

Perceived Workplace Harassment of Informal Public Transport Operators in Two African Cities

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abstract

Informal public transport (IPT) or paratransit, such as traditional taxis, tricycles (*keke*), minivans (*danfo*) and motorcycles (*okada*) are the preferred means of transportation for many people in cities of developing countries. Despite their importance in the movement of people within African cities, the operators of these urban transport modes are exposed to some occupational risks, such as workplace harassment. It is a factor that puts the sustainability of public urban mobility at risk. This study presents the results of the pilot study of larger research on police harassment and the well-being of informal transport operators in two African cities. The study is based on a sample of IPT operators and stakeholders in Durban, South Africa and Ibadan, Nigeria. The sample for this study was drawn conveniently across various motor parks and taxi ranks in the areas. The interest of the study was to understand the workplace experiences of the sampled operators and contribute to the debate about the well-being of informal operators. The study revealed that harassment exists among IPT operators and is multidimensional. It also explained the shared experiences of harassment by both groups of transport operators. This study further contributes to the debate on the effect of harassment on sustainable well-being of IPT operators.

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Introduction

The rapid rate of urbanisation and natural population growth in cities of developing countries has increased the demand for mobility and accessibility to goods and services. The African region accounts for only 2% of vehicles globally and the motorisation rate is low (42 per 1000 inhabitants) compared to the world average of 180 per 1000 inhabitants in 2015 (Organisation Internationale des Constructeurs d'Automobiles [OICA], 2015). Given the motorisation rate of 21 and 176 per 1000 inhabitants in Nigeria and South Africa, respectively (OICA, 2015), a large proportion of the population depends on the public transport system for their daily movements. The stock of existing formal public transport vehicles is grossly inadequate to meet the growing demand for mobility, particularly for the poor in large cities. Formal public transport systems, such as mass transit busses and rail services provided by the government, are either inadequate or non-functional owing to financial and institutional constraints. In addition, an increased population size and increased separation of workplaces and residences have resulted in a higher demand for transport arising from longer commuting distances for people living on the periphery of cities (Zhao et al., 2017; Popoola et al., 2022; Blamah et al., 2023). The mismatch between the demand for travel and the supply of formal public transport vehicles has led to the emergence and growth of cheap, low cost, privately-operated public transport modes, such as motorcycles, minibuses, taxis, three-wheelers and vans, all of which are referred to as informal transport (Cervero, 2002).

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Informal public transport modes are road vehicles that operate as flexible passenger transportation services and do not follow fixed schedules or routes (Cervero and Golob, 2017; Tucho, 2022).

The vehicles are old, low performing, cost effective, time efficient, fuel efficient and effective for short-distance travel (Tucho, 2022). Informal public transport is the dominant mode of travel in cities of developing countries, where over 80% of the population are engaged in the informal sector (Guven and Karlen, 2020). In Nigeria and South Africa, these informal operators are organised and regulated to some degree by National Union of Road Transport Workers and South African National Taxi Council, respectively. Informal public transport services are provided by private operators in neighbourhoods not served by formal operators due to poor road conditions, traffic congestion and an escalating demand for travel. According to Joewono and Kubota (2008), informal public transport persists in areas that are not served, or are under-served, by conventional public transport. It links inaccessible housing areas to the main transport routes, provides trunk services that complement or compete with formal public transport and directs longer-distance services on routes where the formal sector supply is slower or infrequent. In Nigeria, 98% of the public transport market is dominated by private operators (Adesanya, 2002). The informal public transport sector is market-based, unregulated in terms of the law, and unsanctioned (Cervero, 2000; Olowosegun et al., 2021). The paratransit modes operate alongside private vehicles and formal public transport vehicles on roads, with little or no regulation in terms of the quality of the vehicles, age and driving skills of the drivers, possession of valid driver's licences and fares (Adesanya, 2002). Informal transport is used for all trip purposes, which include trips to schools, workplaces, marketplaces and medical facilities.

The operators do not have liability insurance and driving permits, and the vehicles do not provide adequate safety for passengers. Aggressive driving

and non-adherence to traffic rules by drivers also cause serious road accidents. In spite of these issues, informal public transport is the preferred mode of transport by the majority of the urban population because the fares are comparatively low. In addition, the informal transport sector provides employment to a large number of low-skilled people from both rural and urban areas. The sector comprises the owners, drivers, passengers, associations and regulatory authorities (Booyster et al., 2013). The owners lease their vehicles to drivers at an agreed fee or amount of remittance. In some cases, drivers are also vehicle owners. Since the livelihoods of the drivers depend on their earnings, they compete for passengers, stop anywhere for passengers to board, operate without a formal traffic schedule and utterly disregard traffic rules. Although the fares are flexible, the associations fix fares along routes based on prevailing economic conditions, passengers' bargaining power and market demand.

Previous research on the informal transport sector focused on the operations, quality of service and users' satisfaction. However, the well-being of and workplace harassment experienced by drivers have attracted little attention. For instance, Cervero and Golob (2007) examined the costs and benefits of the informal transport sector based on the transport and mobility experiences in various cities of developing countries. The modal choice among informal transport vehicle users was investigated by Yaakub and Napiah (2011) and Gadeballi et al. (2020). Joewono and Kubota (2008) examined user satisfaction among paratransit passengers in Bandung, Indonesia. The quality of the service provided by paratransit operators was the focus of the studies by Tri and Kubota (2007), Amrapala and Choocharukul (2019) and Olowosegun et al. (2021). Informal transport operators' access to public spaces was explored by Heinrichs et al. (2016), while operations of informal modes of transport, such as three-wheelers and motorcycle taxis, were examined by Rahman (2007). Existing studies on workplace challenges experienced by informal public transport drivers focused mainly on Tanzania. Kinyondo (2021) reported that harassment by the police was the major work-related threat experienced by informal transport workers in Tanzania, which is similar to the findings by Cervero (2000) and Rizzo (2011). Although the national dailies are replete with stories of police harassment and killings of drivers in Nigerian cities, including Ibadan (Daniel, 2018; Adetayo, 2022), there has been no systematic study on the causes of such activities and their effects on drivers' livelihoods, operations and coping mechanisms.

Therefore, the objective of this paper is to advance earlier research on informal public transport by examining the nature of the harassment of informal transport operators in two African cities, namely Ibadan, Nigeria and Durban, South Africa. The following questions guided the study: (a) What are the common forms of harassment experienced by drivers? And (b) what are the differences in harassment across study countries

Literature Review

Workers in the informal transport sector are often exposed to workplace violence, such as police harassment. In Bogota, for instance, the police engaged in the harassment of transport workers through illegal confiscation of vehicles and, in some cases, through sending drivers to prison in an attempt to enforce the law (Vargas, 2021). Similarly, in the Philippines, many urban transport operators face daily harassment from the police in the form of demand for bribe and extortion while pursuing their daily activities (Spoonier, 2011). Cases of police harassment towards informal transport workers have also been documented in Nigeria. According to Fulani (2021), police officers always mount illegal barriers or roadblocks where many drivers are compelled to stop and pay a certain amount before they are granted free passage. In Oyediji and Samad's (2018) study, workers in the informal transport sector lamented the increase in the number of police checkpoints and the financial extortion they face on a daily basis. This has a psychological effect on the operators, leaving many of them with a strong feeling of fear towards the police.

Ikenyei (2020) asserts that the mounting of roadblocks by the police is most times a strategy to harass and extort transport workers/operators. As noted by Naku (2021), roadblocks usually take place during the night and early morning hours. Harassed drivers often experience emotional outbursts and become unstable while at the wheel, which can sometimes lead to fatal accidents (Ikenyei, 2021). Buttressing earlier studies on police harassment of informal transport workers in Nigeria, Basati (2010) argues that the majority of police extortions occur at police roadblocks and checkpoints. Thus, informal transport workers throughout the country are subjected to routine extortion on a daily basis and are under the threat of vehicle impoundment, arrest, detention

and physical injury. In Kumasi, Ghana, drivers are extorted by the police for wrongful parking and stopping, even though there are limited parking spaces within the metropolis (Adu, 2005). Similar scenarios occur in Senegal, where cases of police harassment of informal transport workers are also reported. In other countries, workers are exploited and harassed through the establishment of excessive numbers of roadblocks, at which their hard-earned money is forcefully taken from them. Any attempt at resistance by drivers will, in many cases, lead to their arrest and imprisonment following the police's false allegations (Channels TV, 2021).

Likewise, in Kinshasa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, traffic wardens are infamous for corruption. It is common to see a police officer getting into a car and grabbing the ignition key in the hope of extorting money from the driver (Redaction, 2022). Instances of police harassment of informal transport workers have also been documented in Nairobi, Kenya. According to Oketch (2012), drivers transporting goods from Mombasa to Kampala reported being extorted by the police and arrested for non-existent offences when they refused the bribe demands of the policemen. Empirical evidence shows that informal transport operators, especially commercial drivers in Duala (Cameroon), face harassment from the police on a regular basis through the establishment of illegal checkpoints, where they are extorted. This reduces the daily income of the commercial operators, resulting in their inability to meet the basic needs of their families (Kollie, 2019). In Monrovia, Liberia, a similar incident was reported regarding police harassment of workers in the informal transport sector. In Nimba County, for instance, police officers were found to be using government vehicles on the highways to extort informal transport drivers (Brooks, 2014).

Data and Methods

This study was part of a larger project. The study was exploratory in nature and adopted a mixed-methods research design. The questions asked aimed to identify the different forms of harassment experienced by the informal public transport operators in Ibadan, Nigeria and Durban, South Africa. Data collection was done through administration of a structured questionnaire and interviews of key actors at the selected taxi parks/ranks.

Data Collection

Interviews with drivers were done at the major taxi ranks (known as bus parks in Nigeria) and bus stops across the two cities. The choice of taxi parks/ranks was made conveniently. In Durban, the focus was on car and minibus (called taxis in Durban and Dando in Ibadan) drivers; while in Ibadan, Nigeria, the focus included car, minibus, motorcycle (called *okada* in Ibadan) and tricycle (referred to as *keke maruwa* in Ibadan) operators. This was because the public modal splits in Durban were car and minibus. The sampling of respondents (informal public transport operators) was done purposively. In all, 38 informal public transport (IPT) operators were sampled (Figure 1).

Although English was the main language of communication throughout the research, the administration of the structured questionnaire to the drivers, done in an interview-like fashion, was in the language of the immediate environment (Yoruba in Ibadan and Zulu in Durban). The structured questionnaire was administered to the selected drivers over a period of one week in the month of March in 2022. The average interview time for each respondent was 15 minutes. The informed consent of the drivers was obtained and interviewees were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and confidential. The study sample comprised 13 car operators, 10 minibus drivers, 6 motorcycle operators and 4 tricycle operators (Figure 2).

Focus Group Discussion and Interview of Stakeholders

Interviews were conducted with four vehicle owners, six metro police officers in Durban, and four public park managers and rank marshals to understand harassment amongst IPT operators in the sampled cities. The choice of these respondents was made based on the fact that they were the gatekeepers of the taxi parks/ranks in the cities. In addition, they were in the best position to provide sufficient evidence on the impact of police harassment on transport operations. The interview transcripts were used as a supplement, so as to further understand police harassment of IPT operators in Ibadan and Durban. One focus group discussion (FGD) was conducted with stakeholders and law enforcement agents, namely representatives of the Federal Road Safety Commission and Vehicle Inspection Office in Nigeria. The authors initially proposed that FGD sessions be conducted in both South Africa and Nigeria. However, time constraints and the positive responses from the stakeholders resulted in only one FGD being held in Nigeria.



Figure 1: Sampling Approach

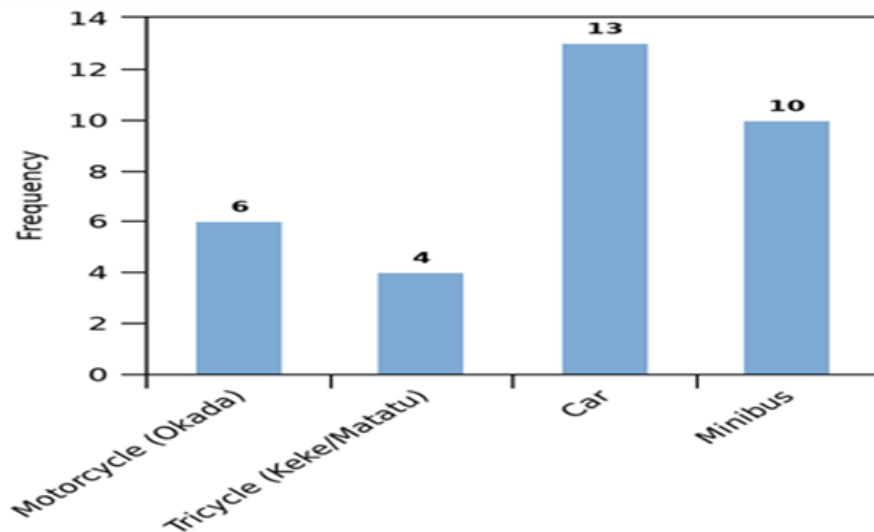


Figure 2: Vehicle Type Being Operated by the Informal Public Transport Operators

Data Analysis

Inferential and descriptive statistics were employed in the analysis of the data. Chi-square and Mann Whitney U were used to understand each country's relationship with harassment in the study area. The descriptive analyses are presented in tables and charts, and the demographic characteristics of the drivers sampled are also presented. These charts and tables provide an understanding of the ratio of the forms of harassment experienced amongst the drivers sampled. Deductive reasoning based on interview quotes in the form of thematic analysis was used to support the data captured.

Study Findings and Data Analysis

Descriptive deductions

Descriptive statistics were computed for the drivers' characteristics. Frequencies and percentages are presented in Table 1, while a summary of the statistics is presented in Table 2. Informal operators in South Africa were classified into minibus or taxi drivers, whereas in Nigeria there were

motorcyclists (*okada* riders), tricycle (*keke maruwa*) operators and minibus and car drivers. Among the operators, 84% were between the ages of 25 and 54. The sector was generally dominated by males, as only one of the respondents was female. Nearly half of the respondents were married (47.37%) (See Table 1). The only female respondent was in Durban, South Africa.

Half of the drivers had a matriculation certificate or secondary school education (50%), while above 18% had an undergraduate degree. Vehicle ownership among the drivers was low (39.37%), and a total of 42.11% shared the driving of the vehicles (the driving was divided into shifts) and had other jobs besides being a transport operator to supplement/complement their income. Each driver did an average of 6.74 ($SD = 3.15$) trips per day. The respondents had an average driving experience of 11.31 years ($SD = 10.53$). The summary of the statistics can be found in Table 2.

Table 1: Frequency Table for Drivers' Characteristics

Variable	N	%	Variable	N	%
<u>Country</u>			<u>Age Distribution</u>		
Nigeria	25	65.79	18-24	1	2.63
South Africa	13	34.21	25-34	7	18.42
			35-44	13	34.21
<u>Sex</u>			45-54	12	31.58
Female	1	2.63	55-64	3	7.89
Male	37	97.37	65+	1	2.63
			No response	1	2.63
<u>Relationship Status</u>					
Married	18	47.37	<u>Educational Status</u>		
Widowed	1	2.63	No Formal Education	3	7.99
Divorced	3	7.89	Primary School	9	23.68
Separated	6	15.79	Matric/Secondary School	19	50
In a domestic partnership or civil union	2	5.26	Undergraduate Degree	6	15.79
Single, but cohabiting	3	7.89	Post-graduate Degree	1	2.63
Single, never married	4	10.53			
No response	1	2.63	<u>Vehicle Ownership</u>		
			Yes	21	55.26
<u>History of Shift Driving among Drivers</u>			No	15	39.47
Yes	16	42.11	No response	2	5.26
No	22	57.89			
<u>Only Vehicle Driver</u>			<u>Complementary Job</u>		
Yes	30	78.95	Yes	14	36.84
No	5	13.16	No	22	57.89
No Response	3	7.89	No response	2	5.26

Table 2: Summary Statistics Table for Average Trips and Years of Driving Experience

Variable	M	SD
Average Trips	6.74	3.15
Driving Experience	11.31	10.53

The descriptive analysis of the types of harassment experienced (i.e. frequencies and percentages) is presented in Table 3. The harassment experiences reported showed that over 60% had been sworn at, insulted in the presence of a passenger, shouted at, stopped from working, made to feel less human, and been forced to pay bribes. Only 36.84% had experienced physical assault as a form of harassment, while 42.11% had experienced a situation where a police officer or other law enforcement officer had bragged about hurting them in the line of duty in Ibadan and Durban (see Table 3).

Inferential Statistics

A Chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine whether the variables of 'country' and 'forms of harassment' were related (Table 4). The

Chi-square test showed that 'country' and 'have the police ever made you feel less of a human?' ($\chi^2(1) = 0.62, p = .431$), 'has any member of the police made sexual advances towards you in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 0.802, p = .371$), 'has any member of the police made sexual remarks/jokes about you in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 2.372, p = .123$) and 'have the police ever requested a bribe (e.g., wanted money from you for Coke) in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 1.091, p = .296$) were not related. However, there was a significant association between 'country' and 'have the police stopped you from working in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 4.296, p = .038$), 'have the police hijacked your vehicle for personal use in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 5.013, p = .025$), 'have the police sworn at you in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 10.153, p = .001$), 'have the police insulted you in the presence of your passengers in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 20.617, p < .001$), 'has any member of the police shouted at you in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 10.153, p = .001$), 'has a police officer bragged about hurting or killing you without repercussions in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 8.018, p = .005$), 'have the police physically assaulted you in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 10.08, p = .001$) and 'have the police verbally insulted you in recent times?' ($\chi^2(1) = 7.632, p = .001$).

A two-tailed Mann-Whitney two-sample rank-sum test was conducted to examine whether there were significant differences in harassment between the two countries. The result of the two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test was significant, $U = 35, z = -3.56, p < .001$. The mean rank for Nigeria was 14.40 and the mean rank for the Republic of South Africa was 27.82. Table 5

presents the results of the two-tailed Mann-Whitney U test. Figure 3 presents a boxplot of the ranks of harassment by country.
Table 3: Frequency Table for Forms of Harassment

Variable	N	%	Variable	N	%
<u>Made to Feel Less Human</u>			<u>Swore at You</u>		
Yes	29	76.32	Yes	26	68.42
No	7	18.42	No	10	26.32
No response	2	5.26	No response	2	5.26
<u>Stopped from Working</u>			<u>Insulted You in the Presence of Your Passenger</u>		
Yes	25	65.79	Yes	23	60.53
No	11	28.95	No	13	34.21
No response	2	5.26	No response	2	5.26
<u>Hijacked Vehicle for Personal Use</u>			<u>Shouted at You</u>		
Yes	13	34.21	Yes	26	68.42
No	23	60.53	No	10	26.32
No response	2	5.26	No response	2	5.26
<u>Bragged about Hurting You</u>			<u>Made Sexual Remarks</u>		
Yes	16	42.11	Yes	5	13.16
No	20	52.63	No	31	81.58
No response	2	5.26	No response	2	5.26
<u>Verbally Insulted You</u>			<u>Made Sexual Advances</u>		
Yes	22	57.89	Yes	4	10.53
No	14	36.84	No	32	84.21
No response	2	5.26	No response	2	5.26
<u>Physically Assaulted You</u>			<u>Requested Bribes</u>		
Yes	14	36.84	Yes	27	71.05
No	22	57.89	No	9	23.68
No response	2	5.26	No response	2	5.26

Table 4: Chi-Square Test Table

Harassment Forms	X^2	df	p-value
Have the police ever made you feel less of a human?	0.62	1	0.431
Have the police stopped you from working in recent times?	4.296	1	0.038
Have the police hijacked your vehicle for personal use in recent times?	5.013	1	0.025
Have the police sworn at you in recent times?	10.153	1	0.001
Have the police insulted you in the presence of your passengers in recent times?	20.617	1	<.001
Has any member of the police shouted at you in recent times?	10.153	1	0.001
Has a police officer bragged about hurting/killing you without repercussions in recent times?	8.018	1	0.005
Have the police physically assaulted you in recent times?	10.08	1	0.001
Have the police verbally insulted you in recent times?	7.632	1	0.001
Has any member of the police made sexual advances towards you in recent times?	0.802	1	0.371
Has any member of the police made sexual remarks/jokes about you in recent times?	2.372	1	0.123
Have the police requested a bribe (money for Coke) from you in recent times?	1.091	1	0.296

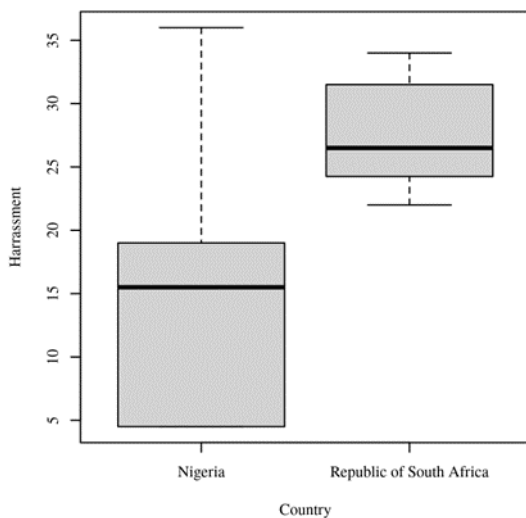


Figure 3: Ranking of Harassment by Country

Discussion

Informal public transport (IPT) plays a significant role in African cities. Welle et al. (2022) assert that IPT is responsible for more than 90% of the public transport system in Africa. This high percentage is due to the mobility and transportation support that IPT offers to the majority of the populations in these cities. In support of this view, a male interviewee, a taxi owner in Durban, commented that:

... Our work (referring to IPT operators) helps lot of people because they don't have cars, especially us black people. Many of us take public transport, such as trains or buses (formal government mass transit) which sometimes become scarce, but the taxis are always there to take them to their destination. Though there are challenges, but we try to ensure that people [are] okay and don't get caught up in our problems. **Male Vehicle Owner.**

The different alternatives (minibuses, cars, tricycles and motorcycles) that IPT offers make it a viable transport and mobility support system for urban dwellers. Evidence from this study suggests a relationship between age and the IPT operators in the sampled locations. To buttress this, a 55-year-old taxi owner sampled stated that:

... Even though I don't have a higher role, but I play a role in advising those younger than us about the business.... **Male Vehicle Owner.**

This response refers to the motivation for youth involvement and engagement in the business, considering the historic dominance of the industry by adults. The prevalence involvement of the youth in Africa's informal economy signals justification for the predominance of youthful IPT operators (Guvén & Karlen, 2020; Agbibo, 2020; Kumar et al., 2021). Hlulani (2021) mentions the role of IPT in the absorption of over 50000 unemployed youths in South Africa. It was estimated that between 30000 and 170000 young employees have been absorbed into the transport sector. StatSA (2021) avers that almost a million people are employed in the sector. Cervero (2000:3) claims that dozens of young men on moped vehicles and motorcycles converge on major intersections in cities across the globe, offering feeder connections between mainline bus routes and nearby neighbourhoods at an affordable fee.

With regard to the Nigerian experience, Olaremi (2021) argues that the involvement of the youth in IPT in Nigeria ranges from driving to working as conductors. He adds observed that drivers (many of whom are young/middle-aged) are usually younger than the vehicle owners. This view aligns with nearly 70% of the respondents in the current study having a history of marriage and the low rate of only two in every three people owning a vehicle

themselves. The sharing of driving duties identified by Olaremi (2021) provides an explanation for the shift in the driving patterns of the sampled drivers. The authors of the current study also suggest this as the explanation as to why nearly 60% of the sample also had other jobs.

A female taxi owner had this to say regarding the shift patterns among the drivers:

... I did not play any role in the taxis; my husband did. But unfortunately, in 2019, he died. So I had to take over the business and learn. What I have learned and I'm doing is that, in the mornings, when drivers arrive to take the taxis, I need to ensure they are in good condition and that they arrive on time for their shifts to make it to work. Then when they come back after their shifts, I collect the money made during the day. That is the work that I do.... **Female Vehicle Owner.**

A male taxi rank manager explained that drivers were predominantly males:

"... Drivers are usually men. We (SANTACO/NURTW) do try though to have women as well, but there are quite a few and they are good at their job."

This could be because the transport business was not financially lucrative for drivers; so, not many women were drawn to becoming drivers. A taxi owner hinted that harassment by the police was also a job disadvantage. When asked about workplace well-being and harassment, he said:

... It is painful to them (drivers). There is one that I bailed out yesterday because he got a warrant from the police. It is not nice really because they are trying, and this job doesn't pay much. **Male Vehicle Owner.**

Why there is a thin line between harassment and legitimate arrest, the data indicated that harassment limited the well-being of the drivers and the vehicle owners. Harassment affected them socially, emotionally, physically and financially. Much (over 60%) of the harassment reported was emotional harassment. This included insults, being made to feel less human and being shouted at. Financial extortion remained the most common form of harassment (over 70%) among the sampled drivers. Some authors have reported the effects of such harassment and having to pay bribes on both the drivers and taxi owners. Reports of cases of sexual remarks being passed and advances made were limited among the respondents.

A rank marshal answered questions about the financial well-being of the drivers and the vehicle owners, and the effect the solicitation of bribes by law enforcement agents had on the drivers and owners. He stated that it shocked them and that the bribes were usually paid by the vehicle owners. Money had to be given directly to a police officer or the driver/owner had to use their earnings to buy drinks for these law enforcement officers. This impacted negatively on the daily income of the vehicle owners and the drivers. Another rank manager also reported that bribe requests often affected driving patterns. When asked how the police harassment negatively affected a driver, he said the following:

They (drivers) hide from them (police) and do not go out until the police are gone... or change the route.... **Male Rank Manager.**

The police harassment (solicitation of bribes) resulted in loss of income for the drivers when they had to change their transport routes or wait until the police had left. They possibly had to change to less lucrative routes to avoid the police and potentially missed out on greater fare collections during peak travel times. This was besides having to hand over their hard-earned money. One rank manager asserted that bribery had become an adaptive mechanism among drivers. Evidence of this was obtained from a rank marshal and a rank manager during interviews:

... No, they don't. Just we have to bribe to get out of situations, sometimes even if you are not having a problem, but still have to bribe.... **Male Rank Marshal.**

... Actually, it's not even about the rights being protected. The laws to protect your rights... but because you know that you are in the wrong and you cannot use the laws. As a result, the only way

is to pay a bribe, that is the only way to fix things. Money fixes everything. Without money we can't go anywhere.... **Male Rank Manager.**

... Yes, there are routes they like and are always a target. You find them there either arresting people or seeking bribes.... **Male Rank Marshal.**

The Chi-square analysis results showed that the country where the drivers lived and the following forms of harassment were independent of each other: being sworn at; their vehicles being hijacked by the police for their personal use; being stopped from working; being insulted in the presence of their passengers; having officers brag about hurting/killing them; being physically assaulted; and being verbally insulted. This meant that the other forms of harassment investigated and the country of operation were related to one another. The focus group discussions held with the transport stakeholders, a Nigerian police officer, a representative from the Federal Road Safety Commission and a vehicle inspection officer revealed mixed experiences in terms of police harassment of drivers and the number of law enforcement officers involved in the harassment process. The following extracts revealed the foregoing:

... In fact, I must confess that recently there was a report in the newspaper about a FRSC officer who pretended to be a driver and a fellow FRSC officer stopped that vehicle and requested for bribe, and at the end of the day he revealed his true identity. I know it is called surveillance, and you have that internal mechanism. What I am trying to say is that these things happen, but you have mechanisms to check and to arrest officers that request for bribes from drivers. **FGD Discussant (Federal Road Safety Commission)**

One thing that I know is that all men are not equal and even in the Bible, the disciples of Jesus Christ were not. But people up there, I mean the senior officers, are trying as much as possible to fetch out those doing that amongst us and that is why in Road Safety now, once you are caught, it is the end and that is the meaning of wearing this white inside your uniform. They will just tell you to remove the uniform and go with the white. They even encourage outsiders to report such acts. When you are sure of it and have evidence to back it up, please report it. Road Safety do not condone such acts. **FGD Discussant (Federal Road Safety Commission)**

Anyway, to the best of my knowledge, it is the drivers that used to be violent. You can hardly see an officer who has been trained and, on his duties, and will go to the road to be harassing, embarrassing the driver who is already discharging his own duty. He will not do like that. No sane police officer would do that. We are always at the receiving end. It is the driver that used to tell me maybe there is one... that a driver has assaulted us. **FGD Discussant (Nigeria Police Force)**

Examination of the qualitative evidence revealed that the types of harassment varied in the two countries. Table 5 and Figure 1 present evidence that the distribution of harassment in Nigeria was significantly different to the distribution of harassment in the Republic of South Africa. The mean rank for Nigeria was significantly lower than the mean rank for the Republic of South Africa, meaning that there were fewer incidences of harassment in Nigeria than in South Africa. This means that the transport operators in the two countries had their share of harassment experiences. Previous studies (Olubomehin, 2012; Owen, 2012; 2014; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019) have documented cases of loss of life, loss of work time and hijacking of vehicles for personal use by law enforcement officers in Nigeria. Some other studies (Dugard, 2001; Singh, 2005; Bähre, 2014; BBC News, 2015; Molefe, 2016) assert that police harassment is a major driver of violence among IPT operators. For example, BBC News (25 August 2015) reported the harassment of immigrant drivers by eight South African policemen that led to the death of a Mozambican taxi driver.

There was no total denial of harassment of the informal public transport operators by the police, and the commentary explained that this harassment

took place in both countries. This implies that harassment, which had great impact on the IPT operators, was multidimensional.

Conclusion

The main aim of this study was to identify the forms of harassment experienced by the informal public transport operators in Ibadan and Durban. The results indicated that the most common forms of harassment from the police reported among the operators in the sampled areas were as follows: being sworn at, insulted in the presence of their passengers, shouted at, prevented from working, and being made to feel less human. Solicitation of bribes was the most common form of harassment identified by the operators. Both vehicle owners and drivers felt the impact of the harassment. The impact included loss of working hours when the vehicle owners had to bail their drivers out of jail, reduction in income remitted to the vehicle owners, and reduction in the income of the drivers. This harassment was seen to be 'trans-generational' and 'trans-ownership' and was not exclusive to one particular gender. Female vehicle owners reported having had to change the shifts of their drivers owing to police harassment.

The study showed that there were numerous external factors that limited IPT operators' financial well-being. Two of such factors were the financial impact of the request for bribes and the subsequent lack of personal finance to own their own vehicles. This initial study did not interrogate the factors that limited their ability to own a vehicle further, but supporting empirical evidence suggested a lack of access to capital, short shifts among the drivers, and the income gap due to the request for bribes by the law enforcement officers. The resulting financial pressure experienced by the drivers/IPT operators sampled accounted for their reported dependence on complementary income from other jobs.

The conclusion was that, although there was evidence that harassment was a two-way process, the negative externalities of the harassment impacted the IPT operators more than the police officers. This indicated that harassment was a stressor that limited the sustainable well-being of the IPT operators. This was because harassment resulted in the loss of or decline in income, reduction in productive time, arising from the reported unlawful arrests and unplanned changes in travel routes among IPTs in Ibadan and Durban. This study, therefore contributes to the gap in knowledge on well-being of IPTs and the literature on well-being of operators and employees in Africa's informal economy.

Limitations of the Study

This pilot study is part of a larger funded exploratory project and data collection is still ongoing. The authors recognise the limitations that non-probabilistic sampling pose in this kind of study. The justification for this study lies in the paucity of research on the well-being of IPT operators, and this study aimed to address this knowledge gap. We are aware that this shorter version of the project has not provided extensive country-wide sets of results. This is attributed to the uneven sample size and time limitations imposed on this phase of the project. The authors recognise the scientific gap in research on the informal economies in Africa.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no potential conflict of interest.

Authors' Contributions

AP led the project, developed the discussion and coordinated data synchronisation. OA did the data analysis. YA wrote the introduction. TO reviewed the first draft. CM and SM developed the literature review. HM and OI read the second and final drafts.

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