

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT OF BUS SERVICES IN LAGOS STATE: A STUDY OF LAGBUS AND MOLUE

¹Hassan, Adegbayi Mutiu and ²Onafeso, Olumide David

¹Department of Transport Management, Faculty of Administration and Management Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

²Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

Corresponding Author's email: simplygbayi@gmail.com



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ABSTRACT

The effectiveness of the public transport operation otherwise known as Molue in the provision of effective road transportation to the Lagos State over the years has brought about the idea of government involvement in the provision of road transport services, a model widely embraced by some countries all over the world. This study attempt a comparative analysis of operational management of Lagbus a government owned transport service and Molue operated by the public in the provision of Bus services in Lagos State. The study used data collected from passengers, through questionnaire administration, to determine users' views on the operational management of both services. A total of One hundred questionnaires were administered on the passengers through Random Sampling Data collected from the questionnaires were analyzed, using descriptive statistical techniques such as total score and simple percentage. The results shows that there are wide range of people patronizing both services but the passengers are more interested in patronizing Lagbus because of its dedicated lanes with absence of traffic congestion and bad attitude of transport union in Lagos State. However, the Lagbus operation has not been able to compete effectively due the nature of Molue services which cut across every parts of Lagos State. The study recommends provision of good roads as well as providing other enabling socio-economic and legal environment capable of enhancing efficient and effective public transport management and services for Molue operation as well as provision of additional buses for Lagbus operation in Lagos Metropolis.

Keywords: Lagbus, Molue, Services, Operation

1.0 Introduction

Transport is a means of movement of people, goods and services from one location in space to another. The quality of life of any nation is determined by the quality and efficiency of

that nation's transport system (Badejo, 1997). An efficient transport system is an axle wheel on which the economic activities of any nation revolve. In Nigeria, road transportation

dominates other modes of transport in the movement of passengers and even goods. This is due to the fact that road transportation has numerous advantages over and above other modes. The advantages include flexibility of route selection by commuters as well as the availability of door to door services. It is considered by the users as the cheapest and most convenient mode of public passenger transport in the country. This is why efficient and reliable public passenger transportation system is a vital and veritable tool in the quest for modernization and socio-economic development of the country (Ifarajimi 1998).

Over the years, Nigerians have been faced with acute shortage of public transport which happens to be the means of mobility for about 90% of her citizens. Transport, as known, constitutes the hub around which the wheel of economic growth revolves. Lagos state metropolis has had the experience of state Transport corporation (LSTC) and has experimented with provision of subsidies for private operators. The state has also ventured into some partnership with TATA assembling of buses and running of a bus system. These attempts have failed for various reasons. Obviously, the transportation section of the economy is being kept in existence by the present generation of private sector fleet owners and smaller scale individual operation whose efficiency made patron of public Transportation, feel that life without a vehicle of their own is a burden almost too heavy to shoulder. Now, only sheer ingenuity has kept the wheels of public transportation in business. It was written in the past literature that well over 97% of public passengers transport services were provided by the private sector for Lagos Metropolis out of which *Molue* buses carried over 45% only 3% of public passenger transport services is accounted for by the public sector (Adegbola, 2001). *MOLUE* buses form of public transport in LagosState became more noticeable,

through various constructions by body builders, on the road this is partly to generate revenue and move more passengers at ago. Further agitation by Nigerian government has however led to the creation of BRT System. There is no gain saying the fact that the idea of BRT was copied from the advanced countries where lanes were designed for certain types of buses. Bus Rapid Transport (BRT) system in the state, an initiative of *LAGBUS* Asset Management Limited and Lagos State Government whereby bus rapid Transit move on a dedicated lanes. This scheme was employed during the administration of Senator Bola Ahmed Tinubu. The government expanded sections of the roads and made the provisions of the BRT buses and clearly demarcated. Also a management team was put in place to recruit and train drivers who would drive of buses. The new initiative was aimed at improving the transport situation in Lagos and its metropolis and to bring some order into the chaotic transport system in the city and its metropolis.

In Lagos, as in most cities in the country, bus services are faced with heavy demand, and exponential rises in capital, operating cost and lack of purchasing power. More importantly, from the available evidence, the over reliance on the privately owned public transport in the city has resulted in the unprecedented growth in the number of vehicles plying the roads without an appreciable improvement in the level of compliance to a road safety and traffic regulation which in turn resulted into traffic congestion, delays, environmental pollution, incessant and uncoordinated land use charge and more importantly road traffic accidents (Gbadamosi 2002). However, many local government, state government and individuals in Nigeria have ventured in public transport provision but no sooner out for operation than grounded. The irony of this is that the cost of production and revenue derived from using

the buses has not offset the investment. Thus, there is a pressing need to ensure that whatever resources are available for bus services are put to the most effective and efficient use as possible. The essence of the study is derived from the inability of public transport operators to cope with the movement of passengers who rely on their services.

People of any society have a requirement for mobility and the function of public transport is therefore to enable people without access to private transport of their own to satisfy those economic, social and political needs which cannot be fulfilled within the walking distance (Badejo, 1997). Over the past decade, the demand for public transport in Nigeria has grown rapidly due largely to the considerable rise in population in most major cities within the country. In fact, the sizes of urban centres and their functions are expanding very rapidly and by the year 2000, urban population had reached 50 million with over 200 urban centres and eleven cities of at least one million populations (Ogunsanya 2001). In Nigeria, a couple of studies have been carried out by consultants and researchers on urban transport policy, development and safety, planning and management to mention but few, with several recommendations being suggested. For effectiveness and reliability, government has rendered assistance.

There are several assistance from finance houses, and governmental agencies such as Federal Urban Mass Transit Agency (FUMTA) giving loans and vehicles to private enterprises that later pay back on instalment. Government assistance to private enterprises has further helped in the deregulation process aimed at assisting the government in conveyance; the competition is stiff in the area of routine, welfarism and administrative discharge. What further helps the private mass transit provision is the commitment in the time and

energy input. (Adesanya, 1998). Extensive studies, especially by the World Bank have actually revealed that public transport in most cities of the developing countries are largely road based and that buses are still the major means of transport (Gardner & Khun, 1992). Over the years it has become quite obvious that public transportation in Lagos metropolis has failed to keep pace with the rate of expansion and demands of economic growth of Lagos. (Bawa Allah, 1997). There is thus apparently unregulated competition from minibus or medium-sizes buses called 'MOLUE' which can operate on virtually all types of routes and are thus more patronized by passenger (up to 70% of total volume) than the municipal buses which could account for 8-10% of person trips, thus causing unnecessary delays and sometimes accidents for other vehicles (Onakomaiya 2002).

The existence of congestion at certain points on the transport network at particular time of the day is a very obvious transport problem faced by all groups of commuters, but concentration of demand in time and space has benefits as well as cost (Hoyle & Knowles, 1992). Adesanya (1998) in his research on the use of motor cycle for public transport in Ibadan, observed that public transport particularly in developing countries, are often operated on a small scale, largely because small vehicles are involved basically and such vehicle may have passenger seating capacities ranging from 2 to 30 (or more as the case with *MOLUE*). In pressing conditions some *MOLUE* could carry up to 60 passengers. The successful performance of the other sectors of the economy of the nation is very much dependent on the transport sector and a lot of investments have been made by the government in the transport sector. Nevertheless, Nigeria is on the verge of imminent crises in the area of transportation. This is as a result of the problems being experienced in the daily movement of people

and goods in Nigerian cities. Regrettably, however, bus services in many cities within Nigeria falls short of demand. The systems are often severally overstretched, uncomfortable and unreliable (Odumosu, 2001).

Ibikunle (1995) observes that public transport in the cities of developing world generally and evidently deficient. Evidence of this includes inadequate capacity as reflected in long queues and extreme overcrowding during long periods peak traffic, the failure to extend public transport network in relation to urban growth. All these anomalies call for improvement. Majority of the buses being operated in Lagos by the private sector is a disgrace to the state. Indeed, if commuters would not have enough buses to meet their transport needs, at least let the few ones available be convenient, comfortable and clean. (Filani 1992). However, the technical innovations (operation and infrastructure) provided in the Bus Rapid Transit system in Lagos State in the course of finding a lasting solution to the challenges facing urban passenger transportation in the state is highly ground-breaking, but there is a need for further improvement on the existing standard so that it will be able to compare well with what is obtainable in the advance economy where BRT has been in operation (Amiegbebor; Akarakiri and Dickson, 2016). Also Gbadamosi (2010) viewed the BRT as rapid mode of transportation that can combine that quality of rail transit and the flexibility of buses.

The aim of the study is to compare and contrast the operation of government owned and privately owned public transport in Lagos State. The objectives of the study include the examination of the operation and management of public transport in Lagos: determination of the level of patronage of commuters as well as examination of the problems inherent in the management and operation of public transport in LagosState.

2.0 Methodology

Data were collected from both primary and secondary sources. With greater emphasis been placed on the primary data. The primary data used in this study were sourced through structured interview and the use of questionnaires. Two sets of questionnaires were administered in each of the two public transport operators under study. The first set of questionnaire was administered to the commuters. This set of questionnaire sought for information on the quality and efficiency of the service provided by the operators under study. The second set of questionnaire was administered to the operators of the public transport provider under study. The questionnaire sought for information on the duration of their operation, the fares charged, the problems and challenges encountered and complaints lodged by users.

The target population were commuters and operators of the transport services. To accomplish this, random sampling was used in selecting those that were interviewed or administered with questionnaires. Altogether a total of 250 questionnaires were administered in both areas of the study 50 questionnaire were administered to each operator and 75 questionnaire each were administered to the commuters of the two transport operators. In analyzing data obtained through the administration of the questionnaires both descriptive and inferential analysis and statistics were adopted. The descriptive form is more explicit on the socio economic characteristic of the respondents there various statistical illustrators such as tabulation, frequency distribution and percentage were used.

Metropolitan Lagos may be described as a major traffic attractor in Nigeria. It is the faster growing and the most heavily motorized city of Nigeria. Road transportation is the most utilized and predominant mode within the metropolis accounting for about 90% of both

passengers and goods movement. In terms of distance travelled, 66% of passengers movement is undertaken by buses 25% by private cars, 4% by taxis and 5% by motor cycles (Oni, 1992). In essence, Lagos metropolis is a major primate city that is “the dominant of economic force, the seat of governments, transportation hub and centre of their developments”. The city finds it difficult to manage the population surge which adversely affects its transportation system.

3.0 Results and Discussion

LAGBUS started operation on the 17th of February, 2007 with the initiative of *LAGBUS* Asset Management Limited. The introduction of *LAGBUS* brought about the use of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) in which Lagos happened to be first to implement the system in Nigeria. From the very beginning, three reasons can be described as the crucial to the establishment of *LAGBUS*.

- (1) To create a modern, secure sustainable bus transportation service designed for the special needs of Lagos.
- (2) To provide a safe and efficient transportation system in LagosState.
- (3) To reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and to phase out the ubiquitous rickety vehicles from the roads.

The *LAGBUS* scheme was projected to be so attractive for rapidity, affordability and comfort as to lure private car owners to make use of public buses. Thus, reducing the number of vehicles and traffic on the roads. Bus Rapid Transit is a transport option which relies on the use of dedicated “interference” free segregated lane to guarantee fast and reliable bus travel. The BRT scheme is a major facility provided for the operation of *LAGBUS*. The *LAGBUS* system is innovative and a bold step in transportation in which these are some of the highlights of the new strategy:

- (1) The company must be run as a private limited liability company.
- (2) Management of the maintenance company must be separated from the bus company.
- (3) Bus Company must operate in conjunction with local transport operators.
- (4) Ticketing is to be centralized
- (5) Backward integration with investments in Bus Assembly plants is necessary.
- (6) Ownership of the company should include institutional private investors.

The operation of *MOLUE* in Lagos metropolis started prior to the introduction of mass transit programme in 1988 *MOLUE* buses are the most popular adapted vehicles used for public transport in Lagos State. *MOLUE* as a means of public transport in Lagos usually operated under private ownership. The carrying capacities of *MOLUE* ranges from 30 to 50 passengers, while in a pressing condition they carry up to 60 passengers thus, engage in carrying more than their capacity and in over loading whereby passengers are seen hanging by the door of the vehicles.

In Lagos State, *MOLUE* operates on fixed route written beside the vehicles. Their fares are predetermined though without using ticketing system. *MOLUE* buses are restricted to federal roads because of their size, noise, pollution and land misuse.

MOLUE as a means of public transport in Lagos metropolis has been supportive in terms of conveyance of masses, job provision for individual when considering Lagos

State population before the introduction of the newly introduced mass transit operation in Lagos (*LAGBUS*). The importance of these *MOLUE* buses could be viewed from these angles; · The operation of *MOLUE* from what the researchers observed on the field is done by the individual or group of people.

Some of these buses are owned or even hired driven and this in turns provide jobs for the unemployed. · Before the introduction of *LAGBUS*, *MOLUE* has been the means of conveying the masses though, still continues, as the *LAGBUS* is yet to be found everywhere.

Looking at it from the side of cost, *MOLUE* buses are affordable and because people can easily afford to board this means of public transport, they preferred it to other means of public transport operation.

(a) Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Operators of Lagbus and Molue.

		LAGBUS	MOLUE
GENDER			
	Male	76	96
	Female	24	4
AGE			
	Less than 20 years	4	22
	21-30years	48	32
	31-40years	38	26
	Above 41years	10	20
MARITAL STATUS			
	Single	24	36
	Married	60	42
	Divorced	16	22
EDUCATIONAL			
	Primary	22	80
	Secondary	64	18
	Tertiary	14	2
VEHICLE OWNERSHIP			
	Private	0	66
	Hired-Driven	0	34
	Public	100	0

Source: Fieldwork, 2014

It was observed that out of questionnaires administered to *LAGBUS* operations 76.0% were male and 24.0% were female. In the case of *MOLUE* 96.0% were male 4.0% were female. This shows that the frequency of male operators is greater than that of *LAGBUS* while the frequency of female operators is higher in *LAGBUS* than *MOLUE*. 4.0% of the *LAGBUS* operators respondent fall below 20 years, 48.0% of the respondents fall within the age

range of 20-30 years, 38.0% of the respondents fall within the age range of 31-40years, 10.0% of the respondents fall within 41 years and above. In the case of *MOLUE* 22% of the respondents fall below 20years 32% fall within 20-30years 26% fall within 31-40years and 20% of the respondents fall within 41 years and above. This shows that the frequencies of the ages within 20-30 years are higher in both transport operators.

So also, it was observed that, from *LAGBUS* operators 24% of the respondents are single, 60.0% of the respondents are divorced. In the case of *MOLUE* 36.0% of the respondents are single 42.0% of the respondents are divorced. This shows that frequencies of married operators are high in both transport providers but that of *LAGBUS* is higher than *MOLUE* where 22.0% of the *LAGBUS* operators respondents are primary school certificate holder, 64.0% of the respondents are secondary school certificate holders and 14.0% of the respondents have tertiary education. In the case of *MOLUE*, 80% of the respondents are primary school certificate holders, 18.0% of the respondents are secondary school certificate holders, 2.0% of the respondents have tertiary education. This revealed that the operators of *LAGBUS* are more educated than *MOLUE* operators.

LAGBUS operator is 100% public owned while in the case of *MOLUE*, 66.0% claimed private ownership and 34.0% of the respondents were Hired-driven. This shows that majority of the vehicles of *MOLUE* are private owned, while *LAGBUS* vehicles are public owned. The opinion of respondents also shows that *Molue* as a bus service is confronted with myriads of problems such as bad roads, traffic congestion, passengers uncomfotability and more importantly attitude of transport unions otherwise known as *Agbero* which incapacitated its operational performance whereas *Lagbus* enjoys a dedicated lane and it unhindered by traffic congestion, because of the nature of the buses passengers enjoy a high level of comfort in the buses. Over the years, *Lagbus* has been enjoying a lot of patronage from commuters but this is not enough to make them compete effectively with *Molue* which is highly ubiquitous in every part of Lagos State.

4.0 Conclusion

Transportation fulfils one of the most important functions and one of the most persuasive activities in any society or economy. It is a major factor interlinked with the environment and with the spatial distribution and development of all other forms of economic and social activity. So therefore, there is no escape from transport. However, the past experiences in management of public transport services revealed that the State could no longer run public transport effectively and efficiently compared with the private-owned organizations (Filani 2003). This is due to high level of corruption, poorly trained operation staff and the general perception of workers in the public service that "Government business is nobody's business".

However, this study made it known that *LAGBUS* vehicles are more preferred by commuters than *MOLUE* vehicles. Meanwhile, a major factor in the failure of many transport ventures especially those owned by Government is lack of adequate planning. As earlier stated in the previous chapter, Government responds more to the political rather than economic implications of transport ventures. Therefore, the need for a comprehensive planning in the commencement and operation of public transport cannot be over emphasized. Such a planning should be preceded by an in-depth study of the problems associated with road public transport operation. Though, transportation problems would still exist no matter the measures taken in ameliorating it, it has been a problem to mankind for ages but, the Government should try as much as possible to fill those gaps such as provision of good roads as well as providing other enabling socio-economic and legal environment capable of enhancing efficient and effective public transport management and services.

In order to alleviate to the suffering of both the operators and commuters of the public transport in Lagos Metropolis, it is necessary to considers some of the measures recommended below. In reality, public transport operators have not really helped in reducing fares for low income passengers. It is necessary for the appropriate authorities to regulate the fares charge by these operators. Facilities such as bus-stops, motor parks, mechanic workshops should be adequately provided as these facilities would reduce traffic congestion and ensure optimal performance of public transport operators in Lagos Metropolis Construction of more motorable roads is necessary in order to extend *LAGBUS* route to some places where they are yet to be found and deteriorated ones should be rehabilitated As found out in

this study many of the *MOLUE* vehicles being used are very old and they can hardly pass road worthiness tests. Therefore, many of these operators need constant enlightenment about the need to operate roadworthy buses. There should be a regulatory body pegging the number of passengers carried to its minimum capacities. More of *LAGBUS* vehicles should be provided and minimal educational standard is required from the operatives of the vehicles. The highest number of indiscipline drivers of the world are on Nigerian roads particularly in Lagos, because there is no enforcement, compliance is lax. Therefore, the traffic regulation and control agencies in Lagos Metropolis should be adequately strengthened. Vehicle regular maintenance and services are needed to enhance operators' performance.

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