



The Socio-Economic Impact of the Ban on Motorcycle in Onitsha

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Abstract

The ban placed on the use of motorcycle (*okada*) may seem like a step in the right direction, in an attempt to reduce the rate of crime and road accident in the community. But, government seem not to have provided any form of alternative employment to absorb these economically displaced persons thereby, increasing the level of poverty in the state. Thus, this study is aimed at the investigating the social and economic implications of the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) in Onitsha. The study reviewed literature on motorcycle (*okada*) ban and anchored on the strain theory. The study adopted a survey research design because; it enabled the researcher to derive first-hand data from the research respondents and the happenings in the study area. Using a sample calculator, a sample size of 384 was derived for this study. Data were collected using questionnaire and secondary sources of data collection technique and analysed using simple percentages. Findings revealed that the ban on motorcycle is because of the increase in the rate of crime and accident caused by motorcycle (*okada*) operators. It was further revealed that, the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) leads to mass unemployment and poverty in Onitsha. Based on this, it was recommended that, government provides alternative economic activities for motorcycle operators, spare parts dealers and repairs before implementing the ban on motorcycle so as not to make them vulnerable to criminal and illegitimate activities.

Keywords

Crime, Motorcycle, *Okada*, Socio-Economic, Unemployment.

Introduction

Motorcycle popularly known as *okada* or *inaga* is a commercial means of transportation that seem to have replaced the use of taxis and buses especially in places that cannot be reached by cars or buses. It aids the movement of people and goods with ease and serves as a source of employment for its riders as well as those who specialise in its repairs. Olaore (2011) stated that, motorcycle (*okada*) saves time and is a very fast means of transportation irrespective of how bad the road may be. It has also contributed to government's revenue generation as a lot of revenues are derived from money paid for plate numbers and licenses by motorcycle (*okada*) operators (Oladipo, 2012).

According to Oyesiku (2002) the increase in the rate of motorcycle (*okada*) riders can be linked to the rise in the rate of unemployment in the country and the economic downturn in Nigeria's economy (Odidi, 2012). Tefe, Jones & Appiah-Opoku (2014) opined that, motorcycle (*okada*) has become a means of survival for most poor unemployed people whose livelihood depends heavily on the proceeds from the business. This seem to have altered the population that used to make up majority of motorcycle (*okada*) riders; from mainly, school drop outs, secondary school graduates to include university graduates. Ani

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(2017) added that, this has so far, reduced the rate of crimes like; snatching of bags, phones, wallets and jewellery, stealing of ballot boxes, kidnapping, assassination, rape (Babatola, Imoukhuede & Ajakaye, 2019).

Critics have opined that the growth of motorcycle (*okada*) riders has increased the rate of crime and road accidents in the country. These according to them have caused lots of people to lose their properties and have also, caused the permanent and temporary disability and death of a lot of people. Ndiribe (2009) stated that in 1989 about 144 cases of motorcycle (*okada*) accident were reported in Lagos State and in 1999, 699 cases of motorcycle (*okada*) accidents were reported, representing 21.06 per cent of the total accidents for that year in Lagos State (Olagunju, 2001).

NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis (2007), further added that, motorcycles (*okada*) have a higher fatality rate per unit of distance travelled compared to automobiles. Motorcycle rider deaths were also, nearly 30 times more than drivers of other vehicles. Motorcycle (*okada*) riders aged below 40 are 36 times more likely to be involved in accidents than other vehicle operators of the same age. Also, motorcycle (*okada*) riders aged 40 years and over are around 20 times more likely to be involved in accidents than other drivers of that age (NHTSA's National Center for Statistics and Analysis, 2007).

In addition to this, Oladipo (2012) reported that motorcycle (*okada*) riders constitute nuisance on the highways because, many of them do not obey traffic rules as they tend to have little or no regard for road traffic regulations and often exhibit poor riding skills in driving (Osinowo, Kunle-Olowu, Osinowo, 2011). This behaviour most at times has been linked to certain risky behaviours like alcohol and drug use (Peek-Asa & Kraus, 1996; Spain, Boaz, Phillip, Davidson, Miller, Carrillo & Richardson, 1997) which seem to be rampant amongst motorcycle (*okada*) riders. Sexton, Baugham, Elliot, Maycock (2004) stated that these behaviours have interacting influences which determine motorcyclist (*okada*) accident (and casualty) liabilities.

Oladipo (2012) opined that, the use of motorcycles (*okada*) for commercial purposes has some negative environmental impact on the society. According to him, the emission from bikes is adding to the pollution of the environment and has increased in the cases of cancer and terminal diseases in the country. This has reduced the life expectancy in Nigeria thereby, leading to the loss of lives of able-bodied men and women who should contribute positively to the country's economic development.

Though the emergence of motorcycle (*okada*) use came as a big relief to prevailing transportation and employment problems with other advantages such as curbing lateness to work, and other challenges associated with traffic jam, (Ukwayi, Ogaboh, Michael, 2013) asserts that, the problem associated with the operations of motorcycle (*okada*) are enormous. This has caused various state governments; including Anambra state government, to place a ban on the commercial use of motorcycle (*okada*) in various places in the state.

The then governor of Anambra state, Chief Willie Obiano in May, 2018, declared a ban on motorcycle (*okada*) operation in most places in the state in a statement signed by Mr James Eze, the then Chief Press Secretary. He affirmed this directive by stating that the July 1 deadline for the ban on commercial motorcycle operators (*Okada*) in Onitsha and Awka, is not negotiable while assuring citizens of intending arrangements that will help to cushion the effects of the ban (pmnews, 2018)

This ban which seem more like an executive order tend to have impeding implications for social mobility especially for most school children and workers who depend on this mode of transportation to attend school and go to work. It tends to also compound the health situation of those who live in streets that are not easily accessible by other modes of transportation but have health challenges that need quick access to healthcare (Akume, Abdullahi & Dahida, 2014). In addition, this may cause occupational displacement for motorcycle (*okada*) riders, spare parts dealers and mechanics who may see crime as an alternative source of income, in the absence of none.

Several studies like, Ogunsanya & Galtima (1993), Fasakin (2001) & Oyesiku (2002) have been done on the use of motorcycles (*okada*) in Yola, Akure etc. However; there are limited studies that investigated the socio-economic impact of the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) in Onitsha. Thus, this study is aimed at the investigating the social and economic impact of the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) in Onitsha.

Statement of the problem

Motorcycle (*okada*) is a cardinal part of the informal sector which has made tremendous contributions to the socio-economic development of the society. It has reduced the rate of unemployment by providing an avenue for employment as riders, motorcycle (*okada*) repair and motorcycle spare parts sellers thereby, alleviating poverty and improving the living condition of the masses. This has also; made it less likely for these employed individuals to engage in criminal activities thereby, instituting an atmosphere of peace and tranquillity in the society. This is because; members of the society will hardly live in the fear of losing their lives and property to criminals.

Also, government's expenditures on eradicating crime and ensuring safety and security in the country will be minimised greatly and rather; these funds will be diverted to other sectors that needs development. Motorcycle (*okada*) also serves as a revenue generating avenue for the government. It ensures the fast and easy transportation of people and goods from place to place; even in places that are not accessible to cars and buses.

Despite these positive contributions to the society, motorcycle (*okada*) has been faulted for the increase in crime rate and the rate of accidents in the country. While these crimes may not have been completely committed by motorcycle (*okada*) operator, it may be difficult to track these criminals who use motorcycle (*okada*) to perpetuate criminal activities due to the lack of accurate statistics of motorcycle (*okada*) operators.

Furthermore, these operators may not have been trained on traffic rule thereby, increasing their vulnerability to road accidents. Though, the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) may seem to be a lasting solution to these problems. However, it has created a massive wave of unemployment by displacing the motorcycle (*okada*) operators, motorcycle repairer and motorcycle spare parts dealers economically. This is because, the government seem not to have provided any form of alternative employment to absorb these economically displaced people. Thus, this population may have been purged back into the labour market thereby, worsening their level of poverty and making them vulnerable to criminal activities as a means to provide their basic needs and the needs of their family.

In view of this, the study aimed at investigating the socio-economic impact of the ban on motorcycle in Onitsha. The study was guided by the following questions. They are:

1. Why did the government of Anambra state, place a ban on motorcycle (*okada*) in Onitsha?
2. How has the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) operators affected the social life of the people of Onitsha?
3. How has the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) operators affected the people of Onitsha economically?
4. How best can the people of Onitsha cope with the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) to improve their socio-economic life.

Empirical review

Onifade, Aduradola & Amao (2012) investigated the effect of socio – economic survival of *Okada* riders in Abeokuta and Odeda Local Government Areas of Ogun State, Nigeria on African cultural values. The study used questionnaire to elicit data from one hundred respondents who were randomly selected from ten *Okada* parks within Abeokuta metropolis and Odeda Township respectively. Simple percentage and t-test statistical tools were used to analyse the data. The findings revealed that *Okada* riding, though a lucrative enterprise has its direct and indirect bearing on the cultural values of the society. The recklessness that is associated with the business tends to erode certain cultural and moral values including respect for other road users, respect for authority and elders within the immediate environment. Majority of the riders engaged in the business because of the pressing need to survive and sustain their families. Furthermore, most of the riders did not take the necessary safety precautions, they used foul languages and drank alcohol even during business hours and these reasons have been identified as major causes for their recklessness. In conclusion, *Okada* business is lucrative and can contribute to the Nigerian economy rather than constituting a menace. It was recommended that riders should be given adequate training on societal ethics. Citizenship education should form part of the training to be conducted for those intending to get into the trade. They should be encouraged to register properly at zonal and state levels. Also, the Federal, State and Local governments authorities should set up regulatory bodies empowered to monitor their activities and mode of operations.

Osinowo & Amaefula (2017) investigated the risk-taking behaviour among commercial motorcycle taxi (*okada*) riders in a semi-rural area of Bayelsa State. The study aimed at identifying the factors that predict persistent risky riding behaviours among *Okada* riders. Using questionnaires, the study examined the risk-taking behaviour of *okada* riders. The study interviewed 403 *okada* riders in Yenagoa and Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa in South-Southern Nigeria. Findings revealed that amongst *okada* riders, significant relationships were present between previous RTA and speeding ($X^2 = 168.425$, $df=3$, $p=0.000$), number of passengers carried ($X^2 = 201.8$, $df=3$, $p=0.000$), frequency of alcohol intake ($X^2 = 11.3$, $df=3$, $p=0.010$), smoking of tobacco ($X^2 = 5.55$, $df=1$, $p=0.019$), wearing of reflective jackets ($X^2 = 5.396$, $df=1$, $p=0.020$), wearing of eye protection goggles or visors ($X^2 = 7.97$, $df=1$, $p=0.005$), getting angry easily ($X^2 = 10.65$, $df=4$, $p=0.031$) and dislike for women motorists ($X^2 = 15.44$, $df=4$, $p=0.004$). It concluded that, amongst *okada* riders, significant relationships were present between previous RTA and speeding, number of passengers carried, frequency of alcohol intake, smoking of tobacco, wearing of reflective jackets, wearing of eye protection goggles or visors, getting angry easily, and dislike for women motorists. Thus, these factors should be incorporated into programmes that are aimed at reducing risky riding behaviour amongst *okada* riders.

Adenle & Kayode (2013) investigated a topic titled, “Commercial Motorcycling (*okada*) Business Distraction for Vocational Practice in Nigeria: The Consequentiality of Intentionality.” The study looks into the proliferating rate of commercial motorcycling business visà-vis vocational and technical training

with a view to evaluating the effect of distraction that neglect has caused the individuals and the nation's economy at large. It was argued that there are damaging effects on the society and there is urgent need for reconsideration of economic steps on the part of the government and the individuals. The research is a survey type. Questionnaire was used as the data collection instrument to elicit response from 240 *okada* riders who were randomly selected from the study area. Three research questions were set to guide the study. Findings revealed that though there are many vocations, commercial motorcycling is never one of them. Most of these motorcycle riders are young men who have some level of education but dropped out of school or with one vocation or the other for reasons that range from passion for quick money-yielding activities, to peer group influence and respite seeking. Furthermore, it was revealed that societal crimes are on the increase and the commercial motorcycle riders are susceptible to suspicion. The paper concludes that the technical and vocational education initiative of the Nigerian government, if adequately handled will positively engage the hands of people and abate vocational neglects.

Dina, Akanni, Badejo & Oruma (2015) carried out an empirical analysis of the effect of commercial motorcycle restriction policy on public health and safety in Lagos state. The study used both primary and secondary data in a survey of 120 commercial motorcyclists operating within the Ikeja local government area. Primary data was presented using descriptive method while the secondary data was analysed using quadratic regression model from a scatter plot of 5 year monthly accident admission cases from a federal orthopaedic hospital in Lagos. Results showed that, the survey indicate a significant improvement in the security challenge posed by commercial motorcycle operations while the downward trend in the observed cases of motorcycle hospitalization from analysis is consistent with introduction of the law restricting their operations. Forecast using trend cycle of the seasonal decomposed series indicates motorcycle accident admission cases will end within 5 months of 2015. The study concludes that the enforcement of the law has made a huge positive impact and therefore, should be sustained.

Odugbesan (2016) examined the Impact of Commercial Motorcycle Operations Ban on the Users in Lagos Metropolis. Oshodi-Isole Local government was randomly selected from the 16 local government areas that made up Lagos metropolitan area and 200 structured questionnaire were administered. The findings of this study revealed are that the ban has significantly reduced the accident cases on highway. It also confirmed that *okada* is often used for criminal activities and; that the ban on CMO has reduced the rate of criminal activities being perpetrated with the use of *okada* however; it does not contribute to the increase in transport charges and cost.

Ukwaiyi, Ogaboh & Michael (2013) investigated the Public Perception of the Involvement of Commercial Motorcyclists in Crime in South-South Nigeria. This paper examines the perception of the public on the involvement of commercial motorcyclists in crime. The method of data collection included questionnaire surveys and in-depth interviews directed at key informants selected through multi-stage sampling techniques. Most of the respondents perceived that commercial motorcyclists are involved in different criminal activities such as armed robbery, snatching of valuables and kidnapping. The respondents identified unemployment and greed as major factors predisposing commercial motorcyclists to crime; 76.8% of respondents claimed that most victims of motorcycle criminal activities are female, and this is because of their physical weakness and the valuables they possessed during transits. Respondents also considered that young people fall victims than old people because they go out often and board motorcycles more frequent. To tackle crime committed by commercial motorcyclists, government has placed a curfew on commercial motorcyclists and encouraged constant police patrol. It is recommended

that government should place more emphasis on the formulation of friendly socio-economic policies that address the harsh and unfavorable economic conditions which manifest in the high level of unemployment and poverty.

Abdussalam & Wahab (2014) carried out a study titled, "Is *Okada* Commercial Motorcycle Riding Reducing Poverty among Operators in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State?" the study aimed at investigating the impact of *okada* or local motorcycle transport in reducing poverty among the riders/operators in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara state, Nigeria. A sample size of one hundred and twenty (120) respondents was selected from *okada* riders populace using multistage sampling technique. Questionnaire were employed as the data collection instrument and was supplemented with personal interview with the respondents. The analysis was done through descriptive and inferential statistics inform of percentages and table frequencies as well as Spearman Rank Order Correlation (ρ), using the software of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 20.0). Findings revealed a negative but not significant impact of the *okada* motorcycle riding on poverty reduction as well as living standard of the respondents. The results showed weak and negative correlation between the two variables, $r = -.091$, $n = 120$, $p(.325) > .0005$, with high amount of money makes per day associated with lower standard of living.

Ikot, Akpan, Benson & Etim, (2011) examined the Motorcycle Ban and Its Economic Implications on Uyo Metropolis of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. This survey was aimed at assessing the Economic Implications of Motorcycle Ban in Uyo Metropolis of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. Data were collected through the use of questionnaire, personal observations and interviews and then, analyzed using simple percentage and frequency counts. The population of the study comprised all motorcycle operators in Uyo metropolis. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting one hundred respondents from the study area. The study found out among others that though government has made tremendous efforts in tackling the problems of urban transportation within Uyo municipality, yet the spate of insecurity and crime in the State may not be unconnected with the recent ban of motorcycle operation in the municipality. Based on this, it was recommended that, the government creates more job opportunities as well as skill acquisition centres where most of the motorcyclists who have been affected can be trained on various trades and empower the graduates to kick start small businesses of their own so as to be able to carter for themselves and families.

Micah & Lasisi (2013) examined *okada* Commercial Motorcycle: Any Gain? The study examined the survival strategies adopted by *okada* operators in Ibadan metropolitan city. The study was anchored on functionalism theory. Research design for this study was a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. A sample of 214 respondents was selected using multi stage sampling techniques such as purposive, simple random, cluster, quota and convenience sampling techniques. Instruments for data collection were questionnaire and in-depth interviews. Over 80% of *okada* operators in the study areas were motivated into commercial motorcycle due to unemployment and infrastructural constraint of electricity and shortage of investment capital. About 79% of the riders possessed training skills and aptitudes, however they were out of job due to power supply and lack of financial capital. At least 90% of the riders earned income sustainable for their livelihood. Not less than 20% of the riders were ready to comply with government regulation. This is because the riders expressed feelings of apprehension that there were no viable alternative to survive outside commercial motorcycle. At least 65.2% were determined to continue with their *okada* operation despite government ban. Since *okada* is a major means

of survival, the business may continue to flourish in the midst of stiff regulation. Therefore, the imposition of government ban on *okada* operation may be unjustified unless there are alternatives (such as sustainable power supply, alternative routes for riders, and provision of employment) to absorb the operators in the economy.

Gambo, Ibrahim & Itari (2017) investigated the Impact of Commercial Motorcycle Transport in Raising Income: Evidence from Jigawa State, Nigeria. The study examined how commercial motorcycle business generates income for many of the unemployed people in Jigawa state and the North-Western region of Nigeria. The study employed primary data generated from a survey of 300 randomly selected motorcycle riders in three local government areas in Nigeria. Eviews9.0 & SPSS 20 software aided data analyses were used for descriptive analyses and in addition, an econometric model was specified and estimated using the OLS techniques. A majority of the operators (40.3%) generate average income of between N901 - N1, 200 and the multiple regression result revealed that years of experience, daily savings and daily fuel purchase are the major determinants of income generation model, although the model does not have a good fit given the very low value of R² (0.31), but, overall, the model is highly statistically significant according to the F-test which is rejected at 1% level of significant. The model is very satisfactory as it passed two out of the three econometric tests conducted. The study therefore, recommended that the government formalizes and regulates the activities of commercial motorcycle operators in order to strengthen the business.

From the above study, it was deduced that motorcycle (*okada*) users engage in lots of risky behaviours like; over speeding, frequency of alcohol intake, smoking of tobacco etc. and lots of reckless behaviour that erode cultural and moral values like; respect. Also, it deduced that motorcycle (*okada*) was used to perpetuate a lot of criminal acts but, since the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) the rate of accidents and crime has reduced drastically. Nevertheless, obeying the government's order on motorcycle (*okada*) ban is indeed challenging the victims of this ban are apprehensive of the fact that there were no viable alternative to survive outside commercial motorcycle. In line with this, the above studies are a departure from this study. Contrary to this present study which examined the socio-economic implications of motorcycle (*okada*) ban in Onitsha, these studies were carried out in Ogun State, Bayelsa State, Lagos state, Kwara State, Uyo, Ibadan and Jigawa State.

Theoretical framework

This study anchored on the strain theory of R. K. Merton because, it effectively explains the impact of the ban placed on commercial motorcycle in Onitsha. This theory postulates that the society has some expectations from individuals in the society but places some restrictions that make it difficult and almost impossible to achieve these expectations.

Based on this theory, the society expects that adult members of the society engage in economic activities that will enable them cater for their needs and the needs of their family members and contribute to the socio-economic development of the society. But, the ever increasing rate of unemployment seems to have made it difficult for adults to meet this expectation. However, while some unemployed adult members of the society may have sought other means of economic engagement or activities, some others may have depended on selling motorcycle spare parts, motorcycle repairs and motorcycle riding for their economic engagement and employment and thus, their livelihood.

However, with the ban on commercial motorcycle, it becomes difficult for these adult to achieve the social expectation as they tend to be economically disengaged and purged back into the labour market. This is made more frustrating as the government seems not to have made provision for alternative employment for this population of economically displaced people.

Research methodology

Area of study

Onitsha is a commercial hub in Anambra State; south eastern region of Nigeria. It hosts the Onitsha main market; the largest market in Africa. As of 2006, Onitsha has an estimated population of 391,227 according to the Nigerian census. The 2023 population estimate from the 2006 population census of 714,693 show that, Onitsha has an estimated population of over 1,623,382 (World statistical data, 2023).

As a fast developing city and a major industrial and commercial hub in Africa, Onitsha experiences voluminous financial activities, therefore hosts major banks, and other financial institutions. Industries are dotted around the city and adjoining towns. Palm oil, cosmetics, motor, and motorcycle spare parts, books, and stationery, textiles, electric cables, and so on are sold in commercial quantity in the area. Its main trading centers include; Mgbuka which is a spare parts market, Onitsha main market etc.

The area has a huge population which sometimes causes traffic jam. Thus, the use of motor bikes made transportation easier and less stressful. This is coupled with the fact that the use of motorcycle (*okada*) overtime has helped the smooth running of the commercial center by ensuring the quick delivery of goods and services. But, this has also brought about lots of security issues and hitches in the safety of citizens in the area. In a bid to curb these problems, the then state governor; Willie Obiano placed a ban on the use of motorcycle (*okada*) in the town but, failed to provide alternative means of livelihood for the displaced persons.

Scope of the study

Motorcycle (*okada*) is the easiest, fastest and one of the major means of transportation in Onitsha before its ban. Thus, this study focused on assessing the impact of the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) operators on the social and economic life of the people in commercial areas in Onitsha.

Research design

The study adopted a survey research design because; it enabled the researcher to derive first-hand data from the opinion of the research respondents and the happenings in the study area.

Sampling technique

Using a non-probability sampling technique, the researcher deliberately selected traders in Mgbuka in Obosi who use to sell motorcycle spare parts and tricycle (*keke*) drivers who were former motorcycle drivers. Snowball sampling technique was adopted in selecting the respondents so as to identify the right population for this study.

Sample population/sample size

Using a sample calculator of 95% confidence level, a margin of error of 5, a population proportion of 50 and a population size of 1,623,382; a sample size of 385. The researcher ensured that no questionnaire was wrongly filled or lost by guiding respondents while they fill the research questionnaire and collecting the questionnaire on the spot after they must have filled it. However, one questionnaire was wrongly filled and discarded. Therefore, 128 questionnaire was distributed to each of the following groups of respondents: traders at Mgbuka in Obosi, tricycle (*keke*) drivers who were formerly motorcycle riders and Onitsha dwellers.

Respondents were selected using snowball sampling technique so as to properly identify the right respondents. Respondents comprised of male than females; from different age range, religious and academic background. This population includes; 128 motorcycles spare parts dealers who specialized on motorcycle spare parts, 128 tricycle (*keke*) drivers that were former motorcycle operators and 128 dwellers in Onitsha.

Data collection technique

Data was collected using questionnaire and secondary sources of data collection technique. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A designed to elicit the socio-demographic data from respondents while section B was designed to elicit data based on the research question. Responses for the questionnaire were closed-ended so as to guide the respondents towards the research question.

Data analysis

Frequency distribution tables were used to present and analyse data relating to the research questions of the study.

Research findings

Why did the government of Anambra state, place a ban on motorcycle (*okada*) in Onitsha?

S/N	Questions	Yes	No	Total
1.	The crimes perpetuated with motorcycle are the reason for the ban on motorcycle in Onitsha.	311 81%	73 19%	384 100%
2.	Motorcycle was ban in Onitsha because of the rate of accidents caused by motorcycle operators in Onitsha.	283 73.7%	101 26.3%	384 100%
3.	Motorcycle was ban in Onitsha because motorcycle operators constitutes nuisance in the community by floating traffic laws.	224 58.3%	160 41.7%	384 100%

The table above shows that *okada* was ban because; it was used by criminals to perpetuate criminal acts. It also showed that the rate of accident and nuisance caused by *okada* were part of the reasons for the ban on *okada* in Onitsha.

How has the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) operators affected the people of Onitsha socially and economically?

S/N	Questions	Yes	No	Total
4.	The ban on motorcycle has increased the cost of transportation in Onitsha.	119 31%	265 69%	384 100%
5.	The ban on motorcycle has in Onitsha has increased the rate of unemployment and thus, poverty in Onitsha.	217 56.5%	167 43.5%	384 100%
6.	Transportation has become stressful as I trek to place buses and cars cannot reach.	210 54.7%	174 45.3%	384 100%
7.	Transportation has become slower due to the dependence on cars and buses; which are not as fast as motorcycle.	195 50.8%	189 49.2%	384 100%

The above table showed that the ban on *okada* has led to high cost of transportation, slower journeys, unemployment and poverty in the community.

How best can the people of Onitsha cope with the ban on motorcycle (*okada*) to improve their socio-economic life.

S/N	Questions	Yes	No	Total
8.	Government has provided alternative employment for motorcycle operators, repairers and spare parts dealers.	23 6%	361 94.8%	384 100%
9.	Motorcycle operators, repairers and spare parts dealers have provided alternative employment for themselves.	362 94.3%	22 5.7%	384 100%
10.	Farming will help motorcycle operators, repairers and spare parts dealers cope with the ban on motorcycle.	101 26.3%	283 73.7%	384 100%
11.	Skill acquisition will help motorcycle operators, repairers and spare parts dealers cope with the ban on motorcycle.	159 41.4%	225 58.6%	384 100%
12.	Motorcycle operators, repairers and spare parts dealers can cope with the ban on motorcycle by doing menial jobs.	98 25.5%	286 74.5%	384 100%

Deduced from the above table, an alternative employment has not been provided for motorcycle operators, repairers and spare parts dealers even though it would have helped to shock the effect of the ban on motorcycle operators, repairers and spare parts dealers. Nevertheless, farming cannot serve as an effective coping strategy in the absence of alternative jobs even though menial jobs and skill acquisition were found to be an ineffective coping mechanism perhaps because there are no lands to farm on.

Discussion of findings

Similar to other parts of Nigeria where a ban was placed on the use of motorcycle (*okada*) in Onitsha, the government of Anambra state placed a ban on motorcycle to reduce the rate of crime, accident and curb disorderliness in the state. This is based on the fact that most criminal activities are perpetrated with the aid of motorcycle and the motorcycle operators float traffic laws thereby, constituting nuisance in the state. The rate of accidents caused by motorcycle operators has become more worrisome especially, as victims are usually left maim or dead.

Though, this has not increased the cost of transportation in the community, it has made social life more stressful as people are forced to trek distances which cannot be covered by vehicles. It has also lead to masses unemployment as most youths; graduates and non-graduates are motorcycle operators, repairers and spare parts dealers. Due to this ban, there has been a displacement in the employment of some of the masses which has given room to poverty.

The situation is more depressing as no alternative employment has been provided for these operators, repairers and spare parts dealers. In a bid to cope, most of these operators, repairers and spare parts dealers did not seek solace in farming but rather found alternative employment on their own.

Conclusion

Motorcycle poses great relief for social challenges like unemployment, poverty and by extension, crime. It also serves as one of the ways in which, the government generates revenues in which to handle developmental projects. But, while serving as a social relief, the use of motorcycle has constituted a threat to the security and order of the society. The rate at which motorcycle are used to execute criminal activities and the rate at which operators float traffic laws and are involved in accidents has caused the government of Anambra state to place a ban at motorcycle operation in Onitsha.

Though, this did not affect the cost of transportation in the community, most youths who found employment in the “motorcycle industry” were displaced economically especially as no alternative employment was provided for them before or after the ban. However, this population were able to find alternative employment so as to satisfy their basic needs.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the research findings. They are:

1. There is need for the government to have an accurate record of the statistics of all drivers; tricycle (*keke*), bus and car drivers. Possibly a tracker should be placed on each motorcycle so as to effectively keep track them in case of any criminal conduct.
2. Individuals who have been economically displaced as a result of government policy should given grants and trained in any skill of their choice for free.
3. Before implementing the ban on motorcycle, government should provide alternative employment before placing a ban on any economic activity.

Conflict of interest

The author has declared no conflict of interest.

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