



Activities of Inter-State Road Transportation Companies and Poverty Reduction in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria

by

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Abstract

This study examined the effects of inter-state road transportation companies on poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom State using survey research design. The population for the study comprised commuters in three major inter-state road transportation companies in Akwa Ibom state. The sample size of 381 individuals was estimated and samples selected using the combination of Purposive and Convenience Sampling. Primary data was obtained using structured questionnaire while secondary data was sourced from publications and necessary documents of sampled companies. The instrument was tested to be reliable with Cronbach reliability coefficient of 0.72. Data obtained was analysed using frequency, percentage and multiple linear regression and some pictorial evidence were also presented. Results showed that among the three inter-state road transportation companies considered, Akwa Ibom Transport Company Limited was the highest contributor to poverty reduction, through financial supports than the other inter-state transport company. Result also showed that inter-state road transportation companies had contributed significantly to poverty reduction by accounting for 26.5% of the variation in poverty reduction in the study area. Regression result revealed a significant effect of inter-state road Transport Company on poverty reduction. It was recommended that the management of these Inter-State Road Transportation Companies especial "God is Good Motors" and "ABC Motors" should do more in the area of poverty alleviation in the study.

Key words Poverty reduction, inter- state road transportation, commuters.

1. Introduction

The primary purpose of transportation according to Bala (2015) is to move people, goods as well as information and services through space which is shaped by both cultural and physical constraints such as distance, time, political boundaries and topography. Even the basic necessities of life such as food, clothes and shelter are difficult to achieve in any society without an efficient transportation. This means that without transport, life would be difficult. Transportation is also very crucial in the sense that the existence of human settlements creates greater demand for transport.

According to Anyanwu, Oaikhena, Oyefusi and Dimowo (1997) cited in Bala (2015), transportation plays a vital role in shaping the economy of any nation because modern industries and commercial activities rely on proper, well developed and efficient transport system. It serves as the bedrock for development of any nation, Olamigoke and Emmanuel (2013). While also commenting on the role of transportation, Wane (2001), pointed out that transportation is a crucial vector for urban growth since it gives access to economic activity; facilitate family life, and helps in spinning social networks. It is an indispensable component of the social, political and economic life of every society because it has a major role to play in the spatial relationship between different locations, globally, nationally and regionally. The importance of transportation can therefore be seen in the daily rural, urban and regional human activities on the surface of the earth (Wane, 2001).

Transport systems are closely related to socio-economic changes. The mobility of people and freight and levels of territorial accessibility are at the core of this relationship. Economic opportunities increase where transportation infrastructures are responsive to mobility needs and ensure access to markets and resources (Jean, Claude and Brian, 2006).

Inter- state road transportation becomes the backbone of any economy especially countries like Nigeria. Inter- state road transportation (ISRT) focuses mainly on conveying people, goods and services from one state to another. The activities of ISRT promotes socio-economic development because of the nature of their operations which involves movement of people, goods, services and information from one state to another (Wane 2001). Socio-economic development is the activities involving both social and economic factors which are capable of resulting in the growth of the economy as well as stimulates societal growth in terms of improved standard of living of the citizenry. Several positions have been made by experts in transportation management on the possible effects of inter- state road transportation on socio- economic development.

Globally, poverty has been recognised as the greatest threat to peace and stability more than terrorism and other highly publicized struggles. While stressing the effect of poverty, Sachs (2009) observed that more than eight million people around the world die each year because they are too poor to stay alive. As at 2010, the United Nation Development Project (UNDP) estimated roughly 1.4 billion people were living in extreme poverty, of these, about 93% live in three regions; East Asia, South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria as a country has also received her own fair share of poverty. Despite government's poverty eradication campaigns and national development plans, poverty still remains a major challenge in developing country like Nigeria. According to the UNDP (2020), developing countries like Nigeria and other Sub-Sahara African countries

account for 84.3% of multi dimensional poor people. The rate of poverty in recent time is even worse as Nigeria has been described as the world poverty capital. This is indicated in the recent report in 2018 by Brooking Institution that showed that Nigeria has the highest number of extremely poor people, with a return of six people every minute.

Abudullahi (2003) viewed the causes of poverty is two ways: first is the structural poverty which is a more permanent phenomenon, depending on a host of factors such as limited productive resources, lack of skills for gainful employment, location disadvantage, endemic socio-political and cultural factors. The second is the transitory poverty. While structural poverty is long term and persistent, transitory poverty is short term and its causes are more reversible. The causes include natural disasters like war and environmental degradation, and changes in domestic policy that may result in price changes, increase in unemployment rate among others.

Poverty reduction can be achieved either directly through income redistribution or indirectly through per capita income growth which inter- state road transportation plays a major role (Aeron-Thomas and Jacobs, 2011). The direct approach of poverty reduction as observed by Ahmad (2010) focuses on the provision of basic education, nutrition, health, and access to employment and product markets for the poor. It arises from recognition that the very poor generally do not have sufficient resources to meet basic human needs and, because of their lack of human capital, in many cases they may not be able to take adequate advantage of the economic opportunities generated by national economic growth. Hence, the need for poverty reduction in Nigeria and one possible ways of reducing poverty is through an effective transportation system.

While commenting on the role of transportation, Bala (2015) observed that transportation enhances free movement of peoples, good and information from origin to destination. Even the basic necessities of life such as food, clothes and shelter are difficult to achieve in any society without an efficient transportation. Inter- state road transportation is one of the key factors that play a pivotal role in a region's economic growth. Due to the fact that a well developed inter- state road transportation system provides adequate access to the region which in turn is a necessary condition for the efficient operation of manufacturing, retail, labour and housing markets (Buis, 2009).

Inter- state road transportation contributes to poverty reduction by helping to generate demands for labour most especially unskilled labour and thereby providing income-earning opportunities for the poor. Also, inter- state road transportation provides intermediate services to facilitate interactions between productive activities, reduced cost and improved quality in transport services also reduces the delivered price of products and hence promotes trading activities, making it possible for agriculture to commercialize, for industry to specialize, and for production and employment to expand by exploiting scale economies. Inter- state transportation as posited by Ahmad (2010) contributes to poverty reduction by increasing economy's ability to handle risks.

Moreover, inter-state road transportation contributes to poverty reduction by positively affecting the personal welfare of all income groups. Inter- state road transportation facilitates poverty reduction by ensuring sustainable growth in employment and income which are the perquisites for achieving long term poverty reduction. Kwon (2005) observed that for every one percent growth in Gross Domestic Product (GDP), poverty declines by 0.33 percent in provinces where there is good roads and by 0.09

percent in provinces where there is bad roads. Similarly, Bala (2015) examined the effects of road transport development on urban growth and commercial activities in Gombe Metropolis which showed that survey results showed that 95% of the respondents revealed that improvement in road network affects commercial activities in many ways such as; provision of access to commercial outfits which bring about profit by locating along major roads, junctions and roundabouts which in turn result to increase in income, improvement in standard of living and reduction in poverty. It was therefore, concluded that road transport development dictates the pattern of urban growth and affects commercial activities positively.

Olubomehin (2012) explored the interconnection between road transportation and the economy. Olubomehin (2012) found that road transportation opened up new areas for economic activities, increased agricultural production, revitalized trading activities and impacted positively on urbanization process. The study concluded that road transportation indeed acted as the lifeline of the economy of the study region.

These studies have contributed in no small measure to the impact of road transportation on poverty reduction yet there still exists a major gap in these studies in that they only focused on road transportation generally and not specific on inter- state road transportation. Also, none of these studies focused on inter- state road transportation and poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria.

2. Objectives of Study

The objective of this study was to examine the effect of inter- state road transportation companies on poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom State. The study hypothesized that there is no significant effect of operations of inter- state road transportation companies on poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom State.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Study Area

Akwa Ibom State is located between Latitude 4° 30' and 5° 32' North of the equator; and longitudes 7° 25' and 8° 30' east of the Greenwich Meridian. It is bounded on the north by Abia and Cross River States. In the south, the State is bordered by the Atlantic Ocean and on the south-west and west by Rivers and Abia States respectively. Akwa Ibom has a landmass of 8,412sq kilometers (Akwa Ibom State, 1989).

There are 2 distinct predominant climatic seasons which is the wet rainy season between April to November and the dry season between December to March. The state experiences a uniformly high temperature all round the year with a mean monthly value of 26°.



Figure 1.1: Map of Akwa Ibom State indicating area of study

3.2 Data Set and Type

The Survey Research design was adopted in the study. The major data sets collected were data on road infrastructure development, data on poverty reduction in terms of financial support to the less privilege. These were collected through the use of well structured questionnaire, interview and observations. The sample of 381 was selected from the three major inter-state road transportation companies in Akwa Ibom state and administered using Convenience Sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling

that involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population that is close to hand and easy to contact and reach within the study area. The total sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula. Sample size according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970)

$$n = \frac{\chi^2 NP(1-p)}{d^2(N-D + \chi^2 P(1-P))}$$

And the sample population is indicated as below:

Table 1. Sample Population

S/N	Transport Company	Number of Questionnaire	%
1.	AKTC	153	40
2.	God is Good Motors	114	30
3.	ABC	114	30
	TOTAL	381	100

Source, Field Data (2020)

3.3 Sampling Technique

Purposive Sampling Technique was use to select the three major inter-state companies out of 21 companies. Generally, there are different transportation companies within the states which includes: Akwa Ibom Transport Company Limited, God Is Good Motors (GIGM) Limited, ABC Transport Services Company Limited, Peace Mass Transport Company Limited, etc.

This procedure was utilized since the three companies met up these criteria's:

- i) Presence of facilities such as parking lots/space,
- ii) Coverage (long distance coverage)
- iii) Employment capacity (having at least ten (10) staff and above)
- iv) Quality of service delivery such as courier services / transport

3.4 Method of Data Analysis

The study adopted descriptive techniques such as tables to present results. To examine the effect of inter-state transport a multiple Regression was used with the following variables, see table 6; (X_1 – Movement of Goods, X_2 – Movement of people, X_3 – Free flow of Information, X_4 – Quality of Services Provided). The model was use because the study determines the effect of operations of inter-state road transportation (movement of goods, movement of people, free flow of information and quality of services provided) on poverty reduction.

4. Results and Discussions of Findings

The result of the demographics of the respondent is presented in Table 1. Out of the 381 respondents, 208 respondents representing 55.8 percent were male while 165 respondents representing 44.2 percent were female. To assess the socio-economic composition of respondent, the distribution of the respondents by age reveals that 118

respondents (31.6 percent), 28 respondents (7.5 percent) were between 18-30 years and 31-40 years respectively. Result also indicates that 129 respondents (34.6 percent) were between 41-50 years and 98 respondents (26.3 percent) were between 41-50 years and above 50 years respectively. One hundred and ten respondents representing 29.5 percent had SSCE or equivalent while 19.8 percent, 38.3 percent and 12.3 percent of the respondents had NCE/OND, HND/B.Sc. and postgraduates' degrees respectively indicating that the majority of the respondents were HND/B.Sc. holders (38.3 percent). One hundred and forty-five respondents (38.9 percent) were into Business while 132 respondents (35.4 percent) and 23 respondents (6.2 percent) were Civil servants and students respectively. Result reveals that 32 respondents (8.6 percent) were unemployed and 41 respondents (11.0 percent) are engaged in other occupations. Out of the 373 respondents, 113 respondents (30.3 percent) were selected from "God is Good Motors" while 150 respondents (40.2 percent) and 110 respondents (29.5 percent) were selected from Akwa Ibom Transport Company and ABC transport respectively (Table 1).

Table 2: The demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic variables	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	208	55.8
Female	165	44.2
Total	373	100.0
Age (years)		
18-30 years	118	31.6
31-40 years	28	7.5
41-50 years	129	34.6
Above 50 years	98	26.3
Total	373	100.0
Academic qualification		
SSCE or equivalent	110	29.5
NCE/OND	74	19.8
HND/B.Sc.	143	38.3
Postgraduate degrees	46	12.3
Total	373	100.0
Occupation		
Business/trading	145	38.9
Civil servants	132	35.4
Students	23	6.2
Unemployed	32	8.6
Others	41	11.0
Total	373	100.0
Transportation companies		
God is Good	113	30.3
Akwa Ibom Transport Company (AKTC)	150	40.2
ABC Transport	110	29.5
Total	373	100.0

Result of the areas where inter-state road transportation has contributed to poverty reduction is presented in Table 2. Result indicates that the majority of the respondents strongly agree that AKTC provides cheap and affordable courier services compared with other private courier operators (83.3%), cheap and affordable transport fare compared with other transport companies (80.7%), give financial support to the less privilege (95.3%), learn helping hands to the vulnerable people (95.3%) and organizes programmes aimed at alleviating the sufferings of the people (92.0%). For other inter- state transportation companies (God is Good and ABC transport), as the majority of respondent either disagree or strongly disagree to all items relating to their contribution to poverty reduction. The overall result indicated that the majority of the respondents do not support that inter- state road transportation has contributed to the poverty reduction as larger percentage either disagree or strongly disagree though reasonable percentages supported these statement.

Table 3: Descriptive analysis showing the contribution of inter-state road transportation Companies on poverty reduction

SA-Strongly Agree, A- Agree, D- Disagree, SD- Strongly Disagree, Source: Field Survey, 2019

Items	Responses options	AKTC (n =150)		God is Good Motors (n = 113)		ABC Transport (n =110)		Total (n = 373)	
		N	%	N	%	n	%	N	%
Inter- state road transportation in Akwa Ibom State									
Provide cheap and affordable courier services compared with other private courier operators in the state.	SA	125	83.3	5	4.4	3	2.7	133	35.7
	A	4	2.7	4	3.5	3	2.7	11	2.9
	D	5	3.3	9	8.0	4	3.6	18	4.8
	SD	16	10.7	95	84.1	100	90.9	211	56.6
Provide cheap and affordable transport fare compared with other transport companies	SA	121	80.7	11	9.7	0	0.0	132	35.4
	A	10	6.7	0	0.0	6	5.5	16	4.3
	D	19	12.7	27	23.9	20	18.2	66	17.7
	SD	0	0.0	75	66.4	84	76.4	159	42.6
Give financial support to the less privilege in Akwa Ibom State	SA	143	95.3	13	11.5	7	6.4	163	43.7
	A	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	D	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
	SD	7	4.7	100	88.5	103	93.6	210	56.3
Learn helping hands to the vulnerable people in Akwa Ibom State	SA	143	95.3	7	6.2	4	3.6	154	41.3
	A	4	2.7	0	0.0	8	7.3	12	3.2
	D	0	0.0	92	81.4	0	0.0	92	24.7
	SD	3	2.0	14	12.4	98	89.1	115	30.8
Organizes programmes aimed at alleviating the sufferings of the people of Akwa Ibom State	SA	138	92.0	8	7.1	0	0.0	146	39.1
	A	12	8.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	12	3.2
	D	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	6.4	7	1.9
	SD	0	0.0	105	92.9	103	93.6	208	55.8

Further analysis was carried out using Multiple Regression and results obtained are as presented in Tables 3, 4 and 5.). Multicollinearity among the independent variables was checked using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and the results yielded VIFs of 1.308, 1.396, 1.099 and 1.017 for movement of goods, movement of people, free flow of information and quality of the services provided respectively. The VIFs were all less than 10 which indicated that there was no evidence of multicollinearity. Result of multiple linear regression revealed coefficient of determination of 0.265 which implies that only 26.5 percent of the variation in poverty reduction in the study area was accounted for by the activities of inter- state road transportation as measured by their role movement of goods, movement of people, free flow of information and quality of their service (Table 3). Result also revealed F-calculated of 33.25 and F-critical of 2.40 at the 0.05 level of significance which implies that there was a significant regression relationship between the poverty reduction and inter- state road transportation variables as measured by movement of goods, movement of people, free flow of information and quality of their service (Table 4). Result of the individual contribution of the independent variables showed that activities of inter- state road transportation such as movement of goods ($\beta = .621$, S.E = .120, t-calc. = 5.160, p-value = 0.000, $p < 0.05$), movement of people ($\beta = .692$, S.E = .142, t-calc. = 4.860, p-value = 0.0000, $p < 0.05$) and free flow of information ($\beta = .273$, S.E = .122, t-calc. = 2.240, p-value = 0.026, $p < 0.05$) contributed positively and significantly to poverty reduction. Result also showed that the quality of the services rendered by the inter- state road transportation also had significant positive contribution to poverty reduction ($\beta = .427$, S.E = .129, t-calc. = 3.306, p-value = 0.001, $p < 0.05$). Apart from the empirical evidence shown above, there were other programmes embarked by inter- state road transportation companies targeted towards poverty reduction.

Table 4: Multiple regression result showing the effect of the operations of inter-state road transportation companies on poverty reduction

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
	.515	.265	.257	1.98591

Source: Researcher Computation using SPSS version 20.0

Table 5: ANOVA summary showing the effect of the operations of inter- state road transportation companies on poverty reduction

Sources of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F-calc.	P-value
Regression	523.824	4	130.956	33.205*	0.000
Residual	1451.334	368	3.944		
Total	1975.158	372			

F-critical = 2.40, *significant at 5% ($p < 0.05$).

Table 6: Parameter estimates of each of the independent variable showing the effect of the operation of inter- state road transportation companies on poverty reduction.

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t-calc.	P-value	Collinearity Statistics	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	10.778	.680		15.859	0.000		
X ₁	.621	.120	0.264	5.160	0.000*	0.764	1.308
X ₂	.692	.142	0.257	4.860	0.000*	0.716	1.396
X ₃	.273	.122	0.105	2.240	0.026*	0.910	1.099
X ₄	.427	.129	0.149	3.306	0.001*	0.983	1.017

***significant at 5% (p<0.05)**, X₁ = Movement of goods, X₂ = movement of people, X₃ = Free flow of information and X₄ = Quality of the services provided.

Apart from the empirical results shown above, there were other programmes embarked by inter- state road transportation companies targeted towards poverty reduction. In Akwa Ibom Transport Company Limited, based on available records for 2005 and 2018, over 250 individuals including students from secondary schools and tertiary institutions, widows and petty traders have benefitted in various ways such as scholarship to students and financial assistance to widows and petty traders. Each of the beneficiary of the poverty reduction programme got between ₦150, 000 to ₦250, 000 as financial aids and within the period of study over ₦2.25 million had been expended as financial aids to the less privileged people in Akwa Ibom state within the period of 2015 and 2018.

Another area where inter- state road transportation companies like Akwa Ibom State Transport Company Limited, God is Good Motors and ABC Transport have contributed to poverty reduction was in the area of their affordable courier services which was cheaper and faster compared to other convectional courier service providers.

The Drive and Own Scheme is also another laudable programme of the AKTC targeted towards poverty reduction in which a driver was only made to pay an initial deposit of 20% of the total sum for a brand new bus and complete balance payment on weekly installments which thereafter qualifies the driver a bona fide owner of his own bus. As per other inter- state road transportation companies (ABC Transport and God is Good) not much had been done in these areas in Akwa Ibom State. This is why it was important for these companies to look in this direction.

The analysis of data revealed that the majority of the respondents either strongly agreed or agreed that inter-state road transportation companies have contributed positively to poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom state. These areas of impact include provision of cheap and affordable transport fare, financial supports to the less privilege, assistance to the vulnerable people in the State and organizing of special Poverty Alleviating Programmes. Result also revealed significant positive effect of inter- state road transportation companies on poverty reduction as 26.5% of the variation in poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom state was attributed to the operations of inter- state road transportation companies. One possible explanation of this result is that effective and efficient inter- state road transportation helps in boosting commercial activities and hence

helps in the redistribution of income, promoting business activities and enhancing effective utilization of manpower for productive activities thereby reducing poverty rate. Another possible explanation of the results is that Inter-State Road Transportation Companies help in providing and creating of jobs and hence give people a source of livelihood.

Another possible reason why inter-state road transportation has positive effect on poverty reduction is in the area of petty businesses like selling of recharge card, food items that is food canteens among others which could serve as a source of income to people of low income. These findings corroborate with the work of Aworemi and Ilori, (2008) and Olubomehin (2012) in Niger State where public transport companies was found to help in the training of youths on skill acquisition in the study area.

These findings agree with that of Uma, Obona, Hyacinth (2014) on the effect of transportation in which it was established that transportation serves as a major vehicle of poverty reduction. In the same vein, the findings agree with that of Olubomehin (2012) that road transportation was established to open up new areas for economic activities and therefore has reduced the poverty rate in Akwa Ibom state.

This finding also agreed with that of the finding by Bala (2015) on the effects of road transport development on urban growth and commercial activities in Gombe Metropolis where transportation was found to enhance commercial activities thereby reducing the poverty level.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study assessed the impact of inter-state road transportation companies on poverty reduction in Akwa Ibom state. The finding based on descriptive statistics revealed that among the three inter- state road transportation companies considered, only Akwa Ibom Transport Company (AKTC) limited has contributed positively to poverty reduction while the impact of the other two companies (God is Good and ABC transport) has not been significantly felt by the residence of the study area. Result of regression analysis indicated that inter- state road transportation has significant poverty contribution to poverty reduction. Hence, this study conclude that inter- state road transportation has a significant positive contribution in terms of poverty reduction. However, the management of these inter- state road transportation companies most especially God is Good and ABC motors should do more in the area of poverty reduction as not much has been done in this regard. There is need for the government also to create more conducive environment for inter- state road transportation companies to foster as this will help in poverty reduction.

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