



Youth Employment : Tricycling as a Means of Transportation in Ho

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ABSTRACT

The use of tricycle (commonly referred to as *cando in the study area*) in the Ho municipal area has recently become part of transport available to the residents aiding in meeting their daily travel needs and filling the shortage gap in public transport. The *cando* business is a novel and relevant form of employment for the youth in the study area. The researcher randomly chose five (5) “cando” picking joints on market days in the Ho township, in all 75% cando riders and also five (5) focus group discussions were organised with the patrons. Features of the tricycle mode have had implications, as such an assessment of this transport mode has become necessary which has led to this study. The information gathered from the field covers data ownership, rider qualification and license, services, convenience, affordability and others. The study discovered that tricycle is an accepted mode of transport in Ho municipal area which forms about 21% total traffic composition in the Ho municipal area. Vulnerability of the mode regarding the fact that the operators are not trained for the job before engaging the business. The study recommends enforcement to improve safety by controlling the activities of the riders to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

Keywords: Transportation, urban transport, Ho municipal, tricycle, *cando*, commercial tricycle services.

1. INTRODUCTION

Litman (2017), outlines transportation as the actions principally related to the provision of changing geographical position and the relocation of people and goods. Unquestionably, transportation is seen as a crucial aspect in the economic development of nations (Chang, 2012). Transportation is believed to be efficient when it facilitates spatial interface, reduces distance and also serves as a requirement for effective economic, social and political development of a country (Aikins and Akude, 2015). Transportation, notwithstanding the means, serves as a conveyer sash for people to access goods and services and facilities.

Decline in organised public transportation has brought about the rise in non-orthodox ways of public transport, formerly provided by minibuses and shared taxi/vans, and more recently by commercial motorcycles and tricycles. The ability to travel on poor unmotorable roads, and demand responsiveness, commercial motorcycle and tricycle services' evolution has equally

brought about a rise in road accidents, traffic control problems, unescapable noise and surges in local air pollution and greenhouse gas emanations (Kumar, 2011).

Motorcycles and tricycles have become the preferred means of transport for people in Ghana because they are the easiest and cheapest means by which most people could do their businesses. In the five regions of the North; Bono Region, Ahafo Region and the Oti Region, the use of motorcycles and tricycles assume critical parts of their everyday schedules significantly. For instance, farmers, teachers, nurses, social workers and many others depend on these means of transport to get to work. Health workers in these areas find them as the most efficient means to access the neighbourhoods to offer healthcare services on time (Dinye, 2013).

The rapid population growth and increased urbanisation in Ghana coupled with heavy vehicular traffics, poor road networks and absence of by-pass roads necessitates an alternative means of transport where motorbikes and tricycles services come handy and are expected to play key role in intra city and rural transport (Starkey and Njenga, 2010). Known by several names, the tricycle business is growing in popularity across Africa and Ghana is not excluded. Tricycles assume numerous names in Africa that include Tuktuk in Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Pousse-pousse in Madagascar, Keke in Nigeria, and Mahama Can Do (cando), Nyaaba lorry, Pragya and Aboboyaa in Ghana (Levy and Wong, 2010). In most developing countries, motorcycles and tricycles are now being used as the main means of transportation, especially, among the urban poor (Ismail, Adeniji and Paul, 2018). The choice of motorcycles and tricycles as an alternate means of transport in resolving urban movement hitches has introduced variable scopes of issues and depravities including traffic accidents and safety on the road issues.

In Ghana, there are several means of transportation, such as cars, vans, buses, motorbikes. Recently, the tricycle was introduced in many parts of the country and has caught up in many urban centres. The use of tricycles has recently become popular in the Ho municipality even though it has been used in Tamale, Wa, Bolgatanga, Accra, and Kumasi. Tricycles have assumed different names in Ghana. They are named 'Pragya' in Accra, 'Motto Kia' in Kumasi, 'Yellow-Yellow' in Tamale, 'Mahama Camboo' in Wa, and 'Cando' in Ho. The key motive for its introduction and acceptance by the residents was the need to expand the traditional commercial vehicles popularly called 'trotro.' It got accepted because of its affordability and propensity to provide jobs for youths in the country (BFTO, 2017).

2. THE PROBLEM

3. METHODS

3.1 The Study Area

The Ho Municipal Assembly area is one of the five (5) Municipalities in the Volta Region, it was established by a Legislative Instrument (L.I) 2074 of 2012. Originally, Agotime-Ziope and Ho West were all part of the then Ho District until 2012 when these Districts were carved from it. The municipality has Ho as its capital which also serves as the capital and economic pivot of the Volta Region. The study was carried out in the Ho township; the capital town of the Volta Region. Ho is one of the communities where the tricycle business is thriving and serving as a means of livelihood for most youth (HMA, 2017).

The researcher randomly chose five (5) "cando" picking points on market days in the Ho township and randomly distributed thirty-five (35) questionnaires each to the picking points; this

was done over a period of two (2) months, covering twelve (12) market days. In order to gather in-depth information, the researcher interviewed a total of fifteen (15) respondents each from the five (5) selected “tricycle” picking points on market days. Also, five (5) focus group discussions were organised with the patrons (mostly residents) of Ho and its environs.

The list of the names of *tricycle* riders were obtained from the tricycle riders association in Ho. The names were put on pieces of paper, each name to a piece of paper. The names were then selected from the bowl using the lottery method of the simple random sampling technique; this exercise was conducted at each of the five (5) selected picking points.

Five (5) focus group discussions (between 12-15 participants in each group) were organised with clients/patrons of tricycle services. Two semi-structured interview guides were designed and administered to the participants. To get all data into compatible format, responses from participants were grouped taking into consideration the items that demanded those responses. Thus, there was manual and electronic analysis of data. Findings from participants were presented in descriptive forms using frequencies, percentages and tables. The sequence of presentations was done with the bio-data of the respondents and the research.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Tricycle Rider Participants’ Demographic Characteristics

The ages of the *cando rider* participants were between 18 and 35 years and above. The table 1 below shows the age distribution of the respondents. Majority of the 75 participants (82%) were within the age group of 18 and 24 years, 17% fell between the ages of 25-30 years. A 7% covered those in the age group of 31 to 35 years and only one (3%) of the participants indicated that they are above 35 years. In all, about 81% of the surveyed *cando* riders were below the age of 30 years which undoubtedly shows that *cando* services is fundamentally a form of employment for the youth in the Ho area. The demographic data of the participants is presented in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Tricycle Rider Participants’ Demographic Features

| Characteristics | Frequency | Percentage |
|--|-----------|------------|
| Sex | | |
| Male | 69 | 92 |
| Female | 6 | 8 |
| Age | | |
| 18-24 | 22 | 29 |
| 25-30 | 38 | 51 |
| 31-35 | 9 | 12 |
| 35+ | 6 | 8 |
| Education | | |
| Primary | 8 | 11 |
| Junior High school (JHS)/Middle School Leavers | 21 | 28 |
| Senior High school (SHS) | 32 | 43 |
| Tertiary | 2 | 3.6 |
| School Drop Outs | 9 | 12 |
| Never been to School | 3 | 4 |

| Religion | | |
|-------------------|----|------|
| Christian | 47 | 62.7 |
| Muslim | 26 | 34.6 |
| None | 2 | 2.7 |
| Ethnicity | | |
| Ewes | 44 | 58.7 |
| Hausa/Northerners | 23 | 30.7 |
| Others | 8 | 10.6 |

There were six (6) female and sixty-nine (69) *tricycle* rider participants in this study. This shows that it is a male dominated (92%) business. The research team observed that there were only six (6) female riders that were covered by the study; this is due to the fact that it is a male dominated sector. Majority (96%) had some form of formal education ranging from primary school level to the tertiary level. About 12% of the participants dropped out of school at various levels of education; this study considers this category of participants as having had some form of education as well. Nevertheless, 4% of the participants have never been to school.

4.2 Entry into Commercial Tricycle Business (Cando service)

It was discovered that unemployment is a key factor influencing the youth to join the *cando* business. Other reasons found as push factors sending the youth into the *cando* business included poverty and lack of capital to start other businesses . The following are quotes from some of the respondents:

Hardship and unemployment made me opt for the cando riding job. I completed senior high school and my grades were good, at least I could have entered the training college, unfortunately, I am an orphan, no one is ready to help me continue my education. I chose to ride the tricycle so I can save some money and return to school.

Another participant revealed his motivating factors in the following words:

I am in the cando business because it gives better profit relative to other forms of businesses I could do. I was a shoe shine boy. During the shoe shine days, things were very difficult for me, there were days I even went to bed without food. An old schoolmate introduced me to the cando business and I am so grateful to him. Today, I can fend for myself and even support my poor family occasionally.

The inspiring features as stated by the respondents in this study is similar to the finding of Akinfemi (2009) who also identified unemployment as a key pull factor for joining motorcycle and the tricycle businesses. The findings revealed that those engaged in commercial tricycling business were chiefly motivated by economic reasons as most of the riders did not have the intention to engage in the tricycling initially. Also, the study discovered that it was quite easier to join the *cando* business because there are businessmen and women who give the tricycles to the riders on hire purchase which they referred to as ‘work and pay’. Levies by the Ho Municipal Assembly was thought wieldy and the obtainability of spare parts at comparatively reasonable prices makes upkeep of the tricycles less taxing. All these reasons have made the business attractive to the youth and therefore the ensuing development of *cando* business in the Ho municipality.

4.3 Ownership

Results from the field, showed that most (71%) of *cando* riders work for the owners of the tricycles. About 13% indicated that they own the tricycles they are using for the business. The

other group of non-owner riders obtained their tricycles through some form of rental agreement or from family/friends. This implies that most of the riders are employed, therefore they do not have the final say on the income accumulated from the *cando* business. The study found that regardless of the type of ownership, the business is booming and helping people involved in it to meet their basic needs. These findings are similar to those reported by Starkey (2011), that *motorcycle* services are thriving in Africa due to the lucrative nature of the business. Below are pictures of some tricycles plying the CK down road in Ho.



4.4 Rider qualification and license

Most of the *cando* riders had no form of formal training in tricycling. They only learned how to operate the tricycles through family, friends and self-tuition. The riders indicated that they do not know any tricycle training schools. Majority (63%) said they would have attended the training schools if such training schools were available. Regarding having tricycle riding licenses, practically all the riders (100%) did not possess valid rider's licenses. However, the data shows that the riders have varied levels/years of experiences. About 64% of the participants have been in commercial motorcycle riding business for more than two (3) years before shifting to tricycle riding. Almost 62% have been doing commercial this business for over five (5) years, some of them revealed that they started elsewhere and later moved to Ho while the rest (38%) of the participants revealed that they have been involved in this business for periods ranging between one (1) year and three (3) years.

4.5 Services

Services provided by the *cando* is essentially the transportation of passengers and goods. The latter, involves movement of produce/goods to and from the markets, homes, shops, farms and many more destinations. There are no regulations presently in place in safeguarding the limit of goods to be carried on the tricycles. Some of the goods transported on the motorcycles included foodstuff, construction materials, farming implements, groceries and others. This finding is in consonance with the findings of IRF (2011) which found that motorcycle taxis transport people and their goods from poorly served areas to functional settlements in urban areas.

4.6 Convenience and Affordability

The patrons indicated that the *cando* services are very convenient and affordable. You can find and board *cando* anywhere and the fares are also cheap as compared to taxi cabs. These *cando* tricycles can go to places that are not motorable to taxi cabs. A *cando* service client revealed that;

I find their services to be so convenient because I do not live by the roadside but these machines are able to get to my area, therefore I do not have to walk all the way to the roadside to get a vehicle to my office. It is also not expensive using them. We normally pay between Ghc 1.5 and Ghc 2.00 depending on the distance.

4.7 Tricycle (cando) Users

From the focus group discussions, countless reasons were given by participants for their use of the *cando* services. These reasons are the ability of the tricycle being a faster and cheaper means of transport. Waiting time was also given as a reason for using *cando*. One of the FGD participant said:

'You only need 2 people for the cando to move because only 2 passengers are needed'. Unlike the taxicabs where you need to wait until the car is full before they move from the station. The cando is also a time saver'.

The current study authenticates the findings of Darido (2010) who found the use of tricycles to be very common in developing countries because they are comparatively cheap. He found that tricycles also have lower travel costs and reduce travel time.

4.7 The benefits of commercial Cando Services

Additionally, the study found that there was a judicious level of income in the tricycling business. The revenue made from the tricycle business made it a worthwhile source of employment. The riders said that the business received high patronage because of its ability to convey people to places where taxi cabs could not go. The patronage of *cando* services in the Ho area disclosed that there are good financial returns from the business. This is in consonance with the findings of Oladipo (2012) which said the operation of this group of transporters has lessened the transport hitches encountered by the people. Consequently, we can say that the *cando* business has filled the gap in the public transport system in Ho. With the operation of commercial tricycles, people can now go to areas previously inaccessible by orthodox means of conveyance.

8.10 Challenges of Okada Business Operations

The operations of *cando* services involve numerous challenges. The riders and patrons revealed that one of the problems of *cando* services is occasional accidents; though they rarely occur when they do, they are serious. Passengers further revealed that some of the riders were sometimes careless and edgy. Edginess, deliberate disrespect for traffic regulations and reckless riding by some operators sometimes results in accidents that hurts the riders and passengers. Also, it was found that some of the riders do not use helmet and they also do not provide helmets for their clients. Some of them also over speed unreasonably thus endangering their own lives, lives of the passengers and other road users.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The *cando* business is a new and pertinent form of employment for the youth. It allows the riders to meet their basic necessities. The service has received approval from residents as they praise the significance of the *cando* service to them. The service has been recognised owing to the deficit in prevailing means of transportation and the flexibility of the service. Notwithstanding the findings of this study, and no matter what thoughts we have about the *cando* operations, society cannot ignore its impact on the passengers. Nonetheless, the opposing effects should be given the required consideration and policy decisions be made to curb their activities.

In relation to the conclusion made, the following recommendations are made:

- Scholarship funds should be established to aid poor children to continue their education.
- Regulations should strictly be enforced to improve safety when used for public transport.
- The Municipal Assembly should organise frequent public education for riders on the adherence to road safety regulations and safe riding principles so that the risks involved can be minimised.
- The operations of the tricycle riders should be controlled so as to help effectiveness and efficiency.

Additionally, more research should be conducted on the usage of *cando* in other urban settlements to determine whether the findings of this study could be extended to the entire country.

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