

**TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT: AN
ASSESSMENT OF BENUE LINKS NIGERIA
LIMITED**

BY

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been written by me and that it is a record of my own research work. It has not been accepted in any previous application of a Postgraduate degree. Also sources of information are acknowledged by means of references. I hereby accept responsibility for any mistake or error in this work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I owe a great deal of gratitude to “**OWOICHO**” for the love he bestowed on me by seeing me through my study of M.P.A. My appreciation also goes to my ebullient supervisor Dr A.A. Anyebe, for his tireless effort in seeing that I complete the work .May God bless you and lift you up the more.

I wish to thank all my sisters and brothers who encouraged me to pursue another master’s degree. I wish to thank all my mates and also my friends. Special thanks goes to Ernest Bisong, Babila and Blessing Afuwai. Special thanks to staff of Benue Links Nigeria Limited.

I wish to specially appreciate my wife who came into my life just as I was completing the program.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to all children of the world and especially Enoch Adoga Idu

ABSTRACT

All over the world, one critical objective of public transportation is facilitating the movement of people and goods from one place to another. In Benue state of Nigeria, the Benue Links was established in February, 1988 to address the problem of public transport occasioned by the effect of the Structural Adjustment Programme on the transport sector. These problems include; vehicle breakdown, old vehicles plying the road, irregular changes on luggages, unnecessary delays, e.t.c.

The study thus set out to answer the following questions; How satisfactory is the services of Benue Links to its passengers? Is the links meeting the objectives for which it was set up? And what could be done to resolve the company's numerous problems. The study's objectives is to find answers to these questions is to determine if the transport needs of the state is being solved or not. And to examine whether the passengers have any complaints about the services of the links.

Both secondary and primary sources of data was explored to test the hypothesis which states that; the level of services of the links is not affected by the level of patronage by passengers. The systematic sampling technique was adopted to generate data from the population. A total of 285 questionnaire was analyzed and used to test the hypothesis in the study.

The research findings shows that most of respondents or passengers earn below N5,000.00 monthly, the services of the BLNL does not cover most of the towns and villages in the state and the passengers are often not refunded their fares in the case of vehicle breakdown amongst others.

On the above findings, the study recommends as follows; BLNL should operate some form of freight services to enable passengers convey bulky goods, purchasing additional buses/vehicles to compliment existing ones, repairing vehicles that have broken down, maximizing passengers comfort, e.t.c.

CERTIFICATION

THIS thesis entitled “An Appraisal of the operation of Benue Links Nigeria Limited” by Emmanuel Benedict Idu meet the requirement governing the award of M.P.A. of the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and is approved for it’s contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

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CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACK GROUND TO THE STUDY

The major objective of public transportation the world over is to facilitate the movement of people and goods from one place to another. Mobility and accessibility have the advantage of speeding up the economic growth of a society. Besides it also encourages socio-economic development of the society.

In Nigeria Government started paying attention to public transportation when there were “hiccups” in the economy. These problems which include among others: inflation; high cost of importing vehicles; and the devaluation in the naira forced private public transport owners to stop importing vehicles. The consequence of all these was that Nigerian roads were littered with old buses which could not satisfy the transport needs of the citizenry.

To address these problems, the Federal Government in January 1988 budget, established the Federal Urban Mass Transit Programme (FUMTP). The programme was entrusted with the responsibility of directing and coordinating all the State Governments in the country and ensuring the establishment of Mass Transit Agencies so as to combat the urban mobility problems, which was worsening day by day.

The Benue Links Nigeria Limited (BLNL) was established on 27th February 1988 in compliance with the Federal government’s directive. The company was later incorporated in May of the same year as a limited liability company. Its task was the implementation of the Federal Urban Transit Programme in Benue State.

The mass transit programme was conceived as a joint Federal and state Government Programme. While the Federal Government provided logistic support, the later was responsible for the day to day operational services. Thus, the Benue links, like other State Transport Corporations, functioned under the operational guidelines of FUMTP established under Decree 67 of 1993.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The LINKS as it is called is experiencing so many problems, and for sometime now commuters are more comfortable using commercial transport vehicles than the Benue Links. These problems range from the fact that the Links does not ply their designated routes always; to breakdown of the vehicles while on transit. When this happens commuters fares are not returned to them. The usual excuse given when this happens is that the fares were collected at the garage and so the monies were not with the drivers.

Besides, the vehicles are old and so their speed level is low and so passengers suffer delays. There are also problems of irregular charges by the management, such that passengers are forced to part with monies that were meant for other needs or worst still become stranded at the parks.

Apart from these, the number of vehicles that would ensure effective route coverage is small and so most times passengers are forced to divert to other public transport agencies

It is as a result of these that the study attempts to find solutions to the pertinent questions.

- 1) Is the service of the Benue Links satisfactory to its passengers?
- 2) Is the Links meeting the transport needs of the people of the state?
- 3) How often do the people of the State make use of the Links?

- 4) Is the Links meeting the objectives for which it was set up?
- 5) What should be done to resolve company's problems?

1.3 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective of this study is to assess the operations of the Benue links, to find out the factors that are responsible for the dissatisfaction of the passengers and to find out how passengers satisfaction can be improved upon by the Benue Links. To achieve this aim the specific objectives are as follows:

- 1) To determine if the transport needs of the people of state are being solved;
- 2) To determine if the vehicles available to the Benue links ply the major towns of the State;
- 3) To examine whether the passengers have any complaints about the services of the Benue Links.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study is significant for many reasons. First of all, it is timely because the Benue State Government shortly after assuming office in 1999 bought some fleet of buses to solve the problems of transportation in the state. How efficient are these buses in providing services for the people.

The researcher hopes to expose to policy markers the operation of the links as it tries to provide services to the people of the State.

The findings will also be a body of idea on improving the performance of not only the Benue Links, but also other State Transport Organizations.

Finally, it is hoped that the study will be of immense significance as a reference point to researchers in related fields.

1.5 HYPOTHESES

- 1) The level of services by the Benue links is not affected by the level of patronage by passengers.
- 2) The fares charged by the Benue links is affected by level of patronage.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Even though the researcher is aware that transport is important to development, and that public transport, throughout the country is bedeviled by problems, yet prefers to delimit the scope of the study to the activities of the Benue Links Limited and its operations. Besides, the scope is between 1999 to 2005.

Another reason for the limited scope of the study is due to inadequate time and financial resources. Though the researcher is interested in public transport, conducting a research work on public transport throughout the state would require enormous time, financial resources and fair knowledge of the various parts of the State, and the researcher possess neither of these, therefore limiting the scope of the study to some parts of Benue state, especially where most people board the vehicles.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The fundamental reason for undertaking this study is that the survey provided not only an insight into the operation of the Benue links but also gives statistical estimates of passengers that use the Links and the status of the passengers in the selected four towns of Benue state.

The selected Local governments; Otukpo, Gwer East, Ado and Guma, were chosen because, apart from the fact that the Benue Links plies the route, these are also the towns with most urban and rural characteristics using population, size, presence of social

amenities, infrastructural facilities etc Gwer East and Guma have the Tiv Ethnic Group residing there while Otukpo and Ado is dominated by the Idoma.

1.8 TYPE AND SOURCES OF DATA REQUIRED

In a study of this nature, the major problem of the researcher was that of data collection, especially when the objective is not to generate voluminous data base on every locale that was randomly sampled and covered.

Two main types of data were used for this research. These are the primary and secondary data.

1.8.1 Primary Data

The main instrument used for this research was the questionnaire. The questions designed were to elicit information on the following issues

- 1) Basic Demographic Data: sex, age, level of education, ethnicity, income.
- 2) Information on how often passengers use the links
- 3) Detailed information on satisfactory services or otherwise of the links.
- 4) Information on complaints with the transport agency.

1.8.2 Secondary Data

Secondary source of information was used in the course of this research. To this end official records were consulted. This is intended to get information about the Benue links, which is important for the research.

Other sources of secondary data that are used include books and journals devoted to public transportation. Others are newspaper and write ups

1.9 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

In this study, the systematic sampling technique is adopted for data collection as opposed to the total population. It is adopted not only for scientific representative ness but also for feasibility , because it saves time, money and effort since the people being dealt with are large. Besides, more money and time can be devoted to ensuring the quality of the data through training of fieldworkers, and through instituting careful check to reduce the number of errors likely to occur at various stages in the process from initial data collection to final tabulation or statistical analysis.

In employing the systematic sampling technique for sample selection, the following bus stops were identified in these four local Government Areas and are arranged alphabetically thus;

- | | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------|
| A) Ado Local Government | B) Guma Local Government |
| Igumale bus stop | Daudu bus stop |
| Agila bus stop | Gbajimba bus stop |
| C) Gwer East local Government | d) Otukpo local government |
| Aliade bus stop | Otukpo bus stop |
| Ikpayongo bus stop | |

From each local government area, every second bus stop on the alphabetical scale was selected as sample depending on the number of bus stops. The following bus stops were thus picked as shown in table 1.1

Table 1.1 Distribution of selected bus stops in the local governments

Local government	Number bus stop	Name of number selected
Ado	2	1

Guma	2	1
Gwer	2	1
Otukpo	2	1

Source: survey conducted by the Researcher

Each of the selected bus stops has a number of vehicles that ply it daily. These were subjected to a systematic sampling for a choice of 1/3 of the vehicles that leave the bus stop as presented in the table 1.2. Starting with the first vehicle randomly picked every other secondly numbered vehicle was picked depending on the number of vehicles.

Table 1.2 Distribution of selected vehicles that leave the Bus Stop

Local government	Selected bus stop	Number of vehicles	Number of passenger selected
Ado	Igumale	15	75
Guma	Gbajimba	10	50
Gwer east	Ikpayongo	12	60
Otukpo	Otukpo	20	100
Total		57	285

Source: survey conducted by the Researcher

Table 1.3 Summaries of Bus Stop and Passengers selected as sample

Local Government	Number of garage in Local government	Number of selected garage	Number of vehicles	Number of passengers selected
Ado	2	1	15	75
Guma	2	1	10	50
Gwer East	2	1	12	60
Otukpo	1	1	20	100
Total	7	4	57	285

Source: survey conducted by the Researcher

To administer the questionnaire to specific respondents a 1.0 percent of passengers in the randomly selected vehicles was picked. In all 285 passengers in the four local Government were administered with questionnaire. The number of respondent interviewed was based on 5 out of every 10 persons in a 10 seater bus and so in Ado local government 75 passengers, in Guma it was 50, in Gwer east it was 60, and Otukpo was 100 respondents.

The systematic sampling method is used because it is more convenient when large samples are to be selected. Besides with the aid of this sample design each unit in the population has a better chance of being represented after the first choice. (Nachmais and Nachmais, 1992:172)

Organization of work

The work is divided into five chapters. Chapter one is the introduction of the study. It discusses issues related to the problems, research questions, purpose of the study, objective of the study, significance of the study, hypothesis, scope and delimitation of the study, and definition of terms used in the study.

Chapter two deals with review of related literature. The chapter review books on public transport and also theoretical frame work on transport.

Chapter three is concerned with historical setting of BLNL. It talks about the history of the state, the people. It also talks about how the organization was set up and what the Company does.

Chapter four talks about data presentation. This was arrived at based on the field work carried out to test the hypothesis.

Chapter five is the summary and conclusion of the research. It also deals with recommendations arising from the study.

1.10 DEFINITION OF CONCEPT

Development: According to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Development is a “process of enlarging people’s choice. Enlarging people’s choices is achieved by expanding human capabilities and functioning. At all levels of development the three essential capabilities for development are for people to lead long and healthy lives, to be knowledgeable and to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living. If these basic capabilities are not achieved, many choices are simply not available and many opportunities remain inaccessible... income is certainly one of the main means of expanding choices and well being. But it is not the sum total of people’s lives.” UNDP 1988

For the purpose of this study development means making available public transport to aid not only movement, but also to better peoples lives.

Public Transport Wrote Cox (1996:1) are established to “facilitate movement of people and goods which is essential for nearly every aspect of economic growth and socio – cultural development” He wrote further that public transport can “bridge the economic gap created between the rich and poor through the redistribution of wealth, which can be

achieved by the social interaction between the poor and the rich, and through rural and urban trade. Transportation thereby encourages those who are in deficit areas of production to acquire those things they do not have and vice – versa for those who are in surplus areas of production.”

The study shares the view of the author, but also agrees that public transport opens up new frontiers especially for those whose income is low, who cannot be able to pay the high fares charged on other transport agencies.

According to the Free Dictionary (www.freedictionary.com) dissatisfaction is “the condition or feeling of being displeased or unsatisfied”, this study believes that there are some commuters who are dissatisfied with the services of the Links.

Mass Transit : According to Onekomaiya (1993:130) are private and public transport facilities used for the movement of the people in urban centres where there is a problem of mass movement of people, posing challenges to modern societies.

The study believes that mass transit agencies such as the Benue Links is also relevant in rural centres whose population is relatively small, and also subscribe, the above views shared by the author.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviews books by different authors on public transport in Nigeria with the aim of helping us understand the various topics on transport.

2.2 PUBLIC TRANSPORT: AN OVERVIEW

Transportation system wrote White (2004) involves the movement of people and goods to their destination safely, irrespective of whichever mode of transportation is involved. These modes of transport may be either by private cars, buses, and coaches, shipping, air transport, railways and road haulage. Generally, however people use transport to satisfy their type of needs.

Public transport emerged as early as 1850's in London and other cities in the form of carts that were pulled by series of horses. A century later public transport was used in the same way as mass transport, a word used to describe all "carrying units" which were capable of conveying large numbers of passengers including motor buses and trolleys normally operating on public street, light rail transit; rapid rail transit and suburban rail transit or the commuter rail system.

According to a World Bank description ()of public transport, it noted that they are motorbuses and trolleys, and are those systems carrying fare-paying passengers and operate on public streets. The routes, fares, frequency and stopping places of these transport system are generally prescribed and subject to government regulations. The fares charged are usually flat rates or rates based on zones or distance, and are usually collected on board the vehicles by conductors or drivers. These buses usually carry between 12 to 240 passengers

and most of them operate with all their passengers seated especially when they are on normal long distance inter- city services. But there is also a blend of standing and sitting passenger as is the case with short distance inter-city services.

Commenting on public transport Cox (1996:1) opined that they would provide maximum benefit to the community if they serve the following purposes: namely

- a) To serve as social need by facilitating mobility for the disadvantage (those without access to automobiles by virtue of low income or disability and
- b) To serve an environmental need by providing an alternative to the automobile and thereby reducing traffic congestion air pollution and energy consumption.

In order for public transport to accomplish its objectives, it must put itself in the place of customers. Customers of public transport are interested in getting from one place to the other quickly and conveniently. Beside they can only be attracted to its services if it is nearby, frequent, quick and is able to take them to where they want to go.

Public transport is performing well only if it is effective that is, the extent to which the system achieves its public policy objectives and whether it is efficient that is providing services at the lowest cost.

Ray (1995:106) observes that transport is an ingredient for progress. This is because it is through it, that land is economically exploited; it motivates labor and capital to proliferate; it leads industry and agronomy to develop while it also encourages trade and commerce to discover new frontiers.

Daniels and Warnes (1980:1) note that persons and vehicles movement in cities of today are guided by the event of the past as they are shaped by the requirement of the present. They went further by elaborating that the industrial revolution stimulated the revolution in

transportation, because the need arose for the movement of raw materials, goods and people within and between cities. The most important revolution achieved during this time was the possibility of traveling long distances without consuming more time. This is important because it separated work place from residences in urban areas. This separation was achieved through public transport, which enable people to travel long distances from their settlements as well as other activities such as going to work or carrying out social functions.

Mumford (1964:178) observes that the “purpose of transportation is to bring people or goods to places where they are needed” in a way which will widen the possibility of choice without making it necessary to travel

2.3 PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN NIGERIA

In his comments about the introduction of Mass Transit Bolade (1993:51) wrote that, it was introduced because of the neglect of urban transport system for some time. To him mass transit system was the solution to Nigeria’s transport difficulties. Even though these problems were noticed before the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) in 1986, they were magnified under SAP when the naira was devalued by between 300-400%.

He believed that SAP shot up prices for both private and public transport vehicles, spare parts and other support equipment hence a decline in number of registered cars and their availability for private and public uses overtime.

Bolade quoting Hang defined mass transit as “a high capacity means and models of transport of moving large number of people within a given network with relatively short term head way and reasonable turn around time”.

Elaborating further on the effects of the decline in oil revenue between the year 1978 and 1981 and the consequent implication for all sphere of national life, Tokumbo(1997:16) explained that belt tightening measures such as the austerity measures was introduced by President Shehu Shagari in 1982 and later SAP by President Ibrahim Babangida.

Tokunbo (1997:16) is of the view that the impact of these measures was most felt by the transport sector. This is coupled with the fact that at this time the nations population was heading towards 100 million people, while the vehicle fleet in the country as a whole stood at 700,000 in 1982, and diminished further to 500,000 in 1988.

He further stated that this situation apart from creating a mobility crises, was further compounded by a decline in the existing transport infrastructure owing to lack of maintenance, inability to embark on new projects due to cash crunch and “the lack of general blueprint on the problem” and “unless something is done and quickly too, Nigeria is becoming immobile”.

Clarifying further Tokunbo, stated that to solve these problems the President of the nation in his budget speech in January 1988, told the populace about “the plan to tackle the mobility crises as envisaged revolved around a tripod of reducing commuter hand ship in the urban centers, laying a solid foundation for modernizing and developing a more integral urban transit system.

In a study conducted in Maiduguri, the Borno state capital, Mala (1988:5) opined that the increase in the population of the city necessitated the increase in the demand for transport. According to him before 1902 the town was made up of patches of rural settlement, but over the years it has grown into a large city with new settlement emerging. Just as there were new settlements, he continued, there was increasing populations,

expanded road network and an increased demand for transport. The problem was how to cope with the increasing transport needs occasioned by urbanization.

Justifying a decline in vehicle fleet, Mala pointed out that, from records given of the number of cars owned by the National Union of Road Transport Workers (N.U.R.T.W.), there was a reduction in the number of vehicles from about 10,218 in 1986 to less than 4,000 vehicles in 1997. SAP was to blame for the trend by ensuring the rise in cost of vehicles and spare part, which meant, “Fewer vehicles could be owned and maintained”.

According to his analysis between the year 1970 and 1994, the only time the number of vehicles rose was in 1970 owing to the “Udoji salary award”, which increased the salaries of workers, allowing most of them to own cars. He put the number of cars at 964 in 1970 and by 1977 it was 6, 143 car. After this time however there has been a decline in the number of cars resulting in transport difficulties by the people.

The implication of the above for the city and transportation was the emergence of the motorcycle as a mode for passenger service. This he stated is because government failed to operate an efficient bus service.

Writing about government operated public transport; Abbas (2000:25) said that the Kogi State Transport Company limited has impacted on the life of the citizenry especially in the areas of price moderation. Though the company, which started operation in 1989, had few vehicles ranging from one to twenty with no infrastructure of its own- permanent office, building, fuel pumps and workshop; though most facilities were old and some were non functioning, the company he stated enjoy good ridership on its present few functional vehicles.

Abbas believes the reason why the mass transit system is having problems is its inability to cover the hinterland, but mostly state headquarters. The reason for this limitation, he observed is as a result of poor road network, which weighs heavily on maintenance ability on the fleets. Besides these, however the numbers of vehicles are few and aging. All these have conspired to limit the impact of the service provided by the company.

Finally he is of the view that on grounds of social welfare and also administrative efficiency, state governments must ensure that mass transit services extend to rural areas, by making the rural road motor able and by providing more and better roads.

Highlighting on the cause of deteriorating services provided by the Lagos State Transport service, Babah(1985: 23) stated that, urban transport is not designed to make profit but to ease congestion, enhance economic, social and political life in the city. Besides, he reiterated public transports are established to service both profitable and unprofitable routes and also maintain regular schedules at all times.

Ogunbodede (1985:101) commenting on urban transport stated clearly that it is a two edge sword, that is, that transport contributes to the growth of urban environment, just as it brings some negative effects to urban environment. Quoting Orski to buttress his point he wrote that: Few technologies have affected modern society more profoundly than has the motor vehicle. Automobiles and trucks have eliminated rural isolation; transformed urban development patterns opened up new forms of recreation and changed our behaviour and life style...more than any automobile has left a deep and permanent imprint on virtually every aspect of our lives...

He went on to say that, urban transport is a necessary evil, because it causes a lot of “congestion, pollution, noise, and a factor in dispersed development and misuse of scarce urban land”.

To solve the negative effects of transportation on the environment, Ogunbodede suggested the following reforms to government:

- i) Set environmental standard for an area;
- ii) Promote bicycling in the central business district through the use of incentive policy;
- iii) Encourage high user tax for owners of private vehicles;
- iv) Encourage the use of mass transit for urban movement;
- v) Encouraging walking in city centers;
- vi) Encourage planning policies that would create traffic reduction in towns.

Ikya (1993:12) notes that even though transportation is important, it is not without problems. He is however of the view that cities developed because of transportation. This is true because “... such fast growing cities nurtured business and industries, provided jobs and high incomes, they also attracted very large populations, that had to be moved from one part of the large city to the other. Obviously, cities could not have developed to this stage without the existence of the various form of transportation. Transport is therefore, the instrument of city development and functioning”.

Ikya went ahead to list the urban transportation problems in the country, namely: urban roads gross inadequate to meet travel needs; available roads are narrow, poorly designed and lack basic complimentary road facilities, like poorly manned road intersections, non availability of traffic light, poor behavioural attitude of road users. Roads

are also overtaken by either refuse or street traders, coupled with these is poor urban transport funding and the ad-hoc nature of urban planning by government.

The world over, transportation studies is geared towards solving urban transportation problems. In rail transport train routes were in existence as far back as 1899 in Lagos to aid movement of goods and persons between the island and mainland. Automobile is a recent phenomenon as compared to rail. In 1907, two vehicles were introduced and used in the city of Lagos. The need for movement was high and with two vehicles, there were no known transport problems. With time, the vehicle stock grew and by 1937 there were about 4,700 vehicles in the country. The problem became worse by 1946 with a total of 6,822 vehicles and in 1970's it had become evidently clear that there were problems in other cities apart from Lagos. The total vehicle stock rose from as little as 100,268 vehicles in 1970 to 1,009,797 in 1977".

Though the country was experiencing transportation problems, studies on transportation were adhoc in nature and scope and were essentially designed to solve the transportation difficulties that arose, like inventories of road transport system, the number, length and volume of vehicles using them and as Ogunsanya (1986:10) had pointed out: The early transport studies of the more developed countries was to see if the existing routes could cope with the vehicles. The result of such adhoc studies in Nigeria determined what additional routes to construct, what road improvements to make and what traffic management technique to introduce.

According to Ogunsanya (1997:4), the major problem that hinders the full operation of mass transit agencies is that of manpower. Most of these public transport agencies, he notes lack the required and skilled staff to man the various aspects of operation. To buttress

this point, his empirical research in 13 transport agencies: (Abia State Transport Corporation; Abuja Urban Mass Transit; Benue Links Nigeria Limited; Borno Express; Imo Transport Company; Jigawa Line Limited; Kaduna State Transport Authority; Katsina State Transport Authority; Kebbi State Transport Authority; Kwara state Transport Company Limited; Rivers Transport Company Limited; Sokoto state Transport Authority and Yobe State Transport Service Limited) came out with the stark realization that they have not given their staff an opportunity to be trained. This is in spite of the fact that they were established between the year 1988 and 1991. Only the Borno Express he went further to say and the Abuja urban Mass Transit that sent four and one person respectively.

Ogunsanya's finding came out with the following results: -

- 1) Many of the mass transit agencies remain professionally qualified but have not acquired the required training for the execution of their duties;
- 2) A lot of opportunities exist in training institutions like the Nigerian Institute of Transport Technology (N.I.T.T.). There is adequate interaction with these state agencies as regard their training needs and the strategies for conducting such training.
- 3) Most of the general managers of the state Mass transit agencies are unaware of the training outlets. For those who have some information, such often come too late.
- 4) Training programmes need to be arranged rather than imposed. A situation where the staff has to be away for as long as two weeks and at a time when such staff is needed discourages nomination for NITT Training programmes;
- 5) Opportunities exist for NITT, Zaria to mount more specialized programmes to take care of staff at the intermediate and low level and so their staff require training in

- Routing and fleet control

- Human Relations
- Record keeping etc

Ogunsanya suggests that the NITT should play a pivotal role in the training of the manpower needs of the mass transit agencies, but also suggested other institutions such as polytechnic, university etc as avenues for meeting and solving manpower shortages. He concluded “The extent to which government objectives in mass transit programmes are achieved centers not only on the quality of human resources available to manage them. There is an appropriate action programme for the development and improvement of skills in the manpower needs of the mass transit sub sector”.

Justifying the relationship between urbanization and economic growth, Oni (2004:53) observed that this leads to increasing use of vehicles, and also the need to tolerate the problem that accompany the use of vehicles which is congestion and pollution. Cities, he states are centers of administration, industrial, commercial, and education, social and recreational activities. Because of these, people are attracted to cities and hence traffic congestion.

While in the city Oni further states that the populace makes use of four major modes: road, rail, water and air. Of all these modes, the road is the most utilized in Nigeria’s urban transportation system. Buttressing this statement, he notes that in 1990, out of the 7-10 million people who used urban means of transportation 95% of them made use of road transport.

Citing an example with Lagos State Transport Corporation, he notes that the corporation uses buses, and transported 90 million passengers in 1978; 82 million in 1983, 76 million in 1986, 67 million in 1987 and about 60 million in 1992.

From this analysis in connection to Lagos, he notes that Lagos has a poor bus service system, thereby making lot of people to rely on cars and vans. As he observes, Lagos is an area characterized by traffic congestion problems because only 50% of the population are transported by bus.

In general, Oni reasoned that urban transportation in Nigeria is characterized by:

- i) Imbalance of growth rates between vehicles, road network and its facilities;
- ii) Over concentration on private car usage;
- iii) Insufficient quantity and quality of public transport;
- iv) Poorly planned and inadequately managed infrastructure facilities, service networks terminals and control systems for public transport;
- v) Low discipline of urban transport users and operation.

Barret (1993:79) admits that Nigeria's urban transport is in crisis, and thus is brought about by urbanization and the inability of transport infrastructure facilities to cope with the high demand arising from this development. As a way out of this mess new initiative is advocated. This includes commercializing the public sector facilities as well as the management of urban traffic in such a way as to help buses avoid traffic congestion which would enable them to operate more speedily, reliably, comfortably and at the lowest cost to the nation.

Barret also advised that traffic management measures should be comprehensively designed and enforced to improve the efficiency of urban transportation and to make the urban environment attractive. He also supports the rehabilitation and maintenance of public transport facilities. Besides these, he favours policy actions in the area of non motorized transport, alternative fuel, traffic restraint, transport coordination and road safety.

Abumere (1993:96) points that planning for the short and longer term mass transportation in Nigeria cannot take place without information on a number of things which include population and urbanization, especially with regards to the spatial and temporal demand patterns for transport, location of economic activities and extent of provision of transport infrastructures. In addition he also notes that there is need for information on the areas within cities and the cities within the country that are to be accorded priority in plans for mass transportation.

Further more, Abumere states that a weak economy cannot support investment in transport. So an understanding of the macro-economic base is relevant to mass transport planning. It is for this reason that the performance of an economy influences mass transport option adopted. For Nigeria to develop to public road transport system he recommended the use of buses and the means of funding should be investments in form of subsidy which will benefit the poor. Besides since investments on transport are long term, the burden of financing should be borne by the present and future generation.

Onokomaiya (1993:134), making a case for urban mass transit scheme in Nigeria observed that it is a good idea to develop the sub sector because of the rising population, low levels of car ownership and disposable income, the distance between work and residence, and the need to reduce urban traffic congestion and air/noise pollution.

Public transport in Nigeria, he observed have been characterized by private ownership, low capital base, poor organization, poor observance of traffic regulations and the absence of priority for mass transit vehicles on road networks.

In making a case for bus transit system, Onokomaiya comments that it could be implemented in phases, as finances are available and as urban areas expand. The bus option

also has the advantage of being easily integrated to the existing congested urban framework and can easily be maintained. Even though there is a need for the private and public sector to collaborate to ensure accountability and efficiency in management. The continuing survival of the system would depend largely on the political will and commitment of the Federal government to the policy and by extension the financial support by all levels of government to the programme. More importantly, however, is that the professional managers must be accountable so that the executives and policy makers who fund the programme should like it.

Extolling the economic virtues of using bus rather than other transport modes, Olumola(1988:10) Stated that they are big, modern and fast. Besides, buses still lead the field in urban transport and despite the growing popularity, of metros, trolley buses, light and conventional rail system; they would be around for a while. Further more, in many towns, cities and rural areas; the only means of mass transport is the bus service.

The Benue Links under the leadership of Engineer Emmanuel Manger is improving and doing its best to ease transportation both within and outside the state. The company through the governor of the state George Akume and the management of the company has over 140 vehicles and additional 100 chartered vehicles. Other key players in the increase in vehicle number fleet include the Afribank Nigeria PLC which purchased Marcopolo buses for the company in September 2004 at the sum of N60 million. The charter vehicles are private vehicles operating under the umbrella of the Benue Links. Part of the income generated by them goes to the Links (Target 2005:1).

TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Development is the process of controlling production, distribution and consumption in the 1950's and 1960's and these processes lead to a high increase in Gross National Products (G.N.P).

In some situations, development is synonymous to growth. When used without referring to quality, development may be good or bad.

According to Todaro (1991:87). Development would be seen as a multi dimensional process which involves re-organizing and re-orienting the economic and social order. Thus, economic development could be seen as the eradication of poverty, inequality and unemployment within a growing economy.

Todaro (1991:87), thus admits to the fact that development is not an entirely economic phenomenon but a multi – dimensional process.

Dudley Seer's contribution to development is premised on the following relevant questions;

- What has been happening to poverty?
- What has been happening to employment?
- What has been happening inequality?

If these three variables, i.e. poverty, unemployment, and inequality, have declined from high levels, then there is no doubt that a country is experiencing development. (Seers, 1997:3)

Moboguje (1989) views development as a process of modernization where distributive justice and social transportation is enhanced. According to him, development goes beyond economic growth alone.

However, with the involvement of the United Nations (U.N) in human development means among other things the satisfaction of the needs and demands of each and every citizen for a minimum of biologically and socially reasonable standards of living, indicators of a whole are: longevity, political rights and decent living (Salihu & Ohwona, 1987).

Development based on the above analogy can't be seen to represent a change within a community or social system in response to the desires and basic needs of the people within the said community or social system. Hence, there is visible progress from unsatisfactory conditions to a better and acceptable material, social and biological condition.

Furthermore, Salihu and Ohwona (1987) believe that within a community or social system people should be able to have their basic needs met, preserve their human dignity and be in a position to participate effectively in the process of decision making on issues that affect their life.

Buttressing the above point the World Bank believes that poverty can be reduced through the promotion of rural development which can be achieved through available rural transport. This can only succeed with the presence of rural transport services and infrastructure especially at the village. This objective can be made by physical intervention and designing policies relating to rural transport and travel. (www.worldbank.org).

Most developing country governments and aid donors, until recently believe that building comparatively high standard rural access/feeder roads was the most important effective way of addressing rural transport problems. But the most effective solution to rural transport will involve designing policies and measures that will address the

constraints to access and mobility that are experienced in the rural areas of developing countries. (www.transport-links.org:2001).

Ray (1995:1) stated that transport is significant to development in the following ways. i. Historically, because transportation has provided the foundation of communication, trade and commerce and national defense; ii. Economically as the network plays a major role in opening up the hinterland and widening the markets; iii. Environmentally, by being largely instrumental in the relative levels of ecological pollution; iv. Socially by determining the trends of urbanization, shift of population and levels of employment; and v. Politically as transportation is strategic to national defense and security.

Transportation plays a primary importance in the achievement of development. This is particularly true in terms of the large investment spent on transportation in developing countries. The justification for this is based on the fact that improvements in accessibility of new areas accelerates economic development by opening up new markets. (Falcocchio and Cantilli, 1974: 19).

2.4 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to the different authors consulted on public transport, public transport is provided to ease the movement of people and goods from one place to another. In Nigeria, the problem of public transport became prominent due to the worsening condition of the economy hence there were very few vehicles on the roads. Public transport from this analysis therefore involves movement of people, goods and an attempt by government to remedy public transport of the country. In this study three theories were considered.

The first is the Organizational theory; this theory according to Fabbri(1996:1) states that public transit firms are separate bodies from the regulators of the economy. Hence, it is better to provide transit firms with simple commercial criteria to aid them in achieving the social welfare objectives.

This theory states also that an organization is necessary, so long as the agent in charge of producing and supplying the public transit service is different from the regulator who subsidizes or regulates the agent.

The differences between the agent and the regulator occurs these forms:-

- 1) The agent and regulator could have conflicting objectives in carrying out their functions;
- 2) The agent may have information that the regulators does not have or is privy to.

Under a free market economy it would be difficult for the regulator to dictate to the agent all its aims and objectives. This is because the public enterprise will have objectives that are different from those of the regulator.

The incentive theory attempts to find a solution to the principal agent problem. It states that since the regulator (principal) wants the agent to take actions that are costly to it, even when it lacks vital information. In remedying this problem therefore, incentive payments should be offered to the agent. The agent too should voluntarily accept the incentive considering the utility of it. This is pertinent because public transit firms are usually associated with low performance and high deficit.

Incentive theory can be applied easily to small firms. Thus, some incentive is not applicable to small, medium and large firm for differing functions.

The standard welfarist theory is the answer to the problem associated with the two theories above. If subsidy is to be associated with public transit firms, it should involve economics of scale, redistribution in kind and imperfect information. The theory believes that when implementing an economic policy, the cost and benefit as well as its direct and indirect effects to the consumer are considered. Since resources are scarce, alternative uses of revenue in form of subsidies are given to the transport sector. This is to allow for the optimum utilization of the limited resources. This could be in the form of adjustment to tariff and quality of transit services. It could also be for the maximization of social welfare in the midst of limited resource (budget constraints).

The standard welfarist theory is adopted by this study because the essence of public transport and the Benue Links is to provide mobility for the disadvantaged persons in the society. This is because when the organization was set up most people find it hard to travel owing to high cost charged by other public transport systems, that is even when the vehicles were old and rickety.

The Benue Links therefore was set up to ameliorate the sufferings of the commuters that came about by lack of vehicles on the street owing to the economic problems in the nation.

Besides, the Government instead of siphoning them channeled most of the resources of the State into buying vehicles. In this way the citizens of the state can benefit from what the state government is doing. This would translate into making the citizens of state to feel the impact of government.

The tariff charged on the Benue Links are low, when compared to other transport systems. Also the services are reliable. The seats of the buses are comfortable, the vehicles are neat and they are available, that is so long as one goes to their garages.

CHAPTER THREE

HISTORICAL SETTING

3.0 THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ORGANISATIONAL SET UP OF BENUE LINKS NIGERIA LIMITED MARKURDI

3.1 BRIEF BACKGROUND OF BENUE STATE

LOCATION

Benue state is located between longitudes 7^0 and 10^0 east and between latitudes 6^0 and 8^0 North. Nassarawa and Taraba States bound it in the North. On the southwest, Enugu, Anambra and Kogi States bound it. Its eastern borders include Cross rivers and Cameroon Republic.

The state came into being in 1976 when it was carved out of the former Benue Plateau state. The state is partially surrounded by rivers Benue and Katsina Ala.

POPULATION

The state has a population size of 2.8 million going by the 1991 census. It is located in the guinea savanna making its temperature varied with fertile land and abundant rainfall.

OCCUPATION

The major occupation of the people of the state is farming. As a result of this the state is referred to as the “food basket of the nation”.

TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The state has a good transportation network and so serves as a link to other states by the use of rail, road, air and even inland waterways transport services. The two river in state (Benue and Katsina Ala) are navigable between July and October yearly.

BENUE LINKS NIGERIA LIMITED OPERATIONAL BACK GROUND

The Links as it is popularly called was established in February 1988 in response to the federal governments policy directing all states to establish a transit agency. The company started operation under the state urban development board with an initial fleet size of 10 seater burem fait buses and 500.000naria as take off grant. It became incorporated in May 1988. Few months later its management was transferred to the states ministry of commerce and industry under an interim sole administrator. The appointment of a chief executive for the company happened nine months later with the removal of the sole administration.

COMPANY OBJECTIVES

The mandate for the establishment of the company revolves around the provision of road based transport services in accordance with established government guidelines. To achieve his guidelines the links objective are.

1. Attainment of highest standard in terms of functional performances, staff training, cost effectiveness and efficiency of safety and at least trend innovation in the transport industry.
2. Providing gainful employment for the citizens of the state.

SITE

Benue links obtained, developed and occupied it present site along Makurdi-Gboko road by the south bank of the river benue bridge in 1989. Previously it operated on a rented premise, which was offered by the Makurdi modern market management board. The facilities in the site include fuel station, office block, passengers lounge, restaurant and workshop.

INTRACITY AND INTERCITY TRANSPORT

The vehicles operate both within the state and outside the state. This is achievable because citizens live outside the state and also there are variations in the fares charged at home. Vehicles owned by the company include among others: Macopolo Peugeot station wagon, 10 and 14 seater buses etc. Some of those vehicles though are privately owned, but are in the custody of the link while the real owners get a certain sum every month.

ROUTES PLIED BY VEHICLES AND FARES CHARGED

INTER STATE

VIP SERVICE

MAKURDI	LAGOS	2000	2500
MAKURDI	KANO	1200	1500
MAKURDI	KADUNA	900	1200
MAKURDI	ZARIA	1100	1200
MAKURDI	JOS	600	850
MAKURDI	ABUJA	600	850
MAKURDI	MINNA	750	900
MAKURDI	ILORIN	1000	1200
MAKURDI	MAIDUGURI	1500	2500
MAKURDI	LOKOJA	600	800
MAKURDI	PORTHACOURT	1200	1500
MAKURDI	9 TH MILE	600	

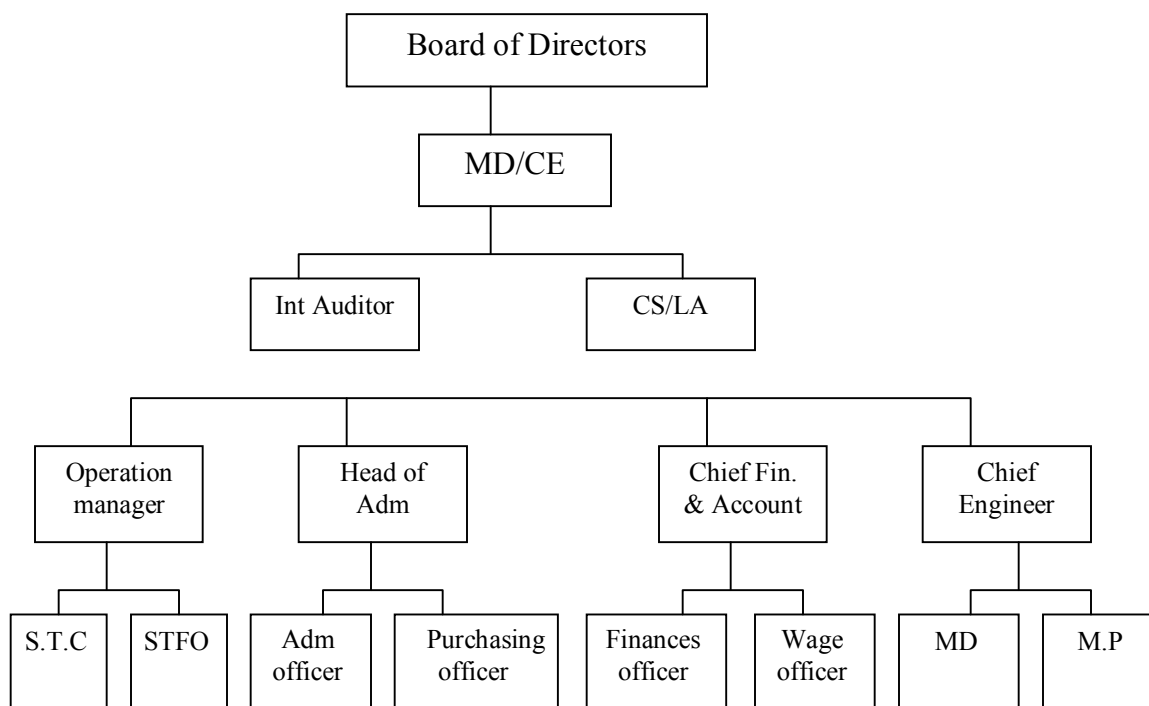
Source-operations department records 2005

MAKURDI	ZBIAM	300
	VKYA	250
	K\ALA	200
	JAOT	250
	GBOKO	1000
	TSEAGBERAGBU	200
	ANYUN	300
	ADIKPO	200
	OKPOGA	200
	IGUMALE	300
	APA	350
	AGILA	450
	NAKA	100

	GBAJIMBA	80
	DAUDU	40
	IKPAYONGU	40
	KWATASULE	60
	ANNUNE	60
	ALIADE	100

Source-operations department records 2005

Organizational Structure of BLNL



Source-operations department records 2005

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

RESULTS OF FINDINGS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

A total of 285 questionnaires were administered to respondents. These respondents were sampled from four local government areas of Benue state, who had boarded Benue Links Nigeria Limited in the course of the study. These local governments include: Ado, Guma, Gwer east, and Otukpo. The results of the findings are presented below;

4.1. SOCIO – DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age (years)	F	%
40 and above	91	34
30 –39	58	20.3
20 – 29	95	33.3
>20	35	12.2
TOTAL	285	100

Sex	F	%
Male	189	63.3
Female	96	33.6
TOTAL	285	100

Marital status	F	%
Single	147	51.5
Married	134	47
Widowed	4	1.4
TOTAL	285	100

Living areas	F	%
Village	44	15.4
Urban Centre	72	25.2
Town	169	59
TOTAL	285	100

Number of Children	F	%
< 5or less	113	39.6
6 and above	36	12.6
Not applicable	136	47.7
TOTAL	285	100

Income	F	%
< N5,000	112	39.2
N5,000 – N10,000	71	24.9
N10,000 and above	102	35.7
TOTAL	285	100

Occupation	F	%
Farming	28	9.8
Housewife	18	6.3
Student	109	38.2
Civil servant	88	30.8
Business	42	14.7
TOTAL	285	100

Majority (34%) of the respondents were aged 40 years and above, predominantly males (63.3%) and about (51.5%) singles. Majority of the respondents reside in town (55.7%). Most of the respondents have less than 5 children (39.6%), while the response was not applicable to a substantial percentage of respondents (47.7%). The findings also revealed that majority of the respondents earn monthly income below N5,000 (39.2%), and most of them were students (38.2%), closely followed by those who were civil servants (30.8%).

TABLE 4.2. USAGE OF BENUE LINKS NIGERIA BY RESPONDENTS.

8. Do you make use of the BLNL whenever you travel?

Response	F	%
Yes	181	63.5
No	17	5.9
Often times	75	26.9

Not at all	12	4.21
TOTAL	285	100

9. Do you think the BLNL is solving the transportation problem of the state?

Response	F	%
Yes	255	89.4
No	30	10.5
TOTAL	285	100

10. Why was the BLNL established?

Response	F	%
To provide transport	230	80.7
Waste of resources	23	8.07
Do not know	32	11.22
TOTAL	285	100

11. Do you enjoy the services provided by the BLNL?

Response	F	%
Yes	189	66.3
No	29	10.1
Sometimes	48	16.8
Do not know	19	6.6
TOTAL	285	100

12. How often do you make use of the BLNL?

Response	F	%
Always	138	48.4
Often times	120	42.1
Not at all	27	9.4
TOTAL	285	100

13. Compared to other transport services in the state, do you prefer the BLNL or others?

Response	F	%
BLNL	256	89.8
Others	29	10.1
TOTAL	285	100

14. Why do you make use of the BLNL?

Response	F	%
Good services	158	55
Low fares	102	35.7
No alternative	13	4.5
Don't know	12	4
TOTAL	285	100

15. Do you make use of the BLNL because of low fares?

Response	F	%
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Yes	133	47
No	65	23
Often times	51	18
Don't know	36	13
TOTAL	285	100

16. Do you consider the BLNL to be prompt in its services?

Response	F	%
Yes	173	61
No	41	14.3
Not sure	46	16.1
Don't know	25	9
TOTAL	285	100

17. Does the services of the BLNL cover your town/village?

Response	F	%
Yes	95	33.3
No	141	49.4
Very frequently	26	9.1
Don't know	23	8
TOTAL	285	100

18. Do you patronize the BLNL because of its services?

Response	F	%
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Yes	176	62
No	50	16
Occasionally	36	13
Don't know	23	8
TOTAL	285	100

19. Have you encountered problems while traveling with the BLNL?

Response	F	%
Yes	88	31
No	185	65
Several times	12	4.2
TOTAL	285	100

From the findings, majority of the respondents revealed that they use the services of the Links (65.5%), while (4.2%) did not use the services at all. However, when respondents were asked whether the agency (BLNL) is solving their transport problem, majority of them were in the affirmative (89.4%), while only (10%) differed. Similarly, an enquiry was made to find out the reason for the establishment of the transport agency. From the findings, a substantial percentage revealed that it is to provide transport services (80.7%), while very few claimed it is a waste of resources (8.1%).

Having established the purpose of the agency, an enquiry was made to find out whether passengers/respondents are satisfied with the services provided by the agency. From the responses, majority of the respondents were in affirmation (66.3%), as against

those who displayed ignorance of its services (6.6%). Thus, respondents were then asked on how frequent they use the service of the agency. Majority of them revealed that they use it always (48.4%) as against those who did not use it at all (9.4%). When further enquiry to compare the services of BLNL and other transport services was made, majority of the respondents said they preferred the BLNL to other transport agencies (89.8%), largely due to the good services they provide (55%), and low fares (35.7%) vis- a –vis other transport agencies, one of the services revealed by key informants is promptness in take – off from its destination and its arrival.

An enquiry was also made to find out whether the services of BLNL cover respondents who reside in either villages or towns. From the findings, majority of the respondents differed (49.4%), while (33%) consented. Out of the respondents who traveled frequently, majority of them revealed that they patronize the services of the BLNL (62%) to other transport agencies.

For those who use the services of the BLNL, it was not all blissful, but some problems were encountered. Even though majority said they have not encountered any problem (65%), (31%) revealed that they have encountered one problem or the other. Among the problems encountered include; “delaying sometimes”, “flat tire”, “loss of luggage”. Others include, charging for luggages, a respondent said that this discourages passengers from using the bus. Respondents also complained of breakdown of vehicles, and when this happens their fares were not refunded. Another respondent complained that he found his journey uncomfortable because the small link bus seats are made of iron. Another respondent complained that the drivers stop on the road to pick passengers, hence causing delays on their journey. Other problems include congestion, such as overloading,

singing in bus by passengers, making and receiving calls during the trips, defecation by babies of married couples, smoking, and other forms of emotional and social disturbances.

4.3. TEST OF HYPOTHESIS

This section examines the hypothesis stated in the earlier part of the study. It tries to find out the relationship between certain variables that are central to the explanation of the research question, and the problem statement.

HYPOTHESIS 1: The level of services offered by the BLNL is affected by the level of patronage by passengers.

Based on the responses of the respondents on frequency of the use of BLNL, those who patronize the services, the relationship between the two variables is positive. This is basically because those who use the services always are (48.4%) while at the same time those who patronize it most is 62%. To also support the hypothesis two key informants revealed that BLNL is the most regular state transport agency that most people patronize in recent time. They even go to the extent of booking two to three days in advance. Even then, their fares are still modest when compared to others plying the same routes.

HYPOTHESIS 2: The fare charged by the BLNL is affected by the level of patronage.

Two variables were used to establish the test for this hypothesis. These include; passengers payment of fares for BLNL, and the other patronage of BLNL by passengers. From the findings, (47%) of the passengers use BLNL because of low fares, while (62%) patronize it for its services. These are substantial percentages that go to show that there is a

correlation between low fares and patronage of BLNL services. As already stated, some of the passengers had to stay for days/hours to wait for BLNL buses. Thanks to its low fares, and good services. One key informant revealed that apart from low fares BLNL usually take her passengers to or close to their point of residence, thus reducing cost.

4.4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study shows that majority of the respondents are males who fall within the age category of 40 years and above. However, they are singles living predominantly in towns, have less than five children between 0 and five years of age. Most of these respondents were students (38.2%), and civil servants (30.8%) who had to commute from one place to the other, even though they have a disposal income of less than N5,000.00.

From the findings, majority of the respondents had made use of the services of the BLNL to solve their transportation problem. These findings tally with the view of Cox (1996:1), who posits that public transport provides social needs to the commuters, especially in facilitating mobility for the advantaged as well as the disadvantaged. He further notes that, for this to be reliable, the services of the transport agency must be reliable, that is; to be regular, frequent, quick and able to take passengers to where they want to go. Similarly, Mumford (1964:178) observed that the purpose of transportation is to bring people and/ or goods to places where they are needed in a way which will widen the possibility of choice, and enhance the welfare of the citizenry.

The findings also reveal that a great majority of the respondents think that the purpose of establishing BLNL is to provide transport services (80.7%), which would be appropriated by the commuters (66.3%). These findings tallies with the view of Mala

(1998:5), who opines that the increase in population of the city necessitated the increase for transport services. In this respect, the Urban Mass Transit was established to provide solace to the urban commuters who had to travel from one part of the town to the other, or one part of the town to the rural areas. All these being due to the fact that the National Union of Road Transport Workers services were dwindling arising from rickety vehicles and poor maintenance. Most commuters prefer traveling with BLNL because of its good services, and low fares, occasioned by the purchase of new fleet of vehicles. Some commuters also think that the agency is prompt in its services.

The findings also show that the services of the BLNL, do not cover all the towns and villages, rather it has specific routes that it plies. A good number of commuters (33.3%) , think that the scope of BLNL, that is village to town, and town to village is still wide enough as compared to services provided by other transport agents to its customers. Abbass (2000:25) on assessment of the Kogi State Transport Authority, holds the same view with the findings in this study. According to him, State Transport Agencies usually impact on the lives of the citizenry through the reduction of fares and improved services, which is an outcome of subsidy to the company. Notwithstanding, Abbas observed that some transport agencies fail to cover the hinterland and other places where the routes are poorly maintained

The findings also show that majority of the respondents' experienced one problem or the other, and some of these were presented in the form of complaints. These range from lack of refund of fares when vehicles break down, noise while on transit in the form of making or receiving of calls during the journey, additional fares charged on luggages, emotional and psychological disturbances during journeys, pollution arising from the state

of the vehicles, congestion among others. These findings tally with the views of Ogunbodede (1985:101). According to him, urban transport just like state transport agencies has two edged sword, that is because it contributes to urban development, and also brings about some negative effects to the environment. Similarly, Orski in Ogunbodede (1985:101) observes that urban transport is a necessary evil because it causes a lot of congestion, pollution, noise... and misuse of scarce urban land. For Ikya (1993:12), urban transportation problems includes narrow roads, inadequate routes and street problems, poor attitude of road users, and other negative behavioral patterns of commuters which can lead to death or destruction of property. Another problem according to Ogunsanya(1997:4) is that of manpower. According to him, most of the transport agencies lack the requisite skilled staff to man the various aspects of operations. These have great implication on the commuters, road users, and the agency itself, apart from the consequences on the society.

On the whole, the findings has shown that despite the benefits of the services of the BLNL to commuters and the society, there is a need for an improvement in its services through better funding, management, planning and monitoring. These could be collaborated by periodic checks and retraining of staff as well as proper maintenance of vehicles to suit the needs of commuters.

4.5 PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED IN THE FIELD

A large number of the respondents especially women refused to fill the questionnaire and when asked why, they said they don't know how to read or write. Other respondents were biased not wanting to say any thing negative about the State's Transport Agency. Some others demanded for money before filling the questionnaire.

Many times also commuters were rude instead of collecting the questionnaires and filling them verbally attacked me thinking I was the staff of the agency.

These reactions may be in response to a problem they may have encountered while using the Links.

Some other times the vehicles are in a hurry to leave the garage so respondents don't fill the questionnaires.

Finally another problem was that officials of the BLNL were suspicious of me, and so don't want to give me information that will be relevant to the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the summary, conclusion, and provides important recommendations.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of public transport is to provide services to its users. Besides, it is established to help them satisfy their economic and social needs which cannot be fulfilled within walking distance.

The Benue Links was set up to meet the needs of its users, and also to achieve the desires of the Federal Government through the Federal Urban Mass Transit Agency (FUMTA) that transport be made available to urban users who were experiencing problems. The agency operates both intra- city and inter – city services.

Most of those who use the services of the Benue Links are aged 40 years and above, and are mostly males, single, living in towns, and earn incomes of less than N5,000.00. They are also mostly students. Most of the respondents make use of the Benue Links whenever they travel. They also travel with the agencies buses because of its low fares, and good services. Even then some passengers claimed they experienced problems while using the buses. Most of these problems range from changing of fares for their luggage, congestion, and vehicle breakdown while on transit among many other problems.

5.2. CONCLUSION

Public transport is an essential form of transportation to any society. It is a lifeline for many rural communities, as it links them to urban centres to dispose off goods from their farms. It also makes it easy for them to take advantage of the social amenities which though not in their locality, abound in urban centres. Transport is so important that development would be impossible in any nation without it.

Users of public transport should also be offered good services; the fares they pay should be stable to the extent that it discourages them from patronizing the services provider or to purchase their own car.

This assertion is very fundamental because public transport is efficiently operated can reduce the problem of traffic congestion in cities, and also reduce the problem of environmental pollution which maybe found when many persons in the country own their own cars.

According to the Standard Welfarist Theory, the essence of Public Transport is to ease the problem of movement for the disadvantaged by subsidizing the fares charged. For this to be realized, the Benue Links must cover every nook and cranny of Benue state. This is to ensure that those people who are in towns not covered at the moment by the buses can take advantage of the subsidy offered by the Links. Besides it would make them reap form the dividends that followed the democratic dispensation.

Also, the management of the LINKS should try to minimize to the barest minimum the problems and complaints of users of the buses. This can be done through increase in vehicle fleet, better funding of the agency, and also monitoring of drivers to guard against over loading of the vehicles.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

In order for the Benue Links to achieve the purpose for which it was set up, and to correct its defects, and solve the problems encountered by commuters the following recommendations if clearly considered will enhance the operation and performance of the organization, they include:

1. The Management of the organization should be given at least four years to complete any plan or vision they have for the agency.
2. Benue Links should operate some form of freight transport to enable commuters carry their goods. This should reduce wear and tear of the buses, but also reduce discomfort that commuters experience while on transit, if luggages were inside the buses.
3. The company should purchase additional buses to complement the number of existing ones, so as to be able to cope with the increasing demand for mobility and accessibility.
4. Efforts should be made to repair grounded vehicles, and also existing ones should be properly maintained, to reduce breakdown while on transit, and also to increase the number of operational vehicles which in turn will satisfy the over increasing transportation demands of the passengers.
5. Checkers should be motivated to monitor the operational activities of drivers. This will also guide against attempt to overload vehicles and also check congestion.
6. It is also recommended that more buses should be put on intercity services as these services generate the greatest revenue for the company.

7. The comfort of passengers should be increased by making the buses more comfortable especially for those traveling long journeys. This can be achieved by emphasizing that passengers switch – off their sets when the vehicles take off. Others forms of discomforts experienced by commuters should be minimized.

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