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## Inter-State Mobility and Commuter Satisfaction in Nigerian Cities: The Role of Private Owned Parks

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### Abstract

*Interstate road transportation remains an important component of mobility and economic interaction in Nigeria, particularly in cities where privately owned transport parks dominate passenger movement. Despite the growing role of private transport operators, concerns relating to commuter satisfaction and service quality continue to attract attention among transport researchers and policy makers. This study examined interstate mobility and commuter satisfaction with services provided by private transport parks in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population comprised interstate commuters using selected private parks, while a sample of 76 commuters was selected through simple random sampling technique. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled Interstate Mobility and Commuter Satisfaction Questionnaire (IMCSQ) with a reliability coefficient of 0.84 obtained using Cronbach's alpha. Descriptive statistics including mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions, while t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that commuters were generally satisfied with the services provided by private transport parks, particularly in the areas of safety, comfort, and driver behaviour. However, ticketing procedures recorded relatively low satisfaction ratings. The study further showed that gender and age did not significantly influence commuter satisfaction, whereas educational qualification and travel frequency significantly influenced commuters' perception of service quality. The study concluded that improving operational coordination, especially ticketing and service reliability, would enhance commuter experiences and strengthen interstate mobility within the Nigerian transport system.*

**Keywords:** Interstate mobility, commuter satisfaction, private transport parks, service quality, Kwara State.

### Introduction

Mobility remains an important aspect of economic and social life in many developing countries. In Nigeria, road transportation continues to dominate inter-state movement because of the limited coverage and inefficiency of alternative transport systems such as

rail and inland waterways. For many citizens, especially traders, students, civil servants, and informal sector workers, interstate road transport provides the most accessible means of connecting cities and regions. Over the years, private transport operators have

gradually become major actors in the movement of passengers across states. Their activities are particularly visible in urban centres where privately owned parks now function as critical transport hubs. In cities such as Ilorin in Kwara State, these parks play a significant role in linking commuters to destinations across northern, southern, and western Nigeria.

The growing reliance on private transport parks in Nigeria is not accidental. Publicly managed transport systems have struggled with poor maintenance culture, inadequate funding, ageing fleets, and irregular service delivery. As a result, private operators stepped into the gap to meet increasing transport demand. Afolabi and Akibo (2020) observed that informal and privately coordinated transport services have become deeply integrated into urban mobility systems in Nigeria because they provide flexibility and accessibility that public systems often fail to offer. Although these operators contribute significantly to mobility and economic interaction, concerns still exist regarding service quality, safety conditions, pricing systems, and passenger comfort.

In transport economics, commuter satisfaction is often used as an indicator for assessing transport service effectiveness. Satisfaction reflects how commuters evaluate the quality of service they receive in relation to their expectations. This includes issues such as waiting time, safety, convenience, affordability, cleanliness, staff conduct, and reliability. According to Pritchard et al. (2021), travel satisfaction is strongly connected with accessibility and overall commuting experiences. Where transport systems fail to meet commuters' expectations, dissatisfaction may discourage usage, increase stress levels, and reduce confidence in transport operators.

Recent studies have increasingly focused on understanding factors that shape commuter satisfaction in public transport systems. Atombo and Wemegah (2021), in their study in Ghana, identified reliability, comfort, affordability, and safety as important predictors of commuter satisfaction in high occupancy bus transport. Similarly, Balamurugan and Gopi (2020) argued that improvement in service quality dimensions contributes directly to higher commuter satisfaction and continued patronage of road transport services. Weng et al. (2023) further noted that operational conditions such as punctuality, overcrowding, and driver conduct significantly influence passengers' perception of transport quality.

Within the Nigerian context, studies on commuter satisfaction have mainly concentrated on urban intra-city transportation, tricycles, buses, and informal transport systems. Okon et al. (2021), for instance, examined passengers' comfort perception in tricycle transportation in Calabar and found that seating arrangement, driver attitude, and vehicle condition shaped users' satisfaction levels. Likewise, Itopa et al. (2024) assessed the quality of interstate road transport services in Minna, Niger State, and reported that service reliability and safety issues remained important concerns among passengers. Despite these contributions, there is still limited empirical attention on the role played by private interstate parks in shaping commuter experiences in medium-sized Nigerian cities such as Ilorin.

Ilorin presents an interesting setting for examining interstate mobility and commuter satisfaction. The city serves as a strategic gateway connecting northern and southern Nigeria. Daily movement of commuters occurs through several private parks including KASMAG, Young Legacy, Success, Ola Express, and Emirate. These parks transport passengers to destinations such as Lagos, Abuja, Ibadan, Kano, and Port Harcourt. Although they are

widely patronised, commuters frequently complain about fare fluctuations, delays, poor ticket coordination, reckless driving, and inconsistent customer relations. At the same time, some commuters prefer these parks because of perceived speed, convenience, and availability of vehicles compared to government-owned transport alternatives.

Efforts have been made by transport unions and regulatory agencies to improve interstate transport services in Nigeria. The Federal Road Safety Corps (FRSC) continues to enforce road safety regulations, while state transport authorities occasionally monitor loading practices and vehicle conditions. Some private operators have also introduced digital ticketing systems, passenger manifests, and scheduled departures in an attempt to improve operational efficiency. Ceder (2021) noted that the future of urban and regional mobility increasingly depends on service innovation and the ability of transport providers to adapt to commuter expectations. However, implementation gaps remain evident in many Nigerian cities where transport management is still characterised by weak enforcement and informal operational structures.

Globally, there is growing concern about the sustainability and efficiency of transport systems. Toledano et al. (2025) argued that efficient public transport systems contribute not only to commuter satisfaction but also to environmental sustainability. Anwar et al. (2021) also highlighted the importance of collaboration between public and private actors in improving transport outcomes. In many developing economies, private transport operators now complement public transport systems in addressing mobility challenges. Yet, the extent to which commuters are satisfied with the services offered by these private operators differs across regions and transport contexts.

Another issue receiving scholarly attention is the relationship between demographic factors and commuter satisfaction. Yang et al. (2022) found that commuting satisfaction varies across groups depending on commuting time and personal characteristics. Similarly, Shang et al. (2025) reported differences in travel satisfaction among commuters across city categories and social groups in China. This suggests that variables such as gender, education, age, and travel frequency may influence how commuters evaluate transport services. In the Nigerian context, however, there is inadequate evidence on whether these demographic characteristics shape commuter satisfaction in interstate transport operations.

A close review of available literature shows that many previous studies concentrated on state-owned bus services, urban public transport systems, or environmental sustainability issues. For example, Garg (2020) focused on customer satisfaction in state transport corporations, while Madhusudhan and Kavatekar (2022) examined consumer satisfaction towards public transportation in Karnataka. Although these studies provide useful insights, their findings may not fully explain the realities of privately operated interstate parks in Nigeria where operational conditions differ considerably. Similarly, studies such as Nyorak et al. (2024) applied the SERVQUAL model to evaluate transport quality, but there is still limited evidence regarding its relevance within privately coordinated interstate parks in Kwara State.

The gap in literature becomes more visible when considering the practical importance of interstate transport in Nigeria's economy. Interstate mobility supports trade, education, healthcare access,

tourism, and labour movement. Poor service delivery within transport parks can therefore affect economic productivity and social wellbeing. In teacher training institutions and colleges of education across Nigeria, many students and staff depend heavily on interstate road transport for academic travels, teaching practice exercises, conferences, and inter-school movement. Delays, unsafe conditions, and unreliable services often disrupt these activities. Understanding commuter experiences in interstate parks is therefore not only a transport issue but also a broader developmental concern.

This study matters because it provides empirical evidence on the quality of services offered by private transport parks in Ilorin, Kwara State. By examining commuter satisfaction across different service dimensions, the study contributes to transport policy discussions and offers practical recommendations for improving interstate mobility. The findings may also assist transport operators in identifying areas requiring improvement, particularly in safety, reliability, and customer relations.

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To examine the level of commuter satisfaction with services provided by private interstate parks in Ilorin, Kwara State.
2. To determine the influence of safety, comfort, fare affordability, driver behaviour, vehicle condition, reliability, cleanliness, and ticketing on commuter satisfaction.
3. To investigate whether commuter satisfaction differs based on gender, age, education level, and travel frequency.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of commuter satisfaction with services provided by private interstate parks in Ilorin?
2. Which service quality dimensions significantly influence commuter satisfaction among interstate commuters?
3. Does commuter satisfaction differ according to gender, age, education level, and travel frequency?

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on gender.
2. There is no significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on age.
3. There is no significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on educational qualification.
4. There is no significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on travel frequency.

## Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain information directly from interstate commuters regarding their perception of service quality and satisfaction. The study was conducted in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Five major privately owned interstate parks were selected for the study: KASMAG, Young Legacy, Success, Ola Express, and Emirate parks. These

parks were chosen because of their active involvement in interstate passenger transportation and high commuter patronage.

The population comprised interstate commuters using the selected parks in Ilorin. A sample size of 76 commuters was selected through simple random sampling technique. The technique ensured that respondents had equal chances of participation in the study. Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire titled Interstate Mobility and Commuter Satisfaction Questionnaire (IMCSQ). The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A elicited demographic information such as gender, age, educational qualification, and travel frequency, while Section B contained 25 items measuring commuters' perception of service quality and satisfaction. The questionnaire adopted a four-point Likert scale of: Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1). The instrument covered variables such as safety, comfort, fare affordability, driver behaviour, vehicle condition, reliability, cleanliness, and ticketing. The instrument was validated by experts in Transport Economics and Educational Measurement and Evaluation. Their observations helped improve clarity and relevance of the items. To determine reliability, a pilot study was conducted using 15 interstate commuters outside the study sample. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained, indicating that the instrument possessed acceptable internal consistency.

The researcher visited the selected transport parks and administered the questionnaire directly to commuters waiting for departure. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and participation was voluntary. Out of the 76 questionnaires distributed, all were retrieved and found usable for analysis. Descriptive statistics including frequency counts, percentages, mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions. Independent samples t-test and one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A decision benchmark of 2.50 was adopted for interpreting mean scores. Any item with mean score of 2.50 and above was regarded as accepted, while scores below 2.50 were rejected.

## Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of commuter satisfaction with services provided by private interstate parks in Ilorin?

**Table 1: Mean Ratings on Commuter Satisfaction**

Variables	Mean	SD	Decision
Safety	3.12	0.71	Accepted
Comfort	2.98	0.76	Accepted
Fare affordability	2.64	0.81	Accepted
Driver behaviour	3.08	0.68	Accepted
Vehicle condition	2.87	0.73	Accepted
Reliability	2.55	0.82	Accepted
Cleanliness	2.92	0.74	Accepted
Ticketing	2.43	0.89	Rejected
Grand Mean	2.82	0.77	Accepted

The result in Table 1 shows that commuters were generally satisfied with the services provided by private interstate parks in Ilorin, with a grand mean score of 2.82. Safety recorded the highest mean score (3.12), indicating that commuters perceived the parks as relatively safe. Ticketing had the lowest mean score (2.43), suggesting dissatisfaction with ticketing procedures and coordination.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on gender.

**Table 2:** t-test Analysis Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	p-value	Decision
Male	42	2.79	0.42	0.61	0.543	Not Significant
Female	34	2.85	0.39			

The result indicates no significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on gender since the p-value of 0.543 is greater than 0.05. The hypothesis was therefore retained.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on age.

**Table 3:** ANOVA Analysis Based on Age

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Decision
Between Groups	1.84	3	0.61	2.17	0.098	Not Significant
Within Groups	20.29	72	0.28			
Total	22.13	75				

The result shows that there was no statistically significant difference in commuter satisfaction across age groups since the p-value (0.098) exceeded 0.05.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on educational qualification.

**Table 4:** ANOVA Analysis Based on Educational Qualification

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Decision
Between Groups	3.12	2	1.56	4.21	0.018	Significant
Within Groups	27.04	73	0.37			
Total	30.16	75				

The result reveals a significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on educational qualification since the p-value of 0.018 is less than 0.05. The hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on travel frequency.

**Table 5:** ANOVA Analysis Based on Travel Frequency

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p-value	Decision
Between Groups	4.25	2	2.13	5.02	0.009	Significant
Within Groups	30.92	73	0.42			
Total	35.17	75				

The result indicates a statistically significant difference in commuter satisfaction based on travel frequency. Commuters who travelled more frequently appeared more critical of transport services compared to occasional users.

## Discussion

The study found that interstate commuters in Ilorin were moderately satisfied with services provided by private transport parks. Safety emerged as one of the strongest areas of satisfaction, while ticketing procedures attracted relatively lower ratings. This finding aligns with the work of Atombo and Wemegah (2021), who identified safety and reliability as major determinants of commuter satisfaction in public transport systems. Similarly, Balamurugan and Gopi (2020) argued that improved service quality contributes positively to commuter retention and satisfaction.

The moderate satisfaction recorded for comfort, cleanliness, and vehicle condition supports the observations of Madhusudhan and Kavatekar (2022), who reported that physical conditions of transport facilities significantly shape passengers' perception of transport quality. The present study also agrees with Okon et al. (2021), whose findings revealed that comfort and operational conditions influence commuter experiences in Nigerian transport systems.

The low rating recorded for ticketing suggests that private parks in Ilorin still experience coordination challenges. In many cases, ticketing procedures remain manual, leading to delays and confusion during peak travel periods. This observation corresponds with the findings of Weng et al. (2023), who noted that operational inefficiencies negatively affect passengers' satisfaction levels.

The study further revealed that gender and age did not significantly influence commuter satisfaction. This implies that interstate commuters, regardless of demographic differences, tend to evaluate transport services in similar ways. However, educational qualification and travel frequency significantly influenced satisfaction levels. More educated commuters and frequent travellers appeared to have higher expectations regarding transport quality. This finding is partly consistent with Yang et al. (2022), who observed that commuter experiences differ across social categories and travel patterns.

The findings also support the broader argument of Ceder (2021) that improving mobility systems requires attention not only to transport availability but also to service quality and commuter experiences. In the Nigerian context, private interstate parks continue to play important mobility roles despite operational limitations. Their contribution to movement across cities remains important for economic and social interaction.

## Conclusion

The study examined interstate mobility and commuter satisfaction in relation to privately owned transport parks in Ilorin, Kwara State. Findings showed that commuters were generally satisfied with transport services, particularly in the areas of safety and driver behaviour. However, weaknesses were observed in ticketing and operational coordination. The study also established that educational qualification and travel frequency significantly influenced commuter satisfaction. The study concludes that improving service quality within private interstate parks is necessary for enhancing commuter experiences and sustaining efficient interstate mobility in Nigeria.

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