



Increased Threatening Level of Unauthorized Parking Lots in an Urban Environment, Example from Ilorin City, Nigeria

Y.A. Ahmed

Department of Geography and Environmental Management, University of Ilorin, Nigeria

Corresponding Author: royalkayb@yahoo.com; +2348036927049; +2348054292949

Abstract

Vehicle parking spaces (VPS) are areas designated by the authority of city management or its agents to relieve inter and intra-transport organization from long or short journey passengers. It is vital branch of the transport system in any country because; it plays an important role in the management for free organized traffic flow. However, where lots are arbitrarily used, they become un-authorized parking lots and caused some major challenges that make traffic situation frenzied in some Nigeria city environments. These challenges at times make them potently tainted with traffic holdups and traffic congestion. Current problems are derived from few availability of parking facilities along the transportation routes or where they are designated and fixed; the transporters misused, abused or abandoned them, just as in the case of Ilorin Metropolis. This work examines the threat of on-street unauthorized parking in Ilorin metropolis. Both primary and secondary data collected were used for the study. While issues examined in the study are the situation of existing parking facilities along inter and intra-transport organization routes; perception of road users (drivers and passengers) about motorist's parking behavior and the effect of un-authorized parking are not left unsorted. Major findings revealed that, some on-street parking facilities such as; kerbs and parking lots used by motorists were few around Ilorin city, and where parking lots and garages were found they are not in organized forms. Therefore, more bus-stops and kerbs must be provided by authorities to conform to the modern cities of the world.

Keywords: Threaten level, Parking lots, Traffic congestion, Transportation routes, Metropolis, Traffic situation, and Clogging.

Introduction

Transport plays a vital role in the social and economic development of any nation. A well-functioning and Integrated Transport System (ITS) would possess among other things:

- stimulates national development and enhances the quality of life for all;
- allows markets to operate by enabling the seamless movement of goods and people;
- provides vital links between spatially separated facilities and enables social contact and interaction;
- provides access to employment, health, education and services;

- plays a vital role in the management of free traffic flow and/or congestion;
- increases access to good parking lots to foster venues to short-time vehicles riders and passengers in the cities; and
- designs relieve for inter and intra-transport systems for long or short journey passengers.

Cities are engine of everyday life and essential for the future of environmental protection of any country, as they are the sources of economic growth and development. But the environmental implications of such growth and development need to be thoroughly

managed in order to suppress its consequences which are copious and hazardous. Ilorin city and the capital of Kwara State, is one of the major cities in Nigeria and its growing capacity in socio-economic relationships is laudable (Ahmed, 2013). However, the city is potentially polluted with inadequate parking space, emergence of mini inter-urban motor parks and garages in both nooks and crannies of the city as well as illegal motor parks. The menace of this un-authorized parks occasionally resulted into free-fight among road users include drivers, motor cyclists and pedestrians in some places around the city hub (Ahmed, 2013).

This work examines the challenges faced as result of incessant inception of unauthorized parking lots in Ilorin city, and its attendant effects on both socio-economic developments, and vehicular movement of people around Ilorin city. Many roads in Ilorin like; Maraba in old Jebba road, Ipata-Gambari road, Agaka-Ojaoba road, Baboko-Oja-Titun road, and Taiwo-Sawmill road, to mention but a few, constitute a keystone on the will of economic development of these areas if we talk of un-authorized motor parks. The areas are known to be the hub of economic growth of the city, most of the adjoining land uses of these areas have legal garages but these garages have been abandoned and the nearest road that provide access to pedestrians and vehicular transportation for inter and intra movement of vehicles are now being used as illegitimate parks (Ahmed 2013).

In the past, transportation has been one of the major activities of man's in space. Man's ability to move himself and his materials from one point to another on the earth's surface significantly influences his life and his environment (Ogunsanya, 1986). The role of transport in our daily activities cannot be overemphasized and without it, the necessities of life would be difficult to achieve. As wonderful as

the role of transport may be in our daily activities, it has been noted to possess myriads of negative effects. This is why in the literature transport is described as the maker and breaker of the cities. Ogunsanya (2002) confirmed how transport has built cities over the years in some cities/urban areas in Nigeria and how it has gradually destroyed them. Cities function as commercial and industrial centers worldwide where buses, trucks and cars move goods and passengers in and out of cities on daily basis. The way cities are organized constitutes a potential for increasing demand for motor based travel (Asiyanbola, and Akinpelu, 2012). Motor-park-lots are vital to ensure people have access to goods and services which they need by road sides or at commercial boulevards. They play a significant role in city's economy. Parking becomes a necessity when one recognizes the fact that urban centers are characterized by interrelated and complex land use activities which requires well-planned and efficient performance of the transportation system.

More and again, on-street parking is a form of parking that involves all metered and unmetered parking lots along the road sides. It is a temporary driving a vehicle or maneuvering a vehicle in a certain location for different purpose e.g. commercial purposes. On-street parking exists as a result of non-availability of space for off-street parking and it is known as nearest to destination routes. On-street or surface parking are located and developed on a place of vacant land. On-street parking tends to be safe where they are available, and in case whereby charges are been paid for each parking space occupied. Otherwise, it is unsafe especially where parking is on-street kerbs and where they are not under control by the government regulations or its agents. Motor park in the past was designed for reason of prestige to promote government's or a company's image and to give the passengers a feeling of well being and safety in their new

destinations. Parking is one of the experiences that people have when traveling to a destination and it plays a crucial role in managing traffic and congestion as it is generally recognized that town center depends on a rapid turnover of parking to meet the demand for short-stay visit. Well-situated and affordable parking is believed to be a sign of welcome to a new area, but the case is contrary in the case of Ilorin city. It is highly discouraging that parking has become a serious problem that confronted the road users in Ilorin city environment (see fig.1-3).

Authorized parks/lots refer to areas specify as parking space for inter and intra-transportation systems within a city or town and are approved by the local authority or the state government and its agencies which includes; the Federal Road Safety Corps (Ahmed, 2013). However, an area allotted as motor parks which is not served as a moderate breather or not approved by the government/agencies is regarded as 'Illegal Park' (Nathaniel, et al; 2013). While in Ilorin at present, people are not having good access to organized motor parks and nearest park lots or kerbs in the city, and this causes a lot of problems such as; traffic clogs, poor traffic flow, hold-up, among others. Current and other related problems are; inadequate parking space on major roads, lack of parking meter/ parking ticket where there are parking lots, narrowed major and feeder roads as well as bad constructed roads with attainable pot holes among others.

The explanation so far on the roles being played by transportation in the city anywhere in the world denotes that transportation is a potent to influence any city growth and development. But on the contrary, what is being witnessed today in the emerging city like Ilorin and many others in Nigeria, is beleaguered by mobility problems, and this is what Ogunsonya (2002) declared as "negative

externality" or "maker or breaker of the cities". In other words, urban traffic problems are further aggravated by the availability of on-street trading muddle up by concentration of traders selling of wares in the major roads, thus, obstructing free traffic flow mostly during the morning rush hour and evening peak periods (Okpala, 1980). In Ilorin, the population of new settlers into the city from other major urban areas is hectic due to incursion by a segment group of people most especially new comers moving away from the northern parts of the country as a result of occasion religious uproar and sectoral killings. Ilorin city, no doubt about it, is one of the peaceful living areas in Nigeria. However, the increase in the population of new arrivals is becoming more difficult to ease of traffic flow in the city as reflected in the increasing 'bumper to bumper' traffic experienced in the major junctions in Ilorin in recent time (Ahmed, 2013).

This work aims at examining the menace of illegal motors parks that are continually springing up in and around Ilorin city. The focus attention on the city which is now potently congested with traffic holdups occasion with traffic clogging, scuttle accidents and/or free-fight between and among road users shall be the main objectives of the study.

Material and Methods

The methods employed for this work are highlighted below: In the first place, reconnaissance visits were carried out by the researcher on different locations such as parking lots and garages within city of Ilorin city (see figs.1-3). This was for on-spot evaluation in order to update information collected from the secondary data source. Primary data was directly collected through the use of structured questionnaires in line with the objectives of the study and this complement with the on-spot assessment mentioned above. Thirty (30) structured questionnaires were

administered to two major set of transport operators- the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW), the Road Transport Employer's Association of Nigeria (RTEAN). Fifteen officers (members) of each of these organizations were given questionnaires from their zones to respond to, while verbal to verbal interviews were carried out among the Government Agencies/officials-such as the police/traffic control officers in their various duty-posts in selected road junctions around Ilorin city. All these were efforts to obtain information on poor parking spaces that usually caused on-street parking problems when they are at work. Apart from this, another two hundred (200) structural questionnaires were randomly distributed and administered to thirty two (32) major

authorized and unauthorized parks around Ilorin city. These were efforts to obtain information on parking space inventory, parking concentration survey, information on total length and width on city roads, as well as other road characteristics simultaneously. All these efforts were put together in order to obtain general information on the number of and the classes of vehicles parked at on-street parking spaces at the period of thirty minutes interval. This was done between 8am – 10am and 3pm – 6pm, these are peak periods of traffic congestion where workers are on the roads for a daily job and periods of their coming back home, and this runs from Monday through Friday and Saturday through Sunday (see tables 1-6).



Figure1: A typical legal park in Ilorin city Nigeria.



Figure 2: Example of an illegal park in city of Lagos Nigeria.



Figure 3: Street Illegal Park at Saw-Mill area in Ilorin city causing a traffic clogging.

Table 1: Legal and Authorized Motor Parks around Ilorin City

S/No	Park	Location	Route
1	Ajasse-Ipo/Offa	Offa-Garage Area	Offa/Osogbo
2	Kaiama	Oloje-Garage Area	Okuta/Kaiama-Baruten Area
3	Lagos/Ibadan	Saw-Mill Area	Lagos
4	Jebba	Maraba Area	Jebba/Minna
5	Kano/Kaduna	Akerebiata (New)	Kano/Jos
6	Lokoja/Abuja	Offa Garage	Okene/Abuja/Onitsha-Eastern Area

7	Kaduna/Sokoto	New Garage/Park Akerebiata/Sobi Road	Yawuri/Sokoto/Kaduna
8	Ogidi	Oko-Olowo Junction	Igbeti/Saki/Igboho & Kaduna/Abuja/ Kano-Northern Area

Table 2: Illegal/Unauthorized Motor Parks around the city of Ilorin

S/No	Park	Location	En-route
1	Saw-mill	Odota	Ilorin-Lagos
2	Oja-Tuntun	Baboko (Abdul Azeez road)	Ogbomoso
3	Queen Elizabeth	AP Petrol Station-Surulere	Ilorin- Ibadan-Lagos
4	Bata Shop	Agaka	Gambari/Ogbomoso
5	Isale Oja	Oja-Oba	Onisha/Portharcourt
6	Adifa	Oja-Oba	Oke-Oyi/Jebba
7	Palace Cinema	Okeita	Afon/Amoyo/Idofian
8	Gambari Junction	Gambari	Shao/Babanloma/Jebba
9	Shao Garage (Old)	Ode Sanda	Shao/Bacita/Jebba
10	Opomalu-Junctio	Emir's road	Lagos
11	Oja Ipata	Okesuna	Oke-OyiAgbeyangi
12	Obbo road	Off-Taiwo road	Ibadan/Lagos
13	Railway junction	Total Petrol Station (Emir's road)	Onisha/Calabar/P-harcout
14	First bridge (Asa)	Emir's road	Lagos
15	AP petrol	Murtala Way	Abuja/Kaduna/Kano/Jos
16	Challenge Bookshop	Murtala Way	Lokoja/Okene/Abuja
17	Keystone Bank	Unity road	Lagos
18	IBTC Bank	Unity road	Lagos
19	Opposite Ijaiya House	Offa Garage Road	Kaduna/Kano
20	Sango	Kulende Estate Junction	Lagos
21	Tanke Oke-Odo	Tanke	Ibadan/Lagos/Onisha/Calabar/ Port-Harcourt
22	Pipeline Road	Tanke	Abuja
23	Tanke-Opposite Tower Hotel	Tanke	Abuja
24	On-the-bridge park	Unity Road	Ibadan-Lagos

Source: Author's Compilation.

Table 3: Parking concentration and Volume of Parking Survey on selected areas in Ilorin city.
Monday traffic count from 7.00am-5.00pm.

Location	Period	Bus	Private Car	Taxicab	Motorcycle	Truck	Total
Saw-mill–Ojaoba (Abdulazee-Attah road)	Morning	98	221	317	33	55	724
	Evening	117	298	404	37	43	899
Oja-Tuntun- Taiwo Road (Baboko Area)	Morning	55	94	88	26	32	295
	Evening	37	46	41	18	29	171
Taiwo Oke-Unity Road(Wahab Folawiyo)	Morning	142	181	154	18	111	606
	Evening	134	162	139	11	97	543
Sango-Post Office (Old Jebba Rd)	Morning	512	445	477	123	99	1656
	Evening	492	399	442	109	61	1503
First bridge-Opomalu (Emir’s Road)	Morning	122	228	532	267	85	234
	Evening	151	249	504	241	56	1201
Post Office-Offa Garage (Offa Rd)	Morning	377	486	324	250	112	1549
	Evening	497	333	397	447	122	1796

Source: Author’s Field Work

Table 4: Parking concentration and Volume of Parking Survey on selected areas in Ilorin city. Wednesday (Mid-week) traffic count from 7.00am-5.00pm.

Location	Period	Bus	Private Car	Taxicab	Motorcycle	Truck	Total
Saw-mill –Ojaoba (Abdulazee-Attah road)	Morning	67	121	321	24	46	579
	Evening	101	281	330	31	39	782
Oja-Tuntun- Taiwo Road (Baboko Area)	Morning	33	77	75	22	39	246
	Evening	23	39	33	11	20	372
Taiwo Oke-Unity Road(Wahab Folawiyo)	Morning	99	93	111	12	91	406
	Evening	97	132	112	09	84	434
Sango-Post Office (Old Jebba Rd)	Morning	399	301	352	89	75	1216
	Evening	300	343	397	02	59	1191
First bridge-Opomalu (Emir’s Road)	Morning	89	154	392	254	78	967
	Evening	100	222	489	190	55	1056
Post Office-Offa Garage (Offa Rd)	Morning	342	401	367	211	93	1414
	Evening	478	301	388	420	98	1685

Source: Author’s Field Work.**Table 5:** Parking concentration and Volume Survey on selected areas in Ilorin city. Sunday (week-end Traffic Count from 7.00am-5.00pm)

Location	Period	Bus	Private car	Taxi Cab	Motorcycle	Truck	Total
Saw-mill –Ojaoba (Abdulazee-Attah road)	Morning	19	52	118	91	2	1967
	Evening	252	96	225	122	3	698
Oja-Tuntun- Taiwo Road (Baboko Area)	Morning	299	95	223	88	9	714
	Evening	226	113	265	111	15	730
Taiwo Oke-Unity Road (Wahab Folawiyo)	Morning	346	103	335	128	4	916
	Evening	441	88	378	210	7	1124
Sango-Post Office (Old Jebba Rd)	Morning	380	98	196	75	8	757
	Evening	460	143	189	66	18	876
First bridge- Opomalu (Emir’s Road)	Morning	363	99	258	71	33	824
	Evening	241	192	376	65	25	899
Post Office-Offa Garage (Offa Rd)	Morning	169	83	413	77	6	748
	Evening	278	88	375	62	8	811

Source: Author’s Field Work

Table 6: Response of respondents to effects of on-street parking

Effect of on-Street Parking	Transport Operators	Commuters	Govt. Agencies	Others	Total Frq.(%)
Traffic clog up	56	20	4	20	100
Accident	35	40	2	23	100
Traffic delay	14	60	5	21	100
Restrict Movement	5	10	4	81	100
Fight/hubbub	18	10	1	71	100

Source: Author's Field Work

The study area

Ilorin, the capital city of Kwara State is located on Latitude 8.5⁰N by 8.30⁰N and Longitude 4.55⁰E by 4.33⁰E of Greenwich Meridian. It lies in the plain of the South Western part of Nigeria. The city lies along the Lagos Kaduna highway is about 306km from Lagos, 600km from Kaduna and about 500km from Abuja, the Federal Capital city of Nigeria. At present, the city of Ilorin cuts across three (3) Local Government Areas namely Ilorin West, Ilorin East and Ilorin South Local Government Areas, and it has about twenty (20) political wards. The increasing development of Ilorin started with the early traditional areas that were built up around the township centre that were similar to what Burgess described as 'concentric zone' (Aderamo, 1990). The creation of Kwara State in 1967 and the choice of Ilorin as the state capital had further resulted in its rapid population increase and area expansion.

Today, Ilorin city has witnessed more physical expansion and opening-up of new

road networks resulting into city enveloping many of the smaller settlements surrounding it (see also fig.4-6). At present, Ilorin is accessible from outside the city through new roads expansion and overhead bridges which are under construction for ease vehicular movement. These accessibility roads are always busied and attract clogs especially when workers are going or returning from work. Ilorin population was projected with an annual growth rate of 2.84% (NPC.1991) and at the 2006 head counts; the city has reached 766,000 by population (NPC, 2006). Although, Ilorin developed as an administrative centre both economic and social activities have greatly influenced its growth in recent times. The major occupations of the indigenes are farming, pottery making, and weaving. There are also a greater percentage of the people who engaged in trading activities, while others are self-employed in various other areas such as mechanics, carpentry, artisans among others.

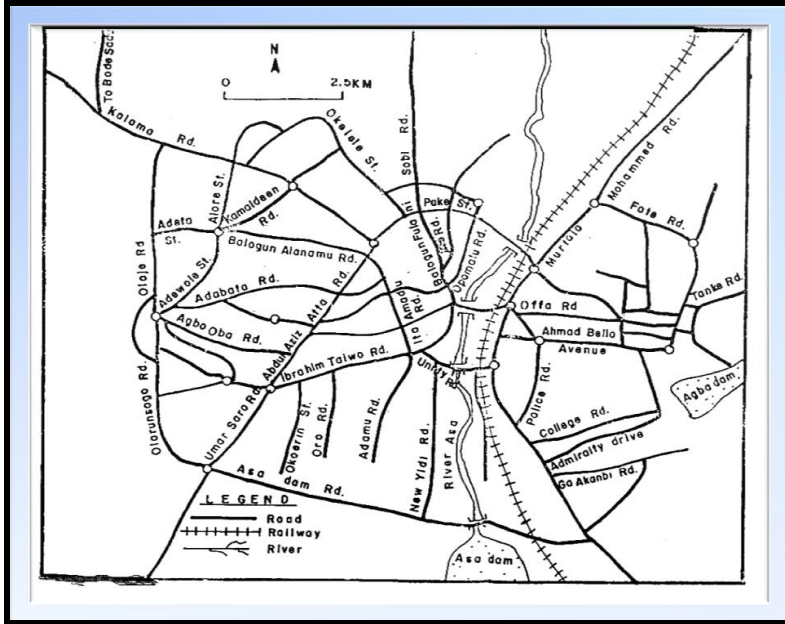


Figure 4: Major Roads Network in Ilorin City Nigeria. (I)

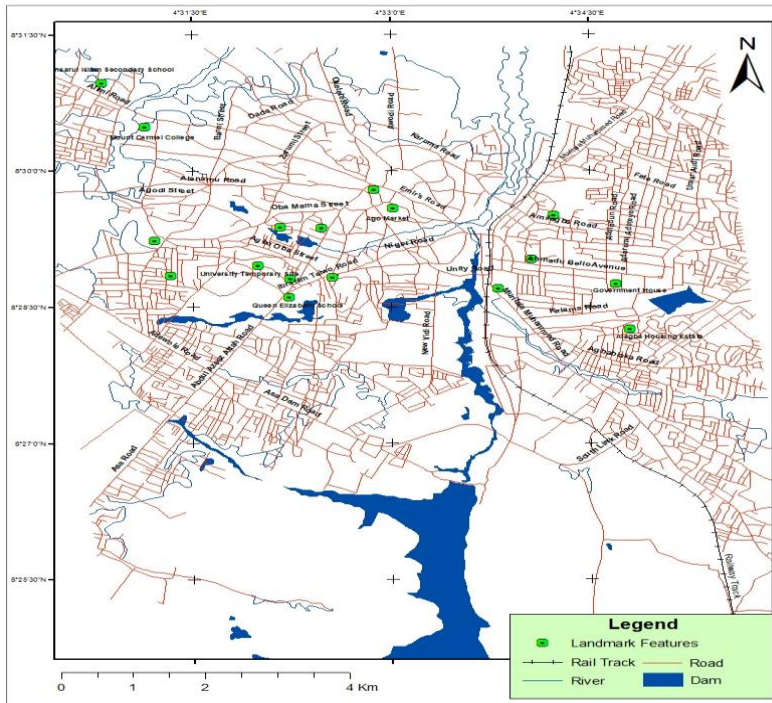


Figure 5: Major Roads Network in Ilorin City Nigeria (II).

Source: Ministry of Land and Survey Department Ilorin, Kwara State Nigeria.

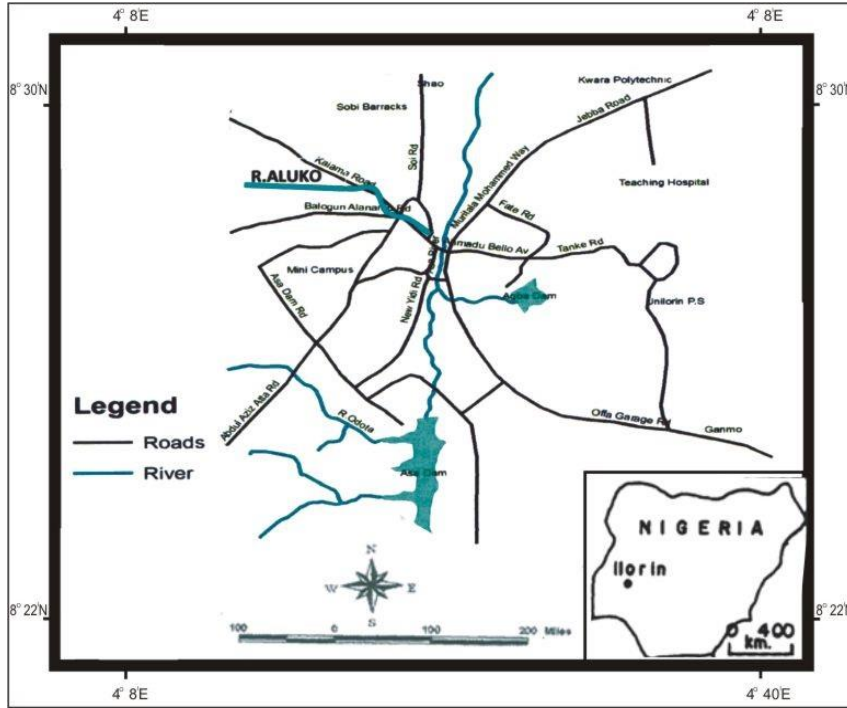


Figure 6: Map of Ilorin city, Nigeria.
Source: Ministry of Land and Survey Survey Division, Ilorin Nigeria.

Results and Discussion

On-street parking facilities available in Ilorin include Kerbs, Bus-stops and Pay parking lots for commercial motors and car parks for private cars all which were very few around Ilorin city especially pay parking lots. It was discovered that only few bus-stops are found in streets/roads in the city of Ilorin thereby causing traffic congestion, hubbub and in some occasions resulted into accident. In some areas within this city there are narrow roads/streets which lack pedestrian lanes. There are cases of double parking along the narrow roads or by at the Kerb’s spaces thereby causing traffic congestion; this was due to the non-availability of off-street parking lots in the city areas. Also, there were fewer parking bays or loading bays for transit vehicles such as taxis and buses either to pick up loads or unload goods and passengers along the routes. Consequently drivers resort to haphazard parking which

not only erodes the aesthetic values of the road way and city structure but also constitutes risks to lives and properties. Also, motorists suffer stress in searching for parking space at destinations or when private vehicle owners looking for areas to buy needed items within shopping or market centers. The areas where this situation usually lead to serious traffic congestion at peak hours of the day include; Post office area of Ilorin, Maraba Garage areas, Ipata area, Oja-Oba area and Opposites of Challenge Bookshop. Lack of loading or parking bay in these points always leads to illegal on-street parking by motorist which has already reached crisis proportion in the areas. Roadside hawking and trading along these roads reduce road-lane capacity. Rapid increase in the number of motor vehicles in these areas has always made the areas inaccessible and reduced the traffic speed and thus increasing traffic congestion as well as

longing journey time within trans-urban inter and intra movements.

More of the findings also revealed the effects of Vehicular Concentration Survey Volume (VCSV) in various locations in Ilorin city, for instance, as a result of lack of parking space and large movement of vehicles from Sango area to Post Office especially in peak period of Monday morning show a total number of 1656 vehicles passed through these city road. While Post office-Offa garage road have 1549 vehicular concentration survey volume. In the same Monday and at the same period, Saw-mill to Oja-Oba has a lighter traffic movement which was 899. In the evening and again, Post office – Offa garage 1796 vehicular movement (highest so far) and followed by Sango- Post office which was 1503 respectively. The effects of all these movements of vehicles are felt more by those who are not only going to a destination but those who wanted to do transactions along these major road arteries but have no authorized parking lots to stay for a while (see table 3).

There was little difference on the Mid-week (Wednesday) where in the peak period of vehicular movement in the morning from Sango- Post office vehicle counts attained 1216 and Post office- Offa garage depicted 1414, whereas, Oja Titun-Taiwo showed a lower vehicular movement which was 246. But in the evening, Post office – Offa garage have another higher vehicular movement/concentration of 1685 followed by 1216 Sango-Post office (see table 4) respectively.

On Sunday (weekend period) Saw-mill to Oja-Oba have 1967 due to movement of people to churches along these routes and is followed by Taiwo-Oke to Wahab Folawiyo (Unity) road which showed 916 volume of vehicles concentration. In the evening periods and the same roads witnessed more volume of vehicles

concentration with 1124 when compared with Emir's road from Post office with 899 Vehicle Counts Survey (see table 5).

Problems of unauthorized Parks in Ilorin City

There are many problems found associated to parking lots (illegal/unauthorised) from the past and to recent time in Ilorin city. These problems include; fighting among drivers to acquire passengers, domination of space by passengers' seekers (the Agberos), and evasion of garage fees by the drivers from their unions among others. A lot of areas were identified and cited in the discussions as areas that were prone to un-authorized parking which usually caused problems of vehicular movement in Ilorin city (see tables 1-2). Ironically, most of these problems are partly caused by the governments or its agencies and/or partly caused by transport operators. There are proliferation of parks in some nooks and crannies of Ilorin city with little or no proper administration, and this made it difficult for other roads users and/or commuters to patronize the authorised and legal parks where they were located in the city. Major complaints arise from the authorized parks that; before commuters/travellers board their vehicles it takes long time than necessary, this makes it preferable for them to patronize some mushroom parks that spring up all over the places and which make journey more faster (Ahmed,2013). Also, the mushroom parks get their passengers cheaply and this situation is really affecting the smooth running of the authorized parks. This problem apart, the activities of criminals in and around some legal parks are becoming notorious. The adjoining roads and the premises of the legal parks are a 'no-go' area the moment it is dark and at early morning of the day. It is always being the case when you see all manner of criminals and pickpockets harassing innocent passengers.

The beauty in any city is not only found on its organized space to ease accessibility to various locations of desired requirements by effective transportation system, but it is also found in motor parks/parking lots where people use for both inter and intra urban transportation systems (Ahmed, 2013). Unfortunately, the arrangement and use of space is not properly organized in major urban centers in Nigeria and Ilorin in particular. However, in Ilorin at present time, people are not having good access to the organized motor parking lots and garages in the city, and this causes a lot of problems which few of them are just mentioned.

Conclusion

This work provides an insight into increasing levels of threat by unauthorized vehicle parking spaces (VPS) in some areas that are not designated by city authorities of city's management in Ilorin urban environment. This threat turns out to be major challenges that makes traffic situation frenzied in the metropolis. The challenges at times resulted into traffic holdups, clogs and traffic congestion. While issues examined in the study indicated that some motorists abandoned the existing legal parking especially by both inter and intra-transport road users and embarked on illegal parking when arrived from long or short journey on daily basis. The efficient movement of people and goods are vital task and upon it rest the quality of life as observed in the literature; there is no escape from transport because immobility perpetrates poverty. While good mobility incurs smooth flow of traffic, less traffic congestion, improves lateness to work, and no hampering to other economic activities.

Recommendations

The followings are put forward to stand as immediate solutions towards the improvement of the disorderly parking situation in the Ilorin city, Nigeria.

- Provision of bus-stops and kerbs for commercial motors and parking lots for private motors.
- Provision of pedestrian walkways and pedestrian overhead bridge crossing at appropriate location.
- Provision of designated and specified park for different vehicles plying different routes as well as off- street parking for inter-city transport.
- Re-organization of market system so that all forms of street-hawking and roadside selling must be totally scratched-off, while the government should provide a ready-made alternative place for commercial activities.
- Strict provision of parking guidance system that will cater for parking of vehicle during the peak hour.
- Efficient movement of people and goods are vital task and upon it rests the quality of life hours of the city.

There is no escape from transport because immobility perpetrates poverty. It affects smooth flow of traffic and causes traffic congestion, lateness to work, accident and hampering other economic activities. Pay-parking serving space must be provided for road users on number of hours they use in the lots, this has been one of the best practices in advanced world, and it equally serves as one of the methods of traffic control in the contemporary period.

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