Willingness to Convert to the Bicycle for Intra City Transportation in Calabar: Revisiting the Old Way.

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Key words: bicycle transport; non-motorised transit; ordered probability; willingness

SUMMARY

This study investigates the willingness of residents to use bicycle for intra city transportation in Calabar. About 100 rating surveys were administered to participants across all income and employment groups in the study area. Twelve problems of bicycle transportation were presented and participants rated them using a six-point scale 1-6, corresponding to highly unwilling to highly willing to ride. These problems include: intense motorised traffic; lack of bicycle paths; conflicts with motorised traffic; conflicts with pedestrian; lack of regard for cyclists by motorists; poor bicycle culture and associated stigma; weather conditions; lack of shoulder lane in the road; bad road surface/potholes; lack of safety; bad street illumination; and lack of signalisation. Ordered probability models were used to estimate random parameters of cyclists' perceived problems to account for unobserved heterogeneity for all respondents. The results indicate lack of bicycle-related infrastructure including lack of bicycle paths, bad road surface/potholes, bad street illumination; and lack of signalisation as the most serious problems leading to high unwillingness to use bicycle in Calabar. Over 70 per cent of respondents expressed conditional willingness to cycle, while about 30 per cent expressed high unwillingness due to what some of them perceived as ill treatment of the population on bicycle users. Whereas, it may be difficult for government to build bicycle infrastructure without a convincing change in attitude towards its use, it is apparent that it is expedient for the development of programs that encourages bicycle use in the city. Strengthening the role of surveyors towards mapping out bicycle paths and related infrastructure is highly recommended.