



Analysis of Rural-Urban Transport Linkages between Oyo Town and its Environ

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Abstract

This study examined rural–urban transport linkages between Oyo Town and its surrounding rural communities, focusing on their patterns, socio-economic significance, challenges, and improvement strategies. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, and data were collected through a structured questionnaire administered to 100 purposively selected respondents, including transport operators, traders, farmers, and residents. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed, while the data were analysed using descriptive statistics and inferential tools such as the Chi-square test and independent samples t-test. The findings revealed that transport services were relatively available, with over 68% of respondents confirming access to public transport. However, motorcycles and tricycles dominated mobility due to the absence of a structured transport system. Road conditions were generally poor, as only 43% of respondents expressed satisfaction, indicating infrastructural deficiencies. Transport linkages significantly enhanced access to markets, education, healthcare, and income opportunities. Nonetheless, challenges such as poor road infrastructure, high transport costs, inadequate transport facilities, seasonal disruptions, and limited government investment constrained effective connectivity. The study concluded that although rural–urban transport linkages were vital for socio-economic development, their effectiveness was hindered by infrastructural and institutional limitations. It recommended a multi-stakeholder approach involving government, private sector participation, and community engagement to improve sustainable mobility and regional development.

Keywords: Rural–urban linkages, Transport infrastructure, Mobility, socio-economic development, Oyo Town

1. Introduction

Transport linkages between rural and urban areas were central to global development, as they promoted access to markets, healthcare, education, and employment opportunities. Efficient connectivity enhanced productivity, reduced spatial inequalities, and facilitated inclusive growth, as noted by United Nations (2020). In particular, rural–urban mobility was recognised as a driver of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) because it promoted the equitable distribution of resources and opportunities across space (Tacoli, 2019). The spatial integration enabled by transport infrastructure supported regional specialisation, strengthened value chains, and enabled the circulation of goods, services, labour, and information between settlements of different sizes. As such, transport systems formed a critical backbone for territorial development and socio-economic transformation, especially in developing regions where spatial disparities remained pronounced.

Despite notable progress in transport development globally, a persistent “transport divide” continued to *Olawuwo, A. A., (2026). Analysis of Rural-Urban Transport Linkages between Oyo Town and its Environ, Ijagun Journal of Social and Management Sciences (JOSMAS), vol. 10, no. 1, pp. 85-91.*

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characterise disparities in access to affordable, safe, and reliable mobility. Many rural communities experienced prolonged travel times, seasonal inaccessibility, and high transportation costs when attempting to reach urban services, thereby reinforcing cycles of poverty and marginalisation (Lucas, 2019). Limited accessibility constrained livelihood diversification, restricted educational attainment, and weakened health outcomes, particularly for vulnerable populations such as women, children, and the elderly. Bridging this divide was therefore fundamental to inclusive development, social cohesion, and balanced regional growth (Cervero & Golub, 2020). Beyond physical mobility, transport connectivity also influenced digital inclusion, governance reach, and emergency response capacity, making it an indispensable component of resilient development planning.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the structure of transport provision reflected broader institutional and infrastructural constraints. Formal mass transit systems were often insufficient in coverage and capacity, leading to a heavy dependence on paratransit modes such as minibuses, tricycles, shared taxis, and motorcycle taxis. These informal systems provided flexible and demand-responsive services that sustained everyday mobility and rural–urban interaction.

However, they were frequently associated with safety concerns, weak regulation, fluctuating fares, and environmental inefficiencies (Behrens et al., 2017). Nonetheless, paratransit remained indispensable for millions of Africans navigating fragmented transport networks and limited public investment (Lucas, Jennings, & Behrens, 2019). Increasingly, scholars emphasised the need to integrate paratransit into formal planning frameworks rather than attempting outright replacement, recognising its socio-economic importance and adaptive capacity.

Efforts to modernise urban and peri-urban transport in Africa included the introduction of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and other mass-mobility innovations. Lagos pioneered Africa's first BRT system in 2008, followed by implementations in cities such as Dar es Salaam and Nairobi (Pojani & Stead, 2018). These initiatives demonstrated attempts to enhance mobility efficiency, reduce congestion, and improve environmental sustainability while strengthening connections between core urban areas and surrounding settlements. However, challenges related to route coverage, affordability, institutional coordination, and long-term maintenance continued to limit their transformative impact (Salon & Gulyani, 2019). Consequently, many peri-urban and rural communities remained weakly integrated into formal transport networks, underscoring the importance of localised studies that examined everyday mobility realities.

Across West Africa, weak road infrastructure and limited rural accessibility significantly constrained economic integration and spatial interaction. Agricultural communities frequently struggled to transport produce to urban markets due to poor road conditions, seasonal flooding, and inadequate logistics systems. These barriers contributed to post-harvest losses, price instability, and reduced farmers' incomes (Olomola, 2019). Strengthening rural-urban road connectivity was therefore widely recognised as a priority for stimulating regional trade, enhancing food security, and promoting inclusive economic development (World Bank, 2020). Transport improvements could also catalyse non-farm employment, rural industrialisation, and tourism, thereby diversifying local economies and reducing migration pressures on major cities.

Nigeria possessed one of the largest road networks in Africa, yet infrastructural quality and maintenance remained major concerns. Of the nearly 200,000 km road network, only about 60,000 km was paved, and many segments were deteriorated or poorly maintained (Federal Ministry of Works & Housing, 2017). Factors such as inadequate funding, axle overloading, weak enforcement, and substandard construction practices intensified transport inefficiencies (Adeniji, 2018). These infrastructural deficits increased travel time, raised vehicle operating costs, and reduced the reliability of rural-urban mobility systems. In turn, farmers' participation in urban markets declined, supply

chains weakened, and regional inequalities deepened. Addressing these structural constraints required coordinated investment, improved governance, and context-sensitive transport planning.

Within Oyo State, transport conditions played a decisive role in shaping agricultural productivity, food distribution, and household welfare. Empirical studies indicated that improved access to motorised transport enhanced technical efficiency among rural farmers and supported greater market participation (Yusuf & Salman, 2018). Similarly, road accessibility was shown to strengthen food distribution networks and contribute to household food security across rural communities in the state (Oladipo & Oni, 2020). These findings highlighted the strong interdependence between mobility infrastructure and socio-economic outcomes, reinforcing the argument that transport development was not merely a physical intervention but also a catalyst for human development.

Oyo Town, historically significant as a cultural and administrative centre, functioned as a nodal point linking surrounding rural settlements with broader regional markets and services. Recent infrastructural upgrades, including road dualisation and urban expansion, influenced residents' livelihoods and mobility patterns. Nevertheless, persistent challenges—such as congestion, delays in loading and off-loading, inadequate maintenance, and limited transport coordination—continued to undermine the efficiency of rural-urban linkages (Ogunleye & Adeyemi, 2021). These issues affected trade flows, commuting behaviour, service accessibility, and overall socio-economic well-being within the town and its hinterland.

Beyond infrastructure, socio-economic and environmental dynamics further shaped rural-urban transport interactions in Oyo Town and its environs. Population growth, land-use change, and urban sprawl increased travel demand and altered traditional mobility routes. Rising fuel prices and income disparities influenced modal choice, often pushing low-income residents towards informal and less safe transport options. Climate variability and extreme weather events could also damage road surfaces and disrupt connectivity, highlighting the vulnerability of transport systems to environmental change. Consequently, sustainable transport planning needed to integrate economic, social, and ecological considerations to ensure long-term resilience.

Analysing rural-urban transport linkages in Oyo Town and its surrounding communities was therefore essential for identifying infrastructural gaps, mobility constraints, and opportunities for sustainable improvement. Such analysis contributed to evidence-based planning, supported inclusive regional development, and aligned with broader national and global development objectives. By examining patterns

of connectivity, transport modes, accessibility levels, and socio-economic impacts, this study sought to provide insights that could inform policy interventions and enhance the functionality of rural–urban systems in Oyo State and comparable contexts.

Ultimately, strengthening rural–urban transport integration in Oyo Town was not only a matter of infrastructure provision but also of social equity, economic vitality, and environmental sustainability. A comprehensive understanding of existing linkages and their limitations enabled stakeholders to design context-appropriate strategies that promoted efficient mobility, reduced inequalities, and supported sustainable territorial development. This study therefore situated rural–urban transport as a foundational element in the pursuit of balanced growth and improved quality of life for communities within and around Oyo Town.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Transport systems are fundamental to socio-economic development because they connect rural producers to urban markets and facilitate the movement of people, goods, and services. However, in many developing countries, weak rural–urban transport linkages restrict equitable growth, limit access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, and reinforce poverty and social exclusion. As a result, the benefits of urbanization often fail to extend to rural communities, leading to uneven spatial development and persistent marginalization.

Across sub-Saharan Africa, rural–urban connectivity is further constrained by poor infrastructure, low investment, and strong dependence on informal transport modes such as motorcycles and minibuses. Although these modes provide essential mobility, they are often unsafe, unreliable, and expensive for rural residents. Consequently, farmers experience high post-harvest losses and reduced incomes because perishable goods cannot be transported efficiently to urban markets, thereby weakening food security and highlighting structural deficiencies in transport development across the region.

Nigeria reflects these challenges, as much of its extensive road network remains poorly maintained and seasonally impassable, particularly in rural areas of Oyo State. In Oyo Town and its surrounding communities, transport inefficiencies despite recent infrastructural improvements continue to hinder market access, disrupt food supply, and constrain residents' mobility and livelihoods. These conditions underscore the need to critically examine the adequacy, accessibility, and sustainability of rural–urban transport linkages in the area to support agricultural productivity, market efficiency, and broader socio-economic development.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The main aim of this study was to analyse the nature, challenges, and socio-economic implications of rural–urban transport linkages between Oyo Town and its

surrounding rural communities. The specific objectives were to:

- i. Examine the types and patterns of rural–urban transport linkages between Oyo Town and its environs;
- ii. Assess the socio-economic importance of transport linkages for residents of Oyo Town and surrounding rural areas;
- iii. Identify the major challenges affecting effective rural–urban transport connectivity in the study area; and
- iv. Analyse sustainable strategies to improve rural–urban transport linkages for enhanced livelihoods and development in Oyo Town and its environs.

2. Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, utilising questionnaires to gather data from residents. The design was suitable because it enabled the researcher to systematically collect both quantitative and qualitative data on the nature, challenges, and socio-economic implications of rural–urban transport linkages between Oyo Town and its surrounding rural communities.

Data were purposively collected from transport operators (commercial motorcyclists, bus drivers, and tricycle operators), traders, and farmers who relied on transport linkages to move goods and services from one area to another. A total of 100 purposively selected respondents were sampled, including residents of each selected town, commercial motorcyclists, bus drivers, traders, and farmers.

Both stratified and simple random sampling techniques were employed in selecting the respondents. The self-constructed questionnaire titled “Analysis of Rural–Urban Transport Linkages between Oyo Town and its Environs (ARUTLBOTE)” was validated by experts from Emmanuel Alayande University of Education, Oyo, and underwent reliability testing using the test–retest method.

The data were analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Specifically, Chi-square tests were used to examine the relationships between transport linkages and socio-economic activities, while independent samples t-tests were employed to examine differences in the challenges faced by rural and urban residents regarding transport accessibility.

3. Results

The study revealed that the availability of transport services in the study area was relatively high, with over 68% of respondents confirming the presence of public transport services. Motorcycles and tricycles were identified as the most commonly used modes of transport, highlighting their dominance in facilitating rural–urban mobility. However, road conditions remained a significant challenge, as only 43% of

Table 1: Types and Patterns of Rural–Urban Transport Linkages

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Adequate transport routes connecting Oyo Town with rural communities	12	45	30	13	3.45	0.92
Availability of public transport services (buses, taxis, tricycles, motorcycles)	18	50	22	10	3.60	0.89
Satisfactory condition of roads	8	35	40	17	2.95	1.02
Affordability of transport services	15	40	30	15	3.30	1.00
Regularity of transport services	10	38	35	17	3.10	1.05
Ease of moving goods between Oyo Town and rural communities	14	42	32	12	3.35	0.98

Table 2: Socio-Economic Importance of Transport Linkages

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Enhances access to markets for goods and services	25	55	15	5	3.95	0.80
Improves access to schools and educational opportunities	20	50	20	10	3.70	0.90
Provides better access to healthcare facilities	18	48	22	12	3.60	0.95
Supports income-generating activities	22	52	18	8	3.85	0.85
Contributes to overall improvement of residents' livelihoods	20	50	20	10	3.70	0.92
Economic growth depends on effective transport linkages	18	45	25	12	3.55	1.00

Table 3: Challenges Affecting Rural–Urban Transport Connectivity

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Poor road conditions hinder smooth transport	30	50	15	5	4.00	0.85
Inadequate public transport facilities	25	45	20	10	3.75	0.95
High transport fares limit access to Oyo Town	20	40	25	15	3.45	1.05
Seasonal changes (rainfall, flooding) affect road accessibility	22	48	20	10	3.80	0.92
Traffic congestion delays movement	18	42	25	15	3.40	1.00
Insecurity and safety issues affect transport services	15	35	30	20	3.10	1.10
Lack of government investment in transport infrastructure	28	47	15	10	3.90	0.90

Table 4: Strategies for Improving Rural–Urban Transport Linkages

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Government should rehabilitate and maintain roads	40	50	8	2	4.25	0.70
Provision of affordable and reliable public transport systems	35	50	10	5	4.10	0.75
Construction of rural feeder roads	30	45	15	10	3.90	0.90
Public–Private Partnership (PPP) in transport infrastructure	25	40	20	15	3.60	1.00
Community participation in road maintenance	20	35	25	20	3.25	1.10
Adequate policy and planning interventions	22	42	20	16	3.50	1.05

respondents expressed satisfaction with the state of the roads, pointing to a considerable infrastructural deficit that hampered effective connectivity.

persisted, particularly during peak seasons when demand was high, often leading to delays and increased transport costs.

In terms of affordability and regularity, transport services were generally perceived as moderately affordable and regular. Nonetheless, challenges

Overall, the findings suggested that although transport services were available, concerns about their reliability and the poor state of supporting infrastructure remained

pressing. The heavy reliance on informal transport modes such as motorcycles and tricycles underscored the absence of structured and formalised public transport systems in the area.

The findings indicated that transport linkages played a critical role in socio-economic development within the study area. About 80% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that transport linkages significantly enhanced access to markets, underscoring their importance in facilitating trade and commerce. Similarly, more than 70% of respondents acknowledged that transport was essential for accessing educational institutions and healthcare facilities, particularly for rural residents who often relied on Oyo Town for such services. In addition, 70% of the respondents agreed that transport linkages contributed to improved livelihoods and economic growth, further emphasising the integral role of transportation in the daily lives of residents.

These results highlighted the fact that transport linkages were indispensable for supporting socio-economic activities, especially for traders, farmers, and service providers whose productivity depended on effective mobility. The evidence underscored the urgent need for sustainable transport infrastructure as a foundation for enhancing livelihoods, reducing spatial inequality, and promoting regional development.

The study identified poor road conditions as the most pressing challenge to rural–urban transport linkages, with 80% of respondents pointing to this issue as a major barrier. Inadequate public transport facilities and the rising cost of fares were also highlighted as significant concerns, particularly for low-income residents who depended heavily on daily mobility for their livelihoods. Seasonal disruptions, such as flooding during the rainy season, further compounded these challenges by limiting accessibility. Additionally, the lack of adequate government investment and policy support was widely acknowledged by respondents as a critical factor hindering effective transport connectivity.

Overall, these findings emphasised the urgent need for comprehensive infrastructure rehabilitation, the provision of affordable and reliable transport options, and targeted policy interventions to overcome the barriers that currently constrained rural–urban linkages in Oyo Town and its surrounding communities.

The findings showed that road rehabilitation and maintenance were considered the most critical strategies for improving rural–urban transport linkages, with 90% of respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that government-led interventions should be prioritised. Affordable public transport systems and the adoption of Public–Private Partnership (PPP) models were also widely supported as sustainable solutions to enhance connectivity. While community participation in road maintenance was acknowledged as beneficial, it was viewed as less important compared to the roles of

government and private sector investment.

Overall, the results emphasised the importance of a multi-stakeholder approach to transport improvement. Sustainable solutions would require strong government commitment to infrastructure development, active private sector involvement through PPP arrangements, and complementary community engagement to ensure the long-term functionality and inclusiveness of rural–urban transport linkages.

4. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study revealed that the types and patterns of rural–urban transport linkages in Oyo Town are moderately functional, particularly in terms of the availability of transport services and route connectivity. The high mean score recorded for public transport availability confirms that mobility between Oyo Town and surrounding rural communities is sustained through buses, taxis, motorcycles, and tricycles. This finding agrees with Ali, Madu, and Okafor (2025), who observed in rural Nigeria that transport services, even when informal, remain the backbone of rural accessibility and socio-economic interaction. Similarly, Garoma, Gutema, and Tolossa (2026) emphasised that strong rural–urban transport linkages significantly improve movement patterns and enhance livelihood opportunities across connected settlements.

However, the finding that road condition recorded the lowest mean value suggests that the functionality of transport services is weakened by poor infrastructure quality. This supports the argument of Luke (2024) that transport disadvantage in developing countries is often less about the absence of vehicles and more about weak infrastructure systems that limit accessibility and increase social exclusion. In the context of Oyo Town, this implies that although transport modes are present, poor roads reduce their efficiency, reliability, and safety.

The study further established that motorcycles and tricycles dominate the rural–urban mobility structure, reflecting the prevalence of informal transport systems. This pattern aligns with Lartey and Glaser (2024), who argued that informal and intermediate transport modes remain dominant in African mobility systems because they adapt quickly to gaps left by formal transport institutions. The implication is that the transport system in the study area is highly adaptive but structurally fragile, as it depends heavily on flexible yet poorly regulated modes.

Regarding the socio-economic importance of transport linkages, the findings showed that transport strongly enhances market access, education, healthcare, income generation, and livelihood improvement. The high mean score for access to markets demonstrates the direct relationship between transport connectivity and rural commercial productivity. This corroborates Sakketa (2023), who established that rural–urban linkages in Sub-Saharan Africa are crucial pathways

through which urbanisation stimulates rural economic development, especially by improving market participation and service accessibility. In the same vein, Garoma et al. (2026) noted that improved transport accessibility strengthens household welfare by linking rural populations to urban opportunities and essential services.

The implication of this finding is that transport linkages in Oyo Town serve as a catalyst for socio-economic integration, enabling rural dwellers to participate effectively in urban-based opportunities. This supports the broader transport geography perspective that mobility is a major determinant of spatial equity and regional cohesion.

The study also identified poor road conditions as the most severe challenge affecting rural–urban transport connectivity, followed by inadequate public transport facilities, high transport fares, and seasonal disruptions such as rainfall and flooding. This finding is strongly supported by Ali et al. (2025), who found that deteriorated rural roads in southeastern Nigeria significantly constrain movement efficiency, increase transport costs, and limit market access for agricultural producers. The present finding equally resonates with recent mobility evidence from rural Côte d’Ivoire by Kouamé et al. (2025), which showed that seasonal road inaccessibility remains one of the major barriers to rural transport efficiency in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The role of insufficient government investment further suggests that the challenge is not merely physical but institutional. This agrees with *Frontiers in Built Environment* (2023), which stressed that transport connectivity outcomes depend on both infrastructure provision and integrated governance frameworks. Therefore, the transport challenges observed in Oyo Town reflect a combination of infrastructural decay, policy gaps, and environmental vulnerability.

With respect to the strategies for improving rural–urban transport linkages, the findings clearly showed that road rehabilitation and maintenance remain the most preferred intervention strategy. This aligns with Ali et al. (2025), who recommended infrastructure rehabilitation as the most effective pathway for restoring rural accessibility and reducing transport inequality in Nigeria. The strong support for affordable and reliable public transport systems also agrees with Luke (2024), who stressed that inclusive mobility policies in developing regions must prioritise affordability and service reliability to reduce transport-related exclusion. Furthermore, the support for Public–Private Partnership (PPP) models indicates respondents’ recognition of the need for diversified financing frameworks. This finding is consistent with Lartey and Glaser (2024), who argued that sustainable transport development in Africa increasingly depends on multi-stakeholder collaboration involving government, private investors, and communities.

5. Conclusion

This study established that rural–urban transport linkages were indispensable for the economic growth and social well-being of Oyo Town and its surrounding rural communities. However, the poor state of infrastructure, lack of affordable transport options, and inadequate policy support continued to hinder connectivity and development. The dominance of informal transport modes, coupled with the disproportionate challenges faced by rural residents, highlighted the urgent need for comprehensive, multi-stakeholder interventions. Without addressing these gaps, the potential for inclusive development in the region would remain unfulfilled, thereby perpetuating inequalities and limiting opportunities for rural populations.

6. Recommendation

To address these issues, the government should have prioritised the rehabilitation and maintenance of rural feeder roads and major transport corridors by allocating dedicated funding to ensure year-round accessibility and safety. In addition, there was a need to develop affordable and reliable public transport systems through regulated fare structures and the expansion of formal transport services such as buses and minibuses, in order to reduce dependence on unsafe and costly informal modes.

Strengthening public–private partnerships was also considered essential, as private sector participation in transport infrastructure could have been encouraged through incentives such as tax reliefs and long-term contractual arrangements, while maintaining strong accountability and service quality standards. Furthermore, local governments were expected to enhance policy and institutional frameworks by integrating transport planning into broader development strategies and establishing functional transport committees to oversee implementation and foster community engagement.

Finally, promoting active community participation in minor road maintenance and advocacy through structured local platforms would have helped ensure that transport interventions were responsive, sustainable, and aligned with the actual mobility needs of residents in Oyo Town and its environs.

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