

Information Needs and Seeking Behaviour of Long-Distance Bus Drivers in Selected Cities in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Background. In Nigeria, where road infrastructure is a challenge and limited access to real-time information are prevalent, understanding how long-distance bus drivers seek and utilize information directly, impacts road safety, public health, and service efficiency.

Objectives. This study explores the information needs, information-seeking strategies, sources, applications, challenges, and barriers encountered by Nigerian long-distance bus drivers.

Methods. Data was collected from 25 long-distance bus drivers. An interview schedule guided the data collection, and the data was analyzed using Atlas.Ti. A qualitative research approach was adopted and it implicitly addresses objectives throughout. It uncovers challenges like misinformation, illiteracy, and broader work-related issues, showcasing drivers' resilience in navigating their professional landscape.

Results. Long-distance bus drivers prioritize information on vehicle-related aspects, such as parts, health, road maintenance, purchases, repairs, papers, and licenses. Information seeking strategies vary from consulting colleagues to using technology like WhatsApp and Google Maps, reflecting adaptability. Co-drivers emerge as the most trusted information source, emphasizing peer-to-peer reliability. The adaptive use of tools, including mobile phones and technology, illustrates the Nigerian long-distance bus drivers' ability to overcome information-seeking challenges.

Contributions. Insights from this research can inform targeted interventions, such as tailored information services, safety protocols, and digital resources that equip long distance bus drivers with the knowledge necessary to navigate Nigeria's challenging driving conditions effectively.

INTRODUCTION

Background

The profession of long-distance bus driving presents a demanding occupation that has the potential to exert a substantial influence on the overall well-being and productivity of the drivers. Factors such as extended driving hours, irregular work schedules, and limited opportunities for relaxation, among others, contribute to an increased risk of fatigue during lengthy journeys. Despite the strenuous nature of driving over long-distances, the informational aspect of this profession is often undervalued. We notice that less attention has been directed toward the information behaviour of long-distance bus drivers of Nigeria where infrastructure challenges, safety concerns, bad roads and limited access to real-time information are prevalent. Hence, understanding how drivers acquire and utilize information directly impacts road safety, public health, and service efficiency.

This study addresses an underexplored aspect of transport sector by examining the information-seeking behaviour of long-distance bus drivers in the Abeokuta and Ibadan metropolis of Nigeria, with the objectives of:

- exploring the information needs of long-distance bus drivers,
- identifying the information-seeking strategies employed by long-distance bus drivers,
- investigating the sources of information consulted by long-distance bus drivers,
- determining the practical applications of the acquired information by long-distance bus drivers and
- assessing the challenges encountered by long-distance bus drivers concerning their information-seeking behaviour.

Examining the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of long-distance drivers is crucial, given their key role in transport safety and efficiency. Access to accurate safety information plays a pivotal role in accident prevention and enhances road safety (Adebayo, Idowu, & Lawal, 2020). Furthermore, drivers' ability to quickly access relevant information for smooth navigation, regulatory compliance, and problem-solving will influence operational efficiency (Ogunbiyi & Salawu, 2021). This also extends to the passenger experience, where well-informed drivers contribute to customer satisfaction through better service delivery (Ayodele & Alimi, 2020). Also, insights into drivers' information-seeking behaviour can guide policy interventions, such as real-time traffic systems and driver education programs, aimed at improving road safety and operational efficiency (Ngadiman *et al.*, 2015). Addressing these information-seeking behaviour issues ultimately will support drivers' professional development; and enhancing both their performance, and career satisfaction. Beside the individual long-distance bus drivers, the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) and the ministries of transport will require the insight of this study for improving road safety, enhancing the well-being of transport workers, and optimizing Nigeria's transportation systems for greater economic resilience.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview of Information Needs and Information-seeking Behaviour

Information needs and information-seeking behaviour is a central concept within information science. It describes the motivation and processes by which individuals recognize a gap in their knowledge space and engage in actions to acquire information to fill that gap. This concept incorporates both cognitive and situational factors, as individuals seek, process, and

use information according to their context and needs.

Information need is defined as the recognition of an inadequacy in one's knowledge that motivates a search for information (Taylor, 1968). It represents the subjective experience of lacking specific knowledge to resolve a problem, make a decision, or fulfill a personal or professional task. Information needs are often shaped by both personal characteristics and external circumstances, such as the demands of a profession or immediate task requirements.

Information-seeking behaviour is the active pursuit of information to satisfy these recognized needs (Wilson, 1981). This behaviour involves various stages: recognizing an information gap, seeking sources, evaluating relevance, and ultimately selecting useful information (Kuhlthau, 1991). It can be influenced by factors such as available resources, individual information literacy, and environmental constraints, especially in dynamic, high-risk fields where real-time information access is essential.

Information Behaviour of Long-Distance Drivers

A range of factors, both individual and environmental shape how drivers seek, interpret and use information factors, and play a key role in defining information-seeking preferences. For instance, age impacts both the methods and the comfort levels drivers have with technology. Younger drivers, more accustomed to digital interfaces, frequently utilize mobile applications, GPS systems, and social media to access real-time updates on traffic, road conditions, and weather. In contrast, older drivers, who may be less familiar with newer digital tools, tend to rely on traditional sources such as radio updates and advice from peers. Studies, like that of Molnar et al (2015) and Ortiz et al (2018), highlight that younger drivers in high-mobility professions often demonstrate adaptability to technology, leading to improved response times and more efficient route management.

Similarly, educational level influences information-seeking behaviour, with drivers who have higher levels of formal education often exhibiting digital literacy that enhances their confidence in using apps and online resources. Conversely, drivers with lower levels of education might depend more on informal networks, relying on advice from colleagues or traditional channels like the radio. Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, Hege, and Lemke (2016) demonstrated that drivers with higher education levels seek a broader range of information, including regulatory updates and health information, which supports a well-rounded approach to decision-making. Experience further influences behaviour; seasoned drivers tend to rely on established, trusted sources and have greater confidence in filtering out non-essential information. This ability allows them to focus on situationally relevant data, a skill noted by Makri, Blandford, and Cox (2015), who found that experienced drivers could prioritize critical information efficiently.

Job demands, time constraints, and safety requirements also dictate the drivers' information needs. In fast-paced settings, drivers may prioritize tools that provide immediate access, like GPS, or rely heavily on peer communication to access practical advice for immediate issues. Dunn and Williamson (2012) highlighted that high-risk environments increase the need for real-time information, particularly regarding weather, traffic, and road conditions, to support on-the-spot decision-making.

Social context, including peer networks, supervisory interactions, and other support systems, can shape information behaviour. Regular interactions with experienced peers provide valuable insights and practical knowledge, which can aid drivers in navigating unfamiliar routes or handling unexpected road conditions. Lloyd (2014) found that peer

networks serve as essential sources of contextual information, allowing drivers to share experiences that support situational awareness and problem-solving on the road.

Together, these individual and environmental factors form a comprehensive framework for understanding the information-seeking behaviour of drivers, emphasizing the importance of both personal and situational influences in navigating their unique professional environments.

Empirical Studies on the Information Behaviour of Transport Professionals

Empirical studies exploring the information behaviour of transport professionals, particularly truck drivers and delivery personnel, reveal distinct patterns shaped by the demands of their work. These professionals have complex, specific needs when it comes to information, primarily because their roles require constant adaptation to changing environments, conditions, and requirements. One of the most immediate needs among transport professionals is operational information that is both real-time and location-specific. To effectively navigate routes, manage traffic, comply with road regulations, and locate fuel stations, they rely heavily on timely data. Studies by Olsson, Gärling, Ettema, Friman, and Fujii (2013) and, Lu and Mirenda (2018), which focused on truck drivers in Europe, underscored the high priority placed on real-time updates to support efficient navigation and on-time delivery. GPS and mobile applications have become indispensable tools, enabling drivers to better manage their schedules and mitigate delays caused by unexpected traffic conditions.

Health and safety are also primary concerns, with transport workers often seeking information to safeguard their well-being on the road. Drivers look for updates on weather conditions, accident alerts, and secure locations for rest stops. Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, Hege, and Lemke (2016) found that long-haul drivers in the United States frequently search for resources related to safe parking zones, health services, and strategies for managing diet and fatigue, all of which are essential for enduring extended trips. The demands of the profession also lead many drivers to seek mental health resources, given the unique challenges of isolation and unpredictable schedules. Such health-focused information is crucial for maintaining the physical and mental health of these workers.

The study by Olumide and Ayo-Yusuf (2020) explored the health needs and information-seeking behaviour of long-distance drivers in Nigeria, emphasizing the role of rest, diet, and access to health services in their daily lives and job performance. The authors found that these drivers experience significant barriers to maintaining health due to the demanding nature of their work, which often involves irregular hours, limited rest opportunities, and challenges in accessing nutritious food on the road. Access to information about nearby health facilities and maintenance of personal health emerged as critical, with drivers expressing a strong need for up-to-date resources that address fatigue management, diet planning, and safety practices. Olumide and Ayo-Yusuf (2020) highlighted that timely access to health information could not only improve drivers' well-being but also enhance their job performance and road safety, given the high physical and mental demands of long-haul driving in the region.

Transport professionals frequently supplement formal sources with informal networks, relying on peer communication, word-of-mouth, and social media platforms. In Australia, for example, Lloyd (2014) found that truck drivers commonly use social media, such as Facebook, to exchange real-time insights on road conditions and job-specific advice. These informal networks are particularly valuable in adapting

to sudden changes, such as road closures or severe weather. Unlike formal sources, peer networks provide adaptable, immediate solutions that are crucial in navigating unforeseen circumstances. The information needs of truck drivers are closely aligned with those of long-distance bus drivers, often encompassing route planning, safety, and health-related information. Golob and Regan (2002) studied American truck drivers and found that real-time traffic, weather alerts, and logistical support (like fuel stops and load tracking) are essential to efficient route planning and safety. Apostolopoulos, Sönmez, Hege, and Lemke (2016) examined health-related information needs among truck drivers, emphasizing that access to health services, information on rest areas, and wellness tips play critical roles in addressing fatigue and promoting mental well-being on prolonged journeys.

The advent of digital tools like mobile apps has greatly influenced the information behaviour of transport professionals, especially in areas like route planning and time management. However, not all professionals have equal access to these tools due to factors such as digital literacy and internet reliability. Makri, Blandford, and Cox (2015) highlighted that older drivers and those in rural areas often face challenges with digital tools, preferring traditional methods like radio broadcasts or consulting with other drivers when technology proves inaccessible or difficult to use.

Despite the wealth of information on transport professionals' information behaviour, significant research gaps remain, particularly for drivers in Nigeria and other developing regions. Much of the existing research has been conducted in Western countries, where factors such as road infrastructure, connectivity, and safety concerns differ from those in African contexts. Nigeria, for instance, presents unique conditions—such as inconsistent road quality, variable internet access, great diversity in languages, difficulty in accessing health facilities—that shape drivers' information needs and approaches differently from those of their Western counterparts.

As a result, while the information behaviour of transport professionals reveals common themes in operational, safety, and social information needs, further research is needed to understand the distinct challenges faced by drivers in developing regions like Nigeria. Such insights could inform more inclusive, accessible information solutions that better address the needs of transport workers across diverse contexts.

METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Research Design

This study is guided by a qualitative research approach that employs a combination of case study and narrative inquiry. The case study design focuses on the in-depth examination of specific cases, allowing researchers to explore intricate phenomena within their authentic settings. This design facilitates a detailed understanding of the driver experiences by investigating real life situations and the unique factors influencing them. In addition, the study utilizes narrative inquiry as a methodology, which involves the collection and analysis of personal stories or narratives. This approach enables researchers to delve into how the bus drivers construct meaning and make sense of their experiences. By gathering these narratives, the research captures the rich, subjective perspectives of the drivers, providing insight into their lived realities. Together, these qualitative methodologies enable a holistic exploration of the drivers' experience, allowing for a deeper interpretation of their perceptions and the contexts that shape their lives.

Table 1. Demography of survey respondents

Respondent	Age	Education	Years of driving experience
1	50	Bachelor degree	25
2	54	O-level	44
3	42	O-level	10
4	54	O-level	12
5	47	O-level	21
6	48	O-level	24
7	42	O-level	22
8	53	O-level	8
9	59	O-level	15
10	53	O-level	28
11	60	Bachelor degree	30
12	42	O-level	18
13	43	O-level	33
14	43	Bachelor degree	18
15	51	O-level	21
16	46	Bachelor degree	20
17	40	Bachelor degree	10
18	53	O-level	29
19	45	Bachelor degree	14
20	45	O-level	30
21	42	O-level	20
22	45	O-level	23
23	61	O-level	44
24	56	O-level	34
25	38	O-level	10

Survey Respondents

The investigation was conducted in Abeokuta, Ogun State, and Ibadan, Oyo State, both situated in the southwestern region of Nigeria. Convenience sampling was employed to select 25 respondents from among long-distance bus drivers in each city. According to the Eurostat criteria applied in the dateline study (Frei, Kuhnimhof, & Axhausen, 2010), a trip is considered long distance if it involves a roundtrip covering at least 100 kilometers. In Ghana, individuals who drive for distances exceeding 140 km on a regular basis are referred to as long-distance drivers (Ghana Metro Mass Transit, 2010). The Federal Road Safety Corps (2015) in Nigeria does not explicitly define “long-distance trip” in terms of kilometers or miles. Instead, it provides guidance that ties the concept to the duration of travel and the risks of driver fatigue.

We selected long-distance bus drivers who were readily accessible and willing to share their experiences. This approach was necessary due to logistical constraints and the exploratory nature of the study, which aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of specific lived experiences. We selected participants based on specific criteria, including their experience as drivers and their willingness to engage in the study. While we recognize that this method may limit the generalizability of the findings, it allowed for a rich exploration of the drivers’ unique contexts and challenges. We also emphasized the importance of contextual

relevance in qualitative research, noting that the insights gathered can inform broader discussions about the experiences of bus drivers in similar contexts. Finally, we acknowledge the need for further research employing varied sampling methods to enhance generalizability and deepen our understanding of this population.

Table 1 provides a demographic snapshot of the 25 respondents selected for this study from the cities of Abeokuta and Ibadan. The participant age ranges from 40 to 60 years, reflecting a mix of middle-aged and senior individuals. All participants are male, married and or reported being married, signifying a common trait in their personal lives. Educational backgrounds vary, with respondents having completed either O-level qualifications or obtained bachelor degrees. The participants exhibit diverse professional experiences, with years of work ranging from 8 to 44. This diversity in experience levels contributes to a comprehensive understanding of knowledge mobilization practices.

Data Collection Instrument

This study employed an interview schedule as the primary method, allowing researchers to gather information from the target population and meet the study objectives effectively. Face-to-face interviews were chosen as the most suitable approach due to their capacity to elicit comprehensive and thoughtful responses from participants. The choice of face-to-face interviews was also particularly appropriate as the study included both uneducated and moderately educated members of the target population. Also, the respondents are busy persons who hardly stay on one spot for a sufficiently long time to complete a questionnaire.

Administration of the Interview Schedule

The interviews took place in the mornings over a period of four weeks, from November 6, 2023, to December 8, 2023. The timing was flexible, depending on participants' preferred time slots, to ensure concentration for maximum participation. In total, 15 and 10 participants were interviewed in Abeokuta and Ibadan respectively. Each interview lasted about 15 minutes. To capture the participants' responses, a telephone recording device was utilized. The interview questions as in the Appendix were formulated in alignment with the study's objectives. Conducting the interviews in Yoruba, the native language, was preferred by most long-distance bus drivers in Abeokuta and Ibadan. The data was initially collected in Yoruba, and then translated to English. Subsequently, a manual coding process was undertaken, involving a thorough review and categorization of the data into themes

We follow Kross and Giust (2019) who asserted that research questions in qualitative inquiry act as foundational frameworks for exploring complex social phenomena, facilitating deep insights into participants' perspectives and experiences. These questions shape the study's design and influence data interpretation, fostering a nuanced understanding of the context involved. They also emphasize the importance of flexibility and adaptability in research questions, allowing researchers to adjust their focus based on new insights during data collection. This iterative process promotes dynamic engagement with the research topic, enriching findings and contributing to the field's overall knowledge base.

Data Analysis

The data analysis process was initiated with the transcription of all interviews using Microsoft Word. The interview data, containing responses from all research participants, were uploaded into Atlas.Ti V9 for analysis and coded using the software (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The

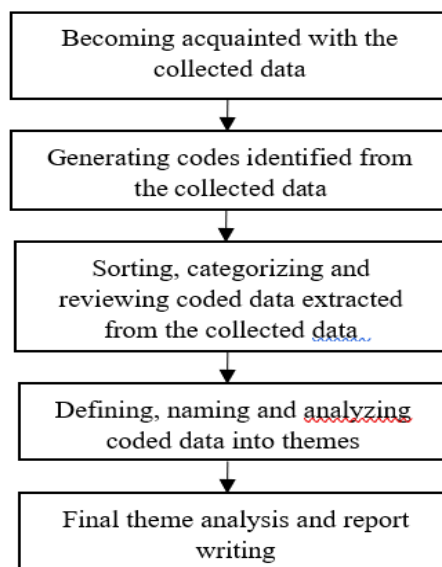


Figure 1. Data analysis research process

coding process commenced with a comprehensive open coding process to categorize participants' responses (Strauss, 1987). After each response, a quotation was often associated with a specific code. The codes and segments were systematically reviewed to ensure that every response to interview questions was captured. The codification process involved segmenting the data according to the structured sections of the interview questions, aligning with both the independent variables from the conceptual framework and the research objectives and questions. Starting with information needs, each response within the respective section underwent analysis, coding, and categorization under relevant themes. Following the completion of the open coding process, a free code was created, defining forty-four codes grouped into twelve code groups, along with over 400 quotations.

Following the structure in Figure 1 for analyzing the results, the researchers employed constant comparative techniques to review each coded response from the respondents. This process included renaming codes with descriptive labels and organizing them into groups. The research objectives and questions guided the coding process, ensuring a comprehensive capture of all perspectives and relevant information. The codified responses were then organized into the following major themes: information need, information-seeking strategies, information sources, information uses, satisfaction, and challenges in information-seeking. This systematic approach facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the various facets related to long-distance drivers' information-seeking behaviour, aligning with the research objectives and questions.

To minimize researcher bias, we incorporated several strategies throughout the data collection and analysis processes. We documented all our assumptions and preconceptions about the study topic before and during data analysis. With this reflective journal, we were able to continuously evaluate how our perspectives shape our interpretations of the data we collected, and this allowed us to approach the data with greater openness. In addition, to ensure the credibility of our findings, we conducted peer debriefing sessions with three academic colleagues from the University of Ibadan who are experienced in qualitative research and relatively familiar with the context of the study. These colleagues reviewed and discussed our interpretations, providing critical insights that helped us refine and validate our analysis. While logistical constraints limited our ability to conduct respondent validation, we acknowledge this limitation and suggest it as an area for further research.

Altogether, this word cloud captures the multifaceted nature of information needs among Nigerian long-distance bus drivers, emphasizing a strong focus on vehicle maintenance, road safety, security, and reliable information sources. It highlights the need for accessible, trustworthy information channels tailored to these concerns, and underlines the importance of social networks in supporting these drivers' information-seeking behaviour.

SURVEY RESULTS

Information Needs

I, Kikelomo, one of the authors of this article, sat down with each bus driver and delved into their world, eager to understand the information they deemed essential for their daily operations. Upon asking about their information needs, the drivers shared a wealth of insights. The drivers' information needs revolve around ensuring the safety and comfort of their passengers, optimizing travel efficiency, and addressing mechanical concerns. The drivers need information about vehicle maintenance and safety, reflecting the pivotal need for smooth operation of their vehicles. The drivers emphasized the paramount need of acquiring knowledge and skills related to vehicle repair and maintenance, as articulated by **Respondents 6, 8 and 17**. This highlights the practical challenges drivers face on a day-to-day basis, requiring them to possess a comprehensive understanding of their vehicles to address mechanical issues promptly and effectively. Furthermore, safety emerged as a recurring theme, with **Respondents 6, 15 and 24** expressing concerns about the information needs on how to protect themselves and their passengers. They stressed the need for information on vehicle safety features, maintenance practices, and defensive driving techniques to mitigate the risks associated with operating vehicles in various conditions. This emphasis on safety underscores the drivers' commitment to prioritizing the well-being of all road users and underscores the critical role of information in promoting road safety.

The information needs of **Respondents 4, 6 and 17** were on costs of vehicle parts and the affordable sources. This concern reflects the economic challenges faced by drivers, who rely heavily on their vehicles for their livelihoods. Also, regulatory and bureaucratic hurdles were highlighted by **Respondents 12, 21 and 24** as issues on which they required information; they expressed frustrations with the complexities of obtaining essential documents such as driving licenses and vehicle permits. This underscores the administrative burdens faced by the drivers, which can impede their ability to perform their duties efficiently and confidently. In the voices of the drivers:

Respondent 4: *I need information about where to get vehicle parts because things are now very expensive.*

Respondent 12: *I need information on how to obtain essential papers like driving license for my vehicle.*

Respondent 24: *I need information on how to get driver's license easily without any issue because vehicle particulars are one of the things that make us fearful while driving.*

The insights gathered from long-distance drivers reveal a multifaceted understanding of their essential information needs, which are crucial for their daily operations. By engaging directly with them, it becomes evident that their information requirements are primarily centered around three key areas: ensuring passenger safety and comfort, optimizing travel efficiency, and addressing mechanical concerns. Drivers emphasized the necessity of knowledge and skills related to vehicle maintenance and repair, highlighting their practical challenges in managing mechanical issues effectively. This reflects a profound understanding of their vehicles as essential tools for their livelihoods, as articulated by multiple respondents. Safety

emerges as a critical concern, with drivers seeking information on safety features, maintenance practices, and defensive driving techniques to navigate various road conditions confidently. This commitment to safety underscores their prioritization of the well-being of passengers and other road users.

Furthermore, economic considerations are evident in the drivers' need for information on the costs of vehicle parts and affordable sources, pointing to the financial pressures they face in sustaining their operations. Regulatory challenges also emerge as a significant concern, with drivers expressing frustrations regarding bureaucratic hurdles in obtaining essential documents like driving licenses and vehicle permits. These administrative burdens hinder their ability to perform efficiently and confidently, revealing an overarching theme: the drivers' information needs are intricately linked to their operational effectiveness, safety, and economic viability in a challenging environment.

Information-seeking Behaviour

Many drivers rely on co-drivers for information about road conditions, reflecting a practical reliance on peer knowledge within their professional network. Prayer and caution about late-night driving were also mentioned, indicating a blend of practical and superstitious approaches to safety. Many drivers mentioned gathering information from road safety lectures or relying on personal experience to adapt to driving conditions. The prevalence of technology use emerged in responses, with drivers mentioning the use of WhatsApp groups for sharing vital information and Google Maps for navigation. Yet, traditional methods like phone calls to colleagues and mechanics remained prevalent, reflecting a balance between modern tools and trusted interpersonal networks. Some of the opinions are apt:

***Respondent 2:** We keep learning every day and this cannot be done without my colleague and my boss. I ask what I don't understand about this job from my experienced colleague and my boss.*

***Respondent 5:** It is only God that can have mercy on us as there is no good road to drive on but nevertheless, we know how to find our ways while driving so I prefer to ask my co-drivers an alternative route before I travel.*

***Respondent 17:** I keep seeking information every day from my co-drivers and my boss because no one knows it all and we keep learning every day.*

Respondent 2, 5 and 17 emphasized the importance of continuous learning in the profession and highlighted the value of seeking guidance and knowledge from experienced colleagues and superiors to enhance skills and understanding. Their repeated mentions of continuous learning reflect the resilience and adaptability of drivers in the face of challenges, while also acknowledging the importance of seeking information from co-drivers to navigate safely through alternative routes. These responses also underscore the collaborative nature of information-seeking behaviour among drivers, highlighting the importance of staying informed and leveraging collective knowledge to improve performance and safety on the job.

Some drivers, such as **Respondents 1, 2 and 6**, relied on their experience and the expertise of their colleagues and supervisors. Others, like **Respondents 7 and 8**, leverage technology and communication platforms to gather real-time information about road conditions, traffic delays, and other pertinent updates. They utilize WhatsApp groups and phone calls to stay informed and make informed decisions before embarking on their trips. **Respondents 10, 16 and 17** consulted with mechanics to ensure their vehicles are in optimal condition, minimizing the risk of breakdowns and ensuring passenger safety. Safety concerns loom large in their information-seeking endeavours, with drivers like **Respondents 15 and 24**

emphasizing the importance of staying vigilant and assessing potential security threats on the road. They sought information from colleagues about obstacles, security threats, and alternative routes to navigate safely and efficiently. Their diverse approaches underscore the multifaceted nature of their profession and the importance of accessing timely and relevant information to navigate the complexities of long-distance travel effectively.

Some respondents displayed a laid-back or indifferent approach to seeking information, showing confidence in their experience and often relying on familiar routes and prayers for protection. For instance, **Respondent 10** below demonstrated a preference for personal experience and faith over actively seeking external information.

Respondent 10: *I don't really seek information before traveling. I just pray to God to protect me and my passengers. I check if my vehicle is in good condition before traveling.* This demonstrates a preference for personal experience and faith over actively seeking external information.

Strategies for Information-seeking

Many participants exhibited specific strategies in their information-seeking behaviour, drawing from an array of sources and methods.

Respondent 3: *I gather information from the road safety as they lecture on our work most times.*

This individual demonstrated a proactive approach to meeting their information needs by seeking guidance from the Federal Road Safety Corps. This indicates an active engagement with relevant authorities to obtain necessary information.

Respondent 21: *Our union usually organizes seminars on a lot of things related to our job, especially on how to deal with law enforcement agencies because no matter what they will collect a bribe.*

This respondent relied on union-organized seminars as a means to acquire essential information, highlighting a collective approach to addressing common challenges within the profession.

Leveraging mobile technology, specifically WhatsApp groups, serves as another prevalent strategy for staying abreast of traffic conditions and road status:

Respondent 11: *I check Google Map since I am conversant with the application. Sometimes I ask my colleagues to confirm if Google Map is giving me accurate information.*

Respondent 7: *I check my phone often when I wake up early in the morning because we have a WhatsApp group where vital information is shared. Information like traffic delay, road condition is what I search for before traveling.*

Information-seeking Scenarios

Undoubtedly, the information-seeking behaviour of the respondents is frequently molded by specific situations encountered during their journeys. These situations encompass past accidents along their travel routes and encounters with law enforcement, prompting the necessity to seek information for more efficient travel and other associated needs. **Respondent 2** shared a recent experience involving an accident caused by the carelessness of a driver. Recognizing that the accident may not have solely resulted from the driver's negligence, given the poor road conditions, he felt compelled to consult with fellow drivers over the course of a week. The objective was to identify a safer route, ensuring a secure and timely

journey. This example illustrates how firsthand experiences, such as accidents, drive the need for updated information on safer routes.

Respondent 14 recounted, *I had to call my colleagues when I had an issue with the law enforcement agency*, while **Respondent 21** added that, *our union usually organized seminars on a lot of things related to our job, especially on how to deal with the law enforcement agency because no matter what they will collect bribes*. Issues with law enforcement agencies necessitate seeking information on proper procedures and strategies for dealing with such situations. According to **Respondent 18**, *most times, people perceive drivers as touts which are not supposed to be*—such situation influenced the respondent to seek information related to being reputedly addressed and recognized as a professional.

Challenges related to public perception drive the need for information on improving the professional image of drivers. These instances showcase how external factors, like accidents, encounters with law enforcement agencies, public acceptance or recognition, and road conditions, influence the information-seeking behaviour of respondents to ensure safer and more efficient travel. **Respondent 7** mentioned the impact of a petrol station closure, requiring them to inquire about other reachable stations to refuel. The drivers are adaptable to external factors that affect their operations, such as fuel shortages or price increases, as mentioned by **Respondents 1 and 8**.

The words of the drivers are illustrative:

Respondent 3: *A recent situation that happened is an accident caused by the carelessness of a driver and I can't say carelessness per say as the roads we drive on is bad and for one week while travelling, I had to ask my fellow drivers for a safer route.*

Respondent 6: *While travelling recently, there was a road blockage as a result of road maintenance so I was told to pass through an alternative route to make my journey faster.*

Respondent 7: *Closure of petrol stations really affected our job and we had to travel down to another state sometimes to purchase petrol.*

Respondent 8: *Increase in petrol recently really affect our work as I spend almost all the money I earn on petrol and this does not help things.*

The information-seeking scenarios of long-distance drivers are significantly shaped by situational factors encountered during their journeys, revealing a complex interplay between external circumstances and the necessity for timely and relevant information. Drivers frequently seek guidance in response to specific events, such as accidents or law enforcement encounters, highlighting their reliance on communication with colleagues and union resources to navigate challenges. For instance, **Respondent 2** illustrated how a recent accident prompted a week-long inquiry among peers to identify safer routes, underscoring the importance of experiential learning in their decision-making processes.

Furthermore, issues related to law enforcement, as discussed by **Respondents 14 and 21**, necessitate strategic information-seeking about proper procedures, reflecting an acute awareness of the socio-legal landscape in which they operate. Additionally, concerns about public perception, as articulated by **Respondent 18**, drive drivers to seek information aimed at enhancing their professional image, indicating a desire for recognition and respect within the community. Drivers also demonstrate adaptability in the face of logistical challenges, such as petrol station closures and fuel price increases, which can significantly impact their operations. The examples provided by **Respondents 3, 6 and 7** illustrated how external factors compel drivers to actively seek information to ensure the safety and efficiency of their journeys. Collectively, these scenarios emphasize the critical role of context in shaping the information needs and information-seeking behaviour of long-distance bus drivers, as they navigate a dynamic and often unpredictable travel environment.

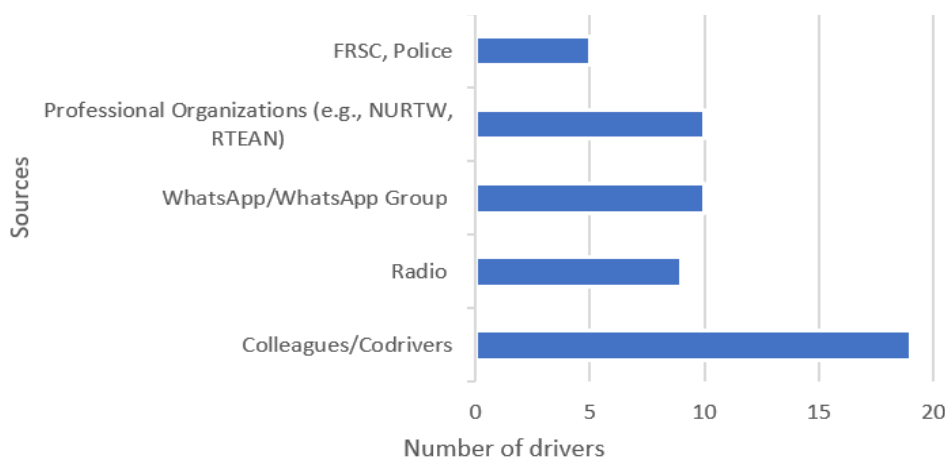


Figure 3. Information source used by long-distance bus drivers

Information Sources Used

In probing the primary sources which long-distance bus drivers rely on for job-related information a variety of preferences and practices emerged as shown in Figure 3, reflecting the intricate network of information exchange within their professional community. The responses were largely consistent in emphasizing the pivotal role of colleagues as a primary source of information. This reliance on peer knowledge underscores the close-knit nature of the profession, where shared experiences and on-the-ground insights play a crucial role in navigating the challenges of long-distance driving.

Radio emerged as another prominent source of information, valued not only for its informative content but also for its role in alleviating boredom during long drives. The accessibility and constant updates provided by radio broadcasts make it a convenient choice for drivers seeking to stay informed while on the road. The utilization of technology, particularly WhatsApp groups and Google Maps, was also evident, reflecting a shift towards digital platforms for real-time updates and navigation assistance. While these digital tools offer convenience and efficiency, they often complement rather than replace the insights gleaned from colleagues and first-hand experiences.

Interestingly, organizations such as RTEAN and NURTW emerged as trusted sources of reliable information. These associations not only provide guidance and support but also organize seminars and meetings to educate drivers on various aspects of their profession. Additionally, interactions with law enforcement agencies were cited as valuable sources of information, particularly regarding road conditions and safety regulations. Seminars and workshops organized by these agencies serve as platforms for drivers to enhance their knowledge and understanding of their profession in a modernized context. The diverse range of sources highlighted by respondents reflects the multifaceted nature of information acquisition within the long-distance bus driving community. From peer networks and traditional media to digital platforms and organizational affiliations, drivers employ a combination of resources to stay informed, ensuring safer and more efficient journeys on Nigeria's roads.

In their own words:

Respondent 18: *When travelling, I rely on Law enforcement agency like FRSC, police officers etc.*

Respondent 19: *I learn from seminars organized by law enforcement agency because they explain things to us in a modernized way.*

Respondent 20: *A driver must join associations like NURTW and RTEAN for some benefits needed for our job.*

Respondent 21: *I don't have any other job apart from this so I learn from my bosses for me to be successful in this profession.*

The examination of information sources utilized by long-distance bus drivers reveals a complex interplay of preferences and practices, highlighting the importance of a robust information exchange network within their professional community. A predominant reliance on colleagues as primary sources of information underscores the close-knit nature of the profession, where shared experiences and peer insights are invaluable for addressing the myriad challenges associated with long-distance driving. This reliance suggests that interpersonal relationships are integral to the drivers' operational success and safety.

Radio also emerges as a significant source of information, valued not only for its informative content but also for its ability to mitigate boredom during lengthy journeys. The immediacy and accessibility of radio broadcasts make it a preferred medium for drivers seeking real-time updates on road conditions and safety information. The increasing utilization of technology, particularly through platforms like WhatsApp groups and Google Maps, indicates a shift towards digital solutions that enhance the efficiency of information acquisition. However, these technological tools tend to complement rather than supplant the insights garnered from direct interactions with peers and lived experiences on the road. Furthermore, associations such as RTEAN and NURTW have emerged as trusted repositories of reliable information. These organizations play a critical role in supporting drivers through educational seminars and meetings that enrich their professional knowledge.

Interactions with law enforcement agencies also contribute significantly to drivers' information needs, particularly regarding safety regulations and road conditions. The multifaceted sources identified by drivers illustrate their adaptive approach to information acquisition, utilizing a blend of peer networks, traditional media, digital platforms, and organizational affiliations. This combination not only ensures that drivers remain informed but also enhances their ability to navigate the complexities of their profession, ultimately promoting safer and more efficient journeys across Nigeria's roads.

Information Access Experiences and Challenges

Long-distance bus drivers find information access to be generally straightforward, due to their familiarity with trusted sources such as colleagues, organizational channels, and mobile communication platforms like WhatsApp. While most drivers encounter minimal difficulties, some acknowledge occasional challenges, such as unreliable sources or unforeseen circumstances on the road. However, they approach these challenges with resilience, leveraging their experience and resourcefulness to overcome obstacles as they arise:

Respondent 1: *It is always very easy to retrieve information since we are getting information from our colleagues.*

Respondent 2: *I don't face any challenges when retrieving information since I get it from either my co-drivers or our organization.*

Respondent 3: *Since where I am getting the information from is at my disposal, it is not always difficult.*

Respondent 4: *It is always very easy retrieving information since we know where we can get the information from.*

Mobile phones emerge as the primary tool for getting information among drivers, facilitating communication with colleagues, accessing real-time updates, and gathering

essential information while on the road. Additionally, drivers emphasize the importance of safety equipment such as caution signs and fire extinguishers, which aid in emergencies and serve as visual indicators to other drivers of potential hazards. Respondents also rely on radios and occasionally use social media, television, and newspapers, particularly during quieter periods, to supplement their information access.

Misinformation is identified as a prevalent challenge, with concerns about unreliable sources leading to potential misunderstandings. Issues such as false alarms and low IT skill complicate the access process. Additionally, poor network coverage during travel poses obstacles to effective communication with co-drivers. Despite these challenges, drivers maintain a pragmatic stance, accepting them as inherent aspects of their profession. Some respondents veer towards broader work-related difficulties rather than specific instances of information access challenges, citing issues like poor road conditions, passenger challenges, and delays in reaching destinations. However, they express resilience, often relying on prayer and positive mindset to navigate challenges.

Language barriers are infrequent within their own tribal communities, but occasional challenges arise, particularly when traversing different regions. Some drivers demonstrate strategies for managing language barriers, including proficiency in English and adaptation to diverse cultural and religious contexts. Long-distance bus drivers heavily rely on mobile phones and traditional tools for accessing information, enabling them to make informed decisions, mitigate risks, and uphold safety standards on the road. Despite occasional challenges, they navigate their journeys with confidence, ensuring smooth and efficient trips for themselves and their passengers.

Role of Information Technology and Preference

The drivers utilize a variety of information sources to boost their efficiency and stay informed. They rely on radio broadcasts for accurate and reliable updates on current events and essential news. Mobile phones are essential tools, enabling communication via WhatsApp and access to apps like Google Maps and Facebook for information on the go. Google Maps is particularly valued for navigation and real-time traffic updates. WhatsApp facilitates efficient communication with colleagues and superiors, allowing for seamless coordination and sharing of work-related information.

The bus drivers increasingly rely on modern information technologies for their efficiency, adaptability, and safety. Technologies like radios and mobile phones offer quick access to updates, aiding decision-making without disrupting tasks. Social media and Google Maps enhance adaptability, enabling drivers to stay ahead in their profession. These tools also contribute to safety by providing real-time updates on weather, road closures, and traffic congestion, helping drivers plan routes effectively for safer journeys. According to two respondents:

Respondent 10: *Everything is now easy with our mobile phone. We communicate with our co-drivers most times if any problem occurs while travelling. I don't really seek information before travelling, I just pray to God to protect me and my passengers while travelling but what I do before travelling is check if my vehicle is in good condition before travelling.*

Respondent 5: *I check my phone often when I wake up early in the morning because we have a WhatsApp group where vital information is shared. Information like traffic delay, road condition is what I search for before travelling.*

Challenges of Information-seeking

The drivers encounter a myriad of obstacles when accessing information. Poor internet connectivity in remote areas and costly data plans restrict their online resource and GPS usage. Tight delivery schedules make it hard to stop and search for information without impacting their driving time and deadlines. They must prioritize safety over browsing while driving, often waiting until it's safe to pull over. The vast amount of online information can overwhelm them, especially when navigating through search results or complex websites.

Language barriers further complicate matters, particularly when using navigation apps or asking for directions in unfamiliar regions. Outdated maps and navigation systems may not reflect current road conditions, leading to unexpected detours or delays. Additionally, some drivers are limited by low-quality phones that lack internet access, further impeding their ability to gather real-time information. Despite these challenges, long-distance drivers navigate through these hurdles, adapting to the ever-changing landscape of information technology to ensure safe and efficient journeys for themselves and their passengers.

Respondent 17 put it this way: My phone is a "palasa" phone.

Palasa is a slang for low quality phones that cannot access the internet.

DISCUSSION

This study was designed to explore the information behaviour of long-distance drivers in Nigeria. In the following paragraphs the study's findings will be contextualized and related to policy recommendations.

Safety and driving skills are seen as critical for drivers. Evans (1991) showed how psychological and behavioural factors influence road safety, underscoring how adopting safer driving behaviour can dramatically reduce accidents and fatalities. Similarly, Anstey, Wood, Lord and Walker (2005) demonstrated that periodic refresher courses enhance hazard perception and reduce reaction times. These insights hold particular relevance for developing countries, where weak enforcement of defensive driving practices contributes to high accident rates. By adopting evidence-based public policies and community-driven campaigns to address risky behaviour like speeding, drunk driving, and failure to use seatbelts, these nations can foster a culture of road safety, ultimately transforming driving habits and saving lives. Given that Okafor, Odeyemi, and Dolapo (2013) found that commercial bus drivers in Lagos, Nigeria tended to have a sub-standard understanding of safety measures, such campaigns would benefit Nigerian long-distance bus drivers.

Vehicle maintenance is a critical area of concern for drivers, who often grapple with challenges related to obtaining quality parts, finding reliable mechanics, and managing the costs of repairs and upkeep. Studies have shed light on the consequences of neglecting maintenance knowledge. For instance, Ngadiman *et al* (2015) highlighted how insufficient awareness of preventive maintenance leads to frequent breakdowns and vehicle malfunctions. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (n.d.) in the United States underscored the vital role of regular vehicle upkeep in road safety, demonstrating how consistent maintenance significantly reduces accidents while prolonging vehicle life. Together, these insights underscore the transformative potential of accessible and practical maintenance information, empowering drivers to maintain their vehicles efficiently and safely.

Regulatory compliance is highlighted as essential, with drivers expressing the need for guidance on obtaining driving licenses and understanding legal requirements for vehicle operation. Navigating bureaucratic processes and staying compliant with regulations are crucial to avoid fines or legal troubles. Okafor, Odeyemi, Dolapo, and Adegbola (2014) told

us that only a few had received formal training, while more than half obtained licenses through illegal means. The study emphasized the importance of strict enforcement of licensing laws and improvements in driver education to address these challenges. Similarly, a report by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (2025) in the USA analyzed the relationship between driver license compliance and fatal crashes, demonstrating the critical need for valid licensing and adherence to legal requirements to prevent traffic fatalities. These findings underscore the necessity for proper guidance on regulatory compliance to ensure safer and more lawful driving practices.

Financial management is a common concern among drivers. Given the uncertainties in their earnings and the irregularity of income, drivers are increasingly seeking information on financial planning, alternative income sources, and entrepreneurship opportunities to enhance their financial security. Financial literacy plays a vital role in helping drivers make informed decisions about budgeting, saving, and investing, thereby ensuring long-term financial stability. Moreover, exploring alternative income streams, such as investing in real estate or engaging in online businesses like e-commerce, has proven to be effective in supplementing their earnings (Adebiyi, Olatunji & Ogunleye, 2020).

The respondents also revealed that information on customer service skills, communication techniques, and ways to enhance the passenger experience during long journeys was needed. Drivers are increasingly aware that these skills contribute significantly to business success. A study by Giwa, Saheed, & Yusuf (2024) suggested that passengers prioritize factors such as driver responsiveness, the cleanliness of the vehicle, and the comfort of the ride. Additionally, good communication skills are essential for establishing trust and ensuring that passengers feel safe and valued during their journey. The research further indicates that by focusing on improving these aspects, drivers can increase customer loyalty and boost their reputation, which can lead to more frequent business and higher earnings.

Law enforcement interactions present significant challenges for drivers, who often seek guidance on understanding their rights and responsibilities during traffic stops. To address these concerns, several initiatives have been implemented to educate drivers on proper conduct during traffic stops including the National Open University of Nigeria which offers a course on driver education, which supplements knowledge obtained from government-printed driving handbooks.

Road conditions play a vital role in journey planning, with drivers requiring access to real-time updates on road closures, construction, and weather conditions to make informed decisions and ensure safe travel. According to a study by Asogwa (1992), the availability of up-to-date information on road conditions helps drivers optimize their travel time and reduce the risk of accidents. This includes information on areas with heavy traffic, roadworks, or hazardous weather, which can affect the safety and comfort of the journey.

In addition, the importance of weather conditions to the drivers in journey planning cannot be overstated. Research by Adewumi (2018) emphasized that weather-related factors, such as heavy rainfall or fog, can reduce visibility and road traction, leading to an increased likelihood of accidents. Drivers who are informed of such conditions in advance can take necessary precautions, such as adjusting their speed or choosing alternative routes, thereby minimizing the risk of road incidents. Moreover, the integration of technologies like GPS navigation systems and mobile applications that provide live traffic updates has become indispensable in modern driving practices (Siyan, Oyeyemi, & Agunbiade, 2019). These technologies allow drivers to receive real-time information and make swift decisions, ensuring a safer and more efficient journey.

The study further categorized information-seeking behaviour into five distinct classes, elucidating the various strategies employed by drivers to gather essential information. Peer consultation emerged as a predominant practice, with drivers often seeking guidance from colleagues and superiors regarding road conditions and alternative routes. Proactive measures, such as consulting vehicle mechanics before travel, underscored the drivers' commitment to vehicle maintenance and safety. Technology plays a pivotal role in information acquisition, with drivers relying on mobile applications like WhatsApp and Google Maps for real-time updates and navigation assistance. Other studies have found broadly similar behaviour (Oporum, 2023; Nwagwu & Olatunji, 2012).

While some drivers exhibited a relaxed attitude towards information-seeking, relying on prayers and familiarity with routes, others demonstrated a more strategic approach, adjusting passenger fares in response to petrol price fluctuations and utilizing various sources for information gathering, including road safety lectures and union seminars. Information-seeking behaviour was frequently influenced by external factors such as past accidents, road conditions, and encounters with law enforcement, prompting drivers to seek timely information for safer and more efficient travel.

Sources of information ranged from direct interactions with colleagues and law enforcement agents to digital platforms like Google Maps and WhatsApp. Drivers expressed a strong preference for information obtained from colleagues, highlighting its perceived effectiveness and reliability. Moreover, drivers emphasized the personal, co-driver, and passenger benefits derived from effective information utilization, ranging from improved safety practices to enhanced customer satisfaction. The survey findings underscored the critical role of information in enhancing the efficiency, safety, and satisfaction of long-distance bus drivers. Despite challenges such as misinformation and language barriers, drivers exhibited resilience and adaptability in navigating information landscapes, leveraging a combination of traditional and digital tools to meet their information needs effectively.

CONCLUSION

This study provides an exploration of the information needs, seeking strategies, sources, practical applications, challenges, and language barriers faced by long-distance bus drivers. By embedding research objectives and questions within the discussion, the study effectively conveys insights into the complex information ecosystem of these drivers, emphasizing the role of co-drivers and the impact of external factors on information-seeking behaviour. The challenges, both in information access and broader work-related issues, highlight the resilience and adaptability of long-distance drivers in navigating their professional landscape.

The findings reveal the long-distance bus drivers to be as resilient and adaptable individuals who navigate the complexities of their profession with remarkable resourcefulness. Central to their adaptability is their reliance on peer networks, as drivers predominantly seek information and support from their colleagues. This reliance fosters a strong sense of community and mutual aid, enabling them to effectively tackle challenges encountered on the road. Embracing modern technology further exemplifies their adaptability. While they face hurdles, such as, poor internet connectivity, drivers increasingly utilize mobile applications like Google Maps and WhatsApp to enhance their information-gathering processes. This willingness to embrace change and innovation showcases their ability to evolve alongside technological advancements, transforming potential barriers into tools for success.

Proactive problem solving is another hallmark of the long-distance bus drivers' resilience. Many drivers took the initiative to consult vehicle mechanics before embarking on journeys and adjust passenger fares in response to fluctuations in petrol prices. This anticipatory mindset reflects their understanding of the uncertainties inherent in their work, allowing them to effectively manage and mitigate risks. Flexibility in information-seeking behaviour is another defining trait of these drivers. They employed a variety of strategies for gathering information, including cross-verifying details from multiple sources and adjusting their approaches based on past experiences, such as, road conditions or encounters with law enforcement. This adaptability allows them to tailor their methods to fit specific contexts and requirements, ensuring they remain well-informed.

The commitment of the long-distance bus drivers to safety and passenger satisfaction further illustrates their resilience. Despite the challenges they face, drivers prioritize their responsibilities and seek to enhance the experience of their passengers. This balance between operational demands and customer care reflects a mindset that values both personal and professional growth. Learning from experience plays a crucial role in their adaptability. The drivers' past encounters with road incidents or law enforcement shape their behaviour, prompting them to seek timely information to navigate future challenges. This ongoing process of learning and refinement highlights their resilience, as they continually adapt their practices based on real-world experiences.

Our study effectively follows the qualitative research approach suggested by Kross and Giust (2019) by intricately weaving research objectives and questions into the discussion. While not explicitly stated, the objectives are implicitly addressed throughout the exploration of information needs, seeking strategies, sources, practical applications, and challenges faced by long-distance bus drivers. Three main themes—information needs, information benefits, and reasons for information—provide a structured understanding of the diverse information needs expressed by long-distance bus drivers. These themes span various aspects, including law enforcement, anti-bribery, income, development, professional recognition, and safety habits, with a strong emphasis on vehicle-related information.

Further, this study reveals a spectrum of information-seeking strategies employed by long-distance bus drivers, ranging from consulting with colleagues and superiors, utilizing technology for continuous learning, adopting proactive measures for vehicle maintenance, to relying on prayers and personal instincts. This diversity underscores the adaptive nature of their information-seeking behaviour. Co-drivers emerge as the primary and trusted source of information for long-distance bus drivers, emphasizing the effectiveness and reliability of peer-to-peer channels. The study also recognizes the role of personal experience, law enforcement agencies, government organizations, driver unions, and traffic organizations as valuable sources contributing to the rich information landscape. While the majority find information access easy, the study highlights common challenges faced by drivers, including misinformation, illiteracy, poor network coverage, and broader work-related issues. The adaptive use of tools such as mobile phones, radio, and technology like Google Maps, showcases the resilience of drivers in overcoming challenges in the information-seeking process.

Contributions

Based on the above findings, we have developed the recommendations below as our

contributions to a possible pathway for the enhancement of road safety, operational efficiency, and overall professional development of long-distance bus drivers in the context of Nigeria:

- **Enhanced road safety policies**

The study found that the drivers prioritized their safety and that of their passengers, a situation that should support interest in defensive driving information. It is therefore recommended to develop and mandate defensive driving training programs. Creating centralized road safety information platforms, and accessible via mobile applications would provide drivers with easy access to crucial safety guidelines and updates.

- **Real-time road condition updates**

The drivers continuously mention the significance of road conditions in their journey planning, and the reliance of drivers on mobile phones and peer networks for updates, prompting the need for the establishment of government or organizational systems to provide real-time updates. These systems should include information on construction zones, weather conditions, and detours to facilitate safer and more efficient travel.

- **Digital literacy programs**

While drivers frequently use digital tools, challenges such as low IT skills and exposure to misinformation persist. To address these issues, training sessions should be conducted to improve proficiency in navigation apps, teach them how to verify information sources, and equip them to combat misinformation effectively.

- **Workshops on regulatory compliance**

The drivers noted the concern of interactions with law enforcement and regulatory compliance. Organizing workshops that focus on essential topics such as license acquisition, understanding legal rights during traffic stops, and conflict resolution techniques would help drivers navigate these challenges confidently.

- **Multilingual and culturally inclusive materials**

Although language barriers are relatively infrequently mentioned by the drivers, they pose challenges on cross-regional routes. Providing multilingual information materials and promoting English proficiency as a common bridge language would therefore be required to enhance communication and inclusivity across diverse regions.

- **Customer service training**

With the study identifying passenger satisfaction as a significant concern, offering training programs in communication, conflict resolution, and service delivery would empower drivers to deliver better customer experiences, fostering passenger loyalty and satisfaction.

- **Union collaboration**

Peer consultation emerges as a predominant strategy for information-seeking among drivers. Hence, strengthening partnerships with drivers' unions could enhance structured peer-based information-sharing systems, making the dissemination of crucial information more efficient and reliable.

- **Support for vehicle maintenance**

The drivers frequently express concerns about vehicle maintenance and the reliability of spare parts. Developing networks of certified mechanics and providing tailored maintenance schedule guides would support drivers in maintaining their vehicles' reliability and safety.

Limitations

In a large multicultural country like Nigeria, a study with a wider geographical scope would

be required to generate information that addresses the subject from a wider range of cultural, regional, and socio-economic perspectives.

Further Studies

To strengthen the above recommendations, there will be needs for empirical studies highlighting the role of real-time information systems in reducing transportation delays and improving safety (e.g., ITS research). Other studies needed would be those which could provide evidence on the effectiveness of driver training programs in reducing accidents and enhancing customer service. Finally, research on the impact of digital literacy on empowering underserved professional groups, including drivers will be necessary to improve travel safety.

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APPENDIX

Section A. Demographic information

1. Age Category: a) 16-20 [] b) 21-25 [] c) 26-30 [] d) 31-35 [] e) 36-40 [] f) 41-45 [] g) 46-50 [] 51-55 [] 56 and above []
2. Gender: a) Male [] b) Female []
3. Marital status: a) Single [] b) Married [] c) Divorced [] d) Widowed []
4. Religion: a) Islam [] b) Christianity [] c) Others []
5. Education: What is the highest level of education you have completed?
a) Primary school education [] b) Secondary school education [] c) Bachelor's degree [] d) others []

Section B. Information Needs

On a scale of 1 to 5, please rate the following statements regarding your information needs as a long-distance driver (1=Strongly agree, 2=Agree, 3=Neutral, 4=Strongly Disagree, 5=Disagree):

	1	2	3	4	5
I often feel that I lack essential information while driving long-distances.					
Uncertainty about road conditions, traffic or weather affects my driving experience as a long-distance driver.					
Having access to up-to-date information about rest areas, gas stations and food options is crucial for me as a long-distance driver.					
I sometimes find it challenging to obtain relevant information about alternative routes, road closures or detours during my long-drives.					
The availability of real-time traffic updates and navigation assistance significantly improves my long-distance driving experience.					

Section C. Information-seeking behaviour

1. *Initiation*: When planning for a long-distance trip, what sources of information do you typically use to gather initial information? Please select all that apply:

	1	2	3	4	5
Internet search engines (e.g. Google, Bing)					
Navigaton applications (e.g. Google Maps, Waze)					
Online travel forums or communities					
Social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter)					
Recommendations from friends or family					
Travel guidebooks					

2. *Selection*: How do you determine which information sources are most relevant and trustworthy for your long-distance trips? Please rate the following factors based on their importance to you (1=not important, 2=important, 3=moderately important, 4=of little importance, 5=very important):

	1	2	3	4	5
Accuracy and reliability of the information					
User reviews and ratings					
Recommendations from trusted sources (e.g. professional drivers, travel experts)					
User-friendly interface and ease of use					
Availability of real-time updates and notifications					
Others (please specify):					

3. *Exploration*: When seeking information about specific destinations, attractions or services during your long drives, how do you typically explore or search for information? Please select all that apply:

	1	2	3	4	5
Online search engines					
GPS navigation systems					
Mobile applications specific to travel or road assistance					
Online travel forums or communities					
Social media platforms (e.g. Facebook groups, travel blogs)					
Asking locals or fellow travellers					

4. *Collection*: Once you find relevant information, how do you collect or save it for future reference during your long drives? Please select all that apply:

	1	2	3	4	5
Taking screenshots or photos					
Bookmarking websites or saving links					
Writing notes or using a travel journal					
Saving information in a mobile application or digital organizer					
Printing physical copies of relevant information					
Others (please specify):					

Section D. Information

1. *Sources*

When gathering information for your long-distance trips, which of the following sources do you typically rely on? Please select all that apply:

	1	2	3	4	5
Internet search engines					
Online travel websites or blogs					
Social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)					
Radio or broadcast traffic updates					
Official government or transportation websites					
Word-of-mouth recommendations from friends or family					
Others (please specify):					

2. *Use*

How do you typically use the information you gather before and during your long-distance drivers? Please rate the following statements based on your usage frequency (1=rarely, 2=occasionally, 3=never, 4=frequently 5=very frequently):

	1	2	3	4	5
Checking real-time traffic updates to choose the optimal route					
Using navigation applications to follow the suggested directions					
Searching for nearby rest areas, gas stations or food options during your journey					
Looking up weather forecasts or road conditions ahead of your trip					
Consulting user reviews or ratings for services					
Sharing your experiences or providing feedback on online travel platforms					
Others (please specify):					

Section E: Environmental factors

How do the following environmental factors impact your information-seeking behaviour during long-distance drives? Please rate the statements based on their influence (1=no influence, 2=limited influence 3=moderate influence 4=very strong influence 5=strong influence):

	1	2	3	4	5
Availability of mobile internet or data connectivity					
Quality and reliability of cellular network coverage					
Presence of road signs or markers providing information					
Accessibility of public Wi-Fi hotspots along the route					
Presence of digital display boards providing real-time information.					
Local language barriers affecting your ability to access information					
Others (please specify):					

Section F: Individual factors

Please indicate the extent to which the following factors influence your information-seeking behaviour during long-distance drives (1=no influence, 2=limited influence 3=moderate influence 4=very strong influence 5=strong influence):

	1	2	3	4	5
Prior experience and familiarity with long-distance driving					
Level of comfort or confidence in using technology and digital devices					
Preference for detailed or concise information					
Need for up-to-date and real-time information					
Willingness to experiment with new navigation tools or applications					
Trust in information obtained from online sources					
Others (please specify):					

Section G: Time constraints

How do time constraints impact your information-seeking behaviour during long-distance drives? Please rate the following statements based on their influence (1=no influence, 2=limited influence 3=moderate influence 4=very strong influence 5=strong influence):

	1	2	3	4	5
I tend to seek quick and concise information due to time limitations					
I allocate specific time for gathering information before embarking on a long-distance trip					
I prioritize obtaining time-sensitive information such as real-time traffic updates					
Time constraints affect the depth of information I seek before and during my journey					
I make trade-offs between extensive information gathering and adhering to my schedule					
Others (please specify):					

Section H: Time constraints

How does the purpose of your long-distance trip influence your information-seeking behaviour? Please rate the following statements based on their relevance to your trip purpose (1=not relevant, 2=slightly relevant 3=moderately relevant 4=highly relevant 5=extremely relevant):

	1	2	3	4	5
I prioritize obtaining information related to business meeting locations or conference venues					
Information about local attractions and tourist spots is essential for my leisure trips					
I seek information on accommodation options based on my trip purpose (e.g. budget-friendly, family-friendly)					
The availability of information on dining options and food preferences is important for my trip					
I focus on obtaining information about outdoor activities or adventure opportunities for my trip					
Others (please specify):					

Section I: Safety concerns

How do safety concerns impact your information-seeking behaviour during long-distance drives? Please rate the following statements based on their influence (1=no influence, 2=limited influence 3=moderate influence 4=very strong influence 5=strong influence):

	1	2	3	4	5
I actively seek information about weather conditions before and during my journey					
Obtaining information about road hazards, construction zones, or accidents is a priority for me					
I rely on real-time traffic updates to avoid congested areas and potential delays					
Safety-related information, such as crime rates or security measures influences my route decisions					
I seek information about rest areas, fuel stations or service facilities for convenience and safety					
Others (please specify):					

Section J: Psychological factors

How do the following psychological factors influence your information-seeking behaviour during long-distance drives? Please rate the statements based on their influence (1=no influence, 2=limited influence 3=moderate influence 4=very strong influence 5=strong influence):

	1	2	3	4	5
I tend to seek comprehensive information to minimize uncertainties and risks					
I feel overwhelmed by excessive information and prefer more selective or curated sources					
I have a preference for visual or auditory information formats (e.g maps, audio guides)					
I rely on recommendations or reviews from trusted sources for decision-making					
I enjoy experimenting with new navigation tools or applications for enhanced information access					
I have a strong aversion to information overload and prefer simplicity in information sources					
Others (please specify)					

Section K: Cultural background

How does your cultural background influence your information-seeking behaviour during long-distance drives? Please rate the following statements based on their influence (1=no influence, 2=limited influence 3=moderate influence 4=very strong influence 5=strong influence):

	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer obtaining information from sources that align with my cultural values or beliefs					
Recommendations or information from individuals within my cultural community are important to me					
I rely on local knowledge or insider tips from residents of the regions I am driving through					
Cultural traditions or customs influence the types of information I seek during my trips					
Language barriers impact my ability to access certain sources of information					
Others (please specify)					

END