



SOUTH SUDAN REGIONAL

B U S E S T R A N S P O R T A T I O N



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ACRONYM

AU	African Union
AUBP	African Union Border Programme
CSPS	Center for Strategic and Policy Studies
EAC	East African Community
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAS	National Salvation Front
RBT	Regional Bus Transport
SPLA-IO	Sudan People Liberation Army in Opposition
SSPMs	South Sudan Policy Makers
SSPS	South Sudan Police Services
T-GoNU	Transitional Government of National Unity
USA	United States of America

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ABOUT CSPS

South Sudan Center for Strategic and Policy Studies (CSPS) was established in July 2011 in Juba, South Sudan, as a national think-tank, just a week after the independence of South Sudan. Since then, the CSPS has been aspiring to inform and shape the path taken by the new country with regard to progress on the path of good governance in the human rights and democratic tradition, under the aegis of which the available resources are utilized sustainably for the well-being of the citizenry and humanity at large. CSPS aims at enabling participatory development and nation-building as guided by applied research, which makes it possible to influence or challenge best practices or worst possible future scenarios with strategies and policies that are drawn out of objectively balanced critical thinking. CSPS does not compromise its values and guiding principles of accountability, competence, confidentiality, dialogue, diversity, equity, integrity, professionalism, transparency and trust. Learn more about CSPS's projects, departments, publications and news on <https://cspss.org.ss>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Regional Buses Transport (RBT) report aimed to study the operation of buses that link South Sudan with the neighbouring countries of Uganda and Kenya. Little was known about those involved in the operations of the traveling business activities before this research. Research was designed to inform the public and policy makers about the current operations of the regional buses transport system. Through the research, we learn that the Ministry of Road and Transportation, Ministry of Interior and the Local government are the government institutions responsible for the regional bus transport operation.

The research tasks were divided into six chapters with three sections planned to investigate how RBT operates in South Sudan. The first section focused on the collections of demographic data. The paper is structured as follows: Chapter One-introduces the study, its objectives, statement of problem and structure, Chapter Two- presents the literature reviews on regional bus transport, Chapter Three- presents methodology, time frame, research scope, sample, and demographic data, Chapter Four: presents the findings of the study, Chapter Five: discusses the findings of the study, and Chapter Six: articulates the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

The researcher studied how many people travelled in and out of South Sudan on a daily basis, and the amounts each traveller paid per trip. The study also learned who runs the Regional Buses Transport business.

Qualitative research is defined by Marlow and Boone (2005) as a ‘systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds’ (p. 11). The research used interviews and questionnaires, and analyzed these using a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approach to arrive to its conclusion. An advantage to using interviews as a form of data collection as identified by Berg and Lune (2009), is that respondents answer questions in their own words with minimum control and direction from the presenters. This research started in April 2021 and it was completed in June 2021. The study was carried out in Juba municipality, Gumbo-Sherkat, Nimule and Juba bus stations.

South Sudan Center for Strategic and Policy Studies (CSPS) sponsored the research processes. There are a total number of 100 participants in this survey aged 18 to 60 years old. Out of 100, 77 responded and returned the questionnaires 64.9% males (50 males) and 35% females (27 females).

The participants of the research belong to various communities living in Juba suburbans and Nimule. Privacies and confidentiality were discussed to make informants feel free and contributed effectively (D’Cruz & Jones, 2004). As Maxfield and Babbie articulated, the facilitator kept informants attentive; involved, focused and attractive during each interview. Conscious of language barriers and pace, the interviewer gave adequate time to the responders.

All personal information and responses were kept confidential. This research will serve to inform the policy makers and the government of South Sudan about the legal operations of the regional bus companies between Uganda, Kenya and South Sudan.

Below is a sample of the questions used in the research:

- a) How many buses are travelling to and back to South Sudan daily?
- b) Why do you like this business? How many travellers per a day?
- c) How much each traveller is paying?
- d) How many bus companies are owned by South Sudanese?
- e) Who are the staffs running these businesses?
- f) Who is regulating this business? Are bus fleets and travellers insured?
- g) When did you come to Juba and how?
- h) How many staff do you have?
- i) How many South Sudanese are participating?

Once the research was finalized, its findings were decimated at a seminar conducted by the researcher. Stakeholders and at least two representatives from the Ministry of Interior (traffic officers), Ministry of Road and Transport, Justice (law enforcement sector) and the Local government were invited to attend.

Among the six regional bus companies; Friendship, Gold Line, Nile Star, Simba and Trinity Bus operating in South Sudan, my research learned that only Eco-bus is owned by a South Sudanese. All of the other buses are owned by foreigners. A total number of twelve buses travel daily, two from each company, with a total of 75 to 80 passengers per bus. Security issues, rough roads, two side tree-lined roads and uncomfortable checkpoint encounters with officials were identified as some of the challenges facing the regional transportation business.

In order to counter the challenges facing the regional transportation business between Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan, a few recommendations were identified. 1) Trimming or removing the trees lined on both sides of the road. 2) The government of South Sudan should increase the number of the existing military escorts on buses travelling from Juba to Kenya and Uganda and back to Juba from each border. 3) The government of South Sudan should scrutinize and discipline the officials responsible for putting the travellers and bus operators at the checkpoints in uncomfortable positions. 4) The South Sudan traffic law should to be clarified to everyone and drivers should have valid insurance certificates and a current driver's licence to operate in South Sudan. 5) The Government of South Sudan should make it law (obligatory) for of its traffic police officers to have current drivers licence and their cars insured as per the transportation regulations. 6) Public transportation should be avoided due to the unsafe condition of vehicles, the regular occurrence of road traffic accidents (particularly on the Juba-Nimule Road), and the high risk of robbery or assault on foreign nationals. 7) Motor cyclists (Boda boda) operations can be limited on the main road to avoid or minimize accidents. 8) Further research is needed to to learn how many South Sudanese are employed

by the 6 foreign bus companies, and why and how can South Sudanese increase their numbers of bus companies.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Regional buses transport (RBT) is a chain of business cooperation that connect South Sudan with its neighbouring countries mainly, Uganda and Kenya for travellers willing to travels by buses . However, little was known about who were involving in the operation of those business activities. This study was designed to inform the public and policy makers in South Sudan with the current operations of the regional buses transport system to and from Uganda and Kenya. The research explored the legality, importance, safety and challenges of regional bus transport. It also examined how the regional bus system operates and how users understand the current transport regulations or traffic Act 2003 of South Sudan organized by Dr. John Garang Mabior (Mabior, 2003). The research also attempted to understand which authorities allow the transport companies to operate, and the measures put in place when it comes to safety and security of the travellers.

1.1 OBJECTIVES

The objectives were as follows:

- ❖ Investigate the legal operations and importance of regional buses transport as well as the safety and the challenges facing by operators and travelers
- ❖ Lean which government institutions is responsible for the operations of regional bus business, and;
- ❖ Inform the public and policy makers about how regional buses transport operates in South Sudan.

1.2 STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Since the economic crisis, travelling from South Sudan to neighboring countries via air has become unaffordable. This crisis has made buses the alternative and less expensive method of travelling. However, it is still unclear who supports the transport business, and how it operates in South Sudan. The challenges of regional bus transport were not clear. Organizations such as the South Sudan Policy Makers (SSPMs) were unclear about how RBT operates, number of buses and people who travel to and from South Sudan, the daily fare, how many and which bus companies are owned by South Sudanese nationals, and how many South Sudanese nationals are employed by the business/network. The researcher also wanted to understand which government institution(s) was responsible for regulating the regional bus transport operations in South Sudan. Information on support provided by the government to regional bus transport was inconclusive. The research needs information about whether buses and passengers were insured.

1.3 STRUCTURE

The study on regional bus transport in South Sudan is divided into six chapters that have three sections. The first section focuses on the collection of demographic data. The second and third sections, (in chapter four), focus on the legal operations and the importance of regional bus transport, as well, it explores the challenges facing operators and travellers. Finally, the research concludes with the findings, discussion of the findings and the recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEWS

The Juba-Nimule Road is the country's lifeline that reduces travel time between Nimule (in South Sudan) and Uganda. As Wamochie (2019) articulated the "regional buses transport is important in connecting South Sudan with Uganda and Kenya that have already completed the border demarcation exercise between them and signed a border treaty to run their cooperative businesses". The regional bus transport helps travellers reach their destinations at a lower rate. As a requirement of the African Union (AU), all the member states must complete their international boundary demarcation by the year 2022. Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda have commenced a joint boundary demarcation process to establish the tri-point of their common border in peace building efforts and run their business through land transportation among others. The three governments aim at strengthening good neighbouring-lines, cooperation and promoting peaceful co-existence amongst their citizens (Wamochie, 2019). The research explored how well the regional bus system is operating and how its users understand current transport regulations or the Traffic Act 2003 of South Sudan organized by Dr. John Garang Mabior (Mabior, 2003). Challenges facing the regional bus operation include security issues, rough roads, tree-lined roads, as well as uncomfortable behavior by border officials at checkpoints. An attack on a passenger vehicle along the Juba-Nimule Highway is imminent. That level of difficulty for travellers on the Juba-Nimule Road as Jackson (2021) elucidated has not only affected the travellers and regional bus transport companies using the highway but also the truckers, transporting food to Juba and other consumable goods.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The research used a mixed data collection approach, which were questionnaires and interviews. Qualitative data from interviews were gathered and analysed. A major advantage of interviewing as Berg and Lune (2009) articulated was to allow respondents to answer questions in their own words with minimum control and direction from the presenters. Qualitative research as Marlow and Boone (2005) defined is a ‘systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct detailed observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understandings and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social worlds’ (p. 11). The Data collection required a quantitative approach since it involved multiple data to allow the study to reach a conclusion; supported by solid evidence-based facts. Subsequently, the quantitative approach was used to investigate how regional buses companies abided by public transport rules in South Sudan through questionnaires.

3.1 TIME FRAME AND RESEARCH SCOPE

The initial survey, which was designed to start in April 2021 until June 2021, was extended to September 2021 because of competing priorities. The questions in the surveys remained the same. The study was carried out in suburbs of Juba municipality and in Gumbo (Sherkat), Nimule and Juba bus stations.

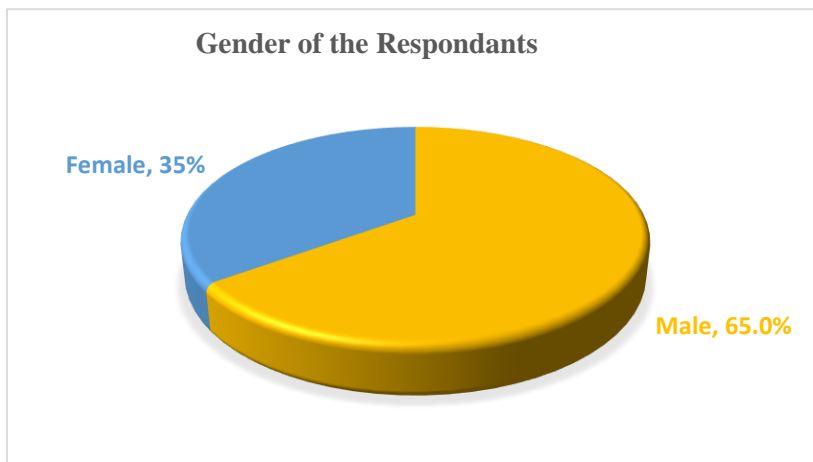
3.2 SAMPLES

A total number of 100 people including males and females from the age of 18 to 60 or over were targeted for the survey. Only 77 participants responded and returned their questionnaires; 50 males (64.9%) and 27 females (35%). The participants represented diverse communities residing in Juba suburbs and Nimule.

3.3 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Specific demographic questions were developed to identify the names, ages, sexes, ethnicities, religions, current addresses, phone numbers, and educational backgrounds of the responders. Privacies and confidentialities were kept to protect the identity of the participants and to allow them to contribute effectively (D’Cruz & Jones, 2004).

A total number of 100 responders from the age of 18 to 60 or over were targeted for the survey from Gumbo-Sherkat, Juba and Nimule bus stations. From the total number, only 77 (65% males and 35% females) responded to the questionnaires. The sample numbers were from diverse communities residing in Juba suburbs and Nimule.



CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF STUDY

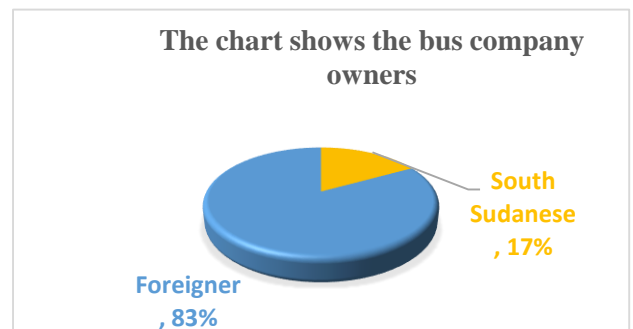
Demographic questions were designed to identify the names, ages, sexes, ethnicities, religions, current addresses, phone numbers, and educational backgrounds. Privacy and confidentiality were discussed with participants, it's impossible to publish the names and other details attached to the research contributors.

The sample of the study was 100 people targeted from Gumbo-Sherkat, Juba and Nimule bus station from various ethnic backgrounds. That sample included males and females from the age of 18 to 60. From the total number of 100 participants, only 50 males (65%) and 27 females (35%) responded and returned their questionnaires. Out of the total 77 responders, 70 participants were from South Sudan, four from Kenyan and three from Uganda. A total of 75 out of 77 participants interviewed were Christians, and two belonged to the Islamic faith.

4.1 LEGAL OPERATION AND IMPORTANCE OF REGIONAL BUSES TRANSPORT

In order to fully comprehend how the regional buses transport operates and how it contributes to the economy of South Sudan, we must understand the number of buses travel that from South Sudan to Uganda and Kenya and back daily, the number of travellers, the fair, the number of buses owned by South Sudanese nationals, the total number of staff employed, the number of South Sudanese nationals employed, and what makes the transportation business attractive and successful.

According to the research, of six regional bus companies operating in South Sudan, only Eco-bus is owned by South Sudanese nationals. A total number of 77 (100%) participants articulated that only *Eco-bus* among six (17%) regional bus companies such as *Friendship*, *Gold Line*, *Nile Star*, *Simba* and *Trinity Bus* operating in South Sudan is owned by the South Sudanese. The



The remaining five buses (83%) are owned by foreigners. The study also found that a total number of twelve buses travel daily, two buses from each company with 75 to 80 passengers per day. Fares vary depending on the distance; to travel to Uganda is 20,000SSP and to travel to Kenya is 30,000SSP. The finding indicates that some passengers encourage their friends to use the least expensive travel fares.

Buses in South Sudan



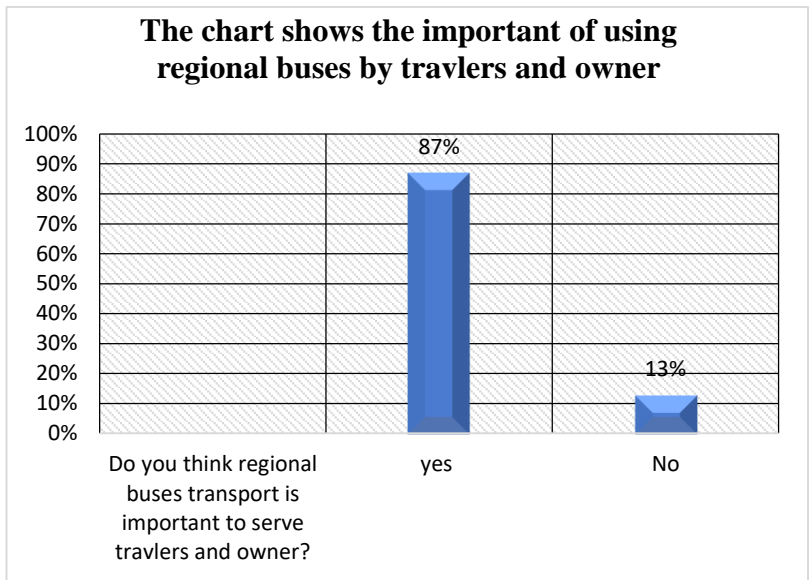
Gumbo-Sherkat Bus Station

A total of number 25 (32.5%) participants mentioned that there are only 20 staff of each company in which only two are South Sudanese, while the other 52 (67.5%) are believed to be foreign nationals.

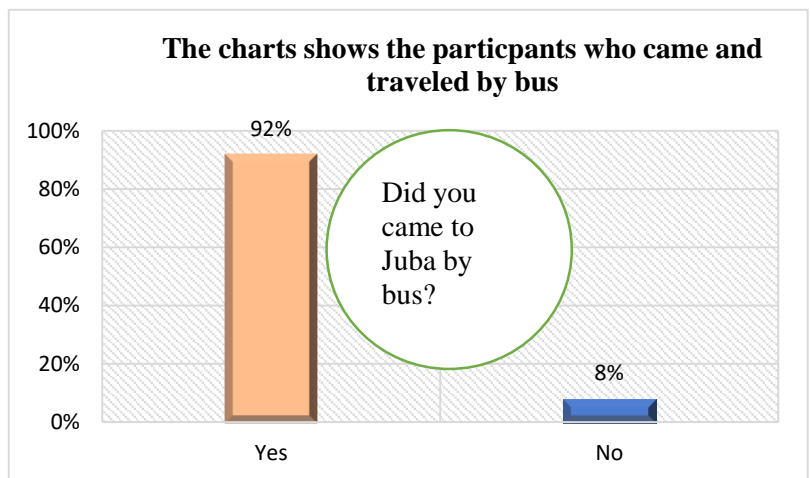
In regards to the number of staff running RBT, the study found that the numbers of employees were foreign nationals and not enough South Sudanese being employed by these foreign bus companies.

The operation of regional bus transport between South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda is important as South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda are in tripartite partnership which is recognised within the frameworks of both the East African Community (EAC) and the African Union (AU) that seeks to emphasise the importance of deepening regional integration, facilitating the development of cross border cooperation while promoting peace, security and stability between the three countries (Wamochie, 2019). One of the challenges faced by South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda is the unclear colonial drawn borders and demarcation, which at times led to tensions. Approximately half of the continent's borders are yet to be demarcated. Therefore, the movement of these Africans nationals through the regional buses is important because it symbolizes an understanding between their governments; it strengthens their international relations and contributes to their developing economies (Wamochie, 2019).

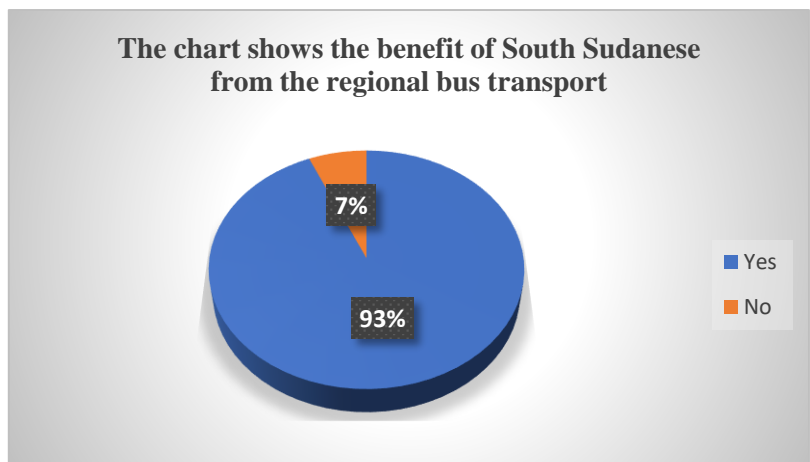
When asked if it's important to use the regional buses, 87% of the participants revealed that RBT is important to serve travellers and owners; while 13% of the participants responded that it is not important to operate.



When asked if the participants travelled by bus to Juba, 92% of participants revealed that they came to Juba by bus. They were willing to encourage their friends to use the bus, which is cheaper, to reach their destinations. 8% of the participants revealed that they did not travel by bus to Juba.



When asked if the regional bus transport is beneficial for South Sudanese, 93% of the responders revealed that South Sudanese are benefiting from regional bus transports through easy travel, low fares and taxes collected at the border. 7% of the participants were not sure how South Sudanese benefit from the regional bus transport.



About what interested bus transport operators and travellers, the study founded that all 77 (100%) participants were happy to travel with

the least prices than paying to the airfare, while six leaders (100%) of all the company owners are happy with good money they receive daily from their bus business. These higher percentages indicated the regional bus transport between South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda is important.

4.2 SAFETY AND CHALLENGES FACING OPERATORS AND TRAVELLERS ON RBT

In order to understand which safety regulations are being followed, the study also researched the government institutions that allowed RBT to operate legally in South Sudan, what type of support was being offered by the government, the type of insurance that covers the buses and its travellers, and the understanding of the South Sudan traffic regulations by the foreign buses companies

When asked which governing body was responsible for the operations of the regional buses in South Sudan, the study revealed that 94.8% of the respondents believe that the Ministry of Road and Transport, Ministry of Interior and the Local Government were the government institutions responsible for giving the regional bus transport the permission to operate, while 5.2% were not sure. 100% of the responders believe that the government provides security escort. The research further reveals that only one vehicle escorts the buses to the borders before heading to other countries. Unfortunately, because of the security situation in South Sudan, number of security escorts should be increased to counter whatever challenges that might arise on their way to the next destination.

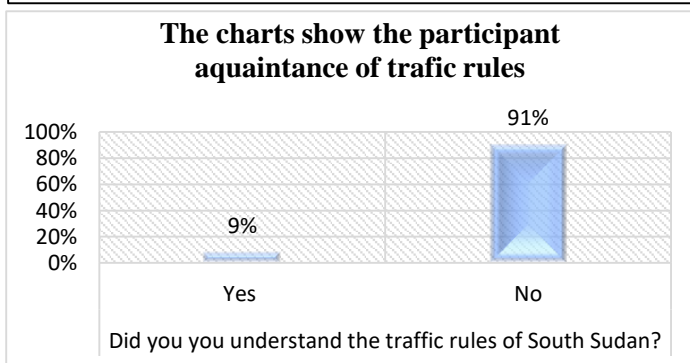
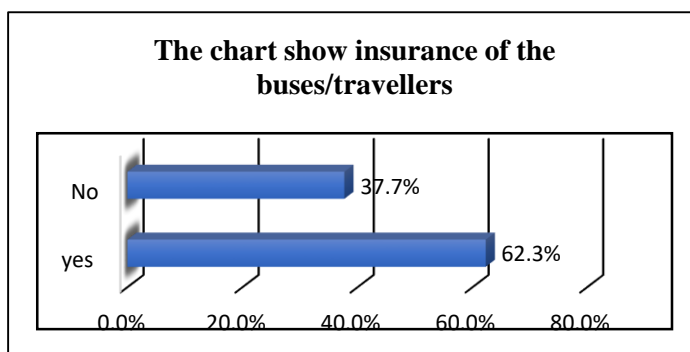
When asked about whether the buses and travellers are insured, 62.3% of the participants believe that they are insured, while 37.7% participants believe that there is no insurance for both buses and the passengers.

In regards to the understanding of the traffic regulations, the study found that only 9% of respondents understood the traffic rules of South Sudan. In order to narrow this, more education is needed about the traffic regulations of South Sudan.

The research further examined challenges facing operators and travellers

on the RBT. 100% of the respondents revealed issues such as security, rough roads, lined-tree roads as well as uncomfortable behavior by officials at the checkpoints as major challenges affecting the safety and operation of the RBT operators and travellers. The Juba-Nimule highway was also considered dangerous because it is also used to transport live cattle, donkey-carts, rickshaw-style cabs, as well as motor vehicles which can be dangerous.

100% of the participants believe that a security threat on the Juba-Nimule Highway is imminent, which can affect the regional bus transport business and travelling from South Sudan to Uganda and Kenya. Survey respondents recommended that authorities should increase the number of security escorts, renovate the roads, and clear the trees on both sides of the road in order to stop any insecurity and make travelling more enjoyable.



4.3 LIMITATIONS

Accessing information in Gumbo-Sherkat, Juba and Nimule Bus stations was challenging as many people were not aware of the importance of the research. Many of the participants we approached feared disclosures of information because they thought it was a political survey. Because of these unfortunate challenges, we did not reach our target number of 100; instead only 77 respondents returned their questionnaire.

In order to get permission to carry out a research in South Sudan, the researcher must explain to security personnel the nature of the research, its importance, and where it will take place. The researcher must also provide a certificate that indicates that it is legally able to operate in South Sudan. These nuances delayed the process of getting permission from the national security to commence the research. There was also an expectation of financial compensation by the participants. If participants were not compensated, they would decline to participate in the research.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A total number of 100 people including males and females from the age of 18 to 60 or over were targeted for the survey from Gumbo-Sherkat, Juba and Nimule bus stations. However, only 77 of them responded and returned their questionnaires. The total number of 50 males which is 64.9% and 27 females which is 35% of 77 informants returned their forms. The participants were approached from diverse communities residing in Juba suburbs and in Nimule. As Maxfield and Babbie articulated, the facilitator kept informants attentive, involved, focused and attractive during each interview. The interviewer had monitored the time and used that limited time wisely (Maxfield & Babbie, 2011).

2. Eco Bus on Juba-Nimule Highway: on Sunday August 15, 2021



Eco bus owned by South Sudanese

The rest of bus companies are owned by foreigners.

Trinity



Friendship



Gold Line



Nile Star



Simba



3. Foreigners Bus Companies in South Sudan

A total number of buses travelling daily are twelve (12). Two buses from each company carrying 75 to 80 passengers on a single bus per a day to their destinations.

South Sudan, Kenya and Uganda are in tripartite partnership and have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) which is recognised within the frameworks of both the East African Community (EAC) and the AU members countries that seeks to emphasise the importance of deepening regional integration, facilitating the development of cross border cooperation while promoting peace, security and stability between the three countries (Wamochie, 2019). African countries were previously experiencing significant challenges and conflicts at borders with fundamental factors being the blurred boundaries that are part of their colonial heritages. Approximately half of the continent's borders are yet to be demarcated. However, these relationships among South Sudan, Uganda and Kenya make regional buses transport lawful and more important (Wamochie, 2019).

The MoU as Wamochie (2019) expressed gives all the respective countries the legal and institutional framework a motivation to start the works linked to the proper marking of boundaries. The implementation of borders demarcation is an African Union Border Programme (AUBP)'s requirement that all the member states must complete the demarcation and endorsement of their international borders by 2022. The role of AUBP is to support the separation of borders, promote cross-border cooperation, build capacity and mobilise resources for demarcation and cross-border cooperation activities. Kenya and Uganda signed an MoU on border delimitation on March while Kenya and South Sudan signed a similar deal in July 2019. The MoU between the three countries recognises the common heritages, good relations and interdependence between their citizens. It also commits to strengthening the existing joined relations. The MoU seeks to promote cross border cooperation and ensures peaceful coexistence of bordering communities in which; regional bus transports play an important role in regional relationships and in development (Wamochie, 2019).

The research investigated a number of government institutions responsible for the regional bus transport in South Sudan. The results shows that the Ministry of Road and Transport, Ministry

of Interior and the Local Government are the government institutions that are responsible in run this business.

4. Trees on both sides of the Juba-Nimule Highway, least military escort and Rough Road



Video captured on Juba Nimule Road:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uPHTpk0KCtg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKQcGCxjopQ>

Based on the relevant literature review, the security condition across South Sudan remains unstable and the safety of travellers on Juba-Nimule highway is at risk (Yoshino et al. 2011, p. 9). This is because guns are overflowing and easily obtained so that offenders are often equipped. Since there is no employment opportunity in South Sudan, many armed actors are resorting to delinquency. The drive-by robberies by individuals or groups on motorbikes have repeatedly occurred.

Research participants mentioned that during the rainy season, from April to November, most of the roads outside of Juba become obstructed, and some parts of the country even become inaccessible. There are also regular reports of inter-communal violence in some parts of the country and sporadic fighting between armed groups in certain areas such as Eastern Equatoria and Jonglei. Due to that situation as participants elucidated, criminal attacks take place on the main Juba-Nimule Road, which is one of the main supply routes from Uganda to South Sudan. This proves that the ability of South Sudan to provide assistance outside of Juba is limited (Yoshino et al. 2011, p. 9).

In discussion with contributors, some articulated that very few roads are surfaced and maintained, particularly outside of Juba. As you can see in the above picture on page 24, residential areas have dirty roads instead of tarmac roads. It's difficult to see at night because street lights are very few, and many of the vehicles that pass have no headlights. Roads are used by pedestrians, donkey-carts and rickshaw-style cabs, as well as motor vehicles. Participants mentioned that checkpoints are manned by armed men around Juba, especially after dark, travellers must provide bribes and there are instances of physical assault on women.

South Sudan has typically been trading more with neighbouring countries of Uganda and Kenya more than it does with the Sudan. As a part of the regional bus transport, small traders and business people from neighbouring countries established hotels and taxi businesses and started importing foodstuffs. Additionally, people who come from different part of the region also generated hostility and hatred among local South Sudanese, who saw them as benefiting from the newly found opportunities. Consequently, relations began to change. For example, the motorbike public transport system (boda-boda), originally dominated by Ugandans, started to attract local South Sudanese. In total, there were 5,000 licensed motorcycles in Juba, with 60% or 3,000 bikes operated by foreigners, many of them from Uganda. Ugandans owned 1,600 bikes, followed by Eritreans and Ethiopians at over 1,200 bikes, and Kenyans at around 100 bikes. The government devised a new policy to regulate the boda-boda transport business. The former Minister of Interior and Wildlife Conservation, Aleu Ayieny, issued an order on 16 August 2013 banning all foreigners engaged in licensed boda-boda business from operating in Jonglei State. This decision was made mainly due to the increasing insecurity associated with this mode of transport. The South Sudanese Police Service (SSPS) reported that, on average, 80% of criminal cases committed in Juba involved the boda-bodas (Wilmot, 2014). It was also observed as you can see in the pictures below that the congested Juba-Nimule Road is used by pedestrians, cows, donkey-carts and rickshaw-style cabs, as well as motor vehicles which cause terrible accidents. However, the safety of travellers and operators on regional buses transports (RBT) is very important. As a result, the government of South Sudan provides escorts for RBT to reach their destinations. Yet, there are many incidents. On April 23, 2021, a team of engineers from the Ministry of Road and Bridges and Rhino Construction Company inspected the 197-Killometer Juba-Nimule Road to assess damage on sections of the highway because the road had not been maintained for a very long time (Hassan, 2021).

4. Juba-Nimule Highway Cattles on the Road Attackers on the Road Congested Road Burned truck on Juba-Nimule Road

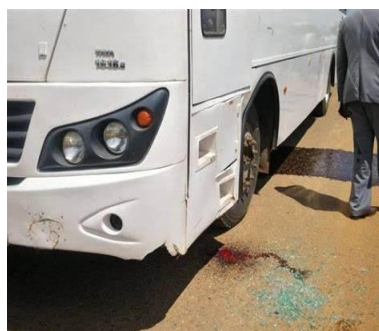


1. ***Video taken on Juba-Nimule Highway on Sunday August 15, 2021:***
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pHEQNcBXGA;>
2. ***Video on Juba Nimule Road inspection visit:***
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mit7-vcRBI4.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mit7-vcRBI4)

There have been repeated serious attacks on the Juba-Nimule Road. As Emmanuel and Abraham (2020) explained, an attack on a passenger vehicle along the Juba-Nimule Highway

is precedent. It happened every now and then. The attack that happened on Friday afternoon August 14, 2020 has left two people dead and five others have been reportedly abducted by the assailants. An eyewitness stated that the gunmen killed the driver and wounded three passengers. That ambush was on a Bonga bus that left Nimule for Juba in the morning. The passenger bus was shot at by unknown attackers between Aru-Junction and Jebelen. A driver and one passenger were killed and then five people were kidnapped. That was the first attack on a commercial vehicle in almost 3 years. After the 2016 clashes, the government provided national security services escorts for all passenger buses operating on the Juba-Nimule Highway. But since the lockdown of the borders over the coronavirus pandemic, it is not clear whether vehicles, such as Bonga bus get security escorts to continue travelling along the Juba-Nimule Road (Emmanuel and Abraham, 2020).

Pedestrians on highway: Bonga bus attacked on Friday August 14, 2020



6. The trees narrowed Juba-Nimule Road: the attacker's hideout shelter

The participants indicated that the government can address those incidents by increasing the number of security forces on the road sides. The contributors also elucidated that there are many trees on both sides of the road, narrowing the highway; and further allowed the attackers to kill at a close range. On other hand, the study shows that most of the drivers in Juba do not have valid driving licences or car insurances to operate safely. Some do not even have plat numbers to identify their cars. Those are illegal drivers, but they are illegally operating and recklessly drive on the streets causing problems. However, all drivers as Mabior (2003) articulated should have both current drivers' licence and a valid car insurance. So, it should be mandatory for every driver in South Sudan to have adequate insurance and drivers' licence for safety purposes.

7. Low Military Escort: Security forces can be increased to escort the regional bus travellers



Military Vehicle: Escort on Juba-Nimule Road

Although the number of travellers killed in targeted attacks has reduced in recent years, South Sudan remains one of the most dangerous operating environments for business people in the world. Incidents of violence, intimidation, arbitrary detentions and kidnappings are reported. The total numbers of seven (7) people have been killed within one week between Wednesday August 11 and Monday August 16, 2021 on Juba-Nimule Road. There were also daily attacks on that highway. That dangerous situation can make a business unattractive for a business person. See picture below.

8. Juba-Nimule highway ambush leaves 2 dead, 3 injured August 11, 2021



8. Juba-Nimule unknown gunmen attack at Kerepi and Moli

There was an attack on a passenger vehicle that came from Juba to Nimule which ended in a grim fate after an unknown gunman stormed the road and fired bullets in a place called Kerepi near Moli at around 12:15 pm on August 11, 2021. A young man of 22-year-old and an 11-year-old girl lost their lives in that ambush. Three other passengers sustained injuries in the same incident. There were a total number of six (6) passengers in the car. Three were injured and one passenger disappeared and has not yet been found, maybe he ran into the forest (Jackson, 2021).

Attack on Juba-Nimule Road: Monday August 16, 2021



9. Four Catholic Sisters died in that vehicle ambushed

There was another attack on Monday August 16, 2021 where Catholic sisters, Sister Mary About who had been Mother Superior for 12 years for the religious congregation of the Sacred Heart Sisters, along with Sister Regina and two others were killed in an ambush along Juba-Nimule highway. They became the latest victims of the brutal unprecedented attacks along the Juba-Nimule highway after they attended the Loa centenary celebration over the weekend. There could be a blame on government failure to protect travellers but Jackson (2021) explained that some drivers often take risks even if they have been assured of security provision. The government would tell security forces to take care and that there is a vehicle going so that they could be on alert, but all this is not happening. There is an escort but these drivers like moving very early and they avoid the escort. They are just in a hurry and they do not tell police that they are leaving, otherwise, the police could give them a special escort. As a result, several ambushes have happened on the highway this year (2021) alone. In April, an attack on vehicles left two people dead, five others wounded and vehicles burned to ashes. That incident occurred after five vehicles came under attack and the drivers were burnt beyond recognition when their vehicles were set on fire. In May, authorities in Magwi County say a chief and his son were killed in Molujere village of Jebelen in Central Equatoria State along the Juba-Nimule highway. Those incidents lead to the recent demonstration of the East African business community in South Sudan demanding government to provide security escort for

travellers and commercial goods. The government promised to provide security escorts at the time. Yet, there are attacks happening.

South Sudan's connections with East African Countries such Uganda and Kenya

10. Juba-Nimule Road: the backbone of South Sudan



Although well-built to the standards, the maintenance has been challenging, which can explain why the lined trees are not trimmed although criminals use it at times to hide and target travellers. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mit7-vcRB14>). Traveling along the Juba-Nimule Road can be considered a matter of life and death by many. The feeling of uncertainty of reaching their final destination forces many to feel scared. Although the December 2013 conflict ended on September 12, 2018, through a revitalized peace agreement, ambushes and killing along the Juba-Nimule highway have not ceased.

That difficult travel on the Juba-Nimule Road as Jackson (2021) elucidated has not only affected the travellers and regional bus transport companies using the highway but also the trucker's transporting food to Juba and other consumables. In April 2021, assailants attacked a fleet of trucks along Juba-Nimule highway. The event was said to have occurred in the Kit 2 area. Five civilians were reported killed while several others were injured. The government of South Sudan blamed the attack on National Salvation Front (NAS) rebels. That incident followed another armed attack on March 27-28 along the Yei-Juba highway which left several Ugandan nationals dead. However, the holdout group was quick to deny the allegations. After

a period of relative peace, since July 2021, the country has experienced frequent attacks along Juba-Nimule highway.

Some participants articulated that the deadly attacks dated back to the 2016 conflict that broke out in Juba where the road leading to Nimule was mired with ambushes. At the time, the Transitional Government of National Unity (T-GoNU) accused the Sudan People's Liberation Army in opposition (SPLA-IO) forces loyal to Dr. Riek Machar. The SPLA-IO denied these accusations on several occasions and stated that it is the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA-IG) who are killings and lootings civilian's properties. On August 3, 2017, unknown gunmen opened fire on a convoy of buses where they killed 14 people and injured 35 others. That was the worst attack in the history of the country. Nevertheless, the culprits of the dreadful attacks were not identified. However, being the only road with activities that contribute to the country's economy like access to movement, food and other products from the other East African countries; travellers and truckers have to confront these challenges. This road is South Sudan's economic backbone and when it is locked it means everyone in South Sudan will suffer. Therefore, in order to continue to grow and play a role in the development of South Sudan, it is important that the Juba-Nimule road is taken care of by the government.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this study is to identify the importance of regional buses transport and the challenges facing the travellers and the companies involved.

It also aims to identify the government institutions responsible for the operations of the business so that the public and policy makers should be inform about the operation so that an effective policy shall be introduced to ensure the safety and the security of both travellers and the companies involved.

In conclusion, the study carried out on regional bus transport confirmed the legality and importance of the regional bus transport between South Sudan, Uganda and Kenya. The operation is clear to South Sudan policy makers. The research was able to identify the number of buses that travel daily, the fare paid by the passengers, and that one bus out of six buses is owned by South Sudanese nationals. We also learned that the remaining five buses are owned by foreigners, and it was unclear how many South Sudanese nationals are employed by the five foreign owned buses.

The safety and challenges pertaining to regional bus transport were also explored and the outcome is very clear to the policy makers. The participants believe that the Ministry of Road and Transport, Ministry of Interior and the Local Government are the government institutions that gave RBT the permission to operate their transport business, and should assume full responsibility. However, we learned through the research that the South Sudan traffic regulations are not clear to many drivers, which means that they are not respected.

Research participants identified security, rough roads, lined trees on both sides of the road and unwarranted behavior by officials at the checkpoints as major challenges facing travellers and bus drivers. The trees lined on the roads have been used as hideouts by attackers. There is a limited set number of security escorts on the highway which make the driving experience difficult. The study also learned that in order to improve the current security threat on Juba-Nimule Highway, it's important to trim or cut down the trees. This action will make the travellers safer by decreasing insecurity and make travelling and business more attractive and enjoyable between South Sudan, Uganda and Kenya.

7.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on observations and the research information gathered, recommendations are outlined as follow:

- a) The trees lined on both sides of the road should be removed so the roadside is left bare and clear. Cutting the trees will minimize attacks on vehicles travelling on the Juba-Nimule Highway.
- b) The government should increase the number of the existing security escorts on the buses travelling from Juba to Kenya and Uganda and back. The implementation of this recommendation will contribute to preventing attacks while making traveling enjoyable.
- c) The government of South Sudan should scrutinize and discipline officials that abuse travellers and the bus operators at the checkpoints. These unwanted behaviors paint a gloomy picture of what South Sudan is and represents.
- d) South Sudan traffic law should be made clearer; drivers and traffic police officers should be instructed to have valid insurance certificates and current driver licences to operate in South Sudan. Police officers should be trained and provide with basic and advanced professional driving skills to enforce the traffic laws and regulation. South Sudan national traffic police are not able to control the traffic given the fact that they do not have more technical skills on the road safety and management. In that regard, they have to be train to ensure the regulations are kept in place and to control the traffic offences.
- e) Further research is needed to find out the number of South Sudanese employed by foreign bus companies, and why South Sudanese do not own more than one bus company.
- f) The research participants added that; use of public transport has become more difficult as the road continue to be unsafe for the vehicles travellers each days. The precedence road accidents (particularly on the Juba-Nimule Road), and the high risk of robbery or the assault on foreign nationals possess fear amongst people.

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