

**Interstate Land Transportation in Nigeria: An Investigative Report**

**Abstract**

*Encircled by profit centric inter-state land transporters, middle class consumers (passengers) in Nigeria have echoed their resolve to adopt any land transport company with robust value creation for passengers due to their hedonistic tendencies. This investigative report sought to ascertain the likelihood of middle class consumers adopting a modern and equipped transportation company for inter-state journeys. It specifically assessed the level of adoption intention, determined the predictive effects of adoption intention on continued patronage for a perceived modern and equipped transportation company for inter-state journeys, and identified factors that optimize value creation among middle class consumers. Using a mixed method, findings revealed that almost 90% of the respondents exhibited high adopting intention level for a perceived modern and equipped transportation company. Results further showed that consumers' adoption intention significantly predicted continued patronage for a perceived modern and equipped transportation company. Lastly, prioritization of timely departure, free access to communication facilities (Free Wi-Fi) while aboard, efficient response to consumer enquiries and complaints, and vehicle condition which is instrumental to passengers' safety are the core factors that determine value creation among middle class inter-state passengers. Implications of the findings are also discussed.*

**Keywords:** *Adoption intention, Free Wi-Fi vehicles' continued patronage, Land transportation, Interstate journey, Nigerian transporters, Dash Motors.*

## **1. Introduction**

Land transportation business has been a lucrative business in Nigeria for decades. This has been so both for inter-state and intra-state shuttles. It involves several types of vehicles such as: luxurious buses, saloon cars, mini-buses, and all sorts of SUVs. According to Nigerian finder.com, there are about ten good transport companies in Nigeria. While transporters (transport company owners) have been extending their market shares cum profits, it is unfortunate that value creation has remained static or even declined among these companies. For instance, lack of entertainment system on board, comfort, line-haul service, and chances of a driver leaving the customary route, significantly determine the choice of mode by passengers (Ibe, Ejem, & Onwuegbuchulam, 2007).

Despite some new entrants (such as: IZUGOD Transport Company, Fair Plus International Limited, OJ Transport Company) promising to overcome the lapses created by existing companies, consumers have expressed their skepticism in those advertorials. They are of the notion that some other companies (Chisco Transport Company, Peace Mass Transit, and Young Shall Grow Motors, God Is Good Motors) have in the past made similar promises which they reneged at the long-run. Some of the issues with existing transportation companies include but not limited to: over-speeding by drivers, late dispatch of vehicles contrary to the stated time on their tickets, arbitrary increase in ticket prices). As a result, most consumers (passengers) have been groaning helplessly without any solution to their dissatisfaction with those companies.

Consequently, consumers are left with no option other than using ABC Transport, God Is Good Motors, and Young Shall Grow Motors (three of the oldest transport companies) even when their vehicles are not sufficient to convey those that bought their tickets especially during festive period. In spite of using these three transport companies predominantly as viable means of interstate journeys to Eastern Nigeria, there has been a lot of concerns among consumers on the safety of luxury buses which dominate some of the transport companies due to bad road network across Nigeria. Hence, land transportation in Nigeria becomes a viable business in the wake of organized and improved operational protocols that matches consumers' tastes and preferences.

While consumers dislike operational mode of existing transportation companies in Nigeria, it is noteworthy to highlight that most records of displeasure emanated from middle class consumers. Thus, occupation or class of a passenger determines the particular class of service which he or she demands (Ibe et al., 2007). Therefore, a feasible land transportation business in Nigeria requires operational system that creates consumer values through a robust marketing plan. This report is aimed at investigating the likelihood of middle class consumers to adopt a new and supposedly reliable transport company (Free Wi-Fi Dash Motors) as a viable alternative to the inadequacies and incompetencies of existing transportation companies engaging in inter-state travels in Nigeria.

Table 1 presents the decision statement, investigative report objectives, and its hypothesis. While the hypothesis of this investigative report aims to empirically test the veracity of the study’s claim, the objectives are structured to support Dash Motors decision statement.

**Table 1. Decision statement, objectives, and hypothesis**

Decision Statement	Investigative Report Objectives	Hypotheses
To ensure that middle class consumers (passengers) adopt a modern and equipped transport company for inter-state journeys.	To assess the level of intention to adopt free Wi-Fi Dash Motors as a means of inter-state journey in Nigeria.	
	To determine the predictive effect of adoption intention on continued patronage/adoption behavior.	Adoption intention significantly predicts continued patronage/adoption behavior.
	To identify factors that optimize value creation among consumers (passengers).	

### 1.2 Operational definitions

**Free Wi-Fi Dash Motors:** Is a new transportation company that intends to join the league of inter-state land transporters in Nigeria with free internet network to passengers aboard while prioritizing vehicle departure time.

**Middle class workers/consumers:** These are second tier of Nigerian consumers that are not actually among the wealthy class but with hedonistic and utilitarian characteristics. Middle class covers over 30% of Nigerian consumers (Business Day, 2019).

### 1.3 Situation Analysis

**Internal environment:** Evaluation of the stated objectives, proposed strategy, and performance reinforces Dash’s belief that there is a green light ahead. For instance, resources required for procurement of vehicles and other start-up expenses have been secured. Also,

one of the small scale transport companies that are on the verge of winding down has entered into agreement with Dash (the new company) to be sending passengers to Dash Motors terminal since their company is not in full operation. This will help Dash to fulfill their timely departure as advertised in various platforms.

Customer environment: Middle class consumers are the company's potential passengers. They need Dash Motors services as a practical means of travelling due to the company's commitment to creation of consumer values. Three terminals/stations have been proposed for each city to enable passengers from distant places to access the company's services. Passengers are believed to select Dash Motors because Free Wi-Fi is installed in all the company buses cum time conscious in respect to departure, and could purchase bus tickets online ahead of scheduled travelling date. Passengers are likely to move away from Dash Motors services if they notice reduction in service quality or in the case of a better alternative what they offer.

External environment: Companies such as ABC transport, Chisco transport company, and God Is Good Motors are potential competitors. However, access to free Wi-Fi gives Dash Motors an edge over them. It is also hoped that while the established standards are maintained, Dash Motors will be sustainable especially since every successive government in Nigeria has maintained existing policies on transportation. In line with the existing road transportation act, Dash Motors bus tickets will contain terms and conditions section to absolve the company of certain legal actions from passengers' default, possession of prohibited items, and the company will abide by the act as well. As technology evolves, Dash Motors will strive to move with the latest trends both in online ticket sales, free Wi-Fi, and the entirety of the company's services, while recognizing and supporting cultural trends and developments.

#### **1.4 SWOT-Driven Strategic Planning**

**S= Strength:** In the wake of consumers' changing tastes and preferences, boredom while travelling has thoroughly reduced with free Wi-Fi access which other transportation companies in Nigeria has not considered or included in their service package. As a result, this will attract many hedonistic passengers especially the ones that believe in having fun through internet surfing. In addition, Dash Motors will capitalize on their free Wi-Fi access to passengers to gain a bigger market share since it serves as a communication channel to smart phone users.

**W= Weakness:** The new company (Free Wi-Fi Dash Motors) is currently not known to consumers and may require a lot of publicity to get the ball rolling in the right direction. Moreover, available capital may not sustain the company to carry out expensive and strategic advertisements and promotions for a long time unlike other companies. Hence, it is the company's belief that social media advertorials will augment its profile in the long run. The company's limited financial resources compared to other big established transport companies in Nigeria which may limit its advertising capability would blossom through high passenger frequency. This will be triggered by Dash Motors incessant value creation to passengers.

**O=Opportunity:** Modern consumers appreciate quality transportation services. Thus, lack of quality services especially untimely departure and over-speeding negates passengers' interests in a transportation company. However, due to Dash Motors resolve to have

different vehicle sizes, it becomes an opportunity for Free Wi-Fi Dash Motors to depart terminals on time even when other transportation companies are not departing on time or including several routes in a particular vehicle trip due to lack of passengers. Moreover, guaranteed round the clock (24 hours) online bus ticket sales, and high price of mobile data subscription in Nigeria are equally another prospect that will drive passengers into Free Wi-Fi Dash Motors. All these constitute weighty opportunities for Dash Motors to become popular and extend their market share.

**T=Threat:** Starting up a transport company in Nigeria can be dicey. Even though embarking on a trip without complete passengers results to losses, Dash Motors available different vehicle sizes helps the company to ensure that big buses are not en-routed in such circumstances. This will proportionately tailor the company's vehicle usage to number/volume of passengers and as a result, reduce operational costs.

## **2. Approach and Design**

The present investigative report employed mixed (qualitative and quantitative) approaches. While quantitative approach is one in which the researcher mainly uses post positivist claims for knowledge development, employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that produces statistical data (Creswell, 2003), qualitative approach allows investigations into why, and how a phenomenon occurs. Consequently, this investigative report utilized survey design and interview.

The investigative report was centered on middle class consumers; thus, differentiated target market. Middle class consumers became the target market following their high number compared to other consumer categories in Nigeria. Moreover, middle class consumers are willing to pay prices commensurate to the values they receive from a particular service. Hence, they are hedonistic and utilitarian in decision making. Therefore, it is believed that middle class consumers' patronage is sufficient to sustain a transport firm in Nigeria.

### **2.1 Population and sampling**

Population of the study is based on 2016 data. According to Worldometers, Nigeria's population was about 186 million in 2016. The middle class accounted for just 30.26% in 2016 (Business Day, 2019), which represents about 562,836. Therefore, this consumer category is believed to sustain and even extend the fortunes of a transport company.

The quantitative aspect of the study anticipated the involvement of 50 Nigerians residing in Malaysia or that returned to Nigeria from Malaysia in the last one year which most of them are postgraduate students or lecturers in Nigerian universities. In spite of being a pilot study, this sample was collected using probability sampling approach through Google form survey. However, about 90% of the expected quantitative sample was received. Google form survey was necessitated in the study to prevent covid-19 spread while collecting data during covid-19 pandemic. On the other hand, the qualitative part targeted no specific number; rather, the interactive

session via phone interviews as a result of the ongoing covid-19 lockdown were hoped to continue until attainment of saturation point. Consequently, 4 informants participated in the interview.

## **2.2 Measurement of variables**

For quantitative data, respondents were asked the likelihood for them to adopt free Wi-Fi Dash Motors as a mode of transportation in Nigeria, and their continued patronage/adoption behavior. That is, they answered for two main quantitative constructs: adoption intention, and continued patronage/actual adoption behavior. Both constructs were measured on a five point Likert scale. On the other hand, there were statements that sought respondents' background information such as age, gender, and others.

Adoption intention was measured with five items adapted from Dodds, Monroe and Grewal (1991). Respondents (potential passengers) were asked how likely it was for them to adopt free Wi-Fi Dash Motors as a mode of transportation in Nigeria? Responses ranged from 1 to 5: 1=very unlikely, 2=unlikely, 3=neutral, 4=likely and 5=very likely.

Continued patronage/actual adoption behavior was measured with four items developed by the researcher. Subjects were asked to indicate the extent to which the statements conform to their plans as eventual passengers of free Wi-Fi Dash Motors. Responses ranged from 1 to 5: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree.

## **2.3 Reliability**

Reliability is the assessment of the level of internal consistency between multiple measurements of a variable. A scale or test is said to be reliable if it produces the same result under constant conditions in a repeated measurement (Moser & Kalton, 1989). Reliability analysis depicted that both items used to measure adoption intention and continued patronage was reliable. According to Hair et al. (2010), an Alpha value of .70 is sufficient for research purposes. The instrument used to measure adoption intention exhibited high reliability value (.87), just as continued patronage instrument was also reliable (.75).

## **3. Respondents' characteristics**

Result showed that 71.1% of the total respondents (45) are males while 28.9% are females. Most of the respondents 68.9% attained postgraduate degree, while some 24.4% had HND/first degree. About 4.4% reached OND/NCE as their highest educational level, whereas only 2.2% stopped at secondary educational level. In terms of age, respondents were categorized into three age groups (19 to 32; 33 to 47; and more than 47years). The second age group accounted for more than half (55.6%) of the total respondents. This was followed by the first group 33.3%, and the last group 11.1%. Also, respondents' monthly income was classified into three groups (<99,900 naira; 100k to 170k naira; >170k naira), where naira denoted as # is Nigeria's local currency. The first income group accounted for almost half (48.9%) of the overall respondents. The second group consisted of 37.8%, with the least being the third income group 13.3%. As shown in table 2, respondents' estimated monthly income mean was #112,466, while their age mean was 36.40 years. This shows that they are averagely capable of paying for any service they desire, and are mainly middle aged people that

tend to explore trending facilities and standards in transport services. Expectedly, more than half of the respondents (66.7%) were married, while the remaining were single.

**Table 2: Summarized respondents' background information (n=45)**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean	Standard deviation
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	32	71.1		
Female	13	28.9		
<b>Educational level</b>				
Below secondary school	1	2.2		
OND/NCE	2	4.4		
HND/first degree	11	24.4		
Postgraduate degree	31	68.9		
<b>Age</b>				
			<b>36.40</b>	<b>10.52</b>
19-32	15	33.3		
33-47	25	55.6		
More than 47years	5	11.1		
<b>Monthly income</b>				
			<b>112,466</b>	<b>51,448</b>
Less than 100,000	22	48.9		
100,000-170,000	17	37.8		
More than 170,000	6	13.3		
<b>Marital status</b>				
Single	15	33.3		
Married	30	66.7		
Others	0	0		

### 3.1 Assessment of level of intention to adopt free Wi-Fi Dash Motors

Results from descriptive analysis as shown in table 3 revealed that 88.9% of the respondents are in the high category while 11.1% are in low category. Classification of respondents into high and low categories imply that, those in low category have a minimal likelihood of adopting free Wi-Fi Dash Motors as transportation means. On the other hand, respondents classified into high category have adequate and maximum tendencies to adopt free Wi-Fi Dash Motors as a practical means of transportation. Given this, it is submitted that nearly 90% of the respondents indicated high intention to adopt free Wi-Fi Dash Motors as an ideal means of inter-state

journeys. This implies that in the event of establishing the said transport company, there are higher chances of middle class workers adopting it as their transportation means.

**Table 3: Summarized level of intention to adopt free Wi-Fi Dash Motors**

Category	Score range	Minimum	Maximum	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Low	6 to 15.5	6		5	11.1
High	16 to 25		25	40	88.9
Total				45	100.0

### 3.2 Determination of predictive effect of adoption intention on continued patronage/adoption behavior

Simple linear regression was used to determine the predictive effect of adoption intention on continued patronage as depicted in table 4. Prior to this analysis, preliminary tests were conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity.

Adoption intention explained 29.2% of the variance in continued patronage,  $F(1, 44) = 17.69, p < .001$ . Adoption intention ( $\beta = .54, p < .001$ ) significantly predicted continued patronage/adoption behavior. This implies that adoption intention is a determinant of continued patronage and with high adoption intention already expressed by the respondents, there won't be any worries or issues of continued patronage. Thus, middle class passengers will be sustainable in their patronage to free Wi-Fi Dash Motors.

**Table 4: Summarized predictive effect of adoption intention on continued patronage**

IV	DV	Unstandardized beta	S.E	Beta	T-statistics	P
Adoption intention	Continued patronage /adoption behavior	.380	.090	.540	4.206	.000

$R^2 = .292$ ; Adjusted  $R^2 = .275$

Note: IV= Independent variable; DV= Dependent variable; S.E= Standard error; P= Probability power

### 3.3 Identification of factors that optimize value creation among consumers (passengers)

In order to identify factors that optimize value creation among consumers (passengers), four informants (Mr. X, Mrs. A, Mr. Y, and Mr. B) sequentially offered the following responses:



*Mr. X: Time is very important for me whenever am entering commercial transport. I promise to be among the first passengers if time is prioritized and free internet fixed to the buses. Ticket price is not an issue in as much as the transporter is time conscious and equip the buses with internet, I will even advertise your company services to others.*

*Mrs. A: Nigeria will hardly get an ideal transporter. However should free internet be accessible and maintained in the said new transport company, I will adopt it as transportation means. Let free internet not be a gimmick to extort or shortchange us on other consumer values. You do not need to worry about ticket price, if it worth your service, then no issue. Count on me for sustained patronage.*

*Mr. Y: Time, communication channels while on board, safety and efficient responses to customer entries are the watchword for my ideal transporter. Existing transportation companies promised to prioritize all I mentioned but none of them has ever fulfilled even half. I would be attracted to the new transportation company if more than half of these concerns are prioritized, because they relief me of boredom, strengthen my word of early arrival to my destination, and assure me of needless exchange of word with drivers. In fact, my colleagues and I have been looking forward to have a World class transport company in Nigeria; no one cares about the price, of course good service calls for good amount of money. So, I am looking forward to commencement of this company as continued patronage would not be an issue for people like me. I also want you to remember that any backslide in keeping to your promises especially free Wi-Fi and timely departure will deter our patronage, more especially, timely departure ensures safety arrival.*

*Mr. B: For me, time is money! That does not mean every other necessary attribute of a modern transporter should be compromised. Quality vehicles and other facilities such as internet while on board, uniformed velocity are the watchwords of my ideal transporter. So, I will definitely adopt any company that prioritizes all these; reduction in other companies' ticket prices is irrelevant to me! Once I leave a company or product, I rarely go back to them. In fact, I will perceive such effort as a desperate competitive measure to dislodge the new modern company (free Wi-Fi Dash Motors) from their position in the marketplace; but left for me, the competitors will not succeed because they are only profit oriented. Their frantic promos will not last, so no need to listen to them. As an individual, I cherish comfort, safety and quality; you know interstate journey should be accompanied with facilities that garnish life. For example, light refreshment on board and access to free internet. With all these in, count me as an ardent campaigner of such a passenger oriented transport company. That is, it amounts to understatement to say that I will always travel with such a good company.*

These interview feedbacks are clear indications of the interviewees' expectations from transportation companies in Nigeria. To sum up, free Wi-Fi gives them great concern as it enables them to be updating their social circle while on transit. Prioritization of time is another area of concern among them. Even though time is highly valued and sought for by all, Mr. Y and Mr. B specifically pointed that time is very important as it determines safety. No doubt, early to bed early to rise, implying that if a bus departs in time, it will likely get to its destination in time and as a result, it is likely to escape avoidable safety threats on the way. Although other factors

such as efficient response to customer enquiries, bus ticket prices, and others are mentioned, it is pertinent to note that communication channel while on board (free Wi-Fi) and time are the most determining factors. Hence, free Wi-Fi and time should be the hallmark of the proposed new transportation company.

Contrary to the assertions of Mrs. A, “Nigeria will hardly get an ideal transporter”; it behooves a classical and modern cum consumer centric transporter to explore and cash in on those shortfalls. As Mr. X rightly emphasized the frequency of importance he places on time and further promised to be among the first entrants should time and free Wi-Fi be the hallmark of the said new company, it is an indubitably indication that with standardized operational mode, little will be spent on advertisement as spreading of positive WOM has been assured. In addition, just as Mr. B stressed the need to include light refreshment for passengers while on board, this seems to be important to certain people; however, while attention should be given to light refreshment, it is important for potential passengers to understand that a company’s light refreshment may not be suitable to everyone’s taste. Hence, passengers should not rely solely on that. This calls for sustained and seasonal enhancement of operational trends to absolve the said new transportation company of becoming obsolete in the wake of other innovations. Therefore, the study concludes that time, and communication channels (free Wi-Fi) are the major factors of adoption intention, while sustenance and enhancing operational trends will sustain their patronage.

#### **4. Conclusion**

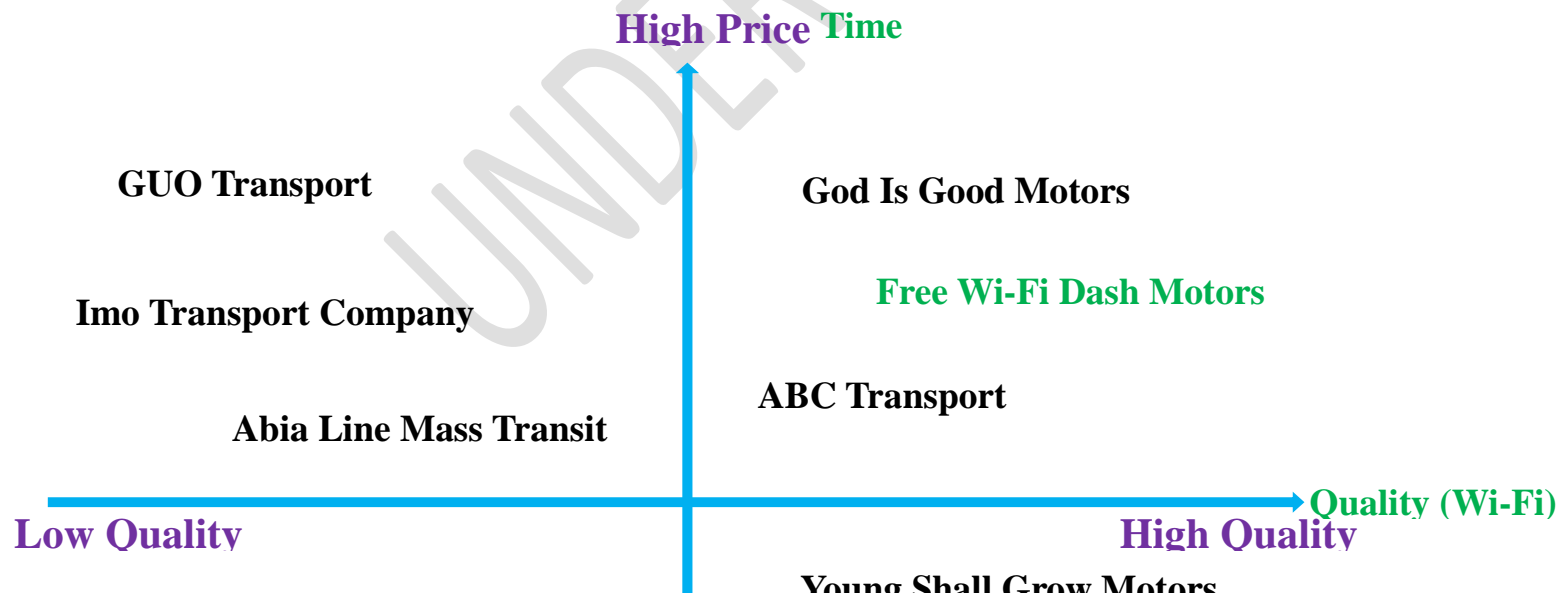
The present investigative report has analyzed the situation, and SWOT driven strategies based on the current state of land transportation in Nigeria, with quantitative and qualitative data collected to ensure a robust marketing plan. Available facts from the present study depicted that Nigerian land transporters hardly maintain stated departure time even as consumers (passengers) are willing to pay ticket prices without hesitation. In addition, lettered consumers are aware of trends in other countries such as free Wi-Fi access while on board, responsive customer management and others which have never been practiced in Nigeria. While situation analysis showed that both customer and external environments supports Dash Motors internal environment, SWOT driven strategy bolsters the company’s decision statement, and further supports the company’s hypothesis. For instance, land transportation act, incorporation of free Wi-Fi in Dash Motors vehicles, and prioritization of timely departure are instrumental in achieving and sustaining Dash Motors decision statement.

Consequent to quantitative and qualitative analyses conducted in order to realize Dash Motors objectives, quantitative results showed that almost 90% of middle class consumers (passengers) in Nigeria have high intention to adopt free Wi-Fi Dash Motors. This is interesting and will expectedly relegate transport companies purporting to offer high quality service without proper creation of consumer values. This is believed to emanate from consumers information search which they tend to get through company’s adverts, and evaluation of alternatives prior to deciding on a transport company to travel with. Hence, it is concluded that the first objective of the present investigative report is in line and supports Dash Motors decision statement.

Accordingly, intention is a proximal antecedent of behavior (Ajzen, 1991). Although studies have proved that the relationship between these two constructs is high, it was tentatively hypothesized that adoption intention will predict continued patronage. This is owing to the fact that Dash Motors was yet to be popular among consumers. Fortunately, the hypothesis was rightly supported by results. Adoption intention predicted continued patronage among middle class consumers in Nigeria. In the wake of this interesting and motivating result, it calls for serious action/enhancement of the company’s strengths, transformation of the perceived threats, and exploration of competitor weaknesses as potential opportunity to galvanize the in-roads of Dash Motors in Nigerian land transportation sector.

Furthermore, in the investigative report’s quest to find out the factors that create consumer values in land transportation business across Nigeria among middle class consumers, qualitative findings revealed that time is related to safety; as a result, it is very important to travellers. More so, free Wi-Fi was pointed as a major facility to be incorporated in passenger vehicles. Nonetheless, little emphasis was placed on bus ticket prices, with consumers attention focused mainly on functionality of Dash Motors strategies. It is also noteworthy that middle class consumers stated their readiness to spread positive WOM to other consumers. All these re-echo the middle class consumers resolve to experience a World class transportation company in Nigeria. This will undoubtedly sustain Dash Motors and constantly increase their market share.

Therefore, guided by Dash Motors proposed strategies and results, efforts should be made to ensure timely release of the start-up capital, efficient monitoring of operational processes, and advancement of related technologies to avoid being obsolete and further replaced by competitor companies in the mind of consumers. Consequent to the findings, Dash Motors which is branded “Free Wi-Fi Dash Motors” is perceived to be a high quality transport company with relatively higher price than transport companies in the lower part of high quality axis as shown in Figure 1. Above all, Free Wi-Fi Dash Motors is believed to be the transportation company to outsmart existing companies with no consumer value. The implication is that existing inter-state transporters may lose many passengers to Free Wi-Fi Dash Motors and further face a dwindling market share.



Bearing in mind some inadequacies often associated with empirical works, the major limitation of this investigative report is the use of Nigerians living in Malaysia or that returned to Nigeria within the last one year. This could trigger a skewed perception of land transportation business due to the respondents' homogeneous experience of Malaysian land transport system. The study believes that using samples with knowledge of different countries' land transport system may offer a slightly different operational view. Hence, these findings should be generalized cautiously. More so, the study's model lacked some variables that could have enhanced the explained variance in continued adoption behavior. Therefore, future studies should incorporate Nigerian respondents from different countries. It is also suggested that more variables (such as: past experience/knowledge, product/vehicle quality, and complain handling approach) should be included in subsequent models similar investigative report.

UNDER PEER REVIEW

**COMPETING INTERESTS DISCLAIMER:**

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist. The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

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