

## An Assessment of Touting Activities in Selected Urban Motor Parks in Ibadan Metropolis

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### Abstract

The pull created by unemployment has pushed many individuals into forming gangs usually referred to as touts, whose activities revolve round the streets, bus stops, market, motor parks and especially, the transport corridors. These studies examine the touting in Nigeria motor parks especially in Ibadan metropolis. The study used a purposive sampling to select five major motor parks in Ibadan Metropolis (Gate, Sango, Ojoo, Iwo-road and Dugbe), and 250 copies of questionnaire were administered to touts in the respective motor parks. Result showed that 75.6% of the touts were introduced into touting by friends without any qualification. Primary activities performed by the touts included collection of money from passengers, collection of union dues and calling of passengers. Many of the touts ventured into the vocation due to unemployment, need for survival and lack of care from parents. The nefarious activities performed by the touts included extortion of money, vandalism, raping, killing and stealing. The study recommended the provision of employment and rehabilitation through vocational establishments.

**Keywords:** Unemployment, Touting activities, Motor parks, Ibadan metropolis

### Introduction

High rate of unemployment, poverty and uncontrollable informal sector among others have led to more than proportionate increase in deviant careers, violence and criminal activities, loss of lives and properties in most urban centres. As submitted by Fayeye (2007), poor economic growth coupled with high rate of corruption and mismanagement are some of the fundamental factors accounting for high rate of unemployment in Nigeria. This unemployment rate as further argued by Fayeye (2007) encouraged early morning gathering of unemployed youths around major urban roads, street and junctions discussing football and headings of newspaper to waste away their time. Salawu, (2009) maintained that the pull created by unemployment has pushed many individuals into forming gangs usually referred to as touts, whose activities revolve round the streets, bus stops, market, motor parks and especially, the transport corridors. These touts hang around motor parks and most times claimed they are working for government especially the local government authorities. Realistically, most of these tout work for their Godfathers, Union Chairman and Garrison politicians (Lana, 2011).

Touts can be defined as workers at railway stations, airports, ferry points, and especially motor parks, who undertake the self-imposed responsibility of recruiting and organizing passengers who wish to travel by road and for this work they received a fee or more appropriately a 'commission' that is gradually paid by the drivers of the vehicles just before their departure (Okpara, 2005; 1998). Ikumola (2011) submitted that most of the touts are private entrepreneurs, who both compete and collaborate with one another to provide road transport for the public which most times generate unhealthy rivalry.

Obviously, these self-appointed passenger procurers are not public employees, although all the motor parks in which they operate are built and owned by the appropriate local government authorities. As opined by Lana (2011) most touts do not consider collection of Dues/ticket only economically viable, thus they help drivers/commercial car owners to get the necessary passengers, in order to boost their income per day.

Usually, as identified by (Momoh 2000 ; Ikumola, 2011) activities of touts are characterized by incessant fights over loading rights in the street, bus stops, motor parks (transportation corridors) and business districts. Similarly, the malevolent character of touts, relative groups and the destructive goals of their members, as revealed by the atrocity in the urban areas are noted for destruction of public peace. These atrocities are not only increasing in proportion but are lethally more devastating and sophisticated in organization. Reports of dastardly acts such as looting, killing, raping, acid bathing, thugery, exhortation, property destruction and stealing have become more rampant among touts in the metropolis. Till date, available police statistics report as revealed in the Nigerian (Tribune, August, 12, 2012) shows that there is a strong association between these so called touts and violence associated with criminal activities and lawful disorderliness in most urban cities.

The demand for transportation is inevitably higher per unit of time in the urban centres of any regional communications network than anywhere else. Land use planners' creation for transport at certain nodes by designating relevant space as motor parks (Oni, 2007) which are supposed to constitute the official station of departure and arrival for most journeys, undertaker or by non-car owing residents of the community. Hence, for those living outside urban centres where such parks are located, these act by the touts caused them to be panic

and make them to be vulnerable to miscreant activities.

Thus, the motor parks constitute the major operational bases for touts and can be used to evaluate the relative importance of certain towns and villages as transportation nodes. Since there seems to be a direct relationship between urbanization and enhanced demand for travel on the one hand, and the incidence of touting on the other, (Okpara, 2007), it is hardly surprising that the latter is not a traditional enterprise. In other words, the unique brokerage services offered to both willing and unwilling passengers have evolved in response to fairly recent urban and related transport development (Mensah, 2008)

Earlier research on touting extensively focused on mode of operation see (Okpara, 2005; Lana, 2011) other focused on attitude and activities of touts along traffic corridors (Ikuomola et al, 2011; Iginla, 2007). Many other scholars review the relevance of theory of planned behaviour in explaining the development of touts (Agnew, 1992). Many other scholars examined how different cultural groups such as Oodua people's congress, Agaba boys and Egbesi boys have metamorphosed into area boys and nuisance in major metropolis mostly in the public places See (Ikoh, 2010; Ekpenyong, 1999; Oloko, 2007). A look at this research will show that several lacunas exist in the study of touting as urban menaces. While many researchers focus extensively on some of the activities of touts, little or no study has examined socio-economic background of these boys (Touts). Also many studies were silent on the formulation of touts in most urban areas especially along traffic corridors. Although, in Ibadan metropolis several journalistic report have been written on members of NUTRW in Ibadan metropolis who are generally believed to be touts, but there is still a need to appraise the prevalence of touts especially in urban motor parks which is a major public places in Ibadan. The study particularly examine; examine the socio-demographic characteristics of touts in urban motor parks; examine the mode of entry of touts in urban motor park Appraise the major activities and operations of touts in urban motor parks, examine the factors that influence touting in urban motor parks, examine the behavioural characteristics of touts and factors influencing such behaviour in urban motor parks.

## **Materials and methods**

### **Study area**

Ibadan is located near the forest grassland in southwestern Nigeria. Ibadan is the administrative centre of Oyo-State. It lies between latitude 7.26 North and Latitude 3.54 East. Ibadan is approximately 50 kilometer from Lagos by most direct route. All road traffic from Lagos to the northern states through Abeokuta and Shagamu converge on Ibadan before proceeding to their destinations. The railways to the Northern states also passes through Ibadan, which has since become a major break of bulk point for trade goods from south west to the North. Ibadan also served as a major fuelling and cargo station in the trade between the eastern states and Lagos from early colonial period till the operation of Benin (Filani et al., 1994). Ibadan municipality has a population of over 6.3 million people (NPC, 2006); the majority of whom are Yorubas, although people of other ethnic origins also reside there. The main modes of transportation within the city are privately owned vehicles, taxis, commerce minibuses, motorcycles and walking. Most of the taxicabs and minibuses (commercial buses) are mostly operated by National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW). Although the body have other affiliated unit such as RTEAN (Road Transport Employee Association of Nigeria) NACCOMORA (The Okada cyclist Union) and the Association of KEKE NAPEP Riders. Most of these Unions usually have their offices at the car-park or garage where they placed personnel or union officers that collect dues.

However, urban motor parks due to its flexibility of being a public place where different economic activities takes place also enhances the operations of NURTW members. For instance Adeola (2008) noted that most urban parks provides meeting points for people, centre for campaign, means of advertisement, waiting and loading bay for passengers, sale of goods and rendering of services. Others include hawking, sales promotion and generally urban motor parks serves as centre of scenery. Since urban Motor Park in most Ibadan metropolis possess these characteristics, it is easier for most touts to operate in their business. Although, there are many urban motor parks in Ibadan metropolis, but those that are largely controlled by NURTW members such as Gate, Olomi, Sango, Iwo-road, Ojoo, Olomi challenge etc. are usually the operation points for most touts usually called Orisa in Ibadan. Thus it is a common thing in Ibadan metropolis to affiliate violence with NURTW members who are touts in most urban motor-parks, since they are jobless, they usually like to foment trouble in order to enrich themselves.

### **Method of data collection and analysis**

The primary data were obtained through the administration of copies of structured questionnaire to touts across five purposively selected intra-city motor parks within Ibadan Metropolis; the five selected motor parks were Gate, Sango, Ojoo, Iwo-Road and Dugbe. These motor parks were selected because they are located in the central business district where transportation activities take place. Data obtained from the questionnaire administration were analysed using tables, simple percentages, cross tabulations, charts, multiple regression analysis (MRA), Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Chi Square.

## Results

### Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Information on the sex of respondents shows that out of the respondents that correctly answered the questionnaire, 95.6% were males, while 4.4% were females. This implies that touting activities and phenomenon are higher among males than females due to its ways of operation; as such the touting business is dominated by the males. Similar result was reported by Oluwole et al., (2012) when they alleged that the activities “Agberos” males’ overbearing dominance of the business. Their study shows that 92.2% of the Agberos were males, while 7.8% were females. Ages of respondents indicates that 30.8% were within the ages of 14 – 25 years; 50.4% of the respondents were within the ages of 26 – 35 years, 13.6% of the respondents were within the ages of 36 – 45 years, while 5.2% were respondents >45 years. This implies that touting business is common among youths/school drop-outs within the ages of 14 – 35 years. This result somehow agrees with earlier studies like those of Ikuomola et al., (2011) and Oluwole et al., (2012) that the majority of respondents (71.1%) of the touts and ‘Agberos’ are likely to fall into the age bracket of 14 – 33 years. Information on the ethnicity composition of respondents’ shows that majority of the youths involved in touting business were Yorubas. The dominance of Yorubas may be attributed to the location of the study. The second dominated ethnic group was Igbos, followed by touts from other ethnic groups. The least ethnic group with involvement in touting business was the Hausas. The parenting level of respondents depicts that 13.2% of the respondents were from single parent mothers; 20.8% of the respondents were from single parent fathers, 43.6% were from polygyny homes; with more than one wife, while 22.4% were orphans (without father and mother). The information therefore indicates that majority of the respondents (56.4%) are children of circumstance, hence, their involvement in touting business as a mean of survivals.

The educational status of respondents shows that 20.8% had primary education (First School Leaving Certificate or Standard Six), 43.6% had post-primary education, 11.2% and 1.6% had post-secondary education, 18.8% of the respondents were school drop-outs, while 4.0% had no education. The information implies that majority of the respondents has low level education (not exceeding secondary education), which perhaps could be responsible for the strong involvement in touting business. The years of involvement in touting business reveals that 11.6% of the respondents had been in touting business for about 1 – 2 years, 31.2% had spent 3 – 5 years in the touting business, while 57.2% had spent more than 5 years in the business. This implies that majority of the touts surveyed have been in touting business for long, and some are comfortable with it, such that, they do not consider quitting at the moment. Others alleged to quit if they are offered employment or have alternative means of making ends meets, as they are married and must put food on the table for their wives, dependants (brothers, sisters and relatives) and children.

### Mode of entry into touting business

Information on the mode of entry into touting business is depicted in Table 1. The Table indicates that majority of the respondents (75.6%) entered into the business through their friends who are touts. This is evident as friend of like minds flock together. Friends in the literature are acknowledged to exert significant influence on youth’s decision making, mostly when they are perceived as role models. This indeed implies that touting business among students or youths is influenced by attachment to peers. According to Akers and Sellers (2004), peer factors seem to be a stronger predictor of adolescent behaviour than parental influence. They argue that peer influence has strong direct effects on adolescent, superior to parental attachment. Continuous apprenticeship and assistance was observed to be the second mode of admission into the business, while the least mode was through relatives. This is so as touts may not want their relatives to know what they do for a living for the fear of losing their respect and exposure of their true identity.

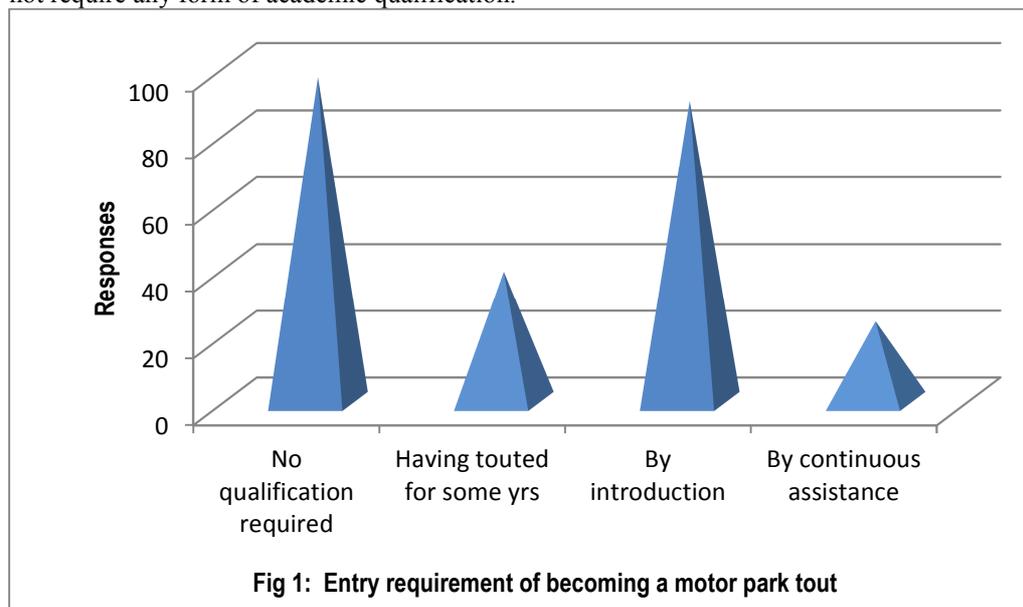
**Table 1: Means of entry into touting business**

Options	Frequency	Percent
Through friends	189	75.6
Through relatives	14	5.6
Through continuous apprenticeship	47	18.8
Total	250	100.0

### Entry requirement into touting business

Figure 1 gives vital information on the entry requirement of being a tout. The Fig indicates that no qualification and by introduction were the prominent requirements. In becoming a tout, no academic qualification is required; all that is required is for existing members to confide in them that the person intending to become a member is well known to him. However, qualifications are not needed as the business does not need any special or technical training, perhaps, the easiest is being a school drop-out. Another possible entry requirement is for the intending person to have touted for some years, likely two years. In summary, the result reveals that touting business does

not require any form of academic qualification.



**Activities performed by touts in urban motor parks**

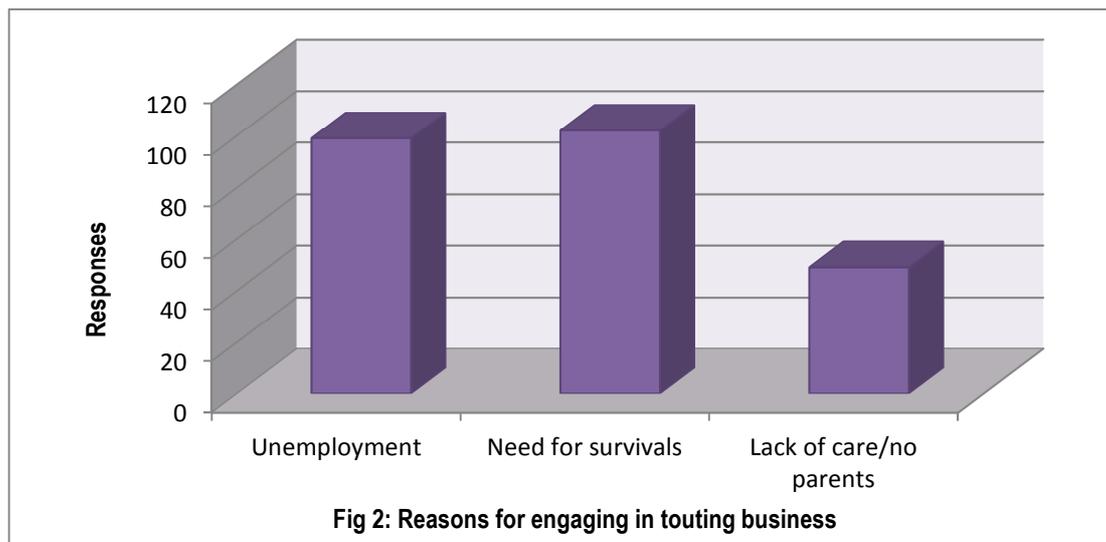
The major activities performed by touts in urban motor parks in Table 2 it indicates that assisting drivers in collecting money from passengers, help in looking and calling passengers as well as helping NURTW to collect dues from passengers constituted the prominent activities performed by touts. Other conventional activities performed by touts in urban motor parks included the provision of security at the park and maintenance of parking lines. A visit to motor parks in Nigeria would convince you, you will see how touts help drivers in calling on passengers, assisting passengers in conveying goods to the car/bus and helping drivers to collect money, and in return for their services, they are paid stipends which they use to make ends meet. Earlier and related studies have made emphasis to the same activities. For instance, Okpara (2005) alleged that touts who are free-lance workers undertake the self-imposed responsibility of recruiting and organizing passengers who wish to travel by road and for this work they received a fee or more appropriately a ‘commission’ that is gradually paid by the drivers of the vehicles just before their departure. Also, Lana (2011) opined that most touts do not consider collection of dues/ticket only economically viable, thus they help drivers/commercial car owners to get the necessary passengers, in order to boost their income per day.

**Table 2: Activities performed by touts in urban motor parks**

Options	Frequency	Percent
Collection of money from passenger	103	41.2
Help in maintaining parking	15	6.0
Collection of dues for union	49	19.6
Help in calling passengers	63	25.2
Provision of security at the park	20	8.0
Total	250	100.0

**Factors/reasons for becoming a tout**

Figure 2 shows reasons why youths engage in touting business. The information indicates that 40.8% of the respondents identified the need for survivals as the reason for being a tout, 39.6% alleged they engage in touting business as a result of the high rate of unemployment, while 19.6% gave the lack of care mostly from the government in the absence of their parents as the reason or factor that motivate them into touting. The aforementioned reasons are indeed significant in promoting risky behaviour among youths. Since, there are no jobs even for the uneducated ones, and the complete neglect of the government, the only means of survivals rather than taking to robbery is to become a tout in motor parks where small stipends are a sure bet. Salami (2002) on a similar study identified high population, unemployment, poor wages and poor living conditions among others as factors influencing touting activities in urban motor parks.



### Nefarious activities carried out by touts in urban motor parks

Despite the good services touts performed on behalf of the drivers and NURTW, they also engage in a number of immoral activities that have in recent time undermine their integrity, thereby calling for their banishment from different quarter across the country. The information in Table 3 shows that extortion of money from passengers and drivers' alike, illegal collection of landing fees and vandalism were the major cruel activities that were most times associated with touts. This finding is consistent with those of Momoh (2000) and Ikumola (2011) that touts are involved in such as immoral acts as looting, killing, raping, acid bathing, thuggery, exhortation, property destruction and stealing have become more rampant among touts in the metropolis.

**Table 3: Nefarious activities carried out by touts**

Options	Frequency	Percent
Extortion of money	72	28.8
Illegal collection of fees	56	22.4
Vandalism	46	18.4
Raping	9	3.6
Killings	5	2.0
Thuggery	42	16.8
Stealing	20	8.0
Total	250	100.0

### Level of satisfaction of tout business

The level of satisfaction of touts with the business is depicted in Fig 3. The information indicates that majority of the respondents (63.6%) were not satisfied with touting due to its associated criticisms as not a noble profession and the low wages. They further asserted that the profession does not attract respect from people, who see them as outcast and irresponsible Nigerians that do not know what is good for a living. On the other hand, 36.4% of the respondents were satisfied with the touting as a profession. This category of people does not see anything bad of being a tout as far as it is able to put food on their table.



**Possible reasons for touting and level of satisfied**

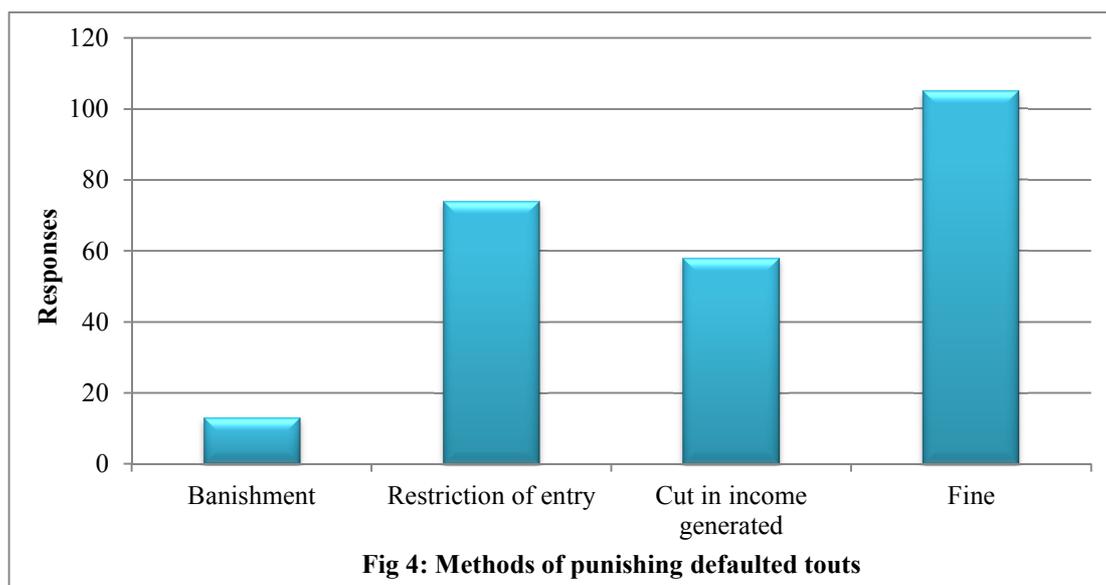
Table 4 gives information on the reasons for engaging in touting business and the level of satisfaction. It shows that out of the 99 respondents that engaged in touting as a result of unemployment, 91 were satisfied with their decision, while 8 were not satisfied and comfortable with the business. In addition, none of the respondents that engaged in the business as a means of survival and lack of care was satisfied with the profession. The possible reasons behind this negative perception and behaviour could be ascribed to the factors earlier mention above. This perhaps implies that majority of the touts are not satisfied with the business irrespective of the reasons for their decisions. As such, are likely to quit the business if provided with other lucrative jobs. The general information is that majority of the respondents (63.6%) are dissatisfied with the touting business, and are likely to quit if better alternatives are available.

**Table 4: Reasons for touting and level of satisfied**

Reasons	Satisfaction with touting as a profession		Total
	Yes	No	
Unemployment	91	8	99
	100.0%	5.0%	39.6%
Need for survivals	0	102	102
	.0%	64.2%	40.8%
Lack of care/no parents	0	49	49
	.0%	30.8%	19.6%
Total	91	159	250
%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

**Method of punishment of defaulted touts in urban motor parks**

The information in Figure 4 provides some clues on how touts who violate laid down order are punished. The information identifies fine, restriction of entry and cut in income generated as the commonest methods of punishing touts who violate existing order of a motor park. However, fine is seen as the commonest approach employed by NURTW in dealing with defaulted touts; while banishment is the least used method. Though, banishment of a tout depends on the nature of crime or offended committed. If the crime committed is notorious, the person is permanently banished from the motor park.



**Analysis of the relationship between educational levels of touts and their satisfaction**

The Pearson’s correlation technique was used to find out whether there is a significant relationship between educational levels of touts and their satisfaction with touting business. Data on level of satisfaction with two options was re-coded into ‘yes’ as 1 and ‘no’ as 0. In a similar manner, the data on education with 6 options was re-coded into two, touts with primary education and above as 1, while those with no education and school drop-outs as 0. The r-value result in Table 5 indicates there is a positive and significant association (0.593) between educational levels of touts and their satisfaction with touting business ( $p < 0.01$ ). This result therefore indicates that there is a significant relationship between educational levels of touts and their satisfaction with touting business. The result further implies that touts engagement and level of acceptance of the business is dependent on their educational status.

**Table 5: Pearson’s correlations of the relationship between educational levels of touts and their satisfaction**

Test statistics	Educational level	Satisfaction
Pearson Correlation	1	.593**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
N		250

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: SPSS Window Output Version 17.0

**Discussion and Implication of Study**

The analysed result indicates that touting activities and phenomenon are higher in males than females; as touting business is dominated by the males. Similar result was reported by Oluwole et al., (2012) when they alleged that the activities “Agberos” males’ overbearing dominance of the business. The age of touts implies that touting business is common among youths/school drop-outs within the ages of 14 – 35 years. This result somehow agrees with earlier studies like those of Ikuomola et al., (2011) and Oluwole et al., (2012) that the majority of respondents (71.1%) of the touts and ‘Agberos’ are likely to fall into the age bracket of 14 – 33 years. The analysed result reveals that majority of the respondents are children of circumstance, hence, their involvement in touting business as a mean of survivals. The majority of the touts has low level education (not exceeding secondary education), which perhaps could be responsible for the strong involvement in touting business.

The study reveals that friends are the main mode of entry, as majority of the entered into the business through their friends who are touts. This is evident as friend of like minds flock together. Friends are known to exert significant influence on youth’s decision making, mostly when they are perceived as role models. According to Akers and Sellers (2004), peer factors seem to be a stronger predictor of adolescent behaviour than parental influence. They argue that peer influence has strong direct effects on adolescent, superior to parental attachment. The result reveals also that touting business does not require any form of academic qualification. The study identifies assisting drivers in collecting money from passengers, help in looking and calling passengers as well as helping NURTW to collect dues from passengers as the prominent activities performed by

touts in urban motor parks. This agrees with the findings of Okpara (2005) that touts who are free-lance workers undertake the self-imposed responsibility of recruiting and organizing passengers who wish to travel by road and for this work they received a fee or more appropriately a ‘commission’ that is gradually paid by the drivers of the vehicles just before their departure.

The study further shows that the need for survivals, high rate of unemployment and the lack of care mostly from the government in the absence of parents are the reasons for being a tout. Salami (2002) on a similar study identified high population, unemployment, poor wages and poor living conditions among others as factors influencing touting activities in urban motor parks. The study identifies extortion of money from passengers and drivers, illegal collection of landing fees and vandalism as the cruel activities that are most times associated with touts. This finding is consistent with those of Momoh (2000) and Ikumola (2011) that touts are involved in such as immoral acts as looting, killing, raping, acid bathing, thuggery, exhortation, property destruction and stealing have become more rampant among touts in the metropolis.

On the level of satisfaction of touts with the business, the study reveals that majority of the respondents are not satisfied with touting due to its associated criticisms as not being a noble profession. A further look at the reasons for engaging in touting business and the level of satisfaction reveals that that majority of the respondents is dissatisfied with the touting business, and is likely to quit if better alternatives are available. The study reveals that the National Union of Road Transport Workers (NURTW) usually punishes touts, who default or violate laid down rules and regulation, and the punishments are in different forms. The study identifies fine, restriction of entry and cut in income generated as the commonest methods of punishing touts who violate existing order of a motor park. Fine is observed to be the commonest approach employed by NURTW in dealing with defaulted touts; while banishment is the least used method. The analysis shows there is a significant relationship between educational levels of touts and their satisfaction with touting business.

### Conclusion

Obviously, having described who is a “touts” as well as identified and shed light on the threat of their activities, it is imperative to state that institutional approach in combating what generally necessitates touting in urban motor parks and bus stop in Nigeria should be targeted. The contention of this study is that if there are more existing, legitimate avenues and opportunities which prospective touts could channel their strength for survival then our urban centres will have a reduction in street individuals taking touting or street development or criminal activities for survival.

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