

CHALLENGES OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION IN  
KAMPALA CITY CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT

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### Declaration

I Adokorach Evelyne, declare that this dissertation is my original work and has never been published or submitted for any other award in any institution before.

Signed: .....  .....

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### Approval

This dissertation entitled “challenges of traffic congestion in Kampala City Central business District” has been submitted to the faculty of Education of Kampala International University with my approval.

Signed:  .....

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Date: 27th/10/2009 .....

## **Dedication**

Dedicated to the family of Mr. Onegiu Bruno and Onegiu Florence, relatives and friends who tirelessly denoted by dedicated themselves towards my studies.

### **Acknowledgement**

My appreciation and gratitude go to all those individuals who made this study a reality. I am particularly grateful to the members of the Faculty of Education – Kampala International University, my supervisor Mr. Kamulegeya Siraje, the respondents in the field (Kampala City Central Business District) and my classmates. My special thanks go to my dear parents, Mr. Onegiu Bruno and Onegiu Florence Wanitho, my sister Doreen and brother Francis for their tireless efforts of educating me.

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## **Definition of key terms**

Challenges of traffic congestion in Kampala City central Business District.

The problems that exist as a result of desire to move / locomote from one place to another could be explored to access the basics and luxurious life, time saving and trade growth.

CBD

Central Business District

KCC

Kampala City Council

## **Abstract**

This study was conducted to explore the causes and problems of traffic congestion. This was after the realization that the people of Kampala City do face such problems.

The study design took the form of a case study of Kampala City Central Business District in that the data sought was qualitative. The study also involved purposive compiling.

The data were collected using interviews and observation for primary and documents analysis for secondary data. In all a sample of 30 respondents were involved in the study. The study specifically set out to achieve the following objectives, to find out the causes of traffic congestion and the problems which arise from traffic congestion.

The data were analyzed qualitatively which involved a narrative and literal description of emerging issues.

The study established that traffic congestion are caused by reckless driving, wrong parking along the road, narrow roads, pedestrians unnecessary crossing of the road. Some of the problems as outcomes of traffic congestion were also explored for instance pollution and delay in trade.

The study recommends for an inter-sectoral and participatory planning given the fact that the number of vehicles are constantly increasing on the same roads. The study concludes that all examples of the causes of traffic congestion work hard in hand to result to the same problems.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Introduction

The effectiveness of traffic congestion only occur with the act of movement and it is from influence of basic and secondary needs of man that man was put into the act of transportation. This in turn led to congestion as people tend to move [transport both goods and services, persons] in the zeal of trade.

Ascof Feter Company [2001], in U.S.A the problem of traffic congestion is mostly caused by automobiles during the morning and evening rush hours.

According to Gombey [1994], in Africa especially East Africa the causes of traffic congestion are more like the same, as the similarity may be noticed in the causes of traffic congestion like vehicles crowding, pedestrian congestion and even the size of the roads being narrow for too and from usage / movement and in Uganda Ogwal [2004], adds to the above causes in the city Kampala central business district, the effect of climatic change like rainy season and also rush of time, semi skilled and unskilled drivers, unnecessary parking along the roads, unnecessary stopping by the traffic police persons and the one way lane construction of road.

As noted by Gombey [1994] and Nyakaana [1997], the rapid urbanization of Kampala has out-topped the city's planning machinery and techniques of providing good transportation systems. Under such circumstances, the most affected have been the pedestrians and the passengers who directly feel the impact of traffic congestion.

According to Wilson and Hogendron [20002, traffic congestion particularly in the less developing countries are often overwhelmed by the immense crush of pedestrians and vehicles of all sorts that clog the street.

It is along the above background that this study, set out to investigate the causes and problems of traffic congestion in Kampala city central business district.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Traffic congestion is one of the most conspicuous dimensions that require compressive planning by Kampala City Authority [Ogwal 2004]. The numbers of vehicles in the central business district has more than tripled in the last twenty years, yet the roads have changed very little [Erigo 2001]. The situation is often worse during the early, lunch and evening hours of the day. This has often resulted into delays on the worse

This study attempted to find out the challenges amidst an increasing volume of traffic with little or no effect to improve on the roads.

## **1.3 The purpose of the study**

One purpose of this study was to investigate the challenges of traffic congestion in the Central Business District of Kampala City.

The research still is to get solutions to the causes of traffic congestion in the city.

## **1.4 Objectives of the study**

The specific objectives include;

1. To find out the causes of traffic congestion in the central business district of Kampala city
2. To find out the problems arising out of traffic congestion in the central business district of Kampala city.

## **1.5 Research questions**

The research was guided by the following research questions;

1. What are the causes of traffic congestion in The Central Business District of Kampala City?
2. What problems arise out of traffic congestion in the Central Business District of Kampala City?

## **1.6 Significance of the study**

As noted by Ogwal (2004), and Sengendo (1995) the rapid urbanization of Kampala has outpaced the city's planning to construct sufficient road infrastructure to cope with the expanding traffic. The effects have been far reaching.

Zacher and Casino (1998) noted that a crowded place quickens easy disease spread like cholera, dysentery, typhoid, TB and cough.

Gombey (1993) observed that the stabilization and adjustment programmes of the IMF and World Bank since 1980s has greatly influenced the distribution of money plans of Uganda as it normally decide on which sector are the money to be used and this has made the government of Uganda to work according to their plans thus leaving the transport system lag behind in terms of transport infrastructure development is concerned.

It is hoped that this study will yield findings, recommendations and conclusions that will be useful to city planners, ministry of works, opinion leaders and politicians. This will enable them to base their decisions on concrete scientific findings.

## **1.7 Scope of the study**

The study on challenges of traffic congestion in central business district of Kampala city was conducted between June and September 2009 targeting a predetermined sample of 30 respondents purposively selected using a case study design. The data were collected by the researcher using interviews and observations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the related literature from various sources of information particularly focused on the causes and problems of traffic congestion in the central business district of Kampala city.

These were considered to be the pillars of the study.

The traffic police persons have tried to define traffic congestion as;

Over crowding of any sort of means to transport along the roads / lanes for both domestic and commercial purposes [white paper journals 2000]. Ogwal [2000] explains that traffic jam is a situation when someone's time is being consumed by another means of transport not of will.

#### **2.2 Causes of traffic congestion**

Gombey [1994], had discussed the existing ways that were the root cause of traffic congestion being the reckless driving, wrong parking along the roads, inadequate traffic lights, unnecessary stopping by the traffic police persons, narrow roads and wrong crossing by the pedestrians.

##### **2.2.1 Reckless driving**

Sengendo [1999] and Gombey [1994], noted that reckless driving has resulted into unnecessary parking, over speeding and the vehicles may end up being spoilt within the main road causing traffic at the end.

##### **2.2.2 Narrow roads**

The roads can greatly determine the movements along it, as the larger / wider roads easy movement on like the narrow pavements which slows movement. [Olukoshi 1996], the road determines its use and speed, good constructed ones with enough spacing easy movement and traffic jam controlled. This is not the case of Kampala city which has narrow roads.

### **2.2.3 Inadequate traffic lights**

Ogwal (2004), noted that the traffic lights being inadequate along the road have resulted into traffic jam as the road users clash to one another due to anyway method of driving and some roads to do not have enough traffic lights.

### **2.2.4 Lack of flyovers**

The act of urbanization should take all round change [Sengendo, 1995], yet in the LDCs it is not the case. The flyovers would help reduce on dependence syndrome of over relying on the roads as it is the nature of transport in Kampala city.

## **2.3 Problems of traffic congestions**

The Ascot Feter company (2001), the Ministry of Transport and Communication, the newspapers [Feb 3<sup>rd</sup> 2004] and traffic police persons of Uganda, the internet among others such as the physical aspects of climate in respect to the government. The traffic jam condition exists as a problem to the near-by people and even country wide. These problems include;

### **2.3.1 Pollution**

Mwesigwa (1997) explains that the act of pollution which comes as a result of traffic congestion only adds to the already existing pollution like air pollution and disease spread.

### **2.3.2 Delays in trade and creation of bad reputation**

Trade is being the most influential factor of economic activities within the city has been delayed by the traffic jam as it consumes the traders time to allocation for commercial purposes.

For the traffic police persons who try to maintain the road use to be sufficient enough to the people, are being misquoted to have been seeking for illegal money route. This is as a result of traffic jam.

According to Lwasa (1999), more of the challenges of traffic congestion is experienced in areas of Kawempe, Bwaise especially during the day from morning to sun set.

Traffic jam is still a problem along this road, too notorious as it characterizes the nature of the road throughout the day.

### **2.3.3 Some attempts done**

Bugembe (2002) explains that not just a matter of identifying the traffic jam problem but the constructions of the taxi parks in the city and more coming taxis in and out of the city causing traffic congestion than the park, it should be at least 8km constructions along to suburbs.

Michuki (2004 Feb New Vision), the restriction put by the minister of transport and communication in Kenya as the public transport vehicles were to meet the requirements needed or forced off the street if failed to comply with the set laws. These obligations could suite the Ugandan government as far as traffic jam problem are concerned.

The government itself attempts to solve traffic jam problem but there are some other limitations like natural calamities [climate, the small size of the city], the people's unwillingness to change, economic hardship, political and social conflicts [Bugembe 2002].

## **2.4 Conclusion**

The traffic congestion has affected worldwide and this has influenced people to point out, its cause, its problems and some attempts to scurb it like then use of traffic lights and persons, rules to mention but a few.

This study, therefore, explored that although there are increase in the numbers of vehicles within the city, this has not stopped traffic jam problems in central business district of Kampala city.



## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the procedures that were used in collecting data on the study. These include the research design, sample size, sampling techniques, area of study, methods of data collection, data analysis and limitation of the study.

#### **3.2 Area of Study**

The study was carried out in the central business district of Kampala city which was purposively selected because of its notorious traffic jam and also its significance as a commercial hub of the country.

The occupants are from various parts of the country [different tribes and religions] and even foreigners. The means of communication are Luganda, Swahili and English. Most of their activities rotate within economic gains of trade and commerce, private ownership of institutions, other social economic activities and learning environment also inclusive.

#### **3.3 Research design**

The research design took the form of the case study of the central business district of Kampala city in which the data sought was qualitative. This research design also involved purposive sampling of collecting only useful and focused information because of the limiting time and funds.

Primary data were got through interviews and observations while secondary data involved the review of documents in libraries and internet.

#### **3.4 Sample size and sampling techniques**

The researcher used a predetermined size of 30 respondents who were purposively collected because of the limited time and funds. The examples include the police persons, motorists, pedestrians and KCC officials who were presumed to be directly affected by traffic congestion in the Central Business District.

Category	Number of respondents
Police officials	03
Motorists	13
Pedestrians	12
KCC officials	02
Total	30

### 3.5 Data collections

The data were of primary and secondary.

Primary data were collected through interviews and observation. An interview schedule was used to collect data from key informants who included the traffic police officials, pedestrians, motorists and KCC officials.

Observations were also used to reinforce the interviews. The observation involved observation of the conduct of motorists and pedestrians, traffic lights, road emanation and zebra crossings.

For secondary data it was got from literature review to the study and various libraries.

### 3.6 Data analysis

The data were analyzed qualitatively which involved the literal descriptions and the narrations of the imaginal formant. Quotations from respondents were also adapted. During the interviews and observation, the researcher could note down the emerging issues on causes reporting.

### 3.7 Limitations of the study

The study could have been conducted in the whole Kampala but time and funds dictated of only a smaller size of the central business district of Kampala could limit its generalization to other parts of the city.

Nevertheless the study will hopefully provide a fertile ground for future research.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the description of the findings data analysis. The study explored the significance of challenges of traffic congestion in Kampala city central business district and how the residents have managed to live with the traffic jam problem.

The data collected were analyzed qualitatively using a narrative analysis.

This involved a literal description of the emerging issues from the data collected. The discussion of the findings are concurrent with the objectives of the study which were to ascertain the basis for the formation of traffic control bodies, causes of jam problem and to explore the role of already existing bodies in Kampala City Central Business District.

#### **4.2 Causes of traffic congestion in Kampala City Central business district.**

The first objective of the study was to find out the causes of traffic congestion in the central business of Kampala city. This finding indicates that the causes of traffic congestion were mostly caused by reckless driving, unnecessary parking along the road, pedestrian crossing, motorists, the narrow road, inadequate traffic lights and lack of over flights.

##### **4.2.1 Reckless driving and unnecessary parking along the road.**

The findings indicated many causes of traffic jam due to reckless driving and wrong parking on the road. This could be as a result of drunkardness the rushing time hours of morning, midday and evening moments.

A traffic police person explained that;

“I always receive, record and report issues on reckless driving and wrong park for at least a day without missing. This is an indication that traffic jam has its route cause somewhere<sup>1</sup>”.

Another respondent basing on the Kampala – Jinja road had this to say;

“The Kampala – Jinja road is busy and overcrowded with the country’s most essential centers like the radio stations, TV stations, some important offices and manufacturing companies. These make the people drive recklessly so as to chase time and there are no parking yards along the

A by-passer of roughly 20, years of age says that he noted reckless driving and wrong park in Kampala city as the way of drivers. A woman of 30s also noted that for it is may be normal for people to drive recklessly and park anyhowly because of little attention being put in effort to fight against them<sup>2</sup>”.

#### 4.2.2 Narrow roads

The study also found out that traffic congestion problem is also being caused by narrow roads. This arouse the need to widen the nature of road construction. Most of the respondents contend that through the effort of road construction and road format amendments the issue of traffic congestion would come to a standstill in Kampala City Central business city.

A KCC person had this to say about the narrow roads within the city.

“From about 8 years of experience in transport field management, I have seen that the narrow roads are in most cases the foundation for traffic congestion problem in Kampala city. He says had it been that the roads are wider enough with two lane construction little could be noticed on traffic jam issues<sup>3</sup>”.

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<sup>1</sup> Traffic police person

<sup>2</sup> Small scale seller

<sup>3</sup> The pedestrian

Another interviewee also had this to say;

“In Kampala city the roads are narrow which are being used constantly that has made the road busy throughout the time as an influential factor of traffic jam problem.

He still says that the roads of Kampala city cannot be widened because of size of the city being small, if to be done then some buildings should be dismantled for the road construction to take place<sup>4</sup>”.

Another respondent too added that;

“To the road widening view be added the place of taxi park construction. For him he says the taxi parks should at least be some 8kms away from the inner City<sup>5</sup>”.

#### **4.2.3 Inadequate traffic lights**

The findings also indicate the traffic jam problem do exist because of the limited traffic lights. Many respondents noted that the effectiveness of traffic lights would be of great importance if only they were in plenty and well maintained. Others say the people of Kampala city should be also be sensitized on the meanings of the different traffic light colours which could help control the traffic jam problems due to ignorance of colours of traffic lights.

A traffic police officer says;

“The traffic lights along the roads in Kampala city are of great use when well distributed and properly maintained. The existing ones are even not enough and are not in good management as if one gets spoiled, its repair takes long or even may not be repair and replaced<sup>6</sup>”.

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<sup>4</sup> By-passer

<sup>5</sup> UTODA person

<sup>6</sup> Traffic police officer

Another interviewee had this to say;

“The people who use the road along Kampala city have to be enlightened on the usefulness of traffic lights and how it should be followed in when to move and when to stop<sup>7</sup>”.

#### **4.2.4 Lack of flyovers**

The findings also exploited the usefulness of flyovers as a way that could reduce the traffic the jam problem with reduction in the numbers of road users as others use the flyovers instead of the road only.

A UTODA official had this to say;

“The flyovers could help reduce traffic jam problems in Kampala city as some people would prefer it than direct road use. The problem could be greatly at a decrease<sup>8</sup>”.

A young youth of 20s had this to say;

“If only the chance of flyovers were there, most of the youth could prefer it to any other means of transport. He added to the rich working class could also be among the users to<sup>9</sup>.”

### **4.3 Traffic congestion and problems**

The second objective of this study was to find out the problems arising out of traffic congestion in the central business district of Kampala city. To achieve this objective, respondents were interviewed to find out how traffic jam has affected the people of Kampala city. The findings indicated that traffic congestion problem can be explored in the following areas, pollution, delays in trade, accidents and creation of bad reputation.

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<sup>7</sup> Student

<sup>8</sup> UTODA official

<sup>9</sup> Young youth

#### **4.3.1 Pollution**

The finding also explored the problems that arose out of traffic congestion in Kampala city as it led to pollution in aspects like environmental pollution, health pollutions due to easy disease spread.

Many respondents say that because of traffic jam problem of pollution, the Kampala city officials have failed to control and manage transportation within its region.

A lady in her mid 30s who works in Owino market also acknowledged that pollution like overcrowdness by vehicles, pedestrians, motorists and so on have affected the environment [air polluted, easy disease spread and acquiring like T.B, flu, cholera] etc.

Another witness say that the vehicle crowdness means that constant road use therefore no time to renovate the pot holes along the roads thus environment polluted.

#### **4.3.2 Delays in trade**

This was one of the finding that was caused by traffic jam. More of the time which could be used for other essential activities either at the working place or any developmental projects. A working class gentleman noted that are being consumed by traffic jam could be very useful in case it was saved to other developmental project.

A student also said that the time that is always consumed by traffic jam could be of great benefit as for as the student studies are concerned if only utilized in the education system.

#### **4.3.3 Accidents and creation of bad reputation**

The study also explored the accident happenings due to traffic jam problem and it was found out that at least 5% of road accidents are as a result of traffic congestion as the road users wish to compensate the time wasted in traffic jam areas and in the end they end up over speeding, forgetting its repercussions to come. Therefore end up knocking persons or any means of transport on the way.

The creation of bad reputation are brought about by the road users and those who try to maintain the road as to avoid traffic jam problems and any form of bad omen that would occur. A lady in the traffic police unit noted that in an attempt to maintain the smooth running of the road use, they clash with the road users as they say the police individuals only want to get means of surviving from road users and that they are not doing any work of help to the road's effectiveness.

#### **4.3.4 Sample measures being taken**

As traffic congestion come along with the introduction of transport means and its advancement in the increase of the number of road use, there were some attempts being done as far as traffic jam problems are concerned. It has been found out that the existence of traffic police persons, road signs and signals, pavements, rules and regulations governing the roads, traffic lights and so on were all done in order to reduce the effect of traffic jam and its associated problems that may arise.

#### **4.4 Conclusion / summary**

From the findings, the challenges of traffic jam [congestion] in the central business district Kampala were caused by the effect of reckless driving and parking, narrow roads, inadequate traffic lights, lack of flyovers, unfavourable climate [rainfall] and pedestrian wrong crossing of the road. The study also found out the problems associated to the traffic jam like pollution, delays in trade and creates bad reputation on those who try to maintain the roads' efficiency. Some control measures like traffic lights, traffic police persons along the road, rules and regulations traffic signs were being created.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS**

#### **5.1 Recommendations**

This study has shown that the effects of traffic congestion in Kampala city central business district decrease by movements away from the city.

The challenges were faced by the drivers, pedestrians, traffic police persons, motorists and some KCC officials from all aspects being affected by traffic jam try to get means to overcome it.

It was against this phenomenal that the following recommendations were made.

There is need to sensitize the causes of traffic congestion to the city users so as to widen their knowledge.

This calls for policy interventions for equity responsibility and community levels.

There is also need for regional and participatory planning in the district level given the fact that the challenges of traffic congestion do exist.

Various stateholders like KCC, Ministry of Transport and Communication network, voluntary providers, Ministry of finance and Economic Development , the local community need to combine efforts for plans that can answer the cause and problems of traffic congestion in Kampala city central business district.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

This study on challenges of traffic congestion in Kampala city central business district has explored the role played by individuals involved in the transport system. The study was upon the backgrounds that the traffic jam problems are at a higher rate of increase by the increase of more numbers of vehicles on the same road.

The study specifically sought to ascertain the basis for the solutions / control, formation of transport board and to explore the role played by the already existing board of transport in the

central district Kampala city. This study established that traffic jam problems are based on the due cause of reckless driving, the narrow roads, unnecessary pedestrian crossings, climate [rainfall], misuse and ignorance of road signs, lack of over flights, motorists and inadequate traffic lights. It was also found out that though problems do exist, the pedestrians, motorists; drivers do still find their ways through in order to reach areas of their destiny.

From the findings, the study concludes that human beings [pedestrians, cyclists, drivers and so on] have little impact onto the cause of traffic congestion in Kampala city but it is mostly caused by the technology advancement [the increase of vehicles, motor cycles, and the physical factor of the road being narrow in hand of the small size of the city areas/district.

In addition to the cause are the traffic light being limited to small areas. The study illustrates how economic hardship and individuals have negative attitude to change. The mass sensitization and road rules would try to help too.

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## **Appendix I**

### **Interview guide**

1. For how long have been in Kampala?
2. What comment do you have on the issue of traffic in the Central Business District Kampala city?
3. What causes traffic jam in the Central Business District Kampala city?
4. What problems do you associate with traffic congestion in the Central Business District Kampala city?

## **Appendix II**

### **Observation list**

1. Speed of vehicles
2. State of roads
3. Police controlling traffic
4. Pedestrian movement
5. Driving conducts of motorists