

**School Travel Characteristics and Attitude Towards Ride Sharing:
A Case Study of St. George East School District, Trinidad**

Madaniyo I. Mutabazi and Ahlya Ackbarali

ABSTRACT

This paper reports the results of a survey conducted in St. George East School District, Trinidad on the characteristics of transport modes used by students to and from school. It also reports attitudes of students, parents and guardians on ride sharing for school trips. Most (74%) of school trips in the study area are made with motorised transport modes. Primary school students do walk to school more than secondary school students, who in turn ride shared modes (public transport and van-pooling) more than primary school students. Both primary and secondary school students ride private car mode in the similar proportion. Older students are more likely to walk to school than riding motorised transport, and they are more likely to ride shared modes more than private car. As the number of cars per household increases, share of private car mode increases at the expense of other modes. A student from a household owning a car is more likely to be driven to school than walking. The share of private car mode has increased between 1980 and 2004, but the shares of other modes remain unchanged. Majority of respondents are willing to participate in school bus, and car-pool programmes. Those who support car-pooling are more likely to support school bus programme and vice versa. Likewise the majority would like to see the school bus programme be funded by the government. Either primary school respondent or older student is more likely to suggest that any school bus programme be funded by the government, while a respondent from a household owning a car would suggest that school programme be funded privately. High use of private cars for school transport and increasing trend of private car ownership in the country imply that more school trips will be served by private cars unless some significant shift in school transport policy is made. School children, parents and guardians are major stakeholders in any school transport programme, and therefore design of a successful and effective school transport programme should take into account their sentiments.

Keywords: Characteristics of school transport modes, ride sharing for school trips, Trinidad