

Analysis of Transportation on Lifestyle Choices in Lesotho, Africa

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Background

The link between transportation and quality of life is particularly strong in the developing world. Transportation can provide opportunity, education, and income. However, if transportation consumes so much of one's day due to the sheer duration of critical life tasks, it can preclude a high quality of life. In this study, we choose to examine the link between transportation and quality of life and how the link differs across segments of the population (genders, vehicle owners, etc.). We use a survey conducted by Dr. Dayton Lambert's team in the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Tennessee- Knoxville of transportation and farming behaviors in Lesotho, Africa. Lesotho is rated as the third highest nation for the percentage of population testing positive for HIV and is characterized by extreme poverty, illiteracy, gender inequality, and poor health care; therefore, the basic needs of the people are not being met.

Purpose

The purpose of the transportation analysis was to determine what relationships exist between transportation and lifestyle choices of individuals in Lesotho, Africa, and how these relationships differ across segments of the population.

Design/Method

An existing survey, displaying household choices and behaviors in Lesotho, was used as the data source. Using statistical techniques, we investigate household characteristics and their correlation with vehicle ownership/transportation options. The data from these questions were summarized and analyzed in charts to determine what relationships exist between lifestyle choices and transportation availability and type.

Results

We find that the availability of transportation sources does not differ greatly between the genders, however, all the vehicles in Lesotho were owned by households with a male head of household. In addition, females with a transportation source are willing to travel longer distances to make a transaction or to get water, revealing a gender inequity. We also found that the majority of vehicles were owned by individuals in one village, which points to a spatial and gender-based income and access disparity.

Conclusions

Studying the differences between individuals with transportation and those without reveals the significant impact transportation has on quality of life, influencing distance to market, water, and other opportunities. Therefore, enhancing transportation in Lesotho could positively impact the lifestyles of individuals there, by meeting more of their needs.