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How Working Women in Healthcare Perceive Public Transportation and Safety

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Walden University
2024

Abstract

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Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

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Abstract

Women use public transportation more frequently than do men. However, most of these

transportation systems were not constructed with women in mind. Public transportation

systems are accountable for securely transporting people to their destinations, as well as

upkeeping protective policies to advocate for fearful passengers. The purpose of this

qualitative study was to examine women's perspectives on public transportation.The

research question guiding this study asked women to discuss their safety experiences and

needs related to existing public transportation policy. Cooley's theory of transportation

and Friedman's public safety theory formed the conceptual framework for this study.

Purposeful sampling was used to select 15 female healthcare workers who reside in

Maryland. The participants shared their perspectives through structured interviews.

Interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The four emergent themes were: (a)

participants' feeling regarding public safety, (b) precautions/learned behaviors, (c)

expectations, and (d) initiatives. The implications for positive social change included

policy recommendations for transportation companies to modify services to better meet

the needs of women. The study provided women with a better understanding of how to

report problems and who to report them to.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my loving family, friends, deceased loved ones, Africa, Cameroon, and myself.

To my supportive parents, beautiful sisters, sweet nephews, family, friends, and my entire community: My success is measured by the abundance of love and encouragement you all have poured into me. I am your reflection, and you're my treasure. You believed in me when I doubted myself, and for that, I cannot thank you enough. The constant check-ins have not gone unnoticed. May this magnum opus inspire you to have grandiose dreams which you will fulfill. I love you abundantly.

To my deceased loved ones, especially my brother, grandparents, dog, and countless relatives: You're exceptionally missed, and I've continuously felt your spirits throughout this journey. Your memories have bought be peacefulness for which I'm content. I seek to impress you knowing the expectations you have for me. Through my bravery, your wishes won't fall on deaf ears. I love you unregretfully.

To Africa and my beloved country, Cameroon: I am imbued by your richness, appeal, people, and history. I cannot wait to rediscover you and create a much-needed impact for our people. My undying hope for you is endless flourishment through unwavering togetherness. We will be greeted with better days. I love you optimistically.

To myself: I told you, "You're one of one." I am unbelievably moved by your courageousness and resilience. All that sacrifice and labor has amounted into something you dreamed of as a kid. Shine boldly even if it blinds others. I love you intentionally.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

In Maryland, working women use public transportation more than men; however, women's specific transportation opinions are often disregarded by the government as well as male passengers. I examined working women in healthcare and their experiences on using public transportation. I defined public transportation safety, governmental enforcements, and societal standards for passengers. I sought to close the gap regarding (a) working women's public transportation expectations and needs, (b) gender-exclusive transportation policies as it pertains to safety, and (c) possible solutions. A social implication of a more inclusive public transportation system allows for women to feel safer. Consequently, women can frequently take trips which can result in greater opportunities for networking, multi-chain trips, and an increase in workplace attendance and promptness.

Public transportation systems are accountable for securely transporting people to their destinations, as well as maintaining protective policies to advocate for fearful passengers. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine women's perspectives on public transportation. Three themes emerged from the literature review: (a) women feel unsafe using buses and rideshares during the evening, (b) lifestyle factors like running errands and mothering contribute to women using public transportation numerous times a day, and (c) women often do not report mistreatment due the fear of being overlooked.

The research question I observed asked women to discuss their safety needs related to public transportation. Cooley's theory of transportation and Friedman's public safety theory will form the conceptual framework for this study (Cooley, 1894; also see Friedman, 2022). Purposeful sampling was used to select 15 female healthcare workers who reside in the eastern United States. The participants shared their perspectives through structured interviews. Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis. The implications for positive social change included policy recommendations for transportation companies to modify services to better meet the needs of women. The study provided women with a better understanding of how to report problems and who to report them to. Finally, the findings created strategies or form stricter policies with equal-gendered transportation structures, such as on-site harassment reports to improve women's transportation experiences.

Background

The history of public transportation was a fascinating journey that spans centuries and reflects the evolution of human mobility and urban development. In various forms, public transportation played a crucial role in connecting communities, facilitating commerce, and reducing congestion (Abdallah, 2023). The origins of public transportation can be traced back to ancient civilizations. In cities like Rome, there were well-organized systems of horse-drawn chariots and boats that transported citizens and goods (Daganzo, 2019). However, these services were often limited to the elite and did not serve the broader population.

The real transformation in public transportation occurred during the 19th century with the advent of steam-powered railways. The opening of the Liverpool to Manchester Railway in 1830 is often considered the birth of the modern passenger railway system (Abdallah, 2023). This innovation revolutionized transportation, making it faster, more reliable, and accessible to more people. Steam-powered trains soon crisscrossed countries, connecting cities and rural areas and facilitating the movement of goods and people on an unprecedented scale (Ceccato, 2017).

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, introducing electric trams and trolleybuses further improved public transportation options in urban areas (Rodrigue, 2016). These electrically powered vehicles were quieter, cleaner, and more efficient than their steam counterparts, leading to increased ridership and expansion of transit networks in many cities worldwide (Rodrigue, 2016).

The mid-20th century saw the rise of the automobile and suburban sprawl, which posed challenges to public transportation (Rodrigue, 2016). However, many cities continued to invest in transit infrastructure, including bus systems and subways, to combat traffic congestion and air pollution. Innovations such as the New York City subway system, which opened in 1904, and the London Underground, which opened in 1863, remain iconic examples of early urban mass transit systems (Waddington, 2021).

In recent decades, public transportation evolved further with the advent of modern light rail, high-speed trains, and bus rapid transit (BRT) systems (Bamwesigye, 2019). Technological advancements, including automated ticketing, real-time tracking, and electric or hybrid buses, have made public transit more efficient and attractive to riders.

Today, public transportation plays a prominent role in sustainable urban development, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and providing equitable access to mobility for people of all socioeconomic backgrounds (Carter, 2022). Public transportation continues to evolve by integrating smart technologies, electric and autonomous vehicles, and efforts to create more walkable and transit-oriented communities (Harvey et al., 2019).

The history of public transportation serves as a testament to humanity's enduring quest for efficient and accessible ways to move within and between cities. Today's working women deserve a public transportation system which considers gender-mainstreaming solutions for optimal physical and mental well-being, diverse schedules and commutes, affordability, and responsiveness to complaints, and fair transport policies.

<div align="center">**Problem Statement**</div>

Throughout history, gender stereotypes have framed women's experiences and perspectives in ways that can undermine their voices regarding public transportation. This literature search is prompted due to women's opinions on public transportation going unheard. Consequently, the culture of omission of women's opinions regarding gender stereotyping, decision-making, safety, and outreach will persist in a biased transportation system (Medina, 2017). For instance, women's concerns about public transit are sometimes dismissed as overreacting, reinforcing the stereotype that women are more fearful than men. Women see violence because of gender inequity, while men counter that women are complaining and unable to deal with the natural challenges of urban mobility. Planners and legislators are unaware of the statistics on sexual assaults on

public transportation in their city (Miti et al., 2023). This stereotype contradicts the validity of women's opinions, minimizes their support systems, and discourages them from speaking out about their genuine concerns and challenging opposing viewpoints (Harvey et al., 2019).

Gender-stereotyping can activate what is known as stereotype threat. A stereotype threat is the risk of confirming negative stereotypes about an individual's racial, ethnic, gender, or cultural group (Steele, 1995). If individuals are aware of negative stereotypes associated with their gender, they may experience anxiety and reduced performance when engaging in tasks associated with those stereotypes (Miti et al., 2023). For example, suppose women are stereotypically believed to feel unsafe during regular commutes. In that case, women who are aware of this stereotype might be more sociably open while on the ride due to the fear of confirming the stereotype (Harvey et al., 2019). This phenomenon reinforces implicit biases about gender and ability. As a result, women's inputs regarding the need for improved safety measures, better lighting, or more frequent service during late hours may be overlooked.

On a similar note, such gender-stereotypes can form implicit bias. Implicit bias can pervade interactions on public transportation. Consider a female passenger who raises concerns about the lack of security personnel on a subway platform. An implicit bias might lead a transit official to assume that her concerns are unfounded or exaggerated (Bamwesigye, 2019). This unconscious bias can lead to dismissive responses discouraging women from providing feedback or participating in public discussions about transit improvements.

Women's voices are often underrepresented in the halls of power where transportation policies and decisions are made. An example of this underrepresentation can be seen in the composition of transportation planning boards or city councils. When these bodies lack gender diversity, it becomes challenging to incorporate women's perspectives into transit planning. Consequently, issues such as childcare facilities at transit hubs or routes that serve predominantly female populations may not receive the attention they deserve.

Women also have strong opinions regarding safety. Safety is a paramount concern for women when using public transportation, particularly during late hours or in poorly lit areas (Lea et al., 2017). Instances of harassment, assault, or even catcalling are not uncommon, and these experiences can deter women from speaking up about their concerns (Harvey et al., 2019). Fear of retaliation or not being taken seriously can silence their voices.

Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort to challenge stereotypes, promote diversity in decision-making, create safe spaces for reporting incidents, and actively seek women's input for urbanism, transportation planning, and policymaking. By doing so, public transportation can become safer, more accommodating, and more inclusive for all passengers, regardless of gender (Bamwesigye, 2019).

Purpose of the Study

In this qualitative study, I examined working women in the healthcare field's opinion on public transportation. I aimed to evaluate how women feel about transit and if their feelings are based on internal or environmental factors. I examined the public safety

standards which working women in healthcare may have. I explored how frequently women use public transit within the domains of buses, trains, and rideshare. I also explored the perceptions of women passengers in relation to the impact of current and potential government policies and programs.

Research Question

What are the opinions of working women in healthcare regarding public transportation and safety?

Conceptual Framework for the Study

Cooley's (1894) theory of transportation and Friedman's (2020) theory of public safety played significant roles in shaping women's perspectives on public safety. Cooley's theory emphasized the looking-glass self, where individuals form their self-concept based on how they believe others perceive them (Bamwesigye, 2019; see also Hubbard & Larson, 2019). For women, this means that their feelings of safety in public spaces are influenced by societal culture and perceptions, potentially compromising their sense of security, and affecting their willingness to engage in public transportation or activities (Medina, 2017). In the context of public transit, this means that women may form their opinions about safety, potential discrimination, comfortability, and accessibility based on how they believe other passengers, transit personnel, and the wider society perceive them as female travelers (Medina, 2017). If women perceive that they are viewed as vulnerable or at risk due to their gender, it can influence their sense of safety and comfort on public transit.

Cooley's (1894) interactionist theory of valuation articulates that value in actions is shaped by communication and interaction. Women who perceive public transit as unsafe or uncomfortable due to their gender may be more hesitant to use it, seek alternative transportation options, or advocate for improvements in transit safety measures. Unfavorable experiences such as harassment or feeling unsafe can lead to negative perceptions of public transportation, while positive interactions and experiences can enhance their perception of protection. These insights conclude that transportation as a form of communication and social interaction will change over time through personal behaviors. Cooley (1894) emphasized that this process of self-valuation is mediated by communication and interaction with others. In the case of women using public transit, their opinions about the safety and suitability of transit systems are influenced by their daily interactions with fellow passengers, transit staff, and the broader public (Nelson et al, 2022).

In contrast, Friedman's public safety theory suggests society views safety as an over-privilege, thus under-supports the government's role in accountability (Friedman, 2022). Public safety refers to the collective measures and efforts undertaken by government agencies, law enforcement, organizations, and individuals to maintain a secure environment (Friedman, 2022). Public safety encompasses various activities and policies designed to prevent and respond to various threats and risks, including crime, accidents, natural disasters, and public health crises (Cox, 2020). In the context of women using transit, public safety is of particular concern because it involves ensuring the

equitable security and well-being of women during their journeys on public transportation systems. This echoes a need for diverse policy implementation.

The public safety theory outlines the tangible harms people face because people view public safety narrowly. Society must think more broadly about what safety and public safety entail. Friedman (2018) underscored the role of government and law enforcement in providing a safe environment for citizens. Women's opinions on public safety are influenced by their perceptions of how effectively authorities address their concerns and protect them from harm. A lack of appropriate safety measures or an inadequate response to gender-specific incidents can heighten women's anxiety about their safety and lead them to be more cautious in public spaces.

These theories highlight the complex interplay between societal perceptions, individual self-concept, and institutional efforts in shaping women's opinions on public safety. Women's feelings of security in public settings are influenced by their perceived vulnerability, precautions, and their trust in authorities to maintain a safe environment.

In the context of healthcare professionals, particularly women working in the healthcare sector who rely on public transit, safety concerns are paramount. These women may have heightened worries about personal safety while using public transportation, especially during late hours or when traveling alone (Lea et al., 2017). Concerns about harassment, verbal abuse, or physical threats can erode their overall sense of security. To address these concerns, women may advocate for increased security measures, well-lit transit stations, and the presence of transit personnel to enhance safety on public transit.

Nature of the Study

For this study, I completed a generic qualitative study. I conducted the qualitative inquiry approach to focus on participants' experiences and perspectives about the impact government public transportation programs and policies and vice versa. I asked 15 qualified participants to voluntarily contribute their thoughts via structured interviews. To gain a deep insight into the participants' lived experiences, I composed open-ended and follow-up questions based on these experiences (Ceccato, 2017). The study is a way to analyze and highlight the participants' stories about their varied situations while using transit in Maryland. Participant recruitment was intentional and exclusively involved working healthcare women who have been residents is Maryland for approximately 1 year. My participants were from healthcare spaces ranging from private clinics to large hospitals. To obtain government and nongovernment organizations' perspectives on working healthcare women while in transit, I reviewed public reports such as the Public Impact Report from the Maryland Transit Administration.

Definitions

Commute: A commute is the practice of travelling to a town or city to work each day, and then travelling home again (Ceccato, 2017).

Comfortability: A pleasant feeling of being relaxed and free from pain. For a passenger, comfort is the quality of the travel experience, with an emphasis on passenger well-being and satisfaction (Medina, 2017). It involves factors such as seating, temperature control, noise levels, cleanliness, and overall convenience (Medina, 2017).

Culture: Culture pertains to the values, norms, beliefs, and practices that influence the individuals' behaviors and expectations relating to factors such as etiquette and social interactions (Welch et al., 2019).

Discrimination: Discrimination is the unjust or unfair treatment of individuals or groups based on factors such as race, ethnicity, gender, disability, or socioeconomic status (Turnball, 2020). Discrimination can manifest in various forms, including unequal access to transportation services, harassment, or biased decision-making processes.

Gender-mainstreaming: Gender mainstreaming involves considering and integrating all gender-related perspectives and concerns during policymaking (Turnball, 2020).

Government Policy: Government policy in the context of public transportation refers to the laws, regulations, guidelines, and initiatives established by government authorities at various levels (local, regional, national) to govern and shape the transportation sector (Rodrigue, 2016). These policies can cover areas such as safety standards, environmental sustainability, funding allocation, and public transportation accessibility, playing a pivotal role in shaping the direction and priorities of public transportation systems.

Multi-trip: A multi-trip refers to a ticket or pass that allows passengers to take multiple journeys within a specified timeframe or for a set number of trips (Carter, 2020). Multi-trip options often offer cost savings for frequent travelers and are commonly used in urban transportation systems.

Policy implementation: Policy implementation represents the stage where government executes an adopted policy as specified by the legislation or policy action. (Rodrigue, 2016).

Precautions: Precautions are measures taken in advance to avert possible evil or to secure good results (Daganzo & Ouyang, 2019). Precautions in public transportation involve safety measures and actions taken to prevent accidents, injuries, or security breaches (Daganzo & Ouyang, 2019).

Public Safety: Public safety refers to the welfare and protection of the public. It is usually expressed as a governmental responsibility (Wright et al., 2022).

Spatial Mobility: Spatial mobility refers to the movement of individuals and goods within a geographic area, particularly in the context of urban or regional transportation systems (Nelson et al, 2022). It involves the accessibility and connectivity of various locations, which impact the efficiency and effectiveness of public transportation networks.

Transport Policy: Transport policy encompasses the goals, strategies, and regulations established by governments to guide the development, management, and operation of transportation systems (Rodrigue, 2016). These policies influence decisions related to infrastructure development, environmental sustainability, accessibility, and affordability of public transportation.

Urbanism: Urbanism is the study of how population of urban areas, such as towns and cities, interact with the built environment (Hong et al., 2022).

Assumptions

Assumptions are those things taken for granted in the study: statements by the

researcher that certain elements of the research are understood to be true (Clarke &

Braun, 2013). One prevalent assumption was that women are inherently more vulnerable

to safety risks while using public transit. This assumption led to the belief that women

need additional security measures or restrictions, such as separate seating or curfews, to

protect them from potential harm. While safety concerns were valid, assuming that

women are universally more at risk than men can perpetuate victim-blaming and limit

women's freedom of mobility.

Another assumption was that women are primarily responsible for caregiving

tasks, including childcare and elderly care (Welch et al., 2019). This assumption resulted

in the belief that women primarily use public transit for family-related trips or to perform

domestic duties. This overlooked the diverse reasons women used transit, such as

commuting to work, pursuing education, or engaging in social and recreational activities.

This notion promoted limited mobility. With limited mobility, there was a common

assumption that women have limited mobility compared to men due to factors like

caregiving responsibilities, safety concerns, or societal expectations. This assumption led

to a lack of investment in transportation infrastructure and services that catered to

women's specific needs, potentially resulting in less accessible and less convenient transit

options.

Some assumptions about women using transit stemmed from the idea that they

rely more on public transportation than men. This assumption led to perceptions that

women were less likely to own personal vehicles and more dependent on public transit

for their daily needs. While this was true for some women, it did not account for the

diversity of transportation choices women made.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope details what a study explored, such as the target population, extent, or

study duration (Clarke & Braun, 2013). My primary focus was on women's opinions and

experiences related to public transportation. I specifically examined how gender-related

stereotypes affected women's voices in transportation discussions. I aimed to understand

the impact of gender stereotypes, implicit bias, and underrepresentation of women in

transportation decision-making. The research also highlighted the safety concerns of

women when using public transportation, especially during late hours, rush hour, or in

poorly lit areas (Wright et al., 2022). A delimitation was something which can be

controlled in a study (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Regarding delimitations, I concentrated on

the experiences and perspectives of women, particularly those worked in healthcare. The

research discussed urban public transportation systems, such as buses, trains, and

rideshares.

Limitations

A limitation was something that cannot be controlled in a study (Clarke & Braun,

2013). Public transportation experiences and policies varied over time. The study focused

on the perspectives of a particular subgroup and did not fully capture the diversity of

women's experiences in public transportation. Lastly, I did not address potential

challenges or biases that could arise in qualitative research, such as interviewer bias or respondent bias.

Significance

The significance of qualitative research allowed the researcher to gather rich contextual insights into people's lived experiences of policies (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The study underpinned the critical issue of underrepresented voices in transportation planning and policymaking, particularly women's voices. Also, the study underscored the importance of addressing gender stereotypes and implicit bias to create a more inclusive and accommodating public transportation system. The study's focus on healthcare workers added a unique perspective, as these individuals had specific transportation needs and experiences due to their profession. The research could contribute to evidence-based policy recommendations for improving public transportation safety and inclusivity for women. Ultimately, the study's findings had the potential to influence transportation policies and practices, making them more equitable and responsive to the needs of all passengers, regardless of gender.

Summary

The provided passage addressed the significant issue of women's voices being overlooked in public transportation discussions and decision-making processes. The study showcased the impact of gender stereotypes, implicit bias, and underrepresentation of women in transportation planning. The study's scope was centered on women, particularly those working in healthcare, and their opinions on public transportation, safety concerns, and perceptions of government policies. However, the passage lacks

specific details about the time frame when the interviews will occur. Despite this limitation, the research is significant as it sheds light on the need to create a more inclusive and accommodating public transportation system by actively involving women's perspectives and challenging existing biases and stereotypes. The study's findings have the potential to inform evidence-based policy recommendations for improving transportation safety and inclusivity. The following chapter discussed the literature review.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The problem within the study was that working women in healthcare have had their public transportation opinions dismissed due to gender-stereotyping and discrimination. The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the perspectives of working women in the healthcare field regarding their experiences on using public transportation such as buses, trains, and rideshare related to public safety and mobility.

My objective in this chapter was to review recent literature and policies that relate to transportation inequity in the eastern United States. Additionally, I examined safety protocols and gender-related transportation patterns in other countries. Working women in healthcare made up 63% of the healthcare workforce overall, as well as 55% of public transportation users (Abdallah, 2023). While the number of women working using public transit is lofty, the pressing matter was gender disparities within public transportation (Lea et al., 2017).

Women had various requirements and ways of getting around when it comes to transportation and commuting. Men's travel patterns were easier to assume, but women's travel patterns were more difficult to predict because of the societal expectations placed on them (Turnbull, 2022). Because women often had more things to did at home, they found jobs that are closer to where they live (Waddington, 2021). Women also tend to work fewer hours or have unpredictable work schedules. These jobs they often take were in industries that pay less. On average, men are okay with traveling 14% longer distances

for work compared to women (Turnbull, 2022). This suggests that men more comfortable traveling in public spaces.

The major sections of Chapter 2 were the introduction, literature search strategy, conceptual framework, literature review, public safety in Maryland, government accountability, elements of safety, obstacles with effectiveness, self-interest, and urban transit patterns, and a summary transitioning into Chapter 3.

Literature Search Strategy

A comprehensive search for literature search for literature from databases accessed through Walden University's online library portal was conducted. *The primary keywords* were *mobility, accessibility, Theory of Transportation, Theory of Public Safety, buses, women passengers, rideshare experiences, diversity, gender mainstreaming, gender norms, transit safety, public engagement, transportation effects, chain-tripping, working women's opinions, public safety, public policy,* and *public sector*.

To collect literature, I first searched the keywords in Google Scholar as well as the Walden library. I searched "women's opinions on public transportation." This process was helpful in accessing 90% of the articles reviewed. Most sources had publication dates of 2017 or after. I obtained books primarily through Google Scholar and SAGE keen to women's experiences and opinions.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework included one or more formal theories as well as other concepts and empirical findings from the literature. It is used to show relationships among these ideas and how they relate to the research study (Walden University, 2022).

Cooley's theory of transportation and Friedman's theory of public safety significantly

contributed to shaping women's perspectives on public safety (Cooley, 1984; also see

Friedman, 2022). Cooley's theory highlighted the concept of the looking glass self, here

individuals formed their self-concept based on how they believe others perceive them

(Ewing & Proffitt, 2016). The looking glass theory corresponded with the phrase:

perception is reality. For women, this meant that their feelings of safety in public spaces

are influenced by societal attitudes and perceptions. If they perceived themselves as

vulnerable or targeted due to their gender, their sense of security can be compromised,

impacting their willingness to engage in public transportation or activities.

On the other hand, Friedman's (2020) theory emphasized the role of government

and law enforcement in providing a safe environment for citizens. Women's opinions on

public safety were likely to be influenced by their perceptions of how effectively

authorities addressed their concerns and protected them from potential harm. If women

perceived a lack of appropriate safety measures or inadequate response to incidents

affecting their gender, they might experience heightened anxiety about their safety and

become more cautious in public spaces (Welch et al., 2019).

Together, these theories underscored the intricate interplay between societal

perceptions, individual self-concept, and institutional efforts in shaping women's opinions

on public safety. The extent to which women felt secure in public settings is influenced

by their perceived vulnerability as well as their trust in authorities to maintain a safe

environment.

Literature Review Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts

Cooley's Theory of Transportation

To dissect Cooley's theory, one must first know the current opinions of working women in the healthcare sector as it relates to public transit. Public transit is a vital mode of transportation for many healthcare professionals, allowing them to commute to and from work, especially in urban areas (Rodrigue, 2016). However, their opinions on public transit safety and accessibility can be shaped by a range of factors.

A key aspect of women's opinions on public transit revolves around safety. Female healthcare workers, like women in other fields, may have heightened concerns about personal safety while using public transportation, particularly during late hours or when traveling alone. These concerns stem from the potential for harassment, verbal abuse, or even physical threats, all of which can undermine their overall sense of security. Women may advocate for increased security measures, well-lit transit stations, and the presence of transit personnel to address these safety concerns.

Moreover, healthcare workers often workex long hours and irregular shifts, which might mean using public transit during less crowded times. This can lead to concerns about the availability and reliability of transit services during these off-peak hours, potentially affecting their ability to reach their workplaces on time. Women healthcare professionals might sought more consistent and accessible transit options that cater to their specific scheduling needs.

Working women in healthcare may consider the cleanliness and hygiene of public transit systems as a significant factor (Adamopoulos, 2022). Given their roles in

maintaining public health, healthcare workers may be more attuned to the risks of exposure to germs and infectious diseases (Adamopoulos, 2022). Their opinions on public transit might reflect the importance of maintaining clean and sanitized vehicles and stations, especially in the context of global health concerns like the COVID-19 pandemic (Adamopoulos, 2022).

Women's opinions on public transit could also extend to issues of affordability. Healthcare professionals, especially those at the beginning of their careers, might prioritize cost-effective transportation options that did not strain their budgets (Adamopoulos, 2022). Affordable transit options could play a significant role in their overall job satisfaction and quality of life.

Cooley's Theory Applied

Cooley's theory of transportation mentioned that the availability and efficiency of transportation systems play a significant role in shaping individuals' social interactions, access to opportunities, and overall quality of life (Hubbard & Larson, 2019). Cooley argued that transportation networks, be it roads, railways, or public transit, are not just physical infrastructure but also social infrastructure, as they facilitate the movement of people and ideas, and consequently, influence their sense of community, identity, and social integration (Wright et al., 2022; also see Cooley, 1894).

When examining working women's opinions on using public transportation, Cooley's theory became particularly relevant. In modern society, where women were increasingly participating in the workforce, their perspectives on public transportation highlight the intersection of gender, mobility, and urban planning. Public transportation

accessibility directly impacted women's ability to access employment, education, healthcare, and other essential services (Wright et al., 2022).

For instance, consider a scenario where a city lacks reliable and safe public transportation options. Women who relied on these systems might face challenges in reaching their workplaces on time or accessing job opportunities that were farther away from their residences (Wright et al., 2022). In such cases, transportation barriers exacerbated gender inequalities in the workforce, limiting women's career growth and economic independence.

Conversely, cities with well-designed and inclusive public transportation systems can empower women economically and socially. An efficient public transit network reduced commuting time, allowing women to balance work and family responsibilities more effectively (Hong et al., 2022). This, in turn, fostered a more diverse and inclusive workforce, as women are better able to participate in various sectors of the economy.

Modern examples of this dynamic were found in cities like Stockholm, where extensive public transportation networks have contributed to Sweden's reputation for gender equality (Smith, 2022). The city's commitment to safe, clean, and reliable public transit enabled women to access job opportunities without the burden of long commutes or safety concerns. On the other hand, in cities with inadequate transportation options, such as some regions in developing countries, women faced harassment or security issues during their commute, dissuading them from utilizing public transportation and limiting their ability to engage in work outside the home (Wright et al., 2022).

Cooley's theory of transportation provided a lens through which people understood the profound influence of transportation systems on individuals' social interactions and opportunities. When examining working women's opinions on using public transportation, this theory highlighted the intricate relationship between mobility, gender roles, and urban infrastructure (Waddington, 2021). Today's examples illustrated how well-designed public transportation can empower women, enhance gender equality, and contribute to a more inclusive and diverse workforce, while inadequate systems can perpetuate inequalities and hinder women' economic participation (Wright et al, 2022). Cooley's theory denoted the following intersectional transportation and gender- specific area: economics, accessibility and land use, modal choice and rational behavior, congestion, environmental impact, network theory and connectivity, transport planning, social equity, technological advancements, and extensive urban planning (Turnball, 2020).

Public Transportation and Economic Development

Macroeconomically, transportation-related activities made up a component of a country's total economic product and contribute to the growth or stabilization of the national or regional economy as well as the exploitation of natural resources like land (Wright et al, 2022). Transportation involved interactions between businesses and specific customers from a microeconomic perspective (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020). Among its concerns were the reasons why the transportation system is both regulated and deregulated, as well as the demand for and supply of transportation for passengers and freight (Moser, 2022).

The transportation sector was a significant sector of the economy and a typical tool for development because it makes extensive use of infrastructure. This was especially true in the context of a global economy where employment prospects are more closely linked to the movement of people, goods, and information and communication technologies (Ceccato, 2017). High levels of growth were frequently correlated with dense transportation networks and infrastructure. When transportation networks were effective, they created possibilities and benefits for the economy and society that had beneficial knock-on consequences, such as improved market accessibility, jobs, and extra investments (Harvey et al., 2019). Transport networks with capacity or dependability issues resulted in missed or diminished opportunities as well as decreased quality of life.

Transportation plays a pivotal role in economic development by facilitating the movement of goods, services, and people. Efficient transportation systems reduced transaction costs, enhanced trade, and enabled access to markets and resources (Harvey et al., 2019). The theory emphasized that well-connected regions experience higher economic growth due to improved accessibility and connectivity. Cooley's theory of transportation underscored the vital role that transportation systems played in influencing economic development and its impacts on women. This theory highlighted how transportation accessibility shaped urban development patterns and economic opportunities (Wright et al, 2022). I delved into how public transportation and economic development impact women, according to Cooley's perspective.

Cooley's theory asserted that efficient public transportation was a catalyst for economic development. Well-connected and accessible transportation networks

stimulated trade, job creation, and investment in both urban and rural areas (Wright et al, 2022). Public transportation systems provide vital links that connected people to employment centers, markets, and services (Harvey et al., 2019). As public transit expands and enhances accessibility, it contributed to increased economic activities, business growth, and overall urban productivity.

For working men, an efficient public transportation system offers opportunities for enhanced mobility and economic engagement. Reliable transit enabled access to employment centers, allowing men to pursue job opportunities beyond their immediate vicinity (Bamwesigye, 2019). Men engaged in longer commutes with confidence, knowing that efficient public transportation reduces travel time and minimizes the barriers posed by distance (Harvey et al., 2019). This, in turn, enabled men to seek better-paying jobs, contribute to urban economic vitality, and potentially improve their socio-economic status.

For working women, an effective public transportation system had multifaceted implications. Cooley's theory suggested that women's economic participation was frequently affected by transportation accessibility (Wright et al, 2022). Adequate public transit alleviated the burden of mobility constraints, enabling women to access education, employment, and services without relying on personal vehicles. This was especially relevant for women in lower-income brackets who faced challenges with car ownership (Waddington, 2021). Reliable public transportation empowered women to engage in economic activities that aligned with their skills and interests, contributing to their financial independence and socio-economic well-being (Wright et al, 2022).

Cooley's theory also addressed gender equity concerns. It emphasized the importance of ensuring that public transportation benefits were distributed equitably between men and women. Gender-sensitive transportation planning acknowledged the distinct travel patterns, needs, and constraints faced by each gender (Rodrigue, 2016). Strategies such as enhancing safety on public transit, optimizing route planning for women's multi-stop trips, and providing accessible facilities for caregivers and families contributed to a more inclusive transportation system (Moser, 2022).

The United Nations (UN) noted that women often connected their tasks by combining several stops and destinations into a single, extended journey due to their responsibilities at home and as caregivers (Waddington et al, 2021; see also UN, 2018). This led to increased costs for women when using public transportation, as they needed to pay for multiple individual fares for each leg of their connected trip. Moreover, women were accompanied by children, elderly family members, or groceries, which was become complicated and inconvenient if the transportation system was not dependable, user-friendly, or accommodating in terms of physical needs (Rodrigue, 2016). Lastly, transportation routes beyond the main commuting routes might not have operated during times when women were more likely to require public transport for accessing their social and economic networks, particularly during non-peak hours.

Cooley's theory recognizes that public transportation and economic development are intertwined with urban growth. As public transit options expand, urban centers become more attractive for both residential and commercial purposes. This urban densification influences living choices, employment opportunities, and lifestyle patterns

(Hubbard, & Larson, 2019) Effective public transportation encourages mixed land-use development and reduces the need for long commutes, positively impacting the work-life balance of individuals.

Accessibility and Land Use

The theory of transportation underscored the relationship between transportation and land use patterns. Accessibility to transportation nodes influenced the distribution of activities such as residential, commercial, and industrial areas (Hubbard, & Larson, 2019). The concept of accessibility explained how people and businesses make location decisions based on proximity to transportation infrastructure.

Public Transportation and Land Use

Cooley's theory of transportation stressed the intricate interplay between public transportation and land use patterns. Efficient public transportation systems had the potential to shape urban development, influencing the spatial distribution of residential, commercial, and industrial areas (Hubbard, & Larson, 2019). For men, access to reliable public transit translated to increased mobility and reduced dependence on personal vehicles. This mobility empowered men to access diverse economic opportunities and amenities across the urban landscape, contributing to their socio-economic advancement (Hubbard, & Larson, 2019).

For women, the impact of public transportation on land use was equally significant. Accessible public transit can alleviate the burdens of commuting and enhance the viability of mixed land-use developments (Lea et al., 2017). Imagine a city with an efficient subway system. For men, this meant they lived in a suburb that offered a quieter

lifestyle while still being able to easily commute to a downtown office. This flexibility

permitted them to choose a home based on their preferences without sacrificing

accessibility to job opportunities. Women, who often engaged in multi-stop trips

involving work, childcare, and errands, can benefit from transportation systems that

allowed seamless transitions between different activities (Ewing & Proffitt, 2016). The

availability of well-connected public transit can reduce travel time, enabling women to

balance their roles. To that point, an integrated public transportation network enabled

women to navigate their daily tasks more seamlessly, influencing decisions about where

they lived, worked, and engaged in social activities.

Modal Choice and Rational Behavior

Modal choice theory examined why individuals and businesses select specific

transportation modes based on factors like cost, time, comfort, and reliability (Hubbard &

Larson, 2019). It assumed that users make rational decisions to optimize their travel

experience. Understanding modal choice helped planners design transportation systems

that align with user preferences (Hubbard & Larson, 2019).

Cooley's theory emphasized the significance of modal choice, where individuals

select transportation modes based on factors such as cost, time, comfort, and convenience

(Hubbard, & Larson, 2019).

For women, modal choice theory touched on a unique dimension. Women's

transportation needed often involved multi-tasking, such as managing work, family

responsibilities, and social engagements. Effective public transportation accommodated

these multi-stop trips, allowing women to select modes that align with their daily

demands (Wright et al, 2022). Safe and reliable transit options empowered women to make informed choices, enhancing their access to education, employment, and social interactions. Modal choice theory, when coupled with gender-sensitive transportation planning, ensured that women can navigate their complex travel patterns efficiently (Rodrigue, 2016).

Consider a scenario where a man needed to commute to work daily. If a city provided a fast and reliable bus service, he might have chosen to use public transit to avoid the stress of traffic and the high costs of owning a car. On the other hand, a woman's transportation needs can involve dropping her child at daycare before heading to work and then running errands after. An efficient public transportation system with well-planned routes and schedules accommodated these diverse tasks, allowing her to choose the most suitable mode for each leg of her journey (Moser, 2022). This aligned with modal choice theory, highlighting that effective public transit options enhanced women's abilities to tailor their transportation decisions to their specific needs (Graystone, 2022).

Congestion and Traffic Flow

The theory of traffic flow delves into the dynamics of congestion and its effects on transportation systems (Waddington, 2021). It explores phenomena like traffic bottlenecks, capacity utilization, and congestion pricing. Traffic flow theory aids in designing traffic management strategies to alleviate congestion and improve overall system efficiency (Harvey et al, 2019).

Cooley's theory recognized the impact of traffic flow dynamics on transportation systems. Public transportation's role was mitigating congestion (Hubbard, & Larson, 2019). Efficient transit systems reduced the reliance on private vehicles, which contributes to smoother traffic flow and reduced congestion. For men, this meant shorter commute times and enhanced predictability in travel (Ewing & Proffitt, 2016).

Regarding women, the impact of public transportation on traffic flow resonated in various ways. Congestion-free transportation options provided women with a reliable means to navigate urban areas, especially during multi-stop trips. Uninterrupted traffic flow and reliable schedules enabled women to balance their diverse responsibilities without the added stress of traffic-related delays (Wright et al, 2022). Furthermore, effective public transportation reduced the environmental impact of traffic congestion, benefitting the overall urban quality of life for men and women alike (Ewing & Proffitt, 2016).

Think about a bustling city such as New York City where traffic congestion was a daily struggle. A well-functioning public transportation system alleviated this issue by encouraging people to use buses or trains instead of personal vehicles (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020). For men, this translated to shorter commutes, reduced stress, and potentially more productive workdays. Similarly, for women, efficient public transit meant she can move smoothly between her work, her children's school, and other commitments without being held back by traffic jams. This contributed to a better work-life balance and improved mental well-being for women (Wright et al, 2022).

Externalities and Environmental Impact

Transportation systems generated externalities. Positive externalities included improved accessibility and agglomeration effects (Moser, 2022). Negative externalities encompassed environmental pollution, congestion, and safety hazards (Hong et al., 2022). Transportation theory examined mechanisms to internalize external costs and promote sustainable transportation choices.

Cooley's theory of transportation emphasized that public transportation did not exist in isolation; it impacted everyone within the broader societal context (Wright et al, 2022). Positive and negative externalities played a crucial role in this interaction (Welch et al., 2019). For men, efficient public transportation led to reduced traffic congestion, benefiting their daily commutes. Conversely, women, who often managed multiple tasks and roles, found that a well-connected public transit system mitigated the negative externalities of traffic congestion, allowing them to navigate their responsibilities more effectively (Wright et al, 2022). For instance, women used their commute time for work tasks, personal errands, or childcare coordination. On the negative side, if public transportation caused air pollution, everyone suffered health consequences. Cooley's theory emphasized the importance of understanding these externalities and creating transportation systems that minimized negative impacts while maximizing positive outcomes (Rodrigue, 2016).

Network Theory and Connectivity

Cooley's theory intersected with network theory when analyzing the impact of public transportation on men and women. In this context, network theory referred to how

transportation networks shaped connectivity and accessibility (Waddington, 2021). For men, a comprehensive public transportation network might have provided them with efficient connections to their workplaces and various social hubs, enhancing their work-life balance (Waddington et al, 2021). Similarly, women, who often engaged in multi-stop trips, benefitted from a well-connected system that allowed them to navigate diverse destinations seamlessly. Considered a woman who used buses or trains to commute to work, pick up her child from school, and then head to the grocery store—all within the same network. Cooley's theory underscored the significance of transportation networks in shaping individuals' daily lives, irrespective of gender.

Transportation networks, whether road, rail, or air, were studied through network theory which investigates network topology, connectivity, centrality, and robustness (Harvey et al, 2019). The network theory helped in understanding how disruptions spread, the efficiency of alternative routes, and the resilience of transportation systems (Hong et al., 2022).

Social Equity and Access

Transportation theory highlighted the importance of equitable access to transportation services. Social equity considerations involved ensuring that transportation systems provide affordable and accessible options for all individuals, regardless of income or physical abilities (Waddington, 2021). Social equity addressed issues like transportation poverty and the impact on marginalized communities (Lea et al., 2018).

This theory underlined the importance of social equity considerations in transportation planning. Public transportation had a significant impact on men and

women from varying socio-economic backgrounds. For men, affordable and accessible public transit provided cost-effective alternatives to private vehicles, especially in lower-income groups (Moser, 2022). Similarly, women, who often faced mobility challenges due to care responsibilities, benefitted from transportation systems that prioritized their needs (Ewing & Proffitt, 2016). For instance, offering safe and reliable transit during off-peak hours enabled women to access job opportunities that aligned with their schedules. The theory emphasized the need for equitable transportation systems that catered to the diverse needs.

Certain transportation theories did not adequately consider equity and social justice implications. Naysayers argued that transportation planning should address the needs of marginalized communities, low-income individuals, and vulnerable populations (Harvey et al, 2019). Theories that failed to account for these considerations risked perpetuating transportation inequalities.

Transportation Assumptions

One assumption was that gender is not a transport issue; gender was a health, education, energy, and sanitation issue. All access to these services by road, in terms of the provider. Women typically walked longer distances than men and make frequent, shorter trips with more stops to combine multiple tasks (Welch et al, 2019). Men, by contrast, followed more direct and linear patterns. Women engaged in more non-work-related travel than males and are more likely to be accompanied by children or elderly

relatives. In that sense, women were also more reliant on public transport (Hong et al., 2022).

Another assumption was that gender was a cultural and social issue not in the realm of transport to resolve. This notion reinforced the social restrictions imposed. The final assumption was that introducing gender into project preparation is administratively cumbersome. However, this assumption demonstrated that there was no more difficult to comprehend than any other requirements for project preparation.

Technological Advancements and Innovation

Advancements in technology continually shaped transportation theory. From autonomous vehicles and smart transportation systems to digital platforms for ridesharing, technology-driven innovations transform how people and goods moved (Hubbard & Larson, 2019). Transportation theory explored the implications of these innovations on system efficiency, safety, and user behavior (Harvey et al., 2019).

The theory intersected with technological advancements when assessing the impact of innovations on transportation (Wright et al., 2022). Technological advancements, such as real-time transit tracking apps, aided passengers by providing accurate information and reducing uncertainty in travel (Waddington, 2021). Men utilized such tools to optimize their commutes and plan their trips effectively. Women, who often value predictability in their schedules, can use these technologies to coordinate their multi-stop trips efficiently. For example, a woman planned her journey, considering the time needed to drop off her child, travel to work, and run errands—all aided by real-time

updates. Cooley's theory showcased the role of technology in forming efficient transportation experiences.

Long-Term Infrastructure Planning

Long-term transportation planning was crucial to accommodate future demands and changes in society. The theory emphasized the need for adaptive planning that accounts for demographic shifts, technological advancements, and evolving urban landscapes (Graystone, 2022). Robust infrastructure planning ensured that transportation systems remained efficient and resilient over time.

Cooley's theory emphasized the interaction between public transportation and urban infrastructure. For men, well-designed transportation infrastructure might lead to shorter commutes and improved access to economic opportunities (Hong et al., 2022). Conversely, women, who needed to access services and facilities, profited from infrastructure that supports safe and convenient multi-stop trips. Reflect on the provision of sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, and accessibility ramps that facilitated women's movement when operating strollers or caregivers. Cooley's theory underpinned the significance of infrastructure in creating inclusive transportation systems that were seamlessly functional for economic, social, and development urban growth (Hubbard & Larson, 2019).

Opposing Perspectives

While there was not a single universally recognized theory of transportation as a singular concept. There were various theories and perspectives related to planning, urban development, gender, and mobility. As such, it is possible to find views both in support

of and against different transportation theories. Sociologist Howard Becker expanded on

Cooley's theory stating every individual in an acting unit had a different interpretation of

the situation (Hubbard & Larson, 2019). People undergo self-evaluation process checking

weighing options and considering alternatives to the situation which transpired (Cox,

2020). As time progressed, however, other scholars developed theories from Cooley's

foundational ideas.

20th Century Transportation Theories

The central place theory of 1933, developed by Christaller, explains settlement

patterns within urban systems based on the concept of a central place. The central place

theory asserted that settlements form around areas providing essential goods and services

(Taylor et al., 2020). Access to necessities like food and water determined settlement

locations. Christaller envisioned a uniform transportation network enabling people to

settle based on easy access to central services. Two key concepts in the theory were

threshold meaning the minimum population or income for a service to be available and

range implying the maximum distance consumers traveled for goods or services.

Settlements of varying sizes develop, each offering specific goods based on its size,

function, and spacing. Larger settlements have greater ranges and more specialized

services.

In the 1950s, Vickery's (1952) theory of urban transportation contributed to

transportation economics focusing on urban transit systems and traffic congestion

management (Vickrey, 1969). Vickrey's work emphasized the role of pricing

mechanisms in regulating transportation and the need for pricing strategies to address

traffic congestion effectively. Vickrey proposed the concept of congestion pricing, advocating for tolls or charges based on road usage during peak hours to manage traffic flow (Vickrey, 1969). Vickrey's theory sought to balance demand and supply for transportation services by using pricing mechanisms to alleviate congestion (Vickrey, 1969).

Later, Voorhees's (1956) theory of land use-transportation emerged and was instrumental in emphasizing the reciprocal relationship between transportation infrastructure and land development patterns. Voorhees' theory highlighted the interconnectedness between transportation systems and urban development. The key points of Voorhees's theory included reciprocal influence. For example, transportation infrastructure decisions impacted land use patterns, and conversely, land use decisions affect transportation demand and requirements. Voorhees's theory also underscored the importance of integrated planning approaches that considered transportation and land use in conjunction as well as the significance of networks, urban planning, and accessibility in shaping land development.

Another transportation theory was the trip generation and distribution models, developed in the 1960s by McHarg, designed to predict and analyze travel patterns and the demand for transportation services based on land-use characteristics (Roös, 2021). These models worked by quantifying the number of trips generated by specific land uses, such as residential, commercial, or industrial areas (Roös, 2021). McHarg considered innumerable factors like population density, employment centers, and land-use patterns to estimate travel demand and distribution.

Cooley's theory of transportation (1894) influenced the specific transportation theories proposed by Christaller (1933), Voorhees (1952), Vickrey (1956), and McHarg (1969) by laying foundational principles that shaped their perspectives on transportation's impact on economic activities, land use, and urban development. Cooley (1894) emphasized the pivotal role of transportation networks in facilitating economic growth and shaping urban development. Cooley's theory mentioned how efficient transportation systems were crucial for social interaction by means of connecting markets, enabling trade, and guiding the spatial organization of cities and regions. This overarching concept likely informed previously mentioned theorists' understanding of the broader impact of transportation.

Economic Rationality Overemphasis

Some critics argued against transportation theories that heavily rely on economic rationality as the sole driving force behind transportation decisions. These theories often assumed that individuals make choices solely based on minimizing costs and maximizing benefits (Wright et al, 2022). Critics contended that this perspective overlooks the complex social, cultural, and psychological factors that influence transportation choices (Moser, 2022). This criticism emphasized the need to consider qualitative aspects beyond monetary considerations.

Environmental Concerns

Certain transportation theories might be criticized for not adequately addressing environmental and sustainability concerns. Theories that primarily focused on efficiency and economic factors neglected the broader impacts of transportation on the environment,

such as air pollution, carbon emissions, and habitat disruption (Ewing & Proffitt, 2016).

Critics argued that transportation theories should integrate environmental considerations

to create more sustainable and responsible transportation systems (Heshner et al., 2020).

Gender-Blindness

There are transportation theories that have faced criticism for failing to consider

gender differences in transportation needs and behaviors. Historically, many

transportation planning approaches have been designed with male travel patterns in mind,

leading to inequalities in access and mobility for women (Harvey et al., 2019). Critics

argued that transportation theories should have been more inclusive by acknowledging

and addressing gender-specific travel patterns and preferences (Bamwesigye, 2019).

Car-Centric Approaches

Opposers of car-centric transportation theories argued that an overemphasis on

private vehicle usage led to urban sprawl, congestion, air pollution, and a host of other

negative consequences (Waddington, 2021). Opposers advocated for transportation

theories that prioritized sustainable and multimodal options, including public transit,

walking, cycling, and shared mobility services, as alternatives to car dependency.

Social Interactions

For people to socialize, it is necessary that they have something in common.

Public transportation had unique specificities that can help to identify and to define social

interests such as companionship (Wright et al, 2022). One important characteristic of the

public transportation system was the high mobility of people (Medina, 2017). Normally,

the passengers only used the public transportation network to reach a specific place. This

factor was explored in the context of the project to generate interactions that have this function into consideration (Cox, 2020).

The occurrence of the familiar stranger's phenomena in the public transportation network was also a characteristic that will be explored in the project (Moser, 2022). The regular users of the public transportation network had a routine, and despite the passengers' familiarity with other passengers, they usually did not interact (Hensher et al., 2020). Putting the passengers to interact with each other could contribute to reducing the psychological travel time (Medina, 2017).

Public transportation was used by a large set of different stereotypes of persons, such as students, senior citizens, and tourists. This characteristic of the public transportation was taken into consideration in the design phase, while specifying the interactions of the system (Carter, 2020). This type of discussion was frequently used to identify a specific problem and to generate different solutions. The authors also believed that through this type of approach, people obtained an interesting set of insights about possible social interactions around public transportation (Turnbull, 2022). That set gave an important support to start developing a platform capable of providing information, entertainment, and socialization to public transport passengers.

Types of Passengers

To provide some structure, the discussion was organized around four different user perspectives, corresponding to different stages of usage of the public transportation system (Welch et al, 2019). One kind of passenger was an observing outsider. This passenger was not a regular user of public transportation systems and was not yet

planning to become one. These interactions should have engaged people to use the public transportation systems, increasing their familiarity with the system and potentially attracting new clients to the use of the public transportation network. Another form of passenger was the prospective passenger. A prospective passenger was considering the use of the transportation system but is not yet using it. Additionally, a waiting passenger was someone who already knows the public transportation journey he or she wanted to follow and was waiting for the bus or metro to arrive. A board passenger corresponded to the situation where someone had already taken some public transportation journey and was now travelling.

Gender-Mainstreaming Theory

Gender-mainstreaming was the concept of a gender equality viewpoint into all phases and levels of policies, programs, and initiatives. In addition to having uneven access to and control over power, resources, human rights, and institutions like the legal system, women and men have different demands, living conditions, and circumstances (Waddington, 2021). According to a nation's, age, an individual's ethnic or social background, or other circumstances, women and men experienced different scenarios (Hong et al, 2022). The purpose of gender mainstreaming was to include these inequalities into the design, implementation, and evaluation of policies, programs, and projects to ensure that women benefitted from them and that they did not worsen inequality but rather advance it (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020). Gender mainstreaming strategists tried to eliminate gender inequalities, which were sometimes subtle. As a result, it served as a tool to promote gender equality.

For gender-mainstreaming to be put into effect, there must have been a strong political commitment and the allocation of sufficient funding and human resources (Hong et al., 2022). Likewise, women's equitable participation at all levels of decision-making must be considered. Lastly, gender units or focal points were still necessary, and mainstreaming did not eliminate the need for dedicated, women-specific policies and programs or for supportive legislation (Daganzo & Ouyang, 2019).

Dynamic public transit priority changes public transit space-time resources based on road traffic volume and saturation, public transit vehicle volume, and intersection saturation. It included public transit lane allocation on the road, intersection entrance lane, and public transit pass time allocation at the intersection. Its goal was to ensure that public transportation had a high enough carrying speed to compete with cars. When people used public transportation instead of driving, their profits were not lower, and their trip costs were not higher.

When people used public transportation instead of driving, their profits were not lower, and their trip costs were not higher. The meaning of dynamic public transit priority can be articulated concretely as follows: (a) For unit journey distance, the profit-to-cost ratio of public transportation travel was not lower than that of car travel; and (b) The cost of taking public transportation was not more than the cost of driving for the same distance (Moser, 2022).

The dynamic public transit priority hypothesis encourages vehicle travelers to use public transportation instead of driving (Harvey et al., 2019). The amount of dynamic public transit priority refers to the level of real-time dynamic priority that should have

been provided for public transit in response to dynamic traffic demand under specific

road traffic facility conditions (Carter, 2020). That was how to assign time and space for

a public transportation priority pass dynamically. Simultaneously, dynamic public transit

priority is relative to car travel service level (average car carrying speed). The goal of

dynamic public transit priority was to demonstrate that the cost of taking public

transportation is not higher than the cost of driving (Hong et al., 2022). As a result,

determining the proportion of public transit carrying speed to car carrying speed was the

key to dynamic public transit priority.

Women's opinions of public transport were not only relevant but crucial for

several reasons. First, women constitute a massive portion of public transport users

worldwide. Their experiences, preferences, and concerns directly impacted the

effectiveness and inclusivity of transportation systems (Harvey et al., 2019). Ignoring

their perspectives led to systems that failed to meet the diverse needs of the population,

resulting in negative consequences for society.

One of the most immediate reasons for considering women's opinions was safety.

Women often face unique challenges while using public transportation, such as the risk of

harassment, assault, or feeling unsafe during late hours (Graystone, 2022). If their

concerns were not addressed, it can detered women from using public transport

altogether, restricting their mobility and access to opportunities. By taking women's

opinions into account, transportation authorities should have implemented measures to

enhance safety, such as increased security presence, well-lit stations, and gender-sensitive

policies.

Women's transportation preferences were closely tied to their roles as caregivers and workers. Women often engaged in multiple responsibilities, such as managing household tasks and caring for family members. Inadequate public transportation hindered their ability to efficiently balance these duties, ultimately impacting their economic participation and well-being (Waddington, 2021). By considering women's opinions and needs, transportation planners could have designed systems that cater to these realities, promoting gender equality and social inclusion (Harvey et al., 2019).

Justification of Cooley's Theory

Ignoring women's opinions on public transport had several long-term harms or potential harms. Firstly, it exacerbated existing gender inequalities. If transportation systems did not meet the needs of women, they faced challenges in accessing education, employment, healthcare, and other essential services (Bamwesigye, 2019). This perpetuated a cycle of disadvantage, limiting their socioeconomic progress and contributing to wider societal inequalities.

Secondly, neglecting women's opinions led to decreased public transport usage overall. If women perceived public transportation as unsafe or unsuitable, they have resorted to other modes of transportation, such as private cars, or ridesharing, or even avoid travel altogether (Waddington, 2021). This resulted in increased traffic congestion, air pollution, and energy consumption, as well as reduced efforts to combat climate change through sustainable transportation solutions (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020).

Moreover, bypassing women's perspectives overlooked a valuable source of innovation and improvement in public transportation. Women's insights contributed to

the development of more inclusive and user-friendly systems that benefit everyone. By engaging women in the planning and design phases, transportation authorities identified specific challenges and produced innovative solutions that enhance the overall quality of public transportation services (Cox, 2020).

Women's opinions of public transport were highly relevant due to their significant presence as users, caregivers, and workers. Ignoring these opinions led to various negative consequences, including compromised safety, increased gender inequalities, reduced public transport usage, and missed opportunities for innovation (Waddington, 2021). To initiate effective and inclusive transportation systems, it was essential to prioritize women's perspectives and needs in the planning and implementation processes.

Friedman's Theory on Public Safety

Public Safety and Working Women in Healthcare

Since this proposal examined the views of working women in healthcare, it was salient to know how their work environment shapes their unique experiences and challenges. In a healthcare environment, which includes hospitals, clinics, and medical facilities, women encountered distinctive safety concerns that intersect with their professional roles and gender dynamics (Harvey et al., 2019).

First, healthcare who were women workers face safety risks related to patient interactions. Nurses, doctors, and other staff members dealt with patients who are agitated, disoriented, or emotionally unstable. These interactions escalated into verbal or even physical confrontations, making personal safety a significant concern (Waddington, 2021). Women in healthcare settings prioritized measures such as de-escalation training,

security personnel presence, and communication systems that provide immediate assistance during potentially volatile situations (Hong et al., 2022).

Second, the healthcare sector had seen its fair share of workplace violence, which can include assaults on staff by patients or visitors (Samuel, 2023). Women, who comprised of a substantial portion of the healthcare workforce, are not immune to such incidents. For female workers, this translated into heightened concerns about personal security and well-being. The implementation of comprehensive violence prevention programs, panic buttons, and security protocols is crucial to addressing these apprehensions and fostering a safer work environment (Graystone, 2022).

Third, women's perspectives on public safety in healthcare extended to issues of harassment and discrimination. The #MeToo movement highlighted instances of sexual harassment within healthcare settings, bringing attention to the importance of addressing power dynamics and ensuring that healthcare workplaces were free from gender-based misconduct (Bamwesigye, 2019). Women healthcare workers advocated for stronger policies against harassment, avenues for reporting incidents confidentially, and support systems that empower them to voice their concerns (Welch et al., 2019).

Moreover, healthcare professionals, especially those working late shifts or in urban areas, might also be concerned about their safety when traveling to and from work (Hong et al., 2019). Consider Arizona's Dr. Sarah Patel was an exemplary healthcare professional working in a busy urban hospital (Daganzo & Ouyang, 2019). As a doctor specializing in emergency medicine, she often worked late shifts to provide critical care to patients during nighttime hours. With the hospital located in a metropolitan area, the

importance of safe and efficient public transportation was paramount for her. Dr. Patel's

work schedule involved late-night shifts that end well beyond regular commuting hours.

Patel relied heavily on the public transit system to reach her workplace and return home

safely after a demanding day at the hospital (Waddington, 2021).

This included issues related to transportation safety, such as walking to parking

lots or using public transit during odd hours. Women's perspectives on this aspect of

public safety could lead to discussions about adequate lighting, secure parking facilities,

and shuttle services that ensure safe commutes for all employees (Hong et al., 2022).

Understanding Public Safety Regarding This Study

Friedman (2022), a legal scholar, and professor provided insights into the concept

of public safety through his work that focuses on constitutional law, administrative law,

and the interactions between law enforcement and civil liberties (Loukaitou-Sideris et al.,

2020). While not as closely associated with a singular "theory" of public safety as Milton

Friedman, Barry Friedman's analyses contributed to a nuanced understanding of how

legal frameworks and law enforcement practices intersect with public safety (Friedman,

2022).

Friedman's work often emphasized the intricate balance between maintaining

public safety and safeguarding individual rights. He explored the idea that effective

public safety measures should not come at the expense of civil liberties, highlighting the

need for legal frameworks that ensure law enforcement agencies operate within

constitutional boundaries (Graystone, 2022). In his book *Unwarranted: Policing Without

Permission,* Friedman critically examines the expansion of law enforcement powers,

particularly in the context of surveillance and technology, and how this can impact individual privacy and civil rights Friedman, 2017; also see Waddington, 2021).

Friedman's scholarship delved into the complexities of policing and the legal mechanisms that shape law enforcement behavior (Friedman, 2022). Friedman recognizes the vital role that law enforcement plays in upholding public safety, but he also underscores the importance of transparency, accountability, and oversight to prevent abuses of power (Bamwesigye, 2019). Friedman's work advocated for a thoughtful balance between effective law enforcement practices and the protection of individual rights.

Furthermore, Friedman's research extended to the mechanisms through which individuals sought redress in cases where their rights have been violated by law enforcement agencies (Friedman, 2017). Friedman explored the avenues available for citizens to challenge unconstitutional practices and hold authorities accountable, thus contributing to the broader discussion of maintaining public safety while upholding the principles of justice and fairness (Hong et al., 2022). Friedman's scholarship underscored the idea that public safety and civil liberties are not inherently contradictory but were harmonized through well-designed legal frameworks and responsible law enforcement practices (Daganzo & Ouyang, 2019). This nuanced approach is particularly relevant in an era where the balance between security and liberty was a pressing concern in societies around the world.

The public generally characterized public safety in terms of the protection role, which involves defending people against natural and unnatural threats to their safety

(Waddington, 2021). The protection function was privileged because it was the primary obligation. For most people, safety was dependent on much more: food, access to clean water and air, a place to live, a basic income and the means to earn one, i.e., education and employment.

Origins of Public Safety

The history of public safety dates to ancient civilizations where communities began to establish rudimentary forms of law enforcement and protection. In ancient Rome, for instance, there were groups of individuals responsible for maintaining order and ensuring the safety of citizens. However, the modern concept of public safety began to take shape during the Industrial Revolution in the 18th and 19th centuries (Daganzo & Ouyang, 2019). The rapid urbanization and technological advancements during this period led to new challenges, such as increasing crime rates, industrial accidents, and the need for more organized fire and rescue services (Daganzo & Ouyang, 2019).

The 20th century marked significant developments in public safety, influenced by world wars and societal changes. Police forces became more professionalized, with a focus on crime prevention and community policing (Waddington, 2021). Fire departments also modernized, adopting advanced firefighting techniques and equipment. The rise of emergency medical services (EMS) and disaster management agencies further contributed to enhancing public safety measures (Lea et al., 2018).

Primary Literature About Public Safety

The primary literature on public safety spans various disciplines, including criminal justice, sociology, public administration, and urban planning. Seminal works like "The Police Function" by James Q. Wilson and George L. Kelling have shaped discussions on crime prevention strategies, particularly the Broken Windows theory, emphasizing the role of visible disorder in contributing to overall crime rates (Cox, 2021). The study will research Milton Friedman's Theory of Public Transportation against Barry Friedman's Theory.

In the realm of disaster management, "The Federal Response to Hurricane Katrina: Lessons Learned" presents a critical analysis of emergency response efforts and lessons from one of the most devastating natural disasters in recent history (Daganzo & Ouyang, 2019). Similarly, "Improving Disaster Management: The Role of IT in Mitigation, Preparedness, Response, and Recovery" by the National Research Council explores the integration of technology in disaster management (Hong et al., 2022).

Previous Research on Public Safety Theory

Previous authors have extensively researched various aspects of public safety theory. Some authors have focused on the effectiveness of community policing models in reducing crime rates and fostering positive police-citizen relationships (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020). On the contrary, other writers have delved into the challenges of coordinating multi-agency responses during disasters and emergencies, highlighting the need for effective interagency communication and collaboration (Rodrigue, 2016).

Researchers have assessed the socio-economic factors contributing to crime and public safety concerns. Studies have investigated the impact of poverty, inequality, and social exclusion on criminal behavior, suggesting that addressing underlying societal issues played a pivotal role in enhancing public safety (Cox, 2021).

Literature Review Related to Key Concepts

Definitions of Public Safety in the USA

Public safety in the USA refers to the collective efforts and measures taken by government agencies, law enforcement, emergency services, and communities to ensure the well-being and security of citizens (Waddington, 2021). This includes protection from crime, accidents, natural disasters, and other threats that jeopardized public health and safety (Turnbull, 2022).

Instances of public safety initiatives in the USA include police departments patrolling neighborhoods to deter crime, fire departments responding to emergencies, and agencies coordinating disaster response during hurricanes, earthquakes, or other major incidents (Graystone, 2022). Moreover, public safety campaigns should have educated citizens about safety measures, such as seat belt use, fire evacuation plans, and safe driving practices, to reduce accidents and injuries.

A more recent public safety exposure was during the COVID-19 pandemic, public safety measures were crucial in mitigating the spread of the virus and safeguarding public health (Welch et al., 2019). Governments and health authorities around the world implemented a range of measures to control the transmission of COVID-19, including lockdowns, social distancing mandates, mask mandates, travel restrictions, and capacity

limitations for businesses and public spaces (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020). These measures aimed to reduce person-to-person contact, limit large gatherings, and promote hygiene practices to prevent the virus's spread. Societies at large endured unpredictable degrees of impact and were often met with challenges; these public safety measures were salient in slowing down the pandemic's progression and protecting communities.

In recent years, the digital age has brought new dimensions to public safety. Cybersecurity has become a critical concern as societies rely heavily on interconnected technologies (Graystone, 2022). Likewise, the understanding of public safety has expanded beyond traditional law enforcement and emergency services to encompass broader concepts of community resilience, public health preparedness, and disaster response (Graystone, 2022).

Public Transit Safety Definition

Public transit safety in the USA referred to the efforts made to ensure the security and well-being of passengers using various forms of public transportation, such as buses, trains, and subways (Bamwesigye, 2019). This included implementing measures to prevent crimes like theft, harassment, and vandalism, as well as maintaining the physical infrastructure to prevent accidents (Rodrigue, 2016). Examples of public transit safety measures included security personnel presence, surveillance cameras, emergency intercom systems, and designated waiting areas with proper lighting. In the USA, organizations like the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) oversaw security at airports, and local transit agencies often collaborate with law enforcement to address safety concerns in public transportation systems (Hong et al., 2022).

The USDOT's Mission Statement to guarantee that our country had the safest, most effective, and modern transportation system in the world; this will enhance the standard of living for all Americans and communities, from rural to urban, as well as boost American workers' and businesses' productivity and competitiveness (Hong et al., 2022),

The Office of the Secretary (OST) directed the development of federal transportation legislation and encourages multimodal travel. Other duties included drafting transportation legislation, negotiating and carrying out international transportation agreements, ensuring the safety of US airlines, enforcing consumer protection laws for airlines, and issuing rules to prevent the abuse of alcohol and illegal drugs in transportation systems (Hong et al., 2022).

Furthermore, data was used by the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) to pinpoint safety issues and come up with solutions that could endanger life (Hong et al., 2022). Through the Safety Data Initiative (SDI), the government hoped to improve our capacity to combine data from new sources with current data, utilize cutting-edge data analytics to reveal fresh perspectives on the hazards to transportation safety, and assist policymakers in finding safety solutions, create data visualizations (Bamwesigye, 2019). The goal behind the safety data initiative was to work from retrospective to predictive analysis. The government anticipated that the DOT will be better equipped to promptly identify and address emerging threats through data integration, analysis, and visualization enhancements. This will allow us to act more quickly to save lives by intervening (Hong et al., 2022).

Public Safety in Maryland

According to the Maryland (Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services), their primary goal was to ensure public safety so that all Maryland residents enjoyed living and working in the state (Abdallah, 2023). This department was achieving this goal by strengthening security in our institutions and providing offenders and ex-offenders with the skills they needed to stay out of the criminal justice system. In addition, DPSCS collaborates with partner agencies to provide critical intelligence information to prevent crime and violence (Abdallah, 2023).

DPSCS served in areas throughout the state where many of the offenders will eventually return. Every day, offenders were out in the community doing community service and sustainability initiatives that save taxpayer money and help preserve Maryland's natural resources (Abdallah, 2023).

In collaboration with its employees, partners, and customers, the Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) aims to prevent injuries, collisions, and fatalities involving bicycles, automobiles, big trucks, and buses (Abdallah, 2023). The first and most important responsibility was to ensure the health and safety of individuals who work for us and others who are affected by our actions. MDOT's strategy to safety performance improvement was focused on risk management, leadership attributes, and customer involvement (Abdallah, 2023).

Governmental Accountability

Public safety was the sort of focused attention given to the government's first duty needs to expand to include many of the other circumstances that threaten individual

safety beyond violent harm (Bamwesigye, 2019). Framers of the United States Constitution likewise recognized the primary governmental function in assuring the safety and security of its subjects (Rodrigue, 2016). In Federalist No. 10, Madison declared that "the first object of government" the "protection" of "the faculties of men" and "the rights of property" (Madison, 2001, p. 22). More so, Hence the Fourteenth Amendment's guarantee of "equal protection of the laws" to all citizens of the United States. This made sense in the historical context: night riders terrorized the freedmen, threatening and bringing physical violence, making a mockery of government's ability to protect them (Bamwesigye, 2019). Today, public safety includes protection via state and municipal public safety agencies, what appears as the police, fire departments and emergency medical services (Carter, 2020).

Exploring Responsibility

The supervision of protective agencies was essentially nonexistent. The agencies opposed all forms of regulation; it took widespread protests throughout all fifty states to start enacting even the most fundamental reform (Hong et al., 2022). Contrary to other government agencies, there was not much front-end oversight of the police, which refers to statutory or administrative regulation, standard-setting, and similar activities (Friedman, 2018). The fact that people who were most at-risk in society were the least monitored and assessed was, at best, ironic. Since police were first responders and frequently the only responders, society required them to deal with substance addiction, mental illness, and other issues of public safety because the idea that public safety means protection was so deeply engrained (Carter, 2020).

Elements of Safety

The elements of safety included basic subsistence, housing, health/well-being, opportunity, and safety. Basic subsistence included the needs from Maslow's physiological hierarchy (Bamwesigye, 2019). The basic steps sentence meant that the person has just enough to get by and was living a substantially adequate life for his or her lifestyle standards. Housing was defined as an adequate place of shelter void of threats (Friedman, 2018). Health and well-being included having a meaningful food supply and long-term access to medical services (Bamwesigye, 2019). Opportunity was being given the same access to socio-economic resources without restrictions due to class, personal choice, or background. Safety was the constant condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury (Bamwesigye, 2019).

Obstacles With Effectiveness

Obstacles served as a reminder of how challenging changing societal priorities will be. The fact that the wealthier among us have chosen not to use government services lowers the general will to provide a sufficient baseline of effectiveness. Other barriers included the Constitution which was so outdated that it does not include affirmative rights; our federal system, which permits a shell game of denying responsibility for people's safety; a lack of altruism toward racial minorities; and plain individual greed (Graystone, 2022). Social division over the function of government was one enduring element, and it directly affected how we think about public safety, including our overreliance on criminalization and under-reliance on many other human needs (Bamwesigye, 2019).

Self-Interest

This immediately identified self-interest as the most evident reason why people

are unable to secure the safety of everyone (Friedman, 2018). Self-interest made people

oblivious to the needs of others, even when doing so might benefit us personally or was

just morally decent. In instances where there was a zero-sum outcome, self-interest

surfaced occasionally. Contemplate a scenario where a homeless person dozing off on a

bus seat. A bystander will no longer feel secure. A person then requests the removal of

the homeless person by calling the police. The homeless person was not safe anymore.

Money for school, food, and police are all in short supply, and if they receive it, others

did not.

Social Disagreement

Most people oppose helping others more because they believe that the

government should be primarily responsible for ensuring personal safety (Rodrigue,

2016). It was challenging to separate ideology from self-interest when they coexisted,

which was the tricky part. Some individuals sincerely disagree with what safety involves;

while protection was important, it breaks down after that. On the definition of personal

responsibility, some people disagree believing people ought to take care of themselves

(Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020)

Gender Disparities Within Public Safety

Public safety had different implications for women compared to men due to

contrasting vulnerabilities (Bamwesigye, 2019). Women often face higher risks of

gender-based violence and harassment in public spaces, which affected their sense of

safety (Carter, 2020). Ensuring public safety for women involved addressing issues like street harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence. Programs that provide safe spaces, increased lighting in public areas, and public transportation services with female safety officers contributed to women's sense of security (Medina, 2017). Men's safety concerns might be more focused on general crime prevention and personal safety in public places like theft, physical altercations, or the overall stability of the transit environment (Moser, 2022). These concerns shape men's perceptions of safety and influence their expectations for effective security measures.

The results indicate a significant gender gap in the perception of safety: women are 10% more likely than men to feel unsafe in metros and 6% more likely to feel unsafe in buses (Carter, 2020). This gender gap was larger for safety than for overall satisfaction (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020). A primary reason women feel unsafe as opposed to men was because women have serious worries about their personal safety and harassment on public transportation. When using transportation services, women are frequently the targets of sexual and other types of harassment (Medina, 2017). Therefore, women's perceptions of safe travel include dangers of harassment, stalking, sexual assault, and rape in addition to physical road safety (Carter, 2020).

Whether the fear was rooted in real or imagined danger, public transit has significant consequences for women and forces them to adopt precautions and strategies that affect their travel habits. These ranged from adopting certain behaviors in public to choosing certain routes, modes of transport and transport environments to avoiding certain transport environments, bus stops and railway platforms or activities such as

walking and cycling (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020) which was considered more dangerous for women. Empirical studies have shown that women often drove or took taxis instead of walking or public transport because they fear for their safety.

Continuing, women were more likely than men to take public transportation exclusively at specific times of the day or when they are accompanied by a partner, husband, or friend (Turnbull, 2022). In addition to having societal connotations, women's dread of public and transit contexts also seems to be strongly rooted in certain constructed surroundings. Women were generally more sensitive than men to warning indicators of danger and social disorder, graffiti, and unkempt and abandoned buildings, according to empirical research like the examination of crime statistics from Chicago (Medina, 2017). Women reacted differently to identical situations than men do, and they could view some locations as unsafe that men did not (Turnbull, 2022).

Previous Approaches to the Theory

Milton Friedman's Theory

Friedman's (1962) theory of public safety was rooted in his broader ideology of limited government intervention and individual freedom (Rodrigue, 2016). This theory proposed that the provision of safety and security services, traditionally considered the domain of the state, could be more effectively and efficiently managed by private market forces (Medina, 2017). It challenged the conventional notion that only governments should be responsible for ensuring public safety and suggests that market mechanisms led to better outcomes in this realm (Lea et al., 2017).

At the heart of Friedman's theory was the belief in individual rationality and choice. Friedman argues that individuals are best equipped to assess their own safety needs and are motivated to make informed decisions to protect themselves and their property. According to Friedman, when individuals were directly responsible for their safety decisions, they had a personal stake in the outcome, leading to more careful consideration and prudent choices (Medina, 2017). This, in turn, fostered a sense of personal responsibility for one's safety.

This theorist envisioned a competitive marketplace for security services. Friedman contends that if individuals are given the freedom to choose their security providers from a variety of competing companies, these companies would be incentivized to offer high-quality, cost-effective services to attract customers (Rodrigue, 2016). This competition, Friedman argued, would drive innovation and efficiency, leading to a continuous improvement in the quality of security services offered.

In this model, Friedman suggested that private security providers would cater to a diverse range of safety needs and preferences, ranging from basic home security to more specialized services tailored to specific communities (Carter, 2020). This customization, according to Friedman, better addressed the unique safety concerns of different individuals and neighborhoods, as opposed to a one-size-fits-all approach often seen in government-run safety programs (Medina, 2017).

Critics of Friedman's addressed several concerns. Opposers argued that leaving public safety to market forces could lead to unequal access to security services, favoring wealthier individuals or neighborhoods who would afford premium security offerings

(Carter, 2020). Additionally, the profit motive could potentially compromise ethical considerations, as private security companies prioritized their bottom line over broader public interests (Medina, 2017). There were concerns that critical safety infrastructure, like disaster response and emergency services, could be neglected or fragmented under a purely market-driven approach (Rodrigue, 2016).

Friedman's theory of public safety embodies his overarching belief in individual autonomy and the power of free markets. While it challenged the traditional role of government in ensuring public safety, it also targeted important questions about the balance between individual choice, social responsibility, and the collective well-being of communities. Whether market-based approaches truly replaced or complemented government intervention in the realm of public safety remained a subject of debate and ongoing exploration.

Regional Differences

Rural regions, with lower population densities, typically experienced challenges in providing extensive public transportation options. However, there were efforts to address these needs. Some rural areas offered demand-responsive transit services, where small buses or vans pick up passengers based on pre-scheduled routes or on-demand requests. Another option of transport was shuttle services. Shuttle services connected rural communities to nearby towns, providing a limited but essential transportation option. Also, rural areas had community-based carpooling initiatives to help residents share rides to workplaces or other destinations (Glass et al, 2022).

Envision a rural community named Greenfield, where public transportation options are limited, the Smith family found a unique solution to address their transportation needs through carpooling. The Smiths resided in a remote area accessing essential services, schools, and work locations often requiring significant travel. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Smith and their two teenage children, Emily, and James. Let's delve into their experience with carpooling.

Contextually, Greenfield was a picturesque, yet secluded town surrounded by farmland and countryside. The nearest town center, with schools, grocery stores, and medical facilities, was a 30-minute drive away. Public transportation options were scarce, and the Smith family relied on their single car for transportation. However, this setup often leads to scheduling conflicts, especially since both parents work full-time and the children have after-school activities.

Recognizing their shared challenges, the Smiths, along with a few other families from the same neighborhood, decided to establish a carpooling system. The families collaborated to coordinate their schedules, share commuting responsibilities, and reduce the strain of constant driving. Mr. Smith's work hours aligned with those of a neighbor, Mrs. Johnson, while Mrs. Smith's schedule was compatible with Mr. Martinez's, another neighbor. This arrangement allowed them to alternate driving duties and share the commuting load.

In rural areas, where population densities were lower and infrastructure was limited, working women often have mixed opinions about traveling (Medina, 2017). On one hand, the tranquility and slower pace of rural life was appealing, but the lack of

accessible and reliable transportation options posed challenges. Many rural women found themselves heavily dependent on personal vehicles, which led to longer commutes and higher transportation costs (Glass et al, 2022). The absence of regular public transportation made it difficult for them to access job opportunities, particularly if they worked in urban or suburban areas. As a result, while rural settings offered a sense of community and natural beauty, the limitations of transportation hindered professional growth and access to essential services.

Rural public transit services served communities that were not located in urban areas. Demand-response public transportation (dial-a-ride), traditional and deviated fixed route services (e.g., shuttles, circulators), vanpool, or reimbursement programs are all examples of rural public transportation (Carter, 2020). Historically, the necessity for rural public transportation was tied to providing mobility and access to important employment, products, and services for older adults, people with disabilities, low-income people, and others. According to the APTA, over 9% of public transportation journeys in places with populations under 200,000 were for medical reasons.

Rural public transportation services, in general, contributed to the well-being of rural communities by providing access to work, schools, places of worship, and social and recreational activities (Medina, 2017). Rural women typically covered the area around their homes, communities, and agricultural and forested terrain on foot (Griffith et al., 2018). Using their shoulders or arms, rural women frequently manually carried heavy quantities of water, firewood, and agricultural produce. Greater emphasis wasgiven to investments in pathways, footbridges, neighborhood walks and roads, intermediate modes

of transportation, and other time-and load-reducing measures to increase the mobility of rural women (Griffith et al., 2018)

Urban Transit Patterns

Urban areas, characterized by high population density and extensive infrastructure, often have comprehensive and diverse public transportation systems like buses, light rail systems, bike-ride, and rideshare realm (Lea et al., 2017). Urban areas had well-developed bus networks with frequent routes and stops, allowing residents to access various parts of the city conveniently. Cities like New York, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. had extensive subway systems that provide efficient and rapid transit within the city limits. Light rail systems, which run above and below ground, served as an additional mode of urban transportation (Carter, 2020). Most cities offered bike-sharing programs, allowing commuters to rent bicycles for short distances or as part of their multi-modal transportation (Graystone, 2022).

Urbanization was one of the overwhelming financial and social changes of the 20th century, particularly within the creating world (Cox, 2020). Although cities played a critical part all through human history, it was not until the mechanical transformation that an organization of expansive cities started to rise within the most financially progressed parts of the world. Advancement diffused through this interconnected arrangement of cities articulating financial improvement. Since 1950, the world's urban populace multiplied, coming to about 4.4 billion in 2021, almost 56.6% of the worldwide populace (Rodrigue, 2016). This move was anticipated to go on well into the moment half of the 21st century, a drift reflected within the developing measure of cities and the expanding

proportion of the urbanized populace. By 2050, 70% of the worldwide populace will be urbanized, speaking to 6.4 billion urban inhabitants (Rodrigue, 2016). Cities moreover rule the national financial yield, bookkeeping for the bulk of generation, dissemination, and utilization.

Worldwide urbanization was the outcome of three primary statistic patterns: increment, rural to urban movements, and relocation. The result of more births than passings in urban ranges was a coordinate work of the ripeness rate as well as the quality of healthcare frameworks (lower mortality rates, especially for newborn children). Stages within the statistic move were commonly connected with urbanization rates, with crest development a long time comparing to huge contrasts between birth and passing rates. Although characteristic increment played a basic part within the past, it was of much lesser significance nowadays as richness rates in numerous created economies have dropped altogether. In a few cases, like Western Europe, Japan, and South Korea, richness was underneath the substitution rate (Cox, 2020). Encouraged fertility rates in cities were as a rule lower than in provincial regions, underlining that cities were seen as motors of statistic decrease.

Rural to urban movements was steadily rising. This was a prevailing urbanization calculate, especially within the developing world, where migration accounted for between 40 and 60% of urban development (Rodrigue, 2016). Rural-to-urban movement persevered through the mechanical insurgency within the 19th century (Rodrigue, 2016). It surged within the to begin with half of the 20th century within the created world and after that within the creating world within the moment half of the 20th century. The

variables behind rural-to-urban movements included the desire to discover business,

picks up in agricultural productivity, which liberates country labor, or indeed political

and natural issues where populaces are obliged to take off the farmland (Graystone,

2022).

Worldwide relocation caused widespread urbanization. The development in

worldwide movement was an imperative calculate within the urbanization of major portal

cities, such as Los Angeles, Miami, Modern York, London, and Paris (Cox, 2020). This

structuring was to happen within the biggest cities, but there was a trickle-down in

smaller-sized cities.

Although urban women were more likely than men to walk, they relied

significantly on public transportation networks to fulfill their various gender

responsibilities (Carter, 2020). In metropolitan settings, the gender roles of production

and reproduction were increasingly becoming physically segregated (Abdallah, 2023).

Women were commuting more to work, especially in manufacturing and service sector

sectors, and extended commute times are disadvantageous to their family responsibilities.

In some situations, women also needed to commute into urban areas with their kids to

transport them to and from school. As a result, women's access to transportation in cities

frequently depended on the availability, schedule, pricing, and physical and personal

safety of public transportation (Graystone, 2022).

Suburban Outlook

Suburban public transit referred to the transportation options available in areas

that lie between urban centers and rural regions, commonly known as suburbs (Cox,

2020). Suburban public transit systems were designed to cater to the transportation needs of residents who worked, studied, or engaged in various activities in urban areas while residing in quieter, more residential neighborhoods (Waddington, 2021). These systems aimed to provide a balance between the convenience of urban transportation and the accessibility associated with rural living.

Suburban public transit often included a mix of transportation modes that accommodated the diverse travel requirements of residents. Commuter rail services were a prominent feature of suburban transit, offering regular train connections that allow residents to travel to and from nearby urban centers for work or leisure (Graystone, 2022). Express buses provided a quicker alternative for commuters traveling longer distances, linking suburban neighborhoods to central business districts (Waddington, 2021). These transit options were particularly beneficial for individuals who wish to avoid the challenges of city driving or the expenses of parking in urban areas.

Park-and-ride facilities were a common feature of suburban public transit systems. These facilities enabled commuters to park their vehicles in designated areas near transit stations and then continue their journeys using trains, buses, or other modes of public transportation. This encouraged carpooling and reduced congestion in densely populated urban centers.

Suburban shuttle services were tailored to local needs, connecting residents to shopping centers, schools, medical facilities, and other community destinations (Cox, 2020). These shuttles contributed to reducing traffic congestion within neighborhoods by providing a reliable alternative to personal vehicles for short trips.

However, suburban public transit systems faced challenges. The lower population density in suburban areas made it financially challenging to maintain a robust transit network (Carter, 2020). Limited funding and resources resulted in less frequent service and restricted coverage, particularly during non-peak hours (Cox, 2020). Overcoming these challenges required careful planning, collaboration between local governments and transit agencies, and innovative approaches to serving the diverse needs of suburban communities.

In suburban areas, working women's opinions about traveling reflected a balance between convenience and the limitations of transportation options. Suburban living provided a quieter and more family-friendly atmosphere compared to the urban hustle, which many women find appealing realm (Lea et al., 2017).

Commuter rail and express buses offered relatively efficient connections to urban centers for work, but the reliance on personal vehicles was still common. While suburban women appreciated the accessibility of nearby amenities and schools; longer commutes can impact their work-life balance and limit the time they spend with their families (Cox, 2020). The need to manage transportation logistics while juggling work and family responsibilities was a key consideration for women in suburban settings.

Summary and Conclusions

The review of the literature depicted the essential relevance of obtaining women's opinions in shaping public transportation systems. Drawing from Cooley's (1894) theory of transportation, it became evident that understanding the distinct ways in which transportation impacts men and women was crucial for creating inclusive and effective

systems. Women's perspectives were pivotal due to their substantial representation as public transport users and their roles as caregivers and workers (Waddington, 2021). Cooley's (1894) theory emphasized that transportation was not merely about physical movement but also about social integration, identity, and access to opportunities.

The immediate significance of women's opinions lies in addressing safety concerns. Many women encounter harassment and insecurity while using public transportation, which can deter them from utilizing these systems. By integrating women's insights, transportation authorities can implement measures to enhance safety, such as increased security presence and well-lit stations, making public transport a more viable option for everyone (Graystone, 2022).

Women's transportation preferences were closely linked to their roles in society. Women often bore the responsibility of managing household tasks and caring for family members. Inadequate transportation options limited their ability to effectively balance these responsibilities and participate in the workforce. By considering women's opinions, transportation planners designed systems that accommodate these unique needs, fostering gender equality and social inclusion.

Neglecting women's opinions had significant long-term consequences. These opinions perpetuated existing gender inequalities, as women struggled to access essential services and opportunities due to inadequate transportation. This also led to decreased public transport usage overall, contributing to traffic congestion, pollution, and reduced efforts to address climate change through maintainable transportation modifications.

Likewise, disregarding women's perspectives denied transportation authorities a valuable source of innovation such as the development of user-friendly and inclusive systems (Wright et al, 2022). By involving women in the planning process, transportation authorities should idenitfy specific challenges and devise creative solutions that improve the overall quality of public transportation services.

In conclusion, women's thoughts on public transport were indispensable for creating transportation systems that are safe, inclusive, and efficient. Cooley's theory of transportation underscores the need to consider the differential impact on men and women, emphasizing that women's perspectives are crucial for addressing safety concerns, promoting gender equality, reducing traffic congestion, and fostering innovation. Prioritizing women's opinions in transportation planning was not only essential for elevating women's lives but for creating a more equitable future.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine working women in the healthcare field's opinion on public transportation. The major sections of this chapter are research design and rationale, role of the researcher, methodology, and issues of trustworthiness.

Research Design and Rationale

The research question that guided this study was: What were the opinions of working women in healthcare regarding public transportation and safety? The central concepts were Cooley's theory of transportation and Friedman's theory of public safety (Cooley, 1894; also see Friedman, 2022). Both theories played significant roles in shaping women's perspectives on public safety. Cooley's theory covered the looking-glass self, where individuals formed their self-concept based on how they believe others perceive them. Friedman's theory of public safety analyzes safety by looking at basic human elements for survival (Friedman, 2022). The research tradition was a basic qualitive study. The rationale behind the chosen tradition was based on the ontological assumption that participants have varying experiences (Braun & Clarke, 2013). A basic qualitative inquiry was acceptable for constructing a grounded comprehension of the perspectives concerning public transportation experiences and to compare and report their realities (Abdallah, 2022). I did a thematic analysis which confirmed qualitative research design.

Role of the Researcher

As a researcher, I explored the perceptions working women in healthcare have on transportation. I had no personal relationship with the participants. To minimize bias, I used a recursive approach for classification and theming to ensure that evidence upholds analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013). This approach was worthwhile to see the budding patterns for further categorization. The axial coding system was implemented. I formed extensive notetaking and documenting processes to maintain validity and reliability (Saldaña, 2015). I completely absorbed this research to understand and decipher participants' experiences.

Methodology

In this study, the population included working women in healthcare who are Maryland residents. I posted the flyers (Appendix A) as Maryland healthcare centers. Participants contributed to be a part of the study. All participants had to be women who lived in Maryland, were over 18, and have used a form of public transportation. There were 15 participants to establish a range in feedback. Potential participants read my flyer which delineates the participation requirements. Then, I emailed the potential participants and shared the required paperwork with them upon interest. The relationship between saturation and size as a larger sample size could have equated to a higher quality study if there was richness in the data. Because saturation determined the point at which collecting additional data no longer provides new insights or information, a sample size of 15 was diverse and inclusive of the demographic.

Participant Selection Logic

In this study, the population included working women in healthcare who are Maryland residents. I posted the flyers (Appendix A) as Maryland healthcare centers. Participants contributed to be a part of the study. All participants had to be women who lived in Maryland, were over 18, and have used a form of public transportation. There were 15 participants to establish a range in feedback. Potential participants read my flyer which delineates the participation requirements. Then, I emailed the potential participants and shared the required paperwork with them upon interest. The relationship between saturation and size as a larger sample size could have equated to a higher quality study if there was richness in the data. Because saturation determined the point at which collecting additional data no longer provides new insights or information, a sample size of fifteen was diverse and inclusive of the demographic.

Instrumentation

I held in-depth interviews. Qualitative research interviews were developed by Felix Lazarsfeld (1941) who thought interviews could provide a framework to interpret human behavior by asking why for basic or complex questions. Interviews were sufficient forms of data collection because they let respondents disclose information in their own terms without external influence (Saldaña, 2015). The detailed interviews with working healthcare women in Maryland highlighted how women understand travel patterns, transportation rules policies, their hesitations, and their satisfaction-level with the overall passenger experience.

Data triangulation consisted of making transcribed interviews available to participants by sending them the transcriptions for reconfirmation. I obtained the Maryland government's official perspectives by reviewing current, available information on transportation regulations, public safety guidelines, and nongovernment institutions involved with women's travel guidelines, such as the Maryland Department of Transportation.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection (as Appropriate)

Data was collected from the chosen interviewees. I sent email invitations to those who replied to the initial email, asking those who confirmed to fill out a consent form (Appendix B; Appendix C). The flyer was posted at local healthcare centers, and the accepted participants received the letter formatted email invitation. This corresponded with Walden University's IRB requirements for fieldwork. I collected the data. I aimed to collect that data within a month's time. The duration of the interviews was 50 to 60 minutes, and I asked 16 open-ended questions. I audio-recorded all interviews, having them transcribed using Otter AI transcription software before coding, categorization, and theming the data. I developed an interview guide framing appropriate follow-up questions (Appendix D). Following each interview, participants were debriefed reminding them they could still withdraw before data analysis and result evaluation (Clarke & Braun, 2013). The participants' identity was protected through numeric names. The follow-up plan if I had too few participants was to have approximately eight, available volunteers on standby.

Data Analysis Plan

The research questions asked: What were the opinions of working women in healthcare regarding public transportation and safety? This data method connected to the research question because coding enables the analyzation of participant feedback. I observed which themes are most frequent and gained insight behind what drives participant satisfaction in an accurate, actionable way. I used the procedure of the axial three-cycle coding framework as well as thematic coding, drawing on insights from Saldaña (2015). Axial coding, as described by Saldaña helps establish relationships among primary, secondary, and tertiary codes on the coding continuum. The software was NVivo analysis software.

I performed a reflexive thematic analysis on my data. When I used thematic coding to analyze participant feedback, I observed which themes were most frequent in feedback. I gained insight behind what drives participant satisfaction in an accurate, actionable way. First, I started by reading and re-reading the data and taking notes on my initial observations from the interviews. The next step was coding, in where I created concise descriptions that highlight important aspects of the data (Saldaña, 2015). I developed themes by determining whether the codes share a unified meaning and address the research question appropriately. Themes were combined or removed during this review process. Finally, I gave each theme or category a unique name and wrote about how the dataset compares to previous research.

Axial coding was a multistep process that involves the transition from initial coding data blocks in the first round of coding. This initial coding aimed to understand

how the codes interrelate to establish categories, which then served as the building blocks for developing concepts or themes. This employed methodology supported by scholars like Rubin and Rubin (2012) and Saldaña (2015).

During the initial coding cycle, patterns started to emerge from the data, and in the subsequent categorization process, similar coded data are grouped together into categories based on their distinct similarities. It was imperative to note that when employing axial coding, data collection and the writing of analytical memos are crucial components of the study (Saldaña, 2015). This was because categories were derived not only from the initial coding process but also from the data collected and field memos generated throughout the research (Saldaña, 2015).

The initial data analysis codes consisted of transportation regulations, policy, comfortability, equality, gender-related, discrimination, public safety, diversity, values, rights, privileges, power, manipulation, beliefs, perception, reporting, self-awareness, expectations, frustration, happiness, purpose, privacy, strategies, language, and convenience.

Researchers avoided selectively disclosing positive results and instead embraced and supported participants' perspectives while maintaining respect and confidentiality. Identifying and testing a thematic framework was crucial for data analysis to synthesize experiences (Saldaña, 2015). Achieving a deep understanding of the data's themes requires full immersion, as emphasized by Saldaña (2015). This immersion was an iterative process, allowing for recategorization as needed. Following categorization, I identified preliminary themes and explore additional ones, ultimately refining categories

and themes for analysis (Clarke & Braun, 2013). To ensure the study's validity, I actively

engaged in reflexivity and reflectiveness (Saldaña, 2015).

Table 1

Preliminary Coding Plan

Parent/ primary code (aspects or characteristics of the theory)	Child/secondary Code	Interview questions
Psychological	Emotions, happiness, frustrations	all
Self-awareness	options, surroundings, work/life, gender/sex, age, size, race	1,3,7,8
Political	Policy implications, discrimination, power	12-14
Public safety	comfort, preferences/habits	all
Gender-related ideas	needs/rights	all
Future considerations	transportation policies, reporting, alternatives	12-15
Fairness	treatment, behaviors	4-5, 6-7, 13
Society	expectations, learned behaviors interactions	3,5,9,11

This table depicts the frequency of possible primary and secondary themes within my research.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness in qualitative research evolved as a response to the need for precision and credibility in the field. Historically, qualitative research was initially met with skepticism due to concerns about subjectivity and the lack of standardized procedures (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Researchers recognized the necessity to address these concerns and demonstrate the quality and dependability of their work. Consequently, the concept of trustworthiness emerged as a framework for assessing credibility, dependability, and transferability each aimed at enhancing the overall component of the research (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Credibility focused on the accuracy of findings, dependability emphasized the consistency and stability of the research process, confirmability addresses the role of the researcher's bias, and transferability assesses the applicability of findings to other contexts (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Researchers applied these criteria by employing thorough data collection methods, transparent reporting, and reflexive practices to minimize bias and subjectivity (Clarke & Braun, 2013). This process confirmed that the research contributes valuable insights and were to be trusted by peers and stakeholders in diverse fields of study (Clarke & Braun, 2013). To ensure the trustworthiness of my qualitative inquiry, I maintained a detailed audit trail, adhering to the principles of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Transferability

To ensure transferability, it was essential to provide ample participant and fieldwork site details along with context (Saldaña, 2015). Transferability emphasized the

need for researchers to provide comprehensive descriptions of their research methods,

participant characteristics, and contextual factors, allowing readers to assess the relevance

and applicability of the study's findings to different situations (Saldaña, 2015).

Transferability aimed to provide enough detail and context to enable others to determine

the potential relevance of the study's insights to their own research or practical

applications (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). To enhance transferability further, it was crucial to

avoid selective disclosure of only positive information (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

Dependability

Dependability assessed whether other researchers undertook comparable research

and validated the theories, producing consistent outcomes. If a study served as a

replicable model and yields identical results when conducted under similar

circumstances, it demonstrated dependability (Saldaña, 2015). Establishing dependability

involved rigorous and systematic procedures for data collection, analysis, and

interpretation. Researchers strove to maintain a transparent and well-documented process,

making it possible for others to follow the same steps and potentially arrive at similar

conclusions (Saldaña, 2015).

Confirmability

Confirmability pertained to the accessibility of thoroughly analyzed data for the

purpose of validation and authentication by the IRB, research supervisors, or any

interested stakeholders. A key aspect of ensuring confirmability was the diligent

maintenance of comprehensive records detailing the research processes (Clarke & Braun,

2013). I employed confirmability to assure that the study findings were derived solely

from the information provided by the participants and were not influenced by any biases

from the researcher. To uphold this, I will securely retain journals, fieldwork memos, and

the documented thematic processes for a period of 5 years following the project's

conclusion (Appendix B). Subsequently, I adhered to Walden University's IRB

guidelines and responsibly disposed of all related files.

Ethical Procedures

Mandatory components of the qualitative approach entailed that I was the primary

instrument for data collection. I researched in an organic environment with various data

sources. The study was inductive, and participants had multiple meanings of the

regarding the subject matter (Saldaña, 2015). I spotlighted these factors as my duty for

adhering to ethical values thus ensuring validity and reliability (Clarke & Braun, 2013).

There was not a conflict of interest between me and this study because I was in a

dissimilar professional field from the participants. I emphasized the participants'

privileges, standards, and boundaries throughout the process (Appendix B). Zero

participants experienced difficulties because of participation (Appendix C). The

confidentiality of the participants disclosing their experiences was paramount.

Accomplishing such secrecy involved using aliases instead of legal names and not

sharing their identities with third parties. Involved parties were aware of the study's

purpose and how to use the data through non-verbal and verbal material. I gained their

permissions via emailed consent prior to the study (Appendix B).

To further strengthen transparency and ethical observance, participants were

given the chance to review their exact transcripts and reworked findings for verification

(Saldaña, 2015). Also, I gave all involved party the option to end participation and not share information on any question with which they found uneasy. I got approval from the Walden University IRB before the beginning any information-gathering, and I complied to the IRB guidelines throughout the research process. Following the IRB approval, I performed a mock run by interviewing a neighbor and relative who were fit to be participants but will not be part of the actual study. A mock run tested the satisfactoriness of all resources, the scheduling of the interviews, and the transcription software's performance.

Lastly, there were several protections to maintain confidentiality. It should be noted that aliases with used for all participants. Data was stored on an encrypted file which no one other than me accessed. Data will be destroyed 8 months after the dissertation is complete. These measures ensured a secure study void of data breaches and participant exposure.

Summary

In Chapter 3, I highlighted the methodology for studying participants' perceptions of the impact of public transportation experiences has on working healthcare women in Maryland. The chapter included the research method, design, and rationale for a basic qualitative inquiry. I reviewed other elements of the research process, such as the researcher's roles and bias, recruitment procedures, data collection and analysis, ethical issues and compliance, data collection instruments, and the necessity for participant security. I expounded on the plan for data analysis and concluded with trustworthiness

issues, including the four concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and

transferability in Chapter 3. I elaborated research findings in Chapter 4.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine working women in the healthcare field's opinion on public transportation. The study defined public transportation safety, governmental enforcements, and societal standards for passengers. The study sought to close the gap regarding (a) working women's public transportation expectations and needs, (b) gender-exclusive transportation policies as it pertains to safety, and (c) possible solutions.

A basic qualitative was acceptable for constructing a grounded comprehension of the perspectives concerning public transportation experiences and to compare and report their realities (Abdallah, 2022). The study was rooted in a thematic analysis which conforms qualitative research design.

This chapter contains results of this study using data collected through interviews to obtain rich descriptions of participants' narratives involving transportation experiences. I conducted 15 Zoom audio interviews which resulted in four emergent themes. The research question was: What were the opinions of working women in healthcare regarding public transportation and safety? In this chapter, I explained the research setting, demographics, data collection, data analysis, and evidence of trustworthiness. Lastly, this chapter closed with its findings.

Setting

The participants were unknown and contributed upon seeing a flyer. Participants contacted me via email to set up interview times and dates. Interviews were conducted

using a Zoom account. Also, each participant was in a quaint, private space of their choosing, allowing for privacy and comfort during interviews. There were no outstanding circumstances that influenced participants or their responses.

Demographics

Fifteen women were interviewed for this study. Appendix B shows participant demographics and minimum requirements for the study. All women were Maryland residents, English-speaking, and workers within the healthcare sector. The participants were all over 18. Amongst the participants, two were current college students and three were in their 50's. The ages of the remaining participants were over 18 yet unknown.

Data Collection

Initial contact with participants was done via email. Once participants expressed interest in the study, a consent form with information regarding the types of questions, study purpose, and inclusion criteria was sent. Dates and times for interviews were arranged when participants emailed back consent forms. Fifteen interviews with healthcare women over 18 served as the primary source of data. Interviews were audio recorded using Zoom and then transcribed via NVivo. The interviews lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Coding of interviews occurred in the same order as they were conducted. Each interview was coded manually and evaluated for emerging themes.

Data Analysis

I played and replayed the Zoom audio recordings while reading the transcripts to ensure accuracy in transcription. For organizational purposes, the interviews were analyzed in two sets, one set containing seven participants and the other containing eight.

During this process, words and phrases emerged and reappeared. I employed Saldaña's coding method to explore healthcare women's perceptions of transportation which was useful in creating descriptions. This method supported descriptive and NVivo coding and themes from participants' answers to open-ended questions. All participants were matched with numeric identifiers to protect confidentiality (Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, etc).

Throughout the first step, I color-highlighted my interviews for popular sayings, descriptions, terms, locations, or experiences regarding public transportation. During the second and third steps, I used bracketing meaning I set aside my own beliefs to eliminate preconceptions and ideas about public transportation and established definitions for the descriptions. This step was fulfilled by carefully rereading transcripts and reclassifying codes.

The next step comprised of altering descriptions into terms that better define the participants' experiences. Lastly, I categorized the terms into recognized themes to exemplify general findings. I shifted the final themes and coding chart in two separate Word documents, one for each interview set. From Saldaña's, I devised a comprehensive narrative of participants' experiences concerning their public transportation perceptions and public safety. There were no unusual circumstances nor variations in data collection from the plan presented in Chapter 3. ⌷

Evidence of Trustworthiness

To establish credibility, I ensured the participants had the experience to discuss public transportation and its factors in their answers. In addition, I continued to be

reflective throughout the study to ensure I presumed data in an impartial way and transcribed entire interviews word-perfect.

To ensure transferability and help other academics reproduce the design in connection to the context of public transportation, I gave an explanation of the background, assumptions, and methodology used to arrive at the data. To ensure dependability, I composed a detailed discussion guide to ensure focused data collection, open-ended questions to elicit unprompted and unbiased answers, digital recordings, rigorous analysis of transcripts, and extensive notetaking. Finally, to mitigate researcher bias, I remained aware of preferences through reflection back to the research question.

Results

I recognized that the participants interviewed had various perceptions and underwent different experiences with public transportation. Four major themes were derived from the findings: participants' feelings regarding safety, learned behaviors, expectations, and potential initiatives. The following research question was addressed.

What were the opinions of working women in healthcare regarding public transportation and safety?

This study highlighted that using public transportation is necessary for the participants' regular commutes to work with one participant describing public transit as "her only means to get to work." Most participants concluded that although this they must take public transportation often, due to their gender, they do experience a fear-like feelings whenever they use public transit. Participant 1 said, "I don't see it as safe means

of transportation in any way as a healthcare worker especially when the bus is very

crowded."

Table 2

Theme 1: Participants' Feelings Regarding Safety

Codes	Theme 1
Fear/anxiety	Participants' feelings regarding safety
Peacefulness	
Exhaustion	
Boredom	
Dissatisfied	
Alone	
Limited control	
Convenience	
Alertness	
Rushed	

When using public transportation, participants used either mass transit or

rideshare services. Mass transit examples include such as airplanes, city buses, trams,

undergrounds, metros, subways while rideshare services mentioned were Uber and Lyft.

Participant 5 stated, "The reason why I do Uber or Lyft, whatever, either one, is because

you can choose to be by yourself, just you and your driver. And that's normally what I

would prefer. I feel safe. And then normally they'll have, like, a profile and all that about

the driver."

Most participants mentioned that public transportation is used due to convenience

and circumstances and if given the choice, it would not be their go-to transportation

option, whereas others were emphatic that public transportation was their preference.

Many indifferently expressed feelings about the public transit safety with most

participants rating their public safety level at 7 or lower. attAs mentioned in first theme's findings, participants did not feel like their well-being was prioritized and thus felt anxiety during their commutes. Participant 11 said:

> They usually are scared and they don't say anything. So, a lot of times you've heard of the bystander effect and the fact that you're always hoping that somebody is going to come to your aid versus you making a spectacle of yourself and speaking out or, you know, defending yourself because you're scared of what this other person will do.

The findings displayed that while on public transportation, due to gender, participants perceived that public transportation as risky due to gender. Participant 1 identified her feelings on public safety. "Yes, as a female, I'll be worried about taking public transportation at night because of the consequences. Me being a female out there, we're prone to armed robbery and sexual harassment. So, it's very risky for a female to take public transportation at night.

In general, the participants felt that females experience more hardships than males. Participant 2 believes experience more thinks that alertness and preplanning is essential prior to taking public transportation, "Females have it harder. Like I can't just go somewhere because I want to take the Uber. We have to think."

Participants acknowledged that they never know who is watching when using public transportation; therefore, they can never be too careful. As a result, these commutes were nerve-racking. Individuals identified anxious feelings of being followed.

Participant 6 stated, "I'm always afraid. Like, in Ubers, I'm like, are they remembering where I'm located so that they could come back or something?"

Other participants expressed that they felt quite safe on public transit having known the environment. Also, participants stated that public transportation acts as a decent means of transportation. Participant 5 believed transportation is second nature normal and says the following regarding her public safety level, "Yeah, I feel about an eight. Alright, safe enough. I never feel threatened or anything like that. I just say a ten because nothing is perfect."

Table 3

Theme 2: Precautions/Learned Behaviors

Codes	Theme 2
Sitting close to the door	Precautions/Learned behaviors
Same-gender seating	
Group trips	
Limiting headphone usage	
People watching	
Speaking quietly	
Shiftiness	
Dressing modestly	
Preplanning routs	
Communicating with loved ones	
Traveling lightly	
Purse clenching	

Before a Public Transportation Commute

Before a public transportation commute, the participants gave thought towards what to anticipate. Participants have developed precautions or learned behaviors for preparation. Participants acknowledged that not implementing such behaviors poorly impacted safety. Participants shared the various precautions they exhibit such as

preplanning trips/routes, using familiar transportation, dressing modestly, traveling lightly, and prior communication. Participants who knew their work schedule in advance planned their commutes accordingly.

Taking her location into account, Participant 2 exclaimed, "I don't leave my house much. I get to work through Uber...it's just three minutes from my house. Participant 3, a travel pharmacist, said her work's complexity consists of planning trips months in advance. Thus, she normally takes transit she has formerly used and is situationally aware. Participant 3 explained:

I have become wiser considering the form of transport I will be using. I do try to avoid night travel. Like, if I have to fly on a plane, I do try to get home within a reasonable time and not do, like, a lot of overnight travels for work if I could avoid it. My trips are planned out, but considering things like making sure that I look like I'm with a crowd even when I'm travelling as an individual is something that I have to do so that way nobody really has to take advantage of me. I just never like looking like I'm alone. And I make sure that whatever kind of transportation that I want to take, it's available for me whenever I need it.

Participants spoke on how clothing decisions play a role in transportation. The notion behind dressing more modestly, spectators will do less. Participant 7 elaborated.

At times, if it's to wear a skirt or to wear certain things, that not necessarily should provoke that attention, but could provoke that attention. Knowing how society works, I do like to avoid those situations at all costs, just to protect my own safety. Dressing in a certain fashion already gives off the message of, you know, I

don't necessarily want to be disturbed or bothered. I hope it gives off the message

of that and can possibly prevent and avoid those awkward interactions.

This participant stated that modesty; however, was risky for hijabis or any headwrap

wearing women, discrimination intensified. Hijabs, post-9/11, were scolded at.

Participant 5 recounted:

There're people who, I know who wear things like hijabs and you people think

things about them when it comes to trains and transportation. When it comes to a

woman is wearing a hijab, can you check under that hijab just so she can get on

the plane or whatever? Does that feel like it's biased? Is that safe?

Participant 11 illustrated that traveling lightly is for quickness and mobility, not

for weightlessness. This is how she ensures personal safety.

I've noticed that, like, I do plan around days when I do have to take public

transportation, I always make sure that I travel light. All of my belongings are

close to me. I usually wear something like a crossbody bag that I don't have to

take any of my arms up with so that I have more dexterity. I'm able to freely use

both of my arms versus having one holding a bag that may be snatched from me.

The participants emphasized the prior communication to loved ones before the

initial commute is salient. The perceptions were that calls and texts too are needed.

Nearly all participants spoke about the benefits behind location sharing. Location sharing

means sharing your exact coordinates to another person's device. In doing so, the

location sharer was always trackable.

Participant 5 said the following scenario would take place assuming her phone died while in an Uber:

> You know, you have your phone, you still be able to, you know, you'll have people who have your location will still be able to find you, things like that, so. I just share my location because if they ever check it, they can confirm to see where I am.

During a Public Transportation Commute

During a public transit commute, the participants viewed the experiences as tense, scary, shifty, or awkward. Adopted precautions include sitting close to the door, same-gender seating, group trips, limiting headphone usage, people-watching, speaking quietly, and purse-clenching.

Environmental Observations

Participants concluded that where they sat and whom they sat with influenced how others treated them. Participant 7 conveyed the following about positioning and same-gender seating:

> Especially if I notice that other females are traveling alone or at night, then you kind of see the precautions that come into play where I have witnessed sometimes where they try to sit closer to the doors and things like that or try to go into, like, a common ground with other females to make themselves feel more comfortable. So, absolutely. I think that's a common thing for women to experience.

Participants expressed how same-gender seating via spontaneous friendships with other female passengers forms momentary solutions until the ride ends. A temporary

buddy, in many cases, denoted togetherness and decreased vulnerability. Participant 11 elaborated on a particular instance that moved her.

> I've observed before I stepped in somebody who was getting their leg inappropriately touched by another passenger who she clearly did not know. But she was going to continue to let them do that because she would be in more danger if she moved that person's hand away, and nobody saw what this person did. So, I was seeing, and I said, hey, ma'am, do you know this man? And, you know, she said, no, she was very uncomfortable. And so, I said, hey, there's a space here. You can sit next to me. And so physically, she got up and moved and sat next to me on my other side versus sitting next to that man who was inappropriately touching her. And now that there were people that were brought to that attention and were looking at the scene, he, of course, did not, no longer felt empowered to make a scene.

Because the participant was attentive and assertive towards the passenger's potential aggressor, the participant deescalated the situation and eased the passenger. Participants continuously highlighted how being alone allows them to be victimized.

Participant 13 clarified that not only does she feel safety when in a group, she bonded. "Group travel comforts me. I would prefer to go in a group when I'm with other people. If I travel with my family, I think that's just the time that we all can sit together. If it's long distance, you guys can talk together."

When it comes to headphone usage, participants used headphones as a positive distraction. Headphones allowed the passengers to enjoy music or a phone conversation.

Nonetheless, the participants typically minimized headphone usage, listening to only one headphone at reduced volume.

Participant 4 shared:

Yeah, I mean, for me personally, I do take it either no ear pods or just one, but the one usually just to silence the noise, but I usually like to be fully aware of my surroundings. And then even in Uber, I don't put in my headset just because I need to. I'm usually engaged with the drivers just to be like, okay, I see you.

Several participants said people-watching is optimal in assessing surroundings for suspicious behaviors. Participant 7 explained:

So, you know, people were already speaking to me on the bus, strangers I didn't know who already spoke to me on the bus, and I just didn't really feel safe. So that was just something that, you know, I tried to do. Just so if I get up on the bus and people can see me standing up, they think, oh, she's going to get off soon. Or, you know, maybe this stop approaching would really, you know, I have my own plan that I'm doing, and they're just looking at what I'm doing.

This participant acknowledged that she could move accordingly depending on how others behaved.

As essential accessories, purses and bags contain passengers' everyday valuables. Therefore, purse-clenching on public transit is an instinctual behavior that all the participants related to. On public transportation, participants held their bags closely and even admitted inserting protective items. One participant voiced how she positioned her

purse when on the bus. Participant 14 delineated on how she positioned her purse as well as how her bag acted as a barrier between strangers.

> Most of the time, if I'm taking the train to library, I flip my purse. So instead of, like, the outside, the opening being on the outside, I turn her in. And then I just, like, keep my bag and myself close to me, and I could probably just sit alone or my bag and another chair so nobody sits there.

Table 4

Theme 3: Expectations

Codes	Theme 3
Politeness/civility	Expectations
Efficiency	
Reliability	
Affordability	
Responsiveness	
Hygiene	

Participants communicated the desire to be respected and valued on public transportation meaning being respected and treated kindly by personal rideshare drivers as well as the conductors or drivers of a city bus or metro. Participants expressed that starting off your workday with an upbeat conversation with the driver sets the tone for a positive ride.

Participant 2 exclaimed:

Nothing can bring you down after that. And what I do in my situation is I normally would reward the person with a good review on Uber. Give them five stars, four stars to say that I had a pleasurable experience. Because I think if we're

able to show to other people that, hey, these are the people who we should be using.

Public transportation should be efficient and reliable when it comes timeliness regarding travel times. Participants expected public transportation to be timely so they could get to work promptly. Furthermore, passengers wanted drivers to follow the predetermined navigation routes and obey traffic laws. Participant 5 said, "Yes, it should be clean, punctual, safe driving at, you know, a normal speed limit, taking the preferred routes, just things like that."

Affordability is a primary reason that people take public transportation. Those who take public transportation confess that buses are often cheaper than Ubers or personal car expenses. Other participants explained that a company car would be more efficient than using a personal car since the company absorbs the cost. Participant 7 said:

So, that's definitely one of the aspects is having more space to get to where I need to get to. And also, the cheaper cost of public transportation compared to catching Ubers or having a car. I think it's about $2.75 or $3 to catch the metro and the bus....Oh, so that's the daily cost. To get on the metro, you always have to kind of pay to get in and pay to get out. I believe it's about maybe between $2 and $3 to get on the metro and also $2 to get off. Also, for about a week, if you put, say, $15 or $20 on the SmartTrip card to get to where you need to get to, you could have a full week of just getting to places or almost a full week of just getting around, especially with where I need to go from work to school to home. I can

possibly get groceries and everything. That really comes in handy and definitely aids to my daily commute. Instead of catching, say, a $20 Uber for one day.

Participant 12 explained, "I know that Uber can be very expensive, but maybe, like, you know, there's a discounted, like, bus rate for students, like, in every city that I know of, and there should be an Uber discounted rate for students." Regarding the company car, Participant 3 said the company car eases the travel.

The company that I work for, they gave us the ability to design our own car. Normally, we are able to pick the make, model, year, color, and all the other specifications to go along with it. For me, I picked a luxury car and it comes with a gas card and the company gives us money on the gas card. Also, the company fully insures the vehicle. I can use the vehicle as a personal vehicle, however; the job would have to see that my car usage is for work-related activities. I said I like Uber so much. But I will say this, if my job notices that I am using the car for other tasks, I don't think they will really care.

Civility also extended to valuing each individual passenger. Many of the participants that they felt like their presence is ignored while they are on public transportation especially if a passenger complains. If there's an incident that transpires while on public transportation and the incident was to be reported, they feel as though the authorities would not follow up with the situation.

Participants mentioned that they and bystanders have either witnessed or been involved in uncomfortable situations. Upon reporting such situations, nothing was done thereafter. Participants revealed that their public transportation reports or concerns go

unaddressed eventually. Participant 7 said tracking multiple incidences is a growing issue

for the transit authorities. "Yep. I would say situations get reported, but maybe they have

too much to tend to. I don't think there's much follow-up."

Participants discussed that they often witness kidnapping, trafficking or assault situations

on the news, and those matters remain unresolved. Participant 5 echoed with

dissatisfaction. "Not everyone is satisfied if people are complaining or reporting things to

news stations."

Participant 6 highlighted that reports or concerns are omitted if people are of a

lower class:

I feel as though, again, the higher up you go, the more you're listened to. If I'm

talking about it from a plain standpoint, there's more of a concern for liability and

wanting to avoid being sued. So, I think that they take better precautions when it

comes to that. However, when you go lower down in the ranking, I do feel and

believe that it falls more on deaf ears. Simply because not everybody is going to

be taken seriously and everybody is going to be respected when it comes to just

having their own, I guess, person just being valued.

Post the COVID-19 pandemic, with healthcare workers being considered

essential, all the participants feel like public transportation settings should have a

heightened sense of sanitation and cleanliness given the vast population size.

A participant clarified that as a healthcare employee, cleanliness occurs both inside and

outside the workspace. She addressed that her clothes and that bodies carried germs from

public transportation sites.

Public transportation and being a healthcare worker, it has made me want to be, I

guess, more sanitary because you don't know the conditions of these vehicles or,

you know, moving parts that you're entering. And as soon as I get home, I'm

always very quick to change and undress from the clothes that I was wearing on

that bus or that metro, whatever, because the things that, you know, you don't

know what other people are coming on the bus with. And, you know, sometimes

it's smelly, sometimes it stinks... You see people doing weird things. So, it just

has made me want to just be more sanitary, especially being a healthcare worker,

because I already know the dangers of, you know, germs, viruses, being sick, but

also being at risk of certain things. And some public transportation is just

something I never want to bring back to my house or where I live or around other

people that I care about.

Participant 1 suggested that routine cleaning showcases thoroughness. "I think

they should do something like getting somebody in there to clean. So, it's to clean the bus

before the next before they move from each station - the end of each station."

Table 5

Theme 4 Initiatives

Codes	Theme 4
Security officers	
Heightened technology	
Gender-exclusive areas	
Diversity training	
Company-funded transportation	

The participants identified areas for improvement such the inclusion of security officers, gender-exclusive areas, heightened technology like cameras, diversity training, and company-funded transportation.

Participants observed that while on public transportation, the only immediate staff is the driver. Usually, the driver is preoccupied with driving and thus cannot focus on the passengers within the facility. An additional staff member in the form of security, assistance, or emergency responders would be beneficial in ameliorating situations. Participant 6 voiced:

> The conductor is expected to drive and behave as mediator, law enforcement and just play all these additional roles that aren't necessarily in their job description. If a fight breaks out and the conductor is driving the train, how is the conductor also going to be expected to break up the fight? That just doesn't make sense. That's why a separate officer can just be there and oversee things. And granted, things don't happen daily, but that doesn't mean nothing will ever occur.

When security officers were involved in issues, it is normally after the incidents and even then, the contact was limited or non-existent. Onboard security or safety personnel would be a helpful touch to ensure passenger safety. Participant 11 said:

I think definitely increasing security would definitely be helpful, especially for them, in managing things like people, you know, getting on either buses or trains or the subway or anything like that without paying, you know, and doing a better job of making sure everybody's intent is just to travel versus to harass or something like that.

Participants felt that a medical first responder is crucial on public transportation. If a medical mishap occurred, the transit system would have to stop before the arrival of first responders. Calling 911 is time-consuming in these instances. When the emergency response teams arrived, the public transportation spaces were often overcrowded and busy making it tricky to service passenger-turned-patients. Participant 6 recalled:

If someone is having a medical emergency in there, there's less access to be able to reach them versus someone that is in first class and have ample room to be able to get some of those accommodations...Yeah. I recently had an aunt suffer from a stroke, but she used to go on planes often. I was just thinking, if she were flying, how would she have been rescued? You know?

Gender-exclusive areas for women would alleviate concerns for women who worry about protecting themselves. Participant 15 suggested, "One initiative I would propose is the implementation of gender-specific safety measures, such as dedicated women-only cars or sections during nighttime hours...This would provide female

passengers with a sense of security and comfort while traveling alone, especially during off-peak hours."

Participants said family-exclusive seating keeps familes together. Also, individual travelers can avoid child-centered interruptions like loud noises or kicking. Participant 13 explained, "Because some people will understand. Because throughout the travel, even by air, when all of you are sitting together, where everybody's sitting together, people talk about children, complain about children. I have children myself."

Additionally, women-only spaces were also useful for pregnant women or mothers who want to engage in breast-feeding, diaper-changing, or other child-rearing tasks. Participant 8articulated an account where her friend was removed from the premises due to breastfeeding publicly. The friend felt humiliated and defenseless in the situation.

Participant 8 explained:

I do recall a friend of mine. She was on a flight. It was she and her daughter, maybe she was about one year old and the husband. She actually was breastfeeding her daughter on the plane. And the flight attendant actually came up to her and told her, you know, you can't breastfeed your child on the plane. And she was like, you know, she was kind of confused. She said, wait, what did you say?... I just kind of witnessed everything happen, and I was just like, oh, my goodness. So, it caused a huge uproar. You know, security had to come on the plane because she kept saying that she was being discriminated against.

Participant 8 revealed that if only women were on that plane, then there would have been no complaints because women understand each other's mannerisms. In that sense, the participants agreed that cameras can see whatever the conductors or security officers were not able to see. This was exceptionally helpful if there was a negative, dangerous activity occurring.

Participant 11 added that long-term staff can continuously review camera footage:

I think, you know, implementing safety measures that make everybody safer. I think maybe having a singular 24 hour staff would be nice, somebody that keeps an eye on things even after hours. I know that sometimes people have, like, security and things like that, or cameras, but it always helps to know that there is somebody that's looking at those cameras in real time, you know?

Participant 7 expressed, "I would say, like, put cameras in there, but there should be at least some type of precautionary measure just to make sure certain passengers that kind that could be a threat, get reprimanded for what they're doing, because so many things happen at times."

Other participants exclaimed that diversity training for public transportation workers allows for drivers and supplementary staff members to be culturally competent and socially aware of passenger cues. By comprehending demeanor, body language, communication, public transportation workers can appropriately serve and interact with diverse passengers.

Participant 6 vocalized:

I'd say a lot more diversity training for the staff that are going to be taking care of

the people who are taking public transportation...It's definitely not a one size fits

all and just learning what the nuances are of the people who are going to be, you

know, riding on whatever transportation they choose to take, knowing that there

could be disparities in eye contact, things of that nature. So, reading social cues,

reading body language, those sorts of things, you know, some mental health

training, just really understanding people because it is such a personable job.

Moving on, participants determined that company-funded transportation was ideal

because the workers would always be prompt. Participant 5 said the following about

herself and her colleagues.

That would be helpful if your job provides some type of shuttle or some type of

bus or car or pickup and drop-off service. That would be extremely helpful if

there was funding specifically for that for essential workers or if there were or if

there were coupons or discounts or something for essential workers who do have

to use public transportation to go back and forth to work and back...I think that for

a lot of my coworkers who end up coming into work late, they will no longer have

that issue because they know that there will be a formal transportation to come

and pick them up at certain time so they can't be late.

Summary

This chapter contains the results of the thematic analysis which ties back to the

research question. Appendix B shows participant demographics and minimum

requirements for the study. Fifteen women were interviewed for this study. Interview

questions were designed to understand working healthcare women's opinions on public transportation. All participants were women over 18 years old who lived and worked in Maryland.

During the interview process, the participants expressed both positive and negative perceptions regarding public transportation. Codes were selected based on the participants' interpretation of their experiences. There were four themes resulting from this study encapsulate the participants' narratives. The four emergent themes were: (a) participants' feeling regarding public safety, (b) precautions/learned behaviors, (c) expectations, and (d) initiatives.

It was apparent that there was diversity in how women perceive the public transportation. Nonetheless, the research results had shown that all the women value a heightened safety measures while using public transportation. Chapter 5 deeply examined the four themes and provided recommendations for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to explore working healthcare women's perspectives on public transportation. This chapter includes a discussion of significant findings as related to the literature on women in public transportation settings, how healthcare women perceive the public safety, and suggestions may be meaningful for public transportation providers aiming to enhance gender-inclusivity. This chapter also includes a discussion on the limitations of this study and areas for future research.

This chapter contains discussion and future research possibilities to answer the research question: What were the opinions of working women in healthcare regarding public transportation and safety?

The perceptions of public transportation vary and consisted of four themes: The four emergent themes were: (a) participants' feeling regarding public safety, (b) precautions/learned behaviors, (c) expectations, and (d) initiatives. All themes were relevant in shaping the women's experiences as passengers and the overall quality of their commutes.

Interpretation of the Findings

Public transportation systems were not gender neutral. Public transportation sector research was primarily male-dominated with most of the information gathered was done on mainly men and generalized for women (Bamwesigye, 2019). These discrepancies were noticeable when analyzing policy formation, city development and planning, safety, access, cost, and mobility. Consequently, these measures contain a gap in the research

when standout instances occur affecting only women, such as breastfeeding shame and stalking. As a result, women's perceptions on public transportation were disregarded as circumstances that women must manage and navigate (Medina, 2017). In the same sense, this gap in the research lead to stigmatization, learned behaviors, and lack of accessibility mentioning the reporting and follow-ups of women's harassment reports and needed support if the situation worsens (Rodrigue, 2016).

The women in the study had slightly conflicting responses to public transportation. All participants preferred that their personal cars were their go-to means of transportations. While participants agreed that mass transit such as buses, metros, undergrounds, subways, and light rails were less pleasing due to crowdedness and lack of hygiene, others valued those systems for their affordability. Participants acknowledges rideshare services like Uber for being more personalized and private but worried about preplanning, kidnapping, cost-ineffectiveness, and the increased chance of stalking. Irregardless of the transportation mode, the participants did not feel exceptionally safe expressed negative feelings of anxiousness and concern before, during, and after their respective commutes.

The participants stated the public transportation authority's meaning the government should better serve civilians. This finding aligns Friedman's (2022) views that the government's initial duty was to protect civilians. This view proposes an expansive understanding of public safety that extends beyond traditional notions of protection from external threats to encompass the government's responsibility to ensure the well-being and basic needs of all citizens.

All the participants in the study adopted precautions or learned behaviors. In the context of public transportation precautions, attitudes can encompass perceptions of safety, convenience, and effectiveness of precautionary measures. The participants who implement precautions effectively and overcome potential barriers are more likely to exhibit proactive behaviors in safeguarding their safety while using public transportation. (Loukaitou-Sideris et al., 2020). For example, if participants perceive keeping personal belongings secure as effective in ensuring their safety while using public transportation, they were more likely to have positive attitudes toward these precautions and be motivated to adopt them.

Perceived behavioral control may include factors such as confidence in navigating transit systems, availability of resources (e.g. personal safety devices), and environmental factors (e.g., safety of transit routes, presence of security personnel). The participants who implemented precautions effectively and overcame potential barriers were more likely to exhibit proactive behaviors in safeguarding their safety while using public transportation. This viewpoint was supported by Loukaitou-Sideris's (2020) research denoting that public transit has significant consequences for women and forces them to adopt precautions and strategies that affect their travel habits. These range from adopting certain behaviors in public to avoiding over-crowdedness, wearing headphones, over-socializing, and people-watching. Other researchers who have begun to analyze these topics are Shaheen and Bliss who study ecology and transportation activity (Moser, 2022).

The participants discussed their loved ones and were also affected by their public transportation. The women's perceptions were that loved ones wanted to be informed before and during the commute. The various feelings associated with public transportation affect a woman's sense of self as well as a woman's interpersonal relationships (Bamwesigye, 2019). This forms the needs to educate transportation authorities about the participants' vulnerabilities face so public transportation units can alleviate loved ones' insecurities.

The circumstances in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age are known as social determinants of health. The allocation of resources, power, and money at the international, national, and local levels shapes these variables. Health outcomes were significantly influenced by social variables, frequently more so than by personal habits or availability to medical care (Hong et al., 2022) From this study, among the major social determinants of health were: socioeconomic status like occupation and income, support groups such as family or friends, the environment which included housing and safety, access to healthcare, and employment conditions such as workplace safety, and levels of job satisfactions.

As healthcare workers, the participants felt that health was a component of public safety which public transportation systems ignore. Understanding that unhealthiness was a risk, the women expressed that post-COVID, germs, bacteria, and illnesses were still prevalent and made connections to maintaining sanitation habits such as wearing masks and carrying wipes and hand sanitizers on their person. However, the participants believed that the transportation companies can do a better job of socially distancing

passengers as well as rigorous cleaning and sanitization by regularly disinfecting seats, handrails, and door handles.

The two main ideas are Friedman's theory of public safety and Cooley's theory of transportation (Cooley, 1894; Friedman, 2022). Women's views on public safety are significantly shaped by both ideologies. Cooley's theory places a strong emphasis on the looking-glass self, the idea that people create their perception of themselves based on how they think other people see them. According to Friedman's theory of public safety, safety is examined by considering fundamental human needs for life (Friedman, 2022). The women studied expressed the desire to invoke self-expression as well as the need for being safe guarded by the government.

Limitations of the Study

A limitation was something that cannot be controlled in a study (Clarke & Braun, 2013). In this case, the participants' public transportation experiences can vary over time and follow-up would need to take place to get the most recent accounts. The study focuses on the perspectives of a particular subgroup of healthcare workers and may not fully capture the diversity of women's experiences in public transportation. The research does account for the non-Maryland residents. As such, sample size may be a concern. Furthermore, I used a notebook for data collection and practiced reflexivity to control bias.

Another possible limitation was the interviewing methodology. I used a structured interview design; however, the interviews were conducted via Zoom audio. As such,

body language cues and voice inflection could have been missed. A future study could benefit from in-person interviews.

Recommendations

There was little research conducted on working women's opinions regarding public transportation (Daganzo & Ouyang, 2019). This study was conducted to explore working healthcare women's perceptions on public transportation and public safety. Future exploration of practices of urban planning, spending budgets, government policy, and security on women's safety perception would be beneficial to add to the current body of research.

While this study focused on Maryland's women perceptions, another study could view this narrative from the perspective of women in more specific locations within the United States, such as the southwest or northeast. Furthermore, examining how accessibility, workplace expectations, gender, health standards, and government implementation affects women's perspectives would further clarifying the feelings of the public transportation experiences.

Implications

Historically, women's opinions on public transportation have been ignored. The purpose of this study is to gather insight on how working women in healthcare view public safety on public transportation. The findings of this study may add to the body of knowledge on the urban planning and policy development for the public transportation sector.

Positive Social Change

Maryland's government should be action-oriented by collaborating with communities and stakeholders to get their opinions, resolve issues, and include a range of viewpoints in the planning and decision-making processes for transit projects promotes trust and cooperation. Through participatory planning techniques, and community engagement programs, the locals were given the opportunity to influence transit policies and services that best suit their requirements.

All passengers should be equally defended, respected, and heard when on public transportation. On the municipal, state, and federal levels, promoting transit justice and equity-oriented policies increases public awareness of transportation disparities and galvanizes support for radical change. Transit justice initiatives seek to guarantee that public transportation functions as a mechanism for social and economic empowerment for all by tackling systemic impediments and promoting fair and equitable transit regulations.

Lastly, public transportation becomes more convenient, efficient, and enjoyable to use when it embraces digital innovation and technological breakthroughs like mobile ticketing, automated real-time updates, and trip planning apps. Utilizing technology to enhance transit systems' accessibility, connectivity, and transparency encourages social inclusion and gives users the power to plan their trips with knowledge.

Public transportation companies can improve mobility, accessibility, and the quality of life for all citizens while helping to create more fair, sustainable, and inclusive communities by putting these impactful social change projects into practice.

Conclusion

This narrative evaluated 15 participants and their perspective of their lived experiences with public transportation. Fifteen interviews structured questions were conducted with working women in healthcare to fully explore public safety measures, personal comfort and safety, and environmental factors. The varied experiences of these 15 participants contained a shared narrative that could be denoted with four themes. The four themes were: participants' feelings regarding safety, expectations, precautions/learned behaviors, and initiatives. The scholarly literature reflected a lack of research on the perceptions of working women in healthcare (Graystone, 2022).

Healthcare working women were a marginal in public transportation research, which affects personal and external perceptions on women's well-being and views women's lived experiences as dismissed figures (Abdallah, 2023). Consequently, public transportation systems were often male-dominated and gendered against women causing disadvantageous circumstances in the areas of security, technology, economics, and advocacy (Harvey et al, 2019). Nonetheless, understanding the lived experiences of the healthcare women can help aid public transportation policy makers, administrators, government officials, and law enforcement professionals provide sufficient protection for their female passengers by normalizing the dissatisfaction around the public transportation experiences and offering real-time solutions for concerns and inequalities.

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Appendix A: Flyer

Working Women's Perspectives on Public Transportation

Participants Requirements:

- Are you a woman over 18?
- Are you a healthcare worker?

My name is Assaaformbi Bama.
I am a doctoral student at Walden University studying women's perspectives on public transportation regarding safety in Maryland.

I would like you to lend your voice to a confidential conversation.
The interview process is as follows:

Duration: 50-60 minutes
Forum: Zoom video

Interviews will be recorded and distributed to participants.

Participation is entirely voluntary.

For more information, please email me at:
assaaformbi.bama@waldenu.edu

A

Appendix B: Consent Form

You are invited to take part in a research study about the opinions of women working in healthcare on public transportation.

This study seeks 15 volunteers who are:

- adult, working healthcare women aged 18 and over

- those living in Maryland for at least a year

This study is being conducted by a researcher named Assaaformbi "Assa" Bama, who is a doctoral student at Walden University.

Study Purpose:
The purpose of this study is to gather insight on how working women in healthcare view public safety on public transportation.

Procedures:
This study will involve:
- Participants partaking in a 50–60-minute audio-recorded Zoom interviews.
- Transcripts will be made available within 2 days following the interviews.
  - (If you want to make any revisions, let the researcher know. If there is no response after 7 days, the data will be used as is.)
  - The transcript will take 10-15 to read.

Here are some sample questions:
- How would you describe your public transportation experiences?
- What is your purpose for using public transportation?

Voluntary Nature of the Study:
Research should only be done with those who freely volunteer. So, everyone involved will respect your decision to join or not.
If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:
Being in this study could involve some risk of the minor distress, discomfort, or embarrassment that can be encountered in daily life such as sharing sensitive information. With the protections in place, this study would pose minimal risk to your wellbeing. If you want to talk privately about any discomfort or distress endured because of this study, please contact 911 or 988 immediately.

This study offers no direct benefits to individual participants other than personal fulfillment. The aim of this study is to comprehend working healthcare women's perception regarding public transportation and safety from which the Maryland government may benefit. The researcher will proactively share the overall results by emailing a 1–2-page executive summary.

Payment:
There will be no gifts distributed following participation.

Privacy:
The researcher is required to protect your privacy. Your identity will be kept confidential, within the limits of the law. The researcher is only allowed to share your identity or contact info as needed with Walden University supervisors (who are also required to protect your privacy) or with authorities if court-ordered (very rare). The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. If the researcher were to share this dataset with another researcher in the future, the dataset would contain no identifiers so this would not involve another round of obtaining informed consent. Data will be kept secure by using codes instead of names, privacy protection on my software, and data encryption. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

Contacts and Questions:
You can ask the researcher questions via call or text. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant or any negative parts of the study, you can call Walden University's Research Participant Advocate at 612-312-1210. Walden University's approval number for this study is **IRB will enter approval number here**. It expires on **IRB will enter expiration date.**

You might wish to retain this consent form for your records. You may ask the researcher or Walden University for a copy at any time using the contact info above.

Obtaining Your Consent

If you feel you understand the study and wish to volunteer, please indicate your consent by replying to this email with the words, "I consent."

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

1. Describe a time you used public transportation.

2. What are your purposes for using public transportation?

3. What are your preferred forms of transportation?

4. Have you developed any gender-related precautions as a public transit user? (i.e., choosing specific routes, day vs. night travel, purse-clenching, multi-trips)

5. How has your job as a healthcare worker impacted your opinions on transportation decisions?

6. With 0 being the 'least safe' and 10 being the 'most safe', can you rate your public safety level? Can you explain why?

7. Which aspects of public transportation make your commute more comfortable and convenient? Why?

8. Which aspects of public transportation do you find unsafe and uncomfortable?

    a. Can you describe a specific instance and how you would handle an uncomfortable situation?

9. Have you witnessed other female passengers display safety concerns?

10. How effective are the security personnel or law enforcement officers on public transportation in ensuring passenger safety?

11. Do you feel safe using public transportation, especially during nighttime or in less populated areas?

12. Have you or others you know ever reported incidents related to gender-based discrimination while using public transportation?

    a.   If so, what has been the experience with the reporting process and the response from transit authorities?

13. Are you aware of Maryland's public transportation policies regarding passengers' rights?

    a.   Do you think that information is inaccessible?

14. Do you believe that public transportation facilities are designed to be gender-inclusive and equitable for all passengers?

15. If you could propose changes or initiatives to improve gender inclusivity and public safety on public transportation, what would they be?

16. Do you have any questions for me in any areas we discussed?