

# Transportation Challenges And Their Effects On Employee And Student Performance In The Education Sector: Case Study Of Hope Africa University 2020-2025

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DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.16.04.2026.p17224

<https://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.16.04.2026.p17224>

Paper Received Date: 25th March 2026

Paper Acceptance Date: 25th April 2026

Paper Publication Date: 30th April 2026

## Abstract

This research examines effects of transportation challenges on performance in education sector. Among these issues, the study examines the effects of transport cost, travel time, distance, and reliability transport on punctuality, attendance, productivity, and overall performance. Transportation challenges affect more than physical mobility; they can disrupt social identity and personal dignity. Our case study is Hope Africa University and the researcher focussed on the effects of transportation challenges on the performance of students and staff at Hope Africa University. Drawing on both primary and secondary data, the research investigated key challenges faced by employees and students in Hope Africa University especially Ngagara and Gishingano campus located in Ntahangwa commune and frequented by students residing in different parts of Bujumbura province. The majority of its employees are from Bujumbura city and its suburbs.

The study also analyses the broader implications of these challenges on the functioning of educational institutions, including administrative delays and weakened service delivery for teachers. By employing a mixed-methods approach, data is collected through surveys, interviews, and document analysis. Findings aim to inform policymakers and education administrators on strategies to improve transportation conditions, enhance staff well-being, and boost overall institutional performance.

The study found that inadequate transportation infrastructure, limited mobility options, and unreliable public transit systems affect staff attendance, punctuality, productivity and overall performance. It also shows how employees and students are affected economically and psychologically. The study concludes with recommendations for targeted interventions, such as improved transport infrastructure, strategic planning for staff mobility, and flexible work arrangements to mitigate transportation-related challenges.

**Key words:** Transportation challenges, employee performance, student performance, education sector.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### I.1 Background of the Study

In the city of Bujumbura, when people wake up and prepare for their long journey to go and come back from work, they start thinking about how they can reach their workplaces. Long commuting hours have become troublesome in recent years aggravated by the frequent interrupted fuel distribution. When they arrive at the bus station, they find long queues of people waiting for buses, which they do not know at what time they will show up. Among these groups of people, many of them are various public workers, teachers and students.

These long queues can be observed from 6, 00 hours until 9.00 hours AM with the probability to last the whole day. Likewise long lines of people can be seen in the evening until 8h30PM.

The question is what time these people will reach their homes in the evening and check if the children have done homework. There are those who can spend a whole week without seeing their little children because they arrive at home while they have slept. It is maybe ease for those who have cooks but very difficult for those who do not have. Many people currently sleep at 24h00 and wake up at 5h00 and follow the routine of going to the bus station to wait for transportation.

This can change when there is no fuel or when buses are parking at fuelling stations waiting to be served. At this time, they can commute on foot and bicycles in some parts of Bujumbura town. This raises concerns about how many hours do people in

public service work and how much time do they sleep. This situation gave us the foundation to conduct an analysis on the effects of transportation challenges on employee and students performance in public and in education sector.

The Crisis in transportation system provoke an increasing price of first necessity goods. We know that good prices at the market have increased but salary whether in public sector or elsewhere in private institutions the salaries remained the same. This affect the psychology of employees who have to fight for everyday to raise their families and help children to go to school. Many teachers and students come late to work due to unreliable transport means .They may even miss workdays and teachers with difficult commutes may feel demotivated leading lower productivity what have great repercussions on students' performance. Long commutes caused by long waiting hours on the bus station contribute to tiredness, reducing efficiency and morale.

We can also mention the difficulties endured by an entire employee's family when transportation come into question: the spouse will need to go to work or shopping and she will encounter the same problems. Children will need to commute from school to their home not mention when one of them is sick. When an employee reckon on this, he will lose equilibrium and he will not focus on his job duties but on how to resolve his domestic problems. Due to these countless problems many workers will spend more time on telephone communication trying to resolve that multitude problems.

This matter raises the question of mental health of the people in these periods of transportation difficulties. It is also important to meditate on how think those who have bought cars thanks to the loans of banks and leave them at home for weeks, the appalling state of these car after a month without moving. It is similar to those who have money and lack means of transport.

Many employers are assisting helplessly this situation ignoring that the problem of lacking fuel will not end tomorrow or after tomorrow as Burundi will still be a landlocked nation and does not produce oil.

Numerous works focussed on urban problems and were silent on rural areas. The problem of transportation observed in rural zones where many workers are not even aware if they have the right to mobility.

In highly status-conscious communities, a change in mobility manner can provoke gossip and speculation regarding the individual's financial circumstances, even when the actual cause is unrelated to wealth. This public scrutiny may result in a perceived "loss of face," particularly for individuals previously regarded as prominent or successful. The experience of being seen queuing for a bus especially when sitting next to individuals from less affluent backgrounds can be internalized as a symbolic "fall from grace."

Psychologically, such situations may generate feelings of embarrassment, vulnerability, or diminished self-worth. Over time, these emotional responses can discourage public engagement, contribute to social withdrawal, and reinforce class divisions. Time people when invited to social gathering cannot go and later this can disrupt relationships .The impact is therefore not purely logistical; transportation challenges can have tangible consequences for an individual's social reputation and mental well-being.

Limited empirical studies examining the psychological effects of transportation challenges, particularly loss of professional identity among university employees

Insufficient exploration of the link between transportation difficulties and changes in organizational culture within higher education institutions. There is rare specific research to the context of Burundi education sector and most of them are studies generalized across East Africa or sub-Saharan Africa, limiting understanding of local nuances

This study will help employers to put in place strategies and protect their employees what will allow employee whether in public or private sector to work comfortably and improve performance. It will also help Burundi researchers to go deeper and find out what can be done on the side of employers and those desperate employees who are rated on what they deliver without considering the main factor, which is transportation.

It will change the employers 'mind of waving the card of discharging employee when they are late or do not meet deadlines and go deeper to the root cause currently transportation.

## **I.2 Problem Statement**

Nowadays we observe a significance price increase of goods and services. Among those services, transport occupy the frontline because it is agreeable that it is at the origin of the hiking costs. For some opinions, this situation is due to the lack of foreigner currencies to import fuel. The problem of not having oil is affecting private and public institutions.

There is only one public named OTRACO, which has no capacity to serve the entire country. Many roads, especially in suburb of Bujumbura and in rural areas, are in poor condition, causing delays and disorders. OTRACO is the only public transport, which is still operating and is supposed to carry public workers and in Bujumbura city and interior of the country but it does not have enough buses. Poste also once involved in public transport has stopped it services for unknown reasons.

Recently we have seen an increase of private transport companies but they are not able to satisfy the passengers willing to move to different localities. Some services hire private buses, which do not have enough fuel. Inadequate bus systems and unreliable schedules affect commuting for government and private employees. Some institutions have bought shuttle buses to carry their workers but other have not been able to solve this issue. Even those who have organized transport for their employees are affected by the general deficiency of fuel. Comparing transport fees in a month and wages, many civil servants cannot afford paying transport expenses due to low salaries. This serious transport problem arose when many public workers were struggling in creation of income generating activities and their hopes are now dim. This issue of lack of oil have affected many sectors of activities causing inflation. The study intend to demonstrate the linkages between bearing transport difficulties and delivering while on duty.

The general problem addressed in this research is finding out different transport challenges met by people working in education sector and examine the effects on how they perform assigned missions. It is needed to comprehend the environment surrounding and better understand the linkages between having adequate means of transportation, good infrastructure and how well an employee fulfil his duties , satisfy his employer expectations and reach the objectives of an organisation.

When travelling, it is not rare to find on the road a group of teachers working in different classes and schools in the same school district waiting for a lift to go to reach his class. One question someone may ask himself is what time these teachers will reach their destination. From 7.00 hours waiting for someone with whom he did not give appointment, he will later meet his students

on the way back home. Even if he gets an unofficial transportation, the duration of spending lesson will not be respected. Punctuality will be affected. For schools with double vacation the problem of transportation is very serious for students and teacher but also the students who may spent a week without meeting their teachers. They will only content management from a teacher of another class who have the chance to arrive on time.

The people who face these transportations are affected economically, psychologically and at some extent result in health problems. This cannot go without having an impact when it comes time of performance appraisal.

The general belief is that employees have to come to work and arrive at time no matter how the moves to their respective offices or workstations if not they have to answer queries. However, in these days this exercise of going to workplaces and coming back home, has become difficult and has many repercussions on employee performance. Frequent fuel shortages disrupt both public and private transportation.

Bujumbura city experiences congestion, affecting punctuality for public workers, teachers and students. Transportation issues slow down government operations, affecting citizen services.

### **I.3 General Objective**

To analyse transportation challenges and assess how they affect employee and student performance in the education sector.

### **I.4 Specific Objectives**

To identify the major transportation challenges faced by administrative staff, teachers and students in the education sector.

To examine the extent to which transportation challenges affect punctuality, attendance, and general performance of employees and students.

To assess the economic, psychological, and health effects of transportation challenges on employees and students.

## **II. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This literature review summarises the existing researches and shows how worrying this issue has been for long period then will highlight the key findings and gaps relating transportation challenges and its linkages with employee performance. They are mostly found in research papers, theses, dissertations, and academic writings.

### **II.1 Inadequate Transport Infrastructure**

Many authors across Africa treated largely the theme of insufficiency of transport infrastructure. According to Foster and Briceño-Garmendia (2010), poor road networks, outdated rail systems, and insufficient ports significantly affect trade and mobility. The African Development Bank (AfDB) (2019) estimates that only 43% of rural Africans have access to an all-season road, making transportation costly and inefficient.

The Rail transport is underdeveloped across much of Africa, with many rail networks dating back to the colonial era and suffering from neglect. Here we can give an example of the railroad in Uvira (South-Kivu province) in Republic Democratic of Congo where citizens have demolished the railroad and they used irons for other purposes. According to Bullock (2009), the lack of investment in rail infrastructure has led to inefficiency, reducing its competitiveness against road transport. Some recent efforts, such as the Standard Gauge Railway in Kenya and Ethiopia's Addis Ababa-Djibouti railway, show promise but remain exceptions rather than the norm.

Rapid urbanization has led to severe congestion in major African cities like Lagos, Nairobi, and Johannesburg. Studies, such as those by UN-Habitat (2018), suggest that weak public transport systems and increased car dependency contribute to traffic congestion, pollution, and long commuting times. Many cities lack efficient mass transit systems, forcing reliance on informal transport services like minibuses and motorcycle taxis.

Transport costs in Africa are among the highest in the world. According to Limao and Venables (2001), poor infrastructure and inefficient logistics significantly increase trade costs, making African goods less competitive in global markets. High fuel prices, inefficient border processes, and inadequate ports further compound the problem. The World Bank (2020) emphasizes that improving regional transport corridors can enhance intra-African trade and reduce costs.

### **II.2 Role of Transportation in Workforce Efficiency**

A well-functioning transportation system ensures that employees can commute to work with minimal delays and stress. According to Littman (2019), an efficient transportation network improves employee punctuality, reduces absenteeism, and enhances job engagement. Conversely, poor transportation infrastructure can lead to excessive travel times and fatigue.

### **II.3 Commuting as a Workplace Challenge**

In urban areas, particularly in large metropolitan cities, commuting is a significant concern. Studies show that prolonged commuting times are associated with increased stress, lower job satisfaction, and decreased productivity (Gatersleben & Uzzell, 2007). For

example, research by Evans & Wener (2006) found that employees with longer commutes experience higher levels of anxiety and lower job performance compared to those with shorter and more efficient commutes.

#### II.4 Economic effects of Transportation on Workforce Productivity

The economic implications of transportation inefficiencies extend beyond individual employees. The World Bank (2020) reports that poor transport infrastructure and congestion cost businesses billions in lost productivity annually. Employers face challenges such as delayed work shifts, increased turnover rates, and lower employee morale, which ultimately affect organizational performance.

In 2008 Japanese experts conducted the Emergency Study on Urban Transport in Bujumbura city. The report was meant to analyse the present and future conditions from that time and demand of urban transport in Bujumbura. It comprehensively covered the issues of urban transport including road, public transport, traffic management, institution, legislation, financing and urban environment.

#### II.5 Impact of School Transportation on Student Outcomes

Transport Problems for Students and Their Effects on Attendance in Community Secondary Schools in Dar es Salaam City, Tanzania (Mugoro, 2014) showed that transportation distance, cost and lack of reliable transport were significantly linked to student absenteeism in community secondary schools in Temeke Municipality. Reasons behind Long Commute Distances on Students' Attendance and Academic Performance in Mwanza City, Tanzania (Ngutunyi, Temba & Sitta Matondo, 2025) studied the effect of commute distance on students' school attendance and academic performance in Mwanza City, concluding that long commute distances negatively affected performance.

Existing international and regional literature shows a clear association between transportation constraints and educational outcomes. Studies in developed contexts find that provision of reliable transport increases attendance and can improve achievement, while African and regional studies link long commutes, unsafe routes, and transport unreliability to higher rates

#### II.6 Gap in the literature

Existing international and regional literature shows a clear association between transportation constraints and educational outcomes. Studies in developed contexts find that provision of reliable transport increases attendance and can improve achievement, while African and regional studies link long commutes, unsafe routes, and transport unreliability to higher rates of student and teacher absenteeism, reduced instructional time, and poorer learning outcomes. However, there is limited studies at institution level for Burundi especially at higher education institutions telling how transport challenges affect both staff and students, which justifies the present case study of Hope Africa University

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### III.1 Research Design

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative research methods. A descriptive survey design is used to gather data on transportation challenges and their impact on performance in Hope Africa University

**Study Population:** The target Population were Hope Africa university teachers, administrative staff, students and other workers consisted of 7823.

**Sample Size and Sampling Technique:** For the case of this study, the population of Hope Africa University in Ngagara and Gishingano campuses, the total population (administrative staff, teachers, students and support staff) are 7823. Using Alain Bouchard formula, a representative sample of 95 respondents was selected and stratified randomly as below:

**Table 1: Sample Size**

Participants	Population	Sample Size
Administrative staff	75	0,02159
Teachers	33	0,040719
Supportive personnel	48	0,03125
Students	7667	94,812830
<b>Total</b>	<b>7823</b>	<b>94, 836216694± 95</b>

**Data Collection instruments:** In conducting this research, the required data was gathered from both primary and secondary data sources. Structured questionnaires were administered to teachers, students, University administrative staff, and other auxiliary workers to assess transportation difficulties and their effect on work attendance, efficiency and psychological impact. Interviews were conducted with Administrative staffs to gain insights into policies, culture and institutional challenges. Traffic, movement of vehicles in the area and the manner they commute were observed. University arrival and departure times were looked into measure punctuality and absenteeism trends.

### III.2 Data analysis

The collected data were expressed in different tables, analysed based on the number of respondents and calculated in percentages from which the conclusion was drawn.

**Reliability and validity:** In this study, the validity of instruments used, required expertise from Hope Africa University staff and students, on the draft submission, adjustments and discussions with supervisor have been important. In addition, reliability was insured by pre-testing the questionnaire with a selected sample from Hope Africa University.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, data were collected from 95 respondents, comprising administrative staff, lecturers, students and support staff. Both quantitative (Likert-scale questionnaires) and qualitative (semi-structured interviews) methods were employed what enabled triangulation of results for greater validity.

### IV.1 Quantitative Findings

**Table 1: Sample Size Overview**

Participants	Population	Sample Size
Administrative staff	75	0,02159
Teachers lecturers	33	0,040719
Supportive personnel	48	0,03125
Students	7667	94,812830
<b>Total</b>	<b>7823</b>	<b>94, 836216694± 95</b>

Source: Field investigation 2025

The sample of 95 respondents represents a reasonable cross-section of the population, suitable for descriptive analysis and reflect the clear picture of the findings.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristic of Respondents**

Gender	Respondents	%
Female	38	40
Male	57	60,
<b>TOT</b>	95	100

Source: Field investigation

Gender: 57 males, 38 females.

**Table 3: Age Range**

18-25	26-35	36-45	46 and above	Total
61	22	10	2	95

64,21%	23,16%	10,53%	2,11%	
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Source: Field investigation

The majority (64.21%) are 18–25 years, indicating a youthful population.

Implication: Young respondents are likely more dependent on walking, motorcycles, and buses.

**Table 4: Transport Challenges Severity**

**Not a challenge =1, Slight=2, Moderate=3, Serious=4, Very Serious=5**

Challenges	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%	95
Poor road condition	5	5,3	11	11,6	17	17,9	42	44,2	20	21,1	
Long distance	15	15,8	15	15,8	15	15,8	30	31,6	20	21,1	
High transport cost	3	3,2	10	10,5	17	17,9	47	49,5	18	18,9	
Irregular transport	6	6	6	6,3	13	13,7%	41	43,2	29	30,5	
Traffic congestion	10	10,5	20	21,1	12	12,6%	28	29,5	25	26,3	

Source: Field investigation

The most serious challenges are:

Irregular or unreliable transport (72% serious/very serious);

High transport costs (68, 4%);

Poor road condition (65%);

Long distance (52, 7%).

Most respondents live 1–6 km from the campus (90%), suggesting that distance is significant enough to impact punctuality and fatigue.

The high proportion of walkers (31%) and motorcycle users (29%) shows dependence on low-cost transport. Only 3% use private cars indicating limited access to personal transport, likely linked to income level.

Over half (≈ 89%) spend more than 30 minutes commuting daily, reflecting significant time loss and potential fatigue.

Nearly 84% spend above 5,000 BIF per day, showing transport is a major financial burden for many.

**Table 5: Transportation Challenges affect Productivity/Performance**

Statement	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Interpretation
Transportation challenges cause lateness	6,32	44,21	49,47	A majority acknowledge transportation challenges make them arrive late, showing clear time-management disruption.
Transportation difficulties cause missing work/classes	8,6	43,0	48,4	Confirms absenteeism as a direct effect of poor transport systems.
Long travel affects energy and concentration	9	41	38,95	Fatigue and reduced focus are common consequences of long commuting times.
Skip sessions due to transport issues	34,74	26,32	39	Indicates a tangible loss of instructional or work time due to transport constraints.

Transportation challenges affect productivity/performance	13,68	40%	46,32	Majority confirm that transportation directly lowers their productivity and efficiency.
Performance drops on the day of long commute	6,5	43,0	50,5	Strong evidence that travel strain reduces daily work quality and engagement.

Source: Field investigation

The analysis shows that transportation challenges significantly hinder performance in the education sector. Issues such as lateness, absenteeism, and fatigue are recurrent outcomes. Reliable and affordable transportation is crucial for maintaining consistent performance and improving efficiency among teachers, administrative staff, and students.

**Table 6: Economic, Psychological, and Health Effec**

Strongly disagree=1, disagree=2, Neutral=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5

Answers Statement	1	%	2	%	3	%	4	%	5	%	Total
Transport expenses affect my household economy					13	13,7	42	44,2	40	42,1	95
Transport stress affects my mental health			9	9,5	14	14,7	44	46,3	28	29,5	
I feel physically tired due to my commute			10	10,5	11	11,6	38	40,0	36	37,9	
Long commutes reduce my job satisfaction			7	7,37	23	24,2	37	38,9	28	29,5	
Decline in invitations to events due to transport-related absences.	18	18,9	12	12,6	30	31,6	22	23,2	13	13,7 %	

Source: Field investigation

Transportation challenges directly influence economic stability, mental health, physical well-being, and social life all of which affect employee performance and student productivity-

## IV.2 Qualitative Findings

Many staff reported spending 30 min–90 min commuting due to poor road conditions and traffic congestion and lack of fuel around Bujumbura.

Some mentioned reduced prestige and loss of identity because late arrivals made them appear less professional to colleagues and students.

In Bujumbura suburbs, infrastructure quality and public transport availability vary significantly by location. Gishingano Campus is situated in a semi-urban area where road maintenance is irregular. This exacerbates commuting difficulties, especially during the rainy season when road accessibility declines.

## IV.3. Discussion of Findings

The results of this study provide strong empirical support that employees and students at Hope Africa University face multiple transportation challenges triggered by poor infrastructure, limited public transport, high costs, and traffic congestion.

The data show that poor road conditions were rated as a serious or very serious challenge by 50 respondents (53%), confirming the infrastructural weakness highlighted in the hypothesis.

Similarly, the challenge of limited and unreliable public transport emerged as the most severe problem, with 67 respondents (70%) reporting irregular transport as a major barrier, thereby validating the insufficiency public transport services.

In addition, 63 respondents (67%) identified high transportation costs as a serious constraint, reinforcing the economic burden predicted in the hypothesis.

Furthermore, traffic congestion was also widely experienced, with 55% respondents rating it as a serious or very serious problem. Together, these findings clearly demonstrate that the transportation challenges significantly affect the daily mobility of employees and students, ultimately affecting their attendance, punctuality, performance, and overall well-being.

The findings of this study confirm that transportation difficulties significantly affect also the performance of administrative staff, teachers, and students, and demonstrates that challenges have economic, psychological, and health-related consequences.

According to the survey, 93% of both staff and of students reported frequent delays due to poor road infrastructure and limited public transport, while 82% indicated that high transportation costs affected their ability to attend work or classes regularly.

Furthermore, 75% of respondents expressed feelings of stress and a diminished sense of professional or academic identity, highlighting the psychological impacts of these transportation issues.

The data revealed that a large majority (84%) of respondents experience significant economic strain due to high transportation expenses, confirming the economic dimension of the hypothesis. Similarly, psychological effects were evident, with 75% reporting that transportation-related stress negatively impacts their mental well-being and job satisfaction, particularly due to irregular transport services and long commuting times.

Furthermore, the study established that transportation challenges contribute to physical fatigue, with 69% of respondents indicating that long or difficult commutes leave them physically tired, thus validating the health issues.

Overall, the empirical evidence affirms that transportation barriers impose substantial burdens on the economic stability, psychological health, and physical well-being of employees and students, ultimately affecting their performance in the education sector.

The results align with the literature showing that longer commutes reduce productivity (e.g., Costa et al., 2021), and with African research highlighting transport as a barrier to education service delivery (Mutiso & Behrens, 2011, Ngutunyi, Temba & Sitta Matondo, 2025).

Unique to this study, however, is the cultural aspect of prestige and identity loss, which is less discussed in existing literature.

## V. CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrated a clear and consistent relationship between transportation challenges and reduced performance at Hope Africa University. Most participants 89% agreed or strongly agreed that transportation problems reduce overall productivity. Late arrivals, fatigue, and absenteeism collectively lower efficiency and quality of work output.

Transportation challenges especially high costs, unreliable transport, and poor infrastructure have a negative effect on employee and student performance in the education sector. They cause lateness, absenteeism, reduced job satisfaction, and overall inefficiency. Both performance and morale scores are below the mid-point, reflecting the possible detrimental effect of transportation challenges on work productivity and engagement.

The Burundian context adds unique cultural dimensions to the problem. The concept of professional prestige, and the stigma attached to habitual lateness, makes transportation challenges not only an operational issue but also a matter of professional image.

## .Recommendations

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10.29322/IJSRP.16.04.2026.p17224

### **Institutional Level**

- Promote flexible schedules to accommodate those with long commutes,
- Introduce flexible arrival policies for unavoidable delays due to transport issues,
- Consider granting loans to the personnel for buying their own means of transport if possible, Organize online courses.

### **Government/Policy Level**

- Improve road infrastructure near education institutions,
- Regulate transport fares during peak hours or when problem of fuel rises, Encourage public-private partnerships for safe and affordable transportation. Train staff and students on planning commutes and using alternative transport methods effectively by developing time management strategies.
- Advocate for government investment in road maintenance and reliable public transport near educational institutions.
- Advocate for improved road conditions around Gishingano.

### **Personal Level**

- Plan travel early to minimize delays;
- Adopt cost-sharing mechanisms;
- Consider relocation nearer to workplaces when possible;
- Encourage or subsidize housing for teachers and staff near campuses.

### **For Future Researchers**

- Extend the study to include other universities in Burundi to allow for comparative analysis.
- Investigate the long-term psychological impacts of commuting stress on academic staff performance.
- Explore the role of digital tools (e.g., remote teaching platforms) as an alternative during extreme transport disruptions. They can also touch gender dimension and enlighten who is the most affected between female and male.
- The study can be extended to other sector and focus vulnerable group such elderly and people with disabilities.
- Final Remarks

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