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# RIDE-HAILING SERVICE ATTRIBUTES AND INTRA-CITY TRANSPORT MODE CHOICE IN TANZANIA: EVIDENCE FROM DAR ES SALAAM CITY

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***Abstract:*** **Urban commuters in Dar es Salaam choose between transport services that differ in cost, travel time, safety and comfort. This study examined how perceived cost affordability, time saving, road safety and comfortability relate to intra-city transport mode choice among ride-hailing users. Using a positivist, cross-sectional quantitative design, the study analysed 203 usable questionnaires from 384 distributed (52.9% response rate). Respondents were recruited through convenience sampling, and the data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multiple linear regression. All four service attributes had positive, statistically significant associations with the measured mode-choice outcome. The model explained 91.6% of the observed variance ($R^2 = .916$; adjusted $R^2 = .914$; $F(4, 198) = 536.909$, $p < .001$). Time saving had the largest standardised coefficient ($\beta = .294$), followed by road safety ($\beta = .272$), comfortability ($\beta = .241$) and cost affordability ($\beta = .206$). Nevertheless, respondents reported mixed experiences with fare affordability, driver responsiveness, vehicle condition and available space. These findings indicate which perceived service attributes are most strongly associated with choice-related assessments in this sample, rather than proving causal effects or actual switching between transport modes. Ride-hailing providers should improve response reliability, roadworthiness, passenger comfort and fare transparency. Interpretation remains limited by convenience sampling, self-reported responses and the cross-sectional design.**

***Keywords*****: ride-hailing; transport mode choice; cost affordability; time saving; road safety; comfortability; Dar es Salaam.**

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Urban transport mode choice is an important dimension of mobility planning in rapidly growing cities. Population growth, spatial expansion, and increasing economic activity raise demand for passenger transport, while congestion and uneven service provision can constrain the reliability and accessibility of available modes. In Dar es Salaam, commuters use a range of alternatives, including daladala, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), motorcycle taxis, conventional taxis, private cars, and app-based ride-hailing services. The availability of these alternatives does not mean that each provides the same combination of affordability, travel time, safety, and comfort.

Ride-hailing platforms connect passengers and drivers through mobile applications and provide on-demand transport services. International research indicates that ride-hailing may improve access and convenience for some users while also interacting with public transport demand and vehicle travel in more complex ways (Clewlow & Mishra, 2017; Erhardt et

al., 2019; Lee et al., 2022). The relationship between ride-hailing and conventional transport is therefore not necessarily one of direct replacement: ride-hailing may substitute for some journeys and complement public transport for others.

Evidence from Tanzania has considered public transport accessibility, integration, and passenger experiences. Research on Dar es Salaam's BRT system has identified differences in access and equity (Mwesigwa et al., 2024), while studies of BRT–daladala integration have highlighted passenger concerns associated with waiting and coordination (Kojo et al., 2025). Bwire and Ntamwiza (2025) further showed that the importance of travel cost and time can vary by activity and passenger circumstances. In the ride-hailing context, studies have examined customer satisfaction and service experiences, including perceived reliability, safety, information quality, pricing, and driver conduct (Mndeme & Mwakalonge, 2022; Makanula & Koshuma, 2025; Shayo & Masele, 2024).

Although this literature provides useful insights, customer satisfaction, service quality, accessibility, and actual transport mode substitution are distinct outcomes. A remaining empirical question concerns how users' perceptions of specific ride-hailing attributes are jointly associated with a measured transport mode-choice outcome in Dar es Salaam. This distinction matters because a passenger may value the convenience or time-saving potential of ride-hailing while still considering its fares expensive or having concerns about vehicle condition.

Accordingly, this study examined the relationships between four perceived ride-hailing service attributes—cost affordability, time saving, road safety, and comfortability and intra-city transport mode choice among ride-hailing users in Dar es Salaam. It contributes local evidence on the relative statistical associations of these attributes. The study does not claim to measure actual switching between ride-hailing and other modes, nor does its cross-sectional design permit causal conclusions.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

### 2.1 Ride-hailing attributes and transport mode choice

Cost affordability refers to users' assessment of whether fares are financially manageable in relation to their resources and the value of the journey. In ride-hailing, this assessment may be influenced by fare levels, price transparency, perceived fairness, and additional charges. Research on the interaction between ride-hailing and public transport indicates that affordability can shape the extent to which app-based services compete with or complement existing modes (Babar & Burtch, 2020; Qiao & Yeh, 2023). In Dar es Salaam, fare uncertainty and the financial demands of different journeys make affordability an important consideration, although the present study measures perceived affordability rather than objectively observed expenditure.

Time saving concerns the perceived ability of a service to reduce waiting and journey duration and to provide timely driver responses. These dimensions are particularly relevant in congested urban environments. Research on ride-hailing operations has examined the importance of passenger driver matching, travel distance, and operational efficiency for service performance (Hryhoryeva & Leclercq, 2024). For users, the perceived value of an app-based service may therefore depend not only on the time spent travelling but also on the time required to secure a vehicle after booking.

Road safety encompasses perceived protection from accidents and security risks, including driver behaviour, vehicle condition, licensing, and compliance with traffic rules. Ride-hailing may provide features such as driver identification and trip information, but these features do not remove the need for safe driving and roadworthy vehicles. Research has identified safety perceptions as relevant to passenger assessments of ride-hailing (Acheampong, 2021; Hu & Yang, 2024). This study focuses on users' perceptions and does not measure crash rates or objectively inspected vehicle conditions.

Comfortability refers to the physical and experiential quality of a journey, including cleanliness, seating, space, relaxation, and respect for passenger privacy. Comfort may distinguish ride-hailing from other available modes, but users' evaluations can vary with vehicle type, trip conditions, and personal expectations. Studies of ride-hailing and shared transport have identified comfort, privacy, and convenience as relevant to user preferences (Ali et al., 2022; Kiriazes & Watkins, 2022).

### 2.2 Theoretical perspective: Theory of Commitment and Consistency

The study was guided by the Theory of Commitment and Consistency, associated with Kiesler (1971), Kiesler and Sakumura (1966), and Cialdini (2009). The theory proposes that individuals tend to behave consistently with prior commitments and decisions. Applied cautiously to transport preferences, repeated satisfactory experiences with

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affordability, time efficiency, safety, and comfort may reinforce a user's willingness to continue choosing a service. Prior travel behaviour can also be relevant to subsequent travel decisions (Bamberg et al., 2003).

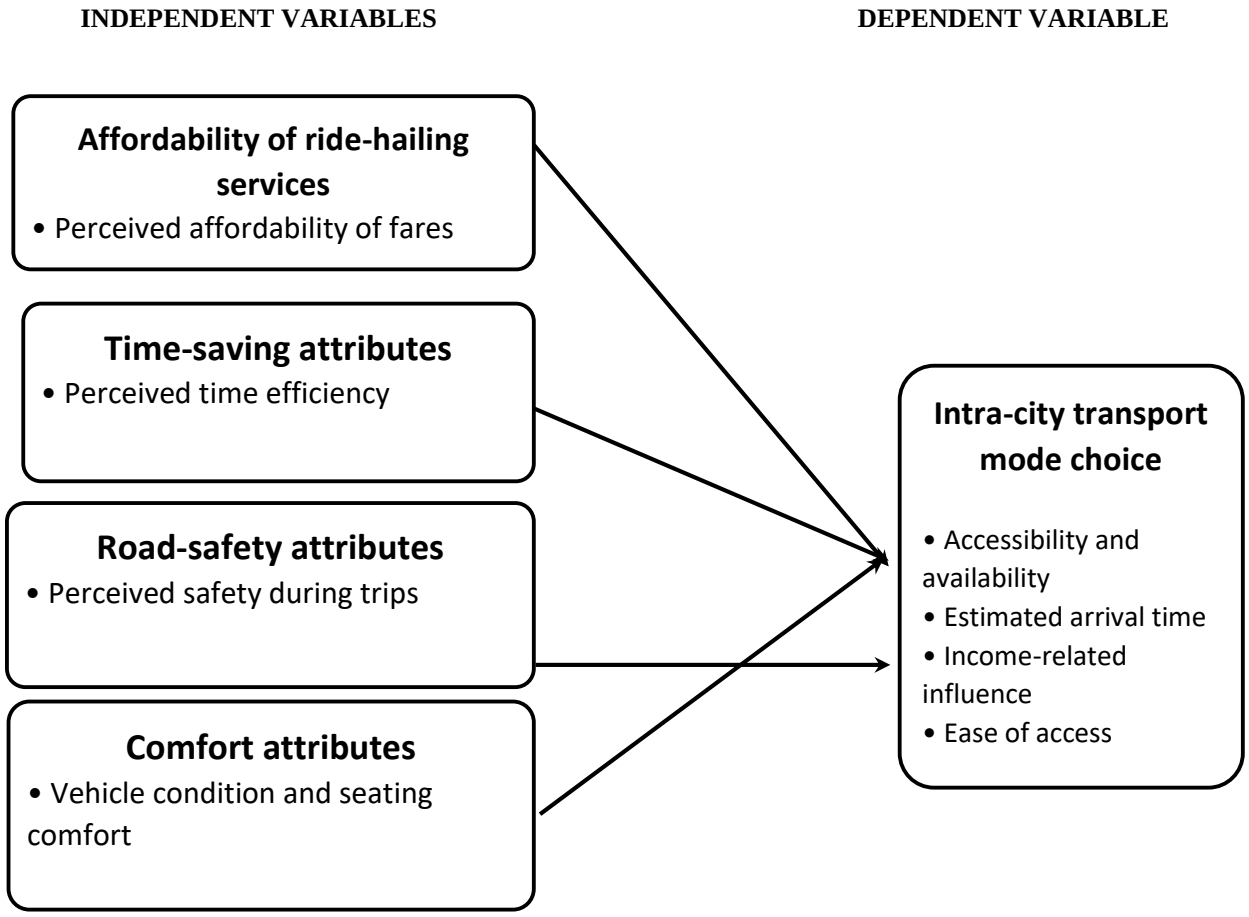
The theory provides a behavioural lens for interpreting why favourable service experiences may be associated with reported transport preferences. It does not, by itself, establish that the attributes cause mode choice. The present cross-sectional survey measured perceptions and reported choice-related assessments at one point in time; it did not follow users over time to observe the formation or persistence of commitment.

**2.3 Research gap and study model**

Existing Tanzanian research has addressed transport accessibility and integration, as well as ride-hailing customer satisfaction and service experiences. However, less evidence is available on the joint statistical relationships between perceived cost affordability, time saving, road safety, and comfortability and a transport mode-choice-related outcome among ride-hailing users in Dar es Salaam. This study addresses that gap by estimating the associations of the four attributes within one regression model.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework illustrates the proposed relationships between the four ride-hailing service attributes examined in this study and intra-city transport mode choice in Dar es Salaam City. Affordability, time-saving attributes, road-safety attributes and comfort are specified as the independent variables, while intra-city transport mode choice is the dependent variable. The arrows indicate the relationships tested through the study's correlation and regression analyses; they should not be interpreted as proof of causation.




***Proposed relationships examined in the Dar es Salaam City study***

**Fig. 1. Conceptual framework of the study**

**Source:** Researcher's conceptualisation based on the study variables.

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## 3. METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research design and study area

The study adopted a positivist research philosophy and a cross-sectional quantitative design. It was conducted in Dar es Salaam City, Tanzania, where commuters have access to multiple public and private passenger transport alternatives, including app-based ride-hailing services. A cross-sectional design enabled the collection of responses at one point in time and the statistical examination of relationships among the study variables.

### 3.2 Population, sample size, and sampling

The target population comprised urban commuters who used digital ride-hailing services for intra-city journeys in Dar es Salaam, including users of platforms such as Bolt, inDrive, Little Ride, Paisha, and Faras. The population was treated as unknown because available regulatory records refer to licensed vehicles rather than unique passengers. Cochran's (1977) formula for a large or unknown population, using a 95% confidence level, p = .50, q = .50, and a 5% margin of error, yielded an intended sample of approximately 384 respondents. Convenience sampling was used to recruit eligible users based on availability and willingness to participate.

A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed. Of these, 203 were returned and usable, giving a response rate of 52.9%. The remaining 181 questionnaires were either not returned or were unusable. The 203 responses formed the analytical sample.

### 3.3 Data collection and measurement

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire. The instrument included demographic questions and five-item measures for cost affordability, time saving, road safety, comfortability, and intra-city transport mode choice. Responses to the construct items were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. The questionnaire items addressed fare affordability and fairness, clarity of trip costs, waiting and travel time, driver responsiveness, driver behaviour, vehicle condition, cleanliness, seating, space, privacy, service accessibility, availability, estimated arrival time, income influence, and ease of access.

Content validity was supported by developing questionnaire items from the constructs identified in the literature and conducting a pilot test. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha, with .70 treated as the minimum acceptable threshold (Cho & Kim, 2015).

### 3.4 Data analysis

Data were analysed using IBM SPSS. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent characteristics and item responses. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to examine bivariate associations among the study constructs. Multiple linear regression was then used to estimate the unique statistical association of each predictor with the measured intra-city transport mode-choice outcome. The model was specified as:

$$\mathbf{MC = \beta_0 + \beta_1 CA + \beta_2 TS + \beta_3 RS + \beta_4 CO + \varepsilon}$$

where MC represents the measured intra-city transport mode-choice outcome; CA is cost affordability; TS is time saving; RS is road safety; CO is comfortability; $\beta_0$ is the intercept; $\beta_1$–$\beta_4$ are regression coefficients; and $\varepsilon$ is the error term. Statistical significance was assessed using the reported p-values.

### 3.5 Ethical considerations

Participation was voluntary. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study, confidentiality was maintained, and personal information was not disclosed. Participants were entitled to withdraw without negative consequences. The research was conducted with the relevant institutional authorization described in the dissertation.

## 4. RESULTS

### 4.1 Response rate and respondent profile

Of the 384 questionnaires distributed, 203 were returned and usable, representing a 52.9% response rate. Table 1 summarizes the respondent profile. The largest age group was 25–35 years (36.9%). In terms of experience, 36.0% had used ride-hailing services for 2–4 years. The most frequently reported usage category was one to two times per week (41.4%).

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**Table 1. Response rate**

| Questionnaire outcome | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Distributed | 384 | 100.0 |
| Returned and usable | 203 | 52.9 |
| Not returned or unusable | 181 | 47.1 |

**Table 2. Respondent characteristics (N = 203)**

| Characteristic | Category | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Age | Below 25 years | 49 | 24.1 |
| | 25–35 years | 75 | 36.9 |
| | 36–45 years | 48 | 23.6 |
| | 46–55 years | 23 | 11.3 |
| | 55 years and above | 8 | 3.9 |
| Ride-hailing experience | Less than 1 year | 41 | 20.2 |
| | 1–2 years | 50 | 24.6 |
| | 2–4 years | 73 | 36.0 |
| | 5 years or more | 39 | 19.2 |
| Frequency of use | 1–2 times per week | 84 | 41.4 |
| | 3–4 times per week | 68 | 33.5 |
| | More than 4 times per week | 51 | 25.1 |

### 4.2 Reliability analysis

All five constructs recorded Cronbach's alpha values above the .70 threshold. Alpha coefficients ranged from .853 for cost affordability to .947 for the measured mode-choice construct, indicating strong internal consistency among the items within each scale.

**Table 3. Reliability statistics**

| Construct | Items | Cronbach's α |
|---|---|---|
| Cost affordability | 5 | .853 |
| Time saving | 5 | .858 |
| Road safety | 5 | .867 |
| Comfortability | 5 | .872 |
| Intra-city transport mode choice | 5 | .947 |

### 4.3 Descriptive findings

The descriptive results indicate that respondents' evaluations were mixed rather than uniformly positive. For cost affordability, 35.0% agreed or strongly agreed that fares were affordable, while 46.3% disagreed or strongly disagreed. For time saving, 39.4% agreed or strongly agreed that trips were completed on time, but only 30.1% agreed that drivers responded quickly after booking. For road safety, 39.9% agreed or strongly agreed that they felt safe during trips, while 36.4% agreed that vehicles were in good condition. For comfortability, 39.9% agreed that seats were comfortable, while 35.5% agreed that there was enough space in the vehicle. These results point to specific service weaknesses despite the positive inferential relationships reported below.

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**Table 4. Selected descriptive indicators**

| Construct / indicator | Agree or strongly agree (%) | Disagree or strongly disagree (%) |
|---|---|---|
| Fares are affordable | 35.0 | 46.3 |
| Drivers respond quickly after booking | 30.1 | 41.3 |
| Respondents feel safe during trips | 39.9 | 40.9 |
| Vehicles are in good condition | 36.4 | 43.8 |
| Seats are comfortable | 39.9 | 36.0 |
| Enough space in the vehicle | 35.5 | 42.4 |

Note: Percentages are calculated by combining response categories 4 and 5 for agreement, and categories 1 and 2 for disagreement, using the dissertation's item-level distributions. Values are rounded to one decimal place.

### 4.4 Correlation analysis

Pearson correlation analysis showed positive and statistically significant associations between each predictor and the mode-choice outcome. Time saving had the strongest bivariate correlation (r = .913), followed by road safety (r = .906), while cost affordability and comfortability each recorded r = .897. All reported significance values were .000 in the statistical output and are therefore presented as p < .001. The correlations among the independent variables were also high, ranging from .845 to .865.

**Table 5. Pearson correlation matrix (N = 203)**

| Variable | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Cost affordability | 1 | .865 | .858 | .845 | .897 |
| 2. Time saving | .865 | 1 | .863 | .858 | .913 |
| 3. Road safety | .858 | .863 | 1 | .846 | .906 |
| 4. Comfortability | .845 | .858 | .846 | 1 | .897 |
| 5. Mode-choice outcome | .897 | .913 | .906 | .897 | 1 |

Note: All off-diagonal correlations were reported as statistically significant at p < .001 (two-tailed).

### 4.5 Multiple regression analysis

The multiple regression model produced R = .957, $R^2$ = .916, and adjusted $R^2$ = .914, indicating that the four predictors jointly accounted for 91.6% of the observed variance in the measured mode-choice outcome in this sample. The overall model was statistically significant, F(4, 198) = 536.909, p < .001.

**Table 6. Regression model summary**

| R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Standard error of estimate |
|---|---|---|---|
| .957 | .916 | .914 | .30500 |

**Table 7. Analysis of variance (ANOVA)**

| Source | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | 199.784 | 4 | 49.946 | 536.909 | < .001 |
| Residual | 18.419 | 198 | .093 | — | — |
| Total | 218.203 | 202 | — | — | — |

The coefficient estimates show that all four predictors had positive and statistically significant associations with the outcome. Time saving had the largest standardized coefficient (β = .294), followed by road safety (β = .272), comfortability (β = .241), and cost affordability (β = .206).

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**Table 8. Multiple regression coefficients**

| Predictor | B | SE | β | t | p |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | .044 | .069 | — | .631 | .528 |
| Cost affordability | .214 | .049 | .206 | 4.327 | < .001 |
| Time saving | .293 | .049 | .294 | 5.938 | < .001 |
| Road safety | .266 | .046 | .272 | 5.732 | < .001 |
| Comfortability | .241 | .046 | .241 | 5.278 | < .001 |

## 5. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Cost affordability

Cost affordability was positively and significantly associated with the measured mode-choice outcome ($B = .214$, $\beta = .206$, $p < .001$), although it was the weakest of the four predictors. This suggests that respondents who evaluated ride-hailing fares more favourably also tended to report more favourable choice-related assessments. However, the descriptive results qualify this relationship: 46.3% disagreed that fares were affordable, compared with 35.0% who agreed. Fare fairness and affordability should therefore not be treated as interchangeable. A passenger may consider a fare understandable or fair while still finding it difficult to afford. This finding is consistent with research emphasizing the role of affordability in the relationship between ride-hailing and public transport use (Babar & Burtch, 2020; Qiao & Yeh, 2023), while the current study specifically concerns self-reported perceptions rather than observed modal substitution.

### 5.2 Time saving

Time saving was the strongest predictor in the regression model ($B = .293$, $\beta = .294$, $p < .001$), indicating that perceptions of waiting time, journey duration, and driver responsiveness had the strongest statistical association with the measured outcome among the four attributes. This is relevant in Dar es Salaam, where congestion and delays can make journey predictability important to commuters. Nevertheless, only 30.1% agreed that drivers responded quickly after booking, while 41.3% disagreed. The contrast between the strongest regression coefficient and the weaker item-level assessment suggests that time efficiency is important to users but that service delivery may not consistently meet their expectations. The result is compatible with research on the operational importance of passenger–driver matching and ride-hailing service performance (Hryhoryeva & Leclercq, 2024).

### 5.3 Road safety

Road safety was the second-strongest predictor ($B = .266$, $\beta = .272$, $p < .001$). The result indicates that respondents' assessments of driver behaviour, vehicle condition, licensing, and personal safety were significantly associated with the mode-choice outcome. However, only 36.4% agreed that vehicles were in good condition, and 43.8% disagreed. Perceived personal safety and confidence in vehicle condition are therefore not identical dimensions. This finding supports the relevance of safety in ride-hailing assessments (Acheampong, 2021; Hu & Yang, 2024), but it should not be interpreted as evidence that ride-hailing has objectively lower crash risk: the study measured perceptions, not accident records or vehicle inspections.

### 5.4 Comfortability

Comfortability was positively and significantly associated with the outcome ($B = .241$, $\beta = .241$, $p < .001$), ranking third among the predictors. Respondents' assessments of seating, cleanliness, available space, relaxation, and privacy were relevant to their reported transport-choice assessments. However, only 35.5% agreed that vehicles provided enough space, suggesting that comfort may be constrained by vehicle size or passenger conditions. The finding is consistent with literature identifying comfort, privacy, and convenience as relevant to ride-hailing and shared-transport preferences (Ali et al., 2022; Kiriazes & Watkins, 2022).

### 5.5 Theoretical and analytical interpretation

The positive associations across all four attributes are broadly consistent with the Theory of Commitment and Consistency: favourable service experiences may reinforce users' willingness to maintain a previous service choice. Time saving and road safety had the largest standardized coefficients, suggesting that these attributes were more strongly associated with the measured outcome in this sample. Nevertheless, the cross-sectional design cannot establish whether positive experiences

created commitment, whether users who already preferred ride-hailing rated its attributes more favourably, or whether other factors influenced both perceptions and reported choices.

The model's high explanatory power ($R^2 = .916$) should also be interpreted cautiously. The independent variables were strongly correlated with one another ($r = .845–.865$), raising the possibility of multicollinearity. The dissertation reports no variance inflation factor (VIF), tolerance, or other multicollinearity diagnostics. Such diagnostics should be checked against the original SPSS output before journal submission. In addition, the dependent construct includes accessibility, availability, estimated arrival time, income influence, and ease of access. It is therefore more precise to describe it as a measured mode-choice-related outcome rather than a direct observation of which transport mode a respondent selected for a specific trip.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

This study examined the relationships between perceived cost affordability, time saving, road safety, comfortability, and intra-city transport mode choice among ride-hailing users in Dar es Salaam. All four attributes were positively and statistically significantly associated with the measured outcome. Time saving had the largest standardized coefficient, followed by road safety, comfortability, and cost affordability. The descriptive results, however, revealed mixed perceptions, particularly concerning fare affordability, driver responsiveness, vehicle condition, and vehicle space. The findings therefore indicate that these service attributes matter in respondents' reported transport-choice assessments, while also showing that important service-quality concerns remain.

### 6.1 Implications for ride-hailing service providers

Ride-hailing providers should prioritize faster and more reliable driver response after booking through improved driver–passenger matching, operational monitoring, and clear communication about expected arrival times. Providers should also strengthen vehicle-condition controls through routine inspections, maintenance requirements, and effective mechanisms for reporting unsafe vehicles. Comfort can be improved by maintaining vehicle cleanliness and ensuring that vehicle categories and passenger capacity are clearly communicated. Finally, transparent fare estimates, clear explanations of pricing, and disclosure of additional charges may help users assess affordability before confirming a trip.

### 6.2 Implications for regulators and urban transport planners

Relevant transport regulators, including the Land Transport Regulatory Authority, should continue to emphasize driver compliance, vehicle roadworthiness, passenger protection, and transparent service information within the applicable regulatory framework. Urban transport planners should consider ride-hailing as one component of the wider mobility system and assess opportunities for complementary connections with BRT and other public transport services. Such integration should be evaluated alongside potential congestion and public-transport substitution effects.

### 6.3 Limitations and directions for future research

The study has several limitations. First, it relied on self-reported perceptions, which may be affected by recall and response biases. Second, its cross-sectional design does not establish temporal order or causality. Third, convenience sampling and a 52.9% usable response rate limit the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the findings beyond participating ride-hailing users in Dar es Salaam. Fourth, the dependent construct captures several choice-related perceptions rather than directly recording a respondent's selected mode for a defined trip. Finally, the high correlations among predictors mean that multicollinearity diagnostics should be reviewed before drawing strong conclusions about the relative contribution of each predictor.

Future research should use probability-based or more geographically representative sampling, compare ride-hailing users with non-users, and directly measure actual mode selection for specified trips. Longitudinal designs could examine whether service experiences precede changes in transport preferences. Further studies should also report regression diagnostics, including tolerance and VIF, and explore differences by income, trip purpose, time of day, and location within the city.

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