
Decision on submission to Transportation Research Part A

Transportation Research Part A <em@editorialmanager.com>
Reply-To: Transportation Research Part A <support@elsevier.com>
To: "Paez, Antonio" <paezha@mcmaster.ca>

Sun, Apr 30, 2023 at 2:47 PM

Manuscript Number: YTRA-D-22-01243

How is active school travel framed in Ontario, Canada?

Dear Dr Paez,

Thank you for submitting your manuscript to Transportation Research Part A.

I have completed my evaluation of your manuscript. The reviewers recommend reconsideration of your manuscript following revision and modification. I invite you to resubmit your manuscript after addressing the comments below. Please resubmit your revised manuscript by Jul 29, 2023.

When revising your manuscript, please consider all issues mentioned in the reviewers' comments carefully: please outline every change made in response to their comments and provide suitable rebuttals for any comments not addressed. Please note that your revised submission may need to be re-reviewed.

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Transportation Research Part A values your contribution and I look forward to receiving your revised manuscript.

Kind regards,

Elisabetta Cherchi

Editor-in-Chief

Transportation Research Part A

Editor and Reviewer comments:

Reviewer #1: The authors have used topic modelling to study policy centred and academic writing about active transportation to school in Ontario, Canada. I was quite fascinated by the approach - the paper presents a new way of looking at a vast grey and peer reviewed literature on school travel that has developed over several decades. I think the authors should offer more detail on their search strategy beyond, in section 4.1.2, simply saying - we conducted a search using Web of Science. Digging into and report search method - and why/how such decisions are made is an important piece of work like this. Why did you limit your search to the fields indicated? How did you arrive at your search strings/keywords? Having some reporting here, similar to what one would find in a review paper (systematic, scoping, or narrative for that matter) would be useful. I think section 5, and the paper overall, could be strengthened by writing a bit more on the relationship between this automated topic modelling approach, and traditional forms of qualitative thematic

analysis - some reflection on the possibility of generating similar or different results, using either approach - would be quite fascinating and helpful. I couldn't help but wonder if the authors considered this approach to be a replace for or in addition too, traditional - less automated approaches. Certainly one advantage is just being able to handle the volume of data. This brings me to my primary concern - I couldn't help but wonder if this piece might be a better fit to TR-B or C - given the emphasis on demonstrating method/tools - and the production of conclusions that are rather unsurprising - the last sentence of the paper alone is something that has been the focus of much work, in practice, for decades. The same can be said of the first sentence of section 7.2 - i.e, the problem is the car, and so we need to make cars seem less helpful to the cause. At the same time, the wide ranging scope of the analysis somewhat interestingly tells us that despite all of this research and policy work - we are somehow no further along (overall) than perhaps we were at the very beginning.

Reviewer #2: this paper is well written and the analysis is conducted rigorously and it is interesting. However in my opinion is not within the scope of Transportation Research Part A. I did not understand the link with the policy and practice. The research finds that a specific policy is not working as intended and it seems to be very expensive. How can this result be generalised and used to say if any policy is "good value for money"? The authors need to convince me about the practical application of their method. Can you identify clear policy recommendations that can be used in practice?

Otherwise the paper, even if interesting, is only methodological and would fit better some journals that focuses on text analysis.

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