International Journal of Innovative Engineering Research and Development
IJIERD

IMPACTS OF STREET TRADING ON URBAN AREAS IN NIGERIA

[1]**Egbuna** O. K., [2]**Alom** A. C.

[1&2]Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

Corresponding Author: **Egbuna** O. K. Email: ok.egbuna@unizik.edu.ng

ABSTRACT

Street trading, a form of squatting characterized by constant movement, often takes place in established marketplaces or near road intersections, leading to various negative impacts on the physical environment. These include traffic congestion, environmental pollution, and an unattractive urban landscape. This study examines the effects of street trading in Nigerian cities, focusing on three urban areas: Anambra, Lagos, and Port Harcourt. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed in each of these locations. The findings reveal that 40.59% of street traders are migrants from rural areas. The study also highlights that many street traders dispose of their waste improperly, often by burning it or dumping it in drainage systems, which clogs the drains and causes flooding during the rainy season. Additionally, 24.75% of traders leave their waste directly on the roadside. The disorganized display methods used by the traders contribute to a visually unappealing and chaotic urban environment. Furthermore, 28.71% of traders encroach on the road by 1 to 1.5 meters or more, exacerbating traffic congestion. The paper recommends several measures to address these issues, including the development of rural areas to reduce rural-urban migration, relocating traders who encroach on the road, and providing mobile refuse collection points to improve waste management.

Key words: Congestion, Environment, Street trading, Urban, and Waste management

INTRODUCTION

Street trading plays a great role in the distribution of goods and services of many cities/town of the world and has been defined by scholars based on their perspectives. According to Crosss (2000), streets traders are those people who offer goods and services for sale on primary streets or pavement. Bogoro, et al. (2012), defined street trading as a form of squatting; it involves perpetual displaying of goods along roadsides which may occur within established market places or outside, the intersection of major roads. In the same view, Ouwamanam, et al (2007) defined it as the act of engaging commercial activities in illegal structures or open spaces (ground) within the building line. Accordingly, a building line is a line set parallel to the center line of a road within which no building or structure, permanent or temporally is permitted to be erected by the local planning authorities. Informal economic activity being an umbrella of street trading activities has been a subject of controversy. There is hardly any unique universally accepted definition of the sector because the classification of activities is a subjective and qualitative judgment. However, there are some common indicators in most definition namely unregistered enterprise, those without permit, or license, as well as the underground economy of drug, gambling, smuggling and other vices. Street or roadside trading is a characteristic of most urban centers of the developing countries like Nigeria. Majority of the traders are migrants to cities with low educational level, and street trading for them represent a desperate means of survival when the hopes of getting white colour job which brought them from the rural areas have been delayed or dashed completely Bogoro (2012). As a phenomenon, it has attracted scholars and researchers to its domain. The causes of street trading are attributed to low educational level or illiteracy, low involvement of capital. Unemployment is another contributing factor and most people are engaged in such activities, since formal employment opportunities are no more abundantly available Olanipekun (2007).

In the view of Olokor (2001), he believed that the inability of most streets traders to afford the rent of charges of market stalls is another possible cause of streets trading. Ouwamanam, et al (2007) observed that street trading was alien to the traditional Yoruba city and perhaps to pre-industrial cities. It is a product of unplanned urban growth, which failed to provide adequate space and accommodation for retail traders as well as appropriate locations Bogoro et al. (2012). Notwithstanding the problems constituted or caused by street trading, it plays a major role in the economic development of the third world countries. It has also contributed directly and indirectly to the urban growth and its impact is been felt both positively and negatively. Crosss (2000) observed that street traders play an important role in the commodity and service

distribution system of most cities of developing countries. He identified the advantages to among others to include performing social role by generating employment for people, keeping them away from the evils of delinquency, crime and unemployment. A street trader serves as a training ground for entrepreneurial skills and generates revenue from the taxes collected by city authorities, However, its disadvantages are numerous and monumental. Street trading causes traffic congestion by congregating at points in the city and market places where there are heavy flows of pedestrians and vehicular traffic. Street traders pose potential problem of hygiene and sanitation. They could transmit disease such as cholera as regards to food or fruits sellers. Streets traders burn the waste generated by their activities, thereby lead to air pollution. Streets traders also cause noise pollution like those who sell traditional medicines and sometimes clothes because they use loudspeakers.

With regards to public attitudes towards street traders, Crosss (2000) noted that they are mixed, he noted that the most positive attitude towards street traders prevailed in Malaysian cities where street trading is seen as a profession that offers job opportunities and contributes to development. Olanipekun, et al. (2007).observed that in the downtown of Singapore, congestion of traffic was experienced with an average attainable speed of only 18km/hour. They noted that the congested streets were further blocked by an increasing number of street traders. The estimated number of street traders in central Asia was given at about 15,000 in 1975 but in 1979, the number had reduced to about 6,200 probably as result of the relocation attempt made. Olokor, (2001) “As at 1989, the estimated number of street traders Singapore was 27,000 and 23% was still on the street”. Ayobade, Shittu, & Adisa (2021), also noted that a programmed was being carried out to clear all street traders of 1984. This programmed was geared towards achieving certain objectives such as improving the sanitary condition of the street where they are found, improving the traffic flow, estimating a better turnover of street traders for tax purposes and also transforming them for an informal to formal sector. World Bank (2001).

The situation is far from what is attainable in this country (Nigeria) where street traders are harassed by the government agencies, which gives the impression that the government is out for total prohibition of street trading, for instance some states in Nigeria have prohibited street trading as can be seen from the following news captions: “ street traders defer Marwa “(tell magazine, April 26; 1999); “ curbing the menace of street trading, edicts tragedy fail to free Idumota from street” (Daily sketch newspaper, February 20, 1984). In conclusion, street trading as a process of selling goods on major Nigerian cities is obvious especially within the

commercial areas e.g. Mudal Lawal, yet not much has been done to singularly define the special component of trading and the attendant problems of environmental pollution.

In Nigeria, street trading has reached an alarming stage that it is now a subject of concern to physical planners and city managers. Street trading causes different problems such as encroachment on right of way by the traders, traffic congestion as vehicles cannot pass smoothly on time and defacement of aesthetics appearance of the street. As the street traders continue to litter or dump their wastes on the roadsides, it seriously pollutes the environment resulting in health problems and reduction of the road width or in drainage systems which block the water ways leading to flooding whenever there is high rainfall which a times causes loss of lives and properties and so on. In view of the above problems this paper is set out to investigate issues like causes and effects of street trading, and suggest possible solutions to the identified problems**.**

RESEARCH METHOD

Nigeria is the most populous black nation with over 170 million people, it is located in the West African region and it has 36 states with the federal capital territory Abuja. Nigeria has over 200 major cities with similar problem of street trading Nigeria is divided in to six geo-political regions. This study sampled three urban areas one from the south-east region (Anambra), one from the south-west region (Lagos) and one from the south- south region (Port Harcourt) to study the impact of street trading in Nigerian urban areas. 100 questionnaires were administered to each of the three urban centers selected from each geo-political region using random sampling giving a total of 300 questionnaires. Factors considered in selecting the study areas are the spatial distribution of the cities, the economic and physical status of the cities and political disposition of the cities

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study shows that, in the southeast, majority of streets traders are male accounting for 62.07% within the ages of 15 to 35 years, while 37.92% are female which indicated that male engage in street trade more than female. But in the south- south and the southwest, the ratio of participation between male and female is within the range of 45% to 55%. The survey indicated that 51.96% of the streets traders stop at secondary schools, 29.42% went to tertiary institution 8.82% had informal education while the rest had either primary education or are illiterate. It implies that the traders are relatively educated and had basic education**.**

Based on the questionnaire administered, the highest daily income generated by street traders is N50,000 and above, and the low income is N1000 – N2000. 60.78%t of the respondents claimed to have sourced their capital mainly from private savings 17.65% got their capital from family loans, it shows that they saved money towards investment. None of them mentioned that they received any loan from the government as in table 1 below.

Table 1: Source of Finance

Source Savings	Percentage (%)
Private Savings	60.78
Family Loans	17.65
Government	-
Others	21.57
Total	100.00

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 2 shows that streets traders engaged in selling fruit/vegetable which accounts for highest percentage i.e. 33.66% followed by food stuff which is 27.72% which calls for proper refuse collection system and appropriate treatment before final disposal.

Table 2: Categories of commodities

Items	Percentage (%)
Food stuff	27.72
Fruits/Vegetable	33.66
Clothes	14.85
Furniture	13.84
Building Materials	6.96
Cooking Fuel	2.97
Total	100.00

Source: Field Survey (2024)

In determining the reason for engaging in street trading, It is found that most of streets traders are migrants from the rural areas which carry the highest percentage of 40.59% followed by low level or education which calls for improving the rural areas in terms of utilities and infrastructure services and educational facilities as in table 3 below.

Table 3: Reasons for Engaging in Street Trading

Reasons	Percentage (%)
Unemployment	28.71
Retired Civil Servant	2.97
Low Level of education	23.76
Lack of good capital	3.96
Migrants	40.59

Total	100.00

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 4 indicates that almost half of the refuse generated by street are disposed of by burning, followed by dumping in drainage which is 31.68% and dumping on ground which causes serious air pollution, breed mosquitoes and depredate the environment and this demand for proper methods of waste disposal.

Table 4: Means of waste disposal

Methods	Percentage (%)
Incineration	40.59
Drainage	31.68
Refuse collection	2.97
Dumping on ground	24.75
Composting	-
Recycling	-
Total	100.00

Source: Field Survey (2024)

Table 5 shows that 28.71% of streets traders encroached into the road with up to 1-1.5m and above which creates parking problems and traffic congestion respectively and these problems need to be taken care of as in the table and plate 1 below

Table 5 Rate of encroachment street traders

Distance	Percentage (%)
< 1 meter	34.65
1-1.5m	36.63
1.5-2m	28.72
Total	100.00

Source: Field survey (2024)



Plate 1 Encroachment on Roads by Street Traders

The following were identified as the major impacts of street trading in Nigerian cities though Streets trading provide job opportunities especially for the unskilled and strangers in Nigerian cities and people earn a living from streets trading. However, In terms of Traffic congestion up to 78% street traders cause obstruction to traffic flow of vehicles and pedestrian movement, this is because up to 28.72% of the streets traders encroached into the roads with about 1-1.5m and above. It also causes accidents to the buyers, the sellers and even passer byes. The study discovered that most of the streets traders indiscriminately disposed of their refuse by burning and dumping in the drainage there by blocking the drainage channels causing flood during rainy season and 24.75% dumped their waste right on the roadside as in the plate 2 below.



Plate 2 Environmental pollution caused by dumping of refuse by the roadside

The negative effects of street trading on the aesthetic quality and environmental health of urban areas in Nigeria have been extensively documented by several scholars. Street trading, particularly in highly congested urban centers, often leads to disorganized and chaotic environments. This unregulated form of commerce is characterized by makeshift stalls, random displays of goods, and excessive littering, all of which contribute to a visually displeasing landscape. According to Isaac and Sanusi (2020) the aesthetic degradation of urban areas due to street trading is a significant challenge in Nigerian cities. The disorderliness in the arrangement of goods and stalls by traders results in a chaotic and unattractive environment, detracting from the overall urban appeal. Similarly, Acheampong, (2019) highlights that street trading often leads to visual pollution, as the haphazard setup of stalls and unsanctioned advertising signs further detract from the beauty of the area. The cumulative impact is a disruption in the planned urban form, making these areas less attractive to residents, tourists, and investors.

Street trading often contributes to environmental pollution through the indiscriminate disposal of waste, including plastics, food scraps, and other non-biodegradable materials. Studies, such as that of Ogundahunsi et al (2016), argue that street trading zones are prone to environmental degradation, with the accumulation of waste posing significant risks to public health. While there is no direct link between street trading and ozone layer depletion, the unregulated disposal of waste can contribute to broader environmental problems. For instance, the burning of waste in these informal markets releases harmful gases like carbon dioxide and methane into the atmosphere, contributing to global warming and indirectly affecting the ozone layer, as noted by Bhowmik (2012).

Street trading environments are often breeding grounds for diseases due to poor sanitation and waste management practices. Several authors, such as Routledge, (2002) point out those unclean trading environments, where food is exposed to dust, vehicle emissions, and waste, increase the likelihood of food contamination, leading to the spread of diseases like cholera, dysentery, and respiratory infections. The disorganized nature of these spaces further complicates efforts to maintain hygienic conditions, exacerbating health risks for both traders and consumers.

The encroachment of roadside traders onto circulation land, particularly in urban areas, represents a significant violation of town planning principles, and this has been observed in several Nigerian cities. The phenomenon where 20 percent or more of the carriageway is taken over by street traders directly impacts both the efficiency of urban transport systems and the functionality of land use. The invasion of roadside traders into circulation land (roadways and sidewalks) significantly reduces the space available for vehicular and pedestrian movement. Roads designed to accommodate a specific volume of traffic are effectively reduced in size, creating congestion, traffic delays, and even accidents. In several studies, such as by Brown (2006), it is noted that when circulation land is encroached upon by informal commercial activities, the flow of traffic becomes impaired, and the road's capacity to handle its intended purpose is drastically reduced. This disruption in the circulation system not only leads to inefficiency but also increases transportation costs, fuel consumption, and time spent in traffic.

Town planning principles emphasize the need for land uses to complement one another in order to create a harmonious and functional urban environment. This is achieved through proper zoning and spatial arrangement of commercial, residential, industrial, and circulation spaces. When roadside traders encroach on land designated for circulation, this balance is disrupted. According to Luman (2021), such encroachment leads to the mixing of incompatible land uses commercial activities in transportation zones which degrades urban functionality and efficiency. Instead of a clear separation of uses that enhances the overall effectiveness of urban spaces, these overlaps create conflicts, particularly in space competition. The competition for space between different land uses, especially between transportation and informal commerce, is a major problem resulting from the encroachment of street traders. In line with the findings of Soneye (2023), this competition leads to inefficiencies in both sectors. Transportation suffers from reduced capacity and safety risks, while traders face instability, as their informal operations are often subject to relocation by authorities. The unintended consequence is that urban spaces designed for orderly interaction become sites of conflict, where different land uses struggle for dominance. This leads to a reduction in the quality of urban life, as neither sector operates optimally.

The encroachment of roadside traders also poses significant safety and environmental risks. Roadside trading often forces pedestrians to walk on the carriageway, increasing the likelihood of accidents. However, the close proximity of trading activities to moving vehicles creates hazards for both traders and customers. In terms of environmental impact, studies such as that

of Olaposi (2020), have documented the increased waste and pollution that often accompany informal trading activities. The presence of traders along roadsides also makes waste management more challenging, as garbage from trading is often left in the street, contributing to urban squalor.

CONCLUSION

The majority of street traders are migrants from various regions there is an urgent need for rural development to address the significant regional disparities in the distribution of resources, facilities, and utilities by the government. To alleviate traffic congestion caused by street traders encroaching on roadways, they should be relocated to designated areas. Urban planners should implement strict development control measures, including penalties for violators, to ensure compliance with zoning regulations. An organized system for arranging commodities must also be enforced to maintain order.

However, mobile refuse collection points should be strategically placed within the road right of way to facilitate convenient disposal of solid waste, thereby improving waste management, aesthetics, and the overall environmental quality of the area. Street traders should contribute financially to waste management services as part of maintaining the cleanliness of their trading environment. Finally, the government should focus on creating employment opportunities that require minimal skills, given that many street traders have limited formal education. This would provide alternatives to street trading and promote economic stability.

REFERNCES

Acheampong, R.A. (2019): Spatial planning and the urban informal economy. Urban Book Series, pp. 269-288.

Adeola, T.A (2019): A spatial Analysis of street trading in Osogbo, Nigeria. An unpublished undergraduate project work.

Ayobade, A., Shittu, A. I., & Adisa, W. (2021). Socio-economic predictors of street traders and buyers' coping mechanisms with Lagos State Street Trading Law, 2003 (amended 2017). Ibadan Journal of Sociology, 12, 66-81 (pdf) street trading and its implications on economic development in Nigeria.

Bhowmik, S. (2012). Street vendors in the global urban economy. Taylor & Francis.

Bogoro A. G. (2012). Women and Solid Waste Segregation in Bauchi Nigeria. International Journal of Environment and Earth Science. Vol. 2, No.8, 2012 pg 25-45

Bogoro A. G., Mohammed T. A. and Babanyara Y. Y. (2012) Indiscriminate Solid Waste Disposal in Bauchi: Causes and Impacts on the Community and the Environment. International Journal of Environment and Earth Science. Vol. 3, No.8, 2013 Pg 40-58

Brown, A. (2006): Contested Space: Street Trading, Public Space, And Livelihoods in Developing Cities: University of Michigan.

Cross, John (2000): "Street Vending in the Modern World." In International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy. Vol. 21, Nos. 3 and 4, 2000.de Souza

Isaac, I. and Sanusi, A. Y (2020). Impacts of physical planning regulations on street trading livelihood: street traders right to the city perspective. A conference paper presented at the 2020 International virtual conference on cultural issues and challenges to sustainable development in Africa.

Luman, A. (2021). Socio-economic impact of street trading in Jimeta – Yola Adamawa State, Nigeria. Futy Journal of Environment, 15(1), 15-25

Ogundahunsi, D.S, Adetoun S.B and Adejuwon S.A (2016). Safety awareness of roadside traders in Osogbo Township. Osun State Nigeria. Witpress Ltd, 2016.

Olanipekun J.A, Oyeniyi P. and Konwea P.E. (2007).Assessment of Solid Waste Management Techniques in Ekiti State Urban Area. Nigerian School Health Journal 19(2) 75-82 19]

Olaposi, T. O. (2020). Towards the development of the informal economy: The case of Ile-Ife, Nigeria. Available at http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.93871

Olokor C.O (2001) Hazardous Wastes: its production, effects, disposal and control in Nigeria Industries; Oyo: JONAPHER-SD 2(2) 258-267 20]

Ouwamanam M. Ac, Olusesi O.O and Babatunde S.O. (2007) Investigations into causes, Effects and Control of Environmental Pollution in Amuwo-Odofin Local Government Area of Lagos State. Nigeria School Health Journal 19(1) 71-79.

Soneye, A. A. (2023). Evaluation of the contributions of street trading on performances of selected FMCG companies in Nigeria. Journal of Economics and Management, 45, 469-507.

Routledge, T.T (2002): The rise and rise of hawking in the city. News article from the city of Johannesburg, 1(5), 68-87.

World Bank, (2001). Urban Environmental Priorities. Draft for Discussion, C.R. Bartone, Urban Development Division, Infrastructure Group, Washington, D.C., January.