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INFORMAL TRADING ACTIVITIES: A STUDY OF THE IMPACT ON THE PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF BUILDINGS AND STREET SCAPE OF AHMADU BELLO WAY, JOS. PLATEAU STATE. NIGERIA.

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ABSTRACT

Informal Trading Activities has become a normal economic activity in our cities and this comes with various impacts on the surrounding buildings, streetscape, landscape, and circulation. The Paper investigates the negative impact these informal activities brings on the buildings and the streetscape of Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos.

The paper used questionnaires as the instrument to collect data reflecting the opinions of respondents. The respondents were randomly picked from business owners and the general public utilizing that street.The Chi – Square Statistical Analysis was used because it is a test that measures how a model compares to actual observed data. Results showed that informal trading activities on Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos which happens to be one of the busiest streets, had a negative impact on the streetscape and other physical infrastructure. The study gathered the importance for an organized architecture for street activities which should factor in these informal trading activities. Recommendations were further made to Government Agencies and market associations on modifications to be implemented, so that our streets with their bustling business activities remain sane and beautiful.

KEYWORDS: *Informal Trading Activity, Physical Infrastructure, Streetscape, Pedestrian & Vehicular Traffic.*

INTRODUCTION:

Informal trading activities in cities and towns, affects the physical characteristics of our buildings, streetscapes and cityscape.The study is set to investigate the negative effects of open market of goods as it defaces the buildings, thereby affecting the streetscape of our cities.Open market displays and alterations to building plans have overtime redefined our streetscape through negative impact of physical qualities like material, openings, color, roofing systems and projections.Open market display of goods would consist of display and sale of goods or services with the primary objectives of generating employment and incomes without having a formal and permanent built-up structure such as shops for which to sell the goods. They may be stationary in the sense that they illegally occupy spaces surrounding building facades, the pavements, roadsides or other public/private spaces (Bhomik 2005).



Figure 1 & 2: Ahmadu Bello Way Jos Showing Open Display of Goods: Author, (2020)

Informal trading activities are often seen by the authorities as an ugly phenomenon and a nuisance. Therefore, conflicts arise between urban authorities trying to keep their cities clean and informal traders who need structures and open spaces for their activities. The Government through its agencies usually frowns at this, which results in forceful evictions. This has been the case in Jos, Plateau State. This at the end of the day doesn't go down as a permanent solution because the traders gradually find their ways back to these streets.



Figure 3: Ahmadu Bello Way Jos Showing Littered Streets: Author, (2020)

This paper will specifically test two hypotheses;

i. Ho = There is no significant relationship between open market display of goods and aesthetic appearance of the ambience of buildings.

Hi = There is significant relationship between open market display of goods and aesthetic appearance of the ambience of buildings.

ii. Ho = There is no significant relationship between open market display of goods and the surrounding landscape / visual continuity of the streetscape.

Ho = There is significant relationship between open market display of goods and the surrounding landscape / visual continuity of the streetscape.

The scope is specifically restricted to one aspect of informal trading activity which is open market display of goods and has been carried out using 30 buildings randomly selected along Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos.

The Significance of the study lies in the fact that the results would proffer solution which could be implemented by the government to address the challenges and negative impact of open market display of goods.

The Urban residents would benefit from organized and orderly activities on the streets, where there will be clearly defined pedestrian paths, vehicular parking and road sizes.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

Open market display of goods has overtime become a normal trend in our cities, taking away the ambience and visual continuity of our streets.

Streets are equally the predominant element of a city whose path network usually forming strong characteristics which forms strong images in the minds of residents. Considerable evidence has been collected showing that the physical characteristics of an urban environment have the potential to affect the attainment of environmental spatial knowledge (Cubukcu and Nasar, 2005; Garling et al., 1986: Weisman, 1981)

Omer and Jiang, 2008 wrote that when the focus is on the physical qualities of the urban environment and how they relate to attributes of identity and structure. Legibility becomes synonymous with image ability, namely "that quality in a physical object which gives it high probability of evoking a strong image in any given observer" (Lynch, 1960).

A city center is the commercial, cultural and social center of a city where natural and man-made physical objects combine to create a vibrant urban environment with modern amenities in order to serve the needs of all people (Roever, 2014).

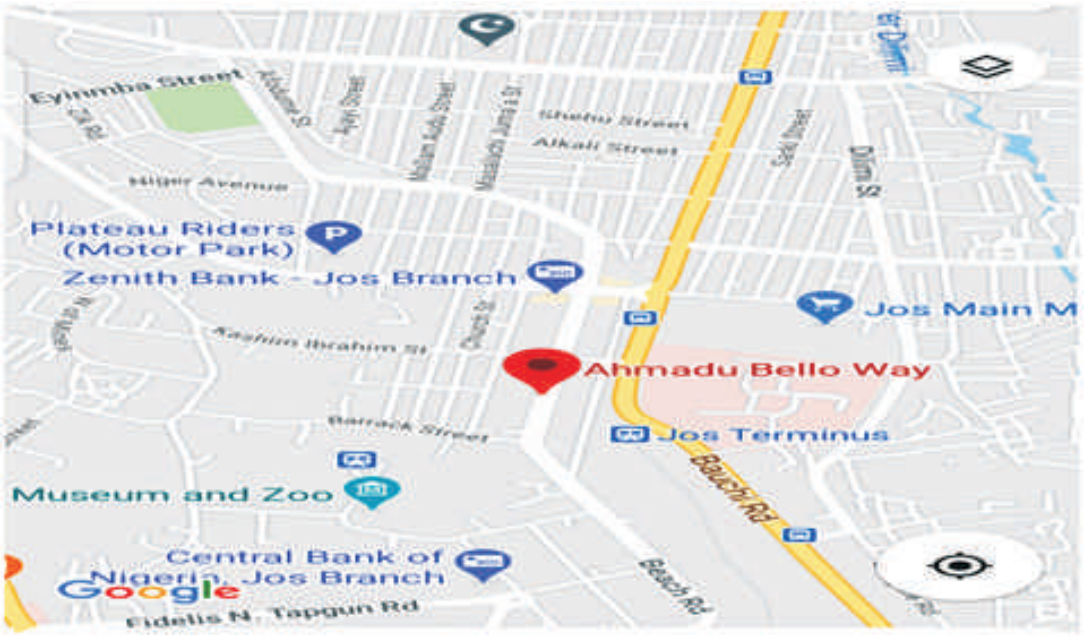


Figure 4: Map of Jos showing Ahmadu Bello Way: Google Earth Map, (2020)

City centers have image or character which are usually borne from building aesthetics, façade and street visual continuity. The imageries of the visual continuity on the Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos is visually poor and lack any formof organized pattern. The era and legacy of failed master plans that are rigid and fixed have left cities, urban areas, residents and the surrounding environment poorly equipped to cope with the exploding urbanization levels (Jiriko,2008).



Figure 5: Ahmadu Bello Way Jos Showing a Disorganized Streetscape: Author, (2020)

Open market displays of goods on Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos constitute an eye sore even though the authorities have tried severally to stop such operators, they find a way to come back thereby interrupting movement and visual experiences. Therefore, the hazardous presence of the urban street open market display goods deserves careful study because it has become protracted, attained epidemic proportions and has implications for building aesthetics, street continuity and governance in Jos.

The vibrancy of the street trading landscape with its multifarious forms are good, but also the resultant congestion and inhibition of human traffic flows, mobile and immobile vendors (in makeshift structures), with various types of display operate adjacent to the shops, either on the pavements or along the road itself. Therefore, there is a mixed use of the commercial space where shop owners, wholesale and street vendors compete with and/ or complement each other to provide goods and services to customers.

Open market display goods or street trading is a situation of economic exchange in a selling place characterized by its precarious occupation of public and by the mobility of the traders and /or of the customers. Street trading is carried out in public spaces that are not specifically designated for trade, and as such, it enters into competition with other urban services such as traffic flow, access to buildings and other commercial activities in the city.

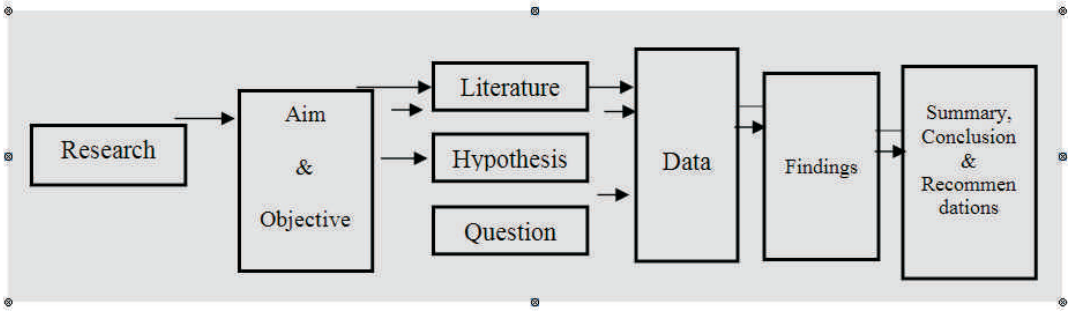


Figure 2: Model Structure for the Research Design; Author, (2020)

The Model (Figure 2) provides a frame work for understanding the structure of the research. The proposed model flow diagram provides description and highlights of the following topics of the research;

I. The associated characteristics of Open market display of goods activities.
II. The problem studied and investigated.
III. Tools and Instrument of the Research.
IV. Data gathering and preparations.
V. The analysis of data and outcomes.

The Methodology used involved gathering data through administering structured questionnaire to over 60 respondents cut across 30 complex buildings on Ahmadu Bello Way Jos randomly selected. The investigations were on perceptions and opinions on how they agree or disagree on the effects of urban informal commercial activities, as they impact on physical form and street scape

All data gathered were analyzed using the CHI- SQUARE Test Analysis.The Chi – Square Statistical Analysis was used because it is a test that measures how a model compares to actual observed data; it compares the size, any discrepancies between the expected results and the actual results, given the size of the sample and the number of variables in the relationship. Commonly it is used for testing relationships between categorical variables. The null hypothesis is that no relationship exists on the categorical variables in the population; they are independent. The population sampling was randomly cut across 30 complex buildings on Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos and about 65 respondents were administered questionnaires.

FINDINGS/RESULTS

FREQUENCY TABLES:

Table 1 showed that majority of the respondents which were 55.4% agreed while another 13.8 strongly agreed that open market displayers of goods actually end up erecting unregulated structures.

Table 1: Open market displayers usually erect unregulated structures and building forms

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	4	6.2	6.2	6.2
	Disagree	9	13.8	13.8	20.0
	Neutral	7	10.8	10.8	30.8
	Agree	36	55.4	55.4	86.2
	Strongly agree	9	13.8	13.8	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

Table 2 showed that majority of the 65 respondents which are 53.8% agreed and another 20% strongly agreed that open markets bring about haphazard refuse dumps

Table 2: Open market displays usually brings about haphazard refuse dumps

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	1.5	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	8	12.3	12.5	14.1
	Neutral	7	10.8	10.9	25.0
	Agree	35	53.8	54.7	79.7
	Strongly agree	13	20.0	20.3	100.0
	Total	64	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.5		
Total		65	100.0		

Table 2: Open market displays usually brings about haphazard refuse dumps

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	1.5	1.6	1.6
	Disagree	8	12.3	12.5	14.1
	Neutral	7	10.8	10.9	25.0
	Agree	35	53.8	54.7	79.7
	Strongly agree	13	20.0	20.3	100.0
	Total	64	98.5	100.0	
Missing	System	1	1.5		
Total		65	100.0		

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

In Table 3, the general outlook, scenery and beauty of the street which is also a concern had 41.5% and 43.1% agree and strongly agree respectively that open markets affect the beauty of the street.

Table 3: Does open market display of goods affect the beauty of the street?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	1	1.5	1.5	1.5
	Disagree	1	1.5	1.5	3.1
	Neutral	8	12.3	12.3	15.4
	Agree	27	41.5	41.5	56.9
	Strongly agree	28	43.1	43.1	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

53.8% agreed while 33.8 strongly agreed in Table 4 that informal open markets affect space allocation in terms of disrupting both vehicular and pedestrian movements.

Table 4: Does open market display of goods affect the management of the street in terms of space allocation?

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Disagree	5	7.7	7.7	7.7
	Neutral	3	4.6	4.6	12.3
	Agree	35	53.8	53.8	66.2
	Strongly agree	22	33.8	33.8	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Effective circulation of activities which is most of the user's desires had Table 5 showing that 53.8% agreed while 27.7 strongly agreed thereby accepting that informal open markets affects free flow of activities on Ahmadu Bello Way Jos.

Table 5: Does open market of goods hinder free flow of activities on the street

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	4.6	4.6	4.6
	Disagree	4	6.2	6.2	10.8
	Neutral	5	7.7	7.7	18.5
	Agree	35	53.8	53.8	72.3
	Strongly agree	18	27.7	27.7	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

Ownership and maintenance of public infrastructure for sustainability shows good value for tax payers monies spent and Table 6 showed that 46.2% agreed and 27.7% supported by strongly agreeing that informal open markets and display of goods damages public infrastructure put on the streets by Government.

Table 6: Does open market display of goods damage public infrastructure put in place on the street

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	2	3.1	3.1	3.1
	Disagree	7	10.8	10.8	13.8
	Neutral	8	12.3	12.3	26.2
	Agree	30	46.2	46.2	72.3
	Strongly agree	18	27.7	27.7	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

Table 7 shows a majority of the 65 respondent's agreeing by 43.1% and strongly agreeing by 43.1% that solutions to the problems emanating from informal commercial activities be found and resolved by meeting with all stakeholders involved in informal commercial activities on Ahmadu Bello Way, Jos.

Table 7: The government should organize a meeting with open market display stakeholders to find a solution to the problem

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	3	4.6	4.6	4.6
	Neutral	6	9.2	9.2	13.8
	Agree	28	43.1	43.1	56.9
	Strongly agree	28	43.1	43.1	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

Final Table 8 showed a majority of respondent agreed by 38.5% and strongly agreed by 35.4% that the Government or authorities should consider creating legal hawking zones or areas on the street to bring some sort of sanity and beauty to our streetscape.

Table 8: Government should create legal hawking zones in multiple places within the city

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly disagree	6	9.2	9.2	9.2
	Disagree	6	9.2	9.2	18.5
	Neutral	5	7.7	7.7	26.2
	Agree	25	38.5	38.5	64.6
	Strongly agree	23	35.4	35.4	100.0
	Total	65	100.0	100.0	

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

TESTING FOR HYPOTHESIS:

HYPOTHESES ONE

Ho: There is no significant effect on physical attributes associated with open market display of goods on the buildings and streetscape.

Hi: There is a significant effect on physical attributes associated with open market display of goods on the buildings and streetscape.

Table 9: Case Processing Summary. Crosstabs

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
QUESTIONS * RESPONDS	260	100.0%	0	.0%	260	100.0%

Table 10: QUESTIONS * RESPONDS Cross tabulation

Count

		RESPONDS					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Questions	Question 1	4	9	7	36	9	65
	Question 2	5	5	4	38	13	65
	Question 3	5	6	13	33	8	65
	Question 4	1	8	7	35	14	65
Total		15	28	31	142	44	260

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

Table 11: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.541[a]	12	.040
Likelihood Ratio	13.135	12	.059
Linear-by-Linear Association	.698	1	.003
N of Valid Cases	260		

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

From the Tables 9, 10, 11 above, the chi square value is 12.541 with degree of freedom 12 and P Value of 0.403. Since the P Value (0.040) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is no significant effect on physical attributes associated with open market display of goods on the buildings and streets.

HYPOTHESES TWO

Ho: There is no effect of open market display of goods on surrounding landscape and visual continuity of the streetscape
Hi: There is an effect of open market display of goods on surrounding landscape and visual continuity of the streetscape

CROSSTABS

Table 12: Case Processing Summary

	Cases					
	Valid		Missing		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
QUESTIONS * RESPONDS	260	100.0%	0	.0%	260	100.0%

Table 13: QUESTIONS * RESPONDS Cross tabulation

Count

		RESPO					
		Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree	Total
Questions	Question 1	1	1	8	27	28	65
	Question 2	0	5	3	35	22	65
	Question 3	3	4	5	35	18	65
	Question 4	2	7	8	30	18	65
Total		6	17	24	127	86	260

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

Table 14: Chi-Square Tests

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.334[a]	12	.022
Likelihood Ratio	17.457	12	.033
Linear-by-Linear Association	6.661	1	.010
N of Valid Cases	260		

Source: Authors Field Survey, (2020)

From the Tables 12, 13, 14 above, the chi square value is 15.334 with degree of freedom 12 and P Value of 0.224. Since the P Value (0.022) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is an effect of open market display of goods on surrounding landscape and visual continuity of the streetscape

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

Urban street informal commercial activities (open street trading) and their effects on physical attributes of building and the streetscape would be a continuous problem because of unemployment and the rural – urban migration in search of greener pastures.

The aim of the research was to investigate the impact of informal trading activities(Open market display of goods) on physical attributes on the buildings and streetscape with particular interest to Ahmadu Bello Way Jos.

The literature review has clearly shown that open market displays of good has long been anongoing activity in our cities which is sustained by the need for citizens to pick up or buy necessary items quickly mostly on their way home from a hectic day at work which also has some economic benefit.

The Methodology used involved gathering data through administering structured questionnaire to over 60 respondents cut across 30 complex buildings on Ahmadu Bello Way Jos randomly selected. The investigation was on their perception and opinions on how they agree or disagree on the effects of urban informal commercial activities (open market display of goods) as they impact on physical form and streetscape. All data gathered were analyzed using the CHI- SQUARE Test Analysis.

HYPOTHESES ONE

Ho: There is no significant effect on physical attributes associated with open market display of goods on the buildings and streetscape.

Hi: There is a significant effect on physical attributes associated with open market display of goods on the buildings and streetscape

From the table above, the chi square value is 12.541 with degree of freedom 12 and P Value of 0.403. Since the P Value (0.040) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is significant effect on physical attributes associated with open market display of goods on the buildings and streets.

HYPOTHESES TWO

Ho: There is no effect of open market display of goods on surrounding landscape and visual continuity of the streetscape

Hi: There is an effect of open market display of goods on surrounding landscape and visual continuity of the streetscape

From the table above, the chi square value is 15.334 with degree of freedom 12 and P Value of 0.022. Since the P Value (0.022) is less than 0.05, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is an effect of open market display of goods on surrounding landscape and visual continuity of the streetscape.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

I. The research has revealed that while the activities of open market display of goods has negative effects on the streetscape, the services they render are equally beneficial to the economy, therefore any policy to be considered must be generated from a round table interaction with all stakeholders (open market display of goods sellers inclusive).

ii. There is also the need to consider and include open market display of goods in land use planning thereby making available controlled open spaces for their services.

iii. Sensitization and advocacy visits to both open market sellers and the general public will go a long way in keeping the buildings and streetscape clean, healthy, beautiful to mention a few.

iv. There is the need to consider proposals to have multi- floor buildings; seated on open column framework spaces that could likely

accommodate open market display market without having them spill onto the streets.

v. The Provision of infrastructure in terms of functional conveniences, sanitary systems and effective municipal waste management within the cities metropolis.

vi. The Government must through community driven approach provide enabling environment through policy making and enforcement of reviewed building rules, regulation and building codes.

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