



CHARACTERISTICS AND CHALLENGES OF TEENAGE WATER VENDORS IN TRADITIONAL MARKETS IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the characteristics and challenges of teenagers involved in water vending in two selected traditional markets in Ibadan, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data were sourced for the study. Two traditional markets, Oje and Oja'ba, were purposively selected because they are the most important traditional markets in the city. Purposive sampling was adopted in selecting 120 teenagers vending water for the administration of a set of pre-tested questionnaire. The study revealed that 75% of teenagers vending water were female, 52.5% had primary education, 70% were between ages 13 to 15 years; 50.00% had both parents, 10.83 had single parent while 32% were orphan. The vendors' average daily profit ranged between ₦200 to ₦500. As high as 54.1% of the vendors travelled a distance of between 2km and 5km from home to the market. On aspiration of the vendors, 36.7% desired to become shop owners while 33.3% were interested in schooling. Main challenges encountered by these vendors include: loss of money (69.2%), sexual harassment (20%), accident (21.6%), loss of goods (57.7%), high rate levy by government (77.5%), police disturbances (68.3%), area boys' assault (70.8%) and market association levy (37.5%). The study concluded that dwindling economy triggered teenagers' involvement in water vending which has impacted on their interest for schooling. It is therefore suggested that the government should be sincere with free education agenda, intensify provision of free books and tuition free.

Keywords: **Water Vending, Teenage water vendors, Traditional markets, Ibadan**

1. INTRODUCTION

Urban water insecurity is a growing in Nigeria and some other parts of the world. Water demand already surpasses supply in many parts of the world, especially in developing countries (Kummu et al., 2016) where population continues to rise at an unprecedented rate and urbanization is increasing without essential utilities. The struggle for water and its resources have progressively increased over periods of time (Kimutai et al., 2018). Adequate water supply is grossly lacking in most urban cities in Africa and particularly in Nigeria (Aliyu and Amadu, 2017). Water shortage has become inevitable in all spheres of the society, both at residential and commercial areas, due to gross deplorable state of the public water supply system.

Water vending tends to be an integral part of water supply system in developing countries, especially in poorer, low income or informal settlements (Ayalew et al., 2014). Water vendors are common in many parts of the world where water scarcity or lack of infrastructure limit access to drinking water, particularly in urban areas. As part of efforts to mitigate water potable scarcity in urban and less urban cities in Nigeria, private merchants and public organizations have invested in groundwater abstraction, packaged in charset for commercial purposes. The wholesalers and vendors are required in the distribution chain. Water vending has become a potential alternative source of water to meet the growing water demand. The manifestations of water vending differ in space and time. For example, in Ethiopia, it is primarily from municipal supply system, while in Kenya, vendors sell from a combination of municipal supply and privately owned boreholes and wells (Ayalew et al., 2014). In Nigeria, water vending comes in multiple forms: retailing packaged water at home, market areas and along streets, selling water from public sources to households with trucks and sales of water from private well and borehole to intended buyers.

Water vending is usually formal or informal. Formal vendors generally supply water in tankers and the water is obtained either from treated utility supplies or from registered sources. On the other hand, informal vendors obtain water from many different sources, protected and unprotected, and deliver small quantities of water for domestic use in a variety of ways, ranging from carts and cycles to containers or wheel barrows, trolleys and animal-drawn or mechanized carts and tanker trucks (Olajuyigbe et al., 2012). A modern dimension of water vending came in form of packaged water whether in bottle, plastic or in sachet. The new packaged system has helped easy delivery and distribution of water to consumers and has provided jobs for many adolescents and unemployed adults. Interestingly, water vending is a competitive business (UN-HABITAT, 2003). The competitiveness usually occurs because there are many people without jobs and entry into the vendor market is easy because of low capital requirements, and technicalities and no official regulation. Since about three decades, sales of packaged water have become famous and many teenagers are partaking in selling packaged water at public places in urban centers, public places such as market areas where higher sales could be realized. Packaged water vending is commonly observed along major streets in Nigerian cities by mixture of teenagers and adults who probably should be in school. Some of vendors are frequently seen in the hawking areas even on official hours. On this premises this paper seeks to examine the characteristics of the teenagers involved in water vending and challenges the vendors commonly encounter in traditional markets in Ibadan.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Street vending has been traditionally viewed from two theoretical viewpoints: Modernisation Theory and Structuralist Theory (Williams and Gurtoo, 2012). Modernisation theory views street vending as a remnant of a premodern era that is slowly becoming extinct while the structuralists perceive street vending as a survival tactic of last resort driven by economic necessity in the absence of alternative means of livelihood. Contrary to the structuralists, contemporary studies perceive street vending as a rational economic choice as expounded by the Neoliberal (Bhowmik, 2012). This study situated within both the structuralist and neoliberal theories perspectives, whereby street vending is viewed as a necessity-driven activity or a rational economic choice.

The structuralist discourse fits well in the Nigerian and particularly Ibadan context where economy is not booming since almost three decades, characterised by high unemployment, closure of industries and retrenchment of workers: Low Economic Growth Rate, Adoption of Untimely Economic Policy Measures, Poor Enabling Environment, Rapid Population Growth, power shortages (Adesina, 2013). Most people were forced into street vending as a result of rising cost of living, unemployment rate due to an unproductive industrial sector, the stagnant and crawling economy, and a mostly unproductive agricultural sector (Njaya, 2015). Some of the teenagers are probably vending for livelihoods due to inability of their parents to provide for their basic needs. Consequently, the increase in the number of vendors on the streets, especially markets is out of necessity as a survival strategy because of its implication on their future aspirations.

The basis for water vending emanates from acute shortage of public water supply in major public places and residential areas. Water vending plays important roles in urban environment to the extent that Wutich et al (2016) conclude that it helps in advancing the human right to water, and services of a significant number of households (Nnaji et al., 2013) besides sustaining the livelihoods of many young people. Water vending was once seen as an undesirable but temporary solution to water shortage (Kjellen, 2000), however is now increasingly viewed as a necessary and acceptable path to achieving the SDGs target (Wutich et al., 2016). Balogun et al (2017) observe that public water supply is cheaper compared to private water supply, helps to reduce diseases, also supports the economy to grow. They observed that public water supply in Lagos State failed to meet the ever increasing demand due to high population increase, poor

performance of existing waterworks, high pipe leakages, poor coverage of existing waterworks, inadequate number of waterworks and poor collection of water fees which limits expansion. .

Olajuyigbe et al (2012) examine the role of water vending in household water supply delivery. They identified the sources of water supply by the vendors, assessed their level of patronage among households and identified the problems associated with their operations. The study identified two main categories of water vending: formal and informal vendors. All formal vendors obtained their supplies from improved sources while most informal vendors obtained theirs from unimproved sources. Majority of the households considered vended water as a coping strategy since they were aware of the safety implications, and were willing to pay for water services.

Roohi (1999) in a study of water vending in Karachi, Pakistan identified private water vending industry as an important source of service delivery in most developing countries of the world and is the major source of water supply mostly undertaken by the informal sector. The study evaluated the extent to which water vending affected households' water supply situation and generated excessive profit for vendors. It argued that where water vending co-exists with piped supply network, it poses a challenge to policy makers in water supply planning. Findings revealed that water vending market may not be economically efficient. Although the vending market provided only 9% of water consumed by city residents on daily basis, it earned more than 50% of all revenue received from water. Wongtada (2014) discovered that all over the world, vendors face a common set of challenges ranging from harassment from civic authorities, arbitrary relocations from vending sites to confiscation of their goods. Existing literature revealed that there is gross neglect of the impacts of water vending activities on the category of people involved in the activities, particularly on the teenagers. The inherent social consequences of the activities are less attended to why the immediate economic benefits are applauded. Therefore, this gap provided the ground for this study to examine the characteristics and challenges of teenagers involved in water vending with view to suggest how these teenage could be assisted for better future.

3. The study area

Ibadan is one of the fastest growing cities in the world, located in Oyo State, in the south-west geo-political zone of Nigeria. Oyo State is bounded on the north by Kwara State, on the south by Ogun State, on the west by Osun state, and on the West by the neighbouring country, Republic of Benin. The city of Ibadan is located approximately on longitude 3°51' East of the Greenwich Meridian and latitude 7°23' North of the Equator at a distance of 145kilometres north east of Lagos.

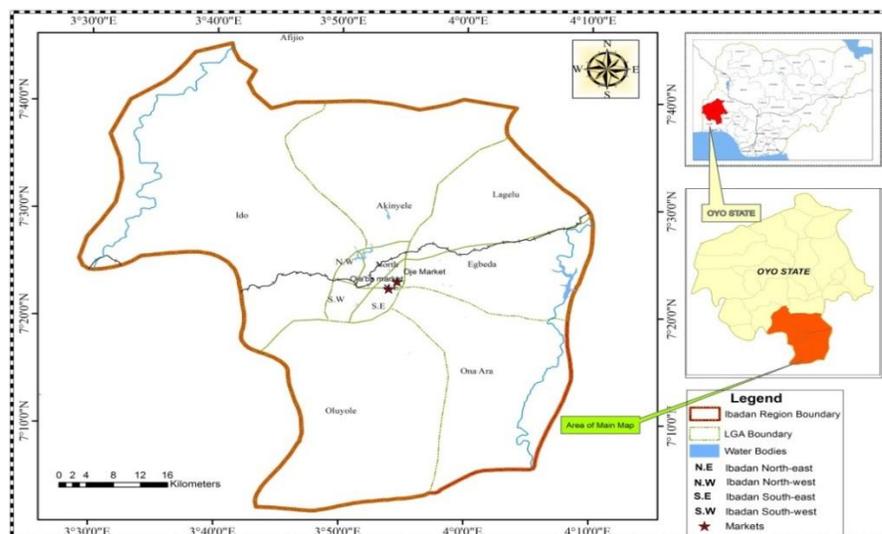


Figure 1: **Map of the study area**
Source: **Department of Geography, University of Ibadan**

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Ibadan metropolis is made up of eleven (11) Local Government Areas. The study purposively selected two (2) Local Government Areas where traditional markets are predominantly situated. The two LGAs thus selected were Ibadan North East and Ibadan South West. Fourteen traditional markets were identified in the two selected LGAs, five (Orita-Aperin, Ode-aje-alalubosa, Oje, Agugu and Academy) in Ibadan North East and nine (Agbeni, Ayeye, Beere, Ifeleye, Alafara-olubadan, Ogunpa, Challenge, Oja'ba and Orita merin) in Ibadan South West. One traditional market was purposively selected from each L.G.A: Oje (from Ibadan North East) and Oja'ba (from Ibadan South West) respectively, because of their being the most important traditional market in each of the LGA.

Both primary and secondary information were required to achieve the objectives of the study. Since the study was done at a specific point in time, a cross sectional survey was adopted to gather numerical data from the sampled participants. The targeted population (respondents) is informal, not recognized by law, thus no existing data for their number. Consequently, it is difficult to determine the sample frame for the study. A set of pre-tested questionnaire were prepared and administered on both teenagers vending water in the study areas. Purposive sampling method was adopted in selecting a total of 120 teenagers (50 teenagers from Oje and 70 teenagers from Oja'ba market) aged between ages 13 and 19 years.

5. FINDINGS

5.1 Characteristics of Teenagers involved in water vending

(a) Socio economic features of sampled teenagers

The study revealed that 75.0% of the water vendors were females. The finding is synonymous with the revelation of Chauke, et al (2015) and Chingono (2016) where women were empowered through street vending. In Nigeria especially in major parts of southern Nigeria women are mostly selling in markets except for few products that required special skill that men must offer. Seventy percent (70.0%) of the respondents were aged between 13 and 15 years, while only 30% were between 16 and 19 years. Of all the selected teenagers, 52.5% had primary education, 22.5% had secondary education, and 25% had no formal education. It was observed that only 10.83% had single parent, 50.0% had both parents, 39.17% were orphans. Among teenagers that had no parent, 76.6% lived in female-headed households. Furthermore, 33.3% were living with relatives, comprising 42% and 27.1% of the vendors hawking in Oje and Oja'ba markets, respectively. The spatial analysis showed that 42% and 27.1% of the vendors living with their relatives were selling in Oje and Oja'ba markets respectively.

Table 1: Socio Economic Characteristics of the Vendors

Socio economic Variables		Oje Market		Oja'ba Market		Total	%
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Sex	Male	10	(20.0)	20	(29.0)	30	(25.0)
	Female	40	(80.0)	50	(71.0)	90	(75.0)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Age	13-15 years	30	(60.0)	40	(57.1)	70	(70.0)
	16-19 years	20	(40.0)	30	(42.9)	50	(30.0)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Education level	Primary	23	(46)	40	(57.1)	63	(52.5)
	Secondary	17	(34)	10	(14.4)	27	(22.5)
	No Edu.	10	(25)	20	(28.5)	30	(25.0)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Family Background	Parents alive	20	(40.0)	40	(57.06)	60	(50.00)
	Single parent	8	(16.0)	5	(7.14)	13	(10.83)
	No parent	22	(44.0)	25	(35.80)	47	(39.17)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Female-- Headed Household	Living with Female-headed household	17	(77.2)	19	(76.0)	36	(76.6)
	Not living with Female-headed household	5	(20.8)	6	(24.0)	11	(23.4)
	Total	22	100	25	100	47	100
Living with Relatives	Teenager living with relatives	21	(42.0)	19	(27.1)	40	(33.3)
	Teenagers not living with relatives	29	(58.0)	51	(72.9)	80	(66.7)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

(b) Operational characteristics of the vendors

The main factors responsible for the involvement of the respondents (teenagers) in water vending were lack of sponsor to school (35.8%), no special skill required (26.7%), low capital required (19.2%), an easy source of daily livelihood (18.3%). It is noteworthy to report that 28.3% of these vendors had either parents and or guardians that were major representatives of water companies. Teenager water vendors come to the markets from different parts of the city: 16.7% journeyed less than 1 kilometer, 29.2% journeyed between one and two kilometers and 54.1% journeyed between two and five kilometers to the market. About a half of the vendors in Oja'ba market travelled between 2 and 5 kilometers from home to the market. Close to a fifth (20.8%) of teenagers vending water had an average net income of less than ₦200, 30.8% earned between

₦200 and ₦500, 29.2% earned between ₦501 and ₦700 daily while 19.2% earned more than ₦700 daily. It was also observed that the average net gains vary with seasons of the year. During the dry season, full time vendors realized an average of more than ₦1000 per day while part-time vendors made an average of ₦300 daily. The study revealed that 45.8% had been in the water vending business for between 2 and 4 years, 38.5% had been on the job for more than 4 years while only 16.7% had spent less than 1 year on the trade.

5.2 Challenges encountered by teenagers involved in water vending

The study identified some problems confronting teenagers vending water. Investigations revealed that 69.2% of the teenagers comprising 76% in Oje market and 64.3% in Oja’ba market selling water, had lost money while hawking; 20% comprising 22% in Oje and 18.6% in Oja’ba markets had been experienced sexual harassment; 30% and 28.6% among the sampled teenagers in Oje and Oja’ba markets respectively had been exposed to social vices such as gambling, stealing, smoking and drug abuse. Of these vices, gambling (37.1%) was the most prominent, followed in descending order by stealing (25.7%), smoking (22.1%) and drug abuse (14.3%). Furthermore, 25% of the hawkers had experienced assault which happened when buyers refused to pay for the water; 21.6% had been involved in different forms of accidents at the hawking areas while running after vehicle or buyers on motion; 58.1% had slid while running, 25.5% had been knocked down by commercial motor-cycle (Okada) riders while 16.7% had been involved in motor accident.

Table 2: Challenges encountered by teenagers involved in water vending

Variables		Oje Market		Oja’ba Market		Total	%
		Freq.	%	Freq	%		
Loss of money	Vendors have lost money	38	(76.0)	45	(64.3)	83	(69.2)
	Vendors have not loss money	12	(24.0)	35	(35.7)	37	(30.8)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Sexual Harassment	Sexually Harassed	11	(22.0)	13	(18.6)	24	(20.0)
	Never Harassed	39	(78.0)	57	(81.4)	96	(80.0)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Social vices	Involved	15	(30.0)	20	(28.6)	35	(19.2)
	Never involved	35	(70.0)	50	(71.4)	85	(80.8)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Dimension of vices	Smoking	3	(20.0)	5	(25.0)	8	(22.9)
	Stealing	5	(33.3)	4	(20.0)	9	(25.7)
	Gambling	6	(40)	7	(35.0)	13	(37.1)
	Drug abuse	1	(6.7)	4	(20.0)	5	(14.3)
	Total	15	100	20	100	35	100
Assault	Vendors assaulted	8	(16.0)	18	(25.7)	26	(21.6)
	Vendors Never assaulted	42	(84.0)	52	(74.3)	94	(78.4)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Accident	Involved in accident	8	(16.0)	18	(25.7)	26	(21.6)
	Never involved in accident	42	(84.0)	52	(74.3)	94	(78.4)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Categories of accident	Okada	29	(58.0)	25	(35.7)	54	(25.2)
	Motor	5	(10.0)	15	(21.4)	20	(16.7)

	Sliding	16	(32.0)	30	(42.9)	46	(58.1)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Loss of stock	Loss stock	35	(70.0)	40	(57.1)	75	(57.1)
	Never loss stock	15	(30.0)	30	(42.9)	45	(42.9)
	Total	50	100	70	100-	120	100
Police disturbance	Disturbed	40	(80.0)	42	(60.0)	82	(68.3)
	Not disturbed	10	(20.0)	28	(40.0)	38	(31.7)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100
Area Boys extortion	Experienced area boys extortion	40	(80.0)	42	(60.0)	82	(68.3)
	Experienced area boys extortion	10	(20.0)	28	(40.0)	38	(31.7)
	Total	50	100	70	100	120	100

Source: Fieldwork, 2019

Teenagers involved in Okada accident (motorcycle) were more common in Oje market (58%). As high as 57.1% of teenagers vending water comprising 70% in Oje and 57.1% in Oja'ba markets had suffered loss of goods; 77.5% of the sampled vendors were uncomfortable with daily rate of fifty naira they usually pay to the Local Government Authority in charge of each market; 68.3% of the water venders each complained about police and Area Boys disturbances; 37.5% complained about extortion by market associations. Close to two-third (65%) of teenagers vending water saw their presence in the market as being temporary because they believed they would become shop-owners in the future.

6. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study had observed that involvement of teenagers in water vending in Ibadan is on the high side requires urgent measures to curb it. Some of the teenagers took to the trade because of the low capital requirement, lack of parental supports, peer influence and quest for livelihoods. This revelation could be attributed to water vending being a reliable source of income and means of survival in harsh economic conditions common in most developing countries where government does not provide adequate social facilities in public places. This implies that most of the respondents had been vending for a few years such that they have a good understanding of the contributions of the business to their per capita income. Some of the vendors have been on the trade for some years, coming to the market centre from varying distances. The time spent on the trade daily varies because some hawkers vend after school hours while a proportion took it as full time job. The full-time operators are some of the respondents that have no interest in schooling and apprenticeship. The magnitude of social and moral implications of the trade by the respondents (teenagers) on the society is a major worry of the study which future should measure. The major challenges and dangers encountered by the vendors speak volume to discourage the teenagers from this trade in the markets.

Conclusion and recommendations

The services of water vendors are commonly found in some public places such as the selected traditional markets in Ibadan. Water vending thrives because there is acute shortage of potable water in Ibadan and in major cities in Nigeria. The study had discovered that large proportion of the teenagers combine water vending with schooling while others are completely out of school. A proportion of the teenagers in water vending have no parents while some are living with female-headed household. Yet some of the parents encouraged these teenagers on this business, they supported them with initial capital to commence the business while others collected goods on credit from dealers. Some of the vendors have been making their livelihoods through water



vending. However, while vending water some of the vendors (teenagers) have been exposed to various vices such as raping, smoking, stealing and drug abuse. Similarly, some of the vendors regularly encounter challenges like assault, accidents and loss of goods. These revelations showed that these teenagers should engaged in more reliable and promising activities. Age of the vendors does not necessarily determine the amount of financial benefit vendors derived from the trade but charisma and commitment to the hawking. The absence of parents is among other factors responsible for involvement of the teenagers in water vending.

This study recommended that teenagers should be encouraged to embrace education being a huge long-term investment for the nation and the beneficiaries. Also, the study suggested against the submission of the structuralist and neoliberal theories perspectives that the government should provide necessary water infrastructures to cushion the water shortage and make water hawking less attractive to the teenagers. This effort will peaceably send off the teenagers who should be in school from hawking activities. The government is advised to operationalise full free education at elementary and post elementary education levels to encourage all teenagers to return to school. There should be serious restrictions to hawking activities by vendors along the main roads in order to avoid traffic obstructions, accident and enhance safety of lives. The teenagers should be encouraged by all means to be in school rather than trading at adolescent ages.

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