



STREET VENDORS AND HOUSEHOLDS POVERTY REDUCTION IN NIGER STATE

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Abstract

Street vendors have been acknowledged as an important driver of economic performance both at the micro and macro level; it is argued that it plays important role in household's poverty reduction. This study examines the impact of street vendors on household's poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. A set of household data was generated from the administration of structured questionnaire to 479 households in Niger State. Structural equation modelling approach (AMOS) was developed and applied for data analysis. The result obtained show that street vendors has significantly improved the living standard of the study area, thus, fulfilling our a priori expectation that street vendors has positive impact on household's poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. The result notwithstanding, Niger State Government, as much as possible should come up with a policy in supporting the street vendors. This will go a long way in improving the welfare of the citizens as well as further reducing the level of poverty in the area.

Key Words: AMOS, Household's, Niger State, Nigeria, Poverty Reduction, Street vendors, Structural Equation Mode.

1. Introduction

The rate at which poverty is increasing in Nigeria is worrisome. It has been established from previous studies that the country recorded high poverty rate over the years (NBS, 2014; Balogun, Yusuf, Omonona & Okorwa, 2011; Balogun, 2011; Ojumba, 2012; Zacheaus & Nwokoma, 2012; Ijaiya, Dayang & Norimah, 2016). Nigeria Government has put in several measures (for example, Austerity Measure and Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), Directorate of Food, Roads and Rural Infrastructure (DFRRI), Integrated Rural Development Projects, Better Life Program, Family Support Program, Mass Transit Program, National Directorate of Employment, Peoples Bank, Family Economic Advancement Program, National Poverty Eradication Program, Subsidy Re-investment Program (SURE-P)) in order to reduce the level of poverty in the country, but still poverty high rate persists. The poverty trend can be traced back to the year of independence where about 15 percent of the population lived below poverty line. In 1980, with an estimated population of 64.6 million in Nigeria, the poverty level rose to 28.1 percent and subsequently rises to 69.1 percent in the year 2010. The percentage rate represents, in absolute term, 112.4 million people from an estimated population of about 160 million people. The rate also rises to 70 per cent in the year 2011 and 2012 and slightly drops to 67 per cent in 2013. This situation, however, goes contrary to the belief that the country is endowed with enormous human and material resources.

Streets, in the Nigeria context, are the multi-functional spaces with diverse characteristics adding vibrancy to the area. Streets are minor highways shared by motorists, cyclists, pedestrians and



other road users. This provides opportunities for businesses to be located beside them due to presence of large number of consumers on the streets on daily basis.

However, with the dominance of motorized traffic, the streets are losing their functionality as inclusive public spaces, and seem to have stopped catering to the social interactions ranging from cultural parades, civic protests and informal sector economic activities. Street vending is an attractive economic strategy and source of livelihood for the unskilled and illiterate new arrivals to the city (Tshuma & Jari 2013). With increasing rural to urban migration and the contracting formal sector, street vending and other forms of informal employment become the most attractive means of survival for the urban poor (Chirisa & Muchini 2011; Adhikari 2012; Njaya, 2015). According to Ray and Mishra (2011), vending has become an important source of employment for a large number of urban poor. Timalsina (2012) argued that street vending in Nepal maintained or improved resource productivity. This resulted in vendors securing ownership of and access to assets, resources and income-earning activities as well as ensuring adequate stocks, flows of food and cash to meet the vendors' basic household needs. Street vending forms an integral part of urban setting of the streets, adding socio-economic and cultural benefits and providing a means of livelihood to the poorer sections of society.

Among several strategies developed for poverty alleviation, street vendor has proven to be very effective in eradicating poverty among the citizenry. In fact, many scholars contend that street vendor contributes immensely to the nation's economic performance both at the micro and macro levels (Auxiliakawara, 2017). There has been little or no research done on street vending in the study area. Thus, this study seeks to bridge the identify gap in knowledge by examining the effect of street vendors on household poverty reduction in Niger State.

The main objective of this study is to examine the impact of street vending on Poverty reduction in Niger State. The specific objective of the study includes the following

- i. To examine the impact of physical environment sustainability on poverty reduction in the study area.
- ii. To assess the impact of Social sustainability on poverty reduction in the study area.
- iii. To examine the relationship between economic sustainability and households' poverty status.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Street Vendors

According to India National Policy of Urban Street vendors (2004), a street vendor is a person who offers goods for sale to the public without having a permanent built up structure but with a temporary static structure or mobile stall (or head load). Street vending forms an integral part of urban setting of the streets, adding socio-economic and cultural benefits and providing a means of livelihood to the poorer sections of society. Street vending adds image ability to public spaces which act as banners illustrating the different cultural components of the city like language spoken, what people like to eat, buy, etc. Street vendors may be stationary vendor, mobile street vendor or peripatetic vendor.

The street vendors act a great role in utilizing squares in which it has a direct link with applying the tactical urbanism principle. There is variety in street vendors' types regarding its volume, types of goods, profit, allocation, and mobility. It is also referred to 'street trader' and 'hawker' (ILO,



2013; Kusakabe, 2006). Movement of street vendors has a direct relation with the events in the space, the weather, customers' flow, or all over the day timing (Bromley, 2000).

Street vending can be proxy by sustainability. The term "sustainable development" is used to balance the three major factors - the physical environment, economy and social equity - that leads to the development of streets and public realm spaces in a sustainable manner. The physical environment involves the efficient uses of spaces with respect to time and social equity facilitating the social interaction between different social, economic and cultural groups to promote the economic objective of livelihood through street vending.

3.2 Concept of poverty

The definition of poverty remains disputable. This is because "poverty is multi-dimensional, multifaceted and, therefore, complex, and because it is both a relative and subjective phenomenon" (Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, 2008; Awojobi, 2014). As a result of this, there is no universally accepted definition of poverty. Depending on the societies and changes over time, the perceptions, contexts, meanings and usages may differ among the observers and researchers. For example, United Nations (2011), defined poverty as "a denial of choice and opportunities, a violation of human dignity. It means lack of basic capacity to participate effectively in society. It means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, not having a school or clinic to go; not having the land on which to grow one's food or a job to earn one's living; not having access to credit. It means insecurity, powerlessness and exclusion of individual, households and communities. It means susceptibility to violence, and it often implies living on marginal or fragile environment, without access to clean water or sanitation".

The definition of poverty by the United Nations corroborated that of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR, 2004) it summarizes poverty as a multinational phenomenon. Poverty is when people lack basic resources such as power, capabilities, choice, lower level of social capital and security that are fundamental for a good standard of living. Thus, poverty can be seen as the scarcity of basic human needs for daily living. Previously, poverty was conceptualized to mean a lack of financial power to shop for basic needs. This indicates one could be considered financially incapacitated for not having income to supply for his or her daily consumption. However, studies have shown that poverty is more than a lack of income. The Copenhagen Declaration (1995) states that poverty is a condition characterized by severe deprivation of basic human needs; including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information. World Bank (2015) report on poverty categorized people with less than \$1.90 per day as living in extreme poverty.

Related to the definition of poverty are the types of poverty. According to Jensen (2009), in his book teaching with poverty in mind, identifies six types of poverty: situational, generational, absolute, relative, urban, and rural. Situational poverty is generally caused by a sudden crisis or loss and is often temporary. Events causing situational poverty include environmental disasters, divorce, or severe health problems (Shah, 2010; Curi, Manning & Chun, 2011; Woodford & Anderson, 2012).



Generational poverty is a situation in families where at least two generations have been born into poverty. Families living in this type of poverty are not expected to get out of poverty (Shah, 2010; Payne & Sleocumb, 2011; Barrantes, 2011).

Absolute poverty involves scarcity of necessities such as shelter, running water and food. It is a situation of day-to-day survival on day-to-day income. It is having an annual income less than half of the official poverty line. It can also be defined in terms of the minimal requirements necessary to afford minimal standards of food, clothing, healthcare and shelter (Brewer, Browne, Joyce & Payne, 2011; Green, 2014; and Bergh & Nilsson, 2014).

Relative poverty refers to the economic status of a family whose income is insufficient to meet its society's average standard of living. In other words, it is referred to as the living standards of majority in a given society and separates the poor from the non-poor. Households with expenditure greater than two-thirds of the Total Household Per Capita expenditure are non-poor whereas those below it are poor (Ravallion & Chen, 2011; Notten & Neubourg, 2011; MacKeigan, Wiese, Mitchell & Loomis, 2013).

Urban poverty occurs in metropolitan areas with higher populations. The urban poor deal with a complex aggregate of chronic and acute stressors; it consists of ghettos, slump, and shanties characterized by inadequate welfare services, low per capita income, over-crowded accommodation, and environmental degradation (Samuel & Wilfred, 2009; Ananat, 2011; Baker, 2012; Rusch, Frazier & Atkins, 2014).

Rural poverty occurs in non-metropolitan areas with lower populations. In rural areas, there are more single-guardian households, and families often have less access to services, support for disabilities, and quality education opportunities. It is characterized by poor living condition. Programmes to encourage transition from welfare to work are problematic in remote rural areas, where job opportunities are few (Whitener, Gibbs & Kusmin, 2003; Milder, Scherr & Bracer, 2010; Krishna & Sharif, 2011; Himanshu, Lanjouw, Mukhopadhyah & Murgai, 2011).

2.3. Street Vending and Poverty Reduction

Timalsina (2012) argued street vending in Nepal maintained or improved resource productivity. This resulted in vendors securing ownership of and access to assets, resources and income-earning activities as well as ensuring adequate stocks, flows of food and cash to meet the vendors' basic household needs.

Street vendors also provide low-cost basic goods and food items to other lower income groups within the cities. According to Natawidjaja *et al.* (2015), since the late 1990s, after the collapse of banks and industries due to the Asian economic crisis, street vending has played an important role by becoming a coping mechanism for low income households in the city of Surakarta.

Evidence shows that the monthly incomes from street vending are very low compared to the national average of formally employed individuals (Roever 2014). However, according to Mengistu and Iibat (2015), most street vendors engage in street vending activities to supplement their low income or to cushion their spouse low salary. Ray and Mishra (2011) also argued that despite the low incomes generated from vending activities, the simple fact that vendors do not wait

for handouts and/or employment opportunities from the government or engage in begging, stealing or extortion is a clear sign that street vending is a form of income distribution with great economic potential. Research also shows that through street vending, most women have taken the role of bringing food on the table (Amankwaa, 2015; Chingono 2016; Reeve, 2016). Therefore, street vending does not only enable the formally marginalized peddlers to meet their minimum daily food, but also teaches and inspires women and youths in particular to value work.

2.4 Empirical Studies of Street Vending and Poverty Reduction

Ebura (2012) in his study explore the livelihoods of formal, semi-formal and informal female food and beverage vendors in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. This exploratory research study is based on qualitative semi-structured interviews with 16 women vendors in the suburbs of Dar es Salaam. The study incorporates purposive sampling because the aim is not to generalise findings, but rather to increase the contextual understanding of livelihoods. The main findings reveal that women vendors draw primarily on labour assets and social capital in order to construct livelihoods. However, engaging in food or beverage vending is in itself not sufficient for securing livelihoods or even survival. The importance of labour assets and social capital in the urban context is in general consistent with previous research. In addition to previous research, this study has revealed that informal vending space in residential areas, accessed through private contacts and social capital, is an important livelihood asset. By avoiding vending in public spaces such as by main roads, visible streets and around market areas, the women vendors avoid bribe payments and police harassments which decreases livelihood constraints.

Down (2017) examined the phenomenon known as road side vending within the spatial arena of Gaborone city of Botswana. The study employed a 15-item inventory on the one hand, to elicit the factors that accounted for the recent phenomenal surge in road side vending in Gaborone and on the other hand, to highlight the expectations of the actors of this sector of the economy. The findings revealed that between 2012 and 2014, road side vending grew by 50% in Gaborone and 74% of Gaborone road side vendors were aged between 38-54 years, suggesting that this market is currently run by mature adults. The findings equally revealed that the growth of road side vending in Gaborone coincided with an era when unemployment began to be discussed within government circles, the press and in the streets of Botswana. This finding is supported by the literature which states that in general, the informal sector of the economy of less developed countries tend to grow under the impulse of unemployment and increasing poverty rate. The study ended with one major recommendation that called on the Gaborone city Council to use the instrumentality of learning to bring about the change it desires for Gaborone without excluding road side vendors from its Gaborone developmental blueprint.

Claudine (2013) opined that street vending activities contribute to the livelihoods of millions of people and to national wellbeing at large, especially in developing countries. The objective of this study is to analyze the contributions of street vending activities on the livelihoods of urban poor in Kigali City. The study used a non-experiment design, a purposive sampling method and participant observations to collect data for this research. Ninety street traders were sampled. Survey questionnaires instruments with both closed and open ended questions were administered to them. Semi-structured interview with key informants were also undertaken in the city of Kigali, Rwanda. The study found that failure to secure employment in formal establishments, the need to support family, and dissatisfaction with previous employment conditions were among the major



factors that pushed people into street vending business. Data analysis showed that the average daily income generated was Rwf 5092 (USD 7.3) while the average daily expenditure for those interviewed was Rwf 2487 (USD 3.5). Meaning that besides meeting urban poor daily needs, there is a small surplus that is saved for a rainy day and for further investment. On monthly basis, street vendors generate Rwf 127,300 (USD 182) which is above the poverty line of Rwanda (Rwf 118,000 (USD 169) and the salary earned by some of the low cadre employees in the formal sector such as the cleaners (Rwf 20,000/ month; USD 29). Street vending is not temporary; it is an alternative to job creation and a source of livelihood to the urban poor.

2.5 Theory Underpinned the Study

This study underpinned De Soto theory of economic empowerment. This is because the theory tells us how formalization of street vendors can help to improve the well-being of the heads of household. The theory of Hernando De Soto is part of the New Institutional Economics and his work represents an important contribution to that field. With the publication of the books *The Other Path* in 1989 and *The Mystery of Capital* in 2000, De Soto brought the importance of institutions such as property and business rights for economic development. He argues that in many countries the assets of the poor do not enjoy property rights and therefore are not protected by the law. These assets are regulated outside the legal system in what De Soto calls, "a parallel economy driven by local practices and norms that allow poor entrepreneurs to do business in the shadows of their nation's legal system." Extra-legality is what holds back poor entrepreneurs like street vendors; and therefore De Soto suggests a change in the legal system in order to cover them under the rule of law (Bromley, 2000; Ray & Mishra, 2011; Claudine, 2016).

Street vendors need to formalize their businesses to be able to reach all the economic potential they have. De Soto used the example of street vendors in Lima to show the hidden economic value they have in their businesses, a value that is not recognized by the law that he calls the 'special right of ownership'. Additionally, their merchandise is not protected and therefore, it can be confiscated at any time by police authorities. De Soto insists that having a proper legal right can empower informal entrepreneurs to access credit and other forms of capital. In that sense, street vendors could gain the power to improve their life after formalization because they could use their own assets and efforts to access credit and lift themselves out of poverty.

De Soto's theory attests that formalization can cause empowerment because vendors could improve their freedom, invest more in their businesses, access credit, and improve their lives. The logical sequence of empowerment is: Formalization → Increase Economic Freedom → Empowerment → Life Improvements (Bromley, 2000; Ray & Mishra, 2011; Claudine, 2016).

However, the concept of legal empowerment includes more than economic change and for that reason, this research complements De Soto's theory with a broader definition of empowerment. Legal empowerment is broadly defined as the use of legal institutions including, law, access to justice, legal aid, or legal knowledge, to improve the control that poor people have over their lives. It emphasizes the increase in people's freedom and the possibility to live without fear. This view of empowerment is based on the idea of Nobel Prize winner in economics Amartya Sen's about 'development as freedom'. According to Sen, "quite often economic insecurity can relate to the lack of democratic rights and liberties, and therefore development cannot only be measured in



terms of needs but instead in terms of capabilities (Bromley, 2000; Ray & Mishra, 2011; Claudine, 2016).

In the case of street vendors, they are deprived of some of the most basic freedoms. They cannot work freely since their job is considered illegal and they have constant fear of eviction from the police. They also fear harassment from the owners of formal businesses, from other street vendors competing for space, and overall some have lost their self-respect and confidence, feeling that what they do for living is a criminal activity. They lack of intrinsic empowerment, they lack basic freedoms, 'feeling self-confident, walking with dignity, feeling respected, living without fear'. This is what Martha Nussbaum calls, one of the negative freedoms that are basic for people to escape poverty and consist on the possibility to live without fear.

Both the theory of De Soto about the economic empowerment that comes after formalization and the broader perspective of Amartya Sen are used in this study to understand the effects of formalization for street vendors and how it has helped improving the well-being of the heads of household in Niger State, Nigeria.

3. Methodology and Data Source

This study was conducted in Niger State of Nigeria. Niger State is one of the State in the Northern part of Nigeria, specifically, North central region. The State is located in an area of about 150 Kilometer from Abuja, the Federal Capital of Nigeria and on Latitude 8°22'N and 11°30'N and Longitude 3°30'N and 7°20'E.

Data was collected through structured questionnaire administered among the heads of households in Niger State between the month of January 2015 and May 2015. A multistage sample design was used to collect cross-sectional data from households in the study area. Specifically, a stratified sampling method and a random sampling was used in selecting the respondents. The first stage was to identify the sample areas which comprise 25 local government areas, which was divided into 3 senatorial districts that is Niger East, Niger North and Niger South. Niger East is divided into 9 local government areas, these include: Bosso LGA, Chanchaga LGA, Paikoro LGA, Suleja LGA, Shiroro LGA, Munya LGA, Rafi LGA, Tafa LGA, and Gurara LGA; Niger North is divided into 8 local government areas, it includes the following: Agwara LGA, Borgu LGA, Wushishi LGA, Magama LGA, Rijau LGA, Mashegu LGA, Kotangora LGA, and Mariga LGA, while Niger South is also divided into 8 and it includes the following: Agaci LGA, Lapai LGA, Kaccha LGA, Bida LGA, Gbako LGA, Edati LGA, Iyawa LGA and Mokwa LGA. In the state, two local government areas were randomly selected from each of the senatorial districts based on the proximity, ecological, socio-cultural, language speaking, and economic variations. This was necessary for equal representation of the study area. The second stage identified the number of households and population in each study area, while the third stage of the sampling involves random selection of 87 households in each of the selected study areas. In all a total sample of about 319 heads of households were randomly selected to respond to the questions in the questionnaires.

In determining the influence of street vending on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria, an econometrics model of simultaneous equation modeling through structural equation model was built around the indicators of street vending and poverty reduction as the main objective of the paper. The model was used in estimating the impact of these indicators on the poverty reduction



in Niger State, Nigeria. The variables considered are as follows: physical environment sustainability, social sustainability and economical sustainability.

These can be represented in the following model:

$$\text{PoVR} = F(\text{PES} + \text{SS} + \text{ES}) + U_i$$

Where:

PoVR = Poverty reduction of the heads of household in the study area

PES = Physical environment sustainability of the heads of household in the study area.

SS = Social sustainability of the heads of household in the study area.

ES = Economical sustainability

U_i = Error terms.

The responses to the questionnaires by the respondents were coded and then analyzed using SPSS version 22. Structural Equation Model (SEM) was conducted using Analysis of Moment Structure (AMOS). All tests were at 95 percent confidence interval.

4. Results and Discussions

Measurement Model Fit

In the measurement model, the model fit generated along with the output including the CFI, NFI, GFI, RMSEA and Relative Chi-square meet their expected range to justify the validity of the measurement model. The CFI generated for the study was 9.34, NFI is 9.45, GFI is 9.84, RMSEA is 0.05 and Relative chi-square is 2.343. Also, the unidimensionality was tested and this was achieved because all factors loading was positive and greater than 0.5.

Table 1: Discriminant Validity Testing

	PES	SS	ES	PoV
PES	0.78			
SS	0.23	0.85		
ES	0.27	0.40	0.87	
PoV	0.34	0.42	0.35	0.98

The value in diagonal and bold is the square root of AVE of the construct while other values are the correlation between the respective constructs. The discriminant validity is said to be achieved when a diagonal value (bold) is higher than the values in its row and column. Therefore, this study exhibits sufficient discriminant validity since the value in bold is higher than the values in its row and column. Also, there is the absence of multicollinearity since the correlation coefficient among the latent variables did not exceed 0.85 (See Zainudin 2015).

Table 2: Results of SEM on the Impact of Street vending on Poverty Reduction in Niger State, Nigeria

Construct	β	SE	Beta	CR	p
PES	0.231	0.024	0.245	3.213	0.000
SS	0.134	0.014	0.432	2.431	0.002
ES	0.245	0.034	0.651	4.243	0.000

R = 0.78

R² = 0.63



The regression analysis on the impact of street vendor on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria is shown in Table 2. The R^2 value of 0.63 shows that 63 per cent variation in the dependent variable (Poverty) is explained by the explanatory variables (Street vendor Components). According to Chin *et al.* (2003), R^2 values greater than 0.67 is having practical value. R^2 value between 0.33 and 0.66 is assumed to have moderate explanatory value, while R^2 value between 0.19 and 0.32 has weak explanatory value. Therefore, R^2 for this study is 0.63 and it has a moderate explanatory power. Looking at the individual variables, all independent variables, street vendor components are statistically significant, an indication that the model is acceptable.

Physical Environment Sustainability (PES) has a coefficient of 0.231, with critical ratio of 3.213 was positively related to poverty reduction and statistically significant at 1 per cent level. The beta result of 0.024 indicates that physical environment sustainability has 24.5 per cent direct effect on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. Social sustainability (SS) has coefficient of 0.134 with critical ratio of 2.431 been positively related to poverty reduction and statistically significant at 1 per cent level. The beta result of 0.432 indicates that social sustainability has 43.2 per cent direct effect on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. Economical sustainability (ES) has coefficient of 0.245 with critical ratio of 4.243 was positively related and statistically significant at 1 percent level. The beta result of 0.648 indicates that economical sustainability has 64.8 per cent direct effect on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. This results goes in line with our a priori expectation and also similar with the work of Pavanika, Vaseem, Sajitand, Rupa (2016) who were of the view that street vending components such as physical environment sustainability, social sustainability, and economical sustainability have positive impact on poverty status of the heads of households in Bangalore Metropolitan Area.

5. Policy Implications

This paper investigates the impact of street vendor components on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria, using Structural Equation Model technique. The findings of this study revealed that physical environment sustainability (PES), social sustainability (SS) and economical sustainability (ES) all have significant impact on poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria. The results of this study can be used in policy formulation relating to street vendors and poverty reduction in Niger State, Nigeria and the World in general.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study established that street vending improves the livelihoods of the heads of household in the study area. It plays a significant role in providing employment and income generation. Stimulating sustainable economic growth, social equity, economical sustainability and accessibility brings about a sustainable development for street vendors. Niger State Government should, as much as possible, come up with a policy in supporting the street vendors. This will go a long way in improving the welfare of the citizen as well as reducing the level of poverty in the area.



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