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The socio-cultural values of Lusada market to inhabitants of Igbesa community in Ado Odo Ota, local government, Ogun state

Abstract:

Market, like many other concepts, could mean so many things but in the context of this study it is perceived as a public place for buying and selling (merchandise). It is usually strategically located to facilitate easy accessibility by people from all walks of life to engage in various forms of business transaction. Participant observation was combined with key informant interview technique in generating data for this work. The study sought to know if Lusada market serves other purpose aside from being a place of exchange of goods and services. The findings were intriguing; ranging from the unique administrative structure of the market to the various rules, sanctions and penalties being meted out to defaulting members of the market community. Aside from economic transaction, the market also affords people of diverse interest and background to collectively relate to one another under an atmosphere of buying and selling with a view to satisfying personal interest, thereby promoting peaceful coexistence. The study recommended that the local government in which the market is situated and even Ogun state government should identify with the marketers by improving on the infrastructural facilities on the ground. The chord of togetherness among the various trade associations can also be strengthened through financial support in form of soft loans to various trade associations which may be registered as cooperative groups.

Keywords: market, community, sanctions, cooperative

Introduction

The market in its physical form is a space where physical exchange of goods and services take place. Broadly speaking however, it can also be seen as a variety of systems, institutions, procedures, social relations and infrastructures where people engage in exchange of goods and services. Markets vary in form, scale (volume and geographic reach), location and types of participants, as well as the types of goods and services traded. Market may take the form of physical-retail markets which can be held in town squares or parking lots on an ongoing or occasional basis or non-physical (internet market). It may also take the form of ad hoc auction

markets, international currency and commodity market, stock markets for the exchange of shares in corporations or even illegal markets such as the market for illicit drugs, arms or pirated products. The market in sociological and anthropological perspective is an economic transaction in human life where buying and selling takes place.

In mainstream economics, market is any structure that allows buyers and sellers to exchange any type of goods, services and information. Market participants consist of all the buyers and sellers of a good and those who influence its price. This influence is a major study of economics and has given rise to major theories and models concerning the basic market forces of supply and demand. The two sets of principal actors in any market setting are buyers and sellers. The market facilitates trade and enables the distribution and allocation of resources in a society. It allows any tradable item to be evaluated and priced. Going into a market place is like going into an arena where people freely enter into social contract with one another in order to foster mutual benefits from one another based on element of economic consideration.

The main focus of this study is to take a cursory look at Lusada market *vis a vis* its economic and social impact on the lives of the people of Igbesa community of Ado-Odo Ota local government area. Lusada market is a typical conventional market holding every five days. However, consequent upon population pressure it has developed to become daily market with pockets of traders displaying their wares. Although the market opens daily, there is still the relic of periodicity because at the designated market date, attendance and sales volume become intense than any other day.

Statement of the Problem

Any market would consist of traders and customers who are likely to differ in one or many ways. The market or the customers may differ in resources, geographical location, size, product requirement and buying behavior. Any of these variables can be used as the basis of segmenting a market. And any market with more than one person is capable of being segmented. While the highest number of segment a market can have is the total number of people that make that market (Cole 1997). What then are the bases of segmentation of Lusada market? Are the traders segmented on the basis of their wares or on the basis of their ethnic leanings? The massive heterogeneous population of traders that congregate at the market must have devised some coping strategies which make their peaceful co-existence possible.

Theoretical framework

Social exchange theory is predicated on the idea that all human relationships are formed by the use of a subjective cost – benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives. According to Homans (1961), the initiator of the theory, it was developed to understand the social behavior of humans in economic undertakings. Ogunbameru (2008) perceived social exchange theory as having its roots in behaviorism, influenced intellectually, by rational choice theory. The key tenet of the theory is that human behavior is in essence an exchange, particularly of rewards or resources of primarily material character (wealth) and secondarily of symbolic attribute. Presumably, such exchange transactions permeate as sets or joint outcomes of voluntary individual actions induced by rewards Blau (1963, 91). Consequently, exchange transactions constitute the foundation and open secret of social life, of group process and relations particularly. Assuming that exchange transactions are reciprocal, if reciprocity is not observed such transactions will tend to eventually discontinue. Social exchange theory is based on a central premise that the exchange of social and material resources is a fundamental form of human interaction.

Some of the traders the researcher interacted with claimed to have brought their wares from as far places as Idi-Iroko, Atan, Alapoti among such distance places. In like manner, many of the buyers claim to have come from areas such as Sango Ota, Oshodi in Lagos, Igbesa, Owode Yewa etc. The interaction revealed that the buyers and sellers considered their coming to the market to be beneficial to them even in spite of cost of transportation and amount of time involved in getting to and fro the market.

The outcome of an interaction is the combination of costs and rewards. People strive to minimize cost and maximize rewards, social exchange uses the equation: rewards-cost-profits to figure out whether a relationship is worth the time. Usually, the typical person decides to pursue relationship where the rewards are greater than the cost. The task of exchange theory is then to investigate the reciprocal advantages that individuals draw from their exchange transactions on the premises that they engage in and sustain most social, including non-economic, relations in the rational expectations of such advantages independently of normative or group consideration (Ogunbameru 2008). In sum, social exchange theory centers on the mutual gratifications persons provide one another that sustain social relations.

The reward accruable to buyer in Lusada market could be in form of the freshness of agricultural products which are sold in the market at a rock bottom prices. While sellers are also assured of being brought into contact with prospective buyers who will transact business with them on the basis of “cash and carry”.

Methodology

A life story is highly potent in providing vibrant insight into the wider context of society. This study adopted focus group discussions (FGD) and key informant interview to generate needed data. The participants' stories evoke unique, idiosyncratic identities, as well as shared values. They also reveal ambiguities, contradictions and complexities of personal and several relations. The raw data generated were analyzed through the process of content analysis to put it perspectives in relation to the objectives of this study.

Research Objectives

The general focus of the study is to investigate the socio-cultural values of Lusada market to the people in Igbesa community. Meanwhile specific objectives of the study are:

- I. To find out other social values of Lusada market besides trading activities
- II. To identify some of the challenges facing the market
- III. To recommend measures of improving the lot of the market

Justification for the Study

The study becomes necessary in view of dearth of empirical information on the socio-economic value of Lusada market to the people in the study area in spite of benefits such information would bring. Empirical information on the market may eventually draw more patronage to the market actors (sellers and buyers). Also, such information may be useful to researchers and policy makers.

Organization of the Study

This report is organized into five sub-headings (sub-units). The first one is introductory sub unit, followed by a brief theoretical framework. The third unit presents methodology while the fourth unit presents results and their discussions; the fifth unit presents the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

Socio/Anthropological Description of the Study Area

Igbesa is a sub-urban community located in Ado-Odo Ota Local Government area of Ogun State. Igbesa kingdom, according to oral history, was founded about 800 (eight hundred) years ago by Akeredun, a hunter who

hailed from Ile-Ife. His father, Olofin the ancestral father of the Aworis, left Ile-Ife with one of the princesses in search of a place to settle. After a long journey in the forest, he first settled at Isheri with his children, among who was Akeredun. Prior to their settlement at Isheri and in their desire to have a divine place to settle, they had consulted Ifa oracle which directed them to prepare an oracle feast in a native plate made of clay (awo) and place it on a flowing river. The oracle instructed further to watch the plate until it sank and that wherever the plate sank would be their divine place of settlement. They obeyed Ifa oracle's instruction and trailed the pot on the flowing river until it got to a place near Isheri, where the plate sank, which in Yoruba language means "awo ri", that is, the plate sank. The exact place where the plate sank is now known as Isheri Olofin and the residents are referred to as Awori omo Olofin.

Just like the seven children of Oduduwa who left Ile-Ife to establish their own settlement which now become the seven important Yoruba kingdoms, Olofin's children did not stay with their father at Isheri. Each one of them went in search of his own settlement. To achieve this, Akeredun again consulted Ifa Oracle which directed him to prepare a feast which he should put on a raffia mat (eni fafa), placed on a flowing river and trailed to wherever the feast and the raffia mat would be blown off shore. That place would be their ordained peaceful place of abode. Akeredun followed the oracle feast and the raffia mat until they were blown offshore at Lebiri lagoon. Akeredun moved northwards of Odan Amiro's hut (who was the first to get to the area before him) and settled. Whenever Akeredun went out on hunting and anyone asked of his abode, he would refer to his abode as a place near the lagoon (Egbe Osa), which with passage of time, was shortened to and became known as Igbesa today. Lusada market is the market in Igbesa kingdom that draws traders from far and wide. The market is situated around kilometer eight of Atan-Agbara road.

Incidental Findings

Road Network/Transportation

The market is strategically located on Atan/Agbara road. The road linking Igbesa and head quarters of Ado Odo Ota Local Government also pass through the market. The market is therefore easily assessable to people from Lagos and Badagry through Agbara road. Marketers coming in from Owode, Egbado, Sango and Abeokuta can get to the market through Atan road. Agbara/Atan road is motorable all the year round except for pockets of pot holes on the road. However the portion of the road right inside the market, leading to Ado-Odo Ota Local government Headquarter is in a deplorable condition. Although the road still form the main route for bringing contra band goods such as frozen foods, rice and drinks to the market.



Risk of Food Poisoning:

Hawking and open display of wares including frozen foods is a common occurrence in Lusada market. The quality of food usually depends on the processing and handling technique employed. The implication of food poisoning on building a healthy nation could be far reaching. A large number of people suffer from gastro-intestinal upsets annually, as a result of eating contaminated food which leads to a considerable loss of man-hour with accompanying consequences. Gbolagunte et al (2012) argued that food poisoning organism can multiply profusely in foods without initially altering the appearance, taste or odour.

The need to ascertain that the frozen foods being freely displayed in the market are safe for human consumption is highly imperative. Or how are they different from such which customs usually confiscate and destroy, on the excuse of it not been safe for human consumption.



Frozen Turkey Wings on Display in The Market



A Typical Buyer

The Market and Smuggling Business:

The market is readily accessible from Seme and Idi-Iroko borders. This probably explains why buying and selling of some contraband goods ranging from food items to drinks thrive in the market.

Gender Structure of the Market

Women were found to constitute about 70% of actors (buyers and sellers) in Lusada market. Although our investigation shows that more women are at the helm of affairs of many trade associations in the market, but that the overall headships of the market (Babaoloja) is a male probably reaffirm the patriarchy nature of the society in which the market is situated.

Major Findings

Social Values of Lusada Market

The social values of Lusada market can best be appreciated from the context of social networks and relations of trust, cooperation and other forms of bonds that exist among the people in the market. The market hosts people of diverse ethnic background every five days and many of the trade associations are found to contain people of diverse background.

Contrary to the universal held opinion that market exchanges contain a history of struggle and contestation that produced actors that predisposed to exchange under a common umbrella of buying and selling (Fowokan 2011), Lusada market was found to be an environment where traders relate with one another with a high sense of cordiality. This idea was buttressed by the experience of the researcher at various times in the market. Firstly, if a customer gets to the market, all he has to do is to mention what he has come to buy, other traders are usually willing to guide such stranger to where his desired ware is sold. Secondly, sellers were found going to another person's stock to sell what she did not possess. The market was discovered to be a meeting point for people of diverse nationality (some of the people found in the market claimed to have hailed from republic of Benin, Togo, Ghana).

Almost all sections of the market have their trade association with their executive committee in place. Each association has their rules and regulations. The central organization is headed by Babaloja who is ably assisted by other chiefs such as Alatunse Oja, Iyaloja, Otun Iyaloja, Osi and Otun Babaloja. The Iyaloja is mainly saddled with the responsibility of caring for the women folks in the market. Our investigation revealed that any prospective seller wanting a space in the market, s(he) is expected to meet Babaloja who after consultation with his committee would do the allocation of space. While, the Local Government (Ado Odo Ota) Estate department does the allocation of stores.

Socio Cultural Beliefs

The study discovered that there are basically no form of festival associated with the market. Except for market anniversary which usually come up once every decade. Our study revealed that, despite the religious confession of the officers of the market, they still believe the traditional view that rain can be deferred from falling or be waded off. This was discovered when we sought to know some of the roles of the market officers. They listed among others; link with Local Government officials, settlement of disputes within the market and link with "rain diviners".

Two Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were held with members of two different trade associations. However, the findings at the two fora were exactly similar to one another. Hence a report of the focus group discus-

sions held with a group of women gave further insight to some of the findings. The discussion was conducted in Yoruba language. Indeed the group members were largely Yoruba women with a few number of them been from other tribes. The age bracket of the women the researcher interacted with during a Focus Group discussion session ranged between 40- 60 years. Some of them claimed to have been in the business of buying and selling all their life. When they were asked to describe the type of relationship between members of the group, they claimed to have very cordial relationship in spite of the fact that they trade in similar wares. One of them said:

“We can be described as “ore di ebi” Meaning that though they are friends the depth of their relationship between them is like that of family members (People with blood affinity).

When they were asked to list some of the things they do or have in common that can justify the above claim; another member of the group retorted that:

“We usually buy clothe in common, so that if anyone has a social function we would go there as a social group to honor the Celebrant.

Another respondent added that: “We are also into thrift, through which we help ourselves economically.

A probe into how they organize their thrift showed that they meet to contribute every market day and give money contributed to the next beneficiary.

Direct interview of the key informant, that is the market head (Baba oloja) revealed that the market came into existence on the 4th of April, 1986. It was formally inaugurated by the then commissioner for Local Government and Development Mr. Kebun Fagbemi. Although it had been in existence for more than a decade before its formal inauguration. It was established by farmers in Igbesa district. The study discovered that the first Baba Oloja of the market was Late chief Ola Odagri and that the key informant (Chief Ramoni Ajose) is the second person to occupy the position of Baba Oloja of Lusada market. The interview was conducted in Yoruba. The following constitute some of the intriguing revelations during the interview. When we sought to know his roles as the head of the market, he stated as follows:

As Baba Oloja of this market, I organize the market associations such as people selling kerosene, fufu sellers have their different associations. There are almost fifty market Associations and they are in groups. The market is free to everybody and as the Baba Oloja, I am also the chairman of the peace committee of the market. I often have meetings with the Local government officials to ensure smooth running of the market”.

Are there sanctions/ punishment for offenders in the market?

Response:

As the chairman of the committee of Lusada market, When ever there is dispute in market, it is my duty to settle it except for criminal cases.

How is the market managed during rainy season?

Aside from contacts being made with the local government requesting them to come and tar the portion of the road in the market. We also usually ask traders to donate money to pay rain diviners to disallow rain from falling

This belief in wading off rain (Ojo titi) goes a long way to buttress the argument of some scholars that Nigeria is still at the low level of technological advancement because of unverifiable (non-empirical) beliefs which are largely anti-development. This argument has some bearings to the argument of modernization theory of development.

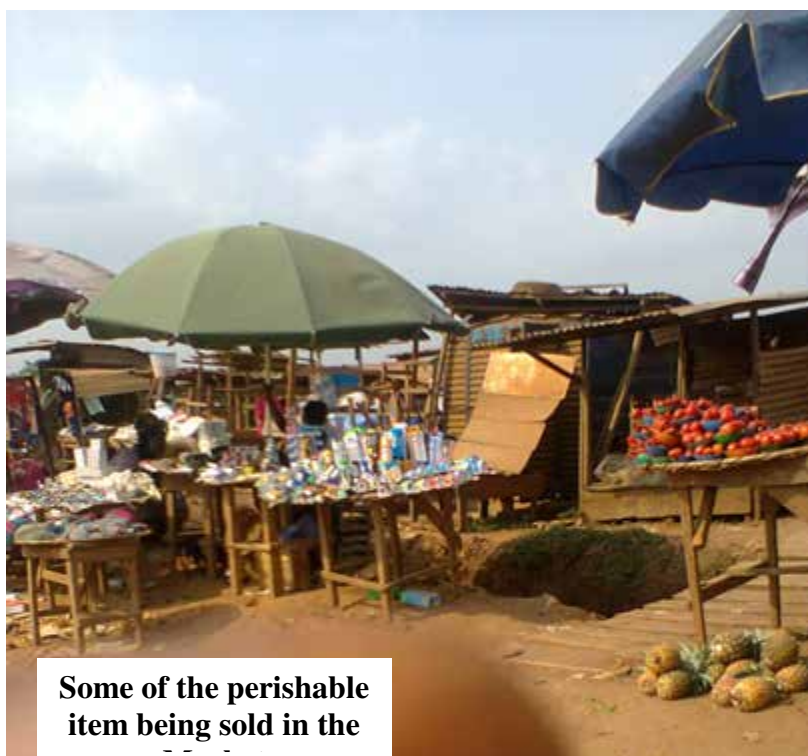
It is not out of place if only for psychological relief, for an average garri or yam flour seller to pay for such divination especially when her wares are openly demonstrated in the market road side. Whereas, if everyone has some form of cover over his or her head such contribution may not be needful after all.

Challenges of the Market

The road linking the market with Igbesa community and Ketu Adie Owe community are in a state of disrepair. The said road transverse the market leading to the local government head quarters. Trading in the market therefore becomes a herculean task during raining season.

Farmers who come to the market with their fresh farm products are usually left at the mercy of the buyer especially during evening time. A buyer stated that, he usually visit VV the market in the evening for perishable items bearing in mind that the farmers who have no place to store the products would not want to go back home with it.

Our investigation revealed that some of the traders operating under the scotch of sunlight would have rented stores from the Local Government if such stores were available.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Lusada market was found to be of immense social economic value not only to the sellers and buyers but also Nigeria as a country. Judging by the spate of unemployment in the country and the number of people earning a living by patronizing the market, it stands to reason to conclude that Lusada market is of immense socio-economic value to Nigeria.

Considering the extent of cordiality prevailing among the sellers in the market, any attempt at reinforcing the sense of togetherness among the traders will be an effort towards fostering sense of unity among diverse ethnic groups in the country.

Some blocks of stores which are under construction in the market may have to be completed duly for the sake of moving some of the traders in to a more dignifying trading environment.

Government of Ado Odo Ota Local Government may take direct interest in enhancing the lots of the traders in Lusada market by investing funds into registered trade associations to be disbursed to their members in form of soft loans. The government should also consider rehabilitating the deplorable road in the market and possibly extend it to some neighboring communities to facilitate movement of goods in and out of the market.

The health officials from sanitary unit of the Local Government should be encouraged to monitor sanitation of the market with a view to forestalling outbreak of disease or likely incidence of food poisoning.

Considering the volume of money that exchange hands on each market day, it may be a wise decision for investors to site a micro finance bank or a branch of commercial bank in the market environment as the nearest bank to the market is situated in Crawford University. Alternative to this is to travel some kilometers to Agbara to avail banking services.

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Амос Олутунде Абисоје
Ехизођие Дејвид Игодало

**Социокултурни значај пијаце Лусада за становнике Игбеза
 заједнице (општина) у Адо одо оти, локалну власт и државу Огун**

Као и многи други концепти, пијаца може да има многа значења, али, у контексту овог истраживања, опажа се као јавни простор за куповину и продају (робе). Обично је стратешки лоцирана тако да буде лако доступна људима свих животних позива, за разне облике пословних трансакција. Подаци за овај рад су добијени методом партиципације с опсервацијом, комбинованим с кључним техникама интервјуисања информаната. Истраживањем се настојало да се утврди да ли пијаца Лусада служи и другим сврхама, поред тога што представља место размене добара и услуга. Налази су били интригантни и протезали су се од јединствене административне структуре пијаце до разних правила, санкција и казни за дужнике међу члановима пијачне заједнице. Поред економских трансакција, пијаца промовише мирну коегзистенцију тако што омогућава људима с различитим интересима и залеђима да ступају у међусобне односе, настојећи да, у атмосфери куповине и продаје, задовоље сопствене интересе. У студији се препоручује да се локалне власти, на чијој територији се пијаца налази, и, чак, власти државе Огун поистовете са трговцима, унапређујући инфраструктурне капацитете. Такође, складност заједништва различитих трговачких удружења, која би могла да се региструју као кооперативе, може бити ојачана финансијском подршком у облику „меких“ кредита.

Кључне речи: пијаца, заједница, санкције, кооператива