

DETERMINANTS OF LOCATIONAL CHOICES FOR INFORMAL ECONOMIC OPERATIONS IN THE KANO METROPOLIS

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Abstract

This study examined the determinants of locational choices for informal economic operations in Kano Metropolis. The quantitative research method was adopted with the use of structured questionnaire (384) to collect data from six clusters taking into consideration the population of each cluster to get the right proportion of desired samples. The study adopted a purposive non-probability sampling technique to be able to target the needed respondents. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that socio-economic characteristics such as educational qualification, distance to work, and income are some of the determining factors of informal economic location with an F value of 4.528 and P value 0.000 (less than the Alpha value 0.05). Also, the scale and nature of informal economic operation in Kano metropolis shows a significant relationship with location ($F= 7.758$ and P value 0.000) with adjusted R square of 0.254 which shows that six predictor variables explained about 25.4% of location of informal economic activities in Kano metropolis. Most Operators (49.2%) do business on road setback with reasons that they have more patronage from customers due to their proximity to roads, and their location on the available space and centrality ranks first, second and third reasons for location respectively. It is therefore recommended that retail outlets should be provided where operators can be easily accessed and creation of awareness on the impact of inappropriate location of their businesses to the goal of achieving a more vibrant and liveable city.

Keywords: Economy, Operators, Informal, locational factors, determinants, Informal Activities

Introduction

The informal economy was first coined in a study on low income economic activities in Nima, Ghana by Hart (1973) where he described it as being different from formal economy on the basis of enumeration. Informal economy comprises of workers with low income earnings against high cost of living and thus have to survive from constant credits from neighbours, and thereby rely on additional source of income from informal activities for survival (Yakson, 2000). The informal sector is also known as that which consist largely of unorganized and unincorporated businesses to which legal restrictions and remunerations does not apply (Lipton, 1984). Chen (2005) broadly defined informal sector as a sector that enterprises are not legally regulated and employment relationships not legally regulated or protected. Though, the Operators and participating stakeholders in the informal sector had over the years experienced improvement in standard of living, sources of income and a great poverty reduction (Sulaimon, 2014). Yet, their activities

pose challenges to efficient urban management due to poor location sites that have implications. In addition, the unplanned nature of locating informal economic activities in the urban space initiates planning challenges, such as encroachment on public spaces, encroachment on pedestrian right of way, pollution and in some cases traffic congestion (Mwau, 2009). Lekwa (2015) revealed that provisions for informality is not normally included in physical development plans which encourages the operators to device ways of sourcing for spaces for their trading without considering the effect on functionality and aesthetics of the city.

The right place to set up an informal economic activity is the paramount concern of any operator as the area of location will determine the strength or weakness of the business operation (Yakson, 2000). This can be attributed to the fact that operators seek to maximize profits by locating in areas that will enable them be as close to customers and other servicing activities as possible as well as distance operations far away from competition. The choice of setting up an operational space is often influenced by social, cultural and political environment (Mohammed, 2016) and by extension, influences the operator's ability to access and secure space for operation. With the continual competition over space, there is great interest for urban public spaces to accommodate the ever-increasing economic activities sprouting in urban areas. Urban public spaces therefore play a significant role in the lives of the informal operators as public spaces present them with social and economic benefits by serving as a place for trade and other personal activities which is mostly evident in most cities in the developing countries (Mohammed, 2016). Informal operations occupy undeveloped spaces such as streets, road setbacks, front of houses, pedestrian walkways, open spaces in urban areas, which are propelled by some underlying reasons like proximity to family members, place of residence, easy access to roads and customers, and affordable space for rent (Muraya, 2004).

Ubogu et al., (2011) in their study explained that businesses in urban areas thrive in locations where infrastructural facilities, value chains, and supply of expertise and labour exists at the peak periods and little or no competition with other operators. Chepkemei (2016) also established that, customer threshold, pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow are strong determinants for location of businesses. This explains why informal businesses are concentrated near junctions and bus stops. The desire to work close to home was another factor especially for women which enables them do household chores and attend to their family while attending to business. The notable characteristics and growth of the informal economy and its associated impact on poverty and employment, vulnerability, inclusion and exclusion of the informal economy, amongst other features were also ascertained by other studies (Chepkemei, 2016; Majadibodu, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Abdulquadri et al., 2022). Chepkemei (2016) adds that, informal activities operate at locations where there is high human traffic flow and a ready market set up for their business, which poses some challenges to planning. However, he recommended that effective policy framework that recognizes the spatiality of the informal business should be integrated into informal enterprises in urban areas (Chepkemei, 2016). In addition, Muhammed (2016) and Majadibolu (2016) studied the development of street trading and challenges of small-scale economic activities regarding space, infrastructure and non-compatibility with surrounding neighbourhoods as problems associated with informal business operations in urban areas. They also revealed that harassment, poor working environment and work space, weak government support, finance and entrepreneurial skills hindered the smooth thrive of informal operators. This agrees with Abdulquadri et al., (2022) who noted that the absence of informal welfare, access to credit facilities, non-membership of association, space, and experience of all forms harassment due to poor locations were the major factors rendering informal operators vulnerable to source of livelihood.

Weak Physical Planning and Development Control were also associated with the woes of the informal economy due to non-review of master plans/ planning schemes in most cities, where old principles and

concepts adopted from western ideas have little or no relevance to the developing country cities of today (Barwa, 1995; Rukmana, 2007; Miraftab, 2009; Roy, 2009; Doe, 2015; Lekwa, 2015; Chepkemei, 2016). The traditional idea of having market areas around small settlements and close to people is currently outdated, because, markets now exist farther away from living quarters/ homes. The location of shopping malls at public buildings, such as place of worships and town halls increases the convenience of access to goods and services without necessarily traveling to markets. This encourages the growth of informal economic activities which sprawls into reserved spaces as set-backs and future developments, thereby impeding city aesthetics, increasing traffic congestion and thrive of nefarious activities (Doe, 2015).

Although, the implications of location of informal activities on the physical and social environment have been studied (Chepkemei, 2016; Majadibodu, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Ndumbaro, 2014; Tshuma and Jari, 2013); there exists a lacuna on the underlying factors why operator's locate where they do and their explanatory factors. It is pertinent to investigate Kano, being the centre of commerce and a commercial nerve of Nigeria where informal economy contributes approximately 60-70% of output and employment (Kano State Government, 2018). The study would uncover the reasons why operators locate where they do so as to give room for improvement as a way of promoting inclusion and creating harmony between the components of the environment and in the long run provide revelations with similar locations having same status with the aforesaid location. This study therefore seeks to assess the determinant factors for locational choices of informal economic operators in Kano Metropolis. The study outcomes would add an understanding of the reasons for choice of business location from the viewpoints of operators, which would help policy formulation and future planning toward improvement of their business environment.

Material and Methods

The Study area

Kano Metropolis comprises eight local government areas though only six local governments areas are wholly within the metropolis and it's located between latitude $11^{\circ} 25'N$ to $12^{\circ} 40'N$ and longitude $8^{\circ} 35'E$ to $8^{\circ} 45'E$. It covers a total land area of 499 square kilometers with a population of 2,828,861 persons according to the National Population Commission (2006) projected to 2020 which gives approximately 4,393,009 persons with a growth rate of 3.2 percent. The metropolis is one of Nigeria's fastest growing urban centers which has continuously attracted people as a result of the commercial and industrial prosperity. Kano city has for centuries been an important commercial and industrial nerve centre of Northern Nigeria attracting millions from all parts of the country and beyond. Kano has developed a diverse economy, establishing itself as a center for industry, agriculture and commerce. Kano has grant a continuous and steady market for both semi-processed and manufactured products. The amount of trading activities performed daily especially in Kurmi, Katin Kwari, Kwanar Singer, Muhammad Abubakar Rimi and Dawanu market demonstrates Kano as a market for different goods. The six local government areas within Kano metropolis are Tarauni, Nassarawa, Fagge, Gwale, Kano Municipal and Dala local government area with Kumbotso and Ungogo partly covered in the metropolis.

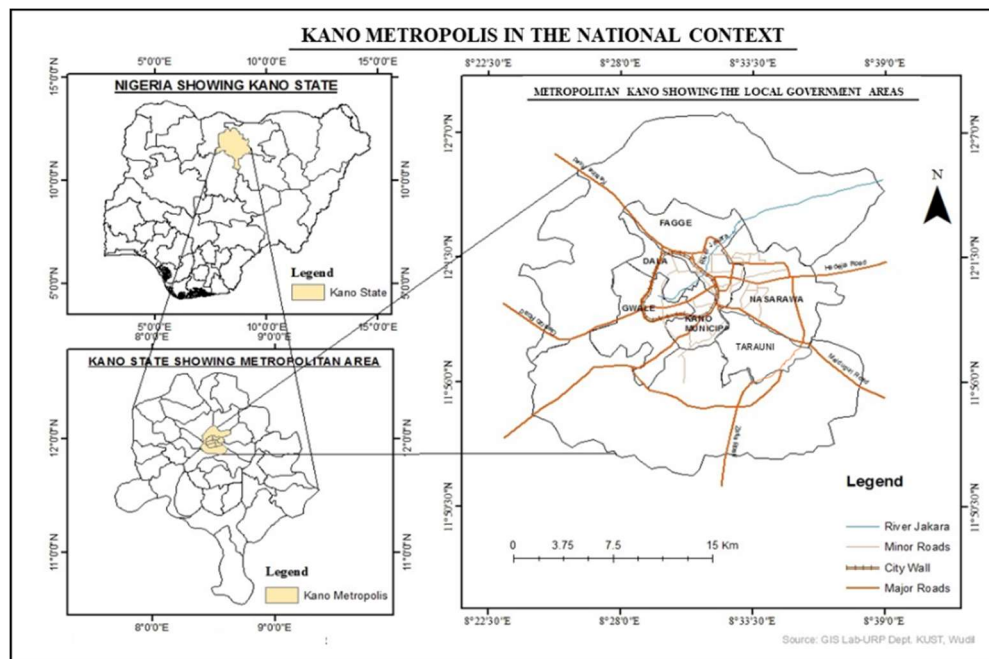


Figure 1: Kano Metropolis in the National context

Source: GIS laboratory, URP Dept, ADUSTECH, Wudil, Kano

Method of Data Collection

Survey research method was employed to assess the determining factors of locational choices in Kano metropolis with the use of quantitative method of data collection. The survey covered six local government areas regarded as clusters. In this study a purposive (non- probability) sampling technique was employed to get the target population using Cochran's formula for indefinite population since the research population comprises of persons engaging in informal economic activities which has no specific number using the formula $n_0 = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$

$$e^2$$

Where n_0 is the sample size, z is the selected criteria value of desired confidence level, p is the estimated proportion of an attribute that is present in the population, $q = 1-p$ and e is the desired level of precision.

The sample size was calculated assuming 50% of the population proportion are into informal activities at 95% confidence level, therefore $p = 0.5$, $q = 1-0.5=0.5$, $e = 0.05$ and $z = 1.96$.

$$n_0 = \frac{(1.96)^2(0.5)(0.5)}{(0.05)^2} = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384.16 = 384$$

The sample size of 384 was then employed. The sample sizes for each cluster was extracted from the population of each local government within the metropolis. This was done by using the percentage of each cluster to the total population to calculate the sample size as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Population and sample size

S/N	Local government area	2020Projected Pop.	Percentage	Sample size
1	Dala	650,849	19.3	74
2	Fagge	310,994	9.2	35
3	Gwale	556,146	16.5	63
4	Kano Municipal	576,998	17.2	66
5	Nasarawa	926,961	27.5	106
6	Tarauni	344,797	10.3	40
Total		3,366,745	100	384

Source: Author's compilation (2020).

Data were presented using tables, charts and graphs. Also, inferential statistics such as analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyse data collected. The determinants of locational choice were further analysed using cross tabulation for comparison within and across study clusters.

Results and Discussion

Socio-economic characteristics

Table 2 revealed that the operators of informal economic activities are mostly male (70% from each cluster) in Kano Metropolis. The cultural factor of Northern Nigeria recommends males to carter for their family's economic needs. Thus, the predominance of the male gender in the informal economic activities as against women (female) who stay at home to handle domestic needs. This explains why there are more male respondents as compared to the females.

More so, majority (41.7%) of the respondents are in their productive age of 20-30 years, and 31% between 31-40 years of age. This suggests that informal activities are youth driven, who engage in different business type in order to earn a living and cater for their families. Interestingly, most (41%) of the operators have formal education and have schooled up to secondary and tertiary institutions. Only 21.4% of the respondents have no formal education in Kano metropolis. This perhaps, explains the initial advantage of operator's locational knowledge on business space for high turn overs and a great potential base for improvement and integration for urban renewal by the Urban Managers. Additionally, the monthly income of most operators (35.9%) in Naira is between 20,000 and 40,000 and the least (14.3%) 60,000 naira and above.

Findings show that majority of the informal economic operators are indigenes of Kano with a total of 81% and 19% for migrants. Furthermore, 78.1% of the respondents rely solely on the proceeds of their business as they do not have alternative source(s) of income while most operators (40.6%) travel relatively short distance (within 1km) to work, therefore, they will be willing to adjust to any improvement geared towards further harnessing their source of livelihood.

Table 2: Socio Economic Characteristics of Respondents

	Socioeconomic Characteristics	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	323	84.1
	Female	61	15.9
Age	Less than 20 years	13	3.4
	20-30 years	160	41.7
	31-40 years	119	31.0
	41-50 years	61	15.9
	51 – 60 years	22	5.7
	Above 60 years	9	2.3
Education	No formal education	82	21.4
	Primary	39	10.2
	Secondary	173	45.1
	Tertiary	90	23.4
Monthly income (N)	Below 20,000	120	31.3
	20,000-40,000	138	35.9
	41,000-60,000	71	18.5
	Above 60,000	55	14.3
Migration status	Migrant	73	19.0
	Indigene	311	81.0
Alternative source of income	Yes	84	21.9
	No	300	78.1
Distance to work	Less than 500m	102	26.6
	1km	156	40.6
	2km	81	21.1
	Above 2km	45	11.7

Source: Field Work, 2020.

Characterization of informal economic activities in Kano Metropolis

Nature of informal operation

Table 3 categorized informal economic activities in Kano metropolis into three sub sectors. These are: the production sub-sector which deals with production of tangible goods such as small scale manufacturing, welding, furniture making; the service sub-sector includes repair and maintenance work of automobiles, tailoring, hair dressing and; the retail sub-sector such as enterprises engaging in buying and selling of basic products including general daily provision, fruits and vegetables, foods and drinks.

Table 3: Nature of Informal Economic Activities

		Local government areas						
		Tarauni	Gwale	Fagge	Municipal	Nassarawa	Dala	Total
Distribution of respondents by LGA								
	Count	40	63	35	66	106	74	384
	Percentage (%)	10.4	16.4	9.1	17.2	27.6	19.3	100
Nature of enterprise								
Production	Count	3	4	0	0	16	6	29
	Percentage (%)	7.5	6.3	0.0	0.0	12.3	8.1	7.6
Service	Count	13	12	2	6	38	23	94
	Percentage (%)	30.0	20.6	5.7	9.1	38.7	31.1	24.5
Retail`	Count	25	46	33	60	52	45	261
	Percentage (%)	62.5	73.0	94.3	90.9	49.1	60.8	67.9

Source: Field Work, 2020.

Operators in the production sub-sector in Kano Metropolis add up to 7.9%, 24.5% are in the service sub-sector while 67.9% are in the retail sub-sector. The nature of informal economic operation is a great determinant factor of location as those in the retail sub-sector (trading) are situated more on road setback, pedestrian walkway and open spaces.

Scale of enterprise

Majority of the informal economic activities in Kano metropolis are micro enterprises (52%) that is informal operations with less than 10 employees, followed by sole business operators (45%) while small scale enterprises (with 10 to 49 employees) takes up only 3%. No category falls under the medium enterprise (enterprises with over 50 employees). This is in line with the classification of informal activities by SMEDAN (2020). However, the need for reclassification to include sole business operations that do not require employees is important as 45% of operators in the study falls within this category as presented in figure 2.

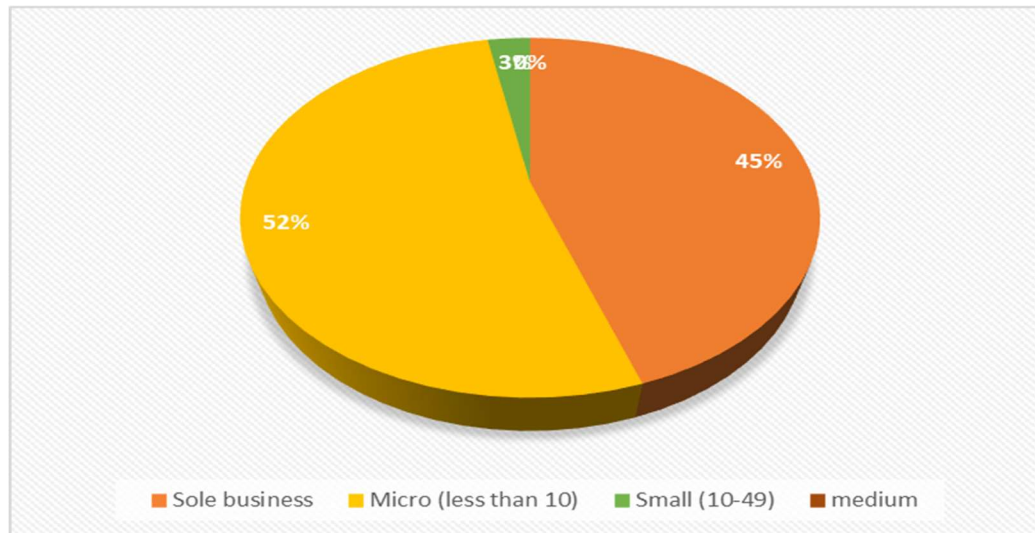


Figure 2: Scale of Enterprise in Kano Metropolis

Source: Field Work, 2020.

Source of space for trading

Figure 3 shows that operators in the study area seek for space from government authority (11%), which is mostly prominent in Fagge and Municipal where spaces are allocated on temporary basis due to an ongoing road and shopping complex constructions. Sourcing of spaces from land and shop owners amount to 23 percent and 28 percent respectively while allocation of space by operators has the largest percentage of 34 percent. Other sources include market chairman, heads of parks and transportation companies allocating certain spaces under their care to operators.

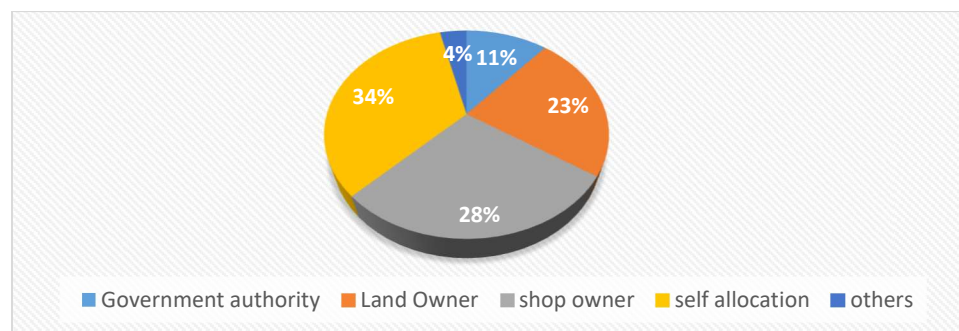


Figure 3: Source of space for trading

Source: Field Work, 2020

Structure type

Table 4 highlights the structure types of informal operators in the six clusters ranging from open spaces to shops. Permanent structures take up 37.5 percent, followed by temporary sheds (29.4%) and open spaces (22.6%). This shows that over 60% of operators use temporary structures such as kiosk, container and umbrella shades in carrying out their activities. These structure types are not far-fetched as determinants of location such as access to road and customers plus available space are mostly reasons behind choice of location. Therefore, the structures for operation would not be their priority as source of spaces used are mostly self -allocated.

Table 4: Structure types for informal economic operations

		Local Government Areas						
		Tarauni	Gwale	Fagge	Municipal	Nasarawa	Dala	Total
Distribution of respondents by LGA								
	F	40	63	35	66	106	74	384
	%	10.4	16.4	9.1	17.2	27.6	19.3	100
Structure type								
Permanent	F	15	25	3	4	64	33	144
	%	37.5	39.7	8.6	6.1	60.3	44.6	37.5
Kiosk	F	2	0	0	2	4	6	14
	%	5.0	0.0	0.0	3.0	3.8	8.1	3.6
Container	F	4	4	2	0	9	7	26
	%	10.0	6.3	5.7	0.0	8.5	9.5	6.8
Temporary shed	F	10	17	14	45	15	12	113
	%	25.0	27.0	40.0	68.2	14.2	16.2	29.4
Open space	F	9	17	16	15	14	16	87
	%	22.5	27.0	45.7	22.7	13.2	21.6	22.6

Source: Field Work, 2020

Comparing among the clusters shows that Nasarawa has the highest number of operators using permanent structures for their informal economic activities (60.3%) followed by Dala (44.6%). gwale and Tarauni followed closely with 39.7% and 37.5% respectively. Fagge and Municipal ranked last with 8.6% and 6.1% respectively. Furthermore, findings on temporary shed usage shows that Municipal (68.2%) and Fagge (40%) ranked first and second. Nasarawa (14.2%) and Dala (16.2%) however have the least operators with temporary sheds. This can be attributed to the fact that Nasarawa and Dala ranked first and second in informal operators using permanent structures. Fagge (45.7%) surpasses all other clusters in the use of open spaces with Nasarawa (13.2) ranking last in open space usage for informal economic activities

3.2.5 Location of informal economic activities

Location is of paramount importance in business. This is why informal economic operators are said to usually locate their business where they can have access to customers and be easily accessed. Table 5 shows informal economic activities located in shops (39.8%), road setbacks (49.2%), walkways (4.4%), open or public spaces (2.1%) and home based (4.4%). Comparing the clusters however shows that Fagge and Municipal have 80% and 84.8% respectively of informal operators on road setbacks which can be attributed to the fact that most operators in the two locations render retailing services, so, spaces with guarantee of accessibility is their top desire and interest.

Table 5: Location of Informal Economic Activities

		Local Government Areas						
		Tarauni	Gwale	Fagge	Municipal	Nasarawa	Dala	Total
Distribution of respondents by LGA								
	F	40	63	35	66	106	74	384
	%	10.4	16.4	9.1	17.2	27.6	19.3	100
Location of activities								
Shop	F	17	22	6	2	71	35	153
	%	42.5	34.9	17.1	3.0	67	47.3	39.8
Road setback	F	20	30	28	56	28	27	189
	%	50.0	47.6	80.0	84.8	26.4	36.5	49.2
Pedestrian walkway	F	1	5	1	6	0	4	17
	%	2.5	7.9	2.9	9.1	0.0	5.4	4.4
Open/ public space	F	2	1	0	2	0	3	8
	%	5.0	1.6	0.0	3.0	0.0	4.1	2.1
Front of house	F	0	5	0	0	7	5	17
	%	0.0	7.9	0.0	0.0	6.6	6.8	4.4

Source: Field Work, 2020.

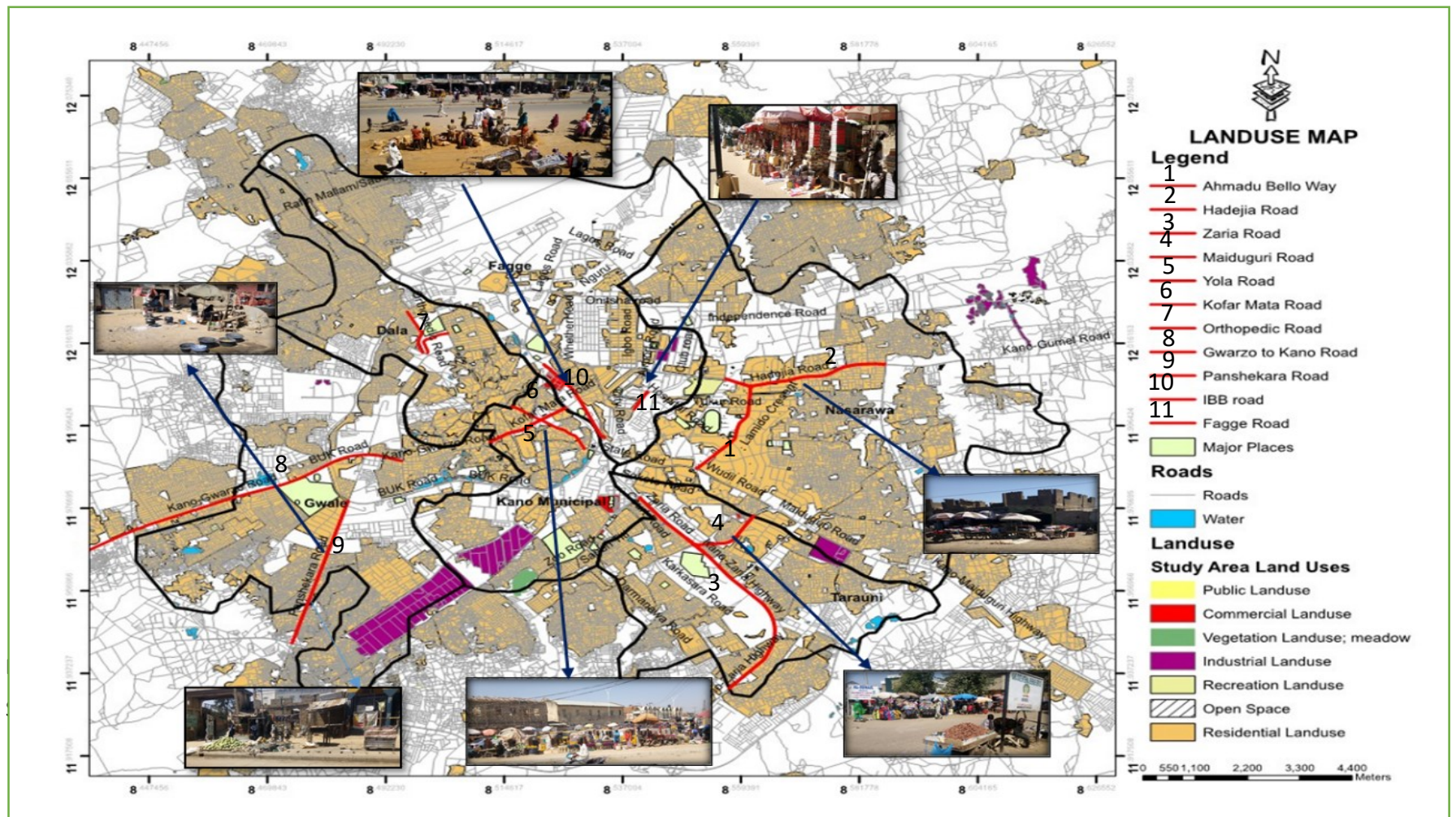


Figure 4 shows the different land uses in Kano metropolis and portrays the various routes the study employed within the six local government areas with informal economic activities adjoining the roads. The location of activities ranges from shops, road setbacks, walkways to open spaces which in turn can influence the vulnerabilities of the operators. Attached to the figure are plates for visual understanding of findings

Relationship between socio-economic characteristics and location of informal economic operations

The relationship between socio-economic characteristics of respondents and location of informal economic operators was established using regression model with independent variables (IV): distance to work, age of respondents, other source of income, migration status, monthly income, gender, educational qualification and location of operation as dependent variables (DV).

Table 6 shows the prediction power of the regression model, the obtained adjusted R square of 0.061 shows that seven predictor variables explained about 6.1% of location of informal economic activities in Kano metropolis.

Table 6: Model summary for Socio economic characteristics as determinant of Location

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
Location of informal activities	.279 ^a	.078	.061	.96026

a. Predictors: (Constant), Distance to work, Age of respondents, other source of income, Migration status, Monthly income, Gender of respondent, Educational qualification of respondents

b. Dependent Variable: Location of activity

The ANOVA table 7 shows the overall significance of the regression model, the F value (F= 4.528) and P value 0.000 (less than the Alpha value 0.05) shows that there is a significant relationship between the predictors (socio economic characteristics) and location of informal economic activities in Kano metropolis.

Table 7: ANOVA showing relationship between socio-economic characteristics and location

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	29.229	7	4.176	4.528	.000 ^b
Residual	346.706	376	.922		
Total	375.935	383			

a. Dependent Variable: Location of activity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Distance to work, Age of respondents, is there other source of income, Migration status, Monthly income, Gender of respondent, Educational qualification of respondents

Relationship between Characteristics of informal economic operation in Kano Metropolis and location of operations.

In order to ascertain the relationship between characteristics of informal economic activities in Kano metropolis and their location, linear regression model was used to establish such relationship with independent variables (IV); payment of tax, Nature of enterprise, Scale of enterprise, Structure type, Source of space for trading, as well as business registration and location of operation as dependent variable (DV).

Table 8 shows the prediction power of the regression model, the obtained adjusted R square of 0.254 shows that six predictor variables explained about 25.4% of location of informal economic activities in Kano metropolis.

Table 8: Model summary for characteristics of informal economic operation as determinants of location

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.504 ^a	.254	.242	.86235

a. Predictors: (Constant), payment of tax, Nature of enterprise , Scale of enterprise, Structure type, Source of space for trading, Is the business registered

b. Dependent Variable: Location of activity

The ANOVA table 9 shows the significance of the regression model, the F value (F= 21.422) and P value 0.000 (less than the Alpha value 0.05) shows that there is a significant relationship between the predictors showing the overall characteristics of informal operations in Kano metropolis (payment of tax, Nature of enterprise, Scale of enterprise, Structure type, Source of space for trading, Is the business registered) and location of operations.

Table 9: ANOVA for characteristics of informal economic operation as determinants of location

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	95.581	6	15.930	21.422	.000 ^b
Residual	280.354	377	.744		
Total	375.935	383			

a. Dependent Variable: Location of activity

b. Predictors: (Constant), payment of tax, Nature of enterprise, Scale of enterprise, Structure type, Source of space for trading, Is the business registered

Reasons behind choice of location

Table 10 reveals that the choice of locating businesses in shops, on road setbacks, walkways and open spaces stems from the need to have access to roads and customers (43%), locating where there is availability of space (27.1%). Operators also choose to occupy different spaces because

of centrality (13.8%), availability of cheap shops (1.8%), comfortability (3.1%), sale of same product (2.9%) and safety (8.3%). The main factors are the availability of space and nearness to customers which has highest percentages across the clusters. These imply that informal economic activities grow in strategic areas where spaces are economically viable.

Table 10: Reasons behind choice of location

		Local Government Areas						Total
		Tarauni	Gwale	Fagge	Municipa l	Nasaraw a	Dala	
Distribution of respondents by LGA								
	F	40	63	35	66	106	74	384
	%	10.4	16.4	9.1	17.2	27.6	19.3	100
Reason behind choice of location								
Access to road and customers	F	21	30	21	21	44	28	165
	%	52.5	47.6	60.0	31.8	41.5	37.8	43.0
Available space	F	6	12	7	25	35	19	104
	%	15.0	19.0	20.0	37.9	33.0	25.7	27.1
Centrality	F	2	2	1	12	20	16	53
	%	5.0	3.2	2.9	18.2	18.9	21.6	13.8
Comfort	F	5	2	0	0	0	5	12
	%	12.5	3.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.8	3.1
Cheap shop	F	6	0	0	0	0	1	7
	%	15.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.4	1.8
Sale of same product	F	0	0	5	6	0	0	11
	%	0.0	0.0	14.3	9.1	0.0	0.0	2.9
Safety	F	0	17	1	2	7	5	32
	%	0.0	27.0	2.9	3.0	6.6	6.8	8.3

Source: Field Work, 2020.

Ranking of reasons behind choice of location

Figure 6 shows that access to roads and customers, available space and centrality top the list ranking first, second and third respectively. Safety and comfort ranked fourth and fifth while sale of same product and cheap shop are the least determinant for the choice of location in Kano Metropolis ranking sixth and seventh respectively. This is in line with Muraya (2004) and Chepkemei (2016) on the reasons behind locating in a particular space for informal economic activities as operators prefer locating where they can have easy access to space and customers as the first three determinants fall under these categories.

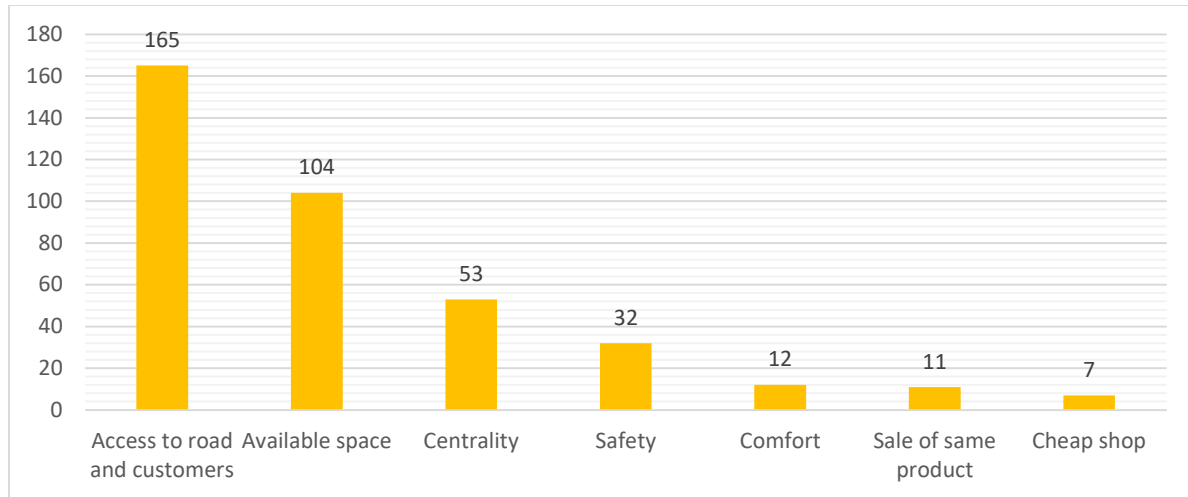


Figure 6: Ranking of the determinants for the choice of location

Similarities and differences in choice of location

The determinants of choice of location in each of the clusters are presented to show similarities and differences among each clusters. This is particularly to ensure clear understanding of the determinants for location in each of the local government areas. Operators in Fagge and Tarauni indicated that their determinant factor for location is mainly to have access to road and customers followed by available space. Tarauni however has operators who sees availability of cheap shops as a determinant factor for choosing to locate in the area as Tarauni is one of the areas where operators locate in shops (42%).

Operators in Kano Municipal opined that available space for displaying their product is the primary determinant factor of location as available space ranked the highest followed by access to road and customer then centrality. Taking Gwale into consideration, operators choice of location hinged on access to road and customer. Surprisingly safety ranked second determinant factor followed by available space. Gwale however stood out as the only place where safety serves as a determinant factor for choice of location. Nassarawa and Dala also have access to road and customers, available space and centrality as the first three determinants of locational choices.

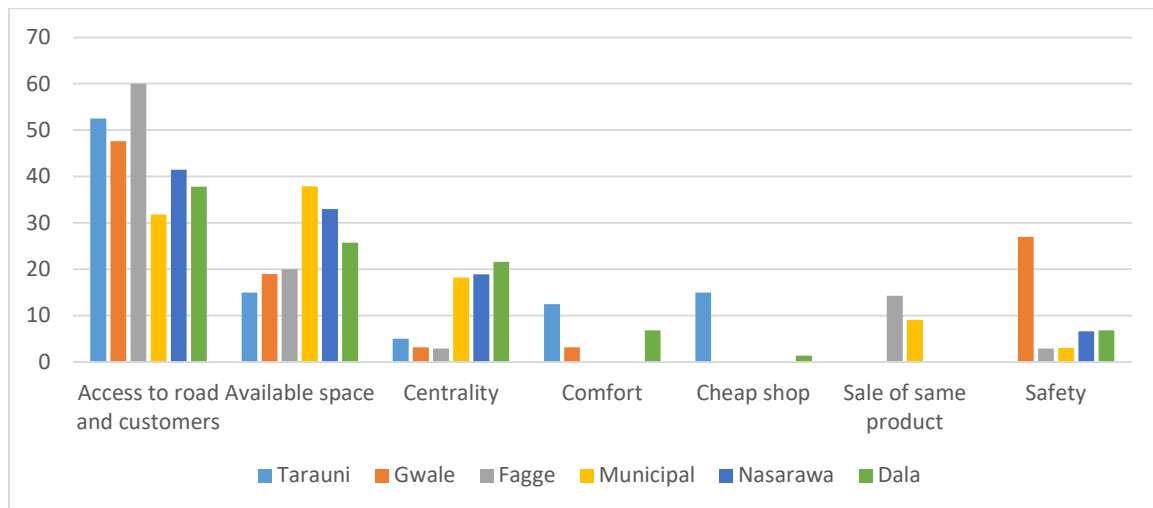


Figure 6: Similarities and differences in choice of location

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study assessed determinants of locational choices for informal economic operators in Kano metropolis. This is against the background that many studies (Mwau, 2009; Majadibodu, 2016; Chepkemei, 2016) focused on the impact of location of informal activities in urban areas without due consideration on the reasons behind such location from the perspective of the operators. Findings show that there is a significant relationship between socio-economic characteristics of operators and location. Findings also show that characteristics of informal activities are accordingly related to where operators locate. Understanding the underlying reasons behind location of informal economic activities in urban areas as highlighted in the study gives an insight on the need for space and how to provide such space in such a way that will be in line with the need of the operators as informal economic operators in Kano metropolis mostly locate within road setbacks giving reasons behind such choice of location to be: access to road and customers and available space. It is therefore important to note that if spaces are made available for informal economic activities where they can easily be accessed, then it will help in combatting encroachment on open spaces and traffic congestions visible in our urban areas.

The following recommendations are put forward to enhance location of informal economic operations in Kano Metropolis:

- i. There should be designated areas for commercial activities in each neighbourhood. It is proposed that such spaces should be provided within the neighbourhood center to make them easily accessible.
- ii. Provision of subsidized shops and/or retail outlets within walkable distance in all neighbourhoods by local governments authorities for mini-marts and other light services such as tailoring shops, barbing salons. These shops should be strategically located within a 200-300m radius of the neighbourhood center.
- iii. There is a need for public enlightenment and sensitization of informal business operators on how their activities can hinder livability of the city. The local governments should take up this responsibility in partnerships with environmental NGOs to train and organize these enlightenment campaigns with Community Based Organizations and youth groups to drive these initiatives.
- iv. There is the need to include the needs of informal economic operators in terms of space in planning strategies so that the provision of spaces will go a long way in reducing the haphazard location on road setbacks and walkways.

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