

DISTRIBUTION AND SIZES OF INFORMAL AUTOMOBILE MECHANIC WORKPLACES IN KANO METROPOLIS, NIGERIA

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Abstract

Locations of informal economic activities are important in the urban spatial planning especially in cities of developing nations. Roadside automobile repair services, otherwise known as roadside mechanics are amongst the small businesses or informal industries that are common to all cities in Nigeria. This paper aimed at describing the spatial characteristics of the informal mechanic workplaces in Kano metropolis. Quantitative data related to the number, location and spatial pattern of distribution of the informal automobile workplaces were used. Direct field observation and measurements were employed while secondary data were collected from National Automobile Technicians Association (NATA). GIS based Nearest Neighbour Analysis was used to determine the locational pattern of distribution of the mechanic's places. It is found that there are a total of 1,763 registered garages located within the six local government areas of Kano metropolis. These were grouped into 58 units. The nearest neighbour index 0.4 was less than 1 and the z score of (-15.8) was less than 1.96; thus the spatial pattern of distribution of the garages has a clustered pattern. Based on their sizes, the workplaces were classified into 3 classes: large, medium and small garages. Majority of the workplaces are located on trunk B, that is state government roads, and trunk C which are minor roads. It is concluded that the large number and high concentration of the garages in some of the metropolitan local government areas is an indication of their and the high demand of their services by the public. It is recommended that statutory land allocation by the state ministry of Land and Physical Planning should take into cognisance the needs of the informal mechanics.

Keywords: Garages, Location, Cluster, Roadside, Nearest Neighbour Analysis.