

Market Architecture, an Effect of Roadside Trading in Port Harcourt Metropolis. A Case Study of Rumu-Woji Market, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The challenges of road side trading along major market roads in Port Harcourt Metropolis has brought about certain menace to the city. The efforts put in place by the Rivers State government to eradicate the act of roadside trading along market roads have been proven abortive. Various means employed by the government to stop the act of roadside trading have not been successful such as, relocation of traders, barricading market fences and forceful manhandling of traders and their goods, by the Rivers State task force. This act by the government has yielded no result, because the traders return to the act of roadside trading after some days. Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate the market architecture in Port Harcourt metropolis and identify the possible architectural issues leading to roadside trading. In order to achieve this, the type of market architecture in the study area was identified, the challenges caused by the market architecture were identified and how these challenges caused roadside trading. The research adopted the qualitative research approach. Personal observation and Interview were the means of data collection. Analysis of the data was achieved through descriptive and content analysis. The results from the study shows that the market architecture lacks inadequacy in the choice of building form, space provision for all categories of traders and inadequate location of spaces. In conclusion, the study reveals that the menace of roadside trading along market roads is architecturally inclined. And thus, the study recommends a review of the existing market architecture and subsequent market designs in Port Harcourt Metropolis in order to eradicate roadside trading.

Keywords: Market architecture, design, marketplaces, roadside trading, traders, customers, goods, markets

INTRODUCTION

The architecture of markets is very essential in every society as the need for goods and services is inevitable, so is a market. Markets serves as the economic power in every society, therefore serious attention should be given to the designing of marketplaces.

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A city can adopt different architectures for its market according to the goods and services rendered in the market. Market designs are also based on the weather conditions of the city. Most importantly, markets designs should be focused on the end users rather than imitating designs from other cities. It is advised that markets are designed in other to take care of the end users' needs. It will be of no importance in creating spaces in a market that cannot be used. Imagine creating a large space for a vegetable seller with probably only a table full of vegetables for sale. Such a space will not be utilized by such small scale trader and vice visa.

Therefore, adopting a bounded or unbounded, closed or open space or a combination of both spaces will prove more productive for efficient and effective market functionality. Such mixed design will accommodate the various categories of traders within the market setting [1–5].

The idea of neglecting key users (petty traders) of market places can cause serious issues in a city. Market designs should be done with total consideration of all users involved. This is because if any user is neglected, such users will find an alternative space for trading activities. This often leads to the illegal use of major roads and adjoining lands for trading activities [6–8].

Port Harcourt Metropolis, as the 5th most populous city in Nigeria has witnessed an unmatched increase in the influx of commercial activities along major roads, with each of the traders competing for an accessible location to display their goods in a bid to gain access to customers [9–11]. It was recorded that the increase in population is as a result of people moving from rural communities to urban cities. As people move to cities without employment opportunities. Petty trading becomes the alternative, hence the rapid increase in petty trading activities along market roads and adjoining lands.

Furthermore, the place of petty traders are often neglected in the designing of markets. This was gathered from the literature review of the area of research. Petty traders are often left with no choice than to create spaces for themselves. This has resulted in several issues in Port Harcourt Metropolis, with the government constantly trying to forcefully remove the traders from the road without addressing the cause of the traders' action [12–15].

The fact that market places have been proven to be places of socialization, designers of market places should focus on building design forms that encourage socialization across every social class for both traders and customers [16–18].

The architecture of markets back in the 20th century were mostly open spaces, usually at the centre of the city or community. Market spaces developed gradually from open spaces to the use of roof coverings without walls and then with walls.

The definition of “market” has been the same right from time immemorial. It is defined as the buying and selling of goods and services and can be referred to as a regular gathering of people for the purchase and sale of provisions, livestock, and other goods.

The functionality and workability of a market should be of great concern in order to give a positive perception of a city to dwellers and visitors [19–22]. The primary role and essence of having a good architecture of market in every society is to create a space where traders can comfortably bring their goods for sale and consumers can comfortably buy goods from traders.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The indiscriminate display of goods along major market roads for trading has resulted in disorderliness, hectic traffic congestion, drainage blockage, indiscriminate alteration of connecting lands to commercial activities, air pollution due to indiscriminate refuse dump, reduction in access road thereby causing vehicular and human traffic, poor and inadequate parking, visual intrusion, lack of safety of traders and customers and social crimes [23–25]. The fact that most neighbourhoods in Port Harcourt Metropolis have functioning markets would generally presuppose that no road side trading will be seen in these places. Unfortunately, this is not the situation as market spaces have become less accommodative, due to an increase in population growth as a result of people migrating from rural communities to Port Harcourt Metropolis. And due to the poor architecture of markets in Port Harcourt Metropolis which does not include spaces for petty traders and plans for future expansion, petty traders use major roads as their sales point.

AIM

The aim of this study is to ascertain how the market architecture influences roadside trading along major market roads, in Port Harcourt Metropolis, through the evaluation of the existing market architecture.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this research are to:

1. Identify the type of market architecture in Rumu-Woji market.
2. Identify the challenges caused by the type of market architecture.
3. Examine the impact of the challenges caused by the market architecture resulting to roadside trading.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised based on the research objectives:

1. What is the type of architecture in Rumu-Woji market?
2. What are the challenges resulting from the type of architecture?
3. What are the impact of these challenges on the environment?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is based on three theories:

1. The first theory is the theory of economics, by Adam Smith, 1776 [3] which has to do with the exchange of buying and selling; this involves traders meeting with customers for the purpose of buying and selling. The theory of economics explains various forms of exchange, however, this study was based on the physical form of exchange, where traders meets physically with customers for the purpose of buying and selling [26–28].
2. The theory of social space is the second theory that was considered for this research work. Henri Lefebvre [29] was the proponent of this theory in the year 2000. This theory talks about the production of social space, by which space is created and shaped through social practices and interactions.
3. The third theory is the theory of urban public space, by Gordon Cullen [16], stating that public spaces should be human centred design, implying the need to align designs with human perception and needs, making the space more inviting and comfortable [30–34].

Theory of Economics

In economics a market is said to be a composition of systems, institutions, procedures, social relations or infrastructures where people engage in the exchange of goods and services (buying and selling) either by barter or monetary exchange. The practice of goods exchange, either by barter or money was the practice of the ancient times. This however, has changed in recent times, as the practice of exchange now is strictly on monetary exchange [29, 35–38].

Madanipour 1999 [37], stated that, the importance of the market space based on its economic value cannot be overstressed. He stated that, the link of profitmaking deeds associated with public space is strongly rooted in the roots of economic concept. The Greek Agora, according to Madanipour, was initially oriented commercially as a market place. He went further to mention the medieval cities, which were major public spaces and were used as market places. The entire city according to Madanipour was in fact used as a market.

The Effect of the Architecture of Market on Buying and Selling

John Tracy 1999 [39], stated that if market architecture is efficient, it can possibly increase the economy of the city. This is due to the fact that, as market places are designed comfortably and attractive, end users' attention will be drawn to it and there will be increase in buying and selling activities [40–44].

She stated that, the main purpose in a market place is that of buying and selling. Traders want their goods to be seen and bought by customers. And customers wants to see all the available goods in the market clearly. She stated that the market architecture in every city should be such that these two factors are considered.

Theory of Urban Public Space

An urban public space is a space accessible to everyone in a society, it is a space that can function as a relaxation space, a space for certain public gathering and tourism. Looking at the description of an urban public space, arguments have been made on market spaces been an urban public space.

Market as an Urban Public Space

Tracy-White 2005 [45], stated that markets are major public spaces in every city and are used by all individuals dwelling in that city. Markets should therefore be designed as an urban public space with utmost technicality to accommodate every user, from the traders to the customers and other users [46–50]. She also stated that markets serve as the centre of attraction in every city. She stated that markets should be designed with detailed attention to every user's comfort and accessibility. She further stated that, most markets have been used as tourist attractions, as people visit cities, they spend some time in the city's market shopping for indigenous and new items. Lucas argued that Space and society are intertwined [36]. As markets serve as an urban public space that houses many social activities with political and commercial been conspicuous in recent time.

Cullen 2012 [16], stated that a failed architecture of market is not only problematic but a chaos in every society. As markets are the most public spaces visited in every city. The architecture has been limited to repetition all over a cities, whereas market designs should be done in the uniqueness of the end users [51].

Madanipour argued that, most urban spaces in the ancient cities started off as a market place, however limited attention is given to the economic role of market as an urban public space, despite its far reaching economic importance [37].

Market as an Urban Public Space the Political Facet

This section discusses the political dimension of market as an urban public space. Market places have been host to political functions right from ages. Market places being an urban public space in particular, has been a focal point for political power. This often plays out as the development of public spaces is usually a space where such authorities display their powers. These market places are seen as a great political symbol of state authority by the citizens and politicians, which reflects in the visitation of market places, especially during campaigns [37].

Theory of Social Space

Sophie and David argued that, markets clearly operate as key sites of sociability [49]. However, the form it takes is different, depending on the people involved. It can vary across different market sites, conditions and locations. Markets were found to provide four different social functions through research. These include, the opportunities provided for social interaction, the formation of social ties, social mixing across groups and social inclusion [52]. They further stated that, markets act significantly as sites for social interactions in a community. Sophie and David stated that, inadequate strategic planning and policy for markets in the national level should be reconsidered [49]. Suggestions from them stated market as key points of developing a community and locally developed policies should be supported. This suggestion is due to the huge successes recorded across farmers' markets with other markets dealing in dedicated goods in cities around the world. They stated that these markets function both and economically and as social spaces successfully. Sophie and David further highlighted that market designs should most importantly focus on the activities of the markets as they are not just places for buying and selling, but a great site for an inclusive sight for all dwellers of a city, whereby a depressed or lonely person can visit for sightseeing and escape depression and isolation [39, 45, 53].

In conclusion, the architecture of every space is built according to the function, use and needs of the people in that space. In a market place the focus is firstly on buying and selling of goods, where, traders want their goods to be seen easily. Customers also need to see clearly what they are buying; therefore, the market architecture should encourage adequate visibility.

Furthermore, the market place has been proven to be a place for socialization, and thus should be designed for maximum socialization in the form of interaction between traders and shoppers. And lastly it has been proven to be an urban public space that is visited by everyone. Therefore, it should be designed with utmost care and functionality as the most frequently visited public space.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used for this research is a qualitative method. And the type of qualitative method that was adopted is the case study method. As it is one of the architectural research methods used in architectural researches. Data was gathered from the market architecture through personal observation and interviews. The case and population sampled in this research were selected purposively. The selected market was Rumu-Woji Market located along Ikwerre road, in Port Harcourt local government area in Rivers State, Nigeria. The selected interviewees (population of the study) were, the head of the market union body and traders.

A total of 30 traders and one market union head was interviewed. To analyse the data from the interview, narrative summary was used and content analysis was used to analyse the data gotten from personal observation, which includes sketches and pictures.

The Area of Study (Rumu-Woji Market)

Rumu Woji market, previously known as Mile One Market, has been in existence as far back as 1968, as a makeshift market (temporary structures). It was however gutted with fire in the years, 1983, 2004, and 2013. Before the 2013 fire incident, the market was built as a solid two-storey building in the year 2011 and was commissioned on May 11th 2012, under the governorship of Chibuike Rotimi Amaechi in Rivers State. The market structure is in two phases, the phase two was recently completed by the immediate pass governor, Bar Nyesom Wike, and is yet to be occupied by traders. Rumu Woji market is a 2000 market capacity, with over 5000 traders, making it the second largest market in Port Harcourt Metropolis, in terms of shop capacity.

Qualitative Data Presentation

Summary of Interview with the Head of Market Union Body

This study, as stated earlier, adopted the qualitative research method. Personal observation and interviews were the primary tools used for data collection. The first step was interviewing various market union heads, usually referred to as market chairmen, followed by personal observation.

Summary of Interview with Traders

The Market Architecture

The building type in Rumu-Woji market is a solid two storey building with a ramp at the west side of the market, and staircases at the east side (Tables 1 and 2). The materials used for the construction

Table 1. Markets in the area of study.

S.N.	Question	Answer
1	What is the type of architecture in Rumu-Woji market?	A modern two storey building
2	What are the types of spaces in the market?	Lock up shops and attachments
3	What are the number of spaces provided for traders in the market?	2000 spaces, this includes the newly built yet to be occupied building.
4	What is the number of traders in the market?	Over 5000 traders
5	What is the ratio of spaces provided to traders?	The ratio of spaces to traders is a 1:3
6	What is the cost of spaces in the market?	1. Lock up shops (120,000–144,000) naira annually 2. Attachments (40,000) Naira annually
7	What are the challenges as a result of the market architecture?	1. Inadequate spaces for all the traders 2. Improper location of the provided spaces

Source: (Researcher, 2024).

Table 2. Markets in the area of study.

S.N.	Question	Answer
1.	What are the challenges as a result of the market architecture?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate spaces for all the traders 2. Improper location of the provided spaces 3. Unaffordable spaces 4. Lack of natural light and ventilation
2.	How does these challenges affect you as a trader?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not having adequate space in the market makes the market disorganised. 2. Customers are not seen easily. 3. Due to the location of the shops, there is lack of goods' visibility. 4. The lack of natural light and ventilation makes some shops dark and uncomfortable for both traders and customers. 5. Spaces are not easily accessible.

Source: (Researcher, 2022).



Image of Rumu-Woji market showing the building type of the market.

Attachments along market building as space provision for more in the market

Figure 1. Image of Rumu-Woji market.

Source: Researcher (2024).

of the building is a solid concrete slab, sand creed block and long span aluminium as the roof covering. The walls of the shops are with two window openings on the front view with a single door for entrance and exit. The shops are built with walkways in front of each shop. The building has the shops arranged in rectangular forms with courtyards at intervals (Figure 1).

Natural Ventilation of The Market Building

The lock up shops located at the outer perimeter of the building and the shops on the ground floor located within the court yards were observed to have good natural ventilation compared to those on the upper floors within the court yard. This is as a result of the direction of air flow (Figures 2 and 3).

Natural Lighting

The natural lighting of the shops in the market was observed to be 70% adequate because not all the shops had natural lighting. The introduction of court yards helped in bringing in natural lighting for some of the shops located in the inner part of the building (Figures 4 and 5), however poor natural lighting was observed in the shops located inside the building that were at a distance from the court yard. Goods in such shops could be seen clearly without the aid of artificial light. Shops that were located at the perimeter of the market building and court yards were all observed to have good natural lighting.

The Spaces in The Market and Dimension

The various spaces as observed in the market are, lock up shops and attachments. The lock up shops were measured to be 2 m×4 m (8 m²). While the attachments where of various sizes, ranging from 2.25 to 0.64 m². It was observed that spaces were not provided for all categories of traders, as some traders

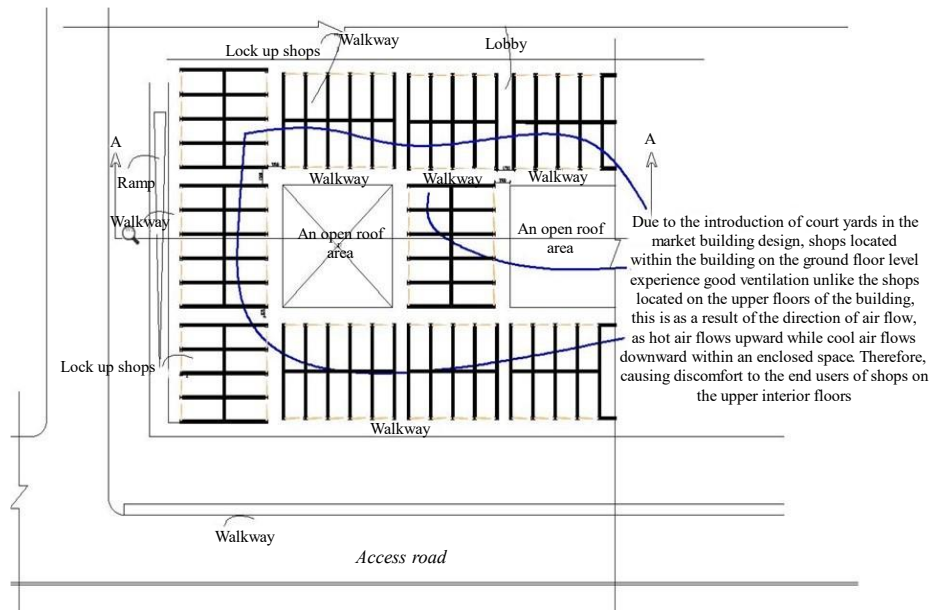


Figure 2. Section of floor plan of Rumu-Woji market
 Source: Researcher (2024).

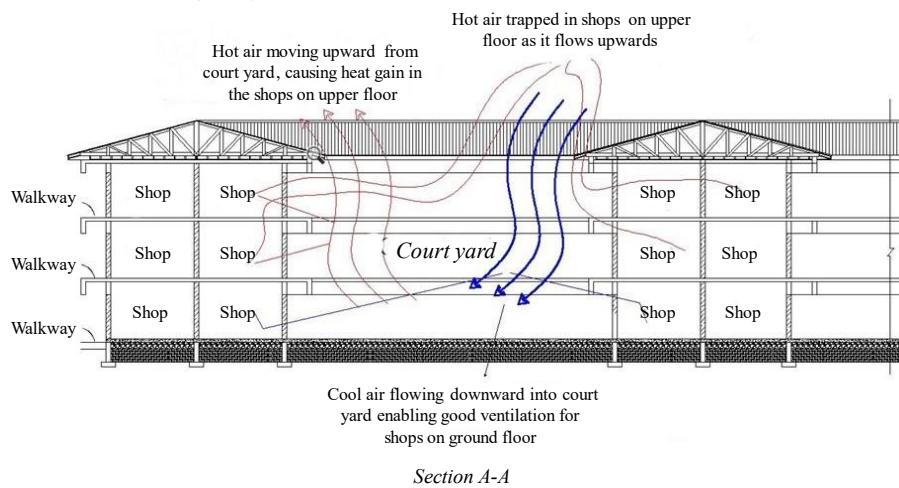


Figure 3. Section A-A showing ventilation analysis of Rumu-Woji Market.
 Source: Researcher (2024).



Figure 4. Image showing shops within the court yard of the market building that lacks natural lighting of Rumu-Woji market.

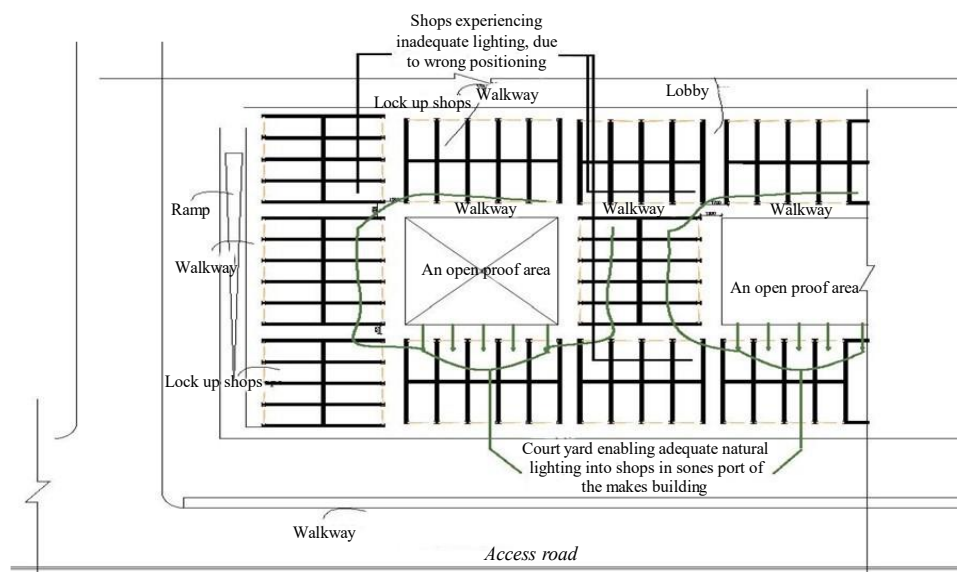


Figure 5. Image of Rumu-Woji floor plan, showing natural lighting analysis.

Source: Researcher (2024).

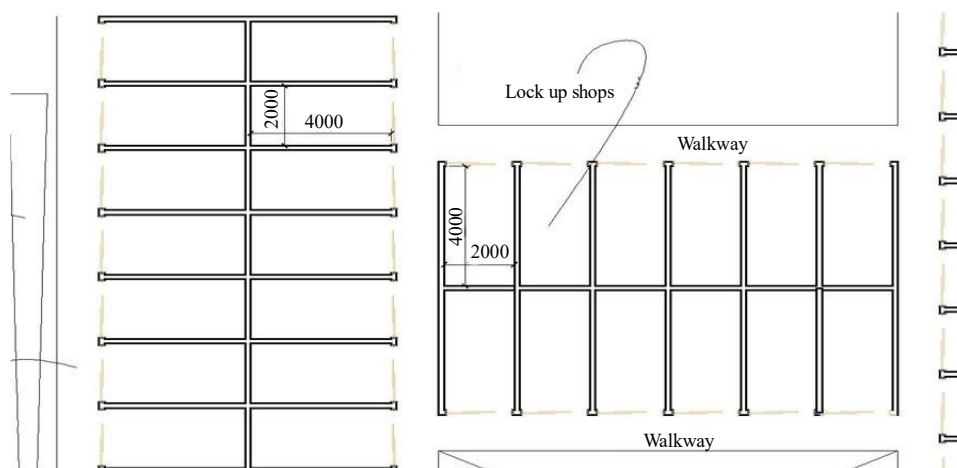


Figure 6. Image showing the dimension of shop spaces in Rumu-Woji market.

Source: Researcher (2024).

were seen selling along the market fence with the use of tables and umbrellas as sheds from the weather. Figure 6 shows the dimensions of shop spaces and the use of aluminium zinc as attachment to create spaces for traders within the court yard.

The Location of The Market and Accessibility

The location of Rumu-Woji market can be said to be central in Port Harcourt local government area as observed, this is because customers from town, which is the old Port Harcourt Township and customers from the later developed areas, like Obio-Akpor local government area, travel almost equal distance to the market (Figure 7). The market is easily accessible by traders bringing in their goods through road transportation.

The Location of Shops in The Market and Accessibility to Customers

The location of shops in the market as observed was not appropriate as every trader does not have equal opportunities of seeing customers approaching (Figure 8). This is also seen in the price difference in the rents of spaces in the market. Shops that are placed on the ground floor and clearly seen by customers are more expensive than the others, vice visa.



Figure 7. Image showing the use of zinc as an attachment space in Rumu-Woji market.

Source: Researcher (2024).

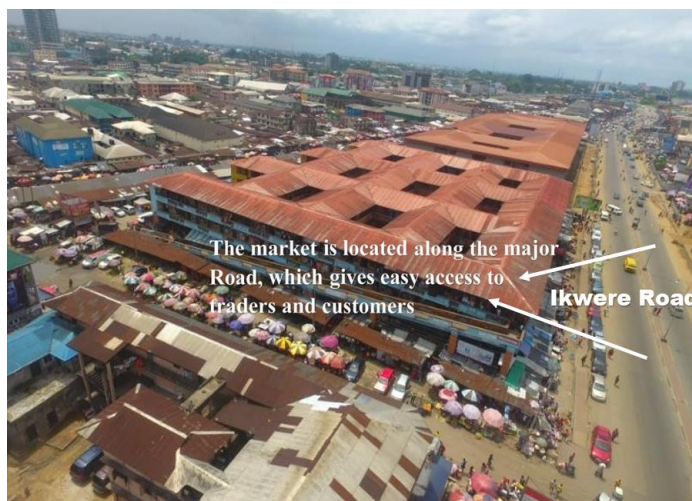


Figure 8. Image showing access road to Rumu-Woji Market.

Source: Researcher (2024).

In summary, the architecture of market according to the market theories in this study should encourage openness to foster the communication of buying and selling (Figure 9). Furthermore, market places has been proven to be sites of social gathering according to researcher and as such should be designed with utmost concerns of effective social interactions.

The study reveals that the market architecture of Rumu Woji market is not in conformity with the various market theories, and this has led to road side trading, since the market building was not designed to meet user's needs. The market architecture has not comfortably addressed the needs of the end users, thereby making them sort for alternative spaces to fulfil their needs.

The major focus of every market architecture should be geared towards visibility. As this is the sole purpose in a market place. Traders want to see customers approaching. Traders want their goods to be seen easily by approaching customers and customers want to see easily the goods they are buying.

Moreover, spaces have not been provided for all categories of traders; in particular, the petty traders were neglected in the market design. This forms a major reason for roadside trading in Port Harcourt metropolis. Therefore, to eradicate the issue of roadside trading in Port Harcourt metropolis, the architecture of the markets has to be reviewed.

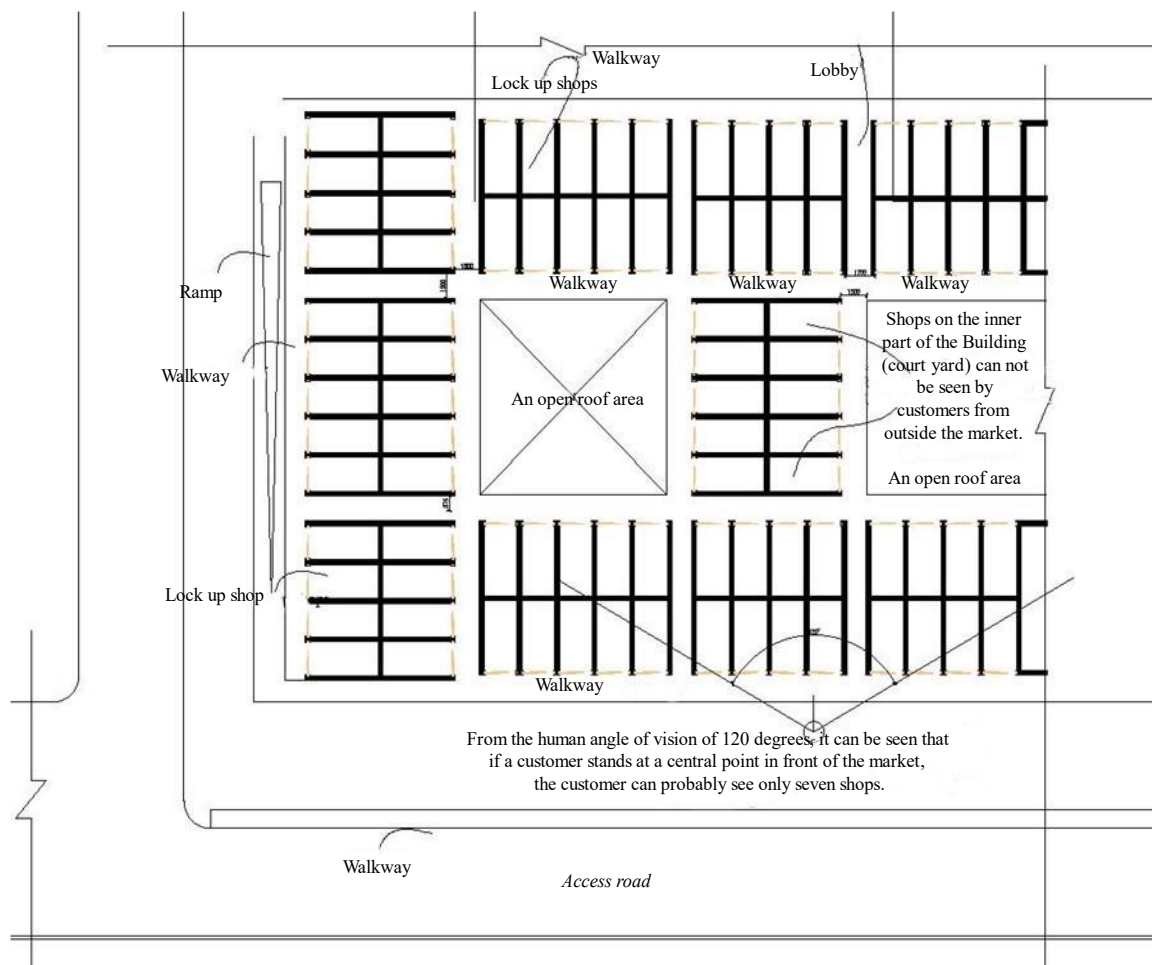


Figure 9. Figure showing eye vision analysis in plan form in Rumu-Woji Market.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results from the findings show a failure in the architecture of markets in Port Harcourt Metropolis, using Rumu-Woji market as a case study. This is because the architecture of Rumu-Woji market was designed as a shopping centre with various lock up shops, on different levels. Market buildings from history have always been an open design, limited to the ground floor for easy accessibility. The designer has neglected the whole idea of a market place, which includes:

1. Easy communication between traders and customers.
2. Bargaining between traders and customers.
3. Goods visibility.
4. Comparing of goods with other goods.
5. The market as a site of socialization.
6. The market as a public space.
7. Easy accessibility.

Recommendations

1. Market buildings should adopt simple designs and construction methods to aid the affordability of spaces in the market.
2. There should be adequate space provision for all categories of traders.
3. Strategic design planning should consider optimal location of market spaces to maximize customer access and safety, thereby reducing the incentive for roadside trading.
4. Market designs should be limited as much as possible to a floor. Upper floors can be used for other activities if land maximization is a concern.

5. Government can partner with private sectors in the building of markets to provide the needed ancillary facilities.
6. Market design should focus on goods' visibility by customers, as this is the aim of every trader in a market place.

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