

The Architecture of Creek Road Market and the Image of Port Harcourt Metropolis, Rivers State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Marketplaces are seen as centers of attraction in every city. Therefore, the architecture of marketplaces should be given extensive attention to attract a positive image of the city. If the architecture of a market lacks functionality, it will affect the perception of the city. Often, market designers ignore the key users of the market space and focus on providing profit-oriented spaces. This leads to the spillover of trading activities by the key users, who are mostly petty traders. The disorderliness experienced from the spillover of trading activities often gives a negative image of the city. The spillover of trading activities to the market environment usually leads to certain hostility in the environment. This is the current state of the subject of study, "Creek Road Market," located in Rivers State, Nigeria. The government of Rivers State, to save the image of the city, has tried several times to curb the act of this spill without any result. Some studies have been conducted concerning the issues caused as a result of the spillover; however, the possible architectural issues that may be associated with the spillover have not been considered. Therefore, this research tends to investigate the issues connected with the architecture of the Creek Road Market, leading to the spillover of trading activities into the environment. To investigate this, the architecture of the Creek Road Market was identified, and the issues associated with the architecture were examined. A mixed-method approach was used for this study. Data was gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and personal observations. The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data reveal space inadequacy to accommodate all traders as the major reason for the spillover in the Creek Road Market. Further reasons include inadequate visibility of goods and insufficient space to accommodate traders' goods.

Keywords: Architecture, Creek Road Market, environment, image of the city, issues, Port Harcourt Metropolis, spill out, traders

INTRODUCTION

The architecture of any city conveys a certain perception about the city. In most cities, marketplaces are of great importance because they house the cultural elements of the city. Marketplaces often act as centers for tourism for visitors. Apart from being the economic power of a city, marketplaces house several

other activities, ranging from political to social activities. Therefore, the architecture of markets should be regarded as an iconic center in every city [1].

Because marketplaces attract large gatherings of people, they form a significant basis for how a city's image is perceived. Consequently, the emphasis on proper market design in every city cannot be overstated.

The primary role and essence of good market architecture is to create a space in which traders and shoppers can comfortably trade. Furthermore, well-

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planned architecture can allow spaces for future expansion of markets to accommodate more traders and customers, which is most likely to occur as people migrate from rural areas to urban cities. This will help to ensure a balanced and organized market. No city or town can function without a market; hence, the importance of having the right architecture for markets [3].

When designing marketplaces, consideration should be given to the higher category of traders using market space. Markets should not be designed without a proper investigation of the possible end-users. A market that holds petty traders as the majority end-users should provide adequate space for them [2].

Initially, markets began as open spaces that accommodated each trader bringing goods in exchange for other goods needed. Therefore, designers can decide to implement a bounded or unbounded space to create an efficient and functional marketplace.

Port Harcourt Metropolis is presently the fifth most densely inhabited city in Nigeria. As people move from rural cities to Port Harcourt Metropolis, petty trading becomes their easy source of livelihood when unemployment is on the increase. Causing a serious increase in trading activities. If the market designs do not take into consideration the category of petty traders. Petty traders will resort to the use of trays, tables, and umbrellas for trading in a market environment [4].

Observing some of the well-built markets in the Port Harcourt Metropolis with modern facilities, one would think that the issue of trading activities spilling out of the market would have been a thing of the past. Efforts by the Rivers State government to eradicate the spill out of trading activities have not been successful because attention has not been drawn to the architectural causes of the spill out [5]. The markets were not designed to meet the extensive needs of the end-users and possible future developments. Therefore, the occurrence of spilling out of trading activities from the market. This has further caused extensive abuse of the environment by traders, to the extent of encroaching on major roads for trading activities [6].

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The continuous increase in commercial activities, especially petty trading in the Port Harcourt Metropolis, with no space created for petty traders in the various markets, has resulted in the spillover of trading activities into the environment. Petty traders are seen around market environments using trays, tables, and umbrellas for trading activities [7].

The spillover of trading activities in market environments has caused certain issues. And it has further given a negative image of the city, thereby reducing the economic growth of the city. Issues such as hectic traffic congestion, indiscriminate refuse dumping, converting adjoining lands to trading activities, accidents, and deaths have been occurring. It further gives a negative image of the market environment, especially to visitors. Furthermore, the environment is polluted due to indiscriminate refuse dumps caused by the spilling out trading. This act can discourage potential business investors from venturing into profitable businesses in the state [8].

AIM

This study investigates the architecture of the Creek Road Market in the Port Harcourt Metropolis and the issues associated with the market architecture that have resulted in the spillover of trading activities.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study are:

1. Identify the type of architecture in Creek Road Market
2. Identify the deficiencies resulting from the architecture leading to the spill out of trading activities.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What is the type of market architecture in Creek Road Market?
2. What are the deficiencies of the architecture of Creek Road Market?

Literature Review

Interestingly, attention has not been drawn to the possible architectural causes of the spillover of trading activities and other related issues faced in the markets in the Port Harcourt Metropolis. Instead, scholars have investigated the activities of roadside trading and other related studies in line with the negative outcome of roadside trading on the environment. Some related studies include as follows.

Amiegbebbhor Desmond. *Most Significant Causes of Traffic Congestion in the Port Harcourt Metropolis*. Director of Bus, LAMATA, and Associate Lecturer, Lagos State University, Lagos State, Nigeria. In this study, the oil mill market, which is one of the major markets in Port Harcourt, was highlighted as one of the major causes of traffic congestion along the Port Harcourt–Aba Expressway in Port Harcourt [9].

Amoo Emmanuel, Ola-David Oluwayomi, Ogunrinola IO, and Fadayomi TO. *Street Trading Activities and Maternal Health in Urban Areas of Nigeria*. This study assessed the health risks associated with street trading among selected mothers in urban centers in Nigeria, including Port Harcourt.

Oluwagbemiga Paul Agboola. *The Significance of Rural Markets as Public Spaces in Nigeria*. This article examines users' expressions and perceptions of public spaces, such as traditional marketplaces, in fostering the sustainable development of indigenous communities in southwestern Nigeria. It further explains the symbolic meanings and functions of public spaces as perceived by users, highlighting the strong relationship between people and their environment [10].

Victor Edozie. *Amid Accidents, Traffic Menaces, Roadside Markets Fester Across States*. Published in Daily Trust Saturday. This article discusses the challenges faced by traders and customers in major markets in Port Harcourt, Jos, and Kano.

David's Boma Gloria. *Assessment of Solid Waste Disposal Patterns of Sellers in Mile One Market, Port Harcourt City, Rivers State*. This study examines the waste disposal practices of traders in Mile One Market, focusing on disposal habits, frequency of dumpster clearance, accessibility of waste disposal facilities, and variations across different sections of the market.

Okeji, Mark C. *Solid Waste Disposal Pattern of Sellers in Mile One Market, Port Harcourt, Rivers State, and Its Potential Health Impacts*. Department of Medical Radiography and Radiological Sciences, Faculty of Health Sciences and Technology, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus, Nigeria; Centre for Environmental Management and Control, University of Nigeria, Enugu Campus. This article examines the waste disposal practices of traders and assesses associated health risks for both traders and customers, including disposal habits, accessibility of dumpsters, frequency of waste clearance, and potential health impacts [11].

Attah AU, Bala B, Othman S. *Design Influence of Squatter Trading: A Case Study of Jimeta Ultra-Modern Market, Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria*. This study discusses the inclusion of squatter traders in the design and upgrading of modern markets, emphasizing the importance of incorporating traders' perspectives to help architects understand spatial requirements for different categories of traders.

The various literatures mentioned above are connected to market architecture because a well-designed market considers the spaces needed in the market. The provision of waste disposal areas is an ancillary space needed in a marketplace, and it is the most researched topic in the literature review [12].

Furthermore, traffic congestion caused by roadside trading due to the spillover of trading activities from the market into the environment can be mitigated with the right architectural design.

METHODOLOGY

The proposed research method for this study is a mixed method, which is a combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. To answer the questions raised in the study, mixed methods can help in gaining a more complete picture than a standalone quantitative or qualitative method, as it integrates the benefits of both methods.

Data was gathered from the market architecture through personal observations, interviews, and questionnaires. The case and population sampled in this study were selected purposively. The selected market was the Creek Road Market, located on Creek Road in the Port Harcourt local government area of Rivers State, Nigeria.

The selected interviewees and respondents (study population) were heads of market union bodies and traders. A total of 30 traders and one market union head were interviewed. A total of four hundred questionnaires were distributed using Slovin's formula, with a population of five thousand traders in the Creek Road Market. To analyze the interview data, a narrative summary was used, and content analysis was used to analyze the data obtained from personal observations, including sketches and pictures. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze questionnaire data [13].

THE STUDY AREA (CREEK ROAD MARKET)

Creek Road Market is one of the oldest markets in Port Harcourt Metropolis. It has been in existence for over five decades and is the oldest market in the Port Harcourt local government area. It was built by the then military governor, Chief Milford Okilo [14].

The official spaces provided for trading in the Creek Road Market are one hundred and forty spaces (140). Residential buildings by the market were converted to lockup shops. These were recorded as about a hundred. While the officially provided hundred and forty spaces are stalls. However, the total number of traders in the Creek Road Market is five thousand. Having a question about the location of the remaining three thousand seven hundred and sixty traders (3,760).

QUALITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION

Qualitative data was gathered from interviews and personal observations. The interviewees were the market chairperson and traders, and the questions were structured with room for open suggestions. Interviewing the market chairperson and traders provided more insight into the study [15].

Qualitative data were analyzed following the research objectives, which are to identify the market architecture, including.

1. The market building type,
2. Natural lighting and ventilation of the market building,
3. The landscape of the market,
4. The spaces and dimensions of the market,
5. The location of the market and accessibility,
6. The location of spaces in the market.
7. The ratio of available spaces and traders [16].

The Market Building Type

As shown in Figure 1, the building in the Creek Road Market is a bungalow with lockup shops and dwarf walls as stalls. The market building was constructed with a solid concrete floor slab and sand-Crete blocks supported by steel pipes as structural members carrying the roof. The stalls were designed and constructed with three-sided dwarf walls and one-sided openings. The roof was covered with long aluminum spans [17].

Natural Ventilation and Lighting of the Market Building

The building design of the Creek Road Market, as observed by the researcher, encourages natural ventilation of the stalls in the market.

The building design of the Creek Road Market, as observed by the researcher, encourages natural lighting of the stalls in the market.

The building design of the Creek Road Market encourages adequate natural lighting and ventilation because of the height of the building and the introduction of an open walkway within the stalls (Figure 2).

The Landscape of the Market

The market lacks landscape, as observed by the researchers.

Spaces in the Market and Dimensions

The dimensions of the stalls, as observed in the market, were 3 msq ($1.5\text{m} \times 1.5\text{m}$).

The Location of the Market and Accessibility

The location of the Creek Road Market is not central, as it is basically located at the heart of the old Port Harcourt town in the Port Harcourt local government area. Customers from town, which is the old Port Harcourt Township, have easy access to the market, and customers from the later developed areas, such as the Obio-Akpor local government area, can also easily reach it. The market is accessible by road (Figure 3).

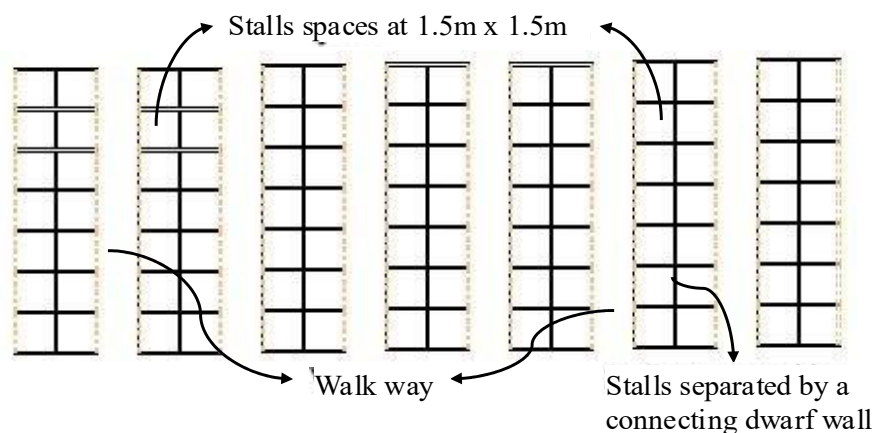


Figure 1. Layout of stalls in Creek Road Market.

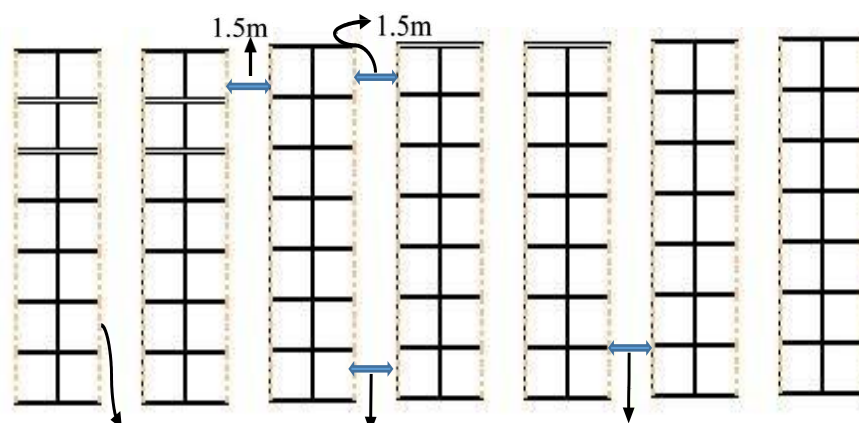
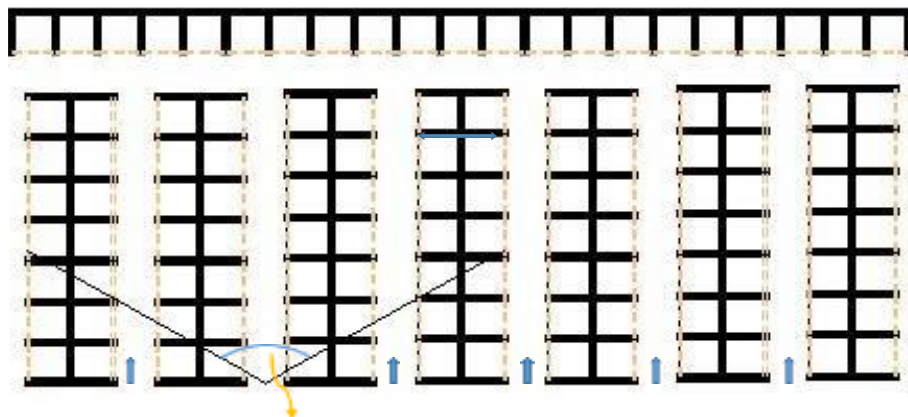


Figure 2. Circulation spaces between stalls in Creek Road Market.



Figure 3. Image of the Creek Road Market with an access road.



The placement of the stalls is such that customers have limited view, when approaching the stalls from the various entrances, when calculated with 120 degrees, angle of human vision.

Figure 4. Design placement of stalls in Creek Road Market.

Figure 4 illustrates the strategic placement of stalls to control visual exposure from multiple entrances.

By aligning stalls in parallel rows, direct sightlines are restricted as visitors approach. The indicated angles show that within the approximate 120° human fields of vision, only limited portions of the stalls are visible.

This layout enhances privacy and reduces visual clutter while guiding movement through space.

The Ratio of Available Shops and Traders

The ratio of shops available to traders is at a ratio of 1:10. The number of traders in the market is approximately ten times the number of shops provided (Figures 5 and 6). A greater percentage of petty traders were observed using trays, umbrellas, and tables for trading, which sadly extended beyond the market building.

The Location of Shops in the Market and Accessibility to Customers

The location of stalls in the market, as observed, can be considered inappropriate because not every trader has equal opportunities to have customers' approach.



Massive use of umbrellas in Creek Road Market along the market road and environs for trading

Figure 5. Image of the Creek Road Market, showing the use of umbrellas and tables along major roads.



Street over taken by petty traders using tables and umbrellas in Creek Road market

Figure 6. Image of the Creek Road market, showing the conversion of an adjoining street to roadside trading.

QUANTITATIVE DATA PRESENTATION

The quantitative data was basically gathered through the administering of questionnaires. The questionnaire had five sections, labeled A–D.

- Section A contains the analysis of the spaces occupied by traders.
- Section B contains an analysis of the location of the traders.
- Section C contains an analysis of the market architecture.
- Section D contains an analysis of the deficiencies of market architecture.

A total of four hundred questionnaires were distributed to the traders. Out of which 395 were valid. The data gotten from the 395 questionnaires were analyzed using the Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The quantitative data was analyzed based on the architecture of Creek Road Market. Which includes:

Section A: Type of Spaces Occupied by Traders

Table 1 shows the distribution of spaces among respondents, with “others” being the most common type, with a frequency of 271, representing 68.6% of the total. “Stall” follows with a frequency of 73, constituting 18.5% of the total, while “lockup shop” has a frequency of 51, accounting for 12.9% of the total selling spaces. In total, there are 395 selling spaces represented in the data. Figure 3 based on personal observations, confirms the distribution.

Section B: Location of Traders

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents across different locations. Most respondents, 271 traders (68.6%), were located by the roadside. While 124 traders (31.4%) were situated inside the market. In total, the data includes 395 respondents.

Section C: Accessing the Architecture of Creek Road Market

The questions and statements generated for the assessment are:

1. What is the building design type of the market?
2. What is the type of space and dimensions in the market?
3. There are multiple access points to the market spaces.
4. The market building is naturally well ventilated.
5. The market building is naturally well-lit.

What is the Building Design Type of the Market?

The type of design in Creek Road Market is a traditional building type which is designed and constructed, with dwarf walls, solid concrete floor slabs, and sandcrete blocks supported by steel pipes as the structural member carrying the roof. The stalls are enclosed with three-sided dwarf walls and one open side for entry and exit.

What are the Types of Spaces and Dimensions in the Market?

The spaces provided in the Creek Road Market are stalls. With a dimension of 3 msq (1.5 m × 1.5 m)

There is Multiple Access to the Market Spaces

Regarding multiple access to market spaces, 32.4% of respondents strongly agreed, 19.1% agreed, and 14.1% were neutral. A further 18.7% disagreed, and 15.4% strongly disagreed. This leads to a general statement of agreement that the market has adequate access to the spaces in the market.

The Market Building is Naturally Well Ventilated

Regarding the natural ventilation of the market building, 22.5% of respondents strongly agreed, 39.2% agreed, 15.8% were neutral, 11.1% disagreed, and 7.3% strongly disagreed. This result shows that the Creek Road Market is naturally well ventilated.

The Market Building is Naturally Well-Lit

Furthermore, regarding the natural lighting of the market building, 24.3% strongly agreed, 29.6% agreed, 15.8% were neutral, 10.6% disagreed, and 15.4% strongly disagreed that the market building was well-lit. This leads to an overall statement of agreement. Though a close percentage of the respondents show disagreement. This is illustrated in Figure 7.

Table 1. Frequency and percentage of spaces occupied by the traders.

Space		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Lockup shop	51	12.9
	Stall	73	18.5
	Others	271	68.6
	Total	395	100.0

Table 2. Frequency and percentage of the location of traders.

Space		Frequency	Percent (%)
Valid	Inside the market	124	31.4
	Outside the market	271	68.6
	Total	395	100.0

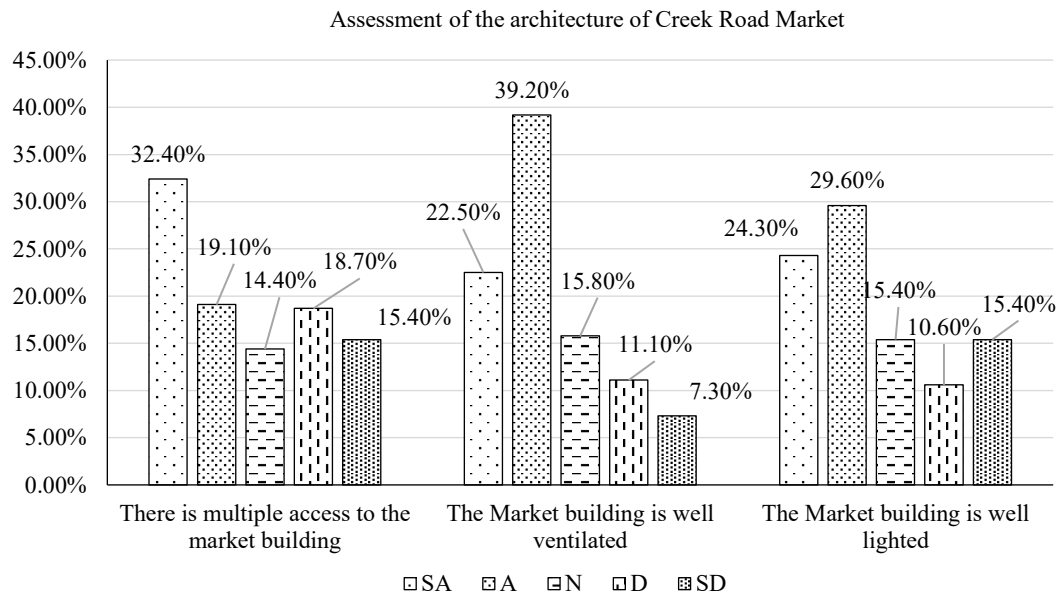


Figure 7. Chart showing the assessment of the architecture of Creek Road Market.
SA, Strongly Agreed; A, Agreed; N, Neutral; D, Disagreed; SD, Strongly Disagreed.

Section D: Accessing the Deficiencies of Market Architecture

The statements generated to assess the challenges of the architecture of the Creek Road Market are as follows:

1. The space provided in the market can accommodate all your goods.
2. There is adequate space provision for all categories of traders.
3. The location of spaces is such that every trader gets equal access to customers.
4. The location of spaces is such that every trader has equal access to safely store their goods in case of an emergency.

The Space Provided in the Market can accommodate All Your Goods

Regarding space capacity, 20.7% of respondents strongly agreed, 16.7% agreed, 3.5% were neutral, 20.3% disagreed, and a notable 38.8% strongly disagreed that spaces provided for shops and stalls could accommodate all their goods, suggesting insufficiency.

There is Adequate Space Provision for all Categories of Traders

Similarly, a significant majority (53.4%) disagreed that there was adequate space provision for all categories of traders, indicating an overall space shortage in the market.

The Location of Spaces is Such that Every Trader Gets Equal Access to Customers

Concerning the location of shops and stalls allowing each trader an equal opportunity to see approaching customers, 39 respondents (9.9%) strongly agreed, 48 (12.2%) agreed, 44 (11.1%) were neutral, 95 (22.5%) disagreed, and 176 (41.6%) strongly disagreed. This reflects general disagreement with the statement.

The Location of Spaces is Such That Every Trader Gets Equal Access to Getting Their Goods to Safety in Case of An Emergency

Similarly, concerning the evacuation of goods in case of a fire incident, 59 respondents (15%) strongly agreed, 63 (14.9%) agreed, 65 (15.4%) were neutral, 70 (16.5%) disagreed, and 138 (32.6%) strongly disagreed. This leads to a general disagreement with the statement. Figures 8 and 9 illustrate these results.

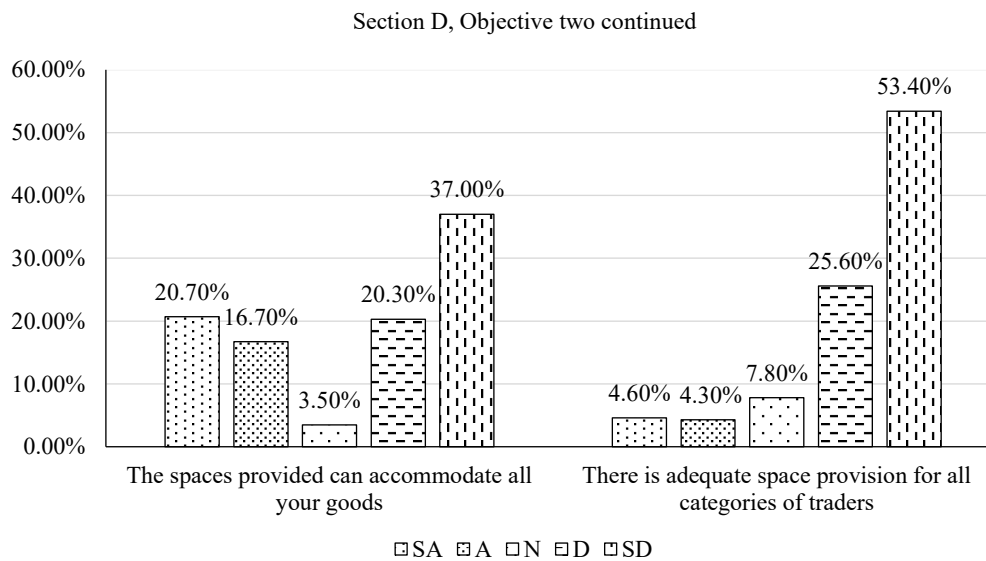


Figure 8. Chart showing the assessment of the deficiencies of Creek Road Market (Figures 1 and 2). SA, Strongly Agreed; A, Agreed; N, Neutral; D, Disagreed; SD, Strongly Disagreed.

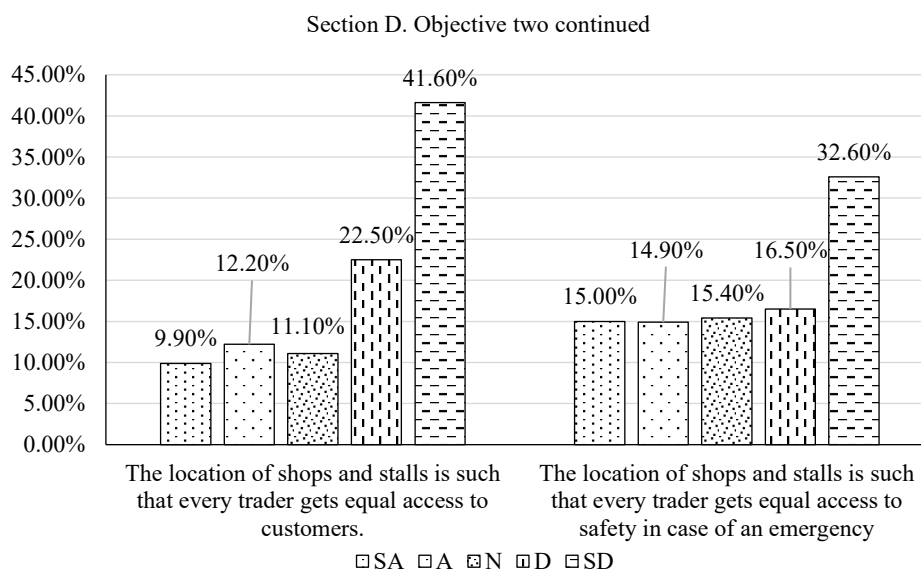


Figure 9. Chart showing the assessment of the deficiencies of Creek Road Market (Figures 3 and 4). SA, Strongly Agreed; A, Agreed; N, Neutral; D, Disagreed; SD, Strongly Disagreed.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Inadequate Space to Accommodate the Number of Traders in the Market

The study reveals that inadequate space provision for traders is the major cause of the spillover of trading activities. From the information obtained during an interview with the head of the market union body. It was gathered that the Creek Road Market housed five thousand traders. While the spaces provided for shops and stalls were two hundred and forty. This left more than three thousand traders seeking trading space within the market and its surroundings.

Undoubtedly, the large number of traders without an official trading space, and in each trader's attempt and struggle to gain space, disorderliness, and a negative perception of the market environment are inevitable.

Lack of Goods Visibility by Customers

Lack of goods visibility by customers, although not a major cause of the spillover, contributes in its own way. This is because some traders who have stalls within the market still bring their goods outside the market so that customers can see them. This was a result of the unfavorable location of their stall spaces within the market. Furthermore, the location of the spaces in the market plays a significant role in traders' behavior, whether to remain inside the market or to look for an alternative space. Every trader in the marketplace aims to sell their goods to customers, and this can only be achieved if a trader's goods can be seen clearly by customers.

CONCLUSION

The results gathered from the study show that the Creek Road Market has adequate access to the market through road transportation. And multiple access to the market spaces. However, while multiple access points to markets are important, they may not effectively deter the act of spilling out of trading activities to the environment if other factors, such as adequacy of space provision and visibility to goods, are not addressed. This finding resonates with the principles of urban design and placemaking. However, if market accessibility is not complemented by adequate infrastructure and amenities, the issue of spilling out of trading activities will always occur.

To address the issues resulting in the spilling out of trading onto major roads and adjoining lands, serious attention should be given to the provision of spaces for all traders within the market building. Further, attention should be given to allowing adequate space around the market environment for future expansion. As stated by Tracey-White (1995), trading, especially small-scale trading, is becoming the livelihood of people, especially women. In the face of unemployment, people engage in small-scale trading, and as such, spaces for petty traders should be incorporated into market designs.

It is also important to include other ancillary facilities within the market to enable the market to function effectively. The inclusion of adequate landscape in the market is of great importance, to give the market and environment a pleasant view. Landscape will further aid in the purification of the air within the market and the market environment. This will give a positive image of Port Harcourt Metropolis.

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