

# The Use or Misuse of Urban Streets? Exploration of Everyday Urbanism in Traditional City Centres

Temitope Muyiwa Adebara<sup>1\*</sup>, Oyinloluwa Beatrice Adebara<sup>2</sup>, Amos Oluwole Taiwo<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Ago-Iwoye, Nigeria

<sup>2</sup>Department of Estate Management, Osun State University, Osagbo, Nigeria

\*Corresponding author's email: adebaratemitope@gmail.com

**Article history:** Received: 16 September 2022 Received in revised form: 11 December 2022

Accepted: 20 January 2023 Published online: 30 June 2023

## Abstract

Urban residents often transform street precincts into places for informal activities through everyday urbanism to meet their daily needs, particularly in traditional city centres. Although strict regulations and control over public space exist, people-centred (bottom-up) interventions usually occur in traditional city centres. While such action exemplifies the rights people claim to suit their requirements and improve the daily living experience, there are arguments that everyday use of the streets generates land-use problems. In this regard, using data collected through questionnaire surveys, observations, and interviews, this study explores the factors that facilitate everyday urbanism and encourage using the streets as public spaces in traditional city centres of Nigeria. This is to provide helpful information that could serve as a tool for putting everyday urbanism into urban planning and design practices. The study established that the three most common street activities in the traditional city centres were informal trading, social events/ceremonies, and cultural festivals. It was also shown that the everyday use of public spaces created a unique setting for social interaction among people and contributed to the liveliness of the city centres. The principal component analysis (PCA) showed that the crucial factors that facilitated and encouraged the everyday use of streets were the economic factor (18.2%), the inadequacy of environmental amenities (17.8%), and culture and social lifestyle (12.2%). This study concludes that everyday urbanism contributes significantly to creating vibrant communities and improving life quality; therefore, it is recommended that the control and management of activities in public spaces should align with people's culture, lived experiences and socioeconomic realities.

**Keywords:** Urban street, public space, everyday urbanism, urban design, traditional city centre

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## 01.0 INTRODUCTION

Streets are important public spaces in cities. They are not only ubiquitous and accessible, but there are diverse opportunities to engage and connect with other people on the street than in other forms of public spaces such as town squares, parks, and gardens (Mehta, 2019). In essence, streets can cater to people's socio-cultural and leisure needs in the built environment. Nevertheless, a common element of modernist urban planning is the capitalistic display and withdrawal of everyday life from the streets as public spaces (Sendra, 2016). Modernist planners use rational functionalism and scientific analysis to manage public spaces and address land-use planning problems with little or no consideration for the variety and complexity of everyday life. They embrace the ideals of a "functional city" and believe that strict functional segregation is the only way to address urban land-use problems. Everyday use of public spaces is often regarded as alien and inimical to the modernist ideals of clean and beautiful streetscapes (Adama, 2020; Igudia, 2020). However, various post-urbanism movements have opposed the formality and rigidity of modernist planning. One such movement is everyday urbanism (Chase et al., 1999).

Everyday urbanism is concerned with real-world situations and experiences of people (Chase et al., 1999). It addresses the disconnect between urban planners and public space users by encouraging a humanistic perspective in urban design. It is intended to complement formal urban planning and design practices to meet people's socio-cultural needs in the built environment. According to Talen (2015), everyday urbanism involves appropriating public spaces by people seeking to enhance their cultural practices and daily life. While appropriation of urban public spaces without formal approval is a worldwide issue, it is pervasive in developing countries like Nigeria (Mukhija & Loukaitou-Sideris, 2015; Talen, 2015).

In Nigeria, urban residents often transform street precincts into places for informal activities through everyday urbanism to meet their daily needs, particularly in the traditional city centres. Although strict regulations and control over public spaces exist, people-centred (bottom-up) interventions occur in traditional city centres. For instance, some residents often appropriate the street space for various purposes, such as informal trading, prayers, and social ceremonies (Adebara, 2017; Adebara et al., 2022). However, while such action exemplifies the rights people claim to suit their requirements and improve their daily living experience, some argue that the misuse of

public spaces can generate land-use problems (Adedeji et al., 2014; Jelili & Adedibu, 2006). In other words, using public space for different purposes, without regard for planning regulations, has both positive and negative effects on the built environment. Along this line, Adedeji et al. (2014) noted that street traders' use of public spaces is breeding severe environmental problems in the city centres.

In this regard, many state governments in Nigeria, like in many developing countries, have employed different measures and tactics to curtail the use of street space for different purposes and ensure that the urban environment is pleasant and safe for people to live, work, and recreate. For instance, some states have passed the "Street Trading and Illegal Market Prohibition Bill" (Olarinoye, 2016). The law prohibits the abuse and misuse of incidental spaces along the streets for commercial activities and the extension of shops into walkways, road setbacks, and any other unauthorized areas in the city centres. It is, however, noticed that despite the law banning the everyday use of public space postulated by the state governments, the practice has continued unabated in the traditional city centres. The preceding suggests that everyday urbanism does not happen by chance; specific factors facilitate and encourage it in public spaces despite the strict planning regulations. Given this, there is a need to explore the factors that facilitate everyday urbanism and encourage the use of the streets as public spaces in traditional city centres to provide helpful information that could serve as a tool for putting everyday urbanism into planning and urban design practices.

Although several studies have shown that the streets serve different purposes other than facilitating mobility and land access (Bogoro, 2016; Igudia, 2020; Jelili & Adedibu, 2006), certain factors that facilitate everyday urbanism in public spaces remain unknown, particularly in Nigeria. This knowledge gap could impede the development of effective urban planning response strategies for managing public space. On this note, this study explores the everyday use of streets in the traditional city centres of Ile-Ife and Osogbo, Nigeria. The study is essential as it provides valuable insights into street life and everyday urbanism in traditional city centres. Such information could guide urban planners and designers in evolving appropriate strategies for managing traditional streetscapes in a manner that is responsive to the local community's needs.

## 02.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Public spaces are areas of the built environment to which urban dwellers have unrestricted access, at least during the daytime (Carmona et al., 2008). They are vital to prosperous cities that can build a sense of community, culture, and social capital (UN-Habitat, 2015). Public spaces are very complex in developing countries because they are used for numerous purposes in urban settings with little regard for planning regulations (Afon & Adebara, 2019; Oranratmanee & Sachakul, 2014). Despite the stringent enforcement of urban planning laws, informal use of public spaces persists, reflecting everyday urbanism in the cities (Alawadi et al., 2022). Everyday urbanism is how urban residents take small-scale planning interventions into their own hands (Hou, 2010). This people-generated urban intervention usually challenges formal planning regulations (Talen, 2015). This aligns with Elsheshtawy's (2013) assertion that everyday urbanism is a counterpoint to the ideals of a modernist city concerned with imposing stringent order, separation of uses, and fragmentation of urban space.

Chase et al. (1999) proposed the concept of everyday urbanism; since then, others have used terminology such as "pop-up urbanism," "guerilla urbanism", and "do-it-yourself urbanism" to convey the same idea. Everyday urbanism is fundamentally a process in which citizens take gradual, small-scale planning and design into their own hands (Hou, 2010). The main feature of everyday urbanism is the bottom-up appropriation of public spaces and the built environment without formal permission from the city administrators (Alawadi et al., 2022; Lefebvre, 2008). According to Alawadi et al. (2022), everyday urbanism is an approach that finds meaning in everyday life and its experiences. Everyday urbanists consider everyday space as a zone of possibilities and transformations. In addition, everyday urbanism allows for informal modifications to the built environment to facilitate daily practices and meet people's social and cultural needs, which are usually neglected by policymakers and urban planners (Amin, 2008; Chase et al., 1999). Everyday urbanism can be expressed through what is known as "quiet encroachment", whereby people challenge formal mechanisms of urban planning by occupying public spaces to meet their own needs (Bayat, 2004).

People in urban areas use streets without formal approval for various reasons. Drummond (2000) stated that the factors influencing the use of streets in Southeast Asian countries were the inadequacy of domestic open space, high population density, and weak official control of informal activities. The study of Rahman et al. (2015) also showed that the determinants of the use of streets in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia were the need to earn income (economic factor), social reason (meeting friends), and distance from the residences. Adedeji et al. (2014) also found that the operators of informal sector activities usually use streets closer to their homes as selling points to eliminate or reduce travel costs in Nigerian cities. Given the preceding, it appears that factors influencing the use of the streets vary from place to place.

Furthermore, literature has shown that the informal use of streets may negatively affect urban environments. Solomon-Ayeh et al. (2011) revealed that using the street as a public space for open-air vending often breeds environmental problems. These include degradation of urban aesthetics, blockage of drainages, open space littering, and air and noise pollution, while pick-pocketing is a significant issue in crowded and congested streets. In another study, Okaka et al. (2014) investigated the challenges inherent in using public spaces for diverse purposes. The study's findings showed that the main problems were garbage, noise, air pollution, poor maintenance, security challenges, and congestion. These problems are similar to those identified in Aragaw's (2011) and Makworo and Mireri's (2011) studies in Ethiopia and Kenya respectively. These authors discovered that using public spaces for incompatible activities generates urban land use problems.

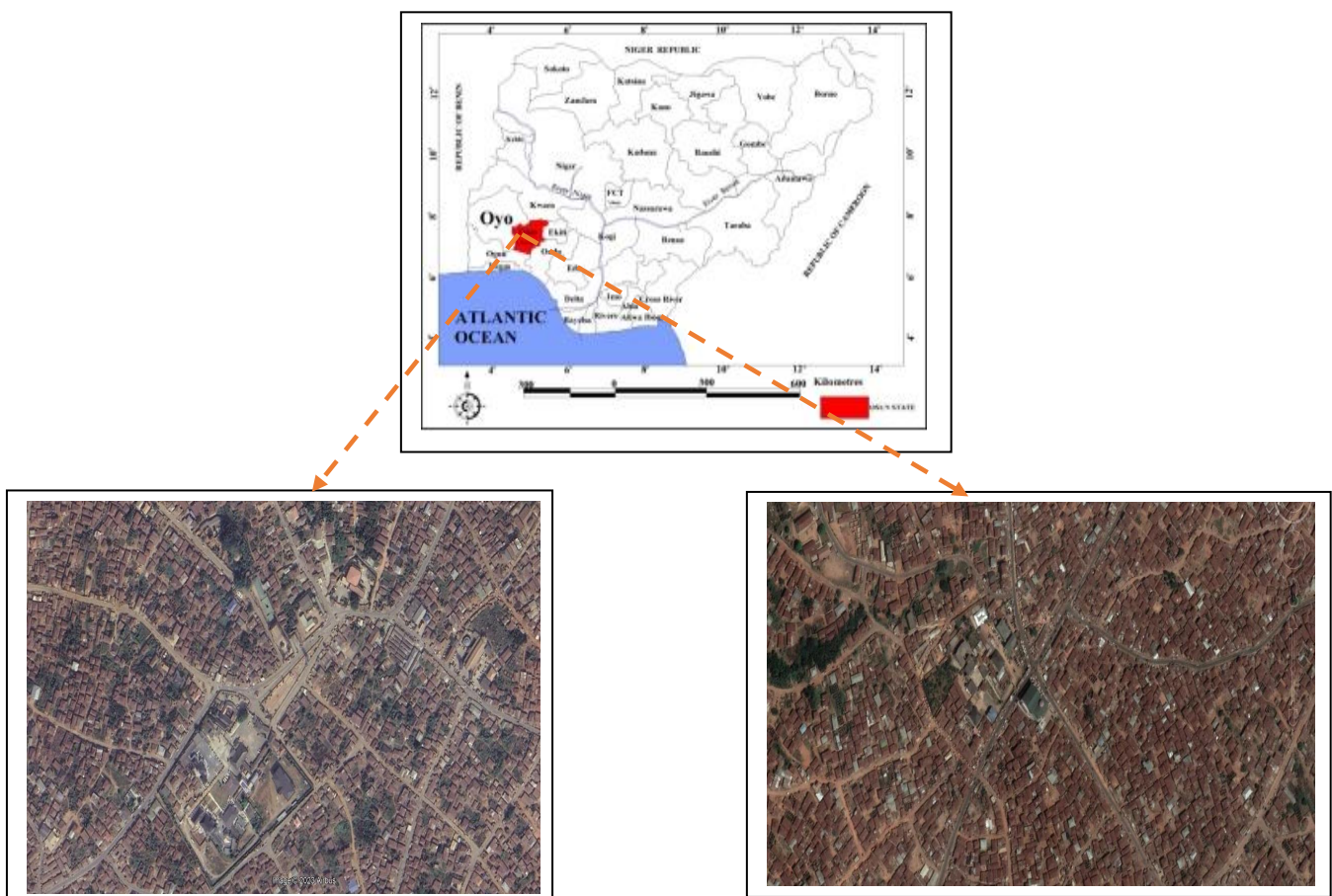
Okanlawon and Odunjo (2016) also identified traffic congestion, increased crime rate, noisy environment, accidents, odour from open space defecation and blockage of drainages by waste as the significant land-use problems associated with the informal use of street space. Other issues Okanlawon and Odunjo (2016) identified were increased travel time, endangering the lives of sick people on the journey to the clinic/hospital, and air quality reduction from electric generating plants. In another study, Afon et al. (2006) examined the degree of prevalence and severity of environmental problems inherent in using public spaces in Lagos, Nigeria. The authors identified ten

environmental issues which the space users ranked based on their perceptions. The identified environmental problems include stagnant water, soil contamination, toilet odour, vehicle pollution, noise pollution, and motor accident. Others are odour from uncollected waste, pollution from indeterminate urinating and defecating, mosquito breeding, and water pollution. The study established that the major causes of environmental problems in public spaces were insufficient amenities, indiscriminate dumping of refuse in open spaces, and poor habits of defecating and urinating in the available open spaces within the parks. The study also indicated that the users were aware of the environmental hazards in the public areas, but the persistent utilisation resulted from the need for economic survival. This study aims to examine the factors that facilitate and encourage everyday urbanism and the persistent use of streets in the traditional city centres of Nigeria to provide information that could serve as a tool for public space management.

### 03.0 THE STUDY SETTING

The study focuses on traditional city centres in Osun State, Nigeria. Osun State is one of the thirty-six (36) states that make up the most populous African country (see Figure 1). It was established in 1991 by the Military government. As of 2006, the state's official population was 3,416,959 (National Bureau of Statistics). Osun State is located in the Southwestern region of the country. The people of Osun State are mainly Yorubas, one of the major tribes in Nigeria. The Yoruba people are known for their gregarious nature and use of public spaces. Public spaces hold significant cultural and social importance in Yoruba communities, serving as gathering places for various activities and interactions in the traditional city centres.

The traditional city centres include areas that were established long ago before the advent of modern urban planning philosophy in Nigeria (Afon & Adebara, 2019; Adebara, 2022). The physical appearance of the traditional city centres exhibits a gamut of highly disorganized residential and commercial uses. The areas are generally poor in terms of modern land-use planning and characterized by inadequate public open spaces. Consequently, the residents in the traditional areas often use the street as a public space for different activities in their daily lives (Adebara, 2021).



**Figure 1** Map of Nigeria indicating Osun State with aerial images of Ile-Ife (left) and Osogbo (right) traditional city centres

Over the years, there has been renewed interest from elected government officials in regenerating the traditional city centres in Osun State as a response to derelict urban infrastructure (Afon & Adebara, 2019). This is manifested through Osun State Urban Regeneration Project (OSURP), which was carried out in nine towns (Ihua-Maduenyi, 2016). These towns are Osogbo, Ile-Ife, Ikirun, Ejigbo, Iwo, Ikire, Ede, Ilesa and Ila-Orangun. The scope of the project includes city beautification, road upgrade/maintenance, and removal of unauthorized

structures, stalls, and buildings encroaching on statutory setbacks along urban streets. However, the urban renewal project is unsuccessful because people continue to occupy and modify the streets for various purposes in the traditional city centres.

For the purpose of this paper, two major urban centres in Osun State are purposively selected. These are Osogbo and Ile-Ife (see Figure 2). While Osogbo is the state capital of Osun State, Ile-Ife is referenced as the ancestral origin of the Yoruba people. These towns are rich and tenacious in tradition. Despite the tide of rapid urbanization in Osun State, the towns still have a traditional city centre largely undisturbed by the so-called modernized urbanism style. The city centres are characterized by traditional landscape features such as the King’s palace (*Aafin Oba*), the King’s market (*Oja-Oba*), shrines, temples, and sacred groves. Although the Western concepts of neighbourhood open space, such as parks and gardens, do not apply to these areas, the residents often regard the local streets as public spaces for different social and cultural activities.

**04.0 METHODOLOGY**

The study used primary data collected through questionnaire surveys, interviews, and field observation to adequately examine the everyday use of the streets in traditional city centres. The data were collected by stratifying the selected towns (Osogbo and Ile-Ife) into the administrative wards delineated by the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) for conducting elections. Wards within the traditional city centres were isolated for the study. Although there are two classes of urban streets (service and distributor streets) in the study area, only the service streets were isolated for this research. This is because, in the traditional city centres, the service streets are the ones the residents often use for purposes other than providing mobility.

From the reconnaissance survey, 1,698 and 1,407 houses were identified along the service streets in Osogbo and Ile-Ife, respectively. After the first building was picked randomly, every fifth building was chosen for survey using the systematic sampling technique. A questionnaire was administered to the household head in each of the chosen buildings. The households were expected to have real experience of the informal use of streets in their neighbourhoods. A total of 621 copies of the questionnaire were administered and analyzed. Household heads selected for the survey provided information on the different street activities in their residential area. It is worth noting that the research assistants retrieved all questionnaires administered.

The attempt to determine the factors influencing the everyday use of the streets led to identifying possible factors from the literature. The respondents were asked to rate each factor using a 5-point Likert scale of *Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Just Agreed, Disagreed* and *Strongly Disagreed*. The analysis of the data obtained subsequently developed into an index termed the relative factor index (RFI). To calculate the index (RFI), each point on the Likert scale was allocated a value of 5,4,3,2 and 1, respectively. The sum weight value (SWV) for each reason was obtained by summing up the products of the number of responses for each rating to an attribute and the respective weight values. Statistically, this is expressed as:

$$SWV = \sum_{i=1}^5 P_i V_i \dots\dots\dots(i)$$

Where: SWV is the sum weight value,  
 P<sub>i</sub> represents the number of respondents to rating *i*,  
 V<sub>i</sub> represents the value attached to attribute *i*  
*i* represents the assigned value of the Likert point response

To obtain the RFI for each of the variables, the SWV was divided by the summation of the respondents to each of the five ratings. This is statistically expressed as:

$$RFI = \frac{SWV}{\sum_{i=1}^5 P_i} \dots\dots\dots(ii)$$

Several authors (Adebara & Adebara, 2019; Opricovic & Tzeng, 2003) used the method for arriving at RFI to determine people's opinions on the conditions of different attributes of the urban environment. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with eleven (11) and seven (7) residents in Osogbo and Ile-Ife, respectively, to probe further and capture the factors that dictate the informal use of the public space as well as the consequences of the different uses (see Table 1). The participants were purposively selected based on their willingness to be interviewed. Furthermore, observations were taken on weekdays and weekends (between 8.00 am and 7.00 pm) during the dry season between February and April in Nigeria. While cloud cover and wind conditions varied during the field survey, no observations were made while it was raining. Descriptive and inferential analytical methods were employed to analyze the data obtained. The research findings are presented in the next section. Except otherwise stated, the tables and plates presented in this paper emanated from the survey carried out by the authors in 2021.



**Table 1** Interview questions

1.	What are the activities you perform on the streets?
2.	In your opinion, what factors facilitate and encourage everyday life on the streets?
3.	Do you think using the street as a place for different activities causes environmental problems?

## 05.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Socio-Economic Background of the Residents

The socio-economic variables considered essential to the central focus of this research were age, education, income, and length of stay of the residents. For simplicity of analysis, the age of the residents was categorized into three. These were: 18-30 years (*Youth*), 31-60 years (*Young Adult*), and above 60 years (*Adult*). This follows the classification of Adebara (2019). As in Table 2, the highest proportion of the sampled residents in the study area were adults. This group represented 46.8% and 39.9% of the respondents in the traditional city centre of Osogbo and Ile-Ife, respectively. The youths, however, accounted for the lowest proportion of the respondents. There was a significant difference in the age of the sampled respondents in the two traditional city centres ( $t=2.981$  and  $p=0.890$ ).

Four levels of education were identified in the study area. These were the residents with basic, post-basic, tertiary, and those with no formal education. As presented in Table 2, the highest percentage of the residents in Osogbo and Ile-Ife had no formal education. Overall, the residents with no formal education accounted for 38.5%, while the percentage of those with basic, post-basic, and tertiary education, respectively were 26.2%, 21.1%, and 14.2%. The result of the Chi-square analysis ( $\chi^2$  value of 0.627;  $p=0.890$ ) confirmed that there was no significant difference between the educational status of the residents in the traditional city centres in Osun State. Closely related to the education status of the residents is the income level. As presented in Table 2, three income groups were identified using the Osun State Civil Service income grade levels (as of 2018). These were the low (salary grade level 01-06), middle (grade level 07-10) and high (salary grade level 13-17) income groups. Findings showed that most residents in the city centre of the two selected towns were low-income earners. The low, middle, and high-income earners accounted for 74.4%, 18.5% and 7.1%, respectively, in Osogbo.

Similarly, the proportion of the three respective income groups in Ile-Ife was 70.5%, 24.2% and 5.3%. There was no significant difference in the residents' monthly income in the traditional city centres of Ile-Ife and Osogbo ( $t=0.018$  and  $p=0.986$ ). Based on the above results, it is established that the residents in the traditional city centres were low in educational status and income. This result supports the submission of Badiora et al. (2016) and Afon and Adebara (2022) that low-income earners and illiterates are concentrated in the traditional city centres. This could be attributed to the area comprising many houses on a traditional courtyard system with inadequate environmental amenities (Adebara, 2017). Thus, the area may be unattractive to educated folks and rich people as a place to live. The poor socio-economic status of the residents in the traditional city centres could influence how they perceive and use public spaces. Furthermore, it was shown that the highest proportion of the residents in the city centres of Osogbo (75.3%) and Ile-Ife (81.9%) had lived in their neighbourhood for more than ten years. Impliedly, the proportion of the above was expected to have adequate information on the different types of activities taking place on the streets.

### 5.2 Daily Activities on the Streets

As presented in Table 3, seven types of activities took place on the streets in the study area. These were informal trading, cultural festivals, social events/ceremonies, worship of deity/ritual performance, Christian/Muslim programmes, children's play and sports. Findings showed that informal trading (29.2%) was the most common everyday street activity. It represented 27.1% and 31.8% of all activities on the streets in Osogbo and Ile-Ife, respectively (see Table 3). Using the street for informal trading indicates that the public space has become a means of survival. This phenomenon is a true reflection of urban poverty and the high level of unemployment in Nigeria. Looking at the literature, this has also been the case in many urban centres of other African countries such as Kenya, Tanzania, Burkina Faso and Ghana (Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah, 2008; Bogoro, 2016; Brown et al., 2010; Ige & Atanda, 2013; Steel et al., 2014). For instance, it was observed by Steel et al. (2014) that informal trading contributes significantly to the municipal and local economy in African countries where issues of unemployment and poverty are very acute. Another reason for the dominance of informal trading in the traditional city centres could be attributed to the fact that the majority of the residents living in the area might not possess the skills and educational qualifications needed for the available white-collar jobs. Moreover, the highest proportion of the sampled residents had no formal education.

During the survey, buying and selling occurred right on the streets and street precincts in the study area. Examples of informal trading included selling local foods, alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks, fruits, herbal drinks, bread, vegetables and pepper (see Plate 1). Generally, there were two categories of traders on the streets. These were ambulatory and static traders. The ambulatory traders mainly operated on the carriageway moving from one street to another to sell their goods. Such traders usually devised several ways, including using wheelbarrows and bicycles to convey their goods to different locations in search of potential customers. Static traders, conversely, usually operated on the setback from the streets. Mainly, they operated at a particular location daily through the use of table-tops, wooden sheds, umbrellas, canopies, and metal containers. A food vendor noted that:

*“Neighbourhood streets are excellent locations to make money. I work as a street seller. Moreover, I cannot afford to rent a place at one of the retail malls. It is pretty easier to find customers on the streets. I have a big shed and seating arrangement for my customers along the street”.*

**Table 2** Socioeconomic characteristics of the residents (household heads)

Socio-Economic Attributes	Osogbo f (%)	Ile-Ife f (%)	Total f (%)
<b>Age Group</b>			
18-30 years ( <i>youth</i> )	8 (2.4)	20 (7.1)	28 (4.5)
31-60 years ( <i>young adult</i> )	159 (46.8)	112 (39.9)	271 (43.6)
Above 60 years ( <i>adult</i> )	173 (50.9)	149 (53.0)	322 (51.9)
<b>Total</b>	<b>340 (100.0)</b>	<b>281 (100.0)</b>	<b>621 (100.0)</b>
<b>Level of Education</b>			
No formal Education	129 (37.9)	110 (39.1)	239 (38.5)
Basic (Elementary) Education	92 (27.1)	71 (25.3)	163 (26.2)
Post-Basic (Secondary) Education	69 (20.3)	62 (22.1)	131 (21.1)
Tertiary Education	50 (14.7)	38 (13.5)	88 (14.2)
<b>Total</b>	<b>340 (100.0)</b>	<b>281 (100.0)</b>	<b>621 (100.0)</b>
<b>Income Group</b>			
Low ( $\leq$ N 24,500.00)	253 (74.4)	198 (70.5)	451 (72.6)
Middle (N 24,501- 54,000)	63 (18.5)	68 (24.2)	131 (21.1)
High ( $>$ N 54,000.00)	24 (7.1)	15 (5.3)	39 (6.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>340 (100.0)</b>	<b>281 (100.0)</b>	<b>621 (100.0)</b>
<b>Length of Stay</b>			
Less than 5 years	12 (3.5)	8 (2.8)	20 (3.2)
5-10 years	72 (21.2)	43 (15.3)	115 (18.5)
More than 10 years	256 (75.3)	230 (81.9)	486 (78.3)
<b>Total</b>	<b>340 (100.0)</b>	<b>281 (100.0)</b>	<b>621 (100.0)</b>

It was also observed during the fieldwork that some other informal sector activities occupied the street setbacks. These included: vulcanizing, motor repairing, and furniture and block-making workshops. However, in most cases, the setback spaces have been swallowed up by the various structures constructed to accommodate the informal sector activities. The implications of this included insufficient space for pedestrian movement and a lack of safety along the streets. In addition, the same street precinct is being contended by car owners, cyclists, motorcyclists, pedestrians and traders. One resident expressed his view about the effects of the use of the streets during the interview, as highlighted in the following statement:

*“The use of streets in this area is a matter of the survival of the fittest. People usually do a lot of things on the streets. The most annoying thing is about the traders! They often display their goods on the roads blocking everywhere. Anyway, I cannot blame them. They are trying to earn money to feed their families due to the economic hardship in the country”.* (A man who is a resident of Ile-Ife)

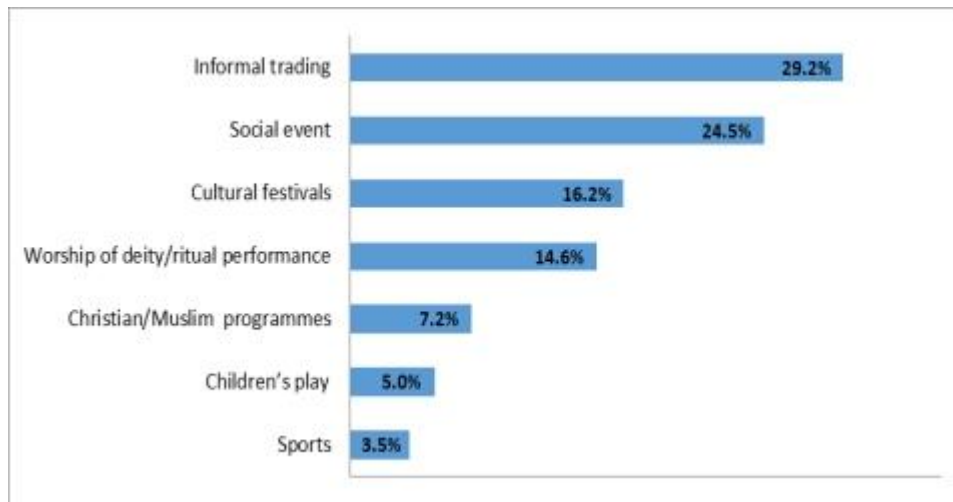
Next to informal trading in order of importance were social events which accounted for 24.5% of the street activities (see Figure 2). They included funeral services, birthday parties, child namings, and housewarmings. Walk-by observations along the streets showed that when any of these social events are to be held, streets are usually blocked for the safety of the celebrants and their guests (see Plate 2). This practice could be attributed to the fact that low-income earners are concentrated in the traditional city centres. As a result, they may consider renting event halls for social gatherings to be expensive. However, the implications of holding street events include public space littering, noise pollution, and traffic congestion. It is interesting to note that the residents did not perceive street activities as a misuse of public spaces but rather as a means to satisfy their socio-cultural requirements. This participant mentioned that:

*“The street is where one can hold a big party outside the house if the compound is small. Therefore, it is common to see people holding ceremonies on the streets in this area. The cost of renting an event centre in this town is on the high side, therefore, people prefer to use the front of their houses for social events and gatherings. And you should know that this area is a native place where we still unite. We practice an extended family lifestyle. Everybody, including friends and extended family members, will attend the naming ceremony if someone gives birth to a baby. Where do you expect us to hold such a ceremony? It is on the street in front of the house. It is a place for family events”.* (A man who is an indigene of Ile-Ife).

**Table 3** Activities taking place on the streets

Uses	Osogbo f (%)	Ile-Ife f (%)
Social events	99 (22.1)	82 (28.1)
Cultural festivals	84 (18.8)	36 (12.3)
Informal trading	121 (27.1)	93 (31.8)
Worship of deity/ritual performance	65 (14.5)	43 (14.7)
Christian/Muslim programs	33 (7.4)	20 (6.8)
Children’s play	26 (5.8)	11 (3.8)
Sports	19 (4.3)	7 (2.4)
<b>Total</b>	<b>447 (100.0)</b>	<b>292 (100.0)</b>

\*Note: The total is higher than the number of respondents surveyed since it represents the frequency of responses



**Figure 2** The summary of the street activities in the traditional city centres



**Plate 1** Informal trading on the streets in the traditional city centres



**Plate 2** Streets blocked for social events in the traditional city centres

Furthermore, it was observed that the locations where the informal trading and cultural events took place were lively and vibrant. In such locations, there were many people engaged in social activities. Using the streets created a unique setting for social contact among shoppers, relatives, and strangers. Private seating arrangements provided by individual street vendors around the trading points created an avenue where shoppers could sit, interact and exchange pleasantries with one another over a short time in the middle of shopping activities. Such spontaneous contact is likely the start of more meaningful and long-lasting social connections between community members and strangers. Similarly, on-street social events allowed local communities to demonstrate devotion and allegiance to long-standing cultural

customs and traditions. Such events involve collaborative efforts to transform the streets and unite family members, neighbours, and friends.

### 5.3 Factors Influencing Everyday Urbanism and Use of Streets

Summarised in Table 4 are the ranked factors determining everyday urbanism and the use of the streets in traditional city centres. The five most important factors in the study area (both Osogbo and Ife) were: *urban poverty* (RFI = 4.95), *culture and tradition* (RFI = 4.78), *earning income* (RFI = 4.73), *inadequate household income* (RFI = 4.72) and *lack of neighbourhood recreational spaces* (RFI = 4.65). Each above had an index higher than the mean RFI computed for the study area. Thus, they had a positive deviation from the mean. Other important reasons were: *distance from homes* (RFI = 4.58), *unemployment* (RFI = 4.42), *high cost of renting event halls* (RFI = 4.35), and *lack of children's playgrounds* (RFI = 4.06). Furthermore, the factors identified were reduced into smaller constructs using a factor reduction technique: Principal component analysis (PCA). This was to ascertain the critical determinants of everyday urbanism and the use of the streets. The data were considered suitable and adequate for PCA based on the KMO of 0.682 and Bartlett's test ( $p = 0.000$ ). The rotated component matrix is presented in Table 5. Four variables loaded on Component 1. These included *a street is a good place for buying and selling* (0.935), *earning income* (0.849), *high cost of renting shop* (0.817), and *urban poverty* (0.640). These variables have economic dimensions. Component 1 was therefore termed the economic factor.

Four variables loaded on Component 2. These were *a lack of neighbourhood recreational spaces* (0.863), *no other open spaces around* (0.849), *lack of children's playground* (0.677), and *distance from home* (0.594). An observation of these variables showed that they were primarily issues concerned with the inadequacy of environmental attributes. Component 2 was therefore named the inadequacy of environmental amenities. Variables loaded on Component 3 concern people's culture and social lifestyle. This category included *cultural beliefs, traditions, and people's local lifestyles and behaviour*. Component 4 comprised three variables. These were *comfort and convenience, tree covers and shelter availability, and ample space and sidewalks*. Loadings of these variables were respectively 0.788, 0.697, and 0.677. The highly loaded variables on this component pertained to attributes of public space. Thus, Component 4 was termed public space attributes. Finally, variables loaded on Component 5 have to do with the perceived environment. In this category were *safety and security and weather conditions*. The total variance explained by these five factors was 70.32% (see Table 6). Separately, the rotation of the sum of squared loading (after rotation) for components 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 were respectively 18.15%, 17.80%, 12.20%, 11.90% and 10.28%. In other words, the economic factor (Component 1) explained 18.15% of the total variance. In contrast, the inadequacy of environmental amenities (Component 2), culture and social lifestyle (Component 3), public space attributes (Component 4), and perceived environmental factors (Component 5) respectively accounted for 17.80%, 12.20%, 11.90%, and 10.28%.

Based on the results above, the study established that the two most important factors that facilitated and encouraged everyday urbanism and the use of streets in the traditional city centres were economic factors and inadequacy of environmental amenities such as neighbourhood open space. In addition, these interview participants noted that:

**Table 4** Perceived factors determining the use of the streets as public spaces

Factors	Osogbo RFI	Ife-Ife RFI	Study Area RFI
Distance from homes	4.48	4.68	4.58
Urban poverty	4.93	4.97	4.95
High cost of renting shops	4.26	4.88	4.57
Inadequate household income	5.00	4.33	4.72
Earning income	4.94	4.51	4.73
There is no other space around	4.68	4.07	4.38
Lack of neighbourhood recreational spaces	4.48	4.82	4.65
Comfort and convenience	4.03	3.90	3.97
High cost of renting event halls	4.68	4.01	4.35
Unemployment	4.91	3.92	4.42
Lack of children playground	3.99	4.13	4.06
Local lifestyles and behaviours of people	3.03	3.46	3.25
Rural-urban migration	3.42	3.98	3.70
Weak enforcement of the law banning the use of streets	3.11	3.21	3.16
Weather condition	3.19	3.04	3.12
Safety and security factor	4.12	2.77	3.45
Character and Image	4.09	4.18	4.14
Diversity and adaptability	4.12	4.07	4.10
Availability of ample space and sidewalks	4.67	4.15	4.41
Culture and tradition	4.89	4.66	4.78
Availability of tree covers and shelter	3.16	3.59	3.38
<b>Mean RFI</b>	<b>4.20</b>	<b>4.06</b>	<b>4.14</b>

Note: RFI denotes relative factor index



**Table 5** Rotated component matrix of the determinants of the use of streets

	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
It is a good place for buying and selling	0.935				
Earning income	0.849				
High cost of renting shop for business	0.817				
Urban poverty	0.640				
Lack of neighbourhood recreational spaces		0.863			
No other open spaces around		0.849			
Lack of children playground		0.677			
Distance from homes (proximity)		0.594			
Local lifestyle and behavior of people			0.947		
Cultural practice and tradition			0.897		
Character and image			0.782		
Comfort and convenience				0.788	
Availability of tree cover and shelter				0.697	
Availability of ample space and sidewalks				0.677	
Safety and security					0.871
Weather condition					0.509

Extraction method: Principal component analysis  
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization

**Table 6** Variance explained by determinants of the use of streets

Component	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (after rotation)		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1. Economic factor	3.811	18.149	18.149
2. Inadequacy of environmental amenities	3.737	17.796	35.945
3. Culture and social lifestyle	2.561	12.196	48.140
1. Public space attributes	2.499	11.901	60.041
2. Perceived environmental factors	2.159	10.281	70.322

“Many people sell things on the streets as their last resort to survive. Everyone knows what is right or wrong. However, the economic situation of the country could be more favourable. Nobody wants to sell things on the streets at the peril of their lives. We all know that a street is dangerous, but man must live. There are no government jobs for us anywhere”. (A young male adult who resides in Ile-Ife)

“...what do you expect me to do in this period of economic hardship? Do you want me to steal to feed my children? I cannot stop selling my goods on the streets because I don't have money to rent a shop. The street is my workplace. It is where I earn my daily bread. I have been selling my goods on the streets for more than 12 years”. (A woman who is a street trader in Osogbo)

“The goods sold by street vendors appeal to me. Whenever I return from work in the evenings, I can easily buy one or two things on the streets close to my house without going to the markets and spending no money on transport fares. So, it is not only convenient for the traders, but the buyers also benefit. Street trading would have stopped if the traders were not getting customers on the streets! People now prefer to buy fresh foodstuffs on the streets close to their houses instead of wasting time and money going to the central market (King's market). I have not visited the central market for an extended period because there are many traders selling foodstuffs everywhere on the streets in my neighbourhood”. (A young man who is a bachelor in Osogbo)

“There are no recreational open spaces around here. The houses are packaged together with only a narrow passage between them. Therefore, the government must make provisions for this area's social and recreational needs. For example, I am a member of a youth social club. We usually spend time together on the weekends and relax to enjoy and discuss important matters. The street is the only available space for us, especially during our youth carnival celebration”. (A young man from the core area of Osogbo).

The results of this study corroborate the findings of previous research that the need for economic survival and the lack of environmental amenities are important reasons why people in developing countries keep using public spaces for different activities despite strict regulations by urban planners (Abolade & Adeboyejo, 2013; Adedeji et al., 2014; Afon et al., 2006). Due to the limited economic means available to the poor and the government's disregard for the deficiency of natural amenities, urban public spaces have become workplaces for the underprivileged (Adebara et al., 2022; Handoyo & Setiawan, 2018; Okanlawon & Odunjo, 2016). The study also showed that culture and social lifestyle were the third important factor determining everyday urbanism and the use of the streets. This finding is in tandem with the submission of Alawadi et al. (2022) that culture is a crucial predictor of everyday urbanism in traditional

contexts. Residents in traditional settings often adapt streets and other public spaces to satisfy their cultural demands and enrich their daily living experience (Adebara, 2022; Afon & Adebara, 2022).

## 06.0 CONCLUSION

This study examined the use of the street as a public space in the traditional city centres of Nigeria. While elected government officials and urban planners consider the street a transport facility, the residents perceive and use the street as a space for different activities. Based on the study's findings, it is concluded that the residents' behaviour of turning the street into an area for different activities results from the economic factor and the inadequacy of environmental amenities. In other words, this study suggested that everyday use of the streets is a response to economic problems and inadequacy of environmental amenities such as neighbourhood open spaces. This is similar to what happens in marginalized communities across developing countries, where people transform public spaces into arenas for different functions to meet their everyday needs (Elsheshtawy, 2013). In this regard, policymakers should respond to the needs and plights of the urban populace and encourage the everyday use of public spaces. It is also essential that urban planners understand the cultural logic behind the use of public spaces before prescribing planning regulations and designing interventions. Moreover, the findings established that the users did not perceive street activities as a misuse of public spaces but rather as a means to satisfy their socio-cultural requirements. Therefore, public space management should align with people's culture and lived experiences in the traditional city centres to achieve the expected outcome.

The study further showed that the locations where the informal trading and cultural events took place were lively and vibrant. In such locations, there were many people engaged in social activities. The everyday use of the streets as public spaces created a unique setting for social contact among shoppers, community members, and strangers. Therefore, policymakers and planners should recognize the contributions of the everyday use of public spaces in creating lively and vibrant communities. Given the above, it is suggested that city administrators and urban planners should encourage informal trading by incorporating "designated open-air trading space" into urban renewal strategies like the innovative approach adopted in Warwick Junction Project in South Africa. The vending space should be strategically located close to street junctions and integrated with walkways to ensure visual permeability and a high level of patronage. Public seating facilities should also be provided around the vending places to encourage social interaction. All these will help the city authorities accomplish some of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly in creating inclusive and sustainable communities.

The government should also collaborate with the local communities to establish effective control measures for street activities. Moreover, users' participation in public space management will help control users' activities and minimize traffic congestion. Finally, policymakers and planners should place a high value on making provision for environmental amenities such as neighbourhood open spaces in the traditional city centres to support the socio-cultural lifestyle of the residents and alleviate the slummy conditions of the traditional city centres.

## Acknowledgement

The authors would like to thank everyone who participated in the successful completion of this study, including participants and research assistants, for their invaluable contributions.

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