

Poverty Vulnerability Index Analysis of Informal Economy: The Need for Integrated Planning

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ABSTRACT

This paper analysed the poverty vulnerability index among informal economic operators in Kano Metropolis with a view to integrate planning. A quantitative research method was adopted with the use of structured questionnaires (384) to collect data from six clusters. A purposive, non-probability sampling technique was used to get the targeted population. The Brata's vulnerability assessment index was adopted for the study, using 14 elements of vulnerability to determine the extent of poverty vulnerability in the study area. Three classes of indices were used to rank the level of vulnerability: strongly vulnerable, vulnerable, and weakly vulnerable. Findings show that poor welfare, finance, and non-registration of businesses render operators vulnerable by more than 80%, while migration status and gender render operators weakly vulnerable. Strong poverty vulnerability occurs in Fagge and Gwale with more than 9 indices, followed by vulnerability within clusters with more than 70% operators with indices 5–9. Nasarawa and Tarauni have the highest number of operators with weak poverty vulnerability (29.2% and 35%, respectively). The study concluded that informal economic operators in Kano Metropolis are vulnerable to poverty and therefore recommended that the informal economic operations be integrated into urban land use planning to improve functionality and aesthetics as well as facilitate participatory planning for effective urban management.

Keywords: Informal economy, Operators, integrated planning, vulnerability, Informal Activities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The informal sector, according to the International Labour Organisation, is “the non-structured sector that has emerged as a result of the modern sector’s inability to absorb new entrants.” (ILO, 1972; Sparks and Barnett, 2010). Informal economic activities are characteristically small-scale, family-owned, use a small labour force, and use simple skills and methods (Yankson, 2000). Lekwa (2015) also described informal economic activities as legal but illegal in terms of location, ease of

entry and exit, reliance on indigenous resources and adopted technology, small scale of operation, labour intensive, family owned, and taking place at a convenient location for consumers with less regard to zoning regulations. In many developing countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and South America, the informal sector represents a critical source of livelihood for a majority of the poor (Tilerman, 2012; Samman and Hunt, 2018).

Vulnerability, according to Dercon (2001), refers to a sense of insecurity or fear of harm that people feel and are wary of. Vulnerability is a resultant effect of exposure to internal and external factors; the sensitivity to such factors leads to a potential impact in the absence of adaptive measures (ACEPIS, 2018). Chaudhuri et al., (2002) defines poverty vulnerability as the probability of becoming or remaining poor at a given time given certain socio-economic and physical characteristics. Kühl's (2003) perception of vulnerability to poverty is the absence of households' resilience to shocks that can bring welfare below a threshold deemed acceptable by society.

The vulnerabilities plaguing the informal economy call for the need to incorporate the sector in the planning and management of cities (Tokman, 2001). This is in the quest for a survival support strategy in the form of policy to improve the welfare of the urban populace, especially the informal operators. Abdulquadri et al., (2022) opined that factors such as lack of informal welfare and access to credit facilities, non-membership of association, non-registration of business, lack of space, harassment due to location and low income were identified as the most contributing factors to vulnerability of the informal economy in Kano metropolis. Integrating the informal economy could be achieved by bringing formalization requirements closer to the capacities of the informal operators through the simplification of bureaucratic procedures that will enable operators be willing to participate in the integration process (Chepkemei, 2016).

Kano, being the nation's centre of commerce and one of the most populated states in Nigeria, has a large proportion of its population involved in informal economic activities as a source of livelihood, as the informal economy in Kano contributes approximately 60–70% of employment (Kano State Government, 2018). Given the population engaged in the informal economy, it is important to inculcate the need of the informal operators in planning and management through an integrated planning process as a tool for embracing the informal sector operators and ensuring they are protected from poverty vulnerabilities.

Several researches on the informal economy have focused on challenges and factors hindering development and the spatial

structure of the informal sector activities (Majadibodu, 2016; Mohammed, 2016; Chepkemei, 2016; Ndumbaro, 2014); other studies focused on the impact of informal sectors as a source of household income (Tshuma & Jari, 2013). However, few studies have considered vulnerabilities in the informal economy. Dabir (2004) and Brata (2010) attempted to construct a vulnerability index in Delhi and Yogyakarta with seven and ten factors, respectively, to predict the rate of vulnerability, not all the factors depict the peculiarities of informal economic operation in Kano Metropolis. This paper therefore seeks to analyse the poverty vulnerability index among informal economic operators in Kano Metropolis with a view to integrate planning.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Study Area

Kano City has, for centuries, been an important commercial and industrial nerve centre of Northern Nigeria, attracting millions from all parts of the country and beyond. Kano has developed a diverse economy, establishing itself as a centre for industry, agriculture, and commerce. Kano has established a continuous and steady market for both semi-processed and manufactured products. The amount of trading performed daily, especially in Kurmi, Katin Kwari, Kwanar Singer, Muhammad Abubakar Rimi, and Dawanu markets, demonstrates Kano as a market for different goods. Kano metropolis is amongst the fastest-growing cities in Nigeria, with eight (8) out of the forty-four (44) Local Government Areas in the state found within the metropolis. The local government areas within the metropolis are Nasarawa, Tarauni, Fagge, Dala, Gwale, Kano Municipal, Ungogo, and Kumbotso Local government Areas. Six out of these clusters are, however, the focus of this study.

2.2 Method of Data Collection

A survey research method was employed in the study. The survey covered six Local Government Areas regarded as clusters. A purposive non-probability sampling technique was used to get the target population using Cochran's formula for indefinite population since the research population comprises persons engaging in informal economic activities, which has no specific number using the formula. $n_0 = \frac{z^2 pq}{e^2}$,

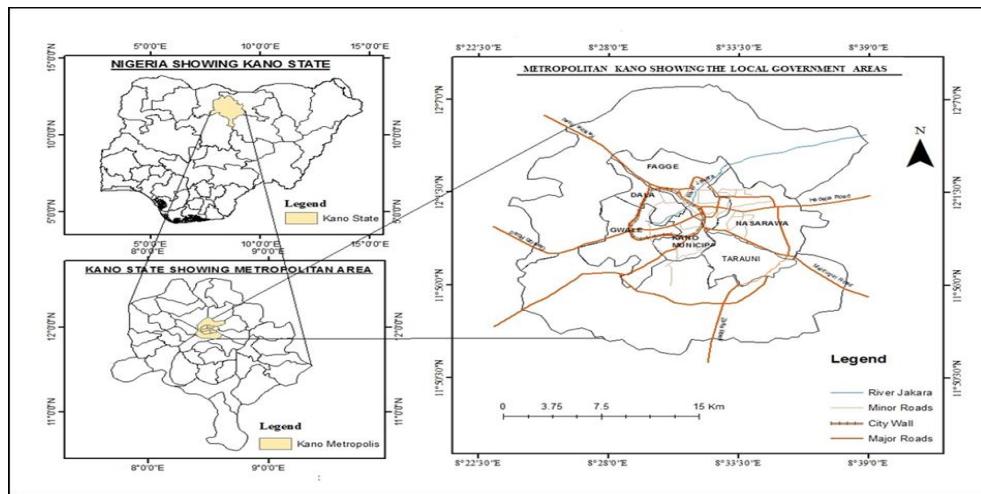


Figure 1: Geographical Location of Study Area

Source: GIS laboratory, URP Dept, KUST, Wudil, Kano, 2020

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

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

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

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

Table 1: Population and sample size

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

Source: Author's compilation (2020).

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the collected data, while the extent of vulnerability was analysed using Brata's (2010) vulnerability index analysis.

2.2.1 Vulnerability Index Analysis

Dabir Alai (2004), in his study, constructed a vulnerability index to predict the rate of street vendors' vulnerability in Delhi using seven elements based on subjective views. The elements are earnings, bullying, dependents, spatial isolation of kin, formal education, long hours, relationships with suppliers and credit lines. He then used binary counts of the elements with the simple addition of the binary value index for each vendor to measure a composite index of vulnerability. Similarly, Brata (2010), in his study on the vulnerability of the urban informal sector in Yogyakarta, used ten elements of vulnerability by adapting the seven elements of vulnerability by Dabir and adding an additional three elements, namely distance from home, ownership of business, and membership in an association, to carry out his study. The index was then grouped into classes to rank the level of vulnerability.

Employing the Brata (2010) method of constructing a vulnerability index to predict the rate of vulnerability in Kano metropolis, this study used 14 elements of vulnerability in calculating the index of vulnerability in the study area, following Brata's conclusion that the more variables used in constructing a vulnerability index, the richer the picture of vulnerability (Brata, 2010). This study employed five of Brata's indices and added an

additional nine to construct the vulnerability index as presented in Table 2.

shift from the popularly held view that the informal sector is for the illiterate.

Table 2: Elements of Poverty Vulnerability Index Analysis

S/N	Elements	Binary value	Underlying justification
1	Low income	No=0, Yes=1	Easy/ difficult consumption
2	No formal education	No=0, Yes=1	Less/ more ability to exploit opportunities
3	Long distance from home	No=0, Yes=1	More/less risk in journey
4	Not a member of an association	No=0, Yes=1	Less/more opportunity to improve bargaining power provided by association
5	Experience of bullying and harassment	No=0, Yes=1	Unlikely/likely to feel threatened
6	Inadequate access to facilities needed	No=0, Yes=1	Less/ more improvement in productivity
7	Lack of space	No=0, Yes=1	Unlikely/likely to feel threatened
8	Lack of security in goods	No=0, Yes=1	Unlikely/likely to feel threatened
9	High tax rate	No=0, Yes=1	Less/more income for other consumption
10	Business not registered	No=0, Yes=1	More/less opportunity for support from government or non-governmental agencies
11	No access to credit facilities	No=0, Yes=1	More/less opportunity for financial support
12	Gender base threat/ competition	No=0, Yes=1	Unlikely/likely to compete favourably
13	Lack of informal welfare	No=0, Yes=1	Less/more access to skill upgrade, training and insurance
14	Migration status	No=0, Yes=1	Unlikely/ likely to have equal access to opportunities
Vulnerability index ranges from 0 -14.			
[(1)+(2)+(3)+(4)+(5)+(6)+(7)+(8)+(9)+(10)+(11)+(12)+(13)+(14)]			

Source: Authors compilation, 2020

The vulnerability index of operators was achieved by adding the binary values for the 14 elements for each respondent to determine the vulnerability index. For instance, if an operator's value for all elements is 1, then the index is 14, and if the elements are 0, then the index is 0. Since the index consists of 14 elements, the indices range from 0 to 14, and are ranked into 3 categories: strongly vulnerable, vulnerable, and weakly vulnerable (see Table 3).

Table 3: Vulnerability Index Ranking

S/N	Rank	Vulnerability Index
1	Strongly vulnerable	10-14
2	Vulnerable	5-9
3	Weakly Vulnerable	0-4

Source: Authors compilation, 2020

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Characteristics of Respondents

Findings from Table 4 show that most operators are male (84.1%); this male dominance reflects the need for males to take care of their families against females, who mostly stay back at home. An average age of 32 years shows that the informal economy consists of youths with educational qualifications, as findings reflect that most operators have access to formal education, as operators with no formal education are only 21.4%, primary education is 10.2%, secondary education is 45.1%, and tertiary education is 23.4%. This is in line with the studies of Mwau (2010), Oladimeji (2012), and Saunyama (2013) which show a paradigm

Additionally, operators in Kano metropolis have an average of N36000 per month, which is just a bit above the stipulated minimum wage, with most operators relying solely on the income from informal operations (78.1%), which is similar across the clusters. This shows that most informal economic operators in Kano metropolis are low-income earners since most operators claim they have no alternative source of income. This is in line with findings that informal operators are mostly low-income earners (ILO, 2000; Chen, 2012; Lekwa, 2015). Informal economic operators travel an average of 1.3 km to work, which shows most operators travel short distances to work except in Fagge because Fagge is the commercial nerve of the city where most commercial activities take place.

3.2 Poverty vulnerability assessment factors of informal economic operators

Factors that render informal economic operators vulnerable to poverty in the running of their businesses were depicted with fourteen (14) variables, as presented in Table 5.

Operators that earn below the stipulated minimum wage were categorised as vulnerable, and this amounts to more than one-third (146), or 38% of the operators, as they might find it difficult to cater for their daily needs. Also, operators with no formal education (73) were said to be vulnerable, as they might not be able to compete and exploit opportunities with their educated counterparts when the need arises. The results show that 19% of the operators are

Table 4: Characteristics of respondents

	Local Government Areas						Total / Σ
	Tarauni	Gwale	Fagge	Municipal	Nasarawa	Dala	
Distribution of respondents by LGA							
F	40	63	35	66	106	74	384
%	10.4	16.4	9.1	17.2	27.6	19.3	100
Gender of respondents							
Male	%	82.5	88.9	91.4	97.0	78.3	74.3
Female	%	17.5	11.1	8.6	3.0	21.7	25.7
Age of respondents							
mean	Σ	30	35	27	35	33	30
Educational qualification							
No formal education	%	7.5	19.0	11.4	31.8	32.1	10.8
Primary	%	20.0	3.2	11.4	3.0	11.3	14.9
Secondary	%	37.5	60.3	60.0	47.0	30.2	48.6
Tertiary	%	35.0	17.5	17.1	18.2	26.4	25.7
Monthly income (thousand naira(₦))	Σ	40	33	32	31	42	37
Alternative source of income							
has alternative source	%	22.5	19.0	8.6	21.2	30.2	18.9
no alternative source	%	77.5	81.0	91.4	78.8	69.8	81.1
Distance to work (kilometres)	Σ	1	0.8	2.2	1.2	1.5	0.8
							1.3

Source: Field Work, 2020

vulnerable to education, which is close to the findings of Brata (2010), where 11% of operators are vulnerable due to illiteracy. Operators that travel a benchmark of 2 kilometres from their home are said to be vulnerable, as they are likely to face more risks in carrying out their day-to-day activities.

Another vulnerability assessment factor is not being a member of an association. Findings from Table 5 show that 72% of the operators are not affiliated with any association. This agrees with the findings of Brata (2010), as 82% of operators in his findings were not members of any association, which further renders them vulnerable. This means less opportunity to improve the bargaining power provided by the association. Operators who affirmed they are exposed to bullying and harassment by government agencies are said to be vulnerable and make up about 37% of the respondents. This applies mostly to street traders, who are likely to feel threatened every time as a result of their location.

Inadequate access to facilities and services needed, such as electricity, water, and waste management, renders operators vulnerable, as they tend to spend more on providing such facilities, affecting their productivity. Lack of space for operation renders operators vulnerable, as this is a major reason for locating on available spaces without due process. This agrees with Oladimeji (2012), who he recommended the provision of serviced space to foster enterprise development. Lack of security in goods does not render operators

vulnerable across the clusters, except in Dala, where operators show concern for the insecurity of their goods. Similarly, high tax rates do not render operators vulnerable, except in Nasarawa and Dala, where operators claim the tax they pay is high. Business registration also renders operators vulnerable, as the majority of operators across the clusters did not register their businesses. Nasarawa, however, has 15% of operators whose businesses have already been registered. This shows operators in Nasarawa have more opportunities for support from government or non-governmental agencies than other clusters when opportunities arise. Lack of access to funds renders operators vulnerable as 99% of operators have never had access to financial aid or support. Gender does not render operators vulnerable. This might be as a result of dominance of the male gender in informal economic operations in Kano metropolis. Lack of welfare for operators in the informal economy renders operators vulnerable as opportunities for skills upgrade, training, insurance and so on elude them. Lastly, migration status does not render 97% of the operators vulnerable. This shows vulnerability in the informal economy of Kano metropolis has nothing to do with being a migrant or an indigene.

Consequently, this study shows that lack of informal welfare (99.7%), non-access to credit facilities (99%), non-registration of businesses (87%), and not being affiliated with an association (72%) are the most significant determinants of poverty vulnerability in the

Table 5: Poverty Vulnerability Assessment Factors of Informal Economic Operators in Kano Metropolis

Local Government Areas		Tarauni	Gwale	Fagge	Municipal	Nasarawa	Dala	Total	%
Distribution of respondents by LGA		40	63	35	66	106	74	384	100
vulnerability factors									
1.Low income	Yes	19	29	11	33	30	24	146	38
	No	21	34	24	33	76	50	238	62
2. No formal education	Yes	2	12	4	23	26	6	73	19
	No	38	51	31	43	80	68	311	81
3. Long distance from home	Yes	10	17	24	27	35	19	132	34
	No	30	46	11	39	71	55	252	66
4. Not a member of an association	Yes	31	47	20	40	75	61	274	72
	No	9	16	15	26	31	13	110	28
5. Experience of bullying and harassment	Yes	8	15	23	41	28	26	141	37
	No	32	48	12	25	78	48	243	63
6. Inadequate access to facilities needed	Yes	7	26	5	35	28	9	110	29
	No	33	37	30	31	78	65	274	71
7. Lack of space	Yes	21	31	18	25	25	25	145	38
	No	19	32	17	41	81	49	239	62
8. lack of security in goods	Yes	4	5	11	12	12	43	87	23
	No	36	58	24	54	94	31	297	77
9. High tax rate	Yes	2	5	0	0	21	20	48	13
	No	38	58	35	66	85	54	336	87
10. Business not registered	Yes	34	56	33	64	70	71	328	85
	No	6	7	2	2	36	3	56	15
11. No access to credit facilities	Yes	40	63	32	66	106	74	381	99
	No	0	0	3	0	0	0	3	1.0
12. Gender base threat/ competition	Yes	0	0	6	2	9	3	20	5.0
	No	40	63	29	64	97	71	364	95
13. Lack of informal welfare	Yes	40	63	34	66	106	74	383	99.7
	No	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.3
14. Migration status	Yes	0	0	4	0	4	3	11	3.0
	No	40	63	31	66	102	71	373	97

Source: Fieldwork, 2020.

study area. This is in contrast with the findings of Dabir (2004), which show bullying of vendors (70%) as the most determinant of vulnerability in Delhi, compared to 37% in the study area. Interestingly, findings on membership of an association as a determinant factor of vulnerability show 82% in Yogyakarta (Brata, 2010) and 72% in Kano metropolis.

3.3 Vulnerability Index Analysis of informal economic operators

Table 6 shows the frequencies of operators in Kano metropolis, with a vulnerability index ranging from zero to fourteen.

Findings revealed that no operator has an index less than two (1, 0) or greater than ten (11, 12, 13, 14) in the study area. Vulnerability index ten, which indicates strong vulnerability, is only visible in Fagge and Gwale. Index 5 to 9 cut across all the clusters, which shows that operators across the clusters are vulnerable. Vulnerability index two appears only in Gwale and Nasarawa, indicating operators that are weakly vulnerable. Vulnerability indexes 3 and

4 also cut across the six clusters, except Gwale and Dala for indexes 3 and 4 respectively.

3.4 Extent of vulnerability of informal economic operators

The vulnerability index presented in Table 6 above is further grouped into three (3) classes: highly vulnerable (10–14), vulnerable (5–9), and weakly vulnerable (see Table 7).

Table 7 summarises the extent of vulnerability of informal operators in the study area. The findings show strong vulnerability in Fagge Local Government Area (11.4%) and Gwale (1.6%), resulting in 1.3% of the total respondents. Vulnerability takes up the highest percentage within clusters, with more than 70% in all Local Government Areas except Tarauni with 65%. This can be linked with vulnerability assessment factors, where one-third of operators are vulnerable to most of them. This indicates that 79.2% of operators across the clusters in Kano metropolis are vulnerable, and calls for the need for integrated planning where the physical and economic components of the

Table 6: Vulnerability index of informal economic operators in Kano Metropolis

S/N	Vulnerability Index	Local Government Areas							Total
		Tarauni	Gwale	Fagge	Municipal	Nasarawa	Dala		
	Distribution of by LGA	40	63	35	66	106	74	384	
1	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
2	13	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
3	12	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
4	11	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
5	10	-	1	4	-	-	-	5	
6	9	1	3	4	9	7	3	27	
7	8	3	7	3	14	11	9	47	
8	7	8	12	6	6	6	24	62	
9	6	8	11	5	23	21	13	81	
10	5	6	17	5	10	30	19	87	
11	4	10	10	4	2	16	-	42	
12	3	4	-	4	2	11	6	27	
13	2	-	2	-	-	4	-	6	
14	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
15	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Source: Field Work, 2020

Table 7: Extent of vulnerability informal economic operators in Kano Metropolis

S/N	Rank	Vulnerability index	Tarauni		Gwale		Fagge		Municipal		Nasarawa		Dala		Total	
			F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Highly vulnerable	10-14	0	0	1	1.6	4	11.4	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	1.3
2	Vulnerable	5-9	26	65	50	79.4	23	65.7	62	93.9	75	70.8	68	91.9	304	79.2
3	Weakly Vulnerable	0-4	14	35	12	19.0	8	22.9	4	6.1	31	29.2	6	8.1	75	19.5
	Total		40	100	63	100	35	100	66	100	106	100	74	100	384	100

Source: Field Work, 2020

environment will be in harmony in a way that will further enhance the social component of the environment. However, 19.5% of respondents showed low vulnerability. Within the clusters, Nasarawa and Tarauni have the highest number of operators with weak vulnerability (29.2% and 35%, respectively), which can be attributed to the fact that Nasarawa has the highest respondents with no vulnerability to space as they are located in designated economic sites (shops) with a high frequency of registered businesses, which makes them less exposed to vulnerabilities.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study analysed the poverty vulnerability index of the informal economy and the need for integrated planning in Kano Metropolis, Kano State, Nigeria. This paper identified fourteen (14) vulnerability factors of low income, migration status, no formal education attainment, space unavailability, inadequate access to facilities and services, membership in an association, high tax payments, and a lack of informal welfare, among others in a male dominated informal economic operation. Findings show strong vulnerability of these factors in Fagge and Gwale local government

areas, followed by vulnerability within clusters with more than 70% in all local government areas. Following these findings, the study recommends an integration of informal economic activities into land use planning to improve the functionality and aesthetics of the settlements as well as facilitate and enhance revenue generation by the local government authorities through licences, taxes, and users' charges for services and facilities. Similarly, formation of associations or affiliations with informal economic operators' associations will help organise and regulate the informal economic operators along trade groups to access credit facilities and facilitate participatory planning for effective urban management, while a department with the responsibility of the welfare of informal economic operations in terms of provision of space and documentation should be established.

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