

Neighbourhood Open space as Cultural Heritage Value in Multi-ethnic Community of South-West Nigeria

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ABSTRACT---- *Neighbourhood open space such as market square (Oja), plays significant roles in the lives of the rural residents in every continent in which South-West region of Nigeria is not an exceptional. This study aimed at exploring the interpretations of this peculiar open space in the context of socio-cultural background of its occupants. The study is underpinned by “place meaning” and “symbolic cultural value” theories. The methodology adopted involved a quantitative approach, using survey questionnaires as instrument. The results revealed a significant difference in the ethnic residents’ perception associating with cultural heritage value. This is an indication that both ethnics cherish their past history, events, and indigenous heritage which market square in their neighbourhood symbolises. This is a recommended tool for allied professionals in built environment in formulation of design decision.*

Keywords---Neighbourhood Open space, Market square, Ethnic Tribes, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

The interpretation ascribes to neighbourhood open space rekindled in the activity that occurs within the setting, physical condition, and the sensory experience, [1]. The activities of people in NOS emanate from personal experience and understanding of what is socially acceptable. This is an indication that different groups and individuals conceptualize public space in different ways [2].

Numerous researchers have examined “place meaning” concepts in different dimensions which associate with tangible and intangible values as averted [3]. Such concepts include inherent/ aesthetics, instrumental/goal- directed, cultural/symbolic, and personal/ expressive meanings. Davenport & Anderson, [4] substantiated place meaning as a reflection of appraisal of thought and feelings assigned to “place” that are rated based on values and importance. Residents’ interpretation of places determines how a particular setting will be shared, maintained, utilized, challenged and negotiated. Low & Altman [5], posited that place instigates the meaning people relate through personal, social and cultural processes. Hence it is an inclusionary measure that involves physical and psychological environmental attributes. The meaning residents ascribed to market square “Oja” is inspired by various activities, cultural factors, religious beliefs, personal attributes, and the setting, which comprises traditional norms, beliefs, historical values amongst others. In addition, it is associated with age, gender, occupation and so forth Manzo, [6]. In the same vein, Carmona & Tiesdell, [7], iterates that age difference, cultural background, gender, geographic and regional factors has relationship with the meaning of open space.

The sensory experience of place opined by Canter, [18], [19] as a tool that relates to environmental experience and foothold on people cognition, affect and behaviour. Gu & Ryan, [20] supported the assertion that people behaviour response to three components as the cognitive (factual), affective, and emotive. In a multi-ethnic environment, the meaning residents ascribed to open space often relate to personal instinct, knowledge, and socio-cultural background of the inhabitant, Low & Altman, [5]. Similarly, the resident’s attachment to “Oja” is rooted in their relationship between the place dependence, place identity and place familiarity. Other factors include physical features/general condition, satisfaction, and utilization pattern of the users, social-economic conditions and historical antecedents. “Oja” in this context is an area located within rural community performing enormous diverse functions ranging from social, economic, historic, religion, cultural and recreational activities that enhances appropriate liveability Adejumo, [16]. Sutton, [21] buttressed that open space such as act as an environment that allowed all citizens perform legal functions and thus encompass public parks and gardens, streets, town squares and other accessible areas. The functions performed therein ought to be accomplished without any restrictions, victimization, discrimination amongst the indigenous residents and their settlers’ counterparts. Attachment to open space relates to satisfaction in the form of symbolic and emotional expressions as identified by Sivalioglu & Berköz [22]. Hence, critical examinations of the value residents attach to “Oja”

through comparative reactions can be evaluated based on differs views which could be philosophical, cultural heritage(historical values and belief), aesthetics, qualitative or combinations of all,Oduwaye,[23].

Therefore, the main objective of study is to explore the residents' interpretations of traditional "Oja" in rural community of Nigeria. Does ethnic diversity impact on the NOS' interpretations? This will further enrich knowledge on needs to consider ethnic's cultural diversity, its resultant impacts on people behaviour and cognitive memories in planning of "Oja". In this regard, the paper is underpinned in "place meaning" and "Cultural value theories. Meaning people ascribed to places determine how a particular setting will be shared, maintained, utilized, challenged and negotiated. The resultant interpretation will be useful in promoting experts' planning insights in built environment. Consequently, further strengthening of residents' communal welfare and ideals insensitivity of ethnic heterogeneity could be achieved.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Open space management and planning emerged from various movements during periods of industrialization and urbanization in the late 19th century after the colonial period 1854. The salient reactions of the different movements rooted in urbanization, preservation of nature and people recreational and socio-economic activities Ho et.al[24]. A plethora of literatures significantly identified NOS in different perspectives. The tripolar meaning of area as identified by Gustafson, [25] encompass the following factors. First is the personal historical and emotional experience about the place. Second part leaned on physical identifiable features and events, different place and localization. The third part relates to counterpart perceived characteristics and trait behaviour. In addition, the definitions perhaps characterizes by inspirational factors such as ethnicity, religion, socio-economic class, age, gender amongst others Carmona & Tiesdells[7], Williams,[8], Kellert, [9], Kil, et.al, [10]. For example, Wolf & Rozance [11] refers to NOS as a neutral space utilized by residents of different ethnic groups interacting without harassment, hatred, intimidation and restrictions. NOS are a public space where social life like strolling, sitting, recreational activities, leisure activities takes place, Montgometry [1], buttressed.

The degree of NOS interpretations are characterized by number of visits, length of existence, proximity to residents and level of familiarity, Moore & Graefe, [12], Kil, et.al,[13], Moore & Scott,[14], Williams, et.al, [15] reported. Thus, environment creates identity that generates from the combination of economic, social and cultural perception, more so, it is a setting for residents, nature and built environment tapping an experience that enhances liveability Adejumo et al., [16]. Canter, [17], defined place as the resultant relationship between conception, activities and physical attributes.

A number of benefits associated with NOS irrespective of the rural peculiarities. In a multi-ethnic neighbourhood, residents of diverse background are bound to be united through participation in NOS activities, hence a strong social inclusion, communal sharing, and a sense of belonging enhanced Peter & Buijs [26]. Exposition to green space through recreational activities in the NOS constitutes health benefits, Wu & Plantinga, [27], Abraham et.al [28], Bell, & Morse, [29]. Furthermore, emotional and aesthetics value are derived Kaplan, et.al [30], Lennard, & Lennard, [31], Williams,[8], Jim, [32]. In addition, NOS foster social well-being and interaction as either passive or active forms, Dinne, et.al[33], Gobster, [34], Peter & Buijs [26], Gehl,[35], Fleming., et. al [36]. In a related development, economic benefits of NOS could not be overemphasized as iterated by Lewis, [37], Carmona, et. al[38], Kong, et. al [39]. Economic opportunity aids in upsurge of property values and reconstruct business and community confidence Tryrvaiven, et.al [40] buttressed.

Alubo, [41], categorizes open space in Nigeria context into three groups. The first category is the secular spaces, such as public parks, amusement park and gardens. The second categories involve geo-political spaces such as cyberspace and international community arena, which is less obvious. The third categories are the religious spaces which host religion faithful gathering for festivities and prayers. Human behaviour in NOS is challenged by the physical and environmental features of open space which facilitate the extent of social interactions amongst the residents Wolf & Rozance, [11] substantiated. In spite of the enumerated definitions, NOS has a common denominator when acclaimed as shared space in the multi-ethnic community hosting residents of different ethnics, religion, class, genders. Thus, the challenge remains how the contested space could be managed. Hence, assessment of shared NOS in multi-ethnic community targeted at responsive cohesiveness is worthwhile. In a related development, Alubo,[41] opined that, contestation over NOS could stirred a violent internal rift between the indigenes and settlers. Thus, struggle for ownership, accessibility and participation characterizes the engagement in open spaces. Lai, et. al, [42], asserted that marginalization practices often time geared individual or groups to express group-based norms, values and collective identity. Ojie, & Ewhrudjakpor [43], captured an ethnically diverse society as comprising distinctive culture-groups characterised by varying forms of exploitation resulting in struggles and conflicts. Therefore, Dinne, et.al, [33], suggest that ethnic residents behaviour in the community should be annexed with fairness, equity and justice. Equal treatment should be accorded to all without any trait of marginalization or exclusion of any groups Francis, et.al,[44] asserted.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is underpinned by place dependence, place rootedness and cultural inheritance theories as indicated in the Fig.1. Brown & Raymond, [45], termed place dependence as an interrelationship that exists through various activities within a setting that showcase the related importance of the “place.” Thus, the “place dependence” contributes to the favourable condition that supported an intended use. The researchers such as, Williams et. al [15], and Moore & Graefe, [12], expressed “place dependence” as a functional attachment that associates with vicinity’s physical characteristics such as accessibility, uniqueness and frequent visitation. Kyle, et.al [46], and Williams et. al [66] identified three distinct dimension of “place meaning” from place attachment. The first dealt with emotional-symbolic meaning reframed as “place identity” which explore the level in which the residents’ interrelates within the frame work of place utilization. The second dimension advocates “place dependence” as the residents’ unwillingness to relocate to another alternative place for their peculiar activities. The third factor is in negative appraisals of the setting which is termed as place indifference dimension.

Meanwhile, Stokols & Shumaker, [47] posits that “place” can be meaningful to people if it responds to expected functional value, desired experience and goal achievement. The author further identified the two components of “place dependence” as the degree of availability of social and physical assets of the present “place” in terms of expected behavioural satisfaction, when compared to other alternative places. Pretty, et. al [48], iterated that place dependence embroil residents’ personal interpretation of the place propel goal-oriented behaviours that characterized by social and physical values of the “place.” Tuan, [49] and Relph, [50] described rootedness as a psychological state of being in the mood, or a feeling, which had a connection with long habitation at the particular locality. Hammitt, et.al, [51] clearly defined rootedness as a situation that relates to the settlement, possession and long-time habitation to particular place without any desiring drive for alternative setting. Aftermath of which typical rootedness is referred to as ‘everyday rootedness’ In connection to this, different tribes Yorubas and Igbos could differ in overall rootedness predict about specific feelings and behaviours signify their tie to particular areas. For instance, Scannell & Gifford, [52], reported that, residents relationship to NOS could be determined by measuring physical and social bond that facilitates the familiarity amongst ethnic groups. More so, rootedness intertwined the length of residency, ownership, and the desire to stay at the place, Scannell & Gifford, [52]; McAndrew, [53].

NOS as a cultural heritage attributes intertwined with possession that connects personal histories, emotions, memories and experiences of an identifiable place, McAndrew, [53]. It could be adjudged as a value inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefits of future generations. Hence it relates to tangible culture such as buildings, monuments, landscapes, that can be realised through the senses, while the intangible culture exists as intellects in the mind of the holder, consisting of tradition, language and knowledge, Pillai, [68]. Hay, [65], disclosed that residents assumption recycling place dependence and rootedness perturbed by the ancestral ties consequence of which it gives an identifiable notion tailored their being stationed at a place. People attitude reflect a connection with the gift endowed from their generations; therefore, detaching from their inheritance would not be tolerated. Open spaces viewed as historical legacies that its value must remained. Thus, strong dependence is initiated to these NOS. In a related development, cultural spaces relied solely on residents’ socio-cultural and economic benefits which further solidify its ascribed interpretations and sense of belonging, Lai et. al, [42]. Also, symbolic meaning associated with inheritance believes and culture of the residents.

Better still, neighbourhood is actually formed through the creation or enhancement of a place that is shared by residents that have similar values, culture, ethics and faith, which may likely transient to reasonable knowledge that enhances group coherence and sense of group identity Wolf & Rozance, [11]; Yoke et al., [69]. The metaphor for community according to Montgomery [1] involves place, culture, individual identity and enthusiasm. Manzo, [6] explained that places are not significant but rather experience gained from it forms meaning and its characteristics are an integral part in the construction of an identified interpretation.

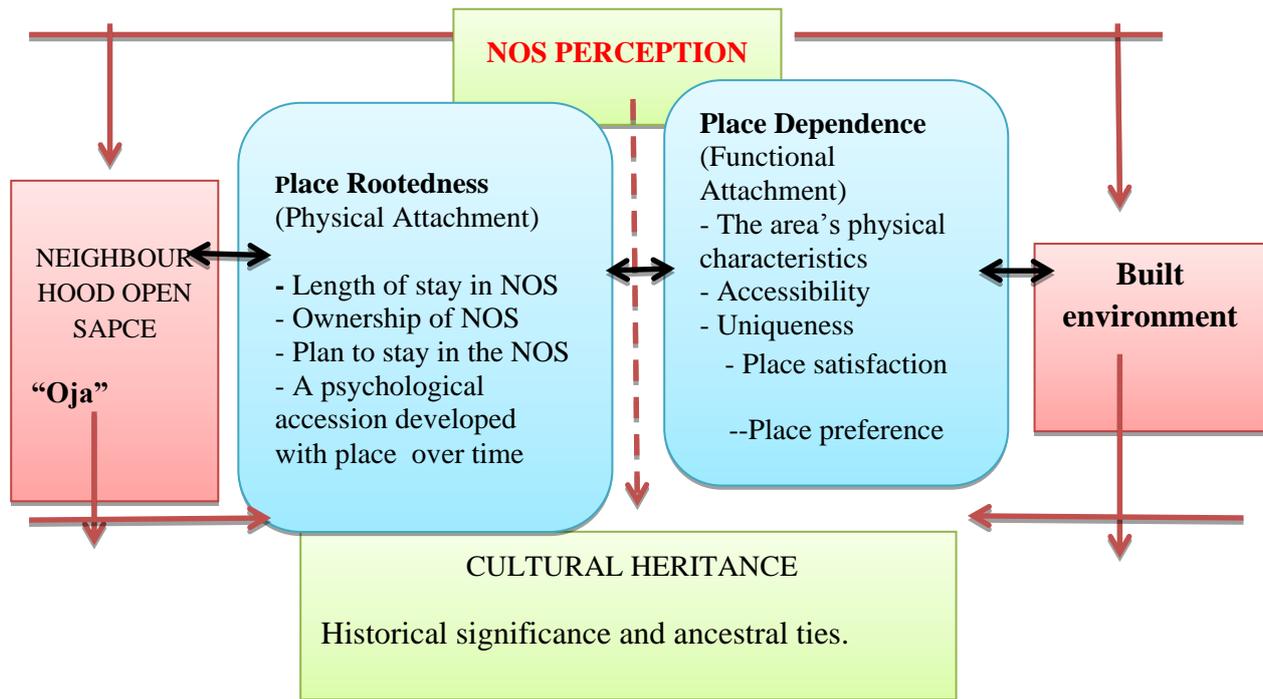


Fig. 1: Research conceptualization.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Study area

A pilot study was carried out at Ijebu-jesa, an ancient community situated in Oriade local government of Osun state, at the South-western part of Nigeria, in Africa. The town is eight kilometres north of Ilesha and around 128 kilometres east of Ibadan, and lies approximately on latitude 7.45 degrees north within the rain forest zone (Ijebu-jesa-Wikipedia). The town is intertwined by Ekiti state, and Ondo state, with hosts of encircling villages such as Iwoye, Iloko-jesa, Ere-ijesa, and Ijeda. Meanwhile, the residents are the core of Ijesa renowned to be industrious. The community was selected for study because of its multi-ethnic nature, centrality of the town (local government headquarter) and its NOS peculiarities (Fig. 2). This community comprises indigenous ethnic residents Yorubas (occupy south-western part of Nigeria), and the Igbo settlers (from south-eastern part of Nigeria). Yorubas comprises of Muslim and Christian, while some are traditional religionists, they involve in many of the social system and agricultural practices, which were in responses to different physical environments. In addition, Igbo's ethnic groups are mostly Christian, while some practices traditional Igbo religion. They are noted for being enterprising and involve in varying forms trading, local manufacturing and craft production.

The community showcase numerous open spaces as shown in fig.3 and fig.4 with different features and characteristics such as, market square, neighbourhood streets, footpaths, recreational playing ground, and communal open space and so forth. This research work focus on market square ("Oja") because of its peculiarity in the lives of the residents in terms of socio-cultural, religion, recreational, and commercial activities amongst others. The importance affirmed by Lai, et.al, [42], in emphasizing the usefulness to residents in line with the creation of opportunities for social interaction, sharing resources and exchanging information. Good interaction and acceptance of diversity amongst neighbours, friends and family, exhibits unanimous sense of belonging that is a factor that enables communal living (Holdsworth & Hartman 2009).

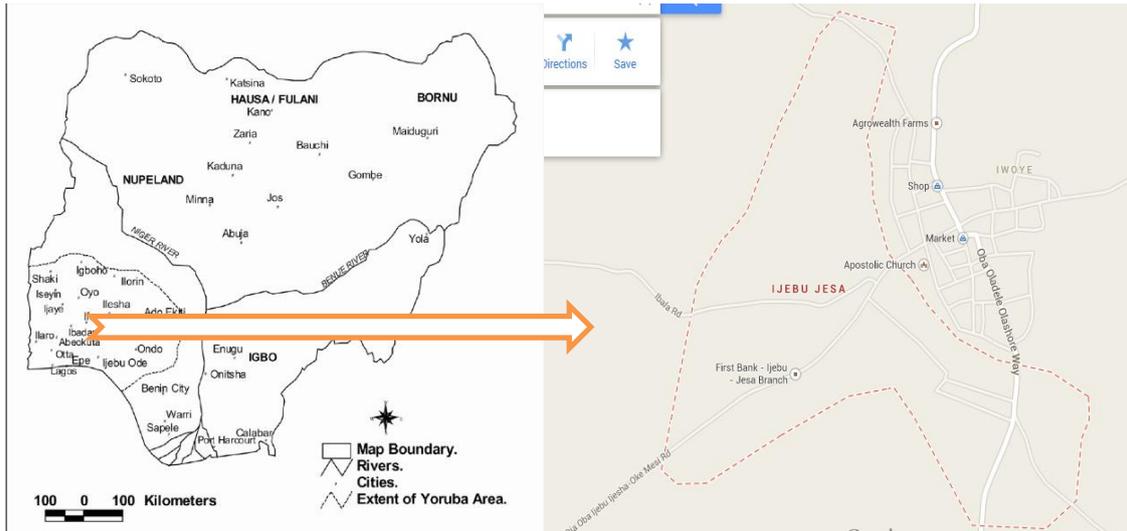


Fig.2: Map showing case study area in Nigeria. Source:Chokor, [63]&Goggle earth(Version 8.1.0.5001),[64].

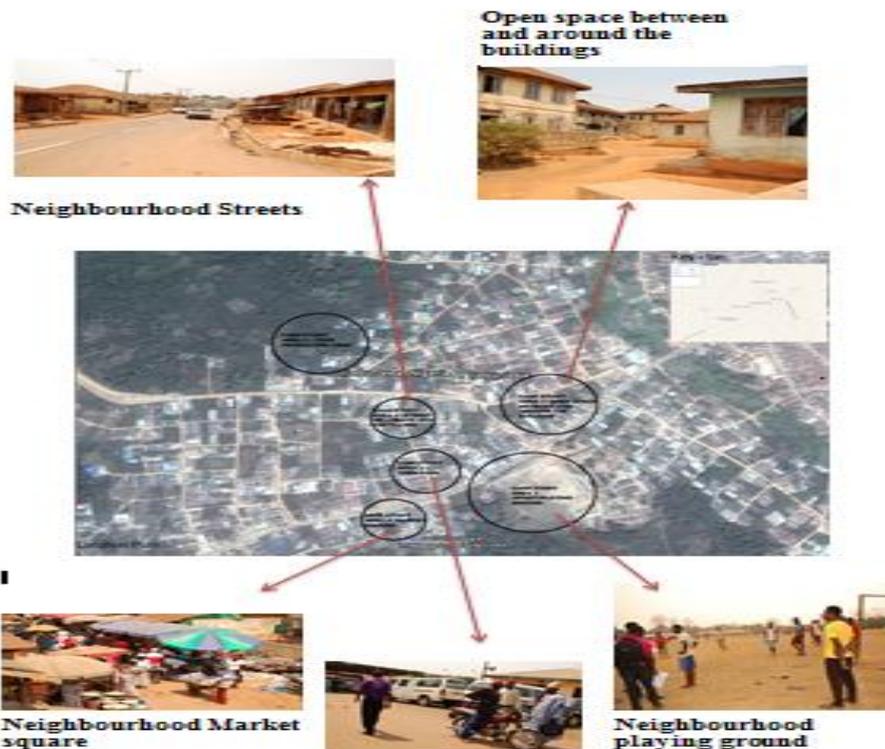


Figure 3:Base map of Ijebu-jesa showing Neighbourhood open spaces. Source: Researchers field survey (2014) and Goggle earthVersion 8.1.0.5001,[64] .

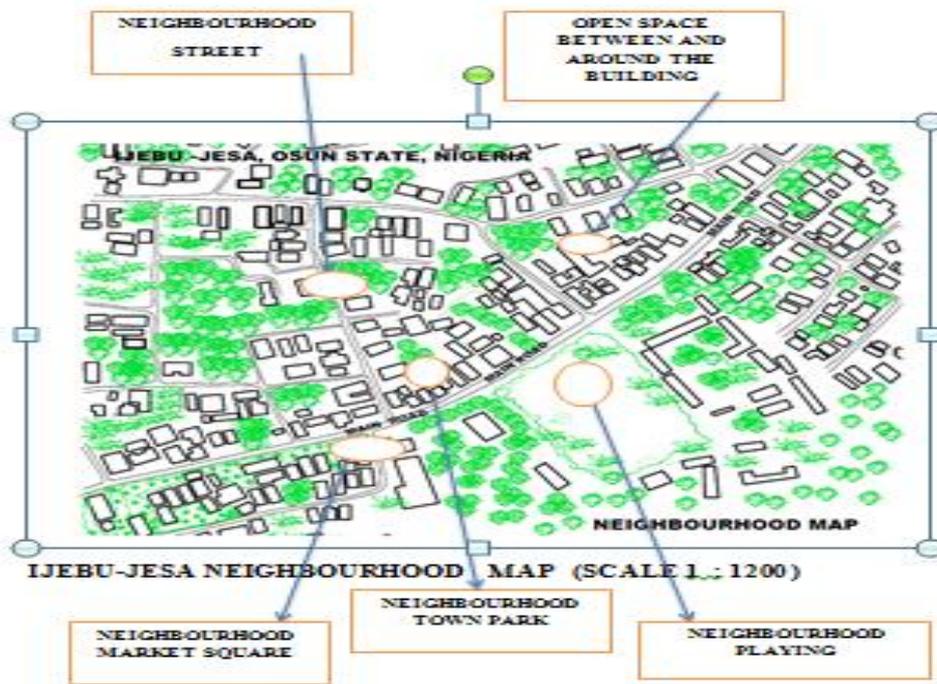


Figure4: Base map of Ijebu-jesa showing market square “Oja” and otherneighbourhood open spaces.

Source: Researchers field survey (2014).

4.2 Methodology and Measurements

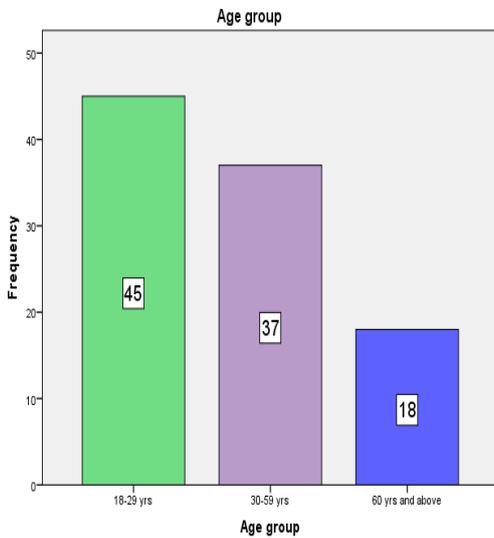
The methodology used involves a quantitative approach using survey questionnaires Cresswell, [62] . Most constructs were adopted and modified mainly from literatures in relation to market square (Oja). The pilot survey questionnaire is divided into five segments. The first segment seeks information about the respondents’ socio-demographic variables, thus adopted nominal scale measurement (Bryne& Wolch, [56], Brocato, [57].The second section involve a continuous scale measurement comprising five items statements and aimed at filtering the assessment market square’s interpretation amongst respondents Kil, et.al,[10], Davenport & Anderson,[4], Moore & Graefe, [12],Williams, et. al [67], Brown & Raymond[45]. Market square’s interpretation includes economic value, recreational value, aesthetics, religion and lastly cultural heritage based values.Adejumo [16] Degree of agreement with the statements elicited through the use of five-point Likert-type scale measurement with 1 being the lowest score(“Strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”) and 3 (neutral), and same used for the remaining segments. The third section contains items that were subdivided into three groups sought comments about place identity and place dependence/ rootedness;Scannell & Gifford,[52] ;Budruk & Stanis, [58];Kyle et.al ,[46]; Stedman, [59].

A total number of 100 survey questionnaires, with the sampling cut across bothethnics’ respondents (Yorubas& Ibos) were retrieved and both the dependent and independent variableswere analysed in relation to research objectives. Hence, the test of data reliability was done using Cronbach’s Alpha, while data internal consistency was tested using factor analysis,Blunch, [55].

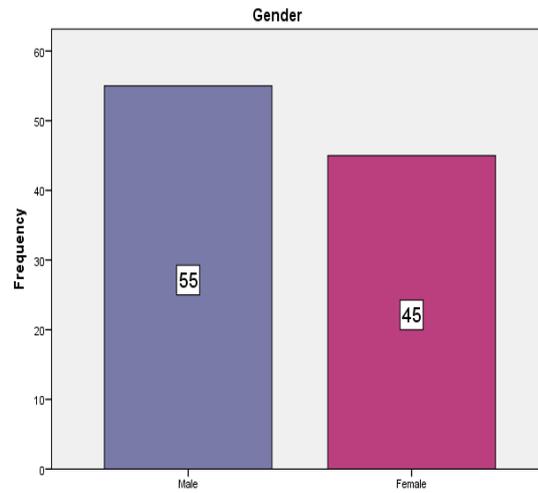
5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographical impacts of residents’ (n=100) age, gender, ethnics’ categories and length of residency in the town were used to explore market square’s variable interpretations, place dependence and place rootedness. Respondents’ age status indicates 45% falls within 18-29 years, 37% are within 30—59 years, while 18% are aged 60 years and above as shown in the frequency chartone. It is an indication that the opinions of ethnic residents are relevant to the research outcome. In addition, the gender population percentage of the male and female respondents shows 55% and 45% respectively in frequency chart two hence a gender balance is established. The respondent’s ethnic group’s population indicates Yorubas (indigenes) is 65% while Igbos (settlers) is 35% respectively in frequency chart three.It is a

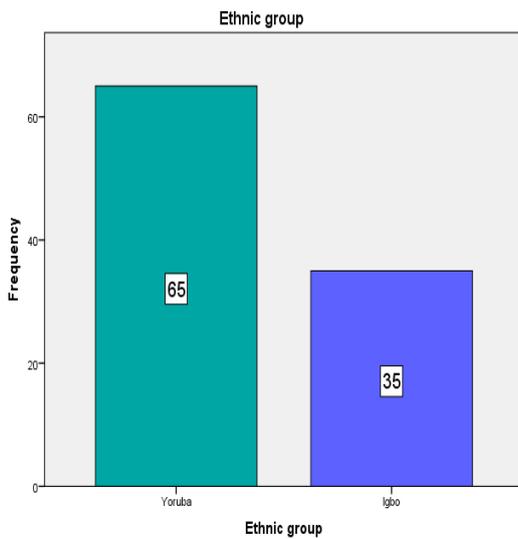
reflection of reasonable ethnic justifications. Frequencies of the year respondents' have lived in town shows 0-1 year is 12.2%, 1-5 years are 24.5%, 6-10 years are 20.4%, 10 years and above are 42.9%, frequency chart four refers. Respondents' frequency of a number of time they have visited market square indicate a fair justification as often visited is 90%, and not often has 10% as reflected in frequency chart five.



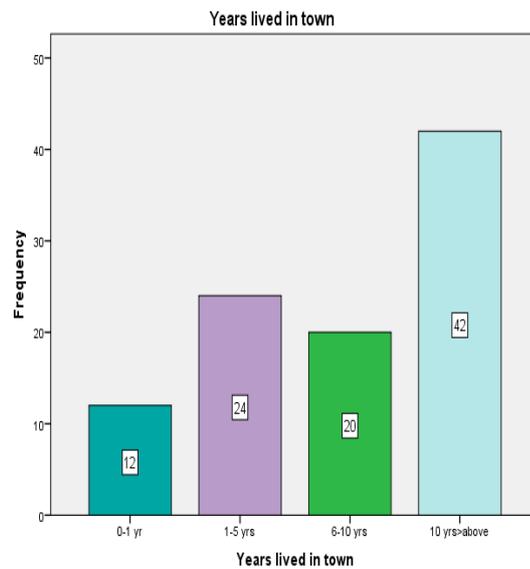
Frequency chart1: Respondents' Age groups



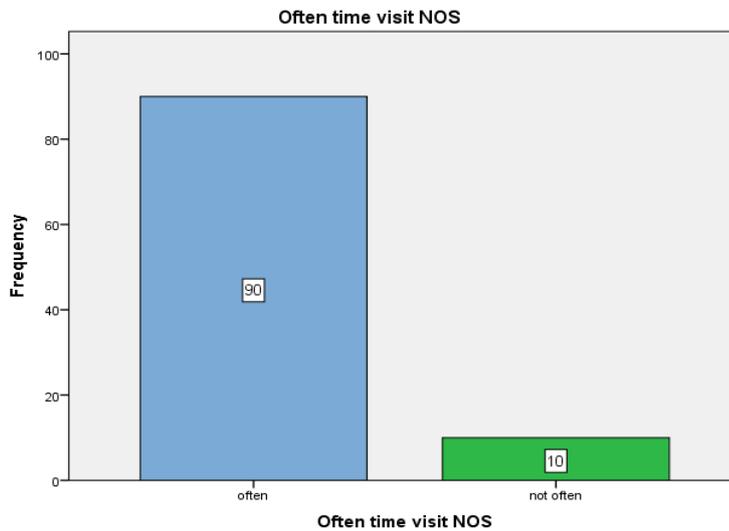
Frequency chart 2: Respondents 'gender population



Frequencychart 3: Respondents' Ethnic classifications



Frequency chart 4: Years respondents' lived in Town



Frequencies chart 5: Number of time respondents visit Market square (Oja)

The data reliability measure for all variables in different segments tested, and result outcome exceeded the Cronbach alpha coefficient (α) of 0.695, which demonstrated reliable value an indication that the statistical data conformed to the usual test for internal consistency as indicated in table1. George & Mallery, [60], Kline, [61].

Table 1: Summary of reliability measurement

Measure	Variables	Reliability (Cronbach alpha)
Perception of Market Square (Oja)	Economy Importance	0.695
	Recreation Importance	
	Aesthetic Importance	
	Cultural/Religion Importance	
	Heritage Importance	
Place identity	Market square means a lot to me	0.953
	I identify strongly with market square	
	Am attached to market square	
	Market square is importance to me	
	Market square contributes to the character of my community	
Place dependence/ Rootedness	Market square is best place for what i like to do	0.898
	No other place can be compared to Market square	
	Get satisfaction in market square than elsewhere	
	Doing what i do in market square is important than elsewhere	
	I would not substitute any other area for market square	

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.706
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	112.024
	df	10
	Sig.	.000

The factors analysis was also performed to check the measurement models variables as recommended by Anderson & Gerbing, [54]. The factor analysis result exhibited 0.706 which is considered as a reliable factor, while the Bartlett's test of sphericity is significant at 0.000 as shown in table 2.

Table 3: Independent Sample Test for Market Square’s Interpretation

			t-test for Equality of Means		
Source			t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Economy Importance Market square	Equal variances assumed		1.063	98	0.290
Recreation Importance Market square	Equal variances assumed		0.681	98	0.497
Aesthetic market square	Equal variances assumed		0.959	98	0.340
Religion Importance	Equal variances assumed		1.150	98	0.253
Cultural heritage Market square	Equal variances assumed		2.607	98	0.011

Note. *p≤0.005

The independent t-test result for Market square’ interpretation amongst the two ethnic groups exhibits non significance with p-value≥ 0.05 in associated meanings related to economic value t(98)=1.063, p=0.29),recreational value (t(98)=0.681, p=0.497), aesthetics value t(98)=0.959, p=0.34), religious t(98)=1.15, p=0.253), table 3 refers. However, a significance value of p≤ 0.05 was recorded in cultural heritage meaning (t(98)=2.607, p=0.011). These results indicate that both ethnic groups supported the interpretations of Market square as exhibited with non-significant factors but opinion differs in the inheritance interpretation.

Table 4: Mean table analysis for Market square' Interpretations (Group Statistics)

	Ethnic group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Economy Importance	Yoruba	65	4.1692	.87624	.10868
	Igbo	35	3.9429	1.23533	.20881
Recreation Importance	Yoruba	65	3.5077	1.31248	.16279
	Igbo	35	3.3143	1.43017	.24174
Aesthetic Importance	Yoruba	65	3.1231	1.35217	.16772
	Igbo	35	2.8571	1.26358	.21358
Religion of Importance	Yoruba	65	3.7385	1.39505	.17303
	Igbo	35	3.4000	1.41837	.23975
Cultural Heritage	Yoruba	65	3.3846	1.42184	.17636
	Igbo	35	2.6286	1.30802	.22110

Table 4 shows the mean analysis figures in which Yoruba ethnic has (3.38±1.42), while Igbo mean indicated (2.62±1.31), this pointed out that the degree that Yorubabelief associates with market square has an inheritance value is more than the Igbos.

Table 5: Independent Samples Test for Market square’ place dependence

			t-test for Equality of Means		
Source			t	df	Sig.(2-tailed)
Market square is best places for what I like to do	Equal variances assumed		2.960	98	0.768
No other place can be compared to Market square	Equal variances assumed		-0.109	98	0.913
I get satisfaction in Market square than elsewhere.	Equal variances assumed		-2.548	98	0.012*
Doing what I do in market square is important to me than elsewhere	Equal variances assumed		-0.867	98	0.388
I would not substitute any other areas for market square	Equal variances assumed		-1.278	98	0.204

Note. *p≤0.005.

Measurement of Market square’s place dependence witnessed a significant difference in “I get more satisfaction in Market square than any other place t (98) = -2.548, P=0.012. P (value) ≤ 0.05, as shown in table 5.

Table 6: Mean table for Market square's place dependence (Group Statistics)

	Ethnic group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Market square best place for what i like to do	Yoruba	65	4.2615	1.00432	.12457
	Igbo	35	4.2000	.96406	.16296
No other place can be compared to market square	Yoruba	65	4.0308	1.17219	.14539
	Igbo	35	4.0571	1.10992	.18761
Get satisfaction in Market square than elsewhere	Yoruba	65	3.3846	1.42184	.17636
	Igbo	35	4.0571	.87255	.14749
Doing what i do in Market square is important than elsewhere	Yoruba	65	3.8154	1.22337	.15174
	Igbo	35	4.0286	1.07062	.18097
I would not substitute any other area for Market square	Yoruba	65	3.6308	1.16685	.14473
	Igbo	35	3.9429	1.16171	.19637

However, mean **table 6** indicates that Igbo (mean value 4.05 ± 0.87) and Yorubas: (mean value 3.38 ± 1.42).

6. CONCLUSION

This study indicates that despite the diversities in respondents' socio-cultural background they seem had the notion that NOS possess values and permit various activities. The findings confirm previous study by Kil, et.al, [10]; Moore, & Graefe, [12], in relation to economic, recreational, aesthetics and religion and cultural inheritance interpretations as indicated in table 3. The results concur with the past researchers findings with a modification that might be necessary for the respondents' perception in terms of cultural inheritance table 3 and 4. In furtherance to this, Yoruba's residents have shown more degree of importance to cultural inheritance of NOS in relation to their Igbos counterparts. The cultural inheritance could be attributed to the residents' historical, emotions, experiences and memories that characterize NOS' dependence, as supported by Gustafson, [25]; Hay, [65].

Findings have revealed that NOS affords residents' dependence as validated by the constructs in table 5 & 6. Respondents have regarded the place as "the best place to carry out all necessary activities" and "no other place could be compared to their NOS." In addition, residents prefer "doing what they are doing in NOS is important to them than elsewhere" and therefore they "would not substitute any other areas for NOS as identified by Brown & Raymond, [45]. In this regard, mean table 5 and table 6 results have shown a modification to study by Stokols & Shumaker, [47]. In the level of satisfaction derived from NOS differs amongst the two ethnic groups. Therefore, this is an indication that Igbo ethnic group seems to be more satisfied and depend on NOS than the Yorubas ethnic group. This could be attributed to the fact that Igbos dominate trade and market activities in Nigeria, hence more enterprising and industrious economically than their Yorubas counterparts which confirm the previous study by Ojie, & Ewhrudjakpor, [43]. This research work posits that ethnic residents' interpretation of NOS relates to inheritance value which intertwines with past historical events/experiences and religious values that could have been transmitted to generations from generation.

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