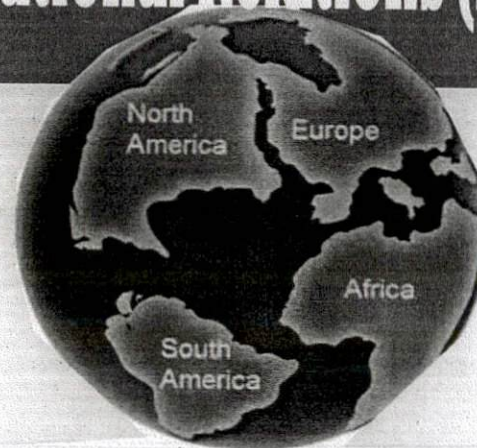




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THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRADING IN USED HOUSEHOLD ITEMS (AGANMU/BASIRI) AT BABOKO MARKET, ILORIN, 1980-2018

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Abstract

As social animals, human beings always find a way out of their economic and financial problems. The sociality of man can further be explained in terms of societal classification where there are the haves and the have-nots, the rich and the poor/needly as well as the educated and the illiterates amongst others. The class of every individual in a society determines his tastes as well as what he purchases in the market, i.e. the quality in terms of either new or fairly used products. The class distinction in a society which is recognized by religion and culture, is however, accounts for the reason why a person in financial need at times sells some of his properties in order to get money. Therefore, the desire to consume and enjoy a variety of goods and services within people's income was a prime factor behind the establishment of trade in used items. This paper using largely oral source and available written data, attempts to flaunt the uniqueness of trading in used household items at a section of Baboko market Ilorin in Kwara State, Nigeria. It identifies the articles of trade and the medium of buying and selling. It also traces the origin of the trade in Ilorin and its impact on the people of the local community in Ilorin and Kwara as a whole. The paper concludes that trade in used household items at Baboko market has enhanced inter-group relations, and also contributed to the economic development of Ilorin community, Kwara State and the entire nation.

Keywords: Household-Used, Trade, Baboko, Market, Ilorin

Introduction

The process of buying and selling of second hand or fairly used items is not new to the Nigerian market system and this explains why there is the use of different names to identify the fairly used items bought or sold such as tokunbo, bend down select, bosikoro, fairly used, okirika and akube amongst others. The trading in used household items at a section in Baboko market, Ilorin has its origin traceable to the parts of the activities at the Ilorin traditional markets¹. It all started as "Dilali" (Broker) and has now transformed to become "Basiri" as the trade is being referred to².

Basiri in Yoruba means standing with somebody at the time of need. This can be further explained to mean that the act of buying properties like clothing materials and other usable items from a person in financial difficulties only amounts

to standing by that person in time of crisis and financial need, hence, the word "Basiri"³.

The trade is different from the popular or common selling and buying of fairly used items because of the unique nature of the medium of trade as well as the assorted articles involved. The uniqueness of the trade as well as its socio-economic impact on the people of Ilorin community and Kwara State as a whole represent the focus of this study.

Origin of Buying and Selling of used Household Items in Ilorin and the "Dilali"

The origin of trade in buying and selling of used household items in Ilorin could be directly linked to the progenitors of Akaje compound in Agbaji Quarters and Ile Omo in Eruda, Ilorin⁴. They used to buy used clothing materials from the people of the surrounding compounds⁵. The buyers i.e. "the Akajes or Ile Omos" started the business as they were called "Dilali", after buying, they used to sell their purchased goods at a place called Idiseke which is now the present location of the old Ilorin Central Mosque⁶.

The Akaje buyers often used needle to convert men dresses usually Agbada (flowing gown) into women's dresses and under wear called "Tobi" which they used to sell at "toro" (3 kobo). This however explains why the Akaje family has this epithet: "Akaje omo ata akisa soro" meaning that the Akaje's offspring become wealthy from the sale of used cloths⁷.

There were many traditional markets in Ilorin, some were established along ethnic lines and this was why each ward therefore had markets that served its immediate people⁸. As stated above, selling and buying of household items started as Dilali and in Ilorin traditional markets just as in other places, each price quotation could be inflated by the middleman but the buyers would negotiate to normalize price. The middlemen who they often referred to as *Alarobo* or *Alajapa* used to approach owners at the markets to buy in bulk, broke it down to retail in their respective ward markets to sell to final consumers⁹.

The activities of the *Dilali* started when goods got to the market as the goods were handled by the traders themselves with the assistance of an agent cum interpreter called *Dilali* (Broker) who lured on a percentage given to him for effecting transaction from both the traders and the buyers¹⁰. Thus, *Dilali* is an agent who ensures effective transaction from the traders and the buyers in markets. The percentage offered for his/her activities that led to the effective transaction was called "*Lahada*" which was regarded as a form of insurance for both sellers and buyers. The *Lahada* was obtained as a condition signifying the ownership after the transaction and the *Dilali* who had been given *Lahada* would stand before any jury to clarify the issue if such case arises¹¹. The means of exchange in Ilorin traditional markets in the 19th century included trade by barter and later, slaves, cowry shells and copper pieces were used. Some of the traditional markets in Ilorin and when

they were established are listed in B.O. Ibrahim's Ilorin Traditional Markets in the 19th Century.¹²

Previous Market places for Trade in Used Household Items and Movement to the Present Location

The first market place where used items especially clothes were sold in Ilorin was at Idiseke, the present location of the old Ilorin Central Mosque¹³. The Local Government at a point ordered that the traders should vacate the market so as to give room for construction of road in the market. The market was then moved to Gurumoh which is at the back of the Emir's palace but the traders were there for a short time and this was during the reign of Emir Abduulkadir, the eighth Emir of Ilorin¹⁴.

Having stayed at Gurumoh for a short period of time, the Ilorin Local Government Authority during the reign of Emir Sulu Gambari re-settled the traders at Ago market where they remained for about ten years. At the Ago market, the traders experienced very low patronage and then they willingly moved to Idiape area of Ilorin¹⁵. They have spent seven years at Idiape market when the residents of Idiape who had learnt the business and were also part of the traders went to report them to the then *Magaji Aare* of Ilorin, Alhaji Ibrahim Adisa Zubair that the activities of the large number of intruding traders i.e. (Egbe Basiri traders) from Ago market as they are called now were affecting their own business. They therefore, demanded that the traders should vacate Idiape market¹⁶. The *Aare* appealed to the angry residents to be calm and allow the traders to remain in Idiape but they insisted that the traders should leave.

The traders acted upon the suggestion of one the members, *Iya Ile Alapansanpa* by approaching the then Chairman of Ilorin Local Government, Alhaji Obalowu Alore (Agarawu), for a suitable market place. Eventually, a section at Baboko market was found suitable and they were asked to move to the place in 1987 where hundred shops were rented out for them at ten naira monthly per shop but the traders settled for eighty out of the hundred shops. That was how they were settled in the present location at the Baboko market till date¹⁷.

Transformation from Dilali to Basiri

The marketers were still known or referred to as *Dilali* up to the time they moved to *Idiape* market. The haphazard nature of the *Idiape* market gave room for unscrupulous elements to get involved in the business as they started buying stolen goods especially cloths. For this reason, people started calling the traders and the trade different names such as "*Aganmu desi*", "*efun abi egbe*" etc. due to the fact that some of the traders at *Idiape* were selling and buying stolen goods¹⁸. In order to distinguish themselves from the unscrupulous traders and show to the world that

they are assisting people who are in financial needs with their trade, the traders after their settlement at Baboko market decided to be referred to as "*Egbe Basiri*"¹⁹.

It should be stated here that there are still traders at *Idiape* market today especially the residents who are selling and buying used cloths. Such traders were perhaps the ones that masterminded the eviction of *Egbe Basiri* traders from *Idiape* market²⁰.

Administration of the Market

Baboko market, Ilorin is a modern market structure built and owned by Ilorin West Local Government. It is a very large market where numerous items are being sold. There are different sections for each set of traders selling the same goods e.g. section for beverages sellers, section for fowl traders, and section for imported second hand cloth traders amongst others.

The traders of the used household items have their own section popularly referred to as "*Iso Basiri*". It is headed by *Iya Egbe* who is also regarded as the leader²¹. The *Iya Egbe* gives instruction and enlightenment on goods to buy and sell in the market so that the members would not buy or sell stolen goods. All members used to converge at *Iya Egbe's* shop on every Thursday by 4:00pm for a meeting and anyone who wishes to join the business must be presented first before the *Iya Egbe* for interrogation and instruction about the dos and don'ts of the business²³. Any erring member shall be suspended from the market for one week but in a serious offence like buying or selling stolen goods or even buying goods from an underage person, such a member shall be dismissed from the market, and the case shall be referred to the police²⁴.

Articles of Trade

The unique nature of the trade is exhibited in the area of the articles of trade. Unlike the usual or common selling of fairly used items where a trader will specialize in the sale of a particular item, for instance in one of the sections at the Baboko market, imported used cloths are sold by the traders and such traders would not mix fairly used cloths with other items and ditto for the sellers of imported used bags or shoes. But in the case of the trade under study, all second-hand or used household items are being bought and sold in that section of the market. The articles of trade include second-hand or used cloths, plates, spoon, mats, beads, shoes, trays, pots, mattress, flask, iron, radio, fan, TV, refrigerator etc. and some of the above mentioned articles were displayed in some shops in the market as witnessed by the researcher²⁵. No one among the traders specializes on buying and selling of a particular item as they buy and sell whatever usable household item(s) brought to the market²⁶. Interestingly, almost brand new item could at times be seen for sale in the market. The reason for this hinges on their name, "*Egbe Basiri*," thus, anyone who buys a new item today and he/she is in need of money the following day could

easily go to the traders in the market or at home and sell up such newly bought property and this is the reason why one could come across brand new item(s) in the market. It should be noted that among the sources of the articles of trade are willful sale of used items by owners, intentional sale of used 'Aso Ebi' by a person who bought it on credit or installment so as to be able to pay the balance, inheritances and by trade by barter amongst others²⁷.

Medium of Trade

As stated above on the origin of the trade, various homes of the traders are seen also as buying places. The traders in used household items are local people living in local environments where the potential sellers who need instant money could easily go and sell their properties²⁸. The buyer (trader) would in turn take the items bought at home to her shop in the market for sale.

Another noticeable and uncommon medium of trade among the traders was through trade by barter²⁹. Some of the traders will hawk either from home or market round the town of Ilorin with their usual statement "Oniparode", meaning the exchanger has come. They often exchanged plastic bowls, baskets and parkers for used cloths from any interested members of the public³⁰. They usually bring those exchange items to their shops in the market. Again, anyone who wished to sell his household property can freely enter the traders' section in the market and sell it to any of the traders who could bargain for the desired price.

In addition, there are some of the traders who only buy used items most especially cloths both at home and in the market with the aim of selling them at various weekly markets outside Ilorin³¹. Some of the weekly markets outside Ilorin include Pategi, Lafiaji, Gbugbu, Share, Alapa, Ote, Igbe and, Mokwa weekly markets amongst others.³²

Social Impact of the Trade

The organisation of weekly markets in various places outside Ilorin where some of the traders often go to sell their goods has given room for socio-cultural interaction between the traders and the people of the host market communities³³. For instance, many of the traders are able to speak other languages due to their interactions with the buyers in the markets through market bargaining. One of such traders is Alhaja Toyin Onagun who understands and speaks Nupe language fluently as a result of her trading activities in various weekly markets in Nupeland such as Gbugbu, Zambufu and Lade³⁴.

Besides, the trade has contributed in no small measure to the upliftment of the social status of the lowest income earners among the people of the local community by affording them the opportunity of purchasing and enjoying their desired goods. This has to a large extent given them good sense of belonging. The traders also support any member during marriage, chieftaincy and burial

ceremonies, by attending in their large number and contributing money for such a person³⁵.

Economic Impact

Economically, the trade provides employment opportunities for many people in the local community. Apart from the traders themselves, they have also introduced their children especially daughters to the business thereby reducing the burden of unemployment on the government. Thus, the trade is contributing its own quota to the economic development of Ilorin, Kwara State and Nigeria as a whole³⁶.

Furthermore, the traders do pay shop rent to Ilorin West Local Government. In 1987, the traders paid #10 per shop every month but they pay #2,000 on each shop per month as at present and this is the economic contribution of the trade to the financial growth of Ilorin West Local Government. More importantly, the trade helps people in urgent financial needs by affording them the opportunity of selling their items to the traders who would pay them money instantly to allow them solve their immediate financial problems. This explains why the traders are called or referred to as "Egbe Basiri", that is an association that helps. The act of buying used goods or properties from the people and provide money instantly to them clearly amounts to assisting and standing by them in time of financial difficulties and serious needs³⁷.

Conclusion

It is clear from the foregoing discussion that the trade in buying and selling of used household items at a section of Baboko market, Ilorin has its origin traceable to the activities of the group of *Dilali* at the various Ilorin traditional markets. It has transformed from being *Dilali* to *Basiri* in modern Ilorin society. The trade is different from the usual or popular second hand business as it is patronized by the lowest income earners among the people of the local community and this account for its unique medium and articles of trade. The trade has contributed immensely to the growth of the socio-economic life of the people involved in the trade in the local community of Ilorin and beyond. The trade has equally become lucrative, and serves as an important source of revenue to both the local and the State government, and by implications, it has become beneficial to the nation.

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18. Alhaja Salamatun Abdulwahab, Iya Egbe Basiri (market leader), Interview, 4/05/2019.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: NAMES OF KNOWN IYA EGBE (MARKET LEADERS)

1. Hawawu Adi (Imon)
2. Iya More Ile Omo
3. Aromoke Agbabiaka
4. Awele Akaje (the market moved to Baboko under her leadership in 1987)
5. Rabiya Akaje (Iya Borno) died in March, 2019
6. Alhaja Salamat Abdulwahab, 2019 till date

APPENDIX 2: Pictures of Traders in the Market



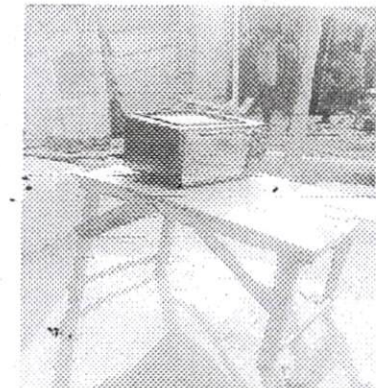
Display of Beads for sale at the market



Market bargaining activities at the market



Market bargaining activities at the market



Display of Microwave Oven for sale at the market



Display of brand new Ankara cloths for sale at a shop in the market



A trader with display of used cloths for sale in the market

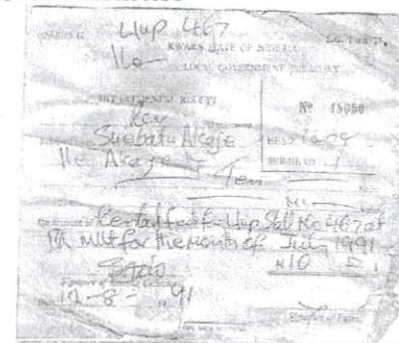


Marketers selecting cloths bought at the market

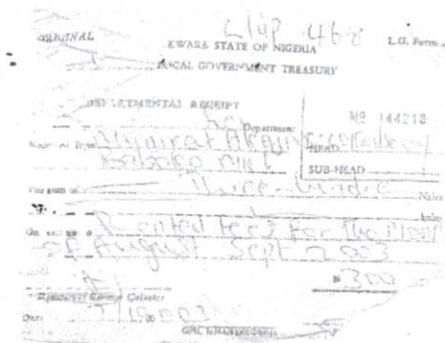


Display of cloths for sale and market activities

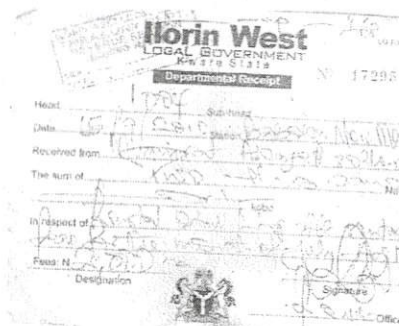
APPENDIX 3: Pictures of Revenue Receipts Issued by the Local Government to the Marketers



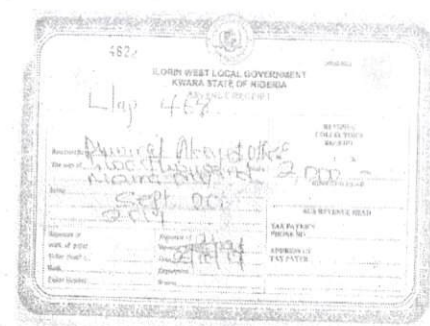
#10 receipt issued in 1991



#300 receipt issued in 2003



#2000 receipt issued in 2010



#2000 receipt issued in 2019