CHALLENGES IN SHARING NEIGHBOURHOOD OPEN SPACE AMONG RESIDENTS IN SOUTH-WEST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Researchers have attributed the collective sharing pattern of neighborhood open space such as the neighbourhood market square to various significant factors. The factors include users' socio-cultural background, personal identity and preferences. Similar factors are also rooted in socio-spatial determinants such as accessibility, features and facilities. It has been established that sharing open space among diverse ethnic groups often resulted to conflict, rift, and misunderstanding. As a result of this, little knowledge about ethnic groups sharing pattern in neighbourhood market square is known and thus become necessary to explore. Hence, this study highlights reasons adduced to the challenges targeting neighbourhood market located in socially and ethnically diverse communities of South-West, Nigeria. The significant of study focus on ways to sustain social interactions among the ethnic residents towards market square development. This exploratory research adopted a qualitative method in which "focus groups discussion" comprising thirty- five (n=35) participants from the three major ethnics groups representing three neighborhoods participated. The consensus group members' notes were transcribed arranged and analyzed using contents analysis and QSR N10 (Nvivo) software. The research findings identified the sources of associated problems to factors such as (i) challenges over the use of space, (ii) communication barrier and (iii) management problem. Notably, the paper recommends the following: (a) planning implication (i) re-planning and expansion of the market square to better accommodate more diverse users and facilities. (ii) Introduction of interactive social spaces within the market region. (b) Policy implication by instituting legal management committee in which all the ethnic groups will be adequately represented. The committee will be saddled with the responsibilities to oversee the affairs of market, and negotiate any disagreement among conflicting groups. Thus, study findings are beneficial to the professionals, society and the government at large. Proper planning, design and management of neighbourhood market square could better enhance residents' harmonious relationships which help in general neighbourhood development and sustainability.

Keywords: Neighbourhood Open Space; Sharing Attributes; Ethnic Groups; Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Neighborhood open space such as "market square" is coined as a spatial planning that housed people for discharging efficient distribution of their commodities and services (Omole et al., 2013). Thus, it is a social area within a neighbourhood where various passive and active sharing activities are initiated without contesting for its accessibility, right of use and ownership or control (Megalhaes, 2010; Cobb, 2011). Explicitly, it is believed to be an arena that favored publics' accessibility, meeting, interaction and engagement. According to Alubo, (2011), the contentious use of open space in a multicultural community often time associate

with ownership tussle, mistrustful, discrimination and sometimes result to violence. Similarly, the open space use could portray people's attitudinal behavior and ego exhibition (Kyle, et al., 2004). The ego exhibition often time portrays by indigenes groups. The ego attitudes also involve ownership and pride features in which certain place are primarily meant for the indigenes, thus preventing other groups such as settlers from its use (Sweeney, 2004). Literatures identified host of benefits are derived from sharing neighbourhood open space among residents. It has been established that access to open space and natural settings permits residents to be more physically and mentally active (Frumkin, 2001; Payne,et al.,2005,Sugiyama,et al., 2008). It offers a unique setting where opportunities for social interaction and benefits are derived (Kazmierczak, 2013; Thwaites, 2010; Lalli, 1992; Hayward and Weitzer, 1984). This assertion implies that the values and benefits of open space are paramount as it creates an avenue where residents from diverse socio-economic background could relate together. In furtherance to this, the physical features of open space and its planning should respond to the needs of residents from diverse cultural groups (Francis, .2003; Wong & Domroes, 2005).

This paper focuses significance of open space management in relation to people and environment interactions. However, fewer studies have directly explored occurrence of social challenges associated with sharing neighbourhood market square among ethnics' users. The understanding of the level of interaction among the users in Nigeria deserves studying, most importantly in multi ethnic communities. This will further establish the associated importance derived from enhancing ethnics' social interactions devoid of rancor, rift and misunderstanding. The special report of United State Institute of Peace has iterated by Sayne (2012) upheld the significance of this study *"Nigeria, like many of its Sub-Saharan African neighbors, struggles to accommodate ethnic and religious differences among its people. Perhaps the third most ethnically diverse country in the world, Nigeria's population of 150million also splits about evenly between Muslims, and Christians or animist faiths. Hundreds of historic political units, cultures, languages, and micro economies jostle each other in a space twice the size of California. Even under the best circumstances, this would present real challenges for development, nation-building, and security"*.

Rofe & Zarchin, (2012), identified that the creations and improvements of the open space in rural settings relied on four key attributes, such as (i) sociability (ii) uses and activities (iii) access and linkages and (iv) comfort and image. Therefore, the success of neighbourhood open space depends on residents' active participation and involvement in communities' activities. The involvement of communities residents in decision making process encourage them and give a sense of ownership and responsibility towards their neighbourhood surroundings. Succinctly, the main objective of this research work is to explore the challenges associating with resident interactions in "neighbourhood market square" in Nigeria. This was supported by literature that the level of communal sharing in multi-ethnic setting, cum socio-cultural factors in rural neighbourhood needed to be examined (Ukiwo, 2006; Bryne, 2012; Falade, 1989).The study aims at harnessing the potentials of open space towards sustaining ethnics' interactions that helps on improving market square and community development. The research findings ought to answer the following research questions. (i) What are the challenges that associate with sharing neighbourhood market square? (ii)Is there any perception of conflict or rift? (iii) Does sharing affected by cultural diversity? (iii) Conflict resolution methods. (iv) Is there any impact of residents' sharing towards community development and unity?

LITERATURE

In a bid to clearly understand the study concept, it becomes imperative to examine the interrelationships among the diverse ethnics within the market square, residents' satisfaction degree within market, as well as the physical conditions among others. In addition, the status of ethnic diversities and their characteristics are equally important to discuss.

Ethnic Residents' Social Interactions within the Market

Interaction in open space is viewed by Megalhaes, (2010), as synergy of equal right of access, use and ownership. Also, it is suggested not to be contested, but acting as an interactive arena, devoid of any form restrictions, regardless of the socio-cultural and ethnic background of its users. Affordance of social interactions and recognition of other user's identity in open space solidify the social contact (Huang, 2006; Völker, et al., 2007). Similarly, it was opined that, sharing affordability of open space intertwine with networking (resident's social relationship), engagement (participation of residents in neighbourhood activities and events) as well as trust and belongingness (Kang, 2006). Definitions of open spaces by scholars emphasized its free access for all users or groups. For instance, open space accessibility abounds to be free, while its maintenance and management should be given an utmost priority (Jacobs, 1961; Madanipour, 1999). In view of this, there were opinions that open space offers people of different backgrounds opportunities for similar activities, responsive to acceptance of each other's ways of life (Cattell, et al., 2008). Therefore, the successful attributes of open space's design and planning depend on its creation of a conducive place for social interactions and attraction (Sunarja, et al., 2008; Whyte, 1985).

The JRF report (2006), established the prerequisite for social interaction in open space as a composition of residents' familiarity, regular use, endurance, and availability of facilities. The qualities of open space are predetermined by the character, adaptability and diversity (Williams and Green, 2001. Similarly, the non-discriminative nature of open space regardless of class and age of users is important (Carr, et al., 1992). Scholars have described open space as publicly accessible places that facilitate activities necessary for community building. For instance Thompson (2008) while supporting this view, adjudged that open space's accessibility should be equitable to all residents. Similar research in multiethnic community of East London identified the importance of open space in the provision of equitable ground for ethnic's experiences and social diversities, leading to reduction in the level of intolerance among users (Dines and Cattell, 2006).

However, it has been established that the higher the residential social interaction, the higher the community social development (Lalli, 1992; Kim, 1997; Carmona, 2010). Interaction opportunity created by open space usage among diverse ethnics indicates a feeling of acceptance of each other (Putnam, .2000). The acceptance is tantamount to human social contacts in public space having unifying power to abridge diverse ethnics and cultural background (Fainstein, 2005). It was noted that people with different cultural and ethnic backgrounds utilized open spaces differently (Burgess et al., 1988; Tinsley et al., 2002). Therefore desiring efforts are needed to better enhance residents' general interest towards harmonious interaction (Dines and Cattell, 2006). Meanwhile, activities in open space promote inhabitants' residential satisfaction, dependence, trust and sharing among other social needs. Consequently, it was affirmed that differences in social and cultural factors could act as an impediment to residents' participation in neighbourhood open spaces' activities (Brownson et al., 2001).

Ethnic's Diversities and Open space Utilization Characteristics

The ethnics' diversities play a significant role while examining the pattern of neighbourhood market square's utilization and interpretations (Rishbeth, 2004). Researchers have iterated the different pattern of open space use among diverse groups around the world. However, the research findings suggest that various ethnic groups have different patterns of behavior. For instance, a study in Montreal by Sweeney, (2004), revealed different approaches and perceptions to public space planning and management in the multi-ethnic neighbourhood of Mountain Sights. The study's findings shows that utilization patterns of ethnics differ due to a reasonable distance that was kept among them in the case study areas. Likewise, four parks were studied in Los Angeles, by Loukaitou-sideris, (1995), and it was discovered that Whites, Hispanics, African-Americans and Chinese had diversities in public space use. The author compared patterns of usage between African Americans, Asians, Hispanics, and Whites. Findings also revealed diversities in the usage pattern. Hispanics frequently use open space collectively in social groups, appreciating the social valued provided by the open space. While, African Americans were involved in sporting, hence preferred the social and relaxing benefits provided by open space. On the other hand, Whites used the place for walking and jogging and valued the space aesthetics qualities. Meanwhile, Chinese users preferred social interaction among each other. Sequel to this, differences were found between users of different races and ethnicities on preferences, perceptions, and use patterns in an open space as reinstated by Gobster, (2002).

The existence of differences in the attitudes of Blacks and Whites in American society toward open space was also emphasized by Elmendorf *et al.,* (2005). The examinations of public space preferences and behaviors among residents were done and findings suggested that, race has the strongest influence on the preferences for open space activities (Payne, et al.,.2002). Previous research has determined cultural differences in landscape appreciation. Comparison was made between environmental attitudes of Turkey and Canada in the context of cultural and contextual factors by Sarigollu, (2009), and discovered attitudinal differences across their cultures. A similar quantitative research study on ethnic, social relationship in public space in East London by JFR report, (2006), indicates two significant findings among others (i) the inter-ethnic encounter in public space affords social interaction that enhances local attachment and people's commitment to their areas. (ii) Public spaces are adjudged to be an important arena for sharing ethnic diversity experiences. Hence, it led to the enhancement of the social contact between ethnic groups. The way people perceive the open space is dependent on the characteristics of open space features, facilities, accessibility and the users' background. Sometimes open space may be perceived as welcoming, appealing, safe, and accessible, while at times the perception might be negative in terms of intolerance hence having an influence on the use pattern. Therefore, the open space could be perceived differently by diverse people and users, based on their background (Sarigollu, 2009). In addition, open space must be well maintained, permits range of activities, and foster social interactions among the users.

RESEARCH STUDY AREA

Ijebu-jesa, Ijeda and Iloko are ancient communities situated in Oriade local government of Osun state, at the South-western part of Nigeria, in Africa. The population of the local government stands at about 148,379 (Year 2006 Nigerians census figure), with an average coverage area of about 465 square kilometers. Ijebu-jesa town is the local government headquarter, distant eight kilometers north of Ilesha and around 128 kilometers east of Ibadan,

and lies approximately on latitude 7.45 degrees north within the rain forest zone. The town is encircling by two villages, Iloko-jesa and Ijeda towns among others. These two villages are located in the north eastern part of the highly mineralized Ilesa schist belt south western Nigeria; bounded by Latitudes 7º37'000"N and 7º41'100"N and Longitudes 4º43'500"E and 4º50'700"E.(Kayode, 2009).The choices of the neighbourhood towns for study were as a result of their accessibility and centrality. The average distance between Iloko to Ijebu-jesa township areas falls within two kilometers, ditto for Ijeda to Ijebu-jesa towns. Meanwhile, a distance of about one kilometer runs through Iloko and Ijeda towns. Diverse ethnic groups predominantly occupy the three towns with Yoruba (Indigenes), Hausas and Igbos as settlers who migrated from other zones of the country.

Similarly, the choices of the case study market squares were equally based on their peculiarities as the nerve centers of the socio-economic activities of the communities, where diverse ethnic interacts. In addition, the neighbourhood markets studied possess similar physical characteristics with other markets in the south–west region of the country. Each market square occupies an average area of about one to two acres of land with open and few locked up stalls. Traders display various items ranging from food items, house hold materials, electrical, textiles and so forth, Figure 1 refers. The origin of the neighbourhood markets could not be established but started about hundred centuries ago, when buying and selling started with "barter", and later with "cowries (Babatope, 2013). Beehive of market activities is at its peak in every three-day because of its periodic nature. Nevertheless, low trading activities operates every day in recent time.

Figure 1: Area occupied by the market square within the neighbourhood
Source: Researcher's field work (2015)

## RESEARCH APPROACH AND METHODS

This is an exploratory and interpretive research approach hinges on qualitative method, which is deemed appropriate for studying human perceptions, behaviors, feelings and attitudes (Draper, 2004; Fade, 2004). However, qualitative approach enables a meaningful understanding of people's experiences in their natural settings, without much influence (Allwood, 2012).This research work adopted "Focus group discussion" as a method for data collection through a semi-structured group interview process, moderated by a group leader Cohen and Crabtree 2006. Plethora of research work has adopted qualitative techniques in open space studies, such as in-depth interviews (Ho, et al., 2005; Krenichyn, 2006). However, fewer studies have adopted focus group discussion method which has been established by Cresswell (2012), to be an effective method of getting feedback from participants on similar research objectives.

A focus group is simply defined as a small group of interacting individuals having some common knowledge, interest or characteristics, brought together by researcher in an interactive manner to gain information about a specific or focused issue. In line with this definition, focus group is discussion organized to explore a particular set of issues (Kitzinger, 1994; Rabiee, 2004). Focus group offers uniqueness in the provision of data generated from synergy of the harmonious group interaction. Also, the method offers several advantage among which is its creation of opportunity for researchers to investigate sensitive issues (Cameron, 2005).

Focus Group Participants' Recruitment and Sample Justifications

Focus group participants are small group of people recruited in many ways ranging from nominations, random selection, networking, and volunteers among others. Therefore, nomination sampling method were adopted in recruiting thirty- five (35) potential participants, through the market leaders, community heads and local government administration board. There were no standard sample sizes for qualitative research such as focus group discussion. Feedback from small sample size will not invalidate the findings, as the main aim of the research is to obtain in-depth understanding of the research concept, not to represent a larger population (Rodriguez et al., 2001). However; it is advisable to keep groups as small as possible, because managing large groups seems difficult.

An average of nine participants per session, or sometimes numbers between six to ten homogenous strangers (respondents) is suggested by Morgan, (1996). Meanwhile, Wilkinson (2003) advocates between six to eight participants as ideal population. The participant's occupational backgrounds cut across, professionals, government employee, market men and women, who have been residing in the neighborhood and familiar with the market for more than three years. The neighbourhood town hall was chosen as the venue of the program, because of its proximity to the market square and its central position within the neighbourhood. Meanwhile, flow chart showing the procedure adapted from participants' recruitment procedure to research findings is graphically depicted in Figure 2.
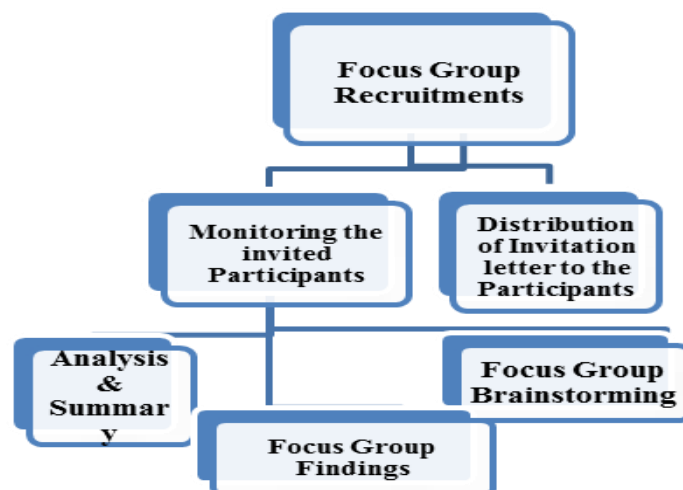
Figure 2: Focus group research flow chart

Source: researcher's intuition

Justification for Adopting "Focus group Discussion" Method

Researchers have been using "Focus group discussion" as qualitative data collection procedure in various fields of leisure study, landscape and urban planning, community studies, environmental amongst others. For instance, a leisure study was carried out through studying the cultural politics of race, nature and social exclusion, among the Latino, non-users of Urban Park in Los Angeles (Bryne, 2012). This was an exclusively qualitative research method adopted "focus group discussion" with a total number of twenty-three participants recruited cutting across diverse sample of the target population. The study findings suggest an equal access to park and nature cities of Los Angeles by all users. Similar rural study was conducted by Holdsworth, (2009) through the same method of qualitative data collection, with twenty nine (29) participants. The study focused on identification of a common understanding of the concept of community cohesion and residents' experiences in an Australian country Town. The research findings revealed host of factors as indicators of community cohesion, such as neighbourliness, provision of services, and good physical environment. In the same vein, focus group technique was adopted in the study of the contribution of local parks to neighbourhood social ties in three inner cities of United Kingdom with eighteen (18) focus group participants (Kazmierczak, 2013). Research finding suggest that local parks may support the development of social ties among the park users.

Focus Group Deliberations

Though the focus group structured questionnaire was written in English, each of the moderators were native speakers of their languages, simultaneously translated the questions to the participants, in which the responses were equally noted accordingly. Detailed clarification and explanations on the questions have been earlier communicated to the moderators before the commencement of the sessions. Four sessions were held in all, with each session completed at an average time of an hour. The first session made up of sixteen (16) Yoruba ethnic group respondents who are indigenes; second session consisted ten (10) Igbos respondents that are settlers from eastern part of the country. While, the third session comprised of nine (9) Hausas respondents that migrated from Northern part of the country.

The joint sessions was the fourth that combined all the sessions, the Yorubas, Hausas, and the Igbos respondents totaling (35) thirty five respondents in all. Each group respondents' comments were tape recorded, and the notes were as well taken by each group moderators, documenting the order in which respondents opined to the questions. Afterwards, the summary consensus notes from each group moderators and their tapes were retrieved for subsequent transcription and summary.

Data Analysis

However, qualitative approach is interpretive in nature and utilizes data in the form of text and phrases (Neuman, 2000). It hinged on interpretative phenomenology analysis as a method of analyzing interview data (Fade, 2004). The sequence of analysis involves, data grouping, information labels and findings. Thus, the open and axial coding of each session's consensus decision extracts was grouped by QSR N10 (Nvivo software). First, it separated, compared and categorized the core data based on themes. Secondly, it creates links or relationships between data categories. This provides the summary of the responses of each of the groups based on the focus group semi-structured questionnaires. Prior to the analysis was the development of initial coding tree. Afterwards, the coding tree was modified based on consensus participants' responses, which formed the basis for transcript analysis. The coding trees identified the key themes and matched to the groups. The identification of final core categories and their relationships was achieved through manual selective coding based on the themes extracted from the Nvivo grouping. However, summary of the themes comprising each ethnics group decision extract were presented in the findings.

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS
Respondents' Profile

Despite the fact that the study is primarily qualitative in nature, better still, descriptive statistics could still be used for the participants' profile. The male participants were 20(57.1%) as against female participants who were 15(42.9%). Out of the total numbers of participants, 16 (45.7%) were government employed (Architects, Planners etcetera), while 19 (54.3%) were self-employed (Market, men, women, artisans among others). The Yoruba ethnic participants made up of 16 (45.7%) participants while Igbo ethnic participants comprised 10 (28.6%) of the participants. Meanwhile, the Hausa/Fulani ethnic participants comprised of 9(25.7%) participants. The participants' population does not have any negative impacts on the focus group findings [60-62]. Participants from Ijebu-jesa township area comprised of 18(51.4%), Iloko town were 10 (28.6%) while Ijeda town were 7(20%), Table 1 refers.

Table 1: Respondents' profile

S/No	Profile				Profile		
	Participants' Demographic characteristics	Number of participants (n= 35)	Percentage (%) (100%)	5	Ethnic groups		
					Yoruba	16	48.7
1	Sex				Igbo	10	28.6
	Male	20	57.1		Hausa/Fulani	9	25.7
	Female	18	42.9	6	Current employment		
2	Marrital				Government employed*	16	45.7

	Status				Self-employed*	19	54.3
	Married	24	68.6	7	Education status		
	Single	11	31.4		No formal education	10	28.57
3	Age groups				High school	9	25.71
	18-30years	9	25.7		Bachelor or 1st Degree	8	22.85
	31-50years	9	25.7		Post Graduate degree and above	8	22.86
	51years above	17	48.6	8	Participants' Neighbourhood affiliation		
4	Years lived in Town				Ijebu-jesa town	18	51.4
	3-5 years	4	11.4		Iloko town	10	28.6
	6-8 years	13	37.1		Ijeda town	7	20
	9-10years	7	20				
	11years and above	11	31.4				

*Government employed includes: Professionals, such as Architects, Planners amongst others.*Self-employed: Market men and women, artisan among others.

Focus Group Consensus Decision Extracts
Theme One: Conflict and Dominance Perceptual Dimensions

This section of the focus group questionnaires explore evidence of conflicts and rift among the residents during interactions within the market square. It also enquires about the significance of residents' sharing. The participants' group affirmed iota of conflict, misunderstanding and rift during interactions. Focus group respondents equally iterated their willingness and urge towards sharing market square with other ethnics, if the open space is improved upon. Participants relate the sharing attitudes, though at lowest ebb to benefits derived from mutual transaction of business and religion. For instance, the consensus of Yoruba focus group participants stated thus:*"There are occasions that conflict and misunderstanding arises, fighting occurs among users due to limited space to display their commodities….. Individual sellers strive to make sales from the displayed goods. Language difference also contributes to rift and conflict...better still; we are enduring each other… "Since we cannot just ignore or prevent other ethnics from coming to the market ……we need improvements in our interactions and association.. We share the market together, have to trade together…we mean selling and buying commodities together"*.

This extract implies that conflict and rift arises, with moderate sharing and engagement. The residents attributed this to the economic benefits derived from open space interactions. This upheld previous research identified (Chiesura, 2004; Thompson, 2002).Nevertheless; there are needs to further improve on active residents' interactions through provision of enough spaces and facilities. The extract from Hausa group:*"There are misunderstanding sometimes. Sharing the market associates with conflicts as a result of inadequate spaces, there are occasion that some users engages in fighting probably due to language barrier... Committee could be set up to look into settling the conflict when it occurs. There will be rancour where we have gathering of many people. ...misunderstanding always happens. .... notwithstanding …despite we try to tolerate, respect and understand each other identities in this market ….even our religion also support the idea of mutual interrelationship…. Better still we need*

improvement in the market for better sharing among us" There seems to be perceived conflict among the users during their interactions. However, the extract substantiates the prevalence of mutual understanding and acceptance between the diverse ethnics. This could have been traceable to their religions and mutual benefits derived. This view was supported by literatures that identified interrelationship between diverse groups could be as a result of mutual engagement, tolerance and endurance (Putnam, 2000; Gilchrist, 2004).Regardless, there are needs for improvements. Notably, there is evidence of conflict among the ethnic users; this concurs with the previous findings of literatures (Alubo, 2011; Kyle, et al., 2004).Also, it corroborates study's findings of Sweeney (2004) that revealed that minor conflicts may ensue between residents in the neighbourhood. Summarily, three factors were identified by the focus group participants as the root cause of the conflicts and rifts. These are (i) contestation over the use of space due insufficiency. In other words, limited number of open space to display goods and items, results to traders striving to use the available ones. (ii) Language or communication differences which tend to limit resident's ability to form more social ties within the market as supported by Brown and Brooks (2006) (iii) Competitions to sell the same commodities to prospective shoppers.

Theme Two: Residents' Sense of Community

This section sought if the use of market square influences residents' social interaction within the community. The Igbo group consensus extract stated thus:*"The fact that we are from different ethnic backgrounds did not affects our interactions. Regardless of our differences in language, culture, religion and social background we relates together in the community. ....we understands each other better every day. There are inter- marriages among the ethnic groups, in which the courtship started from the market…some makes friends from the market square..."*The Yoruba group consensus extract:*"sharing market is beneficial to the entire community because it acts as the centre of activities for all groups, in terms of commerce, transportation, social etc. Even the community events and meetings often held in the market square. It increases diverse opportunities for social interactions with neighbours, and enables meeting new visitors. Youth often like visiting the market to catch fun. Definitely, it assists in building and uniting community residents (old and young). It impacts positively on the communal togetherness"* The extracts indicate that sharing the market seems positively affect residents' social interactions and togetherness in the community (Francis, et al., 2012; Kim and Kaplan, 2004).

Theme Three: Residents' Disputes and Conflict Management

The residents' dispute and conflict resolution procedures were sought. The consensus decision extract elicited the procedural methods initiated in conflict resolution. However, the most prominent and common method is the resolution by the market men and women leaders ("*Iyalojas*" and "*Babalojas*"). Other methods include the settlement by the community high chiefs, ethnic group's representative leaders, King ("*Oba*") and occasionally by government. Hierarchical method of conflict resolution is diagrammatically represented in Figure 3. The flow chart pattern has four levels in all, with government intervention as the highest level of conflict resolution. If the conflict could not be resolved by level one and two intervention, then the onus lies with the King at the third level, who traditionally is the owner of the market to settle the rift. Meanwhile, the seriousness of the rift will determine the government intervention. This happens to be the highest peak of conflict resolution.
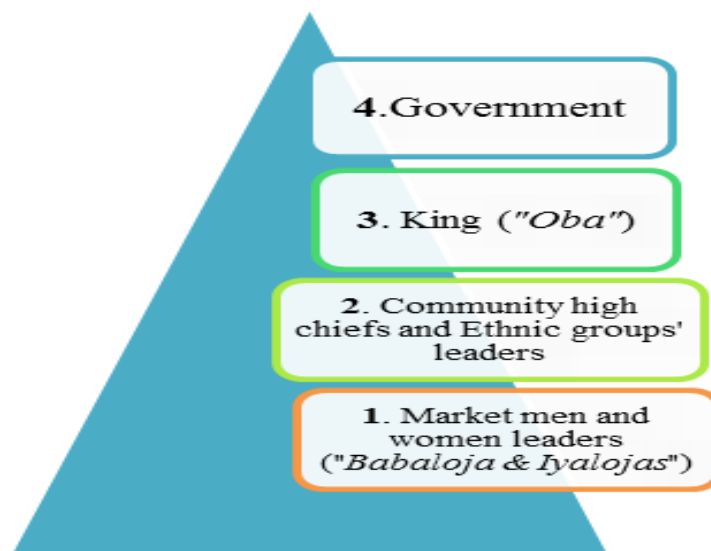
Figure 3: Hierarchical methods of conflict resolution procedures. Level 1: Market's leaders. Level 2: Community chiefs and ethnic groups' leaders. Level 3: King (Oba). Level 4: Government.

Theme four: Appraisal of residents' satisfaction with physical environment of the market square

This part of the questionnaires enquired about the residents' satisfaction with the current market's physical conditions and their suggestions for improvements. All the three focus group sessions suggest improvements on the current physical condition of the market square; meanwhile some challenges were equally identified in the decision extracts. For instance, the Yoruba participant's consensus extract stated thus:*"We need improvements….more permanent stalls and shops for us to display their commodities. We are exposed to the harsh climatic conditions during the raining and dry seasons… trees can be planted to act as shades from the weather…. If the market can be extended or expanded to cater for more stalls and facilities….we shall be pleased. Markets' overcrowding is increasing each day…Appropriate committee could be established by the government to see to the maintenance of the market surroundings….policies could be formulated in this regards too"*Hausa group participants extract*: ".....the maintenance of the market surroundings needs to be improved upon "Litters are found within and around the market areas. More facilities are needed. Government should please assist by restructuring and upgrade the area to contain all the facilities...perhaps a committee could be set up to look into this".*Igbo group participants extract:

The *main entrance roads to the market needed to be improved upon ... and people movement within the market have not been so free..... More public toilets, bore hole or deep wells are needed……. fire station could be established within the market areas in case of fire outbreak...government can assist us in re-designing or expanding the market".* The extract above illustrates perceived challenges and improvement is sought in provision of adequate stalls, improved market maintenance, accessibility, circulation, infrastructural facilities, provision of shade such as vegetation and trees among others. This concurs with similar research work (Bryne, 2012; Falade, 1989).Also, previous research established that having greenery and vegetation in open spaces could improve frequent and casual contact among residents, which invariably enhance neighbourliness where residents support, care and protect

each other (City park forum. 2003). In view of the above, the framework of the interrelationships among the study concept, research findings and recommendations are presented graphically in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Framework of interrelationships between study concept, findings and recommendation

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

A joint collaborative effort is required from all the stake holders in built environment, consisting, professionals, residents, entrepreneurs, government and non-governmental agencies towards improving the social interactions among the residents. Notably, stake holders have roles to play by joining hands and participate in the process of sustaining the resident's interactions within neighbourhood market square. Professionals need to take cognizance of essence of creating harmonious open space towards the sustainability of both the cultural and social diversity of its ethnic users. At the end, open space devoid of ethnic rancor and conflict could be achieved. This study's recommendations are in two folds, first dealt with open space planning, while the second is in line with the policy formulation.

(i)   Planning and Design Implication

Re-planning and expansion of neighbourhood market square will better accommodate diverse users and creates conducive environment. Therefore, this will ameliorate the associated conflict identified. Expansion of the spatial layout, provision of adequate facilities such as interactive space, water, good roads, and landscaping element will improve the user's well-being, market patronage, and market attractiveness. However, open space's attractiveness could be enhanced through planting of trees, shrubs, flowers among others. The communication barrier impede residents' social ties. As such, language differences decreases residents' ability to form social ties within the community. Therefore creating conducise interactive outdoor sitting areas within and around the market square will help further enhance effective social interactions among the diverse users.

(ii)   Policy Formulation

Setting up of legal market's management committee saddled with the various responsibilities among which are to oversee the affairs of the market become paramount. The three ethnics groups should be dully represented as committee members during compositions. Active involvement and participations of community members are important in decision making process in connection with their open space and the community at large. Other responsibilities of the committee should include enhancement of social interaction among users and decision making to resolve or minimizes conflict. This study recommends that to minimize conflict warrant adequate commitment towards enacting and enforcing better policies. Hence, the values of coexistence, cooperation, and tolerance could be meaningful. In view of this, equality and abridged diversity could be achieved. Proper open space's management through setting up of mechanism for achieving clean, neat, and hygienic environment is recommended. Through this, litter and waste could often time be disposed. Well maintained and attractive market will trigger more users' satisfaction and neighbourhood neighbourliness.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This study formed part of the first author's ongoing PhD research work at the Faculty of Built Environment, Department of Architecture, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 81310, Johor Bahru, Malaysia.
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