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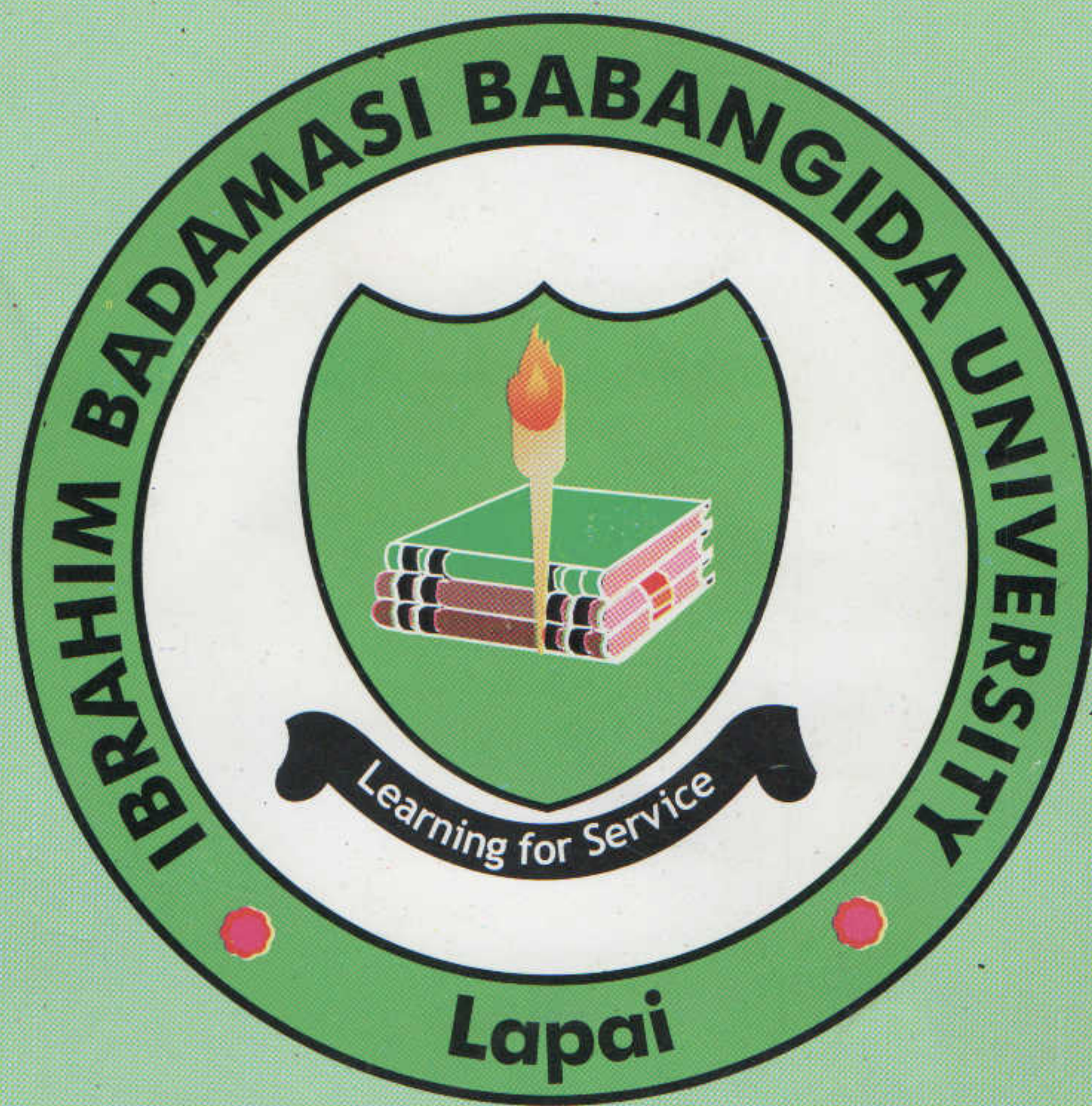
SPATIAL AND TEMPORAL VARIATIONS OF BEGGING IN OGBOMOSO, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Against the background of the perceived influence of urban physical environment on the incidence of begging, this paper examines the relationship between attributes of urban physical environment and begging in Ogbomoso, a traditional Yoruba city. The study relies on both the primary & secondary data. To determine the spatial variation, beggars were enumerated across the 20 political wards in Ogbomoso, Oyo state, Nigeria. Time variation was determined by counting of beggars in selected areas in the morning, afternoon and in the evening. The findings show that the incidence of begging in Ogbomoso conforms to concentric, sector and multiple nuclei theories of urban land use. It recommends, therefore that urban planners, religious leaders and governments should among other things focus development control exercises on land use activities, prohibit begging in public places through legislation and create job opportunities for would- be beggars.

Keywords: Urban land use, alms giving, mendicancy, panhandling, vagrancy, spatial and temporal.

INTRODUCTION

One of the most significant facts about social change in tropical African countries since the end of Second World War has been urbanization the phenomenal growth of the population of towns and the development into agglomeration of many erstwhile village communities.

The problems that come with this development are enormous with socio-economic and physical implications. These problems which have threatened the environmental, social and economic survival of urban

dwellers are yet to receive adequate attention. One of such problems is begging.

Begging, defined simply as asking passers-by for or favour money in public places (Kennedy and Fitzpatrick, 2001), is a social ill whose implications for city's economy and physical environment call for the concern of urban economic and physical planners (Jelili, 2006).

Though, begging is a universal phenomenon, it is least addressed in Third World countries (Adedibu, 1989). Begging has become highly visible in Nigerian major cities (Jelili, 2009) with many negative implications. It has effects on national identity as well as on individuals (Adedibu, 1989). The manifestation of this is seen in their tendency to delay and obstruct free flow of human and vehicular traffic and their high propensity to generate dirty materials either as wastes or as parts of their belongings (Jelili, 2006). Adedibu (1989) observes that begging has implications for the economy of the nation as beggars depend on the already poorly paid workforce. The nefarious activities of fake beggars, who are mostly criminals in disguise, constitute the social implications of begging in Nigerian cities.

The increasing incidence of begging in Nigerian cities has generated discourse among scholars (Adedibu, 1989; Osagbemi, 2001; Jelili, 2006; Esan, 2009; Ogunkan, 2009). While those scholarly exercises have provided some laudable suggestions on how to tackle the problem of begging in our cities, much attention has not been focused on the relationship between land-use activities and incidence of begging in Nigerian cities. Begging is a socio-economic and environmental ill, pervading every public spatial unit of Nigerian urban centers. It requires an intensive study on its spatial and temporal dimensions to reveal the land use that attract or generate high incidence of begging with a view to proffering solution to this menace. This study is a positive development in this direction.

Conceptual Framework

The verb "beg" as presented by Oxford Advanced Learner Dictionary means to ask somebody for something, especially in an anxious way, because you need it very much. The definition above provides the general view of

begging. However, to reflect the means of asking people for something, begging has been variously conceptualized. In the work of Kennedy and Fitzpatrick (2001), begging is simply presented as asking passers-by for money in a public place. However, Jelili (2006) is of the opinion that begging extends beyond asking people for money alone, it involves asking people for money, food, clothes etc as gifts or charity and can take place anywhere, not necessarily public places. Jelili (2006) conceptualizes begging to involve not only individual, but also organizations or countries. This is also agreed to by Wikipedia (2009), but unlike Jelili, it presents begging as requesting something in a supplicating manner with the implications that the person who is begging will suffer emotional and or physical harm.

Various terms have also been used by scholars to reflect reasons for begging. For instance, Hanchao Lu (1999) uses the term mendicancy and vagrancy. While mendicancy is used to describe the act of begging associated with religious belief, vagrancy denotes the begging activities of the jobless, homeless, vagabond or wanderers.

Whatever definition given to begging (Kennedy and Fitzpatrick, 2001; Jelili, 2006; Wikipedia, 2009) and whatever term used: panhandling, sponging (wikipedia 2009), mendicancy or vagrancy (Hanchao, 1999) all have their orientations towards the act of asking somebody for something.

The concept of land use connotes the use to which the land is put, thus we have residential land use, commercial land use, educational land use, agricultural land use and so on. According to Rodriguez (2009), urban land use comprises two elements; the nature of land use and the level of spatial accumulation. While the former relates with activities that are taking place at a certain spatial unit, the latter indicates their intensity and concentration. For instance, central areas have a high level of spatial accumulation and corresponding land uses while peripheral areas have lower levels of accumulations.

Land use can be formal or functional. Formal land use are concerned

descriptive in nature while functional land use are concerned with economic nature of activities such as productive, consumption, residence and transport and are mainly socio-economic descriptive of space (Rodrigue, 2009).

THEORETICAL UNDERPINNING

Land use is rich in theoretical constructs which have contributed much to geographical sciences, agricultural sciences, urban planning, and sociology. However, the relationship between begging and land use is generally drawn from three different descriptive and prominent classical theories of Burgess (1925), Hoyt (1939) and Harris and Ulman (1945) as expressed by concentric, sector, multiple nuclei respective theories of land use.

The concentric theory, articulated by Burgess (1925) was among the first attempt to investigate spatial pattern at urban level. The theory states that as city grows, it expands radically around the Central Business District (CBD). Surrounding the CBD are succeeding zones that contain other types of land use that illustrate the growth of the urban area over time.

Establishing the relationship between land use and begging, Jelili (2006) observes that the concentric pattern of incidence of begging conforms to Burgess' Concentric theory. As described by him, the high incidence of begging in the centre of the city and the low incidence of begging in the outer parts is the reminiscent of concentric theory of Ernest Burgess.

Hoyt (1939)'s sector of urban land use was an expansion of concentric theory. The theory examines the influence of transport axis in the distinctive district which often form the wedge shaped sectors. He also suggests that zones should expand outward from the city center along railroads, highways and other transportation arteries. He theorized that cities tended to grow in wedge-shaped pattern-or sectors-emanating from the central business districts and centered on major transportation routes (Wikipedia, 2009). Begging also follows this land use pattern. The transport

waiting for passers-by or moving from one vehicle to the other in traffic hold-up to solicit for alms. This was vindicated by Jelili (2006) as he associates high incidence of begging in most Nigerian cities with major transport corridors.

The multiple nuclei theory propounded by Harris and Ulman (1945) is an amalgam of concentric and sector theories with the addition of multiple nucleus. In their view, not all urban growths radiate outward from a Central Business District. Instead, an urban area may have many centers of development, each of which reflects a particular urban need or activity. Articulating this theory, Scwab (1993) identifies that a city may have a financial district, a manufacturing zone, a water front area, an entertainment centre and so forth.

In the same vein, begging activities are concentrated around several nuclei rather than a single core. Thus, beggars are not only found in the Central District but are also found in other districts concentrated with human activities such as religious centres, commercial centers, education centres, major road junctions etc.

THE STUDY AREA

Ogbomoso is located on the $8^{o} 10^{1}$ North of the equator and $4^{o} 10^{1}$ East of the Greenwich meridian. It is a derived Savannah region and is 104 kilometres North-East of Ibadan, 58 kilometers North-West of Osogbo, 57 kilometers South-West of Ilorin and 53 kilometers North-East of Oyo.

Ogbomoso, a predominantly Yoruba speaking town, was founded roughly three centuries ago by union of five hunters who came together under the canopy of Alongo society. The five hunters are: Aale of Okelerin, Ohunsile of Ijeru, Orisatolu of Isapa, Akandie of Akandie and the ancestor of Soun dynasty.

The physical and economic growth of the town began in 19th century, when there was unrest throughout Yoruba-land largely due to inter-ethnic wars and the Fulani Jihad. This brought more than 140 communities to seek

refuge in Ogbomoso because of its strong defense. Most of these people took permanent residence in Ogbomoso, and by the end of 19th century, a continuous built-up compact settlement has evolved from the hamlet, covering an extensive area of land.

The rapid growth of the town is also induced by the advent of missionary and establishment of schools. The deportation of indigenous Nigerian by Ghanaian government in 1969 also brought physical and economic growth to Ogbomoso. The establishment of Ladoke Akintola University of Technology in Ogbomoso is said to have induced its phenomenal growth since 1991.

The Urbanization process resulted from the development mentioned above led to the demographic change over time. For instance, the population rose from 25000 in 1885 (Bowen, 1957) to more than 166,000 by 1991 (NPC, 1991) and was said to be about 299,535 by 2006 census.

The demographic changes have contributed to the expansion in built-up area of Ogbomoso. The built-up area of the town which was 2 square kilometers in 1935 and 4.5 square kilometer in 1963 (Opeloyeru, 1983) was estimated to have reached 24.3 square kilometers in 1995 (Popoola, 1997). In 2003, it has increased to 27.5 square kilometers (Abolade, 2004).

Ogbomoso, the second largest city in Oyo State, after Ibadan, is administratively divided into two local government areas Ogbomoso North and Ogbomoso South with their headquarters at Kinnirah and Arowomole respectively. Together with the contiguous areas of Surulere, Orrire and Ogo Oluwa, they constitute Ogbomoso administrative zone in Oyo State (Afon, 2007).

METHODOLOGY

The study made use of both primary and secondary data. Secondary data was generated from relevant textbooks, journals, newspapers, past thesis, internet materials and articles on the subject matter which form the bulk of the information used in the conceptual and theoretical issues as well

as in demographic, physical and other geographic features of Ogbomoso the study area.

Primary data was generated through the direct counting of beggars across the 20 political wards in Ogbomoso. This is to determine the spatial and temporal variation of begging across the wards. The counting was done in each ward at the same time with the help of trained assistants. The total number of beggars found in each ward was recorded on different days of the week to reflect probable variation among weekdays. The time variation in the incidence of begging was determined by similar counting of beggars in selected areas with high incidence of begging in the morning (7am 9am), in the afternoon (1pm 3pm) and in the evening (5pm 7pm).

Result of Findings

Data on table 1 and figure 1 show the main findings of the study.

TABLE 1

Incidence of begging across the wards

Wards	No identified	Standard Scores
Abogunde	25	- 0.80
Aaje/ Ogunbado	15	- 0.93
Masifa / Aguodo	54	- 0.40
Isale afon	63	- 0.23
Alaasa	59	- 0.31
Saja / Isale ora	134	0.70
Jagun	32	- 0.70
Okelerin	99	0.25
Osupa	166	1.20
Sabo / Taraa	344	3.74
Akata	37	- 0.62
Alapata	75	- 0.09
Arowomole	73	- 0.12

Ijeru I	84	0.04
Ijeru II	86	0.10
Oke olla	49	- 0.50
Lagbedu	87	0.10
Isoko	41	- 0.60
Ilogbo	48	- 0.50
Ibapon	58	- 0.31
Total	**1634**	**0000**

Source: Authors' field work (2009)

Table 1 presents the number of identified beggars and their standard scores. The standard scores indicate that with positive values, there is a relatively high incidence of begging while negative values imply low incidence of begging.

It could be inferred, therefore, that the incidence of begging is high in Sabo/Taraa (3.74), Osupa (1.20), Saja/Isale Ora (0.70), Okelerin (0.25), Ijeru I (0.04), Ijeru II (0.10) and Lagbedu (0.10) wards, while there is low incidence of begging in Abogunde (-0.80), Aaje/Ogubado (-0.93), Masifa/Aguodo (-0.40), Isale Afon (-0.23), Alaasa (-0.31), Jagun (-0.70), Akata (-0.62), Alapata (-0.09), Arowomole (-0.12), Oke-Olla (-0.50), Isoko (-0.60), Ilogbo (-0.50) and Ibapon (-0.31).

Table 2 Urban Physical Characterizations of Wards in Ogbomoso

S/N	wards	Descriptive attributes	Socio- economic attributes		
			Commercial (%)	Public (%)	Transport (%)
1	Abogunde	Traditional core area with high residential density	3.77	2.02	6.04
2	Aaje/Ogunbad	Traditional core area with high residential density	3.77	3.03	6.04
3	Masifa/Agnodo	A relatively organized high residential area	3.77	6.06	5.22
4	Isale Afon	A high residential area with some degree of physical order	3.77	5.05	6.04
5	Alaasa	Traditional core area with high residential density	2.80	2.02	5.62
6	Saja/Isale Afon	A central area with high residential density	8.41	10.10	6.82
7	Jagun	Traditional core area with high residential density	2.80	8.08	4.01
8	Okelerin	Traditional core area with high residential density	9.34	11.11	6.04
9	Osupa	An area with relative physical order	14.01	12.12	7.22
10	Sabo/ Taraa	A central area	14.95	10.10	7.63
11	Akata	A relatively organized area with high residential density.	1.86	1.01	5.22
12	Alapata	A relatively organized area with high residential density	0.93	1.01	5.62
13	Arowomole	A relatively organized area with high residential density	3.77	5.05	3.21
14	Ijeru 1	Traditional core area with high residential density	4.67	4.04)	5.22
15	Ijeru 11	A relatively organized area with high residential density.	4.67	2.02	5.22
16	Oke Olla	A relatively organized area with high residential density.	2.80	3.03	3.21
17	Lagbedu	Traditional core area with high residential density	4.67	2.02	3.21
18	Isoko	Traditional core area with high residential density	1.86	2.02	2.00
19	Ilogbo	A relatively organized area with high residential density.	2.80	2.02	2.00
20	Ibapon	A relatively organized area with high residential density.	4.67	6.06	5.22

Source: Authors' computation

From the findings and in line with table 2, it can be deduced that the variation in incidence of begging is attributable to urban physical environment i.e. attributes of space expressed in terms of form, pattern, aspect (formal attributes) and in term of socio- economic activities of space such as productive, consumption, residence and transport (functional land use).

For instance, the high incidence of begging observed in Sabo/ Tarra and Saja/ Isale ora is adduced to the fact they are central areas where commercial activities are highly concentrated. Osupa, though an area with relatively physical order, is saturated with economic activity therefore it attracts beggars. Okelerin is traditional core area but is highly concentrated with informal sectors of economic activities. Moreover, the influence of public buildings such as First Baptist Church, Ogbomoso and Nurudeen Central mosque as generators of beggars cannot be ignored. Other wards with high incidence of begging i.e.Ijeru1, Ijeru 11 and Lagbedu are also favoured as generators of beggars because of attributes of physical environment that attract beggars.

On the other hand, wards with low incidence of begging i.e Abogunde, Aaje ogunbado, Masifa/ Aguodo, Isale Afon, Alaasa, Jagun, Akata,Alapata Arowomole, Oke olla, Isoko, Ilogbo and Ibapon are mere residential areas with minimal commercial activities.

The spatial distribution of begging observed in Ogbomoso is in conformity with theories of urban land use of Burgess (1923), Hoyt's (1939) and Harris and Ullman (1945) respectively.

The high incidence of begging in Sabo/Taraa and Osupa wards could be partly adduced to the influence of Takie the later emerged CBD in Ogbomoso (Takie is shared by Sabo/Taraa and Osupa wards). This distribution is the reminiscent of Burgess's Concentric Theory.

However, the sector and multiple nuclei patterns are more pronounced in Ogbomoso than concentric pattern. For instance, the high incidence of begging observed in Sabo/Taraa, Osupa and Saja/Isale- ora

wards is largely attributed to the influence of Ilorin-Oyo and Ilorin-Iwo highways that run through them. This conforms to Hoyt's concentric theory.

On the other hand, high concentration of beggars in such wards as Okelerin, Ijeru I, Ijeru II and Lagbedu are attributed to land use activities as markets, religion centre, motor parks etc. This is the reflection of multiple nuclei pattern, a reminiscence of Harris and Ullman (1945)'s multiple nuclei theory.

Fig. 1
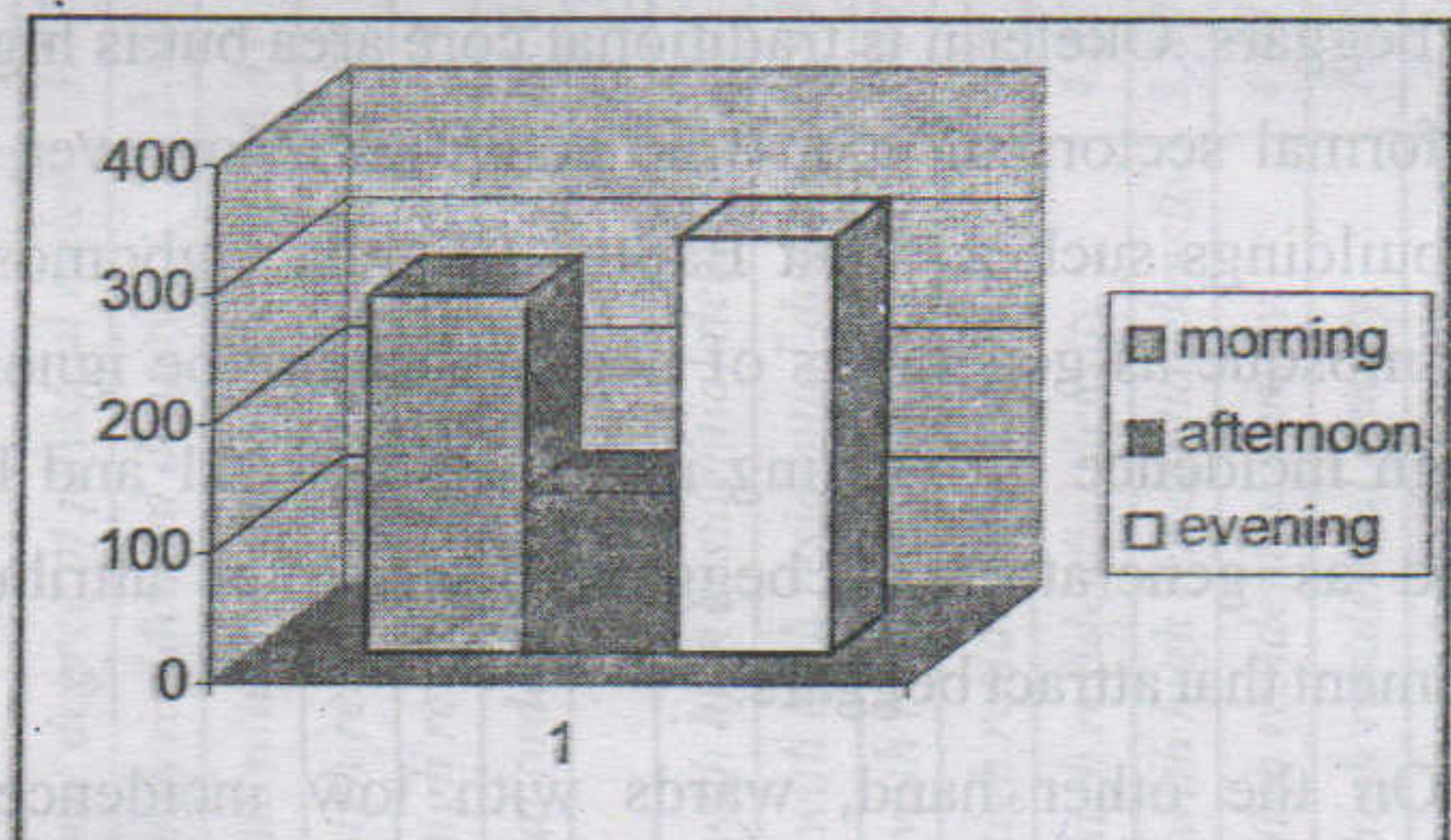
Source: Authors' field work (2009)

Fig 1 shows the temporal variation in the incidence of begging in Ogbomoso. As reflected by fig. 1, the incidence of begging is pronounced in the morning, it is more pronounced in the evening, while it is low in the afternoon.

This distribution may not be unconnected with the fact that most beggars in Ogbomoso are professionals as they do not take "morning business period" for granted. The higher distribution in the evening can be attributed to the tendency of part time beggars to have joined full-time beggars in the evening. The low incidence of begging observed in the

SUGGESTIONS AND CONCLUSION

While examining the spatial and temporal variations of begging in Ogbomoso, this work has confirmed the relationship between begging and urban physical environment such as various land uses (central districts, market zones, transport corridors, public buildings, motor parks etc.)

In the light of the findings above, it is recommended that urban planners should redirect their activities and focus the development control exercise on land use activities mentioned above so that those places become less attractive to beggars.

It is also recommended that governments should put in place a law that will proscribe begging in public places. Not only that, machinery should be put in place to enforce such law.

This work has also established the relationship between begging and religious centres. Religious leaders are, therefore, advised to preach to their subjects on the need to uphold their dignity and engage in productive ventures in the economy. They are also to discourage their members from giving alms directly to beggars but instead turn a larger percentage of their alms as donation to rehabilitation centres where adequate provisions are made for socio-economic, health and mental rehabilitation of the less privileged.

The temporal variation of begging as reflected by this study, suggests the professionalism of begging in the city. In view of this, governments at various levels are advised to create job opportunity that will be suitable for those beggars or make provision for vocational rehabilitation of beggars.

Lastly, it is observed that despite the danger posed by begging to the environmental and socio-economic development of Nigerian urban centres, much research works have not been directed toward the problem of begging as it relates to land use. In view of this, it is highly suggested that more researches be carried out to see more of relationships of begging to land use and other issues such as urbanization, culture, region and socio-economic background.

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