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# Gender and urban infrastructural poverty experience in Africa: A preliminary survey in Ibadan city, Nigeria

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## Abstract

The paper examines gender differences in the urban infrastructural poverty experience in an African city – Ibadan, Nigeria. The result of the cross-sectional survey of 232 households sampled in Ibadan city shows that there is intra-urban variation in the women and men urban infrastructure experience in Ibadan. The result of the correlation analysis shows that there is significant relationship between women and men urban infrastructure experience and the household income, educational level, household size and the stage in the life cycle; only with the urban infrastructure experience of the women is a significant relationship found with the occupation and the responsibility in the household. The result of the multiple linear regression analysis shows that the impact/effect of the socio-cultural, demographic and economic characteristics are more on women experience of urban infrastructure than on men's experience. While the relative contributions of the economic characteristics, family characteristics and socio-cultural characteristics in that order are all significant in explaining the variance in women's experience of urban infrastructure, only economic characteristics and family characteristics in that order are found to be significant in the case of the men. Also, the most important socio-cultural demographic and economic variables as shown by the beta coefficients for women are household income, household size, and responsibility in the household, while for men are the household income and the household size. Policy implications of the findings are highlighted in the paper.

**Keywords:** Gender, Urban infrastructure, Poverty, Nigeria

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## **1. Introduction**

Urbanization estimates indicate that the urban population of Africa is growing four times faster than other less developed countries (Obudho, 1996; UNCHS, 1991). Although urbanization has not been an entirely modern development in Africa since some of the world's earliest urban centres were located in parts of Western, Northern and Eastern Africa (Obudho, 1996) - in Africa, the capitals of some pre-colonial kingdoms date back to the tenth and eleventh centuries (Chandler, 1994) - it was not until the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century that many of Africa's major urban centres developed, though most of them remained small for several decades (Chandler and Tarver, 1994). The pace of urbanization in Africa since the Second World War has accelerated markedly and is expected to continue to do so in most African countries for some time to come. The growth of Africa's population is high while the rates of economic growth are low and the role of government is more pervasive than in other countries of the world (Obudho, 1996). African urban population growing at a rate of 4.5 percent per year during 1985-95, is the highest rate of growth in the world. By 2020-25, the urban population is expected to grow at 3.4 per cent per year, about six times the equivalent rate for the MDCs. Urban growth rates are high for every country of Africa where they exceeded 5.5 percent per year in 1985-90. According to UNCHS, by the year 2025, 54 percent of the population will reside in urban areas. About half of this population is women. The average percentage figure for the continent is even lower than that for the Nigeria which is 61.6 percent.

The process of rapid urbanization in Africa and in Nigeria in particular has resulted into pressure on urban land as well as urban utilities and services (Oderinde, 1995; Egunjobi, 1995). The rate of urbanization has been so high that urban management functions in form of provision and operations of these utilities and services necessarily lagged behind (Egunjobi, 1990; 2002). By 1990, at least 600 million people in the urban areas in Africa, Latin America and Asia were living in housing of poor quality and with inadequate provision for water, sanitation and drainage and their lives and health were under continuous threat (UNCHS, 1996). United Nations estimate suggest that the urban population in the South grew by more than 600 million during the 1990s and without major improvements in housing markets and in the expansion and improved provision of infrastructure and services, the number of people living in such conditions would be expanded very rapidly in this millennium (UNCHS, 1996). Egunjobi (1999) observed that the city growth in Nigeria is largely uncontrolled; and like a carelessly tended or totally neglected yam plot which necessarily does not bring forth the required yield even with adequate rains and fertile land, the cities are diseased by such infections as slum housing conditions, limited coverage of urban services, unreliable service provision, general environmental deterioration, confused transport systems, incessant flood and fire disasters. He remarked emphatically that our cities in Nigeria are not only at risk, they are already manifesting signs and symptoms of ailments at varying stages of severity. Most of the houses are not provided with essential utilities and services. Findings from a study of three sampled cities (Ibadan, Kaduna and Enugu) show that the proportion of households with in-house pipe-borne water connection varies between 65 percent and 69 percent. However, the proportion that has water most of the time varies among these cities between 22 percent and 31percent (Onibokun, 1989). For quite a majority of the sampled urban population, the taps remain dry most of the time. In the Nigerian cities, a sizeable proportion of the populace defecates along local

streams or drainage areas, or may simply use the open space around dilapidated or abandoned public latrines. The general picture is that of inadequacy of sanitation facilities. Sanitation facilities are either not available, or where available poorly maintained. In large part of Ibadan, water is always not available to flush WCs (Egunjobi, 1999). As many Nigerian cities pass the million marks in population, collection and disposal of wastes have become a major urban environmental problem (Egunjobi, 1986). In Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, Port-Harcourt and Enugu, uncollected heaps of solid wastes which constitute health hazards are observable.

Cities in Nigeria also suffer from inadequate intra-connectivity (Filani, 2002; Oyesiku, 2002; Ogunsanya, 2002; Egunjobi, 2002; Osita et al., 2003). City transport which serves as the sinew binding together various land-uses have not only remained inefficient, it has grown over the years to be expensive and dangerous (Egunjobi, 1999). Ibadan city provides a typical example of the chaotic transport where an estimated 50 percent of houses in the traditional core are not accessible to vehicular traffic (Egunjobi, 1999; NISER, 1988). Even though, the role of urban transportation is to facilitate the movement of people and goods comfortably and safely, when they are required and recognizing that there is no alternative to mobility, what exists in the Nigerian cities are a litany of inconvenience, and frustration as evidenced in road congestion, pollution, accidents – all of which are fatal to the quality of life in cities (Egunjobi, 1999, 2002; Osita et al., 2003). Lack of safety and insecurity has also been identified in the literature as characterized the cities in Nigeria (Agbola 1997). Agbola (1997) noted in his study of Lagos that there is poor street lighting; the police were rated as inept, inefficient, and ineffective, and not doing much to reduce crime.

Though poor infrastructural situation of the cities affects women and men, not until recently previous empirical and theoretical discussions most of the times assumed the universality of women's and men's experience (Seager, 1992; Moser, 1992; 1993; McDowell, 1983; Weisman, 1992; Jackson, 1990; Grieco and Turner, 1997; Robinson, 1998; e.t.c.).

Studies that examine gender differences in experience of different places' infrastructural situation not until recently are rare in Africa. The present study is an addition to the existing literature and examines gender differences in the urban infrastructural poverty in an African city – Ibadan, Nigeria. The null hypotheses tested in the paper are:

- i. that there is no intra-urban variations in the women and men experience of the urban infrastructure; and
- ii. that there is no relationship between the socio-cultural, demographic and economic characteristics of women and men and their experience of the urban infrastructure.

The study area, Ibadan city, is located in the South-western part of Nigeria. It is important to note that the literature on this important black city is ever expanding representing different academic and research interests (see, Mabogunje, 1968; Afolayan, 1994; Filani et al., 1994). However, in the area of gender studies available in-depth empirical work not until recently is extremely dearth.

## 2. Methodology

The primary data used in this study were obtained through a cross-sectional survey of 232 households in Ibadan. The fieldwork was undertaken between November 1999 and April 2000 with the aid of field

assistants who were trained on how best to administer questionnaire. Information was collected on some socio-cultural demographic and economic characteristics. Socio-cultural characteristics variable used in the study is the responsibility in the household; the demographic variables used in the study are the family characteristics variables and it include: age, household size and stage in the life cycle; while the economic characteristics variables used in the study are household income, occupation and educational level. Information were also collected on the variables used to measure urban infrastructural poverty experience. These variables are: neighborhood condition variables e.g. neighborhood road quality, garbage collection, public transport, state of cleanliness, street light condition, state of security, crime level, water supply, power supply etc.; and psychological well-being information. Dummy variable (good or bad) is used to measure neighborhood condition variables. The literature shows that psychological distress have two major forms – depression and anxiety – and are no distinct forms of psychological distress, instead are closely intertwined (Dohrenwend et al., 1980; Mirowsky and Ross, 1989; Theodore et al., 1993). Theodore et al (1993) scale of anxiety and depression was adopted in this study. Thus, in the first nine items, the respondent was asked to indicate how often he or she experiences certain feelings during the previous few weeks. The response categories were: often, sometimes, rarely, or never. The feelings were: (1) “Anxious about something or someone” (2) “that people are trying to pick quarrels or start arguments with you” (3) “so depressed that it interferes with your daily activities” (4) “that personal worries are getting you down physically, that is, making you physically ill” (5) “Moody” (6) “Felt you were confused, frustrated and under a lot of pressure” (7) “Are you ever bothered by nervous i.e. by being irritable, fidgety, or tense?” (8) “Do you ever feel that nothing ever turns out for you the way you want it to?” And (9) “Do you have trouble concentrating or keeping your mind on what you are doing?” The last item was: (10) “Are you the worrying type – you know a worrier?” (Yes/No) (Theodore, et al., 1993, pp. 1421-1422).

In order to get a representative sample, Ibadan metropolis was stratified into three residential densities (high, medium and low density residential areas) following existing work on the Ibadan metropolis (Olatubara, 1994; Filani et al., 1994). From these residential areas, 44 neighborhoods were selected. High density residential area is more widely spread so 22 neighborhoods were selected. From medium density residential area 12 neighborhoods were selected and 10 low density residential area neighborhoods. Also in the high density residential area 105 questionnaires were administered. In the medium and low density residential areas, 76 and 51 questionnaires were administered respectively. The numbers of questionnaires administered in each neighborhood were proportional to their respective projected 1996 population as given by the National Population Commission (NPC). From each of the neighborhood systematic random sampling technique was used to select the dwelling units and a woman and a man particularly (the spouse if any) respondents from the same household were interviewed.

The data were analyzed using analysis of variance (ANOVA) and the correlation and multiple linear regression statistical techniques. One of the usefulness of the regression analysis is that it measure the amount of impact one variable produces in another (De Vaus, 1996; Robinson, 1998; Babbie, 1998; etc). Multiple linear regression analysis was used to obtain the regression standardized predicted values between the psychological well-being variables and the urban infrastructural condition variables. The regression standardized predicted values are the values that the regression model predicts for each case. The regression

standardized predicted values are obtained for women respondents and also for the men (women's spouse) respondents separately and is used in the analysis of women and of men urban infrastructure experience.

### 3. Results and discussion

Table 1 and Table 2 show the result of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) of the women and men urban infrastructure experience respectively. The analysis of variance F-value for women is 23.745 and the significance value is .000. Also the F-value of the analysis of variance for men is 17.428 and the significance value is .000. Both of these results are significant at the .01 level. This result implies that there is a significant intra-urban variation in the urban infrastructure experience of women and men in Ibadan. This result may be due to the fact that there are inequalities in the distribution of urban infrastructure in the city. The city spaces have been segregated through household income and the pursuit of fragmenting urban policy (Goerg, 1998; Byrne, 1999; Agbola and Agbola, 1997). There are low qualities residential areas, medium quality residential areas and high quality residential areas (Onokerhoraye and Omuta, 1986). The high quality residential areas are better served with urban infrastructure than either medium or low quality residential areas. While in most low quality residential areas basic amenities and facilities are non-existence; where they are available, they are not functioning regularly and frequently.

Table 1. Result of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Women Experience of Urban Infrastructure

		Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Standardized Predicted Regression Scores (Women)	Between Groups	39.677	2	19.839	23.745**	.000
	Within Groups	191.323	229	.835		
	Total	231.000	231			

\*\* Significant at the .01 level

Table 2. Result of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Men's Experience of Urban Infrastructure

		Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Standardized Predicted Regression Scores (Men)	Between Groups	29.550	2	14.775	17.428**	.000
	Within Groups	153.450	181	.848		
	Total	183.000	183			

\*\* Significant at the .01 level

Result of the correlation analysis between women and men experience of the urban infrastructure and some of their socio-cultural demographic and economic variables are shown in Table 3. This table shows that there is significant relationship between women and men experience of urban infrastructure and the household income, educational level, household size and the stage in the life cycle. However, a significant relationship is found between women urban infrastructure experience only and their occupation and responsibility in the household. A significant relationship is not found between men's experience of urban infrastructure and the kind of occupation they are into as well as their responsibility in the household. The correlation result obtained with respect to women's urban infrastructure experience and their responsibility in the household is not a surprise. It is expected. This is because up till now the responsibility for housework and child caring falls more heavily on women and where the facilities to facilitate these tasks are not available or not functioning well, this constitutes a source of distress and worry mostly for women. The result obtained with respect to the occupation of women which is significant is also expected. However, that of the men which is not significant is a surprise.

Table 3. Result of the Correlation Analysis between women and men urban Infrastructure experience and some of their socio-cultural demographic and economic variables in Ibadan

Some socio-cultural demographic and economic variables	Result of the Correlation Analysis between women and men urban infrastructure experience and some of their socio-cultural demographic and economic variables in Ibadan	
	Women	Men
Household income	-.278**	-.278**
Educational level	-.195**	-.149*
Occupation	-.179**	-.056
Household size	.204**	.204**
Stage in the life cycle	.157*	.157*
Age	-.068	.019
Responsibility in the household	-.171**	.018

\*\* Correlation is significant at the .01 level

\* Correlation is significant at the .05 level

It is not expected. Probably, it is due to the small sample size. If a large sample size had been used, maybe the result would be different. Nevertheless, observation from the literature revealed that households' residential location and relocation vis-à-vis job location is more "slippery" for men than it is for women (Beesley and Dalvi, 1975; White, 1977; Hanson and Pratt, 1991). Madden (1981) and Singell and Lillydahl (1986) have tested models of residential choice and commuting times; their results shows that in two-earner households the residential location is chosen with respect to the man's job, whereas the woman searches for employment from an established residential base, especially if she works only part-time or earns a small portion of the household income. If two-earner households freely shift residential location so as to



accommodate the “primary” earner’s (i.e., usually the male’s) job, but do not do so for the secondary earner’s (i.e., the woman’s) job, the constraint of a fixed residential location, together with the nature of the locally available employment opportunities, which most of the time depends on the condition of the infrastructural facilities, could contribute to the result obtained. Hanson and Pratt (1991) in their study of the occupational segregation of women in Worcester Massachusetts in USA considered the ordering of workplace and residential location decisions. They observed that given the importance that women accord proximity to home, it is of considerable significance that households appear to place a higher priority on convenience to the male’s job in choosing their residential location. They asserted that their result suggest that women are doubly constrained; they must select a job that is close to home, and yet their constrained set of employment opportunities has not been chosen with their employment aspirations needs in mind. They argued that women’s domestic responsibilities lead many to give priority to spatial proximity of paid employment; women’s greater residential fixedness places them in local labour markets not necessarily of their choosing; women’s channels of information tend to be more locally based. They argued further that individuals do not come to the job search as economic men or women, reacting only to the structure of labour markets and employment opportunities. But that they come fully embedded in social relations: of family, community, and gender. And that most women end up in their occupations not because they are making rational, long-term, income-maximizing decisions, but because they are faced with severe day-to-day space-time constraints, dictated in part by their domestic workload (Hanson and Pratt, 1991: 251).

For the analysis of the gender differences in the impact of the socio-cultural, demographic and economic characteristics of women and men and their urban infrastructure experience, the multiple linear regression models has been applied.

The multiple linear regression analysis model summary result and the standardized beta coefficients of the women are shown in Table 4 and Table 5 respectively; that of the men are shown in Table 6 and Table 7 respectively. Table 4 shows that the socio-cultural demographic and economic characteristics used in the analysis are all significant in their relative contribution to the variance in the women’s experience of urban infrastructure. Economic characteristics are the most significant followed by the family characteristics and the socio-cultural characteristics. As shown by the beta coefficients in Table 5, the most important socio-cultural demographic and economic variables used in the analysis for women are household income, household size and the responsibility in the household.

In the case of the men, Table 6 shows that only the economic characteristics and the family characteristics in that order are significant in their relative contribution to the variance in the men’s experience of the urban infrastructure. Also as shown by the beta coefficients in Table 7, the most important socio-cultural demographic and economic variables used in the analysis are the household income and the household size.

A closer examination of the proportion of variance explained (R-square change) by each of the socio-cultural demographic and economic characteristics categories used in the analysis shows that socio-cultural demographic and economic characteristics have more impacts/effects on the women’s experience of urban infrastructure than men’s. The R-square change value of women and men for the economic characteristics

is .102 and .079 respectively, for family characteristics is .054 and .045 respectively and for socio-cultural characteristics, it is .022 and .008 respectively.

This result implies that the condition of the urban infrastructure affect women more than men. Hitherto, relations between women and men are unequal: the division of power, roles, rights and responsibilities between women and men is biased against women and in favour of men.

Table 4. The Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Model Summary Result (Women)

Model	Variable Category	R.	R-Square	Std Error of the Estimate	R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1.	Economic Characteristics	.319	.102	.9572066	.102	6.941	.000
2.	Family Characteristics	.395	.156	.9353838	.054	3.895	.010
3.	Socio-cultural Characteristics	.422	.178	.9256830	.022	4.813	.030

R<sup>2</sup> = 17.8%

Table 5. Beta Coefficients of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (Women)

Variables	Beta 1	Beta 2	Beta 3
Household Income	-.215**	-.184*	-.183*
Educational Level	-.089	-.071	-.103
Occupation	-.101	-.084	-.078
Household Size	-	.208**	.193*
Stage in the Life Cycle	-	.078	.075
Age	-	-.154	-.136
Responsibility in the Household	-	-	-.151*

\*\*Significant at the .01 level

\*Significant at the .05 level

Table 6. The Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Model Summary Result (Men)

Model	Variable Category	R.	R-Square	Std Error of the Estimate	R <sup>2</sup> Change	F Change	Sig. F Change
1.	Economic Characteristics	.280	.079	.9726760	.079	5.201	.002
2.	Family Characteristics	.351	.124	.9565267	.045	3.077	.029
3.	Socio-cultural Characteristics	.363	.132	.9548014	.008	1.651	.200

R<sup>2</sup> = 13.2%



Table 7. Beta Coefficients of the Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (Men)

Variables	Beta 1	Beta 2	Beta 3
Household Income	-.251**	-.232**	-.234**
Educational Level	-.081	-.055	-.056
Occupation	.024	.047	.046
Household Size	-	.201*	.219*
Stage in the Life Cycle	-	.099	.104
Age	-	-.003	.006
Responsibility in the Household	-	-	-.093

\*\*Significant at the .01 level

\*Significant at the .05 level

#### 4. Summary and conclusion

This study, though preliminary, has found that there is intra-urban variation in the women and men urban infrastructure experience in Ibadan. The result of the correlation analysis shows that there is significant relationship between women and men urban infrastructure experience and the household income, educational level, household size and the stage in the life cycle; only with the urban infrastructure experience of the women is a significant relationship found with the occupation and the responsibility in the household. The result of the multiple linear regression analysis shows that the impact/effect of the socio-cultural, demographic and economic characteristics are more on women experience of urban infrastructure than on men's experience. While the relative contributions of the economic characteristics, family characteristics and socio-cultural characteristics in that order are all significant in explaining the variance in women's experience of urban infrastructure, only economic characteristics and family characteristics in that order are found to be significant in the case of the men. Also, the most important socio-cultural demographic and economic variables as shown by the beta coefficients for women are household income, household size, and responsibility in the household, while for men the most important socio-cultural demographic and economic variables are the household income and the household size.

The issue of concern in this millennium therefore is to make services not only affordable, accessible and appropriate, but also gender sensitive. As noted by O'Connell (2000), "we all share an agenda in the areas of social inclusion and service provision; issues of quality, gender sensitivity, and accessibility are as challenging for people in the UK as they are for people in Africa, Asia and Central and Latin America" (p. 6). Hitherto, in whatever the form of service provision envisaged (contracting out and public-private partnerships) there has been relatively little or no gender analysis. According to O'Connell (2000: 9) services which are gender-sensitive would improve the potential of women and men to enjoy and exercise their full human rights – political, economic, social, civil and cultural; would facilitate greater equality between women and men; and would contribute to greater equity.

Therefore, service provision must recognize the different and specific needs and interests of women and men. Such service provision which is gender sensitive and which recognizes and responds to gender

differences can according to O'Connell make a significant contribution towards gender equality and equity. To quote Mirjam Van Donk:

*“Service delivery is ..... not just a basic need but an act which can liberate women in several interconnected ways. Direct provision of clean water and adequate sanitation will improve their quality of life both by improving community health and diminishing their reproductive burden. It will free up many hours which could be turned to more productive uses, or simply allow overworked women to enjoy some much needed rest. Finally, it may enable women to expand their informal income – generating activities by making it easier to practice trades like hairdressing, taking on washing or day care”* (cited by O'Connell, 2000: 10).

Hitherto, women and men do not have equal access to, or influence on, the decision-making that shapes service delivery. As a result, the basic service needs and interests of women, as distinct to those of men, are inadequately articulated, and rarely heard or satisfied. This kind of situation, need to be redressed. Of course policies to improving the number of females going to school should be pursued. Observation from the literature shows that educated women live a better quality of life than uneducated women.

Civil society organizations including NGOs and community-based organizations also need to develop gender awareness and sensitivity. A logical and necessary partner to this is encouraging and enabling men to change (O'Connell, 2000). Some specific issues as identified by O'Connell here include raising awareness among boys of gender issues at grass-roots level, gender awareness training to change the attitudes of hostile or apathetic local officials (usually men); invest in reducing and redistributing women's workload in order to allow women and girls to use services fully; and engage with political parties to begin to deal with patriarchy.

Also, an essential building block, in developing gender sensitive services, is greater accountability (O'Connell, 2000:12) of local government elected representatives and officials to women and men citizens. Building a culture of democratic accountability among elected representatives and officials is an important part of the organizational change required to equip service providers to provide gender sensitive services. On the other hand, citizens/service users must understand their rights and have the capacity, information, skills and power to demand accountability. Critical mechanisms to ensure accountability include monitoring and evaluation systems, feedback from audits, evaluations and consultations.

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