

Determinants of Traders' Spatial Mobility Behaviour and International Migration from Lagos, Nigeria

Dr. Godwin O. Ikwuyatum

Department of Geography

University of Ibadan

Ibadan, Nigeria

Abstract

Determinants of international migration are diverse. This diversity is not only reflected in empirical analyses but also as explained by different theories of migration; however, the explanation of international migration is far from complete, but places the study in a wider context of migration research, within an urbanizing and globalizing world. Though classical and neoclassical theories have over the years been used to explain the perpetuation of international migration; however, the increasing rate of urbanization in Africa has opened up a new window to factor in actors within the urban space, in the determination of the drivers of international migration from African cities. The spatial mobility behaviour of traders' who are key actors in African Cities, such as, Lagos, tend to present an alternative explanation for international migration from African cities. Traders' spatial mobility behaviour is expressed in traders' choice of destination based on effectiveness, economic strategy and individuality; route/mode of migration; frequency and period of migration; length of stay in the destination; commodity purchased and route of importing commodities; and challenges encountered in the process of international trade. The paper therefore examines how spatial mobility behaviour of traders, within four purposively selected international markets in Lagos, a dynamic African city, determines and influences the pattern and process of international migration from the city.

Key Words: International Migration; Urbanization; Traders' Spatial Mobility Behaviour

1.0 Introduction

Determinant's of traders' mobility, of which migration is sub-ordinate, remains an issue for investigation. This is particularly so in the face of new mobility patterns and trajectories that has emerged from mobility behaviour of traders, trading from Lagos to local and international destinations. Though, classical and neoclassical theories have over the years been used to explain human mobility behaviour, migration inclusive between places, on the basis of economic differences, the increasing rate of urbanization in Africa has opened up new intervening variables within the urban space that require consideration. Trading within and externally from Lagos has a long history. Although accounts on mobile traders in Nigeria are many, there has been little effort made towards differentiating mobility from migration; the later signifies permanency of stay in respective destinations (Stapleton, 1959; Adegbola, 1972; Addo, 1974; Surdakassa, 1977; Akinjogbin, 1980; Asiwaju, 1985; Afolayan, 1991; 1996; 2004; Makinwa & Afolayan, 1995). In many of these studies, the focus has been on traders as an economic entity, less on their activities generating mobility and on factors that dictate their movements. For the later, economic explanations often given are that their movements are from centers of supply to those of demand. But, economic factors alone cannot explain adequately factors that dictate the volume, direction of flows, frequency, duration and the dynamics of any of these aspects of traders' mobility within and outside Nigeria.

Traders' spatial mobility behaviour from Lagos, has unearth new questions of traders' choice of destination based on effectiveness, economic strategy and individuality; route/mode of migration; frequency and period of migration; length of stay in the destination; commodity purchased and route of importing commodities; and challenges encountered in the process of international trade. In response to these questions, the dynamics of internal and international mobility behaviour of traders from an urban space, such as, Lagos tend to change the mobility and circulatory migratory patterns of traders over space and time. The study aims to examine how Traders' choice of destination based on effectiveness, economic strategy and individuality; route/mode of migration; frequency and period of migration; length of stay in the destination; commodity purchased and route of importing commodities; and challenges encountered in the process of international trade influence Traders' spatial mobility behaviour and pattern of traders' from Lagos.

Conceptual Framework

Existing concepts, models and or theories tend to consider just one or two prevailing determinants of migration; even then, there is scarcely a model or theory for mobility (Zipf, 1946; Stouffer, 1960; Claeson, 1969; Greenwood, 1968; Sjaastad, 1962; Gallaway, 1967; Harris & Todaro, 1970; Mabogunje, 1972; Shaw, 1978; Massey, 1990; Schoorl, 1994; Afolayan, 1972; 2001). The first three referenced works are on the spatial aspects of migration, of gravity model and intervening opportunities. While the gravity model emphasizes the importance of distance as a deterrent factor and the mass, which is the interactive factor of population sizes of the sending and receiving centers as propelling factors. Besides, intervening opportunities model is on the effect of unequal distribution of opportunities on the volume and direction of migration (Zipf, 1946; Stouffer, 1960; Claeson, 1969).

The next four referenced works, as above, are on economic factors, which are expected to induce workers from low-income areas (countries) to those of high income. Migration is considered the response of a rational economic man to regional or international imbalances in the technological development, labour supply and demand and of the force of demographic growth (Greenwood, 1968). Other sets of theories on economic aspects deal with:

1. The performance of migration as a mechanism for effective allocation of an economic labour force.
2. Migration as a function of man's response to economic stress and push factors.
3. Migration as returns to expected income differentials or cost-benefit calculations (Sjaastad, 1962; Gallaway, 1967; Harris & Todaro, 1970).

On account of the short-comings of these models, the behavioral aspect of the decision to migrate was developed. This includes works on family migration theory, network theory and migration system theory (Mabogunje, 1972; Shaw, 1978; Massey, 1990; Schoorl, 1994; Afolayan, 1972; 2001). Although these are not elegant, robust statistical models or theories, they are attempts at emphasizing the importance of information and social linkages as migration decision making factors.

In general, the different attempts at bringing in more related explanatory variables are indicative of possibility of conceiving the idea within a system framework. A system, by definition is a group of related parts that work together for a particular purpose (Longman Dictionary, 1995). A system is also a technical (scientific term) that is characterized by three (3) features:

1. Finiteness or full-list-ability of its components or members.
2. Exclusiveness of the choice of any component or member, that is, the choice of a component or member excludes the choice of another component or member, and
3. Consequential significance of any increase or decrease in the number of components or members.

For example, if the number of components or members is increased or decreased, the significance of each component or member in the new system is no longer what it was before the increase or decrease. Therefore, the application of the system model entails much more than just listing of possible related factors/components of the system to much thought of rigorous organization of issue of study (migration). It entails two levels of organization, the conception and delivery levels. The conception level of the organization would deal with the aims, goals and objectives of the study. The implementation (policy) or delivery level of the organization assumes a greater complexity than that at the conception level. At this level, the system functions as a term synonymous with the function of the policy. A migration systems model, as a technical term is, therefore, to ensure the clarification of the determinants and of their inter-connectedness, in order to propose appropriate conceptualization of the true state of affairs. The conceptualization of human mobility within the system framework is to ensure that the identified causes of migration are addressed by the migration policy that is proposed.

An attempt at conceptualizing human mobility is, therefore, presented in Fig. 1. This is a modified version of Shaw's model (1978). The figure presents a simplified idea of the complex, interwoven nature of selected factors in migration/mobility decision-making for movers from the urban space, mobile traders' from Lagos inclusive. The model has as its exogenous, independent factors economic, socio-political, urbanization and globalization; for its intervening, endogenous factors, they are the three distinctive features of traders, for interpreting the exogenous factors.

The outcome is the mobility/migration decision, of moving from origin within Nigeria to Lagos, from which movements to other places within Nigeria or outside the country take place. Also, the outcome has ripple effect on the determinants; therefore, the interrelatedness of the factors further indicates the complexity of the migration system. Modifications to Shaw's model, as on Fig.1, are in terms of the introduction of urbanization and globalization is for emphasis, as 'new', or more recent exogenous variables of importance in conceptualizing traders' mobility and the three distinctive features of traders as intervening variables that assist the decision makers in evaluating exogenous factors; hence, the decision making of the traders covers where to move to: first to the city, Lagos; then to any other place within or outside the country.

Urbanization, as a factor, is a process by which the agglomeration of people in centers of urban status over time promotes greater interactions and influence, while globalization is a process by which a place, in conjunction with its activities, is drawn into events and happenings on a global scale. Globalization has to do with linkages with other parts of the world, which arise from shrinking distances, by which for example, instantaneous world-wide electronics communication eases the linkage. There is the time dimension in the operations of both processes. These manifest in the level of interactions generated by the populations of both the urban and the world at large, as a result of their economic activities with one another.

In other words, urbanization is to provide the needed bigger catchment area within which traders could source customers for their goods, all things being equal. Equally, globalization is to draw an urban center beyond the local environment. Consequently, urbanization and globalization provide wider trajectories within which traders can source and disburse items of sale. Therefore, the traditional mobile nature of traders is heightened by forces generated by increasing attractive pull of urbanization and globalization, with the later transcending the local space.

The heightened urban energy that drove the trader to move in the first instance and that made them choose the rapidly growing urban destination is, therefore, enhanced by globalization. This is because globalization is expected to reduce the challenge of distance in the flow of people, goods and services and information, via globalization infrastructure, such as the internet, cell phones, cable networks, fax and telegraphic instrument, and transport technology. However, this may work contrary to increasing physical mobility of traders. Nonetheless, the development of the infrastructure has been known for facilitating the flow of information concerning items of trade and choice of destination. Information about products and destinations are therefore at the reach of traders, by the grace of globalization. In addition, transportation technology has significantly improved in this era of globalization, such that people, goods and services are moved with greater speed and precision. In other words, urbanization and globalization are most of the times exogenous enabling factors in the mobility of traders.

Such a conceptualization of migration as a system mirrors the argument of Kardulias & Hall (1975). The writers advocated for a systemic approach to global migration. According to them:

Migration involves interactions over space that brings about transformations across great geographic distances. A systemic approach indicates that globalization is not a new phenomenon; but, rather it is an extension of old processes. Migration creates ripple effects, which are felt over great distances, as successive groups move over great distances and impinge on the territory of their neighbors; the potential effects of which can stretch across continents. Migration patterns tend to be cyclical. State creation has led to ethnic identification and vast increases in transportation efficiency have heightened the fluidity of boundaries and complicated the process of ethnic identification; hence, a world system perspective facilitates a comprehensive view of past and current migration; thus, places modern issues in a historical context (Kardulias & Hall, 1975).

Next is the consideration of three distinctive features of traders, as enabling endogenous factors in traders' mobility. The first is effectiveness of their mobility that sets them apart from other movers or migrants. This is to say that traders have certain goals in mind (expectations) for their movement, that is, traders' mobility is purposive. This manifests in where they perceive they could purchase the desired goods at least effort and at acceptable level of profitability and of availability of goods, of desired quality and quantities. In other words, effectiveness of traders' mobility hangs on many considerations, which economic motivation may not necessarily capture in full.

Furthermore, the realization of the traders' expectation could be within a short, medium or long time basis. Therefore, the usual defined period of a move that qualifies a change in location of a person from one locality to another as migration, of at least six months of stay in the destination, may not apply to them and should not restrict their move as being of less importance. This is because the driving force for choice of a destination is perceived effectiveness of the transaction within the shortest time possible. But, since change in location is a veritable feature of migration, traders, who have moved over defined space (internal and or international) and over time (irrespective of the length of stay), could simply be referred to as mobile traders; bearing in mind that effectiveness of traders' mobility determines their length of stay.

Also, effectiveness of traders' mobility is often foremost in traders' mobility as they decide how long their stay would be. This is dictated by factors other than economic; some of which are social and relative, depending on level of information received and other social, facilitating factors. Even level of profitability is relative, depending on some indefinite factors. The volume and frequency of the movement of traders to any destination, in particular international destinations, are tied to prevailing conditions and policies of the destination. These could be in terms of existing immigration policies, political economic policies, peace and security and the rate of foreign exchange. Also, the pains and cost of obtaining travel documents and crossing borders: be they land, sea or air borders, often come into their evaluation, as they decide whether or not moving to such destinations is worth it. The political economic policies could be in terms of prohibition of sale of specific goods and services and high cost of custom duties and tariffs that are placed on goods. Also, peace, security and political stability influence the mobility decision making process, as destinations experiencing conflict and instability are avoided for destinations of peace, where security is assured. In addition, instability in the foreign exchange rate between the local currency of the trader and the currency of the foreign destination contributes to profitability of traders' movement, as destinations with relative stability in foreign exchange rates are preferred.

The second distinctive feature of mobile traders is economic strategy, on which traders base their mobility behavior. Traders in deciding their destination of choice, sometimes tie it to the need to survive in the trade and business, which they have accepted as their occupation. In so doing, the migration decision making process, as to which destination the trader intends to move to, is premised on the urge to survive in the business and keep the business afloat, damning challenges they might encounter in the process of migration.

In addition, migrants could turn to trading on discovering the attractions of trade in the destination area or other destination. Consequently, they use the current destination of residence as a spring board to move to other destinations. In this context, the mobility behavior of traders is tied to their urge to survive and keep afloat in the business they are involved in. Traders depict this feature in forms of the knowledge of possible destination (s) and level of utilization of such knowledge in such a manner that suits their best interest or that promotes their economic activity. In other words, their economic strategies would be towards answering questions, such as, where to go; when to go and how to resolve economic problems. Some of these strategies work towards increasing the profitability of the enterprise. This is to show the many factors that influence the decision-making of traders and possibility of an over-lap when the features are quantified. Also, the feature is to show that traders' economic strategies are often different from those contended with by other groups of labour migrants.

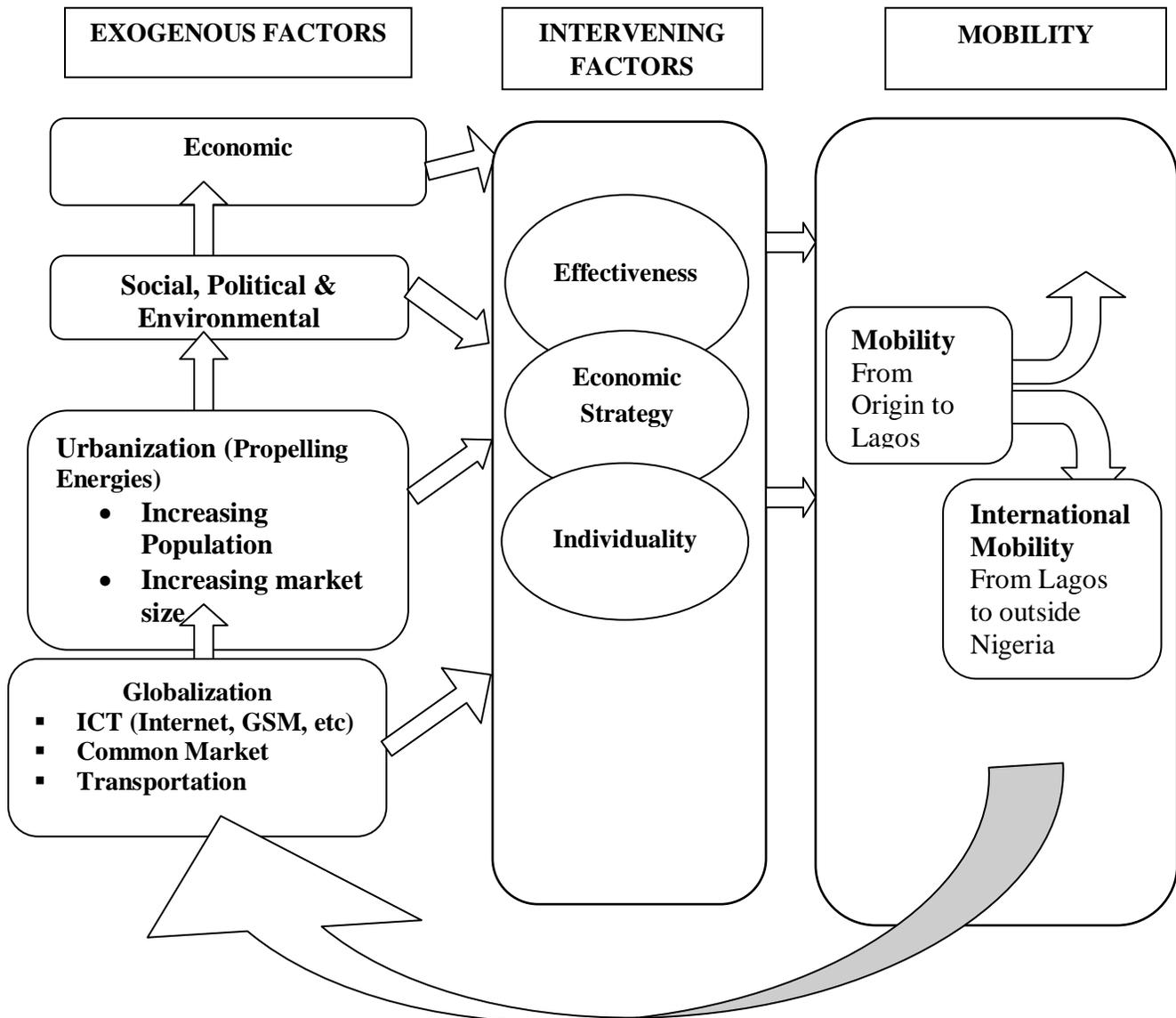
Individuality is another core factor in determining the destination to which the traders move. The choice to move or migrate to any destination is in the first place, that of the individual or trader involved in the process of migration. This does not only influence the trajectory of movement but also the volume of the flow of traders. Individuality presents traders as capable individuals, who can take intelligent actions; protect their interests; expect and/or achieve a profitable venture. The individuality of traders is not premised on group action or regimented by a formal set-up, as traders could change or adjust their behavior in the best way they think fit.

In reality, an individual decision-making draws from knowledge and experiences of other people. Nonetheless, traders evaluate prevailing circumstances that they find themselves in the light of their own needs. For example, their choice of the location(s) to move to, how long their stay would be (short, medium or long term) and the article(s) of trade are dependent on their individual perception and evaluation of the profitability of the action they embark on, among others.

In sum, traders base their decision to move on various reasons, and do so via varied strategies that they employ at both the source region and on reaching the destination area.

In most cases, traders set out with the expectation of buying and selling in order to make a profitable venture within the shortest time possible. In some other cases, they metamorphosed from being tourists, visitors, migrants in transits and or refugees/asylum seekers to become international traders in the destination area, depending on circumstances dictating their actions. Whichever is the case, the dynamism of their mobility and migration processes reflects on the spatial and temporal patterns that result.

Fig. 1: Conceptualizing Mobility of Internal and International Traders



The conceptual framework of traders’ mobility is, therefore, to bring in these various factors and their interrelated nature; thus, allow for the examination of the evolution of mobility, from being a short-term movement of people over space, into a more permanent stay over time, that is, migration. Another possibility is a decrease or diversion in the volume and destination of the moves. These possibilities are dependent on many factors that operate over space and time. The latter is in terms of the processes that are involved may increase or decrease over time; for example, increasing urbanization widens the horizon of business; so also is globalization, all things being equal.

The development of a conceptual framework is also to allow for an examination of forces of dynamics. Therefore, the many factors and their interrelatedness are conceptualized and shown in Fig.1. The varied segments of the model are envisaged as interacting with one another in a loop-like fashion, such that happenings/events in the external world of the actors, the traders, affect those in other segments of the diagram. Therefore, the ripple effect translates across the whole frame, as a highly interconnected frame.

The fact that migration is a sub-ordinate of mobility unearths the synergy that this paper attempts to bring into the discourse on the conceptualization of mobility patterns in Africa and how fits within the context of migration patterns on the continent. Trading involves mobility or circulation of traders over space and time. Since the latter is the basic definition of migration, and migration is the sub-ordinate or sub-set of mobility; hence, traders' mobility encompasses migration, irrespective of duration of stay. By amending duration of stay, from the conventional period of 6 months, the study has extended the concept of migration. This can be particularly so under existing scenario and definition of circulatory migration, within borders and across international borders, like is the case with finding from this study. The circulatory mobility of traders, which is akin to circulatory migration, highlights the issue of trans-nationality in the circulatory process of traders.

In addition, re-defining migration captures the fact that mobility is for a purpose, such that minimum stay of six months is not the ingredient; rather, the principle is that once the goal is achieved, the trader makes a round-about turn for another trading trip. The present study reveals that majority of international traders have their targets in terms of destinations, commodities to purchase and period to spend in destination country. Therefore, they are not to stay for too long because they are to meet the demand needs. This conceptual position is expressed by the findings of the analysis of trader mobility from Lagos metropolis.

Key questions that this paper attempt to address within the foregoing conceptual framework are: What mobility patterns have emerged from traders' behaviour, as in traders' choices of: destination, route of transportation; frequency and period; effectiveness/profitability; economic strategy; and individuality; commodity purchased; route of importing commodities; and challenges encountered in the process of trading (internal and international) from Lagos, Nigeria. This is with a view of examining hitherto ignored urban-driven mobility determinants which could help to explain recent mobility patterns, a sub-ordinate of migration from Lagos.

For fluidity the paper is structured into an introduction, which covers the background to the study, conceptual framework, rational and research questions and aim of the paper. This is followed by the method of the study and the main finding in terms of the patterns that have emerged from traders' decision in the process of trading (internal and international) from Lagos.

2.0 Methodology

The methods of data collection started with the purposive sampling of markets within the metropolis of Lagos State. A multi-stage stratified sampling technique was employed in selecting the traders. This involved first, a purposive sampling of markets within the metropolis. These are markets known to house substantial numbers of international traders. The four main markets known for trading in specialized imported goods in Lagos are Auto Spare Parts and Machinery Dealers Association (ASPAMDA), Computer Village in Ikeja, Alaba International Market, and Balogun-Idumota Market

Both primary and secondary data sources were used for studying the traders. The secondary sources are published documents on Lagos markets, traders and government's activities in the markets and internet search on trading in prominent destinations the traders moved to. The primary source involved the use of quantitative (oral interviews), and of qualitative tools, of Focus Group Discussions (FGD) and In-Depth Interviews (IDIs) with opinion leaders. Oral interviews were conducted via the administration of a multi-round survey of selected market clusters of the major commercial urban centre in the country, Lagos metropolis

3. 0 Results/Discussions

3.1 Route of Transportation as a Mobility behaviour

The major mode of transportation for the first international trip was by air, for 97.2 per cent of the international traders, as shown by Table 1. It is followed by land, or through official land border crossing (2.0%), by sea (0.9%) and by unofficial land border crossing points (0.3%).

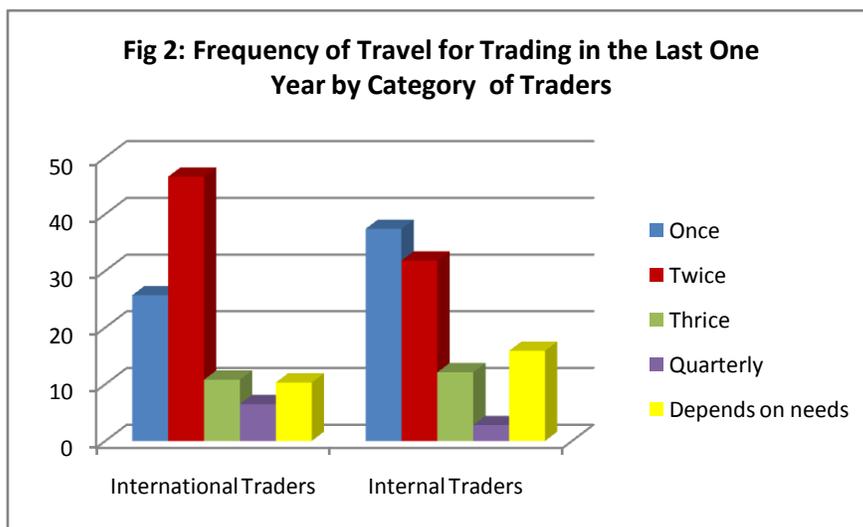
Table 1: Route of First International Trading Trip

Route	Percentage (%)
Air	348(97.2%)
Sea	2(0.6%)
Overland-through formal border crossing	7(2%)
Overland-through informal border crossing	1(0.3%)
Total	358(100%)

Majority (66.7%) of the very few traders that passed through informal land border routes indicated the non-requirement of visa and passport for the trip they made. This was because the trips were ‘within ECOWAS’, while the remaining 33.3 per cent of the traders used non-official, informal border routes because in their own opinion it was cheaper and easier to pass through such routes than through official land border points.

3.2: Frequency and Period as mobility behaviour of traders on first International and Internal Trips

Fig 2.shows that over two-thirds (46.6%) of international traders had traveled twice outside Nigeria; followed by 25.7 per cent of those who moved once, while 10.8 and 6.5 per cent respectively of the international and internal traders had moved thrice and four times. One tenth of them (10.3%) traveled as the need arose.



In the case of internal traders, Fig. 2 reveals close to two-fifths (37.4%) traveled once in the last one year, while the percentages diminish as the frequency of travel increases; 31.8, 12.1 and 2.8 per cent of them travelled outside Lagos twice, thrice and four times respectively in the last one year. Also, over one-quarter (28.3%) of these traders traveled depending on prevailing conditions.

Table 2: Frequency of Trading Trips in the Last One Year by Market

	Market			
	ASPAMDA	Computer Village	Alaba Market	Balogun Market
Once	8(20.5%)	75(24.5%)	21(26.3%)	40(43.5%)
Twice	15(38.5)	139(45.4%)	50(62.5%)	24(26.1%)
Thrice	9(23.1%)	36(11.8%)	4(5%)	8(8.7%)
Four Times	3(7.7%)	22(7.2%)	0(0%)	5(5.4%)
As the need arise	4(10.3%)	34(11.1%)	5(6.3%)	15(16.3%)
Total	39(100%)	306(100%)	80(100%)	92(100%)

Table 2 reveals that the majority of traders had traveled twice for trading in the last one year, in ASPAMDA (38.5%), Computer Village (45.4%) and Alaba (62.5%), while the majority in Balogun market (43.5%) traveled once. However, the highest frequency of travel, that is, four times was recorded in ASPAMDA (7.7%), Computer Village (7.2%) and Balogun (5.4%); only Alaba has no record of four times. Over one-tenth of the traders traveled when the need arose in three of the markets, that is, 16.3, 11.1 and 10.3 per cent in Balogun, Computer Village and ASPAMDA respectively; the exception was Alaba market, with 6.3 per cent.

The peak period for the first international trip, as indicated by Fig. 3., is between January and March, that is, the first quarter of the year, when over one-third (33.1%) of the traders. This is followed by between April and June, with a little above one-quarter (26.9%), October and December (21.2%) and July to September (18.8%).



A probable explanation for the highest modal frequency of movement of international traders between January and March is stocking new products of goods shortly after the end of the year festive period. It is a common tradition to bring in new commodities at the beginning of a new year.

This scenario is different for the internal traders, for whom the peak period of making business trips outside Lagos is between April and June, with close to two-fifths (39.8%) of the traders moving out for business. This is the period when internal trading peaks, as traders from Lagos distribute their new acquired products to destinations within the country, followed by the period, of January to March (32.5%) and distantly by July to September to October and December, with 16.7 and 10.2 per cent respectively.

However, the peak period for the first international trading trips varies among all the four selected markets, according to Table 3. ASPAMDA and Computer Village had over one-third of their traders (36.4% and 35.3% respectively) going for their first business trips between January and March, while majority of traders from Balogun (45.6%) and Alaba (35.0%) moved out between April and June.

Table 3: Period of First International Trading Trip

Period	Market			
	ASPAMDA	Computer Village	Alaba Market	Balogun Market
January-March	12(36.4%)	95(35.3%)	24(30%)	16(23.5%)
April-June	6(18.2%)	74(27.5%)	20(25%)	31(45.6%)
July-September	10(30.3%)	51(19%)	8(10%)	15(22.1%)
October-December	5(15.2%)	49(18.2%)	28(35%)	6(8.8%)
Total	33(100%)	269(100%)	80(100%)	68 (100%)

Other periods of significance for first trading trips among the markets are between July and September for ASPAMDA (30.3%), April and June for Computer Village (27.5%), January and March for Alaba (30.0%) and Balogun (23.5%) markets.

However, there are changes in the peak period of the latest trip made by international and internal traders. The highest modal frequency for latest trading trip for international traders was between July and September, with 37.3 per cent, as Fig. 3 reveals. This is because international traders travel out as early as July up to September, in order to stock pile commodities and to avoid the heavy international air traffic, often experienced close to the end of the year. This peak period is followed by 24.7 per cent of them that traveled between January and March, 21.9 per cent between April and June and 16.1 per cent between October and December.

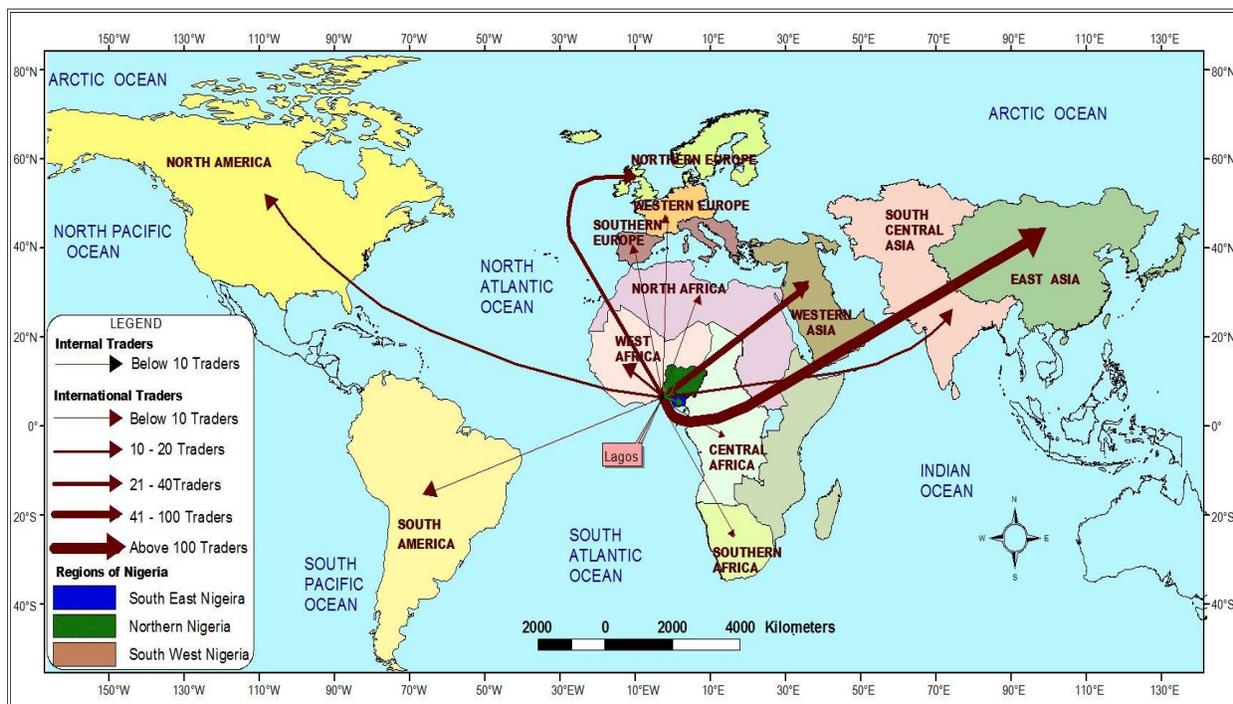
3.3: Choice of Destination as Mobility behaviour of traders

The spatial mobility pattern of traders in the four markets surveyed, based on their choice of international destinations is shown in Fig 4; indicate that over half (53.4%) of international traders on their first trading trip went to destinations in East Asia; followed by those who went to West Asia (23.7%), and distantly to Northern Europe (6.6%) and West Africa (6.4%), in that order of importance. South America destinations (0.3%) received the lowest volume of traders from Nigeria, while North America had 3.1 per cent.

Consequently, the pattern of the region of destination of traders on their first international trading trip reflects the high volume of mobility of traders to the Asian sub-continent, as East Asia and West Asia destinations combined accounted for over three-quarters (77.1%) of traders on their first trip outside Nigeria. Countries that feature prominently in the Asian sub-continent are China (129), Dubai (76), Japan (32) and Hong Kong (18). Others are United Arab Emirate (UAE) (6), Taiwan (8), Singapore (3), India (4), Thailand (4) and Singapore (4). On the other hand, there exists a low level of business and trade transactions between Nigeria and the rest of Africa. In West Africa, Benin Republic and Ghana each with 9 traders, topped the list; followed by Algeria (3) and Zimbabwe, Cameroun and Sierra Leone, which each had one trader patronizing the country. For Europe, Germany stands out, with 14 traders; followed by France (12) and the Netherlands (2). Spain and Italy each had one international trader that patronized the country. Also, the United States of America featured to some extent, with nine traders, while Brazil had just one trader.

In essence, the diverse destinations bring to the fore a new pattern that is quite different to the orthodox destinations in the literature. No doubt, this choice of destination by traders was based on the type of goods in vogue (IT), the known places for the products, the profit maximization and least cost efforts of the traders, among others. Together, the factors served as the driving force behind traders’ mobility between Nigeria and international destinations where business items were purchased.

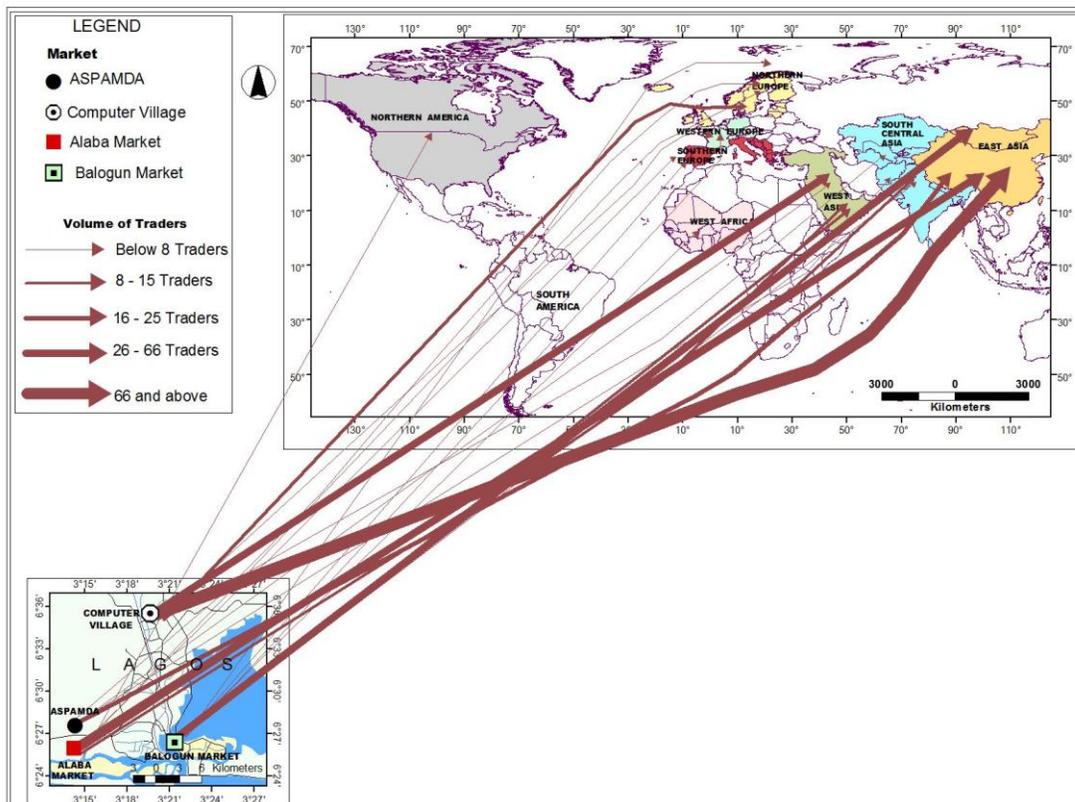
Fig. 4: Destination of First International Trading Trip



Also, the destination pattern of traders on their first international trading trip differs by market as shown in Fig 5. About two-thirds of the traders that patronized East Asia (59.9%) were traders from Computer Village; followed by traders from Alaba (17.3%), Balogun (14.5%) and ASPAMDA (8.9%) markets.

Also, half of the relatively few traders that patronized destinations in South-Central Asia were from Alaba market and the remaining traders were from ASPAMDA (25%), Computer village (18.8%) and Balogun market (6.3%). On the other hand, all traders that patronized Western Europe were from Computer Village, and over half of the traders (55%), who went to Northern Europe, were from Computer Village. They are followed by Alaba market (35%), ASPAMDA (5%) and Balogun (5%).

Fig 5: Destination of First International Trading Trip by Market



In addition, majority (66.7%) of the traders, who patronized southern Europe were from Balogun market, while the remaining traders were from Alaba market (33.3%). For West African countries, about three-quarters (69.6%) of traders were from Computer Village; followed by traders from Balogun (26.1%) and Alaba markets (4.3%). Also, four-fifths (80%) of traders that patronized North American destinations were from Computer Village, while the remaining traders were from Alaba market (20%). In essence, traders in Computer Village patronized Asian countries most among the four markets. A Chi-square test for the first international trip reveals a significant difference in the destinations, with $\chi^2 = 450$, $df=6$, at a significance level = .000.

The predominance of the Asian bloc in the mobility of traders on their first international business trip can be explained by the fact that products from the Asian manufacturing countries tend to be cheaper and more accessible compared to those from the European region. Oruame ((Dubaiexporters.com; 2008) has listed the following nine points explaining why Dubai ruled Nigeria's computer market, as:

1. UAE (United Arab Emirates), of which Dubai is the major center, has an almost zero custom duty
2. Dubai has well-supported infrastructure
3. The Government of the United Arab Emirates promotion of Dubai as meeting point for ideas and industries- made it a strategic warehouse for vendors and their major partnership for the sale of products and services to Africa and to the rest of the Arab World

4. PCs (Personal Computers) from Dubai continued to sell more than even what is on offer from the indigenous Nigerian PC assembly firms, who are assisted by the Nigerian Government in its PC mass acquisition program; tagged Computers for all Nigerian Initiative
5. UAE has several free trading zones- the largest being Jebel Ali Free Zone (JAFZ) in Dubai.
6. There was no taxation for many years
7. UAE has subsidized energy rates
8. UAE promotes full transfer of capital and profits on investment
9. Most brand name products are readily available in Dubai.

About the same idea is portrayed by Gulfnews.com, breaking news online, February 2004, and as follows:

West Africa is traditionally dependent on imports from Europe and North Africa. However, thousands of West African traders, mostly from Nigeria and Ghana, have been using Dubai for some time as a source market for essential commodities. They found Dubai most convenient due to the city being an economic hub, in which they can buy the necessary items on a single trip.

Also, extracts from FGDs and IDIs buttress the prominence of the region:

There was a time when there was a boom, in that, if you settle some young boys with \$5,000 you will see them going to Dubai the next day. People travel in order to expand their business. But because of economic recession you discover that the volume to exportation will drop, hence, those who travel are not many. Their number has reduced. I have been to United Kingdom but it is not a good business place (FGD, Computer Village).

The decision you take to go and buy in a particular place covers issues such as price, policies, etc. that bring about change. Actually, what is there is that before I joined this very trade, I was into motor cycle spare parts, later I was selling clothes and I went to Thailand in 1997 for the first time; from there I went to Hong Kong. I came to Lagos in May 2003 and I joined this business of footwear. Do you understand? Since I joined it there are differences in items of trade: One time, I was trading adult shoes, which we mostly get from Dubai and I used to go to Dubai. ...Why I stopped going to Dubai is because of flight money, ticket, custom. To bring goods, the charge is very high. And they banned the goods, so if you are going there it is an illegal something. That is why I go back to canvas, sport wears and stopped going to Dubai. I started going to China because that is where you get cheap items. You get whatever you want and the flight ticket is cheap compared to that for other places. You can easily get connections because if you go to China, many companies are there. And you can even get the connection here in Nigeria because they have some China people here, who you can have your business connection with. You give them sample of what you want and they import it for you. You deposit some certain amount of money with them and it would be expended based on the money you deposited (IDI, Footwear, Balogun Market).

Consequently, increasing numbers of traders from Nigeria tend to patronize Asia. In addition, the 'Asian Tigers' are involved in the manufacturing of a variety of products, unlike destinations in Western Europe and North America, where there is immense specialization, with its attendant high cost. The quotes also bring out some challenges the traders are confronted with and economic strategies they employ, some of which reflect on dynamics of the spatial pattern.

3.4 Length of Stay as Mobility Behaviour of Traders on First Trading Trip and Market

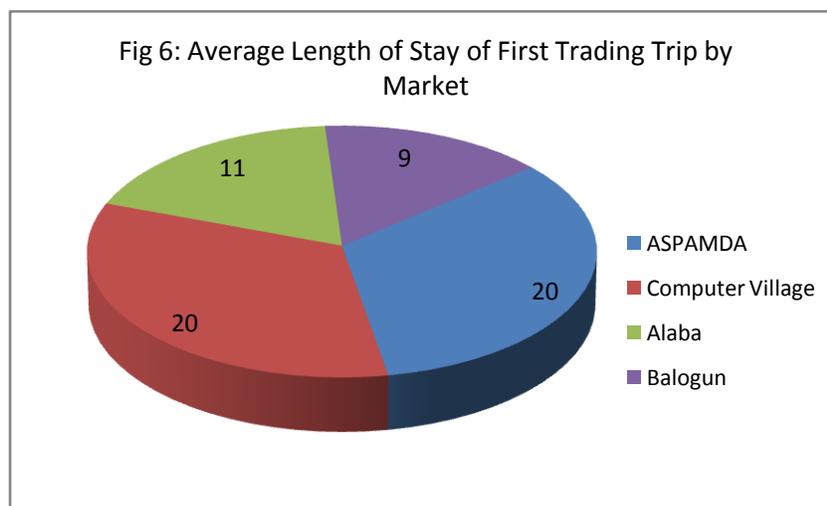
Table 4 shows that majority (84.8%) of internal traders on the other hand spent between 1 to 7 days on their first trip. This is in contrast to that for majority of international traders (41.5%), who spent between 8 to 14 days on their first trading trip outside Nigeria.

Table 4: Length of Stay of Traders on First trading Trip by Category of Traders

Duration of Stay (days)	Category of Traders	
	International	Internal
1-7	111(28.5%)	78(84.8%)
8-14	162(41.5%)	9(9.8%)
15-30	104(26.7%)	4(4.3%)
Above 30	13(3.3%)	1(1.1%)
Total	390(100%)	92(100%)

Generally, very few international (3.3%) and internal (1.1%) traders stayed beyond 30 days in their first ever trip; hence, traders' duration of stay in locations of transaction is very short.

Furthermore, the overall average length of stay for both international and internal traders on their first trip is 17.11 days. However, Fig. 6 depicts a noticeable difference in the average length of stay of the traders among the four markets, as follows: ASPAMDA (20 days); Computer Village (20 days), Alaba Market (11 days) and Balogun Market (9 days). ANOVA test shows there is significant difference between length of stay among the markets, with $F = 1.287$, $df = 3$ and at $\alpha = 0.278$.



One plausible explanatory factor for the short period of stay for international traders is that the goods the international traders bought are standardized and only required a physical inspection for traders to choose from the variety of products available, an action that takes only a few days, at most a month to accomplish. Other factors are facilitation role of links, inclusive relations, agents and prior communication before a trader embarked on the trip.

Comparatively, these figures can be judged against lower average number of days for internal traders, of 7.1 days on their first internal trading trip. Consequently, international traders tend to spend more time in the destination area than internal traders. While 41.5 per cent of international traders spent between 8 to 14 days on their first trip outside Lagos, just 9.8 per cent of internal traders spent the same period in destinations of their first trip. There is, therefore a significant difference in the length of stay of international and internal traders in destination of their first trip, with $\chi^2 = 201$, $df = 42$, at a = .000 significance level. The pattern can be explained by the factor of distance, as it takes a longer period to travel outside the country than to travel within the country, as it is the case with internal traders.

In essence, the relatively short period of stay for international mobile traders as against that of conventional migrants in general necessitated the premise for studying traders as mobile persons, irrespective of their length of stay and not as migrants. Mobility encompasses migration, that is, staying for a longer time, if need be. Traders' mobility is relatively well-informed as opposed to the mobility of labour migrants.

Consequently, as soon as their objective of transacting trade is completed the traders return to their base to sell their wares. Based on their short stay at the destinations, their mobility has not provoked as much an outcry as that for labour migrants.

3.5 Commodity Purchased on First International/ Internal Trip by Category of Traders

The major commodity purchased on the first international trading trip reflects the commodity each category of traders specializes in. Fig 7 indicates that the majority of the international traders (66.5%) purchased computers, GSM and accessories on their first business trip. Next are traders, who purchased electronic equipment (13.9%), auto spare parts (12.3%), textiles (5.1%) and household utensils (0.9%).

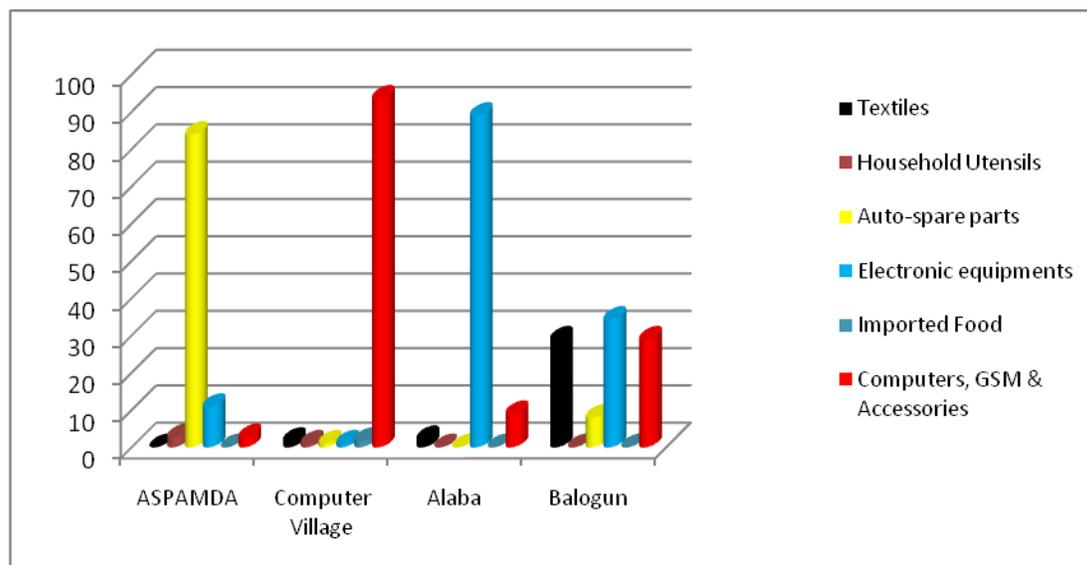
The items bought by internal traders tends to be similar to those bought by international traders, as computers, GSM and accessories (65.5%) and electronic equipment (27.6%) are the more purchased items in that order by internal traders in geo-political zones of the country that they patronized.

Also, the pattern highlights trader's mobility behavior reflects the nature of the product purchased. Most manufactured commodities are not sourced locally; but, are from international markets outside Nigeria; hence, the relatively high level of traders' mobility to international markets, as expressed in the volume of international traders who purchased manufactured commodities.

Furthermore, the major commodity purchased on the first trading trip reflects the commodity each of the four markets specialize in, as shown by Fig 7. Majority of traders in ASPAMDA (83.8%) purchased auto spare parts on their first trading trip, and the remaining minority purchased electronic equipment (10.8%), household utensils (2.7%) and GSM and accessories (2.7%). This is in contrast to over half of traders in Computer Village (51.2%) that purchased computers and accessories; followed by GSM and accessories (28.2%), computers and GSM with their accessories (14.1%), textiles (1.7%) and imported food (1.7%). Also, very few traders from Computer Village purchased auto spare parts (1.0%), electronic equipment (1.0%) and household utensils (1.0%).

International trader destination of choice, tend to be influenced by the commodity produced in that destination. That is, international traders move to destinations where commodities on high demand in their home country is produced and at relatively profitable price.

Fig. 7: Commodities Purchased by Traders on First International Trading Trip by Market



Moreover, Fig.7 shows over four fifths of traders from Alaba (88.9%) purchased electronic equipment, as against the remaining one fifth that purchased computers, GSM and accessories (8.9%) and textiles (2.2%). However, traders in Balogun purchased more variety of commodities than traders in the other markets, as a slight majority of the traders (34.2%) purchased electronic equipment, as against those who purchased textiles (28.9%), computers, GSM and accessories (28.9%) and auto spare parts (7.9%).

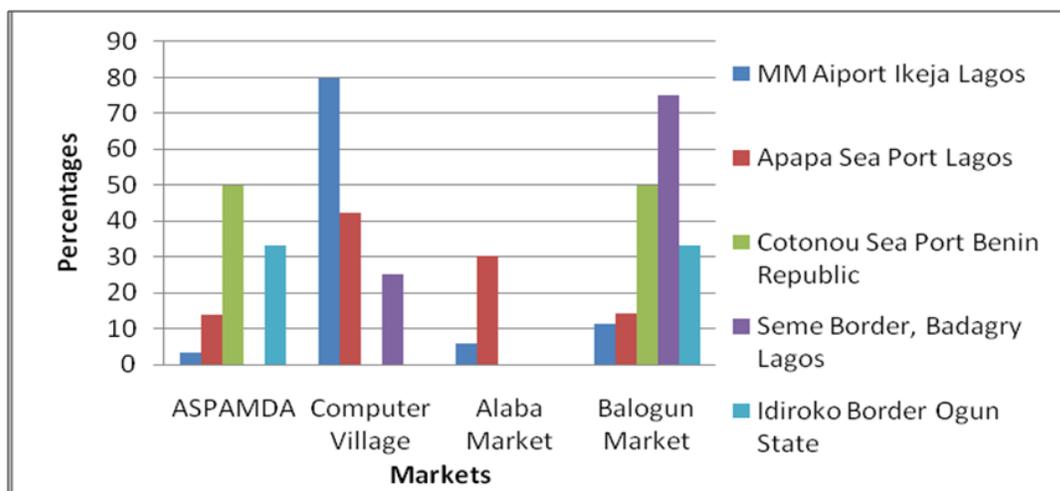
3.6 Routes/Passage for Importing on First International Trip by Market

International traders import the goods that they had physically moved to buy in locations outside Nigeria. The routes used by traders were airport, sea-port, and official land borders. The pattern of routes used, indicated all traders (100%) that imported goods by air on their first international business trip into Nigeria routed the goods through Muritala Mohammed International Airport, Ikeja, in Lagos. This is understandable as it is the only international airport in Lagos; other international airports are in Kano, Port Harcourt, Calabar, Ilorin, Sokoto and Enugu. On the other hand, the major seaport used by traders to import their goods was Apapa Lagos seaport for 95.9 per cent of the traders and the remaining minority (4.1%) imported their goods through Cotonou, Benin Republic.

Nonetheless, the low percentage of traders that routed their imported goods through Cotonou is noteworthy; based on the fact that Benin operated a very liberal import tariff system in the late 1990s. Coupled with this was its fast system of clearing goods, as compared with the multiple import tariffs and long delays experienced by importers in Apapa seaport in Nigeria. This situation significantly influenced the pattern of traders' mobility. However, in the last five years, that is, 2004 -2009, there had been tremendous improvement in the port tariff system and processes in Nigeria; hence, there is increasing use of Nigerian seaports for the importation of goods. This tends to explain the large percentage (95.9%) of traders who now route their goods through the Apapa port, as against the few (4.1%) who routed their goods through Cotonou port during the course of this study.

In addition, two official land borders were used by traders to import goods on the first international trip outside Nigeria, namely, Seme and Idiroko land borders. The pattern shows that more than half of the traders (57.1%) routed their goods through Seme land border and the remaining traders (42.9%) routed their goods through Idiroko land border. The greater volume of goods and consequently trader mobility through Seme land border can be explained by the proximity of Cotonou seaport and Seme land border to Lagos State, when compared with the further location of Idiroko land border in Ogun State. In addition, greater import and export service infrastructure exists in Seme, as against the ones in Idiroko land border post and since most of the goods are imported manufactured goods, Seme border post has an obvious edge over Idiroko. In more depth, the pattern of routes used for importation of commodities by traders in ASPAMDA, Computer Village, and Alaba and Balogun markets varies as depicted by Fig. 3.34 and Table 3.49*. Majority of the traders in Computer Village (79.7%) imported their commodities by air via Muritala Mohammed International Airport; followed by traders in Balogun (11.2%), Alaba (5.9%) and ASPAMDA (3.2%).

Fig 8 Routes Used by Traders for Importation of Commodities by Markets



About two fifths (42.1%) of traders, who used Apapa sea port, were from Computer Village; followed by traders in Alaba (30.1%), Balogun (14.2%) and ASPAMDA (13.7%). This is in contrast to half of the traders that imported their commodities via Cotonou sea port, that is, for ASPAMDA (50%) and Balogun (50%) markets. In terms of land borders, traders in Balogun market led in the use of Seme route, with 75 per cent, and the remaining percentage (25%) was for traders in Computer Village, while Idiroko border was equally shared by ASPAMDA (33.3%), Computer village (33.3%) and Balogun (33.3%).markets.

The nature of goods that are imported, in terms of their fragility and weight tend to influence the means and route of importation. In addition, routes tend to be influenced by the ease and pace at which imported goods were cleared at the point of entry. For example, majority of traders in Computer Village (79.7%) imported their commodities, which are essentially computer and related accessories for safety reasons, due to the fragile nature of these products; hence, they use Murtala Mohammed Airport Ikeja, Lagos. This is in contrast to half (50%) of traders in ASPAMDA, who imported their goods, made up of essentially heavy auto spare parts and machinery through Cotonou seaport, where clearance of goods was adjudged faster, easier and attracted lower tariff, when compared to the sea ports in Nigeria.

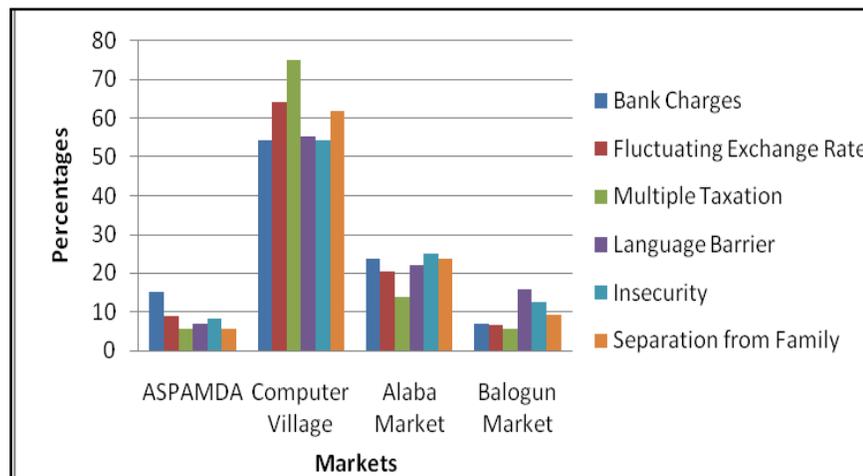
3.7: Major Challenges on First International Trip by Market

Traders on their first international trading trip encountered a number of challenges. The greatest challenge encountered by traders on their first trip outside Nigeria was language barrier (36.4%), followed by fluctuating exchange rate (32.3%), bank charges (12.7%), separation from family members (9.7%) and multiple taxations (6.6%). The least was safety of destination or inadequate security (4.3%).

Language barrier topped the list, in particular for traders that patronized Asian destinations. Traders in general seemed to have overcome language barriers, as they engaged Asian contact-fellows or agencies in destination area. These contacts helped in language translation and documentation of trading transactions in the destination area. As Bodomo (2009) reported, the traders used calculators in communicating with the producers/sellers. Also, FGDs and IDIs reported that traders surmounted language barriers through the use of interpreters and calculators. Moreover, the challenge of fluctuating exchange is more of a local or source region factor, than that of the trader and trading associates in the destination area. Consequently, the trading networks that develop between traders in Nigeria and their international counterpart tend to accommodate this challenge whenever it occurred. Almost the same scenario held for bank charges and multiple taxation, as these challenges seem to be passed on to goods that customers buy, in the form of scarcity of supply or higher prices.

By and large the main challenges for traders on their first international trade trip tend to have been eclipsed by existing favorable business environments in destination areas that enjoy the patronage of most traders. Therefore, destinations in East Asia were preferred.

Fig. 9: Major Challenges Encountered on First International Trade Trip by Markets



In more depth, Fig. 9 show traders in Computer Village tended to have encountered greater challenges, because their goods are usually go through greater scrutiny when they arrive at the airport, by immigration and customs, the goods being high technology items, coupled with the fact that airports are major transit routes for hard drug trade. It is in this regard and as a result of the latter reason that commodities imported by air are often checked by several security agencies, such as, the Drug Control Agency, Customs and the Standard Organizations of Nigeria. These are the responses of traders to the main challenges they encountered in the process of clearing their goods either at the airport, sea port or land route. Traders in Computer Village recorded the highest percentage for each of the challenges out of the overall number of traders that reported on each of the challenges. Traders in Alaba market came second; followed by those in ASPAMDA and Balogun markets.

Conclusion

Traders' mobility behaviour, driven by energies of the urban space and the consequent choice of traders' destination based on effectiveness; economic strategy and individuality; route trade; frequency and period of mobility, length of stay in the destination; commodity purchased and route of importing commodities; and challenges encountered) tend to contribute to and expand the explanation of mobility/migration patterns. The Lagos-south Asia route, for example, has been identified with high volume of trader mobility in recent times, which has been significantly influenced by drivers or variables that are essentially exogenous to economic explanations. In addition, the idea and conceptualization of the synergy between mobility and migration, a subordinate of mobility, tend to extend the explanation of the determinants of human mobility/migration in particular, trader mobility from Lagos, Nigeria

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