

Nexus of Economic Activities and Haulage Transportation: An Ethnographic Perspective from Potiskum (Yobe State) Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Transportation industry does not only facilitate easy movement of people and goods between two geographical locations, it also aids the growth and development of its respective region. The present study investigates the economic perspective of grain market as well as interrelationship between the haulage transportation and the economic activities in Potiskum grain market. The study depends on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were generated using individual depth interview while the secondary data were collected from published and unpublished documents and literatures from various peer reviewed studies. The study uncovered that the strategic geographical location of Potiskum offered a great advantage for the grain market development. However, the study unfolded that the availability of many heavy duty trucks in this region greatly contributes toward the growth and development of the market as well as the economic activities through provision of easy medium of transportation both inward and outward of the region. Lastly, the study recommends the provision of modern parking space for heavy duty trucks as well as to facilitate easy passage within the market terrain.

Keywords: Development, Economy, Haulage Transport, Potiskum Grains Market

1. INTRODUCTION

The transportation industry has greatly improved overall regional accessibility, improved businesses, enhanced people's ability to access employment, education and other basic services. Haulage is largely considered as a business of transporting goods by road or rail. This includes the horizontal transportation of goods (also called cartage or drayage) such as ore, coal, supplies and waste from one place to another. This is also known as haulage fee or rent where charges are imposed for hauling freight on carts, drays, Lorries or trucks [1]. Haulage transportation has long been playing a catalytic role in economic prosperity, transportation of goods and services, migration, as well as physical and social transformation of various regions. Recently, it is a fact that haulage as a courier has positively affected expansion and intensification of production and circulation of goods between or within distinct regions.

In most developing economies like Nigeria where the haulage industry is largely controlled by people, the haulage is and will remain the backbone of these regions' developmental growths and prosperity. Within these regions, besides the immense contribution offered by the haulage transport sector, a harmonized relationship

between these regions economic growths and the transportation industries is still a misery. For instance, In Nigeria where most of its' key regional markets are the power house of economy are faced with various impending, and consequently negate not on the economic activities but also the efficiency of these regions transportation industry.

A study by [2] examined the activities of Adamawa grain market and specifically reported that operational efficiency was found to be about 254.7 percent indicating that the food grain market is highly efficient in its operations. Among the problems affecting the food grain marketing in Adamawa State, the poor transportation network was identified as the most severe. This study affirmed that the assistances of road transportation system, explicitly the haulage to the expansion of the grain market in Nigeria is enormous. Another study by [3] also reported that the degree of product specialization is very low as grain-market traders also specialized in the sale of various other cash crops. This study also discovered some critical factors constraining the development of local grain market; such as lower capital base, high cost of transportation, problem of credit recovery, and short supply of agricultural products [3]. Nevertheless, most of these papers centered essentially on problems solving rather than discovering the quantifying the economic advantages and lineages to haulage transport from the real actors of the market, leaving marketers and traders with colossal the challenges in prompt transportation of their products [4].

Another study by [5] pointed out that trading of cowpea along has a greatly influenced internal trade in Nigeria because of it promotion of trading and movement goods and people between the production area and non-producing area. Within Nigeria, cowpea and other related cash crops are widely grown in the North West and North East geo-political zone [6]. These cash crops greatly contribute to sources of income of middlemen who embark on transportation from one place to another. The returns from cowpea marketing like any other business firm ensure sustainability of the system through enhanced revenue generation to marketers, producers as well as the transporters. In this regards, there are limited ethnographic studies that assess the linkages of these two sectors of the economy. Therefore, the present study attempted to investigate the linkages between haulage transportation and economic activities in Potiskum, through critically investigating people experiences in transporting goods and rendering of service for economic growths and prosperity.

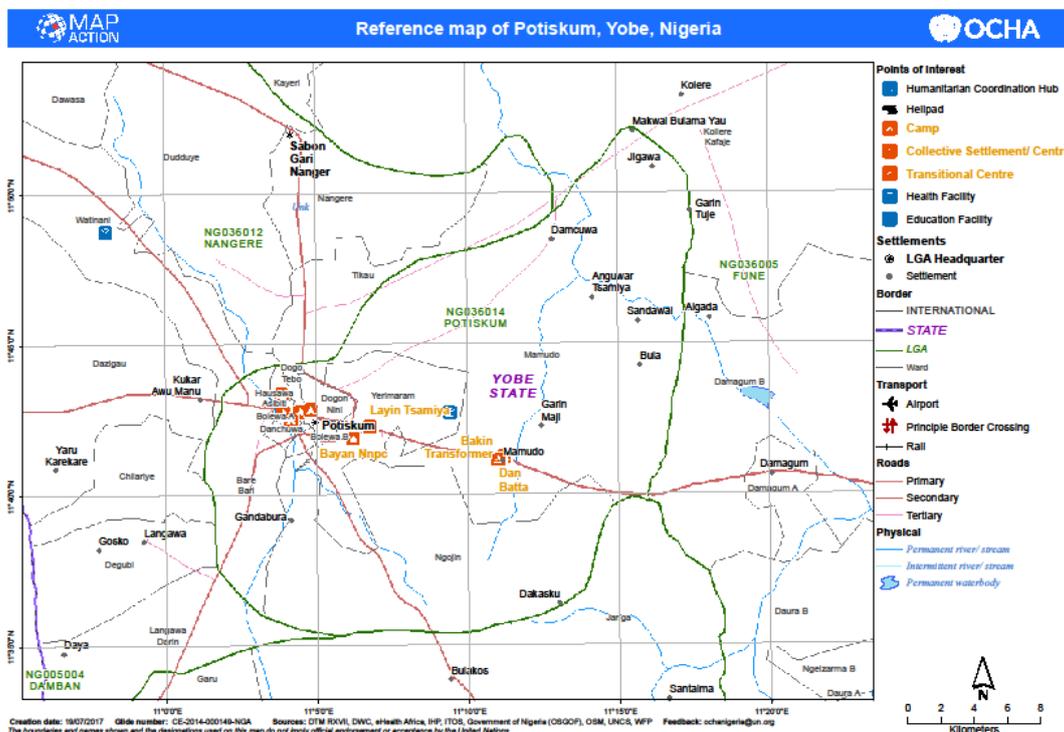
2. THE STUDY AREA

Potiskum town is one of the seventeenth Local Government of Yobe State in Nigeria and the head quarter of Potiskum local Government. This town is located on the A3 highway and geographically referenced approximately on 11°43'N and 11°04'E and has an approximate total area of 559 km². According National Census (2006), Potiskum have a total population of 244,050 people with a population density of about 436.6 people per km² [7]. This town is shares boundaries with Fune Local Government to the East, Fika Local Government from the South, Nangere Local Government from the North-West. The ethnical composition of Potiskum is heterogeneous which include both indigenious and settlers. The indigenious ethnic groups include the Ngizim, Kare-Kare and Bolewa, whereas the settlers' ethnic groups include the Hausa, Fulani, Babur, Kanuri,

Igbos, Yoruba and Shuwa-Arabs. Potiskum is the residence of emir of Pataskum which is also known Potiskum; HRH. Alhaji Umaru Bubaram Ibn Wuriwa Bauya, and also it's the residence of emir of Fika HRH. Muhammad Abale Ibn Idris.

There are two distinct seasons in Potiskum; the rainy season and dry season. The rainy season last for about three to four months (from June-September), while dry season on the other hand last for about eight to nine months (from October-May respectively) [8]. This region lies within the Sahel vegetation where the most common vegetation are the acacia, Shea-butter, Dolm-palm, Baobab, Black-plum and Tamarind tree. However, this region also has some key domestic plants such as the Neems, Moringa, Ficus polita, etc. [9]. Among the key occupations of Potiskum are the agricultural activities (farming and rearing and breeding of various animals), Services (transportation, petty traders, etc.) and also reasonable composition of civil service. Most of the farmers of this region were largely subsistence farmers, who specialized in production of millet, sorghum, groundnut and beans, whereas the animal breeders reared animals such as cattle, cows, sheep, and goat as a sources of milk and meat as well as few poultry and fish-farmers. Potiskum is blessed with three key markets all stationed at three different locations; the general market stationed in the central area of the town while the remaining two key markets were stationed at the outskirts of the town along Damaturu/Maiduguri road. However, there are also other economic centres like the Tsohuwar Kasuwa, Tashan Uganda, Kasuwar Awaki, Tsohuwar Tasha, etc.

Figure 1. Political Map of Potiskum, Yobe State, Nigeria



Source: DTM RXVII, DWC, eHealth Africa, IHOS, Government of Nigeria (OS GOF)

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

Based on the ethnographic nature of the study, this study depend both primary and secondary data. The primary data was acquired using self-invented in-depth interview tool with 23 open ended questions to stimulate discussions. The 120 sample of the study was derived using purposively sampling that targeted key stakeholders which includes; marketers, transporters, leaders of the communities, etc. The first set of 11 questions asked the respondent randomly deliberately in other to attain the craving answers in line with the research objectives which were accomplished in some parts of the research, and secondly the 12 set of questions asked the respondents about the experiences in Potiskum grain market and it respective impacts on the haulage transportation. However, the study also utilizes secondary data both published and unpublished from various sources, such as books, journals, conferences and other referred related materials with the aids of internet service.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Potiskum is a nuclear settlement which is distinctively categorized as both traditionally nucleated well as the modern nucleated settlement. The traditional nucleated part of Potiskum is prevalent within the core city that is characterized with houses that have irregular in shape, houses are roofed with mud, inter-connected streets with narrow corridors, lack packing spaces of vehicles and it's also characterized with a high population density. Some great examples of such areas are the Unguwan Bolewa, Riga, Arikime, Shagotara, Yindiski, etc. However, the modern nucleated areas of the town are mainly found around the Low-cost area, Savannah Street, Barracks area, Yerimaram, Unguwar Jaji, Nahuta and other key peripherals areas of the town. Moreover, the modern nucleated area were characterized with moderate population density, modern structures with proper town planning, moderate to wide streets, tarred and interconnected, and the houses are mostly rectangular or square in shape roofed with corrugated iron sheets.

4.1 Potiskum as an Economic Hub

Potiskum is not only the economic hub of Yobe State, but a key strategic town with enormous opportunities in Northern Nigeria. Potiskum town have one of the key famous grain and cattle market in not only the Northern extraction but the whole country. This town becomes the headquarterd of Potiskum Local Government in 1999 under leadership then the Executive Governor of Yobe State Alhaji Bukar Abba Ibrahim. Moreover, the economic relevance of Potiskum to Yobe and the country as whole is rationally linked to the contribution of the haulage industry. Within this region, there are two famous markets; the cattle and grain market. Though Potiskum have enjoyed strategically location geographically, however, the haulage transportation offered this region superior advantages among it' other peers. This town imports various goods that has been brought from all surrounding villages and neighboring states, and also exports massive goods to both within and outside the country [2].

Prior to the year 1999, the grain market was located at center of Potiskum general market; consequently, the market faced various unprecedented overcrowding which hindered the movement of goods and services in and out of the market, especially during the Sundays (the market day). The relocation of the market 1994 has brought not only extension of market physical area but also increases the activities of the market and various economic activities. Another milestone recorded toward Potiskum economic activities is the establishment of the cattle market besides the grain market and assigning Wednesday as it' market day. These two major markets have brought mammoth crowd from various corners of the countries to this town. Various traders and marketers from close and far come to these markets for various economic activities; for instance; as close as Bauchi and Gombe, and as far as Port-Harcourt, Lagos and Ibadan, etc. Moreover, this study also discovered that these markets also get involved in both supply and exports to various international markets both in Africa (e.g. Chad, Cameroon, and Niger Republic) as well as various European countries [9].

The present study discovered that these markets have attracted this much attention largely due to the fact that it is arguably one of the largest cattle market in sub-Saharan Africa. Potiskum as an economic hub is undoubtedly understood to be busy throughout the week besides having distinct markets days (Sundays and Wednesdays), and also millions of naira business activities were conducted on daily basis within both major markets. For instance; this study discovered that the grain market alone as of 2018 alone was estimated to facilitates the trading of about 30,000 bags of grains per day and this figure are exceptionally higher during the Sundays and Wednesdays. However, these grains are transported both in ward of the market as well as transported to various parts of the Nigeria and other neighboring countries such as Chad, Niger, Cameroon and Central Africa respectively.

4.2 Potiskum Grain Market as a Hub of Economic Activities

“The Potiskum grain market is undoubtedly one of the key grain markets in the country” (Alh Abdullahi Garba, 58years, Businessman)

“This market (Potiskum grain market) is an international market that within a week trading of multi-million naira products were conducted” (Musa Abubakar, 50years, Trader)

Based on primary data collected, this study discovered that Potiskum grain market is for many years a gateway for supplying and transporting assorted grains to the Eastern and Western parts of the country. These transported grains were for both local and domestic consumptions as well as for foreign export. This study further uncovered that trading of beans and other related grains in the market is lucrative business and has being famous among people of the town as long as these grains were free from insects infestation” reported by a prominent key player in the grain market Mall. MH Inusa. This study understands that based on geographic location and accessibility advantages, this region markets gained superior reimbursements for holding all year round business activities; serving as depots that exports and also receives supplies of various grains and livestock from almost all parts of the North East region of Nigeria.

Notably, Potiskum as one of the major frontiers of the heavy transportation industry in the country; large number of heavy-duty trucks significantly contributed to the development of this regions markets and economic activities in addition to providing employment to the teaming youths of the region. The haulage industry, especially the heavy-duty trucks facilitates the ferrying of various grains different places within the country. Most of the key traders of these markets go to as far as Gaidam, Gadaka, Ngalda (within the Yobe State); and even to places like Nafada, Hadejia, Gamawa, Yola and Mubi, Gombe, Kumo, Tumu, Mallam-Sidi, Kurugu and Kashere (in Gombe State); Garba Shede and Mutin Daya (Taraba State); and Maiduguri (Borno State) to purchase these products, and ferry their goods and services to Potiskum for onward trading to other states of the country as well as abroad' [10].

The Potiskum grain market operates on daily basis besides having Sundays as it official market day. This study found that the market is masculine dominated with age range of 15 to 70 years. The activities of the grain market start as early as 7am in the morning and closes at 7pm. The study also discovered that the activities of the grain market were mainly dominated by people who can neither read nor writes. Moreover, the study also understands that most of the interviewed respondents were experienced people who spent more than five years in the market; therefore, information given by these people was largely based on their experiences.

Most of Nigeria's grains and other related crops were mainly cultivated in the rural areas, and onward transported to urban area for trading and storages in various key markets. However, reasonable portion of these products originate from the North Eastern part of Nigeria region, specifically from Yobe, Gombe and Borno States. However, most of the products in this grain market were first exposed to synthetic pesticides since from farms, and also some few selected grains were further exposed to another chemical in an attempt to preserve or conserve these grains, such as beans and other related products. The sale of these products in Nigerian local markets is all year round activity and is also for either local consumption or international exportation [11].

The sales of these products at Potiskum grain market is defragmented into two distinct but overlapping phases or activities. For instance, within the northern part of Nigeria, dried-beans are brought to market by local farmers few days to months after harvest (around November/December) to cater for family immediate needs and wants. This is the first phase of dried-beans sales where farmers sales their commodities directly to their respective third party clients in local market for either domestic or storage [1]. Next phase is the sales of these dried-beans marketing from third party to either the domestic clients or export clients. The second phase normally happened after some months of storage of the products which exposes the seeds to various types of insect infestations [9].

However, between the first and second phases of events, there are two distinct activities; fumigation or mixing the grains with mainly synthetic pesticides to avoid further damages to the commodity, and store it for some time in stores with expectation for better price. This incident of banning of Nigerian dried-beans by EU has caused huge losses to marketers, especially the exporters. There is a need to be proactive in order to avoid further occurrence. Traders from almost all regions (e.g. West; Ibadan (Oyo State), Akure (Ondo State), Lagos (Lagos State), and even within the Northern region; Jibia (Katsina State), and Dawonao in (Kano States) part of the country patronizes the Potiskum grain market [9] [12].

4.3 Contributions of Haulage Transportation Toward the Development of Economic activities in Potiskum

The contribution of haulage transportation towards any economic entity is reciprocal, therefore, there is for effective mechanisms in order to harness its optimum contributions. Once a country transportation system is well established, the emphasis tends to switch from quantum leap to more incremental improvement to transport system and its operation as made possible by ongoing technological advances, efficiency improvement as well as regulatory changes. However, infrastructure expansion may also be required in response to increasing demand. Furthermore, a study by [13] reaffirmed that:

“The evidence is very clear that users want several things from the transport system, placing different weights on their relative’s importance. The key characteristics which are value are: journey time, journey time reliability, cost, network coverage, comfort, safety and security.

“When users experience an improvement or worsening of these characteristics, they feed through to impact on the economy through a variety of mechanisms, increasing business efficiency, investment and innovation, improving the functioning of agglomeration and labor markets, increasing competition, increasing trade and attracting globally mobile resources.”

The contemporary linkage between transport and economy is development, whether human, infrastructural or capital. Though this linkage is very complex than ever with the recent demand and supply as well as the growing expectation for modern transportation systems to meet multiple its targets; such as the safety of all stakeholders, conveniences, accessibility, environmental sustainability as well as other social inclusions. Having the highest carriage capacity among the system of transportation, the haulage transport system is the king of all transportation system. Based on the load carriages, the haulage offers more contributions to the economic activities as well as the development of economy further. Haulage transport remained the key medium in term of transporting goods and services in Potiskum and the country at large.

Potiskum is well known for its massive number of truck especially those of hauling goods, which facilitate in hauling various kind of importation and as well as exportations including grains, building materials and animals from its markets. Conversely, truck mainly trailers has become catalysts in the regional development of any town in the country and Potiskum is one of them. Transportation of grains such as beans, millet, sorghum and groundnut from Potiskum to other parts of the country was aided by these trucks the consolidation of grain elevators typically requires longer and costly truck hauls. Consequently, this increasing role of trucks and hauling activities have resulted to various debates and concerns over infrastructure constraints in the town.

4.4 Compounding issues hindering economic-haulage linkage in Potiskum

One of the major problems that obstruct the efficient transitions of economic-haulage relationship identified by this study are the lack of access to softer loans and other related credit facilities, lower quality products, lack of modern storage facilities, modern parking chalet, etc. For instance, the lack of equitable access to softer loans and various related credits strongly hinders trading and sales of agricultural products. However, the problem of

non patronage of loans was mainly related to religious factor as most of traders in Potiskum are Muslims by faith and background, they did not like to take loan with interest [14]. The other reasons were absence of collateral, high interest rate of micro finance institutes.

In addition, absence of municipality for traders' having collateral in the market place of Potiskum, one reason for traders not taking loans from banks as collaterals confirmed by municipality are conditions to access credit from banks. Market information is a market facilitation function that plays greater role in improving marketing decisions of traders through avoiding or reducing of information asymmetry [9] [15]. However, majority of traders face lack of market information providing institution although they were willing to pay for the required information. Market information is lacking. Sellers and buyers are not well informed about the sources of food supply and thereby reducing potential efficiency in the market. Other facilities such as clean environment, communication facilities, and health facilities, fire services, banking facilities, security facilities, water supply and good toilets are also lacking in most market.

Provision of quality products by farmers to the market were followed by better prices. However, a number of grains traders reported the presence of products quality problem in the study. This was particularly due to absence of extension support after harvest [16]. Thus, the problem made farmers to accept lower prices unlike the neighboring farmers producing the same product. Attention to integrated extension system that can accommodate grain marketing is very important. Poor storage is very common in the study area because of the poor attitude to modern storage facilities by the marketers which has direct effect to the marketing system. Good storage and warehousing facilities such as lock-up stores, silos, barns are lacking in most of these markets. This is consistent with the findings of [10] and [13] who found inadequate storage facilities, inadequate transport facilities, pests and diseases to be significant factors contributing to postharvest losses of grains and commercial horticultural crops respectively.

5. CONCLUSION

The present study investigated the linkages between transportation and the economic activities in Potiskum through exploring how haulage pave the way for economic activities in Potiskum, with specific emphasis to the famous grain market. This market offered enormous economic opportunities in addition to aiding physical and infrastructural development of the region as well as the country in general. Most importantly, the Potiskum grain market is not only famous in the North East region but it has being a major grain market in the whole country. This market is a home to various agricultural products such as beans, maize, corn, groundnut are traded and stored. The market operates throughout the year with fixed market-day "every Sunday". The market also served as a warehouse for agricultural products to be used within the country as well as those expected to be exported outside the country.

This study concludes that the availability of loads of heavy-duty trucks strongly contributes to the economic development of Potiskum. The haulage transport alone has provided an easy medium for not bringing various products but also accelerates and promotes various economic activities in this town. Moreover, the haulage transport system also provides enormous employment opportunities in addition to providing a better medium of transporting goods and services to various parts of the country for both local consumption and as well as export.

This study concludes that most people were largely encouraged because of the profitable nature of business. Finally, the present study recommends the needs conducive transportation system which will facilitate a wide range of indirect value-added employment opportunities; human capital as well as promotion of infrastructural development through various information trainings, seminars and advertisements in radio stations, television stations and billboards. Notwithstanding, the study also recommends the provision of modern parking space for heavy trucks as well as to facilitate easy passage within the market terrain.

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