

Socio-economic benefits and challenges of urban forestry in Ijebu-ode metropolis of Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The research assessed socio-economic benefits and problems of urban forestry in Ijebu Ode Metropolis of Ogun State, Nigeria through a survey of 200 purposively selected urban tree growers using questionnaire. The data generated were analysed using descriptive statistics and Chi square. The findings revealed that majority (88%) of the respondents are between the ages of 31-50years, 74% had tertiary education, 90% are married, and 86% are involved in tree planting with 11-20years experience in urban forestry. Majority (98%) grow trees producing edible fruits such as Mango (92%), Cashew (52%), Coconut (26%), Pawpaw (8%), Guava (8%), Banana (2%) and others-Croton (4%), Bitter leaf (42%), Neem (46%), Hibiscus flower (4%) and Ixora (6%) for other uses. Urban trees benefits respondents in terms of shade (96%), edible fruits (92%), windbreaks (82%), environmental beautification (78%), medicinal plants (80%) and air purification (72%). Chi square analysis shows significant association between produce sold from urban trees and the type of plant grown (0.007), growth of trees (0.026) and knowledge of urban forestry (0.006) at $p < 0.05$. The study concludes that urban forestry is highly beneficial to the residents and recommends more awareness on growing tree species in urban areas, proper planning and legislation to ensure compliance to sustainable uses.

Keywords: Urban Forestry, Metropolis, Resources, Socio-economic, Ijebu-Ode

Introduction

Urban forestry includes activities carried out in the city centre, suburban areas and the “urban fringe” or interface area with rural lands. Miller (1997) defined urban forestry as “an integrated, city wide approach to the planting, care and management of trees in the city to secure multiple environmental and social benefits for urban dwellers.” *Urban forestry is the management of trees for their contribution to the physiological, sociological, and economic well-being of urban society. Urban forestry deals with woodlands, groups of trees and individual trees, where people live - it is multifaceted, for urban areas include a great variety of habitats (streets, parks, derelict corners, etc) where trees bestow a great variety of benefits and problems”* (Grey and Deneke 1986).

Urban forestry, thus, includes the management of individual as well as group of trees and urban foresters see arboriculture as one important component of their subject. Urban forestry is also not restricted to trees that have been planted. Many urban trees may have established naturally, although in an environment in which competition for land is high, they are unlikely to survive longer unless actively cultivated and managed.

Urban forests bring many environmental and economic benefits to cities. Among these are energy benefits in the form of reduced air conditioning, reduced heating by shading buildings, homes and roads, absorbing sunlight, reducing ultraviolet light, cooling the air, and reducing wind

speed (McPherson 1994; McPherson and Row tree 1993; Simpson and McPherson 1996; Coder 1996; Wolfe 1999; Hastie 2003; Lohr et al 2004). There are also economic benefits associated with urban trees such as increased land, property and rental value (Morales et al 1983; Anderson and Cordell 1988; Wolf 1998; Dwyer et al 1992; Mansfield et al 2005; Orland et al 1992; Hastie 2003; USDA Forest Service 2003, 2004).

Well-maintained trees and landscaped business districts have been shown to encourage consumer purchases and attract increased residential, commercial and public investments (Wolf 2004 and 2007). Trees located in business areas may also increase workers’ productivity, recruitment, retention and satisfaction (Kaplan and Kaplan 1989; Kaplan 1992; Wolf 1998). Urban forests also improve air quality, absorb rainwater, improve biodiversity and potentially allow recycling to 20% of waste which is wood-based.

The social and even medical benefits of nature are also dramatic. Urban poverty is common to areas lacking green spaces. Visiting green areas in cities can counteract the stress of city life, renew vital energy and restore attention and as well improve medical outcomes. Simply being able to see a natural view out of the window improves self-discipline in inner city girls.

Having regular access to woodland is desirable for schools and indeed Forest kindergartens take children to visit substantial forests every day, irrespective of the weather. When such children go to primary school, teachers observe a significant improvement in reading, writing, mathematics, social skills and many other areas. Various methods are available to capture the value of urban trees, each designed to analyse a specific type of green space (individual trees, parks, trees on golf courses, etc).

Urbanization provides new jobs and new opportunities for millions of people in the world and this has contributed immensely to poverty eradication efforts worldwide. At the same time, rapid urbanization adds pressure to the resource base, and increases demand for energy, water, and sanitation, as well as for public services, education and health care (UN 2013).

Since 2007, more than half of the world’s population has lived in urban centres and it is estimated that the proportion would have exceeded 70 per cent by 2050. Eighty per cent of the world’s urban population will live in developing regions, especially in cities of Africa and Asia.

Materials and Methods

The Location

Ijebu Ode is a Local Government Area and city located in the South-Western Nigeria, close to the A121 highway. The city is located 110 km by road North-East of Lagos; it is within 100 km of the Atlantic Ocean in the Eastern part of Ogun State and possesses a warm tropical climate. Ijebu Ode is located on longitude 3.920E (3055’12’’E) and latitude 6.820N (6049’12’’N). The mean annual rainfall is 138.92mm and temperature is 24.990C with an estimated population of

222,653 (2007). It is the second largest city in Ogun State after Abeokuta with area of 192 km².

Research Sampling and Administration of Questionnaires

Two hundred (200) Urban Tree growers were purposively sampled with the use of questionnaire designed to elicit essential responses on socio-demographic characteristics and urban forestry activities. The respondents were drawn from randomly selected towns within the city namely: Adefisan, Adeola road, Ondo Road, Molipa, Ikangba, Igbeba, Idowa, Ososa, Erinlu, Alapo and Ala. The questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher to the respondents at their different locations.

Data Analyses

The data generated from the survey were analysed and the results were presented using:

- Descriptive statistics involving the use of frequency tables and percentages.
- Chi-square (X^2) analysis was used to test for the relationship between the incomes generated from sale of urban products and certain socio-economic characteristics. The formula for the Chi-square (X^2) is given as:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where O = Observed measurement

E = is Expected value (mean)

Results and Discussion

The results, as shown in Table 1, reveals that there are mainly (50%) within economically active ages of 31-40years and 41-50years (38%). Mostly (74%) had tertiary education and are generally married (90%) with household sizes ranging from 3-8persons per households.

Table 1 - Demographic and Personal Characteristics of Respondents (N=200)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Age (Years)		
21-30	4	8.0
31-40	25	50.0
41-50	19	38.0
51-60	2	4.0
Level of Education		
Primary	5	10.0
Secondary	8	16.0
Higher Education	37	74.0
Marital status		
Divorce	1	2.0
Married	45	90.0
Single	4	8.0
Household Size		
3	10	20.0
4	12	24.0
5	9	18.0
6	8	16.0
7	7	14.0
8	4	8.0

Table 2 shows that 86% of the respondents are involved in tree planting with experiences of 11-20years (60%) and 1-10years (34%). Majority (60%) had previous knowledge about urban forestry and they grow edible fruit trees (98%),

shrubs (44%), ornamental plants (18%) and other trees (14%).

Table 2 - Urban Forestry Information (N=200)

VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Involvement in Tree Planting		
NO	7	14.0
YES	43	86.0
Experience (yrs)		
1-10	17	34.0
11-20	30	60.0
21-30	3	6.0
Knowledge		
YES	20	40.0
NO	30	60.0
Type of Trees Grown		
Edible fruit plant	49	98.0
Ornamental plants	9	18.0
Shrubs	22	44.0
Trees	7	14.0
Source of Planting Material		
Forestry	49	98.0
Horticulturist	1	2.0
Type of Planting Material		
Seeds	48	96.0
Roots	3	6.0
Stems	24	48.0
Seedlings	5	10.0

The source reveals that there are planting materials mainly (98%) from Ogun State Ministry of Forestry and other private forestry and horticultural Nurseries (2%). In terms of planting materials used for propagation, they generally use seeds (98%), stems (48%), seedlings (10%) and roots (6%).

Table 3 summarizes the perceived benefits derived from growing trees in urban centres in their order of importance to include provision of shade (96%), nutrition supplementation via production of edible parts like leaves, fruits and nuts (92%), serves as wind breakers (82%), production of medicinal materials (80%), beautification of the environment/ ornamental and aesthetic values (78%), erosion control (72%), release of oxygen to the atmosphere for human use (72%), carbon dioxide reduction (44%), noise pollution reduction (36%), wood for fuel (26%), habitat for wildlife (18%), fodder for livestock (6%) and provision of timber and poles (2%).

Table 3 - Distribution of respondents according to the benefits derived from urban forestry

BENEFITS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Provision of shade	48	96.0
Beautification of Environment	39	78.0
Wind breaker	41	82.0
Edible parts	46	92.0
Fodder	3	6.0
Medicinal parts	40	80.0
Release of Oxygen to the environment	36	72.0

Control of Erosion	36	72.0
Reduction of Carbon (iv) oxide	22	44.0
Fuel wood	13	26.0
Noise reduction	18	36.0
Habitat for wildlife	9	18.0
Provision of timber and poles	1	2.0
Total	352*	704*

* Greater due to multiple responses

Ward (1992) and Adejumo (2003) highlighted the benefits derived from growing trees in the metropolis to include - First, it provides a physical condition with appealing outlook. Second, it promotes good health as carbon - related gasses generated in cities are utilized during plants' photosynthesis while oxygen that is useful for man is released as by product. Third and perhaps the most important to this study, plants generally enhance the economic and social values of the community. Generally, trees have a positive impact on energy and carbon dioxide conservation, air quality, urban hydrology, noise reduction, ecological stability, landscape spaces, medical and psychological health, real estate values, economic development, and community wellbeing (Dwyer et al 1992).

FAO (2016) indicated the benefits of growing trees in cities as strategic placement of trees in urban areas can cool the air by between 2 °C and 8 °C, large urban trees are excellent filters for urban pollutants and fine particulates, mature trees regulate water flow and improve water quality, wood can be used for cooking and heating, spending time near trees improves physical and mental health by increasing energy level and speed of recovery, while decreasing blood pressure and stress, trees can provide food, such as fruits, nuts and leaves, trees properly placed around buildings can reduce air conditioning needs by 30% and save energy used for heating by 20–50%, trees provide habitat, food and protection to plants and animals, increasing Urban biodiversity, Landscaping, especially with trees, can increase property values by 20%.

Table 4 reveals the negative effects of growing trees in the city as constituting nuisance (94%), energy reduction (78%), unorganized wastes and litters (68%) as well as vandalization (12%).

Table 4 - Distribution of respondents according to the negative effects of urban forestry

EFFECTS	Frequency	Percentage
Nuisance	47	94.0
Solar energy	39	78.0
Vandalization	6	12.0
Unorganised waste	34	68.0
Total	126*	252*

* Greater due to multiple responses

Table 5 shows that respondents faced the following constraints in urban forestry in the study area- loss of green (100%), lack of public awareness (90%), lack of information (78%), inadequate spaces (72%), uncontrollable root systems (46%) respectively in their order of importance.

Table 5 - Distribution of respondents based on major constraints to in urban forestry

CONSTRAINTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Loss of greens	50	100.0
Lack of information	39	78.0
Lack of public awareness	45	90.0

Inadequate fund	4	8.0
Root System	23	46.0
Poor Tree care Practices	15	30.0
Poor tree selection	10	20.0
Inadequate space	36	72.0
Poor soil	10	20.0
Poor nursery stock	4	8.0
Government policy	1	2.0
Total	237*	474*

* Greater due to multiple responses

Table 6 shows the association between the socio-economic characteristics of urban foresters and their sales of produce. The Chi square value (0.007) for test of independence of the type of plant grown and sales of produce is significant (P<0.05) which indicated that there is a strong association between the type of tree grown and sales of produce. i. e. the more trees farmers grow, the more they have produce to sell from them. On the other hand, the chi square value of the association between the town of farmers and the sales of produce (0.319) is not significant (P<0.05), which means there is no significant association between the town / village and sales of urban tree products.

Table 6 - Chi Square of Association between socio - economic characteristics and sale of produce

VARIABLES	CHI ² VALUE (P<0.05)	DECISION
Type of plant grown	0.007	Significant
Town	0.319	Not Significant
Age	0.093	Not Significant
Level of Education	0.360	Not Significant
Marital status	0.370	Not significant
Household size	0.170	Not significant
Length of growing trees	0.004	Significant
Growing trees	0.026	Significant
Knowledge of urban forestry	0.006	Significant

Also, the chi square value (0.093) of the association between age of urban foresters and their sales of product is not significant (P<0.05) which means there is no significant association between the ages of urban foresters and their sales. More so, the chi square value (0.360) of the association between the level of education and sales of produce is not significant (P<0.05) meaning there is no significant association between the level of education of urban foresters and their sales of produce and the same applied to marital status of urban foresters which had a chi square value 0.370 which is not significant (P<0.05).

Moreover, the chi square value (0.170) of the association between the household size of urban foresters and the sales of product is not significant (P<0.05) as it shows no association between the two variables. Whereas, the chi square value 0.004 is significant (P<0.05) which shows that there is a strong association between the length of time the urban foresters have been growing trees and their sales of produce; that is the longer the number of years of involvement in urban forestry the more produce they will have to sell.

Also, the chi square value 0.026 of the association between the growth of tree and sales of produce from urban forestry is significant (P<0.05) which means that all the urban dwellers who grow trees are likely to have produce to

sell from the trees. Finally, the chi square value (0.006) of the association between knowledge of urban foresters about urban forestry and the sale of produce although show a weak association but there is indeed a relationship. It is therefore regarded as significant.

Oyebade et al (2015) reported that there was high association between the demographic characteristics of the respondents and knowledge about the potential benefits of trees within the study areas. Educational level of respondents helps by making them know the functions of these trees to their environment. The study showed that a great number of respondents were students and can help in the dissemination of urban forest information as to why we need trees around our environments. Konijnendijk et al (2004) also reported that urban trees protect soils and moderates harsh urban climates by cooling the air, reducing wind speeds and shading.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study concludes that urban forestry is highly beneficial to the residents and recommends more awareness on growing tree species in urban areas, proper planning and legislation to ensure compliance to sustainable uses.

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