Street Trading and its Associated Risks in the Tamale Metropolitan Area of the Northern Region, Ghana

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Abstract: The study examined the typologies, negotiation for space and the inherent risks in street trading in the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region of Ghana. To achieve these objectives, a mixed method approach was employed to carry out the study. The simple random sampling technique was used to select respondents. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data from fifty-six (56) respondents and twenty-five (25) key informants respectively. The analysis of the data gathered revealed that there were three main typologies of street traders in Tamale Metropolis and these were permanent, intermittent and mobile street traders. It was also revealed that street traders in Tamale were exposed to various risks such as harassment by city authorities, theft and exposure to health hazards. A number of driving factors such as lack of capital, lack of employment, difficulties in securing stores, poverty among others were responsible for street trading in the Tamale Metropolis. The Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Trades and Industry and the District Assembly should provide a congenial environment for street trading in the Tamale Metropolis to ensure the safety of the traders.

Keywords: Street trading, risk, Tamale Metropolis, typologies, hazards, harassment

1. INTRODUCTION

The past three decades saw many cities in developing countries witnessing rapid urbanization and real expansion that pose unquantifiable threats to human security (United Nations, 2018). In Sub-Saharan Africa, growth is taking place in an unplanned manner, creating sprawling low-density development and uneconomic use of environmental resources (Dyson, 2010). Statistics indicate that cities and towns in Africa house approximately 40% of Africa's current population (UN-HABITAT, 2012). The literature indicates further that the urban population has grown 14-fold from 32 million in 1950 to over 450 million in 2014, and projections are that the African urban population is expected to double over the next two decades and to triple to over 1.3 billion by 2050 (UN-HABITAT, 2012).

In theory, urbanization is expected to engineer industrialization and employment generation. The significant role of urbanization is summed up by Hohenberg (1988) when he suggested that "the extent of urbanization largely defines the place of exchange in economic life, and with it the extent of specialization and the role of markets, money, and credit." Literacy is at home in the town, as the town is the base for counting and measuring, accounts, schools, books, records, and documents". Urban centres are important instruments of exchange, vital for the development of economic systems and social organizations "(p.127). In the context

of politics, urban centres are the basis of the political structure of any democratic country (Danielle, 2021). They are also the sites of political activity, where constituents elect their representatives and leaders, and where elected officials are held accountable for taxes collected and promises made during election campaigns (Danielle, 2021).

However, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the urbanization process is fraught with economic stagnation, poor governance, and fragile public institutions (Cheru, 2000). Additionally, rapid urban growth has brought with it a host of complex problems, including unemployment and underemployment; a growing informal sector; deteriorating infrastructure and service delivery capacity; overcrowding; stiff competition for land; environmental degradation; acute housing shortages; and the overall level of poverty (Kuddus et al. 2020). Again, and as indicated in a UN-HABITAT report on the State of African Cities, "as the urbanization of African poverty makes further progress, the prospect of a dignified and productive life continues to elude the poorest." "(p.21). More and more Africans are forced into informality, whether as a sheer survival strategy or because their living environments are defined by unregulated, non-serviced urban settlements and slums."

In Ghana, as in many African countries, the urbanization process is characterized by a high rate of unemployment

and, more importantly, social exclusion. Indeed, as the population in Ghanaian cities increases, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of the total population, a major challenge remains: coping with poverty. As there are important links between urban production, employment, social equity, and poverty alleviation, the ability of cities to provide sustainable work for their growing population is imperative. Informal livelihood activities have thus emerged in response to the unemployment and, by extension, the poverty challenges. Among the many informal businesses that have emerged to meet the challenges of urban unemployment is street trading. This situation has resulted in a renewed interest in street trading globally (Chen, 2012). The renewed interest is fuelled by the fact that the remarkable economic growth in Ghana, for instance, almost 6% annually since the year 2000 (GLSS, 2016), has not been reflected in the growth of formal jobs.

Available literature on Africa's informal sector shows that the sector provides approximately 70% of jobs in Sub-Saharan Africa (AfBD, 2013). Oteng-Ababio (2018) argues that in the West African sub-region, 9 in 10 informal workers are street traders who lack social protection, skills upgrading, and productive income and are often trapped in poverty. In many Ghanaian cities today, street trading is increasingly becoming a socially and economically constituted process that mediates how the majority of people deal with poverty and livelihood challenges (Chen, 2012; Oteng-Ababio, 2018). In urban Ghana, street trading is primarily undertaken by underprivileged and middle-aged socio-economic groups. This perspective highlights the important role that street trading plays in developing economies. Even with this evidence, scholarly research from some multinational agencies presents street trading as a marginalized sector of the urban economy and suggests that only market-led economic solutions and opportunities can offer job opportunities, enhance the quality of life and accommodate people within smaller ecological footprints (UNEP, 2011). As Chen (2012) observes, such scholars perceive street trading as a barrier to full participation in national economies and a hindrance to long-term development and poverty reduction (Myers, 2011).

Approaches to studying street trading in the context of livelihood have been increasing over time (Chen 2012; Wrigley-Asante, 2014; Oteng-Ababio, 2018). Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah (2008), in their studies focused on migrants' engagement in street trading activities within urban settings, highlighting their survivalist strategies within the context of neoliberal reforms, the challenges they pose to the urban space and the resultant conflicts with municipal authorities. Wrigley-Asante (2014) expanded the knowledge base on street trading in Ghana from the feminist perspective by focusing on how young female internal migrants move from rural areas to urban centres to change their life circumstances. Owusu-Sekyere et al. (2016) examined the implications of street trading for urban governance in Kumasi. Specifically, they highlighted the daily struggles between city managers and street traders and the various strategies adopted by city authorities to decongest the streets of informal traders.

This study, therefore, sought to fill this research gap using the Tamale Metropolis of the Northern Region of Ghana as a case study. The study determined the typologies of street trading in the Tamale Metropolis with respect to the driving forces of street trading, the risks associated with street traders, and the effects of street trading in terms of managing space. The Metropolitan authorities have not yet ensured that the rapid urban growth is accompanied by investments in infrastructural services, especially the expansion of spaces for commercial activities, particularly in the Central Business District (CBD). The CBD is fraught with haphazard, fragmented, and unregulated business activities. The scene at the CBD is very chaotic and exhibits the process of natural selection (survival of the fittest). It is difficult to distinguish street traders from pedestrians, as street traders display their wares on unauthorized pavements and walkways. In an effort to rid the CBD of street traders, the Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TMA) has resorted to both persuasive and repressive tactics, but all in futility. The traders return to the 'base' almost immediately after such an eviction exercise has taken place, without adequate measures to avert future occurrences. The message of these systemic failures is that city authorities can no longer afford to continue with the 'business as usual' attitude. There is a need for a significantly higher level of political determination to make deep reforms if the city is to function as a centre of growth. While the economic significance of street trading has received some academic attention in Accra and Kumasi (Donkor 2005; Nunoo 2005; & Owusu-Sekyere et al., 2016), the spatial manifestation of the phenomenon in terms of the typologies, their negotiation for space, and the inherent risk of the phenomenon in Tamale, with its own spatial settings, has not attracted much scholarly attention.

Whilst the literature highlights the variety of activities in the informal economic sector in many parts of Ghana, street trading in Tamale has not attracted particular attention in the literature. This study therefore aims at filling this important research gap by exploring the complexities, degree of organisation and embedded risks in street trading in Tamale, the largest metropolitan area in northern Ghana.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK
Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework provides a framework to assess the risks of engaging in street trading (Figure 1). Trading takes place within a particular geographical area

or city, inside structures or space provided by the government. In this case, the government provides market infrastructure so that traders in the informal economy can trade in a good and secure environment to achieve order in the city. The local government also sets trade standards for safety. The government also makes rules and regulations to guide traders, and they collect revenue from traders through taxes. This organized system therefore provides orderliness within cities and reduces the risks that might be associated with trading in the open. However, some people still prefer to trade in the open, on the streets or sidewalks. One wonders if these people have an idea of safety since they are just in an open place where their goods could be stolen; they may be harassed by city authorities; they may even succumb to illness.

As shown in Figure 1, the declining income from the villages within the Northern Region pushes people into the Tamale Metropolis in search of greener pastures. When people come to the metropolis, reality stares them in the face. The jobs are not readily available as they had earlier imagined. People from home also expect them to send back remittances.
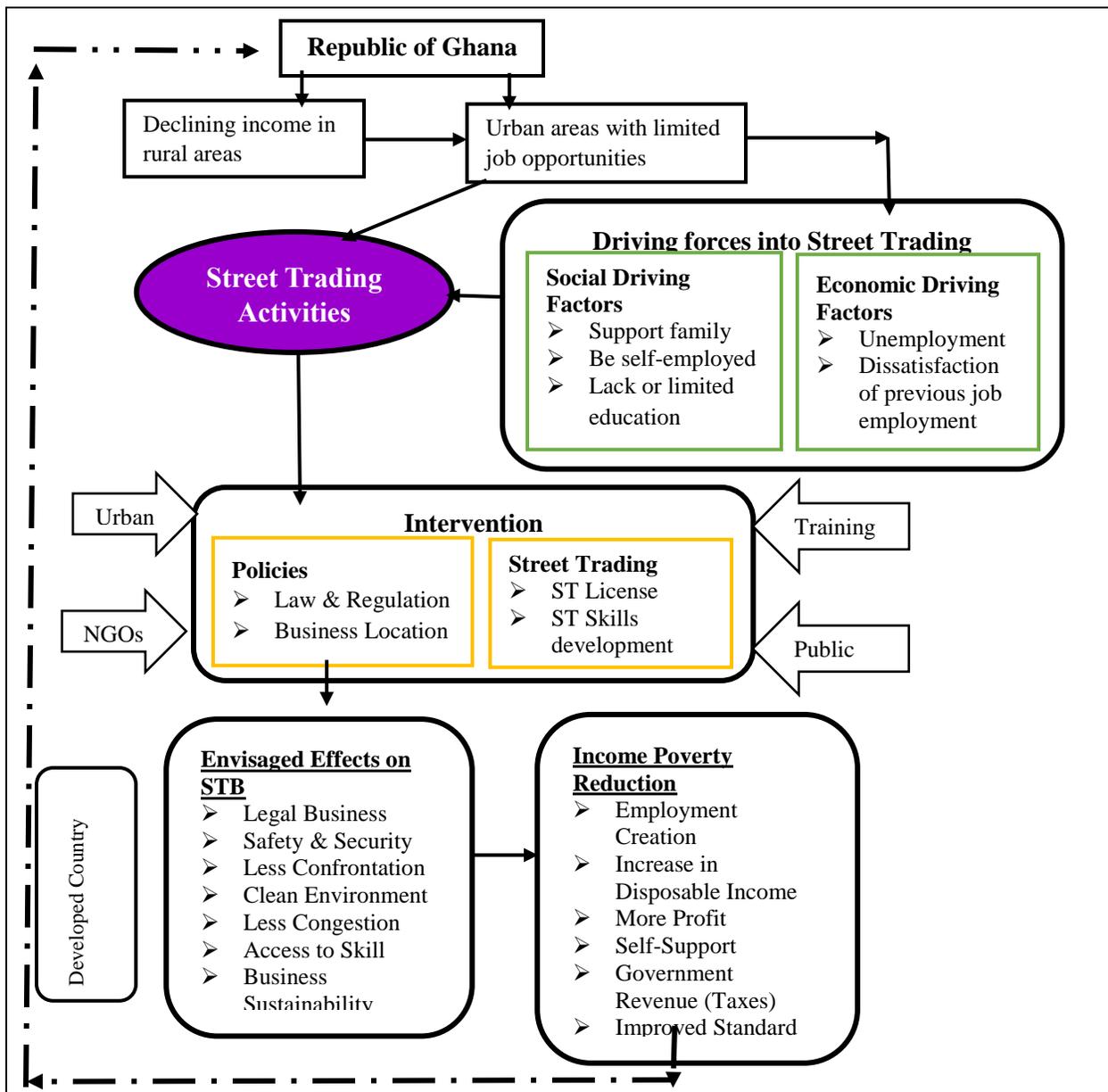
Figure 1: Conceptual framework adopted from Claudine Uwitije, 2013

This pressure from home and from the need to make a living makes street trading a last resort. This can be classified into social and economic pushers of street trading. Street trading in the metropolis is, however, illegal. Street traders are often harassed by city authorities for selling at unauthorised locations. According to structuralists, street trading is a last resort for survival for those who engage in such activities. The government of Ghana and non-governmental organisations can put in place some interventions, such as legalising street trading, whereby traders could be issued with street trading licenses. Non-governmental organizations can help to train street traders in street trading skills. The government can also make laws to regulate street trading activities. The effects of such interventions will have bipartite benefits for the state and the individual. Apart from the income that will be generated by the state from the taxes that will be paid by street traders, the legalisation of street

trading will also provide a safe trading environment, breed less confrontation between city authorities and street traders, and also make the environment clean and healthy for everyone. The interventions will further create employment opportunities, reduce criminal activities, raise the disposable income of street traders and increase the standard of living of their families through a trickle-down effect.

Theoretical Foundation
There are several theories that seek to explain street trading. This study discusses four theories; modernization; structuralist; neo-liberal and post-modern theories of street trading; but adopts the structuralist theory to explain the phenomenon of street trading in Tamale Metropolis.

Modernisation Theory

According to modernisation theory, street trading is a pre-modern traditional economic activity that will eventually be supplanted by modern trading methods such as supermarkets, shopping malls, and shopping centres. For most of the last century, it was widely assumed that street hawkers and peddlers were residues or leftovers from an earlier pre-modern time and their perseverance was taken as a signal of 'under-development', "traditionalism" and "backwardness" (Collins and Gurtoo, 2012:79).

The growing modern formal economy, meanwhile, was seen to represent 'progress', "development" and "advancement" (Packard, 2007). Lyon (2007) discovered that street vendors, in this view, are depicted as a residual labour category ', which, according to Bromley (2007) is viewed' as unimportant and destined to disappear'. Seen through this lens, therefore, the future is one of modern shopping centers, supermarkets, and department stores. Street entrepreneurs are considered parasitic, if not inefficient; they are part of a pre-modern traditional economic order that exists only on the outskirts of modern society and is the antithesis of everything deemed modern (Collins and Gurto, 2012). Bromley (2007) summarises this view as "an unsystematic and unessential activity that mixed-up the urban environment, interrupted traffic flows, and competed unlawfully with new, large, hygienic commercial establishments". It is therefore something to be eliminated. A growing number of studies, however, refute this representation of street trading by revealing how street trading in the contemporary era remains a widespread phenomenon (Bhowmik, 2007).

Structuralist Theory

The structuralist theory sees street trading as a necessity-driven activity. This means people go into street trading because they are unable to make enough to cater for themselves in the formal economy. With the acknowledgment of the widespread persistence and even growth of street trading, a structuralist perspective has come to the fore which depicts street trading as a survival practice conducted out of economic necessity as a last possibility in the absence of alternative means of income. In this view, such entrepreneurship is a direct by-product of the advent of a de-regulated open world economy (Roberts 2005). From Accra's street vendors (Anderson, 2012) to Kumasi's (Owusu-Sekyere et al., 2015) to Tamale's (Itzigsohn 2000), the consensus is that this sphere is entered out of necessity as a survival strategy. These entrepreneurs are therefore depicted as unwilling and unfortunate pawns in an exploitative global economic system. As Bhowmik (2007) states, for such marginalised populations, street trading "is the only means for survival". Indeed, jobs like truck vending, hawking, small store vendors, roadside vending, and tricycle vending are all commonly depicted by this structuralist theory as necessity-driven endeavours which are highly insecure and unsteady, composed of long hours, poor conditions, no legal or social protection, limited access to credit, and very limited bargaining power (ILO, 2002).

Neo-liberal Theory

Neo-Liberal theorists see street trading as a matter of choice rather than due to a lack of choice. For these neo-liberals, street traders are heroes, throwing off the shackles of a burdensome state and making a rational economic decision to enter into street trading so as to escape over-regulation in the formal realm. As Nwabuzor (2005) states, "Informality is a response to burdensome controls and an attempt to circumvent them." Becker (2004) says liberalists view street trading as the people's "spontaneous and creative response to the state's incapacity to satisfy the basic needs of impoverished masses." Neo-liberals see street trading as a rational economic strategy pursued by entrepreneurs whose spirit is stifled by state-imposed institutional restraints and who voluntarily operate in the informal economy to avoid the costs, time, and effort of formal registration (Cross and Morales 2007).

Post-Modern Theory

Post-modern theorists of street trading see street traders as cultural or social actors who rationally decide to engage in such activity as a cultural endeavour. This is motivated by post-colonial, post-structuralist, post-developmental, and post-capitalist thought, which moves beyond the conventional "thin" portrayals of economic endeavor as always purely market-like and profit-motivated and instead adopts "thicker" portrayals of economic endeavor participation that recognize the complex mix of logics, including social, community, and cultural logics, often involved (Collins and Gurtoo, 2012).draw attention to not only how the social relations between street traders differ from normal market relations in that business and friendship relations blur and there is greater community solidarity and mutuality, but also how exchange relations between street entrepreneurs and their customers differ from mainstream market relations in that, without recourse to a legal contract, interpersonal relations and trust become more important (Cross and Morales 2007). Secondly, there has been an emphasis on how such entrepreneurship is pursued as a choice because of the greater personal freedom and flexibility it affords and allows them to gain control over their lives (Cross 2000; & Hart 1973); and third and finally, how this endeavour is often, in the eyes of participants, an expression of community support which allows customers to source goods they otherwise could not afford (Cross 2000).

Research indicates that street trading in many countries in the Global South, including Ghana, has received little

attention in policy circles (Scheinberg et al., 2011; Oteng-Ababio, 2015; & Owusu-Sekyere, 2016). This study adopts the structuralist view to explore the complexities, degree of organisation and embedded risks in street trading in the Tamale Metropolis. The structuralists do not see street trading as a threat to the streamlined trading activities but as a complement to them. Hence, the need for the state to formulate policies which are geared towards inclusion. This will consequently reduce the risks that are associated with street trading.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The Study Area
The study area is the Tamale Metropolis, the regional capital of the Northern Region. The Metropolis is one of the 16 districts in the Northern Region. It is located in the north of the country and shares boundaries with the Sagnarigu District to the west and north, Mion District to the east, North East Gonja to the south, and Central Gonja to the south-west. The Metropolis has a total estimated land area of 731 km^2 (GSS, 2021). The Metropolis is located between latitudes 9o16 and 9o34 north and longitudes 0o36 and 0o57 West.It has a population of 374,744 with males constituting 49% and females representing 51%, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census. The highest proportion of the population (33.0%) is engaged as service and sales workers.

Tamale is strategically located in the Northern Region and, because of its strategic location, the Metropolis has a market potential for local goods from the agricultural and commerce sectors of the other districts in the region. Besides the comparative location of the Metropolis within the region, the area stands to gain from markets within the West African region from countries such as Burkina Faso, Niger, Mali, and the northern part of Togo, and also en-route through the area to the southern part of Ghana (GSS, 2021). 115 communities in the Metropolis, of which most are rural and have large expanses of land for agricultural activities and serve as the food basket for the Metropolis. However, these communities still lack basic social and economic infrastructure such as good road networks, school blocks, hospitals, markets, and recreational centers, thereby hindering socio-economic development, poverty reduction, and reducing the general phenomenon of rural-urban migration.

The Tamale Central Market, Aboabo, Kukuo, and Lamashegu are the four major markets in the Metropolis.In addition to these, there are satellite markets in other communities as well. The Central and Aboabo markets have been upgraded from mini-shops and stalls to modern facilities such as shopping malls and large warehouses. The Central Business District (CBD) is also developing with new business ventures.

There are many streets in Tamale linking various parts of the town to the Central Business District, but the major ones where street trading takes place are those from the Taxi Rank main traffic lights to Aboabo market, traffic lights through to West Hospital, Taxi Rank main traffic lights–Agric Traffic, Taxi Rank main traffic lights–Central Hospital, and Taxi Rank main traffic lights–Tamale Teaching Hospital.

Research Design and Sampling Methods
Because of the numerous business activities that take place throughout the city, the study used a cross-sectional survey. The cross-sectional surveys are "designed to study some phenomena by taking a cross-section of the population at one time" (Babbie, 1989:89, cited in Kumar, 1999:81). This design was appropriate for studies that intend to find out the incidence of a problem or issue. A mixed methods approach was employed to collect data for this study. According to Creswell (2007), the mixed method approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods *to inquiry,* and this makes the overall strength of the study greater than either quantitative or qualitative research (cited in Creswell, 2009).

Data was obtained from primary and secondary sources. For the purposes of understanding street traders' strategies, overall organizational skills, and the risks they face, primary data was collected largely from street traders and other relevant institutions, organizations, and departments that have responsibilities for managing the Central Business District of Tamale. The secondary data was sourced from books, journals, magazines, periodicals, dissertations, newspapers, government reports, recorded discs, and the internet.

The target population for the study was all the street traders on the high streets of Tamale who occupy the streets from the Ghana Commercial Bank to the traffic lights at Barclays Bank, main branch. The main street was chosen because it is the busiest street and noted for the concentration of people who vend all kinds of commodities such as processed food products, second-hand clothes, plastic products, shoes, vegetables, fruits, and cigarettes, as well as household equipment used for household purposes, cosmetics, books, newspapers, and stationery, among others. Secondly, it is a geographical location where statistics are available. Available statistics from the TMA (2017) indicate that there are about 572 street traders on that stretch of the main street.

Using De Vaus (2002) formula for determining sample size, a total of 56 street traders were selected as follows:

$n = \frac{N}{1+N(1-a)2}$; Where n = sample size; N = the population; 1 = constant

a = confidence level at 95 per cent.

In this study, N=572, Therefore: $\frac{572}{1+572(1-0.4801)^2}$

Sample size = 56

A reconnaissance study was conducted before determining the suitable sampling technique for the study, and the researchers observed and mapped the street traders in Tamale. After mapping all the street traders, the researchers observed that the street traders mapped had different characteristics in terms of items sold. After the reconnaissance survey, multiple sampling techniques were adopted to select respondents. First, cluster sampling was used to group the street traders into clusters based on items sold and location. In all, the street traders were grouped into seven different clusters depending on the item sold and their location. Within each cluster, street traders had the same characteristics. This enabled the researchers to use the simple random sampling in each cluster to select eight street traders. This was done till the 56 research participants were selected. While street trading in Tamale can be classified into major groups, this study concentrated on sedentary traders who ply their trade at specific locations such as on pavements, verandahs, the frontage of stores, selling on tables, and sometimes on the bare floor. They were chosen for the study because the preliminary survey through participant observation showed that their constant specific location, which has been described as illegal by the TMA, constantly left them in a perpetual brawl with the law.

Additionally, twenty-five (25) officials who held leadership positions in the Tamale Metropolis were also sampled purposively. It included the Heads of the Decongestion Task Force, Metropolitan Planning Officer, Regional City Engineer, Urban Management, Tamale Transport Officer, and Heads of Traders Associations. The Director of the Justice and Peace Commission of the Catholic Diocese of Tamale was selected and four officials from the Risk Assessment Department of the Ghana Trade and Industry Commission were interviewed.

The fieldwork incorporated questionnaire surveys, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and observations. The questionnaires were administered face-to-face. The face-to-face interview approach was adopted because of the traders' busy schedules and limited educational accomplishment. There were many instances where the researchers had to read the items on the interview guide over and over again and also translate them into other local languages before the appropriate responses were obtained. The core set of questions was guided by the preliminary survey of the trading environment. Although the face-to-face interview locations provided some distractions in the form of noise and hawking activities, the distractions also provided the researchers with the opportunity for participant observation and firsthand experience of some of the challenges and coping strategies traders employ in their operations. As noted by Elwood & Martin (2000), face-to-face interview contexts are highly important for understanding the ways in which knowledge is formed between the researcher and the interviewee.

The items on the questionnaire were organized into four sections. Section one focused on respondents' demographic, personal, and contextual data. The second section sought data on respondents' views of the driving forces of street trading; the third section was on the risk factors facing street traders in the Tamale Metropolis. The fourth section was on the relationship between city authorities and street traders in the Tamale Metropolis. The opportunity for responses was provided in the last part of the survey, requesting the respondents to share any other comments on the risk street traders in Tamale Metropolis were exposed to in their daily activities. Suggestions provided by respondents were used to enhance the presentation of data and to complement the discussion of the findings.

The researchers approached any street traders in the selected streets and public spaces randomly, as earlier indicated. Some were willing to talk, while others were not. Consequently, the questionnaires were administered to the street traders who were willing to be interviewed; 25 males and 31 female respondents were interviewed in order to ensure that gender perception in the sector was effectively captured. It was not easy to find those who were willing to talk because they were afraid that the local government officials were trying to trick them and prosecute them for trading on the streets. They were, however, assured of the confidentiality of information given.

After winning the confidence of the respondents and they agreed to participate in the survey, the researchers took them aside for the interview in order to prevent biased responses in the event they were interviewed in the presence of their colleagues. For each street trader who was willing to participate in the research, they were taken through the whole process of completing the questionnaire through a face-to-face interview. Owing to the pattern of activity in the study area, the timing of questionnaire administration through face-to-face was divided into three categories: morning, afternoon, and night. The questionnaires were administered for seven days in one week.

The aim of this was to ensure that the operators interviewed represented the range of activities that took place in selected streets and public spaces within the week.

Based on a purposive sampling technique, the first set of interviews were conducted with six leaders from three trade associations, namely, United Traders, Petty Traders, and Concern Traders Associations. The interviews sought the participants' socioeconomic characteristics, goods sold, ownership of store and tenancy agreement, daily income, and how the activities of street traders affected their business. Attempts were also made to investigate what informed their decision to trade in a particular location as well as in some particular products. The three associations were selected because they were the best organized and recognized by stakeholders in Tamale. For each group, the president and the public relations officer were interviewed because they were more knowledgeable about the activities of their members and they also represented their associations at meetings.

Focus Group Discussions
Additionally, four focus group discussions were organized. Accordingly, twenty-two (22) street traders who were willing to participate in the study were purposively selected from among the hawkers and put into four groups of five (5) each for the four focus group discussions (FGDs). Some of the issues that were interrogated in both the interviews and the focus group discussions included but were not limited to socio-economic traits of the traders; business location characteristics; the conduct of the street trading business; economic outcomes; conflicts experienced; and coping strategies. Most importantly, the study delved into their relationship with the city authorities and their motivation to return to the street a few days after they had been forced out by the TMA task force. In the case of the FGD, the responses were recorded on audio tape and later transcribed. Finally, six key informant interviews with TMA officials from the Planning, Budget, Revenue, Security, Transport, and head of the Decongestion Taskforce were conducted. The main issues that were explored were their limited capacity to decongest the CBD and what alternative plans they had, bearing in mind that street trading was not going away and that it constituted a major source of livelihood for the majority of the people.

Data Examination
The data was analyzed quantitatively as well as qualitatively. This was done by comparing and contrasting the primary and secondary data sources. Simple statistical techniques were used in the data analysis. The compilation and analysis of quantitative data was done using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) software 18. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze every variable, and inferential statistics were used to evaluate the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. The interviews carried out were interpreted and analyzed qualitatively. Further quantitative data which had been gathered from statistical analysis was input into Microsoft Excel software in order to generate graphs, tables and other diagrammatical representations. In addition, pictorial information was presented in the form of pictures. After analyzing the data, a conclusion and recommendations were made.

The nature of the study of social scientists makes them delve into people's social lives, including private ones, and it is, for that matter, incumbent on them to protect themselves, colleagues, study population, and society at large (Berg, 2001). This study adhered to all ethical issues prescribed and observed in social science research. Consent was always sought before any type of data was taken. There was no form of deceit in the course of the research, so the issues of secrecy, anonymity, and confidentiality, among other ethics, were adhered to in the course of presenting the findings of the study.

4. RESULTS

Street Trading Typologies in Tamale Metropolis
The first objective of the study was to examine the typology of street trading in the Tamale Metropolis. The primary data revealed three categories or typologies of street traders are found in Tamale. The typologies are permanent, intermittent, and mobile street traders (Table 1)

Table 1: Typologies of street traders within Tamale Metropolis

Typology	Characteristics
Permanent	This typology of street traders are stationed at fixed locations. These types of street traders vary their products depending on the season. For example, one trader who was cited selling tomatoes during reconnaissance survey was seen selling okra and pepper during the field survey. The explanation was that the tomato season was over. They sell mostly on tables and sometimes construct temporal wooden kiosks to provide shelter for themselves and their goods.
Intermittent	These street traders push their wares on trucks, tricycles, wheel barrows or simply carry them on their heads. They sell items such as footwear, mobile phones, phone accessories and toiletries. They rotate between permanent and mobile. They sometimes carry their goods around, other times too they prefer to simply sit and wait for their customers. The intermittent traders in Tamale Metropolis were mostly foreigners typically of Nigerian, Malian and Nigerien origins.
Mobile	These typologies of street traders always move about with their goods. They sell items such as ice-kenkey, doughnuts, yoghurts, fan ice, fried meat, 'wagashi', 'sobolo', plantain chips, bananas, apples and oranges.

Source: Field Survey, 2018

Mobile street traders are those who do not have any specific location to ply their trade but move from one point to another in search of buyers. The research revealed that 56 percent of the total respondents were engaged in mobile street trading. They usually move their goods from place to place in search of customers who may be in transit or may just be moving about on the streets. Among the items they sold included fruits (oranges, pineapples, pawpaw, bananas, avocadoes), bread, newspapers, magazines, stationery, drinking water in sachets, herbal drugs, cooked food, detergents, bathing soaps, and clothing (new and used).

The research further revealed that 36% of the total respondents belonged to the intermittent category of street traders. It is important to state that their movement depends on the market (availability of potential customers). It was observed that these categories of street traders push their wares on trucks, tricycles, wheel barrows, or simply carry them on their heads (Plate 4.2). They usually sold items such as footwear, mobile phones, phone accessories, and toiletries. Insightfully, the research showed that the majority of intermittent traders in the Tamale Metropolis were mostly foreigners and were popularly called Gao or Alata irrespective of their nationality. A third category of street traders were those who had secured a place along the street and placed their goods there for pedestrians to buy. Fifteen (15) people, representing 30% of the total respondents, mentioned that they had permanent places where they display their goods daily for sale. The research sought to investigate why the street traders preferred some particular locations. This is against the backdrop that preliminary observations showed that there were constant struggles among traders for certain specific locations, such as in front of the Ghana Commercial Bank, along the pavements leading to Forsmuel Supermarket, the lorry terminals, and the frontages of the Volta River Authority offices. These few responses provide a snapshot of how, by sheer dint of determination and experience, the traders were able to determine the location advantage of their businesses.

The researchers further observed that the traders who sell plastic and jute bags were mostly stationed in front of supermarkets to service clients who shop at such places. The traders have developed all kinds of skills to keep their place on the street. Notable among these was the use of stones and writing on the ground to ward off potential encroachers. In the case of the stones, after the close of the day's trading activities, a trader puts a big stone where they sat, indicating that the lot belongs to someone. Though crude as it may seem, this language was well understood by everybody in the business. In all, the research revealed that the choice of a particular location was influenced by a myriad of factors: availability of customers, which results in high sales; non-payment of rental charges; and proximity to their place of abode in order to reduce transportation costs. It is also important to note that having a fixed location also helps the traders to maintain their regular customers.

Risks Facing Street Traders in the Tamale Metropolis

This section covers objective two and answers research question two, which seeks to examine the risks facing street traders in the Tamale Metropolis. The results showed that while street traders' preoccupation was for economic gains, they were on a daily basis exposed to risks, but their pursuit to escape the poverty trap often overshadowed these risks (Table 2).

Table 2: Risks Facing Street Traders in the Tamale Metropolis

Risk	Description
Health risk	Negative impact of street trading due to heavy lifting and continuous carriage of wares. The weight and the often-awkward posture caused bodily pains.
Accidents	Being knocked by vehicles, falling down etc.
Living with criminals	Selling in the same environment with thieves, prostitutes, and scammers. Sleeping in the same structures with criminal gangs, weed smokers among others.
Living in dirty environments	Sales points sited around dirty gutters, unkempt streets. Spending the nights in dilapidated structures, animal structures, staying in places where people openly defecate.
Sexual abuse	Accepting trading spaces in exchange for sex, unsolicited calls, fondling and sometimes being raped by criminals at night.
Harsh weather conditions	High temperatures, no protective cover from heavy rainfall, exposure to dusty and dry harmattan wind during the early part of the dry season.
Stealing	Picking and running; running with change; refusing to pay; Pick pockets; Shoplifting; Night and the burglary.

Source: Field Survey, 2018

The results showed that of all the risks facing street traders, the lifting of heavy goods stood out (Figure 2).
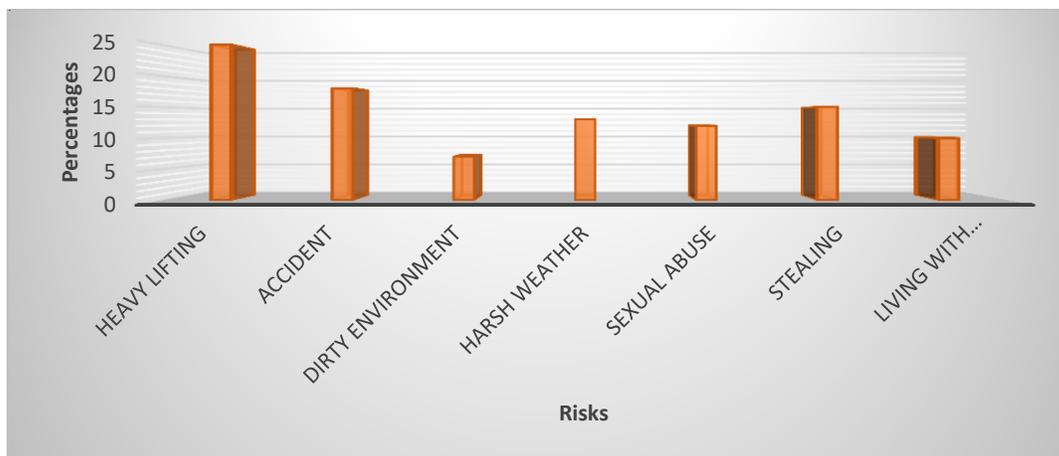

Figure 2: Risks facing street traders
Source: Field Survey, 2018

Apart from the lifting of heavy goods, 18% of street traders indicated that accidents of all kinds, including being run-over by moving vehicles, constituted the greatest risk they faced. The least reported risk was the effects of living in a dirty environment (Figure 2).

5. DISCUSSION

The street traders revealed that moving from one point to another is always the surest bet for cashing in on potential customers. Overall, the majority of the mobile research participants preferred moving about to sitting at a fixed location because one had more chances of meeting prospective customers who may otherwise have taken different routes. This finding is in line with the studies of Donkor (2005), Nunoo (2005), and Owusu-Sekyere et al. (2016), which revealed that street trading had received

some academic attention in Accra and Kumasi and had made a significant economic impact on both metropolises and the traders.

It is therefore imperative at this point to realize that a good location was very important for the survival and sustenance of street trading in Tamale. These findings are similar to the studies by Asiedu & Agyei-Mensah (2008), in Accra, who observed that street traders position themselves in strategic and easy-to-find spots that attract heavy human and vehicular traffic, which becomes a source of market for them. Mitullah (2003) also observed that street traders in West Africa often negotiate with friends who have already been allocated spaces by local authorities at strategic locations so they can also benefit from such a client base. Similarly, Sagoe-Addy (2006) also found that street traders operate at strategic locations close to clients. This means that access to trading space and rights of access were very important factors that influenced the location of street traders. The study revealed that the occupation of street trading entailed a great deal of heavy lifting as well as pushing and pulling of wares. The study participants explained that the high prevalence of musculoskeletal disorders of the neck, shoulders, and back stemmed from constantly repeating awkward movements such as lifting and running with heavy loads. The weight and the often awkward positions caused back strain and ankle sprains. These activities had implications for the health of the street traders. A respondent says he takes pain-killers during working hours but has to endure the pain late at night. Of all the kinds of pain reported, lower back pain (LBP) dominated. Low back pain, or lumbago, as it is also called, is the most prevalent musculoskeletal condition and the most common cause of disability among street traders. The participants further revealed that the experience of LBP morbidity was significant enough to cause them to stop working for at least two consecutive days. Despite the acknowledgment of the widespread persistence and growth of street trading, a structuralist perspective has come to the fore which depicts street trading as a survival practice conducted out of economic necessity as a last possibility in the absence of alternative means of income. In this view, such entrepreneurship is a direct by-product of the advent of a de-regulated open world economy (Roberts 2005). One interesting finding of the study was that while low back pain was regarded as a major problem, only a small percentage (less than 16%) reported seeking proper medical diagnosis and treatment, while the remaining majority confessed that they relied on self-medication or stopped work until their condition abated. The lower back pain resulted in significant levels of disability and produced a significant restriction on usual activity, a situation that was a source of worry to the traders. The results show how the physical environment affects human health is well grounded in literature. Alfers (2009), for instance, observed that the negative effects of an unhealthy work environment for street traders go beyond just physical health and affect psychological wellbeing as well. He noted that working conditions do not only have a physical effect on the traders as there are psychological repercussions, too. Stress and worry, known as "thinking too much" in Ghana, are major concerns for many street traders who face a constant struggle to survive in a context where bureaucracy is often unsupportive, trading space is difficult and expensive to access, basic essential services must all be paid for on top of high tolls and taxes already paid, and the economic environment is generally poor. Apart from the lifting of heavy goods, respondents also reported witnessing a series of street traders being knocked down by vehicles, and many times, such accidents result in death or permanent injury or disability. Street trading happens mostly on major roads. As traffic lights signal for stop, wait, and go, so do street traders cross to access teaming pedestrians who have been halted by the red lights. Sometimes the crossing is not well calculated, so street traders run into moving vehicles. The study revealed that sometimes they are either killed or injured, and traders who have no close relatives in Tamale are abandoned at the hospitals. Beccles (2014) posits that the heavy loads some vendors carry to sell sometimes give them some form of deformity. Also, vendors who walk under the scorching sun for hours as well as breath in the toxic fumes of passing vehicles, tend to develop respiratory and lung diseases. Since shelter is also a problem, they stand a great chance of being raped and

Another risk which came up strongly was the issue of being forced by situations to share accommodation with criminals. The street traders who took part in the study admitted that they frequently stay with people they would not have stayed with if they had other options for lodging. One of the interviewees indicated that this normally results in situations where street traders are often mistaken for thieves by the public and that any time there was a raid on a criminal gang, street traders were also taken along. Sometimes they are subjected to a lot of interrogations before they are released, and other times too. They never get that lucky and end up in prison or police cells. One of the key informants admitted that, in most cases, it was difficult to differentiate between a criminal and a street trader, so they were always taken together for interrogation. Some of them mentioned that sometimes the criminals end up robbing them. Other times, the criminals convince some street traders to join them in their nocturnal activities. The results appear to be a tale of messianic hope and dejection, with some of the respondents seeing street trading as a new opportunity for surviving in the city.

Living in a dirty environment was another risk that was identified by the study. The streets in Tamale are mostly and generally dirty. Available research (GSS, 2021) indicates that one of the most eye-catching signposts on Tamale's urban landscape is poor waste management and that there is a mountain of garbage everywhere in the city. The research revealed that street traders in Tamale have no access to toilets and other sanitation facilities, including water facilities. Street traders also spread their wares near gutters, which were mostly dirty and filled with decomposing materials. The stench from those gutters, apart from constituting health hazards, attracted flies, which also contaminated food sources. The gutters also served as a breeding ground for mosquitoes. This has a lot of implications for the health of street traders. Almost all respondents admitted to suffering from malaria at one point or another. Besides these, street traders were exposed to smoke coming from diesel combustion. The traders were also exposed to harsh weather conditions without any protection. These combined to make their work environment highly unsafe, thereby making them susceptible to ill-health.

Benit-Gbaffou (2016) mentioned that because of the high levels of poverty, street traders are exposed to greater risks and accidents at work; they encounter physical, chemical, and biological dangers with a high incidence of accidents and occupational illnesses. Benit-Gbaffou (2016) continues that street traders work outdoors without any protection or physical structure to safeguard them against environmental contamination. Thus, they are at greater risk compared with other workers. They are exposed to noise, silicosis, poisons, pesticides, metals, solvents, and neurotoxins with resultant musculoskeletal disorders, cancer, malformations, abortions, mental health disorders, premature ageing, and early death. Chen (2005) also observed that street traders suffer numerous health impacts, ranging from skin rashes to more severe cases of dehydration and skin cancer. Indirect health impacts caused by ecosystem changes may result in life-threatening diseases such as cholera. The researchers also observed that the gutters along the streets where the street traders operated were largely unkempt, and they were moist and conducive enough for the mosquito larva to complete their cycle, bringing with them a hike in malaria infections.

Sexual harassment has also emerged as one of the main risks those street traders in Tamale face. About 12 percent of study participants expressed concerns over the sexual assault of female street traders. Some female traders accuse male customers of luring them into their bed rooms under the pretence of buying their wares and forcing them to have sex with them. In an interview, a 36-year-old female street trader recounted with deep emotions how she was sexually abused by an unsuspecting client.

Other research participants intimated that sometimes sexual harassment happens at their sleeping places. The research revealed that street traders sometimes sleep in open structures that are unprotected and unsecured. For this reason, criminals easily take advantage of the situation, sometimes attacking and raping them. Other forms of sexual harassment involve female street traders being forced to offer sex in exchange for trading space. The interaction with street traders showed that female street traders were sometimes forced to consent to sex so that they could get favours like trading space, space to store goods, or space to sleep. This was not an isolated case. Many respondents narrated incidences similar to this. Some were lured and raped, while others willingly gave in to prevent being ejected. Some women are also staying with men they would not have chosen if they had other options.

The harsh weather conditions of Tamale also came up strongly as one of the risks associated with street trading in Tamale Metropolis. The average temperature in Tamale is 33oC (GMA). The statistics further indicate that the temperature is even higher between March and June. Medical experts (GSS, 2021) indicate that working in such high temperatures could have a lot of consequences apart from the stiff burning of the skin by the sun. A respondent explains the terrible effects of the sun as well as the rainy season has on their health. He continued that from morning to evening they are either in the sun or under the rain, which drenches their wares. He said the rains also come with an increase in mosquito bites, which inject malaria parasites into them. The Harmattan season also comes with a cold breeze and a windy environment that dries their skins and cracks their lips and legs. Invariably, throughout the year, street trading is not a good venture in Tamale due to the unfriendly nature of the weather here.

Another risk associated with street trading that was revealed during the study was the stealing of wares. Respondents mentioned that sometimes customers buy their wares and disappear into the crowd. Some also call for an item in a moving vehicle to speed off. Some ran with their change or short-changed them. Others simply lift them without their notice and the daring ones simply rob them by using weapons or physical force. When they try to resist, they are either injured or killed in the process. The majority of the respondents admitted having lost an item or cash to thieves since they started trading on the streets. This corroborates the finding of Adekunle (2015), when he observed that traders in Lagos often face mugging, robbery, and the complete lifting away of their wares by street boys.

6. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIOONS

Street traders in the Tamale metropolis are exposed to several risks. They are constantly harassed by city authorities for trading at unauthorized locations. Their wares are often seized by decongestion task forces, and they are required to pay fines before the seized goods are released to them. Sometimes they have to bribe some members of the decongestion task force in order to be allowed to trade on the streets. In addition to harassment by city authorities, they are exposed to bad work environments where they have to live with the stench emanating from unclean gutters; they inhale combustion from diesel engines; they have no toilet facilities; and they are sometimes knocked down by moving vehicles. Street traders in Tamale Metropolis are also exposed to harsh weather conditions such as rain, winds and excessive sunshine. They are sometimes easy targets for common thieves and sophisticated armed robbers alike. They are sometimes mistaken for criminals, as they travel from a distance to come and trade on the streets of Tamale, with no shelter for themselves, let alone stores for their goods.

They are basically surviving at the mercy of God.

Tamale City authorities do not enjoy the best of relationships with street traders. They see city authorities as being wicked, callous, and unsympathetic people who want to decimate their source of livelihood. Some of them feel city authorities are corrupt and are just out to take bribes from those who can offer those bribes and nothing else. They are aware that trading on the streets is illegal but insist that the authorities should provide them with another source of livelihood before evicting them from the streets. The city authorities have no positive feelings about street traders either. Some of them feel street trading is illegal and should not be tolerated on the principal streets of Tamale. They feel street traders obstruct vehicular flow and sometimes cause preventable accidents. Again, some feel street traders are the very people that sometimes turn into criminals. They feel street traders use trading on the streets as a cover for their nocturnal criminal activities.

Street traders feel a halt to the forceful eviction of their members from the street by city authorities. The provision of alternative sources of livelihood and the legalization of street trading will smoothen the relationship between them and the city authorities. The city authorities feel the construction of a market for street traders, education, and compliance with the bye-laws will end the friction between them and the street traders.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations could be useful:

a) The Government of Ghana, through the Ministry of Trades and Industry and the District Assembly, should take steps to legalize street trading on certain streets while identifying others as non-trading streets, as is done in Europe and other parts of Africa like Tanzania and Botswana. Forceful eviction from space has proved futile in the attempt to end street trading; as street traders always return to the streets almost immediately after the decongestion taskforce has gone.

b) The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly in collaboration with other stakeholders should provide public education on the need to keep certain streets free to ensure order and free vehicular movement.

c) The Government of Ghana through the Ministry of Trades and Industry and the District Assembly should provide a congenial environment for entrepreneurial development so that the youth who want to go into entrepreneurship can easily do so with much ease thereby reducing the number of unemployed youth who throng the streets to make a living.

d) The Tamale Metropolitan Assembly should take steps to engage street traders so that the hostile relationship between them can be transformed into a peaceful working relationship where there is mutual respect for all.

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