



# MARKET PREFERENCES OF RESIDENTS IN CALABAR, CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*The study was carried out to ascertain market preferences of residents in Calabar Metropolis. The study adopts survey method to find out the preferences of markets by the residents of Calabar. Moreover the distribution pattern of the markets was also evaluated using Geographic Information System (GIS); While descriptive statistics of simple percentage was use to ascertain market preference of the resident. The findings of the study shows that market concentrate more on the southern part of Calabar. This is attributed to the population concentration in the area, access to transport route by land and closeness to sea route. These factors determined the pattern of distribution of market in the area. Also, the findings show that the awareness level of markets is low only 30% of people are aware of the location of 50% of the markets. The study also discovered that 60.1% of people visit to the market is to buy goods and services. The proximity to the market, access and range of goods and services and their prices influence patronage. The major access is through public transport and trekking as the second prominent mode of access. The patronage for different markets depends on the advantage they have in terms of goods and services they purchased. It was recommended among others that Government should make some market specialize in some goods and services for instance those at the beach should be made for sales of sea foods.*

## INTRODUCTION

Market places occupy space and form one of the major landuse types in urban settlement. They contribute enormously to the movement of goods and people within a city. One can only imagine the volume of interception or movement between places in a city like Calabar with an estimated daily population of 24,550 people. This will not only impact on the transport system but also the general distribution system and the general economy of a city either directly or indirectly.

It is also observed that while some of the markets are over utilized, others are underutilized in spite of availability of facilities. The resultant effect is the inefficiency in the administration of the city's economy especially in the area of revenue generation. And so this research is focused on the residents' perception, awareness and preference or patronage. Residents, view point are focused upon the fact that markets in Calabar as elsewhere are paramount needs the residents. The consumption pattern of the resident depends on the availability of goods in the market and access to such market and goods.

Differences in the utilization of preferred market in Calabar or elsewhere in the world are a deviation from socio-economic optimization of spatial opportunity or landuse. For one, it does not allow efficiency in the working of the economy of the city, for instance, overcrowding and attendant uneasy movements within a market does not augur well for easy and a quick business transaction. Conversely, underutilization of market lead to redundancy on economics lost as many people with open their shop daily without making sales. At the long run, they will be force to leave the market, if possible pick a shop in another

market. Overcrowded jam may likely have rippled effect on other socio-economic activities of the urban centre, such as high traffic congestion as in the case of roundabout at Watt market etc.

Akin to say that underutilization of markets is a deviation from landuse optimization. It implies, as in the case of ultra-modern Ika Ika market, the tying down of huge capital which perhaps could have been better utilized in the development of alternative projects with significant socio-economic appeal to the residents of Calabar. The modern market appears more or less a "white elephant" project, which characterized much of the developing countries such as Nigeria.

It is indeed paradoxical that despite the existence of more than seven markets of various dimensions, there is the problem of mal-utilization or patronage, which itself is anathema to the efficient working of the economy of the city. It is also observed that in spite of the importance of markets in the socio-economic growth and development of a place or region hardly can one find studies on aspects of markets market preferences in Calabar as pertained to patronage or utilization. Indeed, virtually nothing is found on systematic literatures about the locational patterns or characteristic, or patronage pattern of the different markets in Calabar. This observation tends to be a reflection of the fact that, systematic studies on market patronage parse in any part of the world is hard to come by. Rather geographic literature is replete with patronage of shopping centres.

## OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1. To gauge the pattern of patronage of these market.
2. To establish residents' knowledge/awareness of various market in the city
3. Find out the reason for Choice of Market to patronage by the respondent
4. Find out the respondents' Rank of Markets Preference in the Study Area
5. Ascertain the level of market preference using capital goods, durable goods, non-consumer durable goods, and services offer?

## STUDY AREA

The study area of the research is city of Calabar. The capital of Cross River State of Nigeria. The ancient city of Calabar lies at Latitude  $4^{\circ}57'1''N$  and Longitude  $8^{\circ}20'1''E$  and is situated on the left bank of Cross River State. It is therefore found at the extreme end of south earthen Nigeria. Calabar is the capital of Cross River state and is accessible by road, air and water.

Calabar urban is made up of three ethnic groups- the Efiks, Quas and Efuts. These migrated at various times in history from different places to occupy their present locations.

Calabar was one of the earliest towns to have contact with Europeans on the arrival in west Coast of Africa. It is worthy to note that Calabar is a metropolitan city but cosmopolitan in nature with population of about 177800 (1963), 3220,863 (1991), 330,487 (1992), 340401 (1993), 350613 (1992), 361131(1995) and in 1996 the population of Calabar city was about 371964.

Calabar ancient city has a unique history in Nigeria in that it was the capital of Nigeria-then known as the southern protectorate of Nigeria. The city of Calabar is accessible through the 100km-long Calabar Itu road, Ikom- Calabar and Ekang-Calabar.

The major daily markets in Calabar include Watt market, Ika Ika Oqua market, mbukpa market, Akim market, Bacco market, Ikot Ishie, Uwanse market, Goldie market; Periodic market includes Beach markets, and 8 Mile market. The major industry in Calabar are United Cement Company (UNICEM), the line stone company and majority of the people in Calabar are civil servant or Government worker, traders, few business men and fisher men. The people of Calabar do not indulge in larger scale farming, but on domestic farm basically garden where vegetable such as pulky leaves, cassava, corn, waterleaves and cocoyams is cultivated.

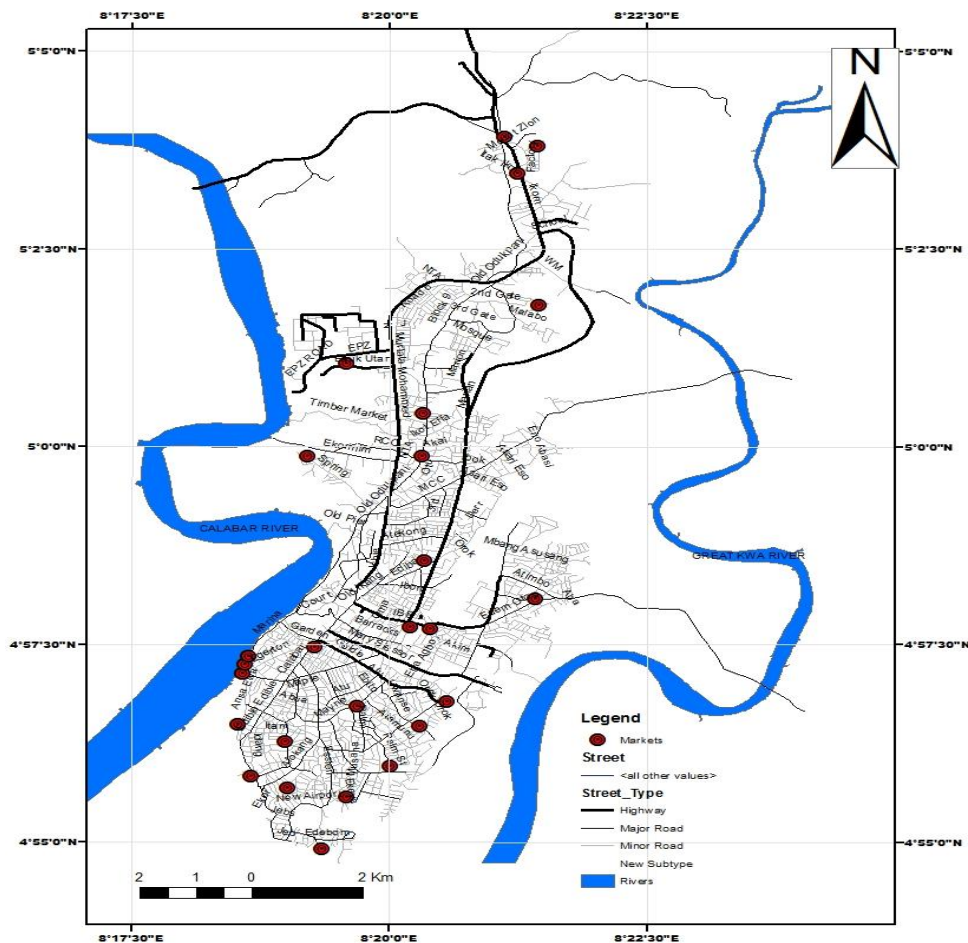


Fig 1: The study area



## LITERATURE REVIEW

Market place is the center of economic activities in a given area. Industrial goods, agricultural goods, educational materials, clinical material etc are all available in the market. Market places are not only stock with variety of goods, but also stock with variety of services as it also creates employment to the populace accounting for a large amount of employer of labour in the labour market. Islam (2018) noted that market is a place that authentically reflects the real scenario of any country. That being the case, market thus becomes an important indicator in knowing the true economics situation of a given country. Marketing system and structure is one of the main circumstances of socio economic condition of the local people and production system of any area. With intra-linkage and inter-linkage from production sector to consumer sector, it is a chain of various systems involved in marketing (Alam, Yasmin, Rahman, Nahar, Pinky, & Hasan, 2010).

In bangladesh, Isam (2018) conducted a study with the aim of finding the location pattern, distribution and sphere of influences of market centers in Rangpur City Corporation, Bangladesh. Analysis of the investigation shows that, about all of the market centers are located in the center of Rangpur and in the residential area of Rangpur. The maximum 67% market centers are found in the high income residential area. The spatial dispersion pattern of market centers is clustered together at one place 0.33(Nearest Neighbor Index value, R) found in the study area. Investigation refers that, market of Rangpur city have a clustered pattern and different levels of market centers found on the bases of centrality scores. The findings of Islam implies that, concentration of market around the city contribute to boosting the economics of that city. However, it further contributes to urbanisation as many people will move from the rural area to the market area for the purpose of business transaction. Oben, & Ndi, (2014) in the study on urbanisation and market growth trends in the Yaounde Metropolis found out that there was an intricate relationship between urbanization and the creation of markets in Yaounde. In the absence of formal sector employment, and with the increasing rate of unemployment in Nigeria (Calabar inclusive), markets seem to be the easiest entry points for all and sundry (graduate at all level inclusive) to connect to the urban economy. That explains the bazaar like nature of city high streets and the multitude of peddlers and hawkers roving Calabar streets and neighbourhoods.

Since the year 2000, Africa has become the second fastest growing economy in the world after Asia (Hatch, Becker & Zyl, 2011) and Hattingh, Russo, Sun-Basorun & van Wamelen, (2012) noted that most of this growth is consumer-led. Consumer spending in Africa was expected to rise to over 1trillion dollars in the year 2020 according to (Hatch, et al. 2011). Consumer spending is directly link to patronage and patronage behavior deals with the process of identifying factors and attributes that consumers use in selecting product/service alternatives. Onu (2005) “describes a consumer as a particular individual who makes a conscious decision to purchase goods or services from and patronize a particular firm or shop”. There are several factors taken into consideration by consumer before

taken purchasing decision; this include among others the place of purchase, income of the consumer, price of the product, access to product among others. Each consumer have a unique attribute such as; freedom of choice in the purchase decision, conscious exercise of that choice which results in the selection of certain goods and services and the rejection of others, involvement at the point of service delivery, and continuous patronage of a particular shop or outlet. These inform the reason why consumer will prefer certain outlet over the other or preferring certain market over the other.

In his study, Okwany (2005), found out that market with variety of services had many customers and vis-versa. Hamish (2003), conducted a research on sustainability of consumers in business and concluded most entrepreneurs operate in an ad- hoc environment which creates an enabling environment for the decline of the business and finally folding up of business. While Njue (2003) in the research on customer requirements for efficiency and profitability in organization maintained that economic factor is the major factor influencing customer patronage.

According to Macinnis and Hoyer (2008), consumer choice of market or outlet for purchase of goods and services involves more than just the way that a person buys tangible products. It also includes consumers’ use of services, activities, experiences and ideas. Eze, Nnabuko and Beredugo, (2014) opined that situation of market should be, consumer focused, consumer centric, consumer oriented, and consumer obsessed, backed by integrated communications aimed at generating consumer satisfaction as the key to satisfying the consumers and boosting economic activities of the environment. For a market to operate successfully in an environment especially with the existence of street shops and kiosk where different brands compete for patronage and consumers have freedom of choice, there is need for proper understanding of what the consumers need, want, and what they feel about the product and services offered in the market.

Decision on the particular market to visit for purchasing purpose is influenced by consumer factors. Ochiche, Isu,& Okpara, (2020) in the study on residents socio-economic characteristics and market visitation pattern in Calabar metropolis, Cross River State, Nigeria found out that income levels, age, sex, marital status, occupation, education and vehicle ownership influence market visitation and that the choice of which market to visit was found to be influenced mostly by the quality of market environment. in another study conducted in Ondo State, Nigeria Allen (2016) found that individual choice of market to patronize was dictated by the distance the individual needs to travel. Types of goods (perishable or non-perishable, whole sale product ect) and the nature of commodities offer in a neighbourhood market, as well as the economic status of the people within its sphere of influence affect the turn-outs in a periodic market. Moore (2006) conducted a study with the aim of examining the effect of consumer price attitudes, which operate as marketplace cues, on retail format choice across a variety of store types in the USA. Design/methodology/approach – A cross-section of US

consumers (n=365) constitutes the sample for the study. The apparel category was selected as the study's context due to the variety of formats it offers to consumers. A telephone survey was used to investigate price perceptions and format choice across seven different retail formats. Findings of the study suggest that price cues affect consumer format choice. Price consciousness and sale proneness tend to positively impact patronage of retail formats that implement low cost strategies, while prestige sensitivity and price/quality schema tend to positively impact patronage of retail formats that implement higher price strategies.

### DATA COLLECTION

Data were gathered from both primary sources pre-eminently and secondary sources. Data for the research analysis were gathered only on primary source using the questionnaire developed by the researcher, validated and trial tested for reliability. Internal consistency of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach reliability estimate ( $\alpha$ ). The reliability ranges from .82-.93 which was a good reliability estimate for the research instrument.

### Secondary Sources

It involved consultation of books, magazine, journals and other periodicals essentially for adequate research background. The library research was particularly useful in the structuring or drawing up of the content and the questionnaires. Map provided valuable formation particularly in getting the pattern of condition of the markets in relation to main roads and residential neighbourhood.

### Questionnaires

Information was elicited from questionnaires administered to individual persons or market users. Specifically, the questionnaires sought to collect information on the Patrons'

(buyers') level of satisfaction of nature and condition of facilities in and around the market each market in the city as their satisfaction was conceptualise to predict their market preference

### Administering the Questionnaire

The sample population was drawn directly from the users of the markets in Calabar city. This took place in the markets centres, and also the sample population cut across all categories of people including men and women who are residing in Calabar and have been making use of the market. The number of questionnaires distributed or allocated to each of the markets in Calabar was according to the population of people that patronized each market daily. A total of 300 copies of questionnaires were administered while 296 were retrieved all were properly filled copies of instrument were randomly administered in all the 21 identifies market in the study area irrespectively of the size of the market.

### DATA PRESENTATION

This section presents the data obtained from the field, the results of the analysis of the data and discussion of findings. The result have been summarized and presented in Table and charts.

#### Question 1

#### What is the level of resident awareness on market location in Calabar?

The awareness level of resident was measured using percentage count and frequency of response. Table 1 indicated that only 36.1% of the respondents are aware of the existence of all the markets in Calabar, whereas 63.2% of the respondents were not aware of all the markets and .7% were indifferent on their responses. Thus, a high proportion of the people were not aware of all the listed market in the study area.

**Table 1. Resident Awareness of Market**

	FREQUENCY	VALID PERCENT	CUMULATIVE PERCENT
Yes	107	36.1	36.1
Not All	187	63.2	99.3
Indifference	2	.7	100.0
Total	296	100.0	

Source: Author's Fieldwork December, 2022.

#### Question 2

#### How Often Do You Visit Your Prefer Market? (Frequency to Market), and why?

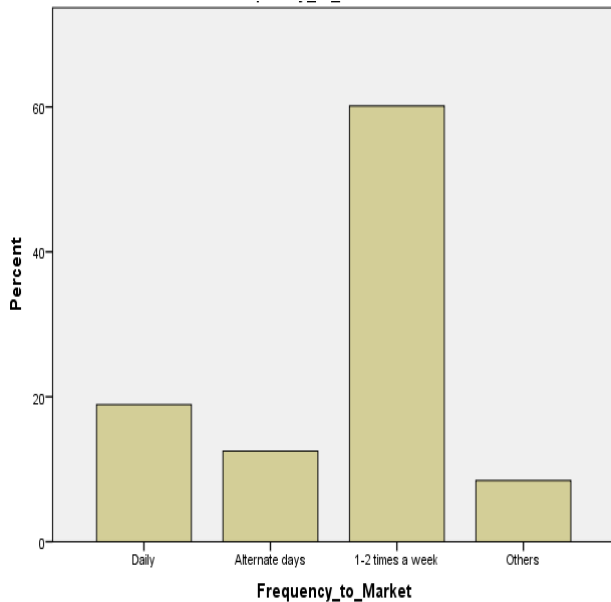
The data presented on Table 2 indicates that the highest frequency to markets is 1-2 times a week (60.1%), for the purpose of buying (84.1%). This is followed by daily as indicated by 18.9% for the purpose of selling. The implication is that those who visited market daily are traders as the sale

purpose is to sale their product while those visiting market 1-2 times weekly are mainly consumer of product who whose sole aim are to buy product it receive services offered in the market. Every alternate days, 12.5% of the respondent visited market to obtain services (3.7%) while some other people visit market for unknown number time weekly (probably as demanded) (8.4%) to render service (5.1%)

**Table 2. Frequency to Market**

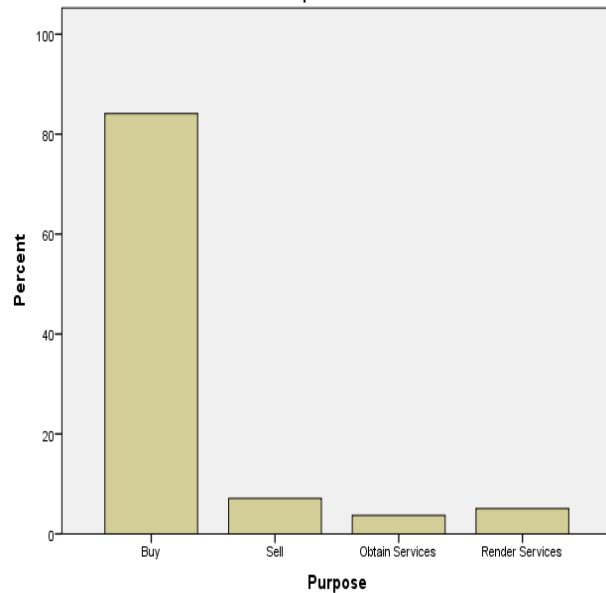
Frequency To market	F.	%	Purpose of visit	F.	Valid Percent
Daily	56	18.9	Buy (sell)	21	7.1
Alternate days	37	12.5	Sell	11	3.7
1-2 times a week	178	60.1	Obtain Services (Buy)	249	84.1
Others	25	8.4	Render Services	15	5.1
Total	296	100.0	Total	296	100.0

Source: Author's Fieldwork December, 2021.



**Figure 2 Frequency To Market**

Source: Author’s Fieldwork,2022.



**Figure 3 Purpose**

Source: Author’s Fieldwork, 2022.

**Question 3**

**What is the reason for your Choice of Market to patronize?**

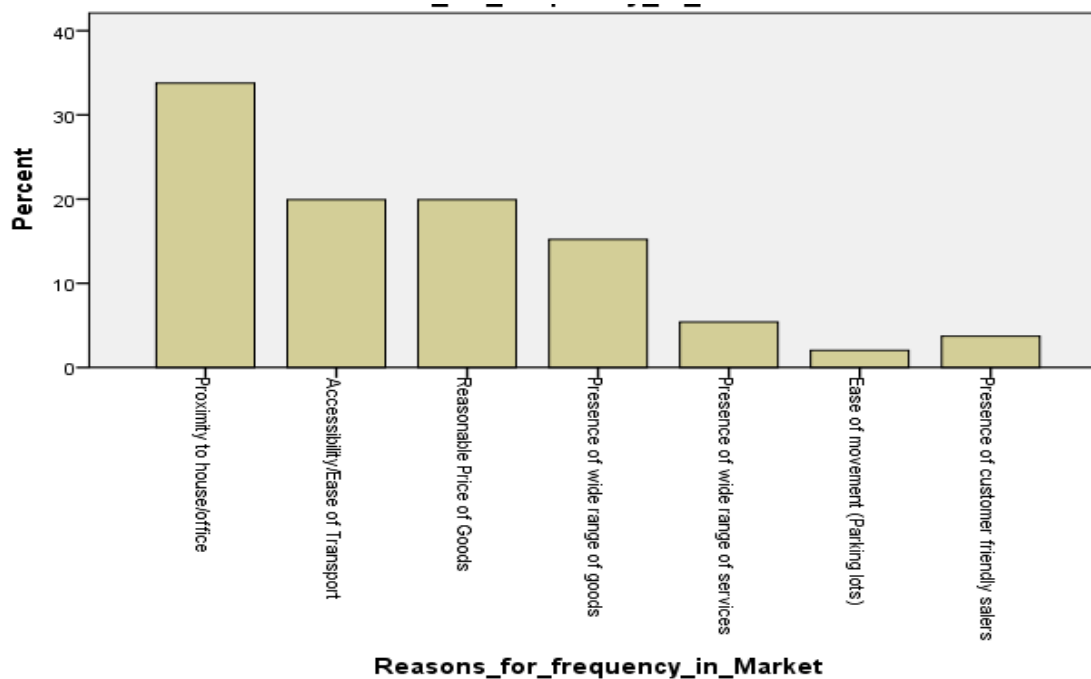
Among the various reasons why people easily visit a certain market as depicted in table 3 includes; in proximity to their house or office and therefore the markets is not far from them, they can have easy movement to the area. This is shown by a large proportion of respondents (33.8%). Accessibility/ease of

transport 19.9%; this means where people can directly move to the market without double transportation such a market is easily accessible. Reasonable price of goods,(19.9%). Presence of wide range of goods,(15.2%). Presence of wide range of services, (5.4). Ease of movement (parking lot), (2%) and Presence of customer friendly sellers, (3.7%)

**Table 3 .Reasons For Frequency In Market**

	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>VALID PERCENT</b>	<b>CUMULATIVE PERCENT</b>
Proximity to house/office	100	33.8	33.8
Accessibility/Ease of Transport	59	19.9	53.7
Reasonable Price of Goods	59	19.9	73.6
Presence of wide range of goods	45	15.2	88.9
Presence of wide range of services	16	5.4	94.3
Ease of movement (Parking lots)	6	2.0	96.3
Presence of customer friendly sellers	11	3.7	100.0
Total	296	100.0	

Source: Author’s Fieldwork December, 2022.



Source: Author’s Fieldwork December, 2022.

**Question 4**

**What is Respondents’ Rank of Markets Preference in the Study Area?**

Market preference was rank base on the responses of the respondents and the result is presented in table 4. Table 4 indicates that the top in the list is Watt markets where 98.6% of

respondents prefer to patronise. This is followed by Marian (Ika- Ika Oqua market) that rank second with 90.5% response, Akim market rank third with 82.4% Nsidung Beach market (62.5%) among others low ranking market include Palm street extension 1.7%, Goldie, Uwanse and Atakpa (8.4% respectively). Among other low ranking ones.

**Table 4. Preference Ranking of Market**

S/N	Markets	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1	Watt	292	98.6	1st
2	Marian	268	90.5	2nd
3	Akim Market	244	82.4	3rd
4	Nsidung Beach	185	62.5	4th
5	8 Miles-Ikot Eneobong market	175	59.1	5th
6	Mbukpa	175	59.1	5th
7	Abasi Obori	170	57.4	6th
8	Ikot Ishe	161	54.4	7th
9	Marina fish market	152	51.4	8th
10	Anantigha	115	38.9	9th
11	Eburutu Barracks	115	38.9	9th
12	Essien Town	115	38.9	9th
13	Edim-Otop	115	38.9	9th
14	8 Miles Morning Market	105	35.5	10th
15	Iko t Ansa	83	28.0	11th
16	8 Miles (First Bank Market)	69	23.3	12th
17	Ibesikpo Slaughter	55	18.6	13th
18	EbukaEbuka	55	18.6	13th
19	Yellow Duke	45	15.2	14 <sup>th</sup>
20	Crutech	45	15.2	14th
21	Atakpa	25	8.4	15th
22	Uwanse	25	8.4	15th
23	Goldie	25	8.4	15th
24	palm Street Extension	5	1.7	16th

Source: Author’s Fieldwork December, 2022.

**Question 5**

**What is the level of market preference using capital goods, durable goods, non-consumer durable goods, and services offer?**

The preferences of market for purchase of some goods/services were evaluated and the markets were ranked and selected accordingly. Table 5 present the result. For capital goods; the most preferred market for building materials is Watt, followed by Marian and Akim, for farm implement Watt, and Akim ranked top out of others. For consumer durable goods; the most preferred markets for households’ utensils are Watt which ranked first to third. For electronics–Watt and Marian; for

furniture and clothing Marian first followed by Watt. For consumer non-durable goods; cosmetics/provision, Watt, Marian and Akin rank in decreasing order of magnitude. For foods and vegetable 8-miles markets is preferred. For sea foods Nsidung beach is preferred. For Meat, Ikot Eneobong is preferred and Grains is for Watt market, tubers, Mammy market and Akin, and life animals such as goats. Preference for services; the most preferred markets for services such as grinding are Watt, Marian and Akin for sharpening of knives and materials, as well as hair weaving/salon services are Watt, Marian and Akim markets. For repairs Akim is preferable, while Watt is preferred for sewing and folding of headgears

**Table 5: Preference of Market for Capital Goods**

S/N	CAPITAL GOODS	PREFERRED MARKETS		
		1st	2nd	3rd
1	Building materials	Watt	Marian	Akim
2	Farm implement	Watt	Akim	Akim

CONSUMER DURABLE GOODS				
S/N	CONSUMER DURABLE GOODS	PREFERRED MARKETS		
		1ST	2ND	3RD
1	Household Utensils	Watt	Watt	Watt
2	Electronics	Watt	Marian	Watt
3	Furniture	Watt	Watt	Marian
4	Clothings	Marian	Watt	Watt

NON-CONSUMER DURABLE GOODS				
S/N	CONSUMER NON-DURABLE GOODS	PREFERRED MARKETS		
		1ST	2ND	3RD
1	Cosmetics/provisions/Toiletries	Watt	Marian	Akim
2	Fruits	8-Miles	Marian	Mammy Market
3	Vegetables	8 miles	Ikot Eneobog	Nsidung Beach
4	Fish/Sea foods	Nsidung beach	Marina	Watt
5	Meat	Ikot Eneobong	Anatigha	Watt
6	Grains	Watt	Akim	Marian
7	Tubers	Mammy market	Akim	Marian
8	Life animals	Akim	Mammy market	Marian

SERVICES				
S/N	SERVICES	PREFERRED MARKETS		
		1st	2nd	3rd
1	Grinding	Watt	Marian	Akim
2	Sharpening Knifes and matchet	Watt	Marian	Akim
3	Hair weaving/saloon services	Watt	Marian	Akim
4	Repairs	Akim	Marian	Mammy market
5	Sewing	Watt	Marian	Akim
6	Folding of head gears	Watt	Marian	Akim
7	manicure/Pedicure	Marian	Watt	Akim

Source: Author’s Fieldwork December, 2022



## DISCUSSION

Markets are randomly distributed within Calabar. The distribution is such that, the southern parts has more markets than other places. Hence market in Calabar concentrate in the southern part of the study area. The concentration of markets in the southern part is determined by the concentration of population in such areas that will patronize the market. the markets take advantage of major transport route, and sea route. The study by Omole (2009) shows that the proximity to the market determined patronage; people need access to transport circulation and vehicular movement. Else the location of such market is unfavourable.

The patronage of the market is determined by level of awareness of markets in Calabar. The awareness level shows that 30% have visited more than 50% of the markets. That 52.4% have visited few markets. This determined frequency of patronage of such market. In the study area, greater proportion of people visits the markets 1-2 times a weeks. The frequency is influenced by the purpose of the visit as indicated that 84.1% of respondents go to buy goods and services. Thus, Lennon Kim, Johnson, Jolly, Damborst and Jasper (2007) argued that awareness is that increase patronage.

Where people are in proximity to the market there is high patronage as shown in this study. Access is another factor as well as range of goods and services. The access indicates that, 33.4% of people have access to the market through public transport. Others trek while some use canoe and speed boat Omole (2009) also confined that accessibility affect patronage.

From the various analysis people have different preferences for wide varieties of goods and services. For instance consumer durable goods and non-durable goods, fruits, vegetables and clothing among others in the markets have competitive advantage over others. This supported by Bondy and Talwar (2011) that consumers go where they can have value for their money and get the best possible. Thus, market preferences differ by goods, access and range of services.

## CONCLUSION

The study has concluded that preferences of market are influenced by different factor one of such is the location of the market. The other factors include access to the market which either is carried out by land or through sea route. The patronage of market depends on the goods and services over markets that are considered insignificant in term of number of market have advantage in a particular good or service rendered. This is why market development or location must take into account the economic activities prevalent in the area. For instance the purchase of fish and other sea foods carried in the market. Preference therefore differs in terms of goods and services.

## Recommendations

1. Location of market should consider the economic advantage in the area.
2. Government should make some market specialize in some goods and services for instance those at the beach should be made for sales of sea foods.

3. Good transport system should be provided at the different markets to increase access and patronage.
4. Government should ensure the increase in awareness of the markets in Calabar to increase patronage.

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