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## Severity of Poverty amongst Entrepreneurs in Slum Settlement: A Case of Makoko Community, Lagos State, Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*The informal economic activities in the slum of urban cities and their impact on poverty are gaining attention. While attempts have been made to measure poverty in slums, and rural communities, empirical evidence on poverty severity within the entrepreneurial class of the slum is scanty. We explore the severity of poverty amongst entrepreneurs and self-employed in the Makoko slum community in Lagos State, Nigeria. Leveraging on primary data obtained from a survey questionnaire designed to elicit information from 300 entrepreneurs living in these communities, descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. Specifically, the Foster, Greer, and Thorbecke (FGT) or Severity/Squared Poverty Gap Index was employed in measuring the severity of poverty amongst the groups of entrepreneurs. The incidence of 0.092% shows that the poverty incidence is mild amongst entrepreneurs in this community. This is contrary to the result when taken for the entire population, as obtained by previous studies. This indicates that welfare programs and empowerment interventions should be multifaceted, even when targeting citizens at the bottom of the pyramid. This paper investigates unique and overlooked strata of the bottom of the pyramid, i.e., the entrepreneurs and the self-employed. This is relevant in getting a holistic solution to the challenge of poverty reduction and alleviation.*

*Keywords: Entrepreneurs, Informal Economy, Poverty, Poverty Severity, Slum*

### **1. Introduction**

Poverty is considered a socio-economic challenge in Africa. Its effect is visible in the stunt growth and development of the continent. This is especially vivid in Nigeria, the most populous country in Africa, with over 200 million people (World Bank, 2020). The increased poverty rates in the country earned it the title “Poverty Capital of the World” in 2018 (Kazeem, 2018). The country's federal government has established numerous measures centred on minimising the rate of poverty

among the masses in the country with very minimal success (see Anyanwu & Uwatt, 1993; Anyebe, 2016; Oyebamiji, 2018).

The Millennium Development Goal (MDG) one focused on eradicating poverty and hunger, but this target was not attained by 2015 (Ernest & Monye-Emina, 2016; Briant, 2017). The succeeding Sustainable Development Goals 1 and 2 also focus on eradicating poverty and hunger; yet, these issues remain dominant in the slums of Lagos State, Nigeria (Akanle & Adejare, 2017; Badmos, 2018; Badmos, Callo-Concha, Agbola, Rienow, Badmos, Greve & Jürgens, 2020). Makoko, one of the largest urban slums in Lagos urban slum, is an important area of study because of its high population (estimated 40,000 and 300,000) (Ogunlesi, 2016). They are predisposed to disease, malnutrition, poor health, education, and prone to producing street urchins, thugs, thieves, and breeding ground of other negative vices (Murtala *et al.*, 2018). Currently, malaria, nutrition deficiency, and respiratory-related illnesses are some of the endemic challenges facing the Makoko community (Akinwale *et al.*, 2013; Popogbe, Akinleye, Oke, 2021). In this cluster of humanity lies people with entrepreneurship drive, industry, initiatives, and enterprise. Entrepreneurs are critical stakeholders of this ecosystem, and how do they fare concerning poverty indices?

Enterprising individuals have played a significant part in the transformation of an economy. This perspective is collaborated by Ogundele (2000) that the promotion and development of entrepreneurial ventures would enhance the diffusion and broadening of economic activities. It will also initiate equal development across the nation. Similarly, Osuagwu (2002) asserted that the growth of entrepreneurial ventures in Nigeria should be seen as an impetus for economic growth, increase the employment rate, minimize importation of manufactured commodities, and reduce trade deficits from importation. Entrepreneurship remains the route to lasting wealth creation in the country (Ogundele, 2000; Toma, Grigore & Marinescu, 2014).

Although several studies on entrepreneurship give adequate attention to entrepreneurship's contribution to lasting economic development, employment opportunities, innovation, and resource allocation (see Toma *et al.*, 2014; Coulibaly, Erbao & Mekongcho, 2018), only meagre attention is given to a micro-study of examining the impact of entrepreneurship-based training and education on alleviating poverty. It is necessary to examine these issues at the micro level to give targeted attention to issues at the grassroots level. The informal economic activities in the slum of urban cities and their impact on poverty are gaining attention (Jones, 2017; Farinmade, *et al.*, 2018; Mahadea & Zogli, 2018). While attempts have been made at measuring poverty in slums and rural communities, empirical evidence on poverty severity within the entrepreneurial class of the slum is scanty (Klopp & Petretta, 2017; Olalekan, 2014; Popogbe *et al.*, 2021; Yoade, 2019). It is thus expedient to further unravel the severity of poverty between different strata of the pyramid's bottom. Encouraging entrepreneurship is one of the government's measures to minimise the huge scourge of poverty and joblessness within the country. This research thus seeks to empirically unravel the severity of poverty amongst the unique and overlooked strata of the bottom of the pyramid, i.e., the entrepreneurs and the self-employed in Makoko, Lagos, Nigeria. Our findings will enable us to

understand if entrepreneurship indeed reduces poverty rates in the slum. We will also explain how entrepreneurship can reduce poverty incidence, depth, and severity. The purpose of selecting the Makoko community is the perceived prevalence of poverty in the slum settlement and remote/isolation configurations of the area.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Theoretical Review**

The Foster-Greer-Thorbecke (FGT) Poverty index was proposed by a theorist (Foster) and two other developmental economists (Greer and Thorbecke). Earlier on, Sen (1976) had constructed an axiomatic framework for measuring poverty. Sen proposed three steps in measuring poverty viz: poverty should be a normalised weighted sum of shortfalls; weights should be selected based on the rank of poor incomes; setting the normalisation factor. However, Anand (1977) observed some practical demerits with Amartya Sen's approach. First, the poverty numbers proposed by Sen (1976) might not convey the right information; and second, the measure cannot decompose across subgroups. These demerits triggered the new measure proposed by Foster, Greer and Thorbecke (1984). The FGT measure added to the theoretical literature on poverty in the following ways: a new class of poverty measure which is understandable, theoretically sound and applicable was introduced; new and more practical axioms were introduced justifying the measure; a concrete illustration of the new technology was introduced. These attributes make this measure of poverty desirable and understandable for policymakers (Foster *et al.*, 2010).

### **2.2 Empirical Review**

Aigbokhan (2000) investigated Nigeria's inequality and poverty profile during 1985-1997, using data for 1985/86, 1992/93, and 1996/97 national household income surveys conducted by the Federal Office of Statistics. Households were classified by sector (urban/rural), gender, and region (geopolitical zones). The study found evidence of worsening inequality and poverty despite economic growth. It was also found that male-headed households seem to have fared worse and that poverty is more pronounced in rural areas and the northern regions (zones). Similarly, Jaiyeola and Bayat (2019) assessed the trend in income poverty in Nigeria between 2010 and 2013. Similar to findings from Aigbokhan (2000), the study found that although all the Nigerian six geo-political zones are poor, however, the North West zone dominated the incidence and poverty share compared to the Southern zones.

The study of rural poverty in Nigeria was again carried out by Anyanwu (2005). The study revealed the factors that account for poverty and the measures that can be adopted to minimize it. The 1996 National Consumer Survey (NSC) data set was applied in this study. Further, this study showed that by the year 1996, the proportion of the rural habitats under the poverty line would be an estimated 71.7 percent, which is way higher than the estimated 46 percent in the year 1992.

Equally, concrete evidence was untraveled in the study by Anyanwu (2005) to boost the hypothesis of rural poverty and the feminine side to it. With this, there was an advancement in the evaluation of gendered-induced poverty in Nigeria. This evaluation also shows that households headed by males reflect the totality of the rural poverty outcome. Contrarily, households headed by females, considering the household's size, level of education of primary school downwards, and being domiciled in Nigeria's central zone (contrary to their male contemporaries), possess a positive as a significant relationship with the tendency of poverty. This is similar to the findings by Aigbokhan (2000).

Wang and Man (2019) used the Chinese General Social Survey (CGSS) conducted in 2005 and 2015 to examine child poverty in China. The decomposition by the community of the poverty headcount, poverty gap and poverty severity showed that ethnicity and location also impacted the level of poverty. However, the contribution to the poverty of the rural areas decreased in the later wave. This was greatly influenced by urbanisation which led many rural dwellers to migrate into cities.

At the state level, Akerele *et al.* (2012) analysed the poverty situation among urban households in Ekiti State, Nigeria. It was stressed that the socio-economic attributes of households and other related attributes had rubbed on poverty. The study revealed that 41.0 per cent of the households that the study considered were poor and needed access to financial resources of up to 45.0 per cent of 1 US Dollar daily (for every household) to get off the grip of poverty. Cases of depth were higher in households headed by females. This finding is contrary to those obtained by Aigbokhan (2000) and Anyanwu (2005).

The empirical studies reviewed showed that very scanty attention had been paid to understand the severity of poverty among entrepreneurs at the community level. While it may be difficult to address the underlying factors causing poverty at the macro level, understanding poverty determinants at the micro-level will expose the underlying factors of poverty and focus attention on alleviating it. It is thus paramount to focus our attention on communities where general wellbeing is poor.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Study Area**

Makoko community is a community along the coaster area of Lagos, located along the Third Mainland Bridge. Makoko is described as a major low-income community situated within the metropolitan city of Lagos. The community is situated at the frontal part of the Lagos Lagoon. The settlement has held an unmatched history of engaging in aquatic transactions with its neighbouring communities. It is made of both the land and lagoon dwellers, and its populace is diverse and include the Ijaw, Egun, Ilaje and the Yoruba extractions.

Its economic structure revolves around the water which is predominantly for fishing, wood logging, and boat making. However, due to language barriers and mobility restrictions around the slums, we could only interview people involved in other major businesses in the slum, live on land in the slum, and are easily accessible. This selection is also justified on the premise that it has been reported that half the population of Makoko live on land, and half on the water (see Udoma, 2017). Thus, the five (5) categories of entrepreneurs doing businesses in Furniture making, Shoemaking, Catering, Welding, and Food Selling were interviewed.

### 3.2 Sampling Techniques

At a confidence level of 95%, 384 sample size was selected. However, valid responses from the survey stood at 300 and these are analysed for further findings in this research. Using the random sampling technique due to its ability to select from a group with every member of the population having equal chances of being selected, 30 respondents were selected from the five adopted business lines.

### 3.3 Measures and Indicators of Poverty

The poverty line is a fundamental gauge, for evaluating the portion of a country's populace that live at the least level of subsistence. Going by the income or the consumption of households, the poverty line, measures poverty in the absolute sense that it is monetary. The absolute measure of poverty also classifies people based on their monetary earning or consumption, emphasising food consumption. Therefore, the poverty line is a point or threshold that differentiates the "poor" households from the "non-poor" households. This gauge also makes poverty measure well understandable from a unit of measurement.

The established poverty line allows for calculating the following indicators of poverty: the rate of incidence of poverty, poverty gap, or poverty depth, and the severity of poverty.

i. **The rate of incidence of poverty:** is, in simple terms, an analysis of the percentage of individuals who live beneath the poverty line. According to the FGT formula, the incidence of poverty is stated as:

$$P_{\alpha} = \frac{1}{n} \sum \left( \frac{z - Y_i}{z} \right)^{\alpha} \quad 1$$

Where:  $P_{\alpha}$  symbolizes the incidence of poverty, when  $\alpha = 0$ , when  $\alpha = 1$ ; poverty gap; and when  $\alpha = 2$ ; poverty severity

$n$  is the number of groups

$Y_i$  is the actual income of the "i<sup>th</sup>" group of poor individuals.

$Z$  is the poverty line (the poverty line in this study is measured as \$1 = N410 (as given by Central Bank of Nigeria, 2021).

## 4. Presentation of Results

### 4.1. Analysis of Poverty Severity Index

We empirically constructed a measure of severity of poverty using the Squared Poverty Gap Index (SPGI) as proposed by Foster, Greer, and Thorbecke (1984). The computation of this is shown using a sample of three hundred (300) entrepreneurs in the community, grouping them into five (5) – Furniture making, Shoemaking, Catering, Welding, and Food Selling.

The assumptions and estimates made on the analysis were as follows:

- i. The poverty line is taken to be people living below income or consumption \$1/day, of which by exchange rate is N410 (Central Bank of Nigeria (2021). That is, z is taken as 410 in this study.
- ii. The average income per group was determined by taking the average daily actual income/consumption of individuals in each entrepreneurship group for ease of computation.
- iii. The poverty gap of daily expenditure above N410 is theoretically assumed 0.

**Table 1: The FGT computation**

Entrepreneur Group	Expenditure for each Group of Entrepreneurs doing business at Makoko (N)					Squared Poverty Gap Index (P)
	Furniture making	Shoe making	Catering	Welding	Food Selling	
Average daily expenditure per entrepreneurship group	300	250	500	250	1,500	
Poverty Gap (Gi)	80	130	0	130	0	
Gi/z	0.2105	0.3421	0	0.3421	0	
$(Gi/z)^2$	0.0443	0.1170	0	0.1170	0	0.2783 1/300 (0.2783) = 0.000927 x 100% = 0.092%

**Source: Authors' computation of the severity of poverty amongst entrepreneurs in Makoko communities.**

The squared poverty gap index of 0.092% shows that the severity of individuals doing business in the selected groups of entrepreneurship communities is relatively low. This is because entrepreneurs' daily income/consumption in the community is far above the poverty line for some groups, while some other groups are well below the poverty line. Specifically, the groups of caterers and food sellers are above the poverty line, while the groups of shoemakers, carpenters, and welders live below the poverty line. This implies that the income poverty for food sellers and caterers is relatively lower compared to other groups sampled. This could have been as a result of more demand for their product (food) which is a key requirement for daily survival. The severity index is moderately low, which implies that the poverty incidence amongst entrepreneurs in Makoko can

be managed. This computation further negates the belief that a large number of individuals in the area of study (Makoko) are low-income earners (Udoma, 2017).

## 4.2 Presentation of Descriptive Statistics

### 4.2.1 Respondents' Demography

**Table 2: Demography Information of Respondents**

<b>Socio-Economic Information</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Gender	Male	73.3
	Female	26.7
Age group	Below 18 years	10.1
	18-27	23.3
	28-37	36.7
	38-47	3.3
	48-57	6.7
	58 and above	20
Marital Status	Single	6.7
	Married	76.7
	Divorced	16.6

Source: Authors' Computation

The sample description shows that of the total respondents and it is represented in table 2. 73.3% were males, and the remaining 26.7%, females. Thus the number of males that participated was much higher than the number of females. The respondents' age indicates that 10.1% of the respondents are below the age of 18, 23.3% are within the age bracket of 18 to 27, 36.7% are within the age bracket of 28 to 37. This also represents the respondents' dominant group, 3.3% of them are within the ages of 38 to 47, 6.7% of them are within the ages of 48 to 57, and 20% of them are 58 and above. Along with marital status, 6.7% of the respondents are single, 76.7% are married, while 16.6% are divorced.

## 5. Conclusion, Policy Implication and Recommendations

This paper examined the severity of poverty among entrepreneurs in the Makoko community of Lagos State. The measure of the severity of poverty was empirically constructed using the Squared Poverty Gap Index (SPGI) as proposed by Foster, Greer, and Thorbecke in 1984 to determine the extent of poverty in the community.

Our sample's result proved to be interesting as against the wild notion that the Makoko community is wildly poverty-ridden. The SPGI of 0.092% shows a low level of poverty severity in the community. Theoretically, the interdependence cyclically and cumulatively is applicable to the community. Evidence suggests that a decrease in the poverty level of individuals makes the whole community better off in terms of poverty severity. However, due to the riverine nature of the community, commercial activities are limited. Though entrepreneurship activities had been the major driver in reducing poverty severity in the communities, most entrepreneurs wish they have a white-collar job (a job in the formal sector). Many of them are entrepreneurs due to joblessness in society.

This study further confirms that entrepreneurship is a good poverty alleviation program. A lot of respondents claimed their livelihood improved tremendously as engaging in entrepreneurial activities. It's saddling that cooperative activities are almost not in existence in the community. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) are also not very involved in the community. Those present are not engaged in the poverty alleviation program for the community. Furthermore, poverty alleviation programs organised by the government are not reliable, as remarked by the respondent. To curtail poverty, the respondents believed that providing an enabling environment for businesses, job creation, and infrastructure development is key in fighting poverty severity in the community.

NGOs and other government agencies should bolster entrepreneurship drive in the community by providing funds, training, and facilities further to enhance the development of entrepreneurship in the community. This is because the study has shown that entrepreneurial drive can greatly reduce poverty in the slums. We strongly recommend that business owners in the slum should be further empowered so that they can thrive and become more productive in their community. Furthermore, those seeking a white-collar job should be encouraged to acquire relevant skills to set up their own businesses. This will provide a means of income for individuals and also enable more people to live above the poverty line. We also recommend that the government's poverty alleviation program should be made known to the people, encouraged to participate, and made available for them to access. Due to the lack of NGOs and corporative society in the community, we recommended creating such in the community further to reduce poverty among the community's entrepreneurs.

**Limitations:** The current study has focused only on one slum in Lagos State due to resource constraints. However, further studies can expand this scope to include other slums in the state. Also, the focus of the study centres on entrepreneurs who engage in the provision of physical goods. However, slums have been identified to also provide cheap labour for urban dwellers. Further studies can therefore examine the welfare status of service providers, their coping strategies, and the extent to which their service provision has improved their standard of living.

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