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Editorial Desk

I have the honour of introducing the inaugural issue of the *LASU Journal of Multidisciplinary Nigerian Studies (LASUJMNS)*, Volume 1, Number 1 (December 2025). This maiden publication represents a significant step in the commitment of Lagos State University to advancing rigorous, multidisciplinary scholarship focused on Nigerian realities.

LASUJMNS was established to provide a credible academic platform for high-quality research that interrogates the social, economic, political, educational, cultural, and technological frameworks in Nigeria. The journal responds to the growing need for scholarly work that moves beyond single-discipline approaches and offers integrated, evidence-based perspectives capable of informing policy, practice, and public discourse.

As a peer-reviewed, biannual, open-access journal, LASUJMNS is committed to academic excellence, ethical publishing, and accessibility. All submissions undergo a rigorous double-blind peer review process in line with international best practices and the principles of the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE). Only original, methodologically sound, and relevant manuscripts are considered for publication.

The articles featured in this inaugural issue reflect the multidisciplinary scope and scholarly standards of the journal. They address contemporary Nigerian issues across key sectors, which offers insightful analyses, empirical findings, and practical implications that contribute meaningfully to national development discussions.

I sincerely appreciate the dedication of the Editorial and Advisory Boards, the professionalism of our reviewers, and the confidence of the authors who contributed to this first volume. Their collective efforts have laid a strong foundation for the journal. On behalf of the Editorial Board, I invite scholars, policymakers, and practitioners to engage with this issue and to partner with us in building a vibrant platform for multidisciplinary Nigerian studies.

Prof. M. O. B. Mohammed, FNAEAP

Editor-in-Chief

LASU Journal of Multidisciplinary Nigerian Studies (LASUJMNS)

Lagos State University.

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Grace, Oluwafunke AKINMOLAYAN¹ & Jennifer, Adaora OPATOLA²

¹Department of Tourism and Hospitality Management, School of Creativity, Culture and Tourism Studies, Lagos State University.

²School of Transport and Logistics, Lagos State University, Ojo Campus.

grace.akinmolayan@lasu.edu.ng; opatolajennifer@gmail.com

Abstract

Last mile delivery in Nigeria is based on the final or concluding movement of goods purchased from the producers and its delivery to the consumers who are the end users. This study investigated the last mile supply chain of Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) among micro retail outlets in Alimosho local government area based of its population and status as a dormitory city. It adopted the use of researcher's observation, interviews and questionnaires for data collection and selected a total of 100 respondents using a stratified convenient sampling technique. The FMCGs was categorized into subsections for the purpose of the study and collated data was interpreted using SPSS analysis, Microsoft Excel and descriptive statistics techniques to show pattern, volume and statistically significant relationship between objectives. The study analyzed FMCGs based on prior classified subsections to determine the commonly sold items. Replenishment of FMCGs varied greatly based on these subsections, some products sell out faster than others and thus have a higher restocking frequency. This resulted in multiple procurement strategies used by micro-retailers and innovative delivery methods employed by respondents. Solutions to challenges encountered were tailored specifically to suppliers and retailers.

Keywords:

Deliveries, FMCGs, Last mile, Micro Retailers, Supply Chain.

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Introduction

The key point of the logistics movement throughout the supply chain is to ensure the right products are delivered at the right time to the right customer. Based on this, Last mile delivery has evolved from traditional shopping habits as commerce is carried out electronically from the comfort of a home, school or office space.

The shift from traditional shopping to e-commerce and last mile delivery was exuberated partly due to the COVID-19 pandemic of year 2020 where all movement were restricted and nations went into self-isolation in a bid to contain and manage the spread of the virus. This quarantine restricted and disrupted the raw material and product flow within and outside countries especially for Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) sector, the pandemic also affected automobile industry, luxurious goods, departmental stores, tourism activities and disrupted food supply chain therefore threatening a food crisis situation (Reddy, 2020). This forced

supply chain experts to look outward and devise new strategies that would aid the supply of relief aid goods and various household items that were needed by citizens while keeping in line with the quarantine rules and regulation.

Fast moving consumer goods are consumer products that are have a high demand regardless of the season or period. They include goods such as drinks, perishable goods, personal sanitation items, non-perishable goods, etc. Despite the low profits associated with the sale of FMCGs, it possesses the tendency to sell out in larger than average quantities, thereby providing sellers with cumulative profits compared to non-FMCG products (Agarwal, 2013). The FMCG industry in Nigeria experience a boom due to the pandemic resulting in increased demand for products while citizens were in self-isolation. The demand for consumable goods driven by families were forced indoors and restricted movements only afforded limited sustenance that was sold in the immediate environment. The nature of FCMGs were compatible with sourcing decisions made by micro-retailers (Solomon and Nancy, 2014) responding to consumer demand dictated by consumer's purchase habits. Most families experienced an increase in consumption and consumption expenditure and this translated to increase in demand for perishable and non-perishable goods especially in developing countries.

The Nigerian lifestyle encouraged over 200 million persons to create a commerce hotspot that involves trading locally, regionally and internationally. Lagos state is a south western state that accommodates the largest population of persons in Nigeria. Its geographical placement allows it access to more than one mode of traveling. The use of water, rail, road and air transport modes has created an avenue where majority of the commerce activities of the country occurs in Lagos making it the largest economy in Nigeria and one of the largest in Africa and one of the most financially centered cities in the country. Its deep-sea ports and airport allow for increase in shipping activities, product demand as well as economic boom especially for the FMCGs industry during the pandemic.

Companies such as Nestle, Vital products, Dangote Group, PZ Cussons, CWAY etc. have regional headquarters in Lagos state and capitalized their operations on mitigating supply side disruptions and increased product deliveries to wholesalers and retailers. Some of these company products are household names and are in high demand across rural and metropolitan areas within the state. These locations act as hives for which commercial activities occur on an hourly basis thus creating an ecosystem for the FMCGs industry to thrive. There are several FMCGs companies that are based in the country and utilizes local sourcing to provide affordable goods for the economy in many big cities like Port Harcourt, Benin, Kano, Abuja, Enugu, Ibadan, Abeokuta, Lagos amongst others. Interstate wholesale trades of FMCGs are the easiest means of transporting goods to final consumers via break-bulk to retail and micro retail outlets.

Micro retail stores are business ventures that are usually family owned and independent. They are relatively small and found in developing areas. They are often used synonymously with bodega (a Spanish term for a family-owned grocery store in Spanish or Hispanic communities),

corner store or convenience stores. They often serve as sole sources of income or a secondary means of income for families. Surprisingly micro retail stores serve to improve local economies by providing means of livelihood for the informally skilled persons within their localities. They are relatively easy to open and operate, they're not often taxable by the government but might include some fees being paid to non-state actors or local officials. Micro retailers deal mostly in FMCGs, i.e., everyday products such as bread, cigarettes, drugs, cereal, biscuits etc. to their immediate environment. They are found in different sections of an area or in clusters along any street, schools, housing estates, along the road side etc. they are drastically smaller than supermarkets and most operations are manually based with the owner and workers being part of the family.

Micro retailers are often the last point of contact from the manufacturers to the final consumers. They purchase goods in mini bulks to be sold to the final consumers in their vicinity. A major requirement for micro retail stores is renting or leasing a commercial space, some are able to skip this step if they are operating from the comfort of an open space in the vicinity of their homes or by operating primarily online where they interact with their customers virtually and have purchased goods delivered directly.

The presence of a physical store represents security of customer interest and possible enticement of customers who may end up purchasing more than their initial plans. Despite the convenience of online shopping, some customers depending on their demographics would wish to relate with the seller and other buyers as word of mouth is often a major sales driver. Micro retail stores help to boost a sense of community in the neighborhood. A retailer who has successfully managed to gain the business, trust and respect of residents, experiences exponential sales level as most people would prefer to shop at his/her store, they are likely to give out goods on credit and accept payment in installment from her clients. In return, the residents help to safe guard her wares in her absence, encourage family and friends within the vicinity to patronize her business and spend time in the store trading local information or gossip.

Statement of Problem

The downstream aspect of supply chain could be filled with numerous challenges if proper planning and external coordination isn't applied and utilized. Delay as a result of traffic congestion is a serious issue for the country in terms of market trading and delivery. FMCGs have grown exponentially since the COVID-19 pandemic of year 2020. This is due to the increase in purchasing needs of consumers and more flexible last mile delivery options. FMCGs are one of the major drivers of the manufacturing industry thus making it invaluable to the micro, small and medium sized enterprises (MSMEs) as 95% of businesses in the country are based on fast moving consumer goods such as bread, confectionaries, soft drinks, personal care and pharmaceuticals.

Micro retailers serve as a one stop shop to final consumers to gain access to consumer goods without the added stress of going to industries or wholesalers to purchase unit goods.

Depending on the various sourcing outlets used by micro retailers, there are a limited number of vehicular varieties that is available and affordable for use by micro retailers. The recent increase in cost of operation and production of FMCGs has resulted in price increase and lower unit quantities. These price hikes are experienced by wholesalers and retailers alike; however micro retailers are most affected by it.

Given their slim profit margin plus rising transportation costs, some are being run out of business while others increase costs with every store stocking. These measures still prove ineffective as it is likely their attempts at increasing costs are met with rebuttal by customers, lower sales and increased risk of old stocks. Price of buying goods from wholesalers and retailers can exceeds stipulated budget and end up cutting significantly into the slim profits not including costs of transporting goods from point of purchase to point of sales. Increase in per unit price of products from the industry has a snowball effect throughout the supply chain.

Efforts made to by local government are minimal when it pertains to micro retailers. Most infrastructure (store front) in use by retailers are either provided by the community they operate within or by their own efforts. The private sector often work hand in hand with the micro retail sector. They have devised means of aiding movement of goods to micro retailers by providing third party logistics option via the use of vans, trucks and specially crafted vehicles which delivers goods directly to the micro retailers on a schedule. The use of POS and bank transfers has helped to ease purchase of goods. The ease of transaction and ease of delivery is dependent on the existing contract between the supplier and the micro retailers.

Despite these measures there are still various last mile mobility challenges that are being faced by micro retailers, this could be as a result of low priority given by the local government authorities because of the low understanding of the movement of FMCGs within the area. This study is therefore aimed at evaluating the logistical means by which micro retailers employ in order to transport their goods from wholesalers and other market sources to their micro retail stores where it is purchased by the final consumers. Having identified the problem, the study shall provide answers to the following questions

Research Questions

The following research questions would help give insight to the project. These includes:

1. What are the socio-economic and business characteristics of micro retailers operating in Alimosho Local Government Area (LGA)?
2. Which Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) are most commonly sold by micro retailers in Alimosho LGA?
3. How do micro retailers in Alimosho LGA procure FMCGs, and what distribution channels do they predominantly utilize?
4. What logistical challenges affect last-mile delivery of FMCGs to micro retailers in Alimosho LGA?

Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Supply chain management (SCM), which comprises all procedures that convert raw materials into finished commodities, is the management of the movement of goods and services. It entails the deliberate simplification of a company's supply-side operations in order to optimize customer value and achieve a competitive edge in the market. Production, shipping, and distribution of a product are all attempted to be centralized managed or linked. Businesses may reduce wasteful spending and speed up product delivery to customers by optimizing the supply chain.

This is accomplished by maintaining surveillance on internal inventory, internal manufacturing, internal logistics and sales, alongside participating vendors. More choices, such as in-person pickups and straight from vendor shipments are frequently necessary to satisfy client needs. The supply chain may diverge into additional directions as a result of these many requirements, which may raise the pressure to keep supplies on hand. Having enough inventory for each choice may result in overstocking. Overstocking comes at a high price. You have to pay for the actual storage space, the inefficiency of keeping things that might not be in high demand longer, and the price of transporting and selling the goods, which might be expensive if you have to provide discounts to persuade people to buy the things. Your transportation and storage expenses become less predictable as a result of the bullwhip effect.

Fast moving consumer goods are products that have a high degree of turnover and are sold ranging from bulk to unit goods. Categories that FMCGs fit into includes dairy products (milk, butter, mayonnaise etc.), over-the-counter medication (painkillers, band aid etc.), confectioneries (sweets, biscuits etc.), baked goods (Bread, snacks, etc.), soft drinks, cosmetics, hygiene products (sanitary pads, tissues, toilet rolls etc.), poultry and meat, cleaning materials etc. For FMCG shipping operations to be successful, the logistics distribution network is essential.

Companies create supply networks in order to lower costs and maintain their competitiveness in the market. It's critical to comprehend proper supply chain management techniques. As the amount of business-to-consumer (B2C) deliveries rises, particularly from e-commerce firms in freight transportation and ride-sharing firms in personal transportation, last-mile delivery is becoming a more widely studied topic. Increasing efficiency, maintaining transparency, lowering costs, and upgrading infrastructure are some difficulties with last-mile delivery.

Adam Hayes (2022) on his blog (Investopedia) explains the term "last mile" is used to represent the brief geographic area when products or media services are delivered to clients who dwell in populated areas. The periphery of a densely inhabited area can receive telecommunications and media material instantly and very quickly for physical goods. For instance, a delivery line that extends to the limits of a city or a large metropolitan area possesses nodes and branches which must extend across the closely spaced streets and buildings to serve the people who work and live there.

In response, businesses are rushing to innovate novel supply chain models and technologies in an effort to reduce costs while increasing package volume, accelerating deliveries, and delighting customers. The last mile delivery on the same day is regrettably one of the largest costs and problems. Rural areas often have delivery points along a particular route that are several miles apart and only accept one or two packages each. The situation isn't much better in urban areas because the near-constant delays caused by traffic congestion quickly offset any advantages that stop proximity may have.

In the United States, costs and inefficiencies associated with last mile distribution has worsened with the rapid growth of e-commerce in retail sales thus raising the volume of packages ordered and delivered daily and the rapid changes in consumer preferences leading towards fast and free delivery on each purchase. Prior to the e-commerce surge, the majority of last-mile shipments were made by goods for consumers and businesses traveling on pallets from factories, depots, or fulfillment centers to other companies or retail establishments. Technological innovations have initiated capacity planning (Crainic et al, 2016), cargo distribution optimization (Marmolejo-Saucedo, 2022) and sustainable energy sources for unmanned technologies (Galkin et al, 2019)

With up to 53% of the entire cost of moving products, the last link in the supply chain is frequently the least efficient. Deliveries in metropolitan areas might be difficult, which is another aspect of the last mile problem, as a result, it has emerged as the top priority for them to introduce new technology and promote process improvements. With time, speed, and cost becoming trade-offs and variations of the service, businesses are focusing on offering this choice for the client to choose from, hastening the growth of last mile logistics in the twenty-first century. Top developments with technology in play include the creation of last-mile-specific markets. Shipping to restaurants, retail stores, and other businesses in a major commercial area frequently cause traffic jams and safety issues. Since it significantly affects both customer satisfaction and broader logistics costs, last mile is a logistics issue that needs to be improved.

Traditionally, before the widespread use of internet and its array of services, the internet was simply more or less a form of catalog viewing. Beginning as a way to satisfy consumer curiosity to browse items online, it has quickly advanced to become the convenient shopping channel, giving customers access to a large range of products across local and now worldwide geographic borders and delivering them to their residences in a brief period of time.

Studies has shown 30% increase in usage of same-day delivery services in 2016 than 2014. These sudden developments are significantly impacting existing retail logistics strategies and operations. Difficulties are associated in particular to the kind of provided product. Food and drug goods frequently need to be stored within specific temperature ranges. Usually, multiple individuals are needed to carry large, bulky objects like household appliances and furniture. Numerous gadgets and electronics need to be delivered and installed upon delivery.

The last mile delivery procedure is the most inefficient part of the delivery process; hence it frequently requires unconventional thinking to improve efficiency. In supply chain management, the term "last-mile" refers to the challenging final leg of transporting people and commodities from hubs to ultimate destinations. The term "last mile" in the context of transit systems refers to the increasing marginal cost of moving people from a prime location, such as an airport or train terminal, to their desired location.

Smaller vehicles, like vans, are preferred for last mile delivery because it's more economical and browses more locations that could be engaged. However, additional delivery efforts might also be required, which might raise expenses even more and make last-mile delivery the least effective part of the delivery process. Recent studies have highlighted the use of drone technology to influence productivity and supply efficiency (Kellermann et al 2020). A prime example of overcoming the challenges of last mile delivery is Amazon.

Amazon is a household name that's commonly associated with last mile delivery. This is due to long term planning and implementation of decisions that are customer centric and controlled output or product placement, training of staff and technology implementation are a few factors that has led to the success of Amazon deliveries. Instead of depending on outside logistics companies, Amazon has constantly invested time and money into growing its own distribution network (3PLs). It continually makes investments in innovative equipment, such as robots and drones, and Amazon is aware that using these technologies will require workers to undergo retraining. Resulting in the corresponding investments in its workforce.

Thanks to delivery giants like Amazon, most customers expect accuracy, speed and timeliness in last mile delivery. Provision of commendable logistics services are key to improving brand image and loyalty, word of mouth advertising and referrals are often due to increased level of satisfaction for suppliers and clients alike.

System Theory

Ludwig von Bertalanffy's research in the 1940s and 1950s was the first to advocate for a general systems theory. He wrote "General System Theory: Grundlagen, Development, Applications" in 1968. This book's objective was to present some fundamental principles that can be used in almost all scientific disciplines. According to him, the cyclical interactions between separate parts of a complex system that both influence it and have an impact on it may be applied to various contexts and provide valuable information. In order to further integrate specific subjects and correlate them to each other rather of viewing them separately, Bertalanffy argued that there should be universal rules or fundamentals that are used throughout the sciences and in educational contexts.

According to the systems theory of management, every organization is made up of a number of interconnected systems or subsystems. Each component of the entire system is interdependent with the others and is reliant on them for proper operation. In light of this, it is likely that things that negatively affect one subsystem within an organization will also

negatively affect other subsystems suggesting that choices and actions made in one corporate area will have an impact on other areas.

Researchers sought a deeper understanding of how people behave in relation to the systems around them, either machine-based or not, as people engaged with new technology in increasing numbers. Here is where the theory of signal detection originated: to improve military personnel's ability to differentiate between different signals, better radar and sensor equipment were needed. The approach's compositional roots can generally be found in the works of 19th-century social scientists Herbert Spencer, an English sociologist and philosopher, and Émile Durkheim, a French social scientist. In social evolution perspectives, it can be thought of as society evolving into more complex state as opposed to perfection being attained. The term "structural differentiation" describes how a civilization adjusts to its surroundings by changing how ambiguous it is from within.

The fundamental tenet of systems theory is that the entirety is bigger than the combined amount of its parts, irrespective of the field to which it is utilized. It aims to clarify and contribute to the formation on traits that appear in complex systems but that would appear to be impossible to exist in any one component across all systems. Emergent behavior can be seen in action on the assumption that a dynamic system exhibits emergent behavior if its qualities do not show these features on their own.

For instance, to create a particular type of meal e.g. Jollof rice, you'll need items such as rice, pepper, tomatoes, onions and various seasonings. Each item individually can't make jollof rice without being combined. This shows that the Jollof rice is a system that's more enhanced as a whole than the ingredients being used to create it. Or if there is a fully prepared jollof rice and one is required to taste it and identify the items used within it, you may be able to correctly identify the rice that was used but wonder about the other ingredients that changed the taste and texture of the food. In a party atmosphere that this food is being served, two or more people sited together may strike up a conversation on the taste and texture of the food, they could trade guesses and information on how to improve on their personal cooking in order to emulate the food they have been served. This can lead to further bonding amongst them which may not have occurred if the jollof rice that instigated the conversation was not served. This gives a different and unique interaction that occur as a result of the whole system.

Every field can apply systems theory by examining how the many components (ingredients above) came together to form the meal (Jollof rice) and the way it eventually produced the outcome that none of these features could generate on their own without changing their surroundings (as emergent characteristic). Some industries, like transportation, have incredibly varied applications. In order to consider their work holistically and better grasp all the variables at stake within their specialties, researchers in broad domains must utilize systems theory.

The cycle nature of a supply chain system is an obvious application of systems theory. Supply chain systems must coordinate with many different variable subsystems, starting from Producer, distributor, wholesaler, retailer and consumer. Throughout the past few decades,

"supply chain'" perception has expanded in scope. This expansion is mostly brought about by increased analysis of the different sections and treating them as an integral subsection without lumping all of it together under a department.

Bullwhip Effect

The concept of Bullwhip effect is based on the mechanics of whip cracking and as a business tries to meet the more erratic upstream demand, it can lead to considerable increases in expenses, increase in production, and decline in service levels. Unexpected spikes in consumer demand, poor inventory control, and a variety of other issues can make a minor problem at the store level ricochet back and enlarge in scope across the rest of the supply chain. The bullwhip effect is how economists refer to this spiraling domino effect.

Bullwhip effect frequently happens when shops are overly responsive to demand, which in turn amplifies expectations surrounding it and sends ripples across the supply chain. Based on limited data, businesses must forecast customer demand and attempt to foresee the amount of product that customers will actually want while taking into account the many elements that enable that amount to be delivered accurately and on schedule. Every step of the supply chain has the potential for changes and disruptions, which have an impact on the numerous supplier orders.

All the other elements in the chain, including inventories, are directly impacted by changes in client demand. But, in reasonably stable markets where demand is virtually consistent, the bullwhip effect can happen. The bullwhip effect is risky because it magnifies supply chain inefficiencies as demand is continually and inaccurately estimated at each stage. As a result, there may be an overinvestment in goods, lost sales, a reduction in customer service, a delay in delivery schedules, layoffs or bankruptcy.

For instance, a store will request more stock from its distributor if they predict a significant rise in demand for a product based on recent sales statistics. The distributor will relay this request to the product's manufacturer. This is but one component of supply chain management, and it is not necessarily indicative of a bullwhip impact. This mechanism is typically distorted by the bullwhip effect in one of two ways. The first instance is when a retailer changes an order because the demand projection was different than usual. When it moves further up the supply chain to the manufacturer, the size of this error tends to increase. The second scenario is when a retailer gets accurate information about demand but draws the wrong inferences because the details of the retailer's order change are lost, which causes wholesalers to make the wrong judgments that are then amplified higher up the supply chain.

Using this scenario, a micro-retailer goes to replenish her inventory and informs her supplier that the rise in purchases is attributable to recent community growth or an increase in client spending, the supplier can interpret this as a cue to buy more merchandise in expectation of rising sales. It's possible the producer will be left with a sizable product surplus when order regulates.

Following this, the retailer and the distributor can experience identical issues because it results from a lack of communication throughout a supply chain, the bullwhip effect can be challenging to spot in real time. It frequently happens that this phenomenon is only discovered after inefficiencies have already been established. As one travels upstream in the supply chain, the impact is that variations are exacerbated (further from the customer).

The bullwhip effect has several behavioral reasons, according to Dellaert et al. (2017), one of which is underestimating the pipeline. A groundbreaking study by Lee et al. (1997) found that the bullwhip effect was not only the result of irrational decision-making, and that in some cases, it is rational for a firm to place orders with higher levels of variability than demand, which can distort demand and result in the bullwhip effect.

Methodology

This study was carried out within the vicinity of Alimosho LGA, it utilized the efforts of five research assistants whom carried out surveys, shared questionnaires and helped to interview randomly selected participants. This study utilized both primary and secondary data sources in its quest to seek answers to the research questions. Primary data were obtained through interviews, questionnaires and general observation of the activities of retailers, utilizing questionnaires, authors observational skills and personalized interviews with the micro retailers. Primary data instruments used included recorders and notepads. Data gotten would be analyzed using Chi Square and Anova. Secondary data were collected from websites hosting pertinent journals, articles, and research papers which offered details on the different facets of this subject. Major libraries were included as a data source. This study shall encompass conveniently selected micro retailers that operate along the inner streets in Power-line vicinity of the Alimosho local government area. At the end of the stratified convenience sampling, over a hundred (100) micro retailers and suppliers were participants to the study. Each respondent varied based on location and products sold. FMCGs sold were classified under five different subsections. The subsections included Beverages (water, drinks.), Confectionaries (biscuits, sweets), Baked goods (bread, snacks), Drugs and other household items. Some of the core data were collected via two sets of questionnaires. Ten micro retailers in the Powerline and its environs some of which included Council roundabout, Liasu road and Idimu road within the Alimosho local government area received questionnaires that was distributed on ten separate streets. The researcher also observed interactions and held interviews with the respondents. Data obtained from this research were collated using SPSS and descriptive statistical techniques explaining retailer's logistical operations. Interpretation of results were done via charts, graphs and mean and standard deviation. Chi square and Anova were the statistical tools to use.

Results

Research Question One: What are the socio-economic and business characteristics of micro retailers operating in Alimosho Local Government Area (LGA)?

Micro retailer's demographic

The study used over a hundred questionnaires spread across the different streets in the study area. A high volume of traffic was observed along the major corridors of the study area which would suggest a high volume of goods movement. It was observed that many able-bodied populaces are either unemployed or are at risk of being unemployed because they are seen loitering around the area. Their presence reveals a mounting rate of unemployment which have led to an increase in informal trading thus resulting in low capital-based businesses. Observation of researcher showed that most micro retail stores are family owned and operated. Given the commercial inclination of the country, job security is a thing of high uncertainty and male breadwinners can find themselves without a source of income without warning. When this happens, their spouses are likely to try and pick up the slack by engaging in informal trade thus influencing a significant percentage of micro retailers to be women. 28% of respondents were males who chose either to run their shops in person while excluding influence from their wives or they have more than one shop in which each spouse runs independently.

Table 1: Showing the age range of respondents

	Frequency	Percent
16 – 25 years	16	16.0
26 – 35 years	30	30.0
36 – 45 years	38.0	38.0
46 and above	16.0	16.0
Total	100	100.0

38% of respondents are aged within 36 – 45 years, this suggests an older demographic of retailers who have been in trade for most of their adult lives, most are self-employed and uses their retail outlet to cater for their established families as a primary source.

They expressed knowledge gained from being in the business for longer than ten years and as a result has both suppliers and customer loyalty.

This is closely followed by 30% of respondents aged by 26 – 35 years, some of which were relatively new to the retail industry and were in a state of flux with suppliers and customers. More so, showcasing that respondents in this age group are starting families and seek to utilize retail outlets as a secondary or supplementary source of income and to balance their salary gotten from a government job. Furthermore, an equal volume of respondents within the range of 16 – 25 years and 46 and above at 16% shows variance in purpose for being in the retail industry.

It's likely that the younger demographic of respondents who are still dependent on their families and are thus predisposed to retail as a source of income to support school expenses or to cushion the impact of unemployment whilst actively searching for jobs.

The elderly age group consists of mostly retired or about to retire persons of whom started retail as a means of passing the time while making enough to sustain themselves. These groups often have young children with them at the stores, likely their grandchildren during the holidays to assists in the sales.

Research Question Two: Which Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCGs) are most commonly sold by micro retailers in Alimosho LGA?

The FMCGs market

FMCGs under study were sub-categorized into five different sections for the purpose of clarity as consumer goods vary in demand and resale value. The sub-categories are Drinks, baked goods, confectionaries, household items and other FMCG products that do not fall within a specific category. Confectionaries such as biscuits, sweets, chocolates and gum are notably the highest selling product amongst respondents at 48% of responses. A close second were household items at 26% response, followed closely by drinks at 14% response. baked goods and the others category had a low response at 6%. This shows that most micro retailers sell more confectionaries as compared to other products, their target customers include school children, teens and parents who buys their favorite items on a daily basis. Micro retailers selling confectionaries display a multitude of products in order to attract all possible clientele, there are numerous varieties of biscuits, sweets, chocolates and gum that retailers stock up on because it has a high turnover compared to other FMCGs.

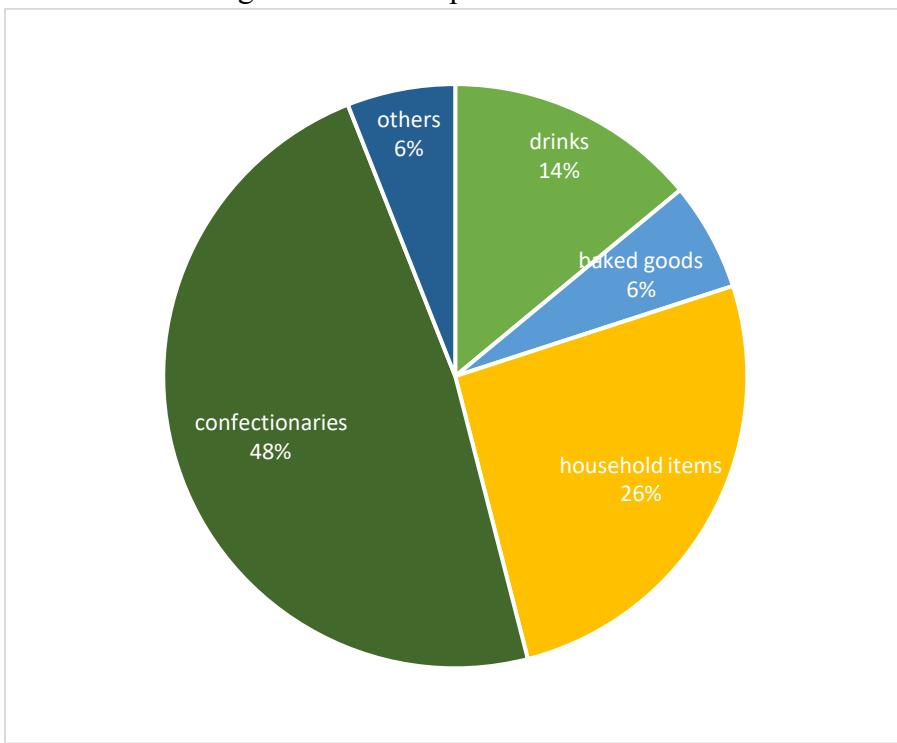


Figure 1.1 A pie chart showing the various categories of FMCGs field work 2023.

Source: Authors

The profit margin of these goods is quite slim or almost nonexistent so retailers sell varieties of popular goods in hopes of making a sizable profit. In a country where most people live hand to mouth, the sale of household groceries that assists in cooking such as cereal, spaghetti, noodles, tin tomatoes, seasoning cubes, sugar, milk, etc. Consumers that live within the communities find it cheaper to purchase these goods per unit as it helps them manage their expenses and track their diets.

Final consumers buying from their preferred micro retailer means they don't have to bother to buy in bulk from a general market and run the risk of product expiring or mismanaging their budget by buying what they won't need. Most of the household items sold are either sealed airtight, dried or canned and are often of just one usage, i.e., it is designed to suit the needs of one person. It has an average turnover and few daily sales are made. Micro retailers selling household items often combine multiple FMCGs which includes confectionaries and baked goods. They act as the mini affordable supermarket as they display varieties ranging from bread to cereal to tin tomatoes to cooking oil to frozen goods and soft drinks. Customers are able to buy items for a meal at a very cheap price as compared to bulk buying in the general market. Beverages are a popular option amongst micro-retailers; there are three classifications of beverages sold. They include:

- **Water** – sachet water, bottled water and dispenser bottles.
- **Soft drinks** – fizzy drinks such as Fanta, Pepsi, Coke, Mineral water, Ice tea etc.
- **Caffeinated drinks** – energy drinks such as Predator, Fearless, Monster and Redbull
- **Hard liquor** – drinks with a strong alcoholic content such as Chelsea spirit sold in sachets, Heineken, Goldberg etc.

The type of drinks sold may vary depending on location as micro retailers that are situated near car parks tend to sell a mixture of soft drinks and liquor, those situated near school environments tend to sell on soft drinks and those situated near beer parlor or clubs deal mostly with hard liquor. Respondents who sell drinks regularly have it delivered to their store fronts from their suppliers.

The location at which some micro retailers sell often have impact on the types of beverages sold. Locations closer to beer parlor, clubs and vehicle pack tend to include hard liquor and caffeinated drinks amongst their beverage offerings. Most micro retailers tend to store these items in a refrigerator or a freezer to be sold to clients as a cold temperature in hopes of increasing its appeal after a day spent walking under the sun. Most of the beverages being sold are often delivered to the micro retailers via trucks, vans or SCVs. These deliveries would be expanded on further in this chapter.

Research Question Three: How do micro retailers in Alimosho LGA procure FMCGs, and what distribution channels do they predominantly utilize?

Majority of the respondents have been in the retail business for more than a decade and are considered experts in their trade. They chose retail as a source of income and actively shun any white-collar jobs for themselves, preferring to sell their wares closer to home or offices of the blue-collared workers. There is a slight variance in the restocking process of the micro retailers, people who make daily sales are more prone to restock their products once or twice a week, while few do theirs once every two weeks. Price increase of FMCGs is constant in the market space and retailers always have to be on a look out for current price upgrade if not they would be severely affected when they go to restock their goods.

The increase in cost of transportation and cost of goods can be a draining combination for micro retailers, which is why they choose a means of restocking that is cost efficient. 48% of respondents choose to restock their goods in person while 28% rely on delivery and 24% chose

to use both options available depending on which is less stressful and efficient. A way of cutting transport cost is by shopping in major markets that are closer to their base of operation. 52% of respondents chose to shop directly from wholesalers at the nearest market at Ikotun.

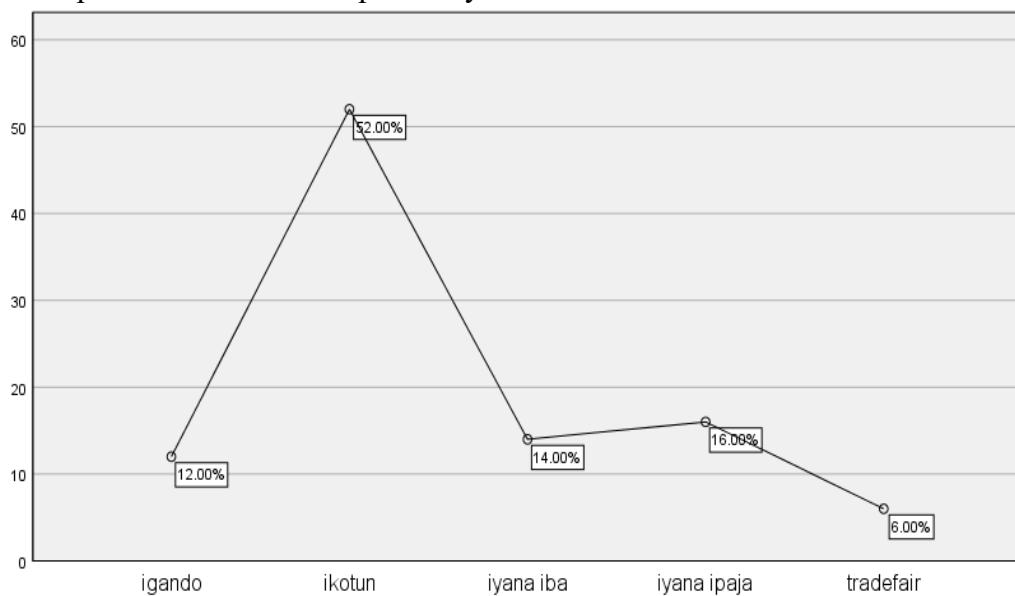


Figure 2.1 A line graph showing various markets from which micro retailer procure their goods. Source: Author's field work, 2023

The Ikotun general market is a major business hub for traders and suppliers as most of the goods present are delivered there straight from factory. By purchasing from wholesalers, respondents were able to restock goods at carton price or dozen price which enables them to gain profit when selling to customers. It is likely that deliveries of goods also happen from that axis. Preference to shop at different general markets may be tied to other factors such as loyalty, personal interest or price fluctuation as shown by 16%, 14%, 12% and 6% of respondents that choose to procure goods at Iyana-Ipaja, Iyana-Iba, Igando and Trade-fair respectively.

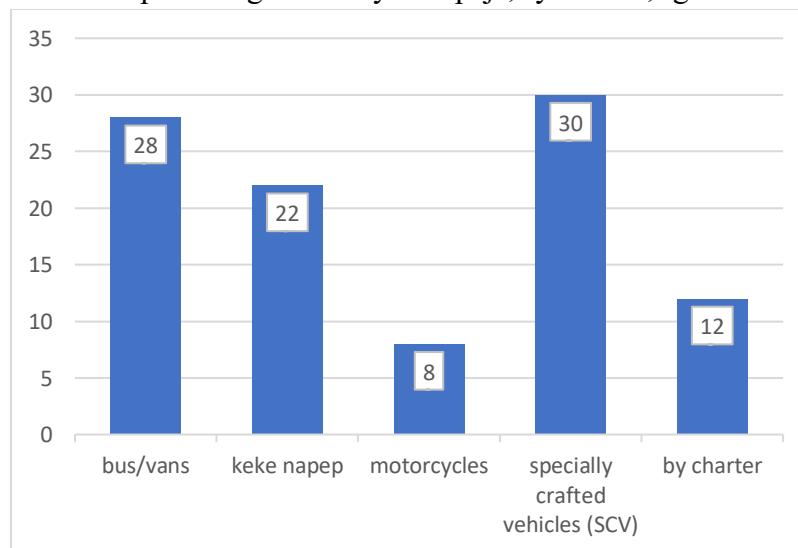


Figure 2.2 A chart showing means of transport used by micro retailers. Source: Authors field work 2023

Data shows that respondents were often relying on specially crafted vehicles (SCVs) for storefront deliveries. This is especially common for micro retailers of confectionaries, baked goods and drinks. 30% of respondents receive goods via SCVs, 28% receive via vans/buses, 22% receive by Keke-Napep and 12% receive by charter while only 8% of respondents utilize motorcycles from market to storefront.

The Transport Carriers

SCVs are mechanically altered vehicles, usually combining two different vehicles to suit a purpose of mass delivery. A common example of this is combining a motorcycle and the flat bed end of a truck. These indigenous vehicles are used to deliver products in mass to more than one storefront. They are economical, relatively fast and flexible. The use of SCVs is seen as a means of reducing cost of transport since they are more economical than regular delivery trucks. These adapted bikes are often used to deliver to a single retailer at once. Money for delivery is often charged and paid alongside the goods purchased or as stated by an agreement between both parties. It often sits one or two people and it runs on the little fuel like a motorcycle does.

The second popular choice of delivery is via vans. These are larger than SCVs and can be used to deliver goods to multiple retailers operating along the same route. The vans are used to deliver drinks, bread or packaged confectionaries in multiple locations. This is called goods consolidation. Retailers who consolidate their goods spend less on delivery and the suppliers are able to better manage their resources.

Keke Maruwa also known as Keke Napep is another vehicle that is used by retailers to transport goods from market to storefront. It's quite flexible and a popular means of travel. Retailers utilize it to move water, bread and other FMCGs products. They can be independently contracted by either retailers or wholesalers and they are relatively cheap to contract. Independent drivers use their tricycles as a means of income by choosing to transport freight instead of passengers.

Research Question Four: What logistical challenges affect last-mile delivery of FMCGs to micro retailers in Alimosho LGA?

The logistical challenges of last mile delivery of fastmoving consumer goods to retailers in Alimosho LGA are discussed below.

The logistical challenges.

The supply of goods to the micro retailers can be considered an open market. This makes it susceptible to new entrants and exit, as suppliers can operate freely without any government taxes or intervention. The market is by no means volatile or but it is over-saturated. As a result of this, private logistics companies have a higher percentage of users as compared to private suppliers, these companies either deliver unit goods via dispatch or bulk goods depending on order. The difference between private companies and private users depend greatly on the type

of goods to be delivered and the cost of delivery. The supply business is heavily dominated by male presence with little female impact.

The loading, driving and offloading portion of the deliveries are handled by the males while the females are restricted to the administrative portion of the deliveries. Their duties include taking orders, relaying information and customer care. Male suppliers are often married men within the ages of 36 – 45 years. They are the breadwinners of their families and decided to go into the logistics business after trying out a series of other business or inclinations. Respondents listed various reasons for engaging in retail supply industry, some of which are explained here. Some of the respondents got into the logistics business as a result of family or relatives or friends who have succeeded in a similar line of work. Some got into it as a viable business means using their already present asset, that is, a private car, motorbike, tricycle, bus or van. Either starting their own company, hiring workers and working with manufacturers and retailers alike. Others choose to work independently to deliver goods only when solicited for transport purposes. Clientele are gained from one or a combination of three ways, these includes:

- **Working with manufacturers/wholesalers:** This ranges from having a verbal agreement or contract with wholesalers to deliver their goods to the micro retailers to leaving a calling card or contact info with wholesaler or retailers and finally hanging around popular major markets and physically pitching their services to patrons of the market. They rely on physical contact to gain customers.
- **Advertising services on the internet:** this is popular with logistics companies who specialize in dispatch and haulage services. They utilize social media to expose their brand or services and sometimes offer incentives for customers. They rely on building their brand image to gain customers.
- **Word of mouth:** this is a combination of the earlier mentioned strategies. It's the most profitable strategy because most micro retailers prefer to use someone, they can trust with the movement of their goods with the least number of problems associated. Word of mouth or referrals can be gained via friendship or family ties, excellent service provision or good faith.

Respondents working with private companies earn a steady monthly salary of N 50,000 to N 70,000 while those who work on commission earn based on what they are able to deliver just like independent suppliers. The vehicle being used to deliver varies based on the size and quantity of goods to be delivered. Independent suppliers often use their cars or specially crafted vehicles (SCV) to transport items such as bread or eggs while the delivery of water and beverages are often done by vans or trucks.

Respondents identified several challenges that they encounter when doing their deliveries, with the dominant ones being client absence, late payment, traffic congestion, bad roads and security. The use of scheduling and calling ahead of inform clients of delivery helps reduce cases of client absence but it's not always effective as some clients may be unavailable on the day of delivery. Late payment can delay delivery as some clients would prefer to see their goods being delivered before they pay for the transport cost. This is being negated by having the price

of delivery factored into the total cost of purchased goods, this method works primarily for suppliers that work hand in hand with wholesalers.

Bad roads are a common challenge for all motorists in Lagos state, the volume of vehicle on the road outpaces its capacity, thus its prone to increased wear and tear and incidences of bottlenecks that can cause traffic congestion which can last hours. Although delivery to micro retailers is done on secondary roads, they still utilize primary roads to get to their location. They reduce the impact of bad roads and traffic by changing routes to less congested roadways when going on delivery.

Security issues experienced by suppliers often arise when entering into a gated community on their delivery routes. Some types of vehicles are restricted based on orders of the community association or they don't allow people that doesn't live in the community to enter without notification and approval from the person they are delivering to. Some incidents that may also hinder quick delivery in which the supplier has no control over may include workers strike, riots in the delivery location or severe weather conditions. In order to safeguard the goods and protect it from damage, suppliers are likely to withdraw and/or delay delivery until it is safe to do so.

Conclusion

Micro retailers' attempt to bring the market and goods closer to the final consumers has resulted in ingenious adoption of sustainable and cost-effective last mile solutions thus ensuring break bulk actions at retail level as a means of mitigating waste, price and budgeting issues for the final consumer. This void filled by micro retailers assists final consumers in managing their budget. By selling items in units, they are able to offer up a variety of options from different brands allowing customers to mix and match their preferred products thus improving customer satisfaction, and building customer relationships whilst maintaining a profit. Micro retailers are not known to express brand loyalty as they prefer to stock up on goods that have high demand and profit. The relationship between micro retailers and their suppliers are symbiotic in nature; by adapting and cooperating with suppliers on new means of freight movement, micro retailers are able to receive their goods and reduce incidences of lost sales due to stock out. More sales translate to more goods delivery and brand specialization for the suppliers.

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