

An Evaluation of How Pedestrians Perceive About Street Vendors Occupying Public Sidewalks: An Empirical Study in Rajshahi City Corporation

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Abstract

Streets wouldn't be complete without sidewalks. A sidewalk is a paved path along the curb or edge of a street for pedestrians to use. Pedestrians need a safe path with fewer impediments to get from one point to another quickly, efficiently, and safely. This inquiry focuses on the desires or needs of pedestrians to implement arrangements about this matter, such as sidewalks, for the better, secure, and free development of pedestrians. Thus, this study aims to identify the issues that pedestrians face as a result of street hawkers on footpaths and to find the remedy based on the viewpoints of pedestrians on hawking on footpaths. Quantitative information is essential to this study. Hence, researchers used a simple random sampling method to talk to several people on the street in Shaheb Bazar, Laxmipur, and CNB Mor. They did this using a questionnaire. The majority of responders support removing street vendors from the area. The study also shows that most pedestrians avoid the sidewalks entirely because of the numerous street vendors. As a result of their habit of wandering along busy streets, they're involved in a wide variety of mishaps. Pedestrians were also unhappy about the crowding on the sidewalk caused by street vendors. Most people walking about seemed to feel bad for the street vendors. As a result, they seek redevelopment or organization of the area around them.

Keywords: Street Hawker; Pedestrian's Perception; Encroach; Eviction; Re-development.

1 Introduction

Rajshahi City Corporation has 50 kilometers of four-lane roads and 35 kilometers of footpaths designed for pedestrians (Habib, 2020). These footbridges are intended to provide pedestrians with a safe and peaceful passage through the city. However, a growing issue has emerged, obscuring the pedestrian experience. A street vendor has intruded on what should be a pedestrian-friendly sidewalk. Urbanization and industrialization have increased migration rates, forcing workers to look for unorganized jobs like hawking on the street (Sharma, 2016). Street vendors, who set up stalls and exhibitions, create chaos on sidewalks, making it difficult for pedestrians to move freely. Street hawkers, also known as feriwala, hari-patil-wala, dukandars of the footpath, and traders of the sidewalk, are individuals who sell goods and services without a permanent fixed structure (F. Rahman & Rashid, 2020). They can be stationary or mobile, and can also hawk their goods inside moving buses (M. S. Rahman, 2019). Street vendors support the unofficial economy in developing nations. However, the global problem of hawkers blocking sidewalks puts pedestrians in danger (Sonawane, 2007). Only 64% of people use footpaths at road intersections (Hasan & Chowdhury, 2021), and illegal use causes accidents. Due to cooking markets, illegal parking, and roadside businesses blocking half of the road's width, road users are unable to fully enjoy the infrastructure (Matin & Rana, 2018). Women and elders are particularly affected, and the public becomes involved in a chaotic dance. Street hawking in underdeveloped welfare systems generates employment, income, and affordable goods through social life networks (Rajabu, 2022). Singapore's street hawkers represent multiculturalism and contribute to the country's Michelin-starred restaurants (Pillai, 2020). However, the government neglects their needs, leading to economic growth and environmental pollution (Azis & Tek, 2018). To address this issue, researchers conducted an investigation in Shaheb Bazaar, Laxmipur, and CNB Mor, where conflicts between street vendors and pedestrians were most pronounced. The study aimed to investigate the influence of street vendors on pedestrian perception.

Two main objectives guided this study. First, the study aimed to identify several problems faced by pedestrians due to sidewalk street vendors. Second, the goal is to identify potential solutions to the sidewalk vending problem from a unique pedestrian perspective.

With a focus on the pedestrians' limitations on freedom and safety, a survey was conducted to better understand the interactions between Rajshahi's pedestrians and street vendors. The study concentrated on environmentally sustainable methods of promoting peace, such as organized markets like the hawker centers in Singapore, which would allow for free, safe, and effective pedestrian mobility. Both residents and pedestrians expressed a desire for order and renovation under rigorous regulations. Time constraints, a lack of pertinent research, and respondents' openness to sharing expertise were obstacles, nevertheless.

2 Methodology

This study's approach provides a complete set of tools for gathering and examining various viewpoints and ideas pertinent to the research topic. It also indicates several methods for gathering, analyzing, and assessing data. This review topic was selected to examine the difficulties that pedestrians have while encroaching on sidewalks and their suggestions for resolving this illegal hawking situation for the benefit of the general public, pedestrians, and peddlers. Three study areas were selected. They are respectively -CNB Mor, Laxmipur & Shaheb Bazar. A structured questionnaire survey was used in this study to gather information from pedestrians in specific study regions. A corresponding number of pedestrians in the research locations was chosen using a simple random sampling procedure in order to assure the validity and reliability of the results. With a 95% confidence level and a 6% margin of error, the primary data were gathered from 240 respondents in Shaheb Bazar, CNB, and Laxmipur in the Rajshahi City Corporation. With the use of software like SPSS and MS Excel, the collected data are analyzed and shown in a variety of graphs and charts.

3 Result and Discussion

We have classified our data analysis into 3 stages. The first one is a Demographic Analysis, the next one is an Analysis of the pedestrian's problem, and the final one is Concerning eviction.

3.1 Demographic Analysis

Figure 1 shows the demographic distribution of pedestrians in Shaheb Bazar, with young males being the most active, accounting for 26.66% of the data. Female responders, aged 21-30, occupied the second position, with 58 females responding. The majority of respondents were between 21-30, with females being less common in study areas like Laxmipur and CNB Mor.

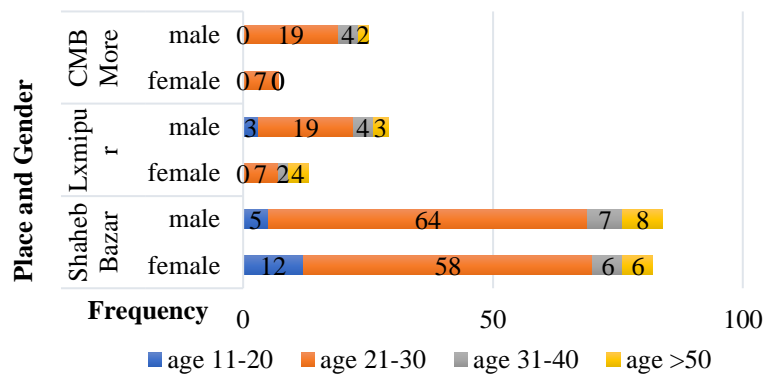


Figure 1. Pedestrian's Demographic.

3.2 Analysis of the Pedestrian's Problem

The problems that the pedestrian of the selected area face have been described here.

3.2.1 Footpath Congestion

The pie chart in Figure 2 shows that 50% of respondents feel the footpath is congested, while 45% sometimes find it congested. Only 5% never encounter congested footpaths.

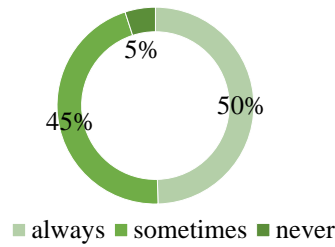


Figure 2. Footpath Congestion.

3.2.2 Way to Reach the Destination

Figure 3 demonstrates that the same numbers of respondents choose the sidewalk and main road while reaching their destination. About 50% of respondents use sidewalks and 50% use main roads to reach their destination.

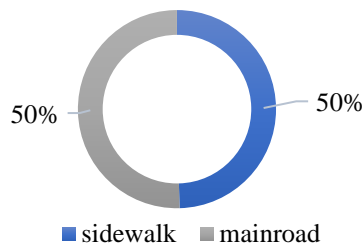


Figure 3. Way to Reach the Destination.

3.2.3 Reason for Not Using Sidewalk

Figure 4 shows 50% of pedestrians don't use sidewalks due to limited space, while 48.12% and 31.55% are unable to use sidewalks due to overcrowding. 15.5% find it time-consuming, and 4.81% believe these factors are the main reason for choosing the main road.

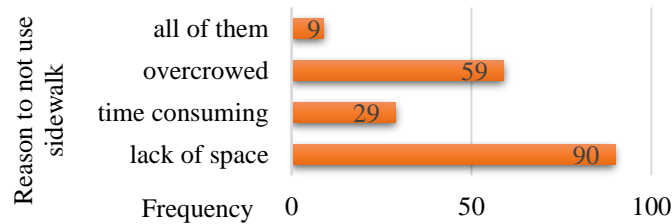


Figure 4. Reason for Not Using Sidewalk.

3.2.4 Rate of Getting Hit or Injured

In Figure 5, Hawkers store promotional materials on pavement, causing 62% of pedestrians to be harmed or hurt, with 9% experiencing an injury, while 29% never experienced a strike.

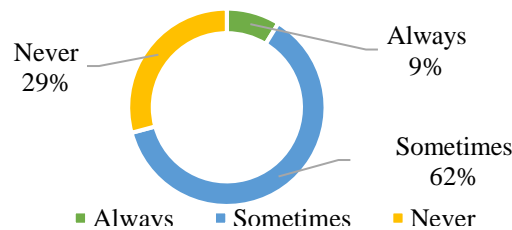


Figure 5. Rate of Getting Hit or Injured.

3.2.5 People Getting Pushed

Figure 2.5 reveals that the majority of respondents (52%) complained that they sometimes get pushed by other people while using the sidewalks to reach their destination. From the chart, 43% of respondents always get pushed by other people, and 5% said they never get pushed by people.

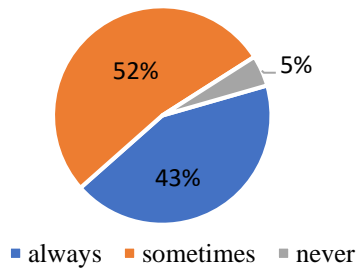


Figure 6. Rate of People Getting Pushed.

3.2.6 People-Faced Crime

The majority of pedestrians who were walking on crowded sidewalks reported being rubbered, hijacked, or fighting, with 42.66% reporting rubbering, 31.30% reporting fighting, 14.78% reporting hijacking, and 11.30% reporting other crimes.

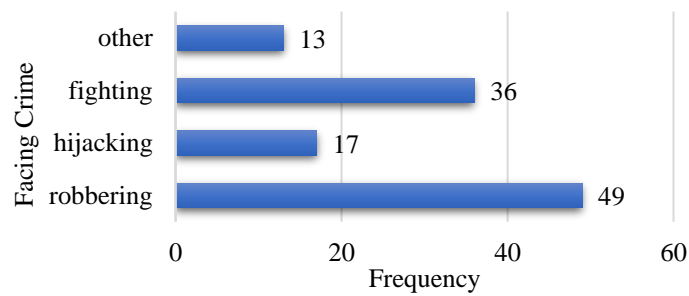


Figure 7. People-Faced Crime.

3.2.8 Elderly People Faced the Problem

Figure 2.7 shows that elderly people face issues like mistreatment, pushing, and harsh words while using sidewalks. 8% complain about mistreatment, 37% about pushing, and 11% about criticism, while 44% report all these issues.

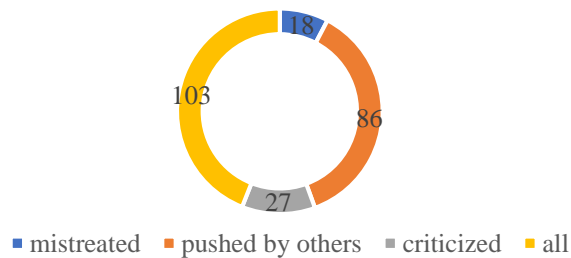


Figure 8. Elderly People Faced Problem.

3.2.9 Other problem

In Table 1, other problems that showed up are women harassment and road accidents. Due to congested sidewalks, 62 women face harassment out of 125 women on the other hand 240 users use the roads for walking and 152 of them end up meeting accidents.

Table 1. Other problem.

| Other problem | Opinion | | Description |
|------------------|---------|-----|---|
| Women harassment | Yes | 62 | Out of 125 women in our study |
| | No | 63 | |
| Road accidents | Yes | 152 | Out of 240 users who walk on the road instead of the sidewalk |
| | No | 88 | |

3.3 Analysis of Concerning Eviction

Table 3 shows that 66.67% of people agreed with evicting street hawkers from footpaths, while 14.58% disagreed and 18.75% had no comments. The majority of people support evicting street hawkers.

Table 2. Eviction from the sidewalk.

| Opinion on eviction | Frequency |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Yes | 160 |
| No | 35 |
| No Comments | 45 |

3.3.1 Rate of Wanting Re-development in Suitable Location

Most people agreed with redeveloping a street hawker's location, with 59.16% strongly agreeing and 32.08% agreeing. However, 2.08% disagreed, and 6.66% did not respond in Figure 9.

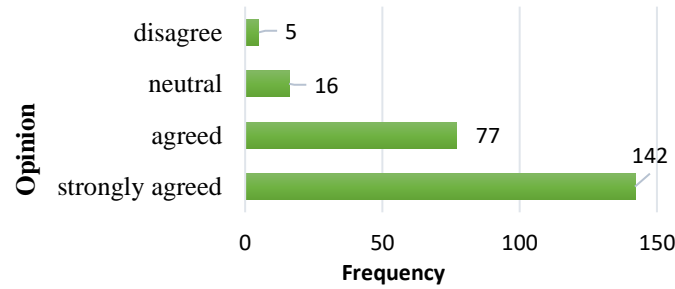


Figure 9. Rate of Wanting Re-development in Suitable Location.

3.3.2 Rate of Starting Back Business on The Footpath

Street hawkers may return to the footpath if they cannot perform their business properly in their new location. Most pedestrians, 55%, strongly agree, with 23% strongly supporting their return. A small percentage, 6%, do not plan to return Figure 10.

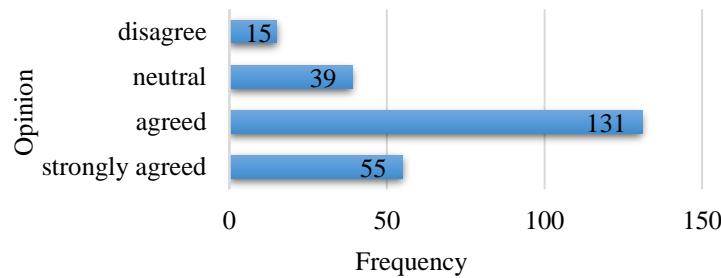


Figure 10. Rate of start-back business on the footpath.

3.3.3 Preference for Better Solution for Street Hawkers

Street hawkers may return to the footpath if they cannot perform their business properly in their new location. Most pedestrians, 55%, strongly agree, with 23% strongly supporting their return. A small percentage, 6%, do not plan to return Figure 11.

Table 3. Preference for Better Solution for Street Hawkers.

| Preferable Solution | Frequency |
|---------------------|-----------|
| re-development | 127 |
| smart sidewalk | 113 |

4 Conclusion

Rajshahi, a clean and green city in Bangladesh, prioritizes sustainable development and maintaining its natural beauty. A well-designed sidewalk is crucial for pedestrians' movement, with 53% of the population supporting the need for street hawker-free sidewalks. As the hawkers contribute to the economy's growth rather than evicting them from the street better results can be achieved by providing a place for them as Singapore provides to the hawker community. With 46% of respondents favoring smart sidewalks if their city adopted the required laws and regulations, they provide a practical alternative but should only be considered a temporary measure rather than a long-term one. By providing creative solutions for pedestrians and street vendors, Rajshahi can foster harmony between the two. Politicians and municipal governments must address challenges faced by street sellers, ensuring vendor relocation with legitimate trade documentation. By implementing well-designed and regulated sidewalks, Rajshahi can become a model city for infrastructure geared towards pedestrians, supporting both pedestrian convenience and street vendor livelihood. By considering local opinions, utilizing smart sidewalks with economic activity zones at the edge of the path to prevent pedestrians get down to the busy roads or end of the path, and involving political leaders and local authorities, Rajshahi can strengthen its position as a prime example of sustainable urban development in Bangladesh.

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