

Employees Fraudulent Practices and Entrepreneurial Development in Selected Microfinance Banks in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined Employee Fraudulent Practices on Entrepreneurial Development in selected Micro Finance Banks (MFBs) in Oyo State, Nigeria. Entrepreneurial development is positive change and progress in all forms of business activities of the owner of resources. This study employed a descriptive research design; the population comprised 25 microfinance banks in Oyo state, Nigeria. A sample size of 615 respondents of the total population was used. This study employed questionnaires as research instruments. Data of this study were analyzed using frequency distribution count and simple percentages, Pearson Moment Correlations with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). Also, the descriptive statistical tool was used to illustrate the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The results of the analysis in this study revealed that; there was a significant relationship between fraudulent practices among employees of microfinance banks (MFBs) and entrepreneurial development in MFBs. The study concluded that fraudulent practices among employees of Microfinance banks in Oyo state would contribute adversely to the entrepreneurial development of microfinance bank owners in Oyo state. Therefore, the study recommends that employees in MFBs be trained and retrained to enhance their capacities and improve quality services to boost the profit and development of entrepreneurship.

Keywords: Employee Fraud, Fraudulent Practices, Entrepreneurial Development

JEL Classification: M4, M40, M41

1. Introduction

Employee fraud is a global issue that serves as a threat to organizations. Frauds on a large scale have destroyed many companies, cost investors significant amounts of money, resulted in high litigation costs, incarcerated essential individuals, and diminished trust in large companies and capital markets. Furthermore, many firms have suffered from reputational damage, brand damage, and public appearance damage

since their executives have been accused of fraudulent activities. Around the world, fraud threatens businesses in a profound way. Essentially, fraud defines any form of dishonesty, deception, or deception. To commit fraud would be to intentionally gain an unfair advantage through deliberate action (Kula, Yilmaz, Kaynar & Ali, 2011).

Fraudsters continually threaten and decimate the financial base of banks as they struggle to uphold the monetary authorities' requirements for recapitalization. It is more concerning that the number of employees participating in the act has increased and how easy it is to avoid detection and encourages many more employees to join the fraudulent act. Abiola and Oyewole (2013) opine that a fraud crisis plagues Nigeria's financial institution (Banking Industry). Employee fraud in the financial sector is a severe threat to the expansion of financial organizations and can lead to bank failures. Furthermore, this fraud reduces depositors' deposits, which eventually causes banks' capital bases to erode. (Arif & Malek, 2013). Banks in Nigeria risk losing one million naira per working day on average due to the prevalence of frauds in various guises or forms (Barba-Sánchez & Atienza-Sahuquillo, 2018).

However, that amount appears low when we consider Nigeria Deposit Insurance Corporation [NDIC] (2015) report, where banks reported fraud and forgery incidences totalling N25.608 billion in one year. Chavez (2016) revealed that such a sum would have been sufficient to establish several state-licensed microfinance banks in the current age. Forgeries are currently the most severe threat to the industry. Also alarming is the number of insiders (employees) who collude with outsiders to keep the act going. Between 1994 and 1996, about 1,914 bank employees from various institutions were involved in bank frauds, according to an NDIC article. Staff involvement decreased to 425 in 2015, as reported in the NDIC Annual Report. The NDIC report further stated that while 43percent of frauds were committed by senior staff, 57 percent of frauds were perpetrated by the junior staff. The investigation also found that fraud played a significant role in the bankruptcy of most banks in the 1990s, with the total amount involved accounting for up to 32.1 percent of shareholders' funds in 1998 (Benzing, Chu, & Kara, 2009).

The growth in the number of high management employees who have been indicted or accused of bank fraud is alarming. In light of this, the primary goal of this research is to determine the nature and causes of bank frauds and propose remedies that would, hopefully, help reduce the number of bank frauds in the country. Akanji (2006) argued that in the wake of ongoing frauds and accounting scandals, the absolute integrity and viability of these noble duties of Nigerian banks had been called into question. As a result, the banking industry's constant frauds have reached

a point where many stakeholders have lost faith in the industry. Benzing, Chu, and Kara (2009), the wave of fraud in the Nigerian financial sector has recently been a subject of national discontent, as evidenced by law enforcement officials' apparent attempts to track down perpetrators successfully.

Entrepreneurship can be defined as the ability, willingness, and ability to establish, organize, and manage a new business, including any risk involved in making a profit. 10 Due to the high risks involved in establishing a business, most definitions of entrepreneurship focus on this process. Private ventures or enterprises with solid growth potential and growing and diversifying existing ventures or enterprises developed through entrepreneurial activity. Brazeal and Herbert (1999) established that in markets for new products, processes, and services, entrepreneurs recognize an invention, mobilize money and management skills and take calculated risks. Regardless of the profession, the preceding description emphasizes four critical qualities of becoming an entrepreneur. Entrepreneurship development is the process of improving an entrepreneur's skill set and knowledge regarding the development, management, and organization of a business venture while keeping in mind the dangers involved (Scheaf & Wood, 2021). This is accomplished through a variety of training programs and workshops focused on enhancing entrepreneurial skills.

Despite several fraud investigations, it is apparent that not a single study is conducted on potential causes of employee fraud in Micro Finance Banks and the effects on the overall development of small business entrepreneurship. Additionally, earlier research does not analyze employees' ability to notice fraudulent activity. However, from the reviewed literature, none of the studies has examined the fraudulent activity from the aspect of the employee, and little or no study was done on the influence of fraudulent employee practices on entrepreneurship development. Furthermore, research on whistleblowing ignores the role of employees in raising red flags when they have information about potential wrongdoing in the firm. Therefore, for the gap to be closed, the current study investigates the influence of employee's fraudulent practices on entrepreneurial development in selected microfinance banks in Oyo State, Nigeria.

This paper is organized into the following sections; the first sections contain the introduction, the second section contains the literature review, the methodology was discussed in the third section, and the results and discussion of findings are shown in the fourth section. Finally, the conclusion and recommendation were discussed in the last section of the paper. The study examines the relationship between

fraudulent employee practices and entrepreneurial development in selected microfinance banks in Oyo State, Nigeria.

The study formulated a single null hypothesis for testing, which stated that.

H₀: There will be no significant relationship between fraudulent employee practices and entrepreneurial development in selected microfinance banks in Oyo State, Nigeria.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Concept of Fraud

Fraud is a conscious, intentional notion of a person or a group of persons in the form of forgery, falsification of a document, unauthorized signature and outright theft. It involves deceit, tricks, cunning and sometimes, brilliant know-how (Olaemi, 2021). As stated earlier, a person or group of people's said action is intended to alter the truth or fact for selfish personnel monetary gain (Abdulrasheed, 2012). According to Adebisi (2009), fraud includes negligence due to improper entry of transactions, inadequate control management, lack of training or orientation, absence of audit exercise. Akindele (2011) thought that "Bank fraud exists as a result of the mode of employment which is principally based on favouritism and familiarity and poor security of essential document".

In a nutshell, Adeoti, Kadiri, Olawale, and Abulraheem (2015) argued that most of the fraudulent acts were caused by the employee in the organizations through the application of house policy by being unwilling to supply information in the account of an identified fraudster to another organization on request, claiming that it counters the ethics of microfinance banking system in protecting the interest of the customers under this method. However, many frauds are carried out by the employee in the microfinance bank in collaboration with customers. Oyetola (2005) observes that people are driven to commit fraud as a means of easy acquisition of money and property, which, in our today's world, translate into recognition and power.

As illustrated above, the concept of fraud takes on many forms in addition to the many forms it takes, which explains why different scholars define the concept of fraud differently and why forgeries are also defined differently by them. Osisoma (2013), pointing to Wells v Zenz, defined fraud as all the numerous means that human ingenuity can devise to get an advantage over others using false suggestions or suppression of the truth. According to Webster's new collegiate dictionary, using deception, trickery, intentionally mixing truth with lies to induce another person to part with valuable property or surrender a legal right. As a result, it refers to any tricks, cunning, or dissembling

which may be used to cheat. Therefore, fraud covers many corporate crimes, such as embezzlement, larceny, theft, and misappropriation of assets. According to Nwaimo (2020), fraud is a deliberate action by an individual or group of individuals to alter truth or fact for their selfish monetary gain. According to this definition, fraud is the act of misleading another and deceiving them by making false representations about material facts or concealing them to cause them harm.

2.2 Employee Fraudulent Practices

Fraud occurs within a company's financial system when a considerable sum of money is lost while the parties involved engage in different acts of stealing the company's money. Research shows four elements are involved when an employee is committing fraud, and these include; a need, the opportunity, and rationalization within the mind of the fraudsters. There is also a low chance of getting caught and justification that rationalization will achieve the results. When discussing fraud, it must be characterized by three drivers described in the fraud triangle: opportunity and capability as elements (Robinson, Robertson & Curtis, 2012). The fraud triangle also demonstrates how their stay influences people involved in fraud in the organization. Employees who have already stayed for a long time in the organization usually have gained trust within these companies. These people also understand better the organization controls regarding fraud. Therefore, it is easy for them to manoeuvre and get ways of undertaking fraud while concealing it from being noticed. For many years, employees who have worked in the organization have probably operated in almost all departments are more susceptible to fraud.

As the year's passed, the employees were getting promoted to different ranks, and in return, other employees started reporting to them. Their position does not warrant the other staff members to question their integrity or actions. These circumstances create an opportunity for such an employee to commit fraud even if they may find it possible. Some events can be compared to leaving the safe unlocked because of trusting a person. These open doors are the opportunities for the person to carry out fraudulent activities. Motivation and pressure are other elements that drive employee fraud in an organization. For example, an employee with financial problems, divorce, or relationship difficulties driven by financial factors will most likely commit fraud to take care of these problems. These circumstances create a lot of pressure among employees to look for alternative methods of raising income. Like any other crime, fraud usually needs motivation such as greed, financial difficulty or even financial need to enrich oneself.

Brytting, Minogue and Morino (2011) argued that the rationale behind fraud is another driver that explains why employees betray their organizations in this dimension. Fraudsters, just like other types of criminals, will always give a rationale for their actions. For example, a long-serving employee may get even with the organization or get overlooked searching for a better candidate and use this as an excuse to indulge in fraud.

Additionally, employees who have served the organization for a long time may feel superior and play around with the company rules. Even though the drivers of fraud may be considered theoretical, they happen and have been evidenced in organizations worldwide. However, the opportunity to commit fraud by employees will depend on the type of organization and the effectiveness of the whistleblowing system. Brytting, Minogue, and Morino (2011) opined that it is essential for organizations to be vigilant enough in ensuring that their controls are tight and the oversight is competent enough to identify events that may lead to the occurrence of such events. An organization recognizing the driving force behind fraud is a good starting point as it can help the organization reduce fraud incidences (Van, 2014). Even though assignation and internal controls are reasonable, an organization must recognize that they deal with human elements. This understanding and consideration in decision-making are measures that can help in preventing the occurrence of fraud. With a primary focus on financial statement fraud, internal auditors can detect fraud occurring in an organization.

Organizations often do not want to admit that their employees are stealing from them, but they know that many try and only a few succeed. Most businesses would rather accept losses that would eventually cost them much money in the long run (Raczkowski & Schneider, 2013). Employees' dishonesty is one of the most common causes of business losses. Poor business performance and inadequate supervision create an environment where dishonest employees can use various methods to defraud their employers. The number of reported fraud cases is simply the tip of the iceberg. Staff fraud can be 'opportunistic,' meaning it can be carried out on an ad hoc basis by an individual for personal financial benefit or related to a significant and organized criminal network or terrorist financing.

2.3 Concept of Entrepreneurial Development

Given the numerous contributions entrepreneurs make to a country's economic development, it is no surprise that governments have sought to foster or develop entrepreneurship, with some countries, such as Nigeria, putting entrepreneurship at the forefront of their national

economic development plans. However, National Bureau of Statistics [NBS], (2011) reported that developing entrepreneurs at the centre of economic progress is not well understood. As a result, this section delves into the definition of entrepreneurship development, its components, and its function in business success. In terms of entrepreneurship policy, governmental and private economic actors must work together to establish the necessary conditions for increased entrepreneurship activity and entrepreneurial business growth. Linquist, Sol and Praag (2012) explained that "entrepreneurship development" has two distinct but related meanings. The first denotes favourable attempts to encourage entrepreneurial activity and business growth in a given economy.

Developing context-specific entrepreneurship policies, creating a business environment comprised of institutions to support entrepreneurship with policy, and fostering the acquisition of entrepreneurship knowledge, skills, and abilities among the population are all part of entrepreneurship development. When used in a narrow sense, entrepreneurship development provides entrepreneurs with the human capital they need to succeed in the business world through training and education. Thus, entrepreneurship development encompasses many actions, such as developing macroeconomic policies to encourage entrepreneurship, investing in institutions to create an enabling business climate, and training and teaching entrepreneurs. On the other hand, entrepreneurship development entails providing customized training and instruction to help entrepreneurs perform better in their most basic form. Regardless of this distinction, any effort to invest in entrepreneurs' human capital through training and education is part of a more significant NHRD policy approach to improve entrepreneur performance. So, these interpretations of entrepreneurial development are linked (Nkechi, Ikechukwu & Okechukwu, 2012).

Entrepreneurial development thus entails adopting entrepreneurship policies to ensure a favourable business environment for entrepreneurs, implementing policies to equip the general public with entrepreneurship knowledge, skills, and abilities, and promoting a positive cultural attitude toward entrepreneurship. Each component of entrepreneurship development is intricate and coordinating them can be difficult. The consequences of these components influence entrepreneurial outcomes, such as entrepreneurship involvement and business growth. To better understand the role of entrepreneurship policy, the business environment, entrepreneurship knowledge, skill and ability acquisition, and societal attitudes in the growth of entrepreneurial businesses in Nigeria, it is essential to consider the literature exploring the various components of entrepreneurship development in Nigeria.

Nkechi, Ikechukwu and Okechukwu (2012) defined entrepreneurial development as a pre-planned advancement, increase or growth in skills and capacity that demonstrates entrepreneurial potential in individuals, especially when deliberate attempts are made to re-orient the people by instilling an excellent entrepreneurial attitude/spirit.

2.4 Empirical Review

Popoola, Fakunle, Omole and Oyedeji (2018) examined the impact of bank fraud on the Nigerian economy in a study of selected money deposit banks. It was reported that there was a significant relationship between bank fraud and economic development in Nigeria. However, the gap was that economic development was used as means to the effects of fraud. In the study of Omotoye (2019), it was reported that one of the reasons for business failure in Nigeria is the fraudulent practices of the employee.

Kankpang, Nkiri and Ewa (2018) carried out a study on the effect of employee dishonesty and fraud on the profitability of manufacturing firms in Nigeria. The study reported that cash theft and kickback have a negative impact on the profitability of the manufacturing firms in Nigeria. They suggested that the government continually review anti-corruption laws and other related fraud laws to deter possible offenders at all levels and sectors of the economy. In addition, organizations should employ strict internal controls.

The effect of employee fraud management practices on fraud detection in small and micro enterprises in Migori town, Kenya, was examined by Chimwene (2017). The study adopted a descriptive survey design, and the target population was 478 employees working in micro-enterprises in Migori town. The study used a census survey as the sampling method. The sample of the study was 142 employees working in a micro-enterprise in Migori town. He argues that internal control systems mainly influence employee fraud management. For a control system to be described as adequate, one person must not influence control policies and procedures.

Olanrewaju and Johnson-Rokosu, (2019) examined how employee fraud affects the operation and success of the business enterprise in Nigeria. Combinations of qualitative research design and survey research techniques were used in this study. Questionnaires were administered to collect data relating to fraudulent practices by employees in the private and public sectors. As a result, it was reported that employee fraud negatively and significantly affected the performance and development of the business.

Kolapo and Olaniyan (2018) examined how fraud affected deposit money banks in Nigeria between 1994 and 2015. Analyzing the

data required the use of the Generalized Method of Moments (GMM). Furthermore, a study of bank deposits in Nigeria revealed that fraud cases, losses incurred through fraud, and staff participation in fraud have a significant negative impact on banks' deposits. Additionally, the value of bank deposits in the past is positively correlated with the value of bank deposits in Nigeria. Finally, they suggested that bank management strengthen their internal controls and establish whistleblowing policies and other methods for communicating underutilized and underrated in the Nigerian financial sector since they encourage complacency.

Iyodo, Agbaji and Abu (2016) examined the consequences of Bank fraud on the Nigerian economy's growth. The study reveals that bank fraud has negative and significant consequences on the growth of the Nigerian economy. The growth of the Nigerian economy was used as a means to determine the effects of fraud. Shanmugam, Haat and Ali (2012) carried out an exploratory study of SMEs' internal control and fraud prevention measures. The study reported that the level of fraud incidence as reported by owners is still shallow, and the overall cost incurred is still within expectation. However, the study was conducted in Malaysia. Therefore, such findings could not be said to reflect the Nigerian context.

Akintiloye, Olokoyo and Taiwo (2016) studied the relationship between fraud prevention and internal control in the Nigerian banking system. The results show that internal control on its own is effective against fraud, but not all staff is committed to it. The primary variables used to interrogate the study were the separation of duties, monitoring, and staff qualifications. Adebisi and Gbegi (2015) examined the effect of fraud and the Nigerian public sector performance. The findings revealed that public sector fraud has a significant effect on economic growth in Nigeria. The lacuna in this study was conducted using the Nigerian public sector as a case study.

3. Methodology

The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. It was adopted because all the variables used in the study have already occurred and are in existence. Also, the design was adopted because it sought to obtain information from a representative sample of the population. The dependent variable was entrepreneurial development, while the independent variables were fraudulent employee practices. The target population of this study comprises all employees in the selected microfinance banks in Oyo State. The targeted population of the study is the employees working in the selected micro-finance bank. 2500 employees were working at the micro-finance bank in Oyo State. A stratified and random sampling technique was employed.

The employee was stratified into 4 strata based on their job status, including senior, junior, contract, and casual workers. A sample size of 625 respondents was selected from 25 microfinance banks in Oyo State, Nigeria. Random sampling techniques were used to determine the sample size, giving an equal chance for the stratum to participate in the study. The questionnaire is the leading research instrument used for the study. The questionnaire consists of two sections in which section 'A', which is self-designed, contain socio-demographic information; Section 'B' contain information on fraudulent employee practices and entrepreneurial development. The Cronbach's alpha value for the research instrument is 0.800. out of 625 questionnaires distributed, 615 questionnaires were used for data analysis. The data collected were analyzed with Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 25. Linear regression analysis was used to test the formulated hypothesis at a 5% level of significance. The list of the selected Microfinance Bank in Oyo State is as shown in appendix 1.

4. Results and Discussion

This section presents the analysis of data collected through the research instrument (questionnaire) in the field, which is helpful for a good analysis of this data. In addition, the analyses were done concerning the research objectives and hypothesis under the study.

4.1 Presentation of Data

The data related to respondents of this study will be presented in terms of age, sex, marital status, educational qualification and years of the job/service of the respondents.

Table 1: Distribution Table Showing Demographical Data of Respondents

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentages
Sex	Male	299	48.6
	Female	316	51.4
	Total	615	100
Age	21-30 years	105	17
	31-40 years	400	65.1
	41-50 years	62	10.1
	51-60 years	38	6.2
	61 and above	10	1.6
	Total	615	100
Marital Status	Single	300	48.8

	Married	215	40
	Divorced	100	16.3
	Others	0	0
	Total	615	100
Educational Qualification	SSCE	350	60
	OND/NCE	150	25
	HND/Degree	100	16.3
	Masters	13	2.2
	PHD	2	0.4
	Total	615	100

Source: Researcher, 2021.

The above distribution table shows that 105 (17%) of the respondents were within 20-30years, 400(61.5%) were within 31-40years, 62 (10.1%) of them were 41-50years, 38(6.2%) of them were within 51-60years while 10 (1.6%) were from 61 and above. Also, 299(48.8%) of the respondents were male, while the remaining 316(51.4%) were female. In addition to that, 300(48.8%) of the respondents were single, 215(40%) were married, and the remaining 100(16.3%) were divorced. Moreover, 350 (60%) of the respondents were with senior school certificate, 150 (25%) were OND/NCE certificate holders, 100 (16.3%) were with HND/BSC certificate, 13 (2.2%) held Master Degree certificate while the remaining 2 (0.4%) were PhD holders. In terms of several years in service, those who have spent one to five years were 301 (40%), five to ten years were 149 (24.3%), eleven to fifteen years were 125 (20.4%), sixteen to twenty years were 30 (4.9%) while those who have spent twenty-one years and above were 10 (1.6%).

4.2 Test of Hypothesis

Table 2: Linear Regression Shows Fraudulent Employee Practices' Influence on Entrepreneurial Development in Selected Microfinance Banks in Oyo State, Nigeria.

R= .625

R square = .412

Adjusted R square = .307

Std, Error

Model	Sum of square	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
Regression	19484.77	3	6223.705	49.482	.000
Residual	40127.288	612	152.332		
Total	59612.05	615			

Source: Researcher, 2021.

This study also used linear regression to analyze the relationship between fraudulent employee practices on entrepreneurial development in selected microfinance banks in Oyo State, Nigeria. The results show that fraudulent employee practices can explain 62.5% of entrepreneurial development. However, with $F(3,612) = 49.482$, $P > .05$, with an R^2 of .625. it was concluded that fraudulent employee practices had a significant effect on entrepreneurial development. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected, and the study concludes that fraudulent employee practices have a significant influence on entrepreneurial development in selected microfinance banks in Oyo State, Nigeria.

This finding was supported by Popoola, Fakunle, Omole and Oyedele (2018), who found out that there was a significant relationship between bank fraud and economic development in Nigeria. In addition, these findings support Omotayo (2019) assertion that fraudulent employee practices tend to increase the rate of business failure. Furthermore, Kankpang, Nkiri, and Ewa (2018) reported that cash theft and kickback have a negative impact on the profitability of manufacturing firms in Nigeria.

Furthermore, the result of the study was tally with Olanrewaju and Johnson-Rokos (2019). They reported that fraudulent practices by employees in the private and public sectors negatively and significantly affected the performance and development of the business. Kolapo and Olaniyan (2018) revealed that fraud cases, losses incurred through fraud, and staff participation in fraud have a significant negative impact on banks' deposits. Adebisi and Gbegi (2015) findings revealed that public sector fraud has a significant effect on economic growth in Nigeria.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

This study concludes that fraudulent practices among employees of Microfinance banks in Oyo state will contribute adversely to the entrepreneurial development of microfinance bank owners in Oyo state, the higher the fraudulent practices among microfinance workers, the higher the winding up of many microfinance banks in Oyo state, therefore, this will hinder the growth of microfinance entrepreneurs in Oyo State. Based on this study, the following recommendations would be helpful. These include,

- i. Entrepreneurs in microfinance banks should adopt those policies that would promote better services for customers in order to retain their good image, thus promoting positive development.
- ii. Entrepreneurs in microfinance banks should try as much as possible to encourage good communication and adopt up-to-date

communication methods to discover all forms of fraud among employees to promote development.

iii. Employees in microfinance banks should be trained and retrained to boost quality services that boost the profit and development of entrepreneurs.

iv. Microfinance banks should use both internal and external auditing to discover fraudulent practices in their organization correctly.

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Appendix 1: Selected Microfinance Bank in Oyo State

S/ N	Bank	Junior Staff	Senior Staff	Total
1	Refined MFB	5	7	12
2	Olowolagba MFB	5	23	28
3	Orilonise MFB	6	18	24
4	NUT Oke-Bola MFB	5	12	17
5	Kadupe MFB	6	14	20
6	Osanta MFB	5	12	17
7	Unibadan MFB	5	5	10
8	New Era MFB	3	6	9
9	Ipapo MFB	4	9	13
10	Isale Oyo MFB	5	27	32
11	Awe MFB	4	12	16
12	Igboora MFB	7	3	10
13	Excel MFB	12	43	58
14	Ifedapo MFB	5	5	10
15	Aibio MFB	12	3	15
16	Iwa MFB	8	6	14
17	Ayete MFB	5	12	17
18	Seap MFB	12	50	62
19	Ebio MFB	5	5	10
20	Multivest MFB	7	7	14
21	Polybadan MFB	5	8	13
22	Ajewole MFB	13	7	20
23	Reality MFB	5	14	19
24	Grooming MFB	7	35	42
25	Seedvest MFB	18	105	123
	Total	174	448	625

Source: Authors' Fieldwork (2021)