

A Study of Socio-Cultural Factors as Determinant of Street Hawking and its Effects on Oyo Township Children of Oyo State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the problem of street hawking among the Nigerian children. The major markets in the four local government areas in Oyo (i.e Atiba, Afijio, Oyo West, and Oyo East) were purposely sampled and the respondents who participated in the study were conveniently sampled in the study areas. Questionnaire was the data collection instrument used by the researcher to investigate the factors determining child street hawking and its effect on children. Simple percentages and chi-square were the methods of data analysis employed in this study. The study showed that the awareness level of the affected children on the dangers inherent in street hawking was low. The investigation of the study revealed that parents' level of education, parents' occupation as well as family size were significantly related to the problem of Child Street hawking in the study area. The study recommends that serious efforts should be intensified on enlightenment programmes on the problem inherent in child street hawking, genuine commitment on policy formulation against child hawking, free and compulsory education and creation of job opportunities to the parents to take care of their children by the government. Parents should also accept and rely on family planning methods in the determination of family size.

Keywords: *Child Street hawking, Socio-Cultural factors, Effect, Nigerian Child.*

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental global problem among others facing developing countries today is the fact that incidences of children who work outside the family to earn a living or to support their families are increasing. Despite the advances in modern retailing, millions of people throughout the world, particularly Africa which mostly constitutes the developing countries still make their living partly or wholly through selling goods on the streets. Bomley (2000) opined that "street hawking/trading as an occupation has existed for hundreds of years and is considered a cornerstone of many cities" historical and cultural heritage. There are certain African realities that affect children on the continent whatever their cultural context, geographical situation or socio-economic status. In order to understand the lives of children who live and work on the street, we need to find out about the lives and roles of children in any culture. Children are known to engage in one form of work or the other especially within the family. In Nigeria, most especially in the urban areas, children between the age of eight and fifteen years are seen working. The situation of most Nigerian children remains critical due to unique factors of their socio-economic, cultural, traditional and developmental circumstances. Poor households need

money in order to take care of the family, and for the fact that majority of the Nigerian parents believe that children are God-sent-helpers both economically and for other purposes, they are compelled by circumstances beyond their control to contribute to family income. In the long run, working children are disadvantaged in several ways due to their involvement in all sorts of hazardous works which affect their health and development process (Yesufu, 2005). One of the basic principles of the International convention of the Rights of the Child is that every child must be protected against all forms of exploitation, indecent or degrading treatment, including child labour, abduction and sale (UNICEF, 2000). According to the UNICEF, exploiting the labour of a child means employing a person below the age of 15 years and paying him/her less than the minimum standard wage.

Child labour depends on the normative attitude towards children in the society and the culturally determined roles and functions of the socialization process. This implies that the type of work children do in a given society is determined by the institutional roles and functions of children in the society (Naidu, 1986). According to Ojo & Olufemi (2013) factors promoting child labour includes poverty, exploitation by the adults and children's own choices as a result of ignorance, among other things. The problem of child labour is pervasive in nature. The Western societies see child labourers as people suffering from some psychological and pathological problems, while in the African society, it is perceived as a natural procedure in child rearing process. Child labour has been considered as social problem in the African context and Nigeria in particular (UNICEF, 1997). The rate of child abuse and child hawking in Nigeria has assumed a worrisome and alarming proportion. In line with the submission of Ebigbo and Abaga (1990), it is a daily occurrence to see children below 14 years, hawking wares and other products along the road sides in the cities of Ondo, Ibadan and Ogun metropolis. Hence, this study is pertinent to the problems. The study focused on the determinant factors of street hawking, the effect generated by the problem of street hawking and recommended some solutions to arrest the problem.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although street trading/child hawking is seen as a profession that offers job opportunities and can contribute to the economic growth and development, however the risks attached supersede the economic positive aspect of it. Risks like motor accident, rape, kidnapping, extortion, sexual molestation and the child involvement in robbery and other anti-social behaviour are too great to ignore. Child hawking exposes the child to a lot of hazards like sexual defilement, sexual assaults, neglects and threat of punishment for sneaking out as exemplified above. The consequences of these acts usually result in an unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, psychological problems and a gradual withdrawal from a healthy relationship with the opposite gender. Street hawking exposes the male and female child to dangers posed by fraudsters and actual murderers because of their vulnerability at odd hawking hours. They are usually under personal jeopardy, harsh and hazardous conditions such as becoming an easy target to occult predators (ritual killings). It is an established fact that various efforts were made by government and non-governmental organizations to stem the tide of the trend, such as the creation of childrens' games village, the passage of child's Right Bill by the National

Assembly in 2005 and the subsequent passage by some states, not much has been achieved as the trend continues.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study provides answers to the following research questions

1. What are the remote and immediate causes of child hawking?
2. What are the implications posted by child hawking?
3. What are the identifiable measures that can be implemented to curb child hawking?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following are the hypotheses tested in this study

- i. There is a significant relationship between parent's (s) or guardian's level of education and street hawking among children
- ii. There is a significant relationship between parent's (s) or guardian's occupational level and street hawking among children
- iii. There is significant relationship between family size and street hawking among children.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study areas covered within four local government areas in Oyo State, namely Atiba, Oyo West, Oyo East and Afijio. The study covered major markets in the local governments where child hawking are prevalent both on part-time and full times bases. The major locations are Ajegunle area, Akesan market, Irepo market, Saabo area, Dangote/Elekara markets and Owode area. The areas were purposely or judgmentally sampled. The researcher used judgment in selecting the areas as a case study with specific purpose (area with child hawkers) in mind. It was based on researcher's judgment that the areas will facilitate the investigation.

STUDY POPULATION AND SAMPLE

There were hundreds of children engaging in street hawking in the study areas who ought to be the study population. However, in the process of obtaining data for this study, it was not possible to contact all of them. Hence, the sample size of one hundred children hawkers selected for the study.

METHODOLOGY

The sampling designs were in multi-stage. The technique of data collections was through quantitative approach. Questionnaire was the data collection instrument employed by the researcher. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed questions and were administered through personal hand delivery method by researcher and research assistants. In view of the fact that some of the respondents were unable to fill the questionnaire legibly and accurately, the questions in the questionnaire were asked and assisted them by transcribing their responses into the questionnaire. However, some of them were able to do the filling by themselves with little or no hitch. The data obtained in the field were processed with the use of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) computer software. The data were analysed using frequency and

percentage method in the process of testing the hypotheses through Chi-square method. The formula is stated below

$$\text{Chi-square formula } \chi^2 = \left\{ \frac{O_1 - E_1}{E} \right\}$$

Where χ^2 = chi-square

O_1 = observed frequency

E_1 = expected frequency

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE STUDY

This work was justifiable because of the significant importance inherent in it. The work is expected to provide further information on the subject matter relating to socio-economic and cultural factors encouraging child hawking in Nigeria. The study is expected to enable the government to proffer solutions to incidence of street hawking in Nigeria by formulating policies on how to abolish it. The work will serve as an instrument of enlightenment to parents about the need to protect the future of their children. The study will add to the existing knowledge in the fields of academics and increases the volume of literature on the child labour in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Causes of Street Hawking

Several factors could be attributed to dramatic increases in child labour and street trading/hawking in Nigeria. Ojo and Olufemi (2013) posits that the rapid population growth of many less developed countries, high rates of unemployment, inflation, low wages and deplorable working conditions have contributed to incidents of street trading and child labour as children attempt to help and support their families. The major cause of child abuse is economic. This is associated with poverty. This hawking of wares and food product on the roads and motor parks is an economic means of making ends meet, either sponsored by parents or the child personal interest (Ebigbo, 2003). Cultural beliefs in treating the child are also considered as another cause of child abuse as children are seen more as mere properties of their parent (Fawole and Osungbade, 2003). Several reasons have been put forward by the duo as predisposing factors to child street hawking. These factors include poverty, high cost of living, lack of sponsorship, poor school performance, single parenthood, large family size, peer group pressure, poor home conditions, lack of parental care, parents' unemployment, parental pressure and poor scholastic achievement.

Appel (2009) attributed structural inequalities as the cause of child hawking, while Nwabueze (1992) sees poverty and inequality as the major causes of street hawking and child labour. Ebigbo (2003) contended that while poverty often postulated as the principal cause of forcing children into labour, lack of social services at home, lack of good housing, inadequate food and health care service have been identified to compel parents to send their children into street hawking and child labour. It is pertinent therefore to submit here that the least privileged children, including children without families and/or without homes are the most vulnerable to these social ill. The economic constraints also force people to look for wealth at all cost to the detriment of their children. The structure and functions of families play central role in shaping the behaviour and skills of children. This is because our children must be raised to become

responsible members of the society with necessary values, beliefs and training. Child development largely depends on the ability of the family to function effectively. Child labour is a sign of family dislocation and disorganization. Child labour adversely affects the welfare of the children, as they are exposed to other social ills and dangers.

EFFECT OF CHILD STREET HAWKING

In Nigeria, street hawking has reached an alarming stage that is it now a subject of concern to physical planners and city managers. It causes different problems such as encroachment on right of ways by the traders, traffic congestion as vehicles cannot pass smoothly on time and defacement of aesthetics appearance to litter or dump their wastes on the road sides, it seriously pollutes the environment resulting in health problems and reduction on the road width or in drainage system which block the waterways leading to flooding whenever there is high rainfall.

Onuzulike (2007) grouped the consequences of street hawking by children to three, namely: physical, psychological and social. Physical consequences include accidents, spread of communicable diseases, food poisoning and traffic congestion. Psychological consequences of child street hawking include stress, fatigue, depression, anger and resultant ills. Social implications include unwanted pregnancies, prostitutions, smoking, robbery, truancy and poor academic performance among others. In this country (Nigeria) it is crystal clear that child street hawkers spend most of their time outside the home in a bid to sell their goods. They do hawk both in early morning and night even during harsh weather. The worrisome aspect of it is that when they could not finish their wares, some of the hawkers are welcomed home with battering by their parents or caretakers, the same thing happen when they could not make profit from their wares. Above all, hawking affects academic performance of the children. Most of the hawkers who hawk in the morning hours before going to school are perpetual latecomers to school. They lack concentration in class work due to fatigue and stress. These result to poor academic performance, delinquency and truant behaviour. They tend to show behavioural problems, low self-esteem, withdrawal syndrome, oppositional bahaviour and learning difficulties (Ebigbo, 2003). The common trend emerging from the synthesis of literature is that street hawking has detrimental effects for children's health, social and educational well-being.

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

Here, researcher present, analyze, interpret and discuss the findings from the field survey. (Frequency, percentage and chi-square were used for data presentation and analyzes). Frequencies and percentages were input into tables.

Table 1: Sex, Age Distribution and Family Types of Respondents

| Variable | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Sex | | |
| Male | 45 | 45 |
| Female | 55 | 55 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |
| Age distribution | | |
| 6 – 8 years | 02 | 2 |
| 9 – 11 years | 15 | 15 |
| 12 – 14 years | 68 | 68 |
| 15 – 18 years | 15 | 15 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |
| Family size | | |
| Polygamy | 39 | 39 |
| Monogamy | 61 | 61 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: Field study 2017

Table 1 show that for sex distributions 45% of the respondent were male, while 55% of them were female, they have average age of 13 years. This indicates that there are more female than male, among the children hawkers. This can be viewed culturally. Among the Yoruba cultural group, buying and selling are the enterprise of female population while men engage in other professional works like farming, hunting, blacksmithing and so on. Females are more skillful in buying and selling (Hawking included) than male. Taking cognizance of age distribution, only 17% of the respondents were between 15 years and 18 years. This is a suggestion that the numbers of the children hawkers will drop as they grow older. This may be as a result of their understanding of the dangers in hawking, the effect on their self-esteem, the demands for higher educational level and consciousness of their dignities among other factors. The data show that 61% of the respondents came from monogamous families while 39% are from polygamous families. Despite the fact that Yoruba culture support polygamy, western culture has influenced this type of marriage system. It should be observed however, that the present economic recession in the country has made many people to restrict marriage to monogamy. In polygamy system, there is tendency of having large number of children and wives to cater for.

Table 2: Respondent's view on their parents

| S/N | Question | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|----------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1. | Are you living with your parents | | |
| | Yes | 71 | 71 |
| | No | 29 | 29 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |
| 2. | If no, who are you living with? | | |
| | Grand parent | 7 | 24.14 |
| | Uncle | 9 | 31.03 |
| | Brother | 4 | 13.79 |
| | Sister | 6 | 20.69 |
| | Aunt | 3 | 10.35 |
| | Total | 29 | 100 |

| | | | |
|----|--------------------------------------|-----|-------|
| 3. | Are your parents separated/divorced? | | |
| | Yes | 24 | 24 |
| | No | 76 | 76 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |
| 4. | Are any of your parents dead? | | |
| | Yes | 19 | 19 |
| | No | 81 | 81 |
| | Total | 100 | 100 |
| 5. | If yes, who? | | |
| | Mother | 3 | 15.79 |
| | Father | 15 | 78.98 |
| | Both | 1 | 5.26 |
| | Total | 19 | 100 |

Source: Field survey 2017.

The table above indicates that 71% of the respondents were living with either or both parents, while 29% were not living with their parents. Among those not living with their parents 24.14% were with their grandparents, 31.03% were living with their uncle, 13.79% were with their brother, 20.69% were with the sister, while 10.35% were living with their aunts as contained in table 2.

A quick glance at the table shows that 24% of the respondents were either separated or divorced. This means 24% of them were under single parenthood. However, 76% were living with both parents, furthermore, 19% of the respondents confirmed that either or both of their parents were dead. 81% of them still have both parents alive. Having recognized the emotional feelings that may characterized this question, the researcher euphemized the question to prevent him from affecting the emotional feelings of the respondents. The loss of one or both parents can possibly increase the economic challenges of the family. Death of a parent will definitely increase the burden of the living parent in making provisions for the family members. It should be recalled that Yoruba culture preaches total responsibility of the parents over their children, some unpleasant conditions such as poverty or death may cause parents entrusting their children to the care of capable members of the extended family. The children in return must be ready to work and assist such guardians in area of income generation. Hence, child hawking may possibly be the area of such income generation.

HYPOTHESIS TESTING

Hypothesis 1

H₁: There is a significant relationship between parent(s)/ guardian's level of education and street hawking among children

H₀: There is no significant relationship between parent(s)/ guardian's level of education and street hawking among children

Table 3: Distribution of Parents' Level of Education

| Level of Education | Observed N | Expected N | Residual |
|---------------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Primary | 14 | 25.0 | -11.0 |
| Secondary schools | 26 | 25.0 | 1.0 |
| Higher Institutions | 46 | 25.0 | 21.0 |
| No formal education | 14 | 25.0 | -11.0 |
| Total | 100 | | |

Source: Field study 2017

| | Parents' level of education |
|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Chi-square | 31.730 |
| Df | 3 |
| Level of sig. | .05 |

Source: Field study 2017

Discussion: The table 3 shows that, the χ^2 calculated is 31.730 and χ^2 tabulated is 7.815 therefore, since the calculated value is greater than the tabulated value it is necessary to reject null hypothesis to accept H_1 , which says there is a significant relationship between parent(s)' level of education, and street hawking among children. The assertion that education gives a better chance of life achievement is hereby established, this is because it can play a significant role in the lives of the citizens of the country. Moreover, it is assumed that the educated citizens are more enlightened than the illiterates. They are expected to know the evils in street hawking and conversant with the laws prohibiting the street hawking and hence, most of their children are not found on the street hawking, whereas the illiterates might not be in the same page.

Hypothesis 2

H_1 : There is a significant relationship between parent's (s) or guardian's occupational level and street hawking among children.

H_0 : There is no significant relationship between parent's (s) or guardian's occupational level and street hawking among children.

Table 4a: Distribution by Parent(s) guardian's occupation (Fathers)

| Occupation | Observed N | Expected N | Residual |
|----------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Driver | 15 | 14.0 | 1.0 |
| Trader | 20 | 14.0 | 6.0 |
| Artisan | 30 | 14.0 | 16.0 |
| Security guard | 10 | 14.0 | -4.0 |
| Farmer | 7 | 14.0 | -7.0 |
| Police | 2 | 14.0 | -12.0 |
| Total | 84 | | |

Source: Field study 2017

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Parents' occupation (fathers) |
| Chi-square | 53.833 |
| Df | 5 |
| Level of sig. | .05 |

Source: Field study 2017

Table 4b: Distribution by Parents/guardian's occupations (Mothers)

| Occupation | Observed N | Expected N | Residual |
|-----------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Food vendor | 12 | 19.0 | -7.0 |
| Trader | 64 | 19.0 | 45.0 |
| Sewing mistress | 13 | 19.0 | -6.0 |
| Farmer | 4 | 19.0 | -15.0 |
| Police officer | 2 | 19.0 | -17.0 |
| Total | 95 | | |

Source: Field study 2017

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|
| | Parents' occupation (mothers) |
| Chi-square | 137.266 |
| Df | 4 |
| Level of sig. | .05 |

Source: Field study 2017

Discussion: From table 4(a) above, χ^2 calculated is 53.833 while χ^2 tabulated is 11.070 which means calculated value is greater than the tabulated value. Table 4(b) shows χ^2 calculated is 137.266 and χ^2 tabulated is 9.488. Hence, it is conclude that there is a significant relationship between parent's occupational level and street hawking among children. It is crystal clear that the major cause of child abuse is majorly economic standard; hence poverty is a visible factor. Poverty can be traced to unemployment which could make provision of basic family needs inadequate and unaffordable. Most of the parents of the respondents were not fully and gainfully employed within the economic sector of the country; this has lead to sending their children to streets to hawk goods and wares. The same stand was taken by Bass (2004), Crosson (2008) and Binder and Sorgin (1999). All were of the opinion that there is a link between parents' marginal incomes and the importance of sending their children to work so as to supplement family income.

Hypothesis 3

- H₁: There is significant relationship between family size and street hawking among children
- H₀: There is no significant relationship between family size and street hawking among children.

Table 5: Distribution by Respondents' family size

| Family size | Observed N | Expected N | Residual |
|-------------|------------|------------|----------|
| 1 – 5 | 19 | 20.0 | -1.0 |
| 6 – 10 | 64 | 20.0 | 44.0 |
| 11 – 15 | 12 | 20.0 | -8.0 |
| 16 – 20 | 3 | 20.0 | -17.0 |
| 21 – 25 | 2 | 20.0 | -18.0 |
| Total | 100 | | |

Source: Field study 2017

| | Family size |
|---------------|-------------|
| Chi-square | 110.200 |
| Df | 4 |
| Level of sig. | .05 |

Source: Field study 2017

Discussion: The calculated chi-square (110.200) is greater than the tabulated chi-square (9.488). Therefore, we shall accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. Hence, there is a significant relationship between family size and street hawking among children. The larger the size of the family relatively to the income of that family, the more the inadequacy of the welfare and care of such family members manifest itself, this is because, family size has to do with the welfare of the family. In other way round, if the size of the family is relatively smaller in comparison with the income, the better will be the welfare and care for the members of such family. This fall in line with the argument of Fawole and Osungbade (2003) who says that large family size is one of the social factors which contribute to street hawking among the children. This assertion is duly subscribed to, with this confirmed hypothesis.

In summary therefore, this study reveals that parents or guardians have a great impact on the possibility of children hawking in the Nigeria streets. Divorce/separation, death or child fostering can disorganize the functioning and structure of the family, when family structure is disorganized the family members can equally disorganized. In this situation children suffer the consequences than the adults in the family. Many children become hawkers because the structures of their families have been disorganized socially and economically. Having aware that there is negative correlation between education and child hawking, it behooves on the authority concern to understand that more still needed to be done in the improvement of the educational statuses of the Nigerian citizens. This brought to limelight that educated citizens could be well informed and socially responsible. The orientations of the educated citizen towards children will be quite different from those of the illiterates. In another development, parents that were gainfully employed and economically above average would hardly send their children out to hawk on the street. Finally, the study revealed that family size plays a crucial role in child hawking. The larger the size of the family among the lower economic class parents in this country, the greater the poverty. Poverty is invariably related to child hawking. If

the adult members of the family were rich enough to take care of these children, there would not be a need for them hawking goods in the street. Most of the children hawkers came from poor families.

CONCLUSION

It is established that there is abundant evidence of street hawking by young children of between the ages of six and eighteen years in the study areas. During the study, children were seen running after moving vehicles, selling wares and goods such as sachet pure water, bottles or plastics soft drinks, bottled pure water, bread and the like. In view of the fact that street hawking is a negation of the International Convention on the Rights of the child, it is indeed, in- human for anyone to engage a child in money making venture. The point is that a child in that situation is being denied basic education which is an important right of every child. Moreover, there is every possibility that some of these children may sustain lifelong injuries which would hinder them from contributing meaningfully to the growth and development of the Nigerian economy. Nigeria as a nation is expected to practically demonstrate her commitment to the global fight against child abuse in all ramifications. This study agrees with many other similar studies in this area which have made the same connection between child street hawking and child abuse.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to address the problem of child hawking in urban and rural areas in Nigeria, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Serious efforts should be made on enlightenment campaigns through seminars, workshops, conferences and other suitable public talks for parents and children inclusive on the dangers of exposing children to street hawking, street begging as well as street wandering.
2. Government is encouraged to create more jobs opportunities and rewards handsomely, those that are currently engaged in employment sector. These will increase the family income of Nigerians and give the opportunity to the parents to take care of their children.
3. Government should be more committed in formulating policy to combat the practice of Child Street hawking/trading. Presently, there is no enough legislation on child street hawking.
4. Free and compulsory education is also advocated. In addition, compulsory formal educational studies on human rights, child labour and trafficking as well as child abuse should be incorporated in the school curricula at all level of education
5. Parents should accept and rely on family planning methods in the determination of family size

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