

Effects of Hawking on the Social Lives of Teenagers in Bida

¹Bello, Babatunde S., ²Zubairu, I. T., ³Nwokenkwo, O. B., & ⁴Abdullahi, F. H.

¹ & ³Department of Marketing, Federal Polytechnic, Bida

² & ⁴Department of Business Administration & Management, Federal Polytechnic, Bida

ABSTRACT

The study investigates the effect of hawking on social lives of teenagers in Bida, Niger State. It intends to find out how hawking impacts on the lives of teenagers with respect to the reasons and the implications of the practice. The study which is descriptive in nature adopted both convenience and judgment sampling methods to arrive at a sample of 399 respondents drawn from the population of 266, 008 of Bida (per 2006 Census). Findings revealed that hawking practice has eaten deep into the mentality of these teenagers as their livelihood sustenance and of their parents largely depend on the proceeds from the business. It was recommended that Bida Forum and wealthy individuals in the town should partner with government at the local and state levels to institute poverty alleviation programmes to assist less-privilege families. Scholarship Board should also be strengthened to identify and assist gifted children at all level of schools to keep their dreams of becoming great in life through qualitative education alive.

Keywords: Effect of hawking, social lives, Teenagers

INTRODUCTION

Street hawking by teenagers especially the girls is a common phenomenon in most developing and undeveloped world. The menace does not only end on teenagers hawking but there are causes and effects of it on the society at large. Regardless of the causes and effects of hawking by teenagers on the streets of many parts of the world, possible remedies/solutions can be applied by the governments, parents and sponsors to solve the challenging issue. Before proceeding further, there is need to define the major terms, child and hawking. Who is a child? A child is defined as any person less than eighteen years of age. This definition is in accordance to the topic under discussion. Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defined a child as a young human being

below the age of full physical development (<https://simple.m.wikipedia.org>, 2015). A teenager is defined as a young person whose age falls within the range from 13 – 19 years (<https://simple.m.wikipedia.org>, 2015). In Nigeria today, teenagers are selling every conceivable article ranging from sachets of water, gala-sausage rolls, soft drinks of different assortments, banana, groundnut, seasonal fruits, groundnut chaff ('kulikuli'), recharge cards, roasted cashew nuts to mention a few. Street hawking in Bida town like any other semi-urban metropolis in Nigeria is part of everyday life. Children(boys and girls), involved in the hawking practice often chase moving vehicles in traffic on the highways under hot sun and sometimes in the rain, by the street corners, under bridges and along busy roads.

There is no gainsaying that this menace constitutes nuisance in the society. According to Olutunde, (2013); Ugochukwu, Okeke, Onubogu and Edokwe (2012), Street hawking in developing countries is attracting a rising interest amongst researchers due to the various health, social, and economic implications to those who engage in the trade. Hawking irrespective of who engages in it, is associated with major hazards (Lee, 2004; Lu, 2011). This includes sexual assault which increases the vulnerability of the hawkers to diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, increased risk of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion (Lee, 2004; Lu, 2011; Kwankye, Nyarko and Tagoe, 2007). Other hazards include physical assaults, mobbing, involvement in road traffic accidents, kidnapping and ritual killings. Street hawking leads to increased exposure to antisocial activities like smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, cultism and crime. Hawkers are exposed to harsh weather conditions, insect and reptile bites and hunger (Ugochukwu et al., 2012; Amoo, Ola-David, Ogunrinola and Fadayomi., 2012; Esin, Bulduk and Ince, 2005; Ashimolowo, Aromolaran and Inegbedion, 2010; Hoyamo and Keenan, 2007; Ekpenyong & Sibiri, 2011). When children are involved, in addition to these other risks, they are deprived of education

and sound health and these constitute child abuse (Ekpenyong and Nkereuwuem, 2011).

The various degrees of danger facing teenage hawking in the society is indeed daunting, even for matured adults. These teenagers fall prey to reckless drivers, ritualists/cultists and intimate predators. There are several cases involving girls as young as ten being sexually harassed and those who trade in sexual pleasure for money alongside whatever commodities they are peddling. This scourge is not limited to the female gender alone as male children also fall victims to sexual offenders as well. The consequences of these acts include unwanted pregnancies, illegal and unsafe abortions, sexually transmitted diseases and psychological trauma. The streets have nothing to offer teenage hawkers safe frustration and psycho-social disorientation.

Objectives of the Study

The study focuses on the effects of hawking on the social lives of teenagers in Bida metropolis and it is set to achieve the following objectives:

- (a) To examine the reasons for street hawking among the teenagers in Bida
- (b) To know the rate of indulgence of teenagers in the practice
- (c) To determine the implications of street hawking on the social life of teenagers in Bida
- (d) To suggest/recommend ways of reducing (if it cannot be totally eradicated) the scourge to the barest minimum among the youth

METHODOLOGY

The study employs both exploratory and descriptive research designs to deal with the menace of street hawking among teenagers in Bida metropolis by sampling opinions of selected respondents and teenagers sighted within the Bida metropolis combining both convenience and

judgment sampling methods that allow the researchers to purposively select a sample of 399 respondents which is readily available and convenient for them from the population of 266, 008 (per 2006 Census). Primary data were obtained via questionnaire and unstructured interview of selected hawkers due to the nature of the work. Books and on-line materials were also consulted to provide clarity and define major concepts.

An overview of Street Hawking

Street hawking in its simplest form is the selling of things along the roads and from one place to the other. In Nigeria, this is done almost all the time by young children both males and females. The girl hawkers come to the cities in groups and then go in different directions of the city to hawk their goods. They remain in the city from the early morning to late in the evening when they take buses back to their respective villages after the days sales. This chapter will be looking at the existing literature, identifying the contributions of researchers and authors. The researcher will make more exposition of literature by discussing the meaning of hawking, effects and the actions of the federal government concerning teenagers hawking.

Hawking is a marketing system characterized by many buyers and sellers usually offering very small quantity of items for sale at a time in the street (Olukosi, Isitor, and Ode, 2005). According to Nseabasi and Oluwabamide (2010), street hawking is a negation of the international convention on the right of the child. It is indeed inhuman for anyone to engage a child in money-making ventures, because such a child is denied basic education which is a right for every child.

The street child is defined as any child who may have parents or guardians in a locality but living and working in the street. Street hawking children engaged in work or employment on a regular basis with the aim of earning a livelihood for themselves or their family. Such

activities are often carried out at the expense of schooling. Therefore, children are not adequately prepared for the future in a modernized society, (UNICEF, 2004).

Hawking is a system of trading whereby trader carries his wares about (Aiyehuro, 2011). According to Anyanwu, (2009), street hawking on the other hand relates to a wandering-like movement in which the concerned individual carries his/her goods with a tray on the head, or by minor means of transportation such as wheel barrow, bicycle or trolley in search of customers which process may be accompanied by at least one form of advertisement-shouting the name of the item on sale, use of a bell or special mannerism- to attract the attention of interested public. According to Ebigbo (2006), street hawking is a trading activity characterized by movement across streets in residential areas in which the hawker aims at selling his/her goods to any interesting buyer. Street hawking especially among growing children constitutes a social and possibly psychological problem.

CAUSES OF TEENAGER STREET HAWKING

There are numerous factors that may give rise to teenager hawking. Some of them include:

Poor family planning: This problem can always result to unwanted pregnancy which in turn brings to life a child that is not planned for. Where this happens, parents of the children find it difficult to cope with up-keeps and proper training of the child.

Child trafficking: Child trafficking is an act against the Law but traffickers are still engaging in such dirty business. Trafficking is defined as the recruitment, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation. In some countries, women in the cities visit rural areas and meet mothers who they think can easily agree for them to take their daughters or sons to the city where they stay. The poor

parents usually think that the persons they handed over their children will take care of them properly without knowing that they have subjected their children to the modern day slavery known as child trafficking. The city women usually go to some other parts of the rural areas to gather as many children they want and finally travel to the cities with them. When the children get to the cities, they would be surprised to see that they were trafficked and hence do not know how to make their ways back to their locations (their parents homes). The "business women" usually hand these children to other people who subject them to hawking on the streets of the cities. Some of these children were usually raped and exploited while hawking on the streets.

War: A wise government does anything within its power to see that anything that can lead to war is eliminated. The reason is because wars have many disadvantages. In fact, wars come with many negative attributes and that is why rational individuals do not want such to take place. Those who have experienced war before can tell more on this. When wars occur, children usually go fatherless and motherless as the breeze of war come with many killings and bloodshed. The blood that was shed during wars is usually that of the parents of various children. When these children loose the people that care for them as a result of wars, some persons take care of them which are not as excellent as how their parents usually did. They are most times subjected to street hawking as their parents are no longer alive to house and cloth them properly.

By 1992, there were at least seven million homeless children in Russia due to the devastation from World War I and Russian Civil War (Anyanwu, 2009). These were wars that claimed the lives of many mothers and fathers and made the children homeless. Most of these children end up on streets and got themselves employed in street hawking businesses.

Illiteracy: There are locations in the world that have parents with high illiteracy level. These kinds of parents do not pay any good respect to education. They are bankrupted on the importance of education to nations. Because they lack the knowledge on how education can transform people to be better, they prefer to send their children to the streets where they will make money for them. The illiteracy the parents of the children suffered from will be transferred to the children because the children do not attend schools when their mates were learning in their various classrooms. Illiteracy in some African countries for instance has contributed to high level of street hawking by children in the location.

IMPLICATIONS OF TEENAGER HAWKING

It is not all about making money through children by sending them to streets to hawk but another thing that matters most are the effects hawking. The effects of teenager hawking is not only felt by the victims but by the society at large. Alan (2006) posits that the effects hawking will have on teenagers include prostitution and rape, poor education, gang stealing and moral decline.

Prostitution and Rape: There are many people that have made their bodies their own business set-up all over the world. The sole business of these women is to surrender their bodies to any man that needs them at any moment in exchange of money. Prostitution is a bad way of living because there are many dangers associated with it. The prostitutes we see in various buildings started it small and became professionals in the business. Some started when they were young as a result of hawking on the streets and become experts to their adult ages.

On the other hand, many young girls that hawk goods on streets as street children have on many occasions been raped by their superiors. The man may pretend to be nice to the girl child at the initial stage but end up forcing the girl into such wicked act irrespective of her age.

Poor Education: When will the children have time to go school when they are busy making money for their heads (the persons that sent them for such functions)? In fact, attending education is a history among most street children. The people that sent them to streets are only after the money the children will make for them in return to their destinations. Some madams that sent them out to the street sometimes starve them when they do not make enough money on return to their homes. Because these children were deprived the benefits associated with education, they face difficulties in their future lives. It is either they do not make enough money for their success in life or that they do not get employed to the places where they will be paid well as they have no qualifications. Some of them find themselves in the military and end up losing their lives in wars.

Gang Stealing: Due to hawking, teenagers are exposed to a lot of negative outcome, they can form a group that go out to steal people's properties; they were always on the streets making possible efforts to make money hence lacking in morals. Out of hunger, teenagers can make plans on how to troop into areas and steal. These children from the experience they had from stealing in their young age sometimes end up being big time armed robbers. They become a problem to the community by robbing various government establishments, banks, markets and other places they know they will realize good sum of money after their operations.

Moral Decline: Street hawking teenagers are not properly equipped in moral practices. This affects most of them greatly. Prostitution is a form of moral decline among people. It is only men and women that are suffering from deficiency in moral practice that venture into prostitution.

Solutions to Child/Children Street Hawking

A number of ideas have to be accessed, examined, cultivated and practiced to stop the challenge of street hawking by children on the streets. It is believed that these points/ideas will solve this challenge that all countries in the world have been facing. The solutions to teenagers street hawking include

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

How will you feel if to say you are among the children that hawk on the streets of your country? Child hawking on the streets is an act against Human Right Law. It is not a welcomed practice and is banished. Many governments are putting in all their best to ensure that such act is stopped. Discussed in this topic are children or child street hawking, causes, its effects and solutions. A little light was also thrown on who street children are.

Findings revealed that hawking practice has eaten deep into the mentality of these teenagers as they eke out a living through the practice. Many of these teenagers even support their families with the proceeds they get from the afternoon. Many parents engage their children/wards in street hawking to cope with the harsh economic situation in which they are. It was revealed that there are efforts by government and individuals to alleviate the sufferings of people in the town but such effort are being neglected. An example of such effort is the establishment of women vocation training centres located in each of the wards in Bida. These centres are meant to train women in various vocations to make them vend for themselves and self-reliant. There are various degrees of danger associated with street hawking as mentioned above. Efforts by various stakeholders to discourage street hawking is not yielding desired result as there is no effective monitoring mechanism for the empowerment programmes of government. Some parents send their children to the streets not because they like hawking business by the children, but because of their poor status. Parents know that what is

good is good but could not help themselves and among the solutions to reduce their poverty level is to send out their children to the streets to hawk.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to get rid of teenager hawking menace, the writers recommend the implementation of Child's Right Act, construction of Orphanage Homes, reaching out to the Poor; and amendment of Some Religious Practices. Government and NGOs should work in collaboration to enforce the implementation of the child's Act by ensuring that children are not treated in inhuman manner. Social welfare division could work by sending their officials to the streets of cities and fetch wandering children and seek to punish the Law offenders that send the children to the streets.

Bida Forum and wealthy individuals in the town should partner with government at the local and state levels to institute poverty alleviation programmes to assist less-privilege families. Where a policy is already in place to alleviate poverty, the policy should be strengthened and monitored to ensure effectiveness. Scholarship Board should also be strengthened to identify and assist gifted children at all level of schools to keep their dreams of becoming great in life through qualitative education alive. Government at the state level should enact law preventing children from hawking during school hours. Any erring parent/guardian to this law should be severely penalized.

Finally, the state government should declare free education at both primary and secondary school levels and should make it compulsory so that children will have access to basic education in the state. The writers are of strong opinion that if children who are regarded as the future of this great nation are empowered and are given hope of a brighter future, Nigeria's economy will be effectively managed out of its present sorry state of downturn.

REFERENCES

- Aiyehuro, O. (2011). *O'level Commerce for West Africa*. Ibadan, Nigeria. Claverianum Press.
- Alan, M. B. (2006). *And Now My Soul Is Hardened: Abandoned Children in Soviet Russia, 1918-1930*, University of California Press.
- Amoo, E. O., Ola-David, O., Ogunrinola, I. O. &Fadayomi, T. O. (2012). Street trading activities and maternal health in urban areas of Nigeria.
- Anyanwu, U. (2009). The effect of Street Hawking on the Academic Performance of Children.A Case Study of Abakpa Nike Children in Enugu Urban Unpublished Project.NnamdiAzikiwe University.
- Ashimolowo, O. R., Aromolaran, A. K. &Inegbedion, S. O. (2010).Child-street trading activities and its effect on the educational attainment of its victims in Epe Local Government area of Lagos state. *J. Agric.* 2(4):211-220.
- Ebigbo, P.O. (2003). Street Children: The Core of Child Abuse and Neglect in Nigeria. *Children, Youth and Environments*, Vol. 13, No 1, Spring 2003. <http://cye.colorado.edu>.
- Ekpenyong, S. N.&Sibiri, A. E. (2011).Street Trading and Child Labour inYenogoa.*International Journal of Scientific Research in Education*, March 2011, Vol. 4 (1), 36-46.
- Esin, M. N.,Bulduk, S. &Ince, H. (2005). Work related risks and health problems of working children in urban Istanbul, Turkey. *J .Occup Health.* 47:431-436.

- Kwankye, S. O., Nyarko, P. E. & Tagoe, C. A. (2007). Reproductive Health Implications of Street Hawking in Accra. Paper presented at the Fifth African Population Studies, Arusha Tanzania, 10-14 Dec.
- Nseabasi, A. & Oluwabamide, A. J. (2010). The Menace of Child Abuse in Nigeria: A Case Study of Street Hawking in Uyo, Akwalbom State. Department of Sociology and Anthropology, University of Uyo press.
- Olukosi, J. O., Ishor, S. U. & Ode, M. (2005). *Introduction to Agricultural Prices Principle and Applications*. Living Book Services, Nigeria.
- Olutunde, A. A. (2013). The Prevalence of Child-Hawkers' in Motor parks in Ibadan Municipality: An Overview. *Open Journal of Social Science Research*; 1(7): 174-179.
- Ugochukwu, E. F., Okeke, K. N., Onubogu, C. U. & Edokwe, E. S. (2012). Sociodemographic characteristics of child street vendors in Nnewi, Nigeria. *Niger J .Paed.* 39(4): 174-178.
- Lee, S. (2004). Assessing the vulnerability of women street traders to HIV/AIDS: A Comparative Analysis of Uganda and South Africa. *HEARD*, July. 26.
- Lu, J. L. (2011). Occupational Health and Safety of Women Workers: Viewed in the Light of Labour Regulations. *J. Int. Women's Stud.* Vol. 12 No. 1. 2011. Pp 68-78.
- UNICEF (2004) retrieved from www.wikipedia.unicef.com.org on September 26, 2015.

Definition of child retrieved from <https://simple.m.wikipedia.org> on
September 26, 2015

Definition of child retrieved from <https://simple.m.wikipedia.org> on
September 26, 2015