



A SOCIOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE DETERMINANT FACTORS AND THE EFFECTS OF CHILD STREET HAWKING IN NIGERIA: AGEGE, LAGOS STATE, UNDER SURVEY

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ABSTRACT

An increase in the number of the children hawkers in Nigeria has become worrisome. With selected respondents in a densely populated area of Lagos State (n = 100), this paper investigates the problem of street hawking among the Nigerian children. Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State, Nigeria, was purposely sampled and the respondents who participated in the study were conveniently sampled from the study area. Simple percentages and chi-square were the methods of data analysis employed in this study. The study discovered that the level of awareness of the dangers inherent in child hawking among the affected children was low. The investigation of the study revealed that parents' levels of education, parents' occupations and the sizes of the family were significantly related to the problem of child hawkers in the study area. The study recommends intensified enlightenment programmes on the problem of child hawkers, positive and genuine commitment by the government, mass, free and compulsory education, and a serious fight against poverty through poverty alleviation and eradication programmes by the government. The implications of doing these were discussed.

Keywords: Agege, child labour, children, hawking, parents and street.

INTRODUCTION

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. There are certain African realities that affect children on the continent whatever their cultural context, geographical situation or socio-economic status. In the first place, children and young people from more than half the population of most African countries, has implications for the distribution of resources and for policy. Closely related to this demographic factor are the observations that significant deficits exist in the schooling systems of most countries and that there is a general lack of provision of child care for working mothers in urban settings, both of which are likely to be significant contributory causes of streetism.



Children in the urban areas are quickly caught up in the daily struggle for survival and material gain (Ebigbo, 1989). A situation analysis of child abuse and neglect in Nigeria, undertaken through the medium of news papers, found that child abandonment, sexual abuse, child neglect, vagrancy, kidnapping and hawking were the most reported forms of child abuse and neglect (Ebigbo, 1989).

Child abuse is seen as a feature of other social phenomena or situations, rather than as phenomenon in its own right. Thus, sexual abuse and exploitation, for example, do not constitute a single category but are mentioned in this account relating it with child labour. There is no generally accepted definition for the term 'child abuse', but it simply refers to the ill – treatment of a child by his parent or any other adult. Edu and Edu (1999) describe child abuse as a willful maltreatment of a child. Such maltreatment, according to them can include acts of commission (abuse) and omission (neglect).

One of the basic principles of the International Convention on 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. Trafficked children are made to works as hawkers and petty traders, beggars, car washers, bus conductors, farm hands or cattle rearers (UNICEF, 1997). The use of children as hawkers, beggars and bus conductors is widespread in the urban areas. Other worst forms of child labour include street hawking, drug peddling, herding of livestock, children used by the physically challenged in begging along busy streets and sneaking (this is a method whereby armed robbers and thieves engaged young children to pass through small inlets into their areas of operation), child trafficking, child prostitution, slavery practices, particularly in the fishing industry, child domestic servitude, exploitation of children in mines and customary servitude.

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 regarded as a natural procedure in child rearing process. Child labour has been considered a social problem in the African context and Nigeria in particular (UNICEF, 1997).

(Ebigbo and Abaga, 1990) opined that in Nigeria, the rate of child abuse and child hawking has assumed a worrisome and alarming proportion. He further noted that in Ibadan, Ondo and Ogun metropolis, it is a daily occurrence to see children below 14 years, hawking wares and other products along the roadsides. Hence, this study is pertinent to the problem. We discussed the determinant factors of street hawking; the effects generated by the problem of street hawking, and recommended some solutions to arrest the problem.



Statement of the Problem

Although, child hawking, can contribute to the economic growth and development, however, the risks that are 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 behaviours 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 speaking 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 (UNICEF, 2000). Oloko (1989) noted that 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 killers).

Although, various efforts were made by federal government and non-governmental organizations to stem the trend, such as the creation of children's games village, the passage of the Child's Rights Bill in 2005 by the National Assembly and the subsequent passage by some states, not much has been achieved as the trend continues.

Objectives of Titis Study

Although, the general objective of this study is to examine the socio-economic determinant factors of street hawking, and the effects on the children in Agege area of Lagos State, Nigeria, the under listed were the specific objectives of our study:

1. To investigate the remote and immediate causes of child hawking.
2. To assess the implication of child hawking.
3. To identify measures that can be taken to curb child hawking.

Research Questions

The followings were the interrogative statements we posed from the objectives of our study. They were research questions that this study answered (George, 2007)

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

Research Hypotheses

We equally put forward some intelligent guesses, conjectural propositions or assumptions known as hypotheses (George, 2007). The followings were the hypotheses tested in this research work:

- (1) There is a significant relationship between parent's (s) or guardian's level of education and street hawking among children.



- (2) There is a significant relationship between parents' (s) or guardians' occupational level and street hawking among children
- (3) There is a significant relationship between family size and street hawking among children.

Scope of our Study

Child hawking is a general social problem in Nigeria. It cuts across many states in Nigeria. However, this study covered only Lagos State. Under Lagos State, only Agege Local Government Area was covered and few respondents were selected. Moreover, our study only covered street hawking as a sub set of child labour.

Limitation of our Study

Our study was limited by time. Fund was another limiting problem. The study was self sponsored by the researcher. Moreover, other educational resources and materials also posed limitation to the study.

Justification of the Study

This work was justifiable because of the significant importance that will be derived. The work is expected to provide further information on the subject matter relating to socio-economic factors promoting child hawking among the residents of Agege. The work identified those socio-economic determinant factors. The study is expected to enable government, non-government organizations and related stake-holders to formulate policies on how to abolish street hawking. 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 increase the volume of literature on the child labour in Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Nigeria is the largest black African country. According to the recent census, a population of 150 million people was recorded. It is said that every one out of four Africans is a Nigerian. There are several ethnic groups, **but** three major tribes make up the majority of the people: the Igbo in the East, the Yoruba in the West and the Hausa in the North. Nigeria plays a leading role in determining the future of Africa, both at the global and regional levels.

Although endowed with rich natural resources and extensive human resources, Nigeria has not developed the necessary technological, industrial, managerial and political know-how to pull its resources together in a sound economy to take care of basic needs of its population. As a result, poverty and hard living conditions are prevalent, affecting children in particular. The country faces social upheaval, cultural conflict, slow industrialization and impact attempts at westernization.

According to (Ebigbo, 1989), children in urban areas are quickly caught up in the daily struggle for survival and material gain. In the Eastern and Western parts of Nigeria, children may attend schools



in the morning or afternoon and hawk goods outside of school hours, though there are some children who trade on the streets the whole day. Their income helps their family or house madams financially or pays for their school fees. Although, most Nigerian children must return home at the end of the day, a growing number including girls, subsist on the streets (Ebigbo and Isuora, 1985; Oloko, 1989).

Hawking by boys and girls is widespread, and parents clearly recognize that the practice holds dangers for children. According to (Nzewi 1988), a systematic survey of cases of sexual abuse of children in three major towns in Nigeria indicated that 60% involved girls below the age of 12 years. Abuse occurred on three levels: exposure to overt genital seduction, exposure to genital stimulation, and witnessing adults in the act of sex. It was discovered that hawking is the major factor which contributed to these three levels of abuse.

Men may lure young female hawkers by buying up all their wares and giving them money in addition to this or they may pay them to run errands. These girls may be shown pornographic pictures in magazines or pornographic Video films (Ebigbo and Abaga, 1990). Since the girls have been driven through poverty from homes, to sell goods from door to door, their parents are happy to receive money which may in certain instances be vital to the family survival (Ebigbo, 1988). The girls learn to beautify themselves daily to draw interest and begin to look forward to hawking. Parents are unable to intervene since the girls keep their liaisons secret because of societal taboos against sex discussion (Obiako, 1986).

Causes of Street Hawking

The dramatic increase in child labour and street trading in Nigeria can be attributed to several factors. 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 another cause of child abuse as children are seen more as mere properties of their parents (Fawole *et al.*, 2003). Another cause is violence against the child caused by emotion on the part of parent or guardian and ignorance. Several reasons have been put forward 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, poor scholastic achievements (Fawole *et al.*, 2003). Under employment in Nigeria has made provision of social welfare services like education, healthcare, water supply and energy not only inadequate, but expensive, thereby promoting parents to resort to child labour and exploitation. Hence, some Nigerian parents and guardians abuse their children through street hawking in order to support



family income and this hawking is encouraged because it is convenient for those who purchase their needs while in traffic, motor parks, offices and business centres (Oloko, 1989).

Appel (2009) has identified 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. Okojie (1987) postulates the causes to be an adverse economic environment, underemployment, massive retrenchment, unemployment and a poor quality of life. Ebgbo (2003) contended that while poverty is 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 known to compel parents to send their children into street hawking and child labour. 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.

In the similar argument, Crosson (2008), argued that there is link between parents with marginal incomes and the imperative to push children into work so as to supplement family income. This view, supported by Bass (2004), and Binder and Sorgin (1999), who hold that children of poor families have to help generate family incomes and compensate for economic discrepancies in the society. In such situations, poverty breeds poverty. A poor family has a high probability of staying poor since low family incomes carry with them high risks of illness, limitations on mobility, and limited access to education. Thus, the legacy of poverty is passed from parents to children (UNICEF, 1997). Child labour is also one of the many manifestations of poverty in 70% of households in Nigeria, providing an essential means of income for poor families. International Labour Organization (2006) identified eight causative factors of child labour in Nigeria. These are: cultural influences, economic problems, national debt, law, education, and unemployment, inability to cope with the needs of the family members, street life and single parent's families. Oruwari (1996), Adudu (1987) and Okojie (1987) identified five factors- housing, illiteracy, possession of consumerism, unemployment/underemployment, low incomes and inability to cope with the needs of members of their households, as indicators of the extent of poverty among women.

Child labour and street hawking can be attributed to urbanization and modernization. Hoyano and Keenan (2007) opined that people who migrate from rural areas to urban areas in search of better prospects are often ill prepared for urban life and therefore forced to either use their children or other children to enhance their economic situation. Child labour and street hawking can also be linked to child rearing norms and the attribute of parents, where, for the purpose of socialization, children are required to carry out assigned domestic chores and economic activities (Aderinto, 2000). Child labour and street hawking has also been traced to the rise of capitalism as a system of production, where labour becomes a commodity to be bought and sold. Child labour was, therefore, encouraged by capitalism (Ake, 1981). The structure and functions of families play central role in shaping the behaviour and skills of children. Children must be raised to be responsible members of



society with appropriate values, beliefs and training. The ability of the family to function effectively is a factor in child development. Child labour is a sign of family dislocation and disorganization. As a result of child labour, the welfare of the children is adversely affected, as they are exposed to other social ills and dangers. They are forced to live in the adult world away from their families.

Implications of Child Labour and Street Hawking

There was a belief that street hawking prepares the children for adult roles, this belief does not take cognizance of the fact that the juvenile hawkers on the street are exposed to numerous hazards ranging from physical violence to loss of wares, risk of accident, robbery, kidnapping and even murder for ritual purposes. They are exposed to vagaries of weather (extremes of cold or heat), to insects and reptiles bites, to hunger and deprivation. The most troubling, perhaps, is the fact that some are sexually exploited and forced into prostitution with the risk of unwanted pregnancies and contracting sexually transmitted infections (including HIV). [Kathleen \(1988\)](#) argued that child labour has physical consequences on the children. These range from malnourishment, disease, musculoskeletal disorders from heavy labour, physical and sexual abuse. [\(Korbin, 1983\)](#) and [\(Malinosky and Hansan, 1993\)](#) opined that child labour can result into bodily injuries to the children and expose them to toxic agents in the process. [\(Basu and Van, 1998\)](#) protested that socially, children can experience negative effects on their educational development and performance. Illiteracy, low school attendance, and low enrolment have developmental and performance implication and have been attributed to children's economic participation.

[Onuzulike \(2007\)](#) grouped the consequences of street hawking by children into 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, prostitution, smoking, robbery, truancy and poor academic performance among others.

Street hawking does not endanger only the lives of the hawkers, but also the food hawked and the consumer society at large. Contamination can occur from indiscriminate exposure of food items to air, dust, flies and dirt. [\(Onuzulike, 2007\)](#). Child street hawkers spend most of their time outside the home in a bid to sell their wares. They do not only hawk during the early mornings but at night and during harsh weather. Some of the hawkers are welcomed home with battering by their parents or caretakers when they could not make profit from their wares or when they could not finish selling 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 behaviour and learning difficulties [\(Ebigbo, 1993\)](#).



Children hawkers may end up becoming ‘street children or children of the street’ when they run away from parental or guardian abuse, leaving them to eke out a living on their own (Finkelman, 1995). The physical and health consequences of children participating in the sales and service sector in Latin America, Asia and Africa include diseases (respiratory problems) injuries, rape and molestation, mal nourishment, extortion of income, police harassment and participation in harmful or delinquent activities. Such children may face robbery, inadequate sleep due to fatigue and long hours on the job and confinement in juvenile homes (Ross, 1996).

Children hawkers also encounter problems related to their psychological well – being. These include stigmatization by the press and public, feelings of disheartenment, stress and irritability, personality disorders, anti – social behaviours, alienation, and isolation from their family(Amin, 1994) . There are negative effects on education and overall human capital formation (Murphy *et al.*, 1991). Children hawkers tend to keep bad company and are negatively pressured to engage in delinquent behaviors (Hughes, 2009). 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.

Legal Framework against Child Abuse

Under the Nigerian Law, a person can be classified into four folds namely: an infant (age 1-6years),a child (age 7-13year), a young person (14-17years) and an adult (18year and above). However, the child Rights Act 2003 classified any person who is below the age of 18 years as a child. In the same vein, the Convention on the Rights of the child (CRC) defines a child ‘as any human being who is below the age of 18, years except the law of the child’s country states otherwise’. For the purpose of this work, the child is referred to as any human being below the age of 18 years.

It is important to note that Labour Act, Criminal Code, Penal Code, the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigerian Constitution. (1999), Child Right Act (2003) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) shall be our guide under this legal framework.

According to the convention on the right of the child (CRC) to which Nigeria is a signatory, a child is defined as ‘a human being below the age of 18 years, except the law of the child’s country stated otherwise’. Some of the highlights of the convention are as follows:

- ❖ Every child has the right to his/her life and the development of body and mind.
- ❖ Government of member nations must ensure that child suffers no discrimination.
- ❖ Children shall not be forced to leave or be separated from their parents unless by the order of the court of law.
- ❖ The upkeep and upbringing of the child is the responsibility of the parents but the states shall assist and support the parents.
- ❖ States shall protect children from all forms of sexual abuse, neglect or exploitation.



- ❖ A sentence of death shall not be passed on any child below the age of 18 years.
- ❖ Children shall be free to enjoy their culture, religion and language and shall be given the opportunity for recreational activities.
- ❖ The rights presented in the convention should be widely made known to both adults and children. Government of member States shall carry the responsibility of educating their citizens on the provisions of the convention.

The thrust of these rights is to assure that every child born into world is accorded in his or her childhood and youth, the fullest opportunities for self-realization, by being entitled to opportunities and facilities which guarantee healthy and normal development in all spheres of human life.

Labour Rights of a Child

The law governing the rights of a child in labour issues in Nigeria is the Labour Act. Section 59 (b) of the Act provides that no young person shall be employed in any work which is injurious to his health or which is dangerous or immoral. The Act further provides that no child under the Age of 16 years shall be employed in circumstances in which it is not reasonably possible for him to return each day to the place of residence of his parents or guardians. The section forbids a child less than 16 years from working underground or on machines. It further forbids young persons from working for a longer period than four hours in one day. It places additional restrictions on the employment of a child or young person on a ship or any vessel and it prohibits absolutely, the night employment of young persons. From the above, one can see that the Labour Act does not prohibit Child Labour, rather it only places restrictions on where, when and how Child's Labour may be employed.

Rights of a Child under the Criminal Law and Penal Law

Our guiding laws are the criminal code applicable to the southern part of Nigeria and the penal code applicable to the Northern part of Nigeria. Section 300-302 of the criminal code becomes imperative for our consideration. Section 300 in particular states inter-alia:

'It is the duty of every person having charge of another who is unable, by reason of age, to withdraw such charge and who is unable to provide himself with the necessities of life, whether the charge is undertaken under a contractor or is imposed by law which arises by reason of any act, whether lawful or unlawful, of the person who has such charge to provide for the other person the necessities of life, and he is held to have caused any consequences which result to the life or health of the other person by reason of any omission to perform that duty'.

This section, like sections 301 and 302 of the criminal code criminalizes the omission or failure to provide necessities of life to a child and imposes liability for any consequence which may arise from such omission or failure.

Section 301 provides for the study of every person who as head of family, has charge of a child under the age of 14 years, being a member of his household, to provide the necessities of life for



such a child and is held to have caused the consequences which result to that child whether or not the child is helpless.

These sections are meant to ensure that a young child in the charge of another is properly cared for. Penal code (section 238) of the code criminalizes cruelty to children. It states that “any person having the charge or care of a child under the age of 15 years or being in a position of authority over him, who willfully ill-treats such a child in a way as to cause injury to the child’s health is guilty of an offence punishable with imprisonment of up to two years or with fine or both”. Section 275 of the penal code punishes procreation of a girl under the age of 18 for immoral purposes. Likewise, section 278 of the same penal code punishes the buying and selling of any person under the age of 18 years for immoral purposes. While section 284 of the penal code punishes any person who has sexual intercourse with a girl under 14 years with or without her consent.

In a related version, sections 223-225 of the criminal code sanction whoever trades in prostitution, facilitate the transport of human beings within or outside Nigeria for commercial sexual exploitation and makes profit from related activities. In addition, no sentence of death can be pronounced on a child or a young offender who is under 17 years old at the time of the commission of the offence. As such children and young persons are to be tried in separate courts. These are Juvenile courts.

The Nigeria 1999 Constitution and the Rights of a Child

The 1999 constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria does not specifically distinguish between the applicability of its provisions relating to children and adults. But it enumerates under its chapter IV certain rights tagged Fundamental Human Rights which are inalienable rights of all the citizens of the country, children and young person’s inclusive. These are rights to personal liberty, human dignity and freedom from slavery and torture, freedoms of thought, opinion, conscience and religion, expression, association and peaceful assembly, movement, fair hearing in both civil and criminal cases, freedom from discrimination on ground of sex, race or ethnicity, religion, political persuasion e.t.c.

The rights enumerated above are recognized and confirmed by both the African Charter on Human and People’s Rights and the United Nations Bill of Rights on Civil Rights and Liberties

In addition to the above, there are fundamental objectives and directive principles of state policy set out in chapter D section 13-24 of the constitution. Section 17 (3f) in particular provides’ “the state shall direct its policy towards ensuring that – children, young persons and aged are protected against any exploitation whatsoever against moral and material neglect. This specifically addresses the protection of children against exploitation in form of Child Labour in all forms. ([Nigerian Constitution., 1999](#)).



Rights of A Child Under The Child's Right Act

Several rights of Nigerian child are listed under the Child's Right Act, 2003 but those that are directly related to our research are:

- (1) Right to Dignity: section 11 of the Act provides that every child is entitled to respect for the dignity of his person and accordingly, no child shall, among other things, be held in slavery or servitude. Every child has the right to parental care and protection, and no child shall be separated from his parents against the wish of the child.
- (2) Right to Education: section 15 states that 'every child has the right to free, compulsory and universal Basic Education at least up to Junior Secondary Education.
- (3) Right not to be exposed to Narcotic Drug.
- (4) Protection against abduction: No person shall remove or take a child out of lawful custody.
- (5) Protection against Child Labour: Section 26 of the Act States that 'no child shall be subjected to any forced or exploitative labour or employed to work in any capacity except work of domestic character.
- (6) Protection against Buying, Selling, Begging and Prostitution. Section 38 outlaws buying, selling, hiring or dealing in a child. A child must not be used for the purpose of begging for alms, hawking of foods, guiding beggars, prostitution, domestic or sexual labour or any unlawful or immoral purpose or slavery or trafficking or debt bondage.
- (7) Protection against Sexual Abuses: section 29 provides that no person shall have sexual intercourse with a child. Such offence is rape and is liable on conviction to imprisonment for life.
- (8) However, the most relevant parts of the Act to our study are: Protection against Child Labour, buying, selling, begging and prostitution. These two parts address the topic under this research.

The legal frameworks examined so far, clearly show that, children must be protected and taken care of by all means by the parents and by the government of every nation. They are set of people that are helpless and therefore, must be helped by all available means.

METHODOLOGY APPLIED

We were concerned with the nature, validity and quality of the data as well as the logic and rationale underlying the data that is put into this sociological research. Hence, this section explains the methodology involved in this study.

Research Design

Our population of Study was very large (all the children Hawkers in Agege Local Government). It was very impossible for us to study every unit of this huge population. We, therefore, resulted into survey design which involves the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions (Schutt, 2004)



Study Area

Our study area was Agege local government Area. The local government is one of the local governments under Ikeja division of the state and one of the metropolitan areas of the state. It was chosen because it is essentially an urban area and one of the densely populated areas in Lagos State. Agege local government population was put to be 1,033,064 (male 564,239 and female 468,825) (Idowu *et al.*, 2011). Hence, its density has made it a potential area for our study.

Study Population

There were hundreds of children engaging in street hawking in Agege local government area, who ought to be our study population. However, it was not possible for us to contact all of them in the process of obtaining data for this study. Hence, one hundred (100) of these children were eventually sampled out of all the children hawkers in this study area. Therefore, our actual or real population of study was one hundred (100) children hawkers.

Designs and Sampling Size

The sampling designs were in multi-stage. Our study site was purposely or judgmentally sampled. We used judgment in selecting the area as a case study with specific purpose (area with children hawkers) in mind (Neuman, 2003). It was based on our judgment that the area will facilitate our investigation (Adler and Clark, 1999). Next, we used the convenience sampling also known as haphazard or accidental to select the one hundred children hawkers that participated in our survey. They were children that were readily accessible to us (Adler and (lark, 1999) and were very cheap and quick for us to implement (Neuman, 2003). As stated earlier on, our sample size was one hundred children hawkers that were conveniently selected from all the children hawkers at Agege suburb area of Lagos State.

Data Collection Instrument and Procedure

Our technique of data collection was through quantitative approach. Questionnaire was the data collection instrument we employed. The questionnaire contained both open-ended and closed questions and were given through personal hand delivery method. Hence, it was self administered questionnaire. We bore it in mind that some of our respondents may not be able to fill the questionnaire legibly and accurately, hence, we asked them the questions in the questionnaire 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. We tried to explain some areas of the questionnaire to them which they did not perfectly understand.

METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

We processed the data we obtained in the field using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) computer software. The data were analyzed using frequency and percentage method. We used cross



tabulation method in the process of testing our hypotheses which we used Chi-Square method to test. The formula is stated below:

$$\text{Chi-Square Formula: } X^2 = \left(\frac{O_1 - e_1}{e_1} \right)$$

Where X^2 = Chi-Square

e = summation

O_1 = observed frequency

e_1 = expected frequency

Rule: Accept H_1 , (alternative hypothesis) when X^2 calculated is greater than X^2 tabulated. Otherwise, accept H_0 (null hypothesis).

Ethical Issues

As social researchers who are bound to protect the interest of the respondents, we took into cognizance the issues in research ethics. We sought the consents of our respondents before we commence the research. We told them what the research was all about and the purpose of conducting it. All our respondents participated through their free-wills. We equally protected our respondents from being identified. The anonymity was followed duly. The questionnaire did not bear any means that will identify any of our respondents. The responses which formed our data eventually were analyzed and interpreted in aggregate without any link to a specific respondent. Moreover, the information was kept confidential and was used purposely for this research work and its publication.

Data Presentations, Analyses, Interpretation and Discussion of the Findings

Under this section, we present, analyze, interpret and discuss our findings from the field survey. Frequency, percentage and chi-square were used for data presentation and analyses. Frequencies and Percentages were input into tables.

Table-1. Table, Showing the Sex, Age Distribution and Family Types of the Respondents.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	48	48
Female	52	52
Total	100	100
Age Distribution		
6-8 years	2	2
9-11 years	13	13
12-14 years	66	66
15-18 years	19	19
Total	100	100
Family Type		
Monogamy	66	66
Polygamy	34	34
Total	100	100

Source: Field survey, 2012

A cursory look at the table above shows that for sex distribution, 48% of our respondents were male, while 52% of them were female. For the age distributions, 2% were between 6years and 8years, 13% were between 9years and 11 years, 66% were between 12 years and 14 years and 19% were between 15 years and 18years. For the sex distribution, we had more female than male, among the children hawkers. This may be explained culturally. Among the Yoruba natives, buying and selling are the enterprise of female population while men engage in other professional works like farming, hunting, black smithing e.t.c. even the products from their professional works are sold by their wives in the market. Females are more skillful in buying and selling (hawking included) than male.

For the age distributions, only 15% of our respondents were between 6years and 11 years. The highest percentage (66%) was between 12 years and 14 years. This age bracket was the highest because they were within the age when development is really coming up. At the age, life adventure is usually pronounced. Hawking is considered as one of the life adventures for these children. However, only 19% 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 from higher educational level and consciousness of their dignities among other factors. Our data show that 66% of our respondents came from monogamous families while 34% came from polygamous families. Although Yoruba culture supports polygamy, however, Western Culture has influenced this type of marriage system. Monogamy is being widely adopted now among the Yoruba natives. Moreover, the present economic hardship in the country has made many of them to restrict their marriage to monogamy because with polygamy there is tendency of having large number of children and wives to cater for.

Table-2. Table, Showing the Responses of the Respondents on their Parents.

S/N	Question	Frequency	Percentage
1	Are your parents separated /divorced?		
	Yes	25	25
	No	75	75
	Total	100	100
2	Are any of your parents dead?		
	Yes	20	20
	No	80	80
	Total	100	100
3	If yes, who?		
	Mother	4	20
	Father	15	75
	Both	1	5
	Total	20	20
4	Are you living with any of your parents?		
	Yes	78	78
	No	22	2



	Total	100	100
5	If no, who are you living with?		
	Grand parent	6	27.27
	Aunt	8	36.36
	Uncle	3	13.64
	Brother	4	18.18
	Sister	1	4.55
	Total	22	100

Source: field survey, 2012

A quick glance at the above table shows that 25% of our respondents' parents were either separated or divorced. Hence 25% of them were under single parenthood. The experience shows that in most of the cases of separation or divorce, the children usually live with the mothers as the haven of their protection, believing that mothers have compassion for their children than the fathers do. However, 75% were living with both parents.

We asked our respondents to say if any of their two parents was dead. 2% confirmed that either or both of their parents were dead. 80% of them still have both parents alive. Recognizing the emotional feelings that may possibly come up from this question, we euphemized the question to prevent us from affecting the emotional feelings of our respondents. Our data show that 4 respondents (20% of those that have lost their parents) had no mother. 15 respondents (75% of those that have lost their parents) had no father, while 1 respondent (5% of those that have lost their parents) had lost both parents. The loss of one or both parents can 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. The situation will be more severe if the deceased parent happened to be the principal bread winner of the family. Furthermore, 78% of our respondents were living with either or both parents. However, 22% of the respondents were not living with their parents. For those that were not living with their parents, we asked them to say whom they were living with. 27.27% of those that were not living with their parents were living with their grandparents (6 of them), 36.36% (18 of them) were living with their aunts, 13.64% (3 of them) were living their uncles, 18.18% (4 of them) were living with their brothers, while 4.55% (1 of them) was living with a sister.

Although Yoruba culture preaches total responsibility of the parents over their children, poverty, death or some other unpleasant conditions may cause the parents entrusting their children with the care of capable members of the extended family. This is called "fomoleboo" in Yoruba language, that is "entrusting the feeding of one's children with some who is economically capable". This act involves that such children be living with that capable person, who would not only provide for feeding but also clothing, education and other necessities of life for those children. The children in return must be ready to work and assist such guardians, especially in area of income generation. Hence, child hawking may possibly be the area of such income generation.



Table-3. Table, Showing the Responses Pertaining to Hawking.

S/N	Question	Frequency	Percentage
1	Is any other member of your family involved in hawking?		
	Yes	48	48
	No	52	52
	total	100	100
2	Do you enjoy hawking?		
	Yes	47	47
	No	53	53
	total	100	100
3	Are you aware of the dangers in hawking?		
	Yes		
	No	54	54
	Total	46	46
		100	100
4.	Are you aware of government's law against hawking?		
	Yes		
	No	53	53
	Total	47	47
		100	100
5.	Which of these dangers have you majorly encountered?		
	Unfavorable weather		
	Kidnapping	3	3
	Rape	5	5
	none	16	16
		2	2
	Total	74	74
	100	100	
6.	Do you think street hawking has negative effects on the society?		
	Yes	28	28
	No	72	72
	TOTAL	100	100

We asked our respondents some question related to hawking in the streets. The table above shows their responses to the questions.

We asked them to signify if any other family members were equally involved in hawking. 48% admitted that other members of the family were equally involved in street hawking, while 52% said no other members of the family were involved. The involvement of the other members of the family in street hawking may be a factor which encouraged some of these children hawkers. For those children that were the only hawkers in the family, it may possibly be that other siblings were too young to undergo this dangerous life adventure or perhaps, other factors may be responsible for this. We asked our respondents to tell us whether they enjoy hawking or otherwise. 47% of them confirmed that street hawking was enjoyable to them, especially in the company of other hawkers. Competition in sales of articles and wares by the hawkers might serve as an interesting thing to the hawkers, especially for those that were selling in and out of the traffic . However, 53% did not enjoy hawking as a result of difficulties and challenges attached to it.



We asked them to say from their opinions, whether hawking has dangers attached to it or not. 54% of them were quite aware of the dangers inherent in hawking and even mentioned some in process of participation in the survey. However, 46% of them did not see any serious dangers in hawking activity. Lagos State has recently passed a law to curb street hawking among the children. This is especially of the period of school hours of the day. We went further to request our respondents to signify if they were aware of this new law. 53% of them were quite aware of the law, While 47% of them were not aware. We draw the conclusion that this new law was not given enough publicity, especially among the Lagos children that are the principal concern and target of this law. We expect the percentage of those that were aware to be higher than what we obtained. We probed the dangers that some of our respondents might have probably encountered in the past. 3% complained of harsh and unfriendly weather during hawking. 5% were previously the victims of attempted kidnapping. 16% have encountered dangers related to accident, while 2% have had experiences of rape related cases in the past. Although, 74% have not had any dangerous experience in the past, this does not mean that we should discard the dangers inherent in hawking activities. Moreover, apart from the physical danger highlighted, there are some hidden psychological and social dangers in hawking. Hence, we conclude that child hawkers that were not physically endangered may have been psychologically or socially endangered by hawking activity without them knowing this. This ignorance was reflected in another question we asked them. Our respondents were asked to say in their opinions whether street hawking has negative impacts on the society or not. Only 28% confirmed that street hawking has negative impacts on the society. 72% did not think that it had negative effects on the society. We conclude that majority of these children hawkers were not even aware that hawking has serious negative effects on the society at large. Hence, a lot have to be done in sensitizing the children hawkers about the dangers and the negative effects of hawking on them, their families and the society at large.

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses, as stated earlier on were tested using chi-square statistical method. Three hypotheses were tested as follows:

Hypothesis 1

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

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

Table-4. Table Showing the Distribution of Parents' Levels of Education

Level of Education	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Primary	13	25.0	-12.0
Junior Secondary School	26	25.0	1.0
Senior Secondary School	48	25.0	23.0
No formal education	13	25.0	-12.0
Total	100		



Source: Field Survey, 2012

	Parents' level of education
Chi-square	32.720
df	3
Asym p. sig	.000

Source: SPSS Software

A 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 25.0

Discussion: From the table above, the X^2 calculated is 32.720 and X^2 tabulated is 7.815 therefore, since the calculated value is greater than the tabulated value, we agree with H1, which says there is a significant relationship between parents' levels of education and street hawking among children. Education can play a significant role in the lives of the citizens of the country. Education gives a better chance of life achievement. An educated person is better placed in the society than an illiterate. Educated people can be easily employed, likewise the skillful people in the society. Hence, poverty might not be their problem. When poverty is not felt by the family there is a good possibility that children will not be involved in street hawking. Moreover, we argue 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 which prohibit the street hawking. Therefore, they may not likely send their children to the streets to hawk goods and wares, whereas, the illiterates might not be aware of the same, thereby taking the risks of sending their children to the street to hawk goods and wares.

Hypothesis 2

H0: There is no significant relationship between parent(s)/guardian's occupational level and street hawking.

H1: There is a significant relationship between parents (s)/guardian's occupational level and street hawking.

Table-5a. Distribution by Parents' Occupations (fathers)

Fathers occupation	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Artisan	30	12.0	18.0
Driver	15	12.0	3
Trader	20	12.0	8
Security	10	12.0	-2
Farmer	6	12.0	-4
Police	1	12.0	-11
None	2	12.0	-10
Total	84		

Source: Field survey, 2012

Test statistics

	Parent occupation (fathers)
Chi-square(a)	54.833
df	6
A symp. Sig	.000



Source: SPSS software

A O cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell is 12.0

Table-5b. Distribution by Parents Occupations (mothers)

Occupations	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Artisan	13	19.0	-6.0
Trader	64	19.0	45.0
Farmer	4		
Food vendor	13	19.0	15.0
Police officer	1	19.0	-6.0
Total	100	95	-18.0

Source: Field survey, 2012

Test statistics

	Parents occupation mothers
Chi-square(b)	139.263
Df	4
Asymp.sig	.000

Source: SPSS soft ware.

A 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 19.0

Discussion: From table (9) above, X^2 calculated is 54.833, while x^2 tabulated is 12.592. Which means calculated value is greater than the tabulated value. Table (b) show X^2 calculated is 139.263 and X^2 tabulated is 9.48773. Which means calculated value is greater than the tabulated value. Hence, we conclude that there is a significant relationship between parent(s) occupational level and street hawking among children. The major cause of child abuse is majorly economic. Poverty is a visible factor of this. Poverty, however, is a result of unemployment. Unemployment has made the provision of basic family needs inadequate and unaffordable, which makes parents resort to Child Labour and exploitation to supplement the family income. We conclude that most of the parents of our respondents were not fully and gainfully employed within the economic sector of the country. Hence, this has led to sending their children to streets to hawk goods, and wares. The same stand was taken by Okojie (1987), Oruwari (1996), Crosson (2008), Bass (2004) 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

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

H1: There is a significant relationship between family size and street hawking among children.

Table-6. Distribution by Respondents’ Family Size.

Family Size	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
1-5	18	20.0	-2.0
6-10	61	20.0	41.0



11-15	11	20.0	-9.0
16-20	7	20.0	-13.0
26-30	3	20.0	-17.0
Total	100		

Source: Field Survey, 2012

Test Statistics

	Family Size
Chi-square	111.200
df	4
Asymp.sig	.000

Source: SPSS soft ware.

A 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 20.0

Discussion: the calculated chi-square (111.200) is greater than the tabulated chi-square (9.48773). Therefore, we shall accept the alternative hypothesis and reject the null hypothesis. Hence, we conclude that there is a significant relationship between family size and street hawking among children. Family size has to do with the welfare of the family. The larger the size of the family relatively to the income of that family, the more is the inadequacy of the welfare and care of such family members. However, if the family size is smaller compared with the income, the better will be the welfare and care for the members of such family. [Fawole et al. \(2003\)](#) argued that large family size is one of the social factors which contribute to street hawking among the children .We subscribe to this assertion too, being duly confirmed by our hypothesis.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDING

Our study reveals that parents or guardians have a great impact on the possibility of children hawking in the Nigerian streets. Separation/divorce, death or child fostering can disorganize the structure and functioning of the family. When family structure is disorganized the family members are equally disorganized. Under this circumstance, children usually suffer the consequences more than the adults in the family. Many children have become hawkers because the structures of their families have been disorganized socially and economically. Hawking will eventually be considered as a way out from the life difficulties. However, the adverse effects of hawking are more severe than the previous predicaments of these children.

We discovered that most children were not aware of the dangers in street hawking. Nearly half of the respondents confirmed that they enjoy hawking goods and wares. Moreover, they were not conscious of any danger posed by hawking. In addition, many of them were not aware of anti- child street hawking law enacted by the government of Lagos State. All indicated that the level of the awareness of these children on the dangers and law on hawking was very low.

Correlation between education and child hawking shows that more still needed to be done in the improvement of the educational statuses of the Nigerian citizens. Educated citizens will be well informed and socially responsible citizens. They will learn quickly the government policies, and implement the same as they affect their families. The orientations of the educated citizens towards children will be quite different from those of the illiterates. Employment was another factor which plays a critical role in the problem of child hawking. Parents that were gainfully employed and handsomely rewarded economically would hardly send their children out to hawk on the street. We arrive at a conclusion that, unemployment as a result of poor economy is a critical factor which induced and supported the problem of child hawking in Nigeria.

Finally we observe that family size also plays a crucial role in child hawking. We affirm that the larger the family size among the lower economic class parents in Nigeria, the greater the poverty. Poverty, of course, is invariably related to child hawking. Most of the children hawkers came from poor families. Of course, if the adults in the families were rich enough to take care of these children, there would not be a need for them hawking goods and wares in the streets.

CONCLUSION

Street hawking is a negation of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is indeed, inhuman for anyone to engage a child in money making venture. Such a child is denied basic education which is another important right of every child. Moreover, children who engaged in hawking or any hard labour may physically wear away before they actually reach the productive age in the economy. Some sustained lifelong injuries which would hinder them from contributing meaningfully to the development and growth of the Nigerian economy. Many children had died as a result of hawking in traffics through accidents. Nigeria as a responsible nation of the world is expected to practically demonstrate her commitment to the global fight against child abuse in all its ramifications.

RECOMMENDATION

We suggest the following recommendations to address the problem of child hawking in urban and rural areas in Nigeria:

Firstly, enlightenment campaigns must be intensified .Serious efforts should be made through seminars, workshops, conferences and other public talks to enlighten the parents on the dangers of exposing their children to street hawking, street begging as well as street wandering. Children must be incorporated as beneficiaries of such programmes . They are the direct victims of the dangers inherent in street hawking. Law enforcement agents need to be enlightened and re-orientated with the view to making them abide by the laws, especially as its affects children, and to put in place proper mechanisms to punish the erring parents, and through which the children can seek redress



whenever the need arises. Secondly, we implore the government (state and federal), to show positive action and serious commitment. At present, preventive measures against child hawking (as well as other forms of child abuse) is very low, compared to the alarming rate at which it is practiced. There is not enough legislation on child street hawking and the few ones are insufficiently enforced. There are no committed government policies being formulated to combat this social problem. The effective policies formulated to eradicate child hawking (as well as other forms of child abuse) are from individuals and non – governmental Organizations (NGO) such as: Civil Liberty Organizations, human rights organizations and religious bodies. Therefore, government should be more committed in this area Thirdly, we advocate for free and compulsory education for all citizens. In addition, compulsory formal educational studies on human rights, Child Labour and trafficking as well as other forms of child abuse should be incorporated in the school curricula at all levels of education. Finally, we appeal to the government, to intensify its efforts in poverty alleviation and eradication. Since poverty and lack of education are the root cause of child hawking, child hawking cannot be eliminated unless these problems are tackled. Government is encouraged to create more job opportunities and reward handsomely, those that are currently engaged in employment sector. These will increase the family income of the Nigerians and give the opportunity to the parents to take care of their children and other dependants, to make Nigeria a safe place to live for our children.

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