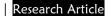
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Perceived Influence of Street Hawking on Hawkers' Development in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Calabar, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study examined the perceived influence of street hawking on hawkers' development in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Calabar, Nigeria. The purpose of the study was to ascertain the influence of street hawking on antisocial behavioural of hawking children as well as on girl-child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State. Thus, two objectives and two null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. This study adopted Social Provision Theory by Jane Addams (1949) as its theoretical framework. The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey. The sample of the study constituted 400 hawkers drawn across the 10 council wards in Calabar Municipality. Accidental sampling and purposive sampling techniques were used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was closed-ended interview questions. In some cases where the hawkers were found in group, focused group interview was adopted but where only one hawker was seen, the hawker was interviewed personally. In analyzing the data obtained from the respondents t-test was used test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The finding indicated that there is significant influence of street hawking on antisocial behaviour of children in Calabar Municipality. Result also showed that street hawking has significant influence on girl child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality. Base on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the government of Cross River State should carry out an enlightenment campaign through radio, television, bill post in collaboration with some religious institutions on the negative consequences of street hawking in order to minimize the moral hazards inherent in it. Also, as a way of curbing the menace of street hawking, the government should take urgent steps in making active policies and laws that can help stop the prevalence of street hawking by child care givers. Parents and caregivers should be enlightened on the negative effect of street hawking on children; the girlchild in particular.

Key words: Street hawking, Hawkers, Development and Abuja.



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Introduction

Street hawking is one of the social problems that tend to be affecting the development and lives of children in developing countries (Nigeria and Cross River State inclusive). This is very evidenced; as both youths and young children are seen on the street and markets hawking food items and other items in Nigeria and Cross River in particular. The above assertion is corroborated by Callous (2012) who stated that street hawking is rampant among children in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State. In the opinion of Olofu and Olofu (2023), street hawking has been in existence in Calabar Municipality for a very long time because the major occupation of parents which are farming, trading and civil service jobs, cannot provide enough income that will help in catering for their entire family. This situation according Olofu and Ukpanukpong (2022), has made parents and caregivers to put their children on the risk of sending them to hawk in order to generate more income for the family without considering effect that comes with street hawking on child development. The menace of street hawking is even more prominent during festive and periods such as carnival, Christmas, etc.

In Cross River State and Calabar Municipality in particular, street hawking is carried out by male and female children; as children hawk different items, ranging from food to non-edible items. Some children have a particular spot where they stay to sell their wares. Some move from place to place along the street while others go from house to house in order to have huge sales (Olofu & Olofu, 2023). Olofu and Olofu further observed that the hawkers that sell similar goods walk different directions while those that sell goods that complement each other like food and drinks, walk in the same direction. The youngest among these hawkers are followed by an adult child who also sells different things in order to teach the younger ones how to calculate or protect the child against any occurrence.

Thus, street hawking has become one of the serious social problems that has attracted the attention of scholars, professionals, social workers and law enforcement agencies and the government among others. Street hawking as a social problem is a form of selling of goods along the road from one place to the other. According to Umar (2019), it is an act of canvassing for sale items carried by a hawker along the street, from house to house or in the public space. Ikechebebu (2018) maintained that street hawking is very rampant in Sub-Sahara region of Africa, mostly in Ghana, Nigeria, Guinea and Cameron. Street hawking is a form of child abuse. According to Ihekoronye, Olofu, and Opara (2020), street hawking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a child by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments, benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over the child for the purpose of exploitation.

In the view of Ebigbo (2013), street hawking is a veritable means of socialization in the western part of Nigeria and it is widely practiced despite the attendant of moral and physical dangers for children. 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. Conakry (2015) stated that a visit to traffic-laden spots of major cities like Calabar, Abuja, Lagos and Port Harcourt would reveal an ugly scenario that adequately typifies the unfortunate situation in Nigeria. Children are seen hawking snacks and wares to commuters and other road users even during school hours, to the detriment of their well-being. Such is the state of affairs that defines the effectiveness of the Universal Declaration on the Rights of the Child, African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and other international and regional policy documents that support the well-being of the African child.

[Street hawking appears to be part of Nigerian culture and Nigeria being among the poorest economies in the world with high level of unemployment, poor infrastructural facilities, street hawking has been very common. Because of the low socio-economic status of most families in



Nigeria and the high rate of poverty, Olofu and Ukpanukpong (2022) maintained most parents cannot help but push their wards into the streets where they spend long hours, at the mercy of environmental elements, selling pure water, (sachet water), fruits, confectioneries, beverages and so on; so that the proceeds may contribute to family upkeep. This situation is alarming because street hawking is a form of child labour and abuse and it is on the increase in Cross River State and other parts in Nigeria.

Street hawking is considered as a form of child abuse because it endangers the health, education, life and future of youths; promoting antisocial behavior and safety of youths. Ebigbo (2013) maintained that street hawking may make a child's developed patterns of speech and behaviour deviate considerably from socially desirable and acceptable standards. These hawkers may become trained to indulge in bad behaviours like stealing, fighting and arm robbery which may thwart their progress in life. Besides, early deprivation of children's right to normal life could lead to serious social behavioural problems.

Street hawking as a form of child abuse has significant-negative impact on the hawkers. It does not only expose children who hawk to smoking and bad peers, it also affects their education, moral behaviour, exposure to rape, drug abuse and gangsterism among others. This work therefore, focused basically on ascertain the influence of street hawking on the hawkers' antisocial behaviour and girl-child sexual abuse.

The behavioural manifestations of problems associated with street hawking include problems of social maladjustment, moral defect, emotional reaction, insecurity and deviancy or juvenile delinquent. Street hawking is highly detrimental to children' physical, mental, psychological and social development (Effiong & Olofu, 2016). A study conducted by Aderinto and Qkunola (2018) showed that children are pushed into street hawking by their parents due to maintenance needs but not minding the effect of getting involved in antisocial activities or learning those behavior that forms antisocial behaviour. In the same vein, Onibokun (2010) also found that youths are forced into street hawking in order to contribute to family income, lack of relevant education that can guarantee employment after training and demands of traditions. The resultant effect is indulging in antisocial behavior as way of copping. In Africa and particularly in rural Nigeria, (Robson, 2014) maintained that hawkers generally have lower self-esteem, feels nervous about life and feel neglected and detached.

Children who engage in street trading encounter problems related to their psychological well-being such as stigmatization by their peers and the general public. They also have feelings of disheartenment, stress and personality disorder which make them see anti-social behaviour as an option of self-cure of their problem of alienation and isolation from their family (Amin, 2014). A study carried out by Baland and Robinson (2010) found that youth hawkers suffer verbal abuse, low self-esteem and loss of imagination and future direction which in the end make them indulge in antisocial behaviour. In the opinion of Hughes (2019), street hawking endangers the life of the hawkers and exposes them to bad company pressure by peers make them to engage in juvenile delinquent behaviour.

Anaboguj (2010) found feelings of inferiority, exhaustion, emotional distress, unhappiness and personality disorders to be associated with street hawking which makes the child become vulnerable to unacceptable behaviours and reduces his/her defensive mechanism against odds of deviant behavior. Nsisong and Erne (2011) carried out a study on the relationship between street hawking and juvenile delinquency among youths in Uyo. The results of the study showed that street hawking makes hawkers develop maladjusted patterns of behaviour which in turn may impair their academic, moral, social, physical and psychological growth and development thus affecting their future negatively.



In terms of street hawking and girl-child sexual behavioural, the girl-child tends to suffer greatly from street hawking; as the tendency for her to be sexually exploited even by her male hawkers is very sure. Ekpenyong and Sibiri (2011) examined the incidence of street hawking among youths and the findings indicated that 64% of the hawkers are females while 36% of them are males. Hence, female hawkers are in particularly vulnerable to all forms of violence including sexual exploitation by men. Some men take advantage girls who are hawkers as sexual partners because they assume the female hawkers are sexually inexperienced and as such, are less likely to be infected with sexually transmitted disease. In a society with poorly developed social network and intervention, many of the girls accept it for fear of being victimized and stigmatized if they should report.

Olofu and Ironbar (2017) posited that the Nigerian society has deliberately discriminated against the girl child especially as regards education with the wrong belief that subsequent marriage will deprive the parents and family of such investment. In order not to waste limited resources and to make the girl more useful to her family, she is given minimal education and sent to the street to hawk and at times; get pregnant on the process if not infected with some sexual transmitted disease. This puts the girl child in the position if low aspiration and limited career and employment opportunities.

Lee (2020) maintained that majority of the female hawkers are usually stigmatized by stereotypes that they are irresponsible and are sent to the street to hawk. The stigmatization of female hawkers impedes their effective thinking, leads to many challenges and violates their respect and dignity. In the view of Okafor (2017), the stigmatization of the female hawkers can lead to marginalization and in some cases, dehumanization. Stigmatization of female hawkers often contributes to depression, low-self esteem, frustration, poor global health outcomes, mental illness and eventually committing suicide.

Sending the girl-child into hawkers especially against her wish often result in frustration. Gemignani and Wodon (2014) maintained that frustration arising from street hawking is one of the key factors that affect the education of the girl-child; as it tends get the girl-child confused to a point that she may lose track of educational aspiration. Gemignani and Wodon added that frustration due to street hawking can make the victims not to attach value to anything, including their education. Ugoji (2013) maintained that every female hawker can be associated with frustration and low self-esteem; as it makes female hawkers to ignore their positive qualities, judge themselves to be inferior to their peers and often times make them use negative words to describe themselves. It can lead to mental and physical health issues like depression, anxiety, and anorexia.

According to Olofu, Pius and Ochanya (2022), hawking on the street exposes female hawkers to numerous hazards such as physical violence, loss of wares, risk of accident, robbery, kidnapping, even murder for ritual purposes. They are also exposed to the vagaries of weather (extremes of cold or heat), insects and reptiles bite, hunger and deprivation. This situation sometimes makes them to easily give in to sexual abuse without being defensive. The most troubling perhaps is the fact that some are sexually exploited and forced into prostitution with the risk of unintended pregnancies and contracting sexually transmitted infections (including HIV). Some of these girls wakeup very early to go hawking even without eating. Hawking with hunger makes it even easier for them vulnerable to sexual manipulation or exploitation by men.

Ugwu (2019) examined the influence of street hawking on the girl-child in Imo State, Nigeria. The result revealed that more than 15.4 % of female adolescent hawkers have been pregnant without knowing who was responsible and had done abortion at least twice, 25.9% had experienced rape while 8.3% have contracted sexually transmitted infections (including HIV).



Umar (2019) as well as Patrick, Olofu and Usua (2024) reported that 30% of the violence experienced by female street hawkers is sexual in nature. Umar observed that most sexually abused girls who hawk do not report the crime because of the stigma attached to it. Street hawking is a very visible phenomenon in the society. Female hawkers are often experience sexual abuse because they are uneducated, ignorant of the risk of being sexually abused and of the help they can receive.

Theoretical framework

This study adopted Social Provision Theory by Jane Addams (1949) as its theoretical framework. Social Provision Theory was founded by Jane Addams in 1949. In the social provision model, individuals are citizens and members of a complex increasingly urban society. It is within the social institutions and cultural systems of the ecological environment that resources and arrangements are provided through which basic individuals, groups and societal needs are met. Thus, children and societal well-being are reciprocal, with people functioning optimally and carrying out their social responsibilities and tasks through membership in social institutions, as in family, economic and political systems.

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According to the theorist, parents have the responsibilities to provide the needs of the child that will foster development in all ramifications and bring before the child programmes that will aid his or her development socially, physically, economically and otherwise. The inadequacy of care, protection, love during the process of child development can doom the child personality and as such affects the overall development and function ability of children which in turn directs its spillover effects on; the society in the future. Adams believes that people have difficulties when social structures and institutions, particularly the social welfare institution are malfunctioning. If social institution like the family is not active in its responsibilities to children, it may result to inadequacy as a result lack of care mostly when they use all their time in hawking which brings about inadequacy in providing needed social resources for an optimal standard of living and their development. According to the theory of social provision approach, much value is given to the socio-legal rights of children in regard to having equal access to social opportunities and provisions; not forcing them to embark on street hawking as a way of life against their personal wish. There; is also stress on community and institutional responsiveness to human problems, child street hawking and particularly to aid disadvantaged and poor street Hawking children.

The application of this theory in this study is conspicuous. This is owing the fact that children and youths have taken to street hawking in recent times because the existing institutions (family inclusive) and structures are malfunctioning due to failure in providing the required resources, protection, job, care, social services and creating opportunities for a good living condition for the children and youths; which will enhance their development. The lapses on the part of parents to send their children to hawk have brought a lot disadvantage to child development.

Statement of the problem

Even though education is the right a child, it is very disheartening that children who ordinary should be in school learning are seen in the streets and markets hawking during school hours. Street hawking as a social menace has become very popular in Cross River State as a who and Calabar Municipality in particular. Children are seen hawking different food items such as pear, ground nut, minerals, banana, bread and akara, stick meat and pork among others. This social problem may go along way affecting the education of the hawkers. It may also expose the children to joining bad peers and gangs, indulging in smoking, drug abuse and impregnating female hawkers.



It is on the basis of the above problem noticed by the researchers that has necessitated the need for this study.

Purpose of the study

This study examined the influence of street hawking on hawkers' development in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Ascertain the influence of street hawking on antisocial behavioural of hawking children in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.
- ii. Determine the influence of street hawking on girl-child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

Research questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

- i. What is the influence of street hawking on antisocial behavioural of hawking children in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State?
- ii. What influence does street hawking have on girl-child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State?

Statement of hypotheses

To guide the study two null hypotheses were formulated.

- i. There is no significant influence of street hawking on antisocial behaviour of hawking children in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.
- ii. There is no significant influence of street hawking on girl-child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

Methodology

The research design adopted for this study was descriptive survey. Osuala (2019) sees survey design as that which is fit for a study that deals selecting the sample of a study from a homogenous population. The study adopted descriptive survey design because it allows the researcher to select representative sample from the larger population of the study. The sample of the study constituted 400 hawkers drawn across the 10 council wards in Calabar Municipality. In order to ensure that the sample of the study was a good representation of the population, multistage sampling was used to randomly categorize Calabar Municipality into (10) political wards as already structured for political and administrative purpose. Thus, 40 hawkers made of children were selected from each political ward via accidental and purposive sampling techniques. Accidental sampling was used because any political ward the researchers went to, hawkers available at the scene were used for the study. Also, purposive sampling was used because the study was specifically and purposefully targeted at the hawkers in order to gather first-hand data. The instrument used for data collection was closed-ended interview questions. In some cases where the hawkers were found in group, focused group interview was adopted but where only one hawker was seen, the hawker was interviewed personally. In analyzing the data obtained from the respondents t-test was used test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Data Analysis and Result

The data obtained from the respondents were presented in tables analyzed while the hypotheses were tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of street hawking on antisocial behavioural of hawking children in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.



Table 1: t-test analysis on influence of street hawking on antisocial behaviour of hawking children in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State

| Variables | N | r-cal | \mathbf{r}^2 | P-value |
|----------------------|-------|-------|----------------|---------|
| Street hawking | 400 | 0.175 | 0.00028 | .833 |
| Antisocial behaviour | 15.22 | 2.68 | | |

Significant at 0.05 level, df. = 398, critical r 0.015

To test hypothesis one, t-test was used. As shown in table 1, the calculated r-value of 0.175 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.015 at .05 level of significance with 398 degree of freedom. Since the calculated r-value of 0.175 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.015, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of street hawking on antisocial behavioural of hawking children in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State was rejected while accepting the alternative hypothesis. Thus, there is significant influence of street hawking on antisocial behavioural of hawking children in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of street hawking on girl-child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State

Table 2: t-test analysis on influence of street hawking on girl-child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State

| Variables | N | r-cal | \mathbf{r}^2 | P-value |
|------------------------------|-------|-------|----------------|---------|
| Communication strategies | 400 | 0.187 | 0.00028 | .823 |
| Organizational effectiveness | 14.22 | 2.68 | | |

Significant at 0.05 level, df = 398, critical r 0.0111

To test hypothesis two, t-test was used. As shown in table 2, the calculated r-value of 0.187 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.0111 at .05 level of significance. Since the calculated r-value of 0.187 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.0111, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant influence of street hawking on girl-child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State was rejected while the alternative version was upheld. Hence, there is significant influence of street hawking on girl-child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality of Cross River State.

Discussion of findings

The discussion of findings as contained herein was done table by table, based on each hypothesis. Data in table 2 examined the influence of street hawking on antisocial behaviour of children in Calabar Municipality. The finding indicated that, there is significant influence of street hawking on antisocial behaviour of children in Calabar Municipality. The result agrees with that of Baland and Robinson (2010) as well as Ebele and Olofu (2020) whose result found that young hawkers suffer verbal abuse, low self-esteem and loss of imagination and future direction which in the end make them indulge in antisocial behaviour. In the opinion of Hughes (2019), street hawking endangers the life of the hawkers and exposes them to bad company pressure by peers make them to engage in juvenile delinquent behaviour.

In the same vein, Onibokun (2010) found that children who are forced into street hawking in order to contribute to family income end up indulging in antisocial behavior as way of copping. International Labour Organization (2008) reported that 40% of street hawkers are employed as sex workers, drug peddlers, car washers and bus conductors, killers, thugs, etc, for economic ends. In Africa and particularly in rural Nigeria, (Robson, 2014) maintained that hawkers generally have lower self-esteem, feels nervous about life and feel neglected and detached. Amin (2014) maintained that children who engage in street trading encounter problems related to their psychological well-being such as stigmatization by their peers and the general public. They also



have feelings of disheartenment, stress and personality disorder which make them see anti-social behaviour as an option of self-cure of their problem of alienation and isolation from their family.

Data in table 2 ascertained the influence of street hawking on girl child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality. Finding showed that street hawking has significant influence on girl child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality. The result is supported by Umar (2019) who reported that 30% of the violence experienced by female street hawkers is sexual in nature. Umar observed that most sexually abused girls who hawk do not report the crime because of the stigma attached to it. Street hawking is a very visible phenomenon in the society. Female hawkers are often experience sexual abuse because they are uneducated, ignorant of the risk of being sexually abused and of the help they can receive. Sending the girl-child into hawkers especially against her wish often result in frustration. Gemignani and Wodon (2014) maintained that frustration arising from street hawking is one of the key factors that affect the education of the girl-child; as it tends get the girl-child confused to a point that she may lose track of educational aspiration. Gemignani and Wodon added that frustration due to street hawking can make the victims not to attach value to anything, including their education. Ugoji (2013) maintained that every female hawker can be associated with frustration and low self-esteem; as it makes female hawkers to ignore their positive qualities, judge themselves to be inferior to their peers and often times make them use negative words to describe themselves. It can lead to mental and physical health issues like depression, anxiety, and anorexia.

According to Durojuye (2016), hawking on the street exposes female hawkers to numerous hazards such as physical violence, loss of wares, risk of accident, robbery, kidnapping, even murder for ritual purposes. They are also exposed to the vagaries of weather (extremes of cold or heat), insects and reptiles bite, hunger and deprivation. This situation sometimes makes them to easily give in to sexual abuse without being defensive. The most troubling perhaps is the fact that some are sexually exploited and forced into prostitution with the risk of unintended pregnancies and contracting sexually transmitted infections (including HIV). Some of these girls wakeup very early to go hawking even without eating. Hawking with hunger makes it even easier for them vulnerable to sexual manipulation or exploitation by men.

Conclusion

This study investigated the influence of street hawking on hawkers' development in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria. Street hawking |especially in the study area has become one of the social problems which has drawn the attention of concerned persons in the society. It constitutes a serious problem, in that it has resulted in unwanted pregnancies among female hawkers, smoking, drug abuse and other social vices which in turns affect the development of children. Hence, street hawking has significant influence on antisocial behaviour and girl child sexual abuse in Calabar Municipality.

Recommendations

Base on the findings of the study, following recommendations were made:

The government of Cross River State should carry out an enlightenment campaign through radio, television, bill post in collaboration with some religious institutions on the negative consequences of street hawking in order to minimize the moral hazards inherent in it. Also, as a way of curbing the menace of street hawking, the government should take urgent steps in making active policies and laws that can help stop the prevalence of street hawking by child care givers. Parents and caregivers should be enlightened on the negative effect of street hawking on children; the girl-child in particular.



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