

IMPLICATION OF STREET HAWKING ON CHILDREN'S FUTURE CAREER AMBITIONS IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper reports on a study that examined the implications of street hawking on the future career ambitions of children in Nigeria. Children hawking in the street is a common practice in Nigeria especially in urban areas. The children are made to sell, carrying heavy loads on their heads for several hours during or after school. This qualitative study employed the case study design where the purposive sampling approach was used to select 54 participants (40 school children and 14 drop-outs) between the ages of 10 to 17 found hawking around two roundabouts in Effurun metropolis participated. 3 research questions guided this study. Data were collected through oral interviewing of the participants by the researcher. Content analysis and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The findings show a lot of negative implications hawking has on the children's future career. 22 (40.7%) of the children would like to study science courses in the university; but 5 out of the 22 were already school drop outs; 47% of the children do not attend school regularly as a result of hawking; 82% do not have time for assignments; also 100% did not enjoy hawking and express desire to stop because of the dangers they face. Recommendations and suggestions were made as an academia based on the findings of the study on how to stop children from street hawking because of the negative implications it has in the attainment of their future career ambitions.

Keywords: *Street hawking; Children's Future Education; Career ambitions*

Introduction

Street hawking by children is a form of slavery and child abuse and child abuse according to WHO, is all form of negligence or exploitation that can result to actual or negligent treatment or exploitation that can result to actual or potential harm on the child's health, survival, development, dignity and attainment of future education. According to Wikipedia (2017), child abuse can be physical, sexual or psychological maltreatment of a child by a parent or caregiver. There are different ways children can be abused by their parents or guardians. One of them is child-street hawking which is the core of this study.

The term 'street hawking by children', as used in this study refers to children below the ages of 18 that engage in carrying goods on their heads to sell to buyers in order to generate more income for themselves or their parents/guardians. These children are those who are currently attending primary or secondary school or are school drop outs. Children

who engage in street hawking and have never attended school are not classified as street-hawkers in this study.

According to the National Policy on Education 2004, admission into higher institution should give 60% to sciences and 40% to other courses. The goal of this policy may not be attained if more and more of the children go into street hawking. The future of the nation depends on the education of the children. Can this be achieved in Nigeria if all children in Nigeria engage in street hawking?

Education of the child cannot be overemphasized as it supports them to become successful and useful adults who can make and build nation tomorrow in all ramifications. Most children in Nigeria are subjected to child labour which tampers with their education and training (Agbo 2017, Ena-Israel 2016, Vinolia & Fubara 1988). All children deserve the right to basic education and quality learning opportunities to help them fit to the nation as useful adults contributing their quota to the nation. However, this is not the case in Nigeria as children who street-hawk, have one issue or the other with their education.

This study examined the implications of street hawking on the attainment of the children's future career ambition in Nigeria. It also examined the dangers faced by the children who engage in street-hawking around Effurun metropolis in Delta State.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to find out

- i. The percentage of children who street-hawk in Effurun metropolis that has science and non-science as future career ambitions.
- ii. The implications of hawking on the educational status of the 'children who street-hawk' in Effurun metropolis.
- iii. The dangers faced by the 'children who street-hawk in Effurun Metropolis.
- iv. To suggest possible solutions based on the findings of this study that can reduce the problems faced by the children who street-hawk.
- v. To make general recommendations based on the findings of this study

Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study

1. What is percentage of children who street-hawk in Effurun metropolis that has science and non-science as future career ambitions?
2. Does hawking has any implication on the educational status of the children who street-hawk in Effurun metropolis?
3. What are the dangers faced by the children who street-hawk in Effurun metropolis?

Literature Review

Slaves are often forced to work against their will and they are often restricted and lack the freedom they need to do their biddings. Forcing people to street hawk is another form of slavery and children are among sufferers of this kind of slavery. And this can affect the children from achieving their future career ambitions which in turn will reduce the population of Nigerian future scientists and non-scientists. Out of 40.3 million modern day

slave figure given by Global index in 2018, 10 Million children are presently rated as modern day slaves and 23% of Children are domestic servants or child labourers of which street hawking is among.

Most poor families cannot fend for their families so they resort to forcing their children to do street hawking in order to raise more money for the family. Child Street hawking is prevalent in most urban cities in Nigeria. In street hawking the children are made to carry heavy loads on their heads for 12-13 hours a day for the upkeep of the family (Agbo, 2017). Some of the effects of child labour (which includes children who street-hawk) according to Agbo (2017) is, school dropout, poor education and ill health.

Many of the children who hawk end up without a certificate, handwork or a trade to sustain themselves for the future. This is because the time they would have used to go to school or learn a trade is spent engaging in street-hawking. So one would ask, is street-hawking a trade? Most children who hawk, also have their parents as hawkers, they learn hawking from their parent's and grandparents and many of their parents do not have any certificate or education. Many of these children hawk six to seven days a week carrying heavy loads on their heads, which is very unhealthy. According to Zubeir (2013) the maximum load a child should carry on his head should not be more than 10% of the body weight to avoid breakdown.

A child according to Nigeria Labour Acts NLA (2003) is anyone below 18years while according to International Labour Acts, a child is anyone below 15years. For the purpose of the study, the researcher looks at anyone below 18 as a child. Thus children made to street-hawk that were used in this study were from 17 years and below. The purpose of this study was to find out the implications of hawking on children achievement of their future career ambitions in Nigeria.

Methods:

Design of Study

This is a qualitative study with a case study design. It employed a case study design in order to get descriptions of the participants; their thoughts, feelings and practical experiences in their present situations as children who street-hawk.

Population

The population composed of all children who hawk around popular Effurun roundabout and DSC roundabout to Okuokoko axis in Effurun metropolis, Delta State, Nigeria.

Sample

A total of 54 children (40 school children and 14 dropouts) were used. These children were between the ages of ten (10) to seventeen (17) years.

Sampling Technique/ Procedure

The method of sampling used was the purposive sampling approach. This was necessary in order to select only children who fit into the purpose of this study. Those selected had the following characteristics:

1. They either attend public school till date or have dropped out of school
2. They were between 10-17 years.
3. They hawk every day after school, or during weekends or during holiday periods.
4. They were found hawking at the time of interview; those who did not fit into their category were rejected. Those who have clocked 18 years are regarded as adults and were not used.
5. Willingness to be interviewed.

Instruments

The main instrument was structured questionnaire with interview method. Materials used were biro, paper, audio and video recording of the sessions. The prepared question grade is in table one.

Method of Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected by the researcher through direct contact with the participants. The researcher had individual interview with the children who street-hawk asking questions that were already prepared and related to the study. Their responses were written down and both audio and radio recorded in some of the cases. Most of the participants were willing to share their experiences and were very open-minded. Some of them were free because the researcher told them the report of this study would be published and sent to the government and Ministry of Education for further action. There was no fear on the part of the participants because the researcher took permission from their parents and seniors/adults who acted as guidance to them who were also hawking in the same roundabout as the children. The research took a period of 3 days of several hours each. The interview sessions were fairly informal and participants were made to feel free to respond to the questions they were asked.

The data collected from all the participants were categorized according to the research questions. Data were obtained from the notes the researcher wrote down during the interview and from the audio and video recordings was to double check the written down note and for authenticity. Pictures taken in some of the sessions were also useful in the study. The method used in analyzing the data was the content analysis method at the basic level (describing what was said by the participants, no additions or interred interpretations were done). Descriptive statistics was also used for answering each research question.

Table I: Sample of interview question

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How old are you? 2. How long have you been hawking? 3. Do you presently attend school? (b) What school? What class? 4. Are you a school drop out? (b) If yes, why? (c) If yes, when? What class where you in when you stopped school? 5. Do you go to school everyday? 6. What was your last average / performance in school? 7. Did you pass basic science / biology in your last exam? 8. Do you miss school to hawk when there is no money? 9. Do you enjoy hawking? If yes / no, why? 10. Are you being forced to hawk? 11. What is your future ambition? / What course would you read in future 12. Do you like science/ or Art subjects best? 13. If given a scholarship, would you still hawk? 14. What can make you stop hawking? 15. What are/were your best subjects in school 16. What do your parents do? 17. Do your parents train you from the proceeds? 18. Do you have time for homework/assignment / extra curriculum activities? 19. Does hawking affect you negatively in anyway? What way? 20. What are the problem you have experienced in hawking /dangers? 21. Do you think hawking is dangerous to you and other children? 22. Do you hawk everyday 23. How long do you hawk a day? 24. Would you like to go to university?

Presentation of Results

Table 2: Showing general information about child –hawkers

Age groups	In-school		Drop outs		
	Males	Female	Male	Female	Total
Primary 6-12yrs	3	6	2	6	17
Secondary 13-17	11	20	1	5	37
Total	14	26	3	11	
G. Total	40		14		54

The Table 2 shows that out of the 54 children who street hawk used for the study, the total of 40 are currently in school and 14 are drop outs.

Ages 6-12 were 17(primary group); while 37 were between 13-17 years (secondary group). The seventeen in the primary group consist of 12 females with 6 currently in school and 6 drop outs and 5 males with 3 currently in school and 2 drop outs.

In the secondary group there are 37 children which consist of 12 males, with 11 currently in school and 1 drop out; and 25 females with 20 currently in school and 5 drop outs.

Research Question One:

What is the percentage of children who street-hawk in Effurun metropolis that has science and non-science courses as future career ambitions?

Table 3: Showing description of children who street-hawk by future career ambitions

In- school	Career in science	Career in non-science areas	Total
	17	23	40
Dropouts	5	9	14
Total	22 40.7%	32 59.3%	54
G. Total	54 (100%0		

The table 3 shows that (22) 40.7% of the children who engage street-hawking indicated interest in studying sciences while (32)59.3% were interested in other courses. of the 22 interested in science courses, 17 were currently attending school while 5 were drop outs. In the course of interview, the researcher got the following responses from the 5 who were dropouts.

1. Male 15years: I wanted to study electrical engineering in future but no money I stopped after primary school. I hawk to help my parents pay school fees for my younger brothers and sisters.
2. Male 12years: I wanted to be an engineer. But my parents don't have money to train me. They asked me to stop attending school and to hawk.
3. Female 16years: I no longer attend school; my mother does not have money to train me. I wanted to study nursing in the university. I stopped school to hawk after my JS3 exams.
4. Female 17 years: I wanted to study Maths. Maths used to be my best subject. If I am sponsored to go back to school, I hope to be a Maths teacher.
5. Female 14 years: I like to study medicine but no money. Government should help my parents so I can go back to school.

The researcher found out that the other 9 who were dropouts wanted to study business Administration, banking or accountancy. According to most of them, since they have dropped out of school, they need money to either continue their education or start a business. However, all of them said they wanted to stop the hawking for several reasons mostly because of the risks involved and for health reason.

Thus in answering research question one, the percentage future scientists among children who street-hawk in Effurun metropolis is 40.7% for both present students and drop outs. Out of which 9% are already drop out and the remaining 31% are still in school with a tendency for more drop outs. The Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education should please take note.

Research Question Two:

Does hawking have any implication on the educational status of the children who hawk in Effurun metropolis?

Table 4: Showing Summary of Educational Status of children who street-hawk

	Educational Status	%	Total No.
Studentship	Number of dropouts	14 (26%)	54
	Number in school	40 (74%)	
Attendance	No. who attended school regularly	21 (53%)	40
	No. who miss school some times	19 (47%)	
Continuous assessment	No. who have enough time for assignment	07 (18%)	40
	No. who do not have enough time for assignment	33 (82%)	
Exams	No. who agreed that they passed last exam	29 (72%)	40
	No. who agreed they did not pass their last exam	11 (28%)	
Extra lessons	No. who attended lesson after school	0(0)%	40
	No. who do not attend lesson after school	40 (100%)	
	No. who attended holiday lesson	0(0)%	40
	No. who did not attend holiday lesson	40(100%)	
	No. who hawk throughout holiday	40(100%)	

The Table 4 gives a clear picture of the present educational status of the ‘children who street hawk’ in Effurun metropolis. 47% do not attend school regularly; 82% do not have enough time for assignments; 100% do not attend after school lesson; 100% do not attend holiday lesson, 28% agreed that they did not pass their last exams. Although the researcher could not go to their respective schools to find out if really more than 28% failed their last exams but for the purpose of this study it is clear that the number of failures would reduce if the children are stopped from the hawking. Hawking takes so much of their extra or free time that could have been devoted to study. The findings clearly showed that the greater percentage of the children who street-hawk have poor academic status. They are not regular in school and give little or no time for their studies. Most of them spend their after school times hawking and 100% hawk all through the holiday periods and no time for holiday lessons. The researcher believes the academic status of these children will improve if the hawking stops.

Research Question Three

What are the dangers encountered by children who street-hawk in Effurun Metropolis?

Table 5 is showing dangers encountered by children who street-hawk in Effurun

	Dangers	Yes	No
1.	Does hawking affect you negatively in anyway? What ways: 1. General Body pains 2. Headache/Neck/Cheek/Leg pain 3. Hunger 4. Harsh weather sunburn 5. Cold sickness/fever	54 35 37 49 54 22	0
2.	What is the problem you have experienced while hawking? 1. Theft/loss of items or goods 2. Accident (keke, bike, car) 3. Assault (from other hawkers) Assault (from customers) Assault (from parents/caregivers)	54 50 24 22 30	
3.	Do you enjoy hawking?	0	54
4.	Do you think hawking is dangerous for you or other children	49	5
5.	If you are given scholarship or alternative financial aids would you stop hawking	54	0
6.	Do you hawk up to 6 hours a day? During holiday do you hawk up to 12 hours	Yes (35) Yes(45)	No (19) No(9)

The Table 5 clearly shows that all 54 of the children suffer a lot of dangers ranging from harsh weather (sunburn and cold from rain) hunger, headache and all kinds of body pains. The researchers in the course of the interview also found out that many of the children eat once a day. That is dinner, most of them do not eat breakfast and they take snacks (gala and soft drinks) for lunch. They complained of hunger as a potential harm to their health.

On the dangers they have encountered at one time or the other while hawking, a higher number have experienced theft and injuries from one form of accident or the other. Some have had one form of assault or another. The researchers found out that all the children said they do not enjoy hawking and most of them agreed that hawking is dangerous to children and are ready to stop if given alternative or financial aids. Many of them hawk for an average of 7 hours daily, some hawk morning till 10pm with only snacks as food.

Thus in answer to research question 3, the dangers experienced by the children in descending order from highest are (1) theft and harsh weather, (2) accident (3) body pains (4) assault and (5) cold fever.

Discussion

Children street-hawking is regarded as child abuse which is one form of slavery because it falls into the category of the definition of child abuse given by WHO that says child abuse is all form of physical emotional, ill-treatment, neglect or exploitation that can result to

actual or potential harm on the Child's health, dignity or education. This study clearly shows that parents who allow their children to street-hawk are endangering the children's lives and this scenario is affecting their academic. Most of them who would have become future scientist have their ambition either aborted or at the verge of being aborted. Previous researcher have findings that agree with the findings of this study (Agbo 2017, Ena-Israel 2010, Ubah & Bulus 2014) that street-hawking by children had negative implications on achievement of future career ambition of the children. Most of the researchers based on their findings, recommend abolition of children hawking by the government, and encourages parents to find alternative means of fending for their children other than abusing or labouring the children through street hawking (Wayas & Adeleye 2010, Agbo 2017, Ena-Israel 2016). This study also agrees with the findings of Bosah (2014) that street hawking poses danger to young children who are below 17 or 18 years. It is clear from this study that the children are not enjoying the street hawking, even though they use it to assist their parents. The government should enact laws to abolish child-hawking for children of 17 and below.

Conclusion

Engaging children in street hawking is a form of child abuse and has negative implications on children of 17 years and below. Their education ambition is tampered with. Some of them could have become future scientists but are already drop-outs and the ones left may still not achieve their career ambition if they continue hawking.

Recommendations

The followings are recommended from findings of this study

1. The government should abolish children street-hawking because of the negative effects on the children's education and health.
2. Ministry of Education should set up education task force saddled with the responsibility of ensuring children do not hawk especially during school hours.
3. There should be enlightenment campaigns by government, Ministry of Education and NGOs about dangers of children street-hawking and parents should be told to source for alternative means to fend for children
4. Government should begin empowerment programmes for school dropouts.

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