

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR CHILD LABOUR AND STREET HAWKING AMONG TEENAGERS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OSHIMILI SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, DELTA STATE

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Abstract

The study focused on factors responsible for child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area, Delta State. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. The study adopted the descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 4,819 public junior secondary school students in the area. Out of which 220 was randomly selected. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data. To ascertain the face validity of the instrument, the draft of the instrument was given to two experts in the Department of Educational Foundations. The researcher with the help of two research assistants administered 220 copies of the instrument and retrieved 216 copies which were used for analysis. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions, while t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that parents' socio-economic background influence child labour and street hawking; child labour and street hawking influence academic performance; and child labour and street hawking influence study habits of teenagers in secondary schools. The study recommends among other things that government at all levels should provide free basic education, enact laws banning all forms of child labour such

assstreet hawking among school age children and provide scholarship to aid the disadvantage parents.

Keywords: Child labour, Street Hawking, Teenagers, Secondary Schools.

Introduction

The term “child labour” is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and/or interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work (International Labour Organization [ILO], 2023). Whether or not particular forms of “work” can be called “child labour” depends on the child’s age, the type and hours of work performed, the conditions under which it is performed and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries. Africa has the highest prevalence of child labour in the world with prevalence rates ranging from 20% to 54%. Nigeria, which is the most populous country in Africa, has its own fair share of the statistics with general child labour rates of between 20% and 30% (Adelakun, 2018).

Street hawking is the commonest form of child labor in Nigeria whereas involvement in agricultural activities is the commonest globally (United Nations Children and Education Fund [UNICEF], 2017). Over half of the nation’s population is less than 15 years and teenagers make up about one-fifth of total census figures. With poverty levels of about 75%, some families strongly believe that children should engage in economic activities to assist in home keeping (Duncan & Brooks, 2015). Furthermore, some studies have revealed that socio-economic and cultural factors are part of the major reasons why parents engage their teenage children in street hawking (Duncan & Brooks, 2015; Black, Hess & Berenson, 2015).

It has been observed that in Oshimili South Local government Area of Delta State, there has been increase in the number of teenage children involved in street hawking activities in both rural and urban areas which impacts negatively on the educational achievements of teenagers. This however can be traced to a lot of factors which according to Apple (2018), include cost of schooling, characteristics of the child, parents socio economic status, government policies,

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households and community, distance of formal education centre, poverty, illiteracy, religion and traditional customs such as polygamy and preference for large family size. In the developing countries especially in traditional African society where there are no effective machinery to enforce teenage child welfare, majority of the teenagers find it difficult to survive talk less of going to school as a result of economic status of their parents. This poses a lot of challenges to the teenager (Bass, 2016).

The International Labour Organisation (2023), approximates that there are more than 246 million teenage children engaged in labour in the world. These teenage children hawk in some of the most horrible conditions conceivable, where they face a serious risk of injury, chronic illness, or death, kidnapping, rape among others. Teenage children face safety and health hazards from carrying heavy loads, inhaling harmful dust and particles while hawking for either their biological, foster parents or guardians (Amoo, Ola-David, Olurinola & Fadayomi, 2016). Teenage Street hawking exposes the teenager to a lot of hazards like sexual defilement, assaults, neglects and the threat of punishment for speaking out these social vices. Some of the dire 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 (Ayodele & Olubayo-Fatiregun, 2017).

Nuhu and Nuhu (2015), states that street hawking by teenagers partly constitutes child labour. Children in urban areas are quickly caught up in the daily struggle for survival and material gains. In the Eastern and Southern 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 may help their family augment financially or pay for their school fees. Although most Nigerian teenagers particularly in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State must return home at the end of the day, a growing number including girls, manage to survive on the streets. Hawking by boys and girls is widespread, and parents clearly recognise that the practice holds dangers for teenage children. This abuse occurs at three levels, viz: exposure to overt genital seduction, exposure to genital stimulation, and witnessing adults in the act of sex (Matthias & Dada, 2016).

Farauta (2016), posits that street hawking is the major factor which contributed to the three levels of abuse mentioned above. The author argued that men may lure teenage 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.

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. Udoh and Joseph (2017), further emphasized that the girl teenage hawkers learn to adorn themselves daily to draw interest before embarking on hawking business. Unfortunately, parents are unable to intervene since the girls keep their premature clandestine sexual activities undisclosed because of certain prohibitive societal taboos against sex discussion (Gimba & Okediran, 2015).

Street hawking is a form of selling goods along the road from one place to the other (Umar, 2015). It also extends to be an act of canvassing for sale items carried by a hawker along the street, from house to house or in the public space (Ikechebelu, Udigwe, Ezechuku, Ndinech & Joe-Ikechebelu, 2015). Street hawking is a veritable means of socialization in almost all parts of Nigeria particularly in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State and it is widely practiced despite the attendant moral and physical dangers for teenagers. In Nigeria, street hawking is done by male and female teenagers alike. Teenagers hawk different items, ranging from food to different types of non-edible items. Some teenagers have a particular spot where they stay to sell their wares. While some move from place to place along the streets, others tend go from door to door in residential areas.

Teenage hawkers sell tray of goods on their head by moving from one street to the other. The hawkers that sell similar goods walk different directions while those that sell goods that complement each other like food and drinks tend to walk in the same direction (Ebigbo, 2019). The youngest among these hawkers are followed by an adult teenager who also sells different things in order to teach the younger ones how to calculate or protect the child against any occurrence. These teenage hawkers shout on top of their voices to announce what they are selling in the community so as to attract the attention of intending buyer of their arrival. It has been noted with great concerns that street hawking exposes both the male and female teenager to dangers posed by fraudsters and ritual murderers because of their vulnerability at odd hawking hours (Ubah & Bulus, 2015).

Bass (2016), states that teenage involvements in street hawking is a threat to the development and survival of the society; as it distorts educational policies due to high rate of school drop-out. It distorts vocational skills and relevant education acquisition thereby destroying the economic sector (Bass, 2016). The stress involved also affects both physical and psychological health of teenagers due to the age and maturation of the child resulting to low concentration in school and breakdown of health of the child. A teenager who shares the school time with

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street hawking is always late to school and he or she will most likely face some academic challenges which may include poor studying habits, lack of skills, low self-esteem and low performance in class hence resulting in low achievement or total drop-out of school (Gimba & Okediran, 2015). It is therefore against this background that this study examined factors responsible for child labour and street hawking among teenagers in Secondary Schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area, Delta State.

Statement of the Problem

Street hawking, like most forms of child labour could adversely affect the physical, social and mental development of teenagers in Secondary schools. Street hawkers are exposed to such risks as road traffic injuries, drug abuse, sexual abuse, child trafficking and various behavioral problems (Adelakun, 2018). Street hawking may also have negative impact on teenagers' education such as high drop-out rates, absenteeism and poor school performance. Some teenagers give little or no time to their academic work because of their involvement in street hawking after school which leads to low academic achievements. If these activities are not curbed, more teenage students will be attracted to street hawking activities before and after school because of its immediate little benefit they derive from it, and this will relatively reduce their academic outcome in secondary schools. This study therefore examined factors responsible for child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area, Delta State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to examine factors responsible for child labour and street hawking among teenagers in Secondary Schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area, Delta State. Specifically, the study sought to;

1. examine how parent's socio-economic background influence child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area.
2. ascertain how child labour and street hawking influence academic performance of teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area.
3. determine how child labour and street hawking influence study habits of teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. Does parents' socio-economic background influence child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools?
2. Does child labour and street hawking influence academic performance of teenagers in secondary schools?
3. Does child labour and street hawking influence study habits of teenagers in secondary schools?

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis is stated for this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of students on how parents' socio-economic background influence child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools based on gender.

Methodology

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design. Survey research design possesses great relevance of adoption when a researcher intends to describe conditions that already exists and intends to induce reasons for their prevalence. The population of the study comprised all 4,819 public junior secondary school students in Oshimili South Local Government Area of Delta State. The sample of the study was 220 students (95 boys and 105 girls) selected through the use of multistage sampling technique. At first, purposive sampling technique was used to select all eleven (11) public junior secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area. Secondly, the same purposive sampling technique was used to select only JSS1 students. While simple random sampling technique was used to select 220 students from the population. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Factor Responsible for Child Labour and Street Hawking among Teenagers Questionnaire (FRCSHTQ)." The questionnaire items used in this study was structured using a four-point response scale with the following options: Strongly Agree (SA) = 4, Agreed (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. To ascertain the face validity of the instrument, the draft of the instrument was given to three experts, two from the Department of Educational Foundations and one from the school of Business Education in FCE(T) Asaba. The researcher administered 220 questionnaires and retrieved two hundred and sixteen copies which were used for analysis. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. For the research questions, the decision was based on the criterion mean of 2.50, thus, any item with mean score 2.50 or above were accepted while any item having a mean score less than 2.50 was rejected. For the hypothesis, if the calculated value of t (t-cal) is greater than the table value of t (t-

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crit), the hypothesis will be rejected; whereas, if the calculated value of t (t -cal) is less than the table or critical value of t (t -crit), the hypothesis will be accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: Does parents' socio-economic background influence child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools?

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on how Parents' Socio-Economic Background Influence Child Labour and Street Hawking among Teenagers in Secondary Schools. (n= 216)

S/N	STATEMENT	$\bar{x}$	SD	REMARK
1.	Parents' inability to adequately provide for the needs of family members seems to influence street hawking among teenagers.	3.72	0.68	Agree
2.	Parent's unemployment status influences street hawking among teenagers.	3.45	0.56	Agree
3.	Parents with low paying occupation and due to instability and financial problems are more likely to push their teenage children into street hawking.	3.88	0.47	Agree
4.	Educated parents with a high paying occupation provide economic, social, psychological and emotional support to their children and are likely not to push their children into street hawking.	3.31	0.78	Agree
5.	Teenagers whose parents are sick or late are more likely to engage in street hawking so as to meet up with family demands.	3.96	0.24	Agree
Grand Mean (SD)		3.66	0.55	Agree

Field survey data (2023).

Analysis in Table 1 reveal that the mean scores range from 3.31 – 3.96. This indicates that the respondents agree to the statements in items 1–5. Data on Table 1 further shows the grand mean score for the entire item is 3.66, which falls within the response option of agree. This indicates that the respondents agree that parents' socio-economic background influence child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area.

Research Question 2: Does child labour and street hawking influence academic performance of teenagers in secondary schools?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on how Child Labour and Street Hawking Influence Academic Performance of Teenagers in Secondary Schools. (n= 216)

S/N	STATEMENT	$\bar{x}$	SD	REMARK
6.	The teenagers' academic performance will be affected, if he/she does not have adequate time to engage in school activities.	3.86	0.53	Agree
7.	Teenagers who engage in street hawking are too tired to engage in any meaningful academic study at home and this tends to influence their academic performance.	3.99	0.15	Agree
8.	Street hawking may have negative effects on student's education such as high dropout rates, absenteeism and poor academic performance.	3.96	0.29	Agree
9.	Most teenagers who engage in street hawking are more likely to have little or no time to do their take home assignments and this influence their academic performance.	3.43	0.57	Agree
10.	Teenagers who hawk before or after school were denied their educational opportunity.	3.90	0.50	Agree
Grand Mean		3.83	0.41	Agree

Field survey data (2023).

Analysis in Table 2 revealed that the mean scores range from 3.43 – 3.99, with standard deviation range between 0.15 – 0.57. This indicates that the respondents agree to the statements in items 6–10. Data on Table 2 goes further to show the grand mean score for the entire item is 3.83, which falls within the response option of agree. This indicates that the respondents agree that child labour and street hawking influence academic performance of teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area.

Research Question 3: Does child labour and street hawking influence study habits of teenagers in secondary schools?

Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores of Responses on How Child Labour and Street Hawking Influence Study Habits of Teenagers in Secondary Schools. (n= 216)

S/N	STATEMENT	$\bar{x}$	SD	REMARK
11.	Students who hawked in the morning before going to school and those who hawked in the afternoon after school hours are more likely to	3.90	0.50	Agree

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	have average study habits.			
12.	Most of the teenage street hawkers are more likely to lose their chances of becoming literate because they engage in hawking on the streets from morning till evening.	3.99	0.15	Agree
13.	Teenagers who hawk in the evening after school get home late, tired and unable to do any quality study for the rest of the day.	3.88	0.53	Agree
14.	Teenagers who engage in street hawking are more likely to have little or no time to do their take home assignments.	3.88	0.47	Agree
15.	Most street hawkers seem not to have enough time to study and prepare for examination, attend classes regularly and punctually, or do assignment and read.	3.25	0.44	Agree
Grand Mean		3.78	0.42	Agree
Field survey data (2023).				

Analysis in Table 3 revealed that the mean scores range from 3.25 – 3.99, with standard deviation range between 0.15 – 0.53. This indicates that the respondents agree to the statements in items 11–15. Data on Table 3 goes further to show that the grand mean score for the entire item is 3.78, which falls within the response option of agree. This indicates that the respondents agree that child labour and street hawking influence study habits of teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area.

Hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant difference in the mean ratings of students on how parents' socio-economic background influence child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools based on gender.

Table 4: Analysis of t-test on the Mean and Standard Deviation Responses of Lecturers on How Parents' Socio-Economic Background Influence Child Labour and Street Hawking Among Teenagers in Secondary Schools based on Gender.

Respondents	n	$\bar{x}$	S^2	df	t.cal	t.crit	α	Remark
Male	82	3.20	0.53	214	-5.765	1.971	0.05	Retain Ho
Female	134	3.67	0.68					

From the t-test table, since $t\text{-cal} (-5.765) < t\text{-crit} (1.971)$, retain H_0 . The null hypothesis is hereby retained that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of students on how parents' socio-economic background influence child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools based on gender.

Discussion

One of the findings of the study reveal that parents' socio-economic background influences child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area. This is so because parents' inability to adequately provide for the needs of family members seems to influence street hawking among teenagers; parents unemployment status influences street hawking among teenagers; parents with low paying occupation and due to instability and financial problems are more likely to push their teenage children into street hawking; educated parents with a high paying occupation provide economic, social, psychological and emotional support to their children and are likely not to push their children into street hawking and teenagers whose parents are sick or late are more likely to engage in street hawking so as to meet up with family demands. This finding is in line with Abubakar (2018), parents' inability to adequately provide for the needs of family members seems to make some put the heavy burden of life jeopardizing street hawking activity on their children which causes academic set back through repetition, withdrawal from school or dropout due to failure and shame.

Another finding of this study revealed that child labour and street hawking influence academic performance of teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area. This is true due to the fact that teenagers' academic performance will be affected, if he/she does not have adequate time to engage in school activities; teenagers who engage in street hawking are too tired to engage in any meaningful academic study at home and this tends to influence their academic performance; street hawking may have negative effects on student's education such as high dropout rates, absenteeism and poor academic performance; most teenagers who engage in street hawking are more likely to have little or no time to do their take home assignments and this influence their academic performance; teenagers who hawk before or after school were denied their educational opportunity. This finding corresponds with Nuhu and Huhu (2022), that child labour and street hawking may have negative effects on children's education such as high dropout rates, absenteeism and poor academic performance.

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The final findings of the study revealed that child labour and street hawking influence study habits of teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area. This finding is true because students who hawked in the morning before going to school and those who hawked in the afternoon after school hours are more likely to have average study habits; most of the teenage street hawkers are more likely to lose their chances of becoming literate because they engage in hawking on the streets from morning till evening; teenagers who hawk in the evening after school get home late, tired and unable to do any quality study for the rest of the day; teenagers who engage in street hawking are more likely to have little or no time to do their take home assignments; most street hawkers seem not to have enough time to study and prepare for examination, attend classes regularly and punctually, or do assignment and read. This finding agrees with Nseabasi and Oluwabamide (2021), that most of the street hawkers have permanently lost the chances of becoming literate; they engage in hawking on the streets from morning till evening. Those who hawk in the evening (after school) get home late, tired unable to do any quality work for the rest of the day. This act presupposes that street hawkers are not likely to have good study habits.

For the test of hypothesis, the null hypothesis since t -cal was greater than t -crit, the null hypothesis was retained which states that there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of students on how parents' socio-economic background influence child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools based on gender.

Conclusion

This study ascertained factors responsible for child labour and street hawking among teenagers in secondary schools in Oshimili South Local Government Area, Delta State and based on the analysis of data collected, it could be concluded that the major factor responsible for child labour and street hawking among teenagers is parents' socio-economic background. More so, it could be concluded that child labour as well as street hawking among teenagers tends to influence student's academic performance as well as their study habits.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made.

- Government at all levels should provide free basic education, enact laws banning all forms of child labour such as street hawking among school age

children and provide scholarship to aid the disadvantage parents as well as create job employment for them.

- Students should not get involved in menial jobs and street hawking activities as this has proved to impact negatively on their academic performance.
- State governments particularly should organize enlightenment campaign in schools, markets, town halls and places of worship on the impacts of street hawking activities on teenage children study habits.

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