

The Risks of Street Hawking among Students of Practical Agriculture in Secondary Schools of Taraba State

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Abstract

The study determined the risks of street hawking among students of practical agriculture in secondary schools of Taraba state. The street child is defined as any child who may have parents or guardians in a locality but living and working on the streets. Street children engage in work or employment on a regular basis with the aim of earning a livelihood for themselves or for their families. Street hawking may also lead to behavioral patterns inimical to healthy citizenship. They may indulge in negative activities or criminal acts, such as prostitution, armed robbery, and pick pocketing, and later imprisonment. For the purpose of this study, two research questions were stated. The study employed a survey design and Taraba State was the area of the study which consisted of 16 local government areas and 118 junior secondary schools. The population was made up of all 8839 JSS II students as at 2010/2011 school session. The sample size of 384 was drawn using the Taro Yamane formula. Questionnaires for students' responses were instruments used to collect data from the students, which was validated by two experts. The instrument was pilot tested using the split halve method. Data collected were analyzed using the mean. For the research questions, a mean of 3.5 and above was considered agreed while less than 3.5 were considered disagreed. Findings revealed that 8 out of the 10 suggested reasons for hawking by students were agreed on by the respondents. Respondents also agreed on 7 of the 15 suggested risks involved in street hawking such as moving round in the market, they get hungry sometimes while hawking, sometimes rain fall on them, they sometimes come back late in the night, they fight with other children, and they fall victims of accident when they go for hawking and they fall sick sometimes. Based on the findings, it was recommended that the poverty level of most Nigerian especially those in the rural areas be improved by the state government, well to do individuals and nongovernmental bodies. The government should make basic education free or affordable for the common Nigerian. The State government should legislate against street hawking by school aged children so that they can concentrate on their studies.

INTRODUCTION

The street child is defined as any child who may have parents or guardians in a locality but living and working in the street. Street children engaged in work or employment on a regular basis with the aim of earning a livelihood for themselves or for their families. Such activities are often carried out at the expense of schooling. Therefore, children are not adequately prepared for the future in a modernized society (UNICEF, 2004; FME, 2004). According to Nseabasi and Oluwabamide (2010), Street hawking is a negation of the international convention on the right of the child. It is indeed inhuman for anyone to engage a child in money-making venture; such a child is denied basic education which is a right for every child. This could probably be because their parents are illiterate and may not place much value on their children's education. Tide online (2010) stated that in most urban centers across the Nigerian Federation, street hawking has persisted. This has become a means of earning a living by traders who are unable to rent shops in the cities. Similarly, some families depend on hawking for a living. Hawking of agricultural produce in Nigeria is similar to how other goods like industrial goods are hawked. According to Umar, (2009), in Nigeria, this is done almost all the time by young children both males and females. She said the girls hawkers come to the cities in groups and then go different directions of the city to hawk their goods, they remain in the city from early to late in the evening when they take buses back to their respective villages after the day's sales. Child labor in this era has eaten deep into the society across the globe. This trend has affected a lot of people including some parents who due to no fault of their own has given their children up for child labor, the purpose of doing so is to get financial stability and to have at least two square meal if possible. It is also pertinent to note that child labor could also be as a result of the death of a parent which will leave the child at nothing rather than to go through the horrible way of life they find themselves. (Uwhejevwe, 2009).

Street hawking is seen as a form of child labor which according to Uwhejevwe (2009) is caused by greed- the quest to get riches propels young boys and girls into doing a lot of things they are not supposed to do all in the pursuit of livelihood instead of employing their youthful strength on farming to produce enough food for the family.

Street hawking is also exposed to a lot of risk and dangers, like in most city centers, traders could easily be knocked down by moving vehicles. Beside, street hawking has denied many children of school despite their ripe age of going to school (Tide Online, 2010). Teenage pregnancy is very common among street hawkers in terms of girl-child; teenage girls who hawk are gradually introduced to some anti-social vices, Umar asserted that girls as young as 13 years are trafficked as sex workers. Also, Danesty and Okediran (2002) lamented that street hawking among young school students have psychologically imposed other problems, like sex networking behavior, juvenile delinquent behavior, which takes most of the student school time that necessitated the poor academic performance and drop-out syndrome noticed among young school students. UNICEF Nigeria stated that these children who work suffer from fatigue, irregular attendance at school, lack of comprehension and motivation, improper socialization, exposure to risk of sexual abuse and high likelihood of being involved in crime. Nwosu (2006) conforms this by stating that during hawking, children reached the most interior part of every street in urban setting thereby exposing them to dangers. She further went on to say that the consequences street hawking has on the family and society are that this children that hawk may have dubious character especially the boys as they come in contact with other children or adult with questionable characters in areas like motor parks, stadiums and in uncompleted buildings in the town. Ebigbo, and Agba, (1990) also stressed that sexually transmitted diseases is on the increase as these teenage hawkers want to be on the reigning fashion will embark into prostitution in other to make money. As they engage in this pre-marital sex, they count all on their gains without counting on the after effect. As these children who are still growing continue to carry goods on their head though the day and some of these loads may be too heavy for their ability, this can affect their growth which could result to stuntedness (Nwosu, 2006).

This study seeks to examine reasons students' hawk and the risks these students are exposed to.

For the purpose of this study, two research questions were stated as follows:

- 1) What are the risks of students involved in street hawking?
- 2) Why are students involved in street hawking?

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Taraba State which lies largely within the middle of Nigeria. Location of Taraba State in Nigeria lies between longitude 8°00'N 10°30'E of Greenwich Meridian and latitude 8°N 10.5°E of the equator and consists of undulating landscape dotted with a few mountainous features (NigeriaGalalari.Com. 2011). The population of the study comprised 8839 JSS II students as at 2010/2011 session according to the Taraba State Post-primary School Management Board (2011), drawn from 118 Junior Secondary Schools in the State.

The researcher applied the Yaro Yamene formula and drew a sample size of 384 JSS II students across Taraba State, and 31 Junior Secondary Schools were randomly sampled at the ratio of 4:1 from the eight (8) Education Zones in the State. Data for the study was collected using structured questionnaire. For the research question, the researcher used a five point likert scale. The decision rule for the research questions was a mean of 3.5 and above was considered Agreed while less than 3.5 were considered Disagreed.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Results revealed that seven of the fifteen items agreed on the risks of students' involved in street hawking with mean ranging between 4.93 and 3.68, while the remaining eight items disagreed with means ranging between 3.48 and 3.15

As regard the risks of students involved in street hawking, Table 5 revealed that seven of the fifteen items agreed on the risks of students' involved in street hawking such as; moving round in the market, they get hungry sometimes while hawking, sometimes rain fall on them, they sometimes come back late in the night, they fight with other children, and they fall victims of accident when they go for hawking and fall sick sometimes, with mean ranging between 4.93 and 3.68, while the remaining eight items disagreed with means ranging between 3.48 and 3.15

The international labor Organization estimates that there are 246 million working children aged between 5 and 17 worldwide (Anti-slavery International 2002). Wheat (2002) expressed shock at the hard work children do in some parts of Ghana. According to International Labor Organization (ILO 2006), little hard data is available but evidence points toward an increase in the phenomenon, both in industrialized and developing countries. It has been observed that adolescents' hawkers stand great risk of hawking, violence and several sexual abuses. ILO (2006:31) states that in a world where workplace violence is on the rise, adolescents are the most vulnerable. (Facebook, 2010).

Even though other research data generally showed that the risks of child labor is high worldwide, but from this study it is not yet at a significant level, this may owe to the fact that Taraba State is mostly made up of rural settlement.

The responses given in Table A showed the mean rating of 10 items on the likert scale. The study found out that eight of the suggested reasons for students involved in street hawking such as; to get money for their school fees, they hawk because their friends also hawk. They also agreed that they hawk to buy some things for themselves and for the family, to take care of their younger ones, to give the money to their parents and because they are from poor families. The items' mean responses ranged between 5.52 and 4.02, while the disagreed items had the mean ranging between 3.30 and 3.26.

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This agrees with Shittu, (2004) who stated that where a child suffers parental and material deprivation and care due to divorce or death, or absconding of one of the parents, the child's schooling may be affected as the mother alone may not be financially buoyant to pay school fees, purchase books and uniforms, such child may play truant, thus his performance in school may be adversely affected. Adelakun, (2010) also stated that many children continue to engage in hazardous labor in order to make ends meet. What is troubling is that while children engage in activities to help increase the family income, many of them are exposed to all forms of danger and enough is not done to protect them. Site (2008) also confirmed that the prevailing abject poverty faced by most parents is the major factor that forces parents to send their children to hawk on the streets.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, There were risks of students' involved in street hawking. Most students go into street hawking to enable them pay for their school fees and to help their parent's economy. It was also revealed that this was due to the poverty level of most parents.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were put forward:

1. Parents should be educated on how to be enterprising and self-employed in agricultural business so that they might have diverse means of income.
2. The government should come out with more strategies for agricultural production to increase food production, this is because most parents involve their children in street hawking in order to meet their basic needs among which is food.
3. The government should make basic education to be free or affordable by the common Nigerian.
4. Practical agriculture should be made more attractive and rewarding for school children.

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Table A
Risks of Students Involvement in Street Hawking

S/N	Risks	X	S	Remarks
1.	I hawk goods by moving round in the market	3.81	31.31	Agreed
2.	I get hungry sometimes while hawking	3.93	32.54	Agreed
3.	Rain falls on me sometimes while hawking	3.67	29.37	Agreed
4.	Sometimes i come back from the market in the night	3.72	29.94	Agreed
5.	I fight with other children sometimes while hawking	3.68	31.29	Agreed
6.	I ever had an accident while hawking	3.86	31.69	Agreed
7.	I got sick while hawking	3.79	30.61	Agreed
8.	I have absented from school to hawk	3.39	27.51	Disagreed
9.	I got lost while hawking	3.47	27.82	Disagreed
10.	I have repeated a class in the past	3.38	26.91	Disagreed
11.	I hawk in the morning before going to school	3.32	26.54	Disagreed
12.	Men ever to asked me for love in the market	3.48	28.81	Disagreed
13.	I have ever been locked up in a shop by some men	3.22	25.45	Disagreed
14.	I hawk by going into people's houses	3.25	26.58	Disagreed
15.	I hawk by going into people's shops	3.15	25.03	Disagreed

N=310; X= Mean; S= standard deviation

Table B
Reasons for Students Involvement in Street Hawking

S/NO	Reasons	X	S	Remarks
1.	My parents sent me to sell goods for them	4.02	32.46	Agreed
2.	My parents do not want me to go to school	3.26	26.19	Disagreed
3.	I fear going to school	3.30	26.97	Disagreed
4.	I sell to get money for my school fees	4.45	37.77	Agreed
5.	My friends like selling things too	4.37	39.07	Agreed
6.	I sell to buy some things for myself	5.52	41.60	Agreed
7.	I sell goods to buy some things for the family	4.15	33.62	Agreed
8.	I sell gods to give the money to my parents	4.25	36.98	Agreed
9.	I am from a poor family	4.24	36.84	Agreed
10.	I sell to take care of my younger ones	4.15	33.28	Agreed

N=310; X= Mean; S= standard deviation

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