

Parental Poverty as a Determinant of Children Street Hawking in Warri Metropolis of Delta State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The pervasiveness of street hawking in Nigeria is of great concern to all stakeholders. Although, street hawking by children could be a sustainable livelihood approach as well as coping strategy to parental poverty problems, early exposure of children to economic activities could lead to physical, social, developmental and psychological consequences. Thus, the paper examines parental poverty as a determinant of children street hawking. Warri in Delta State was purposely sampled and the 240 respondents who were involved in the study were accidentally sampled through a structured questionnaire. Simple percentages and regression were the methods of data analysis employed in this study. The findings of the study showed that parents' socio-economic status was significantly related to the prevalence of children street hawking. Therefore, it was recommended among others that government should create more job opportunities and intensify their poverty alleviation programs as well making serious efforts through seminars, workshops, conferences and other public talks to sensitize parents on the dangers of exposing their children to street hawking.

Keywords: Parental Poverty; Children; Street Hawking; Poor; Family Income

1. Introduction

Nigeria is presumably one of the poorest countries in the world regardless of the fact that oil exploration and production has fetched the country over \$400 billion in revenues. Several factors have been adduced as the determinants of poverty in Nigeria among, which are unemployment, corruption, over dependence on oil and non-diversification of the economy, income inequality, indolence, and non-functional education system (Nduka and Duru, 2014; Togunde and Arielle, 2008). Despite attempts made by various governments to alleviate the scourge of poverty in the country through programs such as Better Life Program (BLP), Peoples' Bank of Nigeria (PBN), Family Support Program (FSP) and National Economic Empowerment Development Strategy (NEEDS) among others, poverty is still highly endemic and it is a serious social malaise. Poverty in Nigeria is characterized by insufficient access to public services, ecological problems, infrastructural decay, absence of functional education, ill health, insecurity, socio-political discrimination and economic marginalization (Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, 2010). This state of affairs according to Nseabasi and Abiodun (2010) has compelled millions of children to work as a means to boost the income of the family to guarantee the continued existence of the household.

The issue of child labor is mostly rife in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and the Pacific (International Labor Organization (ILO), 2012). There are about 48 million children involved in child labor in sub-Saharan Africa, plus the 15 million active child laborers in Nigeria (Ajakaye, 2013). The manifestations of child labor include domestic servitude, forced and bonded labor, begging, mining and agricultural activities, child sex workers, cobblers, car washers, apprentices in various sectors, street hawkers among others (Ukpabi, 1997). However, street hawking is the most prevalent mode of child labor in Nigeria (Osiruemu, 2007). Child Street hawking is the selling of goods and services by children who are below 18 years along major roads or streets and other designated place to make a living or complement family income. Similarly, Ebigbo (2003) averred that in Nigeria, working children have been shown to contribute up to 90% of the family income and many children who work do so as a means of survival. Consequently, children hawking are common sights in Nigeria cities and rural settlements. Poverty is perceived as the utmost driver of children into the work force. Prior studies have revealed that child labor is more common in poorer homes and societies with extreme economic inequalities (Owolabi, 2012; Ekpenyong & Sibiri, 2011).

Vaknin (2009) opined that it is customary for parents and guardians to send a child to work in order to help them learn new skills; however, hawking has been reported to have numerous negative consequences as child hawkers are exposed to physical, intellectual, psychological and emotional hazards. According to Owolabi (2012), children who engage in street hawking are predisposed to sexual exploitation, rape, trafficking. They are robbed of their daily cash, become victims of ritual, poor academic performance many others. Street hawking affects the educational advancement of a child and is a disinvestment in human capital configuration and has destructive outcome on the personal and social returns of a child (Admassie, 2002).

Prior to Nigeria's independence, legislations opposed to children street hawking were formulated and implemented by the colonial regimes in the 1950s. In the same vein, post-independence Nigeria has passed legislations prohibiting street hawking especially the Child Right Act (CRA) of 2003. One fundamental stipulation of the CRA is that utilizing children for hawking is a punishable offence under the Act. Also, Section

59 (b) of the Labor Act disallows the engagement of children under the age of 16 years in any work, which is hazardous and harmful to their general well-being (Awosusi & Adebayo, 2012; Elijah & Okoruwa, 2006). The pervasiveness of the phenomenon (street hawking) in Nigeria despite these legislations is indicative of the severity of the problem, which is unarguably fuelled by poor policy enforcement, family size, socio-cultural beliefs, joblessness, and excruciating poverty. This is so because in the opinion of Adegun (2013) and Okafor (2010), children from large households and low socio-economic class are more inclined to take part in hawking to supplement family earnings. Several empirical studies reveal a connection between living standards and child labor. Krueger's (1996) study demonstrated that low income earners are prone to push their children and wards to hawk, which is unusual in richer households. Duryea, Lam, and Levison (2007) found out in urban Brazil that joblessness of parents mostly the father forces the children to engage in hawking or other types of menial labors to enhance family income. Furthermore, Aqil (2012) believed that when parents are poor and thus worked in their childhood, their children are likely to follow same path hence, transmitting it across generations.

It is against this backdrop that this study is embarked on to examine the impact of parental poverty on Children Street hawking in Warri Metropolis. While this research paper studied the street hawking children in Warri South Local Government Area of Delta State, quite a number of studies had been done in other climes where the incidence of street hawking is high.

2. Statement of the Problem

Studies have shown that the most visible reason for children's participation in hawking is poverty (Bhat & Rather, 2009). If a family lives beneath the poverty threshold, parents tend to view children as major stakeholders or contributors to their family income. Traditionally, the belief that children are partners in the socio-economic improvement and development of the household cannot be over-emphasized taking into cognizance the nature and extent of their contribution to the family income (Aqil, 2012). However, this assumption does not recognize the hazards children street hawkers are exposed to. These children are exposed to risks such as motor accident, rape, kidnapping, extortion, sexual abuse, trafficking, unwanted pregnancies. They are prone to infection of sexually transmitted diseases (STD & HIV/AIDS) and participation in crimes and other social vices. They are also exposed to bad weather conditions, starvation and denial of basic rights (Malinosky & Hansan, 1993; Fasih, 2007). In addition, Basu and Van, (1998) opined that children experience harmful consequences on their academic attainment and performance orchestrated by illiteracy, absenteeism, low enrolment, high rate of dropout associated with street hawking.

Furthermore, Onuzulike (2007) categorized the effects of street hawking by children into three, namely: Physical, Psychological and Social. Physical effects include: traffic congestion, accidents, food poisoning and being infected with communicable diseases. Psychological effects include anger, fatigue, stress, depression and resultant illnesses. Social implications include: unwanted pregnancies, prostitution, smoking, robbery, truancy dwindling academic performance among others. Psychologically, they are disposed to behavioral problems such as low self-esteem, withdrawal syndrome, oppositional behavior, inattentiveness and cognitive deficit.

3. General Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to examine parental poverty as a determinant of Children Street hawking in Warri.

4. Study Hypothesis

There is no relationship between parental poverty and children street hawking

5. Literature Review

5.1 The Concept of Poverty

The concept of poverty does not avail itself to any straight forward definition. There are many definitions as there are many scholars. For instance, Aigbokhan (2000) sees poverty as the incapability to attain a particular negligible standard of living by a person or group of persons. Correspondingly, the United Nations conceptualizes poverty as

A denial of choices and opportunities, an abuse of human dignity. It means absence of basic capacity to function effectively in the society. It also means not having enough to feed and clothe a family, absence of a school or clinic to go to; lack of land on which to grow food or a job to earn one's living and not having access to credit. It means lacks of security, powerlessness and undue hindrances to opportunities for individuals, households and communities. It means unprotectedness against violence, and it often implies living in marginalized environments without access to clean water or sanitation.

Basically, poor people face inadequate basic needs such as food, clothing, health facilities. People, who live

below the poverty line, find themselves in squalid houses with poor sanitary conditions. Many of them live in slums while others have no access whatsoever to housing, health care and nutrition sufficiency. Many of them either do not have any access to education or drop out of school because of high cost of education. In general, poor people only have meager earnings and parents in this category are unable to cater for the needs of their children. They therefore compel them to work to augment household income (Khan, 2001).

5.2 Conceptualizing Street Hawking

Street hawking is a way of selling goods along the road from one place to the other (Umar, 2009). The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2006) defines it as trying to sell by asking people to buy. It also includes the feat or act of soliciting for people to their merchandise carted by a hawker along the street, from house to house or in the public space (Ikechebebu et al 2008). Most of the items sold include snacks, soft drinks, sachet / bottle water, fruits, cigarettes, etc.

Street hawking is an authentic means of livelihood and it is extensively carried out in Nigeria despite the attendant physical, social and psychological perils for children (Ebigbo, 2003). A number of children have a specific location where they stay to sell their wares. A quantity of them move about from place to place, while other move from house to house in residential areas (Grootaert & Kanbur, 1995).

5.3 Poverty as a Determinant of Street Hawking by Children

Poverty is characterized by lack of purchasing power, rural predominance, exposure to environmental risk, insufficient access to social and economic services, lack of political right and few opportunities for formal-sector income generation (Kempe, 2005; UNICEF, 2000). The study done by Davies (2010) shows that informal economies have grown in developing countries, and that many households supplement their formally earned incomes with income earned informally. Blank (2010) pointed out that children are predisposed to working not only because of poverty but also factors such as failure of market force, economic underdevelopment, non-involvement of the individuals in the market, social and political processes as a result of individual behavioral characteristics and choice. Similarly, Admassie (2002: 251) pointed out that poverty is not the only determinant for parents compelling their children to work in less developed countries like Nigeria. Rather, it is coupled with other factors like a poorly developed agricultural sector, uncontrolled rate of procreation that leads to population growth and low literacy rates to mention but a few aspects.

A number of literatures have explained how poverty propels parents to force their children to work/hawk. For example, Bonnet (1993) asserts that family poverty make child labor unavoidable because poor economic and social environments in, which families live make them push their children to hawk. Basu and Tzannatos (2003) used the luxury axiom to illustrate how households push their children out to work in the light of poverty. In this case, households whose adult incomes are very low find it very difficult to keep children out of productive and economic activities. According to Emerson (2009), high income households would prefer not to allow their children to work, while low income households that are in dire need may be forced to push out their children to work in order to survive. He opined that if adult wages are high enough, all households will benefit from the adult earnings and children can be kept out of the labor force.

Bhatotra (2006) in her study in Pakistan found that children work because their household are very poor in the sense that the households income exclusive of child earnings falls below subsistence requirements. Krueger (1996) exposed a similar trend from a cross-country sample, that low income households are more likely to push their children into the labor market than richer households. Duryea, Lam, and Levison (2007) found in urban Brazil that the father's unemployment force children to work to augment family income. Aqil (2012) claims that when parents have worked in their childhood, there is a tendency for the children to do same, thereby passing the ugly trend from generation to generation.as a result, by the time they attain adulthood, they are uneducated and low-skilled .

Rena (2009) indicates that poverty and underdevelopment intensify child labor particularly hawking. She found out that the pervasiveness of poverty amongst countries in Asia and Africa has worsened the cases of children involvement in hawking. Therefore, child labor has become prevalent throughout Africa and Asia. According to studies of Edmonds and Pavcnik (2005); O'Donnell et al. (2005) and Akarro and Mtweve (2011), dealing with poverty is the most viable cure to the menace of children street hawking.

6. Methodology

The population of the study comprised of children street hawkers from age 6-18years. According to the Delta State National Population Commission (2006), the total population of children (both hawkers and non-hawkers) was 303,417. Thus, the population of the study is the estimated 303,417 children resident in Warri metropolis. The study area was sampled for a specific purpose i.e. bearing in mind area with large amount of children hawkers (Neuman, 2003). It was clear that the area will facilitate the investigation (Adler and Clark, 1999).

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. A sample of 240 children was utilized for the study and a

multi-stage cluster sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the respondents. This was adopted because the population of children street hawkers is dispersed. Firstly, Warri was divided into three population density zones i.e. low, medium and high. Furthermore, the simple random sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the various streets in each of the zones. Next, the proportionate stratified sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the sample size from each of the street in the zones as shown in the table below:

Table 1: Demographic Location of Children for the Survey

Population Type	Geographical Location	Number of Children
Low Density	Ogunu	5
	Edjeba	5
	NNPC Quarters	5
	Nigerian Port Authority (NPA)	5
	Warri General Hospital/Warri High Court Areas	5
	Custom Quarters	5
	Government Reserved Area (GRA) Warri	5
	Government Reserved Area (GRA) Effurun	5
	Total	40
Medium Density	Ekurede-Itsekiri	10
	Ekurede-Urhobo	10
	Ugbwangue	10
	Airport Road/Ugborikoko	10
	PTI Road	10
	Upper/Lower Erjeuwa	10
	Jakpa Road	10
	Refinery Road	10
	Total	80
High Density	Okumagba Layout	20
	Okere/Ajamimogha	20
	Iyara/Ikpara/Pessu Market	20
	Hausa Quarters/Igbudu	20
	Mciver/Main Market and Market Road Areas	20
	Enerhen/Udu Road/Delta Steel Company Town	20
	Total	120
	Grand Total	240 Children

Source: Actual Fieldwork, 2016

The accidental sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the respondents i.e. children street hawkers who participated in the study. They were children that could be readily accessed (Adler and Clark, 1999) and engaging them was quite easy and cost effective (Neuman, 2003). A well-structured close - ended questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection and it was self-administered. Section A contained information on the personal background of respondents while section B contained measures on parental poverty as it influences children street hawking. The data obtained in the field were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21.0) computer software. The data were analyzed using percentage method, simple regression analysis and the hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance.

7. Analysis, Results and Discussion

This section of the study dealt with the presentation of the demographic location of children and the mean score and standard deviation of parental poverty index. The results are presented in tables 1 and 2 below:

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Information of Children Hawkers

Item	N = 240	Percent (%)
Age		
6 – 10	103	42.92
11 – 15	112	46.67
16 – 20	25	10.42
How many are you in your family		
1 – 5	53	22.08
6 – 10	153	63.75
11 – 15	25	10.42
15 & above	9	3.75
Are your parents still married		
Yes	132	55
No	108	45
If you do not Hawk, will you be punished		
Yes	159	66.25
No	81	33.75
How many of you are hawking in your family		
Two (2)	137	57.1
One (1)	65	17.1
More than Two	38	15.8
Distribution of children hawkers on the basis of who they are staying with		
Parents	143	59.58
Guardians	97	40.42
Distribution of children hawkers position in the family		
First Born	112	46.67
Later Born	97	40.42
Last Born	31	12.92
Distribution of what children hawkers' parents do for a living		
Trading in a spot	87	36.25
Hawking	65	27.1
Retired Civil Servants	55	22.92
Working	33	13.75
Distribution of who children hawkers remit their hawking money to		
Parents	231	96.25
Self	9	3.75
Distribution of how often children hawkers do hawk		
More than thrice a week	159	66.25
Twice a week (Weekends)	58	14.17
Only on holidays	12	9.58
Distribution of children hawkers' school attendance consistency rate		
Yes (in school)	152	63.33
No (out of school)	88	36.67
Distribution of children hawkers' hawking time schedule		
After School Hours	163	67.92
During School Hours	77	32.1
Distribution of how many children hawk in the family		
More than two	115	47.92
One	72	30.0
Two	53	22.1
Distribution of children hawkers' level of contentment in hawking		
No (Not contended with hawking)	163	67.92
Yes (Contended with hawking)	77	32.1
Distribution of children hawkers' desire to stop hawking		
Yes	142	59.1
No	98	40.8

Source: Actual Fieldwork, 2016.

The result from table 2 above showed that almost 90% of children who are sent to hawk are between the ages of 6 and 15 years and almost 60% of them live with their parents, and 55% of their parents are married. The

information on the table has also shown that over 73% of parents push out their children to hawk and an average of two or more children are engaged in street hawking in a family. The result also showed that irrespective of a child's position (by birth) in the family, any child could be sent to hawk. But from the frequency distribution table, first born (47%) are more engaged in street hawking than later (40%) and last born (13%). The reason could be that the first born are older and more mature than the others and while last born are likely to be too young and inexperienced for such exposure when older ones are available.

The result also showed that most parents of children hawkers are traders and hawkers (63%). No wonder they force their children to hawk more than thrice a week (66%) while other children hawkers are children of retirees (23%) whose parents are involved in one form of work or the other (14%). The data have also revealed that over 96% of parents take the money their children bring home. It is an indication that children hawk to bring money home in order to support family income. The frequency table revealed that 63% of children hawkers interviewed attend school but hawk after school (68%). Some of them do not go to school (37%) and so hawk during school hours (32%).

The children hawkers were asked whether they enjoyed hawking or not. The frequency distribution showed that there are more children who do not enjoy the street hawking (68%) than children who do not mind (32%). The disgruntled children are likely to be the category of children who are compelled against their will to go and hawk. They have no choice as their refusal is likely to earn them punishment. When they were further asked, if they will stop if told to do so, some of them said Yes (59%) while some said No (41%).

Table 3: Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Parental Poverty Index

Descriptive Statistics				
S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
1	How many members does the household have	120	6.69	7.44
2	Are all household members aged 6-18 currently attending schools	120	8.38	1.73
3	What is the main adopted for the selection of the house?	120	3.40	1.43
4	What is the main roofing material of the house	120	5.03	2.14
5	What is the main source of drinking water for the household?	120	4.17	1.17
6	What type of toilet is used by the household?	120	3.21	2.41
7	Does any member of the household own a television?	120	12.13	5.93
8	Does any member of the household own a stove?	120	4.43	3.39
9	Does any member of the household own a mattress/bed?	120	4.33	1.71
10	Does any member of the household own a radio?	120	4.13	1.91
	Summated Mean		5.59	2.78

Source: Researcher's Computation, 2016

The data presented in table 3 above unveiled the mean rating of the approved parental poverty index as provided by Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) (2003). The data showed a summated mean of 5.59. This however revealed that the means of items 1, 2, 4 and 7 are higher than the summated mean (5.59). These means measure parental poverty, which is the reason for parents forcing their children to hawk. But, the mean of items 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 each did not seem to measure parental poverty as each mean is lower than the summated mean (5.59).

Hypothesis Testing

H₀: There is no significant relationship between parental poverty and children street hawking

H₁: There is a significant relationship between parental poverty and children street hawking

The test was performed at 0.05 level of significance. The result is presented in the tables 3, 4 and 5 below:

Table 4: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.720 ^a	.519	.475	.7815

a. Predictor: (Constant), Does any member of the household own a radio? How many members does the household have? Are all household members aged 6 to 18 currently attending school?, What type of toilet is used by the household? Does any member of the household own a television? What is the main source of drinking water for the household? Does any member of the household own a stove? Does any member of the household own a mattress/bed? What is the main material used for the floor of the house? What is the main roofing material of the house?

Table 5: ANOVA^b

	Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	71.799	10	7.180	11.757	.000 ^a
	Residual	66.568	109	.611		
	Total	138.367	119			

a. Predictor: (Constant), Does any member of the household own a radio? How many members does the household have? Are all household members aged 6 to 18 currently attending school?, What type of toilet is used by the household? Does any member of the household own a television? What is the main source of drinking water for the household? Does any member of the household own a stove? Does any member of the household own a mattress/bed? What is the main material used for the floor of the house? What is the main roofing material of the house?

b. Dependent Variable: Children Street Hawking

Table 6: Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error				Zero-order	Partial	Part
1. (Constant)	.971	.297		3.269	.001			
How many members does the household have?	-.002	.011	-.011	-.163	.871	-.036	-.016	-.011
Are all household members aged 6-18 currently attending school?	-.020	.022	-.066	-.910	.365	.127	-.087	-.060
What is the main material used for the floor of the house?	.027	.127	.047	.215	.638	.547	-.045	-.031
What is the main source of drinking water for the household?	-.064	.064	.775	6.378	.000	.707	.521	.424
What type of toilet is used by the household?	.406	.039	.102	1.165	.246	.400	.111	.077
Does any member of the household own a television?	.045	.020	.060	.512	.610	.443	.049	.034
Does any member of the household own a stove?	.010	.047	-.042	-.343	.733	.489	-.033	-.023
Does any member of the household own a mattress/bed?	-.016	.086	-.074	-.596	.553	.395	-.057	-.040
Does any member of the household own a radio?	-.051	.096	.007	.007	.950	.282	.006	.004

The above table, table 5 revealed the regression model summary value of $R = .710$. It was shown that f-calculated value of 11.757 is greater than the f-critical value of 4.01. This implies that there is a significant relationship between street hawking and parental poverty. This is confirmed in the standardized coefficient values of .011, .066, .047, .120, .775, .102, .042, .074 and .063.

8. Discussion of Finding

The study examined parental poverty as a determinant of Children Street hawking in Warri metropolis. From the result of the tested hypothesis, it was revealed that that there is a significant relationship between parent(s)

poverty and street hawking among children. Poverty orchestrated by parental joblessness is a potential drive to children involvement in hawking in order to supplement the family income. Most of the parents of respondents were not fully and gainfully employed. This has therefore made them to keep pushing their children into the streets to make a living. This position was supported by Okpukpara and Odurukwe (2006), Oruwari (1996), Aquil (2012), Bass (2004) and Osiruemu (2007), Ekpenyong and Nkereuwem (2011), Nduka and Duru (2014), Adegun (2013). The connecting thread in these studies is that there is a connection between parents' minor incomes and Children Street hawking as a means to ensure the survival of the family. For instance, Adegun (2013) opined that children from large households and low socio-economic class were more inclined to take part in hawking to complement family earnings.

9. Conclusion and Recommendations

The phenomenon of street hawking is rife in Nigeria and this has grave implication not only for the victims (children) but also for the families and society in general. Street hawking is a repudiation of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child. It is grossly inhuman and dehumanizing for anyone to allow a child participates in hawking in order to make money. The study has established that poverty is connected with children street hawking. Although, street hawking by children could be a sustainable livelihood approach as well as coping strategy to parental poverty problems, early exposure of children to economic activities could lead to physical, social, developmental and psychological consequences. Some of the hazards these children hawkers are exposed to include injuries, sexual molestation and abuse, rape, unwanted pregnancies, contracting STDs and HIV / AIDS, retarded growth, poor academic performance, and death. In addition, they tend to show behavioral maladjustments, low self – esteem withdrawal syndrome, oppositional behavior and learning difficulties, truancy among others. Therefore, Nigeria as a responsible nation of the world is expected to practically demonstrate her commitment to the global fight against child labor in all its ramifications especially street hawking.

Consequently, the following recommendations were made to tackle the problem of parental poverty as a determinant of Children Street hawking in urban in Nigeria. Firstly, Government is encouraged to generate more job opportunities and provide handsome incentives to those who working hard in their current employment. These will increase the family income of Nigerians and give parents the opportunity to cater for their children and other dependants to make Nigeria a safe place for our children. Secondly, government is advised to step up its efforts in poverty alleviation and eradication. Since poverty is the root cause of child hawking, it cannot be eliminated unless the issue of poverty is tackled. Thirdly, serious efforts should be made through seminars, workshops, conferences and other public talks to sensitize parents on the dangers of exposing their children to street hawking. Also, government should be more committed in the formulation and implementation of policies geared towards curbing and/or eliminating the menace of children street hawking. Lastly, compulsory formal educational studies on human rights, child labor, child trafficking and other forms of child abuse should be incorporated in the school curricula at all levels of education.

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