

# Street Hawking as Correlates of Adolescents' Social Adjustment and Academic Performance

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## ABSTRACT

This study examined the street trading activities among adolescents and its effects on the social adjustment and academic performance of secondary school students in Mushin Local Government area of Lagos State. In carrying out the study, the descriptive research design was used; four research questions and four null hypotheses were postulated to give direction. Researcher's self-designed questionnaire (SHASAQ) was used to assess the respondents' opinion while 350 well-completed set of the questionnaire were collected from the respondents. Data collected were analyzed using simple mean, percentage, standard deviation, T-test, Pearson Moment Correlation and Chi-square statistical tools and the hypotheses were tested on 0.05 level of significance. After analyzing the data gathered, it was revealed that there are more female adolescent hawkers than male adolescent hawkers in Mushin Local Government area of Lagos State. Adolescents have the bad disposition towards street hawking in Mushin Local Government area of Lagos State; there is a significant relationship between adolescent social behavior and academic behavior, and gender is a significant factor in social adjustment of street hawkers. It was suggested that the government and the school administrators provide adequate educational scheme arrangement for students from the poor socio-economic background who do not often have time to review school activities at home. As a result of street hawking and that government should ensure that the number of adolescents who partake in street hawking is reduced by making laws to ban street hawking so that the rate of drop out can be reduced. It is however recommended that the study is replicated by other researchers using different location and environment and also to confirm or refute its validity and to expand the scope of work previously done.

## KEYWORDS

Street hawking, adolescent, social adjustment, academic performance, secondary school, descriptive research, Nigeria.

## INTRODUCTION

Children are regarded as the most vital element of development. That is why their welfare in society is an index of social and economic development of that society. As such, child welfare is included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (UNESCO, 2004). In the recent times, street hawking has received considerable attention from public as well as government. However, parents are faced with the challenges of running the families and provision for the basic needs of their children during this period when the unemployment rate and poverty level is at the peak. Parents often argue that this necessitates them to solicit helping hands from their children through Hawking in other to make the family meet their ends (Esan, 2011).

The poor socioeconomic situation has often been mentioned when parents are confronted with the questions on why they send their children hawking. Street hawking is a process of selling goods or services on the street. According to Marie (2012), it is probably the riskiest type of trading in the whole world. The streets are mainly made for vehicles. The sidewalks or pavements are not big enough for pedestrians, let alone, hawkers. However, poverty has been blamed as the major cause of street hawking as many people do not have an opportunity to rent or to secure authorized places to hawk their items.

According to Olagunju (2009), a hawker is a vendor of merchandise that can be easily transported; the term is roughly synonymous with peddler or costermonger. In most places where the term is used, a hawker sells items that are native to the area. Hawking is a universal activity, the street hawkers in Argentina are called manteros, and they are mostly illegal immigrants without document and in most cases, victims of illegal immigration. In London, they are called costermonger. Organized yet

semi-obvious, they are ubiquitous, and their street cries could be heard everywhere. In North America, hawkers are commonly known as street vendors, they sell snack items while in the Caribbean, and hawkers are commonly referred to as higglers.

The emergence of street hawking in Nigeria has been so prevalent of which it has now become an eyesore situation. The pathetic aspect of it is that children are the victim of this activity. According to Ndipe (2010), sick perverts capitalize on this "accepted practice of street hawking by the kids and lure these unsuspecting traders to their house with the pretext of patronizing their wares. Then innocent children soon become the subject of sexual abuse and a threat of punishment would silence them of speaking out.

According to the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (2012), there are more than five million vendors in Nigeria, 80% of who are adolescents some of whom are still in secondary schools. However, in a study conducted by Aina (2009), she found that there was a significant effect of socioeconomic background and social adjustment on the academic performance of adolescent students. Social maladjustment as defined by Hornby (2004) is a way of having the mental and emotional problem that can lead to unacceptable behavior. Such behaviors include absenteeism, depression, anger, fighting, etc.

Several researchers have also shown that academic achievement can be predicted from indicators of social adjustment. In their longitudinal study of the prosocial foundations of children's academic achievement, Caprara, Barbaranelli, Pastorelli, Bandura, and Zimbardo (2010) used children's third-grade social behavior to predict their eighth-grade academic achievement. Caprara (2010) found that new prosocial behavior robustly predicted later academic achievement, but early aggressive behaviors did not. Third-grade prosocial behaviors significantly predicted eighth-grade academic achievement, even when controlling for third-grade academic achievement. Interestingly, third-grade academic achievement was not a significant predictor of eighth-grade academic achievement when controlling for third-grade prosocial behaviors. The results of this study suggest that social adjustment significantly contributes to later academic achievement, more so than do problem behaviors and even early academic skills.

### ***Statement of the Problem***

In the developing countries, especially in traditional African society where there is ineffective machinery to enforce child welfare, a majority of the children in such society find it difficult to survive as a result of the economic status of their parent. In coping with these, some of the children engage in various kinds of activities to survive. Some of these activities which include street trading, begging, etc. are sometimes hazardous to the health and education of the child.

Several states in the country have promulgated laws in regards to street trading especially by children who are supposed to be in school as a result of an increase in the rate of abuse of such children. Some parents, however, feel that the government is just trying to deprive them of those services that their children can offer them without weighing the implication on their children's health and education.

Differences in academic achievement and social adjustment of children from poor and rich background have been established (Ndipe, 2011). Some students are in the habit of sleeping in the classroom while their mind will be far away from what they are being taught. Arguably, most of these students are from a low-income family as they might have been made to do some external work or job before they go to school.

Several studies have been conducted on the variables that can influence students' academic performance and social adjustment of adolescents. However, most of the study did not mention street hawking as a factor that can influence performance and social adjustment. It is by this view that the researcher decided to embark on this study.

### ***Research Questions***

The following questions guide the study:

1. What are the demographic characteristics of children who are into street hawking?
2. How does adolescent feel towards street hawking?
3. Is there any relationship between adolescent social behavior and academic performance?
4. Is gender a significant factor in social adjustment of street hawkers?

### ***Hypotheses***

1. Gender is not a significant factor in demographic characteristics of children who are into street hawking.
2. Adolescents do not have a significant bad disposition towards street hawking
3. There is no significant relationship between adolescent social behavior and academic performance
4. Gender is not significant a significant factor in social adjustment of street hawking

### ***Significance of Study***

The researcher hopes that this research will be found useful to parents by preventing them from sending their children hawking especially during the school hours.

Various laws have been made towards the banning of street hawking in the country because of the danger it poses to children. The government would use this study as bases towards policy making as regards street hawking especially if such activities is affecting student academic performance.

It will help teachers to identify the source of poor academic performance and maladjustment behaviors that are common among adolescents by providing them with emotional needs.

Students can also learn how to embrace other with the spirit of oneness and not by segregating despite the differences in social background.

### ***Scope of the Study***

The study intends to find out if there is the relationship between street hawking and adolescent social adjustment in regards to student academic performance. It covers young students of secondary schools, and it will be carried out in schools under only Education District IV of Lagos State as a result of time constraint.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Ex-post- facto research design was adopted in this study. It is a design that involves the collection of data to test the hypotheses or questions raised by the researcher as it also finds the inter-relationship of those variables of study in an independent environment.

The population of this research consists of all young students in public secondary schools under Mushin Local Government Area of Lagos State. Seventy (70) students were randomly selected from each of the five schools (junior and senior secondary) that were used for this study making a total of 350 participants. The instrument used in a collection of data in this research was the researcher's self-developed questionnaire on Street Hawking and Adolescent Social Adjustment (SHASAQ). The questionnaire has two sections. Section (A) deals with the bio-data of the respondents, while section (B) consists of the structured statement meant to provide answers to the research questions.

Experts in the field of guidance and counseling examined the content validity of the instrument. The advice and constructive criticism were very useful in the final draft of the device before administration.

Before the proper management of the questionnaire, a pilot test was administered in one school that was not included in the sample using 20 students. The correlation coefficient of 0.75 between the two tests showed that the instrument was solidly reliable.

The researcher personally administered the instrument. However, the assistance of research assistants was used when coding the data before analyzing it. To find out the attributes of the respondents in age, occupation, and experience, the use of descriptive statistics has employed in analyzing the personal information of the respondents. While for the hypotheses; chi-square and correlation coefficient analysis were performed at 0.05 alpha level of significance because the study intended to find the influence and relationship between two variables respectively.

## **RESULTS**

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected using percentage and frequency counts. However, Chi-square and t-test statistical tools were used to test the hypotheses formulated so as to determine their rejection or acceptance. The findings of the study are presented below:

### ***Demographic Data of the Study***

In this study, among the participants are 62% male and 38% female. Where 46% of the participants are aged between 10-15 years, while 54% of the participants are 16 years old and above. This indicates that a larger number of respondents are aged above 16 years and are expected to give relevant and reliable information.

### ***Testing of Hypotheses***

*Hypothesis One:* Gender is not a significant factor in demographic characteristics of children who are into street hawking. Gender difference of street hawkers statistically showed that the calculated t-value is 2.97 while the table value is 1.645 at 0.05 significance level with degree of freedom of 348. Since the calculated t-value of 2.97 is greater than the critical value 1.645, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a gender influence in the demographic characteristics of young street hawkers. That is, there are more female adolescent hawkers than male adolescent hawkers in Mushin Local Government area of Lagos State.

*Hypothesis Two:* Adolescents have a bad disposition towards street hawking. Research shows that the  $\chi^2$  calculated value of 6.88 is lesser than  $\chi^2$  table value of 9.49 given with 4 degrees of freedom and 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted. This means that adolescents in Mushin Local Government Area of Lagos State have the bad disposition towards street hawking.

*Hypothesis Three:* There is no significant relationship between adolescent social behavior and academic performance. Research shows that the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between adolescent social behavior and learned behavior. Which is based on statistical findings with calculated r-value of 2.05 while the table value is 1.164 at 0.05 significance level with degree of freedom of 348.

*Hypothesis Four:* Gender is not a significant factor in social adjustment of street hawkers. Based on the adequate provision of educational resources in schools, statistically shows that the Chi-square calculated value is 12.48 and tabulated value is 9.49 with 4 as the degree of freedom 0.05 level of significance. Since the calculated value is greater than the tabulated value, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This means that gender is a significant factor in social adjustment of street hawkers.

## DISCUSSION

In hypotheses, one, the result that was derived from the study shows that there are more female adolescent hawkers than male adolescent hawkers in Mushin Local Government area of Lagos State. This finding contradicts that of Ojo (2008) who found that many secondary school students irrespective of their gender participate in hawking. However, Esan (2009), Oluwole (2007) and Dee (2003) found that there are more female adolescent hawkers than male adolescent hawkers in urban areas. Johnson (2012) stereotyped street hawking and concluded that unwanted pregnancy among young street hawkers is on the rising in the recent times as a result of female exposure to hardship and unscrupulous sex maniac who have various means of luring these girls into sex.

In hypothesis two, it was found that adolescents in Mushin Local Government Area of Lagos State have the bad disposition towards street hawking. This means that many of the young street hawkers do not have the positive attitude towards street hawking as some of them are under force to sell while others hawk on the street to provide for their basic needs. This corroborates the findings of Anumnu (2007) who found that more young street hawkers do not enjoy street trading. Kodaolu (2007) and Gyan & Pajok (2009) in separate studies found that many young street hawkers are ashamed of street trading and as a result develop poor social interaction among friends in school.

In hypothesis three, the result that was derived from the study shows that there is a significant relationship between adolescent social behavior and academic performance. This is in line with the findings of Madubelum (2007), Tonade (2008) and Rufus (2011) who found out that many students from the poor socio-economic background are not performing well in their academics as they cannot cope with challenges of helping their parents to sell wares or cook after school. Rufus also condemned the parents who send their children hawking after school instead of reading their books. In a survey conducted by Tungay (2009), it was found that most of the students who drop out of secondary school have once sold goods on the street of Lagos State.

In hypothesis four, it was found that gender is a significant factor in social adjustment of street hawkers. On the contrary, Bobbit, Leich, Whitener, & Linch, (1994); Chapman & Green (1986), Chapman & Hutcheson, (1982); Grissmer & Kirby (2007) found no significant influence of gender on social adjustment of street hawkers. However, Kadiri (2011), Onuh (2012), Oti (2007) and Miller (2012) found that gender is a significant factor in social adjustment of street hawkers. They all believe that female street hawkers are better adjusted into the society than male street hawkers. Kadiri (2011) and Onuh (2012) emphasized that male street hawkers are usually influenced by peers than female adolescent street hawkers.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has examined the street trading activities among adolescents and its effects on the social adjustment and academic performance of secondary school student in Mushin Local Government area of Lagos State. After analyzing the data gathered, the findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. There are more female adolescent hawkers in Nigerian than male adolescent hawkers.
2. Many young street hawkers do not enjoy hawking.
3. Street hawkers are usually harassed and molested.
4. Many street hawkers feel ashamed to tell their parent if they are sexually abused while hawking.
5. Street hawking affects negatively students' academic performance.

It is, therefore, relevant that the government and the school administrators provide adequate educational scheme arrangement for students from the poor socio-economic background who do not often have time to review school activities at home as a result of street hawking. Government and school administrators should ensure that the number of the adolescent who partakes in street hawking has reduced by making laws to ban street hawking so that the rate of drop out could reduce. The government should ensure adequate provisions of required scholarship and grants for students. This will go a long way in strengthening the free education that secondary school students enjoy in Lagos State as most parents attributed high cost of education to the reason that necessitated their children to hawk. Parents should allow their children to learn after school instead of hawking. Street hawking among adolescents should be banned.

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