

Influence of Hawking on the Education of Primary School Girl-child in Mopa-Moro Local Government Area, Kogi State

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of hawking on the education of an average primary school girl-child in Mopa-Moro Local Government Area, Kogi State. Survey design was used for the study. Random sampling technique was applied to select the five primary schools and the nineteen pupils from each of the five schools used for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) was used to analyse the data. The study was able to establish that the primary school environment and peer influence have a significant effect on pupils' academic performance. School as a learning institution and as a second home for learners has a strong relationship with students' academic performance. The finding shows that there is a significant relationship between school environment and academic performance of pupils :($r = 0.618$; $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is thus rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The mean value of the pupils hawking was 63.35 while the mean value of girl-child education was 37.75. Also, the standard deviation value of pupils hawking was 7.385 while that of girl-child education was 37.99. The implication of the result is that hawking affects the girl child's education negatively since the girl-child suffers physical discomfort causing her to lose concentration during lessons. She may also be exposed to the dangers of rape, kidnapping and accident. It is recommended that street hawking by pupils, especially females, should be banned while parents should ensure that their children have some hours to rest and study everyday after school and also during the holidays.

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Introduction

The value of children as unique gifts from God has a worldwide acceptance. In Africa, including Nigeria, children are the main yardstick with which a man's wealth and success are measured. Furthermore, children ensure not only continuity of the society but also give parents their rightful position in the society (Abbasi, 2009). These gifts of God are so treasured that some people go to the extreme to have them. Any marriage without children is most often devoid of happiness and in some cases, such marriages do not last or are usually unstable in nature (Ada, 2007). Historically, hawking appears to be part of the Nigerian culture and understandably so.

There is no uniform definition of a child in Nigeria. Akinola, (2014) defined a child as a person under the age of 18 years. Asieghu, Okorji & Bosah, (2015) defined a child as an individual below 15years of age. In spite of the variations, children are seen in this study as any human beings below the age of 18years and not yet an adult. A child at birth is helpless and totally dependent on the adults for all its needs. Early childhood (0–6years) has come to be recognized as a period of critical development of the human being. During this period, love, care, good nutrition, a safe environment, stimulation, and encouragement are particularly critical for the individual's future life (Okpukpara, Chine, Uguru & Nnemeka, 2016). Regrettably, in Nigeria, many children in the process of their development do engage in street hawking (Csapo, 2014).

Background to the Study

Nigeria, being among the poor economies in the world with the accompanying effects of unemployment, poor infrastructural facilities, and lack of human empowerment has seen most of her populace living in abject poverty. Therefore, because of the low socio-economic status of most families in Nigeria and the high rate of poverty, most parents cannot help but push their wards into the streets where they spend long hours, at the mercy of environmental

elements, selling sachet water (popularly known as *pure water*), fruits, confectioneries, etc. so that the proceeds from such may contribute to their families' upkeep. This practice is unacceptable because street hawking is a form of child labour and abuse which is on the increase in Nigeria. Street hawking is considered a form of child abuse because it endangers the health and safety of the child (physically, spiritually, psychologically and socially); interferes with his/her education, and deprives him/her the right to normal and happy childhood.

Street hawking is the third largest criminal activity in the world after arms and drug trafficking (Csapo, 2014). In the last decade, the phenomenon of street hawking has considerably increased throughout the world and most especially in Nigeria. Every year, millions of young individuals, mostly females, are misled or forced to submit to servitude. The UN Convention Against Transnational Organised Crimes defined street hawking as follows:

'The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, of abuse of power, giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation 'Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs'.

Research evidence shows that females are trafficked for the purpose of domestic services, prostitution and other forms of exploitative labour (Onouha, Onuigbo & Ugwuanyi, 2014). There has been a serious concern about the cause of street hawking in Africa as a whole and Nigeria as a country in particular. Onouha, et al (2014) had identified poverty, large family size, and urbanization among others as the major factors why many Nigerian females are vulnerable to trafficking. Large families are often prone to traffickers' deceit in giving away some of their female to city residents or even strangers promising a better life for them.

Street hawking as defined by Kasomo (2009) in its simplest form is the selling of things along the roads and from one place to the other. Kiki (2010)

defined street hawking as the process whereby the hawker hawks his goods by carrying the goods on his or her head by means of a tray, or minor forms of transportation like wheelbarrows, bicycles, trolleys etc. in search of customers in the process of which he could employ the use of bells or shout the name of the items he or she is hawking in order to attract the attention of any interested customer.

Odaga (2015) saw street hawking as a trading activity that involves movement across houses or streets with certain articles usually food or household commodities, advertised by the seller through shouting the names of the items, ringing of bell or the likes. Street hawking is considered as the act of canvassing for the sale of items carried by the hawker along the street, from house to house or in the public places in town (Offorma, 2009). Therefore, street hawking is a system of trade that involves the movement of the trader from one place to another in search of customers to purchase his or her wares, which could be household or perishable commodities, through the means of shouting or using a bell.

¹²described street hawking as an aspect of child abuse and neglect especially the girl-child. They argued that certain economic and socio-psychological factors induce street hawking which they added have damaging effects on the developmental processes of children.

The culture of hawking did not come from the blues; it has a historical offshoot. In seeking to situate the development of street hawking in Nigeria, a historical review of how street hawking came to stay in Nigeria becomes imperative. As it concerns the emergence of child hawking in Nigeria, Ottaway (2010) is of the opinion that street trading, especially by children, appears to have started with the introduction of an International Monetary Fund Structural Adjustment Plan (IMFSA) in the late 1980s which led to the devaluation of the nation's currency, a withdrawal of subsidies on items such as fuel, water, and electricity, and job cuts. Resulting from the above, parents who could no longer afford fees for their children or wards withdrew them from school. In an effort to help families make ends meet, some of these children were engaged as domestic servants to wealthy households, as car washers and watchers, bus conductors, and street hawkers.

Street hawking among children of primary school age is fast becoming the norm in our society. When children are kept busy on the streets, they come in contact with different corrupt behaviours during hawking. It becomes worrisome what the outcome will be on their academic, behavioural and socio-emotional development. This, if not properly addressed, will seriously affect the general standard of morality and social norms that has formed the acceptable pattern of behaviour among the youths.

Statement of the Problem

Most average Nigerians consider street hawking by the girl-child as part of the socialisation process in the society. Culture has been identified as a sustaining agent of hawking. Some parents and guardians see street hawking as a socialisation process, relying heavily on their own developmental experiences. For example, they hawked when they were children and so tend to see nothing wrong with the trade. This is most regrettable. These parents or guardians fail to understand that times are changing and that society has changed so much from what it was such that each day a child is sent out to hawk, he/she is being exposed to risks and hazards every minute. It remains a matter of concern among scholars as children who are supposed to occupy a pride of place in any given society are rather being made the most vulnerable in the society. In a developing country like Nigeria, it is unfortunate that children of primary school age are found hawking wares. A great number of children hawk wares during school hours while some hawk wares immediately after school thereby not having time to read their books and do their take-home assignment. As a result of this, their academic pursuits are likely to suffer. This is a source of worry to academics and other stakeholders. Although this academic problem has been studied by scholars, most of the existing literature has focussed on the effects of hawking on the education of young children generally. However, this work has decided to examine the specific effects that hawking has on the education of the primary school girl-child using selected schools in Mopa-Moro Local Government Area of Kogi State as a case-study.

Research Questions

The following research questions are set for the study to answer:

1. What are the causes of hawking by primary school female pupils in Mopa-moro Local Government area of Kogi State?
2. To what extent does hawking affect the education of the girl-child in primary schools in Mopa-moro Local Government, Kogi State?
3. Are parents in Mopa-Moro Local Government Area of Kogi State motivated to engage their young girls in hawking by their friends whose female children also hawk?

Hypothesis

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between hawking by primary school girls and girl-child education in Mopa-moro local Government.

Review of Related Literature

Concept of Girl-Child Education

Within the context of education, many scholars have defined girl-child education in various ways. The National Child Welfare Policy (1989) as cited by Stronquist, (2010) defines the girl-child as a person below 14 years of age. Gele & Gele (2014) define girl-child as a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age. This period is made up of infancy, childhood, early and late adolescence stage of development. The girl-child is seen as a young female person who would eventually grow into a woman and marry. She looks after the young ones, the home and the kitchen.

Girl-child education is a 'catch-all' term for a complexity of issues and debates surrounding education (primary, secondary, tertiary and health education for females. Girl-child education also includes areas of gender equality, access to education and its connection to the alleviation of poverty, and good governance which are major ingredients in averting crime against women. Today's girl-child education is for her tomorrow's living. Stronquist, (2010) defines women education as the education that would make a woman become aware of herself and her capacity to exploit her environment, and it involves training in literacy and vocational skills to enable her to become functional in the society. When maternal care is adequately provided for the girl-child, the aims and objectives of education will be achieved.

Girl-child Education in Nigeria

For over two decades, scholars from various fields of study have carried out studies and reviews relating to girl-child education. Various propositions have been made and agreed upon. Girl-child education program has been viewed by different people interested in the program in different ways. For instance, the ministry of education is likely to see it as the formal school program for all girls in school to ensure they obtain the best learning experience. Those from the non-formal sector see it as an educational program designed for out-of-school girls to help them make up for their missed chance of schooling. Some see it as a program aimed at giving out-of-school girls vocational skills to help them break through economically (Stronquist, 2010). Girl-child education is the process through which the girl-child is made a functional member of her society. It is a process through which the girl-child acquires knowledge and realises her potentialities, uses them for self-actualisation and making them useful to herself and others. It is a means of preserving, transmitting and improving the culture of the society. In every society, education connotes acquisition of something good, something worthwhile (Stronquist, 2010).

According to Ugwu (2014) one of the most important tools available to empower women within the family and within the society is education as it contains a lot of benefits. Girl-child education is, however, not easy to achieve in Nigeria as many impediments stand in the way of the girl-child (UNESCO, 2012). These impediments are discussed below:

Economic Factors: Nigeria as an independent entity is undoubtedly characterised by very harsh economic conditions. This has resulted in scarce resources. As a result of this, choice has to be made between whom to send to school and whom not to send. Most often, it is the girl-child that remains at home. Due to poverty, girls get withdrawn from schools so as to help to supplement family income through hawking, trading or even working on the farm so as to support the family. In some cases, the girls are given out as house-helpers or even sent into early marriages so as to get bride prices which are in some cases huge (Ugwu, 2014).

Sexual Violence and Abuse: These also hinder the girls from going to school as most parents may deny their girl-children access to school due to the fear of sexual violence.

School Environmental Factors: Often, most parents are scared of sending their female children to school in distant places and would rather keep them at home. According to Ugwu (2014), curricula, textbooks and other materials are usually gender-biased. She opines that right from childhood, girls are channeled into stereotyped traditional careers in form of textbook illustrations and stories consequently leading to the development of poor self-image at a tender age. Also, sexual harassment during educational pursuit creates serious emotional and psychological strain on the girl-child.

The Concept of Hawking: To hawk simply means to go from place to place offering things (goods/items) for sale (UN, 2005). This may take place in the streets, motor-parks, expressways, and other public places. Both old and young may engage in hawking. This is why hawking is referred to as an occupation engaged in by children and young adults which involves selling of items or goods in the streets.

They considered street hawking as the act of canvassing for sale of items carried by the hawker along the street, from house to house or in public places in town (Ugwu, 2014). Street hawkers are petty traders who sell foodstuffs to hungry and thirsty commuters.

The Causes of Hawking: No single factor triggers hawking in Nigeria, rather, a constellation of factors are involved in sending children to school or to work as well as being a street child (UNICEF, 2007). According to them, the causes of child hawking range from poverty, exorbitant cost of schooling, characteristics of the child, parental factor, households and community. These factors exercise influence over the decision to send children to school or to work.

Other factors include the location and distance to formal education centres=Poverty and illiteracy reinforced by traditional customs such as polygamy and preference for large family size were identified as root causes of child labour in Nigeria(UNICEF, 2007).

Moreover, marital instability and family disorganisation were also identified as contributory factors to the children's hawking of wares. Be that as it may, the first econometric study of National Child Labour survey data also noted that these factors have an influencing behaviour on the child's participation in different child activity options(UNESCO, 2012).

Another contributory factor to street hawking is the narrow streets of urban slums, which provide no space for vehicles to enter, and because the vehicles could not convey goods into the streets, the result will be that those goods for the use of such communities are carried into the neighbourhoods by petty traders and street hawkers (UN, 2015). Among all the factors considered responsible for child hawking, UN (2015) reports that poverty is cited as the (major) reason for children being on the streets as they are required to contribute to the sustenance of the families through such activities as menial jobs, hawking and bus conducting. Undoubtedly, some parents see hawking as more economically efficient and rewarding than sending their children to school because of poverty.

In the eastern and western parts of Nigeria, children may attend morning or afternoon school and hawk goods outside of school hours, though there are some children who trade on the streets the whole day. Their incomes help their families to pay their school fees among other things. Although most Nigerian children return home at the end of the day, a growing number, including girls, subsist and exist on the streets.

Poverty is a major problem of rapid urbanization in developing nations, and it is a major contributory factor to the growth and exacerbation of child hawking (Tikumah, 2009). He further notes that hawking reflects prevalent urban poverty which compels parents to send children of school age to work to boost family income. For many hours a day, children from poor homes are engaged in economic ventures such as street hawking, cart/wheelbarrow-pushing, bus conducting and the likes "There are too many poor families in Nigeria where the children will go to bed hungry if they do not sell the goods their mum gave them to hawk because the family literally lives on those daily sales (Obiri, 2016). The mummy is selling tomatoes and pepper in a corner of the market; the kids are hawking plantains and eggs in the neighbourhood.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted the descriptive research design of survey type.

Population of the Study

The population of this study comprised all the primary schools in Mopa-moro Local Government Area of Kogi State.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling technique was used to select the schools used for the study. The choice of this technique was to allow the researchers to obtain data from subjects most suitable for the study (Akinola, 2014). Five (5) primary schools were selected in Mopa-muro Local Government Area of Kogi State. Nineteen female pupils were, however, randomly selected from each of the selected schools.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a self-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire comprised two sections – A and B. Section A dealt with the bio-data of the respondents while Section B consists of 20 items. The questionnaire was a structured Likert-type response category built on a four-point scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) respectively.

Method of Data Analysis

The data generated were analysed using descriptive statistics of frequency counts and simple percentages. The inferential statistics of PPMCC were used to test the null hypothesis.

Results and Discussion of Findings

The three research questions raised were answered with the use of descriptive frequency distribution and mean score while the hypothesis formulated was tested with the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). All the analyses were carried out at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question 1: What are the causes of hawking by primary school female pupils in Mopa-moro Local Government area of Kogi State?

S/N	Item	A	SA	D	SD
1.	I am hawking to send myself to school	30 31.58 %	25 26.32 %	10 10.52 %	30 31.58 %
2.	I use the money I get from hawking to buy necessary materials needed in school	28 29.47 %	14 14.74 %	25 26.32 %	28 29.47 %
3.	My mummy is a petty trader. There is no food for me if I do not hawk	65 68.42 %	20 21.05 %	6 6.32%	4 4.21%
4.	I stay with grandma, and I must hawk so that we can get money	55 56.26%	34 35.79 %	-	56 58.95 %
5.	I hawk because all my friends do hawk after school	60 63.20 %	35 36.80 %	-	-

Research Question 2 : To what extent does hawking affect the education of the girl-child in primary schools in Mopa-moro Local Government, Kogi State?

S/N	Item	A	SA	D	SD
	Due to hawking, I do not have time to read my books.	45 47.37%	47 49.47%	3 3.16%	-
	I score below average in class because I do not have time to read my books.	50 52.63%	45 47.37%	-	-
	Children who hawk do not attend school regularly.	45 47.37%	50 52.63%	-	-
4.	My mates do better than me in class work because	35 36.84%	60 63.16%	-	-

	I hawk.				
	Spending a lot of time on the streets hawking makes me sleep in the class while lessons are going on.	65 68.42%	30 31.58%	-	-
	I am often too tired to listen to the teacher.	45 47.37%	30 31.58%	20 21.05%	-
	I do not always do my assignments after hawking.	50 52.63%	45 47.37%	-	-
	Hawking affects my writing ability due to tiredness.	65 68.42%	20 21.05%	6 6.32%	4 4.21%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Research Question 3: Are parents in Mopa–Moro Local Government Area of Kogi State motivated to engage their young girls in hawking by their friends whose female children also hawk?

S/N	Item	A	SA	D	SD
1.	I don't rest after school because I hawk.	25 26.32%	50 52.63%	15 15.79%	5 5.26%
2.	Even at my tender age, boys do harass me while hawking on the streets	20 21.05%	25 26.32%	40 42.10%	10 10.53%
3.	Hawking exposes the child to a wayward lifestyle.	10 10.52%	15 15.79%	45 47.37%	25 26.32%
4.	Exposing children to hawking leads them to moral decadence early in life.	30 31.58%	35 36.84%	20 21.05%	10 10.53%
5.	Hawking exposes children to stealing.	50 52.63%	45 47.37%	-	-
6.	Hawkers tell lies in order to make gains.	23 24.21%	20 21.05%	25 26.32%	27 28.42%
7.	Girl-hawkers can be raped by their male customers.	50 52.63%	45 47.37%	-	-
8.	Children hawkers are exposed to road accidents.	45 47.37%	50 52.63%	-	-
9.	I normally feel pains in some parts of my body after hawking	25 26.32%	50 52.63%	15 15.79%	5 5.26%

Source: Field Survey, 2019

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis earlier formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀: There is no significant relationship between hawking by primary school girls and girl-child education in Mopa-moro Local Government.

Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient Showing relationship between pupils hawking and girl-child education in Mopa-muro Local Government

Variable	Mean	Std Deviation	N	R	P Value	Remark
Pupils hawking	63.35	7.385	100	0.618	0.017	*Sig
Girl-child education	37.75	2.715	100			

**Sig. at 0.05level*

The result of the analysis of data to test the hypothesis formulated was presented in table 4.6 above. The result shows the relationship that exists between hawking by primary school girls and girl-child education in Mopa-Muro Local Government Area of Kogi State: ($r = 0.618$; $P < 0.05$). This means that the hypothesis is rejected at 0.05 level of significance. The mean value of the pupils hawking is 63.35 while the mean value of girl-child education is 37.75. Also, the standard deviation value of pupils hawking is 7.385 while that of girl-child education is 3.799. The implication of the result is that hawking by primary school girls has correlation with the state and quality of girl-child education in Mopa-muro Local Government Area of Kogi State. The result confirms that the rights of the girl-child are always being denied her and this denial leads to lack of access to education by the girl-child thus resulting in child labour and eventual deprivation of the girl-child of her childhood potentials, dignity and joy. This agrees with the position of Kasomo (2009) who noted that there is still gender inequality in terms of accessibility to education in many parts of Nigeria, particularly in states like Katsina, Kogi, Bauchi, and Jigawa, Akwa Ibom, etc. Subsequent to Kasomo (2009) submission, Asiegbu, et al, (2015) lamented that the girl-child is discriminated against in terms of

education and given out in marriage early thereby denying her the required competencies for community development.

Summary of the Findings

In summary, from the result of the hypothesis tested, it has been found that there is no significant relationship between hawking by pupils and girl-child education in Mopa-muro Local Government Area of Kogi State. Hawking affects child's physical development by making the child feel pains in some parts of the child's body, by making the child feel weak and fall sick. It also exposes the child to the dangers of injury, rape, road accidents and diseases. Hawking affects a child's social/emotional development by exposing them to early drinking of alcohol. Similarly, it does not allow them time to visit and play with their mates just as some of them may become morally bankrupt because of the bad habits they may copy from touts and other miscreants who sometimes constitute the bulk of their customers. Eventually, some of them end up having low self-esteem.

Hawking affects children's cognitive development by not allowing them time to read their books or do their assignments after hawking. It affects their learning ability due to tiredness making them sleep in the class while the lessons are going on. They are often too tired to listen to their teachers with their mates, consequently doing better than them in class work. Some of these pupils don't attend school regularly as their parents may ask them to go hawking on some days of the week, especially those that fall on important market days.

Conclusion

Arising from the findings of this study that girls in primary schools who are involved in street hawking are affected in their studies because of the impact which hawking has on them physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually, the study concludes that the girl-child may continue to perform poorly academically if concrete steps are not taken by parents and government to stop the practice of engaging young girls, especially those in school, in street hawking.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are offered: First, the government should legislate against street hawking by school children so that these children could be saved from the evils associated with hawking; including the negative effect the practice has on the academic achievements of the pupils.

Secondly, the school-based management committees (SBMCs) or Parent-Teachers Associations (PTAs) of the different schools should, during their meetings, encourage parents not to allow their children to hawk. This will give the students enough time to engage in studies during weekdays in order to help make them improve on their academic achievements. However, even if pupils are going to street hawk, it should be restricted to weekends and during holidays when the pupils are likely to have some hours to rest and study.

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