

## **Socio-Economic Factors Affecting Children Hawkers in Moba Local Government of Ekiti State**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study investigated socio-economic factors affecting children hawkers in Moba local government area of Ekiti State. The study adopted the descriptive design of the survey type. The sample size in this study was 50 teachers. Three research questions were raised and answered in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire titled "Socio-economic factors affecting hawkers in Moba LGA of Ekiti State." Data collected were analysed using statistical tools that were employed to answer the research questions such as mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that high cost of living is associated with street hawking among children. It was also showed that large family size is associated with street hawking among children in Moba Local Government of Ekiti State. The result revealed that poverty is associated with street hawking among children. Based on the results of this study, it was recommended that there is need for government continuous enlightenment of parents on the effect involving their children in street hawking and the importance of education. Government to create more job opportunities so that citizens would be employed to enable then cater for family needs. Government should make education free at all levels so that the less privileged children would have the opportunity to be educated. Government should legislate against involving children of school age in hawking and punish parent, guardian and caregiver who go against it. There is a need to protect the child, advocate reduction in family size, poverty and promote parental education/economic empowerment in order to reduce the urge on children to perform economic roles. They should also improve the standard of living of the citizens through provision of bursary allowance to the indigent citizens.*

**KEYWORDS:** socio-economic, factors, affecting, children, hawkers

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria as a developing country as perceived needs people who are required for the political, social and economic development of the country. To every child, God has deposited a great potential which when maximized will help in all round development of the society and the world at large.

And until the child passes through school, that potential cannot be harnessed. Education is necessary for the personality grooming of individual. Education is the best legacy a nation can give to her citizens especially the youths. This is because no nation can rise above the quality of its human capital.

Generally, in the whole world, particularly in Nigeria, education has been considered to be the cornerstone for development. It forms the basis for literacy, skill acquisition, technological advancement and ability to harness human and material resources towards the achievement of societal goal, Olufayo (2016). Education is very important in any given society. It is a process by which abilities and capabilities of individual are developed. These abilities might be physical abilities, emotional abilities, social abilities and intellectual abilities. It is the actualizing of human potential so that the individual can become something more than what he was before. (Eze, 2010).

The importance of education through school cannot be overemphasized, for it is through that medium that the child gets to realize his talent and capabilities which under the guidance of an instructor will help to train the child as well as bringing out the best in him. Advancement in this modern world is impossible without education. The continued existence and development of any society depends on the ability of the child to function effectively; socially, politically, economically and religiously as members of the society. The emphasis placed here on the development of the child is based on the truism that when you train up a child in the way he should go; when he grows, he will not depart from it. (Bible, Proverbs 22:6)

Involving Children in hawking of goods in the streets seems to be the emerging trend in Nigeria and an issue of concern. Street hawking or vending in developing countries is attracting a rising interest amongst researchers due to the various health, social, and economic implications to those who engage in the trade. (Olutunde, 2013). Street hawking is a form of selling of goods along the road from one place to the other. It extends to be the act of canvassing for sale items carried by a hawker along the street from one house to house or in public space. The increasing rate of street hawking in Nigeria is alarming despite the attendant moral and physical dangers for children.

In Nigeria and in particular, Moba local government, street hawking is done mostly by female children. Some children have a particular spot where they sell their wares. Some move from place to place along the street, while others go from door to door in residential area. Children hawkers sell tray of goods on their head by moving from one street to the other. The hawkers that sell similar goods walk different directions while those that sell goods that complement each other like food and drinks walk in the same direction. These hawkers shout on top of their voices to announce what they are selling in the community so as to catch the attention of the intending buyers.

Street hawking is in vogue amongst children of school age in Moba Local Government Area of Ekiti state as was personally observed by the researcher. One of the fundamental global problems facing developing countries today is the fact that the incidences of children who work outside the

family to earn a living or to support their families are increasing. Children are now known to engage in one form of work or the other especially within the family.

Most children hawk before going to school in the morning and continue after school until night. Street hawking irrespective of (age and sex) who engages in it is associated with major hazards. These include sexual assault which increases the vulnerability of the hawkers to diseases such as sexually transmitted infections, increases risk of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion. Other hazards include physical assaults, mobbing, involvement in road traffic accidents, kidnapping, ritual killings etc. Hawkers are exposed to antisocial activities like smoking, drug, alcoholism, cultism and crimes which give rise to deviant cases and maladjustment in our society. In addition to the aforementioned risks, they are deprived of education and sound health and these constitute child abuse. (Ekpenyong and Nkerevwuem, 2011)

Children's hawking seems to hampers the academic performance and educational career of the children in question. And the government enforcement strategy to eradicate street hawking has not yielded much result. The number of juvenile hawkers keeps increasing on a daily basis. Related literatures on child labor are concentrated on street children generally while issues specifically on hawking are treated lightly. The Nigerian policy makers are caught up with deciding whether street hawking among children of school age should be totally eradicated or given a legal status. Those that advocated for the continuance of hawking have looked at it from the perspective of immediate economic stand point; whereas Okafor (2010) opined that when children work as wage earners to supplement the family income, it may solve some family economic problems but creates new ones both for children and the society at large. It is in this bid that the researcher delve into this study to examine the factors associated with street hawking among children of school age.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Former South African President, Nelson Mandela, once re-emphasized the power of education when he described it as the greatest engine of personal development through which the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, while the son of a mineworker can become the head of a mine and a child of a farmer can become the president of a great nation. A well-structured educational system is one of the important factors needed for the socio-economic development of any nation. Universally, it is the duty of governments to provide an enabling environment for learning to take place as well as accord top priority to education.

It is in the realization of the foregoing that governments across the universe devote a good chunk of available resources to the development of the educational sector. But despite all these efforts, a number of factors still stand as stumbling blocks in the attainment of this goal. These include insecurity, ethnic idiosyncrasies, gender discriminations and distance. But the greatest barrier to education, especially in our clime, is child labour of which street hawking is chief.

Many Nigerian children seems to be compelled to work because of their parents' joblessness, poor, uneducated etc. What are, indeed, worrisome and saddening are the usual stories of hit and run drivers killing and maiming these future leaders. In addition, these child hawkers suffer from fatigue, irregular attendance at school, lack of comprehension and motivation, improper socialization, exposure to risk of sexual abuse among the female hawkers and high likelihood of being involved in crime. Also, these children become financially independent at a very young age because the extra income they bring is needed to augment that of the parents and consequently, the value of acquiring formal education or skills become unattractive to them. It is in this context that this study is set out to examine the socio-economic factors affecting hawkers in Moba LGA of Ekiti State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to determine the socio-economic factors affecting hawkers in Moba LGA of Ekiti State. Specifically, the study intends to:

1. ascertain if high cost of living is associated with street hawking business among children of school age;
2. determine whether large family size is associated with street hawking among children of school age;
3. Find out if poverty is associated street hawking among children of school age;

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. Is high cost of living associated with street hawking among children of school age?
2. Is large family size associated with street hawking among children of school age?
3. Is poverty associated with street hawking among children of school age?

### **Significance of the study**

This result of the study will be of benefit to many categories of people which include: the children, students, parents, students and the society at large. This study is significant and beneficial to children because they will learn to improve on the ideas they have about themselves as this could be a motivating factor for embarking on formal education and they will be developed thereby becoming useful to themselves.

This study is important to the society because when students are educated, they will contribute their quota towards the growth of the society and by so doing, maladjustment and juvenile delinquencies will be eliminated. This study is also relevant to parents because it will teach them the importance of formal education and so give it its right position while drawing the scale of preference for their children. Parents would then set goals for their children and motivate the children in academic work so that the children would put formal education as their priority which gives self-esteem, respect, Prestige and good personality before making venture. Finally this

research will serve as guide to parents, teachers and even policy makers on how best to develop children positively in order for them to become more useful in the society.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Street hawking is a form of selling goods along the road from one place to the other. It also extends to be an act of canvassing for sale items carried by a hawker along the street, from house to house or in public space. The dramatic increase in street hawking in Moba LGA is alarming (Egbede, 2013). This can be attributed to several factors. The rapid population growth of many less developing countries, high rates of unemployment, inflation, economic recession, low wages, large family size, poor academic performance and deplorable working conditions have contributed to incidence of street hawking and child labour as children attempt to help and support their families. The hawking of wares and food products on the roads and motor parts is an economic means of making ends meet, either sponsored by parents or the child's personal interest.

Fawole (2013) opined that cultural beliefs in treating the child is also another cause of child labour as children are seen more as mere properties. Other reasons put forward as predisposing factors to children's street hawking include high cost of living, lack of sponsorship, single parenting, large family size, peer group pressure, poor home conditions, lack of parental care, parents' unemployment, parental pressure, poor academic achievements. Ewunigwe and Naidu (2018) have identified that there is direct relationship between children's hawking and poverty. They found out that the need for survival often pushes some children to secure employment outside home.

In fact, Abiosoye (2013) found that in Ibadan, as many as 93.3% of juvenile hawkers in his study attributed their involvement in hawking to poor economy with parents having no job. Corroborating this fact, Oloko (2016) submitted that the Nigerian Child labour is the direct victim of the poverty level of his or her parents. Olufayo (2016) buttressed this view by saying that children with poor socio-economic background were left with no option than to abandon their right to education, withdrew from school and take to odd jobs including street hawking.

Atugba (2016) observed that foster children who are not treated, educated or settled moved out to towns and cities to engage in various forms of child labour including hawking.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

Descriptive survey design adopted to examine the socio-economic factors affecting hawkers in Moba LGA of Ekiti State. A survey research gathers data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of the existing conditions or identifying standard against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining relationship that exist between specific events. The population of the study comprised of 279 teachers. This includes 190 female teachers and 89 male teachers in Moba Local Government Area of Ekiti State. The sample size in this study was 50 teachers. Yaro Yamane was used in determining the sample size. Simple random sampling

was used in selecting 5 schools out of the 11 secondary schools in Moba LGA. Proportionate sampling technique was used in selecting the final respondents from each school. The number of teachers that formed the respondents from the 5 selected schools was 50.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled “Socio-economic factors affecting hawkers in Moba LGA of Ekiti State.” The instrument was developed based on the research questions. The instrument is made up of 28 items presented in four sections. Each section addresses each of the respective research questions. The responses are four options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD).

The copies of the questionnaire were administered through personal contact by the researcher and a research assistant who was well trained by the researcher. 50 copies were filled and retrieved which were used for data analysis. In the method of data analysis, the statistical tools that were employed to answer the research questions are mean and standard deviation.

## RESULTS

### Research Question 1

Is high cost of living associated with street hawking among children of school age?

**Table 1:** Mean and Standard Deviation on High Cost of living

S/N	Items	Mean	St.D	Decision
1	High cost of living makes it difficult for parents to cater for their children	3.23	0.92	Significant
2	High cost of goods and services hinder parents from sending their children to school	3.48	0.87	Significant
3	High cost of school fees makes it difficult for parents to enroll their children in school	3.73	0.51	Significant
4	High cost of textbooks discourages parents from sending their children to school	3.10	0.93	Significant
5	High cost of living propels children to indulge in street hawking	2.87	1.05	Significant
6	High cost of living increases the rate of school dropouts	3.56	0.76	Significant
7	High cost of accommodation and transportation pose a stumbling block for parents in registering their children in school	3.65	0.54	Significant
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	3.37	0.80	Significant

Table 1; the result from the analysis revealed that the respondents accepted the following item descriptions: high cost of living makes it difficult for parents to cater for their children, high cost of goods and services hinder parents from sending their children to school, high cost of school fees makes it difficult for parents to enroll their children in school, high cost of textbooks discourages parents from sending their children to school, high cost of living propels children to indulge in street hawking, high cost of living increases the rate of school dropouts, high cost of accommodation and transportation pose a stumbling block for parents in registering their children

in school with the mean responses of 3.23, 3.48, 3.73, 3.10, 2.85, 3.56 and 3.65 respectively. The grand mean was 3.37; thus, high cost of living is associated with street hawking among children.

**Research Question 2:** Is large family size associated with street hawking among children of school age?

**Table 2:** Mean and Standard Deviation on Large Family Size

S/N	Items	SD	Mean	St.D	Decision
8	Large family size makes it difficult for parents to send their children to school	5	3.42	0.84	Significant
9	Most children who are from large family size take to hawking as a means of livelihood because of poverty	- -	3.57	0.62	Significant
10	Parents with large family size find it difficult to give their children good parental upbringing	- -	3.66	0.56	Significant
11	Children from large family homes perform below average in academic achievement due to quarrels from home	8	3.35	0.89	Significant
12	Children from large family size homes are emotionally challenged	4	3.34	0.88	Significant
13	A child from large family size home finds it difficult in getting along with his mates in school	18	2.94	0.98	Significant
14	Parents with large family size find it almost impossible to provide three meal daily for their children	- -	3.68	0.60	Significant
	<b>Grand Mean</b>		3.42	0.77	Significant

Table 2, the results from the analysis revealed that the respondents accepted the following item descriptions: large family size makes it difficult for parents to send their children to school, most children who are from large family size take to hawking as a means of livelihood because of poverty, parents with large family size find it difficult to give their children good parental upbringing, children from large family size homes perform below average in academic achievement due to quarrels from home, children from large family size homes are emotionally challenged, a child from large family home finds it difficult in getting along with his mates in school, parents with large family size find it almost impossible to provide three square meal daily



for their children with mean responses of 3.42, 3.57, 3.66, 3.35, 3.34, 2.94 and 3.68 respectively. The grand mean was 3.42; therefore, large family size is associated with street hawking among children.

**Research Question 3:** Is poverty associated with street hawking among children of School age?

**Table 3:** Mean and Standard Deviation on Poverty

S/N	Items	Mean	St.D	Decision
15	Poverty makes it difficult for parents to send their children to school	3.65	0.47	Significant
16	Most children who are from poor background take to hawking as a means of livelihood	3.40	0.85	Significant
17	Poverty makes its victims to lose interest in education	3.37	0.85	Significant
18	Growing up in poverty hinders childhood academic achievement	3.52	0.74	Significant
19	A poor child cannot cope with high rate of fees in Nigerian schools	3.67	0.52	Significant
20	A child from poor background finds it difficult in getting along with his mates in school	2.98	1.11	Significant
21	Poverty makes it almost impossible for parents to provide three square meal a day for their children	3.67	0.58	Significant
	Grand Mean	3.47	0.73	Significant

Table 3, the results from the analysis revealed that the respondents accepted the following item descriptions: poverty makes it difficult for parents to send their children to school, most children who are from poor background take to hawking as a means of livelihood, poverty makes its victims to lose interest in education, growing up in poverty hinders childhood academic achievement, a poor child cannot cope with high rate of fees in Nigerian schools, a child from poor background finds it difficult in getting along with his mates in school and poverty makes it almost impossible for parents to provide three square meal a day for their children with mean responses of 3.65, 3.40, 3.37, 3.52, 3.67, 2.98 and 3.67 respectively. The grand mean was 3.47; thus, poverty is associated with street hawking among children.

## CONCLUSION

Street Hawking among children is a very prevalent phenomenon in Ekiti State especially in its capital city. It is visible to the blind and audible to the deaf that child labour is on the upsurge. The findings and results show that street hawking is linked with high cost of living, large family size, poverty and ignorance. All these social problems contribute to the prevalence of street hawking among the children of school age in. The study also reveals that parents force their children to work, and parents will have more children if the household income depends on the income of the children. Street hawking as a form of child labour displace children's education and hinder economic development Ewunigwe and Naidu (2018). The study also shows that there is high incidence of children in economic activities in developing countries because of the low income and poverty trap.

The consequences of street hawking by children can broadly be classified into three, viz: physical, psychological and social. Physical consequences include accidents, spread of communicable diseases, food poisoning and traffic congestion. Psychological consequences of child street hawking include stress, fatigue, depression, anger and resultant ills. While social implications include unwanted pregnancy, prostitution, smoking, robbery, truancy and poor academic performance, among others.

### Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations have been proffered:

- i. There is need for government continuous enlightenment of parents on the effect involving their children in street hawking and the importance of education.
- ii. There is need for government to create more job opportunities so that citizens would be employed to enable then cater for family needs.
- iii. Government should make education free at all levels so that the less privileged children would have the opportunity to be educated. Government should legislate against involving children of school age in hawking and punish parent, guardian and caregiver who go against it.
- iv. There is a need to protect the child, advocate reduction in family size, poverty and promote parental education/economic empowerment in order to reduce the urge on children to perform economic roles.
- v. Seminars, workshop, radio and television programmes, hand bills, jingles, bill boards, etc should be made valuable instruments to educate people on the dangers of hawking.
- vi. The government should improve the standard of living of the citizens through provision of bursary allowance to the indigent citizens.

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