



IMPACTS OF STREET HAWKING ON RETENTION OF PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN KONTAGORA METROPOLIS OF NIGER STATE-NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper investigated street hawking and the attendant impacts on retention of public primary school pupils in Kontagora metropolis. Two research objectives were formulated to determine the factors responsible for street hawking in Kontagora Metropolis and to ascertain the impacts of street hawking on the education of secondary school-age students in Kontagora Metropolis. This was followed by two research questions and a null hypothesis generated to guide the study. Survey design was used to conduct this study, with 352 sample of school-age street hawkers as well as teachers from five (5) Public Primary Schools in Kontagora, using multistage, proportionate and random sampling techniques. While 3% was calculated to get the sample of the pupils, 20% was calculated to get the sample of the teachers. Data was collected using a questionnaire titled 'Impacts of Street Hawking on Public Primary School Age Drop-out in Kontagora Metropolis (ISHPPSADKM)' and analysed using mean score. The Findings show that there is a significant relationship between street hawking and the propensity to drop out of school in Kontagora metropolis. The paper concluded that, without effective interventions by government and stakeholders in the knowledge industry, the cycle of poverty and undereducation is likely to continue, adversely affecting subsequent generations. It is recommended among others that government and stakeholders in the knowledge industry provide employment opportunity as well counselling services to affected children to see how to integrating them into the school system; providing Vocational and technical training to serve as motivator to children of primary school age and re-orientating parents on the need to uphold the family value and the importance of child training in the society.

Keywords: Street Hawking, Public Primary School, School-Age Drop-Out

Introduction

Education is an instrument that societies use to prepare citizens to live a fruitful life and add value to the community according to their talents and interests. It forms objective number 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), anchored on free, equitable and good quality primary and secondary education for all by 2030. Even though the achievement of this goal is getting delayed, every child must complete their education without dropping out along the way. Recent studies on the rate of out-of-school children show that only the sub-Saharan Africa region accounts for 52% of the global out-of-school children. 22% of primary school-age children in sub-Saharan Africa are out of school. Nigeria's Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) data for 2016, in fact, show that 7.3 million children of primary school age are out of school (UNICEF, 2016). The figure is not significantly different in the Kontagora area of Niger state.

In order to achieve the SDGs in Kontagora, the school system must not only be appealing to the demands of learners but also accessible and affordable to them, so as to allow their individual talents to grow and mature into usefulness to the individuals and the society as a whole (Farauta, 2013). It worries the mind that despite the acclaimed benefits of education to the society, the family and the person, not many children and parents in Kontagora metropolis of Niger state have realised the danger of having their children out of school. Why parents allow their children to engage in street hawking remains a conjecture. It is a danger to see children who are the future of society and are supposed to be learning skills that will be useful to them in their lifetimes, get involved in learning how to hawk on the streets. No doubt, there are pecuniary gains that the child and the family tend to gratify in the immediate, but in the long run, such benefits never count as anything when reality dawns in the adulthood of the child. Binta et al. (2024) carried out a study on the Impact of Street Hawking on the Education of young girls in Katsina State, which shows that street hawking has detrimental impacts on academic

achievement, with students involved in hawking lacking concentration than their non-hawking counterparts. This suggests that the demand for street hawking, driven largely by economic necessity, consumes time and energy, thereby hindering the child's educational engagement and performance. The results underscore the broader implications of child labour on child education amongst low-income families and communities, pointing to a need for targeted interventions that address the economic and cultural factors compelling children into street hawking.

Street hawking is the practice of selling goods and services in public spaces. It is a widespread phenomenon in many developing countries, including Nigeria. In Kontagora, this informal economic activity is particularly prevalent among young school-age children, who often take to the streets to support their families financially. While street hawking can provide immediate economic benefits, it poses significant challenges, especially for the education and development of children. In their study, Ubah and Averson (2014), Mathias and Dada (2013), and Senna (2022) investigated the practice of street hawking in developing nations, specifically focusing on the direct retail sales of goods in urban areas. This phenomenon is widespread, particularly in numerous African cities, towns, and state capitals. Senna opined that street hawking is often attributed to factors such as rural-urban migration, unemployment, poverty, and a growing number of school dropouts. For many individuals, street hawking serves as a means of generating income that supplements household finances.

Across various households in Kontagora, individuals heavily rely, either entirely or partially, on street sales as their livelihood (Akuoko, 2013; Maryam, 2023). Small-scale trading, particularly on the streets, is a vital component of Africa's informal economy, frequently employed by those with limited education, notably among women and children (Akuoko, 2013). Urban streets are teeming with vendors selling a diverse range of goods, including vegetables, snacks/confectionery, sachets/bottled water/drinks, grains, fruits, furniture, clothing, and technology, to mention a few. Street vending offers a viable source of employment for urban residents with modest education and financial resources, facilitating accessibility for disadvantaged populations. How this can be minimised among children to enable them to pursue their time goals provides the needed background to this study.

Statement of the Problem

Many reasons have been advanced as to why children of school age are involved in street hawking in Kontagora Metropolis of Niger State. One of such arguments is the level of education of parents and their economic status. This school of thought believes that since the parents do not have education, it is most unlikely to convince them otherwise, especially when such parents are very poor and can barely feed themselves. Another school of thought has challenged this position by maintaining that not only children of the poor engage in street hawking. Their argument is rooted in the fact that not all the children who hawk on the street lack what to eat at home. To the second school of thought, therefore, it is the get-rich-quick syndrome and the deliberate promotion of wealth far above the moral fabrics that sustain societies that is partly responsible for children's involvement in activities such as hawking that can, in the long run, damage their future life. In fact, the third school of thought squarely put the blame or the cause on the children themselves. They maintain that many of these children hawking on the street play truancy, which may be a consequence of peer pressure. To this argument, public primary schools are free of charge. Definitely, lack of finance could not be the reason why they are on the street. The above arguments are very relevant in determining the causes and impacts of primary school-age hawking in the Kontagora area of Niger State. In a nutshell, what is the retention level of primary school-age children in Kontagora? Why is Hawking common amongst children of school age in Kontagora? Is there any impact of Hawking on the retention level of primary school pupils? These and many more are the problems this paper is set to investigate.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the factors responsible for street hawking in Kontagora Metropolis
2. To ascertain the impacts of street hawking on the education of secondary school-age students in Kontagora Metropolis.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors responsible for street hawking in Kontagora Metropolis of Niger State?

2. How has street hawking impacted the education of children of school age in Kontagora Metropolis of Niger state?

Research Hypothesis

There are no significant impacts of street hawking on primary school-age drop-out in Kontagora Metropolis of Niger State

Methodology

The research type adopted for this study was a descriptive survey design, which was employed to ascertain the impacts of street hawking on public primary schools in Kontagora metropolis of Niger State-Nigeria. The rationale for using the descriptive method is because of its utility in getting information about the feelings and ideas of a large subject. The population of the study is the primary school teachers in the Kontagora area of Niger State-Nigeria. Using the multistage sampling technique, the study adopted 3% of the population of the five sampled primary schools for the study. By using the multistage technique, we arrived at 352 sample size. Mean score was used in the analysis of data.

Results

Table 1: what are the Factors Responsible for Street Hawking in Kontagora Metropolis of Niger state?

S/N	Variables	Mean (SD)	Decision
1.	Primary school-age children engage in street hawking in Kontagora Metropolis	2.11 (0.98)	Agree
2.	Poverty is one of the reasons why children engage in street hawking	1.85 (0.64)	Agree
3.	The level of education of parents affects children's attitude to school	1.78 (0.88)	Agree
4.	Glorification of wealth promotes a lack of interest in school among children	1.87 (0.80)	Agree
5.	The rate of unemployment and economic hardship encourages children to hawk for survival	1.95 (0.75)	Agree
6.	Peer pressure can affect children's interest in school	2.14 (0.97)	Agree
7.	Street hawking can discourage school-age children from attending school	2.10 (0.96)	Agree
8.	Cluster Mean	1.97	

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The result presented in Table 1 above shows the mean score of respondents on the factors responsible for street hawking in Kontagora metropolis. The mean score ranges from 1.7 to 2.14, with a mean cluster of 1.97, indicating varying levels of importance attributed to each factor. The results indicate that primary school-age children with a mean score of 2.11 are engaged in street hawking in Kontagora. The result from the data gathered from the respondents also indicated that poverty and, level of parents' education are core factors responsible for street hawking in Kontagora. The study also affirmed that Peer pressure, with a mean score of 2.14, affects children's interest in school. Whether street hawking can discourage school-age children from school, the mean score of (2.10) affirmed which further confirmed that peer pressure increases the rate of school dropout. From the results, respondents have indicated and accentuated that the rate of unemployment and economic hardship, with a mean score of 1.96, has also been responsible for street hawking in Kontagora.

Table 2: How has street hawking impacted the education of children of school age in Kontagora Metropolis of Niger state?

S/N	Variables	Mean (SD)	Decision
1.	Children who hawk are early to school	3.03 (0.84)	Disagree
2..	Children who hawk do their school assignments	3.42 (0.82)	Disagree
3.	Children who hawk have full concentration in their studies	3.18 (0.68)	Disagree
4.	Street hawk affects lifetime ambition	2.39 (1.17)	Agree
5..	Lost ambitions have consequential impacts on society	2.17 (0.98)	Agree
6.	Insecurity increases as the rate of street hawking increases	3.28 (0.91)	Disagree
7.	Children who hawk tend to drop out of school.	1.30 (0.50)	Agree
8	Cluster Mean	2.68	

Source: Fieldwork, 2025

The result presented in Table 2 above reveals the impact of street hawking on the education of school-age children in Kontagora, with a total mean weight of 2.68. The results from the respondents indicated that children who hawk with a mean score of 3.03 are not early to school. Most of these children get exhausted when they hawk, and resuming early in the morning at school is always difficult. The respondents disagreed with the statement that children who hawk do their school assignments effectively. The result further indicated that hawking prevents children from completing school assignments and stops school-age children from having full concentration on their studies. The study also reveals that hawking can affect school children's lifetime ambition with mean score of 2.39, while it can increase insecurity with a mean score of 3.28. The results from the respondents, with a mean score of 1.30, agree that children who hawk can easily drop out of school and get recruited into criminal activities in Kontagora.

Test of Hypothesis

Table 3: Ho: There is no Significant Impact of Street hawking on Retention of Public Primary School Pupils in Kontagora

Variables	Mean	SD	DF	Z. Test	P. Value	Decision
Sample size	3.06	0.98	349	2.49	2.11	Rejected

From Table 3 above, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is a significant impact of street hawking on the Retention of Public Primary School Pupils in Kontagora. By implication, street hawking affects the retention level of primary school pupils in the Kontagora area of Niger state.

Discussion of Findings

This study investigated the impacts of street hawking on public primary school-age drop-out in Kontagora metropolis of Niger state-Nigeria. It was found out that Children of school age who are engaged in street hawking have a tendency to drop out of school in Kontagora. Parental level of education, poverty, peer pressure, glorification of wealth above character and unemployment, amongst others, are factors responsible for street hawking amongst children of school age in Kontagora. The finding confirms earlier studies by Ubah and Averson (2014), Mathias and Dada (2013), and Senna (2022) that these aforementioned factors actually hinder school children from continuing with their education. This shows that there is a significant relationship between street hawking and the rate of school drop-out in Kontagora.

The study also reviewed that Children who are engaged in street hawking usually lack the needed concentration in their studies and experience loss of lifetime ambitions; this also makes it easy to recruit them into criminal activities in Kontagora, and which of course increases the rate of Insecurity (Akorede et al., 2022). This supports the earlier report of Binta et al. (2024), which shows that street hawking has a detrimental consequence on the individual and society as a whole.

Conclusion

The findings of this study illustrate that street hawking significantly undermines the educational opportunities of children in the Kontagora area of Niger State. The practice is driven by dire economic conditions and reinforced by peer pressures. This trend not only leads to poorer academic performance and higher dropout rates but also perpetuates criminal activities and limits future career opportunities for these pupils. Without effective interventions, the cycle of poverty and undereducation is likely to continue, adversely affecting subsequent generations. Policymakers, educators, and community leaders need to collaborate on strategies that could alleviate economic burdens and promote the importance of education for school-age children. This study provides crucial insights that can inform policy development aimed at eradicating street hawking and ensuring that school-age children pursue their education without compromise of any form.

Recommendations

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

1. There is a need for the government to continue to enlighten parents on the negative impacts of involving their children in street hawking and the importance of education. This can be done using social media, newspapers/magazines, and the radio/television station anchored by the national orientation agency.
2. The government needs to create more job opportunities so that parents can be employed to enable them to cater for their family's needs. The government can do this by establishing a social welfare program and providing school-based support initiatives to mitigate the adverse educational impacts on children involved in street hawking.
3. The government should make education free at all levels so that the less privileged children would have the opportunity to be educated. The government should legislate and enforce stricter child labour laws against parents found guilty of indulgence.

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