

Informal Economic Sector: An Investigation of the Effects of Street Hawking on the Girl-Child Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

Original Research Article

Street hawking is one of the most booming informal sectors of the Nigerian economy that provides jobs for the teeming unemployed youths. The lucrative business of selling goods on the streets is done by poor hawkers who cannot afford to rent a shop or the capital to start a business. This study investigates the effects of street hawking on children in Nigeria in the context of deprivation of access to and acquisition of quality education. The methodology used in the study is the survey method design, where a structured set of 120 questionnaires were distributed to collect primary data. The theoretical framework used is political economy of the informal sector model. The findings of the study reveal that the informal sector, despite not being regulated, provides jobs to millions of young people in Nigeria. The study identifies some of the causes of street hawking are poverty, illiteracy, and broken families. It is argued in the paper that the effects of street hawking are alarming and include educational deprivation, physical and public health problems, and child abuse. As a result, the study recommends that governments provide free education to the children, build markets, disburse loans for business start-ups, provide employment opportunities, and make laws to prohibit street hawking.

Keywords: Informal economic sector, political economy, street hawking, girl-child education, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Street hawking is a global phenomenon and it is linked to poverty and underdevelopment in the economies of developing countries after the transition to an industrial economy. Street vending is the most visible form of informal economic activity across developing countries. It may account for up to 70% of urban employment in Nigeria and has become a source of income for many Nigerians who are unable to find white-collar jobs (Adide, 2018).

However, with increasing unemployment, millions of children have been forced into new types of labor that are exploitative, hazardous, and prejudicial to their welfare and development, which make them vulnerable in the street as hawkers, particularly in rural areas (UNICEF, 2000). The good side of street hawking is that it shows the resilience, hustle, and entrepreneurial spirit of Nigerians in the economic condition and employment sector in Nigeria. For this type of business, there is no barrier; low income for

start-ups and flexible hours make it more attractive to people.

The street hawkers, both children and adults, travel all the way to the urban areas along the road side, going through the obvious risks of accidents in order to hawk. They trek a long distance with their wares looking for buyers. They run in between vehicles in traffic, exposing themselves to dangerous diseases like asthma by inhaling the carbon monoxide coming from the exhaust pipes. They are sometimes hit by vehicles (Lambu, 2017).

A large percentage of workers and firms operate in the informal economy, outside the line of sight of governments in emerging markets and developing economies. This may hold back the recovery in these economies from the deep recessions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic unless governments adopt a broad set of policies to address the challenges of widespread informality (World Bank, 2021).

Even though statistics on the informal economy are unreliable by virtue of the subject, they can provide a tentative picture of its relevance. For example, informal employment makes up 58.7% of non-agricultural employment in the Middle East—North Africa, 64.6% in Latin America, 79.4% in Asia, and 80.4% in Sub-Saharan Africa (Jacques, 2016).

In Nigeria, the unemployment rate has risen by 1% in the last decade. Currently, in 2022, it stands at 33%, the highest unemployment rate recorded in Nigeria since attainment in 1960, with double digits. Furthermore, youth unemployment remains disastrous, standing at 53% in 2022 (Statista, 2022; NBS, 2021). According to UNESCO and UNICEF, the number of out-of-school children in Nigeria has been increasing in the last decade, with current estimates at 13.5 million children, mostly girls (UNESCO, 2012b; UNESCO UIS, 2021; UNICEF, 2022).

Over the years, the push and pull factors, on one hand, and the insurgency and COVID-19 pandemic, on the other hand, have complicated and precipitated the phenomenon of street hawking in Nigeria's informal sector economy. Nigeria is the poverty capital of the world, with over 87 million of its population living below \$1 USD per day since 2018.

However, recent data from World Poverty Clock shows that India has overtaken Nigeria as the world's poverty capital due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The WPC defines and measures extremely poor people as those living below N800 (\$2 per day). The World Poverty Clock is an online tool that monitors the progress against poverty globally and regionally and provides real-time poverty data across countries (Cable 2022, March 9). It is against this backdrop that this study will investigate the causes, impacts, and dynamics of street hawking as it affects the girl child.

A Description of the Study Area

Taraba State University is located in the southern part of the northeast geo-political region of Nigeria. The university is located in Jalingo, the headquarters of Taraba State. The Taraba State University Campus has an area of 1084 hectares (10,840,000m²) with a 22km perimeter fence. Taraba State University Websites has over 13,000 students enrolled in various programs (Taraba State University Websites). Jalingo town lies approximately between longitudes 11^o 09'E to 11^o 30E and latitudes 08^o 47'N to 09^o 01'N. The town is located in the northern part of Taraba State (Oruonye & Ojeh, 2018). Presently, the university has two main campuses: the main campus at the former College of Education, Jalingo, otherwise known as Advanced Teachers College (ATC), and the Preliminary Studies Campus at the former Taraba State Polytechnic, located at Nukkai along the Jalingo-Wukari road.

Taraba State University began the 2008/2009 academic session with the School of General and Preliminary Studies (SPGS) with 582 registered students in preparation for the degree programs. In the 2009/2010 academic session, the foundation for the degree programmes was laid. Expectedly, 456 students registered for the different programs in the four faculties of the new university. The university has witnessed significant growth since 2008. At the beginning of the 2011/2012 academic session, the academic staff strength was over 100 while undergraduate enrolment was about 2300 (Taraba State University Website). Presently, according to the records obtained from Taraba State University's Establishment Unit, the number of academic and non-academic staff stood at 806 and 1,123 as of 2021 (TSU, 2021).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study used survey design to elicit data on the topic under investigation in the study area. The instrument of data collection is a structured questionnaire. Of the 120 questionnaires distributed, 100 were filled out and returned for analysis. The questionnaires were administered on the Taraba State University Campus in August 2021. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics for easy presentation and comprehension.

Conceptual Clarification

For the purpose of clarity and usage, some key concepts in this study have to be properly contextualized. These concepts are as follows:

The Concept of Street Hawking

According to the African Network on Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect, street hawking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a female by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, a position of vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over the child for the purpose of exploitation (ANPPCAN, 2010).

Hawking can simply mean activities that involve offering goods or services for sale by calling, shouting, or nagging from place to place looking for patronage. UNICEF (2000) conceived the term "street hawking" to refer to the individuals on the street who are at work during the day and retire back home at sunset. Most of the time, street hawkers work and live on the street and have very little contact with parents or guardians.

Ruth (1996) Hawking is an unorganized commercial activity that happens among low-income parents and guardians as a copy strategy. Hawking in a

street is a socialization process that prepares the child for an adult economy and social life as well.

The Concept of the Informal Sector

The International Labour Organization defines the informal sector broadly as consisting of units engaged in the production of goods or services with the primary objective of generating employment and income for the persons concerned. These units typically operate at a low level of organization, with little or no division between labor and capital as factors of production and on a small scale. Labour relations, where they exist, are based mostly on casual employment, kinship, or personal and social relations rather than contractual arrangements with formal guarantees. Therefore, the informal own account enterprises (optionally, all or those that are not registered under specific forms of national legislation); enterprises of informal employers (optionally, all those with less than a specified level of employment and/or not registered and/or employees not registered (ILO, 1993).

Although Lewis (1955) was credited with first using the term "informal sector" to describe livelihood and employment generation in developing countries, To some scholars, the term "informal sector" was first coined in 1972, as the outcome of a comprehensive ILO employment advisory mission to Kenya, and was later converted to "informal economy" to underline the fact that informality is not a "sector", but a certain way of carrying out economic activities. Interestingly, the (Kenya mission) report acknowledges that the informal sector idea originated not with the high-level foreign "development experts" brought in for the mission but with the work and the staff of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Nairobi, a fact which has been generally forgotten since then. In other words, it was not the ILO that invented the concept of the informal sector. It came from the thinkers and analysts of the Third World (Bangasser, 2000).

There are three main schools of thought regarding the relationship between the formal and informal economies:

1. The dualists: the informal economy is a separate marginal economy not directly linked to the formal economy, providing income or a safety net for the poor (ILO 1972).
2. The structuralists: the informal economy is subordinated to the formal economy. In order to reduce costs, privileged capitalists seek to subordinate petty producers and traders (Castells and Portes, 1989).
3. The legalists: informal work arrangements are a rational response by micro-entrepreneurs to over-regulation by government bureaucracies (de soto) (SIDA, 2004:10).

According to the World Bank, the concept of the informal sector was introduced into international usage in 1972 by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in its Kenya Mission Report, which defined informality as a "way of doing things characterized by (a) ease of entry; (b) reliance on indigenous resources; (c) family ownership; (d) small- scale operations; (e) labor-intensive and adaptive technology; (e) skills acquired outside of the formal sector; (g) unregulated and competitive markets". Since that time, many definitions have been introduced by different authors and the ILO itself.

The ILO/ICFTU international symposium on the informal sector in 1999 proposed that the informal sector workforce be categorized into three broad groups: (a) owner-employers of micro enterprises, which employ a few paid workers with or without apprentices; (b) own-account workers, who own and operate one-person businesses, who work alone or with the help of unpaid workers, generally family members and apprentices; and (c) dependent workers, paid or unpaid, including wage workers in micro enterprises, unpaid family workers, apprentices, contract labor, homeworkers, and paid domestic workers (World Bank, 2009; 2021).

As informal commerce has grown to become the lifeblood of African cities, a significant number of constructed markets reveal that the underlying reason why people sell on the street and pavement is mainly due to unemployment due to limited job opportunities and poverty. Despite the fact that many people of varying ages and sex are engaged in hawking, the youths are the most dominant. The underground economy and voluntary sector have remained a viable sector for jobs for millions of people to improve their livelihoods (Feige, 1989; Jacques, 2016).

According to the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the key drivers for the growth of the informal economy in the twenty-first century include:

- i. Limited absorption of labour, particularly in countries with high rates of population or urbanization.
- ii. Excessive cost and regulatory barriers of entry into the formal economy, often motivated by corruption.
- iii. Weak institutions, limiting education and training opportunities as well as infrastructure development.
- iv. Increasing demand for low-cost goods and services.
- v. Migration motivated by economic hardship and poverty.
- vi. Difficulties faced by women in gaining formal employment.

Historically, development theories have asserted that as economies mature and develop economic activity will shift from the informal to the formal sphere. In fact, much of the economic development discourse is centered on the notion that formalization indicates how developed a country's economy is

In many developing countries, children constitute about one third of the total population. Millions of these children do not have the opportunity to be properly and adequately taken care of by their parents, guardians, and the community in which they live. Many of them have to engage in hawking, begging, touting, or prostitution to make ends meet. These children, who are regarded as the custodians of society's future, end up becoming a nuisance to their societies primarily due to the abuse and neglect of their rights (Lambu, 2017).

The Concept of Street Children

Street children are known to be homeless children who are below the age of eighteen (18) and are seen wandering the streets begging for money and help from pedestrians, businessmen, and car owners. These children, in most cases, have no homes and no mothers to call their own. Their mother gave birth to them and left them to keep wandering. Street children are common in most countries, including Africa, Asia, and Latin America, among others.

There are two broad categories of street children. The categories of street children are home-based street children and street-based children. Home-based are those children that have homes and families. They come out in the day for their work, like children's street hawking, which this topic is all about, and go back to their homes in the evening after their street functions. The street-based street children are those who have no homes. They come out to the streets for their daily work and sleep on the streets.

Many bodies, international organizations, and non-governmental organizations have given their definitions of street children. According to Wikipedia, a "street child" is a term for children experiencing homelessness who live in the streets of a city. Street children are boys and girls aged under eighteen years old for whom "the street" (including unoccupied dwellings and wasteland) has become their home and/or their source of livelihood, and who are inadequately protected or supervised (Lily Collins & Sara, 2009). Street children are made up of two genders, which are males and females. The female street children are sometimes called gamines.

Girl-Child Education

The National Child Welfare Policy (1989) as cited by Ada (2007) defines the girl-child as person below 14 years of age. Chibiko (2009), and Juliem,

(2018) viewed the girl-child as a biological female offspring from birth to eighteen (18) years of age. This is the age before one becomes young adult. This period covers the crèche, nursery or early childhood (0–5 years), primary (6–12 years) and secondary school (12–18 years). During this period, the young child is totally under the care of the adult who may be her parents or guardians and older sibling.

According to UNICEF (2003), education is every body's human right. It means that no girl, however poor her family or her country is, should be excluded from schooling. Education is viewed as a positive force with a wide ranging impact on society and human development. This force is more unique for the girl-child who is seen as a child today but who later becomes a woman, and mother. Educating the girl-child means educating the whole family and society. Such right has been ratified by the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights of 1948 (UDHR); the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights of 1966; the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), Nigeria's Child Right Act (CRA), Education for All (EFA), and recently Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and by many others. The Nigerian national policy on education has undergone changes at different times. It said our covenant with every Nigerian child is access to education relevant to the need of the Nigerian economy. The changes were captured in the following policy documents; 1977, 1981, 1988, 2004, 2007, and 2014 respectively. Contemporary basic education that is supposed to be free from pre-primary to junior secondary school in Nigeria is just on paper. This is why Nigeria could not realize the Vision: 20: 2020, MDGs, and probably SDGs particularly the goals relating to quality and girl-child education.

The major problem of the girl-child education is access. Access deals with the availability, convenience, and ability to be educated. However, specific problems include; child labour, poverty and lack of sponsorship, quest for wealth, bereavement, truancy, broken home, engagement of children as house helps, as factors bedeviling girl-children's access to education.

Types of Street Hawking

There are many categorizations of street hawking by scholars in order to situate the context of the ever-changing and expanding phenomenon. Generally, the informal sector in the emerging markets of developing economies (EMDEs) is divided into four types: domestic workers, home-based vendors, street hawkers, and waste pickers or scavengers. In this study, two major types of street hawking can be identified in the understanding of the informal economy, derivable as sectorial classification of business and voluntary.

1. **Street Hawkers:** This type of hawking involves the selling of goods and items on the street by hawkers, either that fixed in one place, loitering and moving from one point to another, or both. This is very common in major city centers, streets, and markets; government departments and agencies; religious institutions; schools; and general markets.
2. **Home-based Hawkers:** This type of hawking involves the selling of goods and items in houses for households and in estates, among others.

Home-based workers and street vendors are the most prevalent types of work in the informal economy. Home-based workers are more numerous, while street vendors are more visible. Combined, the two fields make up about 10–15% of the non-agricultural workforce in developing countries and over 5% of the workforce in developed countries (ILO, 1993; 2000).

While participation in the informal sector can be stigmatized, many workers choose to engage in informal ventures by choice, for either economic or non-economic reasons. Economic motivations include the ability to evade taxes, the freedom to circumvent regulations and licensing requirements, and the capacity to maintain certain government benefits (World Bank, 2021).

Theoretical Framework: A Political Economy of the Informal Sector Model

This study is anchored on the political economy perspective of the informal sector. Political economy is a term used for studying production and trade and their relations with law, custom, history and government, as well as with the distribution of national income and wealth. It is 18th century concepts developed to study and explain the economies and politics of the state. Hence, the term "political economy" has become popular. Adams Smith (1776) wrote *The Wealth of Nations* to explain the economy of England. He emphasizes on the market forces of demand and supply (the invincible hands), taxation, production, and concluded that the consumer is rational. Scholars such as David Ricardo and, later, Karl Marx provide critical impetus for the development and comprehension of the political economy paradigm.

One of the basic assumptions of the theory is that the economy is the foundation of society. Individuals or political agents are self-seeking and rational. Political forces influence the economy. Economic activity generates resources that are required to sustain political activity. Rational individuals use their resources (capital, land, and labour) to maximize some utility function (profits, income, and consumption) by producing goods and services and

participating in the markets (Dappa, Nse, Olisah & Nebeife, 2021).

The informal sector, or shadow economy, remains the most booming in the developing economy. The original use of the term "informal sector" came from Arthur Lewis in 1955, explaining the employment and livelihood generation in the economy of developing countries. The sector covers all economic activities that are unregulated and non-subsidized; easy accessibility, availability in very small sizes and for short terms, low administrative and procedural costs, little or no collateral requirements, flexible interest rates, highly flexible transactions, and repayments tailored to individual needs (Feige, 1989; ILO, 1993; Lenshie, Joshua & Ezeibe, 2021).

This model is applied to explain the culture of economic poverty in Nigeria in the informal sector that provides employment to millions of jobless children and youths. Despite the weaknesses of this model in its reliance entirely on the economic motives and profit of the participants, it still provides valid reasons and the importance of the sector to the Nigerian economy.

Causes of Street Hawking in Nigeria

Hawking is not just a menace; it is a culture. "A culture of economic poverty." The phenomenon of hawking in Nigeria is so pervasive in the cities, towns, and communities of Nigeria, and indeed Africa, that it is of empirical importance to look at the causes and effects of this practice. There are as many causes listed as there are authors who are researching the problem.

Poverty is the single most significant rifest factor for street hawking. In the opinion of Oguntola (2019), hawking is "a culture of economic poverty," given that a large proportion of Nigerians live in abject poverty. In the view of Adinde (2020), street hawking is a phenomenon common in developing countries. In Nigeria, and generally in Africa, informal economic activities serve the need to provide solutions to societal problems of poverty, unemployment, and make consumer goods accessible to the populace. Kazeem (2018) boldly asserts that Nigeria has become the poverty capital of the world, which has propelled street hawking. In the opinion of Agbo (2017), poverty is a dominant factor in child-street hawking, which is a form of child labour. Children voluntarily take part in child labour for survival. For instance, in southeastern Nigeria, children from poor families earn their school fees through child labor. A new report by the World Poverty Clock shows Nigeria has overtaken India as the country with the most extremely poor people in the world (World Poverty Clock). To Aijehi (2020), poverty is the root cause of street crime in Nigeria and indeed, Africa.

- **Child labour:** Another cause of street hawking is child labour. Child labour is any

work or task a child below the age of 18 undertakes with the view to being paid in cash or kind, or for any other reason at all, and which deprives him/her of his/her good health, good education, and normal development, according to the International Labour Organization (ILO Minimum Age Convention of 1973 No. 138). Abubakar (2018) cites the Joint Report issued by the Nigerian National Bureau of Statistics and UNICEF, along with a number of other organizations that states that "more than half of Nigeria's 79 million children between the ages of 5 and 17 engage in work, even in risky conditions." He concludes that child labour continues to be a pressing problem in Nigeria and girls are especially at risk.

- **Refusal to adopt the Child Rights Act:** Advocates opine that resistance to the adoption of the child rights act is a major reason for hawking in the North of Nigeria. According to Olawale, Executive Director of the African Youth Panel, 26 of 36 Nigerian states have adopted the Act, with all ten resisting in the north due to its perception as of western origin and unrelated to cultural or religious milieus (Abubakar, 2018).
- **Poor Implementation of Child's Rights Convention:** Another view is that the convention may be adopted, but not fully implemented, widely known and understood. Thus, millions of children continue to suffer violations of their rights when they are denied adequate health care, nutrition, education, and protection from violence. Some of them suffer from early/forced or child marriages while some were exposed to sexual activities, and they may contract HIV, STDs, and other sexually transmitted diseases (Abubakar, 2018).
- **Boko Haram Insurgency:** This is a major reason for girls' hawking. In the opinion of Abdulkadir Saleh, of the Political Science Department at Gombe State University, the fear that Boko Haram insurgents may go to schools to abduct girls is the reason why they hawk on the streets.
- **Polygamy:** Saleh also argues that the Muslim practice of polygamy is also a factor. The burden put on the family, of two or more wives and many children, means "they sometimes provide for themselves". This means the children have to work to contribute to the support of the family.
- **Education policy:** Poor implementation of education policy is another cause of child street hawking. Many child street vendors have cited street hawking as a means to provide money for their own school fees. This is

because free and compulsory primary education, as touted by Nigeria's policy on education, is not properly implemented.

Agbo (2017), in her work, lists broken families, cultural factors, family size, greed, and illiteracy as causes of child street hawking. Broken families occur when socio-cultural institutions such as marriage and family structure fail due to divorce or separation. Children from such families have to fend for themselves by taking on forms of child labour, including street hawking.

According to Naidu (1986), this depends on cultural and institutional roles and functions of the socialization process. Cultural aspects which look at conceptions of the child, his or her roles in the family and society also contribute to the practice (WHO, 2016).

- **Family size:** this is anchored on polygamy and extended family affiliations, which stretch family finances to their breaking point. This is a cause for children to engage in street hawking to augment family expenses.
- **Greed and illiteracy:** There is a high level of illiteracy and greed among parents and children, which leads to child labour. In Nigeria, the majority of illiterate families do not send their children to school, so the children take up hawking and other jobs. Adinde (2020) finds that the exigencies of city life are another cause of street hawking. In commercial cities, roadside products offer the needed convenience and affordability to customers.

Another focus on street hawking is the lack of accountability afforded by this informal sector to economic activities. There is ease of entry to do business; it undercuts prices, propels the market for smuggled goods, and encourages bad economic practices that will be considered unethical in the formal economic sector (Stears Business, 2020).

- **Gang Stealing:** Gangs are usually groups of youth that unleash violence, especially street gangs. This group targets properties, people, and areas to attack in order to loot. The products stolen are usually sold to street hawkers at cheaper prices. Hence, gangs' stealing contributes to street hawking in big and small cities in Nigeria and around the world.

Effects of Street Hawking on Children

Street hawking, especially by children, is a form of child labour which has attendant effects or consequences on the child, family, and nation at large. It is mostly a problem for families in the lower socio-economic classes. The COVID-19 pandemic and the

lockdown policy it engendered restricted the entrepreneurial freedom and skills promoted by the neoliberal market structure. It also undermined the strings of social networks and collective organizations that protect the individual informal workers, particularly women in the peri-urban areas (Olaere, 2007; Lenshie, Joshua & Ezeibe, 2021).

- **Educational deprivation:** Some effects of hawking on children are lateness to school; school dropout; school phobia; and Alfred (2020). According to a BBC report, Nigeria has the largest number of children out-of-school in the world with 10.5 million in 2017. As at 2022, Nigeria has 13 million children out of school (Sale, 2017; BBC, 2022).
- **Hawking promotes underdevelopment** as it distracts the children from school. This is on the premise that, regardless of education, people can take to hawking. It breeds underdevelopment as illiterates and unskilled labour can enter into it. This cannot make for an equitable distribution of wealth, but rather promotes poverty.
- **Physical health problems:** child street hawking leads to physical exhaustion by children having to work in the scorching heat. They face many dangers, such as road traffic accidents; serious risk of injuries; chronic illness; kidnapping; rape; falling into the hands of human traffickers; or death. It also leads to psychological and mental health deterioration (Oguntola, 2019; Alfred, 2020).
- **Cultural Change:** Street hawking is fast eroding the general standard of morality and acceptable social norms in Nigeria, and instituting a culture of decadence that promotes vices such as prostitution, drug use, stealing, pickpocketing, gangsterism, etc.
- **Public Health Effect:** The prevalence is with regard to food and drinks, most of which are unidentified items. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), around 600 million people die from food contamination annually.
- **Violations of children's rights:** Many child street hawkers are children who have either dropped from school, or have never been put in school. In many instances, these children are married off. Others are vulnerable to sexual molestations, rape, HIV/AIDS infections, sexually transmitted diseases, and reproductive tract infections (Abare 2018).

Solutions to Street Hawking in Nigeria

Before the government at both the federal and state levels in Nigeria can solve or reduce the menace of street hawking, there is a need for a study of the causes and effects of the phenomenon on national development, which will guide policymakers on the

short, medium, and long-term strategies for curtailing it. However, some five major ways of addressing the problem are suggested by this study.

- **Provision of Employment:** There is no government that can give full employment to its citizens. It is important to note that the government can provide employment opportunities to create wealth in different sectors and agencies that need manpower. Presently in Nigeria, the education sector, security sector, agriculture, health, and INEC are in dire need of manpower to achieve their mandate. Unemployed graduates, semi-skilled, and unskilled laborers are needed to fill the available quotas. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, the unemployment rate in Nigeria hit an all-time high of 33.3% in 2021, up from the previous 27.15 in 2020 (NBS, 2021). This number is disturbing and can promote crime, not just street hawking alone in the country.
- **Provision and access to loans and start-ups:** The Federal Government has tried in this capacity, but a lot needs to be done in terms of access and the number of beneficiaries. Unless access is simplified and decentralized for local people in the villages and remote areas of the country, more people will migrate to cities in what is called the "push and pull factors" for rural-urban migration. At the level of small and medium enterprises and cooperatives, they will help the government achieve its goals under the National Social Investment Programme (N-SIP) by reaching out to the poor and vulnerable citizens.
- **Building of Market Infrastructure:** Most major cities in Nigeria have either overcrowded or inadequate infrastructure to accommodate all types of businesses. Hence, the lack of markets with enough space promotes street hawking so much so that it has become the norm. For instance, in the two major commercial business centers in Nigeria, Lagos and Kano States, street hawking is very common, which has adverse effects on transportation and movement, security, health, and even the business itself. Moreover, in Jalingo, the city where this study was conducted, the popular Jalingo market is not a go-area during the daytime for those passing through the palace way via the market site as a result of overcrowding and street hawking on the road. The State government has built ultra-modern markets since 2007, but the business groups, chambers of commerce, and government could not agree on the need for the relocation of some of the goods and services to the new market till now (Mohammed & Oruonye, 2020).

At this point, the government, NGOs/CSOs and the general public need to create awareness among the citizenry on the dangers and effects of the phenomenon of street hawking on the economy, politics and education of those involved. Campaigns could be done in many ways; radio, television, street rallies, distribution of written awareness pamphlets, and town halls, among others.

In line with the Child Rights Act and other global conventions on children, the government at all levels can decide to ban all street hawking activities in the country or affected areas. The government can

decide to make it an offence for parents to allow their wards to hawk on the streets while denying them the right to education. Lagos State banned street hawking in 2016 by amending the 2003 Act. It can be done in all the states of the federation.

RESULTS OF FINDINGS AND DATA PRESENTATION

This study adopted a survey design to elicit data from the targeted population in the study area. The instrument of data collection is a structured questionnaire.

Table 1: Showing Demographic Information of the Respondents

S/N	Sex	Frequency	Percentage
1	Male	38	38%
2	Female	62	62%
	Total	100	100%
	Age bracket	Frequency	Percentage
3	0 – 9	2	2%
4	10 – 15	65	65%
5	16 – 20	30	30%
6	21 – 25	3	3%
	Total	100	100%
	Educational Status	Frequency	Percentage
7	Primary	53	53%
8	Secondary	10	10%
9	Drop-out	3	3%
10	Islamiyya	34	34%
	Total	100	100%
	Local Government	Frequency	Percentage
11	Ardo-Kola	51	51%
12	Jalingo	13	13%
13	Kumo	8	8%
14	Kaltungo	6	6%
15	Yola	9	9%
16	Karim Lamido	11	11%
17	Yorro	2	2%
	Total	100	100%
	State of Origin	Frequency	Percentage
18	Taraba	69	69%
19	Gombe	21	21%
20	Adamawa	9	9%
21	Kano	1	1%
	Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The above table present the entire demographic information of the respondents used in

this study conducted inside the Taraba State University, Jalingo campus.

Table 2: Reasons for Street Hawking

S/N	Reasons	Frequency	Percentage
1	To assist our parents	45	45%
2	Raise fund for school fees	22	22%
3	Raise fund for wedding	18	18%
4	To earn for survival	15	15%
	Total	100	100%

Source: Field Survey, 2021

The above table shows the various reasons why teenagers engage in street hawking. It could be seen that 45 percent of the hawkers gave reasons of assisting their parents with income to take care of their family needs. Moreover, only 22 percent gave reasons that they raise their school fees from street hawking and

18 percent struggle to raise money for their wedding from the business of street hawking. The remaining 15 percent represent those who survive on street hawking. It means therefore, any other reason falls on this apart from survival.

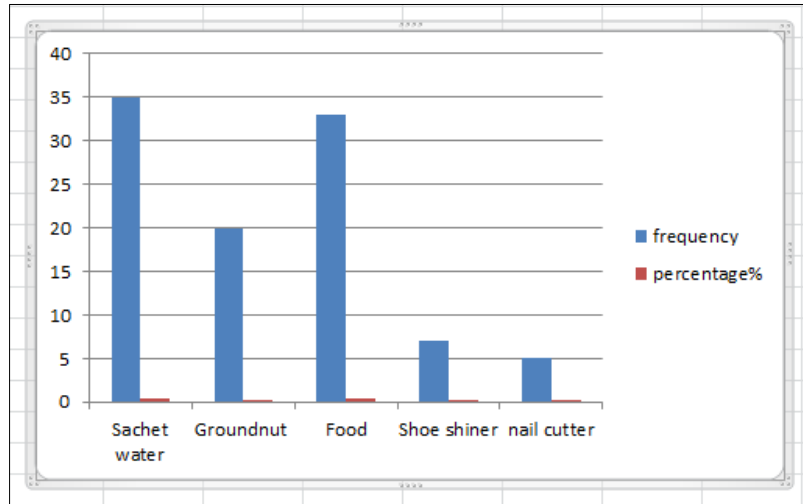


Fig. 1: Showing Types of Hawking Items
Source: Field Survey, 2021

The most common commodity on sale by street hawkers is sachet water (pure water). The sachet water is easy to carry, cheapest, and the most demanded by customers. On the other hand, food items like snags, dates, sugar cane, maize, moi-moi, and cow milk are very commonly sold by the teenagers. This represents

the second most demanded hawking items. Groundnut takes a special place for its demand by customers as the third most traded item in the study area. Surprisingly, shoe shiners provide service together with nail cutters around the area.

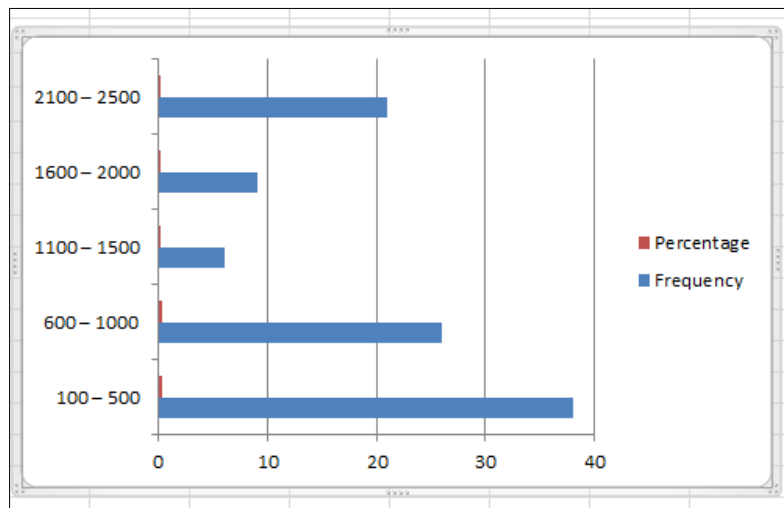


Fig. 2: Showing Daily Income of Street Hawkers (Currency is in Naira)
Source: Field Survey, 2021

The above figure shows the daily income of the street hawkers with those generating N100-N500 representing 38 percent as the highest amount while generating N600-N1000 represent 28 percent in all. On the other hand, those who generate 5 percent N1100-N1500 were the least on daily income which is

followed by those generating N1600-N2000 daily with 7 percent only. A substantial number of the hawkers generate N2100-N2500 daily representing 22 percent of the sample population.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Street hawking as one of the major types of business in the informal sector could be explained by its impacts on society as a whole. The data has shown that the sampled population has a difference in terms of the involvement between boys and girls of 38 and 62 percent, respectively. Despite the fact that the study's focus is on the girl child, the age variable of most of the street hawkers is 10-15 years old, which represents 65 percent of the total population, and 0-9 year's old accounts for only 2 percent.

Furthermore, the hawkers are mostly from Taraba State, with Ardo-Kola Local Government, where Taraba State University is located, accounting for 53% of all hawkers. As a result, Taraba State accounts for more than 85 percent of them, with Adamawa, Gombe, and Kano accounting for the remaining 20 percent. According to the respondents' educational backgrounds, those in primary school account for 53%, those in Islamiyya schools account for 34%, those in secondary school account for 10%, and dropouts account for 3%.

The interesting part of the study is the reason advanced by the teenagers for why they engaged in street hawking. The responses have shown that 45 percent adduce reasons for helping their parents as to why they push into street hawking and 22 percent accept that the hawk is to pay for their school fees. Similarly, 18 percent responded that they were raising money for a wedding and 15 percent for their personal survival. It can be inferred that these teenagers were forced or were engaged in street hawking with the knowledge or permission of their parents, whom they said they wanted to assist with family obligations.

Of the various goods and services offered by the street hawkers, sachet water, otherwise known as pure water, is the most commonly traded, representing 35 percent, and it is followed by food items with 33 percent. Groundnuts are given special consideration due to their high demand as a local food item, with a 20% patronage. Additionally, there were other services in the area, with the show maker/cobbler having 7 percent and the nail cutter having 5 percent.

The daily earnings of the street hawkers are revealed, with those generating N100-N500 having 38 percent as the highest, followed by those generating N600-N1000 with 28 percent. Those generating N1100-N1500 had the lowest rate of 5 percent, while those generating N1600-N2000 had the highest rate of 7 percent. Finally, those producing N2100-N2500 account for 22% of the total. Hence, the average daily wage of street hawkers in this study is N1000.

CONCLUSION

The study attempts to investigate how street hawking affects and prevents the girl child from pursuing life-time goals of education, which is a universal right of every child recognized globally since the 1990s Bankok Declaration on Education for All (EFA). The study reveals that female teenagers, particularly in the study area, engage in street hawking more than their male counterparts, 62 percent against 38 percent, respectively. This is contrary to and will undermine the realization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Goal 5 on gender equality. The 13.5 million out of school children mostly girls remain one of the major challenge to the realization of the gender equality aspirations of women/girl-child.

More than 70% of self-employment jobs have come from the informal economic sector, with street hawking leading the way. According to the study's findings, poverty is one of the driving factors of rural-urban migration in Nigeria, which has resulted in the boost of the underground economy where lack of social amenities and insecurity in the rural areas complicate the urban problems. The street hawking is mostly done by teenagers aged 10–15 and by those at the primary and Islamiyya schools. The reasons for their involvement are to assist their parents and to look for money for school fees and a wedding.

The most common stock in trade is sachet water, which is cheap to buy and sell without much skill or advertisement. The people in the area also like ground nuts, which is a good source of protein. Food items like snags, moi-moi, cow milk, and sugar cane are also sold around. The boys and girls also offer services in shoe shining and nail-cutting. From the sales and provision of these services, they earn an average of N1000 per day and the highest, N2500, respectively.

Street hawking denies a child the right to an education while also exposing her to health risks, rape, sexual, and gang violence. Street hawking, whether on the street or home-based, is full of physical and psychological effects on teenagers as a result of stress and starvation. Therefore, illiteracy, religion, and cultural factors were responsible for the street hawking problem.

Drawing from the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. In order to encourage girl-child education, governments at all levels should provide free education for girls at least at primary and secondary levels.
2. Governments at all levels should provide the market infrastructure for businesses to operate. This will drastically reduce street hawking.
3. Governments at all levels should provide loans for start-up businesses, which would boost the

economy and provide indirect and direct employment.

4. There is a need to create awareness about the effects of street hawking on families and society in general. It would help in reducing the social impacts
5. Total ban of street hawking with strong punitive measures by government at all levels. Governments can achieve that by enacting laws on age limit for those to be allowed to partake in the business.

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