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**THE PREVALENCE OF STREET HAWKING IN AKWA IBOM STATE. ASSESSING THE EFFECT ON CHILD  
EDUCATION AND REMEDIAL MEASURES**

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By

**Amazu NGOZI, Ph.D**  
Department of Education (Educational Psychology)  
National Institute for Nigerian Language, Aba, Abia State.

**Rosemary I. NWOKIKE, ESQ**  
University of Nigeria  
Enugu Campus.

And

**Bassey S. UDOM, Ph.D**  
Department of Sociology and Anthropology  
Faculty of Social Sciences,  
University of Uyo,  
Akwa Ibom State

**ABSTRACT**

*The study assessed the prevalence of street hawking in Akwa Ibom state. The study used a descriptive statistic. The targeted population for the study comprised all primary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 70 teachers from each of the three senatorial district of the state, which gave a total of 210 respondents used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire, face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study. The instrument used for this research was titled "Street hawking and Child Education Questionnaire (SHCEQ). The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.85, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument. The researcher subjected the data generated for this study to appropriate statistical techniques such percentage analysis to answer the research questions. The study revealed that in Akwa Ibom State there are issues of street hawking among children of under age. The study concluded that street hawking has affected child education adversely in Akwa Ibom State. One of the recommendations made was that the Akwa Ibom State government should implement and enforce strict anti-child labour laws.*

**KEYWORDS: Street Hawking, Child Education, Remedial Measures and Akwa Ibom State.**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Nigeria, being a developing nation, need individuals necessary for the political, social, and economic advancement of the nation. This is required because Nigeria needs men and women as well as enough money to ensure the comfort of her citizenry, not just wealthy individuals. In Nigeria, attending school or receiving formal education is required for everyone in order to do this. The national policy on education, which acknowledges that greater achievements are obtained and most explained through formal education is essential to Nigerians, has made primary education in government schools free for its citizens. It is not important that all Nigerian citizens, and Benin City in particular, get full formal education and not partial education, which leads to school dropout and human waste or attrition. Considering the current state of the economy in Nigeria, many people, particularly those from lower socioeconomic strata, have taken to engaging their kids and weeds in different forms of entrepreneurship, such as hawking.



The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, Sixth Edition, defines hawking as moving to sell products by approaching individuals and making sales pitches. But Olalere (2007) distinguished between two primary categories of street vendors: those who wheel their wares and those who set up shop next to the road. Olalere asserts that the nature of the commodities traded in a hawker's custom-built cart determines the capital outlay for each form of trade. The hawker also uses various media to advertise their goods, such as "buy your sweet orange." They may even choose to shorten the names of their products in an unusual yet eye-catching way.

The hawker also uses various media to advertise their goods, such as "buy your sweet orange." They may even choose to shorten the names of their products in an unusual yet eye-catching way. Many hawkers sell a variety of items that one might not often purchase unless we happen to come across them while out and about. On the vendor's side, they greet customers while sitting next to their wares. The type of goods sold determines the amount of capital needed. For example, a side hawker selling oranges would seem to need only 500 Naira (OO), but a provision seller selling beverages would need to invest more. In many cities and towns in Nigeria, the hawker industry is expanding. While hawking occurs in rural regions as well, it is primarily done alone in the evenings after people return from their jobs on the farm, the village markets, or the school. In metropolitan places, the scenario is always different. Hawking is an everyday occurrence in the urban environment, lasting from morning until dusk.

Without a doubt, this circumstance has had an impact on the child's education, particularly on a crucial developmental milestone. "We do this thing (hawking) every day in order to survive in school and to help our younger siblings at home who are not even in schools," claims Ajayi, an orphan and a second-year student in the University of Benin's Department of Banking and Finance. These changes are making my life intolerable because I've always skipped school multiple times. Comparably, a child who attends school alongside a street vendor is prone to tardiness and will undoubtedly exhibit immaturities in their academic work. These may include inadequate study techniques, a lack of knowledge, low self-worth, and subpar performance in classes, ultimately leading to failure or complete dropout.

Some parents in towns and cities have reportedly pulled their kids out of school to go hawk in order to raise extra money for the family's maintenance. Occasionally, kids are perpetually absent from school for a term or even a whole year. If they do return, they find that they are too big for their class and become targets of taunts from younger students. Children in this kind of environment may have numerous detrimental psychological impacts, such as becoming underachievers or possibly developing a fear of school. These kids eventually fall short or give up on their education.

Clearly, one of the main reasons parents and guardians send their kids or wards to hawk is the need for money to get by in a down economy. The majority of hawkers attend primary or secondary schools specifically to engage in hawking, and as a result of their daily sales, the kids grow weaker and more exhausted, making it difficult for them to focus, participate in class discussions, or pursue independent study. Apparently, parents and guardians do not realize this and children do not know that the means by which the mind. Formal education is one way that the social, moral, and material legacies of a society are passed down from one generation to the next.

## **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Child education plays a very important part of child development. This is a much known fact but there seems to be some impending factors such as street hawking which affects child education adversely. In Akwa Ibom State, just as in other states, street hawking is a very common issue. In this case children in public schools are seriously engaged in street hawking which cause them to stay away from school.

The issue of street hawking has been mentioned by several educationists who have really advocated quick intervention by government and other non-governmental organizations. The call for intervention is seen as a welcome development as children are negatively affected academically. It is on this note that this study is carried to investigate the extent of street hawking and to determine the extent in which child education is negatively affected in Akwa Ibom State.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- To find out the extent of street hawking involved by children in Akwa Ibom State.
- To examine the extent to which street hawking has affected child education in Akwa Ibom State.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- To find out the extent of street hawking involved by children in Akwa Ibom State.
- To examine the extent to which street hawking has affected child education in Akwa Ibom State.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### CONCEPT OF STREET HAWKING

The act of selling goods or services on the streets or in public spaces, usually by people who are not officially employed by any company or organization, is known as "street hawking." Vendors setting up temporary stalls or just carrying their goods with them as they wander the streets in search of clients are a familiar sight in many cities and urban regions across the world.

Street hawking is the practice of offering goods or services to members of the public without having a permanent built-up structure, according to M. Hussein et al. (2017). This type of unofficial sector activity is widespread in several nations, such as Nigeria, India, and Assam. Street vendors can be movable, taking their goods from place to place, or stationary, setting up shop on sidewalks or other public or private spaces. People who can't afford to own a store or launch a legitimate business frequently sell goods on the street. Street hawking has been linked to a number of negative outcomes, including as child abuse, physical and public health issues, and educational deprivation.

Street hawking has its roots in the informal economy, where people work for themselves in a variety of capacities to support themselves. Selling fresh vegetables, snacks, drinks, apparel, accessories, and home goods is one possible activity. Other options include providing services like car cleaning and shoe shining, as well as entertainment like fortune telling and street acts.

According to Jesuit Memorial College (2019), hawking, or street selling, is a distinct practice that emerged in Nigeria and throughout Africa as a response to issues with access to consumer goods, unemployment, and poverty. In spite of numerous official initiatives to eradicate it, the burgeoning informal sector has shown to be tenacious. All levels of government have laws and regulations against hawking and street selling because these activities are viewed as unlawful, worthless, and harmful; therefore, even though a better alternative hasn't yet been found, they must be eliminated from society. The numerous signs that read "hawking not allowed" and "street selling not allowed" that are posted in public areas, the constant prosecution and fines of street vendors, and the development of shopping centers and upscale marketplaces throughout our cities have all had little to no impact on the decline of street vending in Nigeria. The practice of selling things on the street to make ends meet for one's family is known as street hawking. Teenagers in Nigeria are accustomed to selling goods on the street. There are several reasons for this. Poverty is a key contributing factor to street selling. Poor families typically look for ways to support their members. Children from these households are consequently compelled to hawk in order to support their families. Another reason someone could pitch goods on the street is due to their line of work. Teens who work as product marketers occasionally have to pitch their employers' goods on the streets in order to get customers. Usually, this holds true for household goods and food.

But over time, especially in cities, street hawking has grown incredibly popular and in high demand across all socioeconomic classes. On their way to or from work and other commutes, middle-class and upper-class consumers are frequently seen buying various things in traffic jams and on the sides of the road these days. Aside from the conventional head porter, hawkers have come up with a lot of new means to deliver their goods, such as wheelbarrows, tabletops, and mobile kiosks. Large and small businesses are realizing that unconventional sales techniques, like hawking, can be an effective way to expand their customer base. It is believed that around one billion Naira is exchanged in hawking each month in the

metropolis of Lagos alone. Even though it appears to be unorganized, the hawking informal economy has been shown to be highly structured, with its own set of social roles, norms, and regulations that make sure it serves the requirements of the vast majority of the population. Thus, contrary to popular belief, hawking, a significant informal economy activity, is not always prohibited, as recent studies have demonstrated. Instead, because of the vagueness of laws and the actions of regulatory agencies, hawkers' activities in developing countries such as Nigeria appear to be mostly outside the purview of formal regulations. Hawkers even pay various taxes to state officials and unofficial tax collectors in addition to selling their goods along important thoroughfares around cities. Vincent, K.D. (2014).

The act of selling goods or services on the streets or in public spaces is known as "street hawking," and it is usually carried out by independent contractors who have no official business affiliations. This type of unofficial commerce is common in cities all over the world, where sellers frequently erect temporary stands or bring their goods with them as they pass through congested streets or open areas. Street vendors provide a broad variety of goods and services, such as car wash and shoe shining, in addition to food, drinks, apparel, accessories, and home goods. Although street hawking offers chances for self-employment and revenue generation, it also poses issues with law, safety and health, and steady income. For many people, street hawking is nevertheless a significant source of income despite these difficulties, especially in areas with few official job prospects.

Adolescents who hawk are at a disadvantage to their peers who do not engage in street hawking because they do not have the opportunity to receive a good education. They might therefore be unable to actively contribute to the nation's economic growth and development.

While there are drawbacks to street selling, there are also advantages. The act of street hawking facilitates the accessibility of goods for drivers. When traveling long distances, drivers may choose to purchase meals or snacks from street vendors, which will assist them have more energy to go on. Because to street hawking, one may readily buy useful products such as paintings, jewelry, clothing accessories, shoes, and other items along the road.

## CONCEPT OF CHILD EDUCATION

The process of giving children, usually from early childhood through adolescence, learning opportunities and experiences to support their intellectual, social, emotional, and physical growth is known as child education. The term "early child" (American school of Paris, 2022) describes the time between birth and eight years of age, when a child's brain is most responsive to their surroundings. During this period of "remarkable growth," children need to be taught certain skills and fundamental ideas in order to be ready for adulthood. The main focus of early childhood education is on the crucial concepts, abilities, and developmental milestones that kids reach at this age, including social-emotional development, reading, numeracy, and critical thinking. The OECD views the establishment of high-quality early childhood care and education as a critical economic indicator for evaluating the state and future direction of a country, in addition to preparing kids for success in school. Furthermore, one of UNESCO's objectives for sustainable development is the provision of high-quality early childhood education. Children explore, experience, and learn in many ways from the environment around them from the moment they are born. Early childhood education is the practice of guiding this period of rapid development in a structured environment.

The academic field of early childhood education deals with instructing youngsters from birth to about eight years old. Developing students' social, emotional, cognitive, and physical needs is part of preparing them for a lifetime of learning, according to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). "At these early levels, educators are trying to encourage learning through natural context," says Donna Elder, E.D., and Interim Dean of National University's Sanford College of Education. "You want children to explore the world through conversations, reading, play, and other ways that they would naturally learn from in a family environment. You ultimately want to create a space where children have a lot of opportunities to talk with each other and experience new things." Teaching young children is officially referred to as early childhood education. More precisely, it refers to structured and unstructured educational initiatives that support kids' development and growth during their preschool years (birth to age

five). At these years, children are totally dependent on the adult careers in their lives, such as parents, teachers, babysitters, daycare providers, and extended family members.

Early Childhood Education (ECE) includes a broad range of activities aimed at supporting young children's social and cognitive development prior to kindergarten entry. While some programmes prioritize preparing students academically for school, others take a "whole child" approach that stresses mental and emotional health. One difficulty faced by ECE teachers is that their job is sometimes written off or minimized as "just playtime." There is no way that this is not false.

Negussie (2023) states, "This misconception about what ECE teachers do is very common." "Many stakeholders, including parents, community members, and even other educators, hold the belief that preschool experiences are irrelevant because formal education starts in kindergarten. "Young children's minds are very elastic and impressionable; they are always taking in information from their environment and picking up new skills through interactions and experiences. They have an innate ability to observe, mimic, experiment, and explore. This is among the factors that make ECE significant.

Early child care and education (ECCE), which covers the years from birth to eight years old, is crucial because it takes advantage of a child's rich brain development and, when provided in high-quality settings, can enable the kid to reach their full potential. It can create the groundwork for lifelong economic production, learning and academic performance, social-emotional learning, and excellent health and nutrition. In education policy and investment, it is still frequently given low priority despite the evidence for these social, human, and economic developmental rewards, and where it does exist, it may exclude marginalized populations. Because so much of ECCE is supplied privately, it has additional vulnerability of its own. During the Enlightenment, especially in the more literate European nations, early research focused on early childhood education (ECE). It grew even more during the nineteenth century when primary education became universal in the West. Early childhood education has gained popularity as a public policy concern in recent years due to discussions over preschool and pre-K funding by local, state, and federal legislators. The primary focus of early childhood education is being debated by governing bodies, who are pitting rigorous academic preparation curricula in reading, writing, and Math's against developmentally appropriate play. The objectives of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 highlight the importance of early childhood education on a worldwide scale. Nonetheless, "only around 4 in 10 children aged 3 and 4 attend early childhood education" globally as of 2023. Additionally, participation rates differ significantly by geographic area: "roughly 2 in 3 children in Latin America and the Caribbean attend early childhood education (ECE), compared to slightly less than half of children in South Asia and barely 1 in 4 in sub-Saharan Africa."

Another professional title obtained via a post-secondary education programme is ECE. For instance, only registered members of the College of Early Childhood Educators, which is composed of certified child care providers who are subject to the College's standards of practice, are permitted to use the designations ECE (Early Childhood Educator) and RECE (Registered Early Childhood Educator) in Ontario, Canada.

To guarantee that all children have access to high-quality learning opportunities, governments, communities, civil society organizations, and other stakeholders must work together in the complex field of child education. Societies can unleash the potential of their youth and create a better future for future generations by investing in the education of their children.

## REMEDIAL MEASURES TO STREET HAWKING BY SCHOOL CHILDREN

Despite the negative impacts on children, street hawking by youngsters is a frequent practice. According to numerous studies, poverty is the primary cause of street hawking. When impoverished families look for ways to make ends meet, they sometimes compel their children to work as street vendors in order to support the family which ultimately have an adverse influence on the kids by leading to the formation of maladaptive behavioural patterns, which harms the kids' intellectual, moral, and social-emotional growth and has an adverse effect on their future.

Street hawking is very dangerous for those who do it, especially for school-age children, as it can easily deter and divert them. Deprivation of education, issues with one's physical and general health, child maltreatment, and exposure to criminality are a few of these repercussions. Schoolchildren selling goods on the streets has caused many issues for their families as well as the country as a whole, issues that need to be swiftly resolved and outlawed. The following are some solutions or remedies to curb schoolchildren's street hawking:

- **Government engagement in student street hawking**

It is necessary to develop an alternative before outlawing street hawking. Undoubtedly, some governments have implemented initiatives aimed at addressing the issue of street children and finding broad solutions, such as placing the youngsters in juvenile homes, orphanages, or correctional facilities. Numerous governments have also fought to aid or sustain these organizations and semi-government services. Before discussing getting people off the streets, the government ought to take care of that condition first. For the families of young street vendors who would like to launch their businesses on a larger scale, the government could establish start-up loans with very low or no interest. This will have a significant impact because there will be less danger to an individual's life. And urge kids to give their academics more of their attention (Enang, 2023).

- **Education about the dangers of hawking**

Creating the world's and the nation's major personalities is always the goal of education when it comes to helping street children. To reduce their numbers, the schools can transport these kids to their locations. However, schools can also help kids avoid bad habits like drug addiction, which is especially important for kids who live on the streets. Like with other children, children in schools can learn and receive assistance in becoming engineers, doctors, or pilots. If they understand how to address the issue of street hawking for schoolchildren and their inclination to leave their homes and go to the streets, they can reduce the number of schoolchildren in this way. Students need to be fully informed about the dangers and drawbacks of street hawking. It is important to make clear the risks associated with street hawking by outlining the drawbacks and implications for their future academic standing.

- **Organizational involvement in student street hawking**

Groups such as NGOs assist in lowering the stress associated with student street hawking. The greatest organizations and services for kids who sell things on the street are development places. Assisting student street vendors is crucial; it is imperative to assess these kids' issues and understand how to support the kids who are street vending. Large-scale assistance is provided to street children by development centers since they are better equipped to understand their issues and provide better answers. The amenities that regular children take for granted at home are extended to the street children through these development centers. These centers never let the children feel that they are in the centers, not in their home. The development centers aim to lower the number of student hawkers and prepare students to engage in all the positive activities that life has to offer.

- **Volunteers assist the street children**

Public welfare free workers are always there to assist the youngsters who hawk on the streets because they are willing to learn about the issues and have knowledge of solutions. Since they provide their services to the public at no cost, it is highly recommended that street children use them in order to reduce the number of student hawkers. The number of street youngsters who sell their wares may decline significantly as a result of the increase in volunteers. We need to understand the issue that street children are facing in order to come up with solutions.

- **Public awareness**

Many of the public do not even know about the street children. Awareness mean that the we can inform as more people as we can about the problems of the street children and what can we do to help street children. The increasing of the public awareness can be very helpful in this regard. We can state the people by telling the stories of different kinds of street children. By bringing attention to the issues encountered by street children and outlining potential solutions, we can assist individuals who are unaware of these issues. To ensure that individuals are prepared to assist these children, we must knock on people's doors.

### **METHODOLOGY**

In carrying out the study, descriptive statistics was adopted for this study. The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State. The targeted population for the study comprised all primary school teachers in Akwa Ibom State. A stratified random sampling technique was used to select 70 teachers each from the 3 senatorial districts of Akwa Ibom State and this gave a sample size of 210 respondents used for the study. The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire titled "Street hawking and child education Questionnaire (SHCEQ)". Face and content validation of the instrument was carried out by an expert in test, measurement, and evaluation in order to ensure that the instrument has the accuracy, appropriateness, and completeness for the study under consideration. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.85, and this was high enough to justify the use of the instrument.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Research Questions 1:** The research question sought to find out the extent to which children in Akwa Ibom State are involved in street hawking. To answer the research question percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 1).

**Table 1:**

**Percentage analysis of the extent to which children in Akwa Ibom State are involved in street hawking.**

EXTENTS	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
VERY HIGH EXTENT	112	53.33**
HIGH EXTENT	89	42.38
LOW EXTENT	9	4.28*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*\* The highest percentage frequency

\* The least percentage frequency

**SOURCE:** Field survey

The above table 1 presents the percentage analysis of the extent to which children in Akwa Ibom State were involved in street hawking. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest percentage (53.33%) of the respondents affirmed that street hawking involved by children in Akwa Ibom State is of "very high extent", while the least percentage (4.28%) of the respondents stated that street hawking is of "low extent".



**Research Questions 2:** The research question sought to find out the extent to which street hawking has affected child education in Akwa Ibom State. To answer the research question percentage analysis was performed on the data, (see table 2).

**Table 2:**

**Percentage analysis of the extent to which street hawking has affected child education in Akwa Ibom State.**

<b>EXTENTS</b>	<b>FREQUENCY</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
VERY HIGH EXTENT	104	49.52**
HIGH EXTENT	79	37.61
LOW EXTENT	27	12.85*
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*\* The highest percentage frequency

\* The least percentage frequency

**SOURCE:** Field survey

The above table 2 presents the percentage analysis of the extent to which street hawking has affected child education in Akwa Ibom State. From the result of the data analysis, it was observed that the highest percentage (49.52%) of the respondents affirmed that the extent to which street hawking has affected child education in Akwa Ibom State is very high, while the least percentage (12.85%) of the respondents stated that the extent of effect is low.

## CONCLUSION

In Akwa Ibom State there are issues of street hawking among children of under age. The extent of street hawking is on very high extent where hundreds of pupils abandon school for the activities while others return to school after the economic activities or engage themselves after school. Based on the findings it could also be concluded that street hawking has affected child education adversely in Akwa Ibom State.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- In order to protect the rights of children and ensure their access to formal education, there is need for the Akwa Ibom State government to implement and enforce strict anti-child labour laws. This should include penalties for parents and guardians who engage their children in street hawking during school hours.
- Launching comprehensive public awareness campaigns at both national and community levels can help educate parents, guardians, and the general public on the long-term consequences of depriving children of formal education. These campaigns should highlight the importance of education in breaking the cycle of poverty, enhancing future opportunities, and contributing to the overall development of the country.
- The Akwa Ibom State government should consider implementing targeted financial support programmes. These programmes could include scholarships, grants, or subsidies aimed at assisting low-income families in meeting the educational needs of their children without resorting to child labour.

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