

Influence of Street Hawking on Socio-Emotional Development of Children: A Case Study of Primary School Pupils in Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Street hawking which appears to be fast becoming a culture in Nigeria has a lot of vices associated with it. Such vices are likely to affect the general standard of morality and social norms that had formed the acceptable pattern of behavior among Nigerian children if not properly addressed. This study therefore investigated the influence of hawking on socio-emotional development of the child. The study was guided by two research questions. The sampled population consists of 140 primary four pupils of public primary schools in Cross River state. The data used for the study was gotten from the questionnaire composed by the researchers. The questionnaire was structured on a four point scale and the data were analyzed using mean scores: the mean of 2.50 and above shows acceptance while any mean value below 2.50 was not accepted. The findings among others revealed that Hawking has a negative effect on socio emotional development of the children. It exposes children to danger such as armed robbery, prostitution and other vices. The researchers therefore concluded that street hawking has negative influences on children's social emotional development and therefore should be discouraged. Based on the findings, recommendations were made among others that there should be advocacy campaign to educate parents and guardians on the dangers of hawking on children's development especially on their socio emotional development.

Keywords: street hawking, social development, emotional development ,development, children

INTRODUCTION

The value of children as unique gifts from God has a worldwide acceptance. In Africa, including Nigeria, children are the main yardstick with which a man's wealth and success are measured. Furthermore, children ensure not only continuity of the society but also give parents their rightful position in the society (Olaitan & Akpan, 2003). This gift of children is so treasured that people go to extremes to look for it. Any marriage without children is most often bereft of happiness and in some cases; such marriages do not last or are usually unstable in nature (Ugwu, 2007).

A child at birth is helpless and totally dependent on the adults for all its needs, which from conception, but personal uniqueness and individuality with strong and loud demands for attention care, and security. Any family, society, or nation that has no good agenda or proper plans for the children has automatically failed to secure its future existence and continuity. The continued existence and development of any society depends on the ability of the children and youths of that society to function effectively; socially; politically, economically, and religiously as members of the society. In other words, children should be capable of

relating with others; participate in politics, and contribute to the economy so that they should be able to adapt to the environment in which they find themselves. This prospective enablement can be achieved if the society values the future development of children.

There are variations in the conception and definition of a child. In view of this, child and childhood are defined differently by different cultures (Melchiorre, 2004). He further stated that children's ability and maturity vary so much that defining a child's maturity by calendar age can be misleading. There is no uniform definition of a child in Nigeria. Nigeria Labour Act, NLA (2003) defines a child as a person under the age of 18 years. The International Labour Organization, ILO (1999) defined a child as individual below 15 years of age. In spite of the variations, in 'this context, children are seen as any human beings below the age of 18 years. Early childhood (0-6 years) has come to be recognized as a period of critical development of the human being. During this period love, care, good nutrition, a safe environment, stimulation, and encouragement are particularly critical for the individual's future life (Dixon-fyle, 2002). Regrettably, in Nigeria, many

children in the process of their development seem to experience exposure to street hawking.

Street hawking is referred to as an occupation engaged by children and young adult which involves selling of items or goods in the street (Voluntary Counseling and confidential Testing – VCCT, 2005). Street hawking is considered as the act of canvassing for sale, items carried by the hawker along the street, from house to house or in the public places in town (Ikechebelu, Udigwe, Ezechukwu, Ndinechi, and Joe-Ikechebelu 2008). The culture of hawking did not come from the blues; it has a historical offshoot. In seeking to situate the development of street hawking in Nigeria, a historical review of how street hawking came to stay in Nigeria becomes imperative.

As it concerns the emergence of child hawking in Nigeria, Olori (2009) is of the opinion that street trading, especially by children, appears to have started with the introduction of an International Monetary Fund Structural Adjustment Plan (IMFSA) in the late 1980s, which led to the devaluation of the currency, a withdrawal of subsidies on items such as fuel, water, and electricity, and job cuts. Resulting from the above, any parents who could no longer afford school fees for their children withdraw them from the education system. In an effort to help families make ends meet, some of these children were engaged as domestic servants to wealthy households, as car washers and watchers, bus conductors, and street hawkers. At this point, it is very clear that the issue of child hawking is not as old as man, rather it started at a point in the history of human existence. Therefore, it is still believed that the principles of anything that has a beginning must have an end will one day be fulfilled in the issue of child hawking in Nigeria, if the right policy steps are taken (Olori, 2009).

To ensure that the general standard of morality and social norms that had formed the acceptable pattern of behavior among Nigerian children is sustained, this paper investigated the influence of street hawking on the socio- emotional development of children, exposed the vices associated with street hawking and made recommendations to forestall the occurrences of such social malady.

Child Development

Child development refers to the biological and psychological changes that occur in human being between birth and the end of adolescence, as the individual progresses from dependency to increasing autonomy (Kail, 2006). These, developmental changes may be strongly influenced by genetic factors and environmental factors during prenatal life, and prenatal development are usually included as part of child development. The child's age related development terms includes:

New born (ages 0-1month); Infant (ages 1 month-1 year); Toddler (age 1-3years); Preschooler (ages 4-6year); School-aged child (ages 6-13years); Adolescent (age 13-15years). Development is a progressive sequence of change in the nature of organization of an organism's structure and behavior, which process in a systematic manner (Ngwoke &Eze, 2004). In other words, development is described as the gradual and systematic manifestation of characteristics, which enable the organism to function at a progressively high level.

Development is increase in functioning resulting from the interaction of maturation forces and learning (Ngwoke 2000). If a child who hitherto cried when thirsty says mummy water, development has taken place. If a child stands erect and takes two or more hasty steps, development has taken place. Both of these refinements in the efficacy of the child's functioning are the result of maturation and learning. Thus, he maintains that development is the sequence of changes in human being that begins with conception and continues through life. The changes involved in development are both qualitative and quantitative'

Developmental changes, like growth in stature, involve fairly gradual and, predictable progress towards adult characteristics (Patterson 2008). When developmental change is discontinues, however, researchers may identify not only milestones of development, but related age period often called stages. A stage is a period of time often associated with a known chronological age range, during which a behavioral characteristic is qualitatively different from what it is at other ages. When an age period is referred to as a stage, the term implies that each stage is both proceeded and followed by specific other periods associated with characteristics behavioral qualities.

As it concerns the developmental stages of the child, Ngwoke and Eze (2004) noted that child at birth is helpless and dependent on others for survival; the child lacks the basic motor skill and coordination required for exploration of his environment, he confuses self with things and objects around, and is unable to use sound and symbols in a manner intelligible to those around. But with the passage of time, the child increases in motor skills and coordination from the crude stage at birth to a high proficiency in games requiring complex skills and coordination at adolescence; from psychological instability to stability; from the birth cry to the manipulation of language in abstract thinking, from confusion of self from things around his environment (egocentrism) to a formation of clear identity of self Importance, they emphasized that development takes place in the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language factors. Environmental factors affecting development may include diet and disease exposure,

as well as social and emotional experiences. Through children's relations with others and their growing awareness of social values and expectations, they build a sense of who they are "and of social roles available to them (Alegre, 2012).

Emotional Development –This refers to the emergence of a child's experience, expression, understanding, and regulation of emotions from birth through late adolescence (Trenlacost et al, 2006). It also comprises how growth and changes in these processes concerning emotions occur. Social and emotional development are strongly linked and sometimes studied in tandem. Parents and other caregivers play an important role in emotional development, but as a child world expands, other people in the social context also play a part in emotional development (Corso, 2007).

Social/emotional development refers to an aspect of child development. It consists of how individuals develop the social skills and emotional maturity to build relationships and relate to other people. Social/emotional development includes child's experience, expression and management of emotion and the ability to establish positive relationship with others (Cohen, 2005). It also involves the ability to form and sustain positive relationships, experiences, manage and express emotion, explore and engage with the environment. Social-emotional development is the combination of learning diplomacy and truthfulness to interact with individuals or groups in a manner that contributes positively to members of society (Kidspot, 2011).

Children with well-developed social-emotional skills are more able to express their ideas and feelings, empathy towards others, manage their feelings of frustration and disappointment more easily, feel self confident, easily make and develop friendships, and succeed in school (Nelson, Erwin, and Duffy, 2001). The greatest influence on a child's socio-emotional development is the quality of the relationships that he/she develops with his/her primary care givers. Early nurturing, experiences and relationships have a significant impact on a child's socio-emotional development.

Street hawking is one of the debilitating factors that influence the socio-emotional development of the children involved and the society at large. The behavioral manifestations of problems associated with street hawking include problems of social maladjustment, moral defect, emotional reaction and insecurity. Street hawking is highly detrimental to children physical, mental, psychological and social development (Dantiye and Haruna (2004).The health and educational consequence of children involved in street hawking can not be over looked . Baland and Robinson (2000) found out that these children suffer

verbal abuse, low self esteem and a lost of imagination. The children tend to keep bad company and are negatively pressured by peer to engage in delinquent behavior (Hughes,2009).Anagbogu (2000) found feelings of inferiority ,exhaustion, emotional distress, unhappiness and personality disorder to be associated with street hawking. In the late childhood stage (6- 10 years) the age of primary school, children learn at this period by observation(Banda, 2003) . It is characterized by the period at which children always play as a natural activity which contributes to their development which give them satisfaction and enjoyment (Ibiam, 2006). It is the time children' socialize with each other in the school and in the environment in which they find themselves, they interact with one another and make friends with their mates. However, some children are denied the opportunity due to the exposure to street hawking. Emotion is the stir up of an individual, which involves both internal and external manifestation (Uche & Ngwoke, 2004). Teenagers especially the female folks are exposed through hawking to be sexually aware too early in life. In attempt to sell their wares teenage females mingle with the touts in the motor packs and in the streets. Some of the teenage hawkers are lured into sexual relationship that may result into pre mature pregnancy. Some of the female hawkers may become promiscuous following exposure through hawking. As a result of this, females may drop hawking and resort to prostitution. Prostitution occasionally results to the spread of venereal diseases" unwanted pregnancies and subsequent criminal, abortion and illegitimate children (Igwe, 1996). Some hawkers learn the act of smoking cigarette and even hard drugs because of the interaction with people of questionable characters while some are exposed to armed robbery business especially boys .

However, in Nigeria, it appears that child development is grossly abused through the increasing display of hawking in almost all the streets in Nigerian towns. In fact, the proportion of hawking and its attendant consequences has uncontrollably assumed an alarming stage as children between 6-15 years are seen everywhere in the cities hawking wares (Ibiam, 2009).the family has a role to play to this problem .The ability of family to function effectively is a factor in child development and street hawking is a sign of family dislocation and disorganization (Crosson,2008). The children are no longer taken care of as should be.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Street hawking among the primary school age children is fast becoming the culture in our society. When children are kept busy on the street and they come in contact with different corrupt behaviors during hawking, it becomes worrisome to the researchers what the out come will be on their socio-emotional development. This if not properly addressed will seriously affect the general standard of

morality and social norms that has formed the acceptable pattern of behavior among the youths. This study therefore sought to find out the influence of street hawking on the socio-emotional development of the primary school children in Calabar south local government area.

METHODOLOGY

The research was limited to all the public primary schools in Calabar South Local government area on the influence of street hawking on the socio – emotional development of primary school pupils. The study adopted descriptive survey design. This design was used because the researchers intended to elicit information from the respondents on the influence of street hawking on the social/emotional development of primary school children in Calabar Education Zones of Cross River state. The populations of the study were all the 1120 primary four pupils in all the 34 public primary schools in Calabar (CRSUBEB ,2012).Random sampling technique was used to select 5 primary schools while 140 primary four pupils were selected through the use of proportionate random sampling technique of 15% of primary four pupils from the 5 sampled public primary schools in the zones. The selection was done in this order: Okurike, 30 in Abanwan, 28 in Akpete, 28 in Etone2 and 54 in Etone1(Now known as Etone central). This gave a total of 140 sampled population of primary four pupils used for the study. The instrument used for collection of data for this study was structured questionnaire designed for primary

four pupils. The questionnaire was structured on a four -point scale of strongly agree (SA); agree (A), disagree (DA) and strongly disagree (SD). Primary four school children were used for their ages are within the hawking stage and they are the worse hit by the vices of street hawking because of their tender ages. They will also be able to respond effectively to the questionnaires. The instrument which was validated by two lecturers from the department of early childhood education and psychology department of University of Calabar was found suitable for the study. The study was guided by two research questions. The data obtained from the questionnaire were analyzed using mean scores. The mean of 2.50 and above were accepted as agreed while any mean value below 2.50 was not considered as acceptable.

Research Question:

The following research question guided the study:

1. How does street hawking influence social development of primary four pupils of Calabar Education zone?
2. How does street hawking influence emotional development of primary four pupils of Calabar Education zone?

Results

RQ 1.How does street hawking influence social development of primary four pupils of Calabar Education zone?

Table 1: Mean responses on the influence of street hawking on children’s social development

S/N	ITEMS	X	DECISION
1	Hawking exposes children to drinking of alcohol.	3.2	Accepted
2	Hawking does not allow children time to visit their mates.	3.06	Accepted
3	Hawking does not allow children to play with their mates.	3.15	Accepted
4	Hawking exposes children to armed robbery (bad habit).	2.81	Accepted
5	Hawking exposes girl child into early prostitute.	2.87	Accepted
6	Hawking exposes the children to wayward lifestyle.	3.11	Accepted

The data on table 1 above shows that the mean values for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are above 2.50 standard mean cut-off. This means that all these factors are the ways in which street hawking influence social development of children.

RQ Two:

How does street hawking influence children’s emotional development?

Table 2: Mean responses on the influence of street hawking on child’s emotional development.

S/N	ITEMS	X	DECISION
1.	Children that hawk on the street easily fight.	2.92	Accepted
2.	Children that hawk on the street have low self concept.	3.1	Accepted
3.	Children that hawk on the street are exposed to watching photographic pictures.	2.85	Accepted
4.	Children that hawk on the street lack self confidence.	3.2	Accepted
5.	Children that hawk on the street are exposed to early sex.	3.2	Accepted
6.	Children who hawk are in dilemma of how to meet societal expectation.	3.34	Accepted

The data on table 2 above shows that the mean values for items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 means are above 2.50 standard mean cut-off, therefore they are accepted. In other words the data presented in this table2 indicated that all the factors are the ways by which street hawking influence emotional development of children.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Research Question One

Table 1on the influence of hawking on child’s social development, it was discovered that children have less interest in socialization. This is because hawking gives children no time either to visit their friends, mates or play. Street hawking influences the social development of children negatively. The findings supports Ibiang (2009) who stated that play is a natural activity which contributes to children development as well as gives them satisfaction and enjoyment. The findings also agree

with (Aliyu, 2012, Dantiyye and Haruna (2004)) that street hawking especially by children exposes them to social evils hence the need to eradicate it and that street hawking is highly detrimental to children's physical, mental and social development.

In table 2, the influence of hawking on children's emotional development, the finding shows that children who hawk have low self-concept, lack self-confidence, easily fights, and are exposed to early sex. The finding agrees with Nzewi (2003) Igwe(1996) and Nte(2005) that street hawking exposes children to Prostitution which occasionally results to the spread of venereal diseases, unwanted pregnancies and subsequent criminal, abortion and illegitimate. The findings also is in tandem with Baland and Robinson (2000) and Anagbogu (2000) views that these children suffer verbal abuse, low self esteem, a lost of imagination, feelings of inferiority, exhaustion, emotional distress, unhappiness and personality disorder.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, the primary four children used for this study revealed that hawking influences social development of children in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River state. This is by exposing them to early drinking of alcohol, not allowing them time to play, visit their mates, exposing them to armed robber, kidnapping, ritual killing, learning to cheat and tell lies, early prostitution and wayward lifestyle.

The study also revealed that hawking influences children's emotional development by making them fight easily, have low self-concept, lack self-confidence and to be sexually aware too early in life. The researchers therefore concluded that since street hawking has negative influence on the socio-emotional development of the children, everything possible should be done to bring it to a stop. For if left to continue, are likely to affect the general standard of morality and social norms that had formed the acceptable pattern of behavior among Nigerian children.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. There should be advocacy campaigns to educate parents and guardians on' the dangers of hawking to the children.
2. The government should promulgate a law against street hawking and law enforcement agents should arrest parents and guardians who sent out their children for street hawking.

3. Seminars, workshop, radio and television programmes, hand bills, jingles bill boards etc should be made valuable instruments to educate people on the dangers of hawking.
4. The government should improve the standard of living of the citizens through provision of bursary allowance to the indigent pupils.

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