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*Full Length Research Paper*

# Predictors of Hawking experience, and knowledge of health hazard of street hawking, among Child Hawkers in Sokoto Metropolis

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Street hawking among children, a form of child labour in its simplest form is the selling of items along roads and from one place to the other. This study aimed at assessing the Predictors of Hawking experience, and knowledge of health hazard of street hawking, among Child Hawkers in Sokoto Metropolis. This study was a cross-sectional descriptive study, conducted among child hawkers within sokoto metropolis, Sokoto state, Nigeria. Sample size estimation was carried out and after adjusting for attrition, a total of two hundred and twenty-seven (227) respondents was recruited into the study using systematic sampling technique. Data obtained was subsequently entered into IBM SPSS version 20 software package. All statistical tests were carried out using 2 tailed tests with alpha set at 0.05. Female gender was the main predictor of being sexually harassed (OR = 8.84,  $p < .0001$ , 95% CI [.042 - .307]), having a father who is not alive was found to be the key predictor being raped (OR = 9.3,  $p = .018$ , 95% CI [.017 - .682]). The main predictor of having good knowledge with respect to hazard associated with street hawking was attending school (OR = 3.5,  $p < 0.001$ , 95% CI [0.137 – 0.600]). Domestication of the Child Rights Act by state governments will go a long way in reducing the hazards associated with child hawking in our communities.

**Keywords:** Street hawking; child hawkers; health hazards

## INTRODUCTION

Majority of the populace of Nigeria are youths below the

age of 25 years, affected by massive unemployment, although quite a number of them take solace in activities such as street hawking for survival (Amoo et al., 2016). In Nigeria, like other African countries, street hawking represents one of those supplement activities quite a number of people engage with in their battle for survival

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in the face of economic recession (Amoo et al., 2016) Street hawking activities falls within the informal sector of the economy and participation in this activity is synonymous with impoverishment and survivalist responses of persons with very little alternative (Amoo et al., 2016).

The statistical information and monitoring programme on child labour survey (SIMPOC) reported that approximately 15 million working children in Nigeria are engaged in one form of child labour or the other; comprising of about 7.8 million males and 7.2 million females. Out of this 15 million, 6 million children do not attend school (Ojie, 2007).

Street hawking among children, a form of child labour in its simplest form is the selling of items along roads and from one place to the other (Umar, 2009). Over the years, increases in the number of child hawkers have been observed in Nigeria especially in rural areas; however, this picture is now largely seen in most urban areas (Omo, 2013).

Sokoto metropolis is not left out with respect to the challenges of child hawkers as numerous under aged hawkers are found all around busy streets, markets and motor parks.

Child hawkers are engaged on a regular basis in selling of various items, with the aim of earning economic dividend for themselves or their families (Kaletapwa, 2013). Hawking more often than not is carried out at the expense of schooling, some of them that struggle to attend school may not have sufficient time to rest after school, for home work and for extra studies (Kaletapwa, 2013).

Hawking exposing these child hawkers to danger and risks associated with working on the streets. Exposure to life on the street at such young ages may lead to negative behaviour such as cigarette smoking, substance use, stealing, prostitution etc (Kaletapwa, 2013).

Some of the problem that have been reported among child hawkers include physical hazards such as musculoskeletal disorders, dermatitis (from exposure to extreme weather conditions) road traffic accidents; vulnerability to sexual assault leading to rape and prostitution; mobbing and even ritual killing (Nduka and Duru, 2014). Most child hawkers usually hawk in company of their mates, usually not guided by adults, this scenario further increases the likelihood of these children having injuries and accidents (Ayodele and Olubayo-Fatiregun, 2014). Injuries and accidents occurring among street hawkers especially children is said to occur almost on a daily basis (Ayodele and Olubayo-Fatiregun, 2014).

There is scarcity of literature with respect to underage hawking in sokoto, this study was conducted with the hope of addressing the gaps with respect to under aged hawking in sokoto, it is also hoped that the outcome of this study will serve as a base-line for further studies in sokoto. This study aimed at assessing the Predictors of Hawking experience, and knowledge of health hazard of

street hawking, among Child Hawkets in Sokoto Metropolis.

## MATERIALS AND METHOD

This study was a cross-sectional descriptive study, conducted among child hawkets hawking within the metropolitan areas of sokoto state. Sample size estimation was carried out using formula for sample size estimation for cross-sectional studies and after adjusting for attrition a total of two hundred and twenty seven (227) respondents was recruited into the study. Line listing of the sites within the metropolis where large numbers of child hawkets are found was carried out through a quick survey conducted by the researchers. It was observed that child hawkets are mainly concentrated around major markets, major motor parks and some busy streets. Proportional allocation was done with respect to the study sites were large number of hawkets are found. Within each of the respective study sites, systematic sampling technique was used to recruit eligible respondents into the study. Data collection, which was carried out on 4 week days, between 9:00am-4:00 pm was by means of interviewer-administered, structured, questionnaire. Data obtained was subsequently entered into IBM SPSS version 20 software package. Analysis of data started with description of data using mean and standard deviation for quantitative variables; frequency and percentages for qualitative variables. This was followed by inferential statistics (chi-square test). Logistic regression was used to identify predictor variables. Results were presented in form of tables. All statistical tests were carried out using 2 tailed tests with alpha set at 0.05.

Consent was obtained from parents/guardians of respondents, permission to carry out the study was obtained from the individual respondents before questionnaire administration, ethical clearance was also obtained from the ethics committee of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto.

## RESULTS

Over half 132 (58.7%) of the respondents were within the ages of 10 – 14 years with only 18 (7.1%) of them were within the ages of 5 – 9 years. The mean age of the respondents was  $13 \pm 2.6$  years. About 124 (54.9%) of the respondents were females; majority 183 (81.7%) of the respondents practiced Islam and Hausa 159 (70.4%) by tribe. Most of the respondents' fathers 158 (69.9%) and mothers 173 (76.5%) were still alive and 132 (58%) had both parents still living with about half 103 (49%) of the respondents' parents living together, most 58 (60.8%) of whom live in Sokoto. Most 143 (63.3%) of the respondents do not go to school. Almost 202 (93.1%) all

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)	5-9	18	7.1
	10-14	132	58.7
	>14	77	34.2
Gender	Male	102	45.1
	Female	124	54.9
Religion	Islam	183	81.7
	Christianity	41	18.3
Tribe	Hausa	159	70.4
	Fulani	23	10.23
	Yoruba	22	9.7
	Igbo	21	9.3
	Others	1	0.4
Is father alive	Yes	158	69.9
	No	68	30.1
Is mother alive	Yes	173	76.5
	No	53	23.5
Are parents living together	Yes	103	49
	No	107	51
Parents reside in sokoto	Yes	59	60.8
	No		
Do you go to school	Yes	83	36.7
	No	143	63.3
Category of street child	Street child	15	6.9
	Child on street	202	93.1
When do you hawk	Morning only	6	2.7
	Afternoon only	40	18.1
	Evening only	29	13.1
	Morning and afternoon	22	10
	The whole day	124	56.1

**Table 2.** Types of commodities being hawked by respondents

Types of products being hawked*	Frequency	Percentage
Sachet water	121	65.4
Soft drinks	25	14.0
Snacks	33	17.9
Confectionaries	33	18.8
Fruits	21	12.1
Groundnut	73	39.2
Tiger nut	51	29.1
Tomatoes	37	21.3
Cooked food	43	22.9
Vegetables	40	22.5
Detergent	18	10.3

\*Multiple responses allowed

the respondents were "child on street" with over half 124 (56.1%) of them hawk the whole day. (Table 1)

The highest sold product by the respondents was sachet water 121 (65.4%) followed by groundnut 73

(39.2%) while the least sold was detergent 18 (10.3%). (Table 2)

Majority 197 (87.6%) of the respondents hawked due to inadequate family income; parents were unemployed 163

**Table 3.** Reasons respondents gave for hawking

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Hawking due to inadequate family income	Yes	197	87.6
	No	28	12.4
Parents are unemployed	Yes	163	72.4
	No	62	27.6
Parents forced child to hawk	Yes	42	18.7
	No	183	81.3
To support family	Yes	203	90.6
	No	21	9.4
To make some money for self	Yes	182	81.3
	No	42	18.8
Am happy hawking	Yes	77	34.2
	No	148	65.8
Would you like to stop hawking	Yes	175	77.8
	No	150	22.2

**Table 4.** Street hawking experience of respondents

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Do you sometimes feel unhappy because you are hawking?	Yes	142	77.6
	No	50	22.4
Have you ever been forced into joining a street gang	Yes	27	12.1
	No	196	87.9
Have you ever been involved in Road traffic accident while hawking	Yes	75	33.5
	No	149	66.5
Have you ever incurred injuries in the course of hawking	Yes	161	72.2
	No	62	27.8
Have you ever experienced physical violence while hawking	Yes	93	42.1
	No	128	57.9
Have you ever been sexually harassed in the course of hawking	Yes	44	19.7
	No	179	80.3
Have you been raped while hawking	Yes	10	4.5
	No	213	95.5
Have you ever had sex for money while hawking	Yes	5	2.2
	No	218	97.8
Have you ever had an unwanted pregnancy	Yes	8	3.6
	No	213	96.4
Did any of your colleagues ever offered you cigarette to smoke while hawking	Yes	32	14.3
	No	191	85.7
Did any of your colleagues ever offered you alcohol to drink while hawking	Yes	14	6.3
	No	209	93.7

(72.4%); were forced to hawk by parents 183 (81.3%); to support family 203 (90.6%) and to make some money for themselves 182 (81.3%). About three quarter 148 (65.8%) of the respondents were happy hawking. Majority 175 (77.8%) of them would like to stop hawking. (Table 3)

Majority of the respondents were not happy hawking 142 (77.6%). About a third of respondents had been involved in RTA while hawking (33.5%), less than a fifth of respondents had been sexually harassed while

hawking (19.7%), 10 (4.5%) of respondents reported having ever been raped while hawking, 2 (97.8%) have ever had sex for money while hawking, 8(3.6%) had ever had unwanted pregnancy, 32 (14.3%) had ever been offered cigarette by colleagues to smoke while hawking and 14 (6.3%) had ever been offered alcohol to drink by colleagues while hawking. (Table 4)

A quarter 56 (25.1%) of the respondents did not know that exposure to extreme weather conditions is a hazard

**Table 5.** Knowledge of hazards associated with street hawking

Variables		Frequency	Percentage
Is exposure to extreme weather conditions a hazard of street hawking	Correct responses	167	74.9
	In correct responses	56	25.1
Is road traffic accident a hazard of street hawking	Correct responses	178	79.8
	In correct responses	45	20.2
Is sexual harassment a hazard of street hawking	Correct responses	151	68
	In correct responses	70	31.5
Can kidnapping be a hazard of street hawking	Correct responses	122	55
	In correct responses	100	45
Can hawkers experience physical violence	Correct responses	164	73.5
	In correct responses	59	26.5
Is exposure to hard drugs a hazard of street hawkers	Correct responses	109	49.1
	In correct responses	113	50.9
Knowledge of health hazard of street hawking	Poor knowledge	74	33.2
	Good knowledge	149	66.8

64.3+/-32.5

**Table 6.** Predictors of Sexual harassment among child hawkers

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	P-value	OR	95% C.I. for OR	
						Lower	Upper
Gender	-2.181	.510	18.280	.000*	.113	.042	.307
Attend school	.175	.396	.195	.658	1.191	.548	2.588
Father alive	-.167	.492	.116	.734	.846	.323	2.219
Mother alive	-1.008	.515	3.834	.050	.365	.133	1.001
Parents living together	.443	.473	.876	.349	1.557	.616	3.935

\* p&lt;.0001

**Table 7.** Predictors of Child hawker being raped

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	P-value	OR	95% C.I. for OR	
						Lower	Upper
Gender	-2.182	1.096	3.963	.047*	.113	.013	.967
Attend school	-.259	.802	.104	.747	.772	.160	3.717
Father alive	-2.225	.940	5.603	.018*	.108	.017	.682
Mother alive	-1.803	.989	3.321	.065	.165	.024	1.146
Parents living together	1.447	1.162	1.552	.213	4.252	.436	41.443

\* p&lt;.05

of street hawking, a fifth 45 (20.2%) of them did not know that RTA is a hazard of street hawking, about a third 70 (31.5%) of them did not know that sexual harassment is a hazard of street hawking, almost half 100 (45%) of them did not know that kidnapping is a hazard of street hawking, about a quarter 59 (26.5%) of them did not know that hawkers can experience physical violence, half 113 (50.9%) of them did not know that exposure to hard drugs is a hazard of street hawking. About a third 74 (33.2%) of the respondents had poor knowledge of health hazard of street hawking with a mean knowledge score of  $64.3 \pm 32.5$ . (Table 5)

Females were 8.8 times more likely to have been sexually harassed compared to males, and this was statistically significant after controlling for the effects of

whether they attended school, father alive, mother alive and parent living together (OR = 8.84,  $p < .0001$ , 95% CI [.042 - .307]). (Table 6)

Female hawkers were 8.84 times more likely of being raped compared to males and this was statistically significant after controlling for the effects of whether they attended school, whether their fathers and mothers were alive or parents living together (OR 8.84,  $p = .047$ , 95% CI [.013 - .967]). Hawkers whose father were not alive were 9.3 times more likely to have been raped and this was statistically significant after controlling for the effects of the children's gender, whether they attended school, whether their mothers were alive and parents living together (OR = 9.3,  $p = .018$ , 95% CI [.017 - .682]). (Table 7)

**Table 8.** Predictors of Respondents' knowledge of hazard associated with street hawking

Variables	B	S.E.	Wald	P-value	OR	95% C.I. for OR	
						Lower	Upper
Age	0.32	0.69	0.209	0.648	1.032	0.901	1.182
Gender	0.581	0.337	2.972	0.085	1.787	0.924	3.458
Attend school	-1.250	0.377	10.991	0.001*	0.287	0.137	0.600
Father alive	-0.201	0.452	0.197	0.657	0.818	.338	1.983
Mother alive	0.827	0.510	2.631	0.105	2.287	0.842	6.217
Parents living together	0.796	0.415	3.683	0.055	2.218	0.983	5.002
Duration of hawking	-0.005	0.08	0.326	0.568	0.995	0.979	1.012

\* p&lt;0.05

Hawkers that did not attend school were 3.5 times more likely to have poor knowledge of hazard associated with street hawking and this was statistically significant after controlling for the effects of their ages, gender, whether father is alive, whether mother is alive, parent living together and duration of hawking (OR = 3.5, p <0.001, 95% CI [0.137 – 0.600]. (Table 8)

## DISCUSSION

Developing countries such as Nigeria are burdened with over population leading to high rates of unemployment thus contributing to the large number of people seen on the streets engaging in hawking activities. Street hawking or vending in developing countries is attracting a rising interest amongst researchers (Olutunde, 2013; Ugochukwu et al., 2012) due to the various health, social, and economic implications to those who engage in the trade (Amoo et al., 2012; Ashimolowo et al., 2010; Esin et al., 2005). The need to continually provide for the family in the midst of unfriendly conditions has led women, men, youths and children in particular, to engage in street hawking activities (Ekpenyong and Nkereuwem, 2011).

This study revealed that over half of the hawkers were children between the ages of 10 and 14 years. Children are preferred to adults in hawking because they are cheap labour to the employer (Anumaka, 2012; Arhedo et al., 2011). This is a cause for concern, as children of this age group ought to still be under tutelage of parents and guardians and not left totally unsupervised.

The involvement of children in street hawking constitutes child labour, which is a form of child abuse (United Nation Children Fund (UNICEF), 2003). The International Labour Organization has estimated that over 200 million children aged 5 to 17 years are engaged in child labour (United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2012). Over 10 millions of these children live and work on the streets and this number has increased with global population growth, urbanization and rural-urban migration (International Labour Office (ILO), 2006). The International Convention on the Right of the Child held in 2000 which hosted all the member states of the United

nations agreed that every child must be protected against all forms of exploitation, indecent or degrading treatment, including child labour, abduction and sale (United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2000).

Policies regarding child labour in Nigeria are contained in the Child Rights Act (CRA) passed by the National Assembly. The act having been enacted at the National level by the Federal Government of Nigeria, the State Governments were expected to formally adopt and adapt the act for domestication as state laws (issues of child rights and protection are on the residual list of the Nigerian constitution), giving states exclusive responsibility and jurisdiction to make laws relevant to their specific situations (United Nation Children Fund (UNICEF), 2003). The bill, in accordance with the decision made at the International Convention ensures that every child born is given the fullest opportunity for self- realization and development (Amoo et al., 2012). A key provision of the CRA states that using children for hawking is a punishable offence under the act. In spite of this law, the streets of major towns and cities in Nigeria are flooded with children who sell various items, this may be because the CRA has only been promulgated into law in 15 of the 36 states of Nigeria and Sokoto state, the study location is yet to promulgate the CRA into law (Olutunde, 2013; Ugochukwu et al., 2012; Ashimolowo et al., 2010).

In this study, about two – third of the hawkers had either dropped out of school or never went to school. This is much higher than that reported in Uyo, South southern Nigeria and Ibadan, Southwestern Nigeria, where more than a quarter of the children had either dropped out of school or never went to school at all (Abisoye, 2013; Ofonime and Chukwuemeka, 2015). This poses a serious threat to the achieving basic primary education for many of these children who would probably end up growing to become illiterate adults. The Nigeria Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS) 2013 reported that 38% of women and 21% of men have no education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). These adults may also have had no opportunity to attend school as a result of engaging in some money making activities during school hours in their childhood years.

The preponderance of female hawkers has been similarly reported in other studies conducted in Nigeria (Fetuga et al., 2005; Omokhodion and Omokhodion, 2001) but differs from reports from South Africa and Brazil (Raffaelli et al., 2000). These findings are not surprising because in a typical African cultural setting, it is believed that the training of female children is not beneficial to their families. A male child usually retains the family name and possessions while the girl child is thought to be useful only to her husband. Thus, the females are less likely to attend school and are either given out in early marriage or sent to live with relatives as "house-helpers" all in a bid to assist in the family finances. This study concurred to this fact, as over half of the hawkers were females.

The study revealed that child hawkers had high level of knowledge of the various hazards associated with street hawking and high overall knowledge, with 66.8% of them having good knowledge of hazards associated with street hawking. This is not surprising considering the fact that majority of these hawkers have experienced one hazard from the other ranging from RTAs, physical violence, sexual harassment to mention but a few. Hawkers that did not attend school were more likely to have poor knowledge of hazard associated with street hawking. Education is an important tool in economic development, yet it has been reported that forty percent of Nigerian children aged 6-11 years do not attend school which is in keeping with National statistics of a high rate of out of school children in Nigeria (United Nation Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2000). This had significantly increased to 66.1% according to NDHS 2013 (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

The major reasons given by hawkers for indulging in street trading was not because they were forced by their parents, but it's was due to inadequate family income and the need to support their families. This was attributable to the fact that majority of their parents were unemployed. This is consistent with other studies that reported that low wages contributed to incidents of street trading and child labour as children attempt to help support their families (Ashimolowo et al., 2010; Akpan and Oluwabamide, 2010; Onuzulike, 2007). Key findings of a study carried out in 2010 among 175 child hawkers in Uyo, Nigeria, were that street hawking was attributed to unemployment and poverty (George, 2011). Similar findings were reported in a study in 2014 among 300 hawkers in Aba, Nigeria (United Nation Children Fund (UNICEF), 2011). Almost all respondents in this study were "children on street" despite having most of their parents alive and living in Sokoto.

Furthermore, over 80% of the children in this study reported hawking in order to earn a living despite having most of their parents still alive. This is higher than 30% reported by a study in Uyo. This may be as a result of being major bread – winner of their families perhaps due

to their parents' unemployed or underemployed or that their parents were just nonchalant about the wellbeing of their children. In addition, socio-culturally, unlike in Western cultures, majority of the people in African societies view forms of child labour like street hawking as a natural growth and development process for maturity of children to be able to withstand the challenges of earning a living in adulthood (Omo, 2013). This explains why the children are so readily sent out to earn a living. Children are seen in many traditional African societies as cheap workforce. This encourages large family sizes without due consideration to what it entails to care for them.

Majority of the street hawkers in this study had been exposed to one or more hazard during the course of trading. Physical injuries were reported by over three – quarter of the hawkers in this study. This could be due to incessant falls while trying to catch – up with prospective customers, or a sequel to physical assaults as they need to defend themselves against robbers or customers who try to take advantage of them. Injuries also occurred due to road traffic accident, which was reported by a third of the respondents. Road traffic accidents, one of the commonest hazards of hawking, have also been reported by other researchers (Olutunde, 2013; Abisoye, 2013). The involvement of these hawkers in road traffic accidents was not surprising as its clearly apparent how these hawkers can easily be knocked down by moving vehicles and motorcycles. Sokoto, though not as busy as some commercial cities like Kano, Aba, Onitsha and Lagos, vehicle drivers and motorcyclists in this state are very impatient, reckless and nonchalant in their driving making these hawkers more prone.

Almost a fifth of the hawkers were sexually harassed with the female hawkers more likely to have been sexually harassed when compared to their male counterparts a finding, which conforms to reports from other parts of the country (Olutunde, 2013; Ugochukwu et al., 2012; Amoo et al., 2012; Nduka and Duru, 2014). A couple of the hawkers were raped, particularly those whose fathers were not alive with the females much more likely to be raped compared to the males. The care and up – bring of a child or children is strongly dependents on the parents with the father not only serving as the head of the family, providing their needs but guiding and protecting his children from weird social practice like rape, which occurs more often among females.

It is worthy of note that majority (77%) of the respondents were not happy with the job of hawking and were willing to quit. This is much higher than 50% reported in a study done in Uyo. A study among 1200 female children engaging in hawking across three States in Northern Nigeria revealed that 70% of child drop outs would quit hawking and go back to school if government and other stakeholders were to sponsor their education (Femi, 2011). Similar findings were reported in a study

where about 72% of the hawkers expressed willingness to quit the job (Nduka and Duru, 2014). It is therefore very clear that if they had alternative sources of income, there would be fewer child hawkers on the streets.

## CONCLUSION

Majority of children that hawk in this community were "children on the street". Female gender was the main predictor of being sexually harassed, having a father who is not alive was found to be the key predictor being raped. The main predictor of having good knowledge with respect to hazard associated with street hawking was attending school.

Domestication of the Child Rights Act by state governments will go a long way in reducing the health hazards associated with child hawking in our communities.

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