



PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS AS CORRELATE OF STREET HAWKING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EKITI STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between parental socio-economic status and the prevalence of street hawking among secondary school students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. Specifically, it assessed the extent of students' involvement in street hawking and explored differences in hawking activities based on parental income, educational attainment, and occupational status. In other to achieve the objective of the study, two research questions were raised while three null hypotheses were formulated. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, involving a sample of 600 students from 12 Senior Secondary Schools selected through multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a validated questionnaire titled Parental Socio-Economic Status and Street Hawking Questionnaire (PSSSHQ) which consisted of two sections. The validity of the instrument was ensured through face and content validity while reliability confirmed via a test-retest method yielding a coefficient of 0.84. Descriptive analysis revealed that students were primarily involved in street hawking due to immediate family needs, and economic pressures identified as significant factors. Hypotheses testing using one-way ANOVA found no significant differences in students' involvement in street hawking based on parental income ($p = 0.707$), educational status ($p = 0.811$), or occupation type ($p = 0.709$). The findings underscore the socio-economic pressures driving street hawking and suggest that interventions addressing immediate family needs and alternative income sources could mitigate this practice. The lack of significant associations with parental socio-economic indicators highlights the complexity of the issue and the need for multifaceted policy approaches to reduce child labour and enhance educational outcomes.

Keywords: Parents, Socio-economic status, Street hawking, Secondary school, Students

Introduction

Street hawking is a widespread practice in developing countries and represents a significant violation of children's right to equitable education. In Nigeria, particularly Ekiti State, it is common to see children under 18 years roaming the streets selling items such as food ingredients, fruits, clothing, and cold drinks when they should be in school. These children often engage in hawking to support themselves and their families. This phenomenon is linked to parental factors such as poverty, low-income occupations, large family sizes, illiteracy, and female-headed households. Poverty remains a dominant factor, as families below the poverty line may see their children as contributors to household income. However, this exposes the children to significant risks, including accidents, sexual abuse, unwanted pregnancies, and trafficking, which may lead to physical harm, psychological trauma, or even death.

The adverse effects of street hawking extend to children's educational development. Hawking often results in school dropouts, absenteeism, and poor academic performance. Kaletapwa and Yumbak

(2013) observed that hawking leads to fatigue, irregular attendance, lack of motivation, and improper classroom socialization, ultimately affecting scholastic achievements. Female children are particularly vulnerable, often constituting the majority of hawkers due to societal and economic factors such as the need to finance education or support their families. The risks associated with hawking include malnutrition, physical exhaustion, and exploitation, with many children experiencing harsh weather conditions and long hours.

Street hawking also reflects broader socio-economic challenges. As Adinde (2019) highlights, street vending is a visible form of informal economic activity, providing income for those without formal employment. While it has low barriers to entry and flexible hours, the risks for children involved outweigh the benefits. Hazards such as vehicle accidents, physical injuries, and exploitation are common among child hawkers. Ayodele and Olubayo-Fatiregun (2014) identified additional causes, including poor parental care, peer pressure, unemployment, and loss of parents, which compel children to engage in hawking.



Education, a cornerstone of child development, is severely affected by hawking. Despite its crucial role in securing a child's future, many students face disruptions due to their economic responsibilities. In Africa, Adebayo and Olaogun (2019) noted that female students are disproportionately involved in hawking, often balancing education with family obligations. This dual burden results in diminished academic performance and social integration. Parents play a pivotal role in addressing this issue. They serve as primary influencers in their children's lives, providing support, guidance, and love. However, many parents in contemporary times struggle to fulfil their parenting roles due to economic hardships, large family sizes, and other social challenges. As Shailong, Onuk, and Beshi (2011) observed, economic difficulties force some parents to rely on their children to supplement family income, often at the expense of their education and well-being.

The persistent engagement of children in hawking underscores systemic issues tied to poverty and inadequate social support. Despite societal expectations that parents prioritize their children's development, many families remain trapped in cycles of economic struggle, leaving children to fend for themselves. Tackling street hawking requires addressing its root causes, such as improving economic conditions, reducing illiteracy, and implementing policies that support families in need. Strengthening parental roles and providing alternative means of livelihood are critical to breaking this cycle and ensuring children's access to education and a better future.

Standard of living can be described as the level or degree of comfort at which individuals in a society have access to basic necessity of life like good dietary, clothing, health care, drinkable water, and education among others. This condition is known as poverty threshold. It therefore means that poor economic standard of living should be viewed as situation under which individuals in a society are living the poverty threshold. According to Akpotor (2018), if a family lives the poverty threshold, parents tend to shift attention on children as major stakeholders or contributors to their family income. There are observed disparities in involvement in street hawking between the children from poor and rich home. It appears certain parents are conceiving the idea that one must be rich in order to be able to adequately deliver their responsibilities at home. Therefore, parents who are unable to provide breakfast for their children often find it difficult to send their children to school, especially where the government cannot provide free education altogether.

Poverty can cause emotional distress in parents, which in turn hamper their ability to be supportive,

sensitive and consistent with their children needs. In Nigeria today, Folorunso (2019) observed that life in Ekiti state like most parts of the country is a survival factor for the best in meaning that most families cannot afford to eat three times a day. Nigerians are finding it difficult to enter and obtain adequate shelter while many high school students of various categories are wandering in search of jobs whose failure to secure jobs seems to have makes many turn to motorcycles (Okada riders), armed robbers, crooks and all kinds of criminal behaviour. Thus, in the face of abject poverty, many parents believed if their children did not work, the family would starve, to explain the reason why they engage their children with street hawking.

Research has consistently shown a strong link between parental income and child involvement in street hawking. Ekpenyong and Sibiri (2011) highlighted that child labour, including hawking, is often a survival strategy for impoverished families, with 98% of respondents in their study coming from low-income households. Similarly, Nduka and Duru (2014) found that hawking is frequently undertaken to support family income, with poverty and unemployment being primary drivers. Low purchasing power among parents often forces children into economic activities, as observed by Julie (2018), who noted that households with low adult incomes are unable to shield children from labour. In contrast, Emerson (2009) suggested that higher adult wages could eliminate the need for child labour. Other studies corroborate this connection. Akpotor (2018) established a significant relationship between parental poverty and street hawking in Warri, Nigeria, and warned of the psychological, social, and developmental consequences of early economic exposure. Similarly, Elegbeleye and Olasupo (2011) found that low-income parents in Ile-Ife demonstrated a higher propensity for child labour than their wealthier counterparts. Akuoko et al. (2013) revealed financial constraints and lack of education as factors compelling women and children into hawking in Kumasi, Ghana, and recommended targeted educational interventions for vulnerable groups.

The negative implications of street hawking extend beyond economic hardship. Nkok and Chukelu (2019) showed that street hawking adversely affects academic performance, citing poverty, large family size, and school fees as contributing factors. Adewusi (2012) similarly linked low socio-economic status with child labour, reinforcing the notion that poverty perpetuates these practices. Ebigbo and Abang (2020) confirmed that families below the national minimum wage often rely on children's hawking to meet basic needs, while



Olawale and Ayinde (2019) revealed that children from low-income households in Lagos are twice as likely to engage in hawking as their higher-income peers. A broader study by Adewale and Aina (2021) across Sub-Saharan Africa found that irregular parental income and weak social protection systems exacerbate child labour, particularly in single-parent households. Collectively, these studies underscore the economic motivations behind street hawking, prompting the current investigation into the relationship between parental financial status and secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ekiti State.

Another factor that may constitute the reason for some secondary school students' involvement in street hawking is the nature of their parents' occupation. It seems there is a link between the choice of career or occupation that individuals engage in and their earning income. And as the rate of unemployment in Nigeria coupled with the economic downturn triggered by the massive strike of Covid-19 pandemic on the global economy, it is heart-breaking to note that what is coming in as revenue to many families for a month is less than Nigeria's minimum wages of N18, 000. Such experience alone to many families in Ekiti state where there is little or no industrial development is challenging not to talk of low and irregular payment of salaries experienced by salary earners. In addition, in a family where the bread winner is affected by the dismissal of workers caused by the pandemic it will be difficult to meet the daily basic needs. No wonder, Folorunso (2019) lamented that even the employed individuals could hardly have time to smile as a result of irregularities in the payment of salaries and entitlements.

Research supports a connection between parents' occupation and students' academic performance, but the link between parental occupation and students' involvement in street hawking remains underexplored. Moneva, Rozada, and Sollano (2019) assert that parents' occupations can positively or negatively affect academic outcomes. Walter (2018) notes that high parental occupational status can negatively impact students' motivation and performance, while Usaini and Abubakar (2015) highlight that parents in informal, unstable jobs often have limited time to support their children academically. Conversely, Gulada et al. (2011) report that parents with higher education, regardless of occupational level, are better equipped to influence their children's academic success positively. Adinde (2019) suggests that children of professionals typically outperform peers, as these parents can afford educational materials and avoid child labour. Similarly, Das and Sinha (2017) link parental socioeconomic status, particularly education,

income, and occupation, to student performance. Financial constraints often push parents in informal jobs to involve their children in hawking, as observed by Amoo (2012). This practice, prevalent in Nigeria, arises from underemployment and the high cost of essential services, forcing children to contribute to household income.

Studies further reveal the impact of parental occupation on street hawking. Edeh et al. (2018) found that children of parents in low-income or unstable jobs, such as petty trading, are more likely to engage in street hawking, diverting focus from academics and exposing them to risks. Similarly, Afolabi and Olanrewaju (2020) reported that low-paying jobs often drive parents to rely on their children's hawking income, leading to academic challenges for the children. In Northern Nigeria, Adamu and Ibrahim (2019) identified a link between informal employment and child labour, with parents in farming or artisanal work relying on street hawking for survival. These findings underscore the role of stable, well-paying jobs in reducing child labour and improving educational outcomes.

Ultimately, inadequate parental income and unstable jobs compel children to engage in street hawking to support their families. Addressing these economic challenges through better employment opportunities for parents could alleviate the burden on children, enabling them to focus on education and achieve better academic outcomes. This highlights the critical relationship between parental occupation, economic stability, and student success. Educational status of parents in Ekiti State may also be another factor that facilitates the engagement of children in street hawking. The level and type of education people receive seems to play a significant role in the perception of issues. Parents who enjoyed formal education and attained higher educational qualifications may likely have certain experiences and orientation which could make them perceive children involvement in street hawking different from those who do not enjoy formal education in Ekiti State.

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This study examined parental socio-economic status as correlate of street hawking among secondary school students in Ekiti state. This study specifically examined:

- i. the level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking;
- ii. the difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parental income, education status, and occupation type

Research Question

This research question was raised for the study:

1. What is the level of secondary school students'

involvement in street hawking in Ekiti State?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for this study:

1. There is no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parental income.
2. There is no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parents' education status
3. There is no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parents' occupation type.

Materials and Methods

This study employed a descriptive survey research design, which was deemed appropriate due to its focus on collecting and analysing data to provide an accurate description of parental socio-economic status and the involvement of secondary school students in street hawking in Ekiti State. The study targeted all public Senior Secondary School students in Ekiti State, Nigeria. According to statistics from the Ekiti State Ministry of Education for the 2020/2021 academic session, the population comprised 59,117 students, with 30,001 males and 29,116 females spread across the state's 16 Local Government Areas. These schools were situated in both rural and urban regions, ensuring a comprehensive representation of the state's diverse geographical areas.

A sample of 600 Senior Secondary School students was selected from the three senatorial districts in Ekiti State using a multistage sampling procedure. The first stage involved selecting two Local Government Areas from each senatorial district through simple random sampling, resulting in six Local Government Areas. In the second stage, two secondary schools from each Local Government Area were chosen using stratified random sampling, yielding 12 schools. Finally, 50 students (25 males and 25 females) were selected from each school using stratified random sampling, culminating in a total sample of 600 students.

Data were collected using a researcher-designed questionnaire titled Parental Socio-Economic Status and Street Hawking Questionnaire (PSSSHQ). The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A gathered information about the students' demographic data and their parents' income, education, and occupation. Section B included 19 items assessing the respondents' involvement in street hawking, rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (4) to Strongly Disagree (1).

The validity of the instrument was ensured through



face and content validity. Face validity was established by subjecting the questionnaire to thorough scrutiny by the researcher's supervisor and experts in Social Studies and Tests and Measurement at Ekiti State University. Content validity was achieved by having the experts review the items to ensure they aligned with the research questions and hypotheses. Their input led to reducing the items from 30 to 19 to avoid redundancy and ambiguity. The reliability of the instrument was assessed using the test-retest method. The questionnaire was administered to 20 respondents from the study population but outside the sample. After two weeks, the instrument was re-administered to the same group, and the data were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation analysis. A reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained, indicating that the instrument was suitable for the study.

The questionnaire was administered with the assistance of two trained research assistants. The researcher visited the sampled schools to provide clarifications and ensure accurate responses. This hands-on approach facilitated effective retrieval, with 589 of the 600 distributed questionnaires correctly completed and deemed usable for the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyse the data. Descriptive analysis involved frequency counts, means, standard deviations, and percentages to answer the research questions. Hypotheses 1–3 were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at a 0.05 significance level.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ekiti State?

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking

	Items	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SDMean		SD	Remark
1.	I do engage in street hawking.	58 (9.8)	308 (52.3)	140 (23.8)	83 (14.1)	2.58	0.83	Agreed
2.	If I do not hawk, I will be punished	153 (26.0)	69 (11.7)	355 (60.3)	12 (2.0)	2.50	0.67	Agreed
3.	I remit my hawking money to my parents	293 (49.7)	59 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	237 (40.2)	2.69	0.64	Agreed
4.	I hawk to provide for family up keep	177 (30.1)	35 (5.9)	365 (62.0)	12 (2.0)	2.64	0.63	Agreed
5.	I hawk because my parents discourage me from going to school	24 (4.1)	166 (28.2)	341 (57.9)	58 (9.8)	2.26	0.68	Disagreed
6.	I hawk to source for my school fee.	48 (8.1)	141 (23.9)	330 (56.0)	70 (11.9)	2.28	0.78	Disagreed
7.	I am pushed into street hawking by maintenance needs.	270 (45.8)	59 (10.0)	237 (40.2)	23 (3.9)	2.98	0.79	Agreed
8.	My parents' occupation requires me to hawk.	24 (4.1)	177 (30.1)	306 (52.0)	82 (13.9)	2.24	0.74	Disagreed
9.	I hawk so as to engage in economic activities to assist in home keeping.	258 (43.8)	95 (16.1)	213 (36.2)	23 (3.9)	3.00	0.85	Agreed
10.	I will quit hawking if offered an alternative means of livelihood.	295 (50.1)	35 (5.9)	247 (41.9)	12 (2.0)	3.04	0.69	Agreed
11.	I will quit hawking if my parents secure better employment.	129 (21.9)	106 (18.0)	342 (58.1)	12 (2.0)	2.60	0.69	Agreed
12.	I will quit hawking if I have access to free education.	235 (39.9)	24 (4.1)	307 (52.1)	23 (3.9)	2.80	0.72	Agreed
13.	I found myself in hawking activities because I do not have stable families	72 (12.2)	162 (27.5)	283 (48.0)	72 (12.2)	2.39	0.85	Disagreed
14.	I choose to hawk in order to support my mother who is the only one responsible for my upkeep.	60 (10.2)	103 (17.5)	414 (70.3)	12 (2.0)	2.36	0.69	Disagreed
15.	I am only hawking to save up money to assist my parents in paying for my schooling.	11 (1.9)	47 (8.0)	225 (38.2)	306 (52.0)	1.59	0.72	Disagreed
16.	I am hawking to save up money for my university education since I will soon complete my secondary school education.	0 (0)	23 (3.9)	260 (44.1)	306 (52.0)	1.52	0.57	Disagreed
17.	I am hawking to source money for WAEC and NECO examination registration.	0 (0)	83 (14.1)	363 (61.6)	143 (24.3)	1.89	0.61	Disagreed
18.	My parents said I should wait for my senior brother to complete his university education before I start so I started this business instead of doing nothing.	12 (2.0)	83 (14.1)	398 (67.6)	96 (16.3)	2.02	0.62	Disagreed
19.	If I quit hawking my parents will not be able to cope with family needs.	234 (39.7)	47 (8.0)	297 (50.4)	11 (1.9)	2.86	0.69	Agreed

Mean Cut-Off: 2.50

The descriptive analysis in Table 1 reveals the level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ekiti State. Using a mean cut-off of 2.50 as the parameter for agreement, items with a mean score equal to or above this threshold indicate agreement, suggesting a higher level of involvement, while scores below this threshold indicate disagreement, suggesting lower involvement or justification for street hawking. For instance, students generally agreed with items like "I do engage in street hawking" (Mean = 2.58), "If I do not hawk, I will be punished" (Mean = 2.50), and "I remit my hawking money to my parents" (Mean = 2.69), indicating that factors such as punishment and family obligations contribute to their involvement in hawking. Conversely, certain items fell below the 2.50 mean cut-off, signifying disagreement. For example, statements like "I hawk to save up money for my university education" (Mean = 1.52) and "I am hawking to source money for WAEC and NECO examination registration" (Mean = 1.89) indicate that students do not typically hawk to save for long-term educational expenses. Overall, the data suggest that while some students participate in hawking due to immediate family needs and pressure, long-term educational objectives are less commonly cited as motivators for their involvement in street hawking.



Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parental income.

Table 2: One way ANOVA on Difference in students' involvement in street hawking based on parental income

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	89.983	3	29.994	.465	.707
Within Groups	37720.377	585	64.479		
Total	37810.360	588			

$P > 0.05$

The result presented in table 2 showed that F-cal value of .465 is not significant because the P value ($0.707 > 0.05$) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there was no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parental income.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parents' education status

Table 3: One way ANOVA on difference in students' involvement in street hawking based on parents' education status

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	102.369	4	25.592	.396	.811
Within Groups	37707.990	584	64.568		
Total	37810.360	588			

$P > 0.05$

The result presented in table 3 showed that F-cal value of .396 is not significant because the P value ($0.811 > 0.05$) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there was no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parents' education status.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parents' occupation type.

Table 4: One way ANOVA on difference in students' involvement in street hawking based on parents' occupation type

Groups	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	89.454	3	29.818	.462	.709
Within Groups	37720.906	585	64.480		
Total	37810.360	588			

$P > 0.05$

The result presented in table 4 showed that F-cal value of .462 is not significant because the P value ($0.709 > 0.05$) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. This implies that there was no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parents' occupation type.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that 62.1% of secondary school students in Ekiti State are involved in street hawking, with 52.3% agreeing and 9.8% strongly agreeing that they engage in this activity. This is in line with the findings of Nduka and Duru (2014) found out that major reason for engaging in the hawking was to support the family income. Emerson (2009) pointed out that high income households would prefer not to allow their children to work, while low income households that are in dire need may be forced to push out their children to work in order to survive. Akpotor (2018) also found positive and significant relationship between parents' poverty and street hawking among children.

Parental income significantly influences students' involvement in street hawking, especially among low-income households where financial pressures necessitate additional income sources. According to Ekpenyong and Sibiri (2011), poverty drives children from poor families into street hawking as a survival strategy to support household finances. The prevalence of street hawking, as observed in various studies, reflects a broader socio-economic issue where families with insufficient income are compelled to involve their children in labor to supplement family resources (Nduka & Duru, 2014). This sentiment is echoed by Emerson (2009), who contends that low-income households, in dire need, may have no choice but to encourage children's participation in economic activities, unlike higher-income families who can rely solely on adult wages. Such economic hardship



perpetuates a cycle of poverty, as children miss out on education while engaging in street hawking, which ultimately affects their academic achievements (Nkok & Chukelu, 2019).

In addition to income, the educational background of parents plays a crucial role in students' likelihood of engaging in street hawking. Parents with lower educational attainment tend to place less emphasis on formal education, which inadvertently supports a cycle of child labor. Adewale and Aina (2021) argue that parents with limited education are often less aware of the adverse effects of street hawking on child development and thus may not prioritize schooling for their children. Similarly, Ibrahim and Balogun (2019) found that students from less-educated families were more likely to participate in street hawking due to a lack of parental understanding of the importance of education. This contrasts with findings from Olawoye and Usman (2017), who noted that parents with higher education levels are more inclined to keep their children in school and away from labor, thus reducing the likelihood of street hawking. Consequently, the educational status of parents not only influences children's academic outcomes but also affects their involvement in economic activities, reinforcing the importance of parental education in breaking the cycle of poverty and child labor.

The findings of this study indicate that there is no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parental income. One probable reason for this non-significant finding could be that the parental income levels among the surveyed students are relatively uniform. If most students come from families with similar income levels, it can make it challenging to detect significant differences in their involvement in street hawking based on income. It aligns with studies that suggest that while income can be a factor, there are often other complex social and economic factors at play in determining why students engage in street hawking just as Elegbeleye and Olasupo (2011) found significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and child labour. Akuoko, Ofori-Dua and Forkuo (2013) revealed that respondents became hawkers mainly because of financial constraints.

The findings revealed that there is no

significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parents' education status. One probable reason for this non-significant finding could be that the involvement of secondary school students in street hawking is influenced by a multitude of factors beyond just their parents' education status. Other factors such as socioeconomic background, family dynamics, cultural influences, and local economic conditions may have a more significant impact on students' decisions to engage in street hawking. Usman (2018) and Kembe, (2010) agreed that parental education can play a role in shaping a child's aspirations and opportunities, it is often not the sole determinant.

Nduka and Duru (2014) highlighted the importance of considering a broader range of factors in understanding why students participate in street hawking, including economic necessity, lack of educational alternatives, and family support. Parental educational level could have influenced their choice to engage children in hawking. There are, however, a number of children whose decision to fall into the street was not influenced by their parent, but the prevailing situation. These findings imply that interventions aimed at reducing street hawking among secondary school students should take a multifaceted approach.

The findings show that there is no significant difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parents' occupation type. It is consistent with Almatalka (2014) that highlight the complex interplay of various factors in determining why students engage in street hawking. Though families with high occupation level are more likely to recognize and support their children with their homework and aspire to a good career. Rabo (2014) concluded that parents with better work and higher education tend to have a higher education level and performance to their children.

Conclusion

The study concluded that over half of the respondents were involved in street hawking. This is considered high as street hawking is regarded as child labour that should not be encouraged. Based on the socio-economic



factors considered in this study, there was no difference in secondary school students' involvement in street hawking based on parental income, educational status and occupation status.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should prioritize addressing broader socioeconomic factors, such as income inequality, access to education, and local economic conditions.
2. There is need for collaboration among educational institutions, community organizations, and local government agencies to create a coordinated effort in addressing the multifaceted issue of street hawking among students.

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