



PEER INFLUENCE AS A DETERMINANT OF STREET HAWKING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ONDO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated peer influence as a determinant of street hawking among secondary school students in Ondo State. The study specifically examined the level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking and the influence of gender on street hawking among the students. The study adopted descriptive research design of the survey type. The population comprised all public secondary school students in Ondo State who are involved in street hawking. Multistage sampling procedure was used to select a sample of 400 secondary school students that hawk at home. An instrument tagged "Students' Questionnaire on Peer Influence and Street Hawking' (SQSPIH)" was used to collect data. The instrument was validated by experts in Social Studies and Tests, Measurement and Evaluation. The test-retest method of reliability was used to establish reliability of the instrument which yielded 0.88 coefficients. Data collected were analysed using frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation for research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation and t-test were used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that the level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ondo-State was moderate. Finding also showed that peer influence had effect on street hawking among the students and that street hawking is not gender sensitive. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that public enlightenment campaign should be organized to sensitize and educate parents on debilitating effects of street hawking on secondary school students' cognitive, social, psychological and emotional development.

Keywords: Peer influence, Gender, Street hawking, Secondary school students

Introduction

The survival and continuity of a nation are guaranteed by the phenomenon of reproduction. It is widely recognised that children are distinctive gifts from God, and they are considered a method of immortalising oneself, particularly in developed countries. In Nigeria and other African countries, offspring are the primary indicator of a man's fortune and success. Additionally, children are the sole means of transmitting culture from one generation to the next and also act as the agent of continuity within any family (Anyanwu, 2015). This gift of children is so cherished that individuals will go to great lengths to locate them. In numerous cultures, it is widespread belief that marriages without children are typically unstable and largely devoid of pleasure (Sassler & Lichter, 2020).

From the moment of their gestation, children are dependent on their parents for all of their requirements, and they are defenseless and completely reliant on them. They make strong and vocal demands for attention, care, and security. Any family, society, or nation that lacks a clear agenda or appropriate plans for its children has inevitably failed to ensure its future existence and continuity. The continued existence and development of any society are contingent upon the capacity of its children and adolescents to function effectively as members of the

society in the following areas: socially, politically, economically, and religiously. In other words, children should be capable of interacting with others, contributing to the economy, and participating in politics in order to adjust to the environment in which they are situated. This potential enablement can be realised if society prioritises the future development of children.

The welfare of children is considered a critical component of development; consequently, it serves as a measure of the social and economic advancement of a society. This is one of the reasons why the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) included infant welfare and health care as objective 4 (UNESCO, 2015). However, the majority of them are denied this privilege by being forced to engage in certain forms of juvenile labour, particularly street peddling.

Hawking, as defined by the Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, 6th edition, is the act of travelling from one location to another in order to sell items by soliciting purchases from individuals. The researcher is particularly concerned about the marketing system in question, as it is prevalent among young children of school age who engage in street peddling. It is a practice in which one is obligated to purchase and sell work, typically offering only small quantities for sale at a time (Aijehi, 2020).



The international convention on the rights of the infant may be undermined by street peddling. It is indeed inhumane for anyone to involve a child in money-making endeavours, as this deprives the child of basic education, which is a fundamental right for all children.

According to Oluwagbohunmi (2019), street hawking is a form of child maltreatment due to the fact that it jeopardises the health of child hawkers, impedes their education, and prevents them from living a normal life. Hawking is the act of selling essential products or commodities along the roadways or from one location to another by travelling around the streets and other areas that are not designated as markets (Shittu, 2014). Street hawking is a form of wandering in which an individual carries their products on their head or on a tray, or by means of conveyance such as a wheelbarrow, bicycle or carriage, in pursuit of consumers. Street peddling is the practice of marketing products or services on the streets or in public spaces, typically by individuals who are not officially employed by any corporation or organisation. Street peddling is the act of providing products or services to the public without a permanent built-up structure (Hussein et al. 2017).

In Nigeria, the quest for money to make ends meet in a depressed economy is undoubtedly one of the primary reasons that parents and custodians send their children or dependents to hawk.

The majority of the hawkers are students in primary or secondary institutions. The children are unable to concentrate, contribute to discussion, or study independently as a result of the fatigue and weakness they experience at the conclusion of each day's sales (Chrisantus, 2020). The researcher in Ondo State observed that certain parents in communities such as Akure, the state capital, withdraw their children from school in order to send them soliciting in order to contribute to the family's financial maintenance. Occasionally, certain children appear to consistently withdraw from school for a term or even an entire year. Upon their return, they become arrogant among their peers and are subjected to name-calling by their younger peers.

The researcher also observed that hawking has deeply impacted over half of the families in the church, as many of them send their children to hawk on Sundays. Hawking appears to be one of the factors that increases the likelihood of children dying prematurely in car accident. This appears to be one of the factors that motivated the government to construct a pedestrian market for the hawkers in Akure and its suburb in Ondo State. Secondary school students continue to be observed hawking on the streets, despite this advancement. They refer to themselves as

"home" while on the street, which may contribute to the escalation of any potential threats. It is important to note that peer influence could either facilitate or hinder the involvement of secondary school students in street hawking.

Peer influence is as a way by which friends affect individual student's mental and psychological orientation towards street hawking. Peer influence, especially at secondary school age and adolescent presents to members' models of way to live life. Peer groups are known to be the most crucial factor influencing young people into street hawking. Smith (2018) explains that peer group serves as a source of relaxation for an individual's entertainment, enjoyment and re-enforcement. In some groups, street hawking is a fashionable thing to do in the society. The reason is not far-fetched because the peer groups provide source of social support and give continuing feedback.. They provide a platform for a sense of security as they move together on the street while hawking by focusing on independence from parents and home at large. Many young secondary school girls and boys are initiated into street hawking through the influence of their peers and with the mind of having a meeting point to exercise their freedom and do whatever they like. Some secondary school students heard some tips on the experiences of their peers while hawking which is related to freedom, with such initial stimulation, they may want to act out what they have heard through introduction of street hawking to their parent and thereby become engaged in hawking all sorts of things, most especially when people they peer with, hawk.

According to Ogbebor (2015), man learns by imitation and notes that in Nigeria, youths through this means learn the act of hawking. Peer pressure may result in secondary school students' positive or negative behaviour and when it is eventually negative, it may likely lead to neglect by the parents and eventually results such child to be struggling to survive through street hawking. Peer group appears to be the strongest influence on secondary school students in terms of street hawking. Apart from peer influence, the researcher observed that gender could be a factor that can determine the involvement of secondary school students in street hawking.

In the whole of Africa, gender bias is still prevalent and it is common to see gender stereotypes manifesting in the day to day life of an average Nigerian, (Ogbebor, 2015). Gender could be seen an important factor to almost every phenomenon such as street hawking among secondary school students with increasing emphasis on ways of boosting manpower for human development and income generation due to increase in the population of the country. Gender could probably influence street



hawking because most families place enormous restrictions on the male gender due to believe that they are the pillars of the family's future. This makes gender to be one of the critical factors that that can influence street hawking.

In Nigeria, it is a common cultural belief over the years that economic activities which includes secondary school street hawking is mostly the responsibility of females, whose parents orguardians are introducing or initiating them into the trading culture. The females mainly involved in the activity, as the place of women in this strong culturally, inclined society is in family building. Nevertheless, there are arguments by the other scholars that the male gender constitutes the highest percentage of street hawkers in most Nigerian cites (Akpan & Olubamide, 2018).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate peer influence as a determinant of street hawking among secondary school students in Ondo State. This study specifically:

- i. examined the level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ondo State;
- ii. examined the relationship between peer influence and street hawking among secondary school students.
- iii. determine the significant difference in street hawking among secondary school students based on gender.

Research Question

One research questions was raised to guide this study:

1. What is the level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ondo-State?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the stated problem, two null hypotheses were tested in the course of the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between peer influence and street hawking among secondary school students.
2. There is no significant difference in street hawking among secondary school students based on gender.

Significance of the Study

Students, school administrators, government officials, parents, medical professionals, and counsellors could all derive substantial advantages from the investigation. This investigation has the potential to furnish parents with information

regarding socio-economic factors that may increase the likelihood of their children engaging in street soliciting. The results of this study have the potential to offer school administrators valuable information regarding the involvement of students in street hawking. Additionally, they could contribute to a more comprehensive comprehension of the various reasons why students in secondary school are involved in hawking.

The result of this study would assist counsellors in devising strategies that they can implement within their respective institutions to decrease the prevalence of street soliciting. Also, it may help them to initiate initiatives that could mitigate street hawking among secondary school students. The results of this study have the potential to be beneficial to health professionals, including medical physicians, psychologists, and other specialists, as they will be able to provide lectures to their patients regarding the causes of street soliciting.

Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was adopted for this study. Due to its emphasis on the observations and perceptions of the current situation of peer influence as determinants or street hawking among secondary school pupils in Ondo state, the design was deemed appropriate.

Population

The population of the study consists of all Public Secondary School students in Ondo State who are involved in street hawking.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for this study consists or 400 secondary school students that hawk at home in Ondo State through multistage sampling procedure. In stage one, random sampling technique was used to select five Local Government Areas in Ondo State. In stage two, simple random sampling technique was used to select two public secondary schools in each of the Local Government Areas selected making ten public secondary schools selected. In stage three, snowballing sampling technique was adopted to select 40 secondary school students that do hawk at home in each of the secondary schools selected, this involved the employment of a street hawking student in each school to help link the researcher and the research assistants with other street hawkers among secondary school students and they were persuaded to participate in the study.

Research Instrument

The instrument used in this research work was a questionnaire tagged: 'Students' Questionnaire on



Peer Influence and Street Hawking' (SQPISH). This instrument consists of three sections; Section 'A' deals with personal data of the respondents such as name or school and students' gender. Section 'B' consists of 20 items, soliciting information on the involvement of street hawking among secondary school students. Section 'C' also consists of 20 items which solicited information on the peer influence among secondary school students. The instrument used a four likert type scale with its scoring points as follow: Strongly Agree (SA)- 4 points, Agree (A)-3 points, Disagree (D)-2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD)-1 point.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

Face and content validities were ascertained for the instrument with the help of experts in Social Studies, Tests, Measurement and Evaluation and Sociology in Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti. The method of test-retest was used to establish the reliability of the instrument by administering it twice to the same 20 public secondary school students who hawk at home in Lagos State within an interval of two weeks. The scores collected from the two tests were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis and the reliability coefficient of 0.88 was obtained. This indicated that the instrument utilized was considered trustworthy.

Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research question was answered using frequency count, mean and standard deviation. Hypothesis one was tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis and hypothesis two was tested using t-test analysis. The two hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

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

In analyzing the question, mean score, frequency counts and percentages were used to illustrate the responses to items 1-20 in Section B of "Students' Questionnaire on Peer Influence and Street Hawking' (SQPISH). Mean score on each of the items was compared with the criterion mean score of 2.50. Items with mean score below the criterion mean were categorized into 'Low' level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking while those around the mean and above the criterion mean were categorized into 'Moderate' and 'High' level of involvement in street hawking respectively. The level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ondo-State is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ondo-State

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remark
1	I do sell goods on the street to assist my parent	150 (37.5)	110 (27.5)	120 (30.0)	20 (5.0)	2.98	Moderate
2	I feel very happy when my parents send me to hawk.	130 (32.5)	160 (40.0)	70 (17.5)	40 (10.0)	2.95	Moderate
3	I enjoy myself while hawking	130 (32.5)	112 (28.0)	55 (13.8)	103 (25.8)	2.67	Moderate
4	I do go to customer's house to collect money of goods sold to them.	110 (27.5)	160 (40.0)	110 (27.5)	20 (5.0)	2.90	Moderate
5	My parents want me to hawk for them	103 (25.8)	142 (35.5)	102 (25.5)	53 (13.3)	2.74	Moderate
6	I like to be on the street hawking	30 (7.5)	190 (47.5)	60 (15.0)	120 (30.0)	2.33	Low
7	I hawk in the morning before going to school	180 (45.0)	100 (25.0)	10 (2.5)	110 (27.5)	2.88	Moderate
8	I usually hawk after returning from school	143 (35.8)	62 (15.5)	75 (18.8)	120 (30.0)	2.57	Moderate
9	I hawk only during the holidays	140 (35.0)	130 (32.5)	80 (20.0)	50 (12.5)	2.90	Moderate
10	I hawk to get money to buy materials for myself	110 (27.5)	130 (32.5)	70 (17.5)	90 (22.5)	2.65	Moderate
11	I am proud to be a hawker	178 (44.5)	101 (25.3)	40 (10.0)	81 (20.3)	2.94	Moderate
12	I like hawking because it makes me to be popular	58 (14.5)	112 (28.0)	90 (22.5)	140 (35.0)	2.22	Low
13	Hawking keeps me very busy on the street with my friends	114 (28.5)	153 (38.3)	77 (19.3)	56 (14.0)	2.81	Moderate
14	I pay attention to the amount of gain I get after hawking every day	150 (37.5)	160 (40.0)	70 (17.5)	20 (5.0)	3.10	High
15	Hawking makes me to see what happens in the town everyday	130 (32.5)	170 (42.5)	50 (12.5)	50 (12.5)	2.95	Moderate
16	I like to hawk every day in order to visit whosoever I want to	125 (31.3)	112 (28.0)	71 (17.8)	92 (23.0)	2.68	Moderate
17	I buy my needed school materials from the gain I make from hawking	70 (17.5)	150 (37.5)	76 (19.0)	104 (26.0)	2.47	Low
18	Hawking gives me opportunity to meet a lot of people in the society	130 (32.5)	190 (47.5)	50 (12.5)	30 (7.5)	3.05	High
19	My mind is always on hawking	121 (30.3)	131 (32.8)	92 (23.0)	56 (14.0)	2.79	Moderate
20	Hawking is my best hobby	160 (40.0)	180 (45.0)	30 (7.5)	30 (7.5)	3.18	High

Criterion Mean: 2.50

Table 1 presents the level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ondo-State. Using a criterion mean score of 2.50 for the rating scale, majority of the items had mean score above the cut-off point. This shows that the level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ondo-State was moderate.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between peer influence and street hawking among secondary school students.

In order to test the hypothesis, scores in Sections 'B' and 'C' of the instrument were computed and subsequently subjected to statistical analysis involving Pearson Product Moment Correlation at 0.05 level of significance. The result is shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Peer influence and street hawking among secondary school students

Variable	N	Mean	SD	r-cal	p-value
Peer influence	400	12.55	3.17	-0.360*	0.000
Street hawking	400	40.10	12.73		

*p<0.05



Table 4 shows that the computed r-value (-0.360) is significant at $p < 0.05$ level of significance. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant relationship between peer influence and street hawking among secondary school students. The correlation between peer influence and street hawking among secondary school students is low but statistically significant in a negative direction.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in street hawking among secondary school students based on gender.

Table 2: t-test showing significant difference in street hawking among secondary school students based on gender.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-tab
Male	200	4.52	12.38	398	0.103	1.96
Female	200	4.38	14.61			

* $p < 0.05$

Table 3 showed that t-cal (0.103) is less than t-tab (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in street hawking among secondary school students based on gender.

Discussion

The study showed that the level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ondo-State was moderate. It implies that secondary school students' involvement in street hawking is given priority attention, what can be responsible for this finding may be the fact that both government and other educational stakeholders have realized that street hawking could endanger the health of child hawkers, impedes their education and prevents them from enjoying right to normal life. This finding is in agreement with Obiako (2015) who found that hawking among teenagers is at the lower level in Southwest region compared to that of North-central region in Nigeria. The result is also in accordance with the claim of Kobiowu (2016) that street hawking among secondary school students is moderate due to the intervention of education stakeholders.

The study showed that there was significant relationship between peer influence and street hawking among secondary school students. This by implication means that the peer influence constitutes a crucial factor influencing young people into street hawking. What can be responsible for this finding may be the fact that peer groups provide a source of social support and give continuing feedback about human. To this end, they provide a platform for a

sense of security as they move together on the street while hawking by focusing on independence from parents and home at large. The finding is in agreement with the views of Ogbebor (2015) who revealed that man learns by imitation and notes that in Nigeria, youths through this means learn the act of hawking. Also contributing, Smith (2018) found significant peer effects on street hawking use when measured through perceptions, with only marginal effects when gauged using peer self-reports.

The study showed that there no was significant difference in street hawking among secondary school students based on gender. The significant difference in street hawking among secondary school students based on gender was not significant. This could be due to the level of poverty in Nigeria that made parents to involve any available child in street hawking. The result that there is no significant difference in street hawking among secondary school students based on gender seems to be in conflict with Chrisantus, (2020) submission that female children involved more than male children in street hawking. However, the result corroborates the study findings of O' Malley et al (2017), who stated that gender is not a factor that influences hawking in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of this study, it was concluded that level of secondary school students' involvement in street hawking in Ondo-State was moderate. Peer influence was an important factor that determines street hawking among secondary school students and that street hawking is not gender sensitive.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study;

1. Public enlightenment campaign should be organized to sensitize and educate parents on debilitating influence of street hawking on secondary school students' cognitive, social, psychological and emotional development.
2. Laws prohibiting street hawking should be enacted and strict compliance enforced while offenders are duly prosecuted.
3. Parents should make conscious efforts to know the kind of company their children/wards are keeping in order reduce their vulnerability to street hawking through peer/friend.
4. A strong positive parent-child relationship should be established in families in order to foster child's positive attitude, morals, principles, and conduct.

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