

STREET HAWKING DURATION AND EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES AMONG ADOLESCENTS IN OSUN AND OYO STATES, SOUTH-WEST NIGERIA: A MIXED METHOD APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

Street hawking among adolescent is a pressing issue that affects their educational outcomes. Previous studies have explored street hawking's prevalence, causes, and consequences, there is limited research on how the duration of street hawking directly impacts academic performance, dropout rates, and future prospects for adolescents in southwestern Nigeria. This study, therefore, investigated the nexus between street hawking duration and educational outcomes among adolescents in Osun and Oyo States, south-west Nigeria using a mixed method approach. The study employed concurrent mixed method of a cross-sectional survey in nature, while three-hundred and ninety (390) sample were selected using both probability and non-probability sampling techniques from two (Osun and Oyo) south-west states Nigeria. A validated self-designed instrument with high reliability coefficient was used to obtained raw data from the respondents. Descriptive statistical tools were used to analysed the generated data. The study found a significant link between street hawking and poor educational outcomes among adolescents in Osun and Oyo States, Nigeria, with 78.5% of respondents reporting negative impacts on school performance, 66.4% not enrolled in school, and 60.8% having dropped out due to street hawking. The study also found that street hawkers prioritize financial support (64.9%) and counselling services (76.4%) over flexible school hours (39%) to pursue their education. The study concluded that street hawking negatively impacts adolescents' education. Hence, community stakeholders should collaborate to create awareness about the negative impact of street hawking on education and promote strategies to enhance the overall well-being of street hawkers.

Keywords: *Street hawking duration, educational outcomes, adolescents, south-west Nigeria.*

INTRODUCTION

Street hawking is a common informal economic activity in many parts of the world, especially in poorer nations, where individuals lacking formal employment opportunities sell goods and services on the streets (Akpan & Uford, 2024). A concerning trend reveals that teenage girls are increasingly engaging in this activity due to poverty, unemployment, and limited access to education, forcing them to contribute to their family's income (Akinyooye & Aransi, 2020).

According to Yizengaw & Gebrewold (2018) and Aransi, (2020), this phenomenon exposes them to emotional distress, health risks, and increased vulnerability to exploitation, ultimately hindering their educational prospects and well-being.

The increasing involvement of teenage girls in street hawking is a multifaceted problem rooted in economic, social, and cultural factors (Omolara, 2022). Driven by poverty, limited educational opportunities, and few income options, these girls face significant challenges and vulnerabilities, including exposure to gender inequality, child rights violations (Olatomide & Osibanjo, 2018; Sanni & Aransi, 2020), and various forms of abuse, such as sexual, emotional, physical, and verbal abuse (Olaku, 2012).

Street hawking among teenage girls involves adolescent females, aged 13-19, selling goods or services in public spaces without formal retail premises, often due to economic necessity or limited access to education (Aryeetey & Yeboah, 2017; Okafor, 2020). This phenomenon affects young girls transitioning from childhood to adulthood, exposing them to various challenges and vulnerabilities (Okafor & Onyemechi, 2017; Aransi, 2019; Oduro, 2022).

In Nigeria, street hawking among teenage girls is a pressing concern, especially in urban and low-income areas. Research by Adjei (2015) indicates that many teenage girls from poor families engage in street hawking due to limited economic opportunities. Okafor and Onyemechi (2017) found that a substantial number of these girls have dropped out of school due to financial or socio-economic constraints, compromising their future prospects. Furthermore, street hawking puts them at risk of sexual harassment, exploitation, and potential involvement in criminal activities (Olaku, 2012; Kowo *et al.*, 2019).

According to Akai and Uford, (2025) one of the pivotal determinants of education outcomes is the focus and commitment of the students, and street hawking is detrimental to such commitments. From preliminary review and street engagements; street hawking among adolescents in Osun and Oyo States, South-West Nigeria, is a pressing issue that affects their educational outcomes, as poverty and limited opportunities drive many to engage in this activity, resulting in poor academic performance, limited future prospects, and increased vulnerability to exploitation. While previous studies have explored street hawking's prevalence, causes, and consequences, there is limited research on how the duration of street hawking directly impacts academic performance, dropout rates, and future prospects for adolescents in this region. This study aims to fill this gap by employing a mixed-methods approach to provide a comprehensive understanding of how street hawking duration affects educational outcomes, offering insights for targeted interventions.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The study's main objective is to investigate the nexus between street hawking duration and educational outcomes among adolescents in Osun and Oyo States, South-West Nigeria using a mixed methods approach, while specific objectives are to;

- i. investigate the effect of the length of street hawking on adolescent education in the selected areas of Osun and Oyo States, South-West, Nigeria; and
- ii. identify forms of support that street hawkers consider most helpful in achieving their educational goals in Osun and Oyo States, South-West, Nigeria

Research Questions

The following research questions are raised to guide the study

- i. What is the effect of the length of street hawking on adolescent education in the selected areas of Osun and Oyo States, South-West, Nigeria?
- ii. What forms of support do street hawkers consider most helpful in achieving their educational goals in Osun and Oyo States, South-West, Nigeria?

METHODOLOGY

Study design, population, sample size and sampling techniques

The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design. All adolescents not only between 10-19 years of age but also involved in street hawking in Oyo and Osun States formed the target population. Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques were employed to selected two-hundred and eighty-one participants.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion criteria consisted of the female adolescent street hawkers within the reproductive age group (10-19 years) in the selected area. Exclusion criteria comprised female adolescent street hawkers not only outside the reproductive age group (10-19 years) but also outside the two sampled states in southwestern Nigeria.

Instrument, validity and reliability

A self-designed questionnaire was used to obtain information from the respondents. These instruments were validated by the expert and administered on respondents with similar attributed. The reliability coefficient from Cronbach's Alpha produced 0.79 which indicated that the instrument was considered reliable for the study.

Methods of data administration and analysis

The administration of the instrument was done in company of the trained research assistants. The data obtained were analysed with the aid of inferential statistics embedded in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 27) software.

Ethical consideration

In carrying out this study, the researcher ensured that the confidentiality of participants and data collected were strictly observed. One of the ways to ensure this was to make sure the research instrument did not bear respondents names or any other means of identification. Besides, the researcher ensured that participation in the study was voluntary by securing the verbal consent of the participants.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What is the effect of the length of street hawking on adolescent education in the selected areas of Osun and Oyo States, South-West, Nigeria?

Table 1: Effect of the length of street hawking on adolescent education in the selected areas of Osun and Oyo States, South-West, Nigeria.

Variable	Street hawking performance	negatively affects	school	p-value
	Yes; n=306	No; n =70	Unsure; n =14	
How many hours a day do you spend on street hawking?				<0.001
Less than 2 hours	12(3.9%)	5(7.1%)	5(35.7%)	
2-4 hours	86(28.1%)	30(42.8%)	5(35.7%)	
More than 4 hours	208(68.0%)	35(50.1%)	4(28.6%)	

Variables	Yes	%	No	%
Educational Attainment				
Are you currently enrolled in a school?	131	33.6	259	66.4
If no, what is the primary reason for not being in school?				
Financial constraints	168	43.1	91	23.3
Time constraints due to hawking	138	35.6	121	30.8
Lack of interest	59	15.1	200	51.3
Have you ever had to drop out of school due to street hawking?	237	60.8	153	39.2

Street Hawking on Education			
Variables		Frequency; n= 390	Percentage%
Do you believe the street hawking negatively affect your school performance?			
	Yes	306	78.5
	No	84	21.5
How does street hawking affect your study time?			
	Significantly reduce it	298	76.4
	Somewhat reduces it	63	16.2
	No effect	29	7.5
	Increases it	0	0.0
The following challenges is experienced due to street hawking?			
Fatigue			
	Yes	205	52.6
	No	185	47.4
Stress			
	Yes	243	62.3
	No	147	37.7

Lack of time for homework	Yes	288	73.8
	No	102	26.2
Difficulty concentrating in class	Yes	310	79.5
	No	80	20.5

The results from Table 1 indicated a notable difference in the time spent hawking among respondents who agreed, disagreed, or were unsure about the negative impact of street hawking on school performance. For instance, among those who agreed, 12 (3.9%) spent less than 2 hours hawking, 86 (28.1%) spent 2-4 hours, and 208 (68.0%) spent more than 4 hours. In contrast, among those who disagreed, 5 (7.1%) spent less than 2 hours, 30 (42.8%) spent 2-4 hours, and 35 (50.1%) spent more than 4 hours.

The study further highlighted the concerning state of educational attainment among adolescents engaged in street hawking. As only 131 (33.6%) of respondents are currently enrolled in school, while 259 (66.4%) are not. Financial constraints (168, 43.1%) and time constraints due to hawking (138, 35.6%) are the primary reasons for not being in school. In another development, a significant proportion (237, 60.8%) of respondents reported having to drop out of school due to street hawking, while 153 (39.2%) did not. This underscores the long-term consequences of engaging in street hawking, which can lead to permanent disengagement from education. In the same vein, informants reiterated the negative consequences of street hawking among hawkers as below:

As a parent operating shop along the road where some adolescents are hawking, I believe the adolescent involvement in street hawking can negatively impact their educational attainment for those who enrolled in schools by leading to absenteeism, fatigue, and limited time for homework. This may further increase their risk of dropping out of school and limit future opportunities for these adolescents (**Oyo State/KII/2024**).

I see street hawking as a harsh reality that often supplants education for many children, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and limited opportunities, yet for some, it might be a necessary evil to survive. I suggest the need for flexible educational systems that accommodate the unique challenges faced by these young individuals (**Osun State/KII/2024**).

Street hawking affects hawkers' education negatively, they miss school, do not have time for homework, and eventually lose interest in schooling. It is a challenge many children face, and it is hard to balance trading with education (**Osun State/KII/2024**).

Honestly, street hawking is a major setback for these adolescents' education. They are out on the streets all day, missing classes, and when they get home, they are too tired to study. It is a cycle that is hard to break, and it limits their future opportunities (**Osun State/KII/2024**).

Moreover, a significant majority (78.5%) of the respondents believe that street hawking negatively affects their school performance, while 21.5% do not think so. The impact on study time is also substantial, with 76.4% of respondents indicating that street

hawking significantly reduces their study time, and 16.2% saying it somewhat reduces it. Only 7.5% reported no effect on their study time. In the same vein, the responses from the FGD with street hawkers also indicated the effect of street hawking on education as follows:

Yes, street hawking affects my education and study time badly. I am always out here selling, and I don't have time to focus on my studies. Sometimes I miss school to hawk, and when I get home, I am too tired to do my homework. It is hard, but I have to do it to survive (**Street hawkers-1,3,7/FDG/2024**).

Street hawking drains my energy, and I often miss school or fall asleep in class. When I get home, I am too exhausted to study or do homework. It is a struggle to balance hawking and education (**Street hawkers-4,5,9/FDG/2024**).

Street hawking and school do not mix. I am either hawking or sleeping, no time for studies. If I do not hawk, I do not eat. It is a daily struggle (**Street hawkers-2,10,12/FDG/2024**).

The challenges experienced due to street hawking are multifaceted. Fatigue is a major issue, affecting 52.6% of the respondents. Stress is another significant challenge, with 62.3% of respondents reporting that they experience stress due to street hawking. The lack of time for homework is a significant problem for 73.8% of the respondents, and 79.5% reported difficulty concentrating in class due to street hawking. These findings suggested that street hawking has a profound impact on the academic performance and well-being of students, and that addressing these challenges is crucial to supporting their educational success. This aligned with an extract from the FDG as thus:

Hawking takes up most of my time, and I am always tired. I miss school sometimes, and my grades suffer. It is hard to focus on my studies when I am worried about making ends meet (**Street hawkers-6,8,11/FDG/2024**).

This is corroborated with a claim made by informants that;

Honestly, the nexus between length of time spent on street hawking and adolescent education is highly negative. This is because, the more hours they spend hawking, the more they miss out on school and studying. It is a recipe for poor grades and eventually, dropping out (**Oyo State/KII/2024**).

The longer hours spent on street hawking, the more detrimental it is to education. It is a direct trade-off - more time hawking means less time for studies, leading to poor grades, absenteeism, and eventually, dropping out. It's highly negative, no doubt (**Osun State/KII/2024**).

The educational impact of hawking is clearly illustrated in Figure 1, which shows that the community overwhelmingly believes that hawking negatively affects school performance. This perception aligns with the quantitative findings—66.4% were not enrolled in school, 60.8% had dropped out, and 78.5% admitted hawking affected their academic performance. The figure offers a strong visual confirmation of the adverse educational implications of hawking.

Tafashiya *et al.*, (2024) corroborated that the demands of street hawking, driven by economic necessity, likely divert time and energy away from education, ultimately hindering the academic engagement and performance of these girls. Similarly, Ugo (2024) noted that street hawking can hinder a child's academic progress, leading to issues like tardiness, poor study

habits, underdeveloped skills, low self-esteem, and decreased academic performance, ultimately increasing the risk of failure or dropout. It is on this note that made Bage-John, *et al.*, (2024) to emphasise the need for government initiatives to support education for teenage girls engaged in street hawking, while also call for the creation of awareness among parents and guardians about the risks of street hawking and promoting strategies to enhance the overall well-being of these girls.

Daniel (2024) corroborated that street hawking has a notable effect on study habits and school attendance among secondary school students, leading to high dropout rates, delinquency, and truancy. Hence, the level of academic achievement of children who engage in hawking is often low. This finding supports the idea that prolonged engagement in street hawking can hinder academic progress.

In contrary, Aransi, (2018) and Kumo (2024) found that while study habits of in-school street hawking students were average, there was no significant relationship between study habits and academic performance. Instead, the study revealed that students' academic performance differs significantly based on different hawking times. This suggested that the timing of hawking activities may impact academic outcomes of the hawkers. This further buttressed that unemployment and poor economic conditions force parents to engage their children in street hawking, which can have hazardous effects on children's future.

Research Question 2: What forms of support do street hawkers consider most helpful in achieving their educational goals in Osun and Oyo States, South-West, Nigeria?

Table 2: Forms of support do street hawkers consider most helpful in achieving their educational goals in Osun and Oyo States, South-West, Nigeria.

Perceived Support considered effective by street hawkers towards their education

Variables	Frequency (n = 390)	Percentage (100%)
Support and Solutions		
The following could help improve your education while hawking?		
Flexible school hours.		
Yes	152	39.0
No	238	61.0
The following could help improve your education while hawking?		
Flexible school hours.		
Yes	152	39.0
No	238	61.0
Scholarships or financial aid.		
Yes	253	64.9
No	137	35.1
Access to tutoring		
Yes	198	50.8
No	192	49.2
Counselling services.		
Yes	298	76.4
No	92	23.6

Interpretation and Discussion

The results in Table 2 showed that 39% of respondents believe flexible school hours would help their education. This suggests that while some street hawkers see flexibility as a potential

solution, the majority do not consider it a priority. The results indicated that 64.9% of respondents think scholarships or financial aid would be helpful. This highlights the significant role that financial support plays in enabling street hawkers to pursue their education.

The results revealed that 50.8% of respondents see access to tutoring as beneficial. This suggests that many street hawkers recognize the value of additional academic support in helping them succeed in their studies. The results showed that 76.4% of respondents believe counselling services would be helpful. This underscores the importance of emotional and psychological support for street hawkers, who may face significant challenges in their daily lives.

The study's findings suggest that flexible school hours are not a top priority for most street hawkers, but financial support through scholarships or aid is crucial for their educational pursuits. This highlights the significant barriers street hawkers face in accessing education, with financial constraints being a major obstacle. In contrast, the relatively low importance placed on flexible school hours may indicate that other factors, such as financial stability, are more pressing concerns for these individuals.

The study highlights the importance of supplementary support services for street hawkers' educational success. Many respondents recognize the value of access to tutoring, indicating a desire for additional academic help to overcome learning challenges. Moreover, the high demand for counselling services underscores the significant emotional and psychological toll of street hawking, suggesting that support services addressing mental health and wellbeing are crucial for this population. Obuzor and Gabriel-Job (2022) corroborated that Street hawkers need support in education because financial constraints, physical demands, and emotional challenges hinder their ability to access and succeed in education, requiring comprehensive support services like financial aid, tutoring, and counselling.

CONCLUSION

Street hawking has a profoundly negative impact on adolescents' education, causing absenteeism, fatigue, reduced study time, and increased dropout rates, ultimately limiting their future opportunities and perpetuating a cycle of poverty. Also, the study concluded that street hawkers require targeted support to access education, prioritizing financial assistance, tutoring, and counselling services to overcome financial, academic, and emotional challenges, ultimately enhancing their educational outcomes and well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are suggested.

- i. Government Agencies, NGOs, and philanthropic institutions should provide financial support through scholarships or aid to street hawkers. This would address the significant financial constraints that hinder their access to education.
- ii. Educational institutions and social welfare organizations should offer supplementary support services, including access to tutoring and counselling, to help street hawkers overcome learning challenges and address the emotional and psychological toll of street hawking.
- iii. Community stakeholders should collaborate to create awareness about the negative impact of street hawking on education and promote strategies to enhance the overall well-being of street hawkers.
- iv. Parents and guardians should be aware of the risks associated with street hawking and explore alternative means of economic support to prioritize children's education and well-being.

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