

# Behavioral Consequences of Hawking in Selected Cities in Nigeria

<sup>1</sup>Ikenyei N. Sandra, <sup>2</sup>Akpotor Julie

## **Abstract**

*While other social issues enjoy the attention of researchers and policymakers, hawking with its numerous hazards is given little or no attention. The endemic problem makes many hawkers withdraw, some are discouraged. This leaves the poor hawkers in abject poverty and hunger. This paper examined the hazards of hawking in some selected communities and possible solutions. Weber's social action theory provided the framework for explanations. For manageability, Nigeria was purposively chosen as a case study. From the three major tribes that make up Nigeria Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba, a total of 280 participants were randomly selected: Ore (70), Benin (70), Onitsha (70), and Abuja (70). 40 in-depth interviews with hawkers were conducted. Quantitative data were analyzed using chi-square and simple percentage. Qualitative data were content analyzed. It was revealed that hawking hazards ranged from kidnapping, physical assault, sexual molestation, robbery, death and gangsterism. The research concludes that irrespective of the numerous challenges, many people chose hawking as a means of livelihood to survive hardship. Solutions ranged from the building of stores, socialization to the stationing of mobile policemen around hawking spots.*

**Keywords:** *Hawking hazards, kidnapping, Sexual molestation stealing, endemic problems.*

## **I. Introduction**

In most African countries, hawking is a common trade people embark on to generate income to support themselves and family members (Nduka and Duru 2014). The desire to provide for self and the family amidst economic hardship forced men, women, youths and children into hawking (Ekpenyong and Nkereuwem 2011). Irrespective of this necessity, hawkers on daily basis, face numerous hazards such as accidents, physical and sexual molestation and robbery. Although, general world view link hawking to poverty, it is assumed that hawking is associated with religion and illiteracy (Okeke 2019). As such it is believed that, while many unskilled and unschooled persons dive into hawking to survive poverty, some engage in hawking due to their ethno-religious background (ibid). Aside from personal volition, some are trafficked into hawking by unscrupulous personalities (Lily and Sara 2009). With juicy promises, they are lured into hawking. They make daily remittances to their

---

<sup>1</sup>Department of Sociology/Psychology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Sociology/Psychology, Faculty of the Social Sciences, Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria.

recruiters. Having being trafficked into hawking, they are abandoned to suffer legion of hazards. They are less informed and inadequately protected (Lily and Sara 2009). This exposes them to accident, assaults, robbery and health challenges (Uzochukwu 2019).

Because of constant exposure to social vices, some hawkers graduate their hawking business into criminal activities. Few go into prostitution, gang stealing and other social vices that are available to deviants. Many female hawkers become accessible to the opposite sex who is capable of offering a token whether in cash or kind, (Lily and Sara 2009). A handful of hawkers who rejects advances are raped (Ibid). Those who do not allude to this gesture are raped and dispossessed of their sales. Most offenders pretend to be rich and nice at the onset, but later rape and rob their victims (Wayas and Adekeye, 2010).

Most of the hawkers graduate their hawking prowess into robbery. They end up as arm robbers who arm bush and dispossess travellers. Although all professions have some level of hazards, those of the hawkers are frightening as they suffer the harsh conditions of the natural world (Nduka and Duru 2014).

Hawking exposes hawkers to numerous health and environmental hazards (Nduka and Duru 2014 and Ekpenyong and Nkereuwem 2011). These include assault which increases the vulnerability of the hawkers to sexually contracted diseases (Nduka and Duru 2014). It has led to several cases of unplanned pregnancies and unsafe abortion (Lee 2004). Hawkercs suffer physical assault, mobbing and ritual killing [ibid]. These incidences happen to both the old and the young. As they struggle along the busy road, they come in contact with the good and the bad. Exposure to harsh weather and assault harden and propels hawkers into unwholesome practices.

The majority become smokers, drug addicts, alcohol abusers, hooliganism and cultists (Nduka and Duru 2014, Ayodele and Olubayo-Fatiregun 2014 and Ekpenyong and Nkereuwem 2011). These exposures make them vulnerable to life-threatening illnesses. Majority abuse drugs to the extent that their daily proceeds are lavished on the purchase of drugs and alcohol. For the greater part of the day, they inhabit the unhygienic environment. Most hawkers are very dirty. They carry out their business in an untidy environment. Waste from hawkers and buyers increases the presences of insects such as mosquitoes and reptiles. As they carry out their hawking business in an unhealthy environment, insects and reptiles bites and infuses poisonous liquids into their system. Waste from hawkers and buyers block the drainages; this leads to environmental pollution (Nduka and Duru 2014). As a result of the polluted environment, infection and disease outbreaks are common. Majority hawkers under the scourging sun and the cold of the rain. Due to constant exposure to harsh weather, social vices and pollutants, many suffer lifelong infirmities and diseases.

## **II. Theoretical framework-Functionalist and Conflict theory**

Talcott Parson (1951) functionalist theory was adopted for the explanation of hawking as a social phenomenon. According to the tenets of functionalist theory, hawking gainfully engage those who have little or no formal education. Without basic skills, they find it difficult to secure a good job. Because they want necessities of life irrespective of their inability to secure white-collar jobs, they dive into hawking which at least can put food on

their table. The functionalist theory espoused that hawking is a beneficial business engaged in by those who find it difficult to secure white-collar jobs. It enhances the stability and advancement of those who are strategically placed at the disadvantaged end of the societal ladder. Largely, hawking is a trade people engage in to raise funds in order to enjoy basic rights and benefits found in life. People who hawk goods are identified in Nigeria as poverty-stricken people who are struggling in the hawking business to survive harsh conditions and their disadvantaged position in life. Most hawkers undergo similar orientations that pattern their inner character and mode of relationship. Mode of hawking and relationships with customers are defined by ethno-religious orientations and cultural practices. Their prejudices, discrimination and exploitative tendencies are explainable under the cultural values of their ethnic group.

On a conflict perspective; the selfish nature of unscrupulous citizens and the harsh conditions associated with hawking breeds hardship which frustrates the goals of the hawkers. Majority get their destinies delayed and most times opportunities denied. They are harassed and molested. The majority are exploited sexually and economically. Invariably, hazards and blocked opportunities destroy potentials. Hazards of hawking dwindle economic productivity and contributions of hawkers.

### **The problem**

The research examined the challenges (hazards) associated with hawking in some selected communities in Nigeria. Hawking is a unique trade many Africans engage in to survive the harsh economic conditions. Nevertheless, as they carry out their hawking businesses, they encounter difficulties which threaten their continual existence in hawking. Hawking has biting implications for physical and emotional wellbeing (Wayas and Adekeye, 2010 and Ekpenyong and Nkereuwem). Hawking exposes them to sexual abuse, drug and substance abuse, physical exhaustion and death. The effects of hazards of hawking affect immediate relations and the general populace who come in contact with victims on daily basis. Irrespective of these numerous challenges and hazards, there is little or no considerations for them by policymakers. Thus, this study examined the hazards of hawking in Nigeria. Hypothetically, the researchers tested whether hawking affects hawkers and the economy at large.

### **III. Methodology**

**Research Design** The study is descriptive and co-relational; it adopted a cross-sectional research design. This design was adopted because of the nature of the problem. The design addressed the hazards of hawking in Nigeria. The result applies to other African communities whose larger portion of its population is involved in hawking. The research is cross-sectional in design because data were generated from sets of respondents who possessed heterogeneous but closely related socio-demographic characteristics at a single point in time.

### **Research Setting**

Nigeria is located in West Africa. Nigeria is bordering Niger in the North, Chad in the Northeast, Cameroon in the East and Benin in the West. It is found around the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean. The federation comprises 36 states with its federal capital territory at Abuja. Nigeria is home to a large number of ancient and indigenous kingdoms and state over the millennia. Nigeria originated from British colonial rule in the year 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Northern and Southern protectorate was amalgamated in 1914. Nigeria is known as the giant of Africa owing to its large population and economy. With over 186 million citizens, Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. Nigeria is considered a multinational state as it inhabits over 250 ethnic groups with varied cultures. The largest ethnic groups are Igbo, Hausa and Yoruba. They speak mainly Igbo Hausa and Yoruba. The official language is English.

The total population of hawkers in the research areas is estimated at 1,638,659 (2019 population projections). The research respondents comprised hawkers who have been hawking in research areas for at least three months. The respondents were purposively selected because they meet the selection criteria to generate vital data for the research. Thus, those who were neither hawkers nor knowledgeable in issues of hawking and hazards were excluded from the research.

A total of 280 respondents along Ore, Benin, Onitsha and Abuja-Lokoja major roads were sampled. The descriptive cross-sectional survey was conducted among 280 road hawkers who were randomly sampled from major roads in Ore, Benin, Onitsha and Abuja. Random sampling techniques were used in gathering data from 280 respondents. The research area was purposively selected. Ore, Benin, Abuja and Onitsha was purposively chosen as the research setting based on the evidence of a large number of hawkers along the major roads who face hazards on a daily basis. Because of the strenuous nature of the in-depth interview which was used in generating in-depth experiences, the total number of respondents that were drawn for the study was 280. The study was conducted in an area where many travellers stop to buy or sell goods across the major roads in research areas. The random sampling technique was adopted to avoid obstructive and biased selection. The effort was made to identify and isolate participants from Ore, Benin, Abuja and Onitsha. Randomizing the respondents gave everyone an equal chance of being sampled. Sampling both the young and old hawkers was initiated to validate responses. This helped to check bias and exaggerations by the respondents.

### **Method of data collection**

The study used qualitative and quantitative instruments in data gathering. Primary data were generated through the use of structured questionnaires and in-depth interview. Secondary data were generated with the use of other ancillary instruments such as extraction of information from archives, literature searches, available records and documents. Quantitatively, the structured questionnaire generated information on respondent's socio-demographic data. Section B of the instrument was designated to elicit the experience of the hawkers. Interviews generated in-depth responses that were used to provide a robust explanation of responses from the questionnaire. Validity and reliability of the instrument were considered to ensure applicability and generalization of results to other hawkers of similar characteristics and experience.

### **Method of data analysis**

Quantitative data were analyzed using chi-square and simple percentages. Data gathered went through content extraction of responses according to common themes. Similar responses from an in-depth interview and observations were identified coded and grouped thematically. Similar responses with a unifying concept or underlying meanings were derived. Key points, phrases and illustrations were noted and were used in presenting robust discussions.

## **IV. Data presentation and Discussion**

A total of 40 in-depth interviews were conducted. These included hawkers at Ore-Lagos expressway, Benin expressway, Abuja and Onitsha. The following responses were elicited from the respondents. All the respondents revealed that they embark on hawking to generate income to support themselves and their family members.

The research participants comprised of male and female who were hawkers within the age of 18 and above. Criteria for exclusion were those who are below the age of 18 and those who are not up to three months in hawking in the research area. Participants in the study included (73.3%) male and (26.7%) female. A total of (20%) respondent was within the age of 18-24, (53.3%) were within 25-31, while (13.3%) is 38 years and above. Majority of the respondents were within the age range of 25-31 years. A total of (63.3%) were Christian while (36.7%) was Muslim. Despite that Christians permit hawking, their culture frowns at social vices which most hawkers are involved in the course of their trade. Forty (40%) respondents had primary education, (26.7%) had a secondary certificate, (20%) had no formal education, while (13.3%) belong to a category that fell under others. A total of (43.3%) were married while (56.7%) was single. Although the majority of the respondents revealed that they are married, those who are separated lost their partner because of the financial challenge of keeping their family. Yoruba was (33.4%), (13.3%) were Urhobos, (20%) were Igbos while (33.3%) accrued to the category grouped as Hausa and sub-ethnic groups. Sales of respondents as at the time of research was (40%) respondents earned 3,500-5,000, (33.3%) earned 5,000-6,000, (6.7%) earned 7,000 and above.

### **Hazards of Hawking**

Apart from a road accident, 47% of the hawkers reported that they were physically and sexually molested. The response below revealed thus:

He asked me how much is my banana after I told him, he said he will pay for everything, so that I can stay and play with him before I go home immediately he told me that, he started touching my body and was pushing me to the bed. IDI male, age 42, 25/06/2019

From the above response, it is deduced that most hawkers are sexually abused by unscrupulous personalities who want to satisfy their sexual desires. This response corroborates with the response from one of the respondents who revealed that the baby in her back was a product of sexual abuse. According to her, she was lured into the apartment of the offender who gave false impressions that he was emotionally attracted to her and wants to

pay for all her goods. She was happy that someone is ready to pay for her goods and also want her as a partner. But contrarily, the man changed totally and would not want to see her after he told the man she has been put in a family way. She now bears the burden of caring for the child which she did not plan for. According to her, she has no money for antenatal, she only combines leaves and hopes she will deliver safely. These situations pose a serious health challenge to the mother and the unborn child. It is envisaged that this problem will linger on even after the child is born due to the financial challenge of the victim. This response is closely related to the one below;

Many hawkers hawk their body as they sell their wares. many men take advantage of their situation and lure them into sleeping with them. Some give them a token and have canal knowledge of them. many make such advances to me but I do not give in because I am married and the culture of my husband forbids it and I am a Christian. IDI, female, age 39, 25/06/2019

as we they hawk, we meet people who want to force themselves on us and rape you. they are so desperate that you become powerless to struggle with them. most times when it happens, they succeed because the seller is handicapped. IDI female, age 42, 25/06/2019

some of the people come out to pick street hawkers and pay them for sex only to end up putting them in a worse situation when they impregnate them and leave them. IDI male, age 38, 25/06/2019

Apart from the hazards of sexual molestation most hawkers suffer on the road, they are faced with the possibilities of being knocked down by a moving vehicle. Most persons have lost their lives and their wares destroyed by a collision by moving vehicles. The above responses correspond with the response below,

at times motor go nearly hit us as we dey run follow buses for the passenger to buy our market. Some have been knocked down and killed while hustling in between the buses along the major roads to sell their wares. IDI, male, age 27, 25/06/2019 as we sell, we are exposed to plenty of hazards. motor fit hit another motor before you know it them don hit the hawkers on the road. some don dies like that. IDI, female, age 41, 25/06/2019

Also, apart from losing their lives, many if not all hawkers have experienced financial loss as most passengers run away with their money when the drivers are not patients enough to wait for them to finalize their transactions. A respondent revealed as follows;

some run away with my money. as we sell, we expect customers to pay us money, the driver will just move that is the end of that customer and the money. they go with our money after we give them our market to buy. IDI female, age 27, 25/06/2019

Sexual exploitation and financial loss are not the only hazards on the road. Most respondents revealed that their lives are constantly endangered as they come in contact with bad boys who ambush the travellers in most bad spots. This was narrated by a respondent as follows;

arm robbers dey disturb well well for this road, as we sell, we are conscious of their sudden appearance to rob travellers especially at the spot where there are hold up with plenty vehicles and that is where we sell. we sell with fear in our heart but we cannot stay at home. IDI male, age 28, 25/06/2019

arm robbers always disturb because this is the major and busy road in and out of town and so we are always on the run. IDI, female, age 37+, 25/06/2019

Another disturbing hazard that was reported by the respondents was the issue of kidnapping. Below is the response from a respondent;

some of the sellers among us have been missing. they were taken by other people looking for daily bread like us. after some time they are released when their people pay for some money. so as we dey sell, we dey fear make bad people no go kidnap us. we no get the money that is why we they hustle. If they kidnap us, na big wahala. some who no fit pay ransom don die inside the bush, them no return again. IDI, male, age 39, 25/06/2019

**Table 1. Responses on various kinds of hazards encountered by hawkers**

Hazards	Male %	Female %
Accident	47%	53%
Sexual molestation	17%	83%
Physical molestation	39%	61%
Robbed	46%	54%
Kidnapped/hostages	0%	.03%

**Table 2. Responses on the effects of hazards on hawkers and the economic activities**

	Strongly Agreed	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Female	82	46	0	8	136
Male	48	38	0	16	104
<b>Total</b>	130	84	0	26	<b>240</b>

$$X^2 = (o-e)/e$$

Where:

**O**= observed frequency

**E= expected frequency**

$$X^2 = 136 \times 130 / 240 = 73.6$$

$$136 \times 84 / 240 = 47.6$$

$$136 \times 26 / 240 = 23.8$$

$$104 \times 84 / 240 = 36.4$$

$$104 \times 26 / 240 = 11.3$$

**Contingency table**

<b>O</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E-o</b>	<b>(e-o)<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>e-o)<sup>2</sup>/e</b>
82	73.68	8.32	34.62	0.94
46	47.6	-0.36	1.28	0.538
0	0	0	0	0
8	14.78	-6.74	22.72	3.082
48	56.34	-8.34	34.62	1.228
38	36.4	0.16	1.28	0.704
0	0	0	0	10.52
18	11.28	6.74	22.72	4.028
<b>X<sup>2</sup></b>				21.04

$$DF = (C-1)(R-1)$$

$$DF = (4-1) \times (2-1)$$

$$= 3$$

Table value of 3 at 0.05 critical value is 7.81

$$X^2 = 21.04$$



From the table, a total of (47%) male and (53%) female's respondents revealed that they have had or witnessed accident cases as they hawk their wares. A larger percentage of female respondents (83%) reported that there are cases of sexual molestation as they hawk their products along the major roads. According to them, some will buy and ask you to come and collect your money, in the process of you returning to collect your money, they make sexual advances. According to the respondents, some people do refuse to pay the said amount they own you until the victim complies with their demand.

A total of (61%) female respondents against (39%) male respondents revealed that there are issues of physical molestations. Those who were not victims of molestation allude to witnessing a hawker been molested physically by offenders. Concomitantly, (54%) female and (46%) male respondents revealed that they have been robbed as they hawk their wares. Although the majority of the respondents responded that they have not been kidnapped, .03% respondents attest to the fact that there are issues of kidnapping along the major roads as they hawk their products.

According to a respondent, "many have contracted diseases as they get molested as hawkers". Some are put in a family way, a respondent reported that " I no unmarried girls who got pregnant, some carried it till they give birth. Some we do not know what happened to the pregnancy". To the respondents, this is surprising because they are not officially married and their suffering is increased with a pregnancy that the offender is not ready to cater for. From the same respondent; "some lost their children as they hawk in terrible conditions. Some lost their pregnancy due to the stress of running after vehicles and buyers.

A respondent revealed that "bus drivers and conductors take advantage of hawkers. They buy things and tell you to come later, when you go for your money, na sex them go they demand from you". Those who do not comply are abused and most times beat. The hawkers run after moving vehicles. Some lean on the vehicles as they go about their business, this exposes them to being knocked down by another oncoming vehicle.

For the explanations below refer to tables 2 and 3

Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the null hypothesis is rejected and the alternative is accepted. This implies that hazards of hawking affect victims and other socio-activities around the hawking junctions. From the foregoing, it is believed that the hazards encountered by hawkers cause stagnation and backwardness in the activities of the hawkers who struggle to survive the present economic hardship. This affects every other sector in the community. All other sectors feel the impact of the consequences of the challenges hawkers face as they go about their daily businesses. According to a respondent,

The challenges cost the victims not less than (\$42) each time there is a crisis. The hazards slow down hawking activities, development and economic growth. By robbing, kidnapping and killing of both hawkers, destroying wares, preventing trade, deterring investment, and eroding trust between hawkers and buyers, large sums of money is lost. These hazards heightened the security challenge and insurgency of kidnapping which are been mediated by the force men in Nigeria. These crises affect the hawkers and all those who are dependent on them.

During a crisis, these commodities which they sale become scarce and very expensive. IDI, male, age 39, 25/06/2019

A total of (67%) revealed that attack on the hawkers has accounted for the death of some hawkers. It has led to relocation and total withdrawal of some hawkers from trade due to fear of attack. This has negatively affected livelihoods for those whose major means of stay is hawking. Socio-economic effects of hawking hazards result in over-dependence of frustrated hawkers on the government. It leads to the displacement of farmers, relocation of Hausas, loss of lives and properties. Loss of wares and finance and destruction of facilities causes setbacks. When the trade becomes unyielding, some hide under the trade to steal from innocent citizens who are travelling.

Psychologically, (43%) of the participants who have suffered a varied form of hazards has a phobia of going to hawk. The fear of facing another attack by unscrupulous personalities pulls them to stay back at home. According to a participant;

Whenever there is a problem, it leads to withdrawal of hawkers, this increases the shortage of food supply on the road. There is increased poverty, migration and dislocation of hawkers from their place of trade. There are often tension and suspicion of the various groups that trades and buys. This raised intense fear in the atmosphere already charged with insecurity. IDI, male, age 34+, 25/06/2019

## **V. Conclusion**

Street hawking is one of the major trades that survive (68%) of Nigerians. Unfortunately, it is bedevilled by many factors which militate against it. Despite these challenges, little attention and policies are geared toward mediating the challenges that are faced by street hawkers in Nigeria. Responses call out for advocacy and expedient action by the government to provide an enabling environment for hawking in Nigeria. This is to enable the survival of the trade and the viability of the hawkers.

### **Recommendation**

Hawkers who believe in hawking along the streets and major roads should be discouraged from hawking under harsh conditions. With little assistance from the government, they should build a store from where they can sell their wares along the major roads. This will reduce the risk they encounter on daily basis.

Job creation should be paramount in government policies to alleviate the poverty and grinding which pushes people into hawking under unfavourable conditions. Those who are caught inflicting hardship on the hawkers should be sanctioned.

## References

1. Abisoye A. O. (2013). The prevalence of child hawkers in motor parks in Ibadan Municipality: an overview. *Online Journal of Social Science Research* vol. 1:7 Pp174-179
2. Ashimi A, Amole T, and Ugwa E. (2015) Reported Sexual Violence among Women and Children Seen at the Gynecological Emergency Unit of a Rural Tertiary Health Facility, Northwest Nigeria. *Annual Medical Health Sciences Research* 5:1 Pp 26-29.
3. Ayodele RB, Olubayo-Fatiregun (2014). Accidental injuries among juvenile hawkers: Clog in the Wheel of Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of a Nation.
4. Ashimolowo O.R. Aromolaran A.K., and Inegbedion S.O (2010) Child-street trading activities and its effects on the educational attainment of its victims in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos state. *Journal of Agriculture* 2:4: pp 211-220.
5. Committee on the Health and Safety Implications of Child Labour (CHSICL) (1998). Protecting Youth at Work: Health, Safety and Development of Working Children and Adolescents in the United States, Washington DC: *National Academy Press Humanities and Social Science*. 2 :2: Pp19-30
6. Dada O. A (2013). Sociological Investigation of the Determinant Factors and the Effects of Child Street Hawking in Nigeria: Agege, Lagos State, Under Survey. *International Journal of Asian Social Science* vol 3:1 Pp 114-137.
7. Ekpenyong S, Nkereuwem SA. Street Trading and Child Labour in Yenogoa. (2011). *International Journal of Science, Research, in Education*. 4:1 Pp 36-46.
8. Johnson O. E, and Ihesie C. A. (2015). Health problems of child hawkers in Uyo, South-South Nigeria. *Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences* Vol. 6:5 pp. 104-108
9. Lantana M. U. (2018). Street hawking and socioeconomic dynamics of nomadic girls of Northern Nigeria. *International Journal of Social Economics* vol 37:9-21. pp 717-734. <https://doi.org/10.1108/03068291011062506>
10. Lee S. Assessing the vulnerability of women street traders to HIV/AIDS: A Comparative Analysis of Uganda and South Africa. 2004. HEARD, July. 26.
11. Lily C. and Sara T. (2009). State of the world's street children: violence report. Slide share publication inc. Retrieved 28/5/2019 from <https://hubpages.com-children-street>.
12. Nduka I. and Duru C.O. (2014). The menace of street hawking in Aba metropolis, South-East, Nigeria. *Journal of Medicine and Medical Sciences* vol 5(6), pp 133-140.
13. Okeke N. (2019). Poverty is driving a rise in the number of Nigerian child hawkers. Retrieved 16/06/2019 from the conversation.com.
14. Uzochukwu M. (2019). *Child Street Hawking: causes, effects and solution*. Retrieved 05/28,/2019 from <https://hubpages.com/family/child-street-hawking-causes-effects-and-solution>.
15. Wayas, S. O. & Adekeye, O. A. (2010) *Problems of Street Hawking by Children as Perceived by Teachers*. VDM Verlag Germany. pp. 87