

Child Street - Trading Activities and Its Effect on the Educational Attainment of Its Victims in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State

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Abstract

This study examined child street trading activities and its effect on the educational attainment of its victims in Epe local government area of Lagos State. One hundred and twenty (120) respondents were selected from 6 communities using purposive sampling techniques, administered by means of interview guide. Children interviewed were between 10 and 18 years of age. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used in data analysis. The study revealed that most (60.8%) of the children who engaged in trading are females while 39.2% were males. Also, 36.7% of the respondents are Christians while 40.3% are Muslims. Most (31.7%) of the respondents have a household size of 9 -12 persons while 34.2% have father's occupation as fishing. Also, 45.8% have mother's occupation as trading. Only 20.0% undertake load carrying operation while 29.2% cited reason for involvement in street trading as poverty. Most (40.8%) are into sales of pure water. Majority of them earn a daily income of ₦500 – ₦1000 while 36.7% work morning and afternoon. Nevertheless, 70.9% of the respondents are of the opinion that child trading activities have a negative effect on the reading schedule of children while 79.2% believes trading activities affect their school attendance rate. There is a significant relationship between daily income and pure water selling ($\chi^2 = 22.22$, $p < 0.05$), orange hawking and head carrier ($\chi^2 = 21.72$) $p < 0.01$). The study suggests the need for government to design appropriate programme aimed at poverty reduction and recommends mass enlightenment for the populace to reduce the menace.

Keywords: Child street trading activities, Educational attainment, Agricultural activities, Outside school work, Food security

1. Introduction

Children are regarded as an important element of development. Therefore, their welfare in society is an index of social and economic development of that society. As such, child welfare is included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) (UNESCO, 2004).

The street child is defined as any child who may have parents or guardians in a locality living and working in the street. Street children engaged in work or employment on a regular basis with the aim of earning a livelihood for themselves or for their families. Such activities are often carried out at the expense of schooling. Therefore, children are not adequately prepared for the future in a modernized society (UNICEF, 2004; FME, 2004).

Education is an essential pre-requisite for reducing poverty, improving agriculture and the living condition of rural people. Building a food security world is a basic necessity for children, therefore, it is important to observe

that the government in the pre-independence era was not indifferent to child welfare. For instance, the Children and Young Persons law (CYPL) in several states in Nigeria contained law regulating street trading and the fact that in the 1960s, at least four ILO conventions prohibiting children's work in various hazardous occupations and conditions were ratified (NBS, 2001).

UNICEF reported that in the year 2000 there were 233million children between the ages of 5-18 years in urban areas in developing countries doing one kind of paid work or the other (UNICEF, 2004). This development has great economic and development consequences. Many studies have condemned child participation in economic activities and worst form of it (street children) because of its resultant effect on schooling, health, physical, moral and psychological development of child (UNICEF, 2004; ILO – IPEC, 2002).

In Nigeria, there has been an increase in the number of children trading or working in the rural areas which affects the acquisition of education which can be traced to a lot of factors which according to Dustmann (2003), are: cost of schooling, characteristics of child, parents, households and community, location and distance of formal education centre. Poverty and illiteracy are reinforced by traditional customs such as *polygamy* and preference for large family size.

1.1 Problem Statment

In the developing countries especially in traditional African society where there are ineffective machinery to enforce child welfare, majority of the children in the rural area find it difficult to survive as a result of economic status of their parent. Hence, life in the rural areas pose a lot of challenges for the children.

In coping with these, some of the children engage in various kinds of activities in order to survive. Some of these activities are sometimes harzadous to the health and education of the child. Therefore, child street trading is a threat to the continue survival of the society; distort government policy with respect to education of the youth due to high drop out rate. It distorts acquisition of vocational skills and relevant education thereby destroying the economic sector (Okumadewa, 2001). Also physical stress due to the age and maturation of the child is affected leading to low concentration at school and breakdown of health of the child.

1.2 Objective Of Study

General objectives

The general objective of this study is to investigate child street trading activities and its effects on the educational attainment of its victim in Epe Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Specific objective

To determine the demographic characteristics of children who are into street trading.

To examine the economic activities engaged in by children.

To investigate the factors responsible for work outside school.

To examine the distance of formal education centre to household family residence.

To examine the contribution of child street trading to the household food security.

To investigate the children's feeling toward working outside the school.

To investigate the period spent on trading activities per day.

To make appropriate recommendation.

Hypotheses

There is no significant relationship between the daily income of the respondents and child street trading activities.

There is no significant relationship between the distance of formal education centre to household residence and child street trading activities.

2. Research Methodology

2.1 Area of study

Epe is a riverine town located on a slightly elevated land ranging between 30-60 meters above the sea level and bordering the shores of the Lagos and sheltered Lekki Lagoon (mangrove swamp forests.)

Epe division is divided into two local government area vis – a vis Epe and Ibeju-Lekki with Epe serving as the divisional headquarters. Epe lies about 89km North-east of the city of Lagos. Peculiarly Epe is like other areas

within Lagos, yet it is quite different from them because it is a part of Lagos in the political context but closer to Ogun State geographically.

The main occupation of the people is farming. Fishing abounds in the riverine area of the local government. The local government area yields substantial volume of rice, cassava, oil palm, cocoa, plantains/banana, maize, ginger and sundry vegetables found in farmlands scattered about the community.

However, many young men and women engage in self employed trades like tailoring, bricklaying, capentry, mechanical works and some other trades. The language of the People is Yoruba with mostly Ijebu dialect. The following rural communities are under the Local Government: Naforija Odomola, Epe, Ilara, Otta-Ikosi, Ejirin, Eredo, Odoragunsen, Mojoda, Ibowon, Itoikin, Ketu, Odo-Ayandelu, Orugbo, Igbonla, Ita oko, Yegunda, Molajoyo Oke egun, Erinmope, Iganke, Araga, Aferan and so on.

2.2 Sampling techniques and sampling size

Structured interview schedule were administered on 120 respondents in the area of study. Six communities Itoikin, Igbonla, Ketu, Ejirin, Molajoye and Agbowo were purposively selected for this study because of the large concentration of Children involved in trading activities in the location. Twenty (20) children aged 10 – 18 involved in trading activities and sighted by the researcher were purposively interviewed. This was done irrespective of their sex.

3. Result and Discussion

Table 2 indicates the demographic characteristics of children in Epe local government. The gender distribution shows that 60.8% of the children were females while 39.2% were male. This indicates that there are more female children involved in street trading activities than males in the sample selected.

Age distribution of the respondent shows that 1.7% of the respondent participating in outside school economic activities falls below 10years of age, while 46.7% have the age range of between 10-15years, 31.7% have their age between 15 – 18years., while 20.0% have their age greater than 18years. Also 40.8% of the respondents were Muslim, 36.7% Christians, 22.5% Traditional worshiper, this shows that most children involved in outside school activities are Muslims.

The house size shows that 20% have 1- 4persons, 23.3% have 5 – 8 persons, 31.7% have 9 – 12 persons while 25.0% have household size of above 30 persons. This shows that most children whose household above 9 -12 person participate more in economic activities outside school.

Table 2 shows that 23.3% had father's occupation as farming, had trading 20%, fishing 34.2%, Civil servants 10.8%, hunting 10% and any other activities apart from ones mentioned is 1.7%. This shows that most children in these selected areas have their father's occupation to be fishing.

Also, table 2 indicates that respondents who had mother's occupation as farming was 14.2%, trading 45.8%, civil servants 5.8%, weaving 30%, and goldsmith 4.2%. This shows that most children who are into street trading activities in the study area have their mother's occupation as trading. This could be an indication that children's participation in trading activities is a means of supplementing household income. This study supports that of Obikeze (1995) that parent in low-income households because of poverty cannot afford to provide for the education, nourishment and health related inputs for members of the household, compel children to contribute to family welfare by engaging in trading activities.

Table 2 reveals that 40.8% of the respondents are engaged in sale of pure water while 9.2% are into sales of orange, bread 6.7%, popcorn 7.5% and akara 7.5%. This shows that the most popular economic activities engaged by the respondents is selling of pure water.

The table further reveals that the percentage of children engaged in truck pushing is 6.7% compared to 13.3% that engaged in head carrying operations. The majority (80%) representing others refer to respondents who uses shoulders, wheel barrows etc. in their operations.

From table 2, the percentage of respondents involved in full time economic activities is 33.3% and part time is 66.7%. This is an indication that most children involved in economic activities outside school in these selected areas do so on part time bases. Also, table 2 further reveals that the percentage of respondents involved in trading is 71.7%, load carrying 20.8% and scavenging is 7.5%. This shows that the most popular economic activities engaged by the children in this area of study is trading. Poverty could be a major factor in children's participation in trading activities. This finding supports that of Okpurakpara and Odurukwe (2003) that if a household is poor; children would be induced to engage in economic activities.

From table 3, the percentage of children with factor responsible for outside school work as parent poor is 29.2%, broken home is 18.3%, parent health (sick) 8.3%, no school in vicinity is 8.3%, personal interest 22.5%, etc This shows that the major factor responsible for the children out of school work in these study area is as a result of parents being poor. This result is consistent with the research that says that poverty and lack of school drive children into economic activities (Basu, 1998).

Table 4 shows that respondents whose school is very far from home is 45%, far from home is 29.2% and near home is 25.8%. This means that most children in these areas of study have their school very far from their homes. This could have an implication that school attendance could invariably lead to higher involvement in street trading activities.

Table 5 further indicates that the percentage of children whose daily income is less than ₦100 is 10%, ₦100 - ₦500 -40%, ₦500 - ₦1,000- 32.5% and above ₦1,000 - 17.5%. This is an indication that most children in these areas of study earn ₦100 - ₦500 as daily income. This is in line with Okurukwe (2006) that child labour and street children increase in both practices and characteristics in society due to the income it generate.

Also, table 5 indicates that the percentage of children whose daily income is less than ₦100 is 10%, ₦100 - ₦500 - 40%, ₦500 - ₦1,000 - 32.5% and above ₦1,000 - 17.5%. This means that most children in this area of study earn low. This study corroborates that of Neilson (2000) that overall analysis of higher incidence of children participating in economic activities reflects that there is high rate of poverty which often compels children to work to enhance household income.

The table further reveals that 26.7% of the respondents work only in the afternoon while 20.8% work in the morning and those working morning only is 20.8%, morning - afternoon is 36.7% and evening is 15.8%. This attests to the fact that most children involved in outside school trading, work both morning and afternoon. Table 5 shows that the percentage of children who like trading on the street is 40.8% and those who do not like trading is 59.2%. This means that most children do not enjoy street trading. This is an indication that most of the respondents are being compelled to go into street trading. It is not by their choice. Also, most (73.3%) of the respondents felt that street trading does not contribute to the attainment of their future goal. This is an indication that street trading activities affect the hope and aspiration of its victims. This could have a serious implication on their future development. This assertion support that of UNICEF (2004); ILO-IPEC (2002) that child participation in economic activities such as street trading have resultant effect on the child's health, schooling, physical, moral and psychological development. The table further shows that only 47.5% of the respondents see themselves as being fortunate to be involved in street trading while those who are unfortunate to be involved in street trading is 52.5%. This shows that most children in these selected areas do not support street trading activities and hence children see trading as an unfortunate incidence. The table also revealed that the percentage of respondents who agree that a lot of hazard is associated with trading on the street is 85.8% and those who do not agree to this fact is 14.2%. This means that street trading is associated with a number of hazards. Such hazards refer to car accidents, sexual exploitation, molestation etc.

More so, that the percentage of children whose means of livelihood is trading is 89.2% and the percentage of children whose means of livelihood is not trading is 10.8%. This means most respondents view street trading as a survival strategy. This shows the level of poverty prevalent in the society. And that the percentage of children whose trading activities affect their academic performance is 84.2% and that whose trading activities do not affect their academic activities is 15.8%. This shows that street trading has adverse effect on the educational attainment of children.

The percentage of children who are working for their father is 23.3%, mother is 50%, while guardian is 25.8% and self is 0.8%. This shows that most children do outside school economic activities in order to assist their mother in the house keeping. This is an indication that children make immense contribution towards household maintenance. The percentage of children who have access to textbooks and writing material all the time before trading is 27.5%, most of the time 43.3%, occasionally 25.8%, and never 3.45. This shows that most children have access to textbooks and writing materials before trading most of the time. Meanwhile, the percentage of children who have access to textbook and writing materials after trading activities all the time is 7.5%, most of the time 15.8%, occasionally 37.5%, never 39.2% which shows that trading activities affect children participation in school activities and does not gear them towards reading and affect the access to textbook and writing materials.

Table 6 shows that the percentage of children who does Agricultural activities is 33.3%, water fetching - 27.5%, domestic sweeping - 30.8% and artisan - 8.3%. This show that most children in the area engage in agricultural activities apart from the outside school activities

Table 7 indicates that most (70.9%) of the respondents involved in child trading activities are of the opinion that child trading activities has a negative effect on their reading schedule while 27.5% of the respondents believe that trading activities has minimal or occasional effect on their reading schedule. Only 1.7% agree that child trading activities has no effect on their reading schedule. This means that child trading activities grossly affects reading schedule as times meant for study is devoted to trading.

The table further reveals that 79.2% of the respondents who are actively involved in trading activity believe that trading activity has adverse effect on their school attendance rate or number of days in school due to the rigours involved in it. Only 0.8% are of the opinion that trading never affects their presence in school. This indicates that trading affects school attendance. Hence, most children who should be found in the school learning are mostly found on the street trading. Also, 75.0% of most of the respondents are of the opinion that trading has negative effect on their participation in homework activity while 4.2% believe trading never affected their participation in homework activity. This implies that street trading affects respondents' ability to undertake homework activity. This means that greater percentage of respondents time/efforts are spent on income generation.

Nevertheless, 74.1% of the respondents are of the opinion that trading activity affects their participation in school extracurricular activity most of the time as against 0.8% who believe trading has no effect on their participation in extracurricular activity while 25.0% believe it has minimal effect on their participation in extracurricular activity. This is a pointer to the fact that most children who are into street trading participate less in school extracurricular activities. Hence, times meant for such extracurricular activities such as debating societies, Red Cross societies etc. are spent on the street (trading). This could have a serious implication on the future development. The table further reveals that 70.8% of most of the respondents are of the opinion that trading affects their access to textbook and writing materials while only 3.4% are of the opinion that trading has no effect on access to textbooks and writing material. This means most of the respondents lack access to textbooks and writing materials.

Table 8 revealed a significant relationship between sales of pure water ($\chi^2 = 22.22$, orange $\chi^2 = 10.93$, and head carrier $\chi^2 = 21.72$) at $p \geq 0.05$ and the effect on the educational attainment of children. This implies that the more the involvement of children in sales of pure water for instance, the higher the effect on their educational attainment. The result of the study further shows that there is a significant relationship between distance of formal education centre to household and pure water selling ($\chi^2 = 27.78$, $P < 0.01$) orange ($\chi^2 = 20.04$, $P < 0.05$), bread selling ($\chi^2 = 39.07$, $P < 0.01$) and head carrier ($\chi^2 = 48.76$, $P < 0.01$). Hence we accept the null hypothesis, that there is a significant relationship between distance of formal education centre to household residence and street trading. It implies that the farther the distance of formal education centre to household residence, the more the likelihood that children would be engaged in trading activity. This assumption is in line with Dustman (2003) which says involvement of children in trading activity is related to the location and distance of formal education centre to household residence. For instance, in communities where education centre are far from home, children opt to trade due to the far distance and other logistics.

4. Summary

Findings of this project revealed that child street trading is a widespread menace and affecting a lot of children in the study area. A number of variables were analyzed. The study revealed that most of the respondents who engaged in trading are female with 60.8% while 39.2% were male within the age of 10-15 years are the majority of children who engage in trading.

Study further show that the household size of 9 – 12 persons above have high incidence of children engaging in street trading in the study area. Responses showed that respondent trade in various commodities. The most common are pure water with 40.8%, orange 9.2%, bread 6.7%, pop corn 7.5%, akara 7.8% and other 28.3%.

Different reasons have been identified as the root causes of this phenomenon and these include poverty 29.2%, parent separated 18.3%, parent sick 8.3%, no school in the vicinity 8.3%, personal interest 21.5% and others 8.3%. Also, study revealed that 45.0% of the respondent had distant of formal education centre to household very far, 29.2% far and 25.8% near.

The study further revealed that 75.0% of the respondents are of the opinion that trading activity have adverse effect on their participation in homework activities while 74.1% believed it affect their participation in extracurricular activity.

There was a significant relationship between daily income and pure water selling ($\chi^2 = 22.22$, $P < 0.05$), orange hawking and head carrier ($\chi^2 = 21.72$) $P < 0.01$). Also, there is a significant relationship between distance of

formal education centre to household and pure water selling ($\chi^2 = 27.78$, $P < 0.01$), orange ($\chi^2 = 20.14$, $P < 0.05$), bread selling ($\chi^2 = 39.02$, $P < 0.01$) and head carrier ($\chi^2 = 48.76$, $P < 0.01$).

The major factors responsible for children's involvement in street trading activities are: poverty, location and distance of formal education centre, illiteracy reinforced by traditional customs, inadequate school facilities among others.

5. Conclusion

The study concluded that child street trading which is a form of child labour is a significant problem in Epe local government area of Lagos state which is due to a lot of factors such as poverty, illiteracy, distance of formal education centre, inadequate school facilities and lack of government policy among others needs adequate steps to curb the menace. Daily income of the household and distance of formal education centre to household residence are major issues in eradicating street trading among children.

Recommendation

Based on this study, the following recommendations were made:

Government should provide assistance in form of grant, free education or scholarship for children of poor. This can be done through well articulated and target programmes to these families.

Policy for effectively eradicating child trading must be linked to ambitious poverty eradication efforts over the long term, since both phenomena are linked in a vicious circle.

Government at all level should provide infrastructural facilities for good education in the rural area as well as in the urban area.

It is also important to educate both parents and children on the danger involve in child trading and on the educational attainment of the child.

Factors that encourage street trading should be discouraged, Therefore, government, non government and international non government organization should establish rehabilitation centers, run-in homes for correction, for proper counseling

There should be law that will prohibit children from trading on the street.

Parent should be encourage to take good care of there children i.e. the child's welfare should be of paramount interest in the parent.

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Table1. Sampling of Respondents

LGA	Purposive Community	No of respondents
Epe	(1) Itoikin	20
	(2) Igbonle	20
	(3) Ketu	20
	(4) Ejirin	20
	(5) Molajoye	20
	(6) Agbowa	20
	TOTAL	120

Source: Field survey

Table 2. Demographics Characteristic of Children in Epe Area

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	73	60.8
Male	47	39.2
Total	120	100
Age	Frequency	Percent
<10 years	2	1.7
10 – 15 years	56	46.7
15 – 18 years	36	31.7
>18 years	24	20
Total	120	100
Religion	Frequency	Percent
Muslim	49	40.8
Christian	44	36.7
Traditional	27	22.5
Total	120	100
Household size	Frequency	Percent
1 – 4 persons	24	20
5 – 8 persons	28	23.3
9 – 12 persons	38	31.7
Above 12 persons	30	25
Total	120	100
Father's Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Farming	28	23.3
Trading	24	20.0
Fishing	41	34.2
Civil servant	13	10.8
Hunting	12	10.0
Other	2	1.7
Total	120	100.0
Mother's Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Farming	17	14.2
Trading	55	45.8
Civil servant	7	5.8
Weaving	36	30.0
Goldsmith	5	4.2
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Data 2008.

Table 2 continued

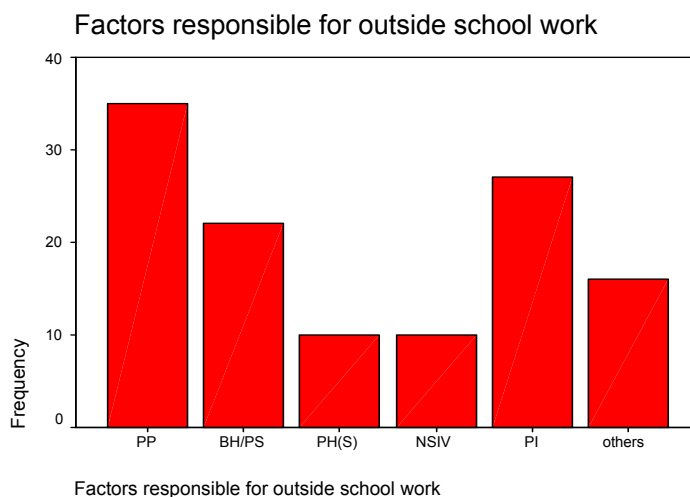
Items sold	Frequency	Percentage
Pure water	49.00	40.80
Orange	11.00	9.20
Bread	8.00	6.70
Popcorn	9.00	7.50
Akara	9.00	7.50
Others	34.00	28.30
Total	120.00	100.00
Load carrying activities	Frequency	Percentage
Truck pusher	8.00	6.70
Head carrier	16.00	13.30
Others	96.00	80.00
Total	120.00	100.00
Mode of participation and economic activities engaged in by respondents		
Mode	Frequency	Percentage
Full time	40.00	33.30
Part time	80.00	66.70
Total	120.00	100.00
Economic activities	Frequency	Percentage
Trading	86.00	71.70
Load carrying	25.00	20.80
Scavenging	9.00	7.50
Total	120.00	100.00

Source: Field Data, 2008.

Table 3. Distribution of respondents by factors responsible for outside school work (n = 120)

Factors	Frequency	Percent (%)
Parent poor	35.00	29.20
Broken home/parent separated	22.00	18.30
Parent health (sick)	10.00	8.30
No School in Vicinity	10.00	8.30
Personal Interest	27.00	22.50
Others	16.00	13.40
Total	120.00	100.00

Source: Field Data, 2008.



PP: Parent poor
 BH/PS: Broken home/Parent separated
 PH(S): Parent health (sick)
 NSIV: No school in the Vicinity
 PI: Personal problems

Table 4. Distribution of respondents by distance of formal education to Household residence (n = 120)

	Frequency	Percent
Very far	54.00	45.00
Far	35.00	29.20
Near	31.00	25.80
Total	120.00	100.00

Source: Field Data, 2008.

Table 5. Distribution of respondents by daily income earned, amount earned, and period of work (n = 120)

What is your daily income?		
Amount	Frequency	Percent
less than 100	12	10.0
Between 100-500	48	40.0
Between 500-1000	39	32.5
above 1000	21	17.5
Total	120	100.0
What is your work period?		
Period	Frequency	Percent
Afternoon only	32	26.7
Morning only	25	20.8
Morning and afternoon	44	36.7
Evening	19	15.8
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Data 2008.

Table 6. Distribution of respondents by other economic activities engaged in by children

Activities	Frequency	Percent
Agricultural activities	40	33.3
Water fetching	33	27.5
Domestic sweeping	37	30.8
Artisan	10	8.3
Total	120	100.0

Source: Field Data 2008.

Table 7. Distribution of respondents according to the effect of child trading on educational attainment of children

Activities	Most of the time	%	Occasionally	%	Never	%	Total frequency	Total percentage
Reading	85.0	70.9	33.0	27.5	2.0	1.7		
Numbers of days in school	95.0	79.2	24.0	20.0	1.0	0.8		
Participation in home work activities	90.0	75.0	25.0	20.8	5.0	4.2		
Participation in extracurricular activities								
Access to textbook and writing materials								

Source: Field Data 2008.

Table 8. Chi-square relationship between daily income and street trading

Variables	χ^2	P	Decision
Pure water	22.22	0.01	S
Orange	10.93	0.042	S
Bread	3.86	0.50	NS
Popcorn	0.92	0.63	NS
Akara	0.04	0.30	NS
Others	0.84	0.56	NS
Truck pushers	0.02	0.90	NS
Head carrier	21.72	0.00	S
Others	0.84	0.67	NS

NS = not significant

S = significant

** P < 0.01, * P < 0.05

Table 9. Chi-square relationship between distance of formal education to household residence and street trading activities

Variables	χ^2	P	Decision
Pure water	27.78	0.001**	S
Orange	20.04	0.012*	S
Bread	39.07	0.00**	S
Popcorn	2.08	0.142	NS
Akara	3.35	0.201	NS
Others	0.02	0.60	NS
Truck pushers	8.29	0.30	NS
Head carrier	48.76	0.00	S
Others	0.09	0.481	NS

NS = not significant

S = significant

** P < 0.01, * P < 0.05)