



EFFECTS OF CHILD STREET TRADING ON EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES IN LAGOS NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examines the effects of child street trading on educational outcomes in Lagos, Nigeria. Using a qualitative research design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with parents and teachers to explore how street trading impacts school attendance, academic performance, and the cognitive and emotional development of children. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involved emergent open coding to identify recurring patterns and themes. The analysis revealed four major themes: (1) disruption of school attendance and engagement, (2) academic performance and learning challenges, (3) cognitive and emotional development, and (4) socioeconomic pressures and educational aspirations. The findings show that street trading significantly disrupts children's school attendance, leading to tardiness, missed classes, and exhaustion, which hinder their ability to concentrate and engage in learning. As a result, academic performance suffers, with children experiencing gaps in knowledge and declining grades. Additionally, the emotional toll of street trading was evident, with many children struggling with low self-esteem and feelings of failure, further diminishing their motivation to succeed academically. The study concludes that child street trading poses substantial barriers to educational success, perpetuating poverty and limiting future opportunities. These findings highlight the urgent need for targeted policies and interventions to mitigate the negative impact of street trading on children's education in Lagos, Nigeria.

Keywords

Child street trading, Educational outcomes, School absenteeism, Informal economy, Cognitive development

1. Introduction

Child street trading remains a critical issue in many developing economies, particularly in Nigeria, where it presents significant challenges to children's educational outcomes. Despite global and national efforts to combat child labor, many children involved in street trading face severe educational disadvantages. These include irregular school attendance, poor academic performance, and stunted cognitive development. The long hours spent working in often unsafe environments hinder their ability to fully participate in school, thereby depriving them of the opportunity to acquire the skills and knowledge needed for long-term personal and economic growth (Pappeswari & Rajalakshmi, 2014).

Street vending, part of the broader informal economy, is a visible element of urban workforces, constituting a significant portion of employment in low-income countries (Herrera et al., 2012). In Nigeria, the informal economy has become a primary means of livelihood for many, including children who engage in street trading to supplement household income. The informal economy is not officially registered or regulated by government policies (Calbreath, 2010), leading to vulnerabilities among street vendors and their dependents. While street trading provides a source of income and survival for many families, it also poses barriers to children's educational success, contributing to school absenteeism and poor performance (Ehrenfeucht, 2016).

The problem of child street trading is closely tied to broader economic challenges such as unemployment and poverty (Alhassan & Adamu, 2014). As formal employment opportunities shrink, families increasingly rely on street trading as a stop-gap measure, with children often contributing to household income (Sarkar & Srivastava, 2009). However, the involvement of children in street trading not only exposes them to unsafe working conditions but also negatively affects their cognitive and emotional development, limiting their capacity for academic

achievement (Fawole et al., 2003). These challenges are exacerbated by Nigeria's volatile macroeconomic environment, which further constrains educational planning and investment in human capital development (Ukwu et al., 2003).

While existing studies have examined the socioeconomic drivers of child street trading (Amoah-Mensah, 2016), there is limited research on its direct educational impacts. This study aims to fill that gap by investigating the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding the effects of child street trading on school attendance, academic performance, and cognitive development. By exploring these specific educational barriers, the study seeks to provide insights for policymakers and educators on how to develop interventions that can improve the educational prospects of affected children and disrupt the cycle of poverty and educational deprivation.

Given the complexities of street vending and its implications for economic growth, particularly in informal economies like Nigeria's, this research also aligns with broader discussions on how informal economic activities, such as street trading, can transition into the formal economy to contribute more effectively to national development (Ehrenfeucht, 2016). The dual challenge of managing the informal sector while addressing the educational needs of child street traders presents an urgent need for policy interventions that support sustainable economic growth without sacrificing the welfare and future opportunities of vulnerable children.

This study will contribute to the literature by highlighting the direct educational consequences of child street trading and offering evidence-based recommendations for interventions aimed at improving children's educational experiences and outcomes. Addressing the specific challenges faced by child street traders is critical to ensuring that these children can break free from the cycle of poverty and achieve long-term economic advancement.

Research Gap/Significance

Due to the current economic challenges in Nigeria, especially among low-income families, many parents involve their children in street hawking. This activity affects children in several ways: Children who combine hawking with schooling often face issues such as lateness, poor study habits, low self-esteem, and weak academic performance, which can result in failure or dropping out. Some children find it hard to manage both school and hawking, leading to complete school withdrawal. Many children involved in hawking become underachievers or develop a fear of school due to the stress and pressure from their hawking duties (Ugo, 2024). The education problem is that child street trading in Nigeria has a detrimental effect on children's educational outcomes.

It leads to absenteeism, early dropout, and hampers their cognitive development due to long working hours and unsafe conditions. Despite efforts to combat child labor, these children struggle to access quality education, limiting their opportunities for long-term advancement. The excerpt highlights a gap in understanding the direct impact of street trading on education and aims to address how it hinders learning and development, trapping children in a cycle of poverty and educational deprivation. Zuhumben et al. (2023) recommended conducting studies to examine the impact of street hawking on teenagers' academic performance, with the aim of informing government policies that could eradicate street hawking. Such policies are critical, as the future of any nation depends on the quality of education provided to its younger generation. The significance of this study lies in its potential to shed light on the detrimental impact of child street hawking on educational outcomes in Nigeria. By exploring how street hawking contributes to absenteeism, early school dropout, and poor academic performance, this research aims to provide valuable insights into the barriers children face in accessing quality education. The findings will inform policies aimed at reducing child labor, helping to break the cycle of poverty and educational deprivation. This study is crucial for developing strategies to improve the academic well-being of children involved in street hawking and ensuring that they have better opportunities for long-term advancement.

Problem Statement

Approximately 71% of children aged 10 to 18 believe that street trading negatively impacts their reading schedules, while about 79% feel that it affects their school attendance rates (Ashimolowo et al., 2010). Child street trading remains a significant issue in developing economies like Nigeria, where it negatively affects children's educational outcomes, including school attendance, academic performance, and cognitive development. Despite global and local efforts to combat child labor, these children experience absenteeism, early dropout, and stunted growth due to long working hours and unsafe conditions. These challenges prevent them from accessing quality education, limiting their opportunities for long-term advancement (Pappeswari & Rajalakshmi, 2014).

While research has explored the socioeconomic drivers of child street trading, there is limited understanding of its direct impact on children's education, particularly how it impedes learning and development. As a result, these children remain trapped in a cycle of poverty and educational deprivation, worsening their marginalization (Fawole et al., 2003; Sarkar & Srivastava, 2009). Furthermore, street vending in Nigeria plays a major role in informal employment, contributing up to 60% of Gross National Income (GNI) and providing significant job opportunities (Verick, 2008).

However, authorities struggle to manage and control this sector effectively, often relying on deterrent measures that fail to address underlying issues like bribery and corruption (Mitullah, 2003; Emozozo, 2017). This

study seeks to fill these gaps by examining the educational consequences of child street trading in Nigeria and offering policy recommendations to improve educational outcomes and transition street traders to the formal economy. Addressing these challenges is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty.

Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

Nigerian Economy and Oil Dependence

The Nigerian economy has long been dominated by oil, with significant impacts on its macroeconomic stability. Ikein (2017) emphasized that oil is a critical resource for both consumers and producers globally, driving energy, social development, and economic progress. However, nations heavily reliant on oil, such as Nigeria, face challenges in balancing their economic needs and preventing external interference without oil revenue (O'Reilly, 1999). Oil price volatility has substantial macroeconomic consequences, influencing exchange rates, government revenues, and economic stability (Hakro & Omezzine, 2016). When oil prices rise, Nigeria experiences increased export earnings and higher national income. Conversely, declining oil prices lead to economic dislocation, currency devaluation, and reduced government revenues (Ikein, 2017). The fluctuations in oil prices have historically affected the value of the Nigerian naira. For instance, during the 2014–2016 oil price drop, the exchange rate shifted from N150 to the dollar to as high as N300 (Ikein, 2017). This volatility has resulted in a fragile economy, dependent primarily on oil, which accounts for nearly 90% of Nigeria's export revenues and over 70% of government income (Rafindadi, 2015). The agriculture sector, once the backbone of the Nigerian economy, now contributes only 31% to the GDP (Akaeze & Akaeze, 2017).

Economic Development in Nigeria

Economic development, as defined by Alhassan and Adamu (2014), involves improvements in citizens' living standards, access to social services, infrastructure, and overall quality of life. In Nigeria, economic development has been heavily influenced by the oil sector, which continues to dominate economic activities. The discovery of oil in the mid-1950s transformed Nigeria into a monocultural economy, relying predominantly on oil revenues (Prince Umor, 2004). Despite the vast oil wealth, Nigeria faces severe economic challenges, including unemployment, inflation, and poverty. Approximately 70.8% of the population lives on less than \$1 per day (Zannawaziri et al., 2012). The agriculture and oil sectors are the primary contributors to Nigeria's economy, with oil playing a critical role in GDP growth. However, the reliance on oil has led to economic instability, especially during periods of low oil prices. Nigeria's experience with "Dutch Disease" illustrates how the dependence on natural resources can negatively impact other sectors, such as agriculture and manufacturing, due to the overvaluation of the national currency (Heidari, 2014).

Macroeconomic Volatility

Macroeconomic volatility (MEV) refers to fluctuations in key economic indicators, such as output, employment, and inflation. In Nigeria, MEV is largely driven by oil price shocks and the country's overdependence on oil exports (Abdulkareem & Abdulkareem, 2016). This volatility undermines long-term economic growth and hinders investment, leading to uncertainty in both public and private sectors (Cariolle, 2012). Developing nations, including Nigeria, often experience high levels of volatility due to weak institutional frameworks and poor macroeconomic policies (Loayza et al., 2007). As a Petro-monolithic economy, Nigeria's revenue fluctuations and macroeconomic instability are closely tied to oil price changes. Public revenues are unstable, and the economy is highly vulnerable to external shocks, making it difficult to sustain long-term growth (Ukwu et al., 2003).

Inflation

Inflation is a critical macroeconomic challenge affecting many countries, particularly those in the developing world. It introduces uncertainty regarding future prices, which influences decisions related to expenditures, savings, investments, and resource allocation. Patience and Augustine (2008) define inflation as the persistent and sharp rise in the general price level of goods and services, noting that inflation occurs when price increases are sustained rather than temporary fluctuations. This steady rise in average prices can cause significant economic harm, especially to the poor who lack savings to buffer against inflation's impact. In Nigeria, several factors contribute to inflation, including increased public spending, money supply, scarcity, policy announcements, and the removal of petroleum subsidies (Orji et al., 2015). Patience and Augustine (2008) also highlight key causes such as money supply, government expenditure, exchange rates, and the pricing of products. The consequences of inflation include diminished purchasing power, increased uncertainty for long-term financial planning, and an unequal redistribution of wealth (McConnell & Bruce, 2008). Inflation in Nigeria has fluctuated over time, with rates moving from single digits to double digits by the third quarter of 2008, reaching 11.5% (Ditimi et al., 2018). By 2017, inflation had risen from 9.0% in 2015 to 18.3%, doubling the price levels of goods and services (Ditimi et al., 2018). Such inflationary trends have led to reduced currency purchasing power, higher unemployment, and income inequality, negatively impacting Nigeria's economy.

Unemployment

Unemployment, the condition where individuals willing and able to work cannot find employment, represents a significant macroeconomic challenge (Matouskova, 2016). This issue signals that a nation's economy is not achieving full employment, a key macroeconomic goal. Unemployment leads to societal welfare loss, reduced output, lower incomes, and a decline in general well-being (Akaeze & Akaeze, 2018). In Nigeria, unemployment has been on the rise, with rates increasing from 13.5% in 1999 to approximately 24% in 2011 (Orji et al., 2015). High unemployment rates result in economic output loss and a diminished ability to address the scarcity of resources (McConnell & Bruce, 2008). The persistence of unemployment in Nigeria reflects the broader struggle to meet the economic goal of full employment, exacerbating the nation's social and economic challenges.

Undeclared Work

Undeclared work refers to paid labor that is not reported to authorities for tax, social security, or legal purposes (European Commission, 2007). This practice, prevalent in Nigeria's informal economy, has various economic, social, and legal implications. Workers involved in undeclared work evade taxes, undermining state resources and creating inefficiencies within the economy (Allingham & Sandmo, 1972). In sub-Saharan Africa, undeclared work is widespread, with up to 70% of workers being self-employed (International Labor Organization, 2002). Undeclared work also distorts competition, as businesses that employ undeclared workers enjoy fewer financial obligations, thereby gaining an unfair competitive advantage over those that comply with legal requirements (Gheorghiu, 2012). Addressing the problem of undeclared work requires a combination of deterrence, preventive measures, and enabling strategies to bring workers into the formal economy (Richardson & Sawyer, 2001).

Street Hawking in Nigeria

Street hawking, a form of street vending, is a common trading practice in Nigeria, particularly within the informal economy. Street hawkers carry their goods and move across streets, selling to customers directly (Aiyehuro, 1979). This trade is especially prevalent in Nigeria's urban areas, where high rates of unemployment, poverty, and lack of formal employment drive individuals, including children, into the trade (Oyekola & Agunbiade, 2018). Hawking is an important part of the Nigerian informal economy, providing income for many families. However, it exposes children to numerous risks, including road accidents, physical exhaustion, and negative socialization (Ezenwa, 2011). Despite government efforts to regulate street trading through laws like the Lagos State Street Trading and Illegal Market Prohibition Law, enforcement remains a challenge, and the practice persists (Emozozo, 2017). Street hawking is often seen as a survival strategy in the face of economic hardship, poverty, and unemployment. Nonetheless, the risks and challenges associated with it, particularly for children, raise concerns about its impact on education and overall well-being.

Contributions of Street Traders to Urban Economies

Street vendors, selling a wide range of products such as food, electronics, and clothing, significantly contribute to urban economies. According to the Informal Economy Monitoring Study (IEMS), street vendors not only provide income for their households by covering essential needs like food and education, but they also support formal businesses by sourcing goods from them. Additionally, street vendors create jobs for others, including porters and transport operators, and contribute to urban revenues through payments for permits, fees, and taxes. Despite their contributions, street vendors often face challenges such as lack of municipal support and unfavorable policies (Roever, 2014).

Informal Sector and Formal Economy

The informal sector plays a vital role in developing countries, offering employment and income to those unable to access formal jobs. The International Labor Organization (1972) defines the informal sector as economic activities not taxed or monitored by the government. Common informal vocations include petty trading, street hawking, and small-scale services. Factors such as rural-urban migration, economic crises, and lack of formal employment contribute to the sector's growth. Challenges faced by informal traders include poor infrastructure, limited access to finance, and conflict with formal business owners over trading spaces (Miltullah, 2003).

Policies for Informal Sector Development

To enhance the informal economy, policies need to address job creation, formalization, and worker protection. Formalizing street vending can improve traders' access to credit, markets, and technology while securing trading spaces and rights. This would help alleviate the economic and social challenges associated with the sector.

2. Method and Theory

2.1 Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

The conceptual framework for this study is grounded in Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (EST), developed in 1979 (Hosek et al., 2008). The EST posits that a child's development is influenced by multiple environmental layers through proximal processes, which are interactions between the individual and their immediate surroundings (Roy, 2018). This theory is instrumental in understanding how different environmental systems impact a child's educational experience, particularly in relation to street trading. At the core of EST is the microsystem, which includes environments such as family, school, and peer groups. Street trading disrupts this level by diverting time and energy away from academic activities, thereby negatively affecting children's focus and participation in education. The mesosystem refers to connections between these settings, such as relationships between parents and teachers. When children are involved in street trading, these relationships may weaken, reducing academic support and engagement.

The exosystem encompasses external factors like socioeconomic conditions. In Nigeria, poverty often forces children into street trading, limiting their access to educational resources and opportunities. The macrosystem, which involves cultural and societal attitudes, also plays a role in shaping the emphasis placed on education and the value attributed to street trading, further affecting the time children dedicate to schooling. By applying EST, this study views street trading as a multifaceted disruptor of children's development, influencing both immediate and broader support systems. It provides a comprehensive lens for examining how street trading affects children's educational outcomes, offering critical insights for designing interventions to improve these outcomes (Roy, 2018).

2.2 Research Question

The primary research question for a basic qualitative study is: How do parents and teachers perceive the impact of child street trading on children's school attendance, academic performance, and cognitive development in Lagos Nigeria?

This question focuses on gathering insights from both parents and teachers regarding their observations and experiences, aligning with the study's aim of exploring educational outcomes related to child street trading. These sub-questions focus on different dimensions of the main research question, enabling a deeper exploration of the specific aspects of school attendance, academic performance, and cognitive development. Three sub-questions based on the primary research question are:

1. How do parents perceive the impact of child street trading on their children's ability to attend school regularly and engage with the curriculum?
2. What are teachers' perspectives on how child street trading affects students' academic performance and learning outcomes in the classroom?
3. How do parents and teachers view the effects of child street trading on children's cognitive and emotional development, and what long-term educational consequences do they foresee?

2.3 Method

This qualitative study explores how child street trading affects educational outcomes in Nigeria. Qualitative research is well-suited for this study because it helps us understand how people experience and interpret their situations (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research is a method that seeks to understand people's experiences, thoughts, and perspectives through techniques like interviews, observations, and document review. It focuses on gathering detailed information that can't be measured with numbers (Neuman, 2000). This approach allows us to gather detailed insights into the challenges and effects of street trading on children's education.

To capture a broad range of experiences and perspectives, this study will involve one-on-one virtual interviews with two key groups of participants including parents or guardians of Child Street Traders who will provide insights into why their children engage in street trading and how it affects their education. The other key group are teachers and school administrators who will share their observations on how street trading influences students' school attendance, academic performance, and behavior. They will also discuss how schools address issues like absenteeism and dropouts. Directly interviewing these participants helps to reveal the specific challenges that might be missed in quantitative research, providing a deeper understanding of how street trading impacts education.

2.4 Research Design

The Basic Qualitative Design was selected for this study because it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences within a reasonable timeframe, ensuring a thorough understanding of the issues while maintaining flexibility in both data collection and analysis. This design is particularly well-suited for examining complex, real-world challenges like the effects of child street trading on educational outcomes in Nigeria. It helps

capture the social, economic, and educational factors that influence the experiences of children involved in street trading, as well as their families and educators.

Unlike more rigid research designs, the Basic Qualitative Design provides the flexibility to adapt methods as new insights emerge, making it ideal for understanding the dynamic nature of street trading and its impact on education. This approach enables a systematic exploration of the perspectives of both parents and teachers, offering a richer understanding of how street trading affects children's school attendance, academic performance, and overall educational experiences. It also supports the development of strategies to address the challenges faced by these children. Purposive sampling was used to select participants for this study. This method involves choosing participants based on their specific relevance to the research topic (Bernard, 2002). A total of five teachers and five parents or guardians of child street traders were selected to provide valuable insights into how street trading influences educational outcomes.

2.5 Data Collection Methods

For the study data were collected using both interviews and questionnaires. Participants included five teachers and five parents or guardians, all selected through purposive sampling. The teachers were chosen based on having at least five years of teaching experience in schools located in areas with a high prevalence of child street traders, as teachers with this level of experience are deemed knowledgeable enough to provide valuable insights (Gore et al., 2024). Parents or guardians were selected based on being primarily responsible for a child engaged in street trading. Parental involvement is often seen as a crucial factor in addressing the educational challenges of underperforming children (Berger, 1991).

Interviews were conducted virtually via Zoom using a semi-structured interview guide with the same set of open-ended questions to ensure focus and consistency across interviews. Interviews based on a semi-structured interview guide, is a simplified display of questions or topics that will be explored by the interviewer (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006). The semi-structured format provided flexibility in the conversation while ensuring that key topics were covered, enabling a deeper understanding of the social, economic, and educational challenges linked to child street trading. This method of data collection was chosen for its cost-effectiveness and time efficiency compared to in-person interviews (Krouwel et al., 2019). Each interview was conducted individually, based on participants' availability, in a setting that ensured comfort and confidentiality to encourage open sharing. Informed consent was obtained before the interviews, which were audio-recorded, and notes were taken to accurately capture participants' responses.

The interview guide was divided into two sections: Section A for teacher respondents and Section B for parent respondents. Ten semi-structured questions were included for both groups, focusing on the causes, implications, and effects of street trading on child education in Lagos, Nigeria. The interviews were conducted primarily in English and Pidgin English, which is widely spoken in Nigeria. In addition to the interviews, data was also collected from secondary sources such as newspapers, textbooks, research papers, and journals to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The entire data collection process, which provided detailed insights into the effects of child street trading on education, was completed within two weeks.

2.6 Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was carried out using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step method to better understand the data and highlight key themes. The steps involved: (1) familiarizing with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing the themes, (5) defining and naming the themes, and (6) producing the final report. Thematic analysis is a reliable qualitative method that helps researchers identify and interpret patterns (themes) within the data (Creswell, 2013). This analysis identified four main themes: (a) Disruption of School Attendance and Engagement, (b) Academic Performance and Learning Challenges, (c) Cognitive and Emotional Development, and (d) Socioeconomic Pressures and Educational Aspirations.

3. Result

The study examined the detrimental effects of child street trading on children's educational outcomes in Lagos, Nigeria. The central research question explored how parents and teachers perceive its impact on school attendance, academic performance, and cognitive development. Participants included five teachers (two primary and three junior secondary) and five parents of child street hawkers. Virtual semi-structured interviews were transcribed and analyzed using NVivo 14 software, following Braun and Clarke's thematic analysis approach.

Emergent open coding revealed 201 code segments, which were organized into 10 sub-themes and synthesized into four major themes: (a) Disruption of School Attendance and Engagement, (b) Academic Performance and Learning Challenges, (c) Cognitive and Emotional Development, and (d) Socioeconomic Pressures and Educational Aspirations. These findings confirmed that child street trading significantly hampers

educational outcomes, supporting the EST, which posits that development is shaped by the interaction of interconnected environmental systems (Crawford, 2020).

Three sub-questions guided the analysis:

1. How do parents perceive the impact of child street trading on school attendance and curriculum engagement?
2. What are teachers' views on its effect on academic performance and learning outcomes?
3. How do both groups perceive its effects on cognitive and emotional development, and the long-term consequences?

3.1 Findings

This section presents the findings of the study, organized by research questions, major themes, and sub-themes. Thematic analysis was conducted using NVivo 14, with participant quotes included to provide depth and credibility to the findings. The basic qualitative design proved effective for exploring both the professional and parental perspectives on child street trading's impact on education (Bailey, 2018). Participant responses offered valuable insights into the challenges faced, enhancing the understanding of how child street trading affects children's educational outcomes.

The findings are structured around four major themes: (a) *Disruption of School Attendance and Engagement*, (b) *Academic Performance and Learning Challenges*, (c) *Cognitive and Emotional Development*, and (d) *Socioeconomic Pressures and Educational Aspirations*. These themes are supported by relevant literature and theoretical frameworks, which help to contextualize and interpret the participants' experiences. The integration of participant quotes strengthens the narrative, making the results more engaging and relatable.

3.2 R1: Parents' Perceptions on Attendance Impact

The primary theme that emerged in response to research question one is the *Disruption of School Attendance and Engagement*. This theme captures parents' perceptions of how child street trading affects their children's school attendance and engagement with the curriculum.

3.2.1 Major theme: Disruption of School Attendance and Engagement

A major highlight from participants responses is that parents perceive child street trading as having a negative impact on school attendance and curriculum engagement. Parents acknowledge that their children often miss school, arrive late, or struggle to focus on their studies due to exhaustion from street trading. This disrupts their ability to keep up with schoolwork and affects their academic performance, particularly in core subjects like reading and math. However, despite recognizing the educational consequences, parents feel compelled to continue relying on the income generated from their children's street trading to support their household needs, creating a difficult trade-off between financial survival and educational success. The support for this answer from participant responses includes from one of the participants *She sometimes misses school or goes late... By the time she gets to class, she's tired and doesn't concentrate well.* Another participant said, *"Street trading makes it difficult for my daughter to attend school regularly... she struggles to focus on her schoolwork and falls behind in her lessons."* Another participant added that, *"He also misses classes occasionally... I know it's affecting his performance, but we rely on the income."* Finally, a participant added that, *"Sometimes, she even misses school entirely when business is demanding."*

Studies have consistently shown that child labor, particularly street hawking, affects the academic performance and study habits of teenagers in secondary schools (Akiti, 2024). This form of child labor contributes to poor school performance, absenteeism, and high dropout rates. Street hawking impedes regular school attendance and concentration, which directly impacts academic performance (Kainuwa & Ashiru, 2022).

3.3 R2: Impact on Academic Performance and Learning

Two major themes emerged from research question one: Academic Performance and Learning Challenges; and Socioeconomic Pressures and Educational Aspirations. These two major themes that address the impact of street trading on academic performance and learning of school age children in Lagos Nigeria:

3.3.1 Major theme: Academic Performance and Learning Challenges

Participants reported that street trading significantly disrupts students' academic performance by causing fatigue and irregular attendance, which impairs their concentration, leads to missed instructional time, and results in gaps in knowledge. According to the participants, this disruption makes it challenging for students to keep up with their studies, complete assignments, and meet educational standards, ultimately affecting their overall learning outcomes and academic success.

Some support from participant responses includes fatigue and concentration issues under which the teachers noted that long hours of street trading leave students exhausted, impairing their ability to concentrate in class and perform well on assignments and exams. An example is when one participant suggested that *"The long*

hours spent trading often leave her exhausted and unable to concentrate during lessons." Participants also noted irregular attendance by the affected students under which they pointed out that frequent absences due to trading responsibilities lead to missed critical instructional time, which hampers students' understanding of the curriculum and contributes to academic lag. For example, one of the participants said, "Her irregular attendance due to trading responsibilities means she misses critical instructional time, which hinders her understanding of the curriculum."

Finally, most of the participants pointed to academic performance decline. According to the participants, the combination of fatigue and disrupted learning opportunities results in students falling behind, struggling with new concepts, and having difficulties in retaining information, affecting their overall academic performance and learning outcomes. As one of the participants said, "The combination of tiredness and missed school days significantly undermines her academic progress and learning potential."

Research indicates that street trading in Nigeria, a widespread form of child labor, significantly reduces the level of education attained by children, affecting literacy and overall human capital development. Street hawkers often struggle to attend school regularly due to the demands of hawking (Ugodulunwa et al., 2014). This inability to focus on studies limits their academic potential. Ubah and Bulus (2014) found that students who engage in street hawking underperform academically, particularly in subjects like social studies, as they lack the time and energy to concentrate on their education.

Considering these challenges, recommendations have been made to discourage parents from subjecting their children to labor activities like hawking, which negatively affect their academic performance. Additionally, government interventions, such as scholarships for economically disadvantaged families, are recommended to reduce the need for children to participate in street trading and improve their engagement in school activities (Ugodulunwa et al., 2014).

3.3.2. Major theme: Socioeconomic Pressures and Educational Aspirations

Participants generally agreed that socioeconomic pressures from street trading significantly impact students' academic performance and learning outcomes. For a sixth-grade boy involved in street trading, these pressures create substantial barriers to his educational success. The need to work for family income often results in exhaustion and irregular school attendance, making it challenging for him to focus and keep up with his schoolwork. This fatigue affects his ability to participate actively in class, complete assignments on time, and perform well in exams. Additionally, his frequent absences mean he misses essential instructional time, which impairs his understanding of the curriculum and hampers his academic progress. The constant juggling of work and school responsibilities creates significant obstacles to his educational aspirations and overall learning potential. The supporting quotes from the participants responses include:

"The need to work for family income often results in exhaustion and irregular school attendance."(P1). "This fatigue affects his ability to participate actively in class, complete assignments on time, and perform well in exams." (P2). "His frequent absences mean he misses essential instructional time, which impairs his understanding of the curriculum and hampers his academic progress." (P4). "The constant juggling of work and school responsibilities creates significant obstacles to his educational aspirations and overall learning potential."(P5).

Socioeconomic status is significantly related to the prevalence of children street hawking (Foday, 2023). As Foday (2023) notes, children from low-income families are often driven to engage in street trading due to the financial pressures faced by their households. This practice, as Ekpenyong and Sibiri (2011) explain, reflects the chronic urban poverty that compels parents to send school-aged children to work to supplement the family income. The impact of this economic necessity is detrimental to the children's education. According to Ashimolowo (2010), street trading adversely affects children's educational attainment, limiting their ability to engage fully in academic activities and achieve long-term educational goals.

3.4. R3: Perceptions of Cognitive and Emotional Impact

A common theme from the responses provided by participants is Cognitive and Emotional Development. Both parents/guardians and teachers recognize the negative impact of street trading on the cognitive and emotional development of child street traders, though their perspectives differ in the extent of their concern. Parents and guardians often view these challenges as unavoidable, focusing more on immediate survival than on long-term consequences. For instance, a guardian might acknowledge that street trading causes "fatigue and limits the child's ability to concentrate on schoolwork," and while they recognize that "street trading deprives him of the time and focus needed for academic growth," they may still perceive it as a "practical necessity despite the potential harm to the boy's future cognitive and emotional well-being." Teachers, on the other hand, take a more critical view, emphasizing the deeper academic and emotional damage caused by street trading. They note that street trading "hinders his ability to grasp basic concepts," and they express concern that "the pressure to work at such a young age has a damaging effect, leading to feelings of failure, low self-esteem, and a loss of motivation for learning."

Long-term, teachers warn that the child's struggles could "limit his future opportunities for employment and success," thus "perpetuating a cycle of poverty." These perspectives highlight the differing levels of urgency both groups assign to the issue, with teachers focusing more on the lasting consequences of the child's cognitive and emotional development. Hawking has a negative effect on socio emotional development of the children (Bosah et al., 2015).

4. Discussion/Conclusion

Discussion

The findings of this study highlight the profound and detrimental effects of child street trading on educational outcomes in Lagos, Nigeria. Street trading significantly disrupts students' school attendance, leading to frequent absences, late arrivals, and exhaustion. This disruption impairs students' engagement with their studies, particularly in core subjects like reading and mathematics. Both parents and teachers acknowledged that fatigue from long hours of trading prevents children from focusing in class, completing assignments, and keeping pace with their peers, leading to a decline in academic performance.

Furthermore, socioeconomic pressures exacerbate these challenges, as families rely on the income generated by street trading for survival. This creates a difficult trade-off between financial stability and children's educational progress. While parents perceive street trading as an unfortunate necessity, teachers express concern over its long-term impact on students' cognitive and emotional development. Students not only struggle academically but also exhibit signs of low self-esteem and loss of motivation due to the overwhelming demands of work and school. Ashimolowo et al. (2010) highlights the significant negative impact of child trading activities on various aspects of children's education. A large majority of respondents reported that trading interferes with homework participation (75.0%), extracurricular involvement (74.1%), reading schedules (70.9%), and school attendance (79.2%) (Ashimolowo et al., 2010). These findings underscore the broad disruptive influence of street trading on students' academic engagement and performance.

5. Conclusion

This study highlights the detrimental impact of child street trading on educational outcomes in Lagos, Nigeria, based on insights from both parents and teachers. Parents generally perceive child street trading as a significant barrier to their children's ability to attend school regularly and engage meaningfully with the curriculum. Many parents expressed concern over their children's frequent tardiness, absenteeism, and exhaustion, all of which hindered their ability to focus in class and participate actively in learning activities. From the teachers' perspective, child street trading severely affects students' academic performance. Teachers reported that many students who engage in street trading often miss critical instructional time, leading to gaps in knowledge, declining grades, and an overall lack of engagement with classroom material. They emphasized that the fatigue and stress associated with trading activities outside of school diminish students' capacity to concentrate and perform at their full potential.

Both parents and teachers view street trading as having a profound impact on children's cognitive and emotional development. They noted that the mental and emotional toll on child street traders often manifests in low self-esteem, feelings of failure, and a diminished motivation to succeed academically. The long-term educational consequences include a higher likelihood of academic underachievement, limited future opportunities, and an increased risk of perpetuating the cycle of poverty. In light of these findings, the study underscores the urgent need for policies and interventions aimed at addressing the socioeconomic drivers behind child street trading. A multi-faceted approach is required, including creating support systems that allow children to attend school regularly, focus on their studies, and thrive both academically and emotionally. Without targeted efforts, the cycle of poverty, educational underachievement, and limited future opportunities for child street traders is likely to continue.

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