

# Determinants and Consequences of Street Hawking among Children in Rumuokoro Metropolis of Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria

Onwuchuruba, Annunciata Chilee<sup>1</sup> & Harry, Patricia Gad N<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>College of Nursing Sciences, University of Port Harcourt Teaching Hospital, Port –Harcourt, Rivers State.

<sup>2</sup>Department of Community Health Nursing, Federal University Otuoke Bayelsa State.

\*Corresponding Author: Onwuchuruba, Annunciata Chilee

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21023420>

Article History	Abstract
<b>Original Research Article</b>	<p><i>Children form a substantial proportion of the population of most African countries but, there exist a significant deficiency in the schooling systems of most countries which is characterized by a general lack of provision of child care, leading to child abuse. This study examined the determinants and consequences of street hawking among children in Rumuokoro Metropolis of Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria. The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a target population comprising of children hawkers within 6-17 years. The sample size of 389 was selected using the convenient sampling technique. Data was collected using questionnaire which was validated by experts. The data gathered from the field were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The analyzed descriptive statistics were presented in frequencies, percentages, standard deviation and mean. The result showed that most of the respondents 122(32.1%) were between the ages of 5 – 8years, very few of them 48(12.6%) stopped school at primary school level, more 198(52.1%) were female and 162 (42.6) were Christians. According to the result, the factors that led to street hawking were death of parents 230 (60.5%); desire to have money early 222(58.4%); parental laziness 208(54.7%); child trafficking/abuse 260(68.4%); among others. The respondents were equally of the opinion that poverty can lead to street hawking. The perceived effect of street hawking were unwanted pregnancy 340 (89.5%); can lead to drug addiction 202(53.2%), child’s rape 174(45.8%) and even death 230 (60.5%). Also, the result shows that, free education 272(71.6%), help from NGOs 256 (67.4%), and help from religious bodies 140(36.8%) will stop children from hawking on the streets. It was concluded that street hawking is a menace which is eating deep into the society and is causing school drop outs. It was recommended among others that, the government should encourage the NGOs to come up with programs that will help remove these children from the streets, and also ensure that there is free education of all children as it is their fundamental human right.</i></p> <p><b>Keywords:</b> Children, Consequences, Determinant, Hawking, Street.</p>
Received: 04-05-2026	
Accepted: 07-06-2026	
Published: 29-06-2026	
<p><b>Copyright © 2026 The Author(s):</b> This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC) which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium for non-commercial use provided the original author and source are credited.</p>	
<p><b>Citation:</b> Amadi, Precious Friday &amp; EBIAMA, Salvation Perefurusowoi. (2026). Assessment of Health Education Effect on Coping Responses to Stress among Healthcare Workers in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. UKR Journal of Medicine and Medical Research (UKRJMMR), 2(3), 119-125.</p>	

## Introduction

Street hawking is a universal socioeconomic act existing in developing and developed countries whereby millions of people engage in informal trading activities on the street to make ends meet. In North America, street vendors selling food items, beverages and other consumer products at particular locations in public space have a footprint all over many developed countries. But in most African countries, street hawking has grown very rapidly as a result of

urbanisation, unemployment and the high level of poverty. For instance, in Ghana the street vending phenomenon increased significantly in major urban centres (e.g., Accra), cluttering roadways and public spaces. These patterns are observable in many cities and towns around the world, where people depend wholly or partially on street trading as an economic means of survival. Although street hawking provides an additional source of income for the family, the

use of children in this work is a serious violation of human rights. UN Children's Fund (2017): Unicef reports every child should be protected from all forms of exploitation, degrading treatment and torture, including illegal trafficking, child labour and other abuse or harmful practices Child labour, as defined by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), is when a child under 15 works in exploitative conditions (e.g. pay under minimum wage), which excludes whatever opportunities children have for healthy development and education.

An understanding of what really happens to children who live or work on the streets can only be arrived at through a consensus view of the prevailing social, cultural, and economic conditions that determine childhood for all people across African societies. Africa-Over 50 per cent of people under the age of twentyfive in many African countries which has enormous implications for resources, welfare, politics to cite a few Africa-70Roadsafe1st June 2015 I am worried The demographic reality is exacerbated by enduring shortfalls in educational provision and an absence of affordable out-of-school childcare for working parents, especially within urban communities which has resulted into an escalating trend in the reach length of time children stay on the street (Ebigbo, 2011). The driver of rapid urbanisation has however put a significant number of children at so much disadvantage that as soon as they were able they had to find employment in order to allow their household to survive, A study of child abuse and neglect situation in Nigeria through newspaper reports showed that the most frequently reported forms of child abuse and exploitation include child abandonment, sexual abuse, neglect, vagrancy, kidnapping, and street hawking (Ebigbo 2011). The data highlights the intertwined nature of poverty, family disruption, lack of social protection and children being more exposed to exploitation.

Child abuse is acknowledged as encompassing physical, emotional, sexual, and economic exploitation perpetrated by parents, guardians, employers, or other adults who take care of a child. While child labour, sexual exploitation and commercial exploitation of children are considered as different forms of abuse, they often occur together and more frequently than not several violations take place at the same time. In short, child abuse should not be seen only as a social problems but as one of the most serious human rights violations that calls for specific legal, social and institutional measures. This becomes an issue when you consider the fact that street hawking involves children in unsafe working conditions, educational deprivation, physical dangers and emotional trauma, all of which are components of a worrying decline in their overall development and well-being.

The international organisations have continually drawn attention to the multiple faces of child labour which remain anathema in the lives of children across developing nations. Common uses of trafficked children include compelled street hawking, petty trading at street corners, domestic labour, farm labourers or cattle rearers and as beggars bus conductors and car washers (UNICEF, 2017). Likewise, the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2017) defines a child as a person under the age of 15 for labour purposes; but most other international human rights instruments recognise every person under the age of 18 to be a child. According to Nigeria Federal Ministry of Employment, labour and productivity the worst forms of child labour include hawking, begging, livestock herding, trafficking, prostitution slavery and use of children for forced labour in criminal activities amongst others. Such practices are common within rapidly urbanizing cities such as this one, Port Harcourt, where population growth, unemployment, environmental degradation and encroaching informal settlements currently afflict an already impoverished urban populace (Macellina 2015: CCN 2009). Since there are not enough formal jobs available, it is common for most households to turn into the informal economy (for instance, street hawking) for their basic survival. Although such activities generate income, they also add to environmental degradation, congestion and safety problems. The International Labour Organization estimates that small and micro- enterprises comprise about 59% of the urban labour force in Sub-Saharan Africa, with informal employment estimated to be anywhere between 40% and 80% of urban employment (in Kenya) Key advances have kept such as rise of poverty, exploitation by adults, lack of the access to education and low level public awareness. Historically, a few African communities correlate child labour as training children for adulthood; however, extensive evidence suggests that exposure to exploitative and hazardous work conditions are more harmful than protectiveists argue whether it concerns health impairment, disruption of education or overall impediment. As a result of these developmentally undesirable trends, child labour has gradually emerged as one of the most significant social problems facing Nigerian society. According to Ebigbo and Abaga (2014), child abuse and child hawking have become rampant with a large number of children under 14 years of age usually found selling wares along highways in cities like Ibadan, Ondo and Ogun.

It opened the youthful hawker to many tormentors i.e. sexual foulness, sexual attacks, mishandle and danger of punishment in chastity on raising voice The consequences of such activities often result in unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, psychological disorders and a more common withdrawal from healthy relationships with the opposite sex (UNICEF 2017). Street hawking

exposes male and female youngsters to the danger of being preyed upon by fraudsters and real murders, this is, their naivety during odd hawking hours (Shailong et al., 2011). They are usually in immediate personal danger, under extreme life-threatening circumstances, e.g. when they are easy targets for occult predator (ritual murders). Even in the face of serious effort by the federal government and some non-governmental organisations to reverse this trend through initiatives like children games village, establishment of Child's Rights Bills passed 2015 by National Assembly and later at least eight state assembly including Lagos State (among other states) where such bills were endorsed nothing much has been achieved as much remain to be done on fulfilling this aspiration. Hence the reason for this investigation. Thus, the research work intends to discover the causes and effects of child street hawking in Rumuokoro metropolis in Obio-Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. Research questions include the following:

1. What are the factors that encourage street hawking in Obio/Akpor L.G.A, Rivers State?
2. What are the perceived effects street hawking have on children in Obio/Akpor L.G.A, Rivers State?
3. What are the possible remedies that will stop street hawking among children in Obio/Akpor L.G.A, Rivers State?

## Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design with a target

population comprising of children hawkers within 6-17 years in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area. The sample size was determined using the Leslie Fisher's Formula  $n = \frac{Z^2 pq}{d^2}$ . Where. n = sample size, z = Confidence level which is 95% = 1.96; p = Prevalence rate gotten from previous studies as 37.2%; q = 1 - P and d = 0.05. The sample size gotten was 389 after adding 10% attrition. The convenient sampling technique was used. Data was collected using questionnaire which was validated by experts for both face and content validity. To continue with the data collection, the self-structured questionnaire was shared among children hawkers selected as respondents after permission has been given by the local government chairman, motor park authorities and children hawkers. The purpose of the study was explained to them. The researcher administered the questionnaire; the respondents filled the questionnaire and they were retrieved at the spot. The data gathered from the field were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. The analyzed descriptive statistics were presented in frequencies, percentages, standard deviation and mean. Ethical issues in the research were taken cognizance of as an informed consent was sorted from the respondents by explaining what the study is all about, the purpose of conducting it and giving option to either accept or decline participation. Confidentiality was maintained as names and address were not included.

## Results

The results of this study are presented below in Tables:

**Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristic of Respondents (n = 380)**

Variables	Frequency (f)	Percentages (%)
<b>Age</b>		
5 – 8yrs	122	32.1
9 – 12yrs	118	31.1
13 – 16yrs	100	26.3
17 – 20yrs	40	10.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	172	45.3
Female	198	52.1
Missing System	10	2.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational qualification</b>		
Nursery level	48	12.6
Primary level	162	42.6
Secondary level	170	44.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Religion</b>		
Christian	162	42.6
Islam	116	30.5
Pagan	102	26.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>380</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 is showing the socio-demographic data of the respondents. The result showed that most of the respondents 122(32.1%) were between the ages of 5 – 8years, closely followed by age 9 – 12years 118(31.1%), also equally followed by age 13 – 16 years 100(26.3%). The

least of the respondents were aged between 17 – 20 years 40(10.5%). Very few of them 48(12.6%) stopped school at primary level. Most of the respondents 198(52.1%) were female and majority of them 162 (42.6) were Christians, while 116(30.5%) were of Islamic religion.

**Table 2: Factors that encourage street hawking in Obio/Akpor LGA**

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	A	SA	Mean	Std Dev
1	Poverty cannot lead to street hawking	224(58.9%)	10(2.6%)	108(28.4%)	38(10%)	1.89	1.12
2	Death of parents can lead	10(2.6%)	18(4.7%)	122(32.1%)	230(60.5%)	3.51	.70
3	Loss of interest in education	18(4.7%)	8(2.1%)	220(57.9%)	124(32.6%)	3.21	.71
4	Desire to have money early cannot lead	0(0.0%)	46(12.1%)	222(58.4%)	104(27.4%)	3.16	.61
5	Peer influence can lead to street hawking	26(6.8%)	106(27.9%)	36(9.5%)	202(53.2%)	3.12	1.04
6	Parental laziness can cause street hawking	40(10.5%)	114(30.0%)	18(4.7%)	208 (54.7%)	3.03	1.12
6	Child trafficking/abuse will not lead	260(68.4%)	10(2,6%)	82(21.6%)	28(7.4%)	1.67	1.04
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.79</b>	<b>0.90</b>

**Criterion mean = 2.50. Decision: <2.50 is poor, ≥2.50 is good**

Table 2 is the table showing the factors that encourage street hawking in Obio-Akpor local Government Area of Rivers State. The overall result showed that the identified factors encourage street hawking as the criterion mean is 2.79 ± 0.90. According to the result, these factors are death of

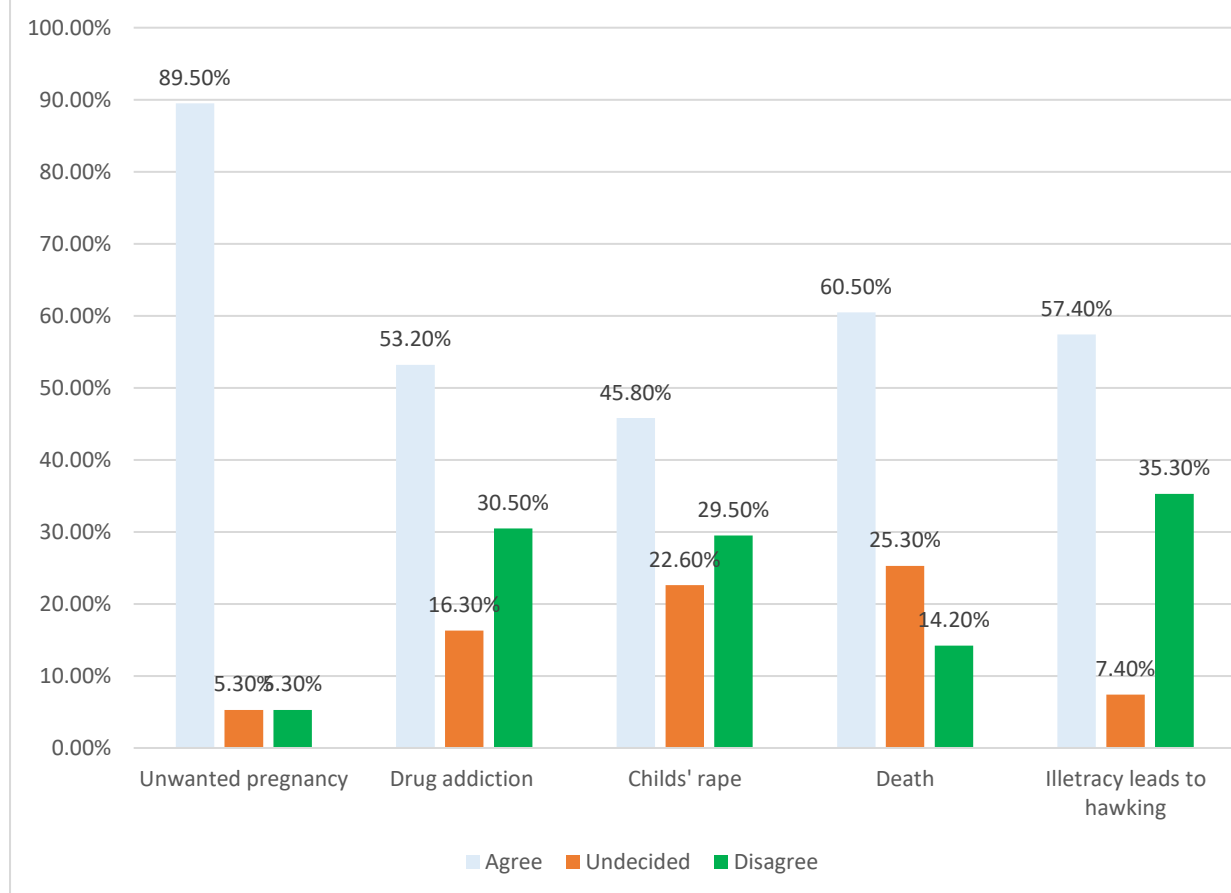
parents 230(60.5%); desire to have money early 222(58.4%); parental laziness 208 (54.7%); child trafficking/abuse 260(68.4%); among others. The respondents were equally of the opinion that poverty can lead to street hawking.

**Table 3: Perceived effects street hawking have on children between 5-18 years.**

S/N	ITEM	A	U	D	Mean	Std Dev
1	Street hawking will lead to unwanted pregnancy	340 (89.5%)	20 (5.3%)	20 (5.3%)	2.84	.48
2	Drug addiction will not lead to street hawking	116 (30.5%)	62 (16.3%)	202 (53.2%)	2.22	.88
3	Street hawking will not lead to child's Rape	112 (29.5%)	86 (22.6%)	174 (45.8%)	2.16	.86
4	Street hawking can lead to child death	230 (60.5%)	96 (25.3%)	54 (14.2%)	2.46	.73
5	Illiteracy will lead to street hawking	218(57.4%)	28 (7.4%)	134 (35.3%)	2.22	.93
	<b>Grand Mean</b>				<b>2.38</b>	<b>0.77</b>

**Criterion mean = 2. Decision: <2. is poor, ≥2 is good**

## Perceived effect of street hawking



**Fig 1: Bar chart showing the perceived effect of street hawking**

Table 2 and Fig 1 shows the perceived effect of street hawking in Obio-Akpor local Government Area of Rivers State. As the criterion mean is  $2.38 \pm 0.77$ , it shows that street hawking has high bad effect on the hawkers. The

result expressed that majority of the respondents stated that street hawking can lead to unwanted pregnancy 340(89.5%); can lead to drug addiction 202(53.2%), child's rape 174(45.8%) and even death 230 (60.5%).

**Table 4: Explore possible remedies to stop street hawking on children**

S/N	ITEM	S A	A	D	S D	Mean	Std Dev
1	Free education will stop street hawking	272(71.6%)	90(23.7%)	0(0.0%)	18(4.7%)	3.62	.72
2	Awareness of child abuse will stop it	50(13.2%)	310(81.6%)	20(5.3%)	0(0.0%)	3.07	.42
3	Help from NGOs will not be of benefit	18(4.7%)	96(25.3%)	256(67.4%)	10(2.6%)	2.32	.60
4	Help from religious bodies will not help	46(12.1%)	68(17.9%)	126(33.2%)	140(36.8%)	2.05	1.01
	<b>Grand Mean</b>					<b>2.76</b>	<b>0.68</b>

**Criterion mean = 2.50. Decision: <2.50 is poor,  $\geq 2.50$  is good**

Table 4 explores the possible remedies to stop street hawking on children in Obio-Akpor local Government Area of Rivers State. The overall result is high as the criterion mean is  $2.76 \pm 0.68$ . The result shows that, free education 272(71.6%), help from NGOs 256(67.4%), and help from

religious bodies 140(36.8%) will stop children from hawking on the streets.

### Discussion of findings

The overall result showed that the identified factors encourage street hawking as the criterion mean is  $2.79 \pm$

0.90. According to the result, these factors are death of parents 230 (60.5%); desire to have money early 222(58.4%); parental laziness 208(54.7%); child trafficking/abuse 260(68.4%); among others. The respondents were equally of the opinion that poverty can lead to street hawking. This study is line with a study done by Shailong, Onuk and Beshi (2011) as it revealed that large family size were major reasons why parents send their children out for hawking. This is tantamount to parental laziness. The result of this study on the perceived effect of hawking was in agreement with Ofonime and Chukwemeka (2015) in their study on Health problems of child hawkers in Uyo, South-South Nigeria. They agreed with this study that pregnancy was reported among the hawkers. Aijehi (2018) in his study on Causes and Consequences of Street Hawking in Shika Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna State stated that poverty motivated them to hawk. This is in agreement with this study which revealed that poverty 224(58.9%) leads to street hawking. Nsisong and Erne (2011) opined that high potential for accidents, exposure to kidnapers, rape and recruitment into hawking drugs by drug barons, early unwanted pregnancy and contraction of STDs are the effects of street hawking. These were at par with the present study that identified unwanted pregnancy 340(89.5%), drug addiction 202(53.2%), rape 174(45.8%) as the consequences of street hawking. These points were seen as high effects as the criterion mean of the study is  $2.38 \pm 0.77$ .

On the remedies that will stop street hawking, the overall result is high as the criterion mean is  $2.76 \pm 0.68$ . The result shows that, free education 272(71.6%), help from NGOs 256(67.4%), and help from religious bodies 140(36.8%) will stop children from hawking on the streets. This findings were supported by Shailong, Onuk and Beshi (2011), who said that nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other women societies can help curb the situation.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, Street hawking is a menace which is eating deep into the society and is causing school drop outs. It is an abuse of child's rights and it has a lot of consequences that can hinder a child from reaching his/her potentials and even jeopardize the Childs' health. It must be put on check.

## Recommendations

### To the government

Government should encourage the NGOs to come up with programs that will help remove these children from the streets.

The religious bodies should also be aided by the government to solve the problem

Government should ensure that there is free education of all children as it is their fundamental human right.

The government should prosecute parents and care givers who expose their children and wards to street hawking.

### To the parents

They should have the number of children they can care for.

Parents should avoid being lazy in training up of their children

Parents should be careful in sending out their children as helpers to relatives and strangers.

### To the children

They should not have the urge to make money as children

They should concentrate on their studies and avoid unserious friends

They should be aware of their rights and report to appropriate authorities if it is violated.

## References

1. Aijehi, G. (2018). Causes and Consequences of Street Hawking in Shika Giwa Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Afribary. Retrieved from <https://afribary.com/works/causes-and-consequences-of-street-hawking-in-shika-giwa-local-government-area-of-kaduna-state-3885>
2. Crosscn T C (2018). Understanding Child abuse and neglect Boston: Ma Pearson education.
3. Ebigbo P.O., 2011. Psychosocial aspects of child abuse and neglect in Africa in Nwogugue. *Enugu: Ebuka publisher.*
4. Ebigbo PO., 2011. Street child: The core of child abuse and neglect in Nigeria. *Children, Youth and Environment: 1-13.*
5. Eboh A. (2018). Perceived Effects of Street Hawking on the Well-Being of Children in Anyigba,
6. Ekpenyong, S. & Sibiri, A. (2011). Street hawking and child labour Yenegua. *Journal of Scientific Research in Education, 4(1),36 -46.*
7. Macellina Y. Ijadunola *et al* (2015) *PubMed National Library of Medicine.*
8. Nsisong, A. U. & Erne, U. J. (2011). Behavioural problem of juvenile street hawkers in Uyo metropolis, Nigeria: *WorldJournal of Education Vo12, 131 - 144.*

9. Shailong,C., Onuk, E. and Beshi, B.(2011). <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Socio->
10. Economic-Factors-Affecting-Children-Hawkers-Shailong-Onuk/70cd2b76c17aef5001a700d68170eec9ec3aa5d9.
11. International Labour Organization (2017). *The child and child labor*. International Labour Organization
12. Macellina Y. Ijadunola *et al* (2015) *PubMed*
13. Shailong,C., Onuk, E. and Beshi, B.(2011). <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Socio->
14. Economic-Factors-Affecting-Children-Hawkers-Shailong-Onuk/70cd2b76c17aef5001a700d68170eec9ec3aa5d9.
15. UNICEF (2017). *Principles of the international convention on the rights of the child*. UNICEF *National Library of Medicine*.