

Street Hawking and Child's Learning Outcomes: A Case Study of Government Primary School Pupils in Zuba District of Gwagwalada Area Council of the FCT, Abuja, Nigeria

Oriakpolor John Idemudia¹; Ruth C. Wali-Essien²

PhD²

^{1,2}Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education, University of Abuja, Abuja, Nigeria.

Publication Date: 2026/03/05

Abstract: This study examined the effects of street hawking on child's learning outcomes among government primary school pupils in Zuba District of Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja. Employing a survey research design, the study sampled 377 pupils and 7 teachers from a population of 7,467 pupils and 133 teachers, using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample determination table. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (percentage) and Chi-Square statistical technique at the 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that poverty and economic hardship are the major drivers of child street hawking in Zuba District of Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja. The practice results in accidents, harassment, exploitation, and abuse, and significantly contributes to lateness, absenteeism, fatigue, and poor academic performance. The null hypothesis (H₀: Street hawking has no significant effect on academic performance) was rejected, confirming a statistically significant negative relationship. The study recommends implementing government support for poor families, school feeding, scholarships, and strict enforcement of child protection laws to curb the practice.

Keywords: *Street Hawking, Child Labour, Learning Outcomes, and Academic Performance.*

How to Cite: Oriakpolor John Idemudia; Ruth C. Wali-Essien (2026) Street Hawking and Child's Learning Outcomes: A Case Study of Government Primary School Pupils in Zuba District of Gwagwalada Area Council of the FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

International Journal of Innovative Science and Research Technology, 11(2), 2477-2482.

<https://doi.org/10.38124/ijisrt/26feb842>

I. INTRODUCTION

Child street hawking, the informal selling of goods in public spaces, is a prevalent issue in many developing regions, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, compelling young children to contribute to family survival due to poverty and limited social safety nets. This practice is classified as a hazardous form of child labour, exposing children to serious risks to their health, safety, and development.

International Labour Organization (ILO) & United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) (2021) clearly pointed out that global estimates revealed over 160 million children were engaged in child labour as of 2020 with 79 million engaged in hazardous work by 2016. Street vending falls within this category because of the risks it poses to children's health, safety, and development. In Nigeria, the practice is deeply linked to entrenched socioeconomic factors such as parental poverty, unemployment, and cultural

acceptance that normalize child work as a "rite of passage" or a means of instilling responsibility.

This dual burden on primary school pupils directly interferes with formal education, leading to irregular class attendance, fatigue, lack of time for homework, poor concentration, and eventual school dropout. Despite existing national laws like the Child Rights Act, poor enforcement allows the problem to persist.

The complication of this challenge necessitates a targeted investigation. There is a critical huge gap in knowledge regarding the socio-economic factors that sustain the practice, the impacts on children's education and well-being, and the societal attitudes that either condemn or condone it. Without a comprehensive understanding of these issues, any effort to curb the problem will be superficial and ineffective in the Zuba District of Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja, Nigeria.

➤ Objectives of the Study

The primary objective of this study was to determine the effects of street hawking on child's learning outcomes. Specifically, the objectives were to:

- Examine the socioeconomic factors contributing to street hawking among school pupils in Zuba district of Gwagwalada Area Council.
- Assess the effects of street hawking on the academic performance, and school attendance of pupils in Zuba district of Gwagwalada Area Council.
- Explore the risks and challenges associated with street hawking among school pupils in Zuba district of Gwagwalada Area Council.
- Investigate teachers' perceptions and cultural attitudes toward street hawking among school pupils in Zuba district of Gwagwalada Area Council.
- Identify policy interventions that are most effective in curbing street hawking among school pupils in Zuba district of Gwagwalada Area Council.

➤ Research Questions

- What are the socioeconomic factors that influence street hawking among school pupils in Zuba district of Gwagwalada Area Council?
- How does street hawking affect the academic performance and school attendance of pupils in Zuba district of Gwagwalada Area Council?
- What risks and challenges do school pupils face while engaging in street hawking in Zuba district of Gwagwalada Area Council?
- What are teachers' perceptions and cultural attitudes towards street hawking among school children in Zuba district of Gwagwalada Area Council?
- What policy interventions are most effective in curbing street hawking among school pupils in Zuba district of Gwagwalada Area Council?

➤ Null Hypothesis Tested (H_0)

The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- H_0 : Street hawking has no significant effect on the academic performance of school pupils.

➤ Conceptual Clarification

- Street Hawking: according to Oyeleke, Eborka, & Okocha in Fagunwa., & Abidoye (2025) involves the sale of goods by moving from one location to another along the streets. In the same vein, Okafor, Okafor, & Ngini in Fagunwa., & Abidoye (2025) stated that the practice extends to canvassing sales by carrying items from house to house or selling in public places.

It is an age-long and universal practice involving both old and young and exposes the hawkers to risks of various degrees. In spite of the prevailing negative effects of hawking

on those practicing it, it also serves as a means of establishing positive relationships among the fold.

- Learning Outcomes: refer to the measurable knowledge, skills, attitudes, and academic performance a pupil acquires, encompassing school attendance, test scores, and classroom participation. According to DePaul University (n.d), learning outcomes are specific statements of what students will be able to do when they successfully complete a learning experience (whether it is a project, course or program). They are always written in a student-centered, measurable fashion that is concise, meaningful, and achievable.
- Child: means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier (Convention on the Rights of the Child). The person being described here represents either the female or male gender and still remains under the full watch of his/her parents or guardians.
- Primary School Pupils: these are children who are enrolled in primary schools typically between Primary 1 and Primary 6. UNICEF describes primary education as that which forms the bedrock of development. It is in primary school that children learn foundational skills that prepare them for life, work and active citizenship.
- Academic Performance: this comes in the form of a learner's formative assessment by the constituted school authority. It is an on-going; short term; diagnostic or a continuous process in a learner's academic journey.

II. METHODOLOGY

➤ Research Design and Population

The study employed a Descriptive Survey Research Design to investigate the effects of street hawking. The study population comprised all pupils (7,467) and teachers (133) from 3 selected primary schools in Zuba District of Gwagwalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja.

➤ Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

A sample size of 377 pupils and 7 teachers (384 respondents in total) was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. A proportionate sampling technique was adopted to select respondents across the selected schools.

➤ Instrumentation and Analysis

The primary instrument for data collection was a structured Questionnaire for Students and Teachers titled "Street Hawking and a Child's Learning Outcomes: A case study of Government Primary School Pupils' Questionnaire (SHCLOGPSPQ)" The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) to address the research questions, while the null hypothesis (if there is an existing relationship between the two variables) was tested using the Chi-Square statistical technique at a 0.05 level of significance.

III. RESULTS

The summary below shows the findings from the study carried out.

➤ *Drivers of Street Hawking (RQ1)*

The primary driver identified by respondents across both pupils and teachers was poverty and economic hardship. The dependence on a child's earnings to supplement family income for essential expenses, such as food and school fees, was a significant factor.

Table 1 Distribution of Pupils' Reasons for Hawking and Teachers' Awareness of Time of Hawking

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Total Frequency
Pupils' Reasons for Hawking	To support family income	118	31.3	
	To pay school fees	79	21.0	
	No one to stop me	49	13.0	
	To help my parents' business	98	26.0	
	I enjoy doing it	33	8.7	
	Total (Pupils)		377	100.0
Teachers' Awareness of Time Pupils Hawk	Before school	1	14.3	
	After school	4	57.1	
	Weekends	2	28.6	
	During school hours	-	-	
	Total (Teachers)		7	100.0
Grand Total	Pupils + Teachers	-	-	384

Source: Field Survey, 2025

➤ *Effects on Learning Outcomes (RQ2)*

The data analyzed strongly indicated that street hawking significantly impacts academic outcomes:

Table 2 Distribution of Pupils and Teachers' Perspectives on the effect of Hawking on School Attendance and Academic Performance

Variable / Response	Pupils (n=377)	%	Teachers (n=7)	%	Total Frequency (n=384)
Missed school because of hawking					
Yes	242	64.1	-	-	242
No	135	35.9	-	-	135
Teachers' observation of performance differences					
Yes (noticeable difference in performance)	-	-	5	71.4	5
No (no difference observed)	-	-	1	14.3	1
Not sure	-	-	1	14.3	1
Total	377	100.0	7	100.0	384

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 3 Distribution of Frequency of Pupils Missing School Due to Hawking and Teachers' Observations of Academic Differences

Variable / Response	Pupils (n=377)	%	Teachers (n=7)	%	Total (n=384)	%
Frequency of Missing School Due to Hawking						
Rarely	102	27.1	-	-	102	26.6
Once a week	88	23.3	-	-	88	22.9
More than once a week	187	49.6	-	-	187	50.5
Nature of Academic Differences Observed						
Poor academic performance	-	-	2	28.6	2	0.5
Irregular attendance	-	-	1	14.3	1	0.3
Lack of concentration in class	-	-	1	14.3	1	0.3
Frequent sleeping in class	-	-	1	14.3	1	0.3
Delayed homework/assignments	-	-	2	28.6	2	0.5
Total	377	100	7	100	384	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4 Distribution of Pupils’ Fatigue After Hawking and Teachers’ Observation of School Attendance

Variable / Response	Pupils (n=377)	%	Teachers (n=7)	%	Total (n=384)	%
Pupils Feeling Tired in Class After Hawking						
Yes	270	71.6	–	–	270	71.9
No	107	28.4	–	–	107	28.1
School Attendance of Pupils Who Hawk						
Yes, regularly	–	–	2	28.6	2	0.5
Sometimes absent	–	–	3	42.9	3	0.8
Frequently absent	–	–	2	28.6	2	0.5
Total	377	100	7	100	384	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 5 Distribution of Effects of Street Hawking on Homework and School Dropout

Variable / Response	Pupils (n=377)	%	Teachers (n=7)	%	Total (n=384)	%
Effect of Hawking on Pupils’ Ability to Do Homework/Revise						
Yes	246	65.3	–	–	246	65.1
No	131	34.7	–	–	131	34.9
Opinion on Whether Street Hawking Contributes to School Dropout						
Yes	–	–	6	85.7	6	1.6
No	–	–	1	14.3	1	0.3
Not sure	–	–	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	377	100	7	100	384	100

Source: Field Survey, 2025

➤ *Risks and Challenges (RQ3)*

Pupils engaged in hawking are exposed to numerous dangers as shown below:

Table 6 Distribution of Experiences and Perceived Risks of Street Hawking Among Pupils (Pupils and Teachers’ Perspectives)

Risk / Experience	Pupils’ Frequency (n=377)	Pupils’ %	Teachers’ Frequency (n=7)	Teachers’ %	Total (n=384)
Road accidents / injury	95	25.2	2	28.6	97
Physical abuse / insult	80	21.2	2	28.6	82
Arrest by task force / police	60	15.9	1	14.3	61
Hunger, thirst, or malnutrition	110	29.2	2	28.6	112
Robbery, theft, or criminal acts	39	10.4	0	0.0	39
Harassment by strangers	72	19.1	0	0.0	72
Total	377	100.0	7	100.0	384

Source: Field Survey, 2025

➤ *Test of Hypothesis*

The null hypothesis (H₀: Street hawking has no significant effects on the academic performance of school pupils) was tested using the Chi-Square technique.

- Result: The calculated p-value was found to be less than the 0.05 significance level (p < 0.05).
- Decision: The Null hypothesis was rejected, and the Alternative hypothesis (H₁: Street hawking has significant effects on the academic performance of school pupils) was accepted.
- Interpretation: There is a statistically significant negative relationship between street hawking and academic performance of primary school pupils in Zuba District of Gwalalada Area Council, FCT, Abuja. The evidence

confirms that street hawking exerts a strong detrimental influence on children’s educational outcomes.

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings indicate that poverty is the most dominant factor influencing child hawking. Both pupils and teachers emphasized that financial hardship pushes parents to send children out to hawk to supplement household income. Among the recommended interventions, government support for poor families was the most frequently mentioned (26.7%), underscoring the strong link between economic deprivation and child labour. This corresponds with the submission by Ekpenyong and Sibiri in Oluwagbohunmi & Owayin (2025) where it is stated that “poverty drives children from poor families into street hawking as a survival strategy to support household finances.”

This aligns with studies in Nigeria and Sub-Saharan Africa, which show that families often rely on children's contributions for survival, with unemployment and inadequate social safety nets intensifying this dependence. Thus, street hawking is less a matter of parental negligence and more of a survival strategy shaped by socioeconomic pressures. This finding corroborates with the finding of Saka-Olokungboye., Akinnigbagbe., & Musa (2024). According to these authors, "illiteracy, poverty, broken homes, unemployment and the death of parents are factors contributing to the menace of child hawking in Nigeria.

However, from a contrary perspective, Oloko in Fagunwa & Abidoye (2025) stated that not all child hawkers come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Some children from relatively affluent families engage in hawking for leisure, excitement, or personal spending money. This youthful exuberance may lead them to participate in economic activities without considering the potential negative effects on their education.

Descriptive and inferential results reveal a strong negative effect of hawking on children's education. Pupils engaged in hawking often arrive late to school, miss classes, feel fatigued, and perform poorly in examinations. For instance, 50.5% of pupils reported missing school more than once a week due to hawking, 71.9% felt tired in class, and 65.1% had difficulties completing homework or revising. The chi-square test confirmed the statistical significance of these effects: $\chi^2 = 75.15$, $p < 0.05$, leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_1). These findings are consistent with prior research linking child labour to absenteeism, fatigue, low concentration, and eventual school dropout, demonstrating that hawking not only reduces study time but also undermines children's ability to compete academically.

Children engaged in street hawking are exposed to multiple risks, including road accidents, physical abuse, sexual harassment, theft, and malnutrition. Teachers noted that hawking often leaves children exhausted and returning home late, further increasing their vulnerability and reducing learning efficiency. Although laws against child labour exist, enforcement remains weak, and families continue the practice due to economic necessity. The dual challenge of poverty-driven need and weak implementation frameworks makes legislative approaches alone insufficient to eradicate hawking. In relating these findings to that Fagunwa & Abidoye (2025) it has been revealed through their findings that street hawking negatively impacted children's psychological well-being, leading to anxiety, low self-esteem, and emotional distress. Additionally, it disrupted their education through absenteeism, poor academic performance, and increased dropout rates. Socially, child hawkers experienced isolation, stigmatization, and exposure to exploitation.

Half of the respondents (50%) agreed that cultural beliefs act as a barrier to stopping child hawking. In some communities, hawking is seen as a way to train children in responsibility, obedience, and trade skills, or as a tradition for

family survival. However, 30% disagreed, indicating a growing awareness of its dangers. This suggests that while culture sustains hawking in some contexts, poverty remains the primary driver. Public perception is gradually shifting toward recognizing hawking as harmful, but cultural justifications continue to weaken intervention efforts. Effective programmes must therefore address both economic needs and cultural reorientation. The study by Obunadike et al (2024) uncovered that poverty and family influence, including parental pressure, family indebtedness, and cultural normalization of child labour were the most cited causes of street hawking and align with the findings of this.

The pattern on Table 25 of this study, reveals a preference for multi-pronged interventions combining: Economic empowerment (government support, financial aid). Educational incentives (school feeding, scholarships). Community awareness: (sensitization and parental education) and Legal enforcement: (child protection laws). Notably, punitive measures such as arresting parents received little support, reflecting the recognition that criminalization without poverty alleviation may worsen the problem.

The eradication of child hawking requires a holistic policy approach, integrating social welfare, educational support, cultural reorientation, and humane enforcement of child rights laws. Substantiating this, is Olanrewaju (2015) where the author opines that "poor enforcement of child protection laws, such as the Child Rights Act, allows the practice to continue unchecked. While the Act prohibits child street hawking, its implementation remains inadequate, leading to the ongoing exploitation of children in this manner." This author's thoughts clearly indicate that the act of child hawking can be curbed (if not eradicated) if the necessary checks are put in place by the relevant authorities. In addition, "sexual abuse of young female hawkers is an issue of great public health importance. Poverty alleviation, health education and protective child right policies will decrease its prevalence and the associated risks" (Ikechebelu., Udigwe., Ezechukwu., Ndinechi., & Joe-Ikechebelu in David et al (2018).

V. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that child street hawking in Zuba District is primarily driven by socio-economic challenges but results in severe negative consequences for children's education, health, and development. The significant effect demonstrated on academic performance underscores the urgent need for supportive policy interventions that tackle poverty while establishing a balance between socio-economic empowerment and child protection to safeguard children's education, well-being, and future opportunities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

➤ *Based on the Empirical Findings, the Following Practical Recommendations are Proposed:*

- Economic Empowerment: The government must provide targeted economic and social support (e.g., financial

- assistance, conditional cash transfers, employment opportunities) to families living in poverty to reduce household reliance on child labor;
- Educational Incentives: Schools and government should introduce and strengthen educational incentives such as school feeding programmes, scholarships, and free provision of learning materials to encourage regular attendance and improve pupils' performance;
 - Legal Enforcement: Stricter enforcement of child protection laws (e.g., Child Rights Act No 26, 15-(1)) is required, balanced with social support, to prohibit child hawking and penalize negligence without criminalizing poverty;
 - Community Sensitization: There is a need for community sensitization and parental education programs to reorient cultural perceptions that normalize child hawking, highlighting the detrimental long-term impacts on children's future; and.
 - School-Parent Collaboration: Encourage strong collaboration between schools and parents to monitor pupils' attendance, academic performance, and overall welfare, thereby, enabling timely psycho-social support and interventions for affected children. This undoubtedly will help mitigate the adverse effects on their learning outcomes.

CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research contributes empirical and localized evidence from a multi-stakeholder perspective (pupils, teachers) to the discourse on child labour and education in Nigeria, specifically reinforcing the link between socio-economic hardship, child work, and poor academic outcomes in the FCT context. By identifying gaps in existing interventions, the findings from the study enriches policy discussions on child protection, education, and poverty reduction, while underscoring the need for multi-sectoral collaboration between families, schools, communities, and government agencies.

Suggestions for further research include investigating the effects of socio-economics status on school attendance and performance of children in urban and rural areas; influence of part-time work on primary and secondary school students' academic performance; child street labour and its psychosocial and educational implication; and the effectiveness of government and community interventions on reducing child labor and enhancing learning outcomes.

REFERENCES

- [1]. Convention on the Rights of the Child. Retrieved on 20/1/2026 from <https://www.unicef.org/child-rights-convention>
- [2]. DePaul University (n.d). Course Objectives & Learning Outcomes. Retrieved on 1/1/2026 from <https://resources.depaul.edu/course-design/Pages/co>.
- [3]. Fagunwa, A. O and Abidoye, A. J (2025). Psycho-Social Implications of Street Hawking among School

Age Children in South West Nigeria. *African Journal of Humanities & Contemporary Education Research*, 18 (1), 306-319.

- [4]. David, N., Ezechi, O., Wapmuk, A., Gbajabiamila, T., Ohihoin: A., Herbertson, E and Odeyemi, K (2018). Child sexual abuse and disclosure in South Western Nigeria: A community-based study. Retrieved on 2/1/2026 from National Institute of Health (<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov>. 18 (2): 199-208.
- [5]. International Labour Organization (ILO), and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). (2021). Child labour rises to 160 million – first increase in two decades. Retrieved on 2/1/2026 from <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/child-labour-rises-160-million-first-increase-two-decades>
- [6]. Krejcie, R. V., & Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 30(3), 607–610.
- [7]. Obunadike, Joy C., Onyekwelu, S.U., Chimezie, J (2021). Causes and perceived effects of street hawking among children in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Home Economics Research*. 28 (1).
- [8]. Oluwagbohunmi, M.F. & Owayin, C.K (2025). Parental socio-economic status as correlate of street hawking among secondary school students in Ekiti state. *Social Science Education Journal (SOSCED-J)*, 7 (1).
- [9]. Saka-Olokungboye, N., Akinnigbagbe, M. V., & Musa, T. O (2024). An exploration of child hawking in major cities in Nigeria. *African Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences (AJSBS)*, 14, (5).
- [10]. ScienceDirect.com (n.d). Academic Performance - an overview | ScienceDirect Topics Retrieved on 30/12/2025 from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/psychology>
- [11]. UNICEF (n.d). Primary education. Retrieved on 2/1/2026 from <https://www.unicef.org/education/primary-education>