

## **Effect of Street Hawking on Moral Upbringing of Under-age Children in Yobe State, Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

Street hawking as a form of child labor has become a global issue of concern to countries across the world predominantly Africa. In Nigeria precisely north, street hawking has been on the rise day after day. This study examines the effect of street hawking on the moral upbringing of under age children in Yobe State, Nigeria. The study is anchored on Marxian theory which is a strand of conflict perspective. This study is survey research which utilize both primary and secondary data. The primary data was obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to 113 respondents and 3 FGD groups consisting of 6 respondents per group in the 3 selected LGA's (Bade, Damaturu and Potiskum) while secondary data was obtained from official records from Ministries, NGO's, articles and journals. Data was analyzed using SPSS version 21. The findings of the study reveal that poverty, unemployment, low income, illiteracy, insurgency, family break-up, large family size, divorce, broken homes and children staying with relatives are among the causes of street hawking which affects children moral upbringing. The effects of the street hawking range from bad behaviors, moral laxity, use of vulgar languages, truancy and exposure to sex at early age. Based on these findings the following recommendations were made; government through its agencies and NGO's should be involve in the fight against underage street hawking, religious and traditional rulers should be involved in sensitizing members of the communities on the effect and dangers of underage street hawking and government should create a welfare scheme to cushion the hardship faced by unemployed parents and family with large size.

**Keywords:** Divorce, Illiteracy, Moral upbringing, Poverty and Street hawking

### **Introduction**

The transformation of society from simple to complex is an emanating factor which leads to unemployment and poor economic condition of many families in Nigeria. There has been increase in the rate at which people engage in trading activities especially the underage children in order to have livelihood which is known as street hawking. Street hawking has been observed to be highly deleterious to children's psychological, social, physical and mental development. Bosah, Ofem and Obumueke-Okeke (2015) maintained that street hawking has a negative effect on socio-emotional development of children and it exposes them to dangers such as armed robbery, prostitution and other vices. Bosah et al (2015) emphasized that behavioral manifestation of problems associated with street hawking include problems of social maladjustment, moral defect, emotional reaction and insecurity. Such children also suffer verbal abuse, fall victim of rape, suffer low self-esteem, keep bad company and are usually negatively influenced to engage in delinquent behavior. Street hawkers are likely to suffer health problems and education backwardness. According to Anabogu (2000), feelings of inferiority, exhaustion, emotional distress, unhappiness and personality disorder are associated with street hawking.

Parents' inability to adequately provide for the needs of family members seems to make some put the heavy burden of life jeopardizing street hawking activity on their children which causes academic set back through repetition, withdrawal from school or dropout due to failure and shame. While Nseabasi and Oluwabamide (2010) identified unemployment, poverty loss of parents among others as the major causes of street hawking, Udoh and Joseph (2012) found that poverty is a primary cause of street hawking. As a result of their poor background, street hawkers seem to exhibit low self-esteem, lack confidence, and feel ashamed while their regular school attendance cannot be guaranteed. From observation, street hawkers do not attend school regularly, have little or no time to work on assignment, read or revise notes in preparation for examinations and neither do they have time to rest or relax after school. This seems to influence their academic performance negatively. Many Nigerian children are compelled to work because of their parent's joblessness, poor or uneducated, and traditional custom especially polygamy which contributes to poor living standard and push children into the street due high birth rate. Some of the street hawking children spends the entire day and sometimes until late in the night selling goods under harsh weather condition. This interferes with their emotional, educational and social development. It was observed that children in the study area are involved in harmful and exploitative work during school hours and they work for very long hours per day.

### **Problem Statement**

Street hawking among underage children is fast becoming the culture in our society. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2005) approximates that there are more than 246 million children engaged in labour in the world. These children hawk in some of the most horrible conditions conceivable, where they face serious risk of injury, chronic illness, or death, kidnapping, rape among others. When children are kept busy on the street and come in contact with different corrupt behaviors during hawking, it is worrisome on what the outcome will be on their educational, socio-emotional, security and resource development of the nation. This, if not properly addressed will seriously affect the general standard of morality, social norms, security and development of the nation. In Nigeria, Street hawking is considered to be one form of child labor and exploitative because of the excessively long hour of trading by the children, hindrance of school attendance, and effectiveness on child's health (Ibanga, 2009).

The increasing rate of street hawking in Nigeria is alarming despite the attendant moral and physical dangers for children (Ebigbo, 2003). In Nigeria, street hawking is mostly done by female children. Some children have a particular spot where they sell their wares. Some move from place to place along the street while others go from door to door in residential areas. In Nigeria especially in the urban areas, children between the ages of eight to fourteen years are seen working. The situation in Nigeria according to United Nation International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), child labor report (2006) reported that 15 million children under the age of 14 are working across Nigeria. The report shows that 64% of Nigerians between the ages of five and fourteen are involved in street hawking. It is against this backdrop that this study assesses the effects of street hawking on the moral upbringing of under-age children in Yobe State, Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study is anchored on Marxian conflict theory. The proponent of this theory is Karl Marx. According to Marx (1963), the change in the society results from the economic base and super structural institutions and reflection of the changes in the economic base. Karl Marx posits that all through history when we consider those social relationships that make the production process a

social phenomenon, two major classes or group of people are identifiable at all times. They are the few individuals who own and control the means of production and the majority of people who do not own the means of production but who do the actual production by using their natural human labor power.

Marx opines that a class struggle always emerges between the ruling class and the working class as a result of the unequal distribution of societal resources. Scholars have criticized Marxian conflict theory because of his overemphasis on the economy as the major source of conflict in the society. Marx failed to identify other non-economic variables like bad governance which may create extremes of wealth and poverty in the same society. In spite of the shortcomings and deficiencies of Marxian theory, it seems to be the most relevant and suitable theory for this study. In relating the theory to street hawking, it should be observed that unequal allocation of resources and inequality encourage poverty among members of the society. High level of poverty influences parents to engage their children in street hawking which also is associated with some social and physical problems. Marxian theory best explains the phenomenon at hand.

### **Conceptual Clarification**

#### **Street Hawking**

Umar (2009) sees street hawking in its simplest form as the selling of things along the roads and from one place to the other. Aiyeluro (1979) defines street hawking as the process whereby the hawker hawks his goods by carrying it on his or her head by means of a tray, or minor forms of transportation like wheel barrows, bicycles, trolleys etc. This is being done in search of customers in the process of which the hawker could employ the use of bells or shout the name of the item he or she is hawking in order to attract the attention of prospective customers.

Aiyehuro (2009) defines street hawking as a system of trading whereby the trader carries his wares about. Street hawking refers to a wandering like movement in which an individual carries his or her goods with a tray on the head or by means of transportation such as wheel barrow, bicycle or trolley in search of customers. Street hawking is considered as the act of canvassing for sale, items carried by the hawker along the street, from house to house or in the public places in town (Ikechebelu, 2008). Aderinto (2006) asserts that street trading exposes the operators to various risks and health hazards as most children end up engaging in various economic activities like bus conducting, load carrying, car washing, hawking earlier as a means of survival. Due to the usual high level of trekking involved in hawking activity, risks of road traffic accident, physical exhaustion, sexual harassments such as rape, molestation and different forms of exploitation are believed to be associated with street hawking (Okojie, 2007).

Street hawking refers to activities where children and adults hawk goods on the street either on tray, wheel barrow, basket and bicycle in search of customers who are willing to buy. street hawking in Nigeria predominantly in the north has become a household business that the family depends on for survival. Children who are under age (below 14 years) are made to hawk during the daytime and some in the evening in search for what the family will feed on, such children are supposed to be in the school but because of the poor nature of the family, they are made to hawk for family survival.

## **Morality and Moral Upbringing**

Morality was defined by Smeltzer and Bare (2014) as the system one uses to decide what is right and what is wrong, and how conscience affects choice. It was also defined by Smetana (2018) as a system of rules that regulate the social interactions and social relationships of individuals within societies and is based on concepts of welfare, trust, justice and rights. It is a state of uprightness and integrity of an individual based on the accepted social order, norms and values. Morality is contingent on ethics, culture, norms and values of a particular society.

Moral upbringing, on the other hand, was defined by Smeltzer and Bare (2014) as the capacity of an individual to act in accordance with conscience and moral imperativeness rather than egocentric values. Similarly, Crittenden (2010) defined moral upbringing as a process through which children develop proper attitudes and behaviours towards other people in society, based on social and cultural norms, rules and laws. Moral upbringing of children has been of concern to parents, teachers and religious organizations the world over

Moral upbringing refers to the process of imbibing and enucleating good morals, values, attitudes and behaviour among children while growing up. It is the responsibilities of the parents, society, religious institutions and schools to ensure that children are raised with good morals so that they can become good ambassadors of their families and they self were ever they may find themselves. But now are days as a result of cultural lack and moral decay, children are growing without respect, valve and regards for those who are older than them.

## **Poverty**

People interpret and understand poverty differently. There are, therefore, different meanings attached to poverty and its impact on society. What is important about these different meanings to poverty is that they all involve a common element of material insufficiency – especially the lack of resources needed for survival. The consideration of poverty from a broader perspective is derived from a global acknowledgement that poverty is more than just having enough income to live by. It is now widely acknowledged that poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon which includes other essential dimensions of living standards. In addition to income and consumption, health and education are now part of the definition of poverty (Sabry, 2009). Mokoena (2004) points out that defining poverty is a difficult task. Public and private initiatives, as well as the direction of policy regarding poverty alleviation, will all determine how poverty is defined – to answer the question, “Who is poor?” There are varying perspectives on what poverty is. There is a need to consider the factors discussed below when defining poverty.

## **Causes of Street Hawking**

A number of factors have propelled children into hawking in various streets. It is not as if the children are not happy to join their mates in schools to enjoy the breeze of good Western Education but something caused such condition to take place, amongst them are;

- i. Poverty:** some families find it difficult to meet up with their basic needs; food, cloth, shelter and provision of other essentials that are necessary for survival. In the absence of that the means of meeting up with the affirmations, parents result into sending their children to the street in other to hawk goods to provide income needed in the family. Studies indicate that most children who hawk are motivated by poverty. The search for money to make ends meet in a depressed economy is obviously one of the major reasons for parent and guardians sending their children or wards to hawk.

**ii. Poor family planning:** Some families do not adopt and practice family planning; they give birth to more than the number of children they can cater for because they see children as a *free* gift of God; therefore, children brought into the world by these parents face difficulties as a result of this. It is not only the children that face hardship but also the parents that gave birth to them. The parents begin to think on how to get support to train the children and end up sending the children to the streets to make money through hawking of goods on the streets.

**iii. Child trafficking:** Child trafficking is one of the principal causes of street hawking. Trafficking is defined as the recruitment, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation. This is in line with the definition of street hawking by The UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (2000);

“the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, of abuse of power, giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation” “exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”

In some countries, women in the cities visit rural areas and meet mothers who they think can easily agree for them to take their daughters or sons to the city where they stay. The poor parents usually think that the persons they handed over their children will take care of them properly without knowing that they have subjected their children to the modern-day slavery known as child trafficking. When the children get to the cities, they would be surprised to see that they were trafficked and hence do not know how to make their ways back to their locations (their parent’s homes). The “business women” usually hand these children to other people who subject them to hawking on the streets of the cities. Some of these children were usually raped and exploited while hawking on the streets.

**iv. War/Death of Parent:** When war occurs, children are most likely to lose their parents, as the war situation come with many killings and bloodshed. When these children lose their parent that cares for them, either through sickness, sudden death or as a result of war, persons who takes care of them may not be diligent as they see these children as not their own. They are most times subjected to street hawking as their parents are no longer alive to love, educate, house and cloth them properly.

**v. Illiteracy:** Illiteracy in some part of Nigeria, has contributed to high level of street hawking by children in the nation. In some part of Nigeria, especially in the North, there are parents with high illiteracy level. These kinds of parents are bankrupt on the importance of education to nation building. As a result of this, they prefer to send their children to the streets where they will make money for them. The illiteracy that the parents of the children suffered from will be transferred to the children because the children do not attend schools when their mates were learning in their various classrooms.

### **Effect of Street Hawking on the Behavioral Development of the Child**

Early deprivation of children’s right to normal life could lead to behavioral problems. Thus, the behavioral manifestations of problems associated with street hawking include problems of social maladjustment, moral defect, emotional reaction and insecurity. The children tend to keep bad company and are negatively pressured by peer to engage in delinquent behavior (Hughes, 2009).

Teenagers especially the female folks are exposed through hawking to be sexually aware too early in life. In the attempt to sell their wares, teenagers mingle with the touts in the motor packs and in the streets. Some of the female teenage hawkers are lured into sexual relationship that may result into pre-mature pregnancy, some may become promiscuous following exposure through hawking. As a result of this, females may drop hawking and resort to prostitution. Prostitution occasionally results to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies and subsequent criminal abortion and illegitimate children (Igwe, 1996). Male teenage hawkers learn the act of smoking cigarette and even hard drugs because of the interaction with people of questionable characters while some are exposed to armed robbery business.

### **Effect of Street Hawking on the Socio-emotional development of the Child.**

Baland and Robinson (2000) found out that these children suffer verbal abuse, low self-esteem and a loss of imagination. Anagbogu (2000) found feelings of inferiority, exhaustion, emotional distress, unhappiness and personality disorder to be associated with street hawking. In the late childhood stage (6- 10 years) the age of primary school, children learn at this period by observation (Banda, 2003). It is characterized by the period at which children always play as a natural activity which contributes to their development which give them satisfaction and enjoyment (Ibiam, 2006). It is the time children socialize with each other in the school and in the environment in which they find themselves, they interact with one another and make friends with their mates.

However, some children are denied the opportunity due to the exposure to street hawking. The street hawking child faces a lot of emotional trauma and abuse. He is denied of the family atmosphere as he spends his life on the street hawking. It may make him/her feel frustrated, dejected, dominated or humiliated especially at school

### **Methods and Material**

The study adopted survey design which utilize phenomenological approach. The primary data involved the use of questionnaire in which 113 copies of questionnaire was administered to members of the societies (Damaturu L.G.A [Nayi-nawa 20 copies and Pompomari 20 copies], Potiskum L.G.A [Dogon karfe 20 copies and Jigawa & Angwan Jaji 18 copies] and Bade L.G.A [Katuzu 20 copies and Abujan Amareh 15 copies]). Focus Group Discussion (FGD) with three groups consisting of 6 people per group in each local government area consisting of religious leaders, civil servants, women and non-governmental organizations. The secondary data was obtained from official records of Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Youths and Sport, State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA), records from NGO's and relevant academic articles and journals. Data was using SPSS version 21 and the result was analyzed through descriptive statistics; tables, frequency and simple percentage.

## Result of the findings

A total of 113 questionnaires were retrieved from the three LGA's under study, the result was analyse and presented below;

**Table 1: Demography of the Respondents**

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age</b>		
18 – 29	57	50.4%
30 – 39	31	27.4%
40 – 49	14	12.4%
50 – 59	5	4.4%
60 – Above	6	5.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Sex</b>		
Male	69	61.1%
Female	44	38.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Married	52	46.0%
Single	43	38.2%
Widowed	10	8.8%
Divorced	4	3.5%
Separated	4	3.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Non formal Education	16	14.2%
Primary	8	7.1%
Secondary	19	16.8%
NCE/Diploma	41	36.3%
HND/B.Sc	29	25.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Field Survey: 2023

Table 1 shows that 50.4% of the respondents are between the ages of 18-29 years, 27.4% of the respondents are between the ages of 30-39 years, 12.4% of the respondents are between the ages of 40-49 years, 4.4% of the respondents are between the ages of 50-59 years while 5.4% of the respondents are between the ages of 60 years – and above. This indicates that majority of the respondents 50.4% are between the ages of 18-29 years. The same table shows that 61.1% of the respondents are male while 38.9% of the respondents are female. This indicates that majority of the respondents are male. It is evident from the result that 46.0% of the respondents are married, 38.2% of the respondents are single, 8.8% of the respondents are widowers, 3.5% of the respondents are divorced while 3.5% of the respondents are separated. The result indicates that 14.2% of the respondents have non-formal education, 7.1% of the respondents possess primary school leaving certificate, 16.8% of the respondents have secondary school certificate, 36.3% of the respondents have NCE/Diploma while 25.6% of the respondents are HND/BSc holders. It is obvious that majority of the respondents 36.3% are NCE/Diploma holders.

Table 2 shows the effect of poverty on street hawking among under-age children.

**Table 2: Effect of poverty on street hawking among under age children**

S/N	Variable	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	TOTAL (%)
1	In ability of the parents to provide food and shelter leads to street hawking among under-age children.	42 (37.2%)	38 (33.6%)	11 (9.7%)	8 (7.1%)	14 (12.4%)	113 (100)
2	Unemployment of the parents result to street hawking among under-age children.	45 (39.8%)	43 (38.1%)	14 (12.4%)	10 (8.8%)	1 (0.9%)	113 (100)
3	Inadequate shelter result to street hawking among under-age children.	58 (51.3%)	31 (27.4%)	12 (10.6%)	9 (8.0%)	3 (2.7%)	113 (100)
4	Terminal illness of the parents/family members leads to street hawking among under-age.	40 (35.4%)	50 (44.2%)	12 (10.6%)	8 (7.1%)	3 (2.7%)	113 (100)
5	Low-income level of the parents results to street hawking among under-age children.	50 (44.3%)	44 (38.9%)	6 (5.3%)	7 (6.2%)	6 (5.3%)	113 (100)

Source: Field Survey: 2023

From Table 2, item 1 which states that inability of the parents to provide food and shelter leads to street hawking among under-age children reveals that 37.2% of the respondents strongly agreed, 33.6% of the respondents agreed, 9.7% of the respondents remain undecided, 7.1% of the respondents disagree while 12.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed. This indicates that only 37.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that inability of parents to provide food leads to street hawking among under-age children in the study area.

Item 2 on unemployment of the parent’s result to street hawking among under-age children reveal that 39.8% of the respondents strongly agreed, 38.1% of the respondents agreed, 12.4% of the respondents remain undecided, 8.8% of the respondents disagree while 0.9% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the statement. Item 3 which state that inadequate shelter result to street hawking among under-age children reveal that 51.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 27.4% of respondents agreed, 10.6% of the respondents remain undecided, 7.1% of the respondents disagree while 2.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. It is evident that more than half of the respondents (51.3%) are of the view that inadequate shelter result to street hawking among under-age children in the study area.

Item 4 on terminal illness of the parent’s/family members been the cause of street hawking among under-age reveal that 35.4% of the respondents strongly agree, 44.2% of the respondents agree, 10.6% of the respondents remain undecided, 7.1% of the respondents disagree while 2.7% of the respondents strongly disagree with the assertion. Considering item 5 in Table 2 which state that low-income level of the parents results to street hawking among under-age children shows that 44.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 38.9% of the respondents agree, 5.3% of the respondents remain undecided, 6.2% of the respondents disagree while 5.3% strongly disagree with the assertion.

Table 3 present result of the findings on the effect of family break up on street hawking of under-age children.



**Table 3: Effect of Family break up on street hawking among under age children**

S/N	Variable	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	TOTAL (%)
1	Insurgency has led to family breakup and result to leads to street hawking among under-age children.	52 (46.0%)	45 (39.8%)	8 (7.1%)	6 (5.3%)	2 (1.8%)	113 (100)
2	Rural-urban migration has resulted to street hawking among under age children.	45 (39.8%)	37 (32.7%)	16 (14.2%)	8 (7.1%)	7 (6.2%)	113 (100)
3	Communal clashes have led to family breakup and result to hawking among under age children.	44 (38.9%)	40 (35.4%)	14 (12.4%)	13 (11.5%)	2 (1.8%)	113 (100)
4	Under age children who stays with guidance are force to street hawking.	48 (42.5%)	31 (27.4%)	9 (8.0%)	12 (10.6%)	13 (11.5%)	113 (100)
5	Divorce among parent’s result to street hawking among under age children.	49 (43.4%)	45 (39.8%)	8 (7.1%)	5 (4.4%)	6 (5.3%)	113 (100)

Source: Field Survey: 2023

In Table 3, item 1 which state that insurgency has led to family breakup and result to street hawking among under-age children in the study area reveals that 46.0% of the respondents strongly agreed, 39.8% of the respondents agree, 7.1% of the respondents remain undecided, 5.3% of the respondents disagree while 1.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. From same Table 3, item 2 which state that rural-urban migration has resulted to street hawking among under age children reveals that 39.8% of the respondents strongly agreed, 32.7% of the respondents agree, 14.2% of the respondents remain undecided, 7.1% of the respondents disagree while 6.2% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. Furthermore, item 3 in Table 3 which state that communal clashes have led to family breakup and result to hawking among under age children reveal that 38.9% of the respondents strongly agreed, 35.4% of the respondents agree, 12.4% of the respondents remain undecided, 11.5% of the respondents disagree while 1.8% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion.

Also, item 4 which state that under age children who stays with guidance are force to street hawking reveal that 42.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, 27.4% of the respondents agree, 8.0% of the respondents remain undecided, 10.6% of the respondents disagree while 11.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. Item 5 in Table 3 which state that divorce among parent’s result to street hawking among under age children reveals that 43.4% of the respondents strongly agreed, 39.8% of the respondents agree, 7.1% of the respondents remain undecided, 4.4% of the respondents disagree while 5.3% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion.

The result of the findings on the effect of illiteracy among parents on street hawking among under age children is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Effect of parental illiteracy on street hawking among under age**

S/N	Variable	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	TOTAL (%)
1	Illiteracy of the parents result to street hawking among under age children.	69 (61.1%)	30 (26.5%)	4 (3.5%)	7 (6.2%)	3 (2.7%)	113 (100)
2	High cost of education result to street hawking among under age children.	42 (37.2%)	47 (41.5%)	12 (10.6%)	9 (8.0%)	3 (2.7%)	113 (100)
3	Gender segregation by parent’s result to street hawking among under age children.	35 (31.0%)	43 (38.1%)	17 (15.0%)	13 (11.5%)	5 (4.4%)	113 (100)
4	Lack of day school for female children result to street hawking among under age children.	41 (36.3%)	38 (38.1%)	13 (11.5%)	11 (9.7%)	5 (4.4%)	113 (100)
5	Lack of effect guidance and counselling on the relevance of education result to street hawking among under age children.	41 (36.3%)	51 (45.1%)	11 (9.6%)	6 (5.3%)	4 (3.5%)	113 (100)

*Source: Field Survey: 2023*

In Table 4, item 1 which state that illiteracy of the parent’s result to street hawking among under age children reveals that 61.1% of the respondents strongly agreed, 26.5% of the respondents agree, 3.5% of the respondents remain undecided, 6.2% of the respondents disagree while 2.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. Also from Table 4, item 2 which state that high cost of education result to street hawking among under age children reveal that 37.2% of the respondents strongly agreed, 41.5% of the respondents agree, 10.6% of the respondents remain undecided, 8.0% of the respondents disagree while 2.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion.

Item 3 in Table 4 which state that gender segregation by parent’s result to street hawking among underage children reveal that 31.0% of the respondents strongly agreed, 38.1% of the respondents agree, 15.0% of the respondents remain undecided, 11.5% of the respondents disagree while 4.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. Also, item 4 which state that lack of day school for female children result to street hawking among under age children reveal that 36.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 38.1% of the respondents agree, 11.5% of the respondents remain undecided, 9.7% of the respondents disagree while 4.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. Furthermore, item 5 which state that lack of guidance and counselling on the relevance of education result to street hawking among underage children reveals that 36.3% of the respondents strongly agreed, 45.1% of the respondents agree, 9.6% of the respondents remain undecided, 5.3% of the respondents disagree while 3.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion.

The result of the findings of the study on the effect of street hawking on behavioral development among underage children is presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Effect of street hawking on behavioral development among under age children**

S/N	Variable	SA (%)	A (%)	UD (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	TOTAL (%)
1	Under age children learn bad behaviors and attitudes as a result of street hawking.	82 (72.6%)	19 (16.8%)	3 (2.7%)	5 (4.4%)	4 (3.5%)	113 (100)
2	Under age Street hawkers always learn vulgar language during hawking.	57 (50.4%)	41 (36.4%)	11 (9.7%)	4 (3.5%)	0 (0%)	113 (100)
3	Street hawking influences the high rate of moral laxity among under age.	39 (34.5%)	53 (46.9%)	14 (12.4%)	2 (1.8%)	5 (4.4%)	113 (100)
4	Under age that hawk on the street is exposed to sexual activities early age.	55 (48.7%)	43 (38.1%)	10 (8.7%)	2 (1.8%)	3 (2.7%)	113 (100)
5	Street hawking influence the high rate of truancy.	59 (52.2%)	33 (29.2%)	5 (4.4%)	10 (11.5%)	3 (2.7%)	113 (100)

Source: Field Survey: 2023

In Table 5, item 1 which state that underage children learn bad behaviors and attitudes as a result of street hawking reveals that 72.6% of the respondents strongly agreed, 16.8% of the respondents agree, 2.7% of the respondents remain undecided, 4.4% of the respondents disagree while 3.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. This shows that majority of the respondents (72.6%) strongly agreed that underage children learn bad behaviors and attitudes as a result of street hawking.

Furthermore, from Table 5, item 2 which state that underage street hawkers always learn vulgar language during hawking reveals that 50.4% of the respondents strongly agreed, 36.4% of the respondents agree, 9.7% of the respondents remain undecided, 3.5% of the respondents disagree while none of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. Also, item 3 which state that street hawking influences the high rate of moral laxity among underage, it shows that 34.5% of the respondents strongly agreed, 46.9% of the respondents agree, 12.4% of the respondents remain undecided, 1.8% of the respondents disagree while 4.4% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion. Item 4 in Table 5 which state that underage that hawk on the street are exposed to sexual activities at early age in life reveals that 48.7% of the respondents strongly agreed, 38.1% of the respondents agree, 8.7% of the respondents remain undecided, 1.8% of the respondents disagree while 2.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion.

Item 5 which state that street hawking influences the high rate of truancy reveals that 52.2% of the respondents strongly agreed, 29.2% of the respondents agree, 4.4% of the respondents remain undecided, 11.5% of the respondents disagree while 2.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed with the assertion.

In collaborating the findings, an FGD was conducted with three groups (one in each LGA) with six selected members (Religious leaders, Traditional rulers, civil servants, women, youths and non-governmental organization worker) on in the three selected local government areas namely; Bade, Damaturu and Potiskum and the result was summarized in percentage. When the FGD groups were asked if street hawking among under age occurs in their communities, they were unanimous in their response that it happens in their society and most of the children are minors. When asked

which gender of the underage are mostly engaged in street hawking, most of them believe that the female children are mostly seen on the street hawking. Also, the group are of the opinion that most of the underage children hawking were out of school.

When the FGD members were asked question about the causes of street hawking, many of them were of the opinion that poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and large family size are among the major causes of street hawking among underage. When asked if religion and constitution of Nigeria have permitted hawking, they were unanimous in their response that both religion and constitution have considered street hawking as an abuse of underage children which are seen as gift from God. When the FGD members were asked if the insurgency that occurred in the state contributed to underage involvement in street hawking, most of them were of the opinion that most of the urban centers are populated with migrants who cannot feed themselves which made them to send their kids to hawk for family survival. On the moral implication of underage involvement in street hawking, members of the FGD were of the views that children pick up bad habits such as fighting, stealing, drug abuse, vulgar languages, sex at early age, bad dressing among others.

### **Conclusion**

This study has examined the effect of street hawking on moral upbringing of under-age children in Yobe State, Nigeria. The findings of the study reveal that street hawking has increase over the years in Nigeria, predominantly in the north and it is largely done by children some of who are underage (below 14 years) and these children engage in street hawking to support their family. The study concludes that poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, insurgency, large family size, divorce, children who are taking from their parents to stay with relatives are the major causes of street hawking among underage and this affect their moral upbringing resulting to negative behaviors, fowl or vulgar languages, drug addiction, truancy and sexual exposure at tender age.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the result of the findings, the following recommendations are made;

- i. Government and non-governmental organization should be involved in the fight against underage street hawking and ensure that an agency such as NAPTIP and Human right commission should be involved in the enforcement of existing laws against child labor.
- ii. Religious and traditional rulers should be involved in sensitizing members of the communities on the effect and dangers of underage street hawking.
- iii. Government should provide free and compulsory education for underage children in Nigeria.
- iv. Government should create a welfare scheme to cushion the hardship faced by unemployed parents and family with large size.

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