

# INFLUENCE OF STREET HAWKING ON THE ENTREPRENUERIAL SKILLS OF OUT OF SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN THE COSMOPOLITAN TOWN OF BUEA, CAMEROON

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**Abstract:** This study investigated the effect of street hawking on the entrepreneurial skills of out of school adolescents in the cosmopolitan town of Buea in Cameroon. Indicators of street hawking were calculation skills, negotiation skills and communication. Methodologically the research adopted a descriptive survey design. The sample was made of 30 children street hawkers in some neighbourhoods in Buea, Cameroon. The data collected was statistically analysed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage counts) to answer research questions and inferential statistics (Logistic Regression Model) to test and verify the hypotheses. From the data analysed, the findings showed that; Majority (56%) respondents agreed that they have communication skills while some (44%) respondents disagreed. Some (47.4%) respondents agreed that they have calculation skills while majority (52.7%) respondents disagreed. Majority (57.4%) respondents agreed they have negotiation skills while some (40.6%) respondents disagreed. The study recommended that entrepreneurship should be encourage as a way of life to youngsters and it should be a subject at the elementary levels to boast children's calculation skills, negotiation skills and communication skills in their formative years of development.

**Keywords:** Street hawking, calculation skills, negotiation skills, communication skills, adolescents, entrepreneurial skills.

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## Introduction

Aiyehuro (2009) defines street hawking as a system of trading whereby the trader carries his or her wares about. Street hawking therefore 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 a wheel barrow, bicycle or trolley in search of customers. This is in the form of shouting, which is a kind of advertisement, moving from one business center to another, bar, restaurant, especially road site business places. In some cases, they move to residential areas, mini cites in student's neighborhood and residential areas to sell by shouting and calling the name of their goods on their head. There is a geometric rise of street hawking in Buea, Cameroon, which many people termed it child labour which ranges from children between the ages 7 to about 18 years of age and many other people sees it as child work, in African context because children are contributors in the betterment of their family welfare. They grow up in hardship, poverty, poor housing conditions, difficult neighborhoods, slums, CDC (Cameroon Development Corporation) CDC camps and their parents can't do it alone, some are peasant farmers, traders, and some with little or no salaries and sometimes salaries not paid or even paid on time, and the only way to cope is to engage these adolescents in to street hawking. Umar (2009) defines street hawking as the selling of things along the roads and from one place to the other. Hawking is a marketing system characterized by many buyers and sellers usually offering very small quantities for sale at a time (Olukosi, Isitor, and Ode, 2005). According to Olayinka (2012), street hawking is a form of self-employment that involves selling goods or services on the street, without the benefit of a fixed physical location. Street vendors may sell a range of

products, including food, clothing, electronics, and other consumer goods. Entrepreneurial skills refer to the competencies and abilities that individuals need to start and run a successful business. These skills may include creativity, innovation, risk-taking, problem-solving, financial management, marketing, and communication skills, among others. Entrepreneurial skills are important for individuals who wish to start their own businesses or to succeed in the competitive global economy. Street hawking can provide opportunities for young people to develop and apply entrepreneurial skills in a real-world setting. Overall, street hawking is an informal sector activity that provides opportunities for self-employment and skill-building, but is also associated with risks and challenges as some children are often raped, money stolen and some engaged in some juvenile acts as they stay late at night outside. In the context of Cameroon, immediately these child hawkers closed from school, they immediately go back home, pick up their goods and start selling while others don't even go to school and it is their daily activity in order to cope with life. They sell items like banana, "Congogo meat", Koki, Koki corn, boiled corn boiled groundnut, just to name a few depending on the season of the year.

Entrepreneurial skills are important for young people who engage in street hawking, as it helps to enhance their economic opportunities and improve their overall well-being. Street hawking started as a result of poor socio-economic status or background of parents. According to Palmer (2007), support for skills development in the informal economy is by far the largest destination for school leavers. Hence, the most important issue being highlighted in relation to the phenomenon of street hawking is the issue of skills training and development to improve the status of these hawkers to remove them from the situation they find

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themselves being on the street. The consequences include dropping out of school, exposed to drugs, sexual assaults which increases the vulnerability of the hawkers to diseases such as HIV/AIDS, sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions (Lee 2004, Lu 2011). Due to intense discussion on Cameroons major news media about street hawking phenomenon and the length of social commentary's, it has led to some form of intervention by the government and other organizations to try to curb its negative effects. In addition, policy makers and government officials has also intervened in an attempt to solve the street hawking problem. Street hawking has been defined and conceptualized by various researchers in different ways. Generally, street hawking refers to the informal sector activity of selling goods or services on the streets, sidewalks, or other public spaces. It is often associated with poverty, urbanization, and informal employment, and is prevalent in many developing countries.

### **Problem Statement**

Entrepreneurial skills are critical skills for self-employment, self-reliant that is enculturated in some cultures while in other cultures it is learned in school. Most people look for white collar jobs that's why they spend long time schooling and forget about certain child work that is very important during the formative years of children which is common in Africa called street hawking. It is common to see African children along the street and in neighborhoods selling after school to meet up to ends needs and some not schooling at all and spend their everyday life as vendors. The development of entrepreneurial skills is very important for the adaptability of children in the African context due to poverty and hardship in order to contribute to family income that can help them go to school or do a trade. These children sometime learn certain vulgar languages in the street, while some adjust, some are being derail.

### **Research objective**

#### **General research objectives**

- To find out the effect of street hawking on the entrepreneurial skills of out of school adolescents in the Buea Municipality.

#### **Specific research objectives**

- To the find out the effect of communication skills on the entrepreneurial skills of out of school adolescents on the Buea Municipality.
- To investigate the effect of calculation skills on the entrepreneurial skills of out of school adolescents in the Buea Municipality.
- To assert the effect of Negotiation skills on the entrepreneurial skills of out of school adolescents Buea Municipality

### **Literature Review**

According to Olagunju (2009) a hawker is a vendor of merchandise that can be easily transported. Aiyehuro (2009) asserts that hawking is a system of trading whereby the trader carries his goods about. It 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, truck, bicycle, trolley, motor bike, in search of customers. Street hawking is very common in Africa and in Cameroon and Buea in particular, for it is a common daily life activity. The population of Buea has increased as a result of the socio-political crisis in Cameroon and many internal displaced persons has migrated to Buea, Cameroon because they see it as safe zone. Most of these kids hawk because

of hardship, some are homeless, some of their parents are traders and they assist them to hawk in order to contribute to the income of their families, and to others, that's the only means of survival. They are a lot of risk factors involve in street hawking as well as there are positive values and skills gained during trading or street vending. Most kids hawk because of high level poverty, high rate unemployment, poor living conditions, where parents leave in slums, and leave below the poverty line, can't afford for decent homes, good meal and unable to send their children to school and not to talk of good schools. When children hawk, wander from one street to another, market to another, neighbourhood to another, with goods on their head, marketing the goods and sometimes moving from one hostel to another, they encounter some setbacks. Sometimes they go back home late at night very tired and its common to find some having accident crossing the roads, some being rape, some of them their money stolen and seized, and some even go to nearby casinos and other entertainment places to gamble, while others sell and take the money back home. In the process of selling, they gain a lot of entrepreneurial skills, calculative skills, negotiation skills, conflict management skills, communication skills and other life skills of resilience and coping with life's adversities. These children are sometimes abused because they are vulnerable. These children hawk because they have to contribute to family welfare and improve on their standards of living because their parents can't do it on their own, as a result of low family income, single parenting, parental conflicts and divorce, lost of parents, living with uncles and aunties, high cost of living in urban centers., just to name a few. Some of these adolescents move from one town to another to hawk, for example some trek from Mutegene to Buea while some take taxi's from Mutegene to Buea just to hawk and only return home at night. Some of these adolescents' hawk with very dirty cloths due to difficulties, wander from one place to another, sometimes begging people buy and insisting their parents gave them an ultimatum to sell all their goods before coming back home. These street vendors are very vulnerable to societal ills, while some adapt and adjust, others are victims of circumstances. In the context of Buea and its environs, it is a complex experience to these children, as they learn the good, the bad and the ugly, same as they gain a lot of life skills to cope with life in this difficult part of the world. Personalities like the late Pa Guarantee a business man, Fokou a business tycoon, didn't go to school, they started as child vendors and became business tycoons and it is not a guarantee that every child that hawks becomes a business tycoon, some dropout from school ,while some remain resilient and become successful businessmen. Some cultures like the Bamileke in Cameroon, street hawking is enculturated in childhood as a way of life. According to Marie (2012), it is probably the riskiest type of trading in the whole world. Adolescence is a critical period of development that encompasses significant physical, cognitive, and emotional changes (Steinberg, 2014). During this time, young people are exploring their identity, developing social skills, and preparing for adulthood (Eccles & Roeser, 2011).

### **Methodology**

The Cross-sectional survey design was used. The sample was made up of 30 street vendors who are adolescents in Molyko, Muea and Mile 16 all in Buea, Cameroon. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire.

**Figure 1: Distribution of respondents according to demographic characteristics**

Characteristics		N	%
Sex	Male	14	46.7
	Female	16	53.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age group	07-12 years	07	23.3
	13-16 years	08	26.7
	17-18 years	15	50.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Neighbourhood	Molyko	16	53.3
	Muea	08	26.7
	Mile 16	06	20.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The findings on table 1 revealed that majority (53.3%) of the respondents were males while 46.7% were females. Again majority (50%) respondents were between the ages of 17-18 years while 26.7% were between the ages of 13-16 years and some (23.3%) respondents were 10-12 years. Furthermore, majority (53.3%) respondents were from Molyko; some (26.7%) respondents were from Muea and some (20%) were from mile 16.

## Findings

**Table 2: Presentation of findings**

Research hypotheses	Tests statistic	Comment
<b>Research hypothesis one:</b> There is no effect of communication skills on entrepreneurship skills of out of school adolescents in Buea Municipality	Binary Logistic Regression Model: - Model validation test (Ominbus Tests of Model Coefficient; P<0.05 - Overall Predictive or Explanatory Power (Nagelkerke R square)	Findings revealed that the variability explained by this model is significant (Omnibus Test of Model Coefficient: $\chi^2=47.836$ ; $df=77$ ; $P=0.000$ ). This therefore implies that this predictive component significantly predicts adolescents' entrepreneurship skills with an Explanatory Power (EP) / Predictive Power of 80.8% (Nagelkerke R Square=0.808).). This shows that communication skills have a significant influence on the entrepreneurship skills of out of school adolescents in Buea Municipality.
<b>Research hypothesis two:</b> There is no effect of calculation skills on entrepreneurship skills of out of school adolescents in Buea Municipality	Binary Logistic Regression Model: - Model validation test (Ominbus Tests of Model Coefficient; P<0.05 - Overall Predictive or Explanatory Power (Nagelkerke R square)	Findings revealed that calculation skills have no significant effect on entrepreneurship skills of out school adolescent in Buea Municipality with a logistic regression (Omnibus Test of Model Coefficient: $\chi^2=0.00$ ; $df=88$ ; $P=0.000$ ) and an Explanatory Power (EP) / Predictive Power of 0.0% (Nagelkerke R Square=0.00). This shows that calculations skills have no significant influence on entrepreneurship skills of out of school adolescents in Buea Municipality.
<b>Research hypothesis three:</b> There is no effect of negotiation skills on entrepreneurship skills of out of school adolescents in Buea Municipality	Binary Logistic Regression Model: - Model validation test (Ominbus Tests of Model Coefficient; P<0.05 - Overall Predictive or Explanatory Power (Nagelkerke R square)	Findings revealed that negotiation skills have no significant effect on entrepreneurship skills of out school adolescent in Buea Municipality with a logistic regression (Omnibus Test of Model Coefficient: $\chi^2=1.636$ ; $df=77$ ; $P=1.000$ ) and an Explanatory Power (EP) / Predictive Power of 5.4% (Nagelkerke R Square=0.054). This shows that negotiation skills have no significant influence on entrepreneurship skills of out of school adolescents in Buea Municipality.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings from the indicators, calculation skills, negotiation skills and communication skills, indicated that when adolescents hawk, they gain a lot of skills for entrepreneurial ship. They gain calculation skills, negotiation skills and communication skills and other life skills that help them adapt and adjust in life and help to self-develop them as they transit to adulthood with its own crisis, which helps some of them to become successful

business men and women. To conclude, these children develop the skill of financial independence that helps them in adulthood life. While some derail, and encounter some vices of street hawking, others negotiate their life trajectories with a lot of skills and fortitudes to cope with life in Sub Saharan Africa with its own challenges and harsh climate, that sometimes affect these children's health. It is recommended that children can even have a confined environment to sell their items so that their parents or

caregivers can easily locate them when need be. It is further recommended that street hawking could be enshrined in the curriculum of elementary to secondary school and Universities where entrepreneurship should be a compulsory subject or course taught in formal education.

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