



Experiences and Attitudes towards Sexual Harassment among Hawkers Residing in Ede Township in Osun State, Nigeria

Adeyemi O^{1*}, M A², Ayorinde O A³, Sally G G⁴, Obasi Chiamaka S O⁵, Modurotolu M O⁶

Variables	Observable variables	Frequency (%)
1. If people make unwelcome advances at me, I become	Embarrassed	14 (28%)
	Offended	28 (56%)
	Not bothered	7 (14%)
	Afraid	1 (2%)
2. Experiences and Attitudes towards Sexual Harassment among Hawkers Residing in Ede Township in Osun State, Nigeria	Be friendly to them	3 (6%)
	Others	3 (6%)
	Yes	40 (80%)
	No	3 (6%)
3. Would you file a complaint if there is a procedure for you to do so?	Yes	40 (80%)
	No	3 (6%)
	Maybe	7 (14%)

Abstract

Background: Peddling through the streets in developing countries is another area of interest the researchers will love to explore due to the socio-economic and negative health effects that can results from this by those who involved in it. This includes sexual assault which increases the vulnerability of the hawkers to diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, increased risk of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion.

Objective: This study aimed to gain an understanding on the experiences and attitudes towards sexual harassment among hawkers residing in Ede Township in Osun State, Nigeria.

Methodology: The study population comprises of hawkers in Ede Township in Ede, Osun State. Fifty respondents were reached through questionnaire titled Experiences and Attitudes towards Sexual Harassment among Hawkers Residing in Ede Township in Osun State, Nigeria. Quantitative research method was applied for data collection. 17 items questionnaire containing 3 segments was used for data collection and SPSS version 23 was used for analysis of data.

Results: The result revealed that 21 (42%) were between the age of 16 – 20 years, 38 (76%) were females, 42 (84%) were Islam, 49 (98%) were Yoruba of which 39 (78%) were single. Also, 37 (74%) were students, 43 (86%) had secondary school education 14 (28%) earned 1,000 – 1,900 and 2,000 – 2,900 per day as income. 16 (32%) responded that sometimes has anyone made gesture or body language of a sexual nature to them, 45 (90%) strongly disagree that they are comfortable with people of opposite sex touching their buttocks without their consent and 44 (88%) strongly disagree that they are comfortable with people of opposite sex touching their waist without their consent.

Conclusion: In conclusion, street hawking is a variant and a very visible phenomenon in our society. It is largely due to poverty and underdevelopment. The hawkers are exposed to many risks of which sexual abuse is a prominent component. The government needs to vigorously pursue poverty alleviation measures to improve the general socio-economic status of majority of the population. There are needs to give sex education to all young people with emphasis on risk reduction measures.

Keywords: Experience, Attitudes, Sexual Harassment, Hawkers

^{1*} Omoge O Adeyemi, Department of Public Health, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Adeleke University, Ede, Osun, Nigeria.

² Adesegun Mobolaji M, Department of Public Health, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Adeleke University, Ede, Osun, Nigeria.

³ Arogundade Ayorinde O, Department of Public Health, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Adeleke University, Ede, Osun, Nigeria.

⁴ Godfrey Sally G, Department of Public Health, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Adeleke University, Ede, Osun, Nigeria.

⁵ Obi – Obasi Chiamaka S, Department of Public Health, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Adeleke University, Ede, Osun, Nigeria.

⁶ Opadele Modurotolu M, Department of Public Health, Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences Adeleke University, Ede, Osun, Nigeria.

Email

omogeadeyemi@gmail.com

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Evidence in Context

What Know: This includes sexual assault which increases the vulnerability of the hawkers to diseases such as HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted infections, increased risk of unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortion.

What New: The government needs to vigorously pursue poverty alleviation measures to improve the general socio-economic status of majority of the population. There are needs to give sex education to all young people with emphasis on risk reduction measures.

To view

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Introduction

Peddling through the streets in developing countries is another area of interest the researchers will love to explore (Olutunde, 2013; Ugochukwu et al., 2012) due to the socio-economic and negative health effects that can result from this by those who are involved in it. (Amoo et al., 2012; Esin et al., 2005; Ashimolowo et al., 2010). Developing countries are faced with exponential growth giving rise to rural-urban drift in search of a better means of livelihood (Hoyamo and Keenan, 2007). Peddling through the street no matter the age or sex, is associated with major hazards like sexual harassment of all forms that makes them to be more susceptible to sexually transmitted infections, undesirable pregnancies and dangerous abortion (Lee, 2004; Lu, 2011; Kwankye et al., 2007).

Other hazards include physical assaults, mobbing, involvement in road traffic accidents, kidnapping and ritual killings. Street hawking leads to increased exposure to antisocial activities like smoking, drug and alcohol abuse, cultism, and crime (Ugochukwu et al., 2012; Amoo et al., 2012; Esin et al., 2005; Ashimolowo et al., 2010; Hoyamo and Keenan, 2007; Ekpenyong and Nkereuwem, 2011). The occurrence of peddling through the streets in Nigeria are associated with increased rates of unemployment, poverty, financial incapability, peer influence, extensive family size and inadequate parental care (Fawole et al., 2003). Poverty has been identified as the main reasons why people engaged in peddling through the streets (Onuzulike, 2007).

Street peddling disfigures the environment with littering by those who are involved in buying and selling during peddling activities (Kwankye et al., 2007). This also leads to environmental pollution, blocking of drainage causing flooding and breeding places for diseases causing organisms. The health of those who reside within these areas are susceptible to all sort of communicable diseases like dysentery, cholera etc. There is a possibility of physical injuries when they go about carrying their commodities from one place to another and activities of street peddlers can also lead to traffic congestions as they occupy most of highways (Amoo et al., 2012). Physical, psychological, economic, and social effects are some of the effects of sexual harassment to the person involved, family and society. Sexual harassment predisposes the street peddlers to rape, early and unwanted pregnancy, low self-esteem, post-traumatic stress and disorder, public assaults, decreased productivity. (ILO,2010).

Methods

The study was conducted in Ede North Township. Ede is one of Local Government Area in Osun State situated in south – west part of Nigeria and speaks Yoruba language. It is known as one of ancient towns of Yoruba people. Ninety percent of population in Ede are Muslim. Ede is well known as land of hospitality.

Study population:

The study population comprises of hawkers in Ede Township in Ede, Osun State. The respondents numbering fifty (50) were reached through questionnaire among Hawkers Residing in Ede Township in Osun State, Nigeria.

Study design and sampling:

This was a cross – sectional descriptive study. A systematic sampling method was utilized in selecting respondents from Ede Township in Osun, Nigeria.

Data collection methods:

Questionnaire was used to collect data from the sample of population. 50 hawkers were sampled and administered questionnaires to. The questionnaire comprised of questions on Socio – Demographic information, offensive attention/behaviours experienced by hawkers and attitudes of hawkers towards sexual harassment.

Data analysis:

The results of respondents were analyzed using Statistical Package for Service Solutions (SPSS) Ver.23 and was presented using tables, charts, means and simple percentages.

Ethical consideration:

Letter of introduction was sought from Faculty of Basic Medical Sciences, Adeleke University, Ede. Approval to conduct research in community was also sought from Ede North Local Government Authority. Permission was obtained from respondents before administering questionnaire and confidentiality of all respondents was ensured.

Results

SECTION A: Socio – Demographic Characteristics of the respondents (n=50)

Variables	Observable variables	Frequency (%)
Age (Years)	11 – 15	18 (36%)
	16 – 20	21 (42%)
	21 – 25	4 (8%)
	26 and above	7 (14%)
Sex	Male	12 (24%)
	Female	38 (76%)
Religion	Christianity	8 (16%)
	Islam	42 (84%)
Tribe	Yoruba	49 (98%)
	Hausa	1 (2%)
Marital Status	Single	39 (78%)
	Married	11 (22%)
Occupation	Student	37 (74%)
	Self – Employed	13 (26%)
Level of Education	Primary	2 (4%)
	Secondary	43 (86%)
	Tertiary	5 (10%)
Level of Income (Per Day)	1,000 – 1,900	14 (28%)
	2,000 – 2,900	14 (28%)
	3,000 – 3,900	11 (22%)
	4,000 and above	11 (22%)

SECTION B: Offensive Attention/Behaviours Experienced by Hawkers (n=50)

Variables	Never (%)	Sometimes (%)	Often (%)
1. Do any of your customers tell sexual stories or jokes that are offensive to you?	26 (52%)	20 (40%)	4 (8%)
2. Has anyone made gesture or body language of a sexual nature to you?	31 (62%)	16 (32%)	3 (6%)
3. Have you experienced any of the following actions either from men or women customers?			
	26 (52%)	19 (38%)	5 (10%)
(a) Whistles/hoots(b) Mocking laughter(c) Staring/leering(d) Offensive/abusive name calling	32 (64%)	15 (30%)	3 (6%)
	26 (52%)	21 (42%)	3 (6%)
	32 (64%)	17 (34%)	1 (2%)
4. Has anyone asked you unwelcome questions about private sexual matters (for example, discussing or commenting on your sex life)?	35 (70%)	13 (26%)	2 (4%)
5. People have insulted and/or made offensive remarks about my appearance, body, or sexual abilities?	28 (56%)	18 (36%)	4 (8%)
6. Have you been touched in a way that made you feel uncomfortable e.g. lips, breasts, buttocks etc?	34 (68%)	14 (28%)	2 (4%)
7. People make unwanted attempts to establish a romantic sexual relationship with me despite my efforts to discourage it?	34 (68%)	15 (30%)	1 (2%)
8. People have attempted to stroke, fondle, or kiss you?	45 (90%)	3 (6%)	2 (4%)
9. I have been offered money or special treatment by people seeking to engage me in sexual behaviour?	47 (94%)	1 (2%)	2 (4%)
10. I have been threatened for not being sexually cooperative?	45 (90%)	4 (8%)	1 (2%)
11. Do people offer special treatment/favour/gift to you in hopes that you would be sexually cooperative?	47 (94%)	2 (4%)	1 (2%)

SECTION C: Attitudes of Hawkers towards Sexual Harassment (n=50)

Variables	Observable variables	Frequency (%)
1. If people make unwelcome advances at me, I become	Embarrassed	14 (28%)
	Offended	28 (56%)
	Not bothered	7 (14%)
	Afraid	1 (2%)
2. Which of the following actions would you take if people make unwelcome advances at you?	Report to parents or other authority figures	17 (34%)
	Insult the trespasser	27 (54%)
	Be friendly to them	3 (6%)
	Others	3 (6%)
3. Would you file a complaint if there is a procedure for you to do so?	Yes	40 (80%)
	No	3 (6%)
	Maybe	7 (14%)

(SA: Strongly Agree, A: Agree, U: Undecided, D: Disagree, SD: Strongly Disagree)

Variables	SA (%)	A (%)	U (%)	D (%)	SD (%)
4. I am comfortable with people of opposite sex touching the following parts of my body without my consent?					
(a) Hair	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	8 (16%)	42 (84%)
(b) Face	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (14%)	43 (86%)
(c) Mouth	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	13 (26%)	37 (74%)
(d) Ears	2 (4%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	10 (20%)	38 (76%)
(e) Hands	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	5 (10%)	7 (14%)	37 (74%)
(f) Buttocks	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (10%)	45 (90%)
(g) Waist	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	6 (12%)	44 (88%)
(h) Back	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	5 (10%)	45 (90%)
5. If I am sexually harassed, I would be cooperative because I would be afraid of being treated poorly or harmed?	1 (2%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	7 (14%)	42 (84%)
6. I can accept/condone any form of sexual harassment except rape?	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)	10 (20%)	39 (78%)

Discussion

Socio – Demographic Characteristics of Respondents: The result revealed that 21(42%) were between age of 16–20 year, 38(76%) were females, 42(84%) were Islam, 49(98%) were Yoruba of which 39(78%) were single. Also, 37(74%) were students, 43(86%) had secondary school education 14(28%) earned 1,000–1,900 and 2,000–2,900 per day as income.

Offensive Attention/Behaviours Experienced by Hawkers: From result above, 26(52%) responded that never do any of their customers tell stories or jokes that are offensive to them. 31(62%) responded that never, 16(32%) responded that sometimes has anyone made gesture or body language of a sexual nature to them, 35(70%) responded that never has anyone asked them unwelcome questions about their private sexual matters. 28(56%) responded that people have never insulted and/or made offensive remarks about their appearance, body, or sexual abilities. 34(68%) responded that they have never been touched in a way that made them feel uncomfortable. 34(68%) responded that never do people make unwanted attempts. 45(90%) responded that never do people have attempted to stroke, fondle, or kiss them.

Attitudes of Hawkers towards Sexual Harassment: of 50 respondents, 28(56%) responded that they will become offended if people make unwelcome advances at them, 17(34%) responded that they will report to parents or other authority if people make unwelcome advances at them. 40(80%) responded that they would file a complaint if there is a procedure for them to do so. 42(86%) strongly disagree that they are comfortable with people of opposite sex touching their hair without their consent, 45(90%) strongly disagree that they are comfortable with people of opposite sex touching their buttocks without their consent and 44(88%) strongly disagree that they are comfortable with people of opposite sex touching their waist without their consent.

Conclusion

This study revealed that majority of respondents falls between puberty stage, greater percentage of them were females between age of 11 – 20 years and this make them to be vulnerable to various degree of sexual harassment while hawking. Efforts and policies should be implemented to prevent any forms of sexual harassment that poses dangerous effects to victims .

In conclusion, street hawking is a variant is a very visible phenomenon in our society. It is largely due to poverty and underdevelopment. The hawkers are exposed to many risks of which sexual abuse is a prominent component. The government needs to vigorously pursue poverty alleviation measures to improve general socio-economic status of majority of population. There is also need to give sex education to all young people with emphasis on risk reduction measures. Centers to assist sexually harassed persons should be established. Efforts to curb child labour and protective child right policies should be intensified.

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