



***Eking Out A Living Through Street Hawking And The  
Dilemma Of Coping With Government Harassment In Lagos  
State, Nigeria***

A Research Paper presented by:

*BAMIGBOYE HAMILTON OLAJUMOKE VICTORIA*

(NIGERIA)

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Members of the Examining Committee:

Dr. Erhard Berner

Dr. Karin Astrid Siegemann

The Hague, The Netherlands

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This document represents part of the author's study programme while at the Institute of Social Studies. The views stated therein are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Institute.

***Inquiries:***

**Postal address:**

Institute of Social Studies  
P.O. Box 29776  
2502 LT The Hague  
The Netherlands

**Location:**

Kortenaerkade 12  
2518 AX The Hague  
The Netherlands

Telephone: +31 70 426 0460

Fax: +31 70 426 0799

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## **List of Acronyms**

LCDA	Local Council Development Areas
LG A	Local Government Areas and
LASTMAS	Lagos State and Ministry of Environment
ISS	Institute of Social Studies
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ILO	International Labour Organisation

## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to the creator of heaven and earth ``JEHOVAH JIREH`` the everlasting and glorious one who had made it possible for me to go this far.

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## **Abstract**

This research seeks to address the lives of the hawker as witnessed by many people in the major towns. It seeks to define the meaning of the hawkers, their work and the limitations they face while carrying out their business. Analysis has been done to show the composition of the hawkers regarding their marital status, educational levels and the number of hours that these hawkers carry out their work in a day. Challenges the hawkers face as far as the government is concerned has been discussed at length. Various people have criticized hawker's relationship with the government. The government has been adamant in legalizing the hawking business, but this report has come out with the underlying benefits of the hawking industry if well established and promoted by the government. Hawking has been a source of employment for thousands of people both the educated and uneducated due to expanding levels of unemployment in the country. In turn, many people have finally found themselves in the informal sector so as to earn living from it. At the end of the research, recommendations have been discussed that can effectively deal with the ongoing government-hawkers relationship.

## **Relevance to Development Studies**

The general view of the majority of people is that Hawking is a business related to poor people. Lack of employment, formal skills and the low capital involved is attributed to this opinion. Hawkers generally lead a hard life as their working conditions are poor and the low income they get from hawking goods in the streets. Prohibition of Hawking leaves hawkers at mercies of the authorities as they are harassed and manhandled by the authorities. As a result, hawkers are not happy and satisfied with their occupation. Hawkers gladly abandon this business if an opportunity comes across to start a more comfortable employment and a more dignified business. However, this research will give suggestions and recommendations to alternative that the government can positively tapped into the potentials of the informal sector of the street Hawkers and helped the poor people get out of poverty

## **Keywords**

Street Hawkers, Entrepreneurship, Vulnerability, Informal sector, Livelihood



# Chapter 1 : Eking Out a Living

## 1.1 Introduction

Poverty remains one of the greatest and severe manifestations of human deprivation that is indefinitely associated to human capital development; it is, therefore, a matter of global concern (Adebayo, 2013:13). Street vending activities have become highly visible in the urban spaces of the developing world (Asiedu, & Agyei-Mensah, 2008:191). Street hawking has become a global concern and a global phenomenon. The United Nation has estimated there are 100 and 200 million hawkers in Africa. In Nigeria alone, there around 20 million hawkers many concentrated in Lagos. In Lagos, hawkers comprise about 20 percent of the total national labor force. This number is predicted to grow as the population rises in Nigeria. The dramatic increase in street hawking in Nigeria and particularly in Lagos can be attributed to several factors. The rapid population growth does not match development in Nigeria. It has led to high rates of unemployment, low wages, inflation and deplorable working conditions. People have resulted into hawking so that they can support their families and earn a daily living (Adebayo, 2013).

In Lagos, Nigeria, sub-Saharan Africa's largest city-state government has downsized the street hawking (Neuwirth, 2013: 65). With the idea to make Lagos Africa's prototypical megacity and international economic and financial center, the Lagos State government considers informality as being unharmonious with the Megacity Plan (Basinkski, 2009; Kamunyor, 2007). By itself, the underprivileged and poor, forced to survive in informal systems, are repetitively confronted with institutional aggression. It can either be through the affirmation of their livelihoods (informal economic activities) as unlawful or the recurrent intimidation of expulsion from their homes (Brown et al., 2010; Brown et al., 2014). "Particularly, vulnerable are the street traders whose activities are prohibited severely by the Lagos State Environmental Sanitation Law of 2000, the Lagos State Street Trading and Illegal Markets (Prohibition) Law of 2003. Lagos State Waste Management Authority Law of 2007 and the Lagos State Road Traffic Law of 2013" (Lawanson, 2014:45).

Surprisingly, half of the Lagos population live below the poverty line despite the fact that Lagos has an economy of about \$50billion and accounts for about 20% of Nigeria's GDP. The 75% of the working population are involved in the informal economy (NBS, 2011, UN-Habitat, 2012).The Lagos Government even went further to threaten those that are patronizing street hawkers with a jail term. However, the more street hawking become more visible, the more, the more people will creep in such of employment (Neuwirth, 2013: 68). The urban government seems to downplay the importance of hawkers in the economic growth as an alternative source of employment to the low-income urban inhabitants (Yinusa, 188: 103). It is evident in the response of the government treating street hawkers as hardened criminals (Neuwirth, 2013: 68), thus banning

out rightly or restricting the activities of street hawkers to limited areas and space that might make them remain in or fall back into absolute poverty as a result of fall in sales. Nevertheless, the research is desired to achieve the following results

Sequel to aforementioned analysis, series of questions continue popping up in my about the reason for the skepticism of Lagos governments in relation to the informal economy that made them treat street hawkers as hardened criminals. Is it because they do not pay taxes or do they not consider street trading as jobs that can create opportunity and contribute to greater political stability by lowering income inequality? Therefore, making a lot of people graduate out of poverty and be self-dependent. This study intends to investigate how Lagos state government actions towards the street hawkers exacerbated their vulnerability to poverty by preventing the urban poor from doing legitimate businesses without committing a crime to graduate out of poverty. Most especially, in a country that has more than 70% of her population living under a dollar per day. It is important to bring to the fore the challenges and the nature of street hawkers/vendors in Lagos state to really understand the importance of the street hawking to households livelihood. Besides, to ascertain the extent at which the street hawking venture is a sustainable livelihood out of poverty for the poor

## **1.2 Street Hawkers Dilemma**

The arising problem here is that, despite the fact that Lagos contributes one-third of Nigeria's GDP, and it is acknowledged that much of it comes from the private sector. (Neuwirth, 2013: 66). The Lagos government continues to target poor people that are trying to eke out a living from street trading. Considering the alarming rate of unemployment in Nigeria, the controversial crackdown on street vendors has been a central part of Governor Babatunde Fashola's effort to "clean up" and reshape Lagos. The unprecedented for the enforcement drive -- cleanliness, congestion (Basinski, 2009: 2) can be considered as an attack on a venture that has been supported empirically to be capable of pulling the poor out of absolute poverty. The government continues to limit the capability of the poor to generate income for themselves so to at least meet up with basic needs. Nonetheless, Yinusa (188: 103) suggests that there is a need to manage and control hawking behavior other than discontinuing it necessities and nature of their developmental problems. In a sequence of moves that are having severe drawbacks on the citizens one can come across—urban street vendors/ hawkers eking out a living to graduate out of poverty. In most cases, government actions portray the little understanding of the interconnected nature of the urban informal economy or widespread poverty impacts that made street traders feel ostracized and often describe themselves as refugees (Brown et al., 2014). It implies that the government policy lacks connection with the characteristics of the street hawkers.

### ***1.3. Research Objectives***

The objectives of this study is to identify the nature of street hawking in Lagos and who are the actual people involved in hawking in the city, the impact that Lagos government policy have on the street hawkers to vulnerability, and most importantly the significance of street hawking activities to urban poor chance of graduating out of poverty. In addition, to determine workable solutions and strategies that can be implemented for the economic and social empowerment of hawkers in Lagos.

## **1.4. Research questions**

- How and to what extent do repressive policies exacerbate street vendors' vulnerability to poverty?

### **1.4.1. Sub Questions**

- What is the nature of street trading activities in Lagos?
- What is the importance of street trading within households' livelihood strategies?
- How are traders affected by policies and practices such as eviction, confiscation, harassment, and bribe extortion? What are their coping strategies?

## **1.5. Methodological strategies and methods of data collection**

### ***1.5.1. Introduction***

The methodology is a set of rules or procedures for scientific inquiry. It gives a comprehensive understanding of the methods that were adopted in carrying out the research study and the justification of such method. It describes the method of data collection, area of study, study population, instrument of data collection and method of data analysis about their essence and justification. According to O'Leary (2010:92), before a researcher start thinking of a methodology that can be used in conducting research, the researcher must consider if such methodology is within his/her capacity, interest, doable and practical.

The design of this research was the use of semi-interview questions and survey that employed informal comparative approach. This design was preferred for this research as this phenomenon has been already under investigation. The research was to determine causative factors and substantiate the existence of the same. As such, in this research the status of hawkers in Lagos has found already in existence and people themselves in this business. Manipulation of variables was not done at the same time. This study design uses interviews and questionnaires to collect data from participants in their views about their options, characters and experiences to generalize the views of the entire hawker's population. Surveys are carried out with the target of determining the nature of existing theories and phenomena so as to apply the data in justifying or explaining current practices and conditions. The design, therefore, was preferred for this research as the study

was set to get attitudes and opinions of hawkers in Lagos. The research had no dependent, and independent values as the research only focused on hawkers and Lagos government actions towards street hawking

I picked these techniques because my research design meets up with all the criteria stated by O'Leary as a prerequisite for successful research. In this chapter, I shall discuss the rationale behind the choice of the research area or rather the case study, the methods of data collection, sample size and selection techniques among others. Moreover, most importantly the limitation and challenges encountered during the field study in Lagos.

### ***1.5.2 Research Location***

The research targeted hawkers with Lagos central business districts. Although, the research could have included all major towns in Nigeria but due to financial constraints I settled in Lagos first. This city was chosen as it is the capital center and where the majority of the hawkers are located. Hawkers who were involved in this research are from different parts of Nigeria who comes to Lagos to try eking a living through Hawking. The choice of Lagos was influenced by the fact that Lagos is the largest metropolises in Nigeria and one of the largest commercial centers in the world with a population of over 18 million people.

First and foremost, the study area was at four different locations in Lagos State. These areas were selected because of their strategic importance to commercial activities and the dense population of various street hawkers and vendors. The study was conducted in four different Local Government area in Lagos. They included Agege (with a population of 1,033,064), Oshodi-Isolo (1,134,548), Eti-Osa (983,515.), and Mushin (1,321,517) Although Lagos states has 52 Local Government Areas (LGA) and Local Council Development Areas (LCDA). The choice of the four LGA to conduct the study was based on the fact that they are essentially an urban area and one of the densely populated areas in Lagos (Lagos State, 2005; Idowu et al., 2011). Therefore, its density has made it a probable area for my study. The main reason for choosing four different locations is to investigate if the street hawkers encounter the same problem across all the zones and district in Lagos.

### ***1.5.3. Target population***

The study targeted hawkers who are aged between 13 and 55 years old including men and women. Both male and female hawkers are actively involved in this business in Lagos. I had prepared one hundred questionnaires, and there was a total respondent of 45 male and 55 female hawkers.

### ***1.5.4. Population Sampling Procedure***

Because the study population was huge (the entire street Hawkers in four different areas in Lagos state), it was not feasible for me to study every component of this enormous population. I, therefore, resulted to using survey design strategy that comprises of

the gathering of data through responses to different relevant questions from a sample of individuals (Schutt, 2004). There were tens of thousands of people engaging in street hawking in the four local government areas. Nonetheless, it was not possible for me to establish interaction with all of them in the course of data collection for this study. Therefore, one hundred (100) of street hawkers that cut across different categories such as age, gender, type of goods and services they rendered were at the end of the day sampled out of all the street hawkers in this study area.

The respondents' selection designs were in multiple stages. The choices of my study sites were judgmentally or on purpose sampled. I judgmentally selected the areas as a case study with explicit purpose at the back of my mind as suggested by Adler and Clark (2007) and Neuman, & Kreuger,(2003). It is because I believed that the area will expedite my analysis. I considered non-random sampling as the most suitable because it involves "a limited sample using criteria chosen to assure representativeness, e.g., selecting your sample based on a clearly defined population profile, individuals with the average age, income and education you are studying" (O'Leary, 2010, 165). The purposive sampling procedure is relevant to this research topic and convenient sampling techniques. In this sampling technique, the researcher purposely chose respondents who in his opinion were thought to be relevant to the research topic. The basic assumption behind this sampling technique is that of good judgment and appropriate strategy one can handpick the cases that was included in the sample and thus developed samples that were satisfactory for one's needs. Then, I adopted the convenience sampling that is also known as accidental or haphazard sampling to select the one hundred street hawkers that partook in my survey. Although, random sampling was adopted in the process of administering the questionnaires, I gave out questionnaires to any street hawker out the population I already sampled that is ready to participate in the process.

### ***1.5.5. Alternative Tools of Data Collection***

There are various tools that can be employed in collecting data in research. However, for the purpose of this study mixed study methodological approach was applied through the use of semi-structured interview and survey research methods as the primary source of my data collection. The choice of mixed methods was used to corroborate results from the different methods and to enhance further clarification of the results from one technique with the results from the other method (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). A semi-structured interview was considered more pertinent because they are most likely to provide the In-depth information useful for the success of the research work. They are mostly appropriate for policy-based research and apply to the research questions raised in this study.

The methods also give the respondents the platforms to express their views and share their experiences on the job, which they can hardly do using a survey method alone. While the semi-structured interview was deemed necessary, survey method was equally considered as an essential data collection tool for this study. It appears to be a useful method for investigating the opinions and feelings of people concerning an issue

or a phenomenon. The adoption of these two methods ensures that data or information was collected in a very standardized and scientific manner, which resulted from incredible, rich and verifiable findings. The questions of the semi-structured interview and those on questionnaire guide were generated from the research questions and the literature review. It was done to proffer answers to the research questions and achieve the research objectives

For a collection of data, Interviews were conducted for two officials of Lagos state government from 2 different ministries and parastatals, mainly, Lagos State (LASTMA) and Ministry of Environment. Conducting interviews with these respondents offer insight into the factors that inform the policies of Lagos State government on banning street trading and how best they could maximize the economic potential of street hawking. Interviews were also conducted for twelve (8) street hawkers that volunteer to be further interviewed after they filled the questionnaires, two each from the four selected locations in Lagos. This was done because I observed that most of the participants that volunteered to fill the questionnaires were in a hurry to get back to the street to continue selling their goods. With this hastiness in responding to the questions, there is a probability that they might not give accurate answers to the questions. More so, conducting interviews for street hawkers will provide us to tap into the wide range of information and data that the questionnaires did not cover.

To maintain balance from the data collected from all the areas I mentioned earlier, I administer questionnaires to 25 hawkers each for the four locations while waiting for them to fill it. I couldn't give out the questionnaires and ask them to return it later because the respondents are not stable in one place due to the type of business they do and the harassment from City Council task force. In fact I witnessed a situation where everybody was running helter-skelter when somebody shouted "they are coming run", it was one of the most chaotic situation that I ever witnessed. Unfortunately, it was a prank by one of the street hawkers, calmness only return to the area when it was clear that it was a false alarm. Therefore, the most prudent course of actions is to ensure that I collect the questionnaires back from them on the spot. I waited and allowed them to fill it on the spot in addition to the fact that they might need explanation for any question they did not understand.

In total, all questionnaires given out were 100 and all were collected back. The questionnaires used in this study have both opened-ended and closed-ended questions. Each questionnaire contained 28 questions that help us to answer the research question. The opened ended questions were meant to solicit the respondents own opinion and answers they considered most appropriate in their own opinion and words on a certain aspect of the study. The closed-ended questions are also meant to ensure that respondents chose the option with which they agree most.

Also, the non-participant observation was carried as a complimentary effort in order to have details that can enable me to analyze the data without any bias. Thus, observers study their subjects from outside the group without being involved in the life of the group. In the administration of the questionnaires, I was able to assist the respondents



to complete the questionnaires since there are some of the respondents that are illiterate. Nevertheless, some the respondents were able to do the filling of the questionnaires by themselves with little or no hindrance. I tried to elucidate on some aspect of the questionnaire to them which they did not perfectly comprehend.

### ***1.5.6. Ethical Issues***

As social researchers, it is my responsibility to protect the respondents' interest. Therefore, it is imperative for me to be cognizance of various issues related to research ethics. First of all, I sought the consents of the respondents that partook in the research before the commencement of the research. I told them the purpose and the importance of the research and guaranteed them of anonymity. It goes without saying that all the respondents partook in the research through their free-wills. This anonymity approach was followed duly throughout the study because the questionnaire did not bear any means (name address, phone number and others) that can be used to identify or trace the respondents. For the interviews respondents, pseudo names were used to reference respondent's responses. All responses that formed the basis of the data for this research were in due course interpreted and analyzed in aggregate without any connection to any particular respondent. Besides, the data was kept confidential and was used strictly for the purpose of this study.

### ***1.5.7. Challenges and Limitations of the study***

The major limitation of this study or challenge faced in the administration of the questionnaires is its limited reference to numbers. It owes to the problem of inadequate information on the urban informal economy in general and street hawking in particular. It was difficult to get the hawkers to answer the questionnaires as the nature of their jobs compelled them to move from one part of the street to another to sell. As a result, lesser attention was given to me or in filling the questionnaires accordingly. For example, most of the respondents gave crisp answers to the open ended questions in the questionnaire while one would have expected a more detailed response that could have helped to make sense of their view. This limitation was addressed by successfully interviewing eight (8) street hawkers from among those that filled the questionnaires. I asked them if I could come back during their closing hour so that we can sit down and have further discussion. Although, 20 of them agreed to meet later, I was only able to meet up with 8 of them, others were nowhere to be found not to my surprise anyway.

Besides, some of the street hawkers asked me for money as a prerequisite for cooperation. It took me time to convince the majority of the respondents to fill the questionnaire or agree to an interview. In fact it was very difficult to let them know that I am a student's just like some of them use to be to disabuse their mind that I was not working for the government trying to trap them to get them arrested. I later found out that the Lagos government Task force has used research methods sending fake researchers to interview them and in turn use the opportunity to round them up. So they became wary of anybody presenting him/herself a researcher conducting a study to better their lives. I

addressed these challenges by showing them my student ID, my pictures and even opened my FB account on the phone to show them that I am not a government spy and that I am not based in Nigeria. In fact some of them demanded for evidence of my flight ticket from Netherlands to Nigeria. It took an average of 30 minutes to 1 hour to convince one street hawker to agree to fill the questionnaire. I was patient and waited in the sun with them while they go and sell and come back to the spot they left me. Some of them even said to me “you are still here, “oya bring am make I help you fill am”. This process done throughout the four local government that visited and it took me 10 days to finally get to 100 questionnaires that I had in mind to administer

Also, the non-availability of government officials coupled with bureaucratic protocols are some of the challenges I faced in carrying out the research. When all efforts to meet them prove abortive, I approached some of my family members that knows some people working in the two targeted government agency and ministry for my study data collection to help secure an appointment. Fortunately, I was able to secure appointment after 3 weeks of lobbying with the condition that whatever they say to me will remain anonymous. I agreed to the terms and conditions and was able to get the government side of the story too

## **1.6 Thesis Outline**

The discussion in this thesis is sectionalized into five (5) major chapters. In chapter one, I have already laid the template for the study by critically presenting the dilemma of street hawkers in Lagos in coping with government hostile policy that criminalized their activities. In this chapter, I identify the objectives and research questions to be answered at the end of the study. Methodological approach used in the data collection for this study was also discussed in the first chapter. I discussed the tools that were use (semi-structured interviews and survey) with justification of the choice for a mixed methodological approach. I justify the choice of study location which was later narrowed down to four local government areas in Lagos city. Furthermore, the targeted population was presented with the choice of the sampling procedures that is also follow the path of mixed approach in selecting respondents for the study data collection. In addition, the limitation and challenges encountered and how it was addressed was extensively discussed.

Chapter 2 of this study focused on the literature review, theoretical explanation and various concepts that are relevant to the analysis of the data used in this study. I extensively engaged the concept of vulnerability to poverty, Entrepreneurship, poverty and employment, and informality. In this chapter, I justify the choice of these entire concepts by bringing to the forefront of discourse their importance to understanding the dilemma of street hawkers that are trying to eke out a living through hawking.

Chapter three and four centers on the presentation and analysis of data collected from the field to answer the research questions and realized the objectives of this study. In chapter three, I discussed the importance of Street trading within households' livelihood Strategies. This was done through critical assessment of the nature of street trad-

ing activities in Lagos and most importantly the demographic nature of street traders in Lagos. I considered the demographic nature of street hawkers because it helped us to understand how crucial the street vending is to households that engaged in the activities. In the following chapter, the extent of repressive policies in aggravating street vendors' vulnerability to poverty was discussed. In addition, I discussed the street hawkers coping strategies to policies and practices such as eviction, confiscation, harassment, and bribe extortion so that we could draw conclusion on the extent of which the government policy negatively aggravated the pitiable conditions of most of the street hawkers.

Chapter five, the last chapter gives an overall summary and conclusion of the study. Revisited the research questions and objectives to ensure that they have been answered and also coming up with possible recommendation based on the findings of the study

# Chapter 2 Entrepreneurship and Informal Sector as A Response to Vulnerability to Poverty

## 2.1. Introduction

This research was conducted under functionalist perspective. It is a principle that explains social phenomena that view society as a living organism. This theory is also referred to as an equilibrium model or consensus society theory. It interprets the society as a system made of several subsystems and institutions. The society is viewed as complex under the functionalist theory that is made up of stable parts that are interdependent yet separate and are functioning for the continuity of the whole society. Under functionalist theory, religion, education, family, legal and economic organs are viewed as parts that make up the society (Kunkel, 2001: 78). The social structure of a state is derived from social institutions. These social institutions are viewed as stable, persistent and interdependent and well-connected elements of the state that perform their unique roles for the continuity of the society and the state. This theory also indicates that there is consent of values among and between the different social institutions that are contained in the system. The main view of functionalist theory perspective is that every economic activity in the society is very important regarding contribution to survival and functioning of the society. Any activity or element that is rendered useless in the society and poses threat to the survival and functionality of the society is eliminated through natural interaction process (Maloney, 2004:67).

Largely, the theoretical framework for this study is deeply embedded in the assessment of the different approaches and activities of people entrepreneurship, informality regarding informal sector and informal employment, the street vendor's typology and how the vulnerability of street hawkers can push them deeper into poverty are considered carefully. In achieving this goal, the concepts of vulnerability to poverty, entrepreneurship and informality were adopted. They addressed the research questions and objectives of this study. These concepts are considered to be more plausible because of the robust study and empirical evidence that supported the nexus of these ideas as a panacea to poverty alleviation.

However, this chapter is divided into five sections with the first part discussing the different nature of street vendors as a premise that will help us understand why the above mentioned concepts are germane to the success of this study. In the second section, the concept of vulnerability to poverty was discussed, the definition, measurement, and challenges were also brought to the fore. The relevance of the concept of the research topic was also highlighted in this section. While the third section addresses the concept of entrepreneurship about the street hawkers from the perspective of the survivalist and growth-oriented model, the fourth section focuses on the concept of informality and informal sector. Critical engagement with the concept of informality became neces-

sary because street hawkers fall under the informal sector of the country economy. The last section is the overall conclusion and summary of the chapter

## 2.2 Street Vendors Typology

Street hawkers and street vendors were one of four categories of informal workers identified by the 1993 International Conference of Labor Statisticians in their efforts to address the “place of work” of informal workers (Becker 2004: 13). The categorization gives no further details or clarification of who comprise the two groups of informal workers. Perera and Amin (1994: 5-6) also identify a class of “street-operated businesses,” by which they mean the informal economic units who located “inwards to the streets from the building line or in circulation areas of public places.” Similarly, Yankson (2000) identifies informal units that operated in public spaces in central city areas and residential neighborhoods. Exactly who qualifies as a street trader or street vendor remains unclear. There are interchangeable usages of the expressions, market vendor, the street vendor, street trader, vendor and hawker in the informal economy discourse, and these terms are loosely defined both across and within cultures. In some countries, the term, “street vendor” encompasses vendors in organized marketplaces, pavement sellers, mobile street hawkers, and home-based vendors. In others, marketplace vendors are a separate category and depending on the context, street vendors may be legal or illegal (Cohen et al. 2002).

In order not to present a picture of street vendors as a homogenous group it important to note that hawkers offer different goods and services to the society. Also, their challenges differ. The types of products sold, the vendor’s gender, etc., however, are likely to have a strong influence on their situation. The characteristics of street vendors are very wide ranging from age, gender and for some it has become permanent employment or occupation while others do it as a temporary form of eking out a living to survive. However, the study conducted by Roever (2014) reflects on three classifications of activities with different challenges.

The first category as suggested by Roever (2014:8-9) is Buy-Sell: This category involves the process whereby vendor’s sources for goods from the wholesalers and transport them to a hawking post in a public place. While selling the goods at a small margin, their profit share depends on selling strategies amongst their competitors. On the other hand, they face the challenges of getting decent prices from suppliers, keeping other costs (e.g., transport and storage) to a minimum and sell volumes to generate profit by carrying what they can carry along the street sidewalk.

The second category is Transformation: A category that involves vendors selling directly to consumer’s goods that they transform or manufactured. This category of street vendors although usually makes their goods at home but sometimes still need to find unused space on the street to make their goods and then should involve themselves in the acquisition of the customers. Also, they should be sure of where to store their commodities for example, portable stoves or juice machines for cooked food or prepared drink.

The third category is Services: This is a broad category of vendors that offer or perform services from street to street on street vending posts. This service provider includes dressmaking, hairdressing, knife sharpening, tailoring, shoe repair, watch repair, among many other examples. Hawkers engaged in service providing have fewer challenges than their counterparts. On the other hand, they are every so often dependent on electricity and require advanced skills in carrying out their work. It is without a doubt that the analysis of the typology of street hawkers will be useful later in the data analysis of this study to help us understand the percentage of street hawkers that are likely to remain in poverty, graduate out of poverty or slide back into poverty according to the poverty baseline of the country. Most important, it help us to have a clearer picture their level of vulnerability.

## 2.3 Vulnerability and Poverty

Without a strong dissimilarity between material deprivation and other forms of vulnerability, the concept of vulnerability has been used frequently and extensively about poverty in the scholarly discourse over a long period. While erudite understandings of the idiosyncratic contribution that vulnerability analysis can add to our determinations at improving well-being have increased over the past decades (Lucas et al., 2013:16). The concept of vulnerability, as theorized by Heesen et al. (2014) appeared in diverse fields of study with the understanding of the livelihood of a physical or social structure to suffer harm in case of particular events. Though, the definition or meaning of vulnerability is keenly disputed within both the economics and scientific groups (Adger, 2006: Yamin et al., 2005). The vast majority of studies in economics ponder more on how best to measure and assess vulnerability, in particular, the outcome of shocks on the wellbeing (Lucas et al., 2013:17).

Irrespective of the conflict in defining vulnerability or how to measure it from a different school of thought, there is some mutual agreement and common ground on how this should be done (Dutta et al., 2011:1). Hypothetically, “human being is prone to external forces. It is these forces that make us strong” (Lucas et al., 2013: 17). In this context, Vulnerability can simply be referred to as the weakened capability of a group or an individual to foresee, deal with, resist and recuperate from the effect of a man-made or natural hazard. The choice of this concept to analyze the situation of the street hawkers in Lagos is pertinent. Apart from the fact that the concept is relative and dynamic, it is every so often connected with poverty albeit in some cases when people are defenseless, isolated, and insecure in the face of risk, shock or stress.

To understand how repressive policies exacerbate street vendors’ vulnerability to poverty in Lagos? The relationship between vulnerability and poverty can be well understood when applying the concept of “vulnerability to poverty”. Just like poverty and vulnerability are confronted with the challenges of definition, the concept of vulnerability to poverty is not excluded from the same challenges. However, for the purpose of this study the World Bank definition of world bank as reiterated by Celidioni (2013a:2) is considered more appropriate for less complexity, “vulnerability to poverty is the proba-

bility of being into deeper poverty in the future”. Celidioni maintained the analysis of vulnerability is poles apart from the typical analysis of poverty for the reason that it recalls a forward-looking perspective rather than an ex-post assessment. Although in theory, vulnerability to poverty is virtually well-defined as the risk of undergoing poverty, empirically (Celidioni, 2013a:2).

Yet, the measurement of vulnerability to poverty is fundamentally more difficult than the measurement of poverty itself because of the unrealistic predictions of the future (Haugton and Khandar, 2009: 234). It is because an individual can be vulnerable to falling below a threshold in multidimensional. These may include health, food consumption and income, and across a period (Dutta et al., 2011:1). Relating the concept to how street hawkers fair regarding the income generation or shock that arises from the policies of the Metropolitan Lagos government will help us make sense of the data collected that will discuss in details in chapter four of this study.

## 2.4 Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship has been documented as a significant characteristic and functioning of economies (Dickson et al., 2008). It is because it contributes in an endless ways toward poverty reduction, the creation of new job, wealth, and revenue generation for both individuals and government (Garba, 2010: 141). While it is accepted that entrepreneurs have enormous capabilities to boost the economic growth and sustainable development of developing countries most especially among African states. The Nigeria government does not embark on entrepreneurial activities to empower its citizenry (Oghojafor et al., 2011: 2). It makes entrepreneurship a must important step to ending poverty and brings income opportunities for the majority poor (Oghojafor et al., 2011: 3). But who is an entrepreneur; can we say street hawkers in Lagos are not entrepreneurs? Moreover, what does the concept of entrepreneurship means? So as to apply the concept to the situation of street hawkers in Nigeria, it is important to understand the concept of entrepreneurship.

From my perspective entrepreneurship is the process of coming up with a viable business venture. The most obvious example of entrepreneurship is the starting of new businesses. Even though Drucker (2014) argued that entrepreneurship and small business are different despite the fact that people use the concept to address both. I still believe that entrepreneurship business can be small or medium scale, sole proprietorship or partnership, formal or informal. Without doubt, street trading falls under the entrepreneurship.

According to Kao (1993), the concept of entrepreneurship was first identified by Richard Cantillon in 1730. 300 years ago Cantillon defined “entrepreneurship as self-employed with uncertainty return” (Kao, 1993:70), up till date there are several definition of entrepreneurship that has even given birth to typologies of entrepreneurship and entrepreneur. For study purposes, I shall adopt the definition of entrepreneurship as suggested by Kao: “Entrepreneurship is the process of doing something new and something

different that can create wealth for the individual as well as the entire nation. (Kao, 1993:69). I found this definition more appropriate to the situation of street traders in Lagos because they are doing something different from what they would have done if they were employed in the formal sector to eke out a living and graduate out of poverty. The dominant interpretation or general assumption of what entrepreneur should look like and the need for entrepreneurs to possess certain skills has relegated street hawkers to the obscure side of the society. The dominant discourse that surrounds the meaning of entrepreneurship will inform the policy of the government towards the use of entrepreneurship to reduce poverty. “The successful contribution of entrepreneurship to poverty alleviation and economic development in Lagos State depends on entrepreneurship training and orientation” (Ogundele et al., 2012: 149).

On the other hand, Berner and colleagues argued that a closer look at these street trades seem to challenge the basic logic of entrepreneurship: “to invest available capital, apply specialized skills, and make a profit while accepting a risk” (Berner et al., 2012:383). They maintained that, virtually from the time that the ‘informal sector’ of urban economies has been discovered in the 1970s, “researchers have noticed the existence of a subcategory that faces particular barriers to growth. It has been termed ‘street economy’, ‘(sub-)subsistence production’, ‘necessity driven entrepreneurs’, ‘informal proletariat’ or ‘survival(it) enterprises’ (Berner et al., 2012:382). Though, the inability to have a unique acceptable definition of entrepreneurship led to various scholars to come with entrepreneurship typologies (see Filion, 2000: 3-4). individuals may be involved in more than one entrepreneurial venture. In such a case, the classification of entrepreneurs becomes complicated. (Kunkel, 2001:2). Going through the literature on entrepreneur typology, the majority of the scholars are more of the growth model that follow the thinking of Lagos state government. However, I considered the survival and growth-oriented entrepreneur’s analysis of Berner et al. (2012) more suitable to the research objectives and questions surrounding the street trading in Lagos. The table below gives a more insightful understanding of how the survivalist and growth model of entrepreneurship works

Survival(ist)	Growth(-oriented)
(Street economy, community of the poor, [Microenterprise], necessity-driven, Informal own-account proletariat, Sub-subsistence micro-accumulation)	(Small-scale family enterprise, Intermediate sector, [Microenterprise], Opportunity-driven, petty bourgeoisie,
Ease of entry, low capital requirements, Skills and technology	Barriers to entry
Preferment with female	Preferment with male



aims at Maximizing security, smoothing consumption	Willingness to take risks
Part of diversification strategy, often run by idle labor, with interruptions, and Part-time	Specialization
It is deeply rooted in networks of family and kin	deeply rooted in business networks
Obligation to share income generated	Ability to accumulate part of the income generated

Sources: Berner et al., 2012:387

Although Bener et al. (2012) notes that the growth potential of survival entrepreneurs are restricted even if they are targeted with well-intended business development programs. Nevertheless, street hawkers in Lagos eking out a living that are placed above the poverty line of two dollars per day will fall into chronic poverty if restricted from selling on the street. There was a reason they started selling on the street in the first place. By and large, this concept will help us to understand why the government believes that the acquisition of entrepreneurial skills favorable in the current economic situations. Also, the application of this concept will give clear insight into why government ignore the survivalist instinct that did not need any training but rather an open platform that can lessen the burden of the poor that are trying to make a living from their initiative.

## 2.5 Informality: Informal Sector and Informal Economy

Before we can explore and identify the set of related issues to street hawking in Lagos, it vital to bring out the composition of both the formal and informal sectors. The concept of informality has been defined and measured in several ways since it was first introduced by Keith Hart (1973) about four decades ago in his work in Ghana and Kenya describing the range of subsistence activities of the urban poor. About Kanbur (2009), the findings of Hart shows that the poor were not necessarily ‘unemployed, rather they work casually most often for inconsistent and largely low-income and revenues, but the fact remains that they were without doubt working. The summary of the finding painted a picture of private incomes coming from regulated economic activities and formal’ incomes, both legal and illegal, lay beyond the scope of regulation.” (Kanbur, 2009:3). The commonly the informal sector is often simply thought of as comprising businesses that are not registered and are as a result unregulated by law (Devey et al., 2006: 4) but ruled by personal ties or customs (Godfrey, 2011:231).

Suharto argued that “informal sector encompasses largely unrecognized, unrecorded and unregulated small-scale activities and the governmental failure to regulate or unavailability of institutions that provide job security and benefits, this sector comprises the ma-

for proportions of the developing countries. However, Chen (2005: 76) argued for expanded definitions that focus not only on the unregulated enterprises but also the unregulated relationship of employment legally. In brief, the new definition of the 'informal economy' focuses on the nature of employment in addition to the characteristics of enterprises.”

The known definition is that contained in the International Labour Organizations Kenya Report (1972:6). It states that informal activities are defined as 'a way of doing things,' featured with ease to entry, reliance on indigenous resources, family ownership of enterprises, the small scale of operation, labor intensive and adapted technology, skill acquired outside of the formal school system, unregulated and competitive markets. Nonetheless, Devey et al. maintained that the term informal sector masks a substantial degree of heterogeneity of the informal sector. It is because Informal activities comprise various categories of economic activity which includes but were not limited to trading, collecting, providing a service and manufacturing. It is important to take note of the diverse employment relationships (such as the self-employed, paid and unpaid workers and disguised wage workers) and the activities with different economic possibilities for example, survivalist activities and successful small enterprises (Devey et al., 2006: 4-5).

Considerably, quite some scholars (Maloney, 2004; Chen, 2004; Chen 2012) have demonstrated that the incomes of the employees running from the public sector to the private were inconsistent. Those that engage in the informal employment in the informal sector are not necessarily doing it on a short-term basis. The term informal sector hides a significant degree of heterogeneity in informal enterprises, workers classified to be under informal employment operate in a wide range of economic units and their employment relations falls somewhere along a continuum between what is considered formal (i.e. regulated and secure) and informal (unregulated and insecure).

According to Hussmanns (2004b), regardless of the fact that the concept of employment in the informal sector' and 'informal employment' refer to different aspects of the 'informalisation' of employment and different targets for policy-making. Both are useful for the analytical purpose, and they cannot replace each other even though they the two concepts need to be defined and measured in a coherent and consistent manner so that one can be distinguishable from the other (Hussmanns, 2004b:1). “Employment in the informal sector includes all jobs in informal sector enterprises or all persons who, during a given reference period, were employed in at least one informal sector enterprise, irrespective of their status in employment and whether it was their main or a secondary job” (Hussmanns, 2004a:2). Clearly, applying concept of informality and informal sector in the analysis of data collected from the field is highly germane to the success of this study because it help to understand that street hawkers are not unemployed but rather they are employed and because someone is employed does not mean he/she is not poor or in poverty

## 2.6 Conclusion

Conclusively, vulnerability to the street hawkers depends largely on the vending venture that the hawker is engaged. Those of a service provider vary from those of a goods provider. The hawking industry if supported accordingly by the government may be a good source of entrepreneurial skills that can be used in coming up with a more viable business. They should set rules that legalize the venture and put the measure that protected them. It could be through setting up designated places that these people can meet and change their goods and services freely without the interruption of the local authorities. As a result, the Hawking can flourish creating jobs to many jobless citizens in town. The income gained can be used to educate the young school going children whose parents are not financially stable.

# Chapter 3 : Importance of Street Trading Within Households' Livelihood Strategies

## 3.1 Introduction

Having conducted this thesis investigation in the four (4) city centers of Lagos business busiest local government areas of Agege, Oshodi-Isolo, Eti-Osa, and Mushin. The research shows that despite the fact that street hawking is an informal sector, not recognized by any arm of government in the country; it remains the largest employer of labor in the Global South, and contributes, financially, billions of naira to the overall GNP of the country. However, ordinary people face series of persecution as a result of unfavourable government policies, which directly points to the dilemma of surviving through street trading as a result of poverty that indirectly forced many of them into street hawking in the first place base on the data collected in the field.

The collected data in Lagos State defines the trends of the population involved in street hawking between the months of July to August 2015 statistically. Nevertheless, to have clarity on how and to what extent do repressive policies exacerbate street vendors' vulnerability to poverty? This chapter is divided into the three sections. First I present the demographic of street hawkers in Lagos city. Although, the objective of this study is not to focus on the demographic structure of the street hawkers in Lagos, nevertheless, it was done in order to let us set a preamble that will enable us to grasp the nature of street trading in Lagos city. After I examined and look at the nature of street trading activities in Lagos, the next section discussed the importance of street trading within households' livelihood strategies which I draw from my previous discussion on nature of street hawkers in Lagos city. The last section gives an overall conclusion and summary of the chapter

## 3.2. Nature of street trading activities in Lagos

The nature of street trading in Lagos involves display of goods by hawkers on the roadside and small authorized kiosks. The research analyzes the nature of trading activities undertaken by hawkers. Besides 20% do their hawking between moving vehicles in traffic, while a group comprising younger people states that they hawk around the streets pavement, indicating 35% of them are in this category. While 31% from the data analysis show that they do their street hawking around the bus station, the rest of about 8% don't have a specific location. Hence, they hawk everywhere

This study also gathered four different sampled perspectives as to the closing hours for street hawkers that include 4 pm for about 19% of younger street hawkers, and 6 pm for those who are married or nursing groups (both males and females). About 40% agree that their closing hours is fixed for 8 pm, while 25% indicated that they could close at any time. Of the three identified categories by Roever (2014) which includes buying and selling, transformation, and services, majority of the street hawkers are engaged in buying

and selling of commodities, followed by those that are involved in transformation and related activities. Although the difference between the transformation and services categories is not huge in comparison with the buying and selling category, research findings also indicate 45% street hawkers are owners of the wares (good and services) that they sell and 55% are not the owners, rather they are secondary owners.

Also within the sampled opinions, vast majority of street hawkers take it as full time job, they have no other job that do for a living and even some of them do form and join street workers associations. For those of them that are working on the part-time bases. They hawk in the morning and go to other jobs in the afternoon or vice- visa while others just do it for part-time and spend their other time doing something else. This interchange in jobs type does occur between formal and informal, informal and formal, and informal and informal sector. For example, there are those that only hawk early in the morning but resume work as a bus driver or conductor in the afternoon and there are those that work in the restaurant or eatery in the morning shift only to resume street hawking in the evening. My findings were that the part-time street hawking model is more regular between the younger street hawkers starting from age 24 years and below. Most of them still live with their parents and have specific time they must return home, moreover, some of them are in school or going to evening lessons. For those going to school among them, they hawk after school hours for few hours while those that are going to evening lessons or extramural classes hawk on the street in the morning. The table below gives further details on different categories of street hawkers in Lagos city.

Table 1

<b>Hawker Category</b>	<b>Percentage.</b>
<b>Buying &amp; selling</b>	56%
<b>Transformation</b>	20%
<b>Services</b>	24%
Full-time hawkers	76%
Part-time hawkers	24%
Hawking workers in a street worker association	37%
Hawking workers do not belong to any street workers association	63%

The beauty of using mixed methodology is that the researcher will have the opportunity to cover for missing data from one method with that of other methods. The semi-structured interviews conducted for the street hawkers helped us to make sense of the importance of the statistics in relations to the educational level of the street hawkers that the survey offered us. During the field study, the data collected revealed that while street hawking on the one hand, offers a platform for the poor to earn a livelihood. On the other hand, it remains a source of employment for many educated and skilled people in a country that have more than 70% of her population without gainful employment. Educationally, many street hawkers individually have different levels of schooling. Data collected through survey shows that most street workers who have a basic or primary education from the sampled population of the four city centers in Lagos are about 10%. Those with secondary level of education are about 50%, those within integrated tertiary levels of education are 25%, and those without formal education are about 15%. However, one of the respondents that I interacted with expressed his concerns about not getting a job for five year after graduating with a Second Class upper degree in Applied Physics from the University. He said that:

“As you are looking at me, I am a second class upper graduate and I did my Bachelor degree in University of Lagos. After graduating with such good grade I couldn’t find a job, I keep submitting applications everywhere until I lost count. In some cases the recruiting agencies will ask you for bribe before they can even shortlist you for the interviews. One day, I thought about using the money that I wanted to use for the bribe that I collected from my uncle to start selling recharge cards in traffic. Within the space of 6 months I made substantial profits that I don’t have to go in between moving vehicles again and I got this small kiosk that I put on the road sides. Although I am not making so much big profits in comparison with what I would have been making in am working with my certificates but at least I am surviving with dignity” (Ayodele, Male, Age 35)

This data resonate with Tilmaisa (2011:5) argument that street hawkers in the city are constituted predominantly by those who are unable or unsuccessful to secure a regular employment in the formal sector. One other respondent added that:

“It is not that I wish to be selling stuffs on the street; my dream is to continue my educational career after I finished my OND from the Polytechnic. I left my village in the East to come and look for job in Lagos with the hope that I will be able to save some money and go back to school because to continue higher education considering the hardship of my economic background is practically impossible. All my effort to secure a job here in Lagos despite the fact that I have a tertiary education certificate prove abortive, I have no other choice than to start hawking on the street to survive” (Fatima, Female, Age 26).

According to Berner et al (2012:387), the survivalist model have the following features but not limited to microenterprise, necessity-driven, informal own-account proletariat, sub-subsistence micro-accumulation, ease of entry with low capital requirements, skills and technology among others. From the data above, we can easily categorized street hawkers in Lagos city as what Berner and others described as Survivalist entrepreneurship model which is totally different from the growth model. Since Sur-

vivalist entrepreneurship model entails street economy and community of the poor, therefore, they attempt to solve their own problems through the meager resources and capital they could raise.

Street hawkers are all hardworking people living a life of dignity and self-respect that do not engage in begging, extortion or demand that government create jobs for them. Those that I encountered in Lagos work for several hours a day beyond any overtime arrangement in formal sector under severe circumstances in the street. The hours spent in street hawking in the Lagos City that was gathered according to participants that participated in the survey have different starting periods for hawking each day: 47% of the hawkers say before 6 am; about 33% agreed that they usually start to hawk between 6 am and 7am in the morning while other 20% of the people gave different time frames.. This study also gathered four different sampled perspectives as to the closing hours for street hawkers that include 4 pm for about 19% of younger street hawkers, and 6 pm for those who are married or nursing groups (both males and females). About 40% agree that their closing hours is fixed for 8 pm, while 25% indicated that they could close at any time.

Table 2

Number of hours worked	Percentage of the total hawkers
<b>1 to 5 hours</b>	20%
<b>6 to 12 hours</b>	65%
<b>13 to 18</b>	15%

One of the respondents that volunteered to be interviewed account helped us to make sense of this statistics above. He said that he is just trying to hawk in the street merely to create livelihood:

“I have been hawking in Lagos city for more than 18 years now, I can say that there is no major part of Lagos that I have not hawked good and in some cases I do render services. Depending on the location that I chose to hawk on a particular day, I normally wake up as early as 4am in the morning, quickly do the rushing hour sales between 5 and 7 in morning when people are going to office then I take transport to Oshodi to start hawking from 9am till like 11pm in the evening. In total I hawk for about 15 hours a day and yet to take care of my family is very difficult because I sell perishable goods that bring little profit. That was why I have to spend longer hours on the street so that I can get enough money to take home for the day. But I thank God because it is still better than nothing and I can’t steal so I have to do with what I have” (Sule, Male, Age 45).

Similarly, another respondent added that:

“In order to survive I have been selling several items on the street for more than 10 years now. I am strategic about my sales, in the morning; I sell gala, biscuits and other snacks in the traffic and bus station targeting those going to work and school children that could not wait to take breakfast at home. Then in the afternoon, I go to different locations, sometime I go to Yaba, Oshodi, and in some cases I go to Idumota or Obalende with seasonal goods such as second-hand clothes and shoes, Video CDs, and cosmetics just for an example. Then later in the evening, again target those people going back home from work and that will be stuck in the traffic and will not have time to buy food stuffs that they will use to cook their dinner. So I sell frozen turkey and chicken, and vegetables such as pepper, tomatoes among other necessities. I spent more hours selling in the night but in total I spent around 14 hours a day (Bolarinde, Female, Age 38)”

Clearly, the expression of the respondents coupled with the data collected from the survey reinforced Timalsina argument that the ongoing unemployment rate has resulted in the growth of a substantial private sector which absorbs the unemployed persons at compromising wages (Timalsina, 2011:2). Besides, the findings of this study also raised fundamental question about previous studies (for example Bhowmik, 2005) that suggested that migrant that comes to the city from the village that lack skills are forced to result into street hawking. The finding shows that the evaluated data on the number of years the interviewees have been hawking are between 1 to 5 years for about 21% of the people, and 34% has spent between 6 to 12 years hawking in the street. The 45% of the same sampled group have about 13 to 18 years different experiences in street hawking. Further still, it was also evaluated that Lagos metropolis street hawkers have categories of duration they have lived, spent, or been residents. Hence, about 5% of the sampled population have lived as street hawkers in Lagos under 1-year. About 15% have lived between 3-5 years, and 21% have lived within 5-10 years while 29% of these street hawkers have lived 10 years and more. Additionally, it was collated that 30% this sampled population are born and raised in Lagos metropolis. Therefore more than half of the street hawkers that participated in this study have either spent above ten years or born and raised in Lagos. So the general assumption that the city attracts unskilled migrants is not really applicable to Lagos

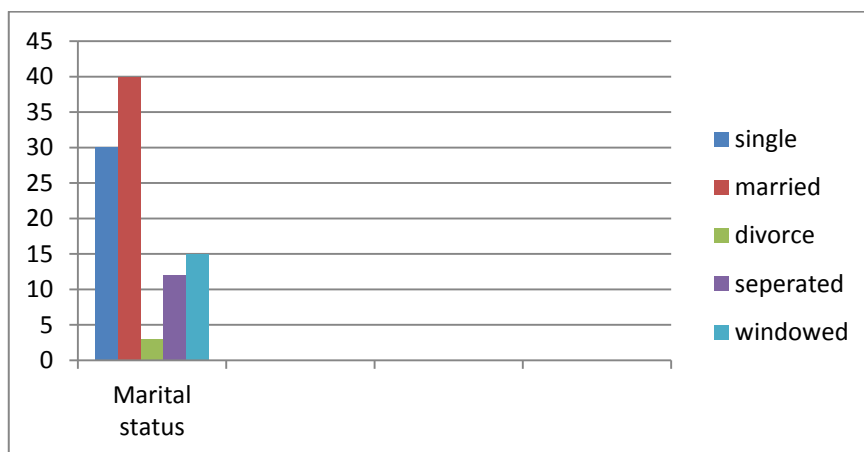
The private sector has played a great role in the provision of employment and generation of government revenue. It is because the informal sector offers the best opportunity for the upward mobility. However, this type of private source of employment has been downsized by the local authorities (Bhowmik, 1999: 4). It has been termed as unprofitable and also does not generate any revenue to the government. They are preferent because they provide the urban population with much-needed services that neither the municipalities nor the larger retailing outlets can provide (Timalsina, 2011:3).



### 3.3 Importance of street trading within households' livelihood strategies?

Street vending is very crucial to many poor household in Lagos city because it provides them with an opportunity to earn a livelihood, most especially to take care of the dependent members of the family. Demographically, for example on the basis of the survey that was conducted, about 45% males and 55% females respectively are involved in eking out daily living through street hawking. Also within this sex composition of the street hawkers, it was gathered that 13% are below 20 years old. About 27% are between 20 and 24 years old. Further still between 25 and 29 age brackets are 20% of the population of the target areas, while 40% are above 30 years of age. Hence, from this age analysis of the data, although difficult to confirm, data explanations of marital status indicate that 30%, 40%, 3%, 12%, and 15% are single, married, divorced, separated and widowed respectively.

Graph 1



As a result of the growing livelihood vulnerability at the household level, some of the street hawkers do come along to the street with dependent members of the family for instance young children. Providing fundamental day to day needs for those dependent family members turn out to be the duty of youths and adults even though children and teenagers that are below 18 years old do engage in street hawking. The above data shows a significant number of hawkers who are above 20 years and over 40years. It means that these hawkers are in their active stage of conducting economic activities. This result shows that Hawking in Lagos does not have an age limit as we have hawkers below 20 years and above 40years old. The high number of married hawkers shows that marital demands and responsibilities might have made them start hawking in streets of Lagos. Thus, as breadwinners in their families, they have to engage in economic activity to keep their families going on

As I discussed earlier that in Lagos, majority of the vendors are on the street for survival, in particular in order to cater for their dependent family members. One of respondents that I discussed with said that she has been hawking on the street since her husband died 4 years ago. She used to be a full housewife taking care of four children. Even though she is educated she couldn't find a job, so she has no other choice than to start hawking on the street since she has to bear all the responsibilities of her family. For decades, the government has been evicting street hawker from unauthorized location yet hawkers continue to return to the street a day at most after the eviction. This study came up with two major findings. 1) Street hawking is the only alternative way they (street hawkers) know to take them out of poverty in a country that has a high level of formal unemployment. 2). Almost every one of them has family members that depend on them. However, there are those that have every able person in the family are involved in street hawking. The story of Alaba, a 22 years old a street hawker that render services as shoe shiner offered us more insight about the importance of street hawking to household livelihood to him:

“All my family members with the exception of the last child that is 8 years and my sick Dad sell goods on the street. Both of my parents have been selling on the street as far as I can remember. So we all grew up and went to school from the proceeds from street hawking. Although, we try to make schedule for shifting so that one person will always be at home to take care of our father and the junior sister. Trust me stopping us from selling on the street is just like a death sentence because we don't know any other way. All my life from childhood till now has been on the street” (Alaba , Male, Age 22)

Since time immemorial, street hawking as a career has been in existence, in particular as a way of life in the former capital city of Nigeria. The Metropolitan street hawking is not only limited to job creation but also, it makes available inexpensive services to the mainstream of the urban poor. Hawkers constitute an essential part of the urban economy through the provision of various indispensable services, and as a result generate their own jobs contributing to economic growth, therefore playing crucial role to earning of the urban poor livelihood. In addition, Tilmasina (2011) corroborated the argument that street hawking has increasingly become a livelihood option. Tilmasima argued that “vending attracts those who have limited opportunities for obtaining formal employment or prestigious business, and minimizes chances of social exclusion and marginalization. Street vending is increasingly becoming livelihood option for those marginalized people” (Tilmasina, 2011: 4). Yet the metropolitan authorities considered street vending as an unproductive and illegal activity regardless of the empirical evidence that suggests that street vending can be counted as a viable opportunity to the underprivileged communities

From the functionalist perspective, street hawkers are part of the majority poor people in the society and are critical to the growth of the economy. However, Hawking is viewed in a different way and outlawed, it is important as it is a means of survival for many households. It is a formality for the poor who face entry barrier in the formal business sector, and they can earn some income. Hawkers contribute a significant amount of income in their families and, therefore, enhance sustain families and to some extension

the development of the society. Therefore according to this theory perspectives, Hawking is a compelling and a functional factor that thrives in spite of legislations and regulations against it (Filion, 2000: 455). Analysis of the research findings further provided the following.

Table 3

Profits range	Percentage
between ₦150 and ₦250	35%
₦250 to ₦500	47%
above ₦500	18%

1\$ = ₦200

Obviously, this type of profit placed majority of the respondents above the international living standard of the 1 dollar per day, one can read between the lines that most of the street hawkers at least live above the suggested one dollar per day. It implies that poor people will rather stick to a business that offers them a light at the end of the tunnel to graduate out of poverty. Regardless of the fact that numerous attempts have been made by city authorities to expel hawkers operating at these unauthorized locations, effort to do so have yielded limited results with the number of street hawkers increasing on daily basis. In a bid to understand why street hawkers continue to flourish despite the government predisposition against their activities. The study finds that street hawkers in Lagos will continue to resist expulsion from the street as their survival lies in their ability to sell in the street so as to make daily income. Most especially, when average daily turnover has the potential to be more than that of the public sector wage, the propensity of increase in street hawkers is most likely in Lagos increase with or without strict rules (Owusu, & Abrokwah, 2014:121).

### 3.4. Conclusion

In this chapter, the demographic nature of street hawkers in Lagos offered us a platform to set the foundation that helped us to really understand the importance of street hawking to households livelihood and the underprivileged individual. This chapter reinforced the assumption of previous studies that street vendors are not homogenous group because hawkers offer different goods and services to the society. Also, their challenges differ. The types of products sold, the vendor's gender, years of doing the business, marital status, and numbers of people that are dependents on them among others are likely to have a strong influence on their situation. The characteristics of street vendors are very

wide ranging from age, gender and for some it has become permanent employment or occupation while others do it as a temporary form of eking out a living to survive.

# **Chapter 4 The Extent of Repressive Policies in Aggravating Street Vendors' Vulnerability to Poverty**

## **4.1 Introduction.**

The majorities of hawkers in Lagos are vulnerable to poverty as result of government policy that targeted street hawkers. Income from hawking is very low as the investment is too low, and no special training and skills are required. The current law in the Nigerian government indicates that Hawking is illegal in any major towns. Experts have termed hawking as undesirable and serious social malaise that needs to be addressed professionally. However, this practice has widespread in Lagos as it is an imperative basis of earnings for the unemployed people in the society (Berner et al., 2012: 78). The omnipresent nature of street hawking in Lagos and the economic benefits it has for the unemployed, as well as the challenges it poses for people's well-being in Lagos, led to the necessity and urgency of this research. This chapter attempted to analyse and identify the challenges of eking out a living through street hawking and dilemma of coping with government harassment in Lagos, Nigeria. In addition, it investigates the extent of repressive policies in aggravating street vendors' vulnerability to poverty while trying to identify the coping strategies of the street hawkers in response to such policies

## **4.2. Street Hawkers are more vulnerable to poverty**

To understand the effect of government policies, practice such as confiscation, harassment just to mention a few on the street traders, in particular, and their strategies. First, we need to critically access and understand the reason government embarks on such practices. From my discussion with the government officials, their responses were based on four major factors, namely security, city filthiness, revenue generation and health issues according to the findings. For ethical reasons, the officials that agreed to talk to me preferred to be anonymous. Therefore, they shall be referred to in pseudo names. Mr. John of the Lagos State Road and Transport Management Agency maintained that government actions were born out of necessity to make the city safe because most crimes committed on the roads and street were committed by those that disguise as street traders

“Criminals disguise as street vendors to rob cars, unsuspecting pedestrians of their belongings especially at night, abduction and kidnapping, selling of drugs and stolen goods, and other criminal activities. I can give you examples of various arrested suspects disguising as street vendors” (Interview with Mr. John)

The response of Mr. John, unfortunately, depicted street hawking as a menace in Lagos that has made the city disorderly and congested. The government on the other has not turned a blind eye on this menace and has formulated policies to curb street hawking in Lagos. The government policy includes confiscation of hawkers' goods, arresting them

and fining and jailing those who fail to raise their fines. As a result of the commotion caused during this exercise, the city council official results in harassing and even injuring hawkers while arresting them (Bhowmik, 2005: 231). It true that one can argue that the presence of hawkers everywhere parading their goods on pedestrian paths and in the parking lot contributed to the congestion of the city creating all sort of commotions and traffic jams making investors and tourists to avoid the city. What is not true based on the findings of this study is that majority of street hawkers are criminals in disguise. Regrettably, informal workers that used to be celebrated for their ‘entrepreneurship’, ‘innovation’, in particular for their ability to adapt themselves to the difficulties and limitations of a problematic economy in the early 1970s are regarded in the present day as anathema to city that that generate disorder, blight and crime and not agents of innovation anymore (Donovan, 2008: 30)

Mrs. Adobo, a senior officer of the Ministry of Environment is of the opinion that Street vendor’s activities have transformed Lagos (mega city) to an eye sore. In particular, they have created a herculean task to make the city clean. Besides, they are the source of all unhygienic food on the street that is dangerous to the populace

“These people (street traders) are out of control, and they don’t follow any regulation, people health is put in jeopardy. If you go to an eatery to eat, and you fall sick, definitely one can trace the source of the food. Who will you hold responsible in case there is a complication?”

There are many factors that contributed to hostile government attitude towards the idea of promoting informal economy, most especially street hawking. The informal economy is difficult to control regarding unsafe and illegal activities that mean no guaranty for health and safety in the process of production, storage and selling. As a result, possible undesirable consequences such as loss in budget revenues by reducing taxes and social security contributions are likely to occur (Llanes and Barbour, 2007; Copisarow and Barbour, 2004; Babour, 2007). The issue of tax and income is generating revenue raised by Mr. John; he disagreed with the fact that street traders add value to the state economy. Instead, he maintained that the activities of street traders are inhibiting the government capacity to provide the right infrastructure facilities because their activities are making the government lose money. He elucidates further that:

“The activities of street vendors are forcing all market women and men to abandon their shops and come out onto the street. Thus, customers don’t even need to go into the shops again since they can find the goods they are looking for at cheaper price on the street. Moreover, they don’t pay taxes, so there is a need that they should be restricted to areas that they can be monitored and not just moving freely”.

On the contrary to the official government argument, it was gathered that about 79% of the respondents were against the view that street hawking activities cause’ filth, congestion, human and vehicular traffic in the city with 80% of the respondents that participated in the survey are ready to pay tax. The remaining 20% that are not ready to pay tax was based on the assumption that their taxes will be embezzled by the government and will not benefit them while others said they were not working to be taxed unsurpris-

ingly. Going by the responses of the street hawkers, one can argue that the majority of the reasons given by the government officials inconsequential because the street hawkers are ready to pay tax if done.

Surprisingly, 23% of the street trader supports the ban of street hawking in the Lagos Metropolis while 77% are against it. But I asked further to give their reasons. For those that supported the ban, 13 respondents said that it is not safe, and it exposed them and their children to abuse from both the police and thugs coupled with the danger of an accident. For those that said no, the majority said that when the government is not after them, they use to make big sales and profits. One man even said that he build his house and send his children to school through street vending, but things have been difficult since the government starts to target them. Some said that the types of goods they sell were majorly meant for customers in the street, bus stations and so on. For example sachet water for people stuck in the traffic. So selling in other places will not bring profits. Chinedu that have been selling on the street for more than six years explained to me why it will be difficult for many of the street traders to leave the street.

“I make a minimum of 300 naira profit every day and in some days it can go up to 500 nairas, with this I can take care of my wife and don’t need to turn to a beggar on the street. But the government wants us to turn to crime with this their policy against street traders. I am a polytechnic graduate, and I looked for a job for more than four years to no avail. They don’t give me a job and yet they want to take away the one I have” (Chinedu, Male, 30 years).

. Sakiru is an uneducated street trader that have been selling on the street for two years; he supported Chinedu claim that many people turn into street trading because of the increasing unemployment rate in the country.

“People that don’t have jobs will surely find a way to feed their family by all means; this can be through legal or illegal means. Because of city outlook, the government is now going after people that chose not to join gangs to be committing crimes. Please tell me which type of government prioritizes the beauty of the city over the wellbeing of her citizen” (Sakiru, Male, 45).

Since this research devoted substantial attention to dangers and consequences that hawkers face in Lagos, the research found out that hawkers are exposed to many risks such as crime, abuse loss of lives and prostitution. In the streets, hawkers are exposed to many hazards that include the risk of accidents, kidnapping, robbery, violence and loss of good and even ritual murders. They are vulnerable to extreme weather conditions, insect bites, reptile attacks, deprivation, and hunger. Women and men are sexually exploited at the same time. However, the worst of all is government harassment and prosecution (Opafunso, & Okhankhuele, 2014: 122). During the field study, the findings also revealed that female hawkers who are lactating mothers go about their business with babies on their backs. Thus, babies are also exposed to dangers together with their mothers when running from task force to escape arrest. Carrying goods alone the whole day is a big burden. Some goods are in big sacks, so hawkers have no rear view in the case of a coming vehicle or motorcycle from behind (Garba, 2010: 324). Before they can put down

these goods and run for their lives, it is too late, and they end up being killed or fatally injured making them permanent disabled. During the research, I did not find an empirical record that document health consequences as a result of carrying heavy goods in the streets. I only relied on casual observation and response from hawkers about the incidence they have witnessed their colleagues being involved in motorcycle and vehicle accidents. So one could understand why we have street hawkers that wanted a better option that is safe, therefore supporting the ban on street trading despite the fact that is the source of their livelihood.

However, there are others that are supporting the ban on another premise. The findings also show that the activities of street vendors are forcing all market women and men to abandon their shops and come out onto the street. Ten respondents of the survey are supporting the ban of street hawking for the reason that they were forced to come to the street from their legal shops because the street vendors don't allow customers to come into the shops again. So they had no choice than also to bring their goods to the street and joined the street vendors if to compete for the market. One of them I later interviewed said that he was forced to join the street trading because sales from the shop as reduced.

“I used to stay at my shops until last year that I made up my mind to come out to the street because the money that I made is double the amount I was staying at the shops only” (Bayo, Male, Age 29)).

Another street vendor with similar experienced corroborated bay views

“Thus customers don't even need to go into the shops again since they can find the goods they are looking for at a cheaper price on the street” (Kanu, Male. Age 20) Street vendor respondent).

Although Informal sector businesses produce a practice whereby formal businesses are lured away from complying with employment law, therefore making the government base its public policy on erroneous information, which in turn make the policy ineffective (Sibhat, 2014: 21). It also noteworthy that the lower income groups in the society expend a greater percentage of their earnings in making procurements from street vendors, mostly since their goods are low-cost and consequently within their means (Bhowmik, 2005:2257). It goes without saying that, the major coping strategy for the urban poor to manage their economy circumstances is embedded in the informal economy. The economy includes street hawking and vending with previously non-earning household members entering the petty commodity sector, as well as wage-earners taking on supplementary cash-earning activities (Potts, 1995: 250). The informal economy at least seems to lessen some of the undesirable social effects of economic suffering for many people (Cross, 1998:42)

When asked how they cope with the harassment from the Lagos Government officials. Bribing of government task force that come to their hawking spot to arrest them, while some of them changed the location of where they sell their goods or render services. From this finding we can see that in an attempt to tackle the so call problem of street hawking, the government is creating a platform where hardworking people can be



exploited since the coping strategy of the street hawkers includes bribing. The work of Devlin helped us to understand better, he argued that “legal threats and even tickets themselves do not always conform to actual laws. The complexity and opacity of vending law makes street vendors vulnerable to false legal claims and dubious tickets” (Devlin, 2011:58). Even when the street hawkers are not disturbing traffic or pedestrian movement flow as claimed by the government official, they are still vulnerable to harassment and extortion

In general none of the street hawkers that I interviewed or that responded to the questionnaire express good feelings about the harassment. With 85% of the respondents acknowledging that they have been arrested or have their goods seized before. The majority of them only came back to business through loans from families or money lenders that still make them to be in debt. While some were helping their families or friends but did not own the business anymore, others change the type of goods they sell to low cost to accommodate the money they could raise.

One interesting finding of their coping strategy is through the formation of splinter groups to support each other depending on the area. Although, not a formalized group but they do contribute money to daily bases to serve as bribe money should in case anyone of them is arrested. However, Peter, one of the street hawkers that volunteered to be interviewed said that they do increase the price of their goods sometimes to accommodate bribe money. But with all the troubles, one would have expected that they will be discouraged to go back to the street. Under normal circumstances, this hostile working circumstance is more than enough to discourage street hawkers activities, but people overlooked this challenges for the fact that street hawking is a major employer that serve as the solitary income Avenue. People return the streets to hawk for a living. (Jimu, 2005; Cross,2000). Although various scholars (Cross, 1998; Bayat, 2000) have described the power of resistance strategies adopted by those, in particular, the street vendors who participate in the informal economy on the one hand. The coping strategy enunciated by the street hawkers in Lagos is in concomitant with the argument of Crossa (2009:46) that resistance can takes numerous procedures and practice that can be applied in manifold and simultaneous ways. The adopted coping strategy and resistance to government policy that allow street hawkers to continue doing their business on the street can be better understood when we realized the importance of street hawking to livelihood of the poor

### **4.3. Conclusion**

Although the findings have demonstrated that vast majority of street hawkers are living above the stipulated poverty line of Nigeria as discussed in the previous chapter on the one hand. The data above also make evident that those above poverty line are vulnerable to poverty on the other hand, even though the process of vulnerability to poverty measurement appears to be a herculean task. In line with Haugton and Khandar (2009) argument it is possible to identify the extent a household can be vulnerable to poverty by identifying various variables for example the available “resources they can draw on in the next year, including assets such as land as well as their educational endowments and their

skills and experience, what risks they face— and their ability to handle each set of risks— for instance drawing on family support networks, or borrowing money, or working harder” (Haugton and Khander, 2009: 234). It is undoubtedly difficult to gather all the data required for such an analysis. Nevertheless, we can draw reasonable conclusion that the street hawkers are likely to fall into poverty. From the data collected from both the interview and questionnaires administered to the street hawkers, the government policy that targeted street hawking activities increase the street hawkers susceptible to poverty because they are witnessing shortfall in their daily earning. They are restricted and many of them lost their goods to task force while some of them were injured as a result of trying to escape arrest. If the government continue to execute her policy of anti-street hawkers, I will argue in line of Celidoni (2013b:2) position that “there are more possibilities that the income falls below a chosen poverty threshold, independently from the magnitude of the negative income shock”.

## Chapter 5 : CONCLUSION

The major intention of this research was to study and investigate how Eking out a Living through Street Hawking and Dilemma of Coping with Government Harassment in Lagos, Nigeria affects the daily lives of street hawkers. The data collected from the field revealed that Hawking is carried by almost people of all ages with an individual over 40 years making the higher percentage. Among these people, married people make the highest percentage as they are forced by family demands and responsibility to hawk to feed their families. Hawkers are from all over Nigeria and from different ethnicity groups. Most of the hawkers have a formal education with majority up secondary school. The biting economic conditions in Nigeria and Lagos force people who are unemployed to take up hawking as a refuge occupation (Bhowmik, 2005: 342).

Previous data has indicated that children are involved in hawking but from this research children are very few that are involved in hawking business; in fact they could be called teenagers. Nevertheless, the research has validated that even though people of all ages and sexes are involved in hawking business, the majority of them are youths. The research has not agreed with previous researcher's findings that hawkers are illiterate as the majority of them have attained secondary education level. Some of the hawkers have formal skills but are not employed due to corruption cartels that are in the corporate world (Kunkel, 2001). The finding shows that majority of respondents are either married, divorced, separated and widowed which place a higher level of responsibility on them. Besides majority of them are youths and adults that are above 20 years old

The research has further revealed that majority of hawkers suffer different health ailments that arise from walking for a long time and carrying heavy wares. The ailments include fatigue, general body pains, malaria, flu and rare incidences of being knocked down by vehicles and motorcycles. Findings from the research have revealed that female hawkers risk their babies' lives while hawking with them on their backs. When asked how they cope with the harassment from the Lagos Government officials (Godfrey, 2011: 565). Some also changed the location of where they sell their goods. In general none express good feelings about the harassment. With 85% of the respondents acknowledging that they have been arrested or have their goods seized before. The majority of them only came back to business through loans from families or money lenders that still make them be in debt. While some were helping their families or friends but did not own the business anymore, others change the type of goods they sell to low cost to accommodate the money they could raise (Dimas, 2008: 134).

One interesting finding of their coping strategy is through the formation of splinter groups to support each other depending on the area. Although, not a formalized group but they do contribute money to daily basis to serve as bribe money should in case any one of them is arrested. However, Peter, one of the street hawkers that volunteered to be interviewed said that they do increase the price of their goods sometimes to accommodate bribe money. But with all the troubles, one would have expected that they will be

discouraged to go back to the street. Under normal circumstances, the hostile working circumstance is more than enough to discourage street hawker's activities. Instead, people overlooked this challenges for the fact that street hawking is a major employer that severs as a solitary income Avenue; people return to the streets to hawk for a living (Maloney, 2004: 342).

The research also revealed hawkers feel that the government has neglected them rather than helping them through soft loans to start a formal small business. The hawkers argue that they are an important part of the society, and they support the economy by paying taxes in other areas. Some of the hawkers said they can do menial jobs if they are offered one since they do not have formal education. Hawkers who had secondary education cited lack of finances to continue with their education and stated that they were free to go back to school if they were sponsored through loans, bursaries, and scholarships. Hawkers also feel that the government is using excessive force while arresting them and imposing unreasonable fines or jail terms. They feel that Hawking is not crime as they trying to earn a living and they have no other option.

## **Summary**

The research was able to bring out the following evidence from the field I conclude that:

1. Most of the hawkers in Lagos are non-literate and are capable of handling formal economic activities.
2. Hawking is the streets is a hazardous activity in the light of health issues and the risks that are involved
3. Female hawkers who conduct business with their babies expose these young ones to health hazards and other risks.
4. Cases of hawker's harassment and assault are very common by authorities.
5. The only way to empower Hawkers is through cooperative societies where they can be able to access loans to start formal businesses

## **Recommendations**

Putt into consideration the above conclusion, it is recommended that;

1. Hawkers should come together and form cooperative societies where they can be able to access loans and aid from the government, non-governmental organizations and financial institutions.
2. The government should identify an area where warehouse could be built and rented out to hawkers at rates that are subsidized to enable them to take off in their businesses.

3. Groups could also be formed and allocated land by the government in strategic positions to build kiosks especially in public places where most of their customers are located.

4. Scholars and experts should continue doing more research on implications and consequences of Hawking and come up with a long lasting solution to this problem.

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## **Questionnaire on Eking Out a Living Through Street Hawking And The Dilemma Of Coping With Government Harassment In Lagos**

This questionnaire is meant to gather information for project work on street hawking and the dilemma of coping with Lagos government harassment in the city. It is not aimed at tracking down any individual person or group of persons but to assist the researcher to investigate how street hawking has helped poor people to graduate out of poverty and the challenges that they face which might push them back into absolute poverty in Lagos state. You are kindly required to answer the questions as correctly as you can. Your contribution will be very much appreciated and you are also assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Thank you.

### **Questionnaire**

#### **SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION**

Please tick [v] the appropriate box.

1. Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ].
2. Age: (a) Below 20 years (b) 20- 24 years (c) 25-29 years (d) Above 30 years
3. Marital Status: (a) Single (b) Married (c) Divorced (d) Separated (e) Widowed (f) Other, specify.....
4. Educational Level: (a) Basic (b) Secondary (c) Tertiary (d) No formal education
5. Duration of years lived in Lagos: (a) under 1 year (b) 1-3 years (c) 3-5 years (d) 5 years and above (e) Born and raised in Lagos (f) Other, specify.....

#### **SECTION B: NATURE OF STREET HAWKING IN THE LAGOS CITY**

6. When do you start hawking each day?  
(a) Before 6 am (b) Between 6am and 7am  
(c) Other, specify.....
7. How many hours do you hawk in a day? (a) 1 to 5 hours (b) 6 to 12 hours  
(c) 13 to 18 hours  
(d) Other, specify.....
8. Where do you normally hawk each day?  
(a) Between moving vehicles in traffic  
(b) On street pavement (c) At bus station (d) Other, specify.....
9. How many years long have you been hawking?  
(a) 1 to 5 years (b) 6 to 12 years

(c) 13 to 18 years (d) Other, specify.....

10. Do you own the goods sold yourself? (a) Yes (b) No

11. How much profit do you normally make daily after hawking? (a) #150-#250  
(b) #250-#500

(c) Above #500.

12. Which time do you close daily?(a) 4pm (b) 6pm (c) 8pm (d) Anytime

**SECTION C: VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF STREET HAWKERS IN LAGOS CITY**

13. Which categories of item do you sell? (a) Buy and sell (b) Transformation (c) Services

14. Is street hawking your full time job or part time job?  
(a) Full time (b) Part time

15. Do you do any work apart from hawking on the street? (a) Yes (b) No

16. Do you belong to any street hawking association? (a) Yes (b) No

**SECTION D: OPINION OF STREET HAWKERS ON STREET TRADING ACTIVITIES IN LAGOS.**

17. Do you think street hawking activities causes filth, congestion, human and vehicular traffic in the city? (a) Yes (b) No

18. How do you cope with the harassment from the Lagos Government?

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.....  
.....

19. Have you been arrested before and your goods seized? (a) Yes (b) No

20. If yes, how do you come back into business?.....

.....  
.....

**SECTION E: SUGGESTED SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH STREET HAWKING.**

21. Will you like to stop hawking and opt for alternative jobs?(a) Yes (b) No

22. If yes, which alternative jobs will you opt for?

.....

23. Do you wish to be taxed?(a) Yes (b) No

24. Will you like to sell at any alternative place apart from the street?(a) Yes [ ] (b) No [ ]

25. Do you support the ban of street hawking in the Lagos Metropolis?(a) Yes (b) No

26. If yes, please give reason(s).....

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.....

27. If no, please give reason(s).....

.....  
.....

28. Which other solutions will you suggest to solve the problem associated with government harassment of street hawkers in Lagos?.....

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