

Do Parents/Guardians of In-School Adolescent Hawkers Provide Academic Support for Them? Examining the Roles of Gender and Living with Parents/Guardians

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Abstract

In-school adolescent hawkers may face difficulties in their studies, emphasizing the need for extra support. Parents or guardians, who are positioned to monitor their overall wellbeing, are critical to this support. However, there is a dearth of studies investigating parenting academic supports of this minority student population. As a result, our cross-sectional study investigated parental academic support for in-school adolescent hawkers, as well as the intersection of gender, living with either parent or guardian, and academic support provided. The study included 230 in-school adolescent hawkers selected using the snowball sampling technique. Data were gathered using the adaptation of Gonida and Cortina (2014) Parental Involvement in Homework Scale (PIHS). Major findings revealed that parents provided academic supports to their children. Furthermore, male in-school adolescent hawkers had significantly lower mean scores on parental monitoring, parental reinforcement, and parental instructional support than their female counterparts, whereas in-school adolescent hawkers who live with their parents had significantly higher mean scores on parental monitoring, parental reinforcement, and parental instructional support than their guardian counterparts. It was concluded that, while parents gave academic supports to their children, gender and the kind of relationship could influence the level of support provided. The implication of the findings was highlighted.

Keywords: Adolescents, hawking, learning outcomes, parent-child relationship, parental support

Introduction

Socio-economic realities in developing nations have resulted in scenarios in which several in-school adolescents assist their parents or guardians in earning money to support them. This is reflected in disturbing statistics that shows that 28.4% of Nigeria children in urban areas experience poverty whereas 65.7% of children from rural areas are poor, and that child poverty rate is highest among children aged 16-17 years (Ministry of Finance, Budgeting and Planning, 2022).

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Report also shows that 35.3% of Nigeria children aged 5-17 are schooling and working, 11.2% are working but not going to school while among children aged 15-17, 45.3% are working and schooling (National Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Consequently, achieving quality education remains a challenge for many young people, particularly in developing countries like Nigeria, where economic pressures and limited resources often impede students' ability to excel academically. One critical issue affecting school-aged children in Nigeria is adolescent hawking—a practice where youths, typically between the ages of 10 and 18, engage in street vending or similar economic activities to support family income while attending school (UNICEF, 2019).

The burden of irking out a living while at the same time going to school could potentially undermine the academic success of these student hawkers. Ugo (2024) sees street hawking by children as an emergent public health concern particularly in developing nations that have defiled policies on ground, which is compounded by rising level of poverty, and noted that children who are involved in street hawking most times are victims of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution with attendant sexual risks, physical violence, accidents, robbery, kidnapping and ritual murder. Other scholars have demonstrated the deleterious effects of street hawking on the students' academic achievement (Ubah & Bulus, 2014). Such dual roles place considerable strain on students, often resulting in fatigue, limited study time, and reduced classroom engagement, all of which adversely impact their educational outcomes (Alobo & Alabi, 2022).

Be as it may, the current economic realities present the problem as an albatross, and it appears that many parents cannot but use their children as helping hands to escape the biting economic realities. Besides, many cannot afford to completely withdraw these children from school. It becomes burdensome for these

children to combine their academics with the hawking businesses. Hawking is often a consequence of economic necessity, where low household income, limited access to resources, and large family sizes push children into income-generating activities to support family welfare (Nwajiuba & Oni, 2017). These adolescents, who often come from low-income backgrounds, face unique educational challenges. They must balance the immediate need to contribute economically with the long-term benefits of education, which is often undervalued due to the pressing need for financial stability. Studies have shown that the rigorous demands of hawking can result in physical and mental exhaustion, decreased academic motivation, and a higher likelihood of absenteeism, all of which limit these students' capacity for academic success (Rahman *et al.*, 2023).

However, a protective factor that could moderate the negative impact of hawking on in-school adolescents' learning outcome include the support they receive from significant persons particularly their parents. Parental involvement in a child's education has been shown to improve academic outcomes, particularly in contexts where children face additional challenges (Garbacz *et al.*, 2020). Parental support which has been viewed as a multidimensional construct depicts the emotional, social, and academic supports involving material and non-material resource provisions (Barr, 2015; Hasan, 2016) parents avail their children of to facilitate their development (Barber *et al.*, 2005; Choe, 2020; Hasan, 2016). For adolescent hawkers, this support may involve monitoring schoolwork, assisting with assignments, or simply reinforcing the importance of education despite economic pressures. According to Omamogho, Okoza, and Roman (2022), parental academic support can foster resilience in adolescents by reinforcing positive attitudes towards education, even when external circumstances are challenging. This type of support can help children internalize the value of education and remain motivated, serving

as a buffer against the stress and exhaustion associated with hawking. Researchers have demonstrated that students' learning outcomes and their overall wellbeing are fostered by the quality of parental supports they received (Akomolafe & Adesua, 2016; Alimba *et al.*, 2024; Ebele, 2024; Enemuoh & Onyenwe, 2020; Gershby *et al.*, 2023; Li *et al.*, 2023; Ugwuanyi *et al.*, 2020).

In Nigeria, limited research has addressed the specific role of parental support in enhancing academic outcomes for adolescent hawkers. While there is considerable literature on the socioeconomic drivers of adolescent hawking and its impact on child development, studies tend to overlook how parental involvement can offset these negative effects. Existing research largely emphasizes structural factors—such as poverty, limited access to quality education, and cultural expectations—that compel adolescents into hawking (Alobo and Alabi, 2022). Although these factors are essential in understanding the broader context, the moderating role of parental support within this dynamic has not been sufficiently explored. Understanding this relationship is particularly relevant in Anambra State, where high rates of adolescent hawking intersect with economic deprivation, making the case for proactive parental involvement in education even more compelling. We set out in this study to investigate if parents of adolescent hawkers provide academic support to them as well as unbundling which dimensions of parental academic supports do parents invest their efforts. Hence, this study specifically investigated:

1. Mean responses of in-school adolescent hawkers on parental/guardian monitoring dimension of parental academic support;
2. Mean responses of in-school adolescent hawkers on parental reinforcement dimension of parental academic support;
3. Mean responses of in-school adolescent hawkers on parental instructional support dimension of parental academic support;

4. If the mean differences on the dimensions of parental academic support for in-school adolescent hawkers based on gender; and
5. If the mean differences on the dimensions of parental academic support for in-school adolescent hawkers based on whether living with parents or not.

Method

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research paradigm, specifically the cross-sectional survey research design given that the objective of the study centred on describing the parenting academic supports provided by parents to their wards. The cross-sectional survey enabled us to determine the behavioural characteristics prevalent among a population by sampling a cross-section of the population at a point in time (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000; Stockemer, 2019). By employing a survey-based approach, the study gathered data that reflects the academic experiences and perceptions of adolescent hawkers and the level of parental involvement they receive.

Study Participants

The target population for the study consisted of in-school adolescent hawkers attending public secondary schools in Anambra State. Adolescents aged 13 to 17 years were selected because this age group represents a critical developmental stage where educational outcomes are closely linked to future opportunities. A total of 210 adolescents were sampled using snowball sampling technique facilitated through a multi-stage sampling procedure. These respondents were chosen from nine local government areas in Anambra State out of the 21 local government areas.

Instrument for Data Collection

The Parental Involvement in Homework Scale (PIHS) by Gonida and Cortina (2014) was adapted for this study to measure the level of parental academic support

received by in-school adolescent hawkers. The original scale consisted of 16 items and assessed various aspects of parental involvement, such as parental monitoring, parental reinforcement, and parental instruction. For this study, the scale was adapted to include 20 items specifically tailored to the Nigerian context and the unique circumstances of in-school adolescent hawkers. The adapted scale had three clusters: Cluster One: Parental Monitoring (7 items); Cluster Two: Parental Reinforcement (6 items); Cluster Three: Parental Instruction (7 items). The items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." Appropriate modifications and cultural adaptations were made to ensure the relevance and comprehensibility of the items for the target population.

Face and construct validity of the adapted instrument was determined by giving drafts of the questionnaire along with the purpose of the study and research questions to three experts; one expert in Measurement and Evaluation, and two experts in Educational Psychology, all in the Faculty of Education at Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. The experts were requested to examine the items for clarity, relevance to the purpose of the study, appropriateness of the language, and the accuracy of the instructions to the respondents. The suggestions and necessary corrections of the experts were objectively adhered to and were incorporated into the final questionnaire. Subsequently, the reliability of the scale was determined using the Cronbach's alpha statistics and the values obtained for the three clusters were 0.918, 0.906 and 0.915 for Parental Monitoring, Parental Reinforcements and Parental Instructional Assistance respectively.

Data Collection Process

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire that included items on demographic information and items on parental academic support. The questionnaire was developed based on previous studies that examined similar variables, with

adaptations to reflect the Nigerian context. Permissions were obtained from the secondary schools after explanation of the essence of the study to the school authorities. Also, teachers were recruited as research assistants. They were briefed on the ethics that bothers on data collection. Students who prefer not to participate in the study were not included and teachers were told not to reveal that the study targets adolescent hawkers to the students to avoid labelling. The survey was administered during school hours. Data collection was conducted over a period of one month to ensure that all targeted participants could complete the questionnaire without disruption to their academic activities. The questionnaire was written in English language which is the official language in secondary schools in Nigeria. Instructions on how to fill in the questionnaire were provided to the students. During the process of filling in the questionnaire, students who needed further explanations were attended to.

Data Analysis

We employed the IBM SPSS version 25 in the analysis of the data collected. First, data were cleaned to ensure that no wrong number is entered in SPSS. Mean, standard deviation and independent t-test statistics were used to analyze the data. Hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Mean Responses of In-School Adolescent Hawkers on Parental/Guardian Monitoring Dimension of Parental Academic Support

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My parents/guardians know what I am doing in school	2.78	1.02	Agree
2	My parents/guardians check if I have completed my homework assignments	2.59	.93	Agree
3	My parents/guardians monitor my academic progress in school	3.08	.89	Agree

4	My parents/guardians know my strengths and weaknesses in different subjects	2.59	1.14	Agree
5	My parents/guardians ensure I attend classes regularly	2.84	1.22	Agree
6	My parents/guardians are aware of the academic challenges I face	2.54	1.13	Agree
7	My parents/guardians monitor my test scores and grades	2.95	.92	Agree
Grand Mean/SD		2.77	.76	Agree

Table 1 revealed that in-school adolescent hawkers agreed that their parents/guardians monitor their academics. All the items had mean scores above 2.50 with items 3, 7, and 5 having the highest mean scores. Items that scored the highest mean scores revolve around parents’/guardians’ monitoring of their academic progress, test scores and grades, and regular attendance to classes. Parents and guardians did not focus more on students’ academic strengths and weakness in different subjects, completion of homework and the challenges students face in school.

Table 2: Mean Responses of In-School Adolescent Hawkercs on Parental Reinforcement Dimension of Parental Academic Support

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My parents/guardians praise me when I do well in school	2.93	1.01	Agree
2	My parents/guardians encourage me to work hard in school	2.98	1.02	Agree
3	My parents/guardians reward me for good academic performance	2.58	1.27	Agree
4	My parents/guardians motivate me to achieve my academic goals	3.00	1.03	Agree
5	My parents/guardians celebrate my academic achievements	2.58	1.23	Agree
6	My parents/guardians express pride in my academic efforts	2.73	1.08	Agree
Grand Mean/SD		2.80	.78	Agree

Table 2 revealed that in-school adolescent hawkers agreed that their parents/guardians reinforce their efforts as a way of parental supports. All the items had mean scores above 2.50 with items 4, 2, and 1 having the highest mean scores. Items that scored the highest mean scores revolve around parents’/guardians’ motivation for achieving academic goals, encouragement, and praise.

Table 3: Mean Responses of In-School Adolescent Hawkers on Parental Instructional Support Dimension of Parental Academic Support

S/N	Items	Mean	SD	Remark
1	My parents/guardians help me with my homework when I need it	2.72	1.23	Agree
2	My parents/guardians explain concepts to me when I don't understand them	2.73	1.23	Agree
3	My parents/guardians provide me with additional learning materials	3.04	.96	Agree
4	My parents/guardians help me prepare for tests and exams	2.47	1.16	Agree
5	My parents/guardians try to minimize distractions when I'm studying at home	2.85	1.29	Agree
6	My parents/guardians assist me in organizing my study time	2.75	1.07	Agree
7	My parents/guardians provide me with academic guidance and advice	3.07	1.06	Agree
Grand Mean/SD		2.81	.87	Agree

Table 3 revealed that in-school adolescent hawkers agreed that their parents/guardians monitor their academics. All the items had mean scores above 2.50 with items 7, 3 and 5 having the highest mean scores. Items that scored the highest mean scores revolve around parents’/guardians’ instructions on academic guidance, provision of additional learning materials, and minimization of distraction at home.

Table 4: t-test on the Mean Differences on the Dimensions of Parental Academic Support for In-School Adolescent Hawkers Based on Gender

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Parental	Male	93	2.60	.82	-2.875	208	.004
Monitoring	Female	117	2.90	.68			
Parental	Male	93	2.65	.81	-2.397	208	.017
Reinforcement	Female	117	2.91	.75			
Parental	Male	93	2.53	.93	-4.312	208	.000
Instructional	Female	117	3.03	.76			
Support							

Results in Table 4 show that male in-school adolescent hawkers had a significantly lower mean scores than their female counterparts on parental monitoring, parental reinforcement, and parental instructional support, $t(208) = -2.875, p < .05$; $t(208) = -2.397$, and $p < .05$; $t(208) = -4.312$ respectively.

Table 5: t-test on the Mean Differences on the Dimensions of Parental Academic Support for In-School Adolescent Hawkers Based on whether Living with Parents or Not.

	Relationship	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Parental	Parents	140	3.09	.48	11.080	208	.000
Monitoring	Guardian	70	2.11	.80			
Parental	Parents	140	3.10	.61	9.395	208	.000
Reinforcement	Guardian	70	2.19	.75			
Parental	Parents	140	3.21	.47	12.611	208	.000
Instructional	Guardian	70	1.99	.93			
Support							

Results in Table 5 show that in-school adolescent hawkers who live with their parents had a significantly higher mean scores than their counterparts who live with their guardians on parental monitoring, parental reinforcement, and parental instructional support, $t(208) = 11.080, p < .05$; $t(208) = 9.395$, and $p < .05$; $t(208) = 12.611$ respectively.

Discussion

Our study investigated the academic supports rendered to in-school adolescent hawkers by their parents/guardians as well as if students' gender and whether they stay with their parents or not would have any significant impact on the supports provided. This is particularly important given the fact that there is a dearth of study on parental instructional supports for in-school adolescent hawkers even though they are vulnerable to circumstances that could demotivate them in school. Major findings revealed that parents generally provided academic supports to their children/wards. On the monitoring dimension of parental academic supports, results revealed that items that scored the highest mean scores revolve around parents'/guardians' monitoring of their academic progress, test scores and grades, and regular attendance to classes. Parents and guardians did not focus more on students' academic strengths and weakness in different subjects, completion of homework and the challenges students face in school. Though several students reported an impressive support by their parents/guardians, not properly monitoring children on their strengths and weaknesses as well as challenges they face in schools indicates the limits to which parents can go in offering supports to their wards. This could rest on their limited knowledge on what academic monitoring entails.

Regarding parental reinforcement items that scored the highest mean scores revolve around parents'/guardians' motivation for achieving academic goals, encouragement, and praise whereas items that scored the highest mean scores on parental instructional support revolve around parents'/guardians' instructions on academic guidance, provision of additional learning materials, and minimization of distraction at home. These findings showed that parents of adolescent hawkers also provide academic supports to them, and the wide range of supports provided to them align with research that shows that parenting supports include the provision of a

variety of supports including the provision of a secure and stable environment, intellectual stimulation, parent-child discussion, good models of educational values and high aspirations relating to personal fulfilment and good citizenship (Desforges & Abouchaar, 2003).

Furthermore, male in-school adolescent hawkers had significantly lower mean scores on parental monitoring, parental reinforcement, and parental instructional support than their female counterparts. Results indicated that females perceive significantly higher parental support across all types compared to males, suggesting gender-based differences in the perception of academic support. This aligns with Gonzalez *et al.* (2021) who reported that female students in challenging contexts often receive heightened academic reinforcement due to parental expectations of educational success. Moreover, Antaramian *et al.* (2022) found that girls tend to experience more perceived support from parents, which enhances their academic engagement.

Moreso, in-school adolescent hawkers who live with their parents had significantly higher mean scores on parental monitoring, parental reinforcement, and parental instructional support than their guardian counterparts. Regarding living arrangements, adolescents residing with their parents reported higher parental support across all forms, aligning with Ezenwa and Adenuga (2020), who highlighted the role of familial proximity in shaping support perceptions. However, the findings also suggested that adolescents living with guardians experienced significant academic benefits, potentially due to the structured independence associated with guardian-led households (Oyetunde & Akinleye, 2022). This outcome contrasts with typical assumptions that parental presence is paramount for effective academic support, suggesting that guardians may sometimes provide a

supportive structure that promotes academic responsibility among adolescent hawkers.

Conclusion and Limitation of the Findings

In-school adolescent hawkers reported that their parents provided academic support that encompasses monitoring, reinforcement, and instructional supports. Findings also revealed that female in-school adolescent hawkers and those who live with their parents are likely to receive higher parental academic support than their counterparts. It could be concluded that a wide-range of supports are provided to in-school adolescent hawkers and that these supports could be influenced by adolescent hawkers' socio-demographic factors. This study contributes significantly to theory and practice regarding support practices for enhanced academic wellbeing of in-school adolescent hawkers. It revealed that parents of these adolescents irrespective of the economic challenges they face still support the educational pursuit of their children. Also, caregivers, educational psychologists and counsellors in schools should be aware of possible lopsided support that may be provided to these students resulting from their demographic data. Efforts should be made to ensure that all children are supported by training parents in such a way that they will not be biased in the provision of academic supports for their wards.

Despite the significant contributions our study has made, the generalizability of its findings could be limited by such factors as methodological limitations. First, our data is based self-reported questionnaire and did not stem from other sources which limits depth of our findings. Besides, data did not include the opinions of other stakeholders such as parents. This makes it difficult to understand the views of parents on their support systems for their children. Therefore, there is need that future studies adopt a mixed method approach involving other stakeholders so that findings could be more robust. Second, our study employed the cross-sectional

descriptive survey research design which makes it difficult to obtain a relationship between parental academic supports and other outcome variables. Future studies should be designed to look at the influence of parental support on in-school adolescent hawkers' academic achievement and other academic related variables.

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