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Causes and prevalence of child labour practices among public secondary school students in Sokoto metropolis, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the causes and prevalence of child labour practices among primar school pupils in Sokoto metropolis, Nigeria.. Two research questions were answered and two hypotheses were tested. Descriptive survey design was used in the study. 381 sampled students were selected through Multistage sampling technique from a population of 43,062 students in public junior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis. Child Labour and Child Schooling Questionnaire and Achievement Records were used to collect data. Frequency, percentage, mean, and chi-square were used for data analysis. The results revealed that, three factors were identified as the major causes of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis; tradition of the society, non-enforcement of the law against child labour and poverty among the people in Sokoto metropolis.,The most prevalent child labour practice among secondary school students in public secondary schools in Sokoto Metropolis is hawking. The paper recommended that Sokoto State Government should come up with more policies and programmes aimed at reducing to minimum poverty level in the state and there should be more advocates by the media and religious centers on the problems of giving children groceries for hawking.

KEYWORDS: child labour, causes, prevalence and Sokoto
Metropolis

Introduction

Millions of children around the world are growing up in circumstances under which they will never be able to fulfill the mental and physical potential with which they are born as a result of reduced opportunities, poor educational background, and poverty (Abiola, 2014). Child labour within the context of this study is the employment or engagement of children who are below the age of 18 years in works that can interfere with their education and/or endanger their health or well being. The menace of child labour is not peculiar or unique to African context but it is practiced with varying degree across the world (International Labour Organization, 2021). In Great Britain, during the latter part of the 18th century, owners of cotton mills collected orphans and children of poor parents throughout the country, obtaining their services and in some cases children five and six years of age were forced to work from 13 to 16 hours a day. At that time, little was done to enforce existing laws limiting work hours and establishing a minimum age for employment. Conditions as bad as those imposed on poor children rapidly developed in enterprises. Often with the approval of political, social, and religious leaders, children were permitted to labour in hazardous occupations such as mining. The resultant social evils included illiteracy, further impoverishment of poor families, and a multitude of diseased and crippled children (Malcolm, 2011).

In Africa, one-fifth of all African children are involved in child labour, a proportion more than twice as high as in any other region (Nurulmomen, 2020). Nine per cent of African children are in hazardous work, again highest of all the world's regions. Africa has the largest number of child labourers; 72.1 million African children are estimated to be in child labour and 31.5 million in hazardous work (International Labour Organization, 2021). In the continent, agriculture accounts for 85 per cent of all child labour and also account for 61.4 million children in absolute terms. Child labour in agriculture relates primarily to subsistence and commercial farming and livestock herding; and it is often hazardous in its nature and directly limits the chances of the African child to be at school.

According to Bolarin (2011) household chores and more responsible decisions come at this time, and so does social comparison. Along with social comparison comes social play. With social play comes learning and teaching. During social play, children learn from and teach each other, often through observation. Bolarin explained that much more is going on cognitively, socially, and emotionally in young children – including infants – than scientists or care and education professionals previously knew. Even in their earliest years, children are starting to learn about their world in sophisticated ways that are not always reflected in their outward behaviour. Learning and development for young children is both rapid and cumulative, continuously laying a foundation for later learning.

International Labour Organization (ILO) suggests poverty is the greatest single cause of child labour (Ringera, 2017). For impoverished households, income from a child's work is usually crucial for his or her own survival or for that of the household. Income from working children, even if small, may be between 25 and 40% of the household income. Other scholars such as Harsch on African child labour, and Edmonds and Pavcnik on global child labour have reached the same conclusion (Uyanga, Johnson, & Udim, 2019).

Lack of meaningful alternatives, such as affordable schools and quality education, according to ILO, is another major factor driving children to harmful labour. Children work because they have nothing better to do. Many communities, particularly rural areas where between 60–70% of child labour is prevalent, do not possess adequate school facilities (Kareem, 2018). Even when schools are sometimes available, they are too far away, difficult to reach, unaffordable or the quality of education is so poor that parents wonder if going to school is really worth it.

International Labour Organisation, (2021) estimates that 152 million children are in forced labour, among them 64 million girls and 88 million boys, which account for almost 1 in 10 of the total children globally. It is also found that 71% of children are engaged in the agriculture sector, while 69% of children are involved in unpaid work for household activities. It is highlighted that nearly half of children engaged in child labour – 73 million children – work in unhygienic environment, which is called

as a worst form of child labour that directly harms their physical health and emotional development.

Children learn readily in contexts of social support and emotional well-being, which is derived from positive relationships with those who care for and educate them in the family and outside. In these contexts, adults can support and encourage developing competencies, convey positive values about learning and school, and help instill curiosity and self-confidence in children. By contrast, learning and cognitive achievement are hindered when children are troubled especially through child labour (Barden, 2010). This is the case for children from infancy through adolescence who are living in homes with significant marital conflict, when mothers are chronically depressed, when parents are hostile and coercive, or in other circumstances of family turmoil.

Poverty emerges as a primary causative agent of child labour in northern Nigeria, where a large proportion of the population lives below the poverty line. As found in a study by Mustapha and Adagba (2017), families struggling to make ends meet often rely on the income generated by their children to supplement household earnings. In rural areas, where poverty rates are particularly high, children are often engaged in agricultural activities, such as farming and herding, at the expense of their education.

Maxwell and John (2012) in their study on school adjustment and child labour using correlation analysis to analyze data collected from 120 students, found that there is a strong negative correlation ($r=-.81$) between child labour and school adjustment. They therefore explained that children whom are well adjusted to their environment tends to be more motivated to excel in the activities assigned during school and has more academic achievement than children whom are not fully adjusted to their environment and that 82.3% of the children that are not adjusted are those who have history of child labour in their life. As a result of this, they concluded that child labour has significant impact on students' adjustment in school and on also on students' academic achievement.

Statement of the problem

In Nigeria, and Sokoto in particular, it is very common to see children working as street vendors, beggars, car washers, heavy load carriers especially in city markets while in the villages, children are engaged in tedious farm activities, carrying of heavy loads and gallons of water for long distances, auto repairs, etc. In Northern Nigeria, the Almajiris system of education in Sokoto State is a system of Islamic education where children are sent to a distant scholar to learn which sometimes lead to gross abuse of children's well being and consequent involvement in child labour practices.

The researchers observed that, in Sokoto State, the prevailing practices of child labour where children are seen roaming streets, markets, moving house-to-house selling variety of commodities and working in farmlands within the fringes of the metropolis. This study therefore sought to ascertain the prevalence of child labour practices, influence of child labour on childhood development and education of children in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State, Nigeria. Child labour exposes children to violence and reinforces inter generational cycles of unskilled manpower and persists poverty. It is stressed that child labour and other forms of exploitation are preventable through the protection of child rights that properly address disadvantaged children.

Theoretical Framework

Theory is a set of facts, propositions, or principles analyzed in their relation to one another and used, especially in science and social science to explain phenomena (Slavin, 2006). This paper is therefore guided by Basu and Van Theory of Child Labour. The Basu and Van theory was developed in 1998. The theory provides a framework for understanding the economic factors that drive child labour. The theory states that the extent of involvement of children in child labour practices is dependent on the degree to which adult wages sufficiently satisfy household needs. This theory, posits that under certain conditions, families may choose to send their children to work rather than to school due to economic necessity and rational decision-making (Kareem, 2018).

Altruistic parents use a switching rule based on the level of the adult wage to determine whether children should work or go to school. Basu and Van (1998) suggest that a ban on child labour can help move the economy out of the low wage-child labour equilibrium.

Basu and Van theory mirrors a family in which altruistic parents withdraw their children from the labour force once adult wages have reached some critical level. As a consequence, the supply of labour is increasing in the wage below this critical level. Then, once the critical level is reached, parents begin withdrawing their children from the labour force. Consequently, the supply of labour begins to bend back.

According to the Basu and Van theory, several key factors drive the incidence of child labour in Nigeria. The principle of this factor is poverty. It is one of the primary drivers of child labour in Nigeria. Many families living below the poverty line rely on the income generated by their children to supplement household earnings. In such circumstances, sending children to work becomes a rational economic decision for families struggling to make ends meet.

In many parts of Nigeria, access to quality education remains limited, particularly in rural areas. Even when education is available, it may be costly, leading some families to prioritize immediate income from child labour over long-term educational benefits (Nurulmomen, 2020). In addition, Nigeria has laws in place to prohibit child labour and protect the rights of children. However, enforcement mechanisms are often weak, and many children continue to work in hazardous and exploitative conditions without adequate legal protection.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to;

1. Find out the causes of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State.
2. Identify the prevalence of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

1. What are the causes of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State?
2. What is the prevalence of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State?

Research Methodology

The research design adopted for this paper is descriptive survey design. The population of the study comprised of all students in public junior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis. The total population of students in public junior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis, according to Annual School Census report (2023) is 43,062 students while the total number of public junior secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis is 52.

Table 1: Population of the Students

S/N	Local Government Areas in Sokoto Metropolis	No. of Junior Secondary Schools within the Metropolis	Population of Students
1	Sokoto North	12	11520
2	Sokoto South	20	23346
3	Wamakko	8	3240
4	Kware	4	2357
5	Dange Shuni	8	2599
	Total	52	43,062

Source: Sokoto State Annual School Census (2023)

The sample for this study were selected from ten randomly selected schools in Sokoto metropolis. The schools selected are;

1. Sultan Attahiru Secondary School Sokoto
2. Sultan Bello Secondary School Sokoto
3. Sultan Atiku Secondary School Sokoto
4. Nana Girls Secondary School Sokoto
5. Nana Asma'u Secondary School Sokoto
6. Government Girls Day Secondary School Kofar Marke Sokoto
7. Government Day Secondary School, More
8. Giginya Memorial Secondary School, Sokoto
9. Junior Secondary School, Alkanchi
10. Junior Secondary School Gidan Salanke

On the selection of students, research advisor (2006) suggested that for a population of 43,062 the number of samples sufficient is 381 samples (see appendix I). Hence a total of 381 students were selected from the selected schools. Furthermore, as explained in section 1.7, JS II students were selected because they are usually between 10-15 years and are the most vulnerable in terms of child labour practices.

Multistage sampling technique was used for the selection of the number base on secondary students. This was done by considering each school as a unit and then selecting respondents based on the sheer population of the school relative to the total population of the entire schools. This method is used when the population is large and widely dispersed (Haruna, 2010).

Then, finally simple random sampling technique was used to select the subjects of the study.

Table 2: Sampled Students

S/N	Name of School	Population of Students	Sampled Students
1	Sultan Attahiru Secondary School Sokoto	2074	55
2	Sultan Bello Secondary School Sokoto	1949	51
3	Sultan Atiku Secondary School Sokoto	965	25
4	Nana Girls Secondary School Sokoto	2130	56
5	Junior Secondary School, Runjin Sambo Sokoto	1518	40
6	Government Girls Day Secondary School Kofar Marke	1624	43
7	Government Day Secondary School, More	883	23
8	Giginya Memorial Secondary School, Sokoto	1134	30
9	Junior Secondary School, Alkanchi	1171	31
10	Junior Secondary School Gidan Salanke	1008	27
	Total	14456	381

Source: Sokoto State Annual School Census (2023)

One questionnaire and two documents were used to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire is Child Labour and Child Schooling Questionnaire (CLCSQ). It was a researcher designed questionnaire while the documents are class attendance register and students' academic achievement from the schools.. CLCSQ has two broad sections, section A and section B. Section A is on demographic variables where respondents indicate their school, gender, age and class. Respondents' names were not required in order to ensure compliance with the ethical guidelines of research that respondents' confidentiality must be secured (Greener, 2008). Section B had two subsections.

The first subsection was on child labour. This subsection sought to measure the prevalence of child labour, causes of child labour and in conjunction with other subsections also measures influence of child labour on school attendance and students' academic achievement. This subsection has 20 close-ended questions. The close-ended questions were used in order to ease the task for the respondents whom were all young children. Again, the close-ended questions were faster in responding as data was collected during school hours and the children may not have too much time to spend on the questionnaire. In addition, the analysis of the close-ended questions was often more valid and more accurate (Barden, 2010).

Data Presentation and Analyses

The descriptive data of the respondents include gender of the respondents, age of the respondents and class of the respondents. The descriptive data of the respondents was obtained from part of the questionnaire which contains demographic variables. The data for the study was analyzed using tables, mean and percentages.

Table 3: Demographic Variables of the Respondents

S/N	VARIABLE	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
1	Gender		
	Male	205	53.8%
	Female	176	46.2%
	Total	381	100%
2	AGE		
	10-12 years	118	31.0%
	13-15 years	221	58.0%
	16 years and above	42	11.0%
	Total	381	100%

Source: Field Work (2023)

Gender of the respondents has effects on research studies or can even skew the outcome of study findings (Ajayi, 2019). In this study efforts were made to ensure adequate representation of both gender through the use of multistage sampling technique.

Table 3 showed that equitable representation of both gender is ensured in this study. This is because the total sum of the respondents showed that two hundred and five (205) representing 53.8% of the respondents are male while one hundred and seventy six (176) representing 46.2% of the respondents are female. This therefore confirms that an average of 50% of the respondents selected for the study is male and an average of 50% is female.

This research studied junior secondary school students and majority of them are between the age

of 10 years and 15 years. This is a critical period in the educational development of every child because if qualitative education is offered to a child at this age, it tends to facilitate the acquisition of subsequent knowledge (Barden, 2010).

Table 3 also shows the age distribution for the respondents in the selected schools. The table indicated that one hundred and eighteen (118) representing 31.0% of the respondents are within the age of 10-12 years, two hundred and twenty one (221) representing 58.0% % are within the age of 13-15 years and forty two (42) representing 11.0% are within the age of 16 years and above. The research questions were answered using tables, frequency and percentages. The results were presented in tables 4 and 5.

Research Question 1: What are the causes of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State?

To answer this research question, descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage and mean were used to accept or reject the responses. The results of the analysis are presented in table 6.

Table 4: Causes of Child Labour Practices in Sokoto Metropolis

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Decision
1	If I did not hawk, there will be no food at our house	69 (18.1%)	66 (17.3%)	86 (22.6%)	160 (42.0%)	381 (100%)	2.11	Rejected
2	If I did not do the work I am assigned by my parent/ guardian, I will not be giving food	65 (17.1%)	73 (19.2%)	124 (32.5%)	119 (31.2%)	381 (100%)	2.22	Rejected
3	The money I earn is used by my parent for our upkeep at home	91 (23.9%)	72 (18.9%)	125 (32.8%)	93 (24.4%)	381 (100%)	2.42	Accepted
4	It is the tradition of our area that every child must be sent to do manual work	59 (15.5%)	93 (24.4%)	136 (35.7%)	93 (24.4%)	381 (100%)	2.50	Accepted
5	Most of the people do not know that children should not be sent to work for payment	93 (24.4%)	146 (38.3%)	93 (24.4%)	49 (12.9%)	381 (100%)	2.23	Rejected
6	The law that protect children from child labour is not enforced	50 (13.1%)	92 (24.1%)	146 (38.4%)	93 (24.4%)	381 (100%)	2.56	Accepted
7	If I did not do manual works giving by my parent, I will become lazy when I become an Adult.	106 (27.8%)	118 (31.0%)	85 (22.3%)	72 (18.9%)	381 (100%)	2.68	Accepted
Criterion Mean						2.39		

Source: Field Work (2023)

Table 4 is a summary of frequency, percentage and mean scores on the causes of child labour practices in Sokoto Metropolis, Sokoto State. The data analysis revealed each of the items with their corresponding frequency and percentage. The mean of value of each of the items is as follows: If I did not hawk, there

will be no food at our house = 2.11 (rejected because it was less than the criterion mean); If I did not do the work I am assigned by my parent/guardian, I will not be giving food = 2.22 (rejected because it was less than the criterion mean); The money I earn is used by my parent for our upkeep at home = 2.42 (accepted because it was more than the criterion mean); It is the tradition of our area that every child must be sent to do manual work = 2.50 (accepted because it was more than the criterion mean); Most of the people do not know that children should not be sent to work for payment = 2.23 (rejected because it was less than the criterion mean); The law that protect children from child labour is not enforced = 2.56 (accepted because it was more than the criterion mean); If I did not do manual works giving by my parent, I will become lazy when I become an Adult = 2.68 (accepted because it was more than the criterion mean).

Therefore, as contained in Table 4, the mean value of four items is below the criterion 2.39 hence it is rejected and the mean value of three items is above the criterion 2.39 hence it is accepted. It can be deducted from the analysis of table 6 that the major causes of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis were; tradition of the society, non-enforcement of the law against child labour and poverty among the people.

Research Question Two: What is the prevalence of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State?

Research question two of the current study determined the prevalence of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis and it reads; What is the prevalence of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State?

To answer this research question, descriptive statistics of frequency, percentage and mean scores were used to accept or reject the responses. The results of the analysis are presented in table 5.

Table 5: Prevalence Child Labour Practices in Sokoto Metropolis

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	N	Mean	Decision
1	I usually do some work that I can earn money	177	118	76	110	381	2.43	Accepted
2	I do hawk in the morning before I go to school	102 (20.2%)	20 (31.0%)	141 (19.9%)	218 (28.9%)	381 (100%)	1.49	Rejected
3	I do hawk in the afternoon after coming back from school	19 (0.5%)	29 (5.2%)	160 (37.0%)	173 (57.2%)	381 (100%)	1.72	Rejected
4	I do hawk in the night before I go to bed	22 (5.8%)	62 (16.3%)	85 (22.3%)	212 (55.6%)	381 (100%)	1.72	Rejected
5	I have to work in the farm everyday except during dry season	83 (21.8%)	52 (13.6%)	93 (24.4%)	153 (40.2%)	381 (100%)	2.17	Accepted
6	The work I am sent to do at farm is very much beyond my ability	35 (9.2%)	100 (26.2%)	147 (38.6%)	99 (26.0%)	381 (100%)	2.81	Accepted
7	I work away from home for at least 6 hours daily	39 (10.2%)	36 (9.4%)	264 (69.3%)	42 (11.0%)	381 (100%)	2.81	Accepted
8	I am forced at home to do works that are beyond my ability	63 (16.5%)	57 (15.0%)	96 (25.2%)	165 (43.3%)	381 (100%)	2.05	Rejected
Criterion Mean							2.15	

Source: Field Work (2023)

Table 5 is a summary of frequency and percentage scores on the prevalence of child labour practices in Sokoto Metropolis, Sokoto State. The data analysis revealed each of the items with their corresponding mean value as follows: I usually do some work that I can earn money = 2.43 (accepted because it was more than the criterion mean); I do hawk in the morning before I go to school = 1.49 (rejected because it was less than the criterion mean); I do hawk in the afternoon after coming back from school = 1.72 (rejected because it was less than the criterion mean); I do hawk in the night before I go to bed = 1.72 (rejected because it was less than the criterion mean); I have to work in the farm everyday except during dry season = 2.17 (accepted because it was more than the criterion mean);

The work I am sent to do at farm is very much beyond my ability = 2.81 (accepted because it was more than the criterion mean); I work away from home for at least 6 hours daily = 2.81 (accepted because it was more than the criterion mean); I am forced at home to do works that are beyond my ability = 2.05 (rejected because it was less than the criterion mean). This implies that there is a high prevalence of child labour practices among public secondary school students in Sokoto Metropolis, Sokoto State..

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis and interpretation of this study, the major findings were summarised as follows;

1. Three factors were identified as the major causes of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis; tradition of the society, non-enforcement of the law against child labour and poverty among the people in Sokoto metropolis.
2. The most prevalent child labour practice among secondary school students in public secondary schools in Sokoto Metropolis is hawking.

Discussion of Findings

The result of research question one showed that three factors were identified as the major causes of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis; tradition of the society, non-enforcement of the law against child labour and poverty among the people. in Sokoto metropolis. These findings were in tandem to many similar studies conducted in other study areas different from the location at which this study was conducted.

The researcher understands that child labour is more likely to occur among families besieged by poverty than it is likely to occur among families that are at least above average level of socio-economic status. The findings of literatures on the causes of child labour are quite similar in that they found poverty among the people, illiteracy/ignorance of the problems of child labour practices, tradition of the society, and non-enforcement of the law against child labour as the main causes of child labour. The differences from the literatures were on the degree to which each of the factors lead to child labour.

For example, Adeniyi (2006) found in his study that poverty at house hold level was the primary cause of child labour among households in Africa. He buttressed that the level of poverty often makes it very difficult for rehabilitative counselling of the victims of brutal child labour or for counselling of the parents on the need to stop all forms of child abuse among their children. Adeniyi further stressed in his study that some parents often argue that if their children are not sent to work, who will take-up the cost of the children's daily life. This finding was very similar to the findings of the current study where some of the respondents of the current study indicated that if they do not go out to hawk wares, there parent may decide not give them any food to eat. In fact, some of the respondents indicated that both them and their parents depends on the proceeds they bring back home after an exhaustive day at Sokoto central market doing differing forms of child labour practices.

Another major cause of the child labour practice among school children in Sokoto metropolis is the tradition of the society. There are parents who consider sending children to work as a mere tradition of the society. Hence, they do not seem to understand the problems enmeshed in sending their children

to work as servants for other people or the problems involved in giving children wares to hawk around markets and other neighborhoods.

The current study also found that the culture of the society is among the key causes of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis. Many of the respondents indicate that it is the tradition of their area to send every young child for manual jobs. They opined that sending the children to do the works can make the children better equipped to face the challenges that tomorrow might bring. That the children will also have means of livelihood in the cause of doing the manual works they are sent to do and that the children will learn interpersonal relationship for a peaceful coexistence.

Base on research question two which is on the prevalence of child labour. The current study also identified the prevalence of child labour practices in Sokoto Metropolis. There is a high prevalence of child labour practices among public secondary school students in Sokoto Metropolis, Sokoto State. Child labour remains a global challenge, affecting the lives of millions of children across the world. In the context of Sokoto metropolis, the staggering prevalence underscores the pressing need for immediate attention and concerted efforts to address this critical issue while highlighting the implications for the affected children and proposing strategies to combat this alarming statistic.

Based on the analysis of the data for the current study, the prevalence rate is indeed high and it signifies that about one in every seven children in public secondary schools in Sokoto metropolis are engaged in some form of child labour practice. This statistic not only points to the widespread nature of the problem but also indicates the underlying systemic issues that perpetuate this practice. The factors driving child labour are multi-faceted, ranging from socio- economic challenges to cultural norms and weak enforcement of protective measures.

Asadu (2020) also found in his study that the prevalence of child labour practices among school children in Sokoto metropolis is indeed high. Sokoto metropolis, like many regions, faces significant socio-economic disparities. Poverty, unemployment, and limited economic opportunities can force families to rely on child labour as a means of financial survival. In such circumstances, children are often compelled to contribute to family income, sacrificing their education and well-being in the process.

Conclusion

Consequent upon the completion of the analysis and interpretation of the collected data, the following conclusions were made from the study; Firstly, three factors were identified as the major causes of child labour practices in Sokoto metropolis; tradition of the society, non-Enforcement of the law against child labour and poverty among the people in Sokoto metropolis. Poverty is a thorn on many developmental indices including good health, wellbeing and life satisfaction. The current study affirms poverty as a cause for children involvement in to child labour practices. In fact, the current economic downturn in Nigeria which is characterized by general increase in the average cost of living is a pointer to the increased tendency of many more children becoming involved into child labour practices.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made in an effort to address the causes and prevalence of child labour in Sokoto Metropolis.

1. The Sokoto State Government should come up with more policies and programmes aimed at reducing to minimum poverty level in the state. This will help to raise the socio-economic status of it citizenry and consequently reduce the chances of children involvement in child labour practices.
2. There should be more advocacies by the media, religious centers and non-government organizations on the dangers of giving children groceries for hawking. Hawking by children is generally bad and could expose the children to unwarranted difficulties.

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