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The Perception of Staff on Hawking at the College of Technology Education, University of Education, Winneba

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Author's contribution

The sole author designed, analyzed and interpreted and prepared the manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The study sought to evaluate the perception of staff on hawking at the College of Technology Education, University of Education, Winneba. Four specific objectives guided this study: (1) To determine staff perception of hawking on the campus, (2) To find out whether staff benefit from hawking on the campus (3) To determine the factors influencing hawking on the campus, and (4) To examine staff perception on measures for eradicating hawking on the campus.

Study Design: A quantitative approach using exploratory research design was used.

Place and Duration of Study: The study was conducted at the College of Technology Education, University of Education, Winneba, Ghana between May to July 2017.

Methodology: Using a cross-sectional design, self-designed structured questionnaires were administered to 150 respondents who were selected using stratified sampling method. Data obtained from the field were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Results: With a response rate of 80%, hawking was perceived to be to an eyesore and unsightly activity ($m=4.22$, $\pm SD=0.882$) capable of denting the image of the University ($m=4.09$, $\pm SD=1.079$). Aside being beneficial in the area of saving time and energy ($m=3.43$, $\pm SD=1.505$) and the ease of getting goods at convenient location ($m=3.37$, $\pm SD=1.401$), lack of mini markets ($m=3.95$, $\pm SD=1.388$) was held to be influencing hawking and intensifying security patrols

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($m=4.10$, $\pm SD=0.929$) was advocated as a key measure for eradicating hawking on the Campus.
Conclusion: Staff are conscious of the benefits accrued from hawking but continue to perceive it as an eyesore and unsightly activity. Destroying hawkers wares as a measure to eradicate hawking was seen not to be supported by staff but intensifying security patrols as well as pasting notices to ward off potential and prospective hawkers from the campus were adjudged to be effective.

Keywords: Hawking; hawkers; perception; staff; campus.

1. INTRODUCTION

Despite advances in modern retailing, millions of people throughout the world, especially Africa, still make their living partly or wholly through selling goods on the streets [1]. According to [2], street vending is pervasive across the globe and provides an important source of earnings for the unemployed in urban areas as well as a source of relatively inexpensive goods and services for city residents. Categorizing it under the informal economic activity, street vending or hawking (as it may be used interchangeably) has been defined by [3] as the production and exchange of legal goods and services that involves the lack of appropriate business permits, violation of zoning codes, failure to report tax liability, non-compliance with labour regulations governing contracts and work conditions, and/or the lack of legal guarantees in relations with suppliers and clients. [4] has also concurred that street vending or hawking involves the act of canvassing for sale of items by hawkers along the street, from house to house or in public places in town. Literature has confirmed that hawkers trade in a variety of goods such as fruits and vegetables, cereals, fish and meat products, processed food products, cosmetics, second-hand clothes, plastic products etc. throughout the day at places where there is a large number of consumers for their wares [5,6,7]. This phenomenon of hawkers transforming streets and other public spaces into areas of economic activities in order to eke out a living is certainly not new. Researchers have concluded that street vending dates back to the colonial days and its development and growth over time has been integrally linked to urbanisation, migration, poverty, unemployment, low level of education, low level of entrepreneurial education, non-enforcement of city authority bye-laws, comparative ease of entry and economic development processes [1,4,5,8,9,10]. Hawking has been identified to provide the much-needed services to the urban population which neither municipalities nor larger retailing outlets can provide thereby helping to reduce the cost of living in urban areas [6,11,12]. Research has also shown that hawking produces

safe public spaces, enhance the quality of life in the neighborhoods and create an atmosphere that enhances tourist experiences [13,14].

Studies have shown that consumers continue to depend on hawkers for their daily necessities by citing reasons for their preference such as low price, easily accessible market area or convenient locations, availability of various products, reasonable price range with the scope of bargaining [6,12,15]. Also, the hustling and bustling of life in the urban city where consumers have no opportunity to visit shops have made consumers to find solace in hawkers to bring them the needed services [16]. Aside from its flexibility of selling commodities in small quantities, it enables consumers to conveniently purchase their needs while in traffic, offices etc. and occupy vulnerable youth from engaging in anti-social behaviours [17,18].

Despite being the most visible segment of the urban informal economy, hawking is viewed as an underground activity that undermines the healthy functioning of formal economy and its contributions to local economies are not recognized in national economic statistics [19]. Some studies have also perceived hawking or street vending as a manifestation of poverty and underdevelopment as well as an undesirable, eyesore causing public nuisance with the potency to discourage international investors [1,2,20]. By illegally using public spaces, making pavements dirty, congesting the city and impeding traffic, hawkers on several occasion have been classified as violators of city by-laws and treated as criminals with no legal status to conduct their business [6,9,12]. In spite of the harassment and difficulties involved in its practice, hawking has been magnified and misconceived as a dynamic and vibrant source of entrepreneurial activity for those facing economic hardships as well as act as a social safety net for the unemployed [2,4,8]. It has also been misconstrued as an avenue to feel city life while selling to earn a living as well as a means to minimize overhead cost of rent and other utilities associated with owning a market space [21,22].

The ultimate consensus has been to evict and punish hawkers, meanwhile, measures such as confiscation of wares, destruction of structures and imposition of fines directed at eradicating the hawking menace in order to restore the respect of city laws have proven unsuccessful [6,21]. It is neither well understood nor appreciated by city authorities as to why hawkers resist eviction and often return to the streets in spite of the brutalities, harassment and confiscation of wares [21]. Despite efforts by city authorities to control hawking, the general public sees any effort at evicting hawkers as inhuman and invariably an attempt to deprive hawkers and their dependents their source of livelihood [23]. Similarly [24,25] have opined that although buyers sometimes feel animosity towards hawkers, they abhor the enforcement of city ordinances against hawkers.

With its long historical presence, hawking or street vending has been identified to provide essential services and direct employment to the greater majority of urban dwellers as well as substantial revenue collected from that activity. But it has been perceived as an underground activity that undermines the healthy functioning of the formal economy. This is because the risk posed by hawking or street vending outweighs the positive economic aspects of it. This has led researchers to conduct studies into the activities of hawkers and its effects [6,4,8,16,21,23]. A common trend in these studies is the focus on the activities of the hawkers and the effects of the hawking business without paying much attention to that segment of the population who patronise hawkers wares. The result has been lack of research explaining the perception of consumers on the activities of hawkers and measures outlined for their eviction. In this study, emphasis has been placed on consumers awareness level, benefits and contributing factors of hawking as well as measures put in place for the eradication of hawking. It is expected that the survey findings would enable authorities to better understand the perception of consumers towards hawking and come up with sustainable interventions programs to resolve the hawking menace.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 Study Area

The study was carried out on one of the four campuses of a public university in Ghana. The University of Education, Winneba, apart from its main campus in Winneba has three other

campuses namely, College of Technology Education (Kumasi Campus); College of Agriculture Education (Asante-Mampong Campus); and College of Languages Education (Ajumako Campus). The present study was carried out at the College of Technology Education, Kumasi because of the persistent concentration of hawking on most parts of the campus including offices, lecture halls, leisure areas, along with the streets, pavements.etc and its implications on the environment. At the time of the study the campus had an estimated staff population of 409, made up of senior members, senior staff and junior staff.

2.2 Study Design

The study adopted quantitative approach using exploratory research design to gather information on the perception of staff on hawking at the College of Technology Education, University of Education, Winneba.

2.3 Sampling Techniques

A cross sectional design was used to obtain data from the target population of 409 staff at the College of Technology Education, University of Education, Winneba. The sample covered three cadres of staff, namely senior members, senior staff and junior staff. Stratified sampling method was found to be appropriate for the study considering the categories of staff available and the limited resources of the researcher. A total of 150 questionnaires were administered with a response rate of 80%.

2.4 Data Collection Instrument and Procedure

Data for this study were collected from both primary and secondary sources. A self-designed structured questionnaire was used for the primary data collection. The questionnaire was pre-tested for inputs and comments with ten randomly selected staff of the College of Technology Education, Kumasi who were later excluded from the main study. It was further given to experts in the subject area to do a thorough review if it would be able to realize the objectives set above. Based on the feedback received, the questionnaire was revised by reducing the number of questions, rephrasing some of the questions and reviewing the Likert scale. The final questionnaire, which was administered to the target population focused on

two areas. The first section centered on demographic characteristics of respondents, namely age, gender and category of staff which were measured using nominal scale. The second section focused on the four objectives for the study, namely objective 1: perception of staff on hawking; objective 2: factors influencing hawking on the campus; objective 3: benefits of hawking activities to staff; and objective 4: measures on eradication of hawking. All the objectives were evaluated using 5-category Likert-type scale anchored from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Cronbach's Alpha was used to test the reliability of the test construct. Cronbach's Alpha is a test for reliability that requires only a single test administration to provide a unique estimate of the reliability/credibility for a given test [26]. If the results is generally above alpha value of 0.5 (50%), then it is considered to be reliable [27]. Analysis of the test items on the instrument for analysis of the final instrument used for the study provided an internal consistency of approximately 84% ($\alpha=.846$) pointing to a higher chance of obtaining a similar trend of responses should the instrument be administered again. The secondary data included data gathered from journal articles, working papers, research reports, conference proceedings and internet sources. This data provided background information about issues of hawking relevant to this study.

2.5 Data Analysis

The collected questionnaires were thoroughly checked to ensure that they were appropriately filled. The data was then edited and coded into the SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) ready for processing and analysis. Data analysis was carried out to capture the descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics covered frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Kendall's coefficient of concordance for ranks (W^g) which estimates agreements between three or more respondents as they rank some subjects according to a particular characteristic was also used. The findings were presented in the form of frequency tables, and descriptive statistics tables. A total of 120 completed questionnaires were analysed in this study. In relation to the demographic characteristics of the respondents, there was a higher response rate from males 68% (n=67) compared to females with response rate of 32% (n=29). A large portion of the sample fell into the age category 30 to 40 years, which is 42%

(n=38) of the sample. The 41 to 50 years age group followed this with 28% (n=25). The majority of respondents (45.8%, n=55) indicated that they were in the senior staff category, which was followed by respondents in the junior staff category at 35% (n=42) (Table 1). In summary, most of the respondents were males in the age group of 30 to 40 and in the senior staff category.

2.6 Ethical Considerations

Verbal informed consent was obtained from each respondent after explaining the purpose of the study. Respondents who did not wish to participate declined and suffered no consequence for such decision. In order to ensure confidentiality and anonymity names of staff as well as their departments were not requested for. Data collected was kept secure.

2.7 Limitations and Future Research

It has to be noted well that since the study used data collected from only one of the campuses of the University of Education, Winneba, findings should be viewed with caution. Future research should therefore consider including staff from other campuses of the University as well as students to investigate perceptions of hawking more holistically. Second, since this study is not a longitudinal but a cross-sectional study, which examined staff perception of hawking in a particular time period, it is difficult to make causal inferences. To address this issue, future research should employ longitudinal approach to study staff perceptions over several time periods in order to make accurate causal inferences.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Perception of Staff on Hawking at the Campus

With the highest mean score (m=4.22, \pm SD=0.882), majority of the respondents indicated that hawking on the campus was an eyesore and unsightly activity. Other respondents were of the opinion that hawking activities on the campus did not only dent the image of the University (m=4.09, \pm SD=1.079) but generated filth (m=4.08, \pm SD1.079). From the present finding it can be concluded that majority of the staff perceive hawking on the campus to be an eyesore and unsightly activity capable of denting the image of the University as confirmed in literature [1,2].

3.2 Benefits of Hawking to Staff

From the survey results, respondents, with mean score of (m=3.43, ±SD=1.505), indicated that buying from hawkers saved time and energy. The ease of getting goods at convenient location was ranked second with a mean score of (m=3.37, ±SD=1.401). However, the benefit of getting goods at reasonable prices received the least rating with mean score of (m=2.29, ±SD=1.083). The present finding suggest that staff preferred depending on hawkers for their needs other than buying from the market because it saves them time and enables them to get what they wanted at convenient locations as reported in literature [15,12,6]

3.3 Factors Influencing Hawking on the Campus

Concerning factors contributing to hawking on the Campus, the summary of responses revealed that 'lack of mini markets at vantage places' obtained the highest mean scores of (m=3.95, ±SD=1.388). This was followed by unwillingness to walk to the new market with mean scores of (m=3.84, ±SD 1.217). It became evident that restrictions in the market was the least contributing factor to hawking, hence the option received the lowest mean statistic of (m=3.12, ±SD=1.373). Although Kendall's (W^{ρ}) statistics of the results showed a weaker degree of

agreement between the raters on the factors contributing to hawking on the University campus, the level of agreement evidenced from the data was statistically significant at the coefficient of ($W_a=0.052$, $\chi^2=30.147$, $df=5$, $Sig=.001$).

3.4 Perception of Staff on Measures to Eradicate Hawking from the Campus

Regarding measures to eradicate hawking, intensifying patrols by security guards obtained the highest rating (m=4.10, ±SD=0.929) as the most effective measure of dealing with the increasing hawking activities on the Campus. Additionally, the option of placing notices to caution potential and prospective hawkers (m=3.85, ±SD=0.973) was also rated second among the options. It is worth noting that destroying the wares of hawkers obtained the least mean rating (m=2.42, ±SD=1.469). From the survey results, it can be concluded that intensifying patrols by security guards and also pasting notices to caution potential and prospective hawkers were adjudged to be the surest way of curtailing the hawking menace. However it became evident that staff were not in favour of destroying hawkers wares as a measure of eradicating hawking on the Campus. It might be that staff consider this measure as inhuman [23,24,25].

Table 1. How staff perceived hawking on the campus

Statement	Percent (%)					Mean	±SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Dent the image of the University	4.3	7.7	5.1	41.0	41.9	4.09	1.079
Eyesore and unsightly activity	2.6	1.7	9.4	43.6	42.7	4.22	0.882
Inimical to teaching and learning	7.7	12.0	14.5	35.9	29.9	3.68	1.236
Generation of filth	3.4	7.6	4.2	47.5	37.3	4.08	1.079

1= Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree

Table 2. Descriptive statistics on benefits of hawking to staff

	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	±SD
Get goods at reasonable price	119	1	5	2.29	1.083
Buy goods at convenient location	119	1	5	3.37	1.401
Save time and energy in walking to the market	120	1	5	3.43	1.505
Ease of examining goods	118	1	5	2.80	1.278
Valid N (listwise)	117				

1= Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree

Table 3. Descriptive and Kendall’s W^{β} on factors contributing to hawking on the campus

Contributing factors to Hawking	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	±SD
Lack of mini markets at vantage place	119	1	5	3.95	1.388
Unwillingness to walk to the new market	120	1	5	3.84	1.217
Desire for sell more and earn more profit	120	1	5	3.62	1.254
Difficulty in getting a space in the market	120	1	5	3.32	1.469
Leniency of security personnel	119	1	5	3.15	1.430
Restrictions in the market	119	1	5	3.12	1.373
Valid N (listwise)	117				

Kendall’s W^{β} =.052, $\chi^2=30.147$, $df=5$, $Sig=.001$

Table 4. Frequencies on measures to eradicate hawking from the campus

Strategies	Percent					Mean	+SD
	1	2	3	4	5		
Intensifying patrols by security guards	0.8	7.6	4.2	34.7	52.5	4.10	0.929
Notices to caution potential and prospective hawkers	3.3	4.2	6.7	41.7	44.2	3.85	0.973
Sensitizing staff/students not to patronize wares of hawkers	6.7	6.7	7.5	40.0	39.2	3.66	1.159
Setting up of mini markets	6.8	11.1	5.1	35.9	41.0	3.58	1.237
Imposing huge on the spot fines	7.6	22	6.8	23.7	39.8	3.40	1.391
Destroying the wares of hawkers	19.2	26.7	8.3	24.2	21.7	2.42	1.469

1= Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree

4. CONCLUSION

Hawking which used to be practiced in major cities and town in developing countries have now found its way in educational institutions such as the College of Technology Education, Kumasi, University of Education, Winneba. The current study was conducted under four broad research objectives, as enumerated above, purposely to examine staff perception of hawking on the campus. As consumers of the hawker's wares, staff was seen to have observed the operations of the hawkers and transacted business with them for some time now. Although, it became evident that staff benefit from the activities of the hawkers, they continue to perceive hawking on the Campus as an eyesore and unsightly activity which dent the image of the University. Lack of mini markets at vantage places on the Campus was identified to be a major factor contributing to the high patronage of hawkers wares by students and staff. This was as a result of the distance to and fro the new market as well as an unwillingness on the part of students and staff to walk to the new market to transact business. Destroying hawkers wares as a measure to eradicate hawking has been observed not to be supported by staff. It has been observed that staff would prefer, as measures for eradicating

hawking, intensifying security patrols as well as pasting notices to ward off potential and prospective hawkers from the campus.

On the basis of these conclusions, this researcher recommended the following in order to tackle the problem of hawking on the campus. The University management should take urgent steps to establish mini markets at vantage places to serve the needs of staff and students. It should also employ more security personnel and equip them with the necessary accouterments to embark on patrols in and around the campus to ward off hawkers and unscrupulous people from transacting business on the campus. Notices to caution prospective and potential hawkers should be pasted at all entrances and places previously adopted as hawking sites. Students, as well as staff, should also be sensitized on the dangers of patronizing hawkers wares. The sellers in the market should also be empowered to arrest hawkers and bring them to the Security Office for further action.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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