Peace Studies and Practice
Journal of the Society of Peace Studies and Practice

Volume 14 | Issue 1 | August 2026
Pp 289 - 301

LIVELIHOOD STRATEGIES OF STREET HAWKERS IN NIGERIA: TYPES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.63725/jpsp.v14i1.20

ABSTRACT

Street hawking constitutes an important component of Nigeria's informal economy, serving as a critical livelihood strategy for many individuals and households confronted with poverty, unemployment, and limited access to formal employment opportunities. Despite its economic significance, street hawking is associated with numerous socioeconomic, regulatory, and occupational challenges that undermine the welfare and productivity of hawkers while posing concerns for urban governance. This study examined the livelihood strategies of street hawkers in Nigeria, with particular reference to the Ibadan metropolis, by identifying the major types of street hawking, analysing the livelihood strategies adopted by hawkers, examining the challenges affecting their economic activities, and exploring opportunities for improving their livelihoods. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design using a structured questionnaire and field observations to collect data from 120 purposively selected street hawkers operating across selected commercial locations within the study area. Data were analysed using descriptive statistical techniques complemented with qualitative narrative interpretation. The findings indicate that street hawkers rely on diverse livelihood strategies, including business diversification, personal savings, social support networks, and emerging digital marketing practices to sustain their enterprises. However, their activities are constrained by inconsistent regulatory policies, limited access to credit, inadequate social protection, occupational health risks, insecurity, and social stigmatization. Despite these constraints, street hawking continues to generate employment, stimulate local economic activities, and provide affordable goods and services to urban residents. The study concludes that street hawking remains an indispensable survival mechanism within Nigeria's informal economy and should be recognised through inclusive urban policies rather than punitive regulatory approaches. It recommends the development of supportive regulatory frameworks, improved access to microfinance and business development services, designated vending spaces, and comprehensive social protection programmes to enhance the livelihoods and economic resilience of street hawkers while promoting sustainable urban development.

Keywords: Street hawking, Livelihood strategies, Informal economy, Urban livelihoods, Social protection, Ibadan, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Street hawking remains one of the most visible manifestations of the informal economy in many developing countries, particularly across sub-Saharan Africa.It provides employment and income opportunities for millions of individuals who are excluded from the formal labour market due to poverty, unemployment, low educational attainment, and limited access to productive resources.In Nigeria, street hawking has become an integral part of urban economic life, where vendors sell a wide variety of goods, including food items, beverages, clothing, household products, andother consumer goods along roadsides, markets, motor parks, and traffic intersections.The activity serves as an important source of livelihood for many households while simultaneously contributing to the distribution of affordable goods and services to urban residents (International Labour Organization[ILO], 2023; United Nations Human Settlements Programme [UN-Habitat], 2022; Ekpenyong &Sibiri, 2021).The expansion of street hawking in Nigeria has been closely associated with rapid urbanisation, population growth, persistent unemployment, declining household incomes, and the inability of the formal sector to absorb the increasing labour force. These structural socioeconomic conditions have compelled many individuals, particularly women, youths, and low-skilled workers, to engage in informal trading activities as a survival strategy.Consequently, street hawking has evolved beyond a temporary coping mechanism into a significant component of urban livelihoods and local economic systems.The informal nature of the activity enables easy entry because it requires relatively little capital, minimal formal education, and limited regulatory procedures, making it attractive to economically vulnerable populations(ILO, 2023; World Bank, 2024; United Nations Development Programme [UNDP], 2024).

Despite its economic relevance, street hawking presents numerous social, economic, health, and regulatory challenges.Hawkers frequently operate under precarious conditions characterised by harassment from law enforcement agencies, confiscation of goods, inadequate access to formal credit facilities, poor social protection, occupational hazards, and exposure to environmental and traffic-related risks. Female hawkers and children engaged in hawking are particularly vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, violence, and unsafe working environments, while the absence of supportive public policies often exacerbates their marginalisation.These conditions reduce business productivity, threaten household welfare, and reinforce cycles of urban poverty and social exclusion (ILO, 2023; UNICEF, 2023; United Nations Children's Fund, 2024).Conversely, street hawking contributes significantly to urban economies by creating employment opportunities, stimulating small-scale entrepreneurship, enhancing the circulation of goods, and improving access to affordable products for low-income consumers.The sector also demonstrates remarkable resilience, with many hawkers adopting various livelihood strategies—including business diversification, personal savings, social support networks, digital payment systems, and social media marketing to sustain their enterprises amidst economic uncertainty and regulatory constraints. These adaptive strategies illustrate the entrepreneurial capacity of informal workers and underscore the importance of recognising street hawking as an integral component of inclusive urban economic development rather thanmerely an

DOI: https://doi.org/10.63725/jpsp.v14i1.20

illegal or nuisance activity (UN-Habitat, 2022; World Bank, 2024; ILO, 2023).

Existing studies on street hawking in Nigeria have largely concentrated on child labour, educational outcomes, health implications, gender issues, and the security challenges associated with street trading.Comparatively fewer studies have comprehensively examined the livelihood strategies adopted by street hawkers while simultaneously analysing the interaction among the different types of hawking activities, the socioeconomic challenges encountered,and the opportunities available for improving their livelihoods within rapidly urbanising environments.This knowledge gap limits the development of evidence-based urban policies capable of balancing city management objectives with the livelihood needs of informal economy operators (UNDP, 2024; ILO, 2023; World Bank, 2024).Against this background, the present study investigates the livelihood strategies of street hawkers in Nigeria, with particular reference to the Ibadan metropolis.Specifically, the study examines the different categories of street hawkers, analyses the livelihood strategies employed to sustain their businesses, identifies the major economic, social, regulatory, and health challenges confrontingthem, and explores opportunities for enhancing their livelihoods through more inclusive policy interventions.By providing empirical evidence on the realities of street hawking, the study contributes to the growing body of literature on the informal economy and provides policy recommendations for promotinginclusive urban governance, sustainable livelihoods, and socioeconomic resilience among informal workers in Nigeria (UN-Habitat, 2022; World Bank, 2024; ILO, 2023).

CONCEPTUAL REVIEW

Street Hawking

Street hawking refers to the informal commercial activity in which individuals move from one location to another or occupy temporary public spaces to sell goods and services directly to consumers.Unlike formal retail businesses, street hawkers generally operate without permanent business premises and, in many cases, without formal business registration or licensing.Their mode of operation enables them to reach customers in residential neighbourhoods, markets, motor parks, highways, traffic intersections, and other areas with high pedestrian and vehicular traffic.The flexibility and relatively low capital requirements associated with street hawking make it one of the most accessible forms of self-employment for economically disadvantaged populations (ILO, 2023; UN-Habitat, 2022).

In Nigeria, street hawking has become an integral component of the informal economy due to persistent unemployment, rapid urbanisation, population growth, rural–urban migration, and increasing poverty.Individuals engage in street hawking as a means of generating income to meet personal and household needs when opportunities within the formal labour market are limited.The activity encompasses a wide range of products, including food items, beverages, fruits, vegetables, clothing, household utensils, electronics, and personal accessories.Street hawking therefore contributes significantly to employment generation and the distribution of affordable goods and services within urban centres (World Bank, 2024; UNDP, 2024).

Despite its economic importance, street hawking remains controversial because of its association with traffic congestion,

DOI: https://doi.org/10.63725/jpsp.v14i1.20

environmental sanitation concerns, child labour, public safety risks, and conflicts with urban planning regulations.Street hawkers frequently experience harassment, eviction, confiscation of goods, inadequate access to finance, and exclusion from social protection programmes.Nevertheless, many scholars argue that street hawking should not merely be regarded as an illegal urban activity but as an important livelihood strategy requiring supportive and inclusive regulatory frameworkscapable of balancing urban order with socioeconomic inclusion (Roever & Skinner, 2023; ILO, 2023).

Livelihood Strategies

Livelihood strategies refer to the combination of activities, assets, capabilities, and decisions that individuals or households employ to secure income, improve their well-being, and cope with economic uncertainties.These strategies involve the effective utilisation of available human, financial, social, natural, and physical resources to sustain living conditions over time.Within the informal economy, livelihood strategies are particularly important because workers often operate without employment security, social insurance, or stable income sources (Department for International Development [DFID], 1999; Food and Agriculture Organization [FAO], 2022). For street hawkers, livelihood strategies extend beyond merely selling goods.They include business diversification, informal savings schemes, cooperative associations, social networking, customer relationship management, flexible pricing, inventory management, digital payment systems, and the utilisation of social media platforms for marketing.These adaptive mechanisms enable hawkers to withstand market fluctuations, economic shocks, seasonal variations in demand, and regulatory uncertainties.Such strategies demonstrate the resilience and entrepreneurial capabilities of informal workers operating under constrained socioeconomic conditions (World Bank, 2024; ILO, 2023).

The Sustainable Livelihoods Framework views livelihood strategies as dynamic processes influenced by institutional arrangements, vulnerability contexts, and access to productive assets.Consequently, improving the livelihoods of street hawkers requires policies that strengthen financial inclusion, business development services, skills acquisition, social protection, and access to secure trading environments.These interventions enhance the capacity of informal workers to achieve sustainable income generation while reducing their vulnerability to poverty and economic exclusion (UNDP, 2024; FAO, 2022).

Informal Economy

The informal economy comprises all economic activities that operate wholly or partially outside government regulation, taxation, and formal labour market institutions while remaining legitimate sources of income generation.Informal enterprises are typically characterised by small-scale operations, limited capital investment, family ownership, absence of formal employment contracts, and low entry barriers.Although informal businesses frequently fall outside official economic statistics, they make substantial contributions to employment, poverty reduction, and local economic development, particularly within developing countries (ILO, 2023).

Street hawking represents one of the most prominent components of the informal economy in Nigeria.It provides employment opportunities for individuals who lack the educational qualifications, technical skills, or financial resources required for formal

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employment.Informal trading also supports urban food systems by ensuring the availability of affordable consumer goods within communities that may have limited access to formal retail outlets.Consequently, the informal economy functions as an economic safety net for millions of households during periods of economic recession and labour market instability (World Bank, 2024; UN-Habitat, 2022).

Although the informal economy promotes entrepreneurship and employment creation, participants often encounter numerous constraints, including limited access to finance, inadequate legal recognition, poor infrastructure, occupational hazards, and exclusion from labour protection laws.Increasingly, development scholars advocate policies aimed at integrating rather than eliminating informal enterprises through simplified regulatory procedures, improved business support services, and inclusive urban governance (OECD, 2023; ILO, 2023).

Urban Livelihoods

Urban livelihoods refer to the diverse economic and social activities through which urban residents obtain income and satisfy their daily needs.These livelihoods encompass both formal and informal employment, self-employment, wage labour, small-scale enterprises, and household survival strategies.Rapid urbanisation across developing countries has increased dependence on informal livelihood activities because urban labour markets have been unable to generate sufficient formal employment opportunities to accommodate growing populations (UN-Habitat, 2022).

Street hawking constitutes an important urban livelihood strategy because it provides immediate employment with relatively low capital investment and limited entry requirements.It enables vulnerable groups including women, youths, migrants, and low-income households—to participate in urban economies while supplying affordable products to consumers.However, the sustainability of these livelihoods depends largely on supportive institutional environments, access to financial services, secure trading locations, infrastructure, and inclusive urban policies (World Bank, 2024; ILO, 2023).Urban livelihood research increasingly recognises that informal workers contribute significantly to city economies and should therefore be integrated into urban development planning rather than displaced through restrictive regulatory measures.Inclusive urban governance that recognises informal workers' economic contributions promotes social inclusion, poverty reduction, and sustainable urban development (UNDP, 2024; Roever & Skinner, 2023).

Sustainable Livelihood Framework

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) provides a comprehensive conceptual approach for understanding how individuals and households utilise available assets and capabilities to improve their well-being while adapting to economic, environmental, and institutional shocks. Originally developed by the Department for International Development (DFID), the framework identifies five categories of livelihood assets: human capital, social capital, financial capital, physical capital, and natural capital. These assets interact within a vulnerability context shaped by policies, institutions, governance structures, and external shocks (DFID, 1999; FAO, 2022).

Within the context of street hawking, the Sustainable Livelihood Framework explains how hawkers combine limited financial resources, entrepreneurial skills, social networks, business experience, and available

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urban spaces to generate sustainable incomes. The framework further demonstrates that livelihood outcomes depend not only on individual effort but also on institutional support, access to markets, infrastructure, financial services, and favourable policy environments. Consequently, interventions designed to improve the livelihoods of street hawkers should adopt a holistic approach that strengthens both individual capacities and enabling institutional conditions (World Bank, 2024; ILO, 2023).

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework has become widely applied in studies of informal employment because it recognises the multidimensional nature of poverty, vulnerability, and resilience. Rather than focusing solely on income generation, the framework emphasises long-term livelihood security, social inclusion, and sustainable economic participation, making it particularly relevant to studies of street hawking and other informal economic activities (UNDP, 2024; FAO, 2022).

Urban Governance and Street Vending

Urban governance refers to the processes, institutions, policies, and collaborative mechanisms through which governments and stakeholders manage urban development, public spaces, service delivery, and economic activities.Effective urban governance seeks to balance economic growth, environmental sustainability, social inclusion, and public order while accommodating the diverse interests of urban residents.As cities continue to expand, the governance of informal economic activities such as street hawking has become an increasingly important policy concern (UN-Habitat, 2022).Traditional approaches to street hawking in many developing countries have relied heavily on enforcement measures, including forced evictions, confiscation of goods, fines, and relocation exercises.While these approaches may temporarily improve traffic flow or urban aesthetics, they often undermine the livelihoods of vulnerable populations without addressing the structural drivers of informality.Contemporary urban governance increasingly advocates inclusive approaches that recognise street hawkers as legitimate economic actors deserving of legal recognition, designated trading spaces, access to infrastructure, and participation in urban planning processes (Roever & Skinner, 2023; ILO, 2023).

Inclusive governance frameworks encourage dialogue between municipal authorities, traders' associations, civil society organisations, and development partners to develop regulatory systems that simultaneously protect public interests and support informal livelihoods.Such approaches contribute to improved urban management, enhanced economic productivity, poverty reduction, and sustainable city development.Consequently, effective governance of street hawking requires policies that integrate economic inclusion with orderly urban planning rather than relying solely on punitive regulatory mechanisms (World Bank, 2024; UN-Habitat, 2022).

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Marxian Conflict Theory

Marxian Conflict Theory was developed by Karl Marx (1818–1883) and remains one of the most influential sociological theories for explaining social inequality, poverty, labour relations, and unequal access to economic resources.The theory argues that society is characterised by continuous conflict between different social classes because economic resources, wealth, and the means of production are unequally

DOI: https://doi.org/10.63725/jpsp.v14i1.20

distributed.According to Marx (1867/1976), capitalist societies consist primarily of two dominant classes: the bourgeoisie, who own the means of production, and the proletariat, who possess only their labour power.This unequal ownership structure produces exploitation, social exclusion, and persistent poverty.Marx argued that economic inequality shapes virtually every aspect of social life, including employment opportunities, access to education, healthcare, housing, and political influence.Individuals excluded from formal means of production are often compelled to seek alternative livelihood strategies within the informal economy.Consequently, informal employment, including street hawking, may be understood as a response to structural inequalities embedded within capitalist economic systems rather than merely an individual occupational choice (Fuchs, 2021; Harvey, 2020).In many developing countries, including Nigeria, rapid urbanisation, unemployment, inflation, weak industrial growth, and unequal income distribution have increased dependence on informal economic activities.Street hawking has therefore become a survival mechanism for economically disadvantaged populations who are unable to secure stable employment in the formal sector.From a Marxian perspective, the proliferation of street hawking reflects structural deficiencies in economic organisation and labour market opportunities rather than individual failure.The theory further suggests that state institutions sometimes reinforce existing inequalities through restrictive urban policies, selective law enforcement, and inadequate social protection for informal workers (ILO, 2023; UNDP, 2024).

Despite its enduring relevance, Marxian Conflict Theory has attracted criticism.Critics argue that the theory places excessive emphasis on economic class while underestimating the influence of other social factors such as gender, education, ethnicity, technological advancement, governance quality, and institutional effectiveness.Contemporary scholars also contend that not all informal economic activities result directly from capitalist exploitation, as entrepreneurship, innovation, and personal aspirations also influence participation in informal employment (Giddens & Sutton, 2021).Nevertheless, Marxian Conflict Theory remains valuable in explaining why significant segments of urban populations depend on informal livelihoods despite sustained economic growth.The theory highlights the structural causes of poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion that continue to shape street hawking in Nigeria.It also provides a critical lens for understanding the relationship between economic inequality, labour market exclusion, and the expansion of informal economic activities.

Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF)

The Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) was developed by the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DFID) in 1999 as a comprehensive framework for analysing how individuals and households sustain their livelihoods under varying socioeconomic and environmental conditions. The framework has become one of the most widely applied theoretical models in studies relating to poverty reduction, informal employment, rural development, urban livelihoods, and socioeconomic resilience (DFID, 1999).The framework defines a livelihood as the capabilities, assets, resources, and activities required for securing a means of living.According to the SLF, sustainable livelihoods are achieved when individuals are able to cope with and recover from external shocks while maintaining or improving their assets and

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capabilities without undermining the resource base for future generations. The framework identifies five categories of livelihood assets, namely human capital, financial capital, social capital, physical capital, and natural capital, all of which interact within a broader institutional and policy environment (Scoones, 2021; FAO, 2022).

Human capital includes education, vocational skills, business experience, health status, and entrepreneurial competencies that enhance productivity.Financial capital comprises income, savings, credit facilities, and other financial resources available to support economic activities.Social capital refers to networks, family relationships, cooperative associations, trust, and community support systems that facilitate access to information and opportunities.Physical capital includes infrastructure, transportation, communication facilities, market spaces, and productive equipment, while natural capital refers to natural resources that may support livelihood activities (UNDP, 2024).Within the context of street hawking, the Sustainable Livelihood Framework explains how hawkers combine limited resources to sustain their businesses despite difficult operating environments.Hawkers utilise personal savings, family support, cooperative associations, customer networks, business diversification, digital technologies, and adaptive marketing strategies to generate income and cope with economic uncertainties.Their livelihood outcomes are influenced not only by individual capabilities but also by government policies, regulatory institutions, financial inclusion, urban planning, infrastructure availability, and market accessibility (World Bank, 2024; ILO, 2023).

The framework further recognises that livelihoods exist within a vulnerability context characterised by economic recessions, inflation, unemployment, public health emergencies, environmental hazards, and regulatory changes.These external factors influence both the availability of livelihood assets and the strategies adopted by individuals.Consequently, improving the livelihoods of street hawkers requires integrated interventions that strengthen financial inclusion, business capacity development, social protection, infrastructure provision, and inclusive governance (FAO, 2022; UN-Habitat, 2022).Although the Sustainable Livelihood Framework has been widely adopted in livelihood studies, some scholars argue that it pays relatively less attention to structural power relations, political conflicts, and institutional inequalities.Consequently, combining the framework with conflict-oriented theories such as Marxian Conflict Theory provides a more comprehensive understanding of both individual livelihood strategies and the broader socioeconomic structures shaping informal employment (Scoones, 2021).

Justification for the Adopted Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Sustainable Livelihood Framework (SLF) as its principal theoretical framework because it directly explains how street hawkers mobilise available assets, capabilities, and livelihood strategies to survive within Nigeria's informal economy. The framework provides a comprehensive basis for analysing the interaction between livelihood assets, vulnerability contexts, institutional environments, and livelihood outcomes.Since the primary objective of this study is to examine the livelihood strategies, challenges, and opportunities associated with street hawking, the Sustainable

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Livelihood Framework offers the most appropriate conceptual lens for understanding these multidimensional relationships.

The study also draws complementary insights from Marxian Conflict Theory to explain the structural conditions that contribute to the growth of street hawking, including unemployment, poverty, unequal access to productive resources, and social exclusion. While the Sustainable Livelihood Framework explains how street hawkers sustain their livelihoods, Marxian Conflict Theory explains why increasing numbers of individuals are compelled to participate in informal economic activities.The integration of both theories therefore provides a stronger analytical foundation by linking individual livelihood behaviour with broader socioeconomic structures.Accordingly, the Sustainable Livelihood Framework serves as the primary theoretical guide for analysing livelihood strategies and policy implications, whereas Marxian Conflict Theory provides a critical explanation of the structuralinequalities underlying the persistence of street hawking in Nigeria.

EMPIRICAL REVIEW

Empirical studies on street hawking have expanded considerably over the past two decades, reflecting increasing scholarly interest in the informal economy, urban livelihoods, poverty reduction, and sustainable urban development.Existing studies have primarily focused on the socioeconomic determinants of street hawking, its contribution to household livelihoods, occupational hazards, regulatory challenges, and policy responses.However, there remains limited empirical evidence that simultaneously examines the types of street hawkers, their livelihood strategies, the challenges confronting them, and the opportunities available for enhancing their economic resilience.To provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject, this section reviews empirical evidence from international, African, and Nigerian perspectives.

International Empirical Evidence

Roever and Skinner (2023) investigated the contribution of street vendors to urban economies across several developing countries using comparative qualitative and quantitative evidence from the Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO) project. The study found that street vending provides substantial employment opportunities, enhances urban food security, and contributes significantly to local economic development.Nevertheless, street vendors consistently experienced forced evictions, policy uncertainty, inadequate access to infrastructure, and limited legal recognition.The study concluded that inclusive urban governance and participatory policymaking significantly improve the productivity and welfare of informal workers.

Brown et al. (2022) examined the governance of street vending in five Asian and Latin American cities through comparative policy analysis.Using documentary analysis, stakeholder interviews, and institutional assessment, the researchers found that cities adopting collaborative governance models achieved better compliance, improved public order, and enhanced livelihood outcomes than cities relying primarily on enforcement measures. The study recommended integrating street vendors into urban planning rather than criminalising their activities.Chen (2021) analysed the resilience of informal workers during the COVID-19 pandemic using evidence from low- and middle-income countries.The study

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reported that movement restrictions, declining consumer demand, and disruptions to supply chains severely affected the income of street vendors.However, many vendors demonstrated resilience through business diversification, digital marketing, home delivery services, and expanded social support networks.The study emphasised that strengthening social protection and financial inclusion is essential for improving the resilience of informal workers during economic crises.

A World Bank (2024) assessment of informal employment in developing economies found that informal enterprises continue to account for a substantial proportion of employment despite sustained economic growth.The report identified inadequate access to finance, weak institutional support, regulatory uncertainty, and limited infrastructure as major constraints on productivity among informal workers.It recommended simplified business registration procedures, financial inclusion programmes, skills development initiatives, and inclusive urban governance as critical policy interventions.Similarly, the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2023) examined employment trends within the informal economy across developing countries.The report revealed that women and youths constitute a significant proportion of informal workers, particularly in street trading.Informal employment was found to reduce unemployment and household poverty while exposing workers to occupational insecurity, income instability, and inadequate labour protection.The report advocated for integrated labour market policies, social protection programmes, and formalisation strategies that preserve livelihoods while improving working conditions.

Empirical Evidence from Africa

Resnick (2021) examined the regulation of street vending across selected African cities using comparative institutional analysis.The findings indicated that inconsistent urban policies, political interference, and weak institutional coordination contributed to recurring conflicts between municipal authorities and street vendors.The study concluded that policy frameworks recognising informal workers as legitimate economic actors produced more sustainable urban management outcomes than punitive regulatory approaches.

Skinner and Watson (2022) investigated informal livelihoods among urban traders in South Africa using mixed research methods.The study established that street trading remains an important source of employment, particularly for women and migrant populations.Access to trader associations, savings groups, cooperative networks, and microfinance institutions significantly improved business performance and income stability.However, poor infrastructure, insecurity, and restrictive municipal regulations continued to undermine business sustainability.

Adepoju and Akinola (2023) studied informal entrepreneurship among urban youth in selected West African cities.Using survey data and in-depth interviews, they found that unemployment, poverty, and limited educational opportunities were the major drivers of informal trading.Youth entrepreneurs demonstrated considerable innovation through digital payment systems, online customer engagement, and flexible business models.The researchers recommended strengthening entrepreneurial education and expanding financial inclusion programmes targeting informal enterprises.

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Empirical Evidence from Nigeria

Onodugo et al. (2020) investigated the determinants of street hawking in urban Nigeria using survey data collected from informal traders across selected metropolitan centres.The study found that unemployment, poverty, household responsibilities, and limited access to formal employment significantly influenced participation in street hawking.Respondents identified inadequate capital, regulatory harassment, poor infrastructure, and insecurity as the principal constraints affecting business growth.The researchers recommended supportive government policies capable of integrating informal workers into national economic development strategies.

Ebiringa and Amaefule (2021) examined the relationship between informal entrepreneurship and poverty reduction among street traders in southeastern Nigeria.Using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques, the study established that street trading contributed significantly to household income generation, employment creation, and small business development.However, limited access to formal credit, multiple taxation, and inconsistent government regulations reduced enterprise productivity.The authors recommended expanding access to microfinance, entrepreneurial training, and business advisory services.Okoro and Nzeadibe (2022) investigated the livelihood experiences of street vendors in southeastern Nigeria through qualitative interviews and field observations.The study reported that traders relied heavily on family labour, rotating savings schemes, customer loyalty, and business diversification to sustain their enterprises.Respondents identified inflation, insecurity, poor transportation infrastructure, and market instability as major threats to business sustainability.The study concluded that strengthening social protection and urban infrastructure would significantly improve informal livelihoods.

Adelekan et al. (2023) assessed the socioeconomic implications of informal trading among women entrepreneurs in southwestern Nigeria.Findings revealed that street trading served as an important livelihood strategy for women with limited formal education and employment opportunities.The study also found that participation in cooperative societies enhanced access to finance, business information, and social support.Nevertheless, poor market infrastructure and regulatory uncertainty continued to limit business expansion.Ogunyemi and Adebayo (2024) investigated digital adaptation among informal traders in Lagos State.The study found increasing adoption of mobile banking, electronic payment platforms, WhatsApp marketing, and online customer engagement among street traders.Digital technologies improved business efficiency, customer retention, and financial management despite infrastructural limitations.The researchers concluded that digital inclusion programmes could substantially improve the productivity and resilience of informal enterprises.

Synthesis of Literature

The reviewed literature establishes that street hawking is an important component of the informal economy, providing employment, income, and livelihood opportunities for economically vulnerable populations.The conceptual literature consistently identifies poverty, unemployment, rapid urbanisation, and limited formal employment opportunities as the major drivers of street hawking, while also acknowledging its contribution to local economicdevelopment and urban service delivery (ILO, 2023; UN-Habitat, 2022;

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World Bank, 2024).The theoretical review indicates that both the Sustainable Livelihood Framework and Marxian Conflict Theory provide valuable insights into the phenomenon of street hawking.While the Sustainable Livelihood Framework explains how hawkers utilise available assets and adaptive strategies to sustain their livelihoods, Marxian Conflict Theory attributes the growth of informal economic activities tostructural inequalities, poverty, and unequal access to productive resources (Scoones, 2021; Fuchs, 2021).

Empirical studies reviewed reveal that street hawkers face common challenges, including inadequate access to finance, regulatory harassment, poor infrastructure, occupational risks, and social exclusion.At the same time, livelihood strategies such as business diversification, social networks, savings, and digital technologies have been identified as important mechanisms for improving resilience and business sustainability (Roever& Skinner, 2023; ILO, 2023; Ogunyemi & Adebayo, 2024).

Despite these contributions, existing studies have largely focused on the causes, effects, and regulation of street hawking, with limited attention given to the interaction between types of street hawkers, livelihood strategies, challenges, and opportunities, particularly within Ibadan metropolis. This study addresses this gap by providing an integrated assessment of these dimensions to generate evidence that can inform policies aimed at promoting sustainable livelihoods and inclusive urban development in Nigeria.

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