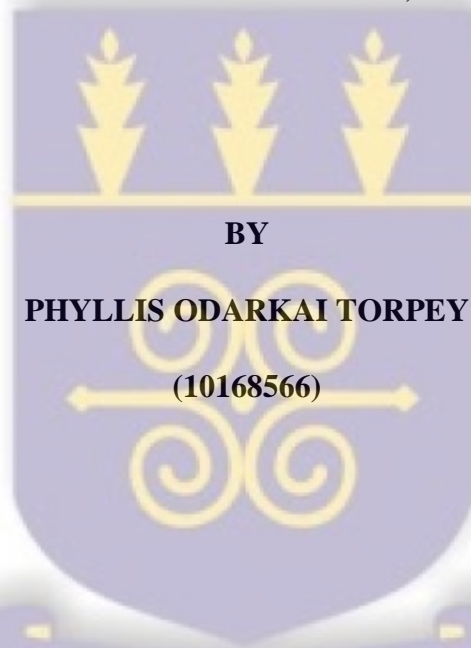


UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

**THE EXPERIENCES AND VIEWS OF CHILDREN ASSISTING ADULT BEGGARS
ON THE STREETS OF ACCRA, GHANA**



BY

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**THIS THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON IN
PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY DEGREE IN SOCIAL WORK**

JULY, 2016

DECLARATION

I, Phyllis Odarkai Torpey, do hereby declare that with the exception of the references duly cited, this thesis titled “The experiences and views of children assisting adult beggars on the streets of Accra, Ghana” was entirely conducted by me in the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, Legon under the supervision of Dr. Kwabena Frimpong-Manso and Dr. Emma Hamenoo. This work has never been presented in part or full to any other Department or Institution for any academic activity.

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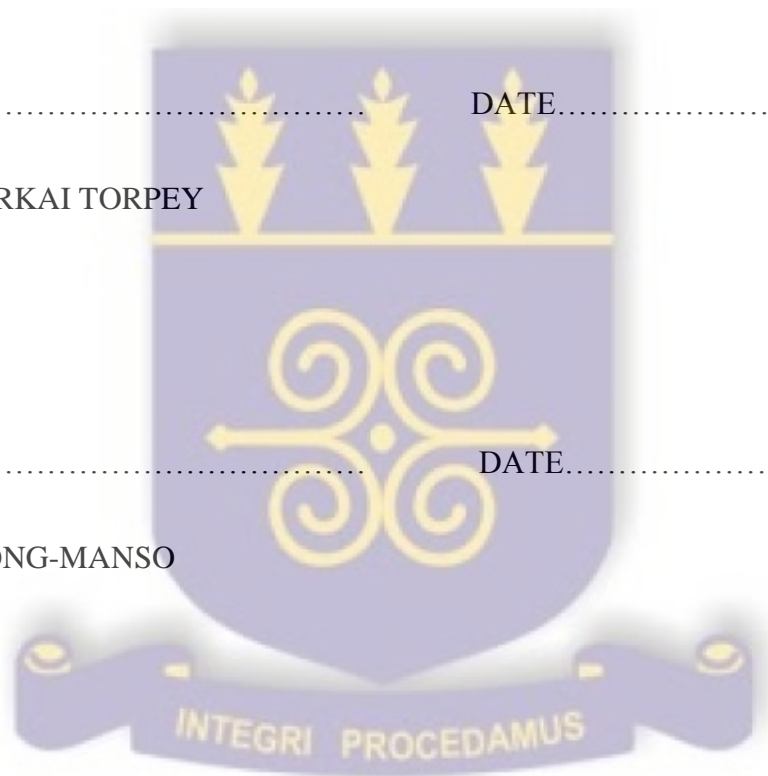
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(CO- SUPERVISOR)



DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Almighty God who has given me the strength and the ability to be able to make it this far and to my supervisor Dr. K. Frimpong-Manso, who inspired me to do this work.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I want to thank the Almighty God for his abundant grace upon my life and for giving me knowledge, wisdom and understanding to complete this work.

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I could not have done this without the support and encouragement from my husband Josiah Torpey, my children Herman and Esther Torpey as well as my mum, my dad, my sisters Betty, Pat, Prudence and my brother Percy. I thank them very much. God bless them all. I also extend my warmest gratitude to my Godmother, Dr Mrs. Cynthia Sottie, for her encouragement and support. My gratitude also goes to my friend Isaac Nooni for his support and help during this work. I want to finally express my appreciation to my course mates for their helpful suggestions and other forms of support during our course of study. I would not have made it this far without them.

ABSTRACT

Many children in Ghana do not enjoy their childhood because of poverty and other socio-economic factors that force them to become street children. Among such children are those who aide adult beggars. Working and/or living on the streets as aides to adult beggars come with several challenges such as the children having to provide their own survival needs as well as the needs of the adult beggars they aide. There are extensive literatures on the experiences of street children in general. However, little is known about the daily lives of children who are aides to adult beggars. To bridge this gap in literature, the current study examines the experiences of children used as aides to adult beggars in Greater Accra. It explores the factors that influence the children to become aides to adult beggars; the activities they perform; and the challenges that confront them.

The study adopted a qualitative research design and data was collected using semi-structured interview, and was analysed using the analytical framework by UK National Centre for Social Research (Richie & Lewis, 2003). The researcher interviewed 15 children. The findings of the study revealed that parental disability and abandonment are factors that drive children to become aides. Children also perform care-giving roles and are confronted with numerous challenges which include their inability to attend school. Based on the findings, the study recommended that for children, who aide adult beggars as a result of parental disability, government through the Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection should ensure that parents receive LEAP cash transfers. In addition, street corner education by Catholic Action for Street Children (Save the children, 2006) could be intensified and supported by government to provide children with some educational opportunities. Furthermore, Non-governmental organizations (NGO) that work with street children such as Assemblies of God Relief Agency can provide short term relief such as mosquito nets or a place they can sleep.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Content	Page
DECLARATION.....	i
DEDICATION.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
ABSTRACT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	3
1.3 Objectives.....	4
1.4 Research Questions	4
1.5 Significance of the Study	4
1.6 Organization of the Chapters.....	5
1.7 Conclusion.....	6
LITERATURE REVIEW	7
2.0 Introduction	7
2.1 Factors that Influence Children to the Street.....	7
2.2 Activities Performed By Street Children	15
2.3 Challenges Confronted by Street Children.....	17
2.4 Theoretical Framework	19
2.5 Conclusion.....	24
CHAPTER THREE	25
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	25
3.0 Introduction	25
3.1 Research Design.....	25
3.2 The Study Area.....	25
3.3 Study Population	26
3.4 Sampling Technique.....	26
3.5 Sample Size	27
3.6 Sources of Data and Data Collection	28
3.7 Data Handling and Analysis.....	29

3.8 Ethical Consideration	30
3.9 Credibility and Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research Design	31
3.10 Limitations of the Study	32
3.11 Conclusion.....	33
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS.....	34
4.0 Introduction	34
4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants	34
4.2 Factors that Influenced Children as Aides to Adult Beggars	35
4.2.1 Parental Disability and Abandonment.....	35
4.2.2 Business Purposes.....	37
4.3 Activities Children Perform as Aides Adult Beggars	39
4.3.1 Care Giving Roles.....	40
4.3.2 Assisting on the Streets.....	41
4.4. Challenges that are confronted by Children as Aides to Adult Beggars.....	43
4.4.1 Emotional Challenge.....	43
4.4.2 Physical Challenge (Stress).....	44
4.4.3 Physical Challenge (Safety Concerns)	45
4.4.4 Health Challenges.....	46
4.4.5 Educational Challenge.....	49
4.5 Conclusion.....	50
DISCUSSIONS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	52
5.0. Introduction	52
5.1 Discussions of Findings	52
5.2 Summary of Findings	64
5.3 Conclusion.....	67
5.4 Recommendations	68
REFERENCES.....	73
APPENDIX.....	83
GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR BEGGARS' AIDES.....	83

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Ecological Theory Diagram23



CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The concept of a street child is defined variously by researchers and organizations. For example, some definitions are based on the degree of family involvement and the amount of deviant behaviour the child exhibits (Cosgrove, 1990). Others also define street children by categorising them into different groups. Initially, street children were put into two major groups. Children living on the streets are one category of street children who live permanently on the streets without returning home. The second category, children off the streets or street working children, spend a considerable number of hours on the streets to work but return home mostly to spend the night (Thomas de Benitez, 2011). A third category of street children has emerged in recent years. These are children who are on the streets with their parents or relatives. For some of these children, they are born on the streets and have spent all their lives there (UNICEF, 2005). However, this study adopts the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) definition which states that a street child is any girl or boy who lives and/or works on the street without the supervision of a responsible adult (UNICEF, 2005).

There are no single causes for children living and working on the streets but rather a combination of economic, social, political, and cultural factors (Kebede, 2015). Empirical studies attribute streetism to poverty and family pressure, orphan hood, peer influence, and migration (Aransiola, Bamiwuye, Akinyemi, Ikuteyijo, 2009; Kyaoya 2014; Oduro, 2013; Tatek, 2008.)

Street children often involve themselves in several activities such as doing menial jobs, selling, stealing and begging, in order to survive. In addition, street children encounter countless physical, sexual, and psychological abuses or even death in countries (UNICEF, 2006; 2007; 2012; OHCHR, 2011). As such child rights instruments including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, which Ghana is a signatory to, all contain statements that prohibit the use of children for begging purposes (OAU, 1999). In addition, the primary Ghanaian law protecting children, the 1998 Children's Act (ACT 560), also specifies in Section 18 that children who accompany people to beg or receive alms, whether or not there is any pretense of singing, playing, performing, offering anything for sale or otherwise needs, should be considered in need of protection from the state.

To deal with the growing numbers of street children, several governmental and non-governmental organizations have been set-up to prevent and promote the reunification of children with their birth families. Organizations such as Street Girls Aid and Catholic Action for Street Children, are all in existence to fight against children being on the streets. Notwithstanding these efforts, it is disheartening to note that there are still many children who have fallen in-between the cracks of the welfare system and find themselves on the streets. It is against this background that the current study sought to investigate the experience street children go through daily as aides to adult beggars on the streets of Accra, the capital city of Ghana.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Living or working on the streets can have implication on the children's wellbeing such as their health and education (Kankam- Boadi, 2013; Osa- Edoh & Ayano, 2012). The issue of children living on the streets is of much concern in many developing countries including Ghana because of the large numbers involved. According to the Department of Social Welfare (2011), over 90,000 children in Ghana live and work on the streets. These children survive on the margins of society, living in inhumane conditions, suffering from hunger, harassment, and physical abuse (Kankam-Boadu, 2013). Their activities do not only affect these children but the development of the nation since their contributions may either retard or enhance future development.

In recent years, an emerging variation of street children is those who are used by adults to beg. Research in Mali and Senegal has highlighted that children (known as talibés) attend Qur'anic schools where they are forced by their instructors to beg on the streets to secure their survival and enrich their teachers (African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child Report, 2012). In Ghana, an increasing number of children aide physically and visually challenged adults to solicit for alms. Anecdotal evidence suggests that for some children, being aides is a full-time job for which they are paid. They do this at the expense of their education and safety. Yet a review of the literature revealed that little is known about the experiences of this subgroup of street children who have to manage their needs as well as those of the adults they assist. The absence of information on these children makes it difficult to plan social interventions to support them. This study explores the experiences and views of children who aide adult beggars on the streets of Accra, Ghana.

1.3 Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore the experiences of children used as aide to adult beggars. The study sought to:

1. Find out the factors that influence children to aide adult beggars on the streets of Accra.
2. Explore the activities that children perform when they aide adult beggars on the streets of Accra.
3. Investigate the challenges confronting children who aide adult beggars on the streets of Accra

1.4 Research Questions

The research sought to answer the following questions;

- What are the major factors that influence children to aide adult beggars on the street of Accra?
- What activities do children perform when they aide adult beggars on the street of Accra?
- What challenges confront children when they aide adult beggars on the streets of Accra?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The study contributes to knowledge on street children by filling a gap in the literature. Most African and Ghanaian studies generally focus on child beggars and street children. The study throws more light on a growing phenomenon by providing

evidence on the activities and challenges children serving as aides to adult street beggars as well as laying the foundation for a larger quantitatively oriented study.

Additionally, the study provides information and recommendations that will hopefully inform formulation of appropriate policy relating to families and children. It will help policy makers develop social interventions programs and social protection that will address the factors and challenges of vulnerable children and their families who live on the streets. Existing social intervention programs specifically catering for adult with disability and their aides can be reinforced.

Finally, the study will contribute to developing new knowledge concerning this subgroup of street children which will help practitioners, including social workers who work with street children in their practices. The results from this study could serve a reference material for academic literature.

1.6. Organization of the Chapters

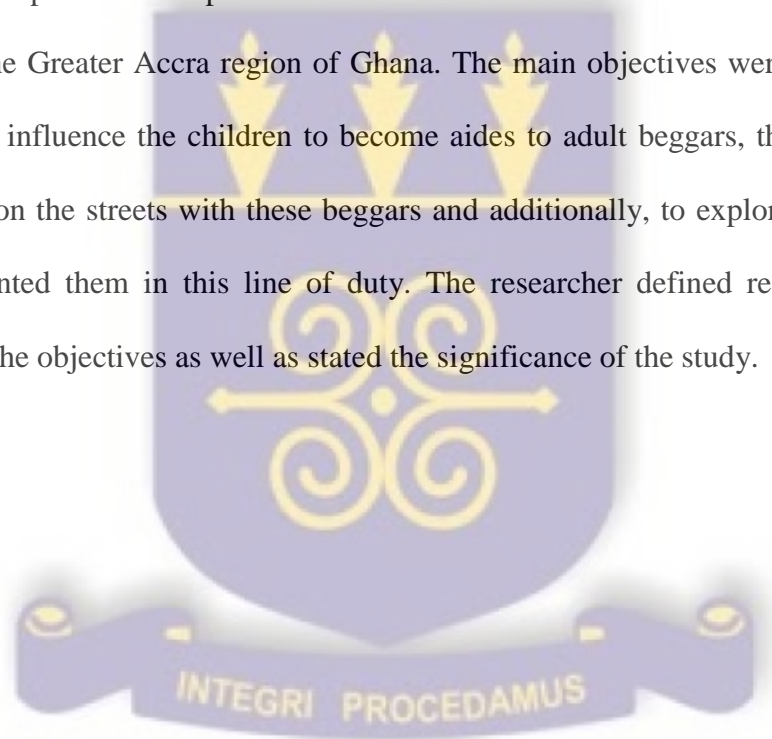
This study is presented in five chapters. Chapter one introduces the study by providing background information on street children and highlighting the main issues of concern through the problem statement. It also lists the objectives and the research questions that guide the focus of the study. Fin

ally talks about the significance of the study and the organization of the chapters. Chapter two reviews literature on the concept and definition of street children, factors that push or pull children to the streets, the experiences of street children which involved their activities and their challenges.

Chapter three presents the methods and processes used in the selection of participants for the study and in gathering and analysing the data. Chapter four presents the findings and discussions. Finally chapter five summarises the findings, draws conclusions based on the findings and makes recommendation, based on the conclusions drawn.

1.7 Conclusion

This study explored the experiences of children used as aides to adult beggars on the streets in the Greater Accra region of Ghana. The main objectives were to find out the factors that influence the children to become aides to adult beggars, the activities they performed on the streets with these beggars and additionally, to explore the challenges that confronted them in this line of duty. The researcher defined research questions specific to the objectives as well as stated the significance of the study.



CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter reviews general literature on street children and child beggars because literatures on child aides to adult beggars are scarce. The theme based review focuses on existing studies relating to the study's objectives and research questions. Literature was reviewed under the following topics: the experiences of street children, and the factors that influence them unto the streets. The review also looked at the activities that children undertake while living and/or working on the streets, challenges of street children and some theoretical perspectives relevant for studies on street children. The review focused on developing countries.

2.1 Factors that Influence Children to the Street

Streetism and begging among children although not a new concept, has become a prominent problem especially in the developing countries. The appreciation of this problem has necessitated studies to be undertaken on the subject. Many factors have been attributed to children living or working on the streets. These include economic, social, culture and political factors. The economic factor is a common finding in many studies. In a study by Namwata, Mgabo and Dimosa (2012) undertaken in Tanzania, it was found that children are compelled to live or work on the streets as a result of economic hardship in their families. This means that poverty as a problem has served as a push factor for children who face economic hardship to move and fend for themselves on the street. Commenting on economic hardship as a factor for streetism, Abebe's (2009) study in Ethiopia asserts that Children beg to raise income which supplements the incomes of their families. This Abebe (2009) assertion, is more common in homes

which are headed by one parent (Female). This shows that although economic hardship is a common factor for streetism in many families in different regions, the nature of the leadership in the family also influences children's decision to engage in economic activities such as begging on the streets. This assertion also proves that children who find themselves in poor households have a socially meaningful and valuable economic role to play for the survival of not only themselves but the family as a whole.

However, literature also shows the decision to be on the streets is sometimes not the preserve of children in poverty-stricken households, especially in developing countries where children's rights are trampled upon due to factors such as poverty and culture. This view is captured in Muchinako, Chikwaiwa and Nyanguru's (2013) study which was conducted on street children in Zimbabwe. In their study, they reported that children had no option than to accompany their parents/caregivers unto the streets because they were poor and lived at informal and unregulated settlements.

The economic motivator to streetism is not only experienced in developing countries in southern Africa but in other sub-regions in the African continent. This is because poverty or economic hardship is a common problem in all developing countries. In Ghana, a West African country, the quest for economic freedom has motivated some children to flock on the streets to engage in economic activities. According to Ghana's Department of Social welfare et al. (2011), some children in Ghana migrate from the rural communities into urban centers to work in order to raise some money to better their living situation. Social welfare et al. (2011) further postulated that these children's decision to engage in streetism is as a result of their perception of the fact that they do not have a viable future ahead. With such perception, these children move into the

streets of the cities to find ends means although they may have no shelter on the streets. In a study conducted in Ghana by Wedadu (2013) on begging, found that child-adult partnership is influenced by socio-economic factors that define livelihood opportunities and constraints especially for the disabled. According to Wedadu (2013), persons with disability are considered at all level, family, society and the state as poor and needy worthy of external assistance in the form of alms, these have in various ways interacted and contributed in rendering the disabled almost nonproductive thereby legitimizing begging as their only source of livelihoods. For some of the persons with disability especially the blind needing assistance to beg hire the services of children as their aides.

More so, charitable donations given by nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and private individuals also act as an additional economic factor that influences streetism. This conclusion was made in a study conducted by Kebede (2015) on the situation of street children in urban centers of Ethiopia. This study revealed that the services provided to street children by different NGOs attract children to live or work on the streets. This means some organizations are simply engaged in providing basic services for the children while they are living on the street. Such services make life easier for the children on the street, thereby giving them incentive to remain on the street or even attracting other children to street life.

The literatures on the economic factors can be classified into push and pull factors. Push factors are the unattractive conditions in children's homes such economic hardship, which encourage the children to leave their homes to the street and the pull factors are the packages on the streets that are attractive to the children (Kebede, 2015; Muchinako

et al, 2013; Social Welfare et al., 2011). Studies done in Tanzania and Zimbabwe (Muchinako et al., 2013; Namwata et al., 2012) suggests that children were pushed onto the streets because of the hardship at home however research done in Ghana and Ethiopia (Abebe, 2009; Social Welfare et al., 2011) suggests that children were pulled onto the streets because of the economic freedom they will obtain as well as the services that were being render by non-governmental organizations.

The second factor which is the social factors has contributed to children living and/or working on the streets. Family separation or divorce, most often, plays a key part in the street children phenomena. When parents remarry after a divorce, it becomes a problem for children especially children who are maltreated by their step parents so they move to the streets to find their freedom (DSW, 2011). This means that children move to the streets because they want to flee from the maltreatment they receive at home and they see the streets as a place they can obtain freedom and some level of peace.

In addition, children who are abandoned by their parents through divorce opt to live or work on the streets in order to earn a livelihood. Namwata et al. (2012), found that the increasing numbers of family members living in either separation or divorce, death of a spouse often increased due to violence and abandonment when the parent remarries. Children from single families usually lack stable support and sometimes choose the streets as the better option in order to escape the problem at home. This shows that when the support in the family is broken and children do not receive the attention and supervision that parents are expected to give to their children, children opt for the streets considering it as a better option than living at home.

Further on social factors, children who are abused by their parents or guardians usually flee from their homes to the streets either to live and/or work because that is the place they find some level of comfort and acceptance and are no longer subjected to the maltreated they face at home. According to Muchinako et al. (2013), children who felt neglected by their parents felt that it was better for them to move to the streets. Also, children subjected to physical and emotional abuse either by their parents or step parents turned to the streets for relief. A similar result was found in a study conducted in Trinidad and Tobago by Julien (2008), which found that when there is violence at home children are pushed to the streets and they can remain there for the rest of their lives.

Aside children going to the streets because they were abandoned by their parents through death, divorce and violence at home, there are other families who also abandon their children because the child had a disability. The reason for some parents abandoning children with disability was due to the fact that the parents were unable to handle the extra care that their children required. The neglect by parents usually leave the children with disability no option than to depend on other people for their daily bread (Namwata et al., 2012). This alludes to the fact that a child with disability living and working on the streets could remain on the streets for the rest of their lives. Additionally, Namwata et al. (2012) in their study found that some families do not educate children who have disability and this hinders their ability to obtain skills and knowledge further hindering their ability to find employment or become self-employed. These children are usually isolated and lack attention and the majority resort to begging.

Parents who are addicted to drugs usually maltreat and neglect their children and these children resort to the streets for survival. Sorre and Oino (2013) found that a significant

number of the street children were attracted to the streets because of neglect or maltreatment by their parents who were addicted to drugs and/or alcohol consumption. Although some children lived/ or work on the streets because they were abandoned by their families due to the inability of the family economically supporting the children, divorce, death and step- parenting or drug addiction, there are other children who were on the streets because of the gradual integration they have on the streets. According to Strehl (2010) children end up on the streets as a result of their parents sending them to work on the streets, this however made them befriend other children on the streets leading them to become use to the freedom and the independence the street live offered them.

Another factor which has contributed to streetism among children is culture. In the past, the extended family cared for children who had been neglected by their parents or children whose parents had died. The extended family was also instrumental in the transmission of culture but the growth in modernization and urbanization has caused a breakdown in the extended family which was very strong in most developing countries (DSW et al., 2011; Muchinako et al., 2013; Sorre et al., 2013). In Ghana, the breakdown of the extended family system is as a result of modernization with the introduction of formal education and money economy. Commenting on the breakdown of the family system as a result of modernization, DSW et al. (2011) opine that Ghanaians depended largely on the extended family system for survival but modernization have greatly affected the role and function of the traditional family system which served as a support unit for children when their parents died.

The growth in demographic and socio-economic change due to urbanization and modernization, has caused family and family life to undergo considerable change, altering its composition and structure of families in our societies and is generally splitting up to such an extent that it is failing to fulfill its primary role of socialization (Sorre et al., 2013). Additionally, Sorre et al. (2013) observed that industrialization and modernization have caused interferences in the family structure and has weakened the family institution making much focus on individual parenting. In the past the family institution was solid and not only was it for procreation but also the development of culture. This shows that the family as a self-enabling institution was instrumental in the socialization process but this system is eroding off as economic pressures on families prevent them from helping others. These days when individuals have problem, they depend on their own resources for solution.

Corporal punishment is viewed as a way to discipline children. Children are not supposed to have a voice and when they go wrong they are beaten. Instances where corporal punishment becomes too much especially in school, children do not enjoy going to school and some may drop out of school hence end up on the streets. According to Aransiola et al. (2009), corporal punishment is upheld in Nigeria to punish children to be disciplined in a school. In Schools where there are regular beaten or verbal abuses, vulnerable children do not enjoy school and may therefore opt for the streets.

Finally, political factors which includes civil unrest, wars, corrupt governments results in the increase of street children (Khaoye, 2014; Kopyegon, 2015). When there are wars families get separated and children are left on their own to survive. Also political unrest deteriorates the economy thereby causing high rate of unemployment and families are

unable to care for their children thereby forcing children to the streets. Khaoye (2014) in his study found that children ended up on the streets because the families were displaced in tribal wars and their parents' house and properties were burnt hence they found it difficult to support the family. Again some children's parents were killed during civil unrest thereby leaving the children to survive on their own (Khaoye, 2014).

When there is bad leadership or governance coupled with hardship in the economy it leads to civil and tribal wars resulting in family displacement and increased number of children living on the streets. In addition, when a society undergoes political and economic change it leaves most citizens displaced and unable to cope with the rapid change (Sorre et al., 2013). According to Sorre et al. (2013) a large number of people are displaced through political violence, social and ethnic clashes, and displacement by evacuation to create space for investment, security, conservation of forests resources and other reasons, are not uncommon scenes in Kenya. The affected families get disoriented, some are separated, many are deprived, and consequently, children become vulnerable and join street life.

The literatures on the factors that influence children onto the street are abundant however most of studies are on street children in general and the studies on child begging focuses on independent child beggars yet there are other street children who are aides to adult beggars on the streets. The general categorization of the factors that push and pulls children unto the streets which includes economic (poverty), social (the disintegration of the family) culture (the breakdown of the extended family system and peer pressure) and political factors (the displacement of families due to tribal wars) to a large extent precludes other forces that may play a part in influencing other children's

lives on the streets that is children as aides to adult beggar. Their lived experience is however not captured in most of the literatures.

2.2. Activities Performed By Street Children

Surviving on the streets means that children have to involve themselves in several activities which includes begging, carrying, car washing, drug trafficking, juggling, performing music, running errands, scavenging, sex work, and shoe shining or vending (Abebe, 2009; Muchinako et al., 2013). Begging has been captured by most of the literature on street children and child begging as a common activity performed by children on major streets, because it enables them to meet their daily needs. The strategy used in begging however differs in most developing countries. In Ethiopia, children engage in begging either full time or part time and they beg by distributing notes and telling people about their plight. According to Abebe (2009), children use different approaches to beg, some beg individually and others beg in groups; new beggars have to patiently observe the other members in order to learn the styles of begging; and also there are some children who distribute notes about their plights and the supports they are seeking from the public.

The situation is different in Zimbabwe because begging in Zimbabwe is characterized by a phenomenon where children are used by mothers to beg because they are of the belief that children induce greater sympathy from members of the public (Muchinako et al, 2013). In the case of Senegal child beggars known as ‘Talibees’ are put in Qua’mic school and forced to beg by some instructors to secure their own survival and enrich the teachers. These children walk barefooted and carry bowls, roaming the motorway and

begging for money from passersby (African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child, 2012).

In India, because seeking and giving alms is an opportunity to do punya, children use the photographs of various Gods and ask people to give alms in the names of the Gods (Kaushik, 2014). In Ghana, begging is done through children and adult partnerships where persons with disability particularly the blind hire the services of children to serve as their aides/guides (Wedadu, 2013). This alludes to the fact that although begging takes different forms in many developing countries children perform this activity on their own will to be able to survive on the streets and others are also forced to perform this activity by their parents or guardians.

Citing the activities children perform on the streets, Kebede (2015) found 'shoe shining' as the most popular job for the street children. Many boys who engage in 'shoe shining' have a fixed place and others are mobile in the city. The mobile 'shoe shine' moves from place to place in order to get customers but they attract fewer customers because many people do not trust these boys as they are often perceived and accused of using inferior creams at the expense of the good ones (Kebede, 2015). Aside begging and shoe shining, street children, specifically girls, engage in prostitution. Girls engage in sex work because they see it as an easy way to make money and in some cases they are forced into prostitution by their street boyfriends to earn quick money in exchange for protection and affection (Strehl, 2010). Muchinako et al. (2013) found in their study in Zimbabwe that older children supplemented their incomes by engaging in commercial sex work.

In addition, there are girls from the northern part of Ghana who engage in head porting (known as Kayayei). They carry heavy loads in head pans that seems as though they are going to break their necks. They follow shoppers around and they spend much time and energy but get paid very little (DSW et al., 2011). Aside these activities, street children also take up jobs in the informal sector which includes working in shops, bars, restaurant and metal works (Strehl, 2010)

2.3. Challenges Confronted by Street Children

The upsurge of children on the street poses numerous challenges to the child. Street children are vulnerable to wide range of violations of their rights. They face emotional, physical, health and psychological challenges (Kebede, 2015, Strehl, 2010). Children living and/or working on the streets face physical challenges such as not having access to food and shelter. Street children mostly live on the little they earn, with no idea where their next food will be coming from because they depend largely on sympathizers (Muchinako et al., 2013). Subarna, Biswas, Shikdar and Hassan (2014) opine that street children are mostly deprived of three squared meal a day and they also lack basic necessities in life such as shelter and security. Apart from street children not having access to food, they are physically abused on the streets by the police or parents. According to Aransiola et al. (2009), children on the streets are often subjected to physical abuse by the police, they are detained, tortured and beaten.

A similar finding was reported by Moolla, Myburgh and Poggenpoel (2008) that street children experience aggression during interaction with the police, and also street children experience physical, verbal and sexual abuse accompanied by threats. Moolla et al. (2008) further explained that street children face verbal abuse from the people to

whom they extended their begging bowls. Many people have negative attitudes towards children who beg and regard them as obstacles or a total nuisance so some react in a rude manner to the request for alms from the children. As a result street children usually end up learning to use vulgar or foul language which they picked up from the public (Muchinako et al., 2013).

Street children also face health challenges. The places they sleep and the activities they perform increase their health challenge. DSW et al. (2011) opine that malaria is very common among street children because they sleep in the open space and lorry parks. The authors further explained that street children suffer from cold because of their constant exposure to the unpredictable weather changes and they suffer skin diseases and infections from the place they sleep and the people they are in contact with and also lack of access to medical services often leads untreated cases of illness among them.

Not only do children face health risk because of the places they sleep but the activities they perform also cause injury for them. For instance, children can be knocked down by vehicles on the street and the long hours of work in the sun cause them to fall ill frequently (Osa-Edoh & Ayano, 2012). According to Muchinako et al. (2013), mothers who work on the streets usually leave their young children playing at dangerous environment without being supervised, and children face the risk of being involved with motor accident. The authors further opine that respiratory infections arising from carbon fumes from passing vehicles and contaminated dusts from the streets cause health risk for street children, in addition, street children also face the risk of accidents or death in the event of stampede caused by the appearance of police pursuing illegal vendors or alleged thieves.

Further on the health challenges that street children face, Strelh (2010) found drug addiction among street children as a major challenge on their health. The author further went on to explain that homosexual was high among street children which increased their risk of contracting STIs. Females lured into cross generational sexual activities by peers or unscrupulous guardians, however exposed them to sexually transmitted infections including HIV and a variety of STIs (Muchinako et al., 2013). Asante and Meyer-Weitz (2015) reported that street girls are exposed to risky behaviors, ranging from sexual violence, abuse and rape.

On the emotional challenge, the stigma and discrimination meted on street children by the public is a major problem. According to Strelh (2010), street children are very much aware of their social exclusion and stigma of being called, among others, “drug addicts”, “thieves”, “dirty”, “dangerous” and “spoilt”. The stigma is reflected in the nicknames they are given in society. They feel people are scared of them and they find these social prejudices as unjust and want to be treated as everyone else in society and to be accepted.

The gap in the challenges is that most researchers gave general challenges of street children and children involved in street begging, but there are not many challenges that have been outlined for street children who are aides to adult beggars.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Bronfenbrenner’s ecological theory is employed as the theoretical framework underpinning this study. Urie Bronfenbrenner is one of the principal advocates of the ecological theory. The concept of the ecological theory was formulated in 1979 after

drawing upon the pioneering work of social psychologist Kurt Lewin (Bandura, 2001). This theory main focus is the interactive dynamics and relationships between a person, process and context over time (Berk, 2000). It is also useful for understanding and examining the complex interactions between a child and the various levels of the social systems (Paquette & Ryan, 2009).

The theory states that child development can be understood in the context of the environments in which the child lives because of the mutual influences from family, friends, neighbors, community and wider society over time. The Ecological Systems Theory includes three significant assumptions: 1. A person is an active player, exerting influence on his/her environment, 2. Environment compels a person to adapt to conditions and restrictions, 3. Environment is understood to consist of different size entities that are placed one inside another of their reciprocal relationships.

In addition, the ecological systems theory states that human development is a consequence of an individual's personal attributes and the environment or context in which an individual lives. The individual's interaction with the environment could either be positive or negative (Paquette & Ryan, 2009). Bronfenbrenner categorized the environment into five (5) and this includes; the micro, meso, exo, macro and the chrono systems.

The microsystem is the closest environment for a child and includes structures with which the child maintains direct contact. It includes the child's family, classmates, teachers, neighbors and other people who have direct contact with the child. The theory states that we are not mere recipient of these experiences we have when socializing with

people in the micro system but we are contributing to the construction of such environment (Berk, 2000). For example in the context of this study, when the parents are unable to perform their parental roles of providing the children with their basic needs such as food and shelter and also education, children may become compelled to move to the streets in order to survive.

The Mesosystem comprises of the relationships between the microsystem (e.g. the relations between home and school, home and neighborhood etc.). That is the relationship between two microsystems and how it affects or influences the development and behavior of the child. This means that a child's family experience may be related to the child's school experience (Berk, 2000). For example, a child who has been neglected by his parents may develop a negative attitude towards his teachers or peers.

The Exosystem is the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain developing person, but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate settings that does contain that person (Example, the relation between the child's home and the parent's work place). This is significant because such events influence the environment where the child grows and develops. Especially, the parents' work (working hours, nature of work and work environment) as well as the day care and school arrangements create the conditions for the child's and the young person's activities within their micro-system (Berk, 2000).

The Macrosystem is the culture of an individual or child. This involves the socio economic status of the child and/or his family, ethnicity or race and living in a developing country. consists of the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exo-

systems characteristic of a given culture, subculture , or other broader social context, with particular reference to developmentally-institutive belief systems, resources, hazards, life styles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems (Berk, 2000). It includes norms, policies, laws, programmes and how they influence the development and behaviour of the child. In the context of this study, high unemployment rate in Ghana gives an additional challenge for persons with disability to be able to obtain jobs hence many of them could move to the streets to beg in order to survive and as a result will bring their children along to the streets as well.

The Chronosystem includes the transitions and shifts in a child's lifespan. It is a description of the evolution, development or stream of development of the external systems in time. The chronosystem model can cover either a short or long period of time. This system basically talks about the changes in the systems over time that affects or influence the development and behavior of the child (Berk, 2000). For instance, if a child losses his/her parents as a result of death and have no one providing for his basic needs then that child may be compelled to move to the streets in order to survive.

The choice of the Ecological theory helped the researcher to understand how the different actors and factors in an environment influence children to become aides to adult beggars on the streets of Accra. It also assisted the researcher to identify and understand how the activity the children are involved with, affect them in their environment and how their engagement affects society at large.

Figure 1: Ecological Theory Diagram

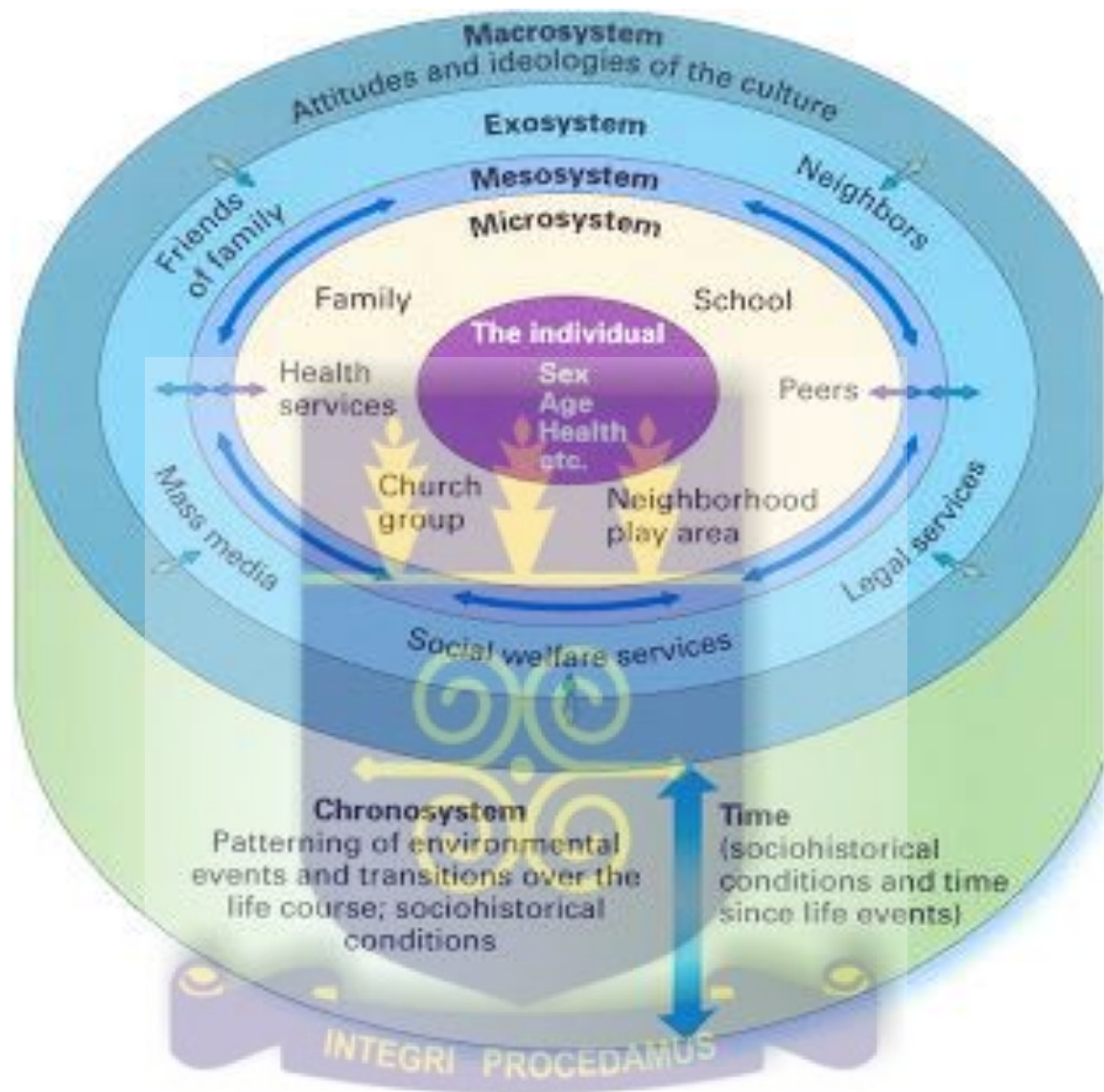
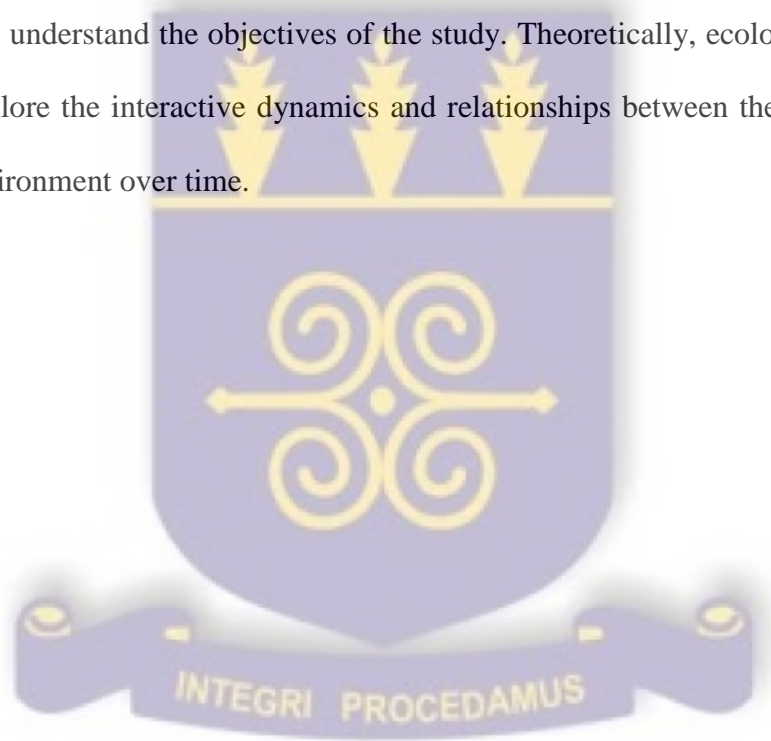


Diagram Adopted from: <http://danalittle.blogspot.com/2011/04/bronfenbrenners-ecological-theory.html>

2.5 Conclusion

The literature review section of the study was done thematically based on the main objectives of the study. The researcher reviewed literature continentally and nationally on street children and child beggars. The review was more from the developing countries, especially from countries in Africa, including Ghana. This may be due to the fact that this is a social problem mostly prevalent in developing countries. Though, there seem to be limited literature on child aides to adult beggars, this literature was critically reviewed to understand the objectives of the study. Theoretically, ecological theory was used to explore the interactive dynamics and relationships between the person, context and the environment over time.



CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The previous chapter reviewed literature on street-connected youth that was relevant to the study. Chapter three focuses on the research methodology used for the study including a description of the sampling design, data collection and analysis procedures, and the ethical considerations.

3.1. Research Design

According to Kumar (2011), a research design entails the successive processes that are intended to address empirical data in connection to the research questions or concerns. Whilst the research could have been undertaken through the use of quantitative or mixed methods, a qualitative approach specifically a phenomenological research design was used. This approach was chosen because the study sought to gain in-depth information on the lived experiences of participants. The emphasis was on gaining a subjective understanding of the subject area from the children's perspective rather than a statistical description, especially, given the exploratory nature of the study (Creswell, 2013).

3.2 The Study Area

Greater Accra, specifically, the Accra Metropolitan Area was selected as the study setting. As the capital city, it has a lot of industries as well as other administrative and economic activities. There is a heavy human and vehicular activity on the streets of Accra, making it an attractive place for many people, especially those living with disabilities, as a place to beg for alms. In addition, many children migrate from the north

to the area to live and work on the streets as head porters or Kayaye. In 2011, the Metropolitan Assembly had an estimated 50,997 street children (Department of Social Welfare et al., 2011). Therefore, the area was chosen as the study location as it had a number of the child aides. In addition, the researcher chose some areas in the Metropolitan Assembly that included Accra central business district, Dansoman, Kwame Nkrumah Circle, Kaneshie, Odorkor, 37, Dzorwulu, El-wak stadium and Cantonments because these areas have heavy vehicular activities and most of the participants were found there. Lastly, limited time and logistics available and the researchers knowledge of the area made it an appropriate choice as a study location.

3.3 Study Population

The target population for the study included all street children in the Accra Metropolitan Area who aide adult beggars. Specifically, it included street children assisting adults with physical or visual challenges begging on the streets of Accra.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Two non-probability sampling techniques, purposive and snowballing or convenience were used in the study (Patton & Cochran, 2002). According to Bryman and Bell (2015), purposive sampling is a type of sampling based on the knowledge the researcher has about the population on the subject being studied. The purposive sampling criteria for the children were: (1) that they should be aged 12 to 17 years, and (2) assist an adult beggar with physical disability for at least three months.

The age criteria chosen, that is below 18 years, was based on the definition of a child according to Ghana's 1998 Children's Act. Participants had to be above 11 years

because children in those age bracket were able to communicate their experiences better with the researcher. Snowballing was also used because of the difficulty the researcher had locating the study's respondents. During the fieldwork, the researcher realized that the adult beggars moved frequently, changing the locations where they begged on a daily basis. Thus, the children who agreed to be part of the study were asked to pass on details about the study to other children they knew who met the criteria for selection. Regarding the recruitment of the children, the researcher went to the selected study locations and approached the aides to the adult beggars. Those who met the inclusion criteria were informed about her study. A meeting was arranged with those who agreed to be part of the study. The researcher again arranged meetings with children's parents to seek their consent. For children whose parents or guardian were not available because of the distance, assent was used by the researcher as well as the researcher ascertained informed consent from the adult beggars the children assisted to involve the children in the study.

Prior to start of the individual meeting, the researcher took time to explain to the participants the purpose of the study and gave them the chance to ask any questions, which could serve as hindrance to their participation, they were also assured of confidentiality of their participation in that their personal information were not going to be shared with anyone. From there participants were recruited and specific dates were arranged for the interviews.

3.5 Sample Size

The sample size was reached when the researcher reached data saturation because there was no new information coming up. According to Patton and Cochran (2002), sample size are typically small in qualitative work, how many people you need is to keep

interviewing until you reach saturation when nothing new comes up. Creswell (2013) always said that a sample size from 5 to 25 is ideal in qualitative study hence my choice in selecting a sample size of 15 participants.

3.6 Sources of Data and Data Collection

Primary data were collected between August and October 2014. The researcher collected qualitative data through interviews with children who aide adult beggars. Semi structured interviews were held with sampled children. The researcher chose semi structured interview because it allowed her to probe into responses for further explanations from the respondents (Patton & Cochran, 2002). Guiding questions which aided the researcher in the interviews included a mixture of close and open ended questions constructed the basis of the objectives of the study. Fifteen (15) participants were involved in the interviews. An interview questions was designed in the English language. However, some of the interviews were conducted in the local dialect of Ga, Ewe and Twi depending on the dialect the interviewee preferred. The research built a good rapport with each of the participants in order to increase trust and enhance the free flow of information. In addition, the researcher listened attentively, and tape recorded using a digital audio recorder with participants' permission. The interviews were individually conducted with the respondents and also conducted at a place convenient to the respondents. Most of the interviews took place at Coco Marketing Board car park or under a tree close to the streets. Interviews were mostly conducted very early in the mornings and also in the evenings. Each interview lasted approximately 35 minutes.

3.7 Data Handling and Analysis

The researcher recorded all interviews conducted with the street children as aide to adult beggars. The recorded information was stored in different media for safe keeping and analysis. The researcher transcribed interviews with the various participants with the aide of Microsoft word. The Analytical Framework developed by the UK National Centre for Social Research (Richie & Lewis, 2003) was used as a guide in the management and analysis of data.

The first step in management and analysis of the data by the framework was that the researcher was familiar with the content of the data collected by evaluating and re-evaluating the transcribed data. The researcher viewed this process as important because it is similar to building the foundation structure of the findings. This process is supported by Ritchie et al. (2003) familiarization process. The researcher also took note of recurring themes at this initial stage.

The second stage of the framework is the development of a conceptual framework. The third stage of the framework is the application of the initial themes identified in the familiarization stage. At this stage, meanings and labels were given to each of the already identified themes as against indexing of the data as analytical framework showed. Next the data were sorted according to the themes which were created. At this stage, themes that were similar were brought together. The reason was to allow the researcher to focus on each subject in turn so that the detail and distinctions that lie within can be unpacked. The final stage the analysis was the summary of data. This helps reduce the amount of materials to a more manageable level. All quotations are presented verbatim in order to present a true reflection of the voices of the participants.

3.8 Ethical Consideration

All research studies consider ethical issues and measures in place to address them. Prior to commencing any aspect of the proposed research, it is important that the approval of the relevant ethics committee must be granted. Ethics can be defined as a code of behaviour considered correct (Rees, 2003). According to Rees (2003) ethical considerations that involve human subjects in social science research can be categorized into two ethical issues.

First, the researcher followed child research methodology and ethics in accordance with procedures outlined in Cochrane (1977) and related publications (Creswell, 2013; Kumar, 2011; Yin, 2011). The research participants included children who are legally minors and cannot give their consent therefore, the researcher sought the informed consent from parents of the research participants. This was done through the use of a written consent form. Parents of the research participants who could read appended their signatures of consent on the informed consent form after the purpose of the study had been read and understood by them. In the case of those who could not read, the researcher orally explained the purpose of the study to them in their local dialect (Ga, Ewe and Twi) and only conducted interviews with the children after their parents had given oral consent of participation. In certain circumstances participants whose parents could not be located assent was used by researcher as well as informed consent was ascertained from the adult beggars that the children assisted.

All research participants who gave their assent and consent from their parents to participate in the study were guaranteed that their participation in this research was voluntary and they could opt out at any point they so wished. Furthermore, the

researcher also ensured that the identities of the research participants were not exposed or could be traced by any third party. This enabled the research participants to give information without fear. This was done by ensuring confidentiality, privacy and anonymity of research participants by the use of pseudo-names and organizing the interviews and discussions with participants at their preferred places where people did not interrupt. The researcher also avoided any descriptive information that could lead to the identification of participants. Participants were duly informed and their permission sought before their voices were recorded on the audio recorder during interviews. Lastly, all sources of information that were retrieved were duly acknowledged. For the purpose of this work, approval was sort from relevant authorities such as the Department of Social Work, University of Ghana, Legon.

3.9 Credibility and Trustworthiness of Qualitative Research Design

The credibility and trustworthiness of the qualitative research data was ensured by adhering to the following: the researcher employed qualitative research methods such as in-depth interview with street children in collecting the data. These methods ensured triangulation of findings from the different methods. This is supported by Kumar (2011) who proposed that triangulation is significant to qualitative studies if its credibility is to be established. The researcher therefore compared the data from the three methods and drew conclusions from them. For example, the researcher interviewed a child and wanted to know if the boy was in school. During the interview, the boy told the researcher that he was in school. However, the researcher verified from the adult beggar and was told that the boy was not going to school. The researcher further asked for the name of the school the boy attended and he pointed to a school not far from where the

interview took place. The researcher went to the school to verify and upon reaching the school, the researcher found that the boy was not a student of the school.

Furthermore, the researcher did frequent debriefing sessions with her supervisors. The researcher was always in communication with her supervisors who gave her different ideas to improve her work. For example, the researcher had to do a pilot study and when the data was conducted, her supervisors improved upon the questions in order for the researcher to gather the needed information.

Lastly, Peer scrutiny of the research project was also one of the methods used to ensure trustworthiness. After the researcher did her proposal for the study she had to do a presentation in front of her colleagues and supervisors who scrutinized the proposal and also gave her ideas that helped shape her work.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

During the process of transcribing the audio recorded interviews, the researcher faced the challenge of adequately translating the local Ghanaian language which was used by participants in the interviews into English. It was difficult, and in some cases impossible, to translate the content of items in the local language into a second language without losing the exact meaning as the local language cannot be concisely expressed in English. In order to validate such limitations, the researcher consulted with her peers and academic supervisors to reconcile the gaps in transcribing the local language into English.

3.11 Conclusion

The study utilized qualitative research methodology specifically phenomenological research design to gain understanding of the subject matter from the research participants instead of undertaking a quantitative method. The study was done in Accra Metropolitan Area of Ghana, which is the national capital city of Ghana. The rationale for the selection of this study site was based on the heavy human and vehicular activities on the streets and the city also served as a pull factor for rural-urban migration of all kinds of people including children, and physically disabled persons with the intention of begging on the streets for their survival due to poverty. The researcher employed in-depth interview with a semi-structured interview guide as the method of collecting primary data.

Fifteen participants, all street children assisting adult beggars, aged 12 to 17 years were purposively recruited through snowball technique and interviewed for the study. Participation was voluntary and consent was sought from participants and their parents. The researcher analyzed data inductively and thematically utilizing the Analytical Framework developed by UK National Center for social Research (Richie et al., 2003)

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter four presents findings of the study. The chapter begins by providing information on the demographic characteristics of participants who took part in the study. It continues with a presentation of findings on the factors that influence children as aides to adult beggars. There is a presentation of findings on the activities children perform as aides to adult beggars and the challenges that confront them as aides to adult beggars.

4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants

This section provides the demographic characteristics of the participants who took part in the study. In all, fifteen (15) participants were interviewed. The participants were street children who were either paid or unpaid assistants to adult beggars.

The ages of the street children ranged from twelve (12) to seventeen (17) years at the time they were interviewed. All fifteen (15) children had been aides to adult beggars for at least three months. In addition, six (6) children were related to the adult beggars, nine (9) of the street children were unrelated to the adult beggars they assisted. Thirteen (13) of them were not in school and only two (2) of the children reported they were still in school. All the participants lived on the streets, except one who came from Winneba to Kaneshie with an adult beggar every weekend to beg.

4.2 Factors that Influenced Children as Aides to Adult Beggars

From the shared experiences of participant, poverty was identified as the factor influencing children to aide adult beggars. Although none of the participants mentioned specifically that they were on the street because of poverty, the researcher found that it was because of poverty that children who had parents with disability came to the streets to be able to survive with their families. In addition, it is also because of poverty that abandoned children came to the streets to make a livelihood. Furthermore, Poverty was the driving force for children to accept the offer of becoming aides to adult beggars through referral to be able to provide for their basic needs.

However, most of the street children stated other factors influencing them to become aides to adult beggars. These factors include Parental disability, Abandonment and Business purpose.

4.2.1. Parental Disability and Abandonment

Breakdown in the family unit as a result of spousal disability is one of the factors influencing children as aides to adult beggars. The neglect by irresponsible fathers and mothers push children to the streets. The study found that for children related to the adult beggars, abandonment happened as a result of a spouse neglecting their responsibilities because their partner developed a disability which they felt burdened with and were not ready to handle the additional care that persons with disability required. This however placed pressure on the other remaining partner who was no longer in the position to work and care for the needs of the families. In the quest to provide for the family's needs, parents had no option but opt for the streets to beg thereby taking their children with them for assistance. According to the participants,

when their parents go out to beg, they required assistance and because they did not find anybody to assist, they had no choice than to assist them:

“My mother abandoned us after my father became blind and lost his job. My father found it difficult taking care of us so he decided to come to Accra to look for work. He later started begging when he couldn’t find work to do and asked me to assist him because it was difficult finding someone” (Adjoa, 12 years).

In addition, children who were unrelated to the adult beggars were assisting the adult beggars because they were abandoned by their irresponsible fathers and felt a sense of responsibility to support the income of their family. The pressure on a single parent, usually females, made it difficult to provide for the needs of their children and this however pushed children to the streets in order to be able to lend support for the upkeep of their families.

“My dad stole my mother’s money and run away to Abidjan. From that day it became more difficult for my mother to take care of my four siblings and myself. Most often we could go days without food so I decided to come to Accra to find work to do so I can support my mother and I found this job (that is being an aide to adult beggars)”(kweku, 15years).

Although children who were related to the adult beggars also aided other beggars on the streets, the study found that the main reason that influenced children related to the adult beggars to become aides was as a result of their parents’ disability. Children had to assist their parents on the streets because their parents required assistance due to the

risky and busy nature of the streets which made it difficult for the parents to beg effectively on their own. Also the parents had difficulty in getting assistance from other people. In addition, children felt sorry for their parents disability and also for their parents not being in the position to have any source of livelihood due to lack of job opportunities for persons with disability. According to participants assisting their parents on the streets ensured their livelihood:

“My dad became blind a year ago and lost his job. It became difficult for him to provide for myself and three of my siblings so he decided to beg in order for him to make some money for us to get food and clothes to wear. I felt sorry to see my dad in his present condition because he can’t do anything to help himself that is why I assist him” (Ama, 14years).

“The main reason why I became an aide was to assist my mother because she found it difficult getting someone to assist her when she went begging. On days that she is unable to go begging, I go with other adult beggars so that I can make some money to assist her” (Akua, 13 years).

4.2.2 Business Purposes

For children related to adult beggars, being an aide to the adult beggars were because of the disability of their parents, while the children who were unrelated were engaged in this activity solely for business purpose. Having assessed the financial situations of the families and also the inability of the parents to live up to their financial obligation, many of the children who were unrelated to the adult beggars voluntarily opted to become aides to adult beggars in order to be able to provide their own basic needs as well as supplement their families income. In addition, some of the children who were not related

to the adult beggars were assisting the adults based on the negotiations their parents had with the adult beggars. Participants had these to say:

“I am assisting the old man because I am able to make money which helps me in providing for my basic needs as well as assisting my family. I earn between GHC20 to GHC50 a day when I assist him” (kobby, 14 years).

“My mother asked him (adult beggar) to take me along when he goes to beg so that I can make some money for her (mother) to send me to school and to take care of our needs” (Danso, 12 years).

More so, children unrelated to the adult beggars were recommended by other people (friends or friends of their parents) to assist the adult beggars. One of the children unrelated to the adult beggars was aiding the adults because some people had told his family about assisting adult beggars being a lucrative the business so had therefore migrated from the rural community to Accra purposely to aid the adult beggar. For instance, Kwame who was living on the streets with his mother was aiding an older man because someone told his mother assisting adult beggars was a lucrative business:

“We were in Suhum and a family member called Kojo said there was a blind man who will pay me if I beg with him. He also told my mother that begging in Accra is a good work and we can make more money from it, so my mother brought me to him” (Kwame, 14 years).

Some of the children unrelated to the adult beggars were already on the streets engaging in other activities like washing windscreen of cars and carrying load for people but they

made pittance from those activities. Their friends who were assisting adult beggars enticed them with gifts and money they got from aiding adult beggars and advised them to go into assisting adult beggars because it can fetched them more money than the activity they were engaged in so they followed their friends and started assisting adult beggars. Kwesi mentioned that he ended up on the street because he wanted to work to earn some money so he started by cleaning the windscreen of cars which did not earn him enough money. His friend who was an aide to an adult beggar then introduced him to the business and he started engaging in it:

I was cleaning the windscreen of cars but I was not earning enough money so some of my friend told me that they take blind adults for begging and they are able to make enough money so they introduced me and I went to CMB (Cocoa Marketing Board) to take one of them for the first time and I have been doing this work since then. This work is more lucrative compared to cleaning of car windscreen in traffic' (Kwesi, 15 years).

4.3 Activities Children Perform as Aides Adult Beggars

Children who are aide to adult beggars perform several activities for the adult as well as taking care of their own needs. Children who are related to adult beggars turn to perform more task than children who are unrelated to the adult beggars. This section looks at the various activities that children as aides to adult beggars perform. These include care given roles and assisting on the streets.

4.3.1 Care Giving Roles

Care-giving roles were one of the activities performed by children as aides to adult beggars. Their roles included buying of food, cooking, sweeping, fetching of water, running errands and washing. Although most of the children performed care-giving roles, the kind of care they gave to the adult beggars differed based on the relationship they had with the adult beggar. The children who were related to the adult beggars did more intense activities than the unrelated ones.

Children who were related to the adult beggars perform multiple activities like cooking for the adult beggars, assisting them to the public wash rooms for them to have their bath, cooking for them, washing their clothes and that of their siblings plus babysitting their younger siblings. In a situation that the adult beggar is unwell the child had the responsibility of assisting them to a health care facility as well as taking care of other things they required. For instance, Mommy a 13 year old who aids her mother said that she gets up very early in the morning to fetch water for her mother and younger siblings to take their baths before setting off to beg. She does the same activity when they return in the night in addition to cooking and babysitting her younger siblings. Another participant also shared a similar experience:

“What I normally do is that I wake up at 4am and leave CMB for the public wash rooms with my father and siblings. Then I fetch water for him to bath; after which I bath my younger sisters. I also pick their cloths for them to change and we set off to our location. When we close I also do the same thing. I cook, wash and babysit my sister who is 9 months old” (Serwaa, 15 years).

Whilst the related children performed much intensive care giving roles, for the children who were not related to the adult beggars, they did less activity with regards to the care they gave to the adult beggars. Participants who were unrelated to the adult beggars explained that the activities they performed entailed buying of food, running of errands and assisting the adult beggar to the public washrooms. They also added that when they return from begging, they assisted the adult beggar by fetching water for them to take a bath and then assisting them to their place of rest after which their work is done for the day. A participant unrelated to an adult beggar had this to say:

I buy food for him when he is hungry and he also sends me for anything he needs. After close of work I take him to the public washrooms for him to take his bath. I fetch water for him to bath and I take him to his resting place [under a tree close to the Accra central police station] then I leave” (Ibrahim, 14 years).

4.3.2 Assisting on the Streets

Assisting the adults on the streets to beg is also one of the activities performed by the children who are aides to adult beggars. According to the participants they mostly assist the adult beggars on the street by moving from one vehicle to another asking people for money. Participants also stressed that it is important for them to set off very early in the morning because it is a strategic time to meet people who are rushing to work and this can help them to make more money for the day. Most of the begging also took place around traffic lights because that is the time children and the adult beggars had the opportunity to beg from people by singing and offering prayers:

“I get up very early and we set off by 4:00 am because we need to get to our location by 5:00a.m so that we can meet the cars to beg from. We move to the cars when the traffic starts and I take him from one car to another. As soon as the traffic moves we stop and when the traffic stops we start again” (Frank, 13 years).

“We go to places where there are huge traffic so that the adults can have the opportunity to beg from a lot of cars in order for us to make enough for the day. I assist him by taking him from one vehicle to another; we sing and also pray for the people. Those who have pity on us give us money but some people just turn their face away” (Baba, 17 years).

Children spend approximately twelve (12) hours to thirteen (13) hours each day assisting the adult beggar on the streets. Each day except Sundays were working days for the children and the adult beggars. Their working time is usually from 5a.m to 5pm and on certain days they work from 5am to 6pm. They have one (1) hour or two (2) hours to have a break time and after eating they resume work. Participants also explained that they change the locations they work at. They do not remain at just one location but rather they go to different locations within a week.

“We start work as early as 5am at places where there are traffic lights and close around 5pm or 6pm depending on how much we had made in that day. Also we don't beg at one particular place all the time, if the money we made at a specific location is small, we don't go back there the next day but rather go elsewhere to see if we can make more money there”(kwesi, 15years).

4.4. Challenges that are confronted by Children as Aides to Adult Beggars

Children are confronted with numerous challenges as aides to adult beggars. The challenges included health which is at a result of the activities they performed and also living on the streets, educational challenge which involved abandoning school for begging, emotional challenge which involved denied leisure and abuse. The challenges that confronted the children as aides to adult beggars have been discussed in subsequent paragraphs

4.4.1 Emotional Challenge

Play time is one of the important aspects of a child's development process because it builds the child's cognitive development (Ginsburg, 2007). It also helps the child develop some networks that could be necessary later in the future when they become adults. For children related to adult beggars their play time was interrupted because of the multiple activities they performed. According to participants denied leisure time was one of the challenges that they confronted because they were unable to make time to play or mingle with other children. Participants further explained that they spend majority of their time caring for their parents as well as their younger siblings that they did not find time for themselves which also included their play time:

“My mother's condition (blind) makes it difficult for me to go anywhere because she is unable to do certain things by herself. I have to constantly stay beside her so that I can assist her with anything she may require. In addition I have to baby sit my other siblings, all the things I do makes it difficult for me to go anywhere or even have time to play with my friends” (Akua, 13 years).

Children showed dissatisfaction in the activities they performed. They described begging as a demeaning and stigmatized activity. The participants also added that it affected their level of confidence and dignity because they faced verbal abuse from passengers and sometimes from the adult beggars. The researcher found that all of the participants faced verbal abuse.

“Sometimes passengers insult you and the adult beggars also insult you. It mostly makes me very sad because sometimes you don’t do anything wrong but they still insult you. When it happens like that I cry” (Edem, 14 years).

For children who were related to the adult beggars, they received protection from their parents which reduced their risk of being raped and robbed, the children who were not related to the adult beggars faced a higher risk of being robbed and raped because of the lack of supervision and protection from a responsible adult:

“The place we sleep is not good. There are lazy people who will not work so when you work they come and steal the money from you and rape you as well” (Pokua, 15 years).

4.4.2 Physical Challenge (Stress)

The frequent walking and standing often made the children burn out. The long hours of work coupled with the other activities they performed after work made the children physically tired. Children as aide to adult beggars worked hours that are approximate to the hours of work for regular workers. Although all the participants shared that they got tired from the activities they performed, the stress is much greater for the children related to the adult beggars. For related children, they had to perform additional

activities after work. This got them very tired because they were unable to have a rest time. Participants added that the time they slept and also woke up from bed got them tired because they were unable to have enough rest:

“I get very tired because I wake up very early to take my father to beg as soon as we get back I have to cook, wash and take care of my younger siblings and I have to be around constantly so that when my dad needs anything I can attend to him. I also sleep very late so at night I feel pains all over my body” (Serwaa, 15 years).

A child who was unrelated to the Adult Beggar had this to say:

“Walking from cars to cars gets me very tired. I am always standing and walking in the hot sun because there is no place to sit and also when we close we have to fetch water or buy things for them. It is very tiring and difficult” (Danso, 12 years).

4.4.3 Physical Challenge (Safety Concerns)

Children also faced the challenge of being knocked down by vehicles. Spending time on the streets is a safety concern because there are high risks of being knocked down by vehicles. The responses from the participants showed that children faced high risk of being knocked down by vehicles because most often they were unable to judge correctly with regard to road safety issues. Children need adult supervision on the road, but in these instances the children were rather giving assistance to adult on the road. All participants admitted that aiding adult beggars increased their risk of being knocked down or killed by vehicles. Participants explained that some drivers did not follow the road and the traffic lights regulations, when traffic lights had signaled red for cars to

stop some reckless drivers still drove on and this has been a cause of most of the road accidents children and their aides were involved with. In addition, the drivers did not assist the victims after they had been knocked down rather they sped off. Children and adult beggars relied on other sympathies:

“Cars drive so fast that if you are not careful you can easily be knocked down. I remember once that a blind man and his aide were knocked down by a car. The driver drove off, he didn’t even stop to assist. Rather it was other people that helped them” (Frank, 13 years).

“We are mostly knocked down by cars. I have had accidents twice and the drivers did not even stop to assist me to the hospital, he just run away. All these cuts on my hand and face are from car accidents” (Kwesi, 15years).

The participants further indicated that sometimes they were unable to judge correctly when vehicles are approaching because they were unable to tell which direction to go hence the danger of them (children and their aide) being knocked down by vehicles:

“When cars are approaching it is difficult for me to tell which direction we should pass so sometimes face the danger of being knocked down by a car. Some have been knocked down by cars during begging” (Ibrahim, 14 years).

4.4.4 Health Challenges

Constant exposure to the sun is a contributing factor for street children falling ill. According to the participants, they often fell ill due to the long hours of work spent under the sun. Additionally, participants indicated that the constant exposure to different

people increased their risk of contracting skin diseases. They also added that the place they slept increased their risk of contracting communicable disease like cholera.

“I am mostly sick due to the harsh weather. For instance when the sun is very hot we still stand to beg and when it is raining we get beaten by the rain because there is no place to stand for refuge. I normally get skin rash due to contact with other people” (kobby, 14 years).

“The place we sleep has a lot of mosquitoes which makes us sick. We are always sick. We get malaria at least once a month” (Akua, 13 years).

Although many of the children had some similar challenges with regards to health, there were however differences in the kind of challenges they experienced based on the relationship they had with the adult beggar. Participants who were unrelated to the adult beggars complained of not being able to cook their own food as a result of not having the facilities and skills to cook. Therefore, they had to resort to constant buying of food from food vendors which increased their risk of contracting cholera whenever there was an outbreak:

“My friends and I always buy food to eat because we cannot cook and again, we don't have cooking utensils and coal pot so we sometimes get sick especially when there is cholera outbreak we normally contract it. I had cholera last year and I nearly died” (Baba, 17 years).

Access to health care facilities is a challenge for children unrelated to the adult beggars. According to participants, they did not have the resources to access health care so they normally buy medicine from the chemical shops or use herbal drugs that were usually

sold on vans. Participants indicated that going to the hospital by themselves was uncomfortable because the nurses were unfriendly towards them. Additionally, participants explained that when they fell ill especially at night, they faced difficulty in getting assistance to health care centers and also receiving care during the period they have been ill because they do not live with their parents:

“ I don’t like going to the hospital because I don’t have the money to pay for my bills, besides when you go there the nurses shout at you and treat you like you are a bad person ” (Danso, 12 years).

“Getting people to assist you to the hospital at night when you are sick is very difficult because they are afraid to spend their money on you. Because my family is far away, it is difficult to get someone to take care of you when you are not well” (Edem, 14 years).

Participants added that because health care was expensive, anytime they were ill their parents went to the pharmacies to seek help and also buy some medication for them to use:

“Initially when we go to the hospital when I am ill, we do not spend because the NHIS was working and we only needed to use our cards but these days the hospitals do not accept the cards so my father has to pay the bills and because he also does have a lot of money, these days when we are ill he goes to the pharmacy to buy some medicine for us to take” (mommy, 13 years).

4.4.5. Educational Challenge

Education forms an important part of every child's development stage because it helps build their potential and also gives them some form of security. Children are able to build their careers through education but for children as aides to adult beggars the prevalence of education was generally low. Two out of the fifteen children were combining begging with schooling. Also their level of attendance to school was even characterized by unpunctuality:

“I am unable to go to school regularly like my friends back home. It makes studying difficult because I always have to work harder to catch up with my friends at school” (Serwaa, 15 years).

Some of the participants related to the adult beggars added that they were aides to adult beggars because of the promise of sending them to school. The dream of sending them to school may have been a ploy to get the children to assist the adult beggars because their dream was yet to be fulfilled by their parents:

“My mother said I should assist her to beg so that she can save some money to send me to school. I have been assisting her for one and half years now but we haven't yet made enough for her to take me” (Edem, 14 years).

Most of the participants related to the adult beggars wished they did not have to aid their parents to beggar. However, the obligation of a child to their parents tied them to engage in the activity at the expense of their education:

“I wish I could go to school but if I do my mother would not have anybody to assist her and besides we do not have the money” (Akua, 13 years).

For participants who were unrelated to the adult beggars, some of them complained of low performance in school as a result they dropped out and decided to move to the streets to engage in economic activities hence their involvement in assisting adult beggars. Others also complained of their parents being unable to pay their fees so they dropped out.

“There was no money at home to support me in school. I went to school hungry and this affected my performance because I couldn't considerate so I decided to abandon school to look for work and support myself as well as my mother” (Baba, 17 years).

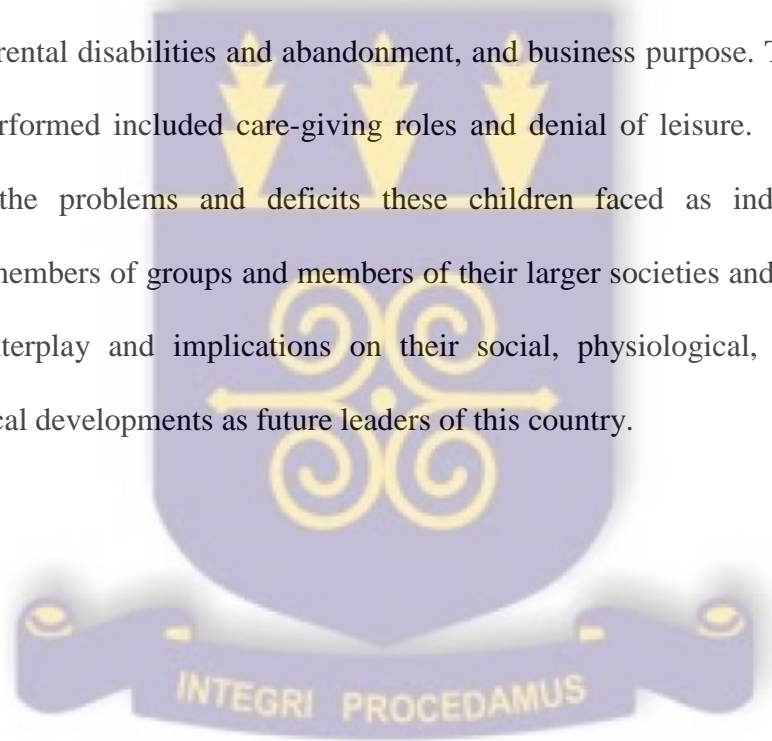
“There was no money to pay for my fees so every time I was being sucked from school, it was too embarrassing for me and my family was also struggling in taking care of our needs (together with his siblings) so I opted to look for work on the streets and I found this woman who needed assistance so I started bringing her here to beg” (Ibrahim, 14 years).

4.5 Conclusion

The main objective of the study was to explore the factors that influenced children to become street aides to adult beggars, activities children performed as aides to adult beggars and the challenges they faced as aides to adult beggars in the streets of Accra Metropolitan area. The chapter presented demographic information of the 15

participants in terms of age, educational and length of time on the streets as aides to adult beggars. The demographical information indicated that all the fifteen children had been aides to adult beggars for at least three months, six of the children were related to the adult beggars and nine were unrelated. Thirteen of these street children were not in school, except for two, who self-reported to be in school and all the children lived on the streets, except for one who travelled from another region to Accra with the adult beggar.

The main factors that influenced children to serve as aides to adult beggars were poverty, parental disabilities and abandonment, and business purpose. The activities the children performed included care-giving roles and denial of leisure. This framework highlights the problems and deficits these children faced as individuals, family members, members of groups and members of their larger societies and cultures and the negative interplay and implications on their social, physiological, educational and psychological developments as future leaders of this country.



CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

This chapter covers a discussion of issues emerging from the findings that have been presented. A conclusion has also been drawn on the findings. Through careful study of findings, the researcher has made some recommendations that if adhered to, will help policy makers and social workers reduce the problem of street children assisting adult beggars on the street.

5.1 Discussions of Findings

In the area of economic, findings from the study shows that parents' inability to provide the basic needs of their children compelled many children to become aides to adult beggars in order to supplement the income of the family. Children usually opt for the streets having assessed their family's financial situations and the inability of the parents to live up to their financial obligations. Also, the findings revealed that rural poverty plays a significant role in forcing many people including children, to migrate to urban centers with a hope of a better future. This findings, is consistent with a study done in Zimbabwe by Muchinako et al. (2013) on street children. They found that children had no option than to accompany their parents/ caregivers unto the streets because they were poor and lived at informal and unregulated settlements. A similar finding by Abebe (2009) in Ethiopia on street begging indicated that the main justification for many boys and girls to be involved in begging is poverty. Abebe (2009) further explained that begging ensures that street children meet their basic needs and enhanced their capacity to be significant contributors to family income. Thus, by begging and supporting their households, child beggars fulfil a socially meaningful and valuable role in everyday life.

The findings further showed that the breakdown of the family influenced children to become aides to adult beggars. Families were able to make a livelihood until one partner abandoned his/her responsibilities. Parents who were staying together had enough resource to support the needs of their children because they were able to gather their resources together to manage the home but in circumstances where one partner abandoned the family, the finance of the family suffered. Again, a single parent's having insufficient resources to provide the household needs like food, clothing, shelter and health, used their children to supplement the income of the family. Children also feeling a sense of responsibility to lend their support for the upkeep of the family resulted to the streets hence giving assistance to adult beggars.

Furthermore, the abandonment of persons with disability by families is a very common feature in most African countries and usually handicap persons have to depend on other people for their daily bread. The findings of the study showed that children becoming aides to adult beggars were as a result of parental disability and abandonment. Parents with disability abandoned by their partner's because of their disability, had no choice than to beg from other people to be able to support the basic needs of their families. Again, parents unable to effectively beg on their own due to the risky and busy nature of the streets required assistance and because most of them did not find other people to assist them they resorted to using their own children. Additionally, children assistance to their parents on the streets was because of the moral obligation children had towards their parents in society. This however made children committed and obligated to support their parents with disability to be able to search for the family's livelihood. This finding is consistent with Abebe (2008) who found in his study that most child beggars had been

born by parents with visibility problems and as a result went on begging with their parents during their early childhood.

Furthermore, lack of job opportunities and statutory support for vulnerable families makes it difficult for them to make a livelihood. Again, the parents of the participants were not receiving any grants or fund (from the disability fund available at the District assemblies) that they are eligible to receive. This however exerted much pressure on the parents and begging became the only means of livelihood. However, this made many of them resort to begging as the only means of survival and taking their children with them as well. This supports findings by Namwata et al. (2012) that person's with disability face many challenges and barriers as well as competitions for jobs which makes it difficult to work or even start any economic activity.

The findings also revealed that children were assisting adult on the streets for business purposes. Children unrelated to the adult beggars received one third of the total money the adults made in a day which ranged from GHC 50 or more on a good day and GHC 20 to GHC 25 on a bad day. On average, this is above the minimum wage of a Ghanaian who works in the formal sector (Ministry for Employment and Labour Relations, 2015). Further, the children were also able to build survival strategies on the streets like being a member of gang that became an agency for them to get what they wanted. They used the agency to either negotiate or demand how much they wanted to be paid as assistance to adult beggars.

The findings are compatible with the ecological system theory used to underpin this study. It highlights the problems in a child's micro, messo, exo, macro and

chronosystems which have negative implications on the child's developmental stage. Most of the children's involvements in assisting adult beggars were influenced by the socio-economic factors that they faced in their micro system.

From the Ecological systems theory, the far reaching change in the structure of the family including the disability of a parent and the abandonment of one party could affect the development of the child. The child's immediate family which is the micro system plays a major role in the development of the child. In this instance, children of parents with disability living and working on the streets to making a livelihood had a higher chance to become an aide to adult beggars because that was what they were nurtured to know.

The parental disability and abandonment could also suggest the weakening of the extended family system that previously provided a safety net for vulnerable families. Extended families are no longer taking care of people with disability as well as their children. Children could no longer just be children, but were forced to take up adult roles to support their own needs as well as the needs of their parents. This supports findings by DSW et al. (2011) that the Ghanaian societies depended largely on the extended families for survival but modernization has greatly affected the role and function of the traditional family system which in the past supported children when their parents died. They concluded that this system of support is eroding off as economic pressures on families prevent them from helping others as these days when people have problem, they depend on their own resources for solution.

The meso-system which consists of interactions between different parts of a person micro system, explains that the microsystems do not function independently but are interconnected and have great influence on each other and this forms a key aspect in the development of a child by affecting the child positively or negatively. From the findings, a child's development were influenced negatively because parents were convinced by their friends of the fact that children assisting adult beggars on the streets was a lucrative business, as a result parents forced their children to engage in the activity for their own benefit. Again, the ecological theory explains the different environment that the child interacts with, impacting the child's development stage. The study findings revealed that children were referred by their friends to engage in assisting adult beggars because it was a lucrative work to do. This supports the study by Namwata et al. (2012) in which they identified peer pressure and being convinced by friends as one of the factors that influenced begging.

Additionally, children who combined the begging with school were affected negatively as they were not punctual at school and performed poorly in class. This however may develop negative characteristics in the child that may include not socializing with their friends and keeping to themselves often, they may also begin to dislike school and eventually drop out. According to Becker (2007) children who spend more time doing a wide range of household and caring tasks, shopping, doing laundry, making dinner, and looking after siblings, are more likely to have anxiety or depressed behaviors and behave antisocially, particularly at school.

More so, the exo-system which refers to a link in a setting where the child does not play an active role and the child's immediate context. The challenge for persons with

disability to get jobs and also lack of support services available for persons with disability as well as their children makes many disabled persons resort to begging as the only alternative to make a livelihood for the larger families. This however impacts on the child development as children and their families face economic difficulties because their parents were not engaged in any economic activity that could generate income for their survival.

In the macro system which includes the economy, cultural values and political systems can have a positive or negative impact on the development of the child. The poor economic rate in Ghana coupled with high unemployment rates leaves many families in Ghana very poor. It is very difficult getting jobs for abled persons so for persons with disability there is a higher challenge for them to get work or be employed. Additionally, the social services in Ghana in charge of handling issues related to vulnerable persons is not well resourced therefore the challenge for families who require support to make a livelihood. According to the Disability Act (Act 715) section 9, the government is supposed to assist persons with disability secure a job but this aspect of the act is not being implemented as many disabled persons remain unemployed. There are other initiatives taken by government to cater for vulnerable groups which include the Livelihood Empowerment against Poverty (LEAP) and the disability fund under the District Assembly Common fund but many of the families were not covered under these programmes. This finding however supports Ali and colleagues (2004) study that poor economic strength of a country coupled with lower income, large family sizes and high cost of living made it difficult for families to provide for their children hence making street life crucial.

Findings revealed that children give regular and significant care-giving and assistance to adult beggars. Children did domestic chores and also run errands for the adult beggars. They gave up their childhood and all the pleasures that came with just being a child to assume adult roles and responsibilities. In the Western construction of childhood, children are not expected to take up substantial or regular caregiving roles or responsibility (Becker, 2007) but this is not the case in Ghana. In Ghana, it is the moral responsibility of children to offer assistances to their parents in terms of assisting with domestic chores and also playing a part in the work that a child's parents perform (Oduro, 2013). For instance, in the case of parents having disabilities, children have an obligational duty to offer assistances to their parents. This finding partially supports Becker's (2007) in her study on young carers, that young carers often offer unpaid services for the person they are caring for. In the findings of this study however, not only do children offer unpaid services to the adult beggars, they also get paid for their services as well.

Additionally, it is the responsibilities of older children to care for their younger ones. That is the reason why most of the children related to the adult beggars played babysitting roles for their younger siblings. This finding supports Warren (2007) who found in his study that millions of children become mums and they give up their own childhood at the expense of taking care of their younger brothers and sisters. According to Robson et al. (2006) young people who give care do more domestic work and have a lot of responsibilities including tasks like cooking, washing and fetching of water.

Among the challenges that confronted children who served as aides to adult beggars, the study found stress, abuse, safety concerns, health and educational challenges as the main

challenges that child aides to adult beggars a faced. Children as aides to adult beggars faced the challenge of regularly getting tired and burnt out. The long hours of work under the sun and walking repeated got most of the children burnt out. Children do not have the strength and the ability to work longer hours like adults that is the reason for most of the children experiencing regular tiredness. In addition, children perform additional activities after a long day's work which was cooking, baby sitting and running errands for the adult beggars. All these activities placed a lot of strain on the energy and strength of the child thereby making them tired and stressed out.

Further, the activities the children performed (especially for children related to the adult beggars) denied them of the opportunity to make friends. This however puts a setback in the child's developmental stage because playing and learning forms an important part of a child's mental or cognitive development. In addition, a child's socializing process is important not only for their cognitive development but also helps in building networks that can be beneficial in the near future. This finding is consistent with Warren (2007) who found that children who give care to adults are mostly restricted to opportunities for social, recreational and extra educational participation. Warren (2007) further explained that children are also unable to fulfill their future ambitions because of the care they give to adults. Also, children on the streets were deprived the opportunity to play the kind of games that other children of their age would be engage in as part of the child development process (Muchinako et al., 2013).

The findings indicated that children were abused verbally by the adult beggars as well as passers-by. The stigmatization attached to begging made most of these children very unhappy about the activities they performed. The children faced the stigma attached to

the activity, and had to also deal with being verbally abused. The self-dignities of most of these children are destroyed and they have low esteem of themselves. In addition to the verbal abuses they had to deal with on a daily basis, they experienced sexually abuses as well.

The above finding is in congruence to a study by Muchinako et al. (2013) on the challenges that streets children face where they reported that street children faced verbal abuse from the people to whom they extended their begging bowls and many people have negative attitudes towards children who beg and regard them as obstacles or a total nuisance so some react in a rude manner to the request for alms by the children. It also supports Osa-Edoh and Ayano (2012) view that street children face sexual abuse, verbal abuse, access to health care, and are easily knocked down by vehicles.

Furthermore, the safety on the roads is a major concern for children as aides to adult beggars. The findings revealed children and the adult beggars were easily knocked down by vehicles because they mostly could not judge on the directions of the moving vehicles. Children experienced this challenge because children are very naïve in their thinking that is the reason why most children require guidance when it has to do with road crossing or road safety measures. Osa-Edoh and Ayano (2012) found that street begging could be risky to life especially in areas where there is heavy traffic. Beggars risk being run over by careless drivers. The findings are also supported by Prothom (2011) in his view that street children being used as street beggars are knocked by moving vehicles when the children attempt to receive alms from moving vehicles.

Furthermore, children faced a lot of health issues as aide to adult beggars. The long hours they spend under the sun exposed them to constant headaches and frequent illness. The findings also showed that children usually had issues with hygiene and also experienced being in contact with people who had airborne diseases as well as other communicable diseases; hence they had a high risk of contracting such diseases. Access to health care was also a problem for these children because they did not have the money to pay for their hospital bills. This supports the findings by Muchinako et al. (2013) that unkempt, unwashed hands and feet has negative impact on the health of street children and they also face the challenge of accessing health care because there is no money for them to do so.

Finally, the findings showed that children who aide adult beggars faced educational challenges. The practice of making children abandon school to condone begging has effects on the future of children. Few of the children who assisted the adult beggars combined begging with school, however, they faced the challenge of irregularly attending school and performed poorly academically. This may however, increase their chances of dropping out of school if they are unable to improve upon their academic work. In addition, many of the children had dropped out of school because of poor academic performance and lack of funding to support their educational needs therefore opt to be on the streets.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that children were assured of educational support if they assist the adult beggars. Nonetheless, this assurance may have only been a ploy by the adults to get these children to assist them because most of the children in this study were out of school. This finding is consistent with Warren (2007) who found that when

children take up care giving roles they miss school and also are unable to take part in educational activities which affects their future ambitions because they lack the qualifications for those ambitions.

Working as an aide to an adult beggar has negative implications on the general wellbeing of the child as well as on their future. According to the Children's Act, 1998 (ACT 560), section six (6), number two (2), every child has the right to life, dignity, respect, leisure, liberty, health, education and shelter from their parents. In the case of children who are aides to adult beggars they have no shelter for adequate security. They sleep on the streets where they get bitten by mosquitoes which expose them to many health problems. When it rains, these children get beaten and have to stay all night awake because the rain takes over their sleeping place. The effect of this however is that these children may lose their lives especially in circumstances where there is flooding. Additionally, on the streets, children are sexually abuse which increases their risk of teenage pregnancy as well as contracting sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS or STI's which may be deadly for the children.

Children are also denied leisure which may negatively impact their networking abilities hence may affect their future link to some opportunities that could have been available should they have networked. Again there are effects on the education of the child because children abandon school and engage in assisting adult beggars. The future of these children may however look bleak because they not acquire educational qualifications that can assist them to be employed in the formal sector.

More so, another effect of the activities on the future of the beggars' aide is that their activities may cause a cycle of poverty. The beggars' aides could remain in poverty and the streets forever if the government does not find a solution to the problem. Children may give birth to other children which can be as a result of teenage pregnancy. Also the lack of educational qualification means that when the beggars' aides grow older, they may not have the opportunity to be employed in the formal sector therefore they may depend on doing menial jobs that will pay pittance and their children may also become street children and may not have the opportunity to go to school or end up abandoning school to get jobs to support their parents.

Furthermore, the activities of these children constitute to child labour and exploitation and this infringes on the provisions in the Children's Act, 1998 (ACT 560). It is clearly against the laws of Ghana that children under 18years of age should be allowed to work. According to the Children's Act, 1998 (ACT 560) section 87 (2), labour is exploitative if it deprives the child of its health and school. Clearing aiding adult beggars is exploitative because children are denied education and are faced with various health challenges like frequently falling ill due to the constant heat from the sun and lack of regular balanced diets. More so, if children remain on the street, they may pick up certain vices like armed robbery, drugs addiction etc. which may not only affect the child and his family but the country as a whole. This may compromise our security system and many people may lose their properties or lives. The future potentials of these children could also be lost as a result.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Living and working on the street can have negative implications on the general wellbeing of the child. It may affect the child physically, psychologically and emotionally. Empirical evidence from literature shows that street children survive on the margins of society, living in inhumane conditions, suffering from hunger, harassment and physical abuse. The activities of street children include doing menial works, selling, stealing and shoe shinning. Begging is also an activity street children involve themselves with in order to survive. This means that many of these studies on street children across developing countries focused on street children and their activities like how they live and where they stay. However, a new phenomenon of street children now includes children who assist adults to beg on the streets.

Although aiding adult beggars can have numerous effects on children which includes exploitation by the adults -because children are not aware of their rights-, increase in crime and alcohol abuse, little is known in literature on children who serve as aide to adult beggars on the streets. What are the factors that influence children as aides to adult beggars? What are the activities children perform as aides to beggars? What are the challenges that are confronted by children as aides to adult beggars?

The study, therefore, was conducted to examine on the whole experiences of children used as aide to adult beggars. The main objective of the study was to investigate the overall experience of children used as aide to adult beggars. As there is no single cause for children living on the streets rather, it is a combination of economic, social, political and cultural factors which force children onto the streets, the study adopted the following specific objectives; Find out the factors that influenced children to aide adult

beggars on the streets of Accra; Explore the activities that influenced children perform when they aide adult beggars on the streets of Accra; Investigate the challenges confronting children aide adult beggars on the streets of Accra.

Literature was reviewed thematically, beginning with factors that influenced children to the street. It also looked at the activities performed by street children and the challenges confronted by street children. The researcher employed Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory as the framework to support this study. The study adopted qualitative research design and employed in-depth interview and observation triangulated with documentary analysis. The researcher interviewed 15street children who were aged of 12 years to 17 years.

The findings of the study revealed that poverty underpinned all factors that influenced children as aides to adult beggars. Parental disability and abandonment are among the factors that exposes children to aide adult beggars. This is due to the fact that parents with disability were abandoned by their husbands, wives or family. The burden on a parent to meet a daily need and to make a livelihood caused them to be on the street to beg and because they are unable to go begging alone they then required the assistance of their children.

Some children travel to the city for business purposes. These children in the quest to make some money from doing decent work travel to the major cities such as Accra and ended up in aiding adults to beg due to the absence of what they termed as "lucrative" jobs. Few of the children were recruited to undertake this activity by peers because it was more lucrative and they could earn more money. Few of the children were into assisting adult beggars because some people had told their families about how lucrative

the business was so they travelled to Accra purposely to beg. Family poverty was main reason why children end up on the streets of Accra. All the children were aides to adult beggars because they had to work to support the finances of their family.

The activities performed by children who were aides to adult beggars included; care giving roles and assisting on the streets. The care giving roles performed by beggars' aides included buying of food, cooking, washing, sweeping, fetching of water and running errands. Although these activities were common among the beggars' aides, the intensity of the activities varied from related and unrelated child aides. The children who are related to the adult beggars did more intense activity than the unrelated once. The children who are not related to the adult beggars only fetch water and took the adult beggars to their place of rest and then their job was done for the day. Begging took place around traffic lights and beggars' aides work 12 to 13 hours in a day and earn between GHC 20 to GHC 50.

The challenges faced by children who aide adult to beg includes; easily knocked down by cars abused and/or tired and burn out and health challenges. The study found that children begging on the street often faced the risk of being knocked down or killed by vehicles. However, when this happens, the drivers often speed off and these children are left to find help for themselves. The study further found that the frequent walking and standing often makes the children tired because they had to move from one car to another and they did it repeatedly. Also the activities they performed before and after work got them more burn out especially for the children who were related to the adult beggars. The study found abuse from commuters towards the children as the children were insulted either by passengers from commercial vehicles or the adults that they aide

and this affected them. Health related challenges were found as contributing factors for street children falling ill because they spend more hours standing under the sun.

5.3 Conclusion

Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory was used primarily as a framework for conceptualizing and investigating the experiences of children used as aide to adult beggars by specifically finding the factors that expose children to aide adult beggars and identify the type of activities that children who aide adult beggars perform for their survival as well as identify the challenges faced by children who serve as aide to adult beggars on the streets of Accra.

The study applied Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory which considers the influences on a child's development within the context of the complex system of relationships that form his or her environment by focusing on the children's internal processes and external influences related to developmental changes. This was explained by the study findings as the study revealed that parental disability, abandonment, and business purposes, are among the factors that expose children to aide adult beggars on the streets of Accra. These children engage in various activities such as domestic chores and actual begging. The findings support the theory which suggests that a child's development is a product of a variety of critical dimensions including context, process, time, and the individual's personal attributes.

This study from the perspective of the Ecological systems theory found that the far-reaching change in the structure of the family have an impact on the development of the child. This is detrimental to children's personal development of skills, knowledge and

deprives them of the chance to be in school learning and playing with their friends, and enjoying their childhood. Playing and learning forms an important part of every child's development, because it builds his or her mental, social, and psychological capabilities and wellbeing within their communities and Ghana at large. The challenges faced by children who aide adult to beg includes; being easily knocked down by cars, abused and/or tired and burn out and health surely is inimical to the whole developmental process of the child. This is what Bronfenbrenner's theory defines as the construct of development and the multi-system layers of the environment that influence child development.

This study has thus demonstrated that by using Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory, the researcher was able to identify and conceptualize the multi-system factors that influence a child development in the context of children aide to adult beggars and have shown how the child setting and the way in which individual and external forces interplay to influence development. The study therefore concluded that, for stakeholders to effectively tackle issues of street children rendering aides to adult beggars, it is important to understand the processes and the dynamics of these processes that influence the children development before formulating policies or applying existing policies to curb the street children menace. This study has brought a lot to light using Bronfenbrenner's ecological system theory to provide insight for those working within the contexts of child welfare.

5.4 Recommendations

The research makes the following recommendations for addressing children being used as aide to adult beggars in Accra. The study found significant number of street children

aiding adult beggars all across the major road intersections in Accra, although there are state laws and interventions such as the social welfare to reduce or manage the phenomenon of street children. The following recommendations are tailored based on the study findings.

5.4.1 Recommendations for the Government and Non-Governmental Agencies

For children who aide adult beggars as a result of parent disability, government through the Ministry of Gender and Social Orientation through the social welfare system should engage and possibly enroll the affected children through any of the National Youth Programmes modules to undergo technical or vocational training to equip the child with employable skills. Also the vulnerable families who are not enrolled under the current LEAP initiatives should be enrolled in order to serve as a support base for them.

Additionally, the state should implement the disability act and all the provisions that are listed there. The government should liaise with vocational schools to give training to persons with disability in order for them to gain skills to start their own business. In addition, the government should assist them in acquiring loans to finance their business. Further, state should persecute immediate family members especially, abled husbands who abandoned the disabled partners and children to fend for themselves to serve as deterrent to others.

The government interventions such as free school uniform, exercise books, school feeding programmes and other proposed initiatives such as Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education geared towards boosting school enrollment should be enforced so that parents with disability can enroll their wards to school. Government should also network

with other non-governmental agencies like Catholic Action for street children to intensify the street corner education by taking education along most major streets in Ghana in order to provide children with some educational opportunities.

There are laws and policies on paper that seek to protect children being exploited for business purpose and child recruitment. Despite these, a lot of street children are recruited or lured to travel to the cities for non-existing jobs only to be engaged in activities that are demeaning to the child. This is practically a human rights abuse and measures must be taken by government to ensure that such laws are enforced to save these street children from such abuses. This is guaranteed, for example, the constitution of Ghana, (1992) frowns on child labor; the Children's Act of Ghana (Act 560), firmly espouse that, no child under 18 should be subjected to child labor, the researcher recommends that, stakeholders (Department of Social Welfare and NGOs) in Accra must as sense of urgency, embark on frequent public education on the dangers of children working on the streets and their right as citizens. Finally, NGOs that work with street children (e.g. Assembly of God Relief Agency) can provide short term relief such as a mosquito nets or a place they can sleep at night.

5.4.2 Recommendations for the media

The media should use an educational campaign to sensitize the general public. Firm concentration must duel on the importance of child education and the advantages that the family, community, the country and the world as a whole stand to gain if all forms of street children issues are eradicated.

5.4.3 Recommendations for Social Workers

Social workers should organize educational campaigns through community durbars and forums, festivals, and concerts in the rural areas where these children migrate from and the message carried out in the predominant local language of the area to let the people understand that it is illegal to engage children on the street for business purpose. In addition, parents in the rural communities should be educated by social workers through community talks and gender activists on the criminal aspect of selling or giving one's child voluntarily to strangers or people to send to the main cities centers for non-existent jobs. This will aid to reduce the problem of child exploitation.

Also, Social Workers should advocate for persons with disability to get employment in the formal sector. For example, should workers can advocate for persons with disability to be employed in all the toll booths in Ghana. This can assist them take care of themselves as well as the needs of their families. Again, Social Workers should liaise with appropriate agencies such as micro finance institutions to solicit for funds on credit basis to assist parents with disability to start an income generating business. This would help them earn profit to cater for the needs of their children.

Additionally, there is the need for more research on this phenomenon, especially, in other regional capital cities in Ghana because the social problem of street children has become a stain on the conscience of all developing countries including Ghana. This will help make appropriate recommendations to inform policy makers to protect children's rights. Again, social workers should engage schools and educate children about their right to education as citizens per the 1992 constitution to understand that education is

key to any individual, community and nation development and that anyone who is denied education is inimical to their future growth and development.



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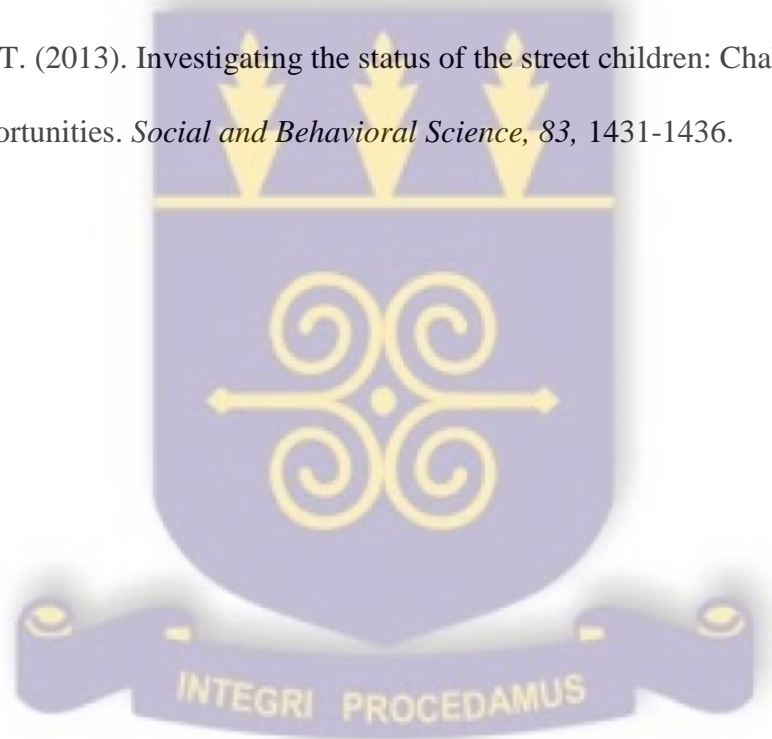
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APPENDIX

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR BEGGARS' AIDES

1. Demographic Data:

a. Name

b. Sex

c. Age

2. Have you ever been to school?

3. Since when have you been in this partnership or activity?

4. What is your relationship to the adult beggar?

Questions on factors that influence children as aides to adult beggars

1. Can you tell me about how you ended up being aides to adult beggars?

2. What are the reasons why you aide adult beggars

3. In your opinion who benefits from your work? (probe)

4. What are the benefits involved in your activities?

5. Ever engaged in other economic activities besides begging?

Questions on activities performed by the children as aides to adult beggars

1. What are some of the things you do?

2. Do you aide the adult daily? (probe)

3. What other things do you do aside aiding the adult to beg?
4. How many hours do you engage in the activity per day?
5. How is the division of labour negotiated?
6. How is the revenue from the activity distributed?
7. Who manages the money you get from the activity?
8. How is the money shared between you two?
9. Do you have a fixed location?
10. How do you see your role in this partnership?

Questions on Challenges that confronted children as aides to adult beggars

1. What are some of the challenges you face? (probe)
2. How are you able to cope?
3. In what others ways does begging affect you?
4. In your opinion what will you like to be done for you to live the quality of life as a child?

