

UNIVERSITY OF GHANA
COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

EXPERIENCES OF STREET CHILDREN IN IWO ROAD OF IBADAN,
NIGERIA



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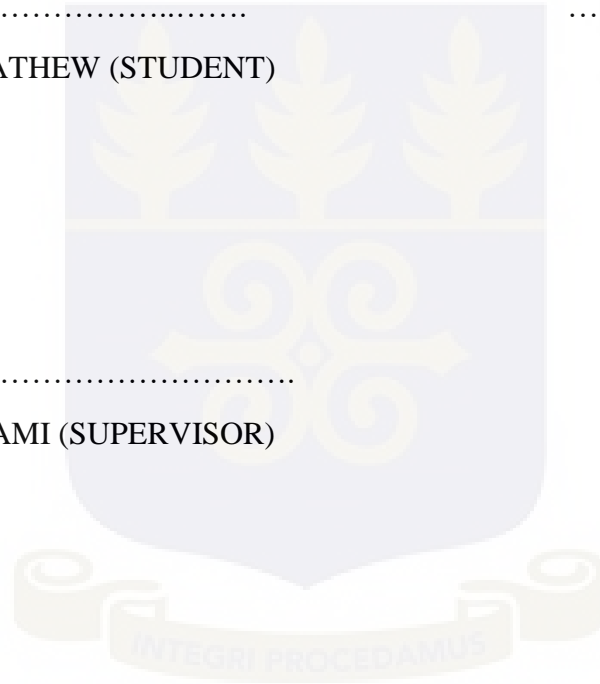
DECLARATION

I, Mathew Ejike Ugwuadu hereby declare that this thesis is my own handiwork towards the Master of Philosophy (M.Phil.) Degree in Social Work and hereby certify that it has not been submitted in whole nor in part to any institution for any degree.

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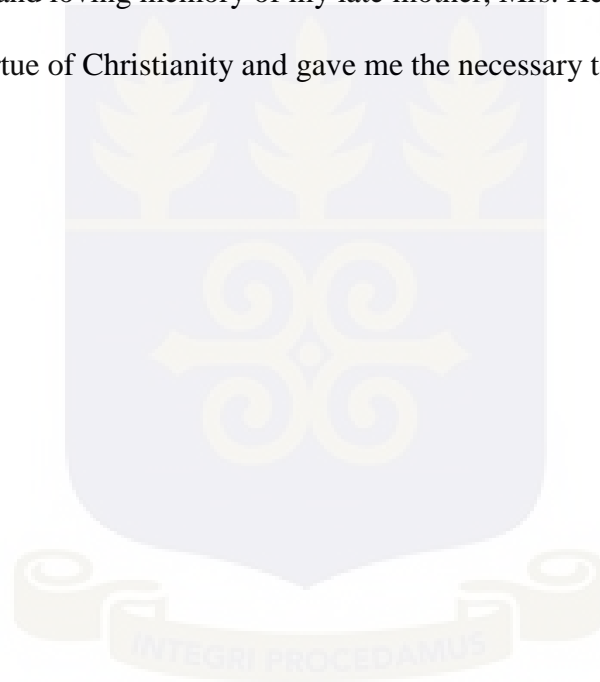
ABSTRACT

The increase in the number of children living and working on the street of Nigeria has become a concern for all. The study argues that the phenomenon of street children can be explained in the context of symbolic interactionism. The study reports the findings of a qualitative study that investigates the experiences of street children in Iwo road of Ibadan, Nigeria. Twenty-two (22) participants were purposively sampled and in-depth interviews were conducted to collect information from seventeen (17) children (all boys), and five (5) key informants (three social workers and two traders). Findings from the study show that family disintegration, low educational background, delinquent acts, poverty, abuse and lack of parental care are the major predisposing factors of streetism. Besides, the children were engaged in different kinds of life style like sleeping arrangement, pushing wheel barrow, washing of cars, carrying loads, and bus conducting. Also, there are major challenges faced by children living on the street of Iwo road, such as attack by thieves, arrest by police, frequent illness, road accidents, attack by colleagues and ritual attacks. However, the children have developed survival strategies that enable them to cope with their situation. In order to prevent more children moving onto the streets of Iwo road of Ibadan, it is suggested that the government of Nigeria should allocate special funds to support poor families, and especially children who have been pushed onto the street due to their neglect and disadvantaged family background. Social workers can educate and sensitize families and communities about the emotional, physical, social and developmental needs of children in the street and the dangers involved so that children can be prevented from moving to stay in the street.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

- All those who have contributed positively towards the support and reunification of children living in the street.
- The fond and loving memory of my late mother, Mrs. Helen Ugwuadu who taught me the virtue of Christianity and gave me the necessary tool in facing reality.



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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background of the Study

It is an undeniable fact that despite the uncountable number of buildings being constructed on a daily basis in our world today, the number of children that live in different corners of streets is inevitably alarming. There are a number of common misconceptions about street children; from who they are, to how many there are around the world, and why children take to the streets (Naidoo, 2008). The term ‘street-connected’ is now more widely used to describe the broad range of experiences children and youth have in the streets: some live in the streets; some work in the streets; some street children maintain relationships with their family whereas others break all contacts (Kalimbira & Chipwatali, 2007). While some remain in the streets, others go on and off of the streets. But all of them have strong connections to the street (Kalimbira & Chipwatali, 2007).

There is virtually no city in the world that is without a record of street children (Miriti, 2015). Children living and working in the streets is a concern in both developed and developing countries but particularly in low and middle-income countries of Latin America, Africa (of which Nigeria is not an exception) and Asia (United Nations Children’s Fund [UNICEF], 2005). The number of street children worldwide is almost impossible to know, although UNICEF (2015) estimates the number to be 100 million. In Africa, where the problem of street children is relatively new, compared to Asia and other continents, it is estimated that about 13 million children live without families and mostly in towns as street children (Ali & Muyenck, 2005).

Nigeria, which is known to be the largest African country with a population of about 177.6 million people (Olley, 2006) is noted to have a very youthful age structure with nearly three-quarters of its population under the age of 30 years (Ijadunola, Ojo, Babatunde, Olatunji, Owolabi, Adewale & Friday, 2015). In 2010 in Nigerian, children under the age of 14 years accounted for 43.2% of the total population, 15-24 years (19.3%), 25-54 years (30.5%), 55-64 years (3.9%), and 65 years and above (3.1%) (Central Intelligence Agency [C.I.A], 2010). The Central Intelligence Agency (2010) further stated that Nigeria has an alarming world record of 10.5million young school dropouts. This huge figure forms part of young people with age range between 0-14years and 15-24 years which is about 62.8% of the total Nigerian population. Many of these children are likely to live in the streets for survival (Ebigbo, 2003).

Although, there is a considerable number of children living in the streets in Nigeria; their precise number, which alters from city to city and often depends on the season of the year, is not known (Owoaje & Uchendu, 2009). Evidence suggests that children in the street are on the rise in Nigeria. For example, in 2013, an organization known as Beautiful children home, rescued about 1095 children from the streets of Nigeria (Independent, 2015). This number doubled in just a year as 2433 children were evacuated from the streets in 2014 (Independent, 2015). Though this rate is horrifying, it only represents an underestimated number of children in the street, that is, the rescued street children. Again, the rescue operation was conducted only by one organization. One can expect this number to be larger if the rescue missions of other organizations are compiled.

Apart from commonly used definitions of streetism, some countries have peculiar ways to appellate the phenomenon, which give clues to the way the country views and addresses the issue. For instance, in the United Kingdom and the United State of America, street children are defined as 'runaways', who left home without permission and stay away during the night (Altanis & Goddard, 2004). In Columbia they are called '*gamin*' (*urchin*) and '*chinchas*' (bed bugs), in Brazil; '*resistoleros*' (little rebels), in Italy '*buidoi*' (dust Children), in Vietnam; '*saligoman*' (nasty kids", in Rwanda '*moustiques*' (mosquitoes), in Nigeria "Area boy\girl and '*mala pipe*' (pipe sleepers) in South Africa (UNICEF, 2005).

The reasons children go to the streets are unique to their individual situations. Often there is not one simple reason why a child is in the street. Rather, combinations of multiple factors drive children to a life in the streets. Some of the factors are poverty, hunger, neglect, breakdown of the family, death of a parent, verbal, physical, and sexual abuse, displacement caused by communal clashes, inadequate care (Quarshie, 2011; Mtaita, 2015; Ijadunola et al, 2015), inability to continue in school due to economic meltdown affecting the family and unemployment of one or both parents (C.I.A, 2015; Ebigbo, 2003; Mtaita, 2015; Ijadunola et al, 2015). Children may also end up in the streets due to cultural factors such as forcing children to leave their family because they are alleged to be witches who bring bad luck upon their families (Miriti, 2015).

Several governments, over the years, have attempted to assist Nigerian children in different ways to no avail. From 1985 to 1993, General Ibrahim Babangida who ruled Nigeria under the military regime established People's Bank, which extended micro-credits to many street boys and girls to help them start small businesses (Okpupara, 2006). However, the program suffered from insufficient funding and many of those who benefited from the handouts simply returned to the streets when the bank collapsed in 1990. Also, Ex-Governor Bola Tinubu of Lagos State, with the return of democracy in 1999, designed a scheme aimed at ridding the city of street children "area boys/girls" (Ojo, 2013). He set up a skills training center at Ita Oko. The aim was to rehabilitate these street boys and girls by teaching them artisan skills and trades. The programme failed for lack of attention and commitment on the part of the government to see to its implementation (Ojo, 2013). The economic meltdown in Nigeria resulted in children hawking, trading or loitering on the streets (Roma & Africa, 2009).

The importance of understanding the lives and roles of children from different culture perspectives cannot be overemphasised as children from these cultures experience different childhood development (Tuladhar, 2013). Devi (2016) notes that street children are at risk for physical, emotional, social, and cognitive violation. He further stated that street children represent a rapidly growing socio-educational challenge affecting both developing and industrialized nations of the world. The author suggests the need for interventions that could appropriately address their needs in the context of their environment. But, the experiences of children living in the Iwo road streets remain largely unexplored regardless of the fact that there are thousands of children living in the streets of Iwo road (Pehlivanli, 2008); hence, the need for this study.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

There is an alarming increase of street children in Nigeria (Ogunkan & Adeboyejo, 2014). In 2009, Omiyinka (2009) said the number of street children in the country had tripled due to the economic meltdown. These numbers are said to be rising daily due to the slow pace in enforcing human right regulations, empowering families and communities as well as equipping teachers with tools for proper education on this phenomenon and its dangers (Wakatama, 2009). Anecdotal evidence indicates that, all over Nigeria, it is common to find children along the streets at all times. But the exact number of street children in Nigeria is still unclear. Some of these children sometimes engage in vulnerable activities such as selling on the high way and carrying heavy loads (Roma & Africa, 2009). They hardly return home and the streets automatically have become abode for such children (Malindi & Cekiso, 2014).

Children living on the streets are exposed to hazards such as being knocked down by moving vehicles or reckless drivers due to the nature of the work they do on the streets and their lifestyles: porters, bus conducting, sleeping in open areas (Biggeri & Anich, 2009). They are often exposed to violence by their street youth and the police (Dada, 2013); they are at risk of being exposed to sexual exploitation, kidnapping, trafficking into brothels, used for rituals (Boakye-Boaten, 2008; Ward & Seager, 2010). Street children are also exposed to health challenges such as not having access to healthy and sufficient diet (Kalibala & Elson, 2010); not having clean clothes and sanitary facilities (Fiasorgbor & Fiasorgbor, 2015) and being prone to malaria and anemia (Trent & von Kotze (2014; Chande, n.d).

Moreover children living in the street are exposed to delinquent behaviours such as stealing, alcoholic abuse, cigarette and other hard substances, which often affect their physical and psychological development (Ballet, Bhukuth & Radja, 2013; Meltzer, Ford, Bebbington & Vostanis, 2012). They are also at risk of joining gangs (Felson & Boba, 2010). Street children are denied access to education (Alenoma, 2012), which also affect the development of children negatively (Ebigbo, 2003) In my experience of working and serving children who are mostly in need and abandoned, I had the opportunity to interact with children on the street. Their experiences and life style were the reasons that motivated this research. I realized that these children neither go to school nor are properly cared for at home. They have to work in order to survive and hence they were engaged in different forms of economic activities detrimental to their human development as children. Street life is therefore such an undesirable phenomenon because culturally, children are cared for and supported by families, relatives, and communities. Children living on the streets do not have the opportunity for fundamental formation, such as socialization and model that the families provide. Families and communities have essential roles to play in fostering the healthy growth and development of any child.

Due to the fragility of the child, it behooves the nation to make it a priority to address the problem of street children because the development of Ibadan and the country at large may be hampered if many of the children continue to live on the streets and be deprived of education. Previous studies examined the cultural factors promoting streetism among urban children (Adeyemi & Oluwaseun, 2012); causative factors that pushed children on the street (Awatey, 2014; Ojo, 2013), and the effects of streetism on street children (Dada, 2013; Mtaita, 2010) however, the experiences of children living in the Iwo road streets remain largely unexplored, hence the need for this study. This study therefore sought to add to literature by investigating the

experiences of street children in Iwo road Ibadan.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The primary objective is to explore the experiences of children living in the streets in Iwo Road of Ibadan, Nigeria. The following are the specific research objectives:

- To ascertain the factors that contribute to streetism among children living in the streets of Iwo road of Ibadan.
- To explore the street life of children living in the street of Iwo road of Ibadan.
- To find out the challenges children living in the streets of Iwo road of Ibadan face.
- To explore the coping mechanism adopted by children living in the streets of Iwo road of Ibadan.

1.3 Research Questions

The main intention of this research was to explore the experiences of children living in the streets of Iwo Road of Ibadan. This study answered the following questions.

- What are the contributing factors of streetism among children in Iwo road, Ibadan?
- What are the street lives of children living in the streets of Iwo road, Ibadan?
- What are the challenges children living in the streets of Iwo road, Ibadan face?
- What coping strategies are adopted by children living in the streets of Iwo road, Ibadan?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings provide insights on the experiences of children living in the streets of Iwo Road of Ibadan. In addition, it serves as an evidence-based information concerning children living in the street of Iwo road of Ibadan, Nigeria. In addition, the study gives insightful information for policy and practice decisions to address streetism. Furthermore, the study contributes to existing knowledge regarding the experiences of street children in Nigeria for the social work. In addition, the study helps to fill the knowledge gap by stimulating ideas in academia so that further research can be conducted to advance knowledge in the field of street children.

1.5 Definition of Terms:

For the sake of clarity and avoidance of ambiguity, the following terms are used in the context of the study.

Child: The Law in the Federal Capital Territory (Abuja), defines a child is a person who has not attained the age of eighteen (Owasanoye, 2004).

Streetism: A broad term used to encompass the desperate situation of children who are forced to spend most of their time outside their homes, engaging in menial income generating activities in order to survive, and often having to sleep rough in the streets.

Children living in the street: Refers to children who are not taken care of by their parents, relatives, and other adults and hence choose to live and work in the street (Dada, 2013). These children usually sleep in abandoned buildings, automobiles, parks, containers, shops, under the bridge or in the street itself (Olley, 2006).

The non-government organization (NGO): A non-government organization can be defined as an association that pursues legal, cultural, social and environmental goals; the operation of an NGO is not driven by commercial or profit reasons.

Poverty: the state of being in lack of necessities of life.

Polygamy: In which a man has more than one wife at a time.

Iwo Road: Is the headquarters of Ibadan, the third largest city in Nigeria with a population of 348,500 according to the 2006 census.

1.6 Organization of the Study

The study is structured in five chapters. Chapter One focuses on the background of the study, statement of the problem, study objectives, research questions and also outlines the significance of the study. Chapter two discusses literature that exists on the topic. It reviews literature on the factors contributing to Streetism, Street life of children living in the street, challenges faced by children living in the street and coping mechanism adopted by children living in the streets. The experiences and coping mechanism of street children and the theoretical framework were discussed in the chapter.

Chapter three which covers the research methodology, entails the strategies and procedures that were used to obtain the data needed for the study. It discusses the research design that was adopted for the study. It also provides information on the population that was studied; data; sampling strategy; sample size; and collection technique, among others. The procedures for handling and analyzing data, as well as some ethical issues that were considered in the study have also been explained in this chapter. Chapter four presents the findings that have been made from the analyzed data and the discussion. Finally, chapter five contains the summary, conclusions and suggests remedies by way of recommendation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section of the study comprises of literature review and theoretical perspective. Literature is reviewed on studies in relation to the phenomenon under investigation. Based on that, books, articles, and Journals were reviewed under themes consisting of factors that contribute to streetism among children, lifestyle of children living in the street, challenges children living in the street face and coping strategies children living in the street adopt. The theory underpinning the study is also elaborated.

2.1 Factors that Contribute to Streetism among Children

Adeyemi and Oluwaseun (2012) investigated the cultural factors promoting streetism among urban children in Ibadan metropolis, Nigeria and three cultural factors were identified; namely, family structures, societal customs and modernization. With the family structures, the authors found that parents giving birth to many children contribute to larger family sizes which puts a huge burden on the parents in terms of providing for their children. These findings were similar to that of Awatey (2014) which found that about 90 percent of the children in his study on the streets in Kumasi, Ghana were not attending school. The study further showed that the major reason for children being on the streets was the need to work in order to get money to support their household income since about 50 percent indicated that they had no support from family members in terms of food, education, clothing and other basic needs.

Studies conducted in Nigeria, Ethiopia and Sri Lanka by Ojo, (2013), Abebe (2009) and Senaratna and Wijewardarna (2013) respectively, report breakdown in family structure as a cause of streetism. Abebe (2009) argues that majority of children found in the street were due to divorce or separation which leads to family disintegration. Also, he further contends that these children lived in the street as a result of large family size ranging from four to six members per household. This situation, when coupled with the lack of a steady income, leads children to perform whatever kind of work they find in the street. Similar findings were observed by Chireshe, Jadezweni, Cekiso and Maphosa (2010) in South Africa and in Nigeria by (Alenoma, 2012; Ojo, 2013). The South African study found that divorce and the death of parents of children left more children abandoned in the street to fend for themselves. On their part, Senaratna and Wijewardarna's (2013) study conclude that poor family functioning and disadvantaged socio-economic conditions initiate children into the street and kept them there. Contributing factors identified in this study include death, illness, imprisonment of one or both parents, alcohol/substance abuse, being born in the street, single parent families, extreme poverty, lack of education and occupational skills of parents.

With regards to societal customs that contribute to streetism in Nigeria, Adeyemi and Oluwaseun (2012) found that in situations where the father is solely responsible for the upkeep of the family and children are to support family at a tender age, this did not favour children's welfare as children were found in the street when fathers failed to meet their responsibilities. Also, concerning modernization, the authors contend that modernization, which has brought about improvement and advancement in cities, has also attracted children from migrating from villages and rural communities into the urban centers to find means of livelihood. These findings are similar to a study conducted in India by Chande (n.d). The findings suggest that rural urban

migration, increasing disparities in wealth and income, rapid population growth, rapid urbanization, and large scale unemployment contribute to children living in the street. In addition, it was identified that extreme poverty, high level child abuse by parents and society and the breakdown of the traditional family and community structures contribute to children living in the street.

Additionally, it was identified by parents and guardians that low educational level of parents and guardians, low interest in sending their children to school and rather preferring that their children acquire practical skills in the street all contribute to streetism (Alenoma, 2012). According to the author, the parents believe that there was a gap in the educational sector to provide practical skills to children and, hence pushed them in the street to acquire such skills. Also, mothers who experienced greater abuse, neglect and violence during childhood were at a greater risk of their children living in the street (Goodman, Martinez, Keiser, Gitari & Seidel, 2016). The authors found that, women who were less educated, lived in poverty during childhood and lived in a dysfunctional household were also likely to see their children live in the street. Similar to this Kenyan finding is that of Turkey which found socio-economic factors such as poverty, migration and unemployment (Mert & Kadioglu, 2014) to be contributive factors to streetism. Alongside these findings are the outcomes of studies in Iran by (Zarezadeh (2013), in Rwanda (Kayiranga & Mukasshema, 2014) and in Asia by (Lam & Cheng, 2012).

In addition, environmental factors like unfavorable neighborhood characteristics, cultural factors such as the belief that, the child develops a sense of responsibility when they work in the street contribute to streetism. Also, familiar factors like parents not being aware of the dangers of children working in the street and poor social support from the family all contributed to children working in the street (Kayiranga & Mukasshema, 2014; Lam & Cheng, 2012).

Other contributing factors to streetism identified by service providers for children in Turkey includes, insufficient social welfare policies, financial circumstances of families, under-resourcing institutes mandated to oversee child welfare (Bademci, 2012). Colinson and Ash (2015) reported that children in the streets of London who eventually became street sex workers were abused sexually which led them to move to the street. The findings also shows that poor parenting, poor impulse control and low level of education attainment of participants caused participants to move to the street to engage in sex work.. Similar to this finding is the study by Ward & Seager (2010) in South Africa. The study which interviewed service providers and women who had grown up in the street found that sexual abuse, domestic violence, poor parental relationship, seeking better life, employment, money, shelter push children to the street.

2.2 Life Style of Street Children

Children that live in the street engage in multiple economic activities such as washing windscreens; shining shoes; hawking; pottering at markets, railway stations, or airports. The children provide a lot of services for local traders by running errands, unloading goods, and standing watch when the trader is absent to ensure their wares are safe (Agency Francaise de development; 2012). They equally work for craftsmen and sometimes become apprentice. Similar findings were observed in urban centres of Ethiopia by Kebede (2015). The study indicates that children were engaged in all kinds of activities such as carrying luggage and shoe shinning in the streets in order to diversify their sources of income for their survival. They work in places where there are a lot of people such as train and metro bus station, shopping malls, restaurants and market centres (Ray, Davey & Nolan, 2011).

The literature shows that, although the children work hard to survive on streets they did not have permanent locations to live and sleep on the streets. They usually spend the night in any available open space. In Bangladesh, Hai (2014) discovered that during daytime, street children moved from one place to another to find petty jobs while at night, they sleep on pavement and under bridges. Ray et al (2011) contend that such children sleep in parks, gardens, under bridges and behind shops and restaurants in South Africa. In addition, street children do not bath always. Hai (2014) found that they bath within the interval of three to four days, patronize public toilets and defecated in gutters during the night; and in South Africa, the children slept outside without blankets or cover cloths (Chireshe et al; 2010).

2.3 Challenges Faced by Street Children

Rabia and Mohammed (2015) investigated the experiences of street children in Pakistan and discovered that street children in Pakistan face a lot of challenges in the street including: lack of shelter (which made them vulnerable to all ranges of bad weather conditions), abuse and exploitation by the police. The abuse, exploitation and harassment by police were also reported as well in Bangladesh (Pratibha, Mathur & Ansu, 2016) and in India by Chande (n.d). Illnesses (e.g., malaria, tuberculosis, anemia, malnutrition and vitamins deficiency) and health problems due to unclean and unhygienic water and sanitation issues as well as unhygienic working conditions and lack of proper care are all aspects of the challenges street children face (Chande, n.d; Pratibha, Mathur & Ansu, 2016).

And, since they do not earn money on a regular basis, many of the children stay without food by fasting, some depended on food in garbages (Hai, 2014); they buy cheap food, take drugs and have sex for money (Ray, Davey & Nolan, 2011). Most of the children have only one cloth, which is most of the time torn, dirty and undersized/oversized (Hai, 2014). The street children

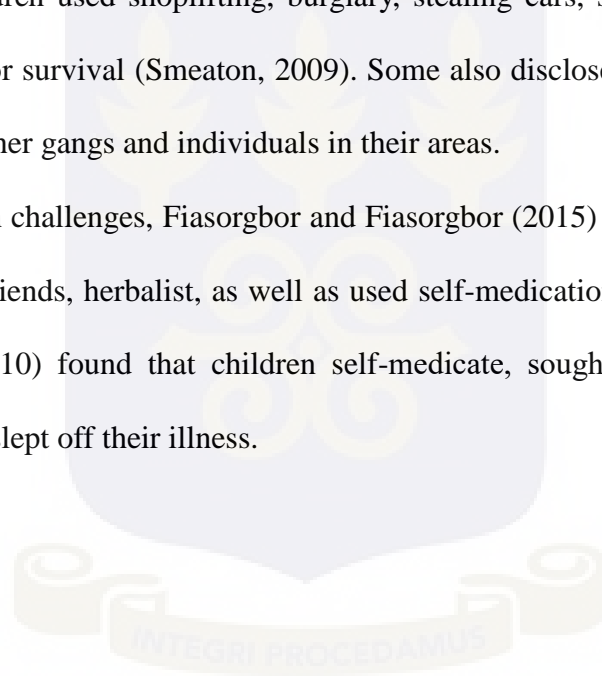
revealed that they lacked recreation, social ties and networks, protection and security (Chande, n.d).

2.4 Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Street Children

In a total of 50 street children studied in Accra-Ghana, (Awatey, 2014) found that about 20% of children who moved to the street to supplement their family income relied on their family for daily meal. The findings also showed that some of the street children begged for food (in restaurants and hotels) similar to findings by Abebe (2009) in Addis Ababa and Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) in urban Tanzania; and some scavenged (Awatey, 2014) or ate from bins (Chireshe et al., 2010) in South Africa. But, 62% of Awatey (2014) participants bought their own food because they worked and earned some income in the street. This finding is similar to that of Julie and Seipel (2007). Among those who bought their own food, Kebede (2015) found that about 83% of street children in Ethiopia bought leftover food, 48% bought cheap food from small cafes and 39% depended on leftover food from restaurants to cope with street life. Julie and Seipel (2007) also found that children who lived in the streets of Ghana also relied on each other for money, protection, encouragement and emotional support; similar to a South African study by (Msocsci, Meyer-weitz & Asante; 2016) and (Malindi & Cekiso (2014) in Tanzania; while some relied on social service assistance provided by non-governmental organizations. Others say they simply rely on God and hope for better life in the future (Awatey, 2014; Msocsci, Meyer-weitz & Asante; 2016).

Additionally, to cope with street life, some of the children used drugs and alcohol (Msocsci, Meyer-weitz & Asante; 2016) on the street of Durban, South Africa while others, also in South Africa, used social distancing surviving strategy by removing themselves from certain social groups and developing anti-social coping mechanisms in the form of attitudes and outlooks such as non-discriminating and intense distrust of others Kolar, Erickson and Stewart (2012). Also, participants developed self-defense and resilience mechanisms in order to cope with experiences of violent attacks (Kolar, Erickson & Stewart; 2012). A study done in the United Kingdom reported that street children used shoplifting, burglary, stealing cars, selling drugs, selling sex and begging as means for survival (Smeaton, 2009). Some also disclosed joining gangs in order to get protection from other gangs and individuals in their areas.

To cope with their health challenges, Fiasorgbor and Fiasorgbor (2015) indicate that the children sought treatment from friends, herbalist, as well as used self-medication. Similarly, in Tanzania, Amury and Komba (2010) found that children self-medicate, sought for traditional healers' services and sometimes slept off their illness.



2.5 Theoretical Framework

The Symbolic Interactionism

The primary social theory used to understand this study was symbolic interactionism. It relies on symbolic meaning that people develop and rely upon in the process of social interaction. Symbolic interactionism traces its origin to Max Weber's (1920). The theory asserts that individuals act according to their interpretation of the meaning of their world. The American philosopher George Herbert Mead introduced symbolic interaction to American sociology in the 1920s. Symbolic interactionism is a qualitative perspective, which emphasizes a phenomenological view in which reality is viewed and understood from individual's perception (Carter & Fuller, 2015) and has been one of the major bases of qualitative research (Fields, Copp & Kleinman, 2006). The theory analyses society by addressing the subjective meaning that people give to objects, events, and behaviours. Subjective meanings are given primacy because it is believed that people behave based on what they believe and not just on what is objectively true. Thus, society is said to be socially constructed through human interpretation. People interpret one another's behavior and it is these interpretations that form the social bond. According to Carter and Fuller (2009), the term symbolic interaction refers to the peculiar and distinct character of interaction as it takes place between human beings.

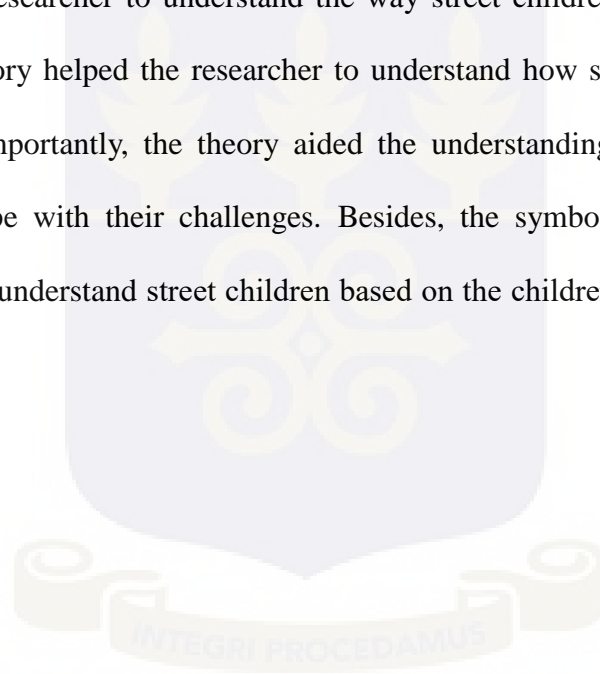
Furthermore, studies derived from this perspective focus on subjective meaning and understanding of events that take place in naturally occurring settings. In line with this, there are three simple premises of the symbolism interaction theory that helped the researcher to understand the way street children view society and react towards it.

- The first deals with how human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning that the things have for them. This includes things like physical objects, other human

beings, institutions, guiding ideals, activities of others, and situations that individuals encounter in their daily life.

- The second premise states that the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of the social interactions that one has with others.
- The third is that such meanings are then handled in, and modified through an interpretative process used by the persons in dealing with the things they encounter (Denzin, 2008).

The theory helped the researcher to understand the way street children view society and react towards it. Also the theory helped the researcher to understand how society perceive and treat street children. More importantly, the theory aided the understanding of how street children interpret things and cope with their challenges. Besides, the symbolic interactionism theory helped the researcher to understand street children based on the children's actions rather than on their personality.



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the research methods used to generate empirical data for the study. Specifically, it gives information on the research design, target population, study population, sampling technique, sample size, sources of data, methods of data collection, data handling and analysis, and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Designs

The study employed a qualitative design. It was considered appropriate for the study because it gave the researcher the opportunity to interview participants who have experienced the phenomenon being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Also, qualitative design helped the researcher to gain an in-depth understanding about street children. This helped the researcher understand the phenomenon under study from the participants' perspective (Creswell, 2013). Hence, the study adopted a qualitative approach in an attempt to understand the experiences of street children.

3.2 Study Area

Nigeria is the largest African country. According to the 2014 census, a population of 177.6 million people was recorded. In Ibadan where this research was carried out, which means the city at the edge of the savannah, is the capital city of Oyo state and the third largest metropolitan area, by Nigerian population after Lagos and Kano, with a population of over 3.5 million, and the country's largest metropolis by geographical area. It is said that every fourth African is a Nigerian.

Ibadan North-East (Yoruba: Ariwa – ilaorun) is a local government area in Oyo State, Nigeria. The principal inhabitants of the city are the Yoruba and significant number of people from other ethnic groups within and outside Nigeria. Ibadan is known for high level of commercial activities, high level population, low living costs and relative peace. It is also the city's commercial center which attracts children to partake in commercial activities for survival. Rescue operations by NGOs (Don Bosco Children Home) have a lot of the children from Iwo-Road. Its headquarters are on Iwo road and has an area of 18km². Iwo Road is an area that is considered as the major exit route from Ibadan to other part of the country where we can see people from different ethnic groups. Iwo Road has the major car park in Ibadan where you can get easy transportation to take you to other destinations.

In Iwo Road several types of peoples and their behaviours can be observed while standing couple of minutes alongside the street. Also, it is a bubbling place with lots of leisure and business outfits. Which in fact attract the researcher to carry on research study given special attention to children living in the street. These children have the right to be protected, as far as the child right in 2003 is concerned. The researcher is also an inhabitant of Ibadan from the last several years and is familiar with the area, which made it easy for the researcher to acquire relevant data and information both from street children and key informant.

3.3 Target Population

The study targeted children living in the street of Iwo road, social workers working with street children and traders selling in the street of Iwo road, Ibadan. According to Lavrakas (2008), the target population of a study is the entire set of subjects or population for which the study is to be used to make deductions. In addition, the target group defines those units to which the findings of a study are meant to apply (Lavrakas, 2008).

3.4 Study Population

Specifically, the study collected data from street children in Iwo road, Ibadan. The criterion for selection was that, the children must have been living and working in the street, without the guidance of their parents or relatives, for three months or more at the time of data collection and must be between 12 to 17 years. The social workers must have worked at the Don Bosco children home for three months and above at the time of data collection. The reason for this selection was to gather information from different perspective about the street children from people who have worked with them and have insights into their situation. The criteria for selecting the traders were that they must have been selling in the street for three months and above at the time of data collection before consideration for participation. The reason for including traders was that they spent more time with the children by providing them with some basic need like cloths, food, and in some special cases take care of them when they are ill. The key informants were people who have worked with street children for at least three months and as such, have insights into the issues explored by the researcher.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Sample refers to a special subset of the population observed for making deduction about the nature of the total population itself. Sampling is the process whereby a researcher chooses his or her sample (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). The study employed purposive sampling technique to select all study participants. Purposive sampling, as defined by Tongco (2007), is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses. The reason for purposive sampling was to help the researcher to select a sample based on the researcher's knowledge of the study population and nature of the research objectives (Babbie, 2007). It allowed the researcher the opportunity to select only participants who would provide the needed information

for the study. Also, purposive sampling allowed the researcher to collect data from participants who fulfilled the inclusion criterion set for recruitment of participants for the study.

3.6 Sample Size

The sample size of any study is the number of participants that partake in the study. The study sampled 22 participants from the chosen population. This is because according to Creswell (2013), sample size for qualitative research should range from five to twenty-five participants to reach saturation. The intention of the researcher was to ensure gender balance of participants. But, during the time this study was carried out, the researcher was unable to get female (street children) who met the criterion for participation. The researcher tried hard through the children's network, but could not find any street girls who met the criterion of the study. Thus, the children who participated in this study were all males who have been in the street for three months and above. Seventeen (17) out of the 22 participants were children living in the street of Iwo road, Ibadan, three (3) of the participants were Social Workers, and the remaining two (2) were traders selling in the street of Iwo road, Ibadan.

3.7 Sources of information

Primary data were collected directly from the field. The study basically relied on qualitative methods of data collection. Specifically, In-depth interviews and direct observation of activities in the street were the methods used to collect data. The individual in-depth interviews allowed the researcher to ask open ended questions that required follow-up questions. In addition, it gave the interviewees the opportunity to freely express themselves in relation to their experience with phenomenon under study. Two separate interview guides (one for street children and one for the key informants) were used to collect data from the participants. The interviews with the children were held at their resting ground behind the bridge and uncompleted building in Iwo road while

that of the key informants was done at their place of work and business. The interview with the children lasted between 35 to 55 minutes, while that of the key informant lasted between 50 to 70 minutes. The interview schedules were designed in English, but the interviews were conducted in English and Yoruba based on the language proficiency of participants. It is noteworthy that, before the commencement of the interviews, the researcher obtained assent from children so as to allow them participate willingly without any external force before obtaining information from them. The consent of key informants were obtained as well. The interviews were audio taped with participants' permission. The researcher also took observational notes as he closely observed the activities in the street of Iwo road, Ibadan.

3.8 Data Handling and Analysis

Data analysis is a process that involves making sense out of the raw data gathered from the field, preparing it for analysis, understanding the data, representing the data and making an interpretation of the larger meaning of the data (Creswell, 2012). The recorded files were transcribed from audio to text format. The six basic steps proposed by Creswell (2012) for qualitative data analysis were adopted to analyze the data. These were

1. The researcher transcribed interviews with street children and key informants and arranged them into different types depending on the source of information.
2. The familiarization process was done by the researcher through reading and re-reading of the transcribed data. This was done to grasp the general coverage of the data collected. The researcher also took note of recurring patterns at this initial stage as he attempts to familiarise with the data.
3. At this stage, the researcher carried-out analysis based on the theoretical approach and methods which involves coding or organizing related segmented sentences into categories

and labelled those categories with a theme.

4. The researcher used the coding to develop a number of themes. These themes are the ones which appear as the major findings and are used to create headings in the findings section of the study.
5. Interrelating themes. The researcher described data using multiple viewpoints and quotations from participants in presenting finding.
6. Finally, the researcher compared the findings with the information from other literatures.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher took all necessary steps to ensure that all ethical procedures involving social work research are considered. Based on this, the following ethical standards were taken into consideration.

Informed Consent and voluntary participation: The researcher adhered to all ethical requirements in conducting a social research. The researcher sought the informed consent of the research participants. This was done through the use of a written consent form. 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. The participants who had given their consent to participate in the study were guaranteed that their participation in the research was voluntary and they could opt out at any point they so deemed necessary.

Child Assent: In the case of the children who could not read, the researcher orally explained the purpose of the study to them in the local dialect (Yoruba) and only conducted interviews with them after they had given oral assent and sign with the thumb finger. The children who had given their assent to participate in the study were also guaranteed that their participation in the research was voluntary and they could opt out at any point they so deemed necessary.

Confidentiality: The principle of confidentiality was considered an important issue in this research. The researcher made use of pseudonyms or anonymity to hide the identity of the participants. The researcher also ensured that the identities of the research participants were not exposed to any third party. This was done through the use of pseudo-names and storing data in a password protected laptop. This enabled the research participants to give in-depth information without fear. The researcher also avoided any descriptive link of information that could lead to the identification of research participants.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is defined as a discrete offence, a specific failure to give credit to a particular published document without proper acknowledgement (Boisvert and Irwin, 2006). All relevant journal and books from which secondary information was drawn were properly cited. In respect to this, the researcher made use of in-text citations and references in the study to avoid any form of plagiarism.

3.10 Credibility and Trustworthiness: In order to ensure the credibility of the study, the researcher adopted member checking. After the initial data analysis, the researcher went back to the participants to cross check whether the summary of findings reflected information they had given. Another measure of trustworthiness of the study is the use of key informants to triangulate the data from the street children.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This section presents the findings of the study and discussions. The findings are presented under the headings demographic characteristics, factors that contribute to streetism among children in Iwo road, challenges children living in Iwo road face and coping mechanisms they adopt. This is followed by discussion of the findings in relation to studies done by other researchers.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Participants

The study included a total of 22 participants. Seventeen of them were children living in the streets of Iwo road, five key informants (three social workers from Don Bosco Children's Home and two traders selling in Iwo road Ibadan, Nigeria). The children were all boys and their ages ranged between 12 and 17 years. Five children that lived in Iwo road revealed that they were the only children of their parents and 12 revealed that they had siblings that ranged between three and nine. The findings revealed that five of the children had no formal education while 12 had formal education that ranged between primary one and Junior High three. In addition, five children revealed that their parents were dead, six indicated that their parents were separated, one revealed that he does not know whether the parents were alive or dead and five reported that their parents were divorced. In relation to the employment of parents, five children revealed that their parents were not working while six indicated that their parents were engaged in petty trading such as selling of sachet water, selling of cooked food, selling of onions by the road side, and bus driving. The findings also showed that the highest educational level of the parents of the children living in Iwo road was Senior High education. All children who participated in the study lived permanently in Iwo road. **(See Appendix C for more details).**

The ages of the key informants ranged between 25 and 50 years. One of the key informants was female and the remaining four were males. In regards to their education, three of the key informants were degree holders and two indicated that their highest education attained was O'level (Senior Secondary School Certificate). In addition, three key informants revealed that they were married with children while the other two indicated that they were single. (See **Appendix D for more details**).

RESULTS FROM FINDINGS

4.2 Factors that Contributed to Streetism among Children in Iwo Road

Multiple factors contributed to children living in the street. These factors include family disintegration, delinquent act, poverty, lack of parental care and abuse.

4.2.1 Family Disintegration

The findings revealed that due to family breakdown, children in Iwo road who took part in this study did not get the necessary care from their parents. The participants noted that family disintegration contributed to their migration to the streets of Iwo Road. Forms of family disintegration identified in this study were: Divorce, death of parents, and polygamy.

4.2.1.1 Divorce

The study found that divorce contributed to streetism. Due to divorce, some of the children noted that they stayed with relatives or step parents.

My dad is no longer staying with us, because he had issue with my mum and left. He later called to tell me he's in Lagos. It's been long, I can't really say the exact thing that caused the brawl, and all I know is that they have divorced. There were challenges in

paying my school fees and was driven home on countless occasions, but one day after school, I did not return home. (Steve, 16 yrs).

My dad and mum are no longer together and I can't really say the exact cause of their quarrel. All I know was that I was three years old when my mum took me away from my father, and they did not tell me anything. My friend was coming to the city and I joined him. (Moses, 16 yrs).

However, others indicated that some of the home arrangements after divorce, as discussed above, were not conducive so finally they opted for the streets as they could no longer cope with difficulties in the house as commented below:

My parents are divorced, my mum re-married. They separated for a reason I don't know. For now I don't know the where about of my dad and I don't even care to know since he does not care about me. My step father did not like me and was beating me all the time so I took to the street. (Mike, 13 yrs).

My parents are divorced. And my mother has packed out of the house and re-married. My mum always come to pick me anytime I am in my father's place with his new wife and when things became so difficult I decided to leave the house for Iwo road. (Bola, 14 years)

My parents are not living together again. They had divorced so, I left the house for the street because my mother was living with another man who does not take care of me. (Musa, 13 years).

The two groups of key informants confirmed that most of the children in Iwo road came to the streets as a result of broken homes. But a Social Worker further noted that women's lack of power in intimate relationships in Nigeria caused their children to take to the streets because some of them suffer in the hands of their step fathers.

Most of these children working on the street here including the big boys came from a broken home. It is painful that none of the parents wants to take up the responsibility of bringing up the innocent child in their new marriage and even if they do, the way the child would be treated in the house would make them leave the house for the street. (Trader 2).

It is a pity my brother. Most of these children come from a broken home. In our society when a woman goes into marriage with a child, some men do not care about the step child and this sometimes goes a long way in pushing the step child away from home to fend for himself, mostly the boys fall victim to such situation. The women may not have a say in whatever happens to their child because she wants to secure her new marriage. It is like that in Nigeria and other parts of African countries. (Social Worker 1).

4.2.1.2 Death of Parents

Some of the participants also pointed out that the loss of their parents at an early age pushed them to the street. As narrated by Tayo and James respectively:

When things were difficult for me and my grandmother. I joined other boys to live and work in the street because I lost my parents when I was born, according to the information given to me by my grandmother. I saw only their pictures. I was told that my parents died at Ilesha on motorcycle. A trailer crushed them on their way and both died.

My grandmother said I was about three years old when this accident happened. However, my grandmother is old and can barely take care of me. The little money I make in the street, I do send some to her to buy food. (Tayo, 16 yrs).

I lost my mom at a very tender age; I was told I was not even six years old when she died. For my dad I do not know his where about. I stayed with my grandmother and she never told me his where about. The little money my grandmother is making from selling of paper and tomatoes is not enough to sustain us or pay my school fees. So, I left home and followed my friend to the street to work, since nobody in the family cares about me. (James, 14 yrs).

4.2.1.3 Polygamy

Polygamy was identified as a contributing factor to streetism. The children noted that they were abandoned by their parents at a tender age due to polygamy. They noted that mostly their mothers leave the marriage because of consistent misunderstanding among the wives. The consequence was deprivation of basic needs which cause some of the children to live on the street as indicated in the following narratives:

I was told my mother abandoned my sister and I when I was one and half years. This was because my father had married five women at that time and gave birth to sixteen children I don't know all of them but only a few finished secondary school. My dad later died when I was five years and I was left in the care of my sister who later got pregnant. I was left to take care of myself because none of the wives wanted to take care of me so I came to the street. (Bayo, 17 yrs).

It has been a long time since I saw my parents. My father got married to three women and I am the son of the second wife. Due to the daily fight among the wives and sometimes with my father my mother left the house for years now and my father does not care if we eat since then I have been on Iwo road with my friends. (Kunle, 13 yrs).

4.2.2 Delinquent Act

The children also revealed that the fear of punishment by their parents or caregivers for committing certain offences like stealing or damaging things at home made them seek solace on the street of Iwo road as narrated by James, Mike and Moses respectively:

I left home because I committed an offence at home. I stole their money. I used the money to eat and when I was about to be punished, I ran out of the house. (James, 14 yrs).

I will attribute the cause of my being in the street to my mother. This is because I mistakenly spilt her oil and was about to be beaten. On the process she told me if I don't want to be beaten then I should run away. It is about eight months now, so I joined them in the street of Iwo-road and she has never come to look for me. (Mike, 13 yrs).

Most of the kids in Iwo road are here because some of them stole from home and could not go back, while some just absconded without any reason. I know a lot of them who have committed one offence in the house before ending up in the street. (Moses, 16 yrs).

One of the Social Workers, a key informant, supported the assertion that some of the children came to live on streets, in order to avoid dishonour, after committing offences in their communities or homes.

Some of them had issues with their parents. Some committed criminal offences in their communities and in order not to bring their family's name into disrepute; they ran away on their own and took up street living. (Social Worker 2).

4.2.3 Poverty

The children who participated in this study revealed that their parents lacked the financial capacity to provide for their basic needs including school fees. This situation compelled many of them to move to the street. Instances are relayed in the following accounts by Tayo, Steve, Moses and Joe respectively:

Things were really difficult for me and my grandmother. I came here because I did not have money to feed myself. I decided to come to the street and start helping people with their load at least to sustain myself. I have been making money from this work which I used to take care of myself. (Tayo, 16 yrs).

My mom is very poor and does not have money, even to buy food, she cannot afford. Although nobody asked me to come and work in Iwo road, I came here on my own. So the main reason for coming to Iwo road is financial, in order to continue my education, and purchase study materials. (Steve, 16 yrs).

My major reason for coming to Iwo road is money problem. If I should see anybody that want to help me now, I will tell the person if he/she can get me a job that can earn me money so as to help feed my mother and provide for my educational expenses, then I will leave the street and follow him/her. (Moses, 16 yrs).

I could not continue my education due to financial problems. I needed two thousand five hundred naira to collect my school results but could not get it. My mother is only selling little things and the profit she makes can't feed us twice in a day. (Joe, 16 yrs).

Some participants narrated that they dropped out of school due to their parents poverty conditions as narrated below:

I stopped school many years ago because for no reason, my parents stopped paying my school fees. I really wish to go back to school to further my education but due to financial reasons I have found myself in the street. (Kunle, 14 years)

It has been long I saw my family. What is the need of seeing them when I know that there is nothing they could offer me? They are the same people who said there is no money to send me to school and suggested I quit school. The truth is that I am not ready to look for them or to stay with them now. (Pino, 16 yrs)

Things are really difficult for me and my grandmother I came here because my grandmother did not have money to take care of me. I decided to go to the street and start helping people with their load at least to sustain myself. (Tayo, 16yrs)

The key informants stressed that children move to the street because their parents are poor and could not provide for the education and basic needs of their children as commented by Chichi and Keke:

Just like I have said before, I think the major thing that brought majority of the children here can be attributed to poverty. They came from poor families, and they need to do something to survive. (Social Worker 3)

As a result of poverty, most families are not in the position to take care of themselves and their children. They are unable to pay their children's school fees, feed them and provide them with the basic necessities in life. (Trader 1)

4.2.4 Lack of Parental Care

Although some of the study participants were compelled to the streets due to poverty as presented previously, others noted that they were pushed to the street due to lack of parental care and support. They noted that their parents stopped taking care of them and did not show any care or support. As related in the following narratives:

My main reason of being in the street is due to lack of parental care and love. They did not take care of me and they did not make me feel like they love me regardless of their financial problem. They abandoned me with no future. (Bola, 14 yrs)

I'm not happy sleeping under the bridge. I have no place to go because nobody in my family is ready to take care of me. My grandmother kept telling me to take care of myself. I stopped going home when I realised that they don't have plan for my future. (Dada, 14 yrs).

Some of the key informants supported the lack of parental care as a contributing factor to streetism as indicated in the following narratives:

They find themselves in the street when their fathers are not responsible enough to take good care of them or when both parents are not responsible towards them. They go out and find the means to assist themselves; some of them have no family at all. Some have also been rejected and abandoned by their families for one reason or another. (Social Worker 1).

We provide assistance to majority of them and during counselling session, they tell you that their parents are not taking care of them and have been neglected. In addition, they do not have any siblings to take care of them also. I know things are very difficult in this country. I still think parents need to work hard to cater for their children.

(Social Worker 2).

4.2.5 Abuse

Another attributive factor to streetism found in this study is abuse by parents and other relatives. The children identified the following forms of parental abuse: starving, beating and punishing with different forms of objects. This scenario is exemplified in the following narratives:

It was because of punishment that I ran away to the street. It is difficult to face my mother's punishment. She beats me with anything she can lay her hands on and sometimes she deprives me of food. (Mike, 13 yrs)

I ran away because my aunt was maltreating me when she moved to stay with us at the time when I was staying with my grandmother. She beat me for no reason and sometimes she would not give me food for the whole day. She sometimes quarrels and fight any of our neighbours who tries to rescue me from her hands. (Mulika, 13 yrs).

Some of the abuse resulted in injuries as indicated by the participants:

Look at my back, my stepmother beat me with a wire anytime I make mistake and sometime she will not give me food or allow me to take my bath. So I left the house because I cannot continue to suffer such punishment. (Tutu, 15 yrs).

My step-father never liked me. He complained about everything I do and beat me alongside. He beat me even when I did not wash the plate well or clean his motorcycle. See my right leg. It was when I was running away from him that I mistakenly stepped on a broken bottle that cut my leg and I was unable to walk for weeks. (Taju, 15 yrs).

Key informants echoed the voices of the children in relation to the abuse they experienced at home and noted that, the children left home when they could no longer cope with abuse. The following comments example this scenario:

Child abuse causes about 10% of child streetism because mostly those who abuse the children are not their real parents. Some of these children are treated as slaves and maltreated anyhow. When the children are no longer able to endure the abuse, they will definitely run out of the house and end up in the street. (Trader 2).

4.3 Street Life of Children Living in Iwo Road

It is noteworthy that children who participated in this study were engaged in different kinds of life styles on the street. The experiences of participants in terms of their street life are presented in themes comprising of sleeping arrangement on the street, pushing of wheel barrow, washing of cars, carrying loads and bus conducting.

4.3.1 Sleeping Arrangement in the Street

The participants said that, they slept in open places provided there were available spaces to occupy. They identified kiosks, under- the-bridge, platforms, and front side of statues, churches and uncompleted buildings as places where they usually slept. They noted that they slept in these non-traditional places of sleep due to their inability to pay for rent.

There is a particular statue in front of a shopping complex known as “Baba oni-ilu” statue, where they sell phone glass, that is where we sleep. (James, 14yrs).

I sleep under-the-bridge at Iwo- road, and I also sleep close to Iya Abbey’s shop. There is a lot of space there so a lot of the street guys sleep there. (Tom, 16 yrs).

There is no room or house available and I can’t afford the cost of hotel so you need to adjust to it no matter how bad the place is. We also make use of public toilet and baths. If you woke up in the night and the public toilet is locked then you find your way in the bush or gutters where you make yourself comfortable. (Bola, 14 yrs).

In addition to sleeping in open areas, the children indicated that they slept on canopies, cartons and on the floor with or without cover cloths. Examples are given in the following narratives:

I have been sleeping in front of a shop of one woman called Iya Abbey. We sleep on the floor and we will just spread a canopy and sleep on it. She is aware we sleep there so we sweep there early in the morning before she comes to work and we also help her carry loads when the wholesalers come to deliver goods to her. (Mike, 13 yrs).

We do go to sleep at the kiosk around 10pm every day after the owner has closed and gone home. But, I do not have any clothe to cover my body during the night and the situation gets worse when it rains. (Mulika, 13 yrs).

There is a particular statue in front of a shopping complex known as “Baba oni-ilu” statue, where they sell phone glass, that is where we sleep and we make use of carton as bed. (James, 14 yrs).

4.3.2 Means of Survival in the Street

Children in Iwo-Road who participated in this study noted that they carry out multiple activities, some of which were dangerous, in order to provide for their daily needs. The following activities were reported: pushing wheel-barrows, washing of cars/buses, carrying of loads, selling of bottled water and bus conducting.

4.3.2.1 Pushing of Wheelbarrow

Street children in Iwo road noted that pushing wheelbarrow was one of their means of survival. They usually hired the wheelbarrows and paid the owners after the day’s work. The children who participated in this study also indicated that they changed from one job to another in order to meet their needs. It is interesting to note that while some of the participants noted that they shifted from pushing wheelbarrow to bus conducting, some left their bottled water business and joined pushing wheelbarrow because they made better profit. These scenarios are described below:

The little money I make from pushing of wheel barrow is the only means I rely on. After paying the delivery money to the owner of the wheel barrow, the little left on me is what I live on. (Bayo, 17 yrs).

I push wheel-barrow for a living in Iwo-Road. And if there is no load to carry, I substitute it by working as a bus-conductor, if I am able to load the bus to the full, then at the end, I might be paid twenty or thirty naira. I use part of the money for my meal and save part for future purposes. (James, 14 yrs).

My major work in Iwo road is pushing wheel barrow, and I enjoy the work because I make more money than any other work. But, sometimes, I engage in helping bus drivers with the boarding of passengers. I engage in this work when there is no load to carry. (Mike, 13 years).

I have been in Iwo-road for a while. I begun selling bottled water, but when the business went down, I decided to go into pushing of wheel barrow. There I made better profit even though I preferred selling water because the wheel barrow work is very hard and stressful. (Joe, 16 yrs).

4.3.2.2 Washing of Cars/Buses

Washing of cars was another means of survival for the street children in Iwo road who participated in this study as described by the following participants:

I do a lot of work in this street and that is why the traders have named me 'oni ishe' meaning "the head of all work". But the one I enjoy most and that fetches me money is washing of cars. There is a washing bay around so I go there between 6am and 9am to wash cars after which I come to the market and road side to do other works. (Mike, 13 yrs).

Although, I join my friends in doing all kinds of work in Iwo road, but I enjoy washing of cars/buses a lot because I make better profit and it is less dangerous comparing with other forms of work we do. (Moses, 16 yrs).

Some participants noted that in addition to car wash they also cleaned drivers' wind screens while they were in traffic. But, they claimed that while some of the drivers treated them well others did not. These scenarios are described in the following narrations:

My only means of survival is washing of cars and buses. Sometimes I clean windscreen in the traffic for drivers. However not everybody rewarded me for the service. Sometimes too I might be lucky to clean windscreen for nice people who will give me money. (Bayo, 14 yrs).

Some drivers don't give anything after cleaning while the private car owners will shout at you to stop when you want to clean. (Steve, 16 yrs)

4.3.2.3 Carrying Loads

The children who participated in this study also noted that they carried loads for people as a means for survival as commented by Sam and Baba respectively:

Carrying load has been the common work in this street. There is no work and many of us depend on this for a living. Although some may be engaged in other works they also carry load. What will you eat if you don't carry load? (Sam, 15 yrs).

In order to survive, I carry loads from one place to the other; for those who are going to the bus station or sometimes those market women selling things. Some pay me N100 and some N50. (Baba, 16 yrs).

Key informants, mostly traders, further noted that the children sometimes ran after cars and hang around shops, due to competition among them, to get load to carry for money:

When customers buy from us and the loads are many to carry, the children help them so as to get paid. The children are always hanging around our shops for such work. Some are also found at the bus station and because of competition, they run after cars when they see loads inside. (Trader 2).

It is astonishing to know that sometimes, the children had to beg the owners of the load before they would be allowed to carry due to the stiff competition. This was narrated by Taju:

I am a load carrier at Iwo road, anybody that wants to carry load I help them to do that. There is always competition so we run after cars once we notice there are loads inside. At times you need to beg the owner before you would be allowed to carry the load. (Taju, 15 yrs).

4.3.2.4 Bus Conducting

The final means of survival stated by the children on Iwo road who participated in this study was bus conducting. It is interesting to know that the participants were involved in helping drivers to load passengers as narrated by Pino:

This is a bus stop and as you see me doing, I help the taxi drivers with the boarding of passengers. Some of them are familiar with me and only signal me to the work as soon as their park the cars. There are some who will ask me to stop when I want to start. This is how I have lived for years in this place and I get money from it. (Pino, 17 yrs).

One Key informant confirmed that the children do help load buses for drivers but they had to run after vehicles in order to get the opportunity to load them:

Some of them are conductors for buses; they run after small cars or big buses and load passengers for the drivers and afterwards they are given some money. (Social Worker 3).

4.4 Challenges Faced by Children Living in Iwo Road

Children living in Iwo road who participated in this study encountered several challenges living in the street on Iwo road. The experiences of participants in terms of their challenges include attacks by thieves, arrest by police, frequent illness, road accident, ritual attacks, and attack by colleagues.

4.4.1 Attacks by Thieves

The participants noted that, there were thieves among them in the street of Iwo road who not only stole their daily earnings and other valuable items such as shoes while they were asleep, but also physically assaulted them as narrated below:

I don't know the person stealing our money and shoes. One day I had some amount of money in my pocket before retiring to my usual place of rest at night. When I woke up I realised that all the money in my pocket had gone even my sandals that I kept beside me was nowhere to be found, the problem is that you don't know who to ask because they are also looking for their things. (Kunle, 13 yrs).

You will sleep with your shoes on, money in your pocket and will wake up to find none. Thieves remove our shoes and cut our pockets with sharp objects and take our money. Sometimes they attack you physically and rob you; if you protest, they may hurt you and still rob you. (James, 14 yrs).

The truth is that a lot of things happen here every night. There was a day when I made a lot of money. I used part to eat and kept the rest of the money in my pocket with the intention of buying some cloths with it. I was the last person to sleep that very night, surprisingly when I woke, I found my pockets empty. I cried and searched everywhere but could not find it. (Dada, 14 yrs).

The big boys will collect money from you and the remaining will be too small for feeding. The painful part is that if they collect money from you, there is nobody you can go and complain to, there is also nothing you can do. (Bayo, 17 yrs).

Sir, look at those big boys sitting behind that bus. They collect our money every night when we are about to sleep. Sometimes they beat us with big stick or threaten us with a small knife. If you run away and refused to give them, they will not allow you to sleep and when they catch you they will remove all your clothes and make you walk naked in the street during the day. (Tutu, 15 yrs).

According to some of the key informants, the children in the street of Iwo road suffer a lot of injustices from the “big-boys” colleagues as they were not only robbed but also experience physical assault:

My dear what can you do? These children are really suffering from the hands of the big boys. Sometime I see the big-boys chasing the children and forcefully collecting their money from them. As if that is not enough, the children are beaten and injured as well. (Trader 1).

4.4.2 Arrest by Police

Participants also described their experiences with the Police in Iwo road. Those who came into conflict with the law reported that they spent more than the required number days in the cell before appearing before the judge for a bail or otherwise and were also maltreated in the cells.

I have once been arrested by the police and I spent two weeks in the cell because I fought with a colleague. But it took the grace of God and my grandmother to bail me out. (Bola, 14 yrs).

The police and I are not friends at all. They once arrested me in Lagos because I was begging for money and they took me to the station and locked me up in the cell for six days. I was the only one in the cell. (Tom, 14 yrs).

Others, like the 14 year old James, said they were wrongly arrested by the police at night instead of their colleagues who were smoking Indian hemp. Narrations of both sides of this scenario are given below:

Some of my colleagues that smoke Indian hemp usually run away when the police come for their usual patrol in search of them. Those of us who do not smoke are sometimes mistakenly arrested. So the police disturb us a lot. Immediately the police get here they will start arresting anybody they see; if you are too relax you are gone but if you can run you have no problem. (James, 14 yrs).

I'm always fortunate not to have been caught by the police. I have seen some guys who were arrested by the police and taken to the prison known as testing ground. They often

punish them by flogging them with hard objects like iron, wood and head of their gun. Presently our chairman in the street is in the prison as we speak. (Bayo, 17 yrs).

Police have never arrested me, but they have arrested people in my presence. If they catch them with cigarette or marijuana, they arrest them. I have been fortunate not to be arrested although I smoke. (Kola, 17 yrs).

Some participants on the other hand said they were fortunate to escape the wrath of the police when they come searching for other street boys who were engaged in criminal and other activities:

Three days ago, some senior boys were smoking marijuana, drinking and making noise at midnight so the police chased them and could not catch them. They came to the place where we were sleeping; they flashed the light, searched and smelt our mouths to know if we were also smoking. When they noticed that we were not part of those who were drinking and smoking, they asked us to go back to sleep and they left. (Steve, 16 yrs).

4.4.3 Frequent Illness

The findings showed that, due to the nature of the work they do, and the fact that the children lived unhygienic lives, they were exposed to different kinds of illnesses like malaria, stomach, fever, ear drum and body pains. Illness, they claimed made it difficult for them to work as narrated by Musa, Bayo and Tayo respectively:

We are mostly infected with malaria. You cannot escape mosquitoes once you decide to sleep in the street and I tell you the mosquitoes outside here are more dangerous than those in your rooms. (Musa, 13 yrs).

I often suffer from headache, stomach pain, heart pain and earache. I am sometimes challenged by these illnesses because when they come, I am unable to eat or work. (Bayo, 17 yrs).

This morning I was having a serious headache and body pains and I also used to have chest pain and fever. The work we do here is very tedious and we are easily subjected to frequent illness. (Tayo, 16 yrs).

4.4.4 Road Accident

The study revealed that the participants lived their lives in Iwo road which is dominated by vehicles and trucks. This situation made them prone to accidents as stated in the following narratives:

Road accident is very rampant on the street and many street boys like me are not exempted. I for instance have been knocked down by a car before when I was chasing another car to offload it. The driver did not even bother to stop. (Steve, 16 yrs).

You must be skilful and fast to work in Iwo road because it is dangerous and risky here. I have seen some of my friends been knocked down and killed by some crazy drivers. For instance, a boy was knocked down by a car yesterday night. His legs were broken with other body injury. (Moses, 16 yrs).

Look at my leg, a car stepped on me last week when I was working and the driver didn't mind me even when I screamed. I was later taken to a woman selling under the bridge who applied some native oil on it. (Mole, 14 yrs).

These accidents sometimes resulted in the untimely death of some of the children but the sad thing is that their relatives could not be found. The narratives of Kola is an example this scenario:

One day one boy was killed by a motor car when he was about to cross the highway, and the police came for his corpse the next day. It was difficult for the police to trace his relatives because nobody knew his home and family. Many of us fall victims to accidents on the streets. (Kola, 17 yrs).

4.4.5 Ritual Attacks

Another challenge that children living in Iwo road encountered was attacks by strangers for ritual purposes as commented in the following narratives:

A lot of things happen in Iwo road especially in the night when most of the people had gone home. For instance, a colleague of mine has been missing for weeks now. We slept under the bridge together that night. When we woke up he was nowhere to be found. (Musa, 13 yrs).

There are instances that a stranger may give you clothes or shoes and when you wear it you start acting abnormal and at times go mad. Similar thing happened to one of my friends called Abee. After collecting the cloth from one man, he went mad in Iwo road before his family came to take him away. So I am very careful when collecting something from a stranger. (Tom, 14 yrs).

4.4.6 Attack by Colleagues

It is surprising to know that the children in Iwo road faced attacks from their colleague street guys who were older than them. They revealed that fighting among the street children sometimes left them injured

Anytime I see them fighting with weapons I try to distance myself from them because of the past experience. One day they were fighting with different weapons like sticks, bottles, cutlass and iron, my friend was standing not too far away from the scene. One of those fighting came from the back and broke bottle on his head. (Baba, 16 yrs).

I use to be scared at Iwo road anytime they start breaking and stabbing themselves with bottles. Because I have experienced it before, they were fighting and they started breaking bottles, stabbing themselves with bottles and cutlass. (Kola, 17 yrs).

4.5 Coping Mechanisms adopted by Children living in the street of Iwo Road

This section presents the coping mechanism children living in the street of Iwo Road adopt to survive. In order to survive the numerous challenges in the street, the children sought assistance from colleagues, resorted to self-medication when they were sick, begged in times of need, were supported by sellers in the street while some also adopted smoking.

4.5.1 Assistance from Colleagues adopted

It was interesting to know that children in the street of Iwo Road lived in groups and life would have been impossible without helping each other. They said that they supported each other in difficult situations in ways described below:

Some of my friends used to buy food for me and I used to work to feed myself. I easily get infected with malaria and anytime I am not feeling well my friend will buy drugs for me.

(Mike, 13 yrs).

If anybody is sick they run to the elderly ones to ask for the kind of drugs they can use to cure the sickness. Sometimes we make contributions to buy drugs for those who don't have money and we get all the necessary drugs and food for them. That is the only way we help each other. (James, 14 yrs).

In support of this, some key informants, mostly the traders, shared the view that the children on the Iwo road street supported each other.

They moved to the streets with their friends and there are others who were lured to the street by their friends so they know each other more than we do. In terms of coping on the street, I think they help each other without which living an isolated life in the street would have worsened their case. (Trader 2).

4.5.2 Self-Medication

According to the children who participated in this study, they were unable to seek medical services at the hospital due to the cost involved. Some revealed that they treated themselves using herbs they believed could cure them.

When I am having pain on my ear drum there is a particular leaf I often use. I squeeze the leaves and drop the liquid inside my ear for few minutes; after sometime, the pain will stop and may come back in one or two months' time. But when I am suffering from stomach pain, headache or chest pain I go to the nearby shop to buy cheap tablets.

(Bayo, 17 yrs).

Anytime am sick, I take care of myself and my friends because my father was a herbalist, I will send them to the bush and tell them the type of leaves they need to get and they should buy for me in the market, and after that I will use it, because I don't use orthodox medicine, all I do is to take herbs. I know the leaves to use to cure any sickness. (Baba, 16 yrs).

4.5.3 Begging

It was revealed that, while some of the children begged for money and left-over food during events like parties, others joined Fulani's to beg for alms. See below the narrations of Kola, Mulika, Tom and Tayo respectively:

When I am hungry but do not have money, I look for where they are having party, I go there to beg for money or food. (Kola, 17 yrs).

Sometimes if there is no work to do, my friends and I go into begging for money and if I hear there is a party going on around Iwo road, we will run to the place to beg for food and money. (Mulika, 13 yrs).

When I wake up in the morning and there is no work, I go to a canteen nearby, I beg for leftover food to eat, after that I go back to sleep. We sometimes use the advantage and sit with Fulani people to beg for alms. Even the clothes I am wearing now are product of alms giving. (Tom, 14 yrs).

I don't have money to go to clinic so I beg for money from my friends and other people along the street to buy medicine and food any time I am sick. (Tayo, 16 yrs).

4.5.4 Assistance from Sellers in the Street

It was interesting to note that children in Iwo road who participated in this research stated that they also depended on traders in the streets for assistance such as food and other basic needs.

This was what Mike and Taju had to say:

In Iwo road, there is one woman that I have taken her as my mother because she takes good care of me. She feeds me, clothes me and asks me to take my bath and to wash my clothes. Also, there is another woman selling shoes, she used to give me some used shoes and any time she is cooking, she gave me food. (Mike, 13 yrs).

Some people are very good to me in Iwo road. There is one man and a woman who have taken me as their son. So, they always advised me on how to behave and be a good boy. Sometimes too I help them to do little things in the shop and they buy food and drinks for me. (Taju, 15 years).

Some of the key informants confirmed that the street children received assistance from sellers in the street when they help them carry their loads.

The children on the street usually get support from people that sell along the street. When the children help traders to carry their loads, some of the women pay more than the normal charge. For example, if they ask for hundred naira (₵100) for a load, some can give them hundred and fifty naira (₵150). They are able to cope with such money and some forget about going back home. (Social Worker 3).

Other key informants indicated that they offered support to the street children because they were saddened by the difficulties they faced. As commented by Trader 1:

Sometimes we look at the kind of life they live on the street and we feel sorry for them. I am always empathetic about their situation and majority of us seek to their needs when it arises. They do errands for me and afterwards I give them money and other things.
(Trader 1).

4.5.5 Smoking

The findings indicate that some of the participants smoked Indian hemp. Some participants revealed that smoking the drug before undertaking any work gave them the needed energy to complete the task as commented by Tom:

To be frank with you I smoke Indian hemp. I was initiated by my best friend and I cannot start the day without smoking. Working on the street is very tedious and you need to get something that gives you energy. When I 'high' (smoke Indian hemp), there is no work you will give me that I cannot do. (Tom, 16 yrs).

Both categories of key Informants, Social Workers and Traders in Iwo road confirmed that the street children in the streets of Iwo road engaged in the use of hard drugs as stated:

They engage in smoking, they smoke a lot, they have been addicted to smoking and majority of them take drug before they can do anything on street. (Social Worker 2).

My brother, I have never seen children smoke like those in Iwo Road Street. They smoke under the bridge and inside the market at night. They smoke during the night, make a lot of noise and fight alongside. (Trader 1).

4.6 Discussion of the Findings

This section discusses the findings of the study and identifies the extent to which the findings were supported or not supported by the literature reviewed. The discussion looks at how the objectives of this study were addressed in the findings. Further, the section discusses how the findings of the study were consistent or not with the theory (Symbolic Interactionism) that underpinned the study.

4.6.1 The Factors that Contribute to Streetism among Children living in the Street

The study reveals that different factors contribute to children living in the street of Iwo road. The study shows that, family disintegration in the form of divorce, separation and death of parents contributed to children living in the street of Iwo road. These events contributed to the children's perceptions that nobody in the family cared about their needs or loved them. This finding validates that of Alenoma (2012) and Ojo (2013) conducted in Ghana and Nigeria respectively. They both found that family disintegration in the form of divorce, separation, death of parent cause children to live in the street. Based, on their perceptions and on the meaning they create in relation to their relationship with their family, they acted by moving to the street. This confirms the assumption of the symbolic interactionism that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning that the things have for them. It is assumed that children believed that by moving to the street, they could survive by engaging in economic activities. Their decisions to move to the streets were based on the meanings they attached to the contributing factors to streetism, which are lack of parental care, family disintegration, abuse, poverty, delinquent act and low educational background.

The findings from this study also indicate that some street children in Iwo road were there because they committed offences such as stealing and as a result of the fear of punishment (by parents and/or caregivers) they moved to the street without returning home. These findings agree with others (Abebe, 2009; Seager, 2010) which indicate that most children face different kinds of parental abuse such as sexual, physical and psychological as well as poor parental relationships that send them to the street. This finding also supports the tenets of the symbolic interactionism which contend that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meaning that the things have for them. This is because the children perceived the home as abusive and believed that the street was the only safe place they could live in order to escape abuse.

Another contributing factor to streetism demonstrated in this study is the lack of financial capacity of parents to take care of their children due to factors such as lower educational levels and doing menial jobs (e.g., labourers for construction work). The children did not mince words by saying that they moved to the street because they had nobody to provide for their needs. Those who were staying with their grandparents were compelled to leave to the streets because these grandparents could no longer work to provide for the children's needs due to old age. This confirms Kayiranga and Mukasshema (2014) assertion that the general condition of poverty pushes children to the street to engage in economic activities.

4.6.2 The Street Life of Children Living in the Street

The findings of the study suggest that children in Iwo road engage in different activities and lifestyles to survive in the street. Evidence from this study shows that, street children had no permanent place they slept but rather it was based on the availability of unoccupied spaces such as in front of shops, over and under bridges along the street of Iwo road. The dangers of sleeping in the street exposed the children to a lot of health problems such as malaria, pneumonia and skin

infections. This finding corroborates the study conducted by Ray et al. (2011) which contend that street children find shelter in open places during the night as a result of lack of accommodation.

The study shows that street children in Iwo road engaged in multiple activities such as pushing of wheelbarrow with loads, carrying of loads, washing of cars and bus conducting in order to survive in the street. They pushed wheelbarrow with loads, which they usually hired, to help traders and customers to carry their loads in exchange for money. Some street children who could not afford to borrow wheelbarrows reported carrying loads on their heads as porters in exchange for money. These children hanged around shops, market places, and bus terminals to help customers carry their loads.

Another activity the children in Iwo road engaged in was washing of cars. While many of them stood in traffic and cleaned the windscreen of cars for drivers and received, or not, money from some drivers others worked in washing bays. Also, street children in Iwo road were engaged in bus conducting. The study found that the children who were usually stationed at bus stops helped drivers load passengers in return for money. The findings that street children in Iwo road engaged in multiple activities in order to survive in the street agree with the findings by Agency Francaise de Development (2012) which posits that street children survive on the street by engaging in begging and assisting food sellers.

4.6.3 The Challenges Faced by Children Living in the Street

The findings of the study revealed that children who live in the street of Iwo road face a lot of challenges such as being robbed of their daily earnings while sleeping. The study also revealed that some of the thieves that robbed them were unknown tugs while others were adults on the street who also lived in Iwo road. This incident affects the children physically, socially, emotionally and psychologically because it exposed the children to be equally violent and abusive to other younger street children. This finding corroborates the study by Hai (2014) conducted in Bangladesh which found that adult boys stole from the junior street children. This study also found that the street children are more likely to be bullied by their older colleagues and this validates a study conducted in India whose outcome indicate that junior street children are bullied by their seniors on the street (Chande, n.d).

A further challenge of street children in Iwo road is likelihood of being arrested for using drugs like Indian hemp and for other offences such as stealing and fighting. The finding suggests that sometimes there were genuine arrests while other times some of the children were mistakenly arrested by the police during police patrols; collaborating a study that Rabia and Mohammed (2015) which found that street children face constant harassment from the police. Some of these children sometimes spent more than the required number of days in the police cells before appearing before the judge for a bail or otherwise and were also maltreated in the cells. It is also interesting to note that sometimes the criminals evade arrests.

The current study also found that due to the fact that the street children lacked the required nutrition, lived unhygienic life and slept in open places like under the bridge and front of shops, they were exposed to different diseases such as malaria, which affected their work and movement and this is consistent with other studies (Pratibha, Mathur & Ansu, 2016; Chande,

n.d). Moreover, this study suggests that, the children encountered several other challenges living in the streets of Iwo road. They are prone to injuries and road accidents, attacks by thieves, frequent illness and ritual attacks.

4.6.4 The Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Children Living in the Street

According to the tenets of symbolic interaction theory, meanings are assigned and modified through an interpretive process that is ever changing, subject to redefinition, relocation and realignments. For children to survive in the street, they adopt numerous strategies; children directing and controlling self as well as sharing strategies on ways to avoid law enforcement. Nevertheless, as they grow in their day to day experiences in the street, they observe that people are able to escape the clutches of poverty through hard work and determination. This spring up their motivation to invest energy into any opportunity that promises them a better life. These mechanisms are adopted by street children in order to realign themselves to life in the street.

The street children living in Iwo road adopt both positive and negative mechanisms to cope with street life. Findings indicate that some of the children depended on assistance from their colleagues such as food and medicine in terms of illness. This finding validates a study conducted in Ghana by Julie and Seipel (2007) which reports that children in the street help each in terms of protection, and lending money to anyone among them who is sick and need to buy drugs and/or food. This finding is also in tandem with tenets of symbolic interaction. The theory posits that meaning arises in the process of interaction among individuals. Meaning for an individual emerges out of the ways in which other individuals act to define things. When children move to the street, they are initiated by their friends and taught various ways and means on how to survive in the street. They live according to how others have lived to survive. Sometimes children follow their friends to the street. Hence, while in the street, children receive

support from their friends from all angles.

Some of the street children employ self-medication whenever they fell ill. This corroborates the findings of Fiasorgbor and Fiasorgbor (2015) which revealed that street children in Accra coped with self-medication when they were sick. Furthermore, the study found that street children in Iwo road used begging as a coping strategy. They begged for food from nearby restaurants and places where events like parties were held as well as from strangers and traders. This finding is consistent to studies by Abebe (2009) and Lugalla and Mbwambo (1999) conducted in Addis Ababa and Tanzania respectively, which found that children who are responsible for their own welfare in the street beg for a living.

Further, evidence from the study indicates that street children in Iwo road coped by the help of street sellers. The traders that sold in the street of Iwo supported the children with food and money. While some of the traders gave them tips (in the form of food or money) for sending them on errands others supported the children out of pity. In addition, the findings show that some street children coped with the stress of the work they did on the street by using drugs such as Indian hemp with the intention of averting the stress. Many of them resort to smoking before their daily work and after the day's work which is consistent with other studies (Malindi & Cekiso; 2014; Msocsci, Meyer-weitz & Asante; 2016) indicating that street children cope on the street with drug addiction.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATION FOR SOCIAL WORK

5.1 Introduction

This section of the study consists of the summary of findings and conclusions. Recommendations are also made based on the findings of the study. The chapter ends by specifying what social workers can do to help children in the street based on the study findings.

5.2 Summary of Findings

Streetism is a problem still confronting many societies in Nigeria. The study therefore was conducted to explore the experiences of street children in Iwo road of Ibadan, Nigeria. The objectives of the study was to identify factors that contribute to streetism among children living in the streets of Iwo road, to explore street life of children living in the street of Iwo road, to find out the challenges children living in the streets of Iwo road of Ibadan face, and to ascertain the coping mechanisms adopted by children living in the streets of Iwo road of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Literature was reviewed thematically, beginning with the general overview of streetism and narrowed to the specific factors that contributed to streetism. It also looked at the contributing factors that push and pull a child in the streets as well as interventions by government and organizations aimed at evacuating children from the street.

The study adopted in-depth interviews to gather qualitative data. Twenty-two participants were purposively sampled for the study.

The findings indicated that different factors contributed to children moving to live in the street of Iwo road. The study found that family disintegration contributed to children living in the street. Their parents were divorced, dead, separated and some did not know their parents as well. As a result, the children lacked parental care hence they moved to the street to work to provide for themselves. In addition, it was found that the children moved to live in the streets after committing certain offences like stealing in the house and the fear of punishment by their parents or caregivers. The children who participated in this study revealed that their parents lacked the financial capacity to provide for their basic needs, such as school fees. This situation compelled many of them to move to the street.

Besides, the findings show that children in Iwo road were engaged in different street lifestyles. Evidence from this study shows that, street children slept in open places such as in front of shops after the shop owners had closed and gone home, at market places while some slept over and under bridges along the street of Iwo road. They slept on canopies and empty boxes on the ground or without any cover cloth.

The findings also indicate that street children in Iwo road engaged in multiple activities such as pushing of wheelbarrow with loads, carrying of loads, washing of cars and bus conducting in order to survive in the street.

Moreover, this study suggests that, the children who lived on Iwo road encountered several challenges living in the street. They were prone to injuries and road accidents, attacks by thieves, frequent illness and ritual attacks. The study also found that due to the fact that the street children lacked the required nutrition, lived unhygienic life and slept in open places like under the bridge and front of shops and, hence, they were exposed to different diseases such as malaria which affected their work and movement.

Additionally, street children in Iwo road adopted many coping mechanisms that made them survive in the street. As a group living in the street, they supported each other in times of need. The findings showed that many of them begged before they could eat or wear clothes. Another coping mechanism used when they were sick was self-medication. Also, the traders in the Iwo road supported the street children. Many of the street children were found to engage in drug abuse as a form of coping mechanism.

5.3 Conclusions

The study has shown that most of the children in the street were between the age 11 and 17 years. This is the period/age for a child to be in school, acquiring the needed knowledge and skillful tools that will enable him to become a good citizen and successful adult in life. Children on the street of Iwo road and their life style as well as the problems they encountered signify that streetism is a social problem that needs to be solved. The findings have made it clear that children did not just wake up and move to the street. There was interplay between different factors within the society that pushed children to the street to engage in economic activities. Factors such as poverty, family disintegration, lack of parental care, and juvenile delinquency contributed to children moving to live on the street. Children choose to live in the street because they believe they had been denied of some basic necessities by the society and think that comfort can be found in the street. This testifies the basic tenets of the symbolic interactionism that human beings attach meanings to how they view the world and react towards it.

Children in the street face difficult living conditions such as lack of basic facilities and not being in school. In order to survive, street children engage in different kinds of lifestyle that some times were harmful to their health or threatening to their lives. They engage in tedious work like pushing of wheelbarrow, washing of cars, carrying loads on their head and serving as conductors for buses. At night, they sleep in open places, provided there is space, regardless of all the dangers attached to it. The phenomenon of street children is a challenge to Nigeria and the children on the street. The street children are sometimes arrested by the police for smoking and fighting at night and others who do not commit offences are sometimes mistakenly arrested. Aside this, the children encounter challenges such as road accident, ritual acts, armed robbery and bullying by adults on the street.

Although children on the street adopt certain mechanisms such as begging, smoking, self-medication, support from traders and colleagues so as to survive, more needs to be done by the government of Nigeria, parents and guardians, non-governmental organizations and civil societies in order to manage the situation of street children.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

The procedure followed in this study was useful to highlighting the experiences of street children in Iwo Road of Ibadan. However, the study cannot be said to be without any limitation, just like any other study. The study was designed to explore the experiences of street children such as factors that contributed to streetism, life style of street children, challenges street children face and coping mechanism adopted by street children. This research work is limited on two accounts. The first was that only male street children participated in this study. This means that the views of street girls were not represented in this study. Although, there might have been girls within this study area in the past and/or after the study, but as at the time of data collection, there were

only boys in the street who met the research criterion. The second limitation is that the sample size for the study is not big enough to make generalization that will include other street children in Ibadan. The findings from this study are therefore limited to Iwo road of Ibadan and cannot be generalized to other streets in Ibadan. Despite the limited nature of Iwo road as the study area, the researcher settled on Iwo road because he was interested in the experiences of research participants in relation to the research topic. Based on that, the study recommends that future studies should focus more on larger sample size and extend investigation to the children living in other streets as well as street girls.

5.5 Recommendations

5.5.1 Policy/ Government:

The study makes the following recommendations for the improvement of the lives of children living and working in the street due to the fact that a lot of children are still out of school.

- Government should allocate specific funds to support poor families, especially, families of children who were pushed into the street due to poor family background. This intervention could help prevent more children from moving into the street.
- The ministry of social welfare and organisations that work for the welfare of street children should coordinate their activities by pooling resources together to address the challenges faced by children who live in the streets. Temporary shelters could be provided for the children till lasting solution is found. Funding should be provided for the children who want to go back to school. Those who prefer vocational skills could also be given skills such as shoe and beads making, fashion designing and carpentry. These skills could equip them for the job market than living on the streets.

The media:

- The media should sensitize and educate the general public on the dangers associated with children living in the street. The media could also create awareness about the for society to be child-friendly and demonstrate affection to children living in the street who need help and attention to grow into a responsible and good citizen with potential for future leadership in society.

Implications for Social Work Practice

- As educators, social workers can educate and sensitize families and communities about the emotional, physical, social and developmental needs of children in the street and the dangers involved and the need to get street children off the street.
- Parents can be educated on the rights of the child and their responsibilities towards the care and protection of their children in order to limit the neglect of children.
- Social workers have a responsibility to offer counselling services on behavioural and child psychology to families to reduce the level of violence and abuse in the house since it contributes to streetism.
- Children living in the street can be helped by social workers through linking them to organizations that seek the welfare of street children such as social welfare, ministry of women affair, child development foundation and Don Bosco Children Home. This could help to address many situations of children in the street especially those in Iwo road.

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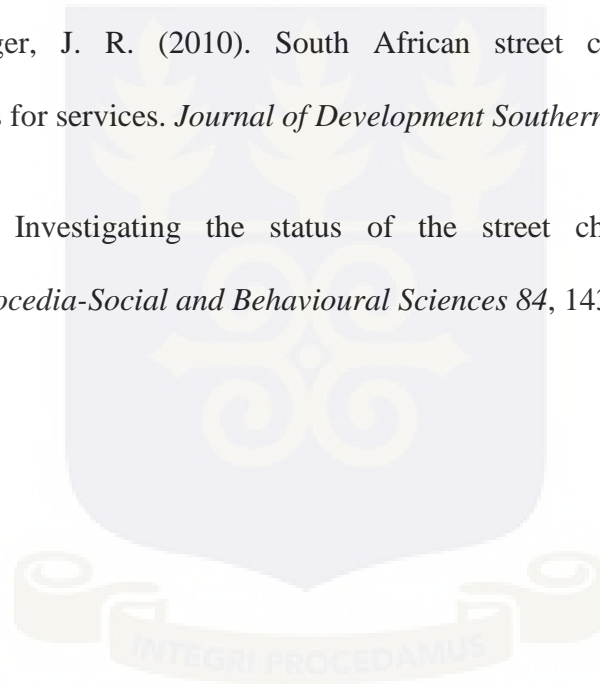
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APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview guide for children living in the street

This study set out to explore the experiences of street children in Iwo Road of Ibadan, Nigeria. I would be grateful if you could respond to the Questions by sparing some minutes of your time. Your responses will be treated with absolute confidentiality since this work will be used purely for academic purpose only.

Background information

- Sex
- Age
- Education
- Religion
- State of Origin

Family background

1. How many siblings do you have?
2. What is your position in relation to your siblings, 1st, 2nd, 3rd etc.?
3. Did/do you live with your family?
4. What is the composition of your family?
5. Do you live with both parents and what is the relationship?
6. What are the occupations of your parents?
7. What are the educational levels of your parents?
8. Do your siblings attend schools? If not why?
9. What grade are your siblings?

Education Background

1. Are you currently in school?
2. Have you ever been enrolled in school?
3. What highest level of education do you have?
4. Did/do you like school?
5. What are some of the experiences you had in school?
6. Would you want to go back to school?
7. What kind of school would you want?
8. Have you talked to anybody about school?
9. How/what do you want to contribute to the society when you grow up?

A. Factors that Contribute to Streetism among Children Living in the Streets

1. What brought you to the street?
2. What is your view about streetism?
3. What are some of the things you need (health, physical, and emotional needs)?

B. Street life of children living in the Street

1. How long have you been in the street?
2. How is your typical day in the street?
3. How do you fend for yourself in the street?
4. Where do you sleep?
5. How long have you been sleeping there?
6. Do you easily get a place to sleep?
7. What benefits do you derive from being in the street (Financial/economic and social benefit)?

8. How often do you see your family?
9. Do you have a surrogate family in the street?
10. Do you receive any form of assistance from any organization in relation to education?
11. Do you find the street as a home?
12. How do you feel about your present conditions?
13. Do you have any advice for other street children?
14. Would you recommend the streets for other children?

C. Challenges Children Living in the Street

1. What are some of the challenges you face in the street?
 - With customers selling food items, and household material etc.
2. Who cares for you when you are sick?
3. What is your relationship with other street children?
4. What is your relationship with the police?
5. What is your view about streetism?
6. How does the general public treat you? Are they friendly or unfriendly? Why?

D. Coping mechanisms Adopted by Children Living in the Street

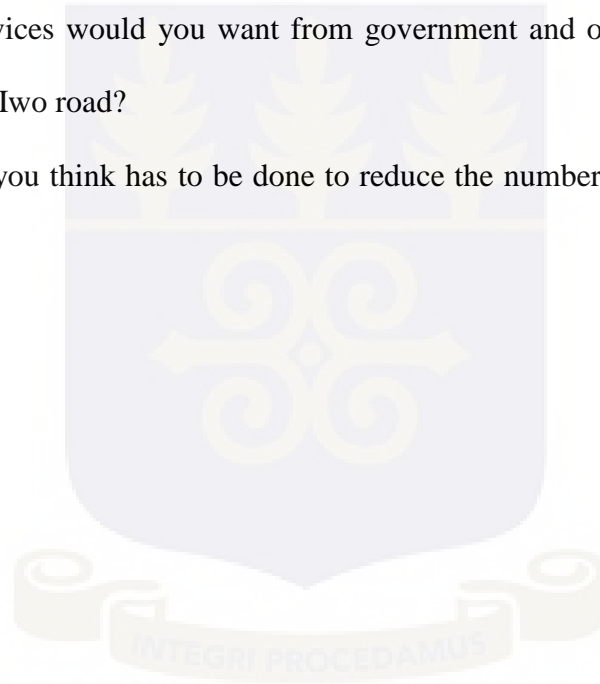
1. How do you meet your physiological needs?
 - Your health needs
 - Emotional needs
2. How do you survive in the street?
3. What are some of the support structures you rely on in the street?

Future Ambitions

1. Where do you see yourself ten years from now?
2. How do you wish to get there?

Remedial Measures

1. What do you think are the needs of street children?
2. What do you think should be done about the street children situation in Iwo road. Ibadan?
3. What services would you want from government and organizations working for street children in Iwo road?
4. What do you think has to be done to reduce the number of street children in Iwo road?



APEENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide for key Informants.

This study set out to explore the experiences of street children in Iwo Road of Ibadan, Nigeria. I would be grateful if you could respond to the Questions by sparing some minutes of your time. Your responses will be treated with absolute confidentiality since this work will be used purely for academic purpose only.

Background Information

- Sex.....
- Age.....
- Ethnicity
- Place of birth?
- Profession
- Level of Education.....
- Marital Status?

A. Factors that contribute to streetism among children living in the street of Iwo road of Ibadan.

1. What do you think are the factors of the street children phenomenon in Iwo road?
2. What are your view about street children?
3. How often do you see or interact with street children?
4. What do you feel when you encounter street children?
5. How do you treat street children when you encounter them?

B. Street life of children living in the street

1. How would you describe street living in Iwo Road, Ibadan by children?

2. What are some of the activities street children engage in, daily?
3. What differences have you noticed between street children and other children in the community?

C. Challenges children living in the streets of Iwo road of Ibadan face.

1. How would you rate the condition of street children?
2. What are the challenges street children face?
3. How are the children living in the street treated by the general public?
4. Who takes care of the street children when they are sick?
5. How is your relationship with the street children?
6. What influences or effects do you think living in the street has on the children?
7. In what ways do you think children living in the street of Iwo road, Ibadan affect the city (or the country) as a whole?

D. Coping mechanisms adopted by children living in the street of Iwo road of Ibadan.

1. What are some of the activities street children engage in, daily?
2. How do street children survive in the street?
3. What are some of the support street children get in the street?
4. What do you think are the needs of street children?
5. What do you think should be done about the street children situation in Iwo Road, Ibadan?
 - Do you have any other comments?

APPENDIX C: DEMOGRAPHIC FOR STREET CHILDREN (ALL BOYS).

Pseudo-names	Age (Year)	Educational level	State of origin	Position in the family	No of siblings	Parent relationship	Number of Months/Years in the Street
Musa	13	non	Ibadan	1 st	Non	Dead	6 months
Kola	17	primary	Osun	6 th	3	Divorced	8 months
Bola	14	non	Ibadan	3 rd	2	Dead	9 months
Steve	16	Junior sec school	Ibadan	1 st	Non	Divorced	19 month
Tayo	16	Junior sec. school	Ondo	1 st	Non	I don't know	11 months
Bayo	17	Primary	Ilesha	4 th	2	Divorced	2 years
Moses	16	Non	Ekiti	2 nd	2	Separated	17 months
Taju	15	Primary	Ogun	3 rd	2	Separated	7 months
Mulika	13	Primary	Ibadan	8 th	3	Dead	8 months
Mike	13	Primary	Oyo	2 nd	1	Separated	9 months
Kemi	16	Primary	Ibadan	4 th	3	Divorced	15 months
Baba	16	Non	Ondo	7 th	2	Dead	12 months
James	14	Primary	Ibadan	1 st	Non	Divorced	10 months
Mole	14	Non	Ilorin	1 st	Non	Dead	6 months
Kunle	13	Primary	Ondo	3 rd	4	Separated	8 months
Tutu	15	Junior sec. school	Akure	5 th	2	Separated	11 months
Dada	14	Primary	Ibadan	3 rd	1	Separated	7 months

APPENDIX D: DEMOGRAPHIC FOR KEY INFORMANTS

Pseudo-names	Gender	Age	Place of Birth	Profession	Educational Level	Marital Statute	Place of Work/ Business	Number of Children
Amaka	F	38yrs	Kano	Trader	Senior Sec. School	Married	Iwo Road	4
Olu	M	46yrs	Ogun	Trader	Senior Sec. School	Married	Iwo Road	3
Mike	M	45yrs	Lagos	Social worker	Degree	Married	Don Bosco Children Home	2
Musa	M	29yrs	Ibadan	Social Worker	Degree	Single	Don Bosco Children Home	Non
Chichi	M	28yrs	Anambra	Social Worker	Degree	Single	Don Bosco Children Home	Non