



INVOLVEMENT OF ALMAJIRIS IN VIOLENT CRIMES IN SOKOTO METROPOLIS, SOKOTO STATE NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This paper focused on the involvement of Almajiris in violent crimes in Sokoto Metropolis. The word 'Almajiri (student) is singular' derived from the Arabic word 'Almuhajir' emigrant. It refers to an Islamic method of acquiring and memorizing the Glorious Qur'an in Hausa/Fulani community where boys at their tender ages are sent out by their parents or guardians to the far and near villages, towns and cities for the search of Qur'anic education under an Islamic scholar called Mallam. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated for the study. Sokoto metropolis sample of the study was 300 Almajiris randomly drawn from the Almajiris population of 14,470 in Sokoto State. A researcher developed instrument titled, "Almajiris Violent Crimes Questionnaire" (AVCQ) was employed to collect data. The questionnaire was subjected to validation by an experts and its reliability was determined using Cronbach Alpha. This yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.76. The data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The findings of the study revealed that the prevalence of violent crimes was high in the study area. The violent crimes commonly committed by the Almajiris included, stealing, post-election violence, pick pocketing violent victimization, purse snatching. Recommendations of the study were highlighted and conclusion drawn. The Almajiri schools teachers (Mallams) should respect and consider the rights and future of the Almajiris in their Schools and monitor their activities closely.

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INTRODUCTION

Involvement of Almajiris in violent crimes in Sokoto Metropolis.

A crime is an illegal act which is punishable by law. According to Selwan and Narany (2007) crime is an unlawful act which is an offence against the public and renders the person guilty of the act or default liable to legal punishment. It is an illegal act or offence committed by a person or group of person against the state law which punishment can be inflicted as a result of judicial proceedings taken in the name of the state. The use of physical force in the cause of committing an unlawful act is called violent crimes. Violent crimes therefore are any forms of offence or unlawful act that is accompanied

by the use of physical force. Nigeria is indeed riddled with pervasive violent crimes resulting from the socio-economic challenges. Violence as a social problem has permeated educational institutions in Nigeria. This has greatly undermined not only the quality of education in the country but also severely impacts negatively on right to education as observed from the increasing number of people who drop out from the schools due to the inherent dangers associated with schooling in violence prone environments (Nnehedum, (2012). Violence has many faces, which includes gang activities, House to house thefts, bullying, assault or any action that causes physical harm on a person (Volokh& Snell, 1998). The word 'Almajiri (student) is singular' derived from the Arabic word 'Almuhajirun' migrants. It refers to a Islamic method of acquiring and memorizing the Glorious Qur'an in Hausa/Fulani community where boys at their tender ages are sent out by their parents or guardians to the far and near villages, towns and cities for the search of Qur'anic education under an Islamic

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scholar called *Mallam*. The Almajiris (plural of Almajiri) are classified as; adults, adolescents and infants. The Adult engage in some labour services for a means of livelihood, while the adolescents and infants beg for alms/food (Bambale, 2003).

Almajiri Education has long been recognized as an integral part of the total education process in the northern Nigeria. It is acknowledged that Almajiri Education helps in the development of physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well-being of the students. Ja'afar (2008) declared that the Almajirci (learning) system of education was designed for the intellectual and moral training (of pupils/students). This point was further strengthened when Hamza (2009) stated that Almajiris who successfully completed their studies and become scholars are those that mostly take the responsibilities of Imams, mediators, Khadis (judges), counselors, Emirs, kings etc. The types of enrolment in the Almajiris Schools have intellectual objectives. Those that are enrolled under the domestic type are mostly restricted and exposed to reading and writing of Glorious Qur'an only, while the boarding ones were mostly aimed at producing future teachers and professionals in various fields, such as Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence), Sirah, (Prophets biographical life), Hadith (sayings and practices of Prophet (S.A.W.) among others. The primary goals of the Almajiri Education according to Sule (2000) are to produce a faithful and pious piety man that will be useful to the society in general. Almajiri Education Teachers are an essential part of the Almajiris School System, They encourage students to be spiritually and morally active and promote good habits. The teachers are well-trained personnel that provide instruction to students to help them in any areas of difficulties. The teacher teaches the students from the beginning until they graduate from the school. However in the process of teaching both the Almajiri and their teachers do experience stress and frustration.

The involvement of Almajiri in violent crimes has made the Almajiri schools environment unsafe for teaching and learning and researching. In the early 1970s and 1980s, the school environment was safe and secured for learners and physical development of Individual. Today the situation has changed drastically and the school environment has become a 'source of worry, anguish and misery for Almajiris, Mallams (teachers), and parents. The pervasive of violent crimes in Sokoto state has rendered Almajiris Schools of learning unsafe for human habitation. Khalid (2000) observed that Almajiri schools change from its origin or purpose to the centre of violence, torture and unwarranted intimation executed by seniors to the junior ones. They plan and execute violent crimes like steeling in neighbouring houses. They talk tough, and believe tough and can easily go to other Almajiri Schools from their own, in a bid to perpetuate evil. This malady appears to have rendered Almajiris schools unmanageable with pervasive violence perpetuated by Almajiris especially if the Mallams keep the large number of them in the school. The involvement of Almajiris in violent crimes in school most often is as result of terrible condition they see themselves as result of hardship they are facing. Indeed, many of the crimes imputed to the Almajiris were actually perpetrated by criminal gangs such as 'Yandaba', 'Area Boys', "'Yankalare', 'Sara-suka' or vigilantes, with little or no western schooling and not bothering to attend Qur'anic schools they used the cover of being Almajiris while they are not but they succeed in victimizing many Almajiris because there is no security in the Almajiris schools in the country and no control in the enrolment or admission. In Almajiris education systems anybody can be a member.

It is not yet known empirically the causes of Almajiris student's involvement in violent crimes, the forms of violent crimes they commit and the frequency of occurrence. It is against this background that the present study was undertaken to examine critically the violent crimes Almajiris (Students) commits, its etiology and pervasiveness among students in Sokoto spoiling Almajiri Schools.

Statement of the Problems

There is no doubt in saying the fact that, there are many forms of violent crimes that are associated with the Almajiris, in Sokoto metropolis. Amongst these are steeling, fighting, punching, pushing, partiality, disruptive behaviours threats of violent, child abuse, psychological violent, denial of rights, hunger and starvation. Some of the causes of violence crimes by Almajiris, are corporal punishments, drugs abuse and steeling of students properties. While some causes of violent are lack of financial support by the State and Local Government, parents. Peer group Influence, feeling neglected /rejected by society, feeling bad for wearing dirty clothes, feeling of no future, lack of interest for being Almajiri, feeling of no security in the school, feeling of depressed, feeling hungry, Influence of negative value system, lack of dedicated teachers who devote their life in the warship of Allah, nonchalant attitude by the government to Almajiris education, indiscipline among almajiris etc. As it is assumed that these students are future leaders of tomorrow it becomes pertinent to identify the areas where counselling could be provided based on their areas of problems so as to assuage the causes of violent crimes by making recommendations for counselling or government to give more care on their education system. Therefore this study is set to investigate the involvement of Almajiris in violent crimes so as to take measures for our society to move forward.

Objectives

The objectives of the study are:

- To identify the forms of violent crimes among Almajiris in Sokoto metropolis Sokoto State.
- To find out the causes of Almajiris (student) involvement in violent crimes in Sokoto metropolis Sokoto State?

Research Questions

This study is instituted to find out:

- What are the forms of violent crimes among Almajiris in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State?
- What are the causes of Almajiris involvement in violent crimes in Sokoto metropolis, Sokoto State?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The design adopted was descriptive survey research. The study was conducted in some Almajiri Schools in Sokoto metropolis. Out of the 83 Almajiri Schools in the metropolis, 30 were selected to represent the total schools population, Five (5) schools each from Dange-Shuni, Wamakko and Kware local government areas that falls within the metropolis, while Eight (8) and seven (7) schools were selected in Sokoto North and South local governments respectively. A total of 10 Almajiris (students) were selected purposively as respondents to the questions raised in the questionnaire from each school selected to give a total of 300 respondents. The total population of

Almajiris in Sokoto metropolis was given as Seven Thousand, Eight Hundred and Fifty Four (7,854) by Ministry of Religious Affairs (MORA 2008). The instrument for the study are researcher developed questionnaire Titled "Pervasive Violent Crimes Questionnaire (PVCQ). It consisted of three parts, A, B, &C, Part A was bio-data of respondents, part B comprised 20 items on the forms of violent crimes and Part C consisted of 10 items that highlighted the causes of violent crime. The questionnaire was developed on four point rating scale of strongly Agree (4 points) and strongly Disagree (1 point). A mean score of 2.50 and above was used as a cut-off point for decision making on each item. The questionnaire was validated by an expert in the department of counseling psychology, Faculty of Education, Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto. The expert critically examined the relevance of the questionnaire items in relation to the research questions, its appropriateness and clarity of statements. They also advised the researcher on the suitability of the rating scales. Their observations and recommendations were taken into consideration in the final modifications of the instrument. A preliminary assessment was conducted on the questionnaire where the instrument was tested on 20 Almajiris drawn in Yabo LGA Almajiri Schools (Makarantun Allo). This enabled the researcher to generate the data for computing the internal consistency of the instrument. This was done using Cronbach Alpha method which after computation yielded internal reliability the coefficient of 0.72, and 0.8 respectively. These scores were high enough to consider the instrument reliable for the study. Copies of the questionnaire were then administered by the researcher with the help of some research assistants who translated the instrument in Hausa language for the respondent's easy understanding. Descriptive statistics which involved the use of mean was used to answer the research questions. Any respondent that scores 2.50 and above indicates a positive response while any respondent who scored below 2.50 indicates negative response.

RESULTS

The results of this study are presented in tables based on the research questions that guided the study presents the forms of violent crimes pervasive in the Almajiri schools What are the forms of violent crimes among Almajiris in Sokoto metropolis? Mean Responses on the Forms of Violent Crimes involvement in Sokoto metropolis.

S/NO	ITEM DESCRIPTION	X	SD	DECISION
1	Steeling	2.05	1.04	Disagree
2	Fighting	2.84	1.13	Agree
3	Punching	2.77	0.93	Agree
4	Pushing	3.41	0.61	Agree
5	Partiality	3.14	0.87	Agree
6	Disruptive behaviours	2.85	0.86	Agree
7	Treats of violent	2.69	1.06	Agree
8	Child abused	3.46	0.79	Agree
9	Psychological violent	3.00	0.95	Agree
10	Penial of rights	3.10	0.94	Agree
11	Hunger and starvation	3.82	0.60	Agree
12	Allegation by colleagues	3.54	0.68	Agree
13	Discriminations	2.88	1.05	Agree
14	Religious fundamentalism	2.65	0.93	Agree
15	Hard labour	3.43	0.65	Agree
16	Corporal punishment	3.54	0.68	Agree
17	Gangsterism	3.23	0.78	Agree
18	Ethnicity	3.10	0.94	Agree
19	Slapping while begging	3.82	0.60	Agree
20	Flogging with hand	3.51	0.79	Agree
Grand X		62.86	11.51	
Average X		2.14	0.58	

Source researcher's work, 2015

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Respondent on the Causes of Almajiris Involvement in Violent Crimes

S/no	Item Description	X	sd	
		Decision		
1	Les concern by parent	3.42	0.71	Agree
2	Peer group influence	2.86	0.83	Agree
3	Feeling neglected society	2.51	0.78	Agree
4	Feeling bad for wearing dirty clothes	3.04	0.59	Agree
5	Feeling of hopelessness	2.83	0.83	Agree
6	Lack of interest for being Almajiri	3.41	0.71	Agree
7	Feeling of no security in the school	2.88	0.64	Agree
8.	Feeling depressed	3.12	0.63	Agree
9	Feeling hungry always	3.12	0.63	Agree
10	Influence of negative value system	3.36	0.68	Agree

The data in table 1 shows that the respondents agreed to all the items (2 to 20) but one as the forms of violent crimes pervasive in the Almajiri schools. These items had mean scores that ranged from 2.65 to 3.82 which are above the criterion mean of 2.50. However the respondents disagreed with item one which had a mean score of 2.05. This score is below the criterion mean of 2.50. This means that only staling is not a crime committed in the Almajiri schools among all the other types of crime listed. What are the causes of Almajiris involvement in violent crimes in Sokoto metropolis Almajiri schools?. These scores were above the criterion mean of 2.50 and therefore accepted. The respondents therefore perceived all the items as the major causes of almajiris (students) involvement in violent crimes.

DISCUSSION

The study was guided by two research questions which focused on the Almajiris involvement in violent crimes. The study revealed that Almajiris are involved in violent crimes such as stealing, fighting, pushing, corporal punishment, pick pockets, interreligious violence and petty delinquency and street crime. Abubakar A N, (2010, Sule, (2011) and Alkali (1998) who identified that the students in Almajiris, schools are involved in one of violent crime or the other. There is no gain saying the fact that Almajiris involvement in crimes adversely affect their studies pursuit and exposed them to danger especially the adolescents and infant among them. The result of the study reveal that, Almajir is students involvement in violent crimes is caused by the following factors; poverty, poor parental care, lack of school rules, violation of Almajiris students' rights, influence of mass media, harsh policies by the Mallams (Teachers) in the school, negative value system. The findings are in consonance with the views of Ahmad (2001), Binanchi (2003) and adams (2000) who observed that Almajiris (students) resort to violence when they are threatened, Abdallah (1999) argued that incidence of violent crimes in Sokoto Almajiris schools is caused by poverty, or value system and absence of school rules and regulations.

The outcome of this study also agrees with Bambale (1996) Khaldum (1989) when they observed that Almajiris in Almajiri schools engage in one form of violent crime or the other. There has been much concern for the increasing bad attitude of Almajiris involvement in violent crimes in Sokoto metro police and Nigeria at large.

The dimension which this problems has assumed and the inherent dangers which it portend for the educational and security development of the nation make it expedient for more stringent measures to be taken against the menace. As feeling bad for sleeping on bare floor, feeling neglected /rejected by the society, feeling hungry most of the time, feeling bad

always for wearing dirty clothes and, feeling ashamed in the presence Children is observed as problems that need counseling intervention in the state.

Conclusion

The pervasive violent crimes by Almajiris in sokoto metro police has undermined individual's right to the formal education system. The Almajiris continuous involvement in various forms of crime such as fighting, steeling, robbery etc has made the Almajiris schools environment not conducive for learning. There are many reported cases of Almajiris leaving their schools to avoid being harmed by their colleagues. The level of Almajiris involvement in crime is associated with poverty, less concerned of the state government in helping the Almajiris and their schools teachers, and lack of disciplinary structures among other factors.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of study and the conclusions thereof, the following recommendations are made:

- The Almajiri schools teachers (Mallams) should respect and consider the rights and future of the Almajiris in their Schools and monitor their activities closely.
- The government should provide a conducive environment that would enhance learning activities for Almajiris and their Mallams (Teachers). The provision of feeding and some social amenities or facilities in their school will facilitate teaching and learning activities and prevent crime.
- Government and NGOS should organize workshops, seminars and orientations to sensitize Almajiri School Mallams (teachers) for Almajiris to be informed on the dangers of getting involved in violent crimes. By so doing the students will become aware of the devastating effect of violent crime and keep away from them.
- There is need to establish counseling centers in the state to monitor the activities of all Almajiri schools in Sokoto state where students will be assisted to resolve their conflicts, educational, vocational and personal to excel problems.
- Parents and guardians should be sensitized through the use of mass media on the need to devote more time and resources in to educating and training of their children. This is because the home is the first school where the child should learn morals, ethics, discipline and values.

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