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**Influence of Street Begging on School Age Children's Education in Gusau Metropolis,  
Zamfara State, Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

The study investigated the effect of street begging on School age children's education in Gusau metropolis, Zamfara state. The study was guided by three objectives, three research questions and three null hypotheses. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. The researcher sample 398 for the population 40,715. Adapted questionnaire titled Street Begging and School age children's education in Gusau (SBSACE) was used for the data collection. The instrument was subject for routinization by experts and pilot tested. A Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of  $r = 0.87$  was obtained. The researchers were assisted by four recruited research assistants collected the data. The data collected were run with Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS), 23 for analysis. The SPSS package was used to run mean scores and standard deviations to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using regression analysis at significant the level of 0.05. The results of the study showed that street begging has negative influence on enrolment, attendance and retention of school age children in Zamfara State. The study concluded that the level of illiteracy and threat of school dropouts will increase if the situation remains unchanged. Consequently, the yarning of school for all will not be achieve. The study recommended that the state government and NGOs should create public awareness on the need to encouraging school enrolment of children. In addition, parents should be aware of the importance of education on growth and development of their children and society at large.

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**Introduction**

The compulsory education for all children below the age of 14 years was introduced by the Federal Republic of Nigeria. To achieve this, Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) emphasises in the National Policy of Education that every Nigerian child shall have a right to equal educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imagined disabilities. To this end, the President Olusegun Obasanjo launched the new Universal Basic Education (UBE) on free and compulsory education for school-age children in September 1999. The introduction is to meet up with the global declaration of achieving the policy on Education for All (EFA) in the year 2000. The aims of Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme is to among others provide free, compulsory universal basic education for every Nigerian child; reduce drastically, drop-out rate from the formal school system through

improved relevance and efficiency and develop in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and strong commitment to its promotion. It is worth saying that Universal Basic Education (UBE) was initiated to provide school children with desire skills, knowledge, competencies and values needed to be responsible citizens.

Despite the initiative, there is a general complain on negative attitude of children enrolled in basic education in North-west, Nigeria. Specifically, the study conducted by Lekwa & Anyaogu (2016) report added there is low enrolment of children in Basic education with high level dropouts. Statistically, the study reported that only 64% of the pupils in primary school completed class six, and only 43.5% continued on to junior secondary school. The situation in Zamfara State is more worrisome as less than 50% of school age children enrolled in basic education, and less than 42% completed their educational secondary school education. (Okene, 2013). Likewise, the study conducted by Femi (2017) reported that, many schools have not much to show on the enrollment of school age children as the percentage enrolment was considered to be too low. Okene (2013) attributed the low enrollment of children in schools in North-West Nigeria to hawking and street begging.

Street begging is one the means of generating income among school-age children, disabilities and aged people in in Northern Nigeria. Specifically, it is widely practiced among children that were popularly call “Almajiri” in the area, despite the attendant moral and physical dangers attributed to the such practices. The street begging needs of the children include money, food and cloths. Fawole, Ogunkan & Omoruan, (2011) lamented that in Nigeria, parents that are not able to continue sustaining their children at school, as a result, many parents withdraw their children from school and sending them into the streets to beg for money that will sustain the family. Based on the above, the trend of street begging in Zamfara State prompted the researcher to investigate its influence on enrolment, attendance and retention of school age children in basic education in Gusau, Zamfara State.

### Objectives of the Study

. The specific Objectives of the study are:

1. Determine the influence of street begging on students’ enrolment in basic education in Gusau, Zamfara State.
2. Determine the influence of street begging on school attendance of basic education students in Gusau Zamfara State
3. Determine the influence of street begging on retention of basic education students in Gusau, Zamfara State.

### Research Questions

The following research questions were answered

1. What is the influence of street begging on students’ enrolment in basic education in Gusau, Zamfara State?
2. What is the influence of street begging on school attendance of basic education students in Gusau, Zamfara State?
3. What is the influence of street begging on retention of basic education students in Gusau, Zamfara State?

### Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses are raised and tested at the significant level of  $P \leq 0.05$ .

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**H<sub>01</sub>:** Street begging has no significant influence on enrolment of students in basic education in Zamfara State.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Street begging has no significant influence on class attendance of students in basic education students in Zamfara State.

**H<sub>03</sub>** Street begging has no significant influence on students' retention in basic education in Zamfara State.

### Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey design. A survey approach according to Kabir & Adamu (2019) is a systematic and organized attempt to analyze, interpret and report the present status of social institution or group of area for the purpose of making inference and decision making. The design was considering appropriate because it enabled the researcher to obtain data for the purpose of testing hypotheses and answering research questions related to influence of hawking and street begging on enrolment and retention in secondary schools, Zamfara State, Nigeria. The design was a vital means through which the researcher could generate data through manipulation of the variables of the study.

The researchers sampled 398 respondents across the 4 groups of the target population 40,715 school age children in Zamfara state. The population comprised of basic education students, school drop outs, street begging children (Source: Department of Social Service), Gusau LGA. Proportional sample technique of 0.00529 was used to draw the sample of each of the cluster. To meet four cardinal features of a good sample (accessibility, economy, practicability, and feasibility), the researcher used random sample technique to select six schools that were used for the study.

The instrument for the data collection was 4-point rating scale questionnaire titled Street Begging and Schooling of School Age Children (SBSSAC). The instrument was structured as follows: Strongly Agree (SA), 4 points; Agree (A), 3 points; Disagree (D), 2 points and Strongly Disagree (SD), 1 point. The respondents were required to tick in accordance to their level of agreement. The instrument was validated by 4 experts and their corrections were incorporated into the final copy. Fifty (50) copies of validated instrument were subjected to pilot study. The pilot test was conducted at Tsafe, in Zamfara State that is outside the study area that shared the same characteristics with regard to culture, religion, children engagement in economics activities with Gusau. The data collected from pilot test were subjected to Cronbach Alpha test and A reliability coefficient of  $r=0.87$  was obtained. The instrument was considered reliable based on the submission of Uzoagulu (2011) who opined that a minimum of  $r = 0.65$  acceptable reliability coefficient of a survey instrument.

The researchers with the help of four research assistants collected the data using direct approach. The approach was considered suitable considering the age, exposure and communication skills of the target respondents. The duty of the research assistants is developing confidence, distribute the instrument, interpreting in their local language (Hausa) and retrieving the instrument from the respondents. The exercise lasted for 3 weeks.

The data collected from the study were run with Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS, 23) for analysis. The SPSS package was used to run mean scores and standard deviations to answer the research questions. The decision rule was based on the index score for agree is at least 2.5. The three null hypotheses were tested using logistic regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance. In

the test of the hypotheses, if  $p \geq 0.05$ , the null hypothesis was rejoinced and if  $p \leq 0.05$ , the null hypothesis was rejected.

### Results and Discussion

The results of research questions were as presented in Tables 1 to 3.

**Research Question One:** What is the influence of street begging on student enrolment in basic education in Zamfara State?

**Table 1: Mean analysis for the influence of street begging on basic education students' school enrolment**

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. dev.	Remark
1.	I love street begging than going to school	2.72	0.68	Agree
2.	My parents did not enrol me in school because they want me to be supporting them financially.	3.40	0.85	Agree
3.	The inability of my parents to finance my schooling led me to engage in street begging.	2.81	0.70	Agree
4.	I prefer engaging in street begging to schooling	2.46	0.62	Disagree
5.	My daily street begging routine hinders me from schooling	3.16	0.79	Agree
6.	street begging hindered me from schooling	3.18	0.79	Agree
7.	My parental encouragement for street begging stop them from enrolling me in school	2.15	0.54	Disagree
8.	My financial to the family hindered them from enrolling me in school	2.83	0.71	Agree
9.	The socio-economic benefit of street begging hinder me from school enrolment	2.03	0.51	Disagree
10.	The economics benefit derive from street begging lured me to engage and deter my schooling	2.45	0.61	Disagree
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>2.77</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

The result of the items used to answer research question one presented in Table 1 revealed the minimum score of 2.03 with standard derivation of 0.51 and the maximum score was 3.40 with standard deviation of 0.85. From the Table, mean scores of 4 items were found to be under the benchmark of disagree while the mean scores of 6 items were under the index score of agree. The grand mean score of 2.77 obtained suggested that respondents agreed with the items used to determine the influence of street begging on student enrolment in basic education in Zamfara State.

**Research Question Two:** What is the influence of street begging on school attendance of basic education students in Zamfara State?

**Table 2: Mean analysis used to answer determine the influence of street begging on basic education students' school attendance**

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. dev.	Remark
11	I do go to school late because of street begging	2.75	0.69	Agree
12	My engagement in street begging sometimes hinders me from going to school	2.79	0.70	Agree
13	I do snick out of school from time to time because of street begging	2.83	0.71	Agree
14	I absence from school is because of the pressure of my parents to engage in street begging	2.89	0.72	Agree
15	Most students that engage in serious street begging are not regular in school	2.68	0.67	Agree
16	I do go to school late because of my persistent begging	2.45	0.61	Disagree
17	My daily street begging routine affects my school attendance	3.20	0.80	Agree
18	Street begging do affects my class attendance from time to time	2.64	0.66	Agree
19	I am sometimes absent from school because my parents prefer me to engage in economics activities.	3.25	0.81	Agree
20	Most of the children that engage in street begging perpetual latecomers.	3.02	0.75	Agree
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>2.75</b>	<b>0.69</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

The result of the 10 items used to answer research question two presented in Table 2 revealed the mean scores ranged 2.45 to 3.25. The mean scores of 9 of the items were found to be under the scale of agree while only one item was found to be under the benchmark of disagree. The grand mean score of 2.75 obtained indicated that respondents agree with the items used measure the influence of street begging on school attendance of basic education students in Zamfara State.

**Research Question Three:** What is the influence of street begging on retention of basic education students in Zamfara State?

**Table 3: Consider using Mean Analysis of the Influence of Street Begging on Basic Education Students' Retention in School**

S/N	Statement	Mean	Std. dev.	Remark
21	Street begging is a factor that determines my retention in school	2.66	0.67	Agree
22	Persistent street begging affects my school retention	2.41	0.60	Disagree
23	Street begging discourages students' retention in school	2.39	0.60	Disagree
24	The financial benefit from street begging is the major factor that hinder me from schooling from	3.37	0.84	Agree
25	Street begging keeps students out of school	3.09	0.77	Agree
26	I opt out of school because I find it difficult to involve in street begging and schooling at the same time.	2.78	0.69	Agree
27	Many students are out of school due to street begging	2.79	0.70	Agree
28	My parents prefer me to engage in street begging to schooling	2.88	0.72	Agree
29	At the detriment of my schooling, I join my friends in the street begging	2.79	0.70	Agree
30	Most of us forgo our schools for street begging	2.48	0.62	Disagree
<b>Grand mean</b>		<b>2.79</b>	<b>0.70</b>	<b>Agree</b>

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

The analysis of items used to answer research question six presented in Table 3 disclosed the minimum mean score of 2.41 and the maximum mean score was 3.37. From the Table, the mean scores of 3 of items were found to be under the scale of disagree while 7 items were found to be under the benchmark of agree. The grand mean score of 2.79 obtained suggested the respondents agree with the items used to measure the influence of street begging on retention of basic education students in Zamfara State.

### Test of Null Hypotheses

The results of the research hypotheses were as presented in Tables 4 to 6

**Hypothesis One:** Street begging has no significant influence on enrolment of students in basic education in Zamfara State.

Table 4: Regression Analysis of the Influence of Street Begging on Enrolment of Students in Basic Education

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T value	P value	Decision
Street begging	-.524	-12.236	.000	Rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

The result of test of hypothesis one presented in Table 4 indicates the power of street begging in influencing the enrolment of students in basic education in Zamfara State based on the standardized coefficients beta value of  $-.524$ ,  $p = .004 < 0.05$  level of significant. The result indicated that the enrolment of students in basic education in Zamfara State is negatively influenced by street begging. The hypothesis was therefore rejected.

**Hypothesis Two:** Street begging has no significant influence on class attendance of students in basic education students in Zamfara State.

**Table 5: Regression Analysis of the Influence of Street on class attendance of students in basic education**

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T value	P value	Decision
Street begging	-.148	-2.979	.003	Rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

The test of hypothesis two documented in table 5 revealed that the variable street begging the beta value of  $-.148$ ,  $p < \alpha$  value ( $.003 < 0.05$ ). This indicates street begging has significant negative influence on class attendance of students in basic education students in Zamfara State. This implies that a street begging is significantly reducing the class attendance of students in basic education students in Zamfara State; hence the research hypothesis two was rejected.

**Hypothesis Three:** Street begging has no significant influence on student retention in basic education in Zamfara State.

**Table 6: Regression Analysis on influence of street begging on school retention of children in Basic education in Zamfara State**

Variable	Standardized Coefficients Beta	T value	P value	Remark
Street begging	-.424	-9.317	.000	Rejected

Source: Fieldwork, 2020

Evidence from the statistical outcome documented in Table 6 indicates that the influence of street begging on student retention in basic education in Zamfara State was negative and significant with a standardized coefficients beta value of  $-.424$ ,  $p = .000$ . The result implies that street begging is also affecting student retention in basic education in Zamfara State negatively. The hypothesis was not retained.

### Discussion of the Findings

Research question one disclosed that street begging has influence on student enrolment in basic education in Zamfara State. The test of null hypothesis one suggests that the influence of street begging on students' enrolment in basic education in the state was significant. The result was found to be similar to that of Jelili (2006) who maintained that most children prefer begging for money, food, clothes, etc. The author added that, the problem of begging is a social menace which has a negative influence not only for cities' economies, socio-physical environment, enrollment and retention of students but also for beggars themselves. Likewise, the study of Ogunkan (2009) reported that roles of individuals and mass media in educating and sensitizing the public on the negative consequences of begging on retention and enrollment of school aged students in basic education. As revealed in the studies of different scholars, street begging at detriment of schooling is not peculiar to developing countries; it is a universal phenomenon (Anumaka, 2012) and a global urban problem.

The results of research question two shows that street begging influenced the school attendance of basic education students in Zamfara State. The test of corresponding null hypothesis

two indicated that the street begging has significant negative influence on school attendance of basic education students in the state. The result of the study was in line with earlier report of Aliyu (2012) whose study shows that, children in Zamfara State dropout of schools as a result of widespread in the urban areas of Zamfara State and other Northern cities in Nigeria. Similarly, Adedibu (2014) reported that the situation of street begging is not so different in the city of Johannesburg, South Africa, where beggars are seen at junctions all over the city. In cities of Britain and similar industrialized countries in the recent years, begging has become highly visible and has negative influence on school age children. Ojo (2015) maintains that the situation in Nigerian is perhaps worse with different categories children begging around motor parks, religious centers, markets, road junctions, venues of ceremonies, among other public places begging for alms during school time.

The result of research question three shows street begging has influence on retention of basic education students in Zamfara State. The test of null hypothesis three further shows that the influence of street begging on school retention of basic education students in the state was significant. Earlier the study conducted by Farauta (2013) who opines that child trafficking, child prostitution, slavery practices, particularly in the fishing industry, child domestic servitude, exploitation of children in mines and customary servitude and become a problem for the teachers, society to retain and enroll these children into basic education. The street-based street children mostly have forgone schools for economics activities. The author added that these children wandering about streets of Nigeria begging from one person to another. Okoji (2013) reported that street begging has serious effect on the children enrollment and retention in basic education. The author argued that street beggars are not economically productive in any way since they contribute nothing to the economy rather than destabilizing children schooling.

## Conclusion

The result of the study indicates that high level of school age involving in economic activities (hawking and street begging) in Zamfara State has negative influence on schooling of the children in the state. The hardship and consequences of street hawking and street begging among school age children in Gusau is overwhelming. School age children that are exposed to child labour (hawking and street begging) in the study area will not benefit from the millennium development goal which emphasized on compulsory and free education for all. By implication, if the situation remains the same, there will be tendency of increase in the rate of school drop out in the state which will lead to the devastating consequences of hawking and street begging like; rape, sexual harassment, kidnapping for rituals, accidents and exposure to various ill health among others.

## Recommendations

The study recommended among others that:

1. The Zamfara State government should be fashioning out legal backing that will stop street begging among school age children in the State.
2. Scholars, governments, media and national and international organizations should organize public awareness programme that will education the parents and general public on problem of street begging among school age children.
3. The community leader should support the state government for formulate a policy that will stop street begging among children in Zamfara State.

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