# Comparative Analysis of the Socio-Ecological Effect of Street Children Activities in North-Western Nigerian Cities

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**Abstract:- Across the globe, street children has been viewed in different dimensions and the effects of their activities have equally caught the attention of social and environmental analysts. In this study, structured questionnaire on socio-ecological attributes of street children activities were administered to 299,163 and 102 respondents in Kano Metropolis, Kaduna Metropolis and Sokoto through multistage sampling technique. The questionnaire were completely retrieved and analysed through Principal Component Analysis and regression analysis. The study discovered that the impact of street children activities on socio-ecological problems was much pronounced in Kaduna Metropolis than Sokoto and Kano Metropolis. Also, all the regressed factors in the study contributed to socio-ecological problems in Kaduna Metropolis while only three factors influenced the situation in Sokoto and Kano Metropolis. Insecurity was the highest effect of street children activities in the cities, distortion of urban system and environmental abuse were in the second and third place. We suggested a social policy that would emphasise advocacy campaign, constant sensitization, counselling on need for sound education and entrepreneurial education across the federation.**

*Keywords:- street children, socio-ecological effect, insecurity, urban system distortion, environmental abuse, drug offences and flirting.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Attentions have been recently focused on street children activities globally. Any child who has not reached adulthood for whom the street has become his/her habitual abode and/or source of livelihood and who is inadequately protected, supervised or directed by responsible adults is regarded as street child (Bukoye, 2015; Ogan, 2021). Extant literature recognized social, political, familial religious and economic factors as causatives of children streetism (Afolabi, 2016; Hassen & Mañus, 2018), Cumber and Tsoka-gwegweni (2016), Hassen and Mañus (2018) and Salaam (2011) equally documented the deplorable condition of street children in different countries. Differences exist in the societies' consideration of street children activities from one country to another. Activities of street children have been declared illegal in United Kingdom, part of USA, Cameroon, India, Canada, Romania(Bukoye, 2015) and some other countries global north and south. Contrarily, Japan, Lisbon, Portugal, Luxembourg, Finland and Nigeria among some other countries have not prohibited street children (Endris & Sitota, 2019).

Studies have elaborately revealed the implications of street children activities. Popular among these are sexual assault(Taft & Blyth, 2016), drug abuse(Salaam, 2011), treat to national security(Ahmed, 2018; Fatai, 2020; Nte et al., n.d.) and environmental abuse (Ahmed, 2018; Hosny & Moloukhia, 2007). There is a divided policy focus on the activities of street children worldwide, yet, (Oyeniyi, 2019) noted the unprecedented rate of proliferation of street children in Nigeria; in particular. The practice of street children activities in Kano (Salaam, 2011; Taft & Blyth, 2016), Kaduna Metropolis (Azaager & Terwase, 2013) and Sokoto (Amzat, 2015; Fatai, 2020), all in the north-western Nigeria, is though popular but with seemingly unbearable consequences. This study is designed to investigated the socio-ecological aspect of the implication of street children activities in these cities

## II. MATERIAL AND METHOD

Arising from variation in the study population in the study areas, 299, 163 and 102 samples sizes were arrived at in Kano Metropolis, Kaduna Metropolis Sokoto. Multistage sampling technique was adopted in each of the cities having stratified the cities into high, medium and low density areas. Consequently, respondents were selected along the streets in the neighbourhoods through systematic sampling method. The study adopted questionnaire as an instrument to collect the needed data. The close-ended questionnaire contained twenty seven variables on social- ecological component of built environment. Principal Component Analysis (PCA) was used to reduce the variables and extract communalities in some identified domains. Similarly, eigenvalues associated with linear composite factors before and after extraction, and after rotation were derived. Values derived represented the variance (%) explained by particular linear composite. From this analysis variable loading and factor scores were generated, classified and named. Factor scores were thereafter inputted as independent variables in a regression model.

The suitability of data for the Factor Analysis was checked by using Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's test of sphericity values. Results of these tests are presented in Table 1. KMO for Kano Metropolis, Kaduna Metropolis and Sokoto was .573, .689 and .829 respectively. For each of the cities, the result of the Bartlett's Test was significant at .000. Hence, data were suitable and adequate for factor analysis.

| City | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kano | Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .573 |
| | Approx. Chi-Square | 11958.271 |
| | Bartlett's Test of Sphericity　　Df | 3568 |
| | Sig. | .000 |
| Kaduna Metropolis | Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .689 |
| | Approx. Chi-Square | 15123.952 |
| | Bartlett's Test of Sphericity　　Df | 5050 |
| | Sig. | .000 |
| Sokoto | Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy | .829 |
| | Approx. Chi-Square | 38375.242 |
| | Bartlett's Test of Sphericity　　Df | 5050 |
| | Sig. | .000 |

Table 1: KMO and Bartlett's test of Sphericity

The identified variables were inputted in the Factor Analysis. None of the variables has low communality values (below 0.500) for Kano Metropolis data; as such all were used in the analysis. For Kaduna Metropolis and Sokoto, twenty-three (23) and eighteen (18) variables have communality above 0.500. These were respectively used for further analysis

Principal component analysis was also used to reduce the variables to four factors. Total variance explained by each of these factors before and after extraction, and after rotation are as presented in Tables 2, 3 and 4 respectively for Kano Metropolis, Kaduna Metropolis and Sokoto. For Kano Metropolis, Factor 1 accounted for 25.61% variance before extraction and 15.91% after rotation. In all, Factors 1, 2, 3and 4 explained 50.44% of variance in the socio-ecological effect of street children activities in Kano Metropolis. In Kaduna Metropolis and Sokoto respectively, 44.57% and 49.55% of variance in the socio-ecological effect of street children were explained by factors 1, 2, 3 and 4.

| Factors | Initial Eigenvalues (before extraction) | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings (after extraction) | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (after rotation) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 25.612 | 25.358 | 25.358 | 25.612 | 25.358 | 25.358 | 16.075 | 15.916 | 15.916 |
| 2 | 10.984 | 10.875 | 36.234 | 10.984 | 10.875 | 36.234 | 14.423 | 14.280 | 30.196 |
| 3 | 9.134 | 9.044 | 45.278 | 9.134 | 9.044 | 45.278 | 10.782 | 10.675 | 40.871 |
| 4 | 6.842 | 6.774 | 52.052 | 6.842 | 6.774 | 52.052 | 9.670 | 9.575 | 50.445 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Table 2: Variance Explained by Socio-ecological Effect of Street Children Activities in Kano Metropolis

| Factors | Initial Eigenvalues (before extraction) | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings (after extraction) | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (after rotation) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 24.172 | 23.933 | 23.933 | 24.172 | 23.933 | 23.933 | 15.009 | 14.861 | 14.861 |
| 2 | 12.916 | 12.788 | 36.720 | 12.916 | 12.788 | 36.720 | 10.050 | 9.951 | 24.811 |
| 3 | 6.252 | 6.190 | 42.910 | 6.252 | 6.190 | 42.910 | 10.018 | 9.919 | 34.730 |
| 4 | 5.263 | 5.211 | 48.121 | 5.263 | 5.211 | 48.121 | 9.938 | 9.840 | 44.570 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Table 3: Variance Explained by Socio-ecological Effect of Street Children Activities in Kaduna Metropolis

| Factors | Initial Eigenvalues (before extraction) | | | Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings (after extraction) | | | Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings (after rotation) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % | Total | % of Variance | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 28.773 | 28.488 | 28.488 | 28.773 | 28.488 | 28.488 | 17.358 | 17.186 | 17.186 |
| 2 | 9.810 | 9.713 | 38.202 | 9.810 | 9.713 | 38.202 | 12.017 | 11.898 | 29.084 |
| 3 | 7.962 | 7.883 | 46.085 | 7.962 | 7.883 | 46.085 | 11.431 | 11.317 | 40.401 |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 4.476 | 4.432 | 50.516 | 4.476 | 4.432 | 50.516 | 9.241 | 9.149 | 49.551 |

Table 4: Variance Explained by Socio-ecological Effect of Street Children Activities in Sokoto
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

*A. Extraction of Socio-ecological Effect of Street Children Activities in the Selected Cities*

Having identified eigenvalues associated with each of the four composite factors, the variables that loaded on each factor were itemised and named accordingly. Varimax rotation was used to forestall the tendency that some variables loaded high on one factor and low on others. The rotated composite matrixes of respondents' responses explain the structure of variables that are loaded on each factor.

Rotated factor matrix for Kano Metropolis variables is presented in Table 5. Factor 1 was labelled insecurity while Factor 2 was named distortion of urban system. Factor 3 and 4 were tagged drug offences and flirting and environmental abuse respectively. Variance explained by these factors in the socio-ecological effect of street children in Kano Metropolis was 57.86%. Variables that loaded on Factor 1 were thirteen (13). Among these were burglary (0.696),

burning of properties (0.689), vandalism (0.685), cultism and related harms (0.669), grievous harm/wounding (0.652), pick-pocketing (0.651) and Stealing and pilfering (0.650). Other variables that loaded in the Factor were threat to national security (0.644), manslaughter (0.613), breach of public peace (0.612), indecent assault (0.597), connivance in theft (0.593) and bullying (0.587). Five (5) variables loaded on Factor 2. They were: obstructing free flow of traffic (0.809), creation of ugly urban scene (0.803), creation of slum (0.800), creation of illegal settlement (0.792) and destruction of urban landscape (0.789). The dimension of Factor 3 was explained by five (5) variables. These variables were gambling (0.824), drug offences (0.797), sexual harassment (0.786), prostitution (0.741) and rape (0.718). Variables that loaded on Factor 4 included air pollution of urban environment (0.743), indiscriminate waste disposal (0.718), waste generation (0.717) and noise pollution of urban environment (0.710).

| | Component | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Burglary | .696 | | | |
| Burning of property | .689 | | | |
| Vandalism | .685 | | | |
| Cultism and related harms | .669 | | | |
| Grievous harm/wounding | .652 | | | |
| Pick-pocketing | .651 | | | |
| Stealing and pilfering | .650 | | | |
| Threat to national security | .644 | | | |
| Manslaughter | .613 | | | |
| Breach of public peace | .612 | | | |
| Indecent assault | .597 | | | |
| Connivance in theft | .593 | | | |
| Bullying | .587 | | | |
| Obstructing free flow of traffic | | .809 | | |
| Creation of ugly urban scene | | .803 | | |
| Creation of slum | | .800 | | |
| Creation of illegal settlement | | .792 | | |
| Destruction of urban landscape | | .787 | | |
| Gambling | | | .824 | |
| Drug offences | | | .797 | |
| Sexual harassment | | | .786 | |
| Prostitution | | | .741 | |
| Rape | | | .718 | |
| Air pollution of urban environment | | | | .743 |
| Indiscriminate waste disposal | | | | .718 |
| Waste generation | | | | .717 |
| Noise pollution of urban environment | | | | .710 |

Table 5: Rotated composite matrix of data of Kano Metropolis

**NOTE**: Extraction method used was Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Total variance explained by these four factors in Kano Metropolis was 50.44%. Separately, rotation of sum of squared loading (after rotation) for Factors 1, 2, 3 and 4

were respectively 15.91%, 14.28%, 10.67% and 9.57%. In other words, insecurity factor explained 15.91% variance, distortion of urban system factor accounted for 14.28%, drug offenses and flirting factor explained 10.67% while environmental abuse factor was due to 9.57% variance of socio-ecological effect of street children in Kano Metropolis.

Data on Kaduna Metropolis subjected to variable reduction revealed that eighteen variables contributed to Factor 1 while Factor 2 and 3 were explained by five variables each. The dimension of Factors 4 was explained by four variables. As presented in Table 6, variables such as burglary (0.930), burning of property (0.916), vandalism (0.914), Cultism and related harms (0.911), pick-pocketing (0.896) and stealing and pilfering (0.861) loaded highly on insecurity factor. Variables that loaded highly on Factor 2 included obstructing free flow of traffic, creation of ugly urban scene and creation of slum. Loadings of these variables were 0.856, 0.811 and 0.808 respectively.

The third factor comprised variables related to drug offences and flirting. These were gambling (0.804), drug offences (0.803), and sexual harassment (0.753) among others. Some variables that accounted for place attachment and neighbourhood characteristics factor were prostitution (0.719) and rape (0.706). Factor 4 comprised variables such as air pollution of urban environment, indiscriminate waste disposal, waste generation and noise pollution of urban environment. The respective loadings of these variables were 0.706, 0.695, 0.672, and 0.672.

| Variable | Component | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Burglary | .930 | | | |
| Burning of property | .916 | | | |
| Vandalism | .914 | | | |
| Cultism and related harms | .911 | | | |
| Pick-pocketing | .896 | | | |
| Stealing and pilfering | .861 | | | |
| Threat to national security | .860 | | | |
| Manslaughter | .859 | | | |
| Connivance in theft | .857 | | | |
| Obstructing free flow of traffic | | .856 | | |
| Creation of ugly urban scene | | .811 | | |
| Creation of slum | | .808 | | |
| Creation of illegal settlement | | .783 | | |
| Destruction of urban landscape | | .773 | | |
| Gambling | | | .804 | |
| Drug offences | | | .803 | |
| Sexual harassment | | | .753 | |
| Prostitution | | | .719 | |
| Rape | | | .706 | |
| Air pollution of urban environment | | | | .706 |
| Indiscriminate waste disposal | | | | .695 |
| Waste generation | | | | .672 |
| Noise pollution of urban environment | | | | .672 |

Table 6: Rotated composite matrix of data of Kaduna Metropolis

**NOTE**: Extraction method used was Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

For Sokoto, 7 variables loaded on Factor 1, 4 variables loaded on Factor 2 and 3 while 3 variables loaded on Factor 4. As presented in Table 7, variables that loaded on Factor 1 included burglary (0.712), vandalism (0.694), stealing and pilfering (0.676), threat to national security (0.655), connivance in theft (0.652). These variables are related to insecurity.

| | Component | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Burglary | .712 | | | |
| Vandalism | .694 | | | |
| Stealing and pilfering | .676 | | | |
| Threat to national security | .671 | | | |
| Connivance in theft | .655 | | | |
| Condition of other buildings | .652 | | | |
| Manslaughter | .652 | | | |
| Obstructing free flow of traffic | | .811 | | |
| Creation of ugly urban scene | | .781 | | |
| Creation of illegal settlement | | .777 | | |
| Destruction of urban landscape | | .757 | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| Sexual harassment | .868 |
| Prostitution | .852 |
| Rape | .840 |
| Drug offences | .832 |
| Air pollution of urban environment | .793 |
| Indiscriminate waste disposal | .783 |
| Waste generation | .762 |

Table 7: Rotated composite matrix of data of Sokoto

**NOTE**: Extraction method used was Principal Component Analysis. Rotation method was Varimax with Kaiser Normalization

Variable that loaded on the composite of Factor 2 were issues that connect to the distortion of urban system. Table 7 also showed that the 4 variables in composite 2 and 4 variables in composite 3 were respectively about distortion of urban system and drug offenses and flirting while three variables that loaded on composite 4 centred on environmental abuse.

## III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Having identified the four factors contributing to socio-ecological effect of street children activities in the three selected cities, these factors regressed against socio-ecological effect of street children activities. The general form of the regression model is Y= a+ $\beta_1\chi_1$ + $\beta_2\chi_2$ + $\beta_3\chi_3$ + $\beta_4\chi_4$ ---------------- (iv)

Where Y = Socio-ecological problems (Dependent variable)

a = Intercept

$\beta_1$-$\beta_4$ = Coefficient of independent variables ($\chi_1$ - $\chi_4$)

$\chi_1$ = insecurity
$\chi_2$ = distortion of urban system
$\chi_3$ = drug offenses and flirting
$\chi_4$ = environmental abuse

For Kano Metropolis, coefficient of determination (R) was 0.741. Similarly, the coefficient of multiple determination ($R^2$) was 0.549 (Table 8). This shows that 54.9% variance in socio-ecological problems in the Metropolis was explained by the significant factors. As presented in Table 10, factors that causing socio-ecological problems in Kano Metropolis as a result of street children activities were insecurity, distortion of urban system and environmental abuse. Standardized Coefficient($\beta$) of these factors were 0.505, 0.321 and 0.415 respectively. These factors separately contributed 27.2%, 10.8% and 16.9% to the total variance explained by the model.

| City | Model | R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kano | 1 | .741 | .549 | .499 | .85793 |
| Kaduna | 1 | .874 | .763 | .755 | .99332 |
| Sokoto | 1 | .789 | .638 | .632 | .96355 |

Table 8: Regression model summary for the Selected Cities

| City | Model | Sum of Square | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Kano** | **Regression** | 32.283 | 3 | 8.071 | 10.965 | .000 |
| | **Residual** | 26.498 | 296 | .736 | | |
| | Total | 58.780 | 299 | | | |
| Kaduna | **Regression** | 362.677 | 4 | 90.669 | 91.892 | .000 |
| | **Residual** | 112.483 | 159 | .987 | | |
| | Total | 475.160 | 163 | | | |
| Sokoto | **Regression** | 498.139 | 3 | 99.628 | 107.307 | .000 |
| | **Residual** | 238.173 | 99 | .928 | | |
| | Total | 781.312 | 102 | | | |

Table 9: ANOVA for Regression Analysis for the Selected Cities

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | T | Sig. | $sr_1^2$ |
| (Constant) | 5.123 | .254 | | 20.198 | .000 | |
| Insecurity | .602 | .134 | .505 | 4.489 | .000 | .272 |
| Distortion of urban system | .395 | .139 | .321 | 2.828 | .008 | .108 |
| Environmental abuse | .662 | .180 | .415 | 3.673 | .001 | .169 |

Table 10: Coefficients of Factors of Socio-ecological Problems in Kano Metropolis

In Kaduna Metropolis, socio-ecological effect of street children activities was predicted by all the factors regressed in the model. Table 8 shows that the factors contributed 76.3% of the effect in the model and Table 9 signifies that the model was significant at 0.000; 91.89 F value. The standardized coefficients ($\beta$) of these factors are presented in

Table 11. These were 0.736, 0.310, 0.268 and 0.232 for insecurity, distortion of urban system, environmental abuse and drug offenses and flirting respectively. The contribution of each of these four factors to the total variance of socio-ecological effect of street children in Kaduna Metropolis was 54.2%, 9.6%, 7.1% and 5.4% respectively.

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | T | Sig | $sr_i^2$ |
| (Constant) | 3.798 | .091 | | 41.713 | .000 | |
| Insecurity | 1.477 | .091 | .736 | 16.154 | .000 | 0.542 |
| Distortion of urban system | .622 | .091 | .310 | 6.798 | .000 | 0.096 |
| Environmental abuse | .537 | .091 | .268 | 5.870 | .000 | 0.071 |
| Drug offenses and flirting | .466 | .091 | .232 | 5.093 | .000 | 0.054 |

Table 11: Coefficients of factors of Socio-ecological Effect of Street Children in Kaduna Metropolis

Result of regression analysis for Sokoto was found significant at $p = 0.00$ and F value of 107.307 (Table 9). The result showed that three (3) independent variables were significant in the model. These were insecurity, ($\beta$ = +0.561), distortion of urban system ($\beta$ = +0.468) and environmental abuse($\beta$ = 0.239). These variables explained 63.8% of total variance of socio-ecological effect of street children in Sokoto ($R^2$ = .638) (Table 8). The unique contributions of each of these factors, determined by semi partial correlation were respectively, .385, .161 and .092 (Table 12).

| | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. | $sr_i^2$ |
| (Constant) | 4.730 | .055 | | 86.568 | .000 | |
| Insecurity | .891 | .055 | .561 | 16.282 | .000 | .385 |
| Distortion of urban system | .742 | .055 | .468 | 13.565 | .000 | .161 |
| Environmental abuse | .379 | .055 | .239 | 6.928 | .000 | .092 |

Table 12: Coefficients of Factors of Socio-ecological Effect of Street Children Activities in Sokoto

## IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The comparative analysis of the socio-ecological effect of street children activities in Kano, Kaduna Metropolis and Sokoto revealed that only Kaduna Metropolis was worst affected by the activities of street children socially and ecologically; ($R^2$=76.6). This result was in agreement with Azaager and Terwase (2013) and Bukoye (2015) who had earlier empirically discovered the vulnerability of Kaduna city to the street children activities. The contribution of all the four factors regressed against socio-ecological problems in the city, unlike in Kano Metropolis and Sokoto, signified that the city was worst affected in the region by the activities of street children.

In the three selected cities, the effect street children activities on insecurity was much pronounced. Studies (Ahmed, 2018; Nte et al., n.d.; Ogan, 2021; Salaam, 2011) have established the supremacy of this impact of street children activities on social crime across the globe. The impact was 54.2%, 38.5% and 27.2% in Kaduna Metropolis, Sokoto and Kano Metropolis respectively. The distortion of urban system due to the activities of street children was more alarming in Sokoto than Kano and Kaduna Metropolises. This effect was also discovered by Fatai (2020). In general, environmental abuse by the street children was the third ranked effect in the study. The impact of this factor was much felt in Kano. Drug offenses and flirting was discovered to have contributed to socio-ecological problems in Kaduna Metropolis out of the three selected cities. This could be due to strict religious laws operating in both Kano and Sokoto States.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study has compared the impact of the activities of street children in three cities in the north-western Nigeria region on socio-ecological problems of the area. The striking outcome of the comparative analysis was that their activities were consequential to insecurity. The proliferating rate of street children activities in the region is synonymous to time bomb that is supposed to be arrested before it explodes. Arising from this, this study suggests that law should be enacted in the concerned States on the prohibition of street children activities. In addition, social and educational policies that centre on the holistic development of children in the region should be formulated. Lastly, due to the assertion of a governor in the region that most of these children were from the neighbouring countries, the government should effectively monitor immigration of the underage children into the country.

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