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ABSTRACT

Initially the Almajiri system was conceived for religious and character development of children as they grow but today has outlived its usefulness, its deviation from the original idea and in practice has resulted in violations of child rights. This study examined the prevalence of sexual and psychological child abuse in Almajiri system of education in Zaria local government North West Nigeria. The study is a descriptive cross sectional design. The study population for this study was 753 respondents comprising of male students between the ages of 8-16 years, a simple random sampling technique was employed to select eight wards out of thirteen wards in Zaria Local Government, a stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to draw the sample size of 449 pupils from the twenty- two schools in the selected eight wards. The instrument used for this study is questionnaire with a reliability coefficient score of 0.78. Data was analysed using SPPS.V.23 and presented in tables, frequencies and percentages. The demographic characteristics of this study reveals that majority of the respondents within the age of 13-15years (37.6%), from Hausa ethic group (68.1%), did not attend Western education school (81.4%). Majority of the respondent's fathers' occupation is farming (73.5%). Findings further revealed that majority of the respondents are engaged in any income generating work (72.6%), such as House help (26.9%) and wheel barrow pusher (22.9%), also, work for 1 to 4hrs per day (43.9%). The result of this study observed that the prevalence of sexual abuse among the pupils in the Almajiri schools is very low (18.1%). Study indicates that the type of injuries sustained from sexual abuse are bleeding in the genital or anal area (19.2%) This study noted that the perpetrators of their sexual abuse among the respondents are the adolescent male pupils (76.9%). Study indicates that the prevalence of psychological child abuse among respondents is above average (58.4%). These results suggest that the provisions of accommodation and possibly following the new system of Almajiri school system introduced by the Federal Government could help to reduce incidence of sex abuse

since the common accommodation is a major factor. The Council of Ulama could play a significant role in adopting the system where by every child should be allow to come from their parent homes to the schools. This will help to reduce incidence of psychological child abuse

Keywords: Almajiri; Sexual Abuse; Psychological Abuse; Educational System.

INTRODUCTION

Almajiri children are a Northern phenomenon that has caused numerous problems for millions of children in Nigeria (Al-amin, 2019). The classification of the Almajiri children as the displaced population first is based on the definition of the United Nations. These groups of children are currently unwelcome at the place of their residences and thereby required to leave. Secondly, they are children and therefore are vulnerable (Akintunde et al., 2020). The International Center for Investigative Report on human rights across some northern states indicates increasing incidences of child abuses, molestations of children and the wrong practice of the almajiri school system across Kano, Kaduna and Jigawa states (Akoji, 2021). Nearly 1,000 people were freed from Islamic schools in northern Nigeria by the police where they reportedly experienced abuse, many of whom had been chained to walls, beaten and sexually abused and all had managers who portrayed themselves as Islamic clerics teaching students how to be good Muslims (Oduah, 2019). The brood roams the street clutching plastic bowls as they beg for alms from one stranger to another. In the evenings,

they return to their masters (Mallam) to remit what was made for the day and rest to continue the same routine the next day (Akoji, 2021). The uncertainty of street life has predisposed the Almajirai to delinquency for self-survival (Akoji, 2021).

Traditional definition of the term "Almajiri" is derived from Arabic word "Al-muhajirun" which is being translated as "Migration" (emigrant or immigrant). It is traditional or non-formal system of education where a learner or pupil seeking Islamic knowledge migrates from his hometown to an Islamic scholar (Mallam). Almajiri refers to a child who left his home to attend an Islamic boarding school to learn Islamic knowledge (Sarkingobir et al., 2020). The Almajiri educational system, which had been flourishing prior to Britain's invasion of northern Nigeria in 1904, began to experience a negative twist when the Colonialists' introduced capitalism which altered all social connections at the period. For instance, the state treasury, which provided funding for the Almajiri system, was taken over by the new leadership (Abubakar, 2020).

In the past, the curriculum of Almajiri offered opportunity the major objective of education is to produce anindividual who is well-skilled, honest, and respectful. As such, education is seen as the overalldevelopment of one's personality (Bolu-Steve et al., 2023) a system conceived for religious and character development of children as they grow (Ahovi et al., 2019). Today, the system has even become a menace to the society as it has outlived its usefulness its deviation from the original idea and practice has resulted in violations of child rights. The rights of children are violated daily. Children are raped, maimed, starved, deprived of education, neglected, and engaged in child labour (Oraka, 2020).

National Human Rights Commission, has warned that children, boys and girls fall victims of abuse and exploitation in all of its forms in this system of education (NHRC, 2020). Two of the major forms of abuses are sexual abuse involving pressuring or forcing a child to engage in sexual acts which includes behaviours such as fondling, penetration, and exposing a child to other sexual activities while psychological abuse refers to behaviours that harm a child's self-worth or emotional wellbeing such as name-calling, shaming, rejecting, withholding love, and threatening (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). According to a UNICEF report, the system is responsible for about 14 million children who are out of school (Akintunde et al., 2020). An almajiri child roams the streets begging house to house, markets, motor parks and criminal hideout, sleep in uncompleted buildings or over crowded rooms where there are no windows for cross-ventilation and the walls have given room to cracks (Modobi & Mohammed, 2023; Chukwu,2016). The children are disadvantaged and live without their parents, which makes them easy targets for sexual and psychological abuses. Therefore, there is an enormous risk for the almajiri child and this neglect is a clear violation of human rights. Although the Almajiri system of education has been studied in other contexts, a detailed understanding of this specific localized context (as in types of sexual and psychological abuse suffered, types of injuries sustained from abuse, perpetrators of abuse) is necessary to develop complex and appropriate supports and interventions that could help develop policy makers proffer solutions. Hence, this study on prevalence of sexual and psychological abuse in almajiri system of education in Zaria Local Government area, Kaduna State.

Objectives of the study

- 1. To assess the prevalence of sexual child abuse in Almajiri system of education
- 2. To identify the type of injuries sustained from sexual abuse in Almajiri system of education.
- 3. To determine the perpetrators of sexual abuse among Almajiri system of education
- 4. To assess the prevalence of psychological child abuse in Almajiri system of education.

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- 5. To determine the perpetrators of the psychological abuse in Almajiri system of education.
- 6. To identify reactions to psychological child abuse in Almajiri system of education.

Methodology:

The descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed for this study. The study population for this study was 753 which comprised of male students between the ages of 8-16 years, a Simple random sampling technique was employed to select eight wards out of thirteen wards in Zaria Local Government, Kaduna State of Nigeria using cap and draw method. The names of the wards are: Kwarbai A, Angwan- Juma, Tudun-Wada, Dambo, Kufena, Angwan Fatuka. All the schools from each of the wards were use. These eight wards have twenty-four schools and a stratified proportionate sampling technique was used to draw the sample size 449 pupils (see appendix 1) from the twenty- two schools in the selected eight wards in Zaria Local Government using Amogu (2001) formula for proportionate sampling.

ns	=	NsX	n
		N	
Where	Ns	=	population size of the school
	Ν	=	total population for the study
	п	=	sample size of the study

The respondents were reached using convenience method, that is, the researchers gave questionnaire to the required number of students first met as they reached each class (See table 1 below).

S/N	Wards	Schools	Total School	School	Total
			Population	sample	sample
1	Kwarbai A	Makarantan Kwarbai 1		11	
		Makarantan Kwarbai 2	35	9	32
		Makarantan Kwarbai 3		12	
2	Angwan Juma	Makarantan Angwan Juma 1		24	
		Makarantan Angwan Juma 2	84	25	75
		Makarantan Angwan Juma 3		26	
3	Kaura	Makarantan Kaura	47	42	42
4	Lumancin	Makarantan limancin Kona 1	68	14	62
	Kona	Makarantan limancin kona 2		17	
		Makarantan limancin kona 3		12	
		Makarantan limancin kona 4		19	
5	Tudu– wada	Makarantan Sarki	59	31	53
		Makarantan Layin- Wawa		22	
6	Dambo	Makarantan Dambo 1	102	22	91
		Makarantan Dambo 2		25	
		Makarantan Dambo 3		16	
		Makarantan Dambo 4		28	
7	Kufena	Makarantan Kufena 1	34	19	30
		Makarantan Kufena 2		11	
8	Angwan-	Makarantan Angwan Fatuka 1		43	
	Fatuka	Makarantan Angwan Fatuka 2	71	11	64
		Makarantan ANgwan Fatuka 3		10	
	Total		500	449	449

A questionnaire for Data Collection was adapted from UNICEF, save the children and prayas project, national level study on child abuse schedule, which has three sections. Section A assessed the respondent demographic characteristics and it is made up nine (9) items. Section B comprised seven (7) items which assessed the prevalence of sexual child abuse. Section C comprised of (4) items which assessed the prevalence of psychological child abuse. The instruments (questionnaire) were face validated by three experts, one from university of nnsuka and two other lecturers Ahmadu Bello University Zaria. Their independent feedback was used to revise the questionnaire to ensure content validity. The reliability of the instrument was established using test re-test method. The instrument was administered to 45 students in Almajiri system of education in Sabon-Gari Local Government, Kaduna state. The test retest approach yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78. The instrument was thus considered sufficiently reliable for the study. Item by item simple descriptive data analysis of data obtained

Table 1. So	ocio-demogra	aphic char	acteristics
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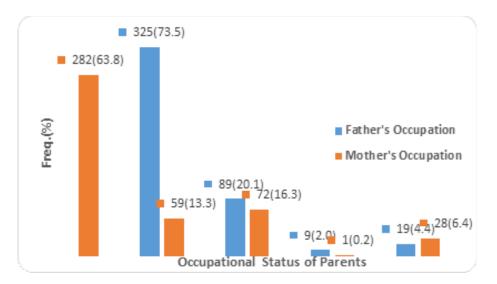
from questionnaire was done to show the frequency and percentages. A descriptive statistical analysis was done using statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 23 software in form of frequency and percentage tables.

RESULTS

A sample size of 449 was proposed but at the end of the administration, only 442 (98.4%) of the total were found to have the required valid information for the study and were therefore used for the study. The demographic characteristics of this study reveals that majority of the respondents within the age of 13-15 years (37.6%), from Hausa ethic group (68.1%), did not attend Western education school (81.4%). Majority of the respondent's fathers' occupation is farming (73.5%). Findings further revealed that majority of the respondents are engaged in any income generating work (72.6%), such as House help (26.9%) and wheel barrow pusher (22.9%), also, work for 1 to 4hrs per day (43.9%).

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Age (years)		
<10	65	14.7
10 - 12	150	33.9
13 – 15	166	37.6
>15	61	13.8
Ethnic group		
Hausa	301	68.1
Fulani	57	12.9
Nupe	58	13.1
Others	26	5.9
Did you go to western educational school?		
Yes	82	18.6
No	360	81.4
If yes, to what level?		
Not applicable	360	81.4
Primary school	71	16.1
Secondary School	11	2.5

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Sources of Income Profile

Variable	Frequency	Percent
Are you at present engaged in any income generating work?		
Yes	321	72.6
No	121	27.4
If yes, what kind?		
None	114	25.8
Wheelbarrow	101	22.9
Shop keeper	38	8.6
House help	119	26.9
Restaurant attendant	19	4.3
Others	51	11.5
For how long do you engage in such job in	a day?	
Not stated	151	34.2
1-4hrs	194	43.9
5-8hrs	68	15.4
>8hrs	29	6.6
Total	442	100

Table 2 determines the prevalence of sexual abuse in Almajiri school system of education, the pupils were asked whether they have been sexually abused in the schools. Only 26 out of 442 (5.9%) pupils agreed they had experienced sexual abuse. For those who gave affirmation, they were asked the method used by the perpetrators, the injury sustained and the accompanied feelings along with whether they were treated, the place of treatment and who the perpetrators of the sexual abuse were. The opinions of the pupils in the table revealed that "being shown pictures of naked people" was

the most common sexual abuse perpetrated in the schools. Of the total who suffered from the sexual abuse, 6 or 23.1% experienced the form and were followed by those who were forcefully being kissed, touching their private part, putting any object in their anus, putting private organ in their mouth and putting private organ in their anus were 5 or 19.2 % respectively. Being exposed to an individual's private part was not common (2 or 7.7%). The result of this study observed that the prevalence of sexual abuse among the pupils in the Almajiri schools is very low (18.1%).

	Frequently	Not frequent	Never	
Types of Sexual Abuse Suffered	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Freq. (%)	Total
Being exposed to an individual's private part	2(7.7)	9(34.6)	15(57.7)	26(100)
Being shown pictures of naked people	6(23.1)	11(42.3)	9(34.6)	26(101)
Forcefully been kissed	5(19.2)	3(11.5)	18(69.2)	26(102)
Touching your private part	5(19.2)	8(30.8)	13(50.0)	26(103)
Putting any object in your anus	5(19.2)	3(11.5)	18(69.2)	26(104)
Putting private organ in your mouth	5(19.2)	3(11.5)	18(69.3)	26(105)
Putting private organ in your anus	5(19.2)	2(7.7)	19(73.1)	26(106)
	18.1			

Table 2: Prevalence of sexual abuse among the pupils in the Almajiri schools.

From table 3, only 2 of the pupils which amounted to 7.7% of the total (26) actually agreed that they suffered injuries from the sexual abused they experienced. These two pupils who suffered from injuries tended to have manifested all the listed symptoms listed in the table. Study indicates that the type of injuries sustained from sexual abuse are bleeding in the genital or anal area (19.2%)

Table 3: Responses of the pupils on the type of injuries sustained from sexual abuse.

Types of Injuries Sustained from Sexual Abuse	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total
Not able to wash your genital or anal area	2(7.7)	24(92.3)	26(100)
Pain at the genital or anal area	2(7.7)	24(92.3)	26(100)
Itching in the genital area	2(7.7)	24(92.3)	26(100)
Swelling in the genital or anal area	2(7.7)	24(92.3)	26(100)
Sudden absenteeism in school	2(7.7)	24(92.3)	26(100)
Lacerations in the genital/anal area	2(7.7)	24(92.3)	26(100)
Penile discharge	2(7.7)	24(92.3)	26(100)
Bleeding in the genital or anal area	5(19.2)	21(80.8)	26(100)
Fear of bed time	2(7.7)	24(92.3)	26(100)
Excessive masturbation	2(7.7)	24(92.3)	26(100)

The observations from table 4 is that most sexual abuse in the Almajiri schools are perpetrated by fellow adolescent pupils. 20 or 76.9% of the pupils who experienced sexual abuse was from their fellow pupils in the schools. But 6 or 23.1 % said they suffered such acts from members of the community. This study noted that the perpetrators of their sexual abuse among the respondents are the adolescent male pupils (76.9%). Bature F. U.; Alkali, M. A. & Nwanneri, A. C.

Perpetrators of Their Sexual Abuse	Frequency	Percent
Mallam	0	0.0
Adolescent male pupils	20	76.9
Member of the community	6	23.1
Total	26	100

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Ianie 4. Res	nonses of the	nunus on th	e nernetrators of	f their sexual abuse
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In table 5, the determination of the prevalence of psychological child abuse in the Almajiri school system was conducted by asking the pupils whether they have been worried and anxious in the schools or not. If they have been psychologically worried, the types of abuses, the perpetrators and their reaction. Of the total of 442 involved in the study, 427 or 96.6% of them have suffered from psychological child abuse. Only 15 or 3.4% said they have not experienced any form of psychological child abuse in the schools. Table 5 shows that verbal abuse was the most common psychological

child abuse suffered by the pupils in the schools. This is indicated by 282 or 66.0% of the 427 pupils who experienced such phenomenon in the schools. Looking down on the pupils was another form of child abuse which though was found but was not common. Others like telling pupils that they were worse than their fellow pupils were found but they were not frequently experienced by the pupils. Study indicates that the prevalence of psychological child abuse among respondents is above average (58.4%)

Table 5. Responses of the	pupils on prevalence of	psychological child abuse
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Psychological Child Abuse	Freq.(%)	Freq.(%)	Freq.(%)	Freq.(%)
	Frequently	Not frequent	Never	Total
Foul names	45(10.5)	188(44.0)	194(45.5)	427(100)
Harsh criticism	50(11.7)	106(24.8)	271(63.5)	427(100)
Loud yelling	78(18.3)	105(24.6)	244(57.1)	427(100)
Looking down on you	59(13.8)	284(66.5)	84(19.7)	427(100)
Telling you that you are worse than others	137(32.1)	235(55.0)	55(12.9)	427(100)
Telling you that you cannot be useful in life	282(66.0)	84(19.7)	61(14.3)	427(100)
Abusing your family members especially your parents	53(12.4)	186(43.6)	188(44.0)	427(100)
	22.1%	36.3%	36.1%	

As to the perpetrators of the abuses in table 6, a total of 288 or 67.4% of the 427 who suffered from the abuse said it was by the fellow pupils of the schools. Malams were also identified as perpetrators by 125 or 29.3% of the pupils

while 14 or 3.3% said the perpetrators were others not specified. Findings revealed that the perpetrators of the psychological abuse among respondents are Fellow pupils (67.4%)

Perpetrators of the Psychological Abuse	Frequency	Percent	
Mallam	125	29.3	_
Fellow pupils	288	67.4	
Others	14	3.3	
Total	427	100	

Table 6: Responses of the pupils on the perpetrators of the psychological abuse

The long-term reactions of the pupils as indicated in the table 7 shows that they range from poor peer relationship to total withdrawal from the others. In the table, 378 or 88.5% said they become anxious while 360 or 84.3% said they become aggressive and 294 or 68.9% have problems of unusual fearfulness and 264 or 61.8% have the problem of inability to sleep at night. Others sucks their hands while 213 or 49.9% said they lost interest in the schools. From the 96.6% of the pupils who agreed they

suffered from psychological abuse, it could be said that this form of abuse was the most common and cut across every pupil in the Almajiri school system in the Local. Study reveals that the significant responses of the pupils on reaction to psychological child abuse include Withdrawn (71.4%), Sucking your hand (57.6%), Aggressive (84.3%), Anxious (88.5%), Unusual fearfulness (68.9%), Inability to sleep (61.8%).

Table 7. Decreased	of the average	ila an magatian	to maryahala air	al abild aburga
Table 7: Responses	or the bub	on reaction		al child aduse
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Yes Freq. (%)	No Freq. (%)	Total Freq. (%)
246(57.6) **	181(42.4)	427(100)
360(84.3) **	67(15.7)	427(100)
378(88.5) **	49(11.5)	427(100)
294(68.9) **	133(31.1)	427(100)
264(61.8) **	163(38.2)	427(100)
213(49.9)	214(50.1)	427(100)
191(44.7)	236(55.3)	427(100)
	Freq. (%) 305(71.4) ** 246(57.6) ** 360(84.3) ** 378(88.5) ** 294(68.9) ** 264(61.8) ** 213(49.9)	Freq. (%)Freq. (%)305(71.4) **122(28.6)246(57.6) **181(42.4)360(84.3) **67(15.7)378(88.5) **49(11.5)294(68.9) **133(31.1)264(61.8) **163(38.2)213(49.9)214(50.1)

Significant=**

DISCUSSION

This study assesses the prevalence of sexual and psychological abuse in Almajiri system of education in Zaria Local Government area, Kaduna State. The demographic characteristic of this study reveals that majority of the respondents are within the age of 13-15 years, from Hausa ethic group, did not attend Western education school. Majority of the respondent's fathers' occupation is farming. Findings further revealed that majority of the respondents are engaged in any income generating work, such as House help and wheelbarrow pusher, also, work for 1 to 4hrs per day. Our findings on the prevalence of sexual abuse among the pupils in the Almajiri school system in Zaria Local Government Area revealed that the prevalence of sexual abuse among the pupils in the Almajiri schools is very low. This study is similar to Ally & Paul, (2022) who observed relatively low prevalence rate among vulnerable street children from a Tanzanian city.

Study indicates that the type of injuries sustained from sexual abuse are bleeding in the genital or anal area. This study is in contrast to Ally & Paul, (2022) who noted that contracting infectious diseases and pains and swelling of the genital are most prevalent injuries sustained from sexual abuse among vulnerable street children from a Tanzanian city

This study noted that the perpetrators of their sexual abuse among the respondents are the adolescent male pupils. Our findings contradicts the reports of Muhammad, (2019) who observed that are by mallams. He further stated that one mallam was arrested by the police on an offense of sexually abusing more than 30 of his pupils in Sokoto Metropolis, at Arkilla Area. Also Daniel (2019) had cited a report titled "Man, who raped over 30 Almajirisin Niger, therein, the man was their teacher in Minna, Niger state and he was sentenced to 7 years jail term. This study does not align with a report from Akoji, (2021) where is quoted ICIR in Jigawa state, stating that a 21-year-old Almajiri student who narrated how some of boys were sexually abused by their Malam and were already practicing the same thing within themselves.

Study indicates that the prevalence of psychological child abuse among respondents is above average. The finding here is consistent with the report of Chukwu et al, (2016) where the almajiris are affected both psychologically and socially This study reflect the result of Abubakar-Abdullateef et al, (2017) who observes a higher proportion of psychiatric disorders in Almajiris and public primary school pupils in Zaria, Northwest Nigeria.

Conclusion

Both sexual and psychological abuses are common in the almajiri system of education. Sexual abuse is very low while the prevalence of psychological abuse is very high. Injuries sustained from sexual abuses are treated within the schools with few reference cases to the hospital. the Perpetrators of sexual and psychological abuse are mostly adolescents and Malams are complicit in all abuses.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that provisions for safe accommodation be made and possibly following the new system of Almajiri school system introduced by the Federal Government could help to reduce incidence of sex abuse since the common accommodation is a major factor.

The Council of Ulama could play a significant role in adopting the system where by every child should be allow to come from their parent homes to the schools. This will help to reduce incidence of psychological child abuse.

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