

The Influence of Poverty on *Almajiri* Institution and Security Challenges: Study in Yobe State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Poverty is a multidimensional concept. Depending on the level and dimension of an individual's or group's deprivation, the menace can be measured in absolute or relative, temporary or permanent, as well as in subjective or objective terms; as well as an economic, political, social and psychological problem. Poverty has many consequences, and almajiranci, is one of the latent and alarming in Nigeria, especially in the northern part of the country. Almajirci itself is leading to various socio-economic and political problems. Yobe State is one of the northeastern states affected by security challenges associated with Boko Haram and the insurgent group is associated with almajirci. This is why the present study is designed to investigate how poverty influences almajirci and security challenges in Yobe State, Nigeria. The study is anchored on the theory of "poverty as a positive feedback system" otherwise known as the "Vicious circle theory of poverty" will be adopted. Methodologically, the research is descriptive because describes the influence of poverty on almajiri and security challenges in Yobe State. The target population of the study is the male and female residents, almajiris, their mallams, their parents, and political and community leaders in the study area. A total of 411 sample sizes were selected using multi-stage and purposive sampling techniques. Two instruments of data collection are proposed for the study. They are a questionnaire guide and an interview schedule. The method of data analysis was mixed. The study finds that the cases of almajirci in Yobe State are very high and the rate of poverty in the State is very high, too. The lower class people have more tendency to send their children to almajirci, which established the relationship between poverty and almajirci. On the nexus between almajirci and security challenges, the study finds that almajiris are seeing society as merciless, hence they are aggressive to all and sundry. Almajiri children are also taken advantage of during conflict periods and often obliged to carry arms. Thus, the study recommends that: government should make laws that prohibit almajirci in the context of child-street and house-to-house begging; fight poverty through some workable economic policies; the community should also make an effort to help families through some self-help initiatives; and awareness should be made through media for families to stop sending children to almajirci, etc.

Keywords: *Almajirci; Poverty; Security challenges; Yobe State*

1.0 Introduction

Poverty is a multidimensional concept. Depending on the level and dimension of an individual's or group's deprivation, the menace can be measured in absolute or relative, temporary or permanent, as well as in subjective or objective terms. Poverty can also be defined as an economic, political, social and psychological problem. In economic terms, the level of poverty in a country is measured as the percentage of the population that receives income below a threshold level, which is usually determined by the necessary caloric intake and the local monetary cost of purchasing the corresponding food basket. Simply put, the level of poverty is jointly determined by the national income level and by the pattern of distribution of this income (Fajnzylber, Lederman & Loayza, 2001).

In a generic sense, poverty in this paper is seen as an evil that transcends economic suffering. Thus, poverty is any state of social and/or economic deprivation that adversely affects the well-being of an individual, group or society. This working definition brought together three pairs of discomforts: absolute and relative, subjective and objective, as well as social and economic. The fact of living in a state of deprivation can be "absolute" and "objective", while the feeling of this deprivation can be "subjective" and "relative". These intersections and segregations of deprivation can either be social or economic. Social deprivation in this context encompasses educational (illiteracy), political (domination and inequality) and racial or gender discrimination (social exclusion). Economic deprivation, on the other hand, simply refers to little or no source of income, due to unemployment, underemployment or because one belongs to a lower-class family background.

This checklist of social, educational, political, and economic problems associated with poverty reveals the fact that poverty is evil and can lead to numerous social problems, such as crimes, high rates of divorce, juvenile delinquency, child labour, and youth political violence. Perhaps a latent but alarming social problem that emanates largely from poverty in Nigeria is *almajiranci*, especially in the northern part of the country. *Almajiranci* is a Hausa word for the occupation of *Almajiri*. *Almajiri* itself originates from the Arabic word *al-Muhajir*, which means one who emigrates. *Hijra* (emigration) in Islam is very important and one of its meanings is physical emigration from the land of unbelief or injustice to the land of Islam and justice. The Prophet Mohammad, may peace be upon him, made the *Hijra* from Makkah to Madina and later liberated Makkah from the unbelievers (Kurawa, 2003). In the Hausaland, which dominantly occupies northern Nigeria, Shehu Usman Danfodio "made the *Hijra* from Degel to Gudu and he later waged a Jihad, which liberated most of the Hausaland from tyranny and he established a just Caliphate" (Kurawa, 2003:305).

From the foregoing, it is clear that *Almajiranci* represents a very long-standing tradition in northern Nigeria. The institution of Islamic education can involve *Hijra* (migration), but begging for the sake of knowledge-seeking should not be a criterion. Many of the prominent Islamic scholars did not undergo the process of *Almajiranci* (begging) which involved begging for food at the junior stage. It is just the way the institution has taken a different dimension to have been influenced by poverty in the Yobe State, Nigeria. As a result, parents are subjecting their little children to house to house, shop to shop begging for alms in the name of education. These children are usually experiencing humiliation and serious hardships, starvation and maltreatment at the hands of their

teachers. Growing up in this brutal condition is one of the reasons why they (Almajirai) are behaving violently and aggressively as they become adults. Consequently, they usually end up in violent gangs, and radicalized groups, such as Boko Haram among deviant sub-cultures. Ajaegbu (2012) observes that the disenchantment and frustration of young people due to mass poverty has increased the number of aggrieved youths and resulted in the emergence of *area boys* and *Almajiris* who target the very society that alienated them.

1.1 Statement of the Research Problem

Almajirci is one of the major factors leading to various socio-economic and political problems in Nigeria, Yobe State in particular. The Nigerian government has battled with domestic terrorism due to the activities of the *Boko Haram* sect, which began in 2009 and has constituted a major security threat to the nation, according to (Akinbi, 2015: 32), it has made “northern Nigeria particularly the North-East (where their activities are rife), the most dangerous region to live in the country”. Although the activities of the sect are presently contained, it is important to address some of the remote and immediate factors that underlie the insurgent movement. *Almajiranci* has been identified as one of the remote causes of *Boko Haram* and other security challenges that emanate from religious radicalism.

Migration for the sake of knowledge is part of the Islamic heritage, but the Almajiri institution has taken a different dimension in the northern part of Nigeria. Instead of being a source of Islamic scholarship and proper discipline, the institution has rendered many vulnerable children to multiple abuses, and molestation and it has become an avenue for producing delinquent children, religious extremists and criminals in their adult age. Abuh (2015) also stated that the *Almajiri* institution is associated with the violation of many children’s rights. As reported by the Premium Times (March 2014), it has become common to see children carrying plates begging for food in northern Nigeria. Statistics from the Federal Ministry of Education put the number of these children at nine million (9,000,000). The children are becoming a public nuisance as they are commonly sighted in city streets in rag-tags.

According to Daily Post (August 2016), recent statistics showed that the majority of the *Almajirai* are not indigenes of the states they are living in, but they only migrated with their *mallams* (teachers) or were sent by their parents purportedly to study. The influx of these child beggars to many cities of Yobe State has become so alarming that it has formed a stumbling block to the developmental plans of the government (Daily Post, August 2016). While the *Almajiri* institution is attributed to a variety of social problems, it is also true that the institution thrives by the simple fact that poverty has made parents of these children unable to cater for them. In line with this assertion, Abuh (2015) has mentioned that a major issue of discourse is that the *Almajiri* institution is tied to the inability of parents to take care of their children; that is why addressing the problem of *Almajirai* requires the intervention of the government and that of entire northern Nigerian people.

To provide quality education for indigent children, a multifaceted strategy has been adopted by the commission that includes on-the-site schools, the shift system, schools with alternative intake, and Islamiyya (Islamic) schools. The current mobile school system in the strictest sense remains sparingly used, primarily due to the enormity of problems associated with this model, some mobile schools, however, are in operation in the River Benue area of Taraba, Benue, Adamawa,

Nassarawa, Borno and Yobe states. Yet, there is a growing influx of the almajiris across the nooks and crannies of Yobe State because they do that for begging to have something to eat not for the education per se. This implies that poverty is the main factor for almajirci today rather than the search for Islamic knowledge.

Given the above, the present study will investigate the influence of poverty on Almajiri institutions and security challenges in Yobe State, Nigeria.

1.3 Research Questions

The following are the research questions:

- 1) What is the economic status of the people who sent their children to *Almajirci*?
- 2) Is *almajirci* associated with poverty in Yobe State?
- 3) How *almajiri* institution influence security challenges in Yobe State?

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the Study

The main aim of the study is to investigate how poverty influence of poverty on *Almajiri* institutions and security challenges in Yobe State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are:

- 1) To examine the economic status of the people who sent their children to *almajirci*;
- 2) To understand whether *almajirci* is associated with poverty in Yobe State; and
- 3) To examine how *almajiri* institution influences security challenges in Yobe State.

2.0 Literature Review

The *Almajirci* system of education is, for centuries, the dominant educational system in the Islamic world. As observed by Kurawa (2003), the *almajiri* system of study has remained in the non-formal schools that still produce Islamic scholars commonly known as *Malaman Makarantun Zaure*. These scholars can receive students from the neighbourhood, neighbouring towns, and from far away cities and villages. One of the four greatest scholars in Islamic history, Imam Shafi'i, jurisprudence after whom Shfi'i jurisprudence was named was the main proponent of migration (Hijra) for knowledge-seeking. He described it as a similitude of precious stone which he said is nothing unless it is mined and transported away from its soil (Naija Informan, 2012).

In the later years, the Mashriq (Oriental) style was introduced and it became popular, especially with those who studied in Saudi Arabia and returned to deliver various lessons of Hadith and Tafsir; that is prophetic traditions/teachings and the exegesis of the Qur'an, to a large group of students in their various Mosques. Some of these scholars were *almajirai* before they proceeded to Saudi Arabia for higher studies. They have received extensive patronage from their wealthy students who popularized their lectures in the mass media. Many former *almajirai* acquired Islamic education by proceeding from the *makarantar allo* to one of the formal Islamic schools.

Many lower-class children, orphans and *almajiris* are engaging in the worst forms of labour in broad daylight in the country. Legislative measures were taken by the government at various levels, but the incidence of child labour seems to defy these efforts. According to the US Department of Labor (2012), children in Nigeria are engaged in the worst forms of child labour, particularly in domestic service and dangerous agricultural activities. In 1998, ILO estimated that 24.6 per cent of children between the ages of 10-14 in Nigeria were working (Ndem, Micheal & Awa, 2012). This indicates the extent to which child labour the country has become alarming trend. There are arguments that the formal schools have not been of any advantage to the society, and that they are mere agents of modernization and erosion of Islam. Some of the points given

against them are correct especially when the colonial authorities hijacked the schools and used them for the purpose of producing those who perpetuate the colonial culture and for undermining the Shari'ah (Kurawa, 2003).

The social context that incubates *Boko Haram* is characterized by chronic poverty, unemployment, a large number of the economically destitute *almajirai*, and weak social control and crisis in criminal justice system (Osumah, 2013). *Almajirai* are vagabond children who engage in underage begging on the street. They virtually have no hope for the future having been abandoned by their parents. They are predominantly children who devote the greater part of their time for Islamic studies (Umenne, 2010; Osumah, 2013). But the current system of *almajirci* is associated with many challenges. To tackle these challenges, according to Abuh (2015), Yobe State and other northern Nigerian state governments have embarked on some schemes for detection and identification of the immigrants and to establish child rights monitoring committee to supervise the *almajiri* centres or schools (*makarantar allo*), the *mallams*, and their parents in order to forestall the perpetration of the children rights abuse within the boundaries of Islamic Shari'ah.

This research concurred with the above development, but the research has a stance beyond the improvement of the *almajiri* institution and sanitisation the teacher-student (*mallams-almajri* in this context) relationships as well as the supervising parents' excesses on their relationship with their children. The position of this study is that, while these measures are good enough to improve the *almajirci*, measures did not address the bottom line that necessitates parents to send children to *mallams*; that is poverty. Poverty is also a reason why the *mallams* are relying on the little children sent to them for sustenance. Most of the times, it is the *almajirai* that fend for the *mallams* and the reason for this scenario is poverty.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

There is ample theorising on the influence of poverty on human social relationships and living standard. For the purpose of this study, Coates & Silburn's (1970, as cited in Haralambos & Heald, 2006) theory of "Poverty as a positive feedback system" otherwise known as "Vicious circle theory of poverty" will be adopted. According to this theory, "poverty has many dimensions, each of which must be studied separately, but which in reality constitute an interrelated network of deprivations". (Haralambos & Heald, 2006: 152). The vicious circle "in which poverty breeds poverty" takes place through time and transmits its effects from one generation to another (Haralambos, 2006: 152). The above couple of statements contain the kernel of the theory that views poverty as a positive feedback system. In other words, poverty is a system in which each part reinforces the others and so maintains a system (of deprivation) as a whole.

This theory also argues that the various circumstances of the poor combine to maintain them in poverty; that is they are trapped in the situation and they have little chance of getting out of it or escaping the poverty situation. This theory is relevant to the study because it can explain why poverty has coerced many parents to send their children to a faraway city for begging alms. It can explain not only why the *almajirci* is thriving in the Yobe State, but can also explain how poverty perpetuates in the younger generations, because *almajirci* is not a formal education; no certificate for future career; no entrepreneurship development; no scholarship by any donor agency; and no proper discipline and future planning. Consequently, *alamajirai* are usually ending up as burden to the society as youth gangs (Saleh, 2016) or radicalized groups (Osumah, 2013).

As observed by Mukhtar, Isyaku & Sani (2016), it is a glaring fact that poverty and unemployment are interrelated issues and are social problems with potentiality of leading to other social problems, including *Almajiranci* and its attendant culture of poverty consequences. Despite the explanatory power of the theory, it has some flaws. The most noticeable criticism is that the vicious circle of poverty theory provides only a partial explanation for poverty. Instead of answering the question of why poverty exists, the theory directs itself to the question of how poverty is maintained once exists.

3.0 Background of the Study Area and Methodology

This section deals with the description of the study area and methodology. It consists of methods and tools for data collection, research design, study population, sample size, sampling techniques, method of data collection, and method of data analysis.

3.1 Background of the Study Area

Yobe State is the study area. Yobe State is diverse and rich in terms of cultural heritage. The major ethnic groups in the state include the Kanuri/Manga, Fulani, Ngizim, Bolewa, Bade, Kare-Kare, Hausa, Ngamo, Babur/Maga and several other ethnic groups from different parts of the country. Most of the people are peasant farmers which the main reason why guinea corn, ground nuts, beans; maize, millet, wheat, and rice are produced in commercial quantities. A significant number of the inhabitants also engaged in trading, fishing, livestock and animal rearing. The state has the largest cattle market located at Potiskum town which makes it the supplier of livestock in the country. Traditionally, the people are known for the world-famous durbar usually organized on important occasions like turbaning ceremonies of traditional rulers as well as honouring august visitors (Fartua, & Palmer, 1970).

It is important to point out that, nature has endowed Yobe State with diverse economic potentials such as Diatomite, Limestone, Kaolin, Quartz, Gypsum, Gum-Arabic, and Potash. The capital of the Yobe State is positioned at Damaturu. The name Yobe was derived from River Yobe an important geographical feature in the state. The State is strategically located in the far north eastern part of Nigeria carved out of the old Borno State in 27th August, 1991 by the then Military administration of General Ibrahim Badamasi Babangida. It has seventeen (17) Local Government Areas which all together covers an estimated area of 47,153 square kilometres. The state shares international boundary with the Republic of Niger to the North (YBS Gazette, 2013). Within the country, it shares borders with Jigawa and Yobe States to the West, Borno State to the East as well as Gombe and Borno to the South. Based on the national head count, the population of the state stood at 2.5 million (CENSUS, 2006).

3.2 Research Design

The research is descriptive because it described the influence of poverty on *almajiri* institution in Yobe State. To generate the data, primary and secondary data sources are to be used. The research is thus survey, because questionnaire and interview would be used as instruments of collecting the primary data. The secondary data are not more than library materials, text-books, journals, newspapers, available in libraries, etc.

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population of the study is the entire residents of the study area, the almajiris, their mallams, their parents, political leaders and the community leaders.

3.4 Sample Size

Because the population of Yobe State is too large, a total of 411 sample size was selected. From this total sample, 405 represent respondents for quantitative data; questionnaire guide was administered to this segment of the sample. Six (6) respondents out of the total sample represent respondents for qualitative data; that is 2 in-depth interviews (IDIs) in 3 LGAs. Thus, 405 out of the selected sample (411) gave quantitative data, while qualitative data was generated from the rest (6 subjects). The total sample is therefore as stated $(405+6) = 411$.

3.5 Sampling Techniques

Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted in order to carry out the survey. In the first stage, probability sampling using cluster sampling was used to divide Yobe State into three (3) areas, based on the 3 senatorial zones that make up the State. Each zone constitutes a cluster. In the second stage, purposive sampling was used to select one LGA from each senatorial zone. This gave a total of 3 LGAs. Purposive sampling was used in the second stage because there are LGAs that are more urbanized and complex. Because of their complexities, these selected LGAs have higher rates of almajiris.

In the third stage, simple random sampling (SRS) was used to select three political wards from each LGA; that is, $(3 \times 3) = 9$ political wards. In the fourth stage, purposive sampling was used to select three streets having Tsangaya schools from each political ward, which is $(3 \times 9) = 27$ streets. In the fifth stage, accidental sampling was used to select 15 houses from each street. Fifteen multiplied by 27 gave 405 respondents. In addition, 6 respondents (2 from each of the selected 3 LGAs) was selected using purposive sampling technique for qualitative data, i.e. IDI. Hence the total respondent for quantitative data is 405 and that of qualitative data is 06. The grand total is $(405+6) = 411$.

3.6 Instruments of Data Collection

Two instruments of data collection were used in the study. They are questionnaire guide and interview schedule. Both were employed in the study for complementarities. Questionnaire is instrumental in providing statistical or quantitative representation of the opinions of the subjects, hence positive outcome is guaranteed, whereas interview provides an insight into the in-depth or feelings of the respondents, i.e. qualitative data.

3.7 Methods of Data Analysis

The method of data analysis is mixed one. Quantitative data analysis was employed to analyze data generated through questionnaires and to conveniently achieve this, statistical tool; Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized during the data analysis stage. Frequency distribution table with simple percentages, were used in the analysis. The outcome of this quantitative analysis gave vivid description on the influence of poverty on *Almajiri* institution and security challenges in Yobe State. In addition, qualitative method of data analysis was also used to analyze data generated through interview sessions with the respondents.

4.0 Results and Discussions

The instruments employed for the data collection were questionnaires and in-depth interview (IDIs). The data collected using questionnaire guides were presented in tabular form and being

interpreted first, and complemented with qualitative responses gathered from the IDIs. For the quantitative data, a total of 405 questionnaires were administered to the respondents but only 378 questionnaires were retrieved. Thus, the analysis is based on the 378 questionnaires and by extension the 6 IDIs.

Section A: Personal, Socio-Economic, and Demographic Data of the Respondents

This section deals with the personal, socio-economic and demographic information of the respondents.

Table 1.1: Personal, Socio-Economic, and Demographic Data of the Respondents

S/N	Variables	Options	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	284	75.1
		Female	94	24.9
		Total	378	100
2.	Age	18-27	167	44.2
		28-37	87	23.0
		38-47	77	20.4
		48-57	27	7.1
		58 and above	20	5.3
		Total	378	100
3.	Marital Status	Single	189	50.0
		Married	128	33.9
		Divorced	35	9.3
		Widowed	26	6.9
		Total	378	100
5.	Educational Qualification	No formal education	56	14.8
		Quranic education	46	12.2
		Primary education	8	2.1
		Secondary education	100	26.5
		OND/NCE	76	20.1
		First Degree/HND	74	19.6
		Postgraduate	18	4.8
		Total	378	100
8.	Occupation	Civil Servant	126	33.3
		Student (western education)	54	14.3
		Student (Quranic education)	16	4.2
		Traders	74	19.6
		Others	15	4.0
		Total	378	100
		9	Monthly Income	No income
N10,000-N29,999	85			22.5

	N30,000 – N49,999	54	14.3
	N50,000 –N69,999	38	10.1
	N70,000-N89,999	30	7.9
	N90,000-and above	24	6.3
	Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1.1 presents personal, socio-economic, and demographic data of the respondents. The demographic profile of the respondents, as presented in Table 4.1, reflects diverse characteristics crucial for understanding the context of *almajirci* and its influence on security challenges in Yobe State, Nigeria. A majority of respondents are male (75.1%), aligning with Chidi's (2014) observation that security issues often have a distinct gender dimension, potentially influencing perceptions and experiences of crime and security. The age distribution indicates a significant representation of younger individuals, with 44.2% between 18-27 years, suggesting a youthful demographic, which is consistent with the broader Nigerian population structure (Ibrahim and Mukhtar, 2017). The high percentage of younger respondents could reflect the increased vulnerability or awareness of younger individuals to the *almajirci* and its nexus with insecurity in Yobe State.

Marital status shows a balanced distribution with half of the respondents being single (50.0%), followed by married individuals (33.9%). This demographic spread is important as it represents varied social responsibilities and life experiences, which might influence their perceptions and experiences, as different marital statuses could have different socio-economic and security concerns (Asuquo, 2009). The educational qualifications provide insights into family obligations and literacy levels, both of which are significant factors in understanding societal issues. A larger family size might impact the economic pressure and thereby influence the parents' decision to send children to *almajirci*. Educational levels, with a notable percentage having secondary education (26.5%) and higher education (39.5% combined for OND/NCE, First Degree/HND, and Postgraduate), suggest a relatively educated sample, which could mean a more informed and critical understanding the *almajirci*.

The majority of respondents identify as Muslims (58.5%), reflecting the religious composition in the region, which is important as religious beliefs in Islamic context can influence perceptions of parents on the importance of *sangaya* school and *almajirci*, which exposed the children to crime and render the area insecure (Fage & Alabi, 2017). The ethnic composition, predominantly Hausa (65.3%), is also reflective of the regional demographics and may influence cultural perspectives on the issue. Occupationally, the respondents are diverse, with a significant proportion being students (33.3%), indicating an involvement of the younger, potentially more educated segment of the population. This diversity in occupations, including farming and business, provides varied socioeconomic perspectives, which is crucial in understanding the why parents send children to the institution of *almajirci* (Chidi, 2014).

Lastly, income levels, with 33.9% having no income and a substantial number earning below N10,000, highlight the economic backdrop of the respondents, which is crucial as poverty is an factor often connected with *almajirci* and, by extension, security issues.

Section B: The Economic Status of People who send their Children to *Almajirci*

This section addresses objective one of the study. It deals with the economic status of people who send their children to *Almajirci* in Yobe State.

Table 1.2: The Economic Status of People who sends their Children to *Almajirci*

S/N	Questions	Options	Frequenc y	Percent
10.	Whether respondent is aware of the cases of <i>almajirci</i> in the area	Yes	356	94.2
		No	12	3.2
		No response	10	2.7
		Total	378	100
11	The extent of the cases of <i>almajirci</i> in the area	Very high	216	57.1
		High	121	32.0
		Low	35	9.3
		Very low	6	1.6
		No response	0	0.0
		Total	378	100
12	The dominant socio-economic status of parents who send their children to <i>almajirci</i>	Upper class	43	11.4
		Middle class	75	19.8
		Lower class	195	51.6
		All the classes	65	17.2
		Total	378	100
13	Whether parents who send children to <i>almajirci</i> provide for children’s daily needs	Yes	104	27.5
		No	274	72.5
		Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1.2 above presents data on the economic status of people who send their children to *Almajirci* in Yobe State. The Table shows that majority of the respondents (94.2%) are aware of the cases of *almajirci* in Yobe State, while 3.2 percent of them are not aware of the problem. This indicates the prevalence of *almajirci* in the area. Thus, the table also shows that majority of the respondents (57.1%) reported that the extent of the cases of *almajirci* in the area is very high, followed by those who reported that it is high, represented by 32.0 percent; while 1.6 percent reported that it is very low. This finding is in agreement with the report by UNICEF (2022), who observed that a striking case of multiple deprivations among children can be observed in the case of *Almajiri* children. One of the male IDI respondents gave the following remark on the rate of *almajirci* in the area:

The rate of *almajiris* in the area is very high because more little children are coming into our towns by the day from different northern states, such as Jigawa State, Kano State, and Katsina State. But there are those children of Yobe origin sent by their friends from near and far villages. (IDI with a male community leader, 2024).

Amongst the three socio-economic classes in the State, the Table shows that lower class people have more tendency of sending their children to *almajirci* (51.6%), while those respondents who reported that middle class people send children to *almajirci* constitute 19.8 percent. A minority of the respondents (11.4%) reported that upper class sends children to *almajirci*. This indicates that poor people have more tendency of sending children to *almajirci*. Table also shows that majority of the respondents (72.5%) are of the view that parents who send children to *almajirci* do not provide for children’s daily needs, while minority of the respondents (27.5%) reported that parents who send children to *almajirci* provide for children’s daily needs. This finding corroborates Abdulkadir & Idris’ finding (2021) who reported that welfare problem is one of the major challenges of Quranic schools. UNICEF (2022) also reported that these children are always on the move and are deprived of decent living conditions, good food and nutrition, water and basic sanitation, access to health care facilities, access to education, parental care, protection from violence and abuse, and participation in decisions affecting their lives, and they are often subjected to child labour and abuse.

Section C: Relationship between *Almajirci* and Poverty in Yobe State

This section addresses objective two in the study. It deals with whether *Almajirci* is associated with poverty in Yobe State.

Table 1.3: Whether *Almajirci* is Associated with Poverty in Yobe State

S/N	Questions	Options	Frequency	Percentage
14	The rate of poverty in Yobe State	Very high	222	58.7
		High	118	31.2
		Low	31	8.2
		Very low	7	1.9
		No response	0	0.0
		Total	378	100
15	Whether poverty associated with <i>almajirci</i> in Yobe State	Yes	274	72.5
		No	104	27.5
		Total	378	100
16	Whether addressing poverty can reduce cases of <i>almajirci</i> in Yobe State	Yes	274	72.5
		No	104	27.5
		Total	378	100

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1.3 presents data on the relationship between *Almajirci* and poverty in Yobe State. The table shows that majority of the majority of the respondents (58.7%) reported that the rate of poverty in Yobe State is very high, followed by those who reported that it is high, represented by 31.2 percent; while 1.9 percent reported that it is very low. On question of whether poverty associated with *almajirci* in Yobe State, the majority of the respondents (72.5%) reported that there is connection them, while minority of the respondents (27.5%) reported that there is no association between them. Thus, majority of the respondents (72.5%) reported that addressing poverty can reduce cases of *almajirci* in Yobe State. A male IDI respondent stated that:

Indeed, reducing poverty will contribute to the reduction of almajirci in this period, because of the parents that failed to cater for their children are the ones who end up sending children to almajirci. In the past, even rich people send children to learn Quran even if they will not beg, but today some parents are sending children to beg for food in the guise of learning Quran. (IDI with a male community leader, 2024).

. In line with the above finding, UNICEF (2022) reported that child poverty and child deprivations are more pronounced in northern Nigeria and rural areas. Multidimensional poverty is manifested in varying degrees with 28.4 percent of urban children being multi-dimensionally poor compared with 65.7 percent of rural children experiencing multidimensional poverty.

Section D: The Influence of *Almajirici* on Security Challenges in Yobe State

This section addresses objective three in the study. It examined the influence of *Almajirici* on security challenges in Yobe State.

Table 1.4: The Influence of *Almajirici* on Security Challenges in Yobe State

S/N	Questions	Options	Frequency	Percentage
17	Whether <i>almajirici</i> has influence on security challenges in Yobe State	Yes	318	84.1
		No	60	15.9
		Total	378	100
18	Respondents' views on how do you think <i>almajirici</i> influences security challenges in Yobe State	Response	Yes	No
		The <i>almajiris</i> are seeing society as merciless	317(83.9%)	61 (16.1%)
		Most crimes are perpetrated by <i>almajiris</i>	251(66.4%)	127 (33.6%)
		The <i>almajiris</i> are susceptible to joining violent gangs	222(58.7%)	156(41.3%)
		Because of the condition of despair the <i>almajiris</i> live in	155(41.0%)	223(59.0%)
		Others specify	99(26.2%)	279(73.8%)
19	Whether <i>Almajirci</i> is connected to Boko Haram in Yobe State	Strongly agreed	235	62.2
		Agreed	131	34.7
		Disagreed	7	1.9
		Strongly disagreed	5	1.3
		Undecided	0	0.0
		Total	378	100
20	The possible solutions to <i>almajirci</i> in Yobe State	Response	Yes	No
		Making laws that prohibit <i>almajirci</i>	214(56.6%)	164(43.4%)
		Fight poverty	192(50.8%)	186(49.2%)
		Community effort to help families	194(51.3%)	184(48.7%)

		Family to stop sending children to almajirici	233(61.6%)	145(38.4%)
		Transforming Quranic schools	70(18.5%)	308(81.5%)

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1.4 presents data on the the influence of *Almajirici* on security challenges in Yobe State. Majority of the respondents (84.1%) reported that *almajirici* has influence on security challenges in Yobe State, while minority of the respondents (15.9%) reported that there is no such influence between *almajirici* and security challenges in the State. Respondents' views on how do they think *almajirici* influences security challenges in Yobe State showed that the *almajiris* are seeing society as merciless (83.9%), most crimes are perpetrated by *almajiris* (66.4%), the *almajiris* are living in condition of despair (59.0%), and few others like having criminogenic *mallams* who are into black magic practices (26.2%). Most of the respondents did not believe that the *almajiris* are susceptible to joining violent gangs (58.7%), while minority believed that the *almajiris* are susceptible to joining violent gangs (41.3%).

With regards to question on whether *Almajirici* is connected to Boko Haram in Yobe State, Majority of the respondents (62.2%) strongly agreed, 34.7 percent agreed, while minority (1.3%) strongly disagreed. The Table also showed that the possible solutions to *almajirici* in Yobe State include: making laws that prohibit *almajirici* (56.6%); fight poverty (51.3%); and community effort to help families (61.6%). But majority of the respondents (81.5%) did not believe that transforming Quranic schools is a possible solution to *almajirici* in Yobe State. Aghedo & Eke (2013) find that the socioeconomic destitution of the *almajirai* makes them easy prey to conflict entrepreneurs - desperate politicians who will stop at nothing in their quest for power and resources- who pay the street urchins peanuts to execute criminal acts. Today, the some of the *almajirai* have become ready-made recruits for prosecuting violence against political and business opponents and rivals. According to UNICEF (2022), *almajiri* children are also taken advantage of conflict period and often obliged to carry arms.

An IDI respondent stated the following on the possible solutions to *almajirici* in Yobe State:

Fighting poverty and making Quranic schools available and free, as well as supporting families through economic empowerment of both men and women will enable parents to take care of their children's need and stop them from sending children for begging in the name of Quranic education. (IDI respondent, 2024).

Another IDI respondent stated the following on the possible solutions *almajirici* in Yobe State:

Muslim clerics should preach against child begging because it is destroying the image of Muslim community among non-Muslims to start thinking that it is a tenet in the Islam, while it is no. Learning Quran is compulsory for Muslims, but child begging is demeaning. The parents should also know that children are trust given to them by Allah and failure to discharge their responsibilities on the children will

make them face the wrath of Allah in the day of judgment. (IDI with a male respondent, 2024).

The above responses and supporting findings from previous studies established the relationship between poverty and *almajirci*. On the nexus between *almajirci* and security challenges in Yobe State, the relationship is also positive.

Conclusion

The study examined the influence of poverty on *Almajiri* institution and security challenges in Yobe State, Nigeria. It specifically investigated the economic status of the people who sent their children to *almajirci*; relationship between *almajirci* and poverty in Yobe State; and the extent to which *almajiri* institution influences security challenges in Yobe State. The study concludes that extent of the cases of *almajirci* in Yobe State is very high and rate of poverty in the State is very high, too. The lower class people have more tendency of sending their children to *almajirci*. This established the relationship between poverty and *almajirci*. On the nexus between *almajirci* and security challenges in Yobe State, the study finds that *almajiris* are seeing society as merciless and they therefore are aggressive to all and sundry. In addition, respondents believed *Almajirci* is connected to Boko Haram in Yobe State and that most crimes are perpetrated by *almajiris*, because the *almajiris* are living in condition of despair. *Almajiri* children are also taken advantage of conflict period and often obliged to carry arms.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The government should make laws that prohibit *almajirci* in the context of child-street and house-to-house begging.
2. Fight poverty through some workable economic policies like addressing inflation and unemployment will go a long way in discouraging parents from sending children for *almajirci*.
3. Community should also make effort to help families through some self-help initiatives that can reduce parents' tendency of unnecessarily sending children for *almajirci*.
4. Awareness should be made through media to make families stop sending children to *almajirci*.
5. Government, local NGOs and individual philanthropists should collaborate to making Quranic schools available and free. This can serve as a better alternative to *almajirci*.
6. Government and local NGOs should be supporting families through economic empowerment to both parents to enable them take care of their children's need and stop them from sending children for begging in the name of Quranic education.

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APPENDIX I
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
YOBE STATE UNIVERSITY
QUESTIONNAIRE GUIDE

Respondent's Consent

Dear Sir/Ma,

I am an academic staff in the above named Department and institution. I am conducting research on the topic: The Influence of Poverty on *Almajiri* Institution and Security Challenges: Study in Yobe State, Nigeria. To gather the opinion of the general public on the subject matter within Yobe State, I am soliciting for your cooperation to kindly fill this questionnaire. Your participation to answer the set of questions is voluntary. I assure you that the information given will strictly be used for academic purpose, adhering to all the principle guiding research ethics.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Dr. Bukar Jamri

Instruction: Kindly indicate your answers by ticking on the option(s)

Section A: Personal, Socio-Economic, and Demographic Data of the Respondents

1. Gender

- 1. Male
- 2. Female

2. Age

- 1. Below 18 years
- 2. 18 – 27 years
- 3. 28 – 37 years
- 4. 38- 47 years
- 5. 48-57 years
- 6. 58 and above

3. Marital Status

- 1. Single
- 2. Married
- 3. Divorced
- 4. Widow

4. Education

- 1. Primary
- 2. Secondary
- 3. Tertiary
- 4. Qur'anic education

5. Others ()
5. Occupation
1. Civil Servant ()
 2. Student (western education) ()
 3. Student (Quranic education) ()
 4. Traders ()
 5. Others.....
6. Monthly Income
1. N10,000-N29,999 ()
 2. N30,000-N49,999 ()
 3. N50,000- N69,999 ()
 4. N70,000- N89,999 ()
 5. N90,000 and above ()

Section B: The Economic Status of People who sent their Children to *Almajirci*

7. Are you aware of the cases of *almajirci* in the area
1. Yes ()
 2. No ()
- If no, skip Question 8-10
8. If Q7 is yes, what is the extent of the cases of *almajirci* in the area?
1. Very high ()
 2. High ()
 3. Low ()
 4. Very low ()
 5. I don't know ()
9. What is the dominant socio-economic status of parents who send their children to *almajirci*?
1. Upper class ()
 2. Middle class ()
 3. Lower class ()
 4. All the classes ()
10. Do you think the parents who send their children to *almajirci* make provision for children's daily needs?
1. Yes ()
 2. No ()
 3. I don't know ()

Section C: Whether *Almajirci* is Associated with Youth Poverty in Yobe State

11. What is the rate of poverty in Yobe State?
1. Very high ()
 2. High ()
 3. Low ()

- 4. Very low ()
- 5. I don't know ()

12. Is poverty associated with *almajirci* in Yobe State?

- 1. Yes ()
- 2. No ()
- 3. I don't know ()

13. Do you think addressing poverty can reduce cases of *almajirci* in Yobe State?

- 1. Yes ()
- 2. No ()
- 3. I don't know ()

Section D: The Influence of *Almajirici* on Security Challenges in Yobe State

14. Do you think *almajirici* has influence on security challenges in Yobe State?

- 1. Yes ()
- 2. No ()

If no, skip Question 15-18

15. If Q14 is yes, how do you think *almajirici* influences security challenges in Yobe State?

S/N	The Influence of <i>Almajirici</i> on Security Challenges	Yes	No
1.	The almajiris are seeing society as merciless		
2.	Most crimes are perpetrated by almajiris		
3.	The almajiris are susceptible to joining violent gangs		
4.	Because of the condition of despair the almajiris live in		
5.	Others specify		

16. *Almajirici* is connected to Boko Haram in Yobe State.

- 1. Strongly agree ()
- 2. Agree ()
- 3. Undecided ()
- 4. Disagree ()
- 5. Strongly disagreed ()

17. What are the possible solutions to *almajirici* in Yobe State?

S/N	Possible Solutions to <i>Almajirici</i> in Yobe State	Yes	No
1.	Making laws that prohibit almajirci		
2.	Fight poverty		
3.	Community effort to help families		
4.	Family to stop sending children to almajirci		
5.	Transforming Quranic schools		
6.	Others specify		