

# Relationship Between Street-Begging and Poverty in Ilorin Emirate, Kwara State, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** There are diverse economic groups in any given society or country. Some of these groups are either privileged or less privileged with different traits in the economy of a society or country. This paper intends to examine the relationship that exists between the street-begging and poverty in Ilorin Emirate, Kwara State, Nigeria. One hundred and fifty (150) respondents were selected using Simple-Random Sampling Technique among the beggars. Questionnaire, interview and observations were used to collect data while the latter was analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistics. Findings show medium, positive and significant correlation between street-begging and poverty scale ( $\rho = .31$ ,  $n = 112$ ,  $p < .005$ ). More so, full-time beggars are poorer than part-time beggars as there was significant difference in the poverty levels for the two and there was no significant difference in poverty scores for male and female beggars. Most of these beggars are poor, needy and equally illiterate without significant helping hands to care for their daily necessities of basic needs. They only access to relatively meagre amount of money through street-begging activities to keep themselves and their family members survive. It is recommended to the government to incorporate this socio-economically less privileged group in the Nigerian anti-poverty programme and public to desist from encouraging this group from engaging in begging activity by extending more their helping hands to the poor or destitute before turning to any form of beggars in the society.

**Keywords:** Ilorin Emirate, Poverty, Street-Begging

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## 1. Introduction

Beggars are the members of the society who have been neglected entirely in many spheres in Nigeria, both socio-economically and politically, they have no pride and dignity to protect in a society due to their begging business engagement. There are two main types of beggars: full-timers and part-timers. The former type of beggars engages in street-begging activity on regular-basis or daily-basis and openly done it, while the latter type of beggars engages in begging activity on irregular-basis or occasionally-basis and not done openly. *This is equally categorized as “fine beggars” which are “psychological beggars” who use language to deceive people, tell reasonable and unreasonable lies and stories, dodge under the activities of religion, alluring people to give them money and/or other material things, and sometimes if chance permit it they engage in petty or light stealing and often change areas (Esan, 2009) [5].* Most of these beggars, particularly, those

that are full-time beggars are disproportionately located in the public places such as markets, religious premises like mosques and churches, motor parks or garages, filling stations, social event places and dilapidated buildings which are more likely in the cities and towns than in the rural areas and villages. Likewise, the disturbance and violence causing by beggars are experienced by every country of the World particularly significantly higher in the Less Developed Countries than in More Developed Countries. Namwata et al. (2012) [14] have described the street-begging activity as a universal phenomenon.

According to Namwata et al. (2012) [14], street-beggars are individuals, including children, elderly people with disabilities, and families who normally beg or make their living from the streets or public spaces such as shopping areas, churches, and mosques by asking people for money and food. Some socio-economic items are considered to represent poverty problem as only independent variable against street-begging as dependent variable in the study. This would show how poverty influences/relates with the

begging activity. In other words, this paper aims to examine socio-economic and political realities of beggars as under-developed group in Nigerian society. The beggars are considered and coined as nuisance and their activity of begging is seen as disturbance in the various towns and cities of Nigeria.

#### *Literature Review on Street-Begging, Poverty and Related Concepts*

Mohd Ramlan Mohd Arshad et al. (2014) [13] in their study on the "Street Begging in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia" using quantitative method via questionnaires to collect data, and analyze the data through Pearson Correlation Coefficient show positive significant relationship between the street begging and poverty in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. They consider a set of identified variables like poverty, disability, human trafficking and homelessness against the street begging, in which only poverty variable shows significant relationship with the latter. This implies that with increase in the number of poor in Kuala Lumpur, more people involve in the street begging activity as a means to survive from poverty problem.

Menka and Hassan (2013) [12] analyze the socio-economic causes of begging, bad habits and consequent diseases, the obstacles of beggars as well as their remedies in Aligarh. Primary data were employed through field survey and direct questionnaire to the respondents. Their findings show that poverty topped the economic rationale behind begging, others are unemployment and insufficient earnings on the part of the beggars. More so, illiteracy is a major social cause of begging in their study area. It is concluded that majority of the beggars are poor, being deprived and less privileged group in the society of Aligarh.

Jelili and Mnitp (2013) [9] argue that there is a link between street-begging and various variables associated with socio-economic, political and cultural deprivations in any particular society. With existence of various degrees of deprivations, street-begging would persist to exist in a society. They observed that poverty and other related socio-economic factors have strong linkage with the problem of street-begging in many urban areas and cities.

Jabir Hassan Khan et al. (2013) [8] examine major problems facing the beggars in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. Their findings reveal that poverty and unemployment are the major problems facing by the beggars. Others are lack of supply of electricity, sanitation, supply of water and dwelling place in the study area. Furthermore, Findings show that begging activity is slightly more happening in the rural area than the urban area in the study area. The implication of the findings is that poverty problem is more pronounced among the beggars than non-beggars but poor in Aligarh district.

Namwata et al. (2012) [14] in their findings show that majorly the cause of street-begging is poverty. Beggars result to street-begging due to their inability to satisfy their traditional and modern basic needs of food, clothing, accommodation, education as well as employment, after they lose either one or both of their parents. Albeit, some of them engage in this uncalled for activity because they are

physically-challenged, old age, family disintegration, sickness, or lack of caring in the midst of relatives.

Adedibu and Jelili's (n.d.) [2] findings reveal that those who engage in street- or house-to-house begging in Kano, Ibadan and Enugu in Nigeria, are mostly illiterate, either possessed primary school certificates or no certificates. They are being prompted to begging due to their illiteracy. Although, out of the number of variables considered in the study, only age, tribe and education proven higher significance with chi-square analysis. Additional reasons for their involvement in begging is lack of food besides being physically challenged or disable.

The study carried out by Gloria and Samuel (2012) [6] using descriptive survey and in-depth structured interview to collect data from the respondents (beggars). Their findings prove that majority of the respondents engaged in street-begging as a result of their problem of homelessness, unemployment, poverty and family rejection. These factors have shown strong and consistent relationship with the street-begging activity. Other factors considered in their study include religious obligation, children's education as well as treating sickness.

According to Kamruzzaman and AbdulHakim (2015) [10] in their study carried out in Dhaka city, Bangladesh on "Socio-economic Status of Child Beggars in Dhaka City", the finding reveals that poverty is the leading cause of street-begging among the children in the city. Menka et al. (2014) [12] equally show in their study that economic life of the beggars is characterized by poverty as many of them are destitute in the Aligarh district of Uttar Pradesh. It shows that poverty is strongly positively influence street-begging and begging activity in general in the district.

Abdulraheem (n.d.)'s [1] finding reveals that poverty is a great influential cause of street-begging among the elderly people in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria. Cross-sectional designed method was employed in the study and primary data were used to collect data and information from both elderly beggars and non-beggars in the metropolis. Apart from poverty which is greatly influenced begging activity, other factors (lack of careers or caring relatives, physical disability or challenges/medical illness, lack of family support, unemployment and non-existence of social welfare) are not significant factors to the begging activity in general and to the elderly beggars in particular, in Ilorin (see also Delap, 2009). [4].

Ogunkan and Fawole (2009) [16] note that the main socio-economic characteristic of begging is illiteracy. Majority of the respondents didn't have formal education. This is followed by high number of household size of the beggars, married beggars and male. They equally earn low-income for living (see also Gabriel, et al. 2015). [7].

Bose et al. (2014) [3] finds out in their study of analysis of factors responsible for alms giving in South Western part of Nigeria that combination of Society, Personal and Religion as factors responsible for alms-giving or begging. Using different techniques as multiple regression and correlation coefficient, the findings show that the three factors have

positive and significant impact and relationship with the alms-begging in Abeokuta, Ogun State. In other words, people are begging because the society and religions give chance to do so, apart from personal reason of the beggars.

It is argued that there is strong relationship between street-begging, disability and poverty in many societies. It is equally assumed that those that engaged in begging do so because they are being trapped in a “Vicious Cycle of Poverty” and see the former as a last resort for their survival. Furthermore, the poor people are at the greater risk to become disabled through lack of adequate housing, food, clean water, basic sanitation and safe working environments. While in return, disabled people are at higher risk to become poor through restricted access to education, health care, job training and employment opportunities (Nora, G. et al. 2014). [15].

## 2. Research Questions

- (1) Is there a relationship between street-begging and poverty?
- (2) Are full-time beggars poorer than part-time beggars?
- (3) Is there a significant difference in the means poverty scores for male and female beggars?

### 2.1. Research Hypotheses

- (1) There is a relationship between street-begging and poverty.
- (2) Full-time beggars are poorer than part-time beggars.
- (3) There is a significant difference in the means poverty scores for male and female beggars.

### 2.2. Area of Study and Methodology

The area of study is Ilorin Emirate, Kwara State, Nigeria which is the biggest Emirate in the State. It comprises five (5) Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the State, i.e. Asa, Ilorin East, Ilorin South, Ilorin West and Moro Local Government Areas. One hundred and fifty (100) respondents (beggars) were selected using stratified sampling technique across the States that fall under the zone. Questionnaires and face-to-face interview were employed to collect data from the selected respondents in the study area. The questionnaire was self-drafted one and contains both open-ended and closed-ended questions in two sections: Section one is all about the demographic information of the respondents while Section two is on the poverty scale which consists of seven items to be responded to by the respondents. Interview contains four questions to be answered by the interviewees and those questions are related to both street-begging and poverty level of the respondents.

The data collection was administered by the researcher with the help of two assistants who are good in Hausa and Yoruba languages in addition to English language. This is to ease the data collection as the respondents involved are different in tribes/ethnics/languages. Analysis of data was done through three techniques apart from simple percentages

and frequencies that are equally employed. Spearman rank order correlation coefficient ( $\rho$ ) was used to answer research question one and its related research hypothesis, Mann-Whitney U-test was used to respond to research question two and its related research hypothesis and Independent-sample t-test was employed to analyze research question three and its related research hypothesis.

## 3. Results and Discussion

This section presents the selected results from the generated output of the SPSS. It comprises demographic characteristics of the respondents and the results that answer the research questions and the related hypotheses raised early in the study.

*Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents.*

Variables	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Age:		
Below 18yrs	8	7.1
18yrs-40yrs	64	57.1
41yrs-60yrs	28	25.0
Above 60yrs	12	10.7
Sex:		
Male	58	51.8
Female	54	48.2
Religion:		
Islam	82	73.2
Christianity	26	23.2
Others	4	3.6
Marital status:		
Single	32	28.6
Married	57	50.9
Separated	13	11.6
Divorced	4	3.6
Widowed	6	5.4
Ethnicity/tribe:		
Yoruba	63	56.3
Hausa	37	33.0
Igbo	1	0.9
Others	11	9.8
Education:		
No schooling	45	40.2
Primary	13	11.6
Secondary	5	4.5
Adult education	25	22.3
Others	24	21.4
Begging types:		
Always/regular	45	40.2
Occasional/not regular	67	59.8
Total	112	100.0

Table 1 shows age distribution of the respondents (beggars) in the study, respondents 77 (64.2%) are age range of 40 years below while the remaining respondents 40 (35.7%) are in the age range of 41 years above. From the information provided it shows that majority of the beggars in the study are youth. Respondents 58 (51.8%) are males while the remaining respondents 54 (48.2%) are females. For the religious belief, majority of the respondents 82 (73.2%) are practicing Islam and the remaining respondents 26 (23.2%) and 4 (3.6%) are Christianity and Others, respectively. Not less than half of the respondents 57 (50.9%) are Married and

respondents 32 (28.6%) are Single. Others are Separated 13 (11.6%), Widowed 6 (5.4%) and Divorced 4 (3.6%) of the respondents. More so, majority of the respondents 63 (56.3%) are Yoruba while the remaining respondents 37 (33.0%) and 11 (9.8%) are Hausa and Others, respectively. For the respondents' education qualification, respondents 45 (40.2%) are without schooling while respondents 25 (22.3%)

have adult education. Respondents 13 (11.6%) possess primary school certificate, respondents 5 (4.5%) have secondary school certificate and the remaining respondents 24 (21.4%) are Others. Respondents who are part-time beggars are 67 (59.8%) while the remaining respondents who are full-time beggars are 44 (40.2%).

**Table 2.** Spearman Correlations Coefficient ( $\rho$ ).

		resp. begging type	retotal poverty
Spearman's rho	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.311**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
	N	112	112
	Correlation Coefficient	.311**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
	N	112	112

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 investigates the relationship between poverty and street-begging using Spearman Rank Order Correlation Coefficient. Preliminary analyzes were performed to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity and homoscedasticity. There was a medium, positive correlation between the two variables,  $\rho = .31$ ,  $n = 112$ ,  $p < .005$ , with high levels of poverty associated with higher levels of street-begging. The two variables share only 10 per cent (.311x.311) of their variance. There is not much overlap between the two variables.

The aforementioned results indicate that poverty is seriously existent in Ilorin Emirate, Kwara State and mostly among the Muslims in the State. Though, this is not a surprise as the State particularly, the Emirate is dominated by the Yoruba Muslims than any other tribes. Therefore, the hypothesis one which states that "there is a relationship between street-begging and poverty" can be accepted. The findings of this study are in line with the previous findings in the existing literature and studies (Kamruzzaman, Md. and AbdulHakim, Md., 2015; Mohd Ramlan Mohd Arshad et al., 2014; Menka and Hassan, T., 2013; Jabir Hassan Khan, et al. 2013; Namwata, B. M. L. et al., 2012). It implies that those who engage in street-begging activity are poor, unable to take care of themselves and their family members. They choose this activity as last option to generate relatively meagre resources to survive. The beggars are the poorest of the poor group in Ilorin Emirate, Kwara State. Most of the reasons for engaging in street-begging activity include among others are lack of employment opportunity, illiteracy, meagre income, less empowerment or no empowerment.

**Table 3.** Mann-Whitney U Test.

Ranks

	resp. begging type	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
retotal poverty	always/regular	45	43.80	1971.00
	occasional/not regular	66	64.32	4245.00
	Total	11		
		1		

Test Statistics<sup>a</sup>

	retotal poverty
Mann-Whitney U	936.000
Wilcoxon W	1971.000
Z	-3.308
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001

a. Grouping Variable: resp. begging type

Report

retotal poverty		
resp. begging type	N	Median
always/regular	45	20.0000
occasional/not regular	66	23.0000
4.00	1	22.0000
Total	112	22.0000

In Table 3, a Mann-Whitney U Test revealed significant difference in the poverty levels of full-time beggars ( $Md = 20$ ,  $n = 45$ ) and part-time beggars ( $Md = 23$ ,  $n = 66$ ),  $U = 936$ ,  $z = -3.31$ ,  $p = .001$ ,  $r = 0.312$ .

With the above result of the Mann-Whitney U-test, it can be concluded that the hypothesis 2 which states that "full-time beggars are poorer than part-time beggars" can be accepted. It connotes that full-time beggars are more destitute than the part-time beggars in the society of Ilorin Emirate, Kwara State, Nigeria. In other words, the level of poverty and suffering of those beggars who go out on street on daily basis are higher than those beggars who go out on street on occasional basis for begging in the society of Kwara State, Nigeria. Sometimes, those part-time beggars go out for begging activity when they face a peculiar problem to solve like problem of hunger, sickness, paying hospital bills, stranded in traveling and need transport fare and other related problems they are currently facing and require immediate solution. Unlike the full-time beggars who have chosen relied on street-begging activity as their full-time job to earn daily income to survive.

Table 4. Independent-Sample t-Test.

## Group Statistics

	resp. sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
retotal poverty	male	58	22.5517	4.55058	.59752
	female	54	21.4444	4.47916	.60954

## Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
									Lower Upper
retotal poverty	Equal variances assumed	.113	.738	1.297	110	.198	1.10728	.85405	-.58524 2.79980
	Equal variances not assumed			1.297	109.652	.197	1.10728	.85356	-.58434 2.79890

In Table 4 above, the independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the poverty scores for males and females. There was no significant difference in scores for males ( $M = 22.55$ ,  $SD = 4.55$ ) and females ( $M = 21.44$ ,  $SD = 4.48$ );  $t(110) = 1.30$ ,  $p = .20$ , two-tailed). The magnitude of the differences in the means (mean difference = 1.11, 95% ci: -.59 to 2.80) was very small (eta squared = .015).

The hypothesis 3 that suggests that “there is a significant difference in the means poverty scores for male and female beggars” cannot be accepted, in other words, can be rejected. Irrespective of gender of the beggars, those who involve in street-begging activity are conjointly considered poor.

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, more poverty is associated with more involvement in begging activity as the findings of the study revealed positive relationship between the poverty and begging activity. Generally, poverty abets street-begging activity in a society. It is concluded that full-time beggars are poorer than part-time beggars nevertheless, being male or female does not justify the level or rate of poverty and suffering of the beggars. Street-begging activity has been seen as nuisance in the society but to desist from it poverty problem must be address in the society.

Therefore, it is recommended to the government to incorporate this socio-economically less privileged group in the Nigerian poverty alleviation programme. Likewise, public should desist from encouraging this group from engaging in begging activity by extending more their helping hands to the poor and destitute before turning to any form of beggars in the society. Since the study area is predominantly Muslim-dominated society within Kwara State, Nigeria, both conventional and Islamic measures should be employed to address the problem of poverty in the area. Ilorin Emirate has numerous and competent scholars that excel in both conventional and Islamic ways to tackle the problem of poverty and street-begging. It is necessary to forge public-private partnership in solving the said problems by improving and merging government anti-poverty scheme, empowerment

scheme as well as *Zakah* and *Saddaqa* institution in the Emirate in particular and in Kwara State, Nigeria, in general.

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