

The nexus between child streetism and delinquency in Nigeria: Implications for sustainable development

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ABSTRACT

Child streetism and delinquency present significant social challenges in Nigeria, where children engaged in street life are often exposed to criminal activities and adverse socio-economic conditions. This study explores the relationship between child streetism and delinquency, and their implications for sustainable development. Utilizing a systematic review methodology, the study critically analyses 61 key sources published between 1969 and 2023, including peer-reviewed journal articles, reports from international organizations, and empirical studies, to explore the definitions, contexts, and empirical evidence related to street children and their behaviors, risks, and socio-environmental impacts in Nigeria. It reveals a significant relationship between child streetism and delinquency, highlighting that children engaged in street work often participate in various negative behaviors such as drug trafficking, thuggery, sexual assault, and cultism. These issues severely impact their psychological and moral development, contributing to broader societal challenges and undermining sustainable development efforts. The paper identifies persistent socio-economic and cultural factors within the family and society as key drivers of child streetism and delinquency behavior in Nigeria, with current government initiatives failing to address these root causes effectively. The study concludes by suggesting a collaborative, multi-stakeholder approach to effectively address the complex issues surrounding street children and delinquency in Nigeria.

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Introduction

Child streetism and delinquency are interconnected and multifaceted socio-economic issues that affect numerous countries worldwide, posing significant challenges for researchers, policymakers, human rights advocates, law enforcement, and religious leaders (Ogunsakin, 2015; Fors, 2012; Marte, 2008). In Nigeria, these concerns are exacerbated by widespread terrorist activities, banditry, unemployment, hunger, poverty, high population density, political instability, inadequate healthcare, environmental degradation, lack of education, poor sanitation, and ethnic conflicts. As a result of these socio-economic challenges, a large number of children live and work on the streets in urban areas across Nigeria, often subjected to violence and engaging in delinquent activities such as stealing, banditry, gangsterism, truancy, cultism, fighting, drug trafficking, pickpocketing, and prostitution (Okpa et al., 2021; Jack et al., 2019; Nzeakor, 2019; Ugwuoke & Duruyi, 2015).

These behaviors are frequently linked to children's exposure to street activities like begging, hawking, motorcycle riding, shoe shining, bus conducting, and vehicle washing (Esiri & Ejechi, 2021; Okpa et al., 2021; Hassan et al., 2020). Their interactions with individuals of questionable moral standing on the streets further shape their behaviors, as they are often influenced into adopting harmful lifestyles under the guise of selling goods or receiving assistance (Okpa, Ilupeju, & Eshiotse, 2020; Ukwaiyi, Okpa, & Akwaji, 2019). Such activities not only jeopardize the children's psychological development and hinder their potential, but also threaten sustainable development, as these children represent the future of the nation.

While numerous studies have examined the phenomenon of street children and child delinquency in Nigeria (Okpa et al., 2021;

Hassan et al., 2020; Udoh & Joseph, 2012), many have not adequately explored the implications of these vulnerable conditions for Nigeria's sustainable development. This research addresses that gap by providing a comprehensive analysis of the circumstances faced by Nigerian street children as the country strives to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, which aim to eradicate poverty, protect lives, and promote peace and prosperity.

This article seeks to deeply examine child streetism and the associated rise in child delinquency, along with their implications for Nigeria's sustainable development. The study explores the foundational concepts of street children, child streetism, and child delinquency, the impact of these issues on sustainable development, and the underlying factors that perpetuate these social problems in urban areas. Additionally, the study synthesizes a critical model to enhance the understanding of child streetism and delinquency, offering insights into potential solutions for these pervasive challenges. The study underscores the urgent need for targeted interventions and policies that address the root causes of child streetism and delinquency, advocating for a holistic approach involving government, NGOs, and community stakeholders to mitigate these challenges and support the nation's development trajectory.

Method

The study utilized a comprehensive literature review approach to examine the concepts of street children, child streetism, child delinquency, and their broader implications as well as the reasons for the prevalence of the phenomena in the urban environment. A total of 61 key sources from 1969 to 2023 were identified and analyzed. These sources included journal articles, reports from international organizations,

books, and empirical studies relevant to street children and child delinquency.

The literature was selected through systematic searches in academic databases such as Google Scholar, PubMed, and JSTOR, using keywords like "street children," "child streetism," "child delinquency," "youth gangs," "Nigeria," and "urban poverty." Inclusion criteria focused on studies that provided definitions, contextual clarifications, and empirical evidence related to street children and their behaviors, risks, and socio-environmental impacts. Studies were selected if they were peer-reviewed, relevant to the Nigerian context, or provided a broader theoretical framework applicable to child streetism. The data from the selected literature were analyzed using a qualitative synthesis approach. This involved coding and categorizing the literature according to themes such as definitions of street children and child streetism, socio-economic factors influencing streetism, behavioral risks associated with street life, and theoretical perspectives on delinquency. Key themes were identified using content analysis, where recurring patterns, concepts, and arguments were systematically categorized.

Additionally, the analysis included examining the socio-economic, cultural, and environmental factors contributing to child streetism, drawing on empirical data from the literature. For instance, the analysis of socio-environmental impacts utilized a thematic approach to identify the various risks faced by street children, such as drug use, engagement in criminal activities, and exposure to exploitation. The study was anchored on Hirschi's Social Bond Theory (1969), which posits that weakened or broken social bonds lead to deviant behavior. This theory was used to contextualize the findings within the broader societal and familial influences on street children. The four elements of social bonds—attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief—

were used as analytical lenses to explore how the lack of social ties contributes to the prevalence of streetism among children in Nigerian urban settings.

Results and Discussion

The following discussion encompasses four interrelated subsections. The first section provides insights into the concepts of street children and child streetism. While the second gives the definition and context of child delinquency, the third section discusses the implications of child streetism and delinquent behaviors for sustainable development. The fourth section analyzes the reasons why child streetism and delinquency persist in the urban milieu.

Street children and child streetism: conceptual clarifications

The terms "street children" and "child streetism" are often used interchangeably in current literature on streetism (Ogunkan & Adeboyejo, 2021; Siibaway, 2021; Awartey, 2014). While there is no academic controversy over their meanings, it is important to clarify these terms to avoid potential ambiguities. Both terms can be considered synonymous when "street children" is used to describe the phenomenon rather than the individuals themselves. According to Ogunkan and Adeboyejo (2021), both "street children" and "child streetism" refer to situations where young individuals seek safety or livelihood on the streets, often engaging in unsupervised activities without the guidance of a trustworthy adult.

The Consortium for Street Children (2003) describes child streetism as involving young people who spend most of their time away from home, engage in menial tasks to survive, and frequently sleep on the streets. These children may not be abandoned or without family, but they live

in environments devoid of responsible adult supervision and guidance. Child streetism also encompasses the engagement of street children in risky behaviors such as drug use, gambling, prostitution, smoking, and glue sniffing (Kaime-Atterhog, 2012). Some children are introduced to these habits at a very young age, while others gradually adopt them. In Nigeria, streetism describes individuals under the age of 18 who live on the streets without the supervision of guardians, parents, or any adult. It is a culturally ingrained and socially reinforced pattern of behavior and activity.

These definitions suggest that although "street children" and "child streetism" describe similar behaviors, "child streetism" provides a more comprehensive understanding, emphasizing the hazardous conditions and vulnerabilities faced by children on the streets.

Child delinquency: Definition and context

The terms "child" and "delinquency" lack universally accepted definitions. Various countries and states define different age ranges for minors. For example, the Juvenile Justice Act of 1986 stipulates that the maximum age for child delinquents in Nigeria is currently 18 years for girls and 16 years for boys. The term "child" is also used interchangeably with "juvenile," "youth," and "adolescent," with specific legal definitions varying by jurisdiction. In this study, these terms are used interchangeably to maintain consistency.

Alemika and Chukwuma (2001) describe delinquency as encompassing pathological conditions, influences, dysfunctions, ethical depravity, disruptions, and uncontrolled behaviors. They note that a range of socio-economic, political, and historical factors influence the concept of child delinquency and concerns regarding its regulation.

According to them, child delinquency involves any criminal offense committed by someone legally classified as a child, which would be considered a crime if committed by an adult. It is characterized by persistently antisocial, unlawful, or criminal behavior by youths that endangers others, cannot be managed by parents, and attracts law enforcement attention (Adeboye, 2015). Edet (2012) defines child delinquency as offenses committed by minors under 18 years old, often in an effort to please peers, resist parental pressure, or cope with specific emotional challenges. Similarly, Shoemaker (2010) defines child delinquency as minors engaging in criminal and status offenses, which are illegal activities performed by those under 18.

Onyehalu (2003) broadens the scope to include any deviation from accepted societal norms by individuals not yet considered adults, which are often labeled as problem behaviors (Bingham et al., 2006). These behaviors contravene societal values, cultural norms, and expectations, and are thus viewed as undesirable (Siegel & Welsh, 2009; Okorodudu & Okorodudu, 2003). Eke (2004) categorizes delinquent behaviors into two main types: status offenses and criminal offenses. Criminal offenses, such as arson, sexual assault, theft, burglary, drug offenses, murder, and armed robbery, are dealt with by the criminal court system. Status offenses, on the other hand, include behaviors like truancy, running away from home, malingering, loitering, public alcohol consumption, and associating with questionable individuals, including criminals and prostitutes.

Afon and Badiora (2013) classify youth gangs or delinquency into four global categories: conflicts, criminal activity, cult or occult gangs, and retreatist groups. Conflict groups engage in violent confrontations with rival groups over perceived slights or territorial disputes. Criminal gangs

focus primarily on financial gain through illegal activities like theft, extortion, and drug trafficking. Cult or occult gangs are characterized by secretive or mystical practices, including devil worship. Retreatist gangs prioritize substance abuse, including heroin, cocaine, alcohol, and marijuana. Individuals often join these groups to maintain access to these substances. These classifications are crucial in understanding the diverse forms of delinquent behaviors, particularly among street children in various Nigerian cities, highlighting the complexity of the issues and the need for targeted interventions.

In Nigeria, most street activities are centered around generating income to sustain livelihoods (Adedeji et al., 2014; Ekpenyong & Sibiri, 2011). According to the International Labor Organization Labor Act, children are prohibited from participating in any street activities (Dillon et al., 2012), making such activities illegal for children everywhere. Despite this, the number of street children has surged in Nigerian cities (Taiwo et al., 2021; Okeke, 2015; Nte et al., 2009). Although there are no concrete statistics, it is estimated that over 20 million school-age children in Nigeria are not attending school (Alabi, 2022), with many of these children working and living on the streets (Taiwo, 2022; ILO, 2020). While the streets may offer these children a sense of freedom and the opportunity to engage in various activities, it also exposes them to dangers that undermine their dignity and negatively impact their physical, emotional, mental, and moral well-being (Okafor, 2010). As Omokhodion et al. (2005) noted, these children often watch helplessly as life on the streets shatters their dreams and aspirations. Instances of abuse and exploitation against children are rising (Asamu, 2015; UNICEF, 2003), infringing on their rights to safety, education, self-worth, and a childhood free from harm.

According to WHO (2000), children who are routinely exposed to the risks of street life become vulnerable and unprotected, leading them to engage in behaviors such as promiscuity, drug use, theft, and other anti-social activities as a means of survival. The literature indicates that drug use among street populations, including street children, is alarmingly high and has drawn significant attention from researchers and stakeholder organizations (Femi, 2015; Patience et al., 2015). Ajake et al. (2010) report that three out of every ten offenders detained in Nigerian urban centers are under the age of 18. Nigeria ranks among the top consumers of harmful substances like marijuana, cocaine, alcohol, benzodiazepines, nicotine, and analgesics compared to other countries in the global south (Degenhardt et al., 2008). Children working as motorbike (*okada*) riders and bus conductors are often involved in pickpocketing, fighting, gambling, and theft from passengers (Taiwo, 2018).

The recent emergence of street-connected adolescents has been linked to road improvements, as these teenagers beg for money from passing drivers under the pretense of repairing potholes. However, many of these youths do more than beg—they participate in roadside robberies, serve as informants for bandits, and devise ways to deflate car tires to facilitate theft or looting. They have frequently engaged in breaking into vehicles stalled in traffic or on bad roads, robbing drivers and passengers of valuables such as cash, cell phones, laptops, jewelry, and other personal items (Nte, Eke & Igbaniho, 2009; Ojo, 2005).

A review of the literature shows that many children flee their homes seeking autonomy and safety from harsh treatments (Esiri, 2020; Joshi, 2020; Onwe, 2014). Onwe (2014) notes that many of these children are subjected to sexual or physical abuse by parents, relatives, or guardians, resulting in severe psychological and physical

consequences. According to the World Health Organization (2010), such abuse can significantly impact the psychological and physical development of children. This abusive behavior is particularly prevalent among domestic workers (Esiri, 2020), who often exhibit both externalized behavioral problems, such as violence and defiance of authority, and internalized issues, including withdrawal, low self-esteem, and stress. To escape these conditions, many domestic workers flee their homes and turn to street life. Joshi (2020) suggests that children who have been maltreated are 25% more likely to engage in criminal activities, use harmful substances, or become teenage parents.

Studies by Oladosu (2012) and Adewale (2018) claim that the Almajirai, a group of street children in northern Nigeria, are responsible for many terrorist activities, including suicide bombings, arson, killing innocent people, attacking security personnel, and damaging property. Additionally, groups such as the Odua People's Congress (OPC) in the southwest, the Bakassi Boys, and the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) in the east have contributed to significant delinquency in recent years. These urban terror groups often recruit street children as armed foot soldiers and surveillance operatives, gathering intelligence for attacks (Nte et al., 2009). In various parts of the country, children working as hawkers or beggars are at risk of being recruited into organized crimes, such as terrorism, drug trafficking, armed robbery, gangsterism, and banditry, and they also frequently engage in theft and pickpocketing.

Despite these challenges, the Nigerian government has made minimal progress in addressing the issues facing these vulnerable children. Although various poverty alleviation programs have been initiated, they have largely failed due to political motivations, poor coordination, inadequate execution, and a lack of enforcement. The

benefits of these programs often do not reach the intended recipients, as they are diverted by intermediaries between the government and the target populations (Jelili, 2006). Consequently, these initiatives fall short of reaching the most impoverished, including street children, for whom poverty remains a critical concern (Ogunkan, 2014).

Implications of child streetism and delinquent behaviors for sustainable development

Children's development is crucial for the overall sustainability of any society. The widely referenced definition of sustainable development from the Brundtland Report states: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Anderson, 2002). This definition encompasses two key ideas: (1) addressing the needs, particularly of the poorest individuals globally, with priority; and (2) considering the constraints imposed on the environment's capacity to meet current and future needs through technological advancements and social structures.

In every culture, it is essential to provide children with every opportunity to reach their full potential, as they represent the future of society. The achievement of this objective is the main focus of all educational and youth initiatives. However, this is not the reality for many Nigerian teenagers involved in streetism and delinquency. While these adolescents engage in street activities to support themselves and their impoverished families, the children are jeopardizing not only their future, but also the future of the whole country. They will become a societal burden when they grow up, weakening the economy, and raising the standard of living for the population as a whole. In line with this assertion, Ayoade (2010) and Okpukpara et al. (2006) aver that, as a result of children's

lack of survival abilities and expertise that the nation will ultimately profit from, these youngsters will eventually grow up to be a burden to both themselves and the country as a whole.

According to Hassan et al. (2020), street life frequently corrupts children and introduces them to criminal comportments. When street children engage and interact with individuals who behave unethically, such as those involved in gambling, cults, deceit, trafficking in drugs, armed robbery, and arson, they acquire information and imbibe delinquent behaviors. Often, these people indoctrinate and lure them into their egregious lifestyles (Okpa, Ilupeju & Eshiotse, 2020; Ukwaiyi, Okpa, & Akwaji, 2019; Okpa & Ukwaiyi, 2017). Children and the nation as a whole are suffering greatly as a result of the increased crime rate among young people in Nigerian society. One can argue that in a developing nation, like Nigeria, where strict traditional standards and values are kept, adolescents who work are preparing themselves for bigger challenges and jobs in the future; nonetheless, this has a number of detrimental implications for the children's future. Not only are the children's childhoods damaged by being denied care, play, and a useful education, but their future is also in danger.

Children who have received a sentence or have been detained due to criminal activities experience a variety of consequences that they may not be able to foresee. While they are being detained or found guilty, they might lose their freedom. Young persons who are heavily involved in the criminal justice system suffer long-term detrimental effects on their development. This is because, as mentioned by Jannetta and Cameron (2017), having a criminal record as a youngster lowers lifelong family earnings; it has the impact of branding them as "criminals;" it disrupts relationships with family, friends,

and coworkers; and it makes them subject to probationary supervision and surveillance.

Serious crimes committed by children before they are adults pose a threat to everyone's future. It is possible that they are acting out in protest of alleged mistreatment and exploitation they have suffered. They could think that the only options for their future are criminality and living on the streets. They could even be searching for backing from a gang or releasing their rage or frustration on a specific individual or group. Regardless of the motivation, the great majority of Nigerian people, families, and communities are impacted by youth delinquency. It is important to say here that this does not allow for sustainable development. As averred by Taiwo et al. (2022), adults symbolize the present, while children represent the future. Hence, children must be safeguarded in the present in order for them to reach their full potential in the future because of this function that they will play in the future and how it will affect institutional continuity and discontinuity.

The nations that have achieved industrialization today is those that have fully tapped into the potential of sustainable development by making educational investments in the future of young people, as well as by creating environments and conditions that enable families to care for the needs of all of their members. In this context, sustainable development depends not only on providing for the needs of street children today, but also on eliminating all kinds of child streetism and the delinquency it breeds, both of which endanger the long-term development of both these children and the country as a whole. For this reason, the status of street culture and the accompanying delinquency of a Nigerian youngster does not ensure sustainable development.

Despite the negative impacts of child streetism, the number of children living on Nigerian streets continues to rise.

Understanding the reasons behind this persistence is crucial for developing effective government interventions. The following section explores the reasons why child streetism and delinquency persist in urban milieu.

Reasons why child streetism and delinquency persist in the urban milieu

A comprehensive review of the literature highlights several factors that influence children's involvement in street life in urban areas, with these factors showing consistency across various regions (Siibaway, 2021; Ogunkan & Adeboyejo, 2021; Adewale & Afolabi, 2013; Dada, 2013; Ugochukwu, 2012; Shailong, 2011; Davies, 2010; Alimi & Micah, 2010). Key contributing factors include urbanization, population growth, migration, erosion of basic family values, peer influence, and deficiencies in child protection systems (Taiwo, 2023; Ogunkan & Adeboyejo, 2021; Adewale & Afolabi, 2013). Additionally, issues such as unemployment, large family sizes, avarice, and illiteracy further exacerbate the problem (Ugochukwu, 2012; Shailong, 2011). The breakdown of parental unity due to divorce, separation, or death also plays a significant role (Femi, 2015).

According to Dada (2013), the death of a parent or parents increases the family's economic and social responsibilities. When a parent dies, the child is left with little choice but to engage in one activity or the other on the streets in order to survive. Parents with limited formal education and job-relevant skills earn meager salaries, which can lead them to coerce their children into illegal activities to augment family income (Femi, 2015). For instance, commenting on child hawking, Nduka and Duru (2014) aver that the choice of children to hawk is affected by their parents. However, parents are not always able to influence their children's

decisions, as there are cases when the prevailing circumstances influence their decision to engage in hawking. A high desire to earn money at an early age may push some children onto the streets (Shailong, 2011).

Davies (2010) states that in emerging countries, cozy economies have increased, and revenues earned by families in the formal sector are being combined with those earned informally. According to Bass (2004), child streetism is the most prevalent form of poverty, which hinders African nations' ability to integrate into technologically advanced economies. A major focus of Blank's (2010) research is the impact poverty has on children who engage in any kind of street activities. The researcher also linked the issue of child streetism to the failure of economic forces and under-development, people's incapacity to participate in the official marketplace, and their unwillingness to take part in administrative activities.

Many sub-Saharan African countries, including Nigeria, have structural constraints such as debt, poverty, conflict, illness, corruption, and ineffective laws. All these constraints, as noted by Bass (2004), make child streetism inevitable. The economic issues are reducing children's educational opportunities and placing greater work demands on them. Edmond (2003) discovers a link between economic position and child work in his cross-country study. He explains that the involvement of children in economic activities decreases when households can meet their subsistence needs, while household income increases. Further research indicates that a household's high per capita income reduces children's economic participation (Alimi & Micah, 2010). It is clear from the above submissions that the factors responsible for child streetism and delinquency in Nigeria and other regions of the world are related to socio-economic and cultural realities within the family and society at large.

Several theories have been proposed to explain child streetism and its associated juvenile criminality, particularly in developing countries. This study utilizes Hirschi's Social Bond Theory as its theoretical framework. According to Hirschi (1969), social bonds or relationships play a crucial role in shaping behavior, influencing individuals to either conform to or deviate from societal norms. Hirschi posits that a weakened or broken bond between an individual and society leads to misbehavior. Conversely, individuals with strong social bonds are less likely to engage in deviant behavior because they possess effective internal controls that align with societal rules and standards.

Hirschi (1969) asserts, "we are all animals and therefore, we can commit crime." This statement underscores the idea that the propensity for criminal behavior is inherent but can be moderated by the strength of one's social ties. Specifically, individuals who maintain robust connections with societal institutions such as family, religion, and educational systems are less likely to engage in criminal activities (Iwarimie-Jaja, 2012; Hirschi, 1969).

Hirschi outlines four key elements of social bonds that influence adherence to conventional values. First, attachment pertains to the emotional connections and relationships individuals maintain with family, peers, and other social institutions. A strong attachment to these entities generally encourages conformity to societal norms. Second, belief involves one's acceptance and commitment to societal ideals and moral standards. Those who firmly believe in these norms are less inclined to engage in deviant behavior. Third, commitment relates to the investment an individual has in conforming to societal values and the stakes involved in adhering to socially approved activities. A high level of commitment, such as striving for educational success, bolsters conformity.

Lastly, participation denotes the extent to which individuals engage in conventional activities that reflect societal values. Frequent involvement in these activities helps to reinforce adherence to societal norms.

These four components help predict the likelihood of delinquency. When these social bonds are weak or absent, delinquency becomes more probable. However, Hirschi's theory has faced criticism for assuming uniformity among the components of social bonds and for its deterministic view that delinquency will inevitably follow from weak social bonds.

Despite these criticisms, Social Bond Theory remains relevant in understanding child streetism and juvenile criminality. Hirschi's argument that individuals with a weak sense of social connection are more prone to deviate from societal norms is particularly applicable to street children. For these children, the lack of strong social bonds can lead to feelings of frustration, disillusionment, sadness, and hopelessness. These emotions often contribute to the establishment of weak social bonds and relationships, fostering a disconnection from socially acceptable behaviors.

Children involved in street activities may show diminished concern for others and exhibit a lack of motivation towards conventional methods of living. Consequently, they may resort to social vices, which, although deemed illegal by society, are perceived as viable means of survival within their context. Understanding these dynamics through the lens of Social Bond Theory provides insight into the challenges faced by street children and the broader implications for juvenile delinquency.

Conclusion

The study highlights the pervasive issue of child streetism in Nigeria, where children spend most of their time on the

streets engaging in menial jobs and are vulnerable to various forms of delinquency such as drug trafficking, thuggery, and cultism. It establishes a clear link between streetism and delinquency, showing that these interconnected social issues hinder sustainable development and negatively impact the children's future and the nation's economy. The novelty of this study lies in its comprehensive exploration of the socio-economic and cultural factors driving children to street life and its critical examination of existing governmental efforts, which are found to be largely ineffective due to poor coordination and enforcement.

The study advocates for the establishment of rehabilitation centers that offer professional support services, including vocational and technical training, to help street children reintegrate into society. Collaborations with private sector organizations can enhance these efforts by providing internships and job placements, thereby creating viable pathways out of street life. However, the study acknowledges that street children might resist structured interventions due to their developed survival skills. This underscores the necessity for highly skilled professionals who can provide tailored, empathetic support to effectively address their unique needs and challenges.

The study also emphasizes the need for public enlightenment campaigns to raise awareness about the detrimental effects of child streetism and delinquency on individuals, communities, and the nation at large. It recommends that policymakers and national security agents take more decisive actions, including the enforcement of laws against child abuse and exploitation. Additionally, the study suggests a revival of the traditional kinship system as a social safety net, restructuring government poverty alleviation programs to focus on basic needs, and enhancing education and healthcare

services in urban slums to address the root causes of streetism.

The study further advocates for the revision and enforcement of child protection laws, ensuring that policies specifically address the needs of street children. This includes criminalizing exploitative practices such as child labor and providing legal aid services to protect the rights of street children. By focusing on these actions, advocates can work to create a more protective and supportive legal environment for street children, helping to ensure their safety, dignity, and rights are upheld.

One limitation of the study is that it primarily relies on existing literature and program evaluations, which may not fully capture the current realities or the effectiveness of recent initiatives. Future research could involve more empirical investigations to provide updated insights and evaluate the long-term impacts of recommended interventions. Overall, the study calls for a holistic and coordinated approach involving government, NGOs, and private sectors to effectively tackle child streetism and delinquency in Nigeria.

Declaration of Ownership

This article is my original work.

Conflict of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

Ethical Clearance

This study was carried out with a strong commitment to ethical principles, ensuring that all data collection and analysis followed established academic frameworks and standards. Consequently, no ethical issues were identified in the research.

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