

**Street begging among the elderly: Types,
Influencing factors and people attitude towards
the phenomenon of begging in Ilorin, Nigeria**

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Introduction

The population of elderly beggars on Nigeria streets and public spaces is growing exponentially especially in Ilorin Metropolis. Their increasing number is due to hardeconomic measures and poverty. Their presence on the streets is embarrassing and it therefore requires urgent solution.

Introduction--cont

The phenomenon of street begging is a result of a number of factors, such as poverty (real or imagined), religion, physical disability, culture, national disaster, civil war, bad habits (drug, alcohol, and gambling dependencies), family heritage, uncontrolled rural–urban migration, and psychiatric disabilities and disorders (Amman, 2006;Ogunkan & Fawole, 2009; Namwata et al., 2011).

Introduction--cont

Many efforts were adopted by Ilorin local government authority to address the challenges brought by the elderly begging activities, but have not been successful. The problem persists because the LGA failed to develop other alternatives or strategies that would help elderly street beggars to obtain the basic necessities of life.

Statement of the problem

Efforts to stop street begging among the elderly have failed because governments and other stakeholders are not well informed about the types of street beggars and the factors associated with begging activities. This lack of detailed information has led to the adoption of efforts that deal with the symptoms of begging rather than with the root causes of the begging problem.

Objective

The objective of this study was to determine the types of begging and the influencing factors among elderly and also to assess people attitude towards begging in the elderly

Methodology

Study site: Ilorin metropolis was selected as the site because it is the largest urban area in the local government Yoruba is the predominant ethnic. Other tribes include the Hausa and Ibbos.

Study design: A study employed a cross-sectional design method. This design allows data to be collected from the target population at a single point in time.

Study Population: The population of the study consisted of elderly street beggars. Some elderly that were non-beggars were included to enrich the data

Methodology-- cont

Data collection: Primary data were collected using structured questionnaires, focus-group discussions (FGDs), key-informant interviews, and observations. These techniques were used to understand issues concerning types of street beggars and factors associated with street begging from the perspectives of both street beggars and non beggars. People attitude were measured using 5 points likert's scale

Methodology---cont

Street beggars were selected from a very wide variety of public spaces in order to ensure good representativeness.

Pre-test: The questionnaire was pre-test in Ilorin East to correct any ambiguity and improve clarity

Consent: Verbal consent was obtained from the beggars and there was no compulsion in the recruitment of the study subjects so an individual was allowed to withdraw from at any stage of the study if he or she pleased

Result

In this study there were three types of elderly street beggars and these were beggars on the streets (65.2%), beggars of the streets (32.3%) and beggars in the streets (4.5%). The typing was based on where they are domicile or slept after begging hours and contacts with their families.

Result---cont

Beggars on the street :This group of beggars earns money on the street for themselves and/or their families. Beggars in this group spend most of the time of the day on the streets begging for alms, but they have permanent homes, they usually maintain family ties or contacts, and they often return home in the evening to sleep after spending the day on the street begging as revealed by FGD

Result---cont

Both FGD information with key informants also showed that majority of the beggars on the street came from poor families and therefore had to resort to begging as the primary means of obtaining a livelihood.

Result---cont

Beggars of the street: This group of beggars lived and slept on the streets and had loose family contacts. Beggars in this group normally spent some nights or days on the streets and very occasionally went back home.

The study also revealed that most beggars of the streets usually found accommodation around verandas or close to various public areas such as restaurants, shops, hotels or guesthouses, bus terminals and railway stations , pharmacy shops,markets and public offices.

Result---cont

Beggars in the streets: Beggars in this third group were completely detached from or had abandoned (or been abandoned by) their families and their immediate communities, and they have drifted into the begging life.

Result-cont

Factors influencing begging among the elderly were poverty (76.4%), lack of careers (7.6%), physical challenges (5.5%), no family support (3.8%), un-employment (3%) and non-existence of social welfares (2.7%). People attitude towards begging were strongly disagree (63.5%), somewhat disagree (20.7%), neither agree nor disagree (9.3%), somewhat agree (5.4%), strongly agree (2.1%).

Socio-demographic variables of the study respondents

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	110	69.6
Female	48	30.4
Age		
60-64	98	62.0
65-69	32	20.3
Above 70	28	7.7
Religion		
Islam	115	72.8
Christianity	43	27.2
Ethnicity/Tribe		
Yoruba	32	20.3
Hausa	89	56.3
others	37	23.4
Daily Income/Earnings		

Distribution of Types of Elderly street beggars by area of begging

Types	Areas of begging				Total N (%)
	Market	Religious worship areas	Motor park	Social event places	
Beggars on the street	40 (58.8)	30 (62.5)	10 (52.6)	18 (78.3)	98 (65.2)
Beggars of the street	24 (35.3)	16 (33.3)	8 (42.1)	4 (17.4)	52 (32.3)
Beggars in the street	4 (5.9)	2 (4 .2)	1 (5.3)	1 (4.3)	8 (4.5)
Total	68 (100)	48 (100)	19 (100)	23 (100)	158 (100)

Factors influencing street begging among the elderly

Factors	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	121	76.4
Lack of careers or caring relatives	12	7.6
Physical disability or challenges/medical illness	9	5.5
Lack of family support	6	3.8
Un-employment	5	3
Non-existence of social welfare	5	2.7

Attitude towards begging among the elderly

ATTITUDE	FRWQUENCY	PERRCENTAGE
Strongly disagree	100	63.5
Somewhat disagree	33	20.7
Neither agree nor disagree	15	9.3
Somewhat agree	9	5.4
Strong agree	1	1.1

Conclusion

The study showed that there are three categories of street beggars among the elderly: beggars on the street, beggars of the streets, beggars in the streets. Factors influencing begging are diverse and multifaceted. Poverty influences begging to a large extent among the elderly.

Conclusion----cont

Families of beggars should be encouraged to take care of beggars. Social policies that care for the elderly are urgently be needed.

Governments and other stakeholders should create opportunities for street beggars to make a living by other means.

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