Deprivation, Youth Crime and Religiosity: A Case Study of the *Almajirai* in Northern Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

The *Almajira*i, who are students at an informal Quranic schools (*Tsangaya*), often associated with crime in popular and policy discourse in Nigeria. This thesis is the first to empirically explore the nature and extent to which the *Almajirai* are involved in crime in this context. A mixed-method approach was used, involving 800 *Almajirai* (aged 14-17 years) through questionnaire interviews, 18 in-depth interviews with the *Almajirai* and their *Malamai,* and observations. Participants were selected from nine randomly selected Tsangaya schools in areas of Northern Nigeria.

The research suggests that some *Almajirai* are involved in occasional petty crime and anti-social behaviours, that are more associated with their experiences of severe absolute deprivation, and mild relative deprivation. Absolute deprivation is found to have a stronger association with petty crime often committed for survival, than relative deprivation. The extent of involvement in petty crime is found to be low for self-reporting and high for reporting others (colleagues). The petty criminal acts involved by the participants include occasional stealing and fighting, commonly committed for survival, settling status, and dealing with discrimination. Other criminalised and antisocial acts involved include poaching vermin, open defecation, and scavenging waste. Serious crimes such as substance abuse and sexual-related offences were found to be disliked acts by moral definition and not commonly found among the *Almajirai*. Religiosity, measured by belief and practice, was found to be low but influences a powerful sense of in-group identity connected to respect for the *'Almajirai'* identity, which influences the self-concept of the *Almajirai* through humility and morality.

Given the self-reported severe (absolute) deprivation, and low crime involvement, despite low level of religiosity measured by faith and practice, in the *Almajirai*. A mediating role of other factors which included environmental setting and behavioural disposition were suggested by the research, as important in understanding the relationship between the *Almajirai* and offending behaviour. This thesis underscores the importance of empirical approaches and involving *Tsangaya* students' and teachers' voices in understanding nature and extent of crime committed by the *Almajirai*. It contributes to criminological studies by highlighting the role of absolute deprivation in understanding criminal behaviour, in the context of the Global South. It also provides an empirical answer to the popular and policy discourse views on crime and the *Almajirai*. Recommendations for policy and future research are provided.

Declaration

I Mohammed Mamun Usman declare that this thesis is my own work and is submitted to fulfil the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy and has not been submitted in in the same form for the award of a higher degree elsewhere.

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Abbreviations

CAN	Christians Association of Nigeria
CAQDS	Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Software
FMH	Federal Ministry of Health
GLOWING	Global Index of Well-being
GST	General Strain Theory
IDI	In-depth Interview
IEB	Islamic Education Bureau
ISWAP	Islamic State in West Africa Province
NBA	Nigerian Bar Association
NBS	National Bureau of Statistics
NCDC	Nigerian Center for Disease Control
NSPCC	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
PIS	Participant Information Sheet
PSJ	Peacebuilding and Social Justice
RBB	Religious Background and Behavior Questionnaire
REA	Rapid Evidence Assessment
REC	Research Ethics Committee
SBNR	Spiritual but Not Religious
SD	Social Disorganization
SPSS	Special Package for Social Science
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission
YP	Young Person

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Glossary

***Ajami* -** The use of Arabic text for writing in local languages among non-Arab nations in west Africa, mostly Hausa, Wolof, Fulfulde, Kanuri and Mandinka.

***Almajiri* (plural. *Almajirai*)** - a young boy between school age and adolescence studying in a Traditional Quranic school called Tsangaya.

***Almajiranci* (*or Almajirci*)** - The Process of undergoing educational acquisition in Tsangaya school.

Boko Haram – Means 'western education is forbidden' and used to describe an Islamic insurgent group fighting to establish an Islamic state in Nigeria.

Farauta – The practice of tracking and hunting wild animals either for food or sport

***Gardi* (*plural-Gardawa*)** - A graduate of the Tsangaya system, who is semi-independent under Mallam.

Hisbah – State own Islamic policing organisation that enforces law and morality in Shari'a practicing areas.

Islamiyya – Non-boarding Islamic schools operate mostly in the evenings and nights, after the closing hours of formal Western schools.

Kore – chasing animals, mostly found around human residences, such as rats and other rodents. It usually takes place at night.

Maitatsine – A radical Islamic movement in the 1980s that used violence in advocacy for conservative values and practices.

***Mallam* (plural- *Malamai*)** - A teacher in Tsangaya school.

Rani – a seasonal attendance of Tsangaya school by seasonal Almajirai, who arrive after harvest during winter and return to their parents at the beginning of the rainy season.

Shari'a – Islamic law, derived primarily from the Quran, prophetic traditions, and opinions of the Islamic jurisprudence.

***Shi'a* –** A sect in Islam which believes Ali (Peace be on Him), the cousin and one of the successors of the Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him), and his descendants as the rightful successors of the prophet.

***Sunni* –** A sect in Islam which draws its teachings from traditions gathered from the Prophet and believes a leader should be chosen by consensus of the Muslim community, rather than through hereditary rights.

***Tsangaya* (plural *Tsangayu*)**- A Traditional Quranic boarding school attended by the Almajirai.

***Uwar Daki* (*plural, Uwayen Daki*) –** A woman in purdah who employs an Almajiri, sending him on an errand, and doing other menial jobs. The woman gives motherly support to the Almajiri, who consider her like a surrogate mother.

'*Yan Daba* – A gang of boys within the neighbourhood who often move with dangerous weapons and engage in organized criminal activities such as theft and substance abuse.

Waqf – A charitable donation involving land, house, farm, or any property, which can never be claimed or inherited by heirs, but be used for helping the needy in the community.

Zakat – One of the five pillars in Islam, it is obligatory for the wealthy to give 2.5% of their total wealth to the needy and others specified by shari'a law.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Youth crime has for long been a phenomenon of scholarly inquiry within the global research community. Recent emphasis is particularly on the intersection of social justice and the imperative for welfare reforms in addressing the circumstances that predispose young people to criminality. In Nigeria, as in other countries, the issue has garnered significant attention from academics, media organisations, and international stakeholders. The situation in the country is linked to many factors, including poverty, weak law enforcement, and deep-seated ethno-religious rivalry, among others. A report by the International Organization for Peace-building and Social Justice PSJ (2022) has suggested that seventy per cent of Nigerian youth who are below 35 years of age embrace criminality because of poverty. This is in connection to the fact that Nigeria is the most populous country in Africa. Still, it is highly divided regionally across geographical, cultural, and religious practices, and so are the contexts of causes and manifestations of youth involvement in violence and criminality.

In the Northern region, for instance, the situation is often context-specific of extreme poverty, ethno-religious rivalry, and sometimes religious indoctrination and fundamentalism. Consequently, the situation culminates in inter-group conflicts and religious insurgencies, causing embedded poverty in most of the population, which for some youth is intricately linked to criminality to escape the situation. A prominent Nigerian newspaper *Leadership,* for example, has raised such concern by analysing the report by the PSJ (2022), which suggests that the geopolitical division and inter-group rivalry have cost lives and reduced wealth, and remain an obstacle that hinders full utilisation of the country's vast resources (David, 2022). To this end, a global data and business intelligence platform *Statista* reported that Nigeria is ranked as 19th world's least peaceful country by the Global Peace Index, 8th country most affected by terrorism on the Global Terrorism Index, and 5th with the highest risk of mass killing in Africa (Sasu, 2024).

Within the country, it is difficult to suggest the exact extent of the situation of youth crime across the regions, as there is a lack of accessible comprehensive official statistics.

However, in the Northern region, various sources have reported the prevalence of some forms of crimes, including but not limited to banditry, mass kidnappings, insurgency, burglary, cattle rustling, forcible phone snatching, knife crime, minors' rape, and substance abuse (Amnesty International, 2021; Olaniyan & Yahaya, 2016; Oloyede, 2022; Sarkingobir & Dikko, 2020). For instance, in Kano state alone, the police command reported that between February 19th – November 25th in 2021, there were arrests of 1,220 youth gangs ('*Yan Daba*) for various crimes, with more than 128 arrested for suspected drug dealing (Oloyede, 2022). Another report by Amnesty International (2021) indicates 11,200 recorded rape cases in 2020, which included children who were raped to death.

Official statistics and empirical evidence have shown that the Northern Nigerian region has a higher poverty rate than the South (Adeleke et al., 2023). According to a report by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2019), some Northern states, such as Sokoto, Jigawa, and Zamfara, have more than a 70% poverty rate. Millions of people, including children, lack access to education, clean water, and basic health care. With an inadequate investment in formal education by the government, the literacy level is less than 40%. The region also has the highest number of out-of-school children who do not attend either non-formal or formal school. In general, Nigeria has the highest number of out-of-school children of any country in the world (Oluwole Alfred and Stephen Oluwatoyin, 2016). The Northern Nigerian region constitutes 70% of all Nigeria's out-of-school children (Mohammed, 2018), who are mostly in rural areas (Ogwumike and Ozughalu, 2018). Notably, 70% of Nigerians live in rural areas, and 65% of those in urban areas live in slums (Oluwole Alfred and Stephen Oluwatoyin, 2016). It was reported by the *Guardian* that currently there are about 20 million out-of-school children in Nigeria (Lawal, 2022). This data highlights unequal access to resources and opportunities across the country's regions and populations.

In the Northern Nigerian region, historic ethnic and religious differences have become catalysts and major factors for violence and political crisis, resulting from inter-group rivalry and the politicization of religion. The tension occurs in the form of intra-religious conflict, such as among Muslims, or inter-religion, for example between Muslims and Christians (Weimann, 2010). The most prominent instances are the *Maitatsine* riots of the 1980s, and the *Boko Haram* insurgency, which started in 2009 - 2011. In most cases, the

crises relate to economic deprivation and religious indoctrination through Islamic fundamentalism, believed to be spread through a traditional Quranic system of education called '*Tsangaya*' (Winters, 1987; Weimann, 2010). The word *Tsangaya* means college or learning centre. The curriculum taught in *Tsangaya* is mostly related to Qur'anic memorization and Islamic values (Khalid, 1997). The system has existed since the 11th century under pre-colonial Islamic entities in Northern Nigeria (Abdulqadir, 2003). The *Tsangaya* system, therefore, is a religious and traditional vestige that attempts to conserve the Islamic educational culture established by these entities and has existed for more than a thousand years. The students of the *Tsangaya* schools are called '*Almajirai*', a word originating from the Arabic '*Almuhajirun*' meaning emigrants. The *Almajirai* are boys of primary school and adolescent ages, who travel far from their communities to live in *Tsangaya* schools. The public and local media often blame the *Almajirai* for the violence and other crimes in Northern Nigeria. The *Tsangaya* system they attend is considered the institution responsible for indoctrination and transmitting the spirit of fundamentalism as well as upholding the principles of reform and restoration of Islamic values, initiated by the revolution of Uthman Bin Fodio (1754 - 1817) (Buba, 2018; Hill, 2013; Winters, 1987).

It is notable that some parents in Northern Nigeria, especially those from rural areas, opt for the *Tsangaya* system of education for their children, mostly because of a lack of adequate infrastructure in their locality, or to invest in what Hoechner (2013) called 'spiritual' and 'moral' capital. Currently, the *Tsangaya* system operates informally and is managed by adults and older men who are graduates of the system. They are called '*Malamai' (*Singular *Mallam)* a corrupt use of the Arabic word '*Mu'allim*' which means a teacher. The *Almajirai* rely on begging within neighbourhoods and markets, working for households, engaging in various forms of labour and other income-earning activities, during intermittent studies sessions, to support their livelihood and that of their *Mallam*. According to the Nigerian Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2010), the enrollment of the Almajirai in *Tsangaya* schools reached about ten million in 2010. This data from UBEC however include students of *Islamiyya* schools who are not *Almajirai*. Currently, there are no official statistics that accurately represent the number of *Almajirai* in Nigeria.

The *Almajirai* are depicted as problematic through public perception and local media news. For example, recent newspaper headlines include The *Vanguard* "Almajirai: out-of-school children a big problem in Nigeria, says Lawan[1]" (Umoru, 2020), *This Day*, "Almajiri Children: Nigeria's Ticking Bomb" (Amao, 2023), and "Almajiris: Breeding Ground for Covid-19, says Ganduje[2]" (Shuaibu, 2020). Another article in the *Vanguard* reads "Terrorism: Almajiri system fueling banditry, kidnapping in North — CAN[3]" (Jannamike, 2021). The same story with similar captions was reported by *PM News* and *Agence de Presse Africaine*. *The Nigerian Tribune* also linked Almajirai with violence in a report headlined "Nigeria and violent revolt of the Almajirai" (Adebayo, 2019). In a further *Vanguard* article titled "The Almajiri Catastrophe in Northern Nigeria" was concluded that "They often end up as street urchins (area boys), male prostitutes, petty and hard criminals, garage boys and most recently, Boko Haram, ISWAP[4], and Bandits as well as dangerous tools for desperate politicians to get at one another's throats" (Maishanu, 2022). Area boys and garage boys are similar terms used to denote a version of gangs (*'Yan Daba*). Such media rhetoric helps create the common public perception of the *Almajirai*.

Only occasionally in the press are the *Almajirai* viewed through an alternative lens. So, for example, a catholic cleric, Hassan Kukah, as reported by *Premium Times,* sees them as victims of a failed system and as "victims of northern Nigerian Muslim elites" (Adebayo, 2019). The report quoted him saying "The Almajiri has become a scapegoat for the multiple sins of the Nigerian state in general and the Muslim Umma in particular," adding that "Here is my thesis: With regards to his condition today, the Almajiri is an object, not a subject, is a victim, not a perpetrator, sinned against rather than a sinner".

Even among academics, there is also a widespread view, linking the deprived condition of *Almajirai*, the traditional curriculum taught in *Tsangaya* schools, as well as their daily interactions in the street and other places, as the factors used in predicting desperation and indoctrination of religious radicalization, with consequential involvement in crimes. This

[1] The 14th president of Nigerian senate (2019-2023)
[2] The Executive Governor of Kano State, Nigeria (2015-2023)
[3] Christian Association of Nigeria
[4] Islamic State in West Africa Province

is held to prepare them to become easy recruits for insurgents such as *Boko Haram* and *Maitatsine*, involved in various crimes, and sometimes affiliating themselves with gangs, such as *'Yan Daba* (Winters, 1987; Hansen et al, 2016. Salaam, 2011, Abbo & Zain, 2019; Casey, 2007; Emmanuel Osewe, 2016). These views, in most cases, lack adequate empirical evidence but work to substantiate the rhetoric, which helps to criminalise the *Almajirai*. In contrast, there are other academic writers, such as Akali (2016) who suggest contrasting views, describing the *Almajirai* depiction as a scapegoat for the problems of Nigeria, from which the *Almajirai* have no means to defend themselves. So, they were easily blamed for Islamic militancy, as well as inter-religious and political violence. Such a phenomenon is not new in criminological studies; for instance, Young (1999, p.14) explains similar situations, where lower-class people living in social settings with glaring inequality "becomes a scapegoat for the troubles of the wider society".

These positions highlight the need for empirical scrutiny. In this thesis, I argue that resolving the debate concerning the *Almajirai's* involvement in criminality can be possible through rigorous empirical enquiry, particularly by involving the *Almajirai* themselves as participants. This is crucial because their insights offer a richer understanding of the context through which they can become involved in crime, violence, and gangs. Exploring these relationships underlies the questions this thesis addresses and is important both for the criminological research community and policymakers.

Understanding the relationship between the situations of the *Almajirai* and crime is important to me on a personal level, as I was brought up in a setting of frequent acquaintances with *Almajirai*. My family background and my interactions with my immediate society have an immense impact on my academic curiosity, interest, and training. I was brought up in a family with high levels of interest in religious knowledge of Islamic jurisprudence. During my childhood, I used to engage in Qur'anic studies alongside the *Almajirai*. The neighbourhood I lived in often hosted seasonal *Almajirai* for quite a length of time. Therefore, my curiosity and interest in studying the *Almajirai* is born out of being a student of sociology, interested in criminological studies, as well as my daily observation and interactions with the *Almajirai*.

1.2 Context of the Study

1.2.1 The Geographical and Political Structure of Northern Nigeria

Nigeria is one of the biggest economies of the African continent, with the potential to cater for the development and provision of essential welfare to its citizens. Islam and Christianity are the two major religions in the country, separated by the dominance of practice across Northern and Southern regions. The Northern part of Nigeria is overwhelmingly a Muslim region. The history of Islam in the Northern part of Nigeria is traced back to its contacts with North Africans through trans-Saharan trade in the seventh century. Before the colonial era, the region was ruled by two large Islamic kingdoms, the Kanem-Borno Empire and the Sokoto Caliphate, with both kingdoms responsible for the deep-rooted appeals to Islamic culture in the region. The Sokoto Caliphate was the largest, established through Fulani Jihad (Islamic revolution) under the leadership of Usman bin Fodio in the early nineteenth century, by defeating the Hausa *Habe* rulers in a major part of the region (Last, 1967). The two kingdoms were later conquered by British colonialists in the early twentieth century, bringing them together under a unified Northern protectorate. Later, in 1914, the British colonialists succeeded in the historic amalgamation of the Northern and the Southern protectorates and created a single entity called Nigeria. Eighty-six years later, on 1st October 1960, Nigeria achieved its independence. Six years later, the country experienced its first military coup, led by a group of military officers, who mostly hailed from the southern part of the country. This event led to a countercoup and subsequent military interventions. This experience remains the major source of discord between the regions of the country.

The Northern part of Nigeria shares borders with the Republics of Cameroun, Niger, Chad, and Benin. It has an area of about 660,000 km^2 (250,000 sq. ml). Major ethnic groups are Hausa, Fulani, and Kanuri with dozens of other minority ethnic groups. Most of its vegetation is the Savannah belt, with an abundance of substantial mineral deposits, including tin, limestone, columbite, lead, barite, zinc, gypsum, and gold (Abraham et al., 2022). The main agricultural activity in the region is farming, which involves rearing animals, fishing, and crop production. The farming system has been affected badly by climatic change, with resulting environmental degradation, and the eruption of violence because of competition over land for grazing and cultivation between Fulani pastoralists and farmers (Madu and

Nwankwo, 2021). This conflict has further widened the situation of insecurity in the region, compounded poverty and contributed to an upsurge of ethnic militias, banditry, cattle rustlings, and kidnapping. The Northwestern region of Nigeria suffers an elevated level of poverty and security challenges, with a prevalence of criminal activities, all of which overwhelm state institutions. Consequently, neighbourhoods resort to community-based vigilante groups in response to insecurity threats (Lar, 2019).

1.2.2 Youth's Religiosity in Islam

Religiosity is a common concept among social theorists, but its context varies across faiths and cultures. In Islam, adulthood is considered the period when an individual is expected to assume responsibility for religious activities and is responsible for reward and punishment for any act of sin or worship. Before adulthood, in Islam, children are trained in the expectations of religious belief and practice, a discipline that is expected to be perpetuated during and after adulthood. The *Almajirai* are enrolled in *Tsangaya* to acquire such skills of practice and belief, through memorisation of the Holy Qur'an and attending religious rituals under the guidance of their *Mallam* (Teacher). Religious practices and values are purported to provide protective effects by instilling morality and preventing involvement in problematic acts, such as crime. In Islam, religiosity is measured by practice and belief (Jana-Masri & Priester, 2007). The components of the belief are built on the faith in the supremacy of Allah over material and spiritual realms, while the practice involves mandatory and voluntary rituals. Theorists of Islamic religiosity, Ramzy et al (2021) and Jana-Masri and Priester (2007), for example, explain the components of this religiosity to include belief (*Aqeedah*), which guides the faith that Allah supervises and has power over mundane and spiritual worlds, social relationships (*Mu'amalat*), ethics and morals (*Akhlaq*), and mandatory and voluntary rituals (*Ibadat*). The *Almajirai* learn these aspects of religiosity in *Tsangaya* schools by practising the rituals and internalising the belief through listening to the religious doctrines in lecture sessions delivered by their *Mallam*. In Islam, internalizing beliefs and values involves spirituality, which implies seeking to know God deeper and promotes an individual's position in the sight of God, usually attached to institutionalised symbols of identity (Warsah and Imron, 2019).

Islam is a religion of within-group heterogeneity (Jana-Masri & Priester, 2007), which means it constitutes diverse groups. There are many terms used about diverse groups and movements within Islam, such as *Sunni* and *Shi'a* Muslims. While most *Tsangaya* schools were established and managed by *Malamai* following Sunni sect, in the pre-colonial period, the Shi'ism movement in Nigeria is a more recent phenomenon, starting after independence. The Islamic dynasties were established by Sunni scholars, who also spread their teachings through the establishment of *Tsangaya* schools. The Sunni followers can be further categorised into three; *Sufis* (Mystics) who are conservative, traditionalists, and *Wahabists,* who represent reformists. *Wahabism* is linked with rationality of thought because of the influence of Western education and Nigeria's relationship with Saudi Arabia (Thurston, 2019; Winters, 1987). The founder of the Sokoto caliphate, Uthman bin Fodio, was a Sunni-Sufi cleric, under whom the *Tsangaya* system was institutionalised and supported (Winters, 1987). As a result, most of the *Tsangaya* schools were led by either Sufi or traditional teachers. Previously, most of the *Malamai* of the *Tsangaya* schools perceived formal education as a way of westernisation and secularism and a path that can undermine the morality instilled by Islamic values (Winters, 1987). Some of those I met during data collection for this study indicate the relevance of formal education only for occupation, not religiosity. Thus, they consolidate the identity of their system exclusively with Islamic religiosity and spirituality.

From some Islamic theorists' point of view (for example, Warsah and Imron, 2019, p.226), spirituality is a personal growth where an individual transcends to a "destination with a higher entity, God, love, affection, and purpose religiosity". Concerning this, Winters (1987, p.173) explains "the traditional Nigerian Islamic sciences are divided into two areas of study: the juridical class of studies which make up the Islamic science of society as a whole (*zahir*); and the mystical level of studies made up of occult knowledge, medicine and divination (*batin*)." The Sufis put more emphasis on spirituality. As such, it can be deduced that *Almajirai* as students of the *Tsangaya* system, are taught conservative religiosity, which is a congruence of traditional and mystical beliefs.

1.2.3 The Origins of Deprivation in the *Almajirai*

The concept of deprivation has been an important concern in criminological theorizing, particularly in explaining the connection between inequality and criminality (see for example Cloward and Ohlin, 2001; Merton, 1938; Young, 1999). Understanding deprivation, its existence in varying contexts and degrees in certain groups of people and how it influences criminal behaviour is an important subject that matters in the study of crime, especially, when a person's predicament is perceived to be caused by injustices or inequality in a society (Agnew, 2001). Deprivation measures go beyond income and can exist, for instance, in a situation of disjuncture between expectation and achievement or because of other non-material obstacles that prevent the achievement of aspirations (Agnew, 1992).

The concept of deprivation in this study relates to the perceived lack of basic resources for survival, or experienced difficulties in accessing basic needs and the social exclusion of individuals as participants in society. From the relative viewpoint, the study focuses on the perceived worse off by the *Almajirai*, in comparison other children do in Nigerian society. This is in concert with the conceptualisation of poverty by Townsend (1979, p.31), who argues that a "population can be said to be in poverty when they lack the resources to obtain the types of diets, participate in the activities and have the living conditions which are customary, or at least widely encouraged and approved, in the societies to which they belong". This indicates the relevance of cultural context and material culture, specific to social collectivities and highlights the difference between poverty and deprivation, as poverty implies lacking the material means to subsist. In contrast, deprivation denotes the disproportionate access to entitled resources and opportunities within a given collectivity, including the indicators of poverty and more.

In pre-colonial Nigeria, the *Tsangaya* system enjoyed supervision under provincial emirs during the administration of Islamic kingdoms, who managed the affairs of the educational system with the alms collected (*Zakat*) and other substantial support (*Waqf*) obtained from the members of the hosting community (Khalid, 2006). The *Malamai* and the *Almajirai* also support themselves through farming to subsist on their basic needs. As such, survival strategies were officially supported, and community members supported the running of the system by giving alms to the *Malamai* and the *Almajirai*. The colonial government did

not consider *Tsangaya* education as essential, and therefore it was not given support. The *Tsangaya* system in post-colonial, independent Nigeria witnessed what Abdulqadir (2003) described as "bastardization", implying the system's lack of support, with eventual relegation and marginalization by authorities.

In describing the current system of *Tsangaya*, Amzat (2015) categorizes *Almajirai* students into three based on their reasons for staying in *Tsangaya*, and methods used for survival. The first are students given to the *Mallam* on trust by their parents. They live permanently in the *Tsangaya* far from their homes until they graduate to *Gardi* category, by memorizing the entire chapters of the Qur'an. The students subsist through begging and other income-earning work in their free time and only return to their parents after graduation. The second category survives as the first, but returns to their parents, mostly to rural areas during the rainy season, to help with farming activities. They return to the *Tsangaya* after harvest, following this pattern until graduation, when some return to their parents, and some remain in the host communities. The third category consists of *Almajirai* who migrate from rural to urban areas with their *Mallam* during the dry season and return to rural areas for farming in the rainy season. This category of students also tends to return to their parents after graduation. Generally, returning to parents after graduation does not guarantee a permanent return, some of them reside permanently in the urban areas, searching for work. It is worth noting that the *Almajirai* are brought to the *Tsangaya* by their parents, but there, the parental responsibility can end. In all cases, no education fee is either asked for or given, which means that the *Almajirai* must make their living, often from an early age.

The *Almajirai* are identified on the streets of northern Nigeria by their widespread practice of movement in groups, wearing dirty and tattered clothes, carrying plastic bowls, and sometimes walking barefoot. Their main survival strategy is begging for food, clothes, and money, mostly in the neighbourhood where their *Tsangaya* is located, motor parks, restaurants, markets, and other places where people gather and engage in economic activities, like shopping malls. The *Almajirai* often wait for leftover food and drinks in cafes and restaurants. In their *Tsangaya* schools, they sit on the floor, or in an open space sitting on tree trunks (*Gargari*), provided as seats, usually surrounded by a blazing fire during wintry weather nights and early mornings. The fire serves as a source of illumination for reading

and heat for warmth. The *Almajirai* often utilise neighbourhood porches, uncompleted buildings, and other spaces provided in the *Tsangaya* as accommodations, which are often overcrowded by the size of enrollment in some of the *Tsangaya* schools, which in many situations are without adequate toilet facilities.

1.2.4 State Policy for Transformation of the *Tsangaya* System

Since the fall of the Islamic dynasties in Northern Nigeria, and the inception of colonial government, the *Tsangaya* system has operated non-formally, outside of government support, and the *Almajirai* struggle to support themselves without full parental care, except on rare occasions such as Eid celebrations. However, in various attempts to integrate the *Almajirai* into formal education, some *Tsangaya* schools enjoyed the construction of classrooms through Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) projects, which started during Goodluck Jonathan's presidency in 2009. This was accompanied by plans for formal classes in the *Almajirai's* study-free times. According to former president Goodluck, the scheme aimed at laying a roadmap for the gradual transformation of the Tsangaya system, but was not politically driven to garner support for winning political elections as assumed by some people (Idio, 2022). The scheme initiated a reform to transform the *Tsangaya* system by building many *Almajiri* Model Schools across the country, which sought to integrate formal and Islamic education delivery. The dual-curriculum system includes subjects such as English, Mathematics, and Science, combined with Quranic education.

However, the project faced many problems, according to some writers like Usman (2008) and Solomon (2015), the challenges were associated with failures in recruitment and payment of salaries to the teachers, inappropriate mechanisms to enrol the *Almajirai* into schools, an inability to include school feeding as a retention strategy, the reluctance of the *Malamai* to accept the integration process, and a lack of facilities and effective management. Moreover, integration faced a problem with continuation because of the change in government after the 2015 election. The succeeding administration under President Buhari was blamed for its poor commitment towards improving the integration initiative, an approach allegedly linked with the view that the system lacks the strength to satisfy the political interests of some politicians (Solomon, 2015). The challenges of government commitment to education are not limited to the integration of *Tsangaya* into formal universal

education, rather they are generally long-standing problems. They can also be seen in the formal sector entrusted with basic education in public schools across the country, especially in rural areas in the North (Ogwumike and Ozughalu, 2018; Olatunji and Ajayi, 2016). Thus, parents in rural areas especially where formal educational services are not available opted for the *Tsangaya* system as an available alternative (Hoechner, 2013).

After former President Jonathan's administration, the immediate past administration of President Muhammadu Buhari signed into law the National Commission for *Almajiri* and Out-of-School Children. For instance, on his last day in office (28th May 2023), he appointed Sha'aban Sharada as the Commission's Executive Secretary, following much advocacy and pressure from Nigerian legislators. The commission was established to provide formal education, skills acquisition, entrepreneurship for self-reliance, and the prevention of poverty and youth crime (Umoru, 2023)**.** However, the commission has yet to achieve any of its goals. The new federal government of Nigeria, under Bola Ahmed Tinubu, replaced Shaaban Sharada with Jafaru Isa as the new executive secretary on 15th March 2024 (Angbulu, 2024). In addition to the political issues noted above, the repeated failures of various administrations in transforming the *Tsangaya* system can be attributed to their lack of consideration of the insights from the *Malamai* and the *Almajirai,* which can help in designing policies that fit the context of the *Almajirai,* for acceptance and effectiveness in implementation.

1.2.5 Social Construction of Youth Crime in Nigeria

The idea of youth crime in Nigeria has been traced by Fouchard (2006) to have been invented by colonialists in the 1940s. He stressed that the construction of urban youth crime emerged with the establishment of social welfare offices, resulting from the media outcry on youth involvement in property and sexual-related offences around the 1920s. This led to the invention of juvenile delinquency in the legislative lexicon in the 1940s. This view gains support from Boyden's (1997) explanations of the social construction of street youth's crime in connection with colonial legacies in many former colonised countries. According to Boyden (1997), the colonialists' welfare provision focused more on the protection of rulers than the citizens, with urban deprived youth cast as vulnerable for embracing crime. Thus, the post-colonial administrations under the rule of the Indigenous elites continued with the

standard inherited from their predecessors. This supported the notion that youth and children have to be protected from becoming spoilt on the streets because the streets are perceived as morally pathological. And supported the idea of equipping them with skills, mainly through education in formal schools as potential industrial workers (Boyden, 1997). This suggests that out-of-school children who are working for survival are constructed as street children vulnerable to criminality has a long, colonial and postcolonial history and has closely placed them in law enforcers' sights. One of the central arguments raised by Boyden (1997, p.203) was that "Social policy can be an extremely blunt instrument and its application in the consolidation of a universal standard for children can have the effect of penalising, or even criminalising, the childhoods of the poor, often for the simple reason that poor families are unable to reach this standard". In the same vein, Fouchard (2006) explains that the influx of young people to urban areas in search of opportunities in colonial and post-colonial periods in Lagos, and other Nigerian cities marked a transformation, characterised by a subsequently large number of unemployed poor individuals living alongside rich educated others. This situation prompted the emergence of organised youth crime as a survival strategy, such as pickpocketing and prostitution.

Some socially constructed deviant behaviours arising from social harms, such as severe deprivation, have been described by criminologists as consequences of systemic injustice perpetrated by policy and political elites. These elites marginalise certain social groups, relegating them to positions of disadvantage while simultaneously criminalising their alternative survival strategies through laws that frame such actions as individual pathology (see Heather, 2013; Quinney, 1982; Vegh Weis, 2017; Young, 1999).

Notably, within the Shari'a legal framework governing the social context of this study, acts committed out of desperation in the absence of viable alternatives are not deemed unlawful (see Zahra & Herman, 2023). This occurs in the case of the *Almajirai* because they have no power to influence the state policies, or make their voice heard (Hoechner, 2018, 2014). A specific example of the criminalisation of survival strategies can be observed in the case of the *Almajirai*, where historical and contemporary policies have sought to control and restrict their activities. Existing literature documents how, in 1959, the colonial administration in Kano State sought to regulate the movements and activities of the *Almajirai*. More recently, efforts by the state government under Governor Rabi'u Musa

Kwankwaso aimed to ban street begging and prohibit the *Almajirai* from public spaces, further reinforcing their marginalisation (see Hoechner, 2018, p. 68).

The notion of criminalisation of survival strategy is not new in criminological studies. It has been used for example, by Marxist criminologists such as Vegh Weis (2017) in the discourse of criminal selectivity, towards explaining how impoverished individuals are over-criminalized by state laws for involvement in specific survival activities, while the elites are under-criminalized for involvement in crimes, which are more detrimental to life and property. Resort to criminalised survival strategies have been discussed as a response to absolute deprivation, focusing on survival indicators (Grover, 2008). Such criminalised survival activities include vagrancy, prostitution, begging, shoplifting and so on (Heather, 2013; Vegh Weis, 2017). However, as a concept, survival strategy has gained little attention in explaining criminality in criminological studies (Heather, 2013). In this study, the idea of survival strategies refers to the activities engaged in by the *Almajirai* to make a living and support their *Mallam* (and the family of their *Malamai*) either with their money earnings or through domestic work such as farming. This mostly happens between study sessions and on study-free days; Thursdays and Fridays. The recent COVID-19 pandemic and the consequential lockdown caused a lot of difficulties for the *Almajirai*. Their unhygienic living conditions, along with begging and other survival strategies, were considered unacceptable by authorities, a situation which resulted in the repatriation of all the *Almajirai* to their original states. The Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) described the move as discriminatory and unjust because they were treated as such for being *Almajirai* (Azu, 2020).

The desperation of ensuring survival and achieving life goals through unstructured movement as well as interactions with other individuals by the *Almajiri*, without adult supervision, goes some way to explain why they are perceived as criminals by the public and media (Casey, 2008; Hoechner, 2013). For some, the survival strategies of the *Almajirai*, often characterised by unsupervised activities through which they might be exposed to social vices, such as drug misuse, and interactions with criminal peers and gangs suggests how they may adopt criminal behaviours (see Casey, 2007; Hansen et al, 2015; Shehu, 2006). For instance, in the places the *Almajirai* visit during their study-free times, Casey (2007) explained how *'Yan Daba* often provides food and accommodation for them, encouraging

the *Almajirai* to have extended contact with the gangs. This view, however, provides little evidence for the circumstances under which the *Almajirai* join gangs. Even though, some writers suggested that a small minority of the *Almajirai* run away from their *Mallam* and live permanently on the street (see for example, Amzat, 2015). Also, Shehu (2006) observes that begging exposes the *Almajirai* to psychological, social, and physical problems. According to him, begging instils a sense of dependency and inferiority in the *Almajirai*, and their unsupervised interactions can expose them to learning certain criminal behaviours, and concludes that the *Almajirai* "are at the mercy of enormous indiscriminate and arbitrary agents of socialization in society that undoubtedly wage a lot of influence on them more than their *Tsangaya*".

In this thesis, survival strategies are conceptualized as active responses by the *Almajirai* in dealing with the experiences of deprived situations. This concept, however is understood in a broader context, notably using a temporal-spatial framework – in relation to guardian/intimate handler supervision, environmental (neighbourhood) effects, and peer interaction, as mediating factors such as self-control in explaining propensities for involvement in criminality (Wikstrom et al., 2010). The temporal-spatial explanation of exposure and propensity to crime involvement is important, because crime involving youth allegedly occurs in free school hours or days, and mostly in groups (Cauffman et al., 2015; Kubrin and Wo, 2015). It is important to note that the interest of this study goes beyond criminalized behaviors, including acts socially sanctioned as immoral, and culturally deviant, even though not criminalized by law, such as cigarette smoking. In Hausa societies, there are places considered criminogenic, where immoral and criminal behaviours are learnt. Examples of such places include bars, markets, transportation stations, adult game centres and so on. Such places are termed as *Tasha*; meaning 'station', but by wider implications, the concept is linked with immorality, because of their popular association with crime and criminals. It is culturally assumed that whoever frequents *Tasha* shares certain characteristics of '*Yan Tasha* (people of *Tasha*). Therefore, youth, particularly the Almajir*ai* are strongly instructed to avoid visits to such places so that they do not learn immoral attitudes. And some who visit such places to make livelihoods are seen as potentially vulnerable to learning criminal behaviours.

Thus, by association, *Almajirai* are perceived as criminal partly because of their alleged association with criminals and also because their behaviour can be construed as socially deviant. This thesis is interested in exploring how much of the *Almajirai* behaviour is actually criminal *as per* its seriousness, and how much is socially deviant, or as might be better described in an English context 'anti-social'. This is because it is important to distinguish between the two, but also understand the nature and prevalence of both. By understanding the range of this behaviour there can be an acknowledgement of how unequal power relations influence what and whose behaviour is criminalised.

1.2.6 Criminal Law in Northern Nigeria

In Northern Nigerian states, criminal law is primarily sourced from the criminal procedural code and penal code. In some 12 of these northern states, Shari'a law is added as part of the criminal law (Lawan, 2014). However, the application of the Shari'a is limited only to civil law and personal status (Human Rights Watch, 2004). This is because the punishments for some offences involve the death penalty, amputation, and flogging, which are considered violations of human rights (Human Rights Watch, 2014). The practice of Shari'a is highly influenced by the precolonial history of Islamic dynasties on the moral values and sources of some states' laws in Northern Nigeria. Weimann (2010) provides an overview of the acts considered criminal in Shari'a law, which include theft, substance abuse, sexual-related offences, physical altercation, and homicide:

> They comprise theft, banditry, unlawful sexual intercourse, the unfounded accusation of unlawful sexual intercourse, drinking alcohol and—according to some schools of jurisprudence—apostasy. Secondly, the prosecution of offences against persons, i.e., homicide and wounding, is subject to the will of the victim or—in case of homicide—the victim's family, who have considerable influence on the punishment, e.g., by demanding or remitting retaliation (*qisas*), and are entitled to financial compensation (*diya*) (Weimann, 2010, p.10).

This thesis considers the criminal acts specified in the penal code and criminal law, as practised in some predominantly Muslims' states in Northern Nigeria, particularly Jigawa and Kano states where the study was conducted. In these states, criminal responsibility for the law is explicitly stated as applicable to every individual "except a child below 12 years of age, who has not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequence of such acts (Ministry of Justice Jigawa State, 2021 p.22)".

In criminological studies, the common offending behaviours found in youth are those related to property crime, substance abuse or drug use, and sexual-related offences (Brown, 2001; Cauffman et al., 2015). The most prominent and common acts of youth criminality in Hausa societies are more often attributed to gangs (‘*Yan Daba)*, who engage in various forms of crimes including theft, substance abuse, interpersonal and inter-group violence (Casey, 2014; Dawha, 1996; Salaam, 2011). The word *Daba* means gang, while the prefix of ‘*Yan* means membership. Most of the writers on gang membership in Hausa societies argue the *Almajirai* are the pool from which *Yan Daba* recruits (Casey, 2008; Casey, 2014; Dawha, 1996; Hansen et al., 2016; Matusitz and Repass, 2009). As this thesis demonstrates, however, the basis of this claim is problematic.

1.3 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study seeks to empirically explore the nature and extent of crime committed by the *Almajirai*, and in particular, with relationship to deprivation and religiosity, as a response to public and academic speculation, highlighted above. The study enriches existing theoretical explanations of youth crime, by examining criminological theories in the context of the *Almajirai*, which provides a case study of youth across the Global South.

The framework of the study stems from the theoretical guidance of criminological theories, particularly, strain theories (structural Anomie and general strain). Other theories including those concerning social disorganisation, routine activities, self-control, and labelling are also considered guiding frameworks in understanding and explaining the influence of social settings, space-time budgets, adult supervision, behavioural disposition, and identity in exacerbating the propensities for learning and involvement in a crime. To improve the rigour, I used a mixed-method approach, utilizing quantitative and qualitative data, as well as observation. Data analysis drew on descriptive and inferential statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data.

This study is then broadly aimed at addressing four overarching research questions:

- What is the nature and extent of crimes committed by the *Almajirai*?
- What is the depth of deprivation for *Almajirai* in *Tsangaya* schools?
- What is the relationship between the depth of deprivation and the extent of involvement in criminality amongst *Almajirai*?

- Is religiosity a protective or risk factor for *Almajirai* gang and criminal involvement?

1.4 Significance of the Study

This study is significant on various levels. First, academically, and empirically it contributes to debates about the relationship between deprivation, religiosity, and crime among the *Almajirai*. It is, however, not limited to empirically understanding these relationships. As noted above, the thesis draws upon criminological theories, to help understand both the potential (or not) for criminality among the *Almajirai* and more broadly, the application of criminological theories developed in the Global North, in the context of the Global South. This is important, because some theoretical literature suggested a strong need for empirical evidence in establishing relationships between early youth deprivation and crime involvement across nationalities, to understand how differences in context can produce varied outcomes (Alm & Estrada, 2018; Cohen, 1955; McClair et al., 2017). It is worth noting that the Global North theories of youth crime have been developed in the context of majority white, majority Christian or secular societies, with high scores in the Global Development Index (UNDP, 2024). For instance, the UK and the US are ranked among very high human development countries - 15th and 20th respectively, measured by life expectancy, education, and per capita income, Nigeria is ranked 161 among low human development countries. This highlights some of the major differences between Nigeria and the countries in the Global North where most of these theories originate.

Second, the study involves the *Almajirai* as informants to help understand the depth of their experienced deprivation and how that relates to criminality, as well as the role of religiosity in understanding the relationship. This is an opportunity for the *Almajirai* to express their lived experiences, an approach which differs from the previous studies that do not consider their voices. An exception was Hoechner (2013, 2018), who conducted ethnographic research with this group. My study builds on this research with a specific focus on crime and deprivation.

Third, the study provides an empirical basis for policy formulation, particularly for the new Nigerian National Commission for *Almajirai* and Out-Of-School Children. Given the size of the *Almajirai* population in Nigeria, counting over 10 million, the study delivers a research-based outcome that can help to offer realistic solutions for dealing with not only

the deprived conditions, but also other circumstances that may influence criminality in *Almajirai*, and other youth living in similar conditions.

1.5 The Structure of the Thesis

In Chapters Two and Three, I adopt a Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) methodology to review existing empirical literature on the relationship between deprivation, religiosity, and criminality in youth. Chapter Two highlights the importance of considering the depth of deprivation as an essential factor in explaining crime involvement, particularly considering appropriate indicators for understanding absolute and relative deprivation. The review examines proposed relationships between deprivation and criminal behaviour among youth and identifies empirical and theoretical gaps in knowledge, which the thesis helps to address. Chapter three focuses on the relationship between religiosity and criminality in youth. Measures of religiosity are reviewed along with research and theory concerning how religiosity serves as a protective or risk factor for criminality among youth. Emphasis is given specifically on the effect of religiosity on the outcomes of various forms of criminality, across different faiths. This is because the meaning of religiosity and criminality can vary across beliefs and sociocultural entities.

Chapter Four discusses prominent criminological theories in explaining youth crime, by highlighting how the theories share similar explanations of crime causation, and how they differ. I argue that it is often difficult to adequately explain criminality through a single theory. So, for instance, where strain theories argue economic deprivation may cause desperation and a search for illegitimate opportunities to satisfy a need, routine activity theorists suggest that the crime can also take place in a favourable setting. Chapter Five provides the methodological approach of the thesis. It explains the methodological and ethical details, focusing on the relationship between deprivation and religiosity in *Almajirai* and crime, and elaborates on the justification for choosing a mixed-method design. It argues that such a design was appropriate in the case of the *Almajirai* because it offers them a chance to explain their situation, concerning the themes under study, relating to the extent of deprivation, religiosity, and criminality. The chapter also explains the data collection instruments and the experience of doing fieldwork.

In Chapter Six I start by exploring the extent of the *Almajirai* involvement in criminality, the common acts of crime, and the antisocial behaviour in which they are engaged. In Chapter Seven, the depth of absolute and relative deprivation in the *Almajirai* is assessed and interrogated. In my argument, the depth of deprivation is an important parameter in understanding and explaining potential involvement in offending behaviour, as postulated by strain theorists discussed in Chapters Two and Four. The chapter highlights the depth of the experience of deprivation, and the survival strategies, through numerous opportunities commonly practiced by the *Almajirai*, preparing them to fend for themselves. Thus, in Chapter Eight the statistical evidence and related themes for analyzing the relationship between deprivation and criminality in the *Almajirai* are presented. Here, the thesis argues that the extent to which *Almajirai* are involved in specific forms of criminality is influenced by desperation because of the greater influence of absolute deprivation, more than relative deprivation, but the situation is often regulated by a strong appeal to identity among the *Almajirai*. In Chapter Nine the thesis challenges the understanding of relationships between religiosity and criminality in the *Almajirai*, their sense of religiosity, and how the latter may be a protective or risk factor in the former. The chapter argues that the effects of deprivation and the perceived identity of *Almajiri* are more relevant in predicting criminality in the *Almajirai* than religious beliefs and practices.

To elaborate on the importance of other criminological theories, beyond deprivation-related theories in explaining the *Almajirai's* involvement in crimes. Chapter Ten examines the participants' responses to those theories. The chapter explores substantive empirical explanations of *Almajirai* criminality guided by prominent criminological theories, including structural anomie, general strain, social disorganisation, routine activity, and self-control theories. The chapter further discusses other circumstances under which the *Almajirai* can learn criminal behaviour or affiliate themselves with criminal groups, as well as the effect of criminalizing their identity to the public. Chapter Eleven brings together the preceding discussions about the research questions to provide conclusions and implications for policy and further research.

1.6 Conclusion

Youth crime in Northern Nigeria is linked to embedded poverty, religious indoctrination, and inter-group rivalry, which creates political tension and crisis in the region. The media and academic discourses, in many instances, blamed the situation on the *Almajirai*, who are boarding students of an non-formal and Islamic-affiliated educational institution called *Tsangaya*. Under the system, the *Almajirai* live in deprived conditions and engage in unstructured interaction for survival. Their condition is often described by local media and academic writings as the pool where gangs and religious insurgents recruit new members. However, the claims are considered inconclusive, because there is a lack of statistics from the state officials on the extent to which the *Almajirai* engage in crime, or affiliate with the gangs and insurgents, as well as the absence of adequate empirical evidence to substantiate such claims that criminalize the *Almajirai*, concerning the deprived condition and the religious values they learn through the *Tsangaya* curriculum. This thesis, therefore, argues that the nexus between the experience of deprivation, religiosity, and involvement in crime by *Almajirai* can be established only through empirical enquiry. The argument underlies the research questions of this thesis. The next two chapters review related studies on the relationships between deprivation and youth crime, as well as religiosity and youth crime. To contextualize the direction of the thesis and identify its general and specific contributions.

A typical study space for *Almajirai* '*Gargari'* in Hadejia Urban *Tsangaya* (Photo: Mamun Usman)

CHAPTER TWO

DEPRIVATION AND YOUTH CRIME: RAPID EVIDENCE ASSESSMENT

2.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes existing studies on the relationship between deprivation and criminality among youth using a rapid evidence assessment (REA) methodology. The REA approach emerged recently as a method of rigorous and timely literature review to build evidence-based outcomes through data gathering from relevant sources (Varker, et al 2015). In REA, time limitation and specification are central in consideration of data sources (May-Chahal & Palmer, 2018, p.22). This is done by using a specified search process to enable retrieval of studies that are relevant in explaining the conceptual or theoretical development of the phenomenon under study, with more focus on the outcomes of recent publications not more than 10 years old (Varker et al., 2015). The chapter, therefore, explains the management of the search processes, using Lancaster University library databases, and storage using EndNote, for rapid review. In my REA, I used the SPIDER (Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, and Research) model to ensure a broad spectrum for inclusion of the research terms without affecting the quality of the research work reviewed (Cooke, Smith, and Booth, 2012).

2.2 Creating Endnote Library and Accessing Data Bases for the Rapid Review

The relevant literature was sourced from Lancaster University's library databases (see Table 2.1), which were later saved in categorized groups, such as measures of deprivation, the relationship between deprivation and crime, deprivation and youth criminality, and religiosity and crime. The literature searches on the database followed keywords search (see Table 2.1) and exported to an EndNote library.

The REA was aimed at finding and reviewing literature on the relationship between deprivation, religiosity, and crime in adolescents. To have a broader understanding of how empirical studies test the relationship between deprivation and crime, I ran the search without age or time specification. Then, I ran another search, with specifications of age groups using keywords like adolescents, youth, and juveniles, and the time scale between 2012-2022. The outcome of the two searches is presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.1 The Spider Frame

SAMPLE (POPULATION)	Youth, Adolescents, Juveniles
PHENOMENA OF INTEREST	Relative Deprivation, Absolute Deprivation, Poverty, Social Exclusion, Social Inequality, Antisocial Behaviour, Religiosity, Survival strategy, Delinquent Subculture, strain, Anomie, Youth Crime.
DESIGN	All relevant data (Including a systematic review, Longitudinal studies, Meta-Analyses, Survey, and Ethnography)
EVALUATION	Relationship between Relative Deprivation, Absolute Deprivation and Delinquency, Criminality OR Criminal Behaviour, Antisocial Behaviour
RESEARCH	Quantitative, Qualitative, Mixed Method, Participant and non-participant Observation, Ethnography

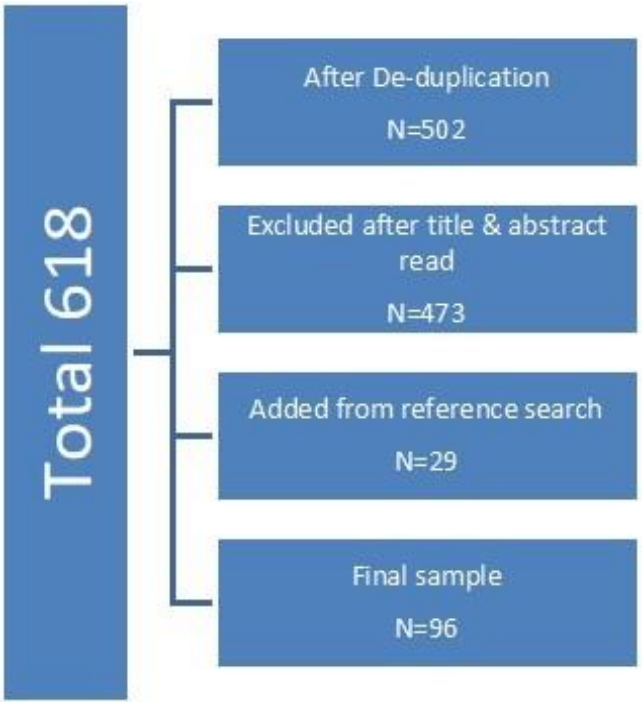
Table 2.2 The Results of the Data Bases Search

Data Bases	**Results**	**Data Bases**	**Results**
Academic search ultimate	2,074 1,144	Duke university press	2,842 1,117
APA PsycINFO	324 30	Ethos	58 13
Google Scholar	43,300 17,300	Ingenta	126 7
JSTOR	4,026 3,970	Library of Congress	221 9
Oxford University Press Journals	5,895 1,523	ProQuest dissertations and theses global (with full text)	23,929 15,098
SAGE Journals	10,591 9,987	SAGE Knowledge	1,428 923
Science Direct	3,960 617	Scopus	922 216
Social care online	101 18	SocINDEX with full text	5,391 2,868
Springer Link	21,876 8,773	Taylor & Francis online	5,101 480
University of Chicago Press Journals	734 47	Web of Science	1,350 90

After rigorous searches on different databases, the outcomes displayed thousands of results, because the concepts of deprivation and crime were used by many studies under different disciplines, such as in social sciences, and health and medical studies. Therefore, I used an exclusion and inclusion strategy by examining the titles of the results displayed and selected

only those that were related and relevant to the area of this review, concerning the relationship between deprivation and crime, mostly of a social sciences background, and particularly sociology, or disciplines that are concerned with criminological studies.

Figure 2.1 The Framework for Displaying Result



The abstracts of the studies exported were studied to understand their relevance in reviewing the phenomenon under study, as well as the relationships between them. Those found relevant, based on the SPIDER framework criteria, were reviewed, while those found irrelevant were disregarded. In many instances, the references of the selected articles reviewed provided further literature for accessing other relevant studies, which I also exported and reviewed. In the end, the endnote database was scrutinized and duplicated articles were de-duplicated. Figure 2.1 provides the results of the various stages of my REA.

2.3 The Concept of Deprivation

Deprivation implies uneven access to resources and opportunities, which can be an essential social, physical, and psychological resource at an individual or group level of analysis. The concept of deprivation has been understood and explained in many ways by social scientists.

For example, it was conceptualized through temporal dimensions by de la Sablonnière et al. (2015). Other scholars explain it concerning individual experience (egoistic deprivation) and group-based (fraternal deprivation) (Runciman, 1966), neighbourhood deprivation (see for example Dennison & Swisher, 2018; Nettle, 2015). All these can be explained as subjective (or perceived) and objective notions of deprivation (Brown, 2001). These dimensions of deprivation manifest under two major forms; absolute and relative deprivation. Many theorists provide a conceptual definition of absolute deprivation, such as the level "encompassing a minimal level of need rendering a person able to subsist and to participate actively in society" (Ladin, 2014, p.1). It is also defined as the "lack of capacity to afford one's basic physical needs such as food" (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2019a, p. 515). These basic needs include food, clean water, clothing, sanitation facilities, shelter, education, information, and health care. In a broader understanding of these definitions, the basic needs are not limited to material resources but also include participation through inclusion (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2019a; Ladin, 2014). Other concepts such as social exclusion and neighbourhood structure are equally considered as important in explaining absolute deprivation in various contexts (Janicka & Słomczyńska, 2002).

Relative deprivation, as the other form of deprivation, is most discussed in sociological and criminological studies. Townsend (1979, p.125) defined it as "a state of observable and demonstrable disadvantage, relative to the local community or the wider society or nation to which individual, family or group belongs". Other theorists, such as Smith, et al. (2012, p. 203) conceptualized it as "the judgment that one is worse off compared to some standard accompanied by feelings of anger and resentment". It is also expressed as the frustration that is related to an individual's relative position in a reference group (Stewart, 2006). Relative deprivation occurs when individuals compare themselves with others who are better off and feel undeservingly disadvantaged, which also affects their emotions and behaviour (Smith & Huo, 2014). Young (1999) argues that the comparison can be to someone who is even less well-off. The concept of relative deprivation provides researchers with both subjective and objective levels of analysis, and at individual and group levels (Pettigrew, 2015; Webber, 2007). In some situations, deprivation can be felt with the blockage of opportunity to fully participate, through marginalization, and discrimination or lack of

affection from significant or generalized others, irrespective of the adequacy of material resources. For instance, in caste-practising societies, social class is inherited by birth and maintained throughout someone's life. In such situations, income is less relevant than social inclusiveness, as such inequality by social class, not by income prevails (White, 2014).

In criminological theories, deprivation has been explained as a strong source that often creates stressful conditions, which may influence crime involvement as a response to escape adversity. Existing criminological studies therefore offer insights explaining the theoretical implications of the effect of stresses which creates 'strain', sometimes caused by social inequalities in accessing means to achieve a socially valued goal. Consequently, subjecting some individuals to embracing criminality as an available means to an end, especially when the legitimate means are available only to a few similar others (Merton, 1938, 1968; J. Young, 2004; L. Young, 2004). Shifting to an individual level in explaining such experiences, Agnew (1992) emphasizes that where there is a disjunction between aspirations and outcomes, resulting from negative relationships with other individuals, criminality is embraced to access the perceived deserved outcomes. Sometimes criminality can be conditioned in lower-class youth, living alongside other youth within the same neighbourhood, leading to the formation of subcultural gangs, who are against the middle class, regardless of any purpose (Cohen, 1955). According to Cohen (1955), this results in perceived status deprivation and the legitimization of aggression. The studies of Merton (1938) and Agnew (2001) provided the initial foundation for strain theories. However, recent developments in the theory consider other important factors that can mitigate the magnitude of deprivation, or its influence in causing criminality among youth, such as family background and training, religiosity, and morality.

2.4 Depth of Deprivation and Involvement in Criminality

As forms of deprivation vary, so do the indicators to measure the depth of each type too. Much research faces the challenge of identifying thresholds for measuring either absolute or relative deprivation in explaining certain outcomes. For instance, it has been noted by Pettigrew (2015) and Smith et al. (2012) that some studies have failed to use appropriate measures in exploring the depth of specific deprivation, as some outcomes were found to be measuring absolute even when assumed to measure relative deprivation. This view suggests

that the demarcation of absolute and relative deprivation must be spelled out in examining the effect of the constructs, to avoid obscuring the efficacy of the results. In criminological studies, it has been observed by Grover (2008) that relative deprivation has gained more attention, and the relationship between absolute deprivation and crime is not given adequate attention.

It is also important to note that the concerns for measuring the depth of deprivation in relation to behavioural outcomes are given attention in other social science disciplines, such as economics, social policy, and health studies, more than in criminological studies (see for example, Anand, Jones, Donoghue, & Teitler, 2020; Reagan, Salsberry, & Olsen, 2007; Yitzhaki, 1979). Despite the low concerns given to the measurement of deprivation by the theorists of crime, it is pertinent to note how previous social theorists suggested the importance of understanding its depth. For instance, Runciman (1966, p. 10) stated that "the magnitude of a relative deprivation is the extent of the difference between the desired situation and that of the person desiring it". This highlights the importance of exploring the magnitude or depth of deprivation, as it can also influence the magnitude of its outcomes, such as frustration, resentment, desperation and so on. Regarding this, Agnew (2001) categorically indicates the relevance of measuring the magnitude of strain, as a prerequisite for understanding how it may lead to crime. Agnew (1992) suggested that strains can lead to crime, when they are high in magnitude, more recent, of long duration, and clustered in time. Therefore, it was made clear by Smith et al. (2012) that research relating to relative deprivation should investigate appropriate tools for the measurement of deprivation and its outcomes, as well as appraising situations that are theoretically relevant. Despite these suggestions, there is low attention from academic studies that quantitatively explore the relationship between the depth of deprivation and involvement in criminal behaviour. Hence, in this project, the use of mixed methods to elicit qualitative data about the experiences of the *Almajirai*, but also quantitative data to explore the extent to which they are living with the deprivation is pursued.

For accuracy purposes, Delamonica and Minujin (2007) suggested that it is important to define the thresholds for the indicators of deprivation that can be considered to determine the depth and severity of the identified indicators, measured from no deprivation to mild,

moderate, then severe, and extreme. In developing countries, the magnitude of deprivation especially among youth and children is focused on seven indicators including safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene, nutrition, health, shelter, education, and information (Delamonica and Minujin, 2007; Gordon et al., 2003). A study by Gordon et al. (2003) reported on the frequency of deprivation incidence, to at least one out of the seven internationally recognized indicators (mentioned above), revealed by the research as highest in sub-Saharan Africa, more than any part of the world. These indicators provide an established basis for theorizing deprivation of disadvantaged youth such as the *Almajirai* in the Global South, particularly in Africa, hence, their consideration and adaptation in this project.

2.5 Dimensions in Measuring Deprivation

Existing studies have offered various dimensions to measure the depth of deprivation, considering the type and target subjects under study and the outcomes desired. Some have done this by comparing different nations or communities, within or between social groups, and between individuals. It was found in the REA that cross-cultural differences have significant effects on responses to relative deprivation and gratification (Shamrova & Lampe, 2020; van den Bos, van Veldhuizen, & Au, 2015). In support of this, Smith et al. (2018) conducted two surveys across global rich and low- and middle-income countries to explain how outcomes of relative deprivation are moderated by national cultural differences. In the first study, using national assessments of individual collectivism and power distance, the results show that perceived relative deprivation influences various outcomes, such as levels of life satisfaction and collective action, and the effect is found to be stronger in countries with a prevailing culture of individualism. At the level of individuals, the second survey comprised 6,112 undergraduate university students from 28 different countries. The findings showed that the relationship between individual relative deprivation and different outcomes is higher for students who lived in more individualistic countries. Another study, using world value survey 6 waves focusing on OECD countries by Shin (2018) suggests that relative deprivation should be measured by income satisfaction, because relative deprivation results from a feeling of resentment, which affects income satisfaction negatively and stimulates support for redistribution of resources. This view is supported by meta-analysis studies, which found similarities in background and financial status to be strong indicators of

perceived relative deprivation. The studies revealed that people are more dissatisfied with their financial statuses, if they are worse off, when they compare themselves with referent targets, who share similar backgrounds, such as educational qualifications with them (Kim, Callan, Gheorghiu, & Skylark, 2018; Quispe-Torreblanca, Brown, Boyce, Wood, & De Neve, 2020). The studies involving various social context across the world also found that people are dissatisfied when their financial statuses are similar to those of their referent targets, who had lower academic qualifications than them.

Other studies, however, suggest measures for consistent deprivation to be explained beyond an income-centered approach. For instance, Hick (2014) argued that deprivation should be measured by examining the practice of giving equal weight to low-income and other material deprivation indices, which suggests measures of material deprivation beyond a rudimentary state, centred on poverty measurement. This is supported by another view, because some people with income above the poverty line can still experience low living standards while others living below the poverty line can still have satisfactory living conditions (Coromaldi & Zoli, 2012). Therefore, Smith and Huo (2014) believe measuring the effect of deprivation because of growing inequality by focusing on individuals' material possessions can be misleading unless it is supported by understanding how individuals subjectively experience deprivation of resources. In this view, people experience deprivation by feeling disadvantages directed towards them as unique individuals, or as members of a group, feeling anger or another emotion such as resentment, and view the system of leadership as unjust. Other theorists believe that group-based deprivation determinants of prejudice might lead to bias by focusing on group perceptions and therefore suggest attention should be given to individual-level deprivation (Yoxon, Grasso, Karampampas, & Temple, 2019). In this regard, it can be understood that merging the group and individual scales can offer broader and more precise outcomes. In this thesis, the participants' responses as individuals are considered in understanding the group-based level of perceived deprivation by using mixed methods to gain a richer and wider insight from both quantitative and qualitative data. For instance, Kangmennaang, Smale, and Elliott (2019) use mixed research methodology to explore linkages between measures of deprivation, inequality, and well-being, using the tool Global Index of Well-being (GLOWING) in Ghana, which provides a

means for examining relationships between different measures of inequality and well-being. The study considers absolute deprivation measures such as food, water, and housing to explore the effect of inequalities on well-being and through involvement and participation. This suggests the efficacy of using appropriate measures and the efficacy of mixed methodology in exploring the depth and effect of deprivation on behavioural outcomes.

Many studies consider measures beyond income analysis in understanding the extent and effects of deprivation. In the Senian approach, deprivation should be evaluated and explained by reference to capability (Anand et al., 2020). For example, a study by Anand et al. (2020) used capability data on 29 dimensions for adults from the US, UK and Italy to understand capability deprivation concerning low income and perceived well-being. They use a class analysis to explore features of poverty and deprivation concerning social exclusion, and capability deprivation in association with local area deprivation, specifically in the UK. The study found varied associations between capabilities in individuals and local area deprivation in some situations, depending on the dimension of measures of individual capability and community under study. The findings suggest studying deprivation using dimensions of individual capability and local area of living. This includes the skills possessed by an individual, with which they can achieve possibilities and life aspirations. The capability concept is a measure of opportunity relating to tackling the problem of disjunction between means and goals. This approach is a breakaway from income-centrist approaches to deprivation (Hick & Burchardt, 2016). Some empirical studies suggest support for the approach by suggesting that there is no relationship between individual income and crime rate, however, other studies have suggested that income inequality and unemployment rate, through which the income is generated increase the crime rate and vary with spatial distribution of inequality and crime (Anser et al., 2020; Whitworth, 2013). Therefore, capability deprivation here appears as a dimension of inequality manifestation.

Social inequality has many intersecting facets - racial, gender, income, class, and others such as disability (Heimer, 2019). Gaining skills can help in individual social mobility, which often occurs through education, occupation, and earning income. Usually, income regulates the effects of inequality in a literal sense and earns status for individuals. The variables of income and occupation are pathways for upward mobility through education and

skills, serving as conversion factors, which determine one's capability to achieve desired aspirations or meet life's expectations. In this regard, the trajectories leading to social disadvantage usually occur in three stages from childhood to adulthood, especially among disadvantaged individuals. The stages are childhood disadvantage, adolescent deprivation, and multi-dimensional measures of social disadvantage (Peruzzi, 2015). In the final stage, the extent to which deprivations affect all the relevant social exclusion dimensions directly or indirectly can be understood in the educational domain. It is worth noting, that the opportunity deprivation from access to educational services in many countries subjects a substantial number of children to engagement in paid work as an economic survival strategy to help themselves and their parents or guardians (Adama, 2020; Bajari & Kuswarno, 2020; Fuseini & Daniel, 2020; Hoechner, 2013, 2018). In some situations, when individuals lack the means or capability to compete in accessing social resources, such as education and employment opportunities, they may resort to various activities including crime, in search of survival, consequently raising rates of crime in society (Del Cid, 2018; Thomas & Shihadeh, 2013; Xia & Ma, 2020).

In the context of some Global South countries, and in Nigeria particularly, the Living Standard Survey (HNLSS) in 2010, and the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) in 2011 found high levels of child deprivation in the spheres of education, nutrition, safe water, health, and child's rights protection, especially in the rural areas of the northern part of the country (Ogwumike & Ozughalu, 2018). In Northern Nigeria, the severe experience of deprivation is strongly linked to *Almajirai*, which was assumed to lead some of them to affiliation with the *'Yan Daba* and *Boko Haram* (Abbo, Mohd Zain, & Ali, 2017; Amzat, 2015; Hansen, Jima, Abbas, & Abia, 2016). These studies, however, do not provide reliable evidence that systematically supports the relationship between *Almajirai* deprivation and criminality, and the circumstances under which the relationship occurs. The example of the *Almajirai* provides the possibility of exploring the cross-national context of measures of deprivation in children, as suggested by Shamrova and Lampe (2020) pointing to the use of a varied framework for exploring the depth of deprivation. This implies the use of thresholds that can be adapted to suit the context of communities and cultures under study because they vary in their context of response to deprivation.

2.6 Deprivation and Youth Crime

Studies on youth criminality have indicated that adolescence is a period of profound social, emotional, and cognitive change, which can be characterized by increased risk-taking and a propensity for adopting offending behaviour. The trajectory of criminality by individuals differs across cultures, subgroups, and time, and so too does the risk-taking behaviour, both those that are criminal, and others that are non-criminal (Cauffman, Cavanagh, Donley, & Thomas, 2015). An example from the Global North, using Danish national register, Mok et al. (2018) suggest that the longer a child lives in poorer circumstances, the higher their subsequent risks for self-harm and violent criminality and vice versa for time spent living in affluent conditions, though, the associations were stronger for violent criminality than for self-harm. In England, children from disadvantaged families earn less income as adults, compared to those children from affluent families as adults (Carneiro et al., 2020). This highlights the possible effects of relative deprivation among youth in rich countries. However, in some contexts, such as China, differs from the circumstances of the youth in rich countries, because deprived children's pathways to criminality start with an initial effort to make a legitimate living through conventional work. When that poses some difficulty, they engage in non-formal work like artisanship and begging, and then as further failure happens, they resort to crime as a survival strategy (Yu, Gao, & Atkinson-Sheppard, 2019). This marks glaring differences across social context in the effects of deprivation to potential crime among youth.

Other empirical studies in various social contexts have shown gender implications in explaining the relationship between deprivation and crime in youth. Particularly, boys have a higher propensity to engage in criminality compared to girls, when in deprived condition (Jiang, Dong, & Jiang, 2020; Odgers, Donley, Caspi, Bates, & Moffitt, 2015). As suggested by the studies, boys are more prone to risk-taking than girls. The difference was also related to the experiences of differential socialization, influenced by culturally gender-specific contexts (DeLisi & Vaughn, 2015). Even among the boys, the propensity of criminality is found to be higher in deprived urban boys belonging to a lower class, residing in affluent neighbourhoods, with low self-control, and low social integration or inclusiveness (Balsa et al., 2014; Chan & Chui, 2015; Chan, 2019; Odgers et al., 2015). This highlights the effect

and manifestation of relative deprivation. In connection to this, age is considered an important correlate of crime involvement, denoting stages of association with peers, and changes in behaviour. In some societies, anti-social behaviour emerges in late adolescence and early adulthood, that is 15 – 20 years, and the commonly identified criminal behaviours during these years are related to property crime, substance abuse, and sexual-related crimes (DeLisi & Vaughn, 2015).

Deprivation at the household or family level in different cultural contexts also was found to have implications for behavioural adoption, sometimes leading to criminality among youth. For instance, parental warmth can serve as a protective element for criminality, whereas deprivation from parental responsibility and affection, as well as social discrimination in the neighbourhood, is likely to increase adolescents' involvement in criminality (Hojat, 2016; Jaggers, Tomek, Hooper, Malone, & Church Ii, 2017; Pyrooz & Decker, 2013). This is because experienced adversity can lead to strain, which can consequently motivate criminality. Concerning this, studies suggest that children who are raised outside family care experience deprivation of parental responsibility and affection, and they can have higher risks of social threats and experiences, with adverse effects that may extend to later life (Boothby et al., 2012; Dai & Chu, 2018). Other studies have shown that even where the deprivation is minimal, having a criminal adult in the family as a father or sibling can have a direct effect on the criminality of the children in the family (Boakye, 2020; Farrington, 2020), an effect found to have been higher for white compared to black adolescents (Zapolski, Clifton, Banks, Hershberger, & Aalsma, 2019).

There are instances of children from poor and deprived families in the countries of the Global South, who have migrated from their deprived communities, such as rural areas, and lived in the outskirts of urban areas, and rely on begging. Without access to basic education, or sometimes skipping classes, and even preferring work over education, they struggle to make a living (Amzat, 2015; Bajari & Kuswarno, 2020; Mhizha, 2015; Shahraki, Fouladiyan, & Toosifar, 2020). As suggested by Huang, Ryan, and Rhoden (2016), such deprived children often experience neglect or lack of adult supervision, which is likely to risk them to criminality. Other studies suggested that can be linked to their condition in some situations, which can expose them to interaction with criminal peers (Levey Garandeau,

Meeus, & Branje, 2019; Pauwels, Bernasco, Ruiter, Bruinsma, & Weerman, 2013; Monahan, Rhew, Hawkins, & Brown, 2014; Ryan & Gallupe, 2020). These studies apparently oversight the mediating effect of other factors, such as morality and religiosity, which can predict alternative outcomes.

The crime-predicting influence of absolute deprivation has been noted by a large body of empirical literature, using different methodologies, especially in developing countries where there is poverty and severe deprivation from basic needs. For instance, sexually related crimes were found to be influenced by absolute deprivation from basic needs among youth in the Global South countries such as Nigeria and Bangladesh (Kunnuji, 2014; McClair et al., 2017). The studies examined the association between deprivation of basic needs such as food, shelter, and inadequate clothing, and involvement in illegal sexual relationships, as a survival strategy among young boys and girls aged 15-24 years, mostly migrants from rural areas, living in urban settings. The onset of sexual activity and involvement with multiple sexual partnerships were influenced by food deprivation. The youth engage in sexual relationships, offering themselves for sex and gaining pay for sex on demand, which was illegal in the context of the study. Evidence from the Global North was established through a study in United States, which found that food insecurity has effects on children's self-control and early involvement in criminality (Jackson, Newsome, Vaughn, & Johnson, 2018). The study results show that children who experience food insecurity have significant propensities in exhibiting lower levels of self-control and higher levels of delinquency in early and late childhood, compared to children brought up in food-secure households. An example in Indonesia shows that some youth skip classes to beg in the street and take part in other hazardous income-generating activities, with high exposure to interaction with street criminals and eventually engaging in substance abuse (Bajari & Kuswarno, 2020; Trisnawati, Khoirunurrofik, & Ismail, 2019). These studies demonstrate how absolute deprivation at an individual and family level can be associated with criminality, a phenomenon commonly found in some developing countries. Some scholars blame the social structural system for creating inequality and the marginalization of some social groups from a wide social institution, as being at the root of criminal activities (Magashi, 2015; Sengupta & Mukherjee, 2018; S. A. Thomas & Shihadeh, 2013).

In US, the effect of relative deprivation on crime has been examined through measures of relative socioeconomic status on substance use, focusing on how reference group effects are likely to exert some influence on adolescents' decision to engage in substance use. The results indicate that relative deprivation is positively associated with alcohol consumption, drinking to intoxication, and smoking for adolescents, especially boys (Balsa, French, & Regan, 2014). Many studies indicate income inequality and the coexistence of poverty and affluence produce relative deprivation that instigates crime by the deprived people to settle their aspirations, which are shaped by social norms. For instance, a lack of legitimate employment opportunities, as a basic source of income, through marginalization of specific social groups (group-based deprivation), may lead groups to engage in illegitimate activities such as street violent crime as an alternative employment opportunity (Richardson & Vil, 2015). At an individual level, Greitemeyer and Sagioglou (2019) found that relative deprivation creates a staged process of hostility in an individual. At the initial stage, individual relative deprivation is associated with aggression. In the second stage, the effect of repeated strain increases individual relative deprivation, with increased aggression, which later spreads through the individual's social interaction. Recent studies indicate that the coexistence of the poor and affluent in the same community can be a significant factor in crime. For instance, Metz and Burdina (2018) found that even in boundary demarcation, economic hardship in less affluent communities can result in higher crime rates in affluent neighbourhoods. This is due to perceived neighbourhood deprivation and crime opportunities in the more affluent neighbourhoods. The pattern and trend of criminal victimization are reinforced by specialization in specific criminal careers available to the deprived individual (Ha & Andresen, 2017; Phillips & Land, 2012).

The few studies from the Global North that tested the two forms of deprivation mostly focused on adults, and the outcome has indicated that both absolute and relative deprivation display a complementary relationship by strengthening each other in predicting criminal behaviour (Burraston, McCutcheon, & Watts, 2017; Burraston, Watts, McCutcheon, & Province, 2019; Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2017). These studies consider income inequality as a measure of absolute deprivation, while the feeling of disadvantage represents relative deprivation. The findings suggest that both relative and absolute deprivation reinforce each

other in engagement with violent crime. These studies clearly show an income-centrist approach, which considers income as a sole measure of deprivation. More research is therefore needed to explore further the effect of other indicators, particularly those described by experts as indicators of absolute or relative deprivation, and how the reinforcement between the two forms of deprivation can lead to crimes other than hostility-related violence, such as homicide. In contrast, another study suggested that relative deprivation is a better predictor of crime than absolute deprivation (Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2017, 2019a). The investigation utilized three experiments to examine the causal effects of absolute and relative status on experienced deprivation and hostility. The findings showed that relative deprivation affects aggressive behaviour, greater than absolute deprivation. Alternatively, people are more hostile when their resources are compared negatively to others' resources, even when their satisfaction with basic and deserved resources is high. For youth, a study found that increased feelings of disadvantage and aggressive affect influence criminal behaviour (Martínez-Ferrer & Stattin, 2017). In the Global South, other studies found the influence of absolute deprivation, concerning basic life needs as a predictor of criminality especially among youth (Bajari & Kuswarno, 2020; Kunnuji, 2014; McClair et al., 2017). However, there are yet to be studies that test the effects of absolute and relative deprivation on behavioural outcomes, particularly criminality.

This discussion made it clear that the debate on crime prediction between absolute and relative deprivation is still open for exploration through empirical evidence, particularly through valid indicators, and qualitative and mixed methods (the above studies rely heavily on quantitative data) to offer deep insight into relationships between deprivation and youth crime. Much of the literature examining the strength of absolute and relative forms of deprivation is limited by its focus on adults and crime. This suggests a need for more research that focuses on youth.

Moreover, social disorganization theorists in the Global North believed that material or socioeconomic deprivation, at individual and family or group levels, is influenced by the mediating effect of disorganized neighbourhoods, to produce criminal or delinquent subculture (Azeredo, Moreira, Figueiredo, & Barbosa, 2019; Newsome, 2013; Piotrowska, Stride, Maughan, & Rowe, 2019; Warner & Settersten, 2017). These studies indicate that the

effects of general neighbourhood disadvantage, low income, social stratification, ethnicity/racial differences, persistent poverty, poor child rearing, and delinquent peer influences, serve as factors in producing and promoting the transmission of criminal culture. In this regard, Berti and Pivetti (2019) offered an overview of the classical theoretical models concerning the various pathways and processes that may lead young people from socially disadvantaged backgrounds to be at a higher risk of criminality, which include economic stress, poor parenting, and peer influence, especially those living in the environment with available opportunities for crime. This can be possible, as shown by another study that low-income boys living around more affluent neighbours had higher propensities of antisocial behaviour, than their peers living within poverty-concentrated areas (Odgers et al., 2015). The theorists further suggest that factors relating to adverse life conditions, in association with the mediating role of poor family functioning and child-rearing, neighbourhood poverty, unsupervised and unstructured interaction, and persistent poverty overtime, as pathways to embracing criminality in young people (Sandahl, 2016; Ward & Forney, 2020). The conglomeration of factors such as alcohol and drug use among parents or guardians, as well as lack of parental supervision, control, and affection, in association with child abuse/neglect, lack of consistent social support, and taking to the streets as a space for survival have been found through association to be major risk factors for 'beyond control' street boys' involvement in crime and consequential incarceration (Atilola, Omigbodun, & Bella-Awusah, 2014).

Previous studies indicate the involvement of boys, more than girls, in delinquent behaviour, with the influence of economic and capability deprivation, in absolute and relative forms. However, most of the studies used a longitudinal design, with an over-reliance on official official data (Connolly & Kavish, 2019; Connolly, Lewis, & Boisvert, 2017; Newsome, 2013; Nieuwenhuis et al., 2017; Odgers et al., 2015), which indicates that investing in other methodologies could further advance in theorizing the phenomena of youth crime. Hence, my study on deprived *Almajiri* youth used a mixed method approach that includes qualitative approaches, including semi-structured interviews and observation. In addition, it is important to note that the study gathered data to challenge the Western-centric nature of much criminological research. As observed by Antonaccio and Botchkovar (2015,

p. 509) “For years, theories of criminal behaviour were scrutinized based on Western data, and the criteria for the generality of their predictions were set to vary within the borders of the Western world”. Hence, in the present study, I will be drawing upon data from Northern Nigeria to understand the contested nature and prevalence of deprivation and criminality among a group of youth in the Global South.

In Northern Nigeria, a study reported that street space has become an avenue for the *Almajirai*, as a linkage to ‘people and places’, and sometimes feels like a home. “Hence, the street is adopted as a personal space to achieve some possibilities” (Amzat, 2015, p. 58), claiming tendencies of peer interaction and the possibility of exposure to criminogenic places. In the same vein, assumptions were made by other literature linking the deprived condition of *Almajirai* as a propensity that subjects them to become easy recruits for gangs and insurgent groups in Northern Nigeria (Abbo et al., 2017; Hansen et al., 2016). There is, however, a lack of systematic evidence for these claims. Some writers on the *Almajirai* disregard the claim and call for more research to establish its existence through empirical study (Akali, 2015; Hoechner, 2013).

In the *Tsangaya* system, the *Malamai* who are the custodians of the *Almajirai*, and who also play the role of parents in caring for them are often accused of abusing the students, consequently creating adverse experiences (Amzat, 2015; Sarkingobir, Sambo, Hamza, Tambari, & Sahabi, 2020; Thurston, 2019), a situation which also requires in-depth empirical scrutiny, including whether this situation is associated with the *Almajirai* criminality. However, some theorists, such as Hoechner (2013) argue that the relationship between *Almajirai* and the *Malamai* involves a spiritual contract - the *Malamai* provide knowledge to the *Almajirai* and in doing so, regard the students as the “trust” of God. The *Almajirai* students on their side contribute to sustaining the daily needs of their teacher who is there purposely for them, which is also regarded as a blessing and source of spiritual uplift, demonstrating pride and self-esteem to the children. In her view, such activities prepare the *Almajirai* to “fend for themselves” a notion which also reveals the economic importance of *Almajiranci* in creating self-reliance for social maturation. She noted:

> *“Almajirci* aims to mould children into socially suitable beings by teaching them respect and self-sufficiency…. It seeks to prevent them from ‘becoming spoilt’, by

> exposing them to a certain degree of hardship, and endeavours to ensure that they acquire spiritual capital by memorizing the Holy Qur'an (Hoechner, 2013, p. 83)."

Hoechner's viewpoint focuses on the protective role of *Tsangaya*, in dealing with deviant behaviour as a means of social control. This is consistent with social control theorists, arguing that in a situation where the family failed in child-rearing, the effort of school experience can effectively settle the child-rearing gap (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). This can also be the case with the *Almajirai* because some parents enrolled their children in the *Tsangaya* system with the expectation that the previously identified antisocial and criminal behaviour can be changed for the better. However, in some circumstances, the outcome may not necessarily be the case. It should be noted that in school settings, students learn from their peers through daily interaction, which may affect the effort invested by parents and teachers when the influence of peers is present. Except, when the individual involved has strong self-control. Hirtenlehner, Pauwels, and Mesko (2015) examine the protective influence of self-control on the association between peer effect and adolescent criminal behaviours. The findings suggest that only low self-control influences the delinquent peer effect on self-reported offending.

There are many studies in the Global North on risk-taking behaviour among students, influenced by peers and reward-seeking motivation. For example, Thomas and Nguyen (2020) found greater readiness in students to get involved in either deviance or non-deviance activity, when the outcomes of the action reinforce their status. In a critical review, Thurston (2019) noted that the research work presented by Hoechner (2018) did not account on the other side of the *Almajirai* life, such as bullying by a fellow *Almajiri*, or direct abuse by the teachers themselves, and how the *Almajirai* as students, influence each other as peers. This is essentially imperative to chart a path for transformation driven by farmework of social justice as suggested by some criminological studies (see for example Borner, Gayes, & Hall, 2015). Furthermore, the effect of religiosity in terms of values and practice requires more scrutiny in the *Almajirai*, especially regarding how it plays a role in instilling values of social conformity through belief. This is important because studies on Muslim youth such as Abdollahzadeh Rafi, Hasanzadeh Avval, Yazdani, and Bahrami (2020) find that various dimensions of religiosity are positively correlated with the emotional–behavioural health of youth (see Chapter 3).

2.7 Implications and Research Questions

The review of previous criminological studies on deprivation have shown an immense relevance of measuring the depth of deprivation concerning behavioural outcomes, particularly relating to crime and antisocial behaviour. However, there is little attention in research measuring the depth of deprivation, especially in relation to youth crimes. Hence, the present study focuses on such issues, taking the case of one group, the *Almajirai*. This provides an opportunity to test identified measures of deprivation that suit the context of a specific area and culture, given it is also clear that communities differ on how they perceive and respond to deprivation. Findings from previous studies have indicated the influence of distinct types of deprivation on varied crime outcomes. However, most of the studies rely heavily on quantitative data on adults, which represents relative more than absolute deprivation. This further indicates that the effect of absolute and relative deprivation is still open for exploration among youth through using appropriate measures in empirical studies. Mixed methods design, involving quantitative and qualitative approaches will help to offer deeper insight into relationships between deprivation and criminality, especially among young people. There is also a great need to enable subjects under study to share their experiences and understanding in a one-to-one context with the researchers. This is because as suggested by Yates (2004), it provides an opportunity for young people to speak up as participants. Hence, my study on the *Almajirai* uses a mixed method approach that includes qualitative approaches, including qualitative interviews and observation.

It is also important to note that most of the research conducted under the influence of criminological theories was developed and appraised in the countries of the Global North. Yet, empirical evidence has confirmed that the propensity for criminality by individuals differs across cultures, subgroups, and time. The same applies to risk-taking behaviours, both those that are criminal and others that are non-criminal. This study therefore draws on findings using data from Northern Nigeria to understand the contested nature and prevalence of criminality among *Almajirai*, to appraise and challenge the Western-centric nature of much criminological research.

Many studies that attribute criminality to *Almajirai* faces severe criticism from other researchers, mostly owing to the use of weak methodologies that lack rigour, especially in

establishing reliable evidence on the relationship between the *Almajirai's* deprived condition and adoption of criminality, and the circumstances under which such a relationship occurs. The debate prompted the need for this study, which adopts validated instruments, informed by various theories of crime, to measure the relationship.

2.7 Conclusion

Previous studies have established evidence on the relationship between deprivation and crime. The relationships were found to exist with the intervening effect of mediators, such as neighbourhood, sex, age, parental background, low self-control, and other emotion-related variables. As it was seen in this chapter, the depth of deprivation is important in predicting crime propensities in youth. The research community has given much more emphasis to the relative form of deprivation in explaining the outcomes of criminal behaviour, compared to absolute deprivation. The few studies that explore the differences between the two forms of deprivation suggested that relative deprivation is a better predictor of crime, compared to absolute deprivation. Despite questions on the relevance of the effect of the magnitude of deprivation on the outcome of criminality, there is little research investigating the correlation between the depth of deprivation and criminal behaviour, especially among adolescents, as well as other factors that play a mediation role. To do such exploration, there is a need to consider indexes and thresholds essential in measuring the depth of deprivation, as well as the strategies employed by youth in response to the effect of deprivation, the setting of their neighbourhoods, and behavioural dispositions.

The review in this chapter suggests the relevance of using mixed methodologies as a useful method for exploring the relationship between deprivation and criminality, informed directly by the research subjects, in contrast to dominant approaches using official quantitative data. Furthermore, research from the global south is required so that the assumptions and usefulness of criminological theory, primarily developed and scrutinized within the borders of the Western world, can be explored. In this thesis, this is done by examining the case of the *Almajirai*, whose situation attracts comments and analysis from academic and media discourses, which in various ways comment upon the links between the *Almajirai* and crime. Following the review of evidence about the relationships between crime and deprivation in this chapter, the following chapter reviews related literature on the relationships between religiosity and youth crime.

CHAPTER THREE

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGIOSITY AND YOUTH CRIME

3.1 Introduction

The *Almajirai,* as perceived by others in Nigeria are a religious group; they attend school where their studies are almost exclusively focused on religious texts. When considering crime in the context of *Almajirai*, it is therefore important to explore potential connections between religion and crime, and how these have been previously theorized and researched.

This chapter provides a summary of review and analysis of extensive literature on the relationship between religiosity and criminality in youth, as an important issue in the studies of religion, particularly among criminologists. First measures of religiosity or the strength of belief are presented. Following this the literature on the relationship between religiosity and youth crime is reviewed, including the role of religion as a risk or protective factor, which has been the focus of several studies.

3.2 Measuring Religiosity in Youth

Researchers are interested in studying young people's religiosity, particularly how it relates to behavioural outcomes. Central to this interest is the dimension of how religiosity should be measured. Different theorists suggest various measures considering indicators such as religious practice, religious beliefs, religious exclusivity, private practice and religious salience. Indicators of religious practice have included attending religious centres, reading religious books, and participating in religious services (Kamenowski et al., 2021; Laird et al., 2011; Rostosky et al., 2007). For instance, a study by Rostosky et al. (2007) measured religiosity using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, through a 4-item scale that assessed the extent of the importance of religion in the participant's life, the frequency of attendance at religious services, of prayer, and of reading religious materials. Similarly, Kamenowski et al (2021) developed a scale which measured religiosity by assessing traditional religious practices such as attendance at religious services, prayer, and reading religious texts. These studies used quantitative methods, however using qualitative techniques might offer deeper insights on the context of the measured outcomes. Some theorists consider measuring observable elements, such as attendance at worship centres

through participant self-reporting, as indicators of religiosity (Laird et al., 2011). Despite serving as a strong process of understanding religiosity in participants, the self-report indicator for religious practice may tend to be biased. Stark (1996) suggests that measures of religious commitment should consider common elements that can be explored across different religious faiths. For instance, a study on young Muslims in Malaysia considers measures of religious salience, including having an Islamic worldview *(Aqedah*), ethics and morals (*Akhlaq*), ritual practices (*Ibadat*), and social relationships (*Mu'amalat*) (Ramzy et al., 2021). This highlights the use of these peculiar, not universal measures of religiosity, with consideration of cultural context, despite limits of generalizability, but they provide sensitivity.

Some studies consider religious practice, religious beliefs, and response to religious orientation as appropriate measures of religiosity, all related to the peculiarities of practised faith and regions of the participants (Connors et al., 1996; Roberts et al., 2011). In a comparative study between the youth of the U.S. and that of Turkey, Roberts et al. (2011) adopted the suggestion made by Stark (1996) and explored religiosity using a Religious Background and Behavior Questionnaire （RBB), proposed by Connors et al. (1996), which measures religious practices and consciousness of God. The God Consciousness factor contains five items reflecting prayer and thinking about God, while a Formal Practices factor is measured using eight items assessing meditation, worship service attendance, reading scriptures, and experiences of God. In this regard, the RBB measures additional features, overlooked by previous theorists. Another similar study considers God-consciousness as a measure of developmental trajectories of religiosity, among female adolescents (Aalsma et al., 2013). The study proposes four dimensions of the measure, which include relying on religious teachings when having a problem, belief in God, reliance on religious beliefs as a guide for day-to-day living, and the ability to pray when facing a problem. Gender-based specificity may limit the strength of its generalizability in testing religiosity, particularly among male youth such as *Almajirai*. Another study, by Manglos-Weber et al. (2016) also suggested that religiosity should be measured through the evaluation of relationships with God. They define "relationships with God" as a latent and multidimensional concept that emerges from how individuals experience their God-relation over time. They measure this

concept across four dimensions of individual experiences of anger, anxiety, intimacy, and consistency. This suggests a method for exploring the level of religious salience through understanding relationships with God but overlooking religious practices as an essential indicator.

Work by Pearce et al. (2017) combines several domains for measuring religiosity in youth across five interrelated dimensions of religiosity. They include religious beliefs, religious exclusivity, external practice, private practice, and religious salience. Pearce et al. (2017) theorized and tested a latent variable model of adolescent religiosity, analyzing data from two waves of the National Study of Youth and Religion in the U.S., In their view, measuring multiple dimensions of religiosity is significant because it allows researchers to design surveys and select measures that accurately capture the unique but interrelated dimensions of religiosity that exist among adolescents.

This section has highlighted the importance of considering the multidimensional nature of religiosity, and how different dimensions of the influence of religion in adolescence may relate to different outcomes. Those proposed by Pearce et al. (2017) demonstrate a more holistic approach that can be adapted by different faiths to suit their peculiarity in exploring religiosity. Moreover, the model contains most of the elements proposed by other theorists as measures of religiosity, hence, its two essential measures i.e., belief and practice are applied to measuring religiosity, similar to other studies conducted in Muslim context (Jana-Masri and Priester, 2007; Ramzy, et al, 2021). Hence, the adoption of the measures in the present study (see Chapter 5 on Methodology).

3.3 Religiosity and Youth Crime

Scholars have theorized that active involvement in religious rituals and practices is central to the social-psychological processes involved in the internalization of conventional moral values (Aalsma et al., 2013; Higgins and Albrecht, 1977; Kamenowski et al., 2021; Laird et al., 2011; Rostosky et al., 2007; Stark, 1996). Some early theorists reject the notion of the existence of relationships between religiosity and youth deviance (e.g. Hirschi and Stark, 1969). In their analysis, Hirschi and Stark (1969) tested the hypothesis, assuming religious training and practices prevent criminality in youth by inducing development in moral values,

acceptance of conventional orders, and faith in a metaphysical superpower and its sanctions. Tested on high school students in California. The findings of the study indicated little relationship between religiosity and youth involvement in crime. This led to the conclusion that religion is irrelevant to youth crime. Further studies emerged to retest the claim. Burkett and White (1974) for example, used data from high-school students in the Pacific Northwest U.S. The findings replicate Hirschi and Stark and reveal a moderately strong relationship between religion and the use of marijuana and alcohol, which challenges the conclusion that religion is irrelevant to youth crime. They suggest that the findings by Hirschi and Stark (1969) may only be applied to offences against persons and property. Also, the relationship between religiosity and criminality in youth can be found in 'victimless' crimes (such acts that are criminalized by law but committing them does not directly affect other individuals). In the same vein, Burkett and White (1974) offer an alternative interpretation of Hirschi and Stark's findings and test one of its implications. They suggest that the fact that Christian adolescents are no less likely than anyone else to engage in delinquent acts may mean that Christians are failing to live up to the implications of biblical morality, but on the other hand, it could mean that their faith is a fairly effective influence, but that secular influences are equally effective in keeping many non-Christians from becoming delinquent.

Subsequently, more studies tested Hirschi and Stark's conclusions. In their study of grade 10 students in Atlanta, Higgins and Albrecht (1977) noted some findings different from both Hirschi and Stark and Burkett and White. They found a moderate negative relationship between religiosity, as measured by church attendance, and delinquent behaviour. Additionally, their data suggest a link between church attendance and criminality for three of the four sex-by-race groups that they investigated, with a mediating effect of youths' respect for the juvenile court system. Therefore, they conclude that church attendance may be a stronger indicator of adolescents' religious experience in the South than in the West US, which could account for the differences between their findings and those of previous research. It can be noted that the study by Hirschi and Stark (1969), and subsequent replications, focused solely on Christian youth in the U.S. limiting generalizability and yielding mixed results.

Later in the 1990s, Stark (1996) revisited the argument, explaining that the relationship between religion and youth crime is contingent on context and that variations in the religiousness of communities, or other significant social groups determine whether individual religious commitment will reduce the likelihood of criminal behaviour. In a study conducted in 87 high schools in the US, Stark (1996, p.165) found that most respondents scored low on various religious measures. Therefore, he concluded that "religion and delinquency would be unrelated in this subset, while a strong negative relationship would be found in the remainder of the sample (p.165)." A contextual-interactional explanation of this phenomenon was proposed, which considers social and cultural factors influencing the effectiveness of religious beliefs and practices in preventing criminality in adolescents. This means the relationship between religion and criminality in youth depends on a variety of factors, including the religiousness of the community they live in, the strength of social networks, and the cultural norms surrounding criminal behaviour:

> "Even in ecological settings where religious indifference is rife, if religious persons are part of a very isolated and integrated subgroup of believers, then religious effects on conformity should appear among them (Stark,1996, p.164)"

The review argued that the previous studies failed to consider these contextual factors, leading to inconsistent findings. Stark (1996) recommended future studies use more comparable measures of religious commitment applicable across different religious traditions. Also, studies should take a more contextual approach to understand the relationship between religion and criminality, by examining the social and cultural factors that influence the effectiveness of religious beliefs and practices in preventing criminal behaviour.

Generally, the early studies on religion and youth crime varied under three categories; those who reject the effect of religiosity on criminality in youth (Hirschi and Stark, 1969; Kelly et al., 2015; Rostosky et al., 2007), those who suggest mixed results indicating religiosity has a protective effect on youth crime (Burkett and White, 1974; Higgins and Albrecht, 1977), and those who believe in the influence of religiosity in inducing extremism and supporting violence (Franz, 2007; Kamenowski et al., 2021). For instance, Franz (2007) argues that the failure to integrate Muslim communities into mainstream society by European

governments has left some Muslims more vulnerable to extremist ideologies and radicalization. This highlights some of the risk effects of esteemed religious identity, in a minority group, experiencing discrimination. Concerning this, Franz (2007) suggests that segments of Europe's Muslim youth, many of whom are second or third-generation Europeans, feel discriminated against in a society that does not fully accept them, and so they turn to Islam as a badge of identity. Individuals of these cohorts are then radicalized by extremist Muslim clerics or fundamentalists.

3.4 Relationships between Religious Faiths and Various Forms of Youth Crime

Research studies have continued to explore the relationship between religiosity and criminality in youth. Various methodologies have been deployed including longitudinal design (Aalsma et al., 2013; Guo, 2021; Lehmann and Martinez, 2023), meta-analysis and review (Adamczyk et al., 2017; Hardy et al., 2019), and cross-sectional qualitative design (Ne'eman-Haviv et al., 2020). An example of a longitudinal study using Group-Based Trajectory models and Growth Curve models by Guo (2021) found that the relationship between religiosity and crime among serious juvenile offenders varied by measures of religiosity and types of crime. The various measures of religiosity had little relationship with offences at the beginning of the observed period. Trajectories capturing changes in religious attendance and importance were associated with both violent and non-violent offences, while changes in spirituality were only related to violent offences. This suggests changes across youth transition periods. In a systematic review and analysis of 241 studies relating to religiosity within the range of 30 years (1988-2017), Hardy et al. (2019) found that personal aspects of religiosity, such as a strong appeal to religious identity or spirituality tend to be more salient predictors of behavioural outcomes than public aspects of religiosity, such as religious worship and service attendance. Meta-analyses, utilizing both qualitative and quantitative studies, suggest that the most popular theoretical perspectives in research on religion and crime include religious contextual effects, social control, and social learning (Adamczyk et al., 2017). These different approaches used in the study of religion and youth crime reveal varied outcomes, particularly on the relationship between the two concepts. Furthermore, mixed method designs appear to be under-utilized in research exploring the effects of religion on youth crime.

Research has also examined the effects of religiosity on substance abuse. For instance, a study examining the religious and spiritual lives of youths in America aged 13-17 indicated that youth who engage in some pious religious practices, such as reading religious scriptures and attending church, tend to avoid using cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana, as well as involvement in drunkenness (Lehmann and Martinez, 2023). Another study by Kelly et al. (2015) tested six bivariate correlations of two attitudinal and behavioural measures of religiosity and church attendance, across three measures of criminality relating to substance abuse and non-drug crime. The results showed that religious involvement is negatively related to substance abuse and other criminal behaviours, regardless of measurement characteristics. In contrast, a related study by Seto (2021) investigates the association between Spiritual but Not Religious (SBNR) identity and youth criminality in the United States. According to Seto (2021:158) "spirituality without religion, however, suggests an emphasis on personal experiences of meaning-making and transcendence." It implies a strong and esteemed appeal to individual personal life experiences relating to identity. Seto (2021) tested religious salience through religious attendance, peer influence, parental expectations, images of God, morality, and life stresses, and a broad range of criminal acts, such as theft, fighting, marijuana use, drinking alcohol, and smoking cigarettes. The results suggest that the "spiritual but not religious" identity is associated with heightened criminality. However, the strength of this association varies across diverse crime types. The strongest associations are observed between marijuana use and smoking cigarettes. Also, fighting and drinking alcohol have similar levels of association with identity. This suggests that the formation of the spiritual identity condones such acts described as crime. In the case of *Almajiranci*, alcohol use and smoking are considered immoral and are strongly detested. Highlighting the protective effect of morality formed by religious identity.

In the case of sexuality-related behaviour, studies such as Fahey et al., (2023), Hanna-Walker (2023), Alfita et al., (2021) Aalsma et al., (2013), and Rigo, (2018) Vasilenko et al (2013) suggest that religiosity in adolescents serves as a protective factor for influencing sexual conservatism, and the adoption of guided sexual behaviour. It also induces sexual guilt and reduces sexual fantasy and unrestricted search for sexual pleasure. According to the studies, religiosity provides such a protective effect through the internalization of

religious values. A longitudinal study on African American female adolescents found that religiosity and sexual conservatism decreased over time (Aalsma et al., 2013). Suggesting that religiosity and sexual conservatism may be more malleable during early adolescence and may stabilize somewhat during later adolescence.

To explain the relationship between religious affiliation and gang membership, a study by Lauger and Rivera (2022) shows that gang members report being religious. However, when tested on four individuals' religious measures, they were found to be significantly less religious than non-gang peers, with a marginally significant difference on the overall religiosity scale. This may be because personal religiosity is inversely associated with violence, while gang membership is positively associated with violence. Other studies are interested in explaining the relationship between religiosity and property crime, such as theft among youth (Salas-Wright et al., 2014; Seto, 2021). In such studies, religious salience was indicated by the strength of religious attendance, peers, parental expectations, images of God, morality, and strain, tested across a broad range of criminal acts, such as theft, fighting, and substance abuse. The results indicate varied strengths of association across distinct types of criminal behaviours. The weakest association was observed for theft.

Some studies highlighted the risk effect of extremism associated with religiosity and identity internalization, but also on the effects of inducing prosocial behaviour. As observed by Seto (2021), social identities, including religious identity, play a role in emotional, cognitive, and behavioural responses related to morality and prejudice. The theorists suggest that understanding religious identity's role in moral processes is an understudied area of research. Some related studies, such as Van Tongeren et al. (2021) explored the intersection of these two important domains, by reviewing studies that examine a potential religious residue effect for the endorsement of moral foundations. The analysis suggests that the relationship between religion and prosocial behaviour is complex and may depend on many factors, including the specific religious beliefs and practices of the individual and the context in which the behaviour occurs. Some studies link the effect of religious identity with religious exclusivity and extremism. For example, Kamenowski et al. (2021) found that religious affiliation explains extremist attitudes in diverse ways. However, religious affiliation and religiosity are less important than specific religious attitudes such as religious tolerance and

religious exclusivity. The study showed that belonging to a Christian religious affiliation is associated with a slightly higher acceptance of right-wing extremists as well as Islamist extremist attitudes. On the other hand, belonging to Islam was found to be accompanied by a certain level of approval of Islamist extremism in some participants. However, the relationship between religion and extremism is not the same for all forms of extremism and across faiths. Research in Finland found that where some Muslims live as minorities, they experience discrimination, hatred and sometimes victimisation in connection to perceived global extremism and violence by some Muslims, even though, the discrimination they experience does not in any way affect their daily routines and lifestyles (Litvak et al., 2023). Independent of religion, there was a strong and direct positive association between hate victimisation and a risky lifestyle, such as substance use and interaction with delinquent peers. This study further found that Muslim youths were found to be at a higher risk of experiencing hate crimes and assaults than any other religious group.

In a comparative study on the relationship between religious orientation, self-control, and deviance among adolescents from different cultures, Klanjšek et al. (2012) explore the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity on problem behaviours and youth crime, and how this varies across Bosnia & Herzegovina, Serbia, Slovenia, and the United States. The study defines intrinsic religiosity as a religious orientation in which individuals find their main motive for decision-making, while extrinsic religiosity is characterised by using religion for one's ends, such as a source of solace and security, a means to socialise or to affirm one's social status. The study's findings indicate that intrinsic religiosity was negatively related to deviance, while extrinsic religion was not significantly related to deviance. This suggests that the motivation behind religious behaviour may be an important factor in understanding adolescent deviant behaviour. The study further shows that mediation occurs when the relationship between religious behaviour and deviance is explained by a mediating variable (in this case, low self-control). The study found that low self-control partially mediated the relationship. This suggests that low self-control may be an important mechanism through which religiosity influences adolescent deviant behaviour. It can be noted that most of these studies were conducted in the Global North context, with participants of the Christian faith, reinforcing the need for such studies in the Global South among participants of other faiths.

3.5 Risk or Protection? The Effects of Religiosity on Youth Criminality

The growing concern of religious fundamentalism and insurgencies by Muslim organisations across the world regions have garnered significant public attention, evoking the perception of propensities for violence among Muslim youths raised in an Islamic-identified institution, such as the *Tsangaya* schools of the *Almajirai*. The theorists of religious studies, however, suggested evidence of how religiosity plays a protective role in crime prevention and internalisation of morality through religious salience, identity, and approved practices and rituals (Hardy et al., 2019; Laird et al., 2011; Ne'eman-Haviv et al., 2020). For instance, the findings of a study conducted in Israel by Ne'eman-Haviv et al. (2020) suggested that religion is not a risk factor for deviance among religious youth. On the contrary, devoutly religious youths maintained that religion protected them and served as a barrier against risky behaviours. The study also found that religion plays a significant role in personal identity. Similarly, Hardy et al. (2019) found that religiosity protects youth from negative outcomes, such as risky behaviours, and promotes positive development. This research suggests that religiosity has a protective effect on adolescents' involvement in deviant attitudes and risky behaviours, which are indicators of low self-control that can lead to criminal behaviour.

Some researchers, such as Abdollahzadeh Rafi et al. (2020) focused on the effect of religiosity on the emotional and behavioural outcomes relating to health among adolescents. The effects of religiosity were found to have a positive correlation with the adolescents' emotional and behavioural health, as well as other individual factors such as problem-solving and self-regulation. The effect on self-regulation can be connected to the strength of self-control that can lead to avoidance of anti-social and criminal behaviours. In support of this, a study by Laird et al. (2011) shows that religiosity moderates the link between low self-control and antisocial behaviour such that low levels of self-control were more strongly associated with more antisocial and rule-breaking behaviour among adolescents reporting low religious importance compared to adolescents reporting high religious importance. This suggests that religiosity may act as a protective factor against the negative effects of low self-control on antisocial behaviour. Further empirical evidence suggests that a reduced extent of religiosity in an adolescent offender may be associated with raised risks of recidivism (Guo, 2021). This is because the offenders' guilty feelings may persist in making them less likely

to forgive themselves for their wrongdoing, which inhibits a transformation from an 'offender' identity to a 'prosocial' individual motivated towards good behaviour. Thus, the loss of spirituality may eventually become a potential risk for reoffending behaviour. Therefore, maintaining high religiosity over time may result in reduced reoffending, while a small range of gains and losses in religiosity may increase the risk of reoffending.

Islam is often linked to violence motivation through extremism. Kamenowski et al. (2021) found that Islamic religiosity does not seem to be a strong preventive factor against Islamist extremism. Previous studies such as Guerette (2006) found that for young Muslims there is a positive association between religiosity and positive attitudes towards violence, and for young Christians, religiosity has a buffering effect which reduces the positive approval of violence. The study which was aimed at exploring the relationship between religiosity and crime among young Christians and Muslims in Germany, found that Muslim youth differ from Christian youth, showing a higher positive evaluation of violence. Guerette (2006) suggests that the difference can be related to variations in gender role orientations, with Muslim youth demonstrating a more traditional attitude towards gender roles, where the role of masculinity is linked with violent behaviour. This indicates there may be a difference between attitudes and behaviour among Muslim youth, which is not found for the other groups. Moreover, the study findings indicate a low negative effect of religion on delinquent behaviour in general. However, another study found that there is consistency across genders regarding the protective relationship between religiosity and criminal acts of theft and drug selling within the transition periods of adolescence and young adulthood (Salas-Wright et al., 2014).

As suggested by Van der Meer Sanchez et al. (2008) religiosity can be an important protective factor in preventing the initiation of drug use among adolescents. Unlike other studies in this section, the study utilized a qualitative methodology. In a further example, a study by Rostosky et al. (2007) showed that the unique social context of identity development among minorities, such as experiences of discrimination and rejection, may make it more difficult for religiosity to provide a protective effect against substance use in them. The finding therefore cautions against over-generalization made by previous findings about the

protective effects of religiosity, as the relationship between religiosity and substance use may be more complex and nuanced than previously thought.

3.6 Conclusion

Theorists of religiosity have suggested various dimensions of how religiosity can be measured in youth. They highlight the need for considering external practice, private practice, religious salience, and religious exclusivity, as essential measures of religiosity. They also suggest that measures of religiosity should reflect the context under which the studies were carried out. Therefore, consideration of a contextual-interactional explanation has been highlighted as a crucial factor, whilst testing measures across faiths and places, so that a comparative analysis can be made.

Findings from existing literature regarding religiosity and crime in youth have mixed outcomes. Some studies suggest a protective effect of religiosity on criminality among youth, while others have suggested both protective and risk effects of religion and religiosity in crime involvement and victimization. However, in most instances, studies have found that religiosity has no effect on criminality among youth. The chapter indicates that more studies have tested the religiosity of Christian youth than among Muslims, indicating an under-representation of testing religiosity in them, in relation to various crimes, beyond a focus on extremist violence. The studies mostly utilize longitudinal and meta-analysis approaches, and those that used cross-sectional design indicated an overreliance on quantitative methods. This suggests a need for greater utilization of mixed method approaches, as in this thesis, where both quantitative and qualitative methods are utilized to explore the extent of religiosity and its risk or protective effect on criminality in the *Almajirai*.

Measures of religiosity have varied across studies, differing by faith tradition and geographic context. However, most research employs similar indicators of religious practice and belief when examining specific populations. While some theorists have proposed measures applicable only within specific religious' frameworks, such as Islam or Christianity, others have developed broader measures that capture common elements of religiosity across different contexts, particularly within the domains of religious practice and religious salience.

Given that the *Almajirai* are defined by their religious affiliation, and this study examines their involvement in crime, it is essential to consider previous research for two key reasons. First, to better understand whether and how religiosity is associated with criminal behaviour among the *Almajirai*. Second, to contribute to the broader study of the relationship between religiosity and crime in the Global South, a region where such research remains relatively scarce. Accordingly, this study builds on existing scholarship, evaluating the justifications, generalizability, and reliability of measures of religiosity—particularly religious practice and belief—as proposed by various theorists, to ensure robust findings concerning the *Almajirai*. The objective is to explore the extent to which religiosity either heightens the risk of criminal involvement or serves as a protective factor, particularly within a context where the *Almajirai* are subject to criminalisation, including through the imposition of criminogenic labels. Chapter 9 provides an empirical analysis of these dynamics.

Another defining characteristic of the *Almajirai* is their socio-economic marginalization, as they are known to live in impoverished conditions and rely on begging for sustenance. The following chapter, therefore, examines criminological theories, focusing on how their frameworks explain the relationship between deprivation and youth crime—key concepts central to this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEORIES OF CRIME

4.1 Introduction

Previous Chapters have provided explanations of youth crime in connection to deprivation, using various criminological theories as guiding frameworks. Highlighting the writings that linked the *Almajirai* with criminality have predominantly employed criminological theories such as structural strain, general strain, routine activity, and social learning, as the framework from which their arguments stem (see for example Abbo et al, 2017, Hansen et al, 2016). Thus, the arguments and conclusions presented by previous studies on the *Almajirai* can be critically evaluated using the same theoretical lenses employed to attribute criminal behaviours to the group. Therefore, the theoretical underpinnings, used by the previous writers, were utilised in guiding data generation and analysis of this thesis. While some of these theories are inherently classical, Euro-centric, and ageist, they continue to offer valuable theoretical underpinnings for researching socio-economic and structural factors in the Global North and across societies in the Global South. Their focus on disadvantaged youth and crime, for example, is still helpful.

In this chapter, I present the tenets of criminological theories relevant to this thesis, which include strain, social disorganisation, routine activity, social learning, social control/self-control, and labelling theories, focusing on their intersections and efficacy in explaining criminality. The chapter focuses on discussions of the basic assumptions of some prominent criminological theories and how they differ or share similarities in providing explanations for understanding motivations and manifestations of criminality in young people. From a historical lens, it is important to note that early approaches to explaining crime and deviance can be found in the works of Adolphe Quetelet (1796–1874) and Émile Durkheim (1858–1917). Quetelet initiated the use of statistical analysis in conducting criminological research, while Durkheim explained crime and deviance using the notion of anomie, which refers to an absence of domination of norm or order. These interpretations remain influential and provide impetus for the development of contemporary sociological explanations and criminological theories (Burke, 2014).

Therefore, it is important to note that the criminological theories presented in this chapter are shaped by the specific historical and geographical contexts of the Global North, which is highly developed and secular. In contrast, Northern Nigeria maintains a strong traditional and religious identity, with Shari'a law influencing legal and social systems, which creates ethnic and religious tensions and conflicts. Economic disparities further distinguish the two regions, with the Global North's industrialised, service-driven economy contrasting Northern Nigeria's largely agrarian and informal economy. Additionally, infrastructure development in Northern Nigeria remains limited compared to the high-standard systems in the Global North. These fundamental differences shape social values and norms, posing limitations to directly applying Global North criminological theories in the Northern Nigerian context.

4.2 Strain Theories

The Strain theorists focus on explaining the effect of frustration from stresses, referred to as 'strain', as the motivation for crime (Tibbetts and Piquero, 2022). There are two major perspectives of strain theories: structural anomie and individual (general) strain. Both models explain how strain motivates criminal acts, especially when people become frustrated and perceive justification in responding to their situation (Agnew, 1992; Merton, 1938). Structural anomie explains how an individual's aspirations and means to achieve them are influenced by social structure, in which stratified individuals have unequal access to material opportunities (Merton, 1938). The individual strain theory extends beyond economic gains by considering situations of adverse experiences and disjunction between aspirations and expected outcomes at an individual level (Agnew, 1992). Stress as the source of strain is not context-specific; it is a universal phenomenon that occurs in all cultures among social groups. However, methods of dealing with it can vary across cultural traditions since there is an interplay between causes and mediating factors that predict the intensity of the strain and its potential effect on criminal behaviour. Therefore, despite being developed in the North, testing the strain theories in the context of the South can enhance insights, and enrich the generalizability of the theories.

4.2.1 Structural Anomie (Strain) Theory

The origin of Merton's structural strain theory can be traced back to the concept of anomie used in the work of Émile Durkheim, which referred to the societal condition of a lack of order, because of drastic social change, leading to a violation of social norms, and hence to normlessness or anomie; a lack of dominant norms. Merton used the concept of anomie in explaining the consequences of the 1930s Great Depression in the USA leading to unemployment and rising rates of crime (Tibbetts and Piquero, 2022). This version of anomie derived from the disjunction between achieving socially ascribed aspirations of accumulating material wealth (the American dream) and a lack of conventional opportunity to do so. In this case, aspirations were highly shaped by cultural goals, while the means to achieve them were influenced by access to opportunities, such as paid work and education. Mertonian strain theory argues that opportunities for legitimate avenues to success were (and are) unequally distributed among members of society, thereby leading to perceived relative deprivation and frustrations (strains) among those who are unable to access success through legitimate means (Burke, 2014; Tibbetts and Piquero, 2022).

The theory highlights differential access to the means of achieving culturally valued goals as the main cause of crime in society. Merton (1938) described social order as a mechanism for controlling individual aspirations, which can result in strain, a condition that can influence the violation of social codes, and in which actors may consider crime to be an appropriate response to the circumstance in which they find themselves. According to Merton, the purposes and interests inherent in the culturally defined goals provide a configuration of aspirational preference, determined by social structure. The analysis explained social structure as represented by social norms, expressed by definitions, regulations, and the controlled method of achieving aspirations. The situation heightened competition to actualize socially accepted goals, whereby individuals belonging to a lower social class who have less opportunity to realize those goals legitimately face the pressure that forces them to escape from the accepted means and engage in available illegitimate means to achieve them. Five modes of adaptation were identified by Merton (1938) as a response to the situation created by social inequalities. In the scheme of adaptation, each person has a specific concept of the social goals of society and the means available to secure them. The modes are conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion.

Conformity occurs when individuals accept conventional social goals and acquire the means to attain them**.** Innovation happens when an individual accepts the social goals, but rejects the legitimate means of acquiring the goals, because of incapability, or unavailability of attaining the goals through legitimate means. Innovation is the adaptation mode, strongly associated with criminal behaviour. However, ritualism as a mode of adaptation does not appeal to wealth accumulation or any social goals, but it is the kind of adaptation explained as strongly attached to pleasure seeking through engaging in traditional ceremonies and activities, irrespective of their relevance relating to purpose or social goals. Retreatism occurs in the set of people, which Merton described as those who are in the world, but not of the world (Merton, 1968). They reject both the social goals and the means of achieving them in society. Examples of people in this category include psychotics, outcasts, vagrants, vagabonds, chronic drunks, and drug addicts. Rebellion represents the activities of revolutionaries, who want to substitute the existing social order with an alternative set of goals and means. This movement can be a radical movement, a reaction against a corrupt government, or an effort to overthrow an existing system of government and replace it with a new one, such as Muslim jihadist movements.

There have been several attempts to integrate Merton's structural (strain) anomie with other theories, leading to the formulation of new theories, such as subculture, differential opportunity, institutional anomie, and general strain. Cohen (1955), who was a student of both Merton and Edwin Sutherland, attempted to merge Strain Anomie and Differential Association theories in 'Delinquent Boys: The Culture of the Gang.' He eventually produced a new theory of the emergence and development of delinquent subcultures. He started by reviewing a large body of literature on delinquency and found that the subculture of delinquency is a phenomenon more of gangs of urban boys, from lower-class families. The subculture promotes the feelings of appeal to being 'deviant' and engaging in behaviours against the values of the middle class. According to Cohen (1955), the values of criminality among youth were transmitted to other members who joined the gang, through affiliation with subcultural values. Two processes 'status-deprivation' and 'legitimation of aggression' were major sources of affiliation with delinquent subcultures, challenging the middle-class status quo.

Cloward and Ohlin (2001) sought to integrate Sutherland's differential association theory with Merton's strain theory, extending the latter's perspective on economic deprivation. They elaborated on Merton's concept of adaptation through innovation, wherein individuals from deprived backgrounds, unable to achieve societal goals through legitimate means, resort to illegitimate alternatives. According to Cloward and Ohlin, these illegitimate means are not merely the inventions of criminals but are instead embedded within the structural norms of society, arising as a consequence of unequal access to legitimate opportunities. In contexts where legal means are restricted, individuals may perceive illegitimate pathways as the only viable alternative for social and economic advancement. However, the theorists further emphasized that even within the realm of illegitimate opportunities, access is not universally available. Engaging in criminal activities necessitates specific skills, expertise, and an enabling social environment, underscoring the role of structural constraints in shaping pathways to crime.

In a similar vein, Merton's strain theory of crime was further adopted by left realists in explaining how capitalist economies produce aspirations for material acquisition, such as accumulation of wealth, through high incomes, whereby failure to achieve the aspiration creates economic stress, which can result in criminality, especially property crime (Webber, 2007; Webber, 2021). Jock Young was a central figure in the development of left realism (Lea, 2015). In its essence, left realism is a crime control policy-oriented approach (Lea, 2010), with the intellectual and political objective of providing a coherent theoretical discourse (Lea, 2015). The usage of the 'realism' construct connects to political expressions of policy formation in relation to crime causation and control (Walklate, 2007). In this regard, Young (1999) observes that the rise in capitalism as an economic system gradually erodes the fabrics of social justice, with rising demands and uncertainty in social life, and rising rates of crime.

It suffices to say Merton's anomie theory suffers criticism for narrowing its explanation of crime particularly to instrumental criminality and neglecting other behaviours, such as substance use and sex-related offences. The theory was also criticized for not considering a 'plurality of values' by restricting societal cultural goals and values to material wealth. Thus, it precipitated lower-class people as potential offenders who adopt illegitimate

ways to escape economic disadvantage, whereas white-collar crimes committed by corporate organizations are left unexplained (Burke, 2001).

Moreover, the economic deprivation framework of the theory categorically focuses more on relative deprivation resulting from social inequality and heightened competition over limited resources to achieve culturally constructed aspirations. The theoretical analysis suggests relative deprivation as a better predictor of crime, with an emphasis on social inequalities in means to secure opportunities, defined, and regulated by social norms, in which the offending of a particular group of individuals may be embedded. Moreover, the analysis identified clearly that competition for the accumulation of wealth as defined as the goal for success, amidst limited opportunity, creates a situation which for some leads to the rejection of legitimate means and the creation of illegitimate means to secure those goals, a situation which he believes "produces this strain toward dissolution" (Merton, 1938, p.682). However, in another part of the analysis, he highlights the relevance of absolute deprivation measured by poverty manifesting as opportunity deprivation as an important but weak predictor of crime, which differs across cultural and national contexts. According to his views, absolute deprivation does not necessarily result in crime, as it is "not sufficient to induce a conspicuously high rate of criminal behaviour" (Merton, 1938, p.681), unless poverty and disadvantage are associated with values that prioritize the accumulation of wealth, as a cultural goal. In support of this argument, he cites examples from the nations of southeastern Europe, which recorded lower rates of crime compared to rich countries like the USA, supporting the idea that wealth accumulation being culturally valued, amidst limited resources, and legitimate ways of accessing such wealth, which embeds heightened competition, and the possible inducement of instrumental crime.

While this view can be true of the comparison between some European countries, it is evident that the theory neglects and fails to anchor regions of the Global South. Therefore, the assumption that absolute deprivation is a weak predictor of crime is subject to tests, particularly in other cultural contexts other than the North regions. Even though, some recent scholarly efforts sought to compare the effect of absolute and relative deprivation in predicting crime (see for example - Burraston et al., 2019; Greitemeyer and Sagioglou, 2019). The outcomes still reflect the situation in the North, and the indicators used in the

evaluation can arguably be described as sole measures of relative deprivation, including those used to measure absolute deprivation.

4.2.2 General Strain Theory

Robert Agnew's general strain theory (GST) was an extension of Merton's anomie strain theory, with the specific departure of analysis from the structural to the individual level, and a broader consideration of strain sources. Agnew (1992) believed that the theory required modification to regain its role in explaining crime and delinquency, after the foundations laid by the work of Merton (1938), Cohen (1955), and Cloward and Ohlin (2001). The sources of strain according to Agnew (1992) come from the failure to achieve positively valued goals, a disjunction between expectations and achievements, the removal of positively valued stimuli, and the presentation of negative stimuli. The general strain perspective provides a broader scope beyond Merton's economic deprivation, by considering various social forces that produce strain. In support of this notion, for example, empirical evidence suggests that repeated experience of negative treatment from teachers promotes criminal behaviour in adolescents, influenced by weak social bonds and beliefs, and frequent association with criminal peers (Bao et al., 2012). Given the conceptualizations and development of GST, it is clear the theory supports the notion which views youth as vulnerable group for criminality.

In refining the relationship between strain and crime, Agnew (2001) explained the specific strains that are likely to lead to criminality. Those that are seen as unjust are high in magnitude, associated with low social control, and produce pressure to engage in criminality as a solution, or coping mechanism. By highlighting the 'high in magnitude', the theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the depth of strain. Additionally, Agnew (2001) suggests consideration of indices associated with adverse experiences such as recency, duration, and clustering in time, as essential in exploring the magnitude of strain. Recency refers to the occurrence of the event not long ago that is felt in the memory, duration means the length of time taken to experience the adversity, and clustering in time implies an intersection of various sources of adversity occurring at the same time. GST can be differentiated from other criminological theories such as social learning and social control by its specific focus on the motivation for involvement in crime and negative relationships with others. In his previous discussion, Agnew (1985) acknowledged that, if family or school

environments turn out to be sources of adverse experience, and there are no legitimate means to escape the situation, adolescents may choose an illegal way to escape through the adoption of anger-based criminality. Therefore, Agnew (2001) believes that strain resulting from injustice provokes negative emotions, and the outcome is likely to lead to criminality; "angry individuals are less likely to feel guilt for their criminal behaviour because they feel that the injustice they suffer justifies the crime" (Agnew, 2001, p.327).

Seemingly, Agnew was not adamant about admitting the mediating influence of other factors in mitigating the effect of the strain experienced. The assumptions of GST are supported by many empirical studies (Cénat et al., 2018; Reza et al., 2020; Sigfusdottir et al., 2012). It is also pertinent to note that Agnew (2001) acknowledged that certain coping mechanisms regulate and prevent the magnitude of the effects of strains from becoming criminal. This include perceiving the adverse experience as less valued, considering positive outcomes rather than negative outcomes, and accepting the consequence of the adverse experiences through convincing the self that they deserve, especially if the perceived reason is to be justified. Morality and religiosity are among many factors that can mitigate the effect of strain. Some recent studies have explored the role of religiosity and spirituality in regulating the effects of strain, by reducing anger and depressing mood, even among those who experience traumatic abuse (Hardy et al., 2019; Martinez, 2017; Vollhardt, 2009). They found that religiosity and altruism can regulate strain by attenuating its effect in producing violent or reactive behaviour. However, the outcomes of criminality resulting from the conflation of strain with religiosity vary across race and ethnicity (Barbieri and Craig, 2018), demonstrating that the cultural context of religiosity is important in this regard. A cross-cultural study among youth from major cities in Russia, Greece, and Ukraine shows that religiosity seems irrelevant in influencing the effect of strain on criminality (Botchkovar et al., 2009). Other evidence suggests a moderating effect of religiosity on the effect of adverse experiences on youth crime (Johnson and Morris, 2008). Reinforcing the need for more empirical evidence from across varied cultural contexts.

A prominent criticism of strain theories is their assumption of the likelihood of crime involvement among those who experience a disjunction, particularly between educational achievement and occupational goals. In this regard, individuals in the lower class were

considered vulnerable to crime involvement, because they faced difficulty with educational achievement and securing lucrative jobs, ignoring the white-collar crimes committed by those who have achieved higher levels of either educational or occupational status. The theory is also unable to comprehensively explain crime causation and involvement, with its narrow focus on crimes caused by frustration resulting from unpleasant encounters and the search for coping outlets through unconventional ways. There are, however, various moderating and mediating factors, such as religiosity, cultural values, peer influence, avarice, and favourable settings for a crime to occur. So, for instance, the motivation for looting public funds by state officials may not come from negative relationships with others, but from greed and the presence of a favourable setting for the act.

Moreover, strain theorists focus more on the effect of relative deprivation on criminal behaviour, and give little attention to absolute deprivation. While other criminologists like Quinney (1980, p.64) consider absolute deprivation as a good predictor of crime, where he explained committing a crime as a survival strategy, in a form of response to absolute deprivation, among individuals who struggle to make a livelihood, because "survival is not assured by other, collective means". Thus, desperation for survival caused by uncertainty creates forces that induce survival strategies, such as vagrancy, prostitution, begging, shoplifting and so on - that are often criminalised (Heather, 2013; Vegh Weis, 2017). Thus, discourse among critical criminologists suggests criminalisation labels, and the power to label an act a 'crime', lies in power and ideology supporting the labelling processes (Scraton & Chadwick, 1997). Merton's economic deprivation theory suggests powerless lower-class population as those at risk of criminal involvement, which Foucalt (1977) viewed as an approval to legitimising power elite's criminalisation of lower-class categories. Even though Merton's theory focuses more on the criminalisation of acts outside conventional means, subsequent frameworks derived from the theory were developed with specific interest in the youth. For this, scholars interested in youth studies have noted how adolescents are depicted as a threat and vulnerable to criminality, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. The idea is mostly driven by official statistics as stated by Boyden:

> Thus, while disquiet about the suffering of innocent child victims grows in the twentieth century, there exists another, very different, perception, of the unsocialized or anti-social child, the deviant, or troublemaker. In this image, children and young people are

> characterized as being 'deficient' through immaturity... Crime statistics are frequently used to confirm adult fears about young people out of control, roaming the streets and indulging in acts of vandalism and violence (Boyden, 1997, p.190).

As noted in Chapter 1, the situation in the South reflects the exportation of contradictions inherent in the capitalist societies of the North and ideologies regarding criminalisation and criminal justice through colonialism. Thus, highlighting the specific interest of the officials and some researchers in youth crime, such as the *Almajirai*. An important point to make here is that the context and standard of the South can vary from that of the North. For instance, empirical evidence in the south suggests adolescents' pathway to criminality is usually characterised by an initial effort to gain legitimate income through conventional methods, when that becomes impossible, they engage in informal work as a survival strategy. As further failure occurs, they resort to instrumental crime (Jiang et al., 2020; Yu et al., 2019). However, others find that economic deprivation may not necessarily result in crime or delinquent outcomes, but can produce a sort of 'lumpenhood*,'* where the young, deprived people rely on others by begging for their daily needs (Amzat, 2015; Bajari and Kuswarno, 2020; Bukoye, 2015), which are criminalised in some contexts.

4.3 Social Disorganization Theory

Social disorganization (SD) concerning crime causation was connected to early scholars like Durkheim, who explained social factors as forces that determine actions, including crime (Burke, 2014). Such social factors include social cohesion, constructed as collective efficacy in contemporary SD theory. Ecological theorists of the Chicago school, particularly Robert Park and Ernest Burgess were the first to sow the seed for the development of SD in the 1920s. They showed the effect of some factors, such as social cohesion across city zones, on the rates and manifestation of social problems, such as poverty and crime (Burke, 2014). Later in the 1930s, Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay embarked on an empirical study, using official data on the rates of crimes and convictions across concentric zones in Chicago. In their analysis, Shaw and McKay found that the centres of the cities have the highest crime rates, which decreased across the outer concentric zones (Shaw and McKay, 1943). The data revealed consistent patterns over decades, despite transformations experienced over time (Kubrin and Wo, 2015). Crime-embedded zones were characterized by prominent levels of cultural heterogeneity and poverty, unemployment, and other social problems. In essence,

Kubrin and Wo (2015, p.144) defined social disorganization as "the inability of a community to realize the common values of its members and maintain effective social control." Therefore, theorists of social disorganization focus on levels of social ties and social control, as factors that mitigate disorganization and its resulting outcomes, such as crime. This was especially so in the neighbourhoods characterized by a high prevalence of poverty, unemployment, family disruption, dilapidated buildings, and poor educational and health services (Kubrin and Wo, 2015). This theory also mobilizes the approval of neighbourhoods with features that characterised areas inhabited by lower class individuals as crimogenic. Thus, by residing in such neighbourhoods, the propensities of adoption of criminality exist in an individual, unless the situation is controlled by agents of socialization and law enforcement.

In "Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas" Shaw and McKay (1943) provide an analysis of 20 years of ecological research results on the relationship between social structure, social organization, and delinquency. The work explained the relationship between conditions in some local neighbourhoods of Chicago, high rates of criminal and delinquent behaviours, and patterns of group delinquency. They found a differential pattern of crime distribution across concentric zones, radiating from within the inner parts of the city. The inner zone was characterized by the presence of businesses and industries, which attracted migrants from various parts of the world, resulting in a heterogeneous neighbourhood, with conflicting values, and poverty. In these communities, the theorists identified a situation which supports the emergence and transmission of criminality, particularly among youth. This occurs because of a lack of a dominant culture, and poor social ties, both of which can be a powerful force of social control. The transmission of a delinquent subculture in such communities was hypothesized to occur, as the young person is exposed and socialized into delinquent subcultures through interaction with delinquent peers, with whom they intimate frequently in interaction (Shaw and McKay, 1942). This notion of interaction appears as an overlapping concept among other criminological theories, such as social learning, and situational action (an extension of routine activity) theories, to explain how youth learn criminal behaviors. In addition to other factors such as cultural heterogeneity and poor housing, poverty was considered as one of the key features of the criminogenic

neighbourhood, where intergenerational transmission of criminality is often argued to be harboured.

In their analysis, Shaw and McKay (1942) explain that affiliation with gangs provides a sense of prestige, and instrumental gain to the youth, which further sustains their group membership. This highlights the element of rational choice in their analysis, showing the relevance of reward-seeking unconnected with other forces external to the subcultural values of the gangs. Further explanations relate to connections between social inequality and crime. Theorists observe that variation in economic status is closely related to the frequency of criminality across neighbourhoods. The rate and pattern of crime are found to have a strong relationship with population dynamics, poor housing, low income and poverty, cultural and racial heterogeneity, health problems, and adult criminality (Shaw and McKay, 1942). This highlights the theory's emphasis on the causation of youth crime concerning disorganised structures of the neighbourhoods, more than of individual difference, a notion rejected by other criminological theories, such as social learning and routine activity, despite sharing similar constructs of unsupervised peer interaction in explaining learned criminality (Ward and Forney, 2020).

Kubrin and Wo (2015) observe that one of the greatest challenges of social disorganization theory is the lack of a plausible explanation of how social factors create circumstances of criminality, claiming there is inadequate attention paid to understanding the mediation effect of community characteristics. According to them, this challenge prevents researchers from exploring the mediating effect of the two constructs - social ties and informal social control in crime causation. Moreover, the theory fails to account for the source from which criminal subculture is produced and transmitted (Burke, 2001). Other theories, such as those supporting routine activity reject the notion of entire neighbourhoods being criminogenic. They assume that a setting must be created which is favourable for the crime to occur (Agustina and Felson, 2015).

In contrast to the SD assumption of criminogenic neighbourhood, and especially youth, religious theorists believe that "Even in ecological settings where religious indifference is rife, if religious persons are part of a very isolated and integrated subgroup of believers, then religious effects on conformity should appear among them" (Stark, 1996,

p.164), implying that, the force of religiosity can attenuate the tendencies for adoption of criminality. In contrast to this view, empirical evidence of a study with minority black youth in Chicago between 1979 and 1980 by Johnson et al. (2000) suggests that religious resilience measured by attendance at religious services has no effect in reducing youth criminality. This finding carries implicit racial undertones in its implications, further suggesting that minority populations, who frequently face systemic discrimination and possess fewer opportunities compared to the majority, are disproportionately perceived as potential offenders. Rather than reinforcing such biases, efforts should focus on addressing the underlying structural inequalities that contribute to social disparities, ensuring a more just and equitable society.

4.4 Routine Activity and Rational Choice

Routine activity and rational choice share a similar theoretical background, traceable in the works of classical thinkers of criminology, notably Cesare Beccaria and other utilitarian philosophers who suggest that people have a choice of action, including in criminal acts, but the choice is strongly influenced by the aim of maximising pleasure or reward and minimising pain or punishment. Unlike many criminological theories that focus on the essential causes that produce motivation for criminality, rational choice and routine activity focus on reward seeking, environmental setting and situational factors, which create opportunities for motivated offenders to commit crimes (Bryant, 2011).

Routine activity, according to Lawrence and Marcus (1979, p.593) refers to "any recurrent and prevalent activities that provide for basic population and individual needs, whatever their biological or cultural origins". This can be related to the hourly, daily, weekly, or monthly schedule of time and space for survival as an example. The routine activity approach presented by Lawrence and Marcus (1979) focuses on the circumstances in which motivated offenders carry out criminal activities. They suggested the convergence of three factors, motivated offenders, suitable targets, and an absence of capable guardians is likely to lead to crime. Capable guardians include those people who protect potential victims, intimate handlers who supervise the potential offenders, and managers who prevent the occurrence of the crime through monitoring (Bryant, 2011). The theory focuses on individuals at risk of becoming a criminal target based on their daily routine activities and

lifestyles, and the suitability of targets which refers to their value, accessibility, visibility, and portability (Lawrence and Marcus, 1979).

Various theories connect situations with this disposition. For instance, the Situational Action model, which is interested in the space-time budget, with empirical studies indicating that supervision moderates time for delinquent activities, while unstructured socializing with delinquent peers creates a tendency for criminality (Agustina and Felson, 2015; Pauwels et al., 2013; Sandahl, 2016; Ward and Forney, 2020). A further study suggests that an environment becoming more socially disorganized coupled with neglect by caregivers increases the risks of criminality (Huang et al., 2016). Unstructured interaction on the streets provides space for conveying activities, where they present themselves, observe others, and offer a chance to share experiences. Also, many places visited by youth may be criminogenic settings, which can influence their involvement in learning and becoming involved in criminal acts (Agustina and Felson, 2015; Willis, 1998).

The theory's emphasis focuses more on a favourable 'setting' for crime to occur, which can be prevalent on the streets, with youth being the most vulnerable group for learning and committing street crimes. This notion of ideological construction of the street as a corrupting space for youth crime was birthed from the policy and welfare elite's fear and assumption that "childhood innocence if not properly directed and trained at home and in school could give way to riotous and immoral behaviour" (Boyden, 1997, p.190). The view influences more attention, beyond physical settings of the street, as more studies are exploring the shift in adolescents' routine activities into virtual spaces, focusing on many youths who spend more time in homes, busy with electronic devices, compared to previous generations (Elonheimo, 2014; Miller et al., 2021). Thus, the role of caregivers and guardians, as well as law enforcers in formal or informal control suggest a nexus where routine activity and social disorganization emphasise the propensities of youth interaction on the street as potential criminals and help in the criminalisation of many, who utilise street to make a livelihood. Especially, those whose survival activities were criminalised by officials. Furthermore, media organizations help in exaggerating and shaping public perception of this assumption. As noted in Chapter 1, the situation remains the same in the Global South, via

import of justice system from the North through colonialism and perpetuation of the system by post-colonial administrators (Boyden, 1997; Fouchard, 2006).

As noted, one of the major flaws of routine activity theory is the assumption that settings provide an opportunity for crime to occur, without accounting for the motivation leading to criminality in the offender. Is it the setting that creates motivation, or rather is it the motivation that seizes the chance of the criminogenic setting? In this regard, the theory has much to say only on why some people become victims of criminality, but not why people get involved in criminality (Burke, 2014). The theory further emphasizes a strong tone of advocacy for social control by 'capable guardian' or 'intimate handler, which in a way legitimizes use of coercion by those who have the power upon powerless, to prevent the configuration of a setting, which can harbour acts that are criminalised by the power elites.

4.5 Social Learning Theory

Social learning theory is rooted in the works of Ronald Akers in 1968, who linked the background of the theory to Edwin Sutherland's differential association principles of delinquency. Differential association principles assume that criminal behaviour is acquired through the learning processes related to an individual's interaction and communication with intimate peers. The process includes learning the techniques of committing a crime, and an inclination favorable to law violation, that exceeds abiding by the law. In this theory, criminal behaviour is a learned behaviour; involving learning the processes and mechanisms, sometimes expressed as general needs and values (Akers and Jennings, 2015). This implies physical and social needs, as constrained by cultural values. Akers (1968, p.50) stated the core assumption of the theory as:

> The probability that persons will engage in criminal and deviant behaviour is increased and the probability of their conforming to the norm is decreased when they differentially associate with others who commit criminal behaviour and espouse definitions favourable to it, are relatively more exposed in person or symbolically to salient criminal/deviant models, define it as desirable or justified in a situation discriminative for the behaviour, and have received in the past and anticipate in the current or future situation relatively greater reward than punishment for the behaviour.

Initially, Akers (1968) proposed four theoretical constructs that explain his assumptions, which include differential association, imitation, definitions, and differential reinforcement.

The constructs manifest over time in an individual in a sequence of their arrangement above. Firstly, criminal behaviour is learned through differential association and imitation, gradually the learned behaviour can be internalized into values, which guide definitions and decisions on subsequent involvement in criminal behaviour (Pratt et al., 2010). The concept of differential association focuses on the effect of interactions between individuals in social settings, such as schools, groups of peers, places of worship, and now social networking sites, through which interaction and learning take place (Akers and Jennings, 2015). As Sutherland explained, frequent interaction with delinquent peers, who have attitudes favorable to law violations, increases the propensities of learning the attitudes, and practicing them, processed via internalization of the learned deviant behaviors. The second construct of the theoretical principles – definitions – implies an orientation or discipline relating to attitudes and values held by an individual in defining what is right or wrong. Alternatively, individual judgment on justified or unjustified action covers a wide range of circumstances favourable to law violation (Ward and Brown, 2015). The third principle, which is differential reinforcement focuses on the internalization of reward or punishment, anticipated, perceived, or experienced as the consequence of an act. The final construct is imitation, which implies the learning of criminal behavior by observing an action performed by others and relating to the techniques and the consequences (Akers and Jennings, 2015). In the measurement of influence in criminality, peer association is the most robust element of social learning theory (Jennings et al., 2013).

Many studies have tested the empirical validity of social learning theory, with some findings showing the effect of definitions (as described above), as strongly associated with crime prediction. Differential reinforcement and imitation measures also demonstrate a modest effect, relating to property crime and substance abuse, but measures of differential association indicate the strongest effect size estimated (Kruis et al., 2020; Pratt et al., 2010; Ryan and Gallupe, 2020). Regarding cross-cultural differences, the study of Kobayashi and Farrington (2019) shows lower peer deviance among Japanese compared to American youth. Within the research, this is related to the fact that Japanese young people have the cultural orientation of avoiding uncertainty, and their socialisation emphasizes having fewer deviant friends compared to US youth.

Akers and Jennings (2015, p.260) made it clear that social learning theory while focusing on behavioural mechanisms of crime, needs to be understood in the context of structural theories in explaining crime, such as structural anomie, social disorganization, and social control in a revised framework of "cross-level integration of social learning and structural theories." Later, Akers (2017) proposed a fuller understanding of this cross-level theoretical model of social structure social learning (SSSL), while still retaining the social learning constructs as the main variables, meaning that even "social structural factors are found empirically to be related to crime rates will be substantially mediated by the social learning variable" (p. xxviii). In explaining the dimension of social structure in this new framework, Akers identified four components, including differential social location in the structure, theoretically defined structural variables, differential location in the social group, and social disorganisation (Akers and Jennings, 2015; Tolle, 2017). Differential social location in the structure refers to the status of an individual in the strata of social hierarchy, which has implications for an individual's involvement in certain types of deviance, such as age, sex, class, and so on. Theoretically defined structural variables are conceptualised as measures of structural theories, such as lack of social cohesion, lack of integration, social disorganization, and social inequalities. These are some variables used as constructs in structural theories, such as anomie, social organization, and conflict theories. Differential social organization refers to the overall demographic makeup of a community, and what distinguishes it from another community, in which the distinguishing factors are also considered as correlates of crime, such as race, history, and minoritized ethnicity. Differential social location in the group implies the immediate and distant reference contacts of individuals (such as family, siblings, and peers) that can influence behaviour towards deviance.

The new proposed Social Structure and Social Learning model has been tested for empirical validity, through the evaluation of gang membership regarding the effect of social structure as a factor for deviance, mediated by social learning elements (Tolle, 2017). Results indicate that social learning mechanisms expressed through interaction, imitation, definitions, and differential reinforcement, with the combined effect of gang membership as a social structure variable, predict deviance, better than any single variable alone. The new

theory has also been used to explore the potential mediating effects of social learning variables and low self-control on outcomes relating to youth crime (Choi and Kruis, 2020; Jennings et al., 2013). Findings showed cross-level theoretical integration in synergetic relationships between social learning and self-control theories. However, the lack of theoretical insights to explore the specific motivation of criminality and under-explaining the mediating process of learning from interaction highlights a major shortcoming of the social learning theory (Burke, 2014). This is because various circumstances, such as deprivation, can induce criminality, without the processes of interaction and learning. Moreover, religiosity also can condition the effect of peer influence on involvement in some specific offending behaviour. For instance, Desmond et al., (2011) suggest that, whereas religiosity does not have a strong protective influence on the conditioning effect of peers on fighting and property crime, it serves as a protective factor in reducing the effect of peers towards substance abuse. Another study of Arab-Muslim youth in Israel suggests that religiosity reduces the effect of peer influence on involvement in physical violence perpetration (Massarwi et al., 2019).

4.6 Social Control and Self-Control Theories

The early social control theorists, such as Sykes and Matza (1957), and Walter Reckless's containment theory (1961) present insights into social control theory. The later work of Travis Hirschi (1969) in his work *Causes of Delinquency* appears as the most prominent of social control theories. All these theories assume that criminal behaviour occurs because of the weakening effect of socialisation. Hirschi (2017) believed that an individual's bond to moral values prevents deviance, which is created and supported by four basic elements of social control: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. According to Hirschi (2017), attachment is the impetus for conventional values. It is the most important of the four elements. Attachment refers to social ties with family, friends, and social institutions. The strength of attachment determines one's aversion to delinquency. Commitment as an element of social control implies an engagement in linked activities across a person's life. This includes enrollment and spending years in school or business activity, and the reputation gained in such activities. The third element is involvement, which represents energy and time spent in socially approved activities. The last of the four elements is belief, which represents strong appeals to respect for social values. An individual who is well socialized in their

society, with staunch support by these four elements, is expected to live a conventional lifestyle of middle-class values, with a low propensity of becoming delinquent. In this regard, weakening of any of the four elements can result in delinquency (Hirschi, 2017). In establishing the initial tenets of social control theory, Hirschi (2017) assumes that the element of belief represented by strong appeals to respect for social values has protective effects in preventing criminality, which in some circumstances can be considered as the level of religiosity in an individual.

A new theory of self-control proposed by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990), in their work *General Theory of Crime* focuses on explaining delinquency through the improper socialisation of a child, that is, one which cultivates suitable traits for delinquency. The new theory is described as not only different but incompatible with Hirschi's (1969) social control theory because of the apparent absence of the consideration of the elements of social control (Taylor, 2001). The construct of self-control, according to DeLisi and Vaughn (2015), refers to the broad ability to modify one's emotions and behaviours in the face of social demands. Self-control is usually related to childhood personality and later-life criminal behaviour. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) defined self-control as how individuals feel about their acts rather than the likelihood that they will or will not commit them. This notion connects to the tendency to commit or not to commit a particular action under certain conditions, be it criminal or non-criminal. The theory, therefore, outlined some basic self-control elements in explaining crime-related acts, immediate gratification of desires, easy or simple gratification of desires, exciting, risky, or thrilling acts, and few or meagre long-term benefits. Also, requiring little skill or planning, the act often results in pain or discomfort for the victim. These explanations propose the conceptual relevance of self-control in explaining circumstances under which low self-control can influence criminal behaviour. Some of these elements negate social learning and uphold rational choice constructs. According to Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990, p.88), "whereas self-control suggests that people differ in the extent to which they are restrained from criminal acts, criminality suggests that people differ in the extent to which they are compelled to crime." The view indicates that not all criminal behaviours are a manifestation of low self-control. There are many labelled 'noncriminal'

acts that can occur due to low self-control, such as accidents, alcoholism, and other addictions.

The theorists relate criminal behaviour to improper socialisation due to poor discipline, poor supervision, weak affection, and sometimes manifestation of low self-control or criminal behaviour on the part of the parents. Therefore, in providing effective child-rearing, they suggested behaviour monitoring, understanding deviant behaviour in children, and punishment of such behaviours when they occur. The theory suggests further principles of child-rearing that can lead to potential criminal behaviour in children, which include the degree of attachment of the parent to the child, recognition of deviant behaviour, punishing deviant acts, parental criminality, living in a single-parent family, family size, and having a working mother and has very little time to spend with the child. Some scholars such as Mason (2019) and DeLisi and Vaughn (2015), argue that young offenders tend to be socialized in families that have little concern over rules of social norms. However, parental affection is found to have protective effects on youth crime (Daspe et al., 2019; Jaggers et al., 2017). In support of self-control theory, some studies suggest that children cared for outside their family have higher risks of criminality, especially in their later life (Boothby et al., 2012; Dai and Chu, 2018). In another study, Savage (2014) indicates a strong association between poor parental attachment and violent behaviour. The study offers some understanding of how detachment presents strain that can stimulate aggression and violent behaviour.

Studies have varied in their findings on the role of religiosity in association with self-control towards inhibiting criminality. A study found an associative effect between religiosity and self-control, reinforcing one another, where an increase in religiousness appears to lead to an increase in self-control, and the reverse is also the case. However, another study suggests that low self-control plays a partial role in mediating the relationship between religiosity and offending behaviour (Klanjšek et al., 2012). Other studies, such as Reisig et al. (2012, p.1172) suggest that the "effect of religiosity on criminal offending is a spurious result of individual variations in self-control." While others like Welch et al. (2006, p.1605) argue that "self-control does not seem to account for the effects of religiosity." Other evidence suggests that religiosity in conflation with parental control produces more protective effects against deviance than personal self-control (Khoury-Kassabri et al., 2015).

This suggests how levels of self-control can have implications for mitigating or motivating involvement in crime, even in a situation with a certain level of religiosity as in the *Tsangaya* mitigating the potential criminality in the *Almajirai*.

As with other theories of crime, self-control theory faces criticism, notably for its claim to be a general theory to explain all forms of criminality. It explains criminality resulting from a lack of positive bonds with others (such as family members) and conventional institutions (such as schools). It does not consider specifically the sources of motivation for criminality, such as those that might overwhelm self-control. For instance, the need for survival amidst extremely deprived circumstances, where crime may be the only alternative to legitimate forms of survival. Moreover, the theory fails to account for why individuals with low self-control differ in specific crime involvement. Here the relevance of peer influence is arguably underestimated (Burke, 2014). Thus, in addressing the theoretical defects in explaining crime, the theory is often integrated with other criminological perspectives in explaining criminality.

4.7 Labelling Theory

The theory of labelling has its roots in the symbolic interactionist perspective. The labelling theorists conceptualise deviance and criminality as socially constructed phenomena. As such they consider no behaviour is inherently criminal until it is defined as such by others, particularly those having the power to make and impose laws upon others (Becker, 1997). Thus, certain social groups or categories of individuals are more likely to be suspected, arrested, and convicted as criminals, and the effect is eventually to lock some into criminal careers. Frank Tannenbaum is considered the founder of the labelling approach (Burke, 2014). He laid the theoretical foundation by suggesting that crime is created by the societal definition of certain actions as being problematic, and eventually casting those who get involved into the label of ‘deviant’ or ‘criminal’. This further sharpens the borderline of definitions between those who are cast as criminals and those who impose law and order. Each group consider others as ‘outsiders’ in Becker's (1997) analysis. A broader explanation of the process was provided by Edwin Lemert (1953), who regarded labelling in two stages of primary and secondary deviance. Primary deviance is an initiated act created out of physiological, emotional, and social needs. However, the reaction of others through labelling

the actor exacerbates the situation, with the individual becoming caught in a struggle of dealing with self-identity and gradually resolving the situation by accepting the labelled identity, thereby becoming a secondary deviant.

Postulations of labelling theorists suggest that an act of criminality and who is considered a criminal are created through social processes, which sometimes emanate from mass media sources, serving as the melting pot for public perception (Baranauskas, 2020). Negative labels on social groups shape the public perceptions and the behaviours of public officials and agencies, which promote institutional injustice in dealing with certain social groups. An instance of such can be found in the criminalization of religiously affiliated groups. As observed by Ysseldyk et al. (2010) religion provides a social identity in some contexts but often faces multiple challenges, such as in interreligious groups' conflicts, or the effect of power relations. Such problems are, for example, demonstrated through identity representation in religious fundamentalism and atheism. An instance is the criminalization of Muslim identity in the US by media sources that depict Muslims as terrorists that, in turn, encourage officials to target Muslims for surveillance, subjugating them through discrimination and exclusion (Kaufman, 2019). Similarly, in Nigeria, the *Almajirai* are described by local newspapers and academics as 'low-cost foot soldiers' from which the insurgents of Boko Haram recruit (Olusegun Anthony, 2016). Such criminalization rhetoric arguably creates a negative label not just for individual *Almajirai*, but for the entire *Tsangaya* system.

Labelling theory does not escape criticism. It is described as a 'vague perspective' that fails to consistently account for the connection between causation and involvement in criminality (Burke, 2014). The insights in perspective that can helping policy makers on the appropriate model to reduce factors responsible for crime causation. Instead, the theory focuses on building explanations concerning the effects of societal reaction as the basis for inducing perpetual involvement in criminality, which does not capture the embedded motivations that cause crimes. In this regard, it can be noted that there are crimes committed but which are neither noticed by the law enforcers nor do the perpetrators experience societal response. The theory, however, offers broader insights in considering the relevance of identity in exploring motivation for criminality.

4.8 Conclusion

Prominent criminological theories have continued to garner influence in providing an understanding of crime causation, processes, and circumstances that explain motivation and elicit feasible ways of addressing the problems associated with criminality. However, the Global North under which these theories were developed differs from the historical and socioeconomic context of the countries in the Global South, such as Northern Nigeria. Yet some researchers interested in youth crime from Northern Nigeria applied the theories as the lens of understanding youth crime in their context. This chapter highlights the limitation of using these theories in the context of Northern Nigeria (historical, socioeconomic and cultural), varying with the countries of the Global North, although the theories provide a framework for understanding and explaining youth crime, in connection with factors such as deprivation, religiosity, stresses, environment, reward seeking, and self-control. Moreover, it is understood from the discussion that some theories need to be used alongside one another to provide a comprehensive understanding and explanation. For instance, if strain can motivate crime as a strategy to escape stressful conditions, a setting is also required for the act of crime to occur.

Using the framework provided by some of these criminological theories, the criminalisation of youth, and the use of power to label activities of others from disadvantaged backgrounds by officials' data and reports have continued to be supported by discourse in media and among researchers. As has been noted (see Chapter 1), the *Almajirai* are commonly thought to be the source of criminality in their neighbourhoods. Following the theories discussed above, their demographic characteristics, behaviour, actions, associations, and cultural contexts could be hypothesised as related to any involvement they might have in crime and, if they are involved, why are they? Understanding such issues underpins the methodology outlined in the following chapter, which was used to explore whether and how the *Almajirai* are involved in crime. The questionnaire created for the present study was purposely structured to examine the theories outlined here, as was the analysis of one-to-one interviews and the fieldwork observations.

CHAPTER FIVE
METHODOLOGY

5.1 Introduction

This Chapter explains the research design adopted, and the process followed in gaining appropriate data, concerning the depth of deprivation and religiosity, and their relationship to crime among the *Almajirai*. It also describes participants' characteristics, the justification for a mixed method approach, the tools used for data collection, and ethical considerations. Moreover, the chapter explains the justifications, processes, and techniques used in the analysis of the data obtained.

5.2 The Research Design

The research involved a case study of *Tsangaya* students (*Almajirai*), through a mixed-method approach, which utilized qualitative and quantitative data, obtained directly from the research participants. The method was supplemented with other data gathered through observation of the participants' activities as a participant within their *Tsangaya*, and non-participants in public places. In-depth interviews (IDIs) were used in obtaining qualitative data, while the quantitative data was obtained through using multiple option questionnaires constructed with Likert scales. I employed participant observation when in the *Tsangaya* schools, and non-participant observation was us in strategic moments to observe the participants' interactions, within and outside their *Tsangaya*.

The mixed method approach was chosen for its strength in offering opportunities for obtaining rich data, with wider coverage than that obtained through a quantitative questionnaire, and elucidating deeper insight into the phenomenon under study through qualitative interviews. In this regard, the strength of one method supports the weaknesses of another (Hagan, 2007). The mixed method is a methodological technique that is frequently used in instances when the employment of both quantitative and qualitative methods can help provide a better understanding of the phenomena being examined, such as when the research area is complex (Heesen, Bright & Zucker, 2019). As observed by Heesen et al. (2019, p.3068) "the convergence of multiple methods upon a single conclusion better supports that conclusion than just one of those methods arriving at the conclusion". Specifically, the mixed method approach was used in my research, because it explores the relationships between

complex variables, i.e., deprivation, religiosity, and criminality, from a large size of population.

The mixed method approach also mitigates biases associated with specific methods of data collection and facilitates the exploration of deeper insights into a complex topic, leading to a broader understanding that goes beyond any singular approach (Heesen, Bright & Zucker, 2019). Additionally, it uncovers multiple connections between variables under study (Bryman, 2012; Davies, 2018; Lall, 2021). The mixed method paradigm originated from the philosophical underpinnings of pragmatism, which allows a choice of the best method, or combined methods to answer research questions (Lall, 2021). The adoption of mixed methods was based on the notion of multiple realities as an ontological stance for understanding a social phenomenon from the perspective of the actors using different approaches (Davies, 2018).

The strategy followed the recommended steps of priority, sequence, stage of integration, and use of relevant theoretical explanations (Bryman, 2012; Davies, 2018; Lall, 2021). The priority step is concerned with the allocation of emphasis between qualitative and quantitative elements of inquiry in the study. A stronger priority is given to qualitative data, particularly because it offers deeper insights for analysis. The quantitative aspect provides the basis for the quantification of the depth of the major variables. For instance, the depth of deprivation and extent of involvement in offending behaviour. However, the quantitative analysis cannot provide a descriptive illustration of the depth, but the qualitative does that by providing details and a descriptive understanding of the phenomenon under study. The sequence implies the chronological arrangement of considering the quantitative followed by the qualitative facets of the research. This is done at both stages of data collection and analysis. The collection of quantitative data in the first instance, provides a direction of the participants' response, which is important in consideration for the qualitative data collection. The same process is utilized for the data analysis for proper integration. The priority and sequence were initially considered at the level of construction of data collection instruments (see appendices 1 and 7). The integration step connects the two different datasets to provide a clearer picture of the phenomenon under study, guided by theoretical perspectives (see Chapters 6, 7, 8, and 9).

Additionally, the mixed method approach is strongly recommended in criminological studies, because of its association with unique challenges and complications entailed in investigating crime, deviance, and victimization (Davies, 2018), especially, in the context of Nigerian crime-related studies (Dumbili, 2014). These were the reasons for the choice of the method in relation to studying criminality in *Almajirai* because the approach offered the participants an opportunity to express their understanding of their situation as an appropriate way to explore the questions under study, and which previous studies that linked *Almajirai* with criminality failed to consider. On a general note, it was observed by Yates (2004) that few studies on youth crime offer opportunities for the subjects under study to explain the context of their experiences. Instead, some studies on youth crime rely on official data for their analysis and conclusions (Davies, 2018, p.14). Therefore, Yates (2004) suggests adopting a methodology that allows youth to speak up as participants, allowing researchers to draw on rich data that can account for an in-depth understanding of lower-class marginalised youth experiences concerning criminality. Hence, in this study, I considered it important that the *Almajirai* had a strong voice to enable an understanding of crime, as it features in their everyday life.

As for the non-participant observation, I choose it to gather data on the *Almajirai* interactions outside their *Tsangaya* compound, without altering the natural state and context of the interaction. The method is aimed at maintaining the natural state of the social settings of interaction, and to avoid or cause reactive effects, especially when the subjects know they are under observation. This is important because some of the criminal activities attributed to the *Almajiri* are explained as learned behaviours through interaction with gangs on the streets, but the circumstances under which such interactions occur are not well explored. The method is justified by the fact that the presence and activities of *Almajirai* are common phenomena everyone can observe on the street in Nigeria. Moreover, it is argued by Ruane (2016, p.213), such observation can be "accomplished via some kind of hidden observation (e.g., watching children play through a two-way mirror or observing taped behaviour) or via simple detachment (observing hospital emergency room behaviours by sitting in the waiting area). In all likelihood, field subjects will be unaware of the ongoing research efforts."

5.3 The Data Collection Tools

The survey adapts different empirical works in its construction of tools for the collection of data. The absolute deprivation indicators were drawn from thresholds and scales used for measuring youth poverty in developing countries proposed by Gordon et al, (2003) which include access to safe drinking water, food and nutrition, sanitation and hygiene, clothing, health, and shelter, and Ladin's (2014) and Greitemeyer and Sagiogolou's (2019) views which consider financial sources and social inclusion as essential indicators. The scale for measuring the depth of deprivation used the range of; no deprivation, mild, moderate, severe, and extreme deprivation, as suggested by Gordon et al., (2003) and Delamonica and Minujin (2007). Using the same scale, the depth of relative deprivation was explored using the model of perceived disadvantage because of self-comparison to referent others proposed by Smith et al. (2012). In the present study, the Likert scale was presented in the questionnaire as never, rarely, often, and more often or frequently. Each indicator was measured by the peculiarity of the response related to it. For example, access to safe water was measured by the sources of the water, the distance to get it, and the purity of the water, as well as other challenges uncovered in the field, such as discrimination and fighting in the process of accessing the water. The level of religiosity was investigated using elements of religious beliefs and religious practices, adopted from the works of Jana-Masri and Priester (2007) and Ramzy, et al (2021), that provide measures of youth religiosity in the context of Islam. The level of involvement in criminality was explored by obtaining self-report and peer-report data on specific crimes (theft, substance abuse, fighting, and violence), which are commonly linked to youth, concerning deprivation and religiosity. An open space was provided for other criminal acts not categorically stated in the questionnaire.

Criminological theories guided the construction of the other parts of the questionnaire, using measures embedded in the context of the *Almajirai's* lives. The routine activity was tested using the time-space budget measures proposed by Wikström et al. (2010) to explore the motivation for criminality, the suitable targets involved, and the role of the *Malamai* as capable guardians (intimate handlers) concerning places visited and daily routine activities engaged in by the *Almajirai*. The magnitude of strain was also explored using the tools developed by Sigfusdottir et al. (2012). The measures covered many spheres of

potential strain-producing circumstances peculiar to the *Almajirai* experiences, such as physical victimization, school strain, peer rejection, and economic deprivation. Indices of family conflict were excluded for lacking relevance in the specific circumstances of the *Almajirai*, who live far away from their respective families. Peer rejection was utilized and extended to explore peer and societal rejection, to fit the context of the *Almajirai* experience. The effect of self-control and opportunity as mediating variables in criminality was considered, and measured using six constructs, which are: impulsivity, approaches to simple tasks, risk-taking, physical activities, self-centeredness, and temper, proposed by Grasmick et al. (1993).

Themes for the in-depth interview and schedules for observation were designed in concert with the questions of the questionnaire. Firstly, deprivation concerning living conditions and access to basic needs, interaction with criminal peers, religiosity, neighbourhood structure concerning the presence of gangs, and environs' collective efficacy in dealing with social problems. Secondly, routine activities such as the way time is spent and places visited when not in the *Tsangaya*, encounter situations that can get the *Almajirai* into trouble, and the extent to which they are monitored or supervised. Thirdly, themes for understanding structural and psychological strain were included, such as access to provisions for necessities, experiences of discrimination and rejection in the host communities, and access to support from government and private agencies, or alternative strategies to escape from the situation. There is also a section that explores the extent of self-control through measuring levels of impulsivity, risky behaviours, avoiding hard tasks, and self-centeredness. Lastly, religiosity was explored through understanding the level of engagement in mandatory religious practices and feeling supervised by God, as measures of religious belief and practice.

In multi-linguistic research, involving differences in language used in the original instrument construction and that of the research participants, there is a need for translation of data collection instruments, to avoid errors of response bias, non-response, misunderstanding, and misrepresentation (Sarac and Koc, 2021). Translation of the research instrument must be done by someone who understands the language used in the original questionnaire, and the local language in which the questionnaire is administered. The process

is aimed at explaining the theme under inquiry targeted by each item and maximizing the efficacy of the construct measures in the instrument (Hawkins et al., 2020). In this regard, as the designer of the questionnaire, and speaking the local language (Hausa) of the participants, I initially translated all the data collection tools and other relevant forms and then submitted them for validation to a language expert in Sule Lamido University, Kafin Hausa, Nigeria. After observation and review by the expert, the instruments were pilot tested in one of the *Tsangaya* in the Hadejia community to detect if there was a need for adjustment. The results of the pilot testing suggested no further need for changes in the instruments.

5.4 The Ethics Procedure

The research was approved by the Lancaster University Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (REC). It adopted Lancaster University's "guidelines for research involving children and young people", as a research supervising institution, and the Nigerian research ethics code as the area where the research was conducted.

5.4.1 Ethical Considerations

In line with the guidelines suggested by Lancaster University, the data was collected only from participants who were *Gillick* competent, or old enough to respond to the questionnaire, and who had the mental capacity to understand the risks, implications, and consequences of their participation. This assessment was completed through a simple conversation before the interview, guided by *Gillick* guidelines produced by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC, 2022).

In Nigeria, the functional REC is mostly focused on research related to health issues. The National Health Research Ethics Committee (HREC), under the Federal Ministry of Health (FMH, 2014) considers research activities in which there is involvement of human participation, but some specific categories of research are exempted from ethics committee oversight. This includes research involving the use of educational evaluation, survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behaviour unless the participants' information can be identified concerning their participation. Other reasons are those that can precipitate the risk of any form of harm to participants (FMH, 2014, p.13). However, the guidelines for young persons' (YP) participation in research and access to sexual

reproductive health services in Nigeria (FMH, 2014) indicate that the consideration of gatekeepers who are the closest guardians to the young persons as appropriate in permitting the young persons' and children's taking part in research. In this regard, the *Malamai* are the legitimate guardians of *Almajirai*, for being entrusted with the care of *Almajirai* by their parents and so were regarded as the appropriate gatekeepers and consent givers for the *Almajiri* students' participation in this study.

The document of guidelines for young people's participation in research in Nigeria, the Federal Ministry of Health (FMH, 2014, p.11) suggests that "determining the age boundaries for engaging children in research, the principle of beneficence is fundamental. This implies that the researcher must understand that he is responsible for the participant's physical, mental, and social wellbeing as related to the study or service rendered. It should be noted that one of the motivations for the study was to understand and improve the situation of the *Almajirai*. Therefore, in my situation, I planned to manage the process by avoiding any language that may instigate negative perceptions. Also, any observed discomfort in the participants during the data collection process would lead to discontinuing the process and support to gain help from responsible agencies, if the situation warranted it. Concisely, this research adopted the research guidelines available in Nigeria, the country where the research participants were recruited, while still conforming to the guidelines of England, the country where the institution of the research is located.

5.4.2 Access to the Research Participants

In accessing the participants of the study, the "*Kungiyar Malaman Tsangayun* Nigeria" (*Tsangaya* Teachers Association of Nigeria) was considered as the appropriate route to reach the gatekeepers and recruit the participants. The association has branches in all the states of Northern Nigeria, serving as the voice of, and links between the non-formal *Tsangaya* System and the Directorate for *Tsangaya* schools, presently under the Islamic Education Bureau (IEB) in some Northern Nigerian states. The association provided me with a list and locations of various *Tsangaya* schools, and the size of their student populations, before starting the data collection, which further guided me on the project's sampling procedure. On initially visiting any community, I visited the police and local authority for introduction and to explain the purpose of the research, seeking cooperation and support, before starting

the data collection. I was also fully aware of potential conflicts of interest that may arise from the teachers being fearful of harm to their educational system. Before starting the data collection, I held a meeting with the leaders of the *Tsangaya* Teachers' Association, where the rationale for the research was explained to them. They understood and accepted the justification for the research and assured me of their support throughout the study.

5.4.3 Recruiting Participants and Sampling Procedure

The Nigerian Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC, 2010, p.6) puts the total enrolment of *Almajiri* students in *Tsangaya* schools at 9,523,699 in 2010, "with the North-East having 2,657,767 pupils, North-West 4,903,000, North-Central 1,133,288, South-West 809,317, South-East 3,827 and South-South 18,500". The data collection for my study was restricted to the North-Western Nigerian region, which is made up of Sokoto, Kebbi, Katsina, Zamfara, Kaduna, Kano, and Jigawa states. The study was further restricted to specifically Kano and Jigawa states. This was because, while the *Almajiri* system is similar in the north-western states, and across Nigeria, there are security challenges in most of the states of the federation. The two states, Jigawa and Kano, are safe compared to the other five states in the north-western region. The identified respondents for the study were the *Almajirai*, and the *Malamai* (teachers), both groups are 100% male and reside in rural and urban areas. A total of nine (9) *Malamai* and 800 *Almajirai* (within the ages of 14-17 years) were reached for the data collection, determined by Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sampling frame.

A multi-stage cluster sampling method was used in recruiting the participants. Firstly, information was obtained on the location and size of various *Tsangaya* schools in Kano and Jigawa states, from the *Tsangaya* Teachers Association, which was used as a guide for a random selection of the *Tsangaya* visited for data collection. Using systematic sampling, the communities selected from this random sample were two urban and two rural communities (Bhattacherjee, 2012). The two urban areas selected were Kano and Hadejia, and the two rural areas Jiyan and Kebberi. The data was collected from nine different *Tsangaya* schools, within the four different communities from the list provided by the *Tsangaya* teachers association, within Kano and Jigawa states. In each *Tsangaya* school, permission to interview the *Almajirai* was sought from the *Malamai* as gatekeepers, and only the *Almajirai* within the specified age category (14-17 years) were considered for participation. Purposive

sampling was used in selecting the appropriate participants, who were selected through voluntary participation (Bryman, 2012).

In each *Tsangaya*, the data was collected from 100 volunteer participants. The idea here was to ensure the sample is representative of the population. Given the large size of the *Almajirai* in all the *Tsangaya* visited, there exists a tendency for diverse experiences, as well as responses from the participant sample, which may result in complementary or opposing findings. In addition to increasing the variability of outcomes across locations, *Tsangaya* schools, and individual experiences. The large size of the participants' sample can also increase the statistical power, accuracy, and findings' generalizability, even though it demands resources – time, effort, data collation, coding and analysis. And longer time spent in a single school can potentially give rise to unforeseen problems before completion of the exercise. This was also foreseen and included in the REC application, that if the required number of participants is not reached in any selected *Tsangaya*, the number of participants could be maintained by interviewing volunteers from another Tsangaya. Suddenly, it happened in the first *Tsangaya* we visited, a problem arose where one of the *Malamai* in the *Tsangaya* felt uncomfortable with the entire process, and began to mobilise others, leading to growing suspicion among them about the data collection process, with some *Malamai* preventing their *Almajirai* from participating, before reaching the targeted number of participants. Despite the head *Mallam's* intervention, I felt threatened and left the *Tsangaya*. Therefore, another *Tsangaya* was visited to fill the remaining target number of participants.

In establishing the age of the participants, I started by asking *Almajirai* their ages. However, it became clear some did not know their age. In this case, the best way to determine their age was by asking them the age at which they were enrolled into *Tsangaya* schools. Usually, the parents disclose the age of their children to the *Malamai* during enrolment. Combining the age of their enrolment with the years they spent in the system gave an idea of their ages. In this regard, I requested the *Mallam* help those *Almajirai* who did not know their age, in determining their actual age, before recruiting them for the research. After the questionnaire interview, an item in the questionnaire asked the *Almajirai* participants to indicate their voluntary interest in participating in an in-depth interview. The rationale for this was to ensure that their participation in the in-depth interview was voluntary, not coerced, even if they were found competent for the in-depth interview. Nine participants, one

from each *Tsangaya* visited were purposively selected based on the *Gillick* competence and bestowed interest in participation.

At the end of the questionnaire interview, Almajirai were asked if they consented to taking part in an IDI. IDIs were held with those who consented and were identified as competent for the in-depth interview. The IDIs were conducted by me only. Therefore, other competent participants identified by the research assistants were forwarded to me, for further assessment, and continuation with the IDI.

Research assistants were trained to help in quantitative data collection and identify competent participants for the in-depth interviews. The research assistants were academics working with Nigerian higher education institutions, and all had experience in academic research. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the use of pseudonyms, to prevent participants' identities from being exposed (Bhattacherjee, 2012). An appropriate and very quiet venue, such as a room or mosque was chosen for the interview throughout the process, to prevent being overheard by other participants, as well as possible distraction by noise or events.

5.4.4 Procedure for Obtaining Participants' Consent

The *Almajirai* are from various locations across Nigeria, and so are their parental backgrounds. It is important to note that, parental consent is necessary in research involving children in Nigeria, but only when the participant is too young or does not have the cognitive capacity to speak for himself. It is also stated that "seeking parental consent is however inappropriate where parents are neglectful or abusive. In such situations, consent from another adult who has responsibility for the young person's safety, security, and well-being might be more appropriate. In some situations, asking for parental consent may be risky rather than protective" (FMH, 2014 p.18). In this regard, the *Malamai* are the guardians of the *Almajirai* and were asked for consent for *Almajirai* participation. In Nigeria, there is no provision in existing legal instruments on the age at which young persons can give consent in research (FMH, 2014). The Children and Young Persons' Act enacted in the former Northern Nigerian region in 1958, which is still valid in the laws of Jigawa State of Northern Nigeria defines a child as "any person who has not attained the age of fourteen years…and young person as a person who attained the age of fourteen years but who has not attained the

age of eighteen years" (Ministry of Justice Jigawa State, 2012: CAP. C3, p.3). In this situation, both the consent on behalf of the *Almajirai* by the *Malamai* as gatekeepers, and assented consent by the *Almajirai* were sought before the data collection process.

In each *Tsangaya*, the consent of the *Malamai* as the guardians of the *Almajirai* was obtained by signing one consent form on behalf of the students, and one for themselves as participants. All the Participant Information Sheets and consent forms were translated into the local language (*Hausa*). The forms contained the study's objectives and essential information that the participants may need to know in order to get an informed consent to their participation. My and my supervisor's detailed information and phone numbers for contact, as well as the number of a focal person of Save the Children Nigeria, was included in the forms, in case the participants felt uncomfortable or had any complaints about the research. The contact numbers of my supervisors provided a means of contacting Lancaster University in case of any complaints or questions about the research. In the event, no such contact was made.

Each item of the translated version of the Participant Information Sheet (PIS) and consent forms were read to the *Mallam* using the local language by me, to ensure they understood the contents and other vital information about the research. They were asked to sign on the translated and the English versions of the consent form. This is because in Nigeria, "in a situation where parental consent is required for an adolescent to access sexual reproductive health services or participate in research, consent from one parent or guardian is deemed sufficient. The choice of the guardian is determined by the sociocultural context in which the research is taking place, without prejudice to instances where assent is required" (FMH, 2014, P.18). In each school one PIS was used to 'batch' request the consent of *Mallam* for the *Almajirai* participation. The list of the participants was written and attached to the signed consent form. To protect against coercion in participation, the *Malamai* were not present when the consent of the students was asked, nor did they know who agreed to participate and who did not. The same process was maintained for the second PIS, which was used in obtaining the consent of the *Almajirai* participants involved in in-depth interviews. Before collecting any data, the participants were asked to assent to their participation using verbal consent.

5.4.5 Data Collection, Safety and Storage Procedure

The quantitative data was obtained from the *Almajirai* using a questionnaire, while the qualitative data was obtained through in-depth interviews. Three research assistants helped me in the quantitative interviews using the questionnaire. In addition, I also conducted non-participant observations, where I visited some public places, the participants reported to be visiting (in the questionnaire), such as markets and transport stations, and observed their activities, particularly during their study-free times.

All the data collection processes were conducted in the Hausa language. The recorded voices on consent and interviews were stored securely in Lancaster University's Microsoft OneDrive account, then transcribed, and translated by me, on my password-protected personal computer. All the questionnaire sheets were scanned immediately after data collection and stored electronically also in the OneDrive storage facility. To prevent data loss, it was either coded as written on paper or through audio recording transcription.

5.4.6 Covid-19 Protection and Other Safety Protocols

During the data collection process, the research team ensured adherence to COVID-19 protection protocols, as outlined by the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC). The protocols included avoiding sharing personal items, regular disinfection of frequently touched surfaces, proper wearing of face masks, and washing hands with soap under running water. In light of this, hand sanitisers and facemasks were provided. Also, a water container was provided for the research team and the participants for hand washing during the data collection process.

A strategic and organized plan was set up to respond to any dangerous situations during the data collection process. In case of distressing information, which indicated someone may have been harmed or was in danger, Save the Children Nigeria as a human rights organization agreed to help. The Jigawa State Chapter of the Nigerian Bar Association (NBA) also agreed to render possible legal support if the need arose. The plan was that, if during interviews with the participants, an illegal practice was identified (even if uncovered by a research assistant) that needed to be reported, the data collection would proceed, and after the interviews, the situation would be reported to the appropriate agency. However, if situations requiring urgent attention indicated some immediate potential harm to the participant, the data collection would be suspended, and we would report the situation to the

relevant authority. This protocol was included on the PIS read to the participants, before starting the data collection. Throughout the process, the team did not come across any identified case that needed to be reported to any agency.

In every community the team visited, I kept reporting to my family, and my supervisors, so they were fully aware of all my movements, concerning where I planned to visit, the length I stayed, and whenever I left. I also reported to the community police, and local authority personnel, before starting the data collection in each community I visited, except in the rural areas, because there are no police offices there. Had any situation required the Nigerian Human Rights Commission, I would have logged on to their website (nigeriarights.gov.ng) to report the situation.

5.5 The Field Experiences for Data Collection

The process started with a meeting, which I held with the research assistants in Hadejia (Urban area), Jigawa state. The moment was utilized for discussion of all the essential ethical considerations and planning the exercise. The administering of the questionnaire was trialled by the team, with some *Almajirai* in one of the *Tsangaya* schools chosen for the study. The trial gave us essential hints, particularly on what needed emphasis and careful consideration. We proceeded to a *Tsangaya* setting and trialled again, until we were satisfied with the familiarity, and felt competent enough to move on to the data collection exercise.

5.5.1 The *Tsangaya* Schools Visited

The *Tsangaya* schools visited varied in terms of location, and so are the characteristics of their neighbourhood, which can result in differences of experiences. On the first day we started with the first *Tsangaya* in Hadejia town. The largest and the most commercial community in Jigawa state. The *Tsangaya* is situated in an old but less affluent residential area, with places identified by the residents as hubs for gang activities. The process went well on the first day. However, on the second day, the team faced resistance from one of the teachers, who perceived our work as suspicious, and therefore asked his students to keep away from the process, and moved further in mobilizing other *Malamai*, by spreading suspicious thoughts against the data collection. I reported the situation to the Head-*Mallam* and explained that I could not continue working in such an atmosphere with suspicion about the research's aim. We moved to another *Tsangaya*, not far and almost similar to the first

Tsangaya, and completed the remaining number of respondents to 100. Within Hadejia we visited four *Tsangaya* schools, reaching up to 300 participants. Even though the schools were far between each other, they share similarity of being situated in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, three of them within the inner city, and the other one on the outskirts. Strategic moments convenient for in-depth interviews were chosen, and there, I achieved 6 interviews, with three *Almajirai* and three *Malamai*.

Next, the team visited the first rural community Kashin Dila, in Mallam-Madori, for the exercise. The team was received warmly by the *Tsangaya Mallam*, and after introductions, I demonstrated the research's purpose using the PIS and consent form, and he happily accepted us and agreed with everything. The next day, the team arrived for the data collection. However, a *Gardi* came up and whispered to me that the *Mallam* was not interested in the activity, so he asked us to leave. From the list, I chose another nearby *Tsangaya* to replace this one, about which I promptly informed the *Tsangaya* Teachers' Association. The next day, the team proceeded to another rural community Kebberi, and luckily the *Mallam* informed us that he received a call from the *Tsangaya* Teachers' Association about the visit. Kebberi is a hard-to-reach small community with no constructed access road. It is surrounded by smaller villages, hamlets, and large farms used for farming in the rainy season. The *Malam* welcomed the process, we spent some days visiting the *Tsangaya*, until we reached the targeted100 participants required.

Kano, the largest urban community in northern Nigeria, was next visited by the team. In Kano, the *Tsangaya* Teachers' Association played a vital role in informing the four selected *Tsangaya* about the research visit and enquired if the *Tsangaya Mallam* had any conflicting feelings towards the process, to avoid rejection or any conflict of interest. Despite this effort, in the *Tsangaya* we visited, I came across a *Mallam* who reported to me that he was called by another *Mallam* in Kano, describing the research as suspicious, and therefore advised him to reject us. Fortunately, the *Mallam* had prior experience of academic research projects, therefore, he accepted us, without hesitation. I also visited the Panshekara Divisional Police Office and reported the data collection activity to the Divisional Police Officer. The research team also held another strategic planning meeting. In the evening, the team went around the selected *Tsangaya* for familiarization with the *Malamai* before the data

collection activities. We were accompanied by two representatives of the *Tsangaya* Teachers' Association. The familiarization was successful, with positive responses from the *Malamai*.

All the *Tsangaya* visited in Kano metropolis are within the developed outskirts of the old inner city, chosen from random selection. These include *Tsangaya* schools in Shargalle, Kauyen Alu, Unguwa Uku, and Hotoro. All the *Tsangayu* are situated in disadvantaged neighbourhoods composing people who mostly migrated from different places, and some few from various ethnic backgrounds. Except Hotoro *Tsangaya*, which is surrounded by affluent neighbours. This happens because the *Tsangaya* was established long before the buildings surrounding it. The data collection in the four selected *Tsangaya* schools was completed within two weeks.

Table 5.1 Distribution of Survey Responses and In-Depth Interviews in the *Tsangaya* visited

Location	Tsangaya visited	Survey responses	Interviews
Hadejia (Urban)	Tsangaya 1	56	2
	Tsangaya 2	44	2
	Tsangaya 3	100	2
Kano (Urban)	Tsangaya 1	100	2
	Tsangaya 2	100	2
	Tsangaya 3	100	2
	Tsangaya 4	100	2
Jiyan (Rural)	Tsangaya 1	100	2
Kebberi (Rural)	Tsangaya 1	100	2
Total	**9 Tsangaya schools**	**800 responses**	**18 In-depth Interviews**

The last *Tsangaya* visited by the team was one in the Jiyan rural community, a small community close to a river. The common occupations of the community members include all-year-round fishing and crop production, with labour opportunities among the youth. The

Mallam was also informed of the process by their association. He accepted the team, and the conduct of data collection was successful.

During our visits to the *Tsangaya* schools, I utilized chances for observations and made several notes. Also in some strategic moments, I attended the places mentioned by the *Almajirai*, which they mostly visit in their study-free times. I successfully observed some interactions and activities engaged in by the *Almajirai* amongst themselves and with other children. The observation strategy was justified by the need to understand and explain their interactions during study free time, to supplement self-report data and conjectures concerning where they go, who they interact with and what they do. Before engaging in the observation, however, the process was explained to the leaders of the *Malamai* and *Tsangaya* Teachers Association.

5.5.2 Challenges Experienced in the Fieldwork

In addition to the previous challenges mentioned relating to conflict of interests and rejection by some *Malamai*, in some situations, the team also faced the problem of absenteeism of the participants, at the scheduled time for the data collection activity. The *Mallam* apologized for that. On some rare occasions, the team visited some *Tsangaya*, but we were told that the students had left to beg. Sometimes, we had to wait for an hour or more, until they returned from the begging session to interview them. In some situations, we engaged in interviews, while the participants were in study sessions, as they were interviewed one after another.

The team also came across situations that halted or delayed the process of data collection. For instance, there was a day, during interviews, when one of the students reported fighting between their peers, where one was seriously injured and bleeding from his forehead. We quickly intervened, and together with their *Mallam*, we took the injured *Almajiri* to a nearby hospital, resuming the data collection activity after treatment. In many instances, we allowed the students to go for their break, and wait, then we continued after they resumed. Also, when the students started recitation and their voices created inconveniences in hearing the interviews, the team had to move. The verbal consent voice recording also took a surprising amount of time, so we dedicated one team member to take care of it to save time.

5.6 Method of Data Analysis

This section is concerned with the process of data analysis specific to the mixed method design. It explains the process of organizing, coding, transcription, translation, and analysis of the data collected. Qualitative data obtained through in-depth interviews and from observations were organized, coded, and analyzed respectively with the help of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo 12. The quantitative data was coded and analysed using the Special Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21.0. As discussed in section 5.4 the process of mixed method approach involves priority, sequence, integration, and use of theory (Bryman, 2012; Lall, 2021). The presentation of priority and sequence was done at the level of questionnaire formulation, while the integration of the datasets and the theory application is presented in the chapters of findings, in a sequence of presenting the quantitative analysis, followed by the qualitative analysis. The overall outcomes are thus merged for a clearer understanding of the findings, discussed, and guided by theoretical frameworks.

5.6.1 The Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative variables include categorical (nominal), such as age, dichotomous e.g., location (rural, urban), and discrete (e.g., yes or no) variables. Moreover, interval variables measured by a continuous scale were used to explore the depth of deprivation, extent of religiosity, and level of involvement in criminality. The type of analysis in quantitative data is determined by the question under study and the scale used in the questionnaire (Bryman, 2012). This study sought to answer questions related to exploring the level or intensity of the variables such as deprivation, religiosity, criminality, and relationships between them. Therefore, the extent or level of the variables were analyzed using descriptive statistics, by considering the range and mean of the measures of central tendency. In some instances, frequency and percentages tables were considered to provide a clearer picture of the distribution. Relationships were explored through descriptive statistics using cross-tabulation of the variables, and bivariate inferential statistics using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation and linear regression analyses because the variables are provided in the Likert (continuous) scale (Bryman, 2012; Hagan, 2007). The differences were explored through descriptive statistics, by considering the distribution of mean, frequencies, and percentages across the urban and rural locations. Where the bivariate correlation occurs

between categorical and continuous (interval) variables, the statistical significance was determined by Point Biserial correlation (Davies, 1962; Demirtas and Hedeker, 2016).

The analysis of the data using SPSS software involves systematic steps, starting by labelling variables, and coding the obtained data in the questionnaire, into the data viewer of the SPSS. Labelling variables attaches a term to a code (Bryman, 2012) (e.g., 0 = N0, 1 = YES). Coding refers to the use of numerical values to represent responses in the dataset for analysis (Bhattacherjee, 2012; Hagan, 2007). In this study, respective steps of analysis using the SPSS interface specific to univariate (frequency, measures of central tendency), bivariate (coefficient correlation), and multivariate (regression) analysis were followed in generating the analyzed descriptive, and inferential statistics. The results were presented in appropriate tables in the analysis sections of Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

5.6.2 The Qualitative Data Analysis

The qualitative data were gathered through in-depth interviews, and observation (sometimes including field notes) within and outside the *Tsangaya*, obtained with the guidance of themes to explore the analysis of theory and research. Therefore, consistent with the data, a deductive and reflexive thematic analysis was adopted. The analysis was carried out in line with the conceptualization of these themes and represents a systematic approach for the detection, examination, and interpretation of patterns of semantic significance ('themes') within qualitative data (Clarke & Braun, 2017).

The in-depth interviews were conducted in Hausa, which I translated and transcribed into English. The data was fragmented and organized with the help of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo 12, through coding relevant information in groups of reference themes. I started the process by coding, through the categorization of data in nodes, which is a key step in the process (Bryman, 2012). The *coding* in the NVivo is done through a *node* of the NVivo interface. The nodes can be free nodes or tree nodes (Bryman, 2012, Bazeley and Richards, 2000). While free nodes are created as a distinct group, the tree nodes are made up of other subgroups created from the original nodes. In this, the original nodes and those created under them are labelled with terms or concepts and constructs containing themes essential to answer the questions under study, such as criminality, food deprivation, accommodation, hygiene, clothing, supervision, parental visits, religiosity, and so forth. Further sub-nodes or branches were created under

the existing nodes. For instance, under criminality, sub-nodes were created with new labels such as theft, substance abuse, sexual-related offences, and so on. In this study, the hierarchically organized groups and sub-groups were fragmented into further groups of nodes, formed by consideration of similarities in opinions. The data were used as the sources for the thematic analysis presented in the finding's chapters (see Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). In the analysis, I consider connections between responses to the questionnaire, interview data, and observations in explaining each specific theme under study.

5.7 Conclusion

Studying youth crime in the context of religiosity and deprivation requires a comprehensive approach to obtain the data required to answer the research questions under study (see Chapter 1). Therefore, this study considers the participants' lives, and adopts a mixed methodology, using quantitative and qualitative approaches, supplemented with an observation method. The use of mixed methods is strongly recommended in criminological research, particularly for its richness in reaching a large number of participants and providing a deeper insight into understanding the context and circumstances of criminality through in-depth interviews. A mixed methods approach also provides a clearer picture of the phenomena under study, because of its potential to reduce bias, through triangulation of research methods. It also offered an opportunity for the participants to share their perceptions about their lives and situations, which was important as often they went unheard, yet commented upon. The data and its analysis provide the source for the findings discussed in the following five chapters.

CHAPTER SIX

ALMAJIRAI, CRIMINALITY AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings concerning the extent to which *Almajirai* are involved in offending behaviour, and analysing the seriousness of the act as criminality, using the data obtained through self-report and peer-report surveys, interviews, and observations. The seriousness of crime was primarily introduced by Sellin and Wolfgang (1964) in their influential work *Measurement of Delinquency*. The notion of crime seriousness implies an estimation of the magnitude of deviance or criminality based on popular perception concerning the nature of the act (Parton, Hansel, and Stratton, 1991; Stylianou, 2003). This chapter, therefore, focuses on acts criminalised by law and commonly engaged in by adolescents, which are relevant to the circumstances of the *Almajirai*, considering the social context of the place in which they live.

Therefore, the categorisation of crimes in this context includes serious crimes such as sexual-related offences and substance abuse or drug use, and petty crimes, such as petty theft and fighting within the *Tsangaya* and in the neighbourhood, as well as other antisocial acts not categorically mentioned in the questionnaire, but which emerged in interviews and observations, such as scavenging waste and poaching vermin. Criminal acts are those specified in the penal codes, used as the criminal law in 12 Muslim states in Northern Nigeria, including the two states where the data was collected (see context in Chapter 1 for details). However, their seriousness lies in the estimation of their gravity related to the nature of the act in the social context of this research. Criminal responsibility for the law is explicitly stated as applicable to every individual, except a child below 12 years of age, "who has not attained sufficient maturity of understanding to judge the nature and consequence of such acts" (Jigawa State, 2021 p.22).

Property crime, sexual-related offences, and substance abuse are explained as the criminal acts usually committed among youth, in relation to the effects of social circumstances, such as deprivation (Cauffman, Cavanagh, Donley, & Thomas, 2015). The present study adopts a method that involves analysis of self-report survey data obtained using questionnaires, along with in-depth interview data. Through these methods, participants expressed their perceptions of their own and their peers' involvement in criminality, which

was also supported by observational data. The statistical significance of the difference in the participants' locations in crime involvement is measured using point Biserial correlation because it involves the association of dichotomous data (location) and continuous data (level of involvement in criminality) (Bonett, 2020; Demirtas & Hedeker, 2016).

A Note on Reliability

It is fully noted that self-reporting is a valid form of data collection, but it can be influenced by many factors that could bias responses (Gomes, Farrington, Maia, & Krohn, 2019). In this context therefore, data on reporting peers' involvement in criminality is utilized in the analysis to support the reliability of the general level of involvement in criminality admitted by *Almajirai*. Moreover, the possible presentation of bias is partially mitigated, through the application of a one-to-one method for data collection, by ensuring an effective data collection process and assuring confidentiality of the information offered by the participants (see Chapter 5 Methodology for details). Whilst it cannot be claimed that admissions of criminal behaviour presented are complete, owing to the number of participants involved （N=800） the room for bias is reduced, as the data is collected from 9 different *Tsangaya* schools in different communities, kilometres away from each other, which boosts the reliability level (Andres, 2012). Thus, the general trends outlined below are at the least indicative of a more accurate picture than has hitherto been provided.

Table 6.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Nature and Extent of *Almajirai* Self-Reported Criminality

	Range	**locations**	**Mean**	**SD**	***P* value**
Substance Abuse	0-2	Urban	0.00	.058	0.414
		Rural	0.00	.000	
		General	0.00	.050	
Fighting	0-2	Urban	0.20	.427	0.000
		Rural	0.02	.122	
		General	0.15	.383	
Theft	0-2	Urban	0.03	.180	1.000
		Rural	0.03	.171	
		General	0.03	.178	
Other Criminal and Antisocial acts	0-2	Urban	0.02	.134	0.180
		Rural	0.01	.071	
		General	0.01	.122	

Table 6.2 Cross-Tabulation of Reporting Others' Criminality

	Range	locations	Mean	SD	Never		Rarely		Frequently	
					N	%	*N*	%	*N*	%
Substance abuse	0-2	Urban	0.00	.058	600	100	00	00	00	00
		Rural	0.00	.000	200	100	00	00	00	00
		General	0.00	.050	800	100	00	00	00	00
Fighting	0-2	Urban	0.56	.573	290	48.3	285	47.5	21	3.5
		Rural	0.43	.506	116	58.4	83	41.5	01	0.1
		General	0.51	.561	406	50.8	368	46	26	3.3
Theft	0-2	Urban	0.52	.516	291	48.5	304	50.6	05	0.8
		Rural	0.47	.510	107	53.5	92	46	01	0.5
		General	0.51	.515	398	49.8	396	49.5	06	0.8
Other Criminal / Antisocial acts	0-2	Urban	0.03	.180	583	97.1	16	2.6	01	0.1
		Rural	0.00	.171	199	99.5	01	0.5	00	00
		General	0.02	.160	782	97.8	17	2.1	01	0.1

6.2 The Level of Criminality in *Almajirai*

Across each domain of inquiry (substance abuse, fighting, stealing (theft), and other criminal or anti-social behaviours) the mean for self-reported criminality was low ranging from 0 for substance abuse to 0.20 for fighting (Table 6.1), rising to 0.56 (Table 6.2) for fighting when reporting on the behaviour of others. Each of these categories is discussed in turn throughout the remainder of the chapter.

6.2.1 *Almajirai* and Petty Theft for Survival

The quantitative data analysis finds extremely low levels of self-reported acts of theft (*m* = 0.03, SD = .178) in the range of 0-2 (see Table 6.1). The data further indicates that half (N = 398; 49.8%) of the respondents believe their colleagues do not steal (see Table 6.2), whilst the other half (N = 396; 49.5%) reported that their colleagues have stolen on rare occasions. Less than 1% (N = 6) of respondents reported that their peers engage in stealing frequently (see Table 6.2). By implication, the analysis reveals a high level of occasional involvement in theft. Even though 49.8 per cent of the *Almajirai* reported that their colleagues were involved in theft acts, but very few, 0.8 per cent, believed the involvement in the acts by their colleagues is frequent, the outcome, however, does not represent the number of *Almajirai* involved in the act of theft. Rather, it is the perceived prevalence of the act amongst *Almajirai*. It is possible, for example, that the same *Tsangaya* respondents were referring to the same (small) number of *Almajirai* involved in theft.

The quantitative analysis shows that the difference in involvement in theft and location has no statistical significance (p = 1.000). Similarly, the descriptive analysis supports the absence of difference between urban (m = 0.03, SD = .180) and rural (m = 0.03, SD = .171) participants (see Table 6.1). Moreover, 50.6 per cent of urban *Almajirai* reported colleagues' involvement in theft acts, while 46 per cent of rural participants agreed that their colleagues rarely steal from others, suggesting the prevalence is marginally higher in urban areas than in rural *Almajirai*. Very few *Almajirai* (urban N = 05; 0.8%, and rural N = 01; 0.5%) reported that their colleagues frequently steal others' property. The data cannot account for the number of those involved, because it is not clear who gets involved and who does not, but they do suggest a high frequency of the occurrence of occasional theft by the *Almajirai* within or outside some *Tsangaya* schools.

To understanding the magnitude and seriousness of the theft committed by some of the *Almajirai*, the participants including the *Malamai* and the *Almajirai* reported instances and details on the nature, extent and pattern of theft engaged by *Almajirai*, which sometimes occurred within the *Tsangaya* setting. The items that are commonly stolen within *Tsangaya* schools include mobile phones, foodstuffs, and clothes:

To be honest, I know some Almajirai who steal, of course. They take stolen phones to the market, where stolen phones are bought and sold from different places… Even in this Tsangaya, I lost three different phones, at different times to such Almajirai …For example, on Thursdays, when most of the Almajirai are not around, such Almajirai come to steal new clothes from the other Almajirai bags and take them to the town (Mamman aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Even here in Tsangaya, some engage in such acts, for instance, someone might be sleeping within the Tsangaya compound, and when he woke up, he found that his cell phone went missing (Mallam Tahir, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, there are thieves in Tsangaya, but someone has to be patient if he loses an item. Because it is not easy to detect them. Some are stealing, as I told you before (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, I often do get such complaints of stealing by my Almajirai… For instance, in the Tsangaya schools there are instances where in the absence of the students, some of them return and search for the bags of the students, and steal some items kept in the bags. If it is money, they take it away, even if it is food items, they steal also. There are all these cases in many Tsangaya (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

The responses indicate that there are acts of theft by *Almajirai* among themselves, characterized by a pattern of taking advantage of moments when the targeted items are not

well guarded by the owners. Perpetrators appear to focus on items that have monetary value. However, there was no self-report of theft in the interviews, thus those who commit the act cannot easily be identified. Theft is not limited to *Tsangaya* settings. Given the nature of the items involved in the theft, and both the victims and the perpetrators are identified as those experiencing severe absolute deprivation (see next Chapter 7 for details). It can be understood that the nature of theft is petty theft, conditioned by the severe deprived situation.

The data also provides details on the instances of the act outside *Tsangaya*. One of the *Almajiri* respondents felt that legitimate activities such as scavenging solid waste (such as plastics and aluminum) to sell to recyclers, could lead to criminal acts, notably theft:

Well, if someone follows those who steal, he can also learn. Something like scavenging solid waste and selling it to buyers, because it leads to taking other people's property. (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, there are many Almajirai who steal from the fruits in the market, some even steal money… It is easy! Something like someone keeps a wristwatch on the fruits when he is busy with the transactions… I was there when the money and the wristwatch went missing, it was taken by someone… Just like this （demonstrates） if I keep the wristwatch like this （demonstrates） and someone took it away (Danliti Aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya).

They mostly engage in stealing from farms, something like potatoes, and this is common among Almajirai, like going into the farms to steal or to take stalks and sell, and so on (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

It is true that we often steal from farm produce, like tomatoes, maize, and so on, or harvest the pepper and sell it (Jari Aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

Scavenging solid waste as a means of survival reflects a significant degree of opportunity deprivation. In the context of Northern Nigeria, such activities are predominantly undertaken by individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds as a means of sustaining their livelihood. The practice of scavenging for valuable items is primarily driven by the necessity to generate income for the fulfillment of basic needs. However, concerns have been raised by the data regarding the tendency of some *Almajirai* engaged in scavenging to resort to theft, particularly of valuable materials such as iron belonging to others. While this may be true for some *Almajirai*, it is important to acknowledge that other youth within the same neighborhoods also participate in similar activities. During a field visit to a *Tsangaya* school for data collection, I encountered a group of young boys scavenging at a waste dump. Given that it was study hours for the *Almajirai*, their presence at the dump site was unexpected.

Upon inquiry, they denied being *Almajirai*, highlighting a critical issue: youth engaging in scavenging may often be misidentified as *Almajirai*. Consequently, if they engage in criminal activities, the blame may be unjustly attributed to the *Almajirai*, reinforcing existing stereotypes and misconceptions.

In the same vein, the data shows that the struggle in commercial centres to augment their needs can also risk the *Almajirai* engaging in theft. It further shows that even the availability of opportunities to steal can vary, as some of the *Almajirai* utilise opportunities to steal from the farms. Some of the stolen items are sold in marketplaces that harbour such transactions. The presence of *Almajirai* in such settings and the opportunity offered to observe how such acts are committed as outlined above by *Danliti* can have implications for learning and subsequent engagement in the act of theft. The common act of theft by rural *Almajirai* is related to stealing farm produce, those that are consumable such as potatoes, and those that are not consumable like stalks, which can be sold to earn money. This also reveals a difference between urban and rural *Almajirai*, which manifests in a difference in available opportunity and accessibility to the property commonly stolen in the different settings. The complaints are many in some *Tsangaya* schools, while in others, the cases reported are few. This may indicate variations in the extent to which the *Almajirai* are criminalized by different communities.

Some of the *Malamai* corroborate student reports, experiencing complaints by community members of petty theft by their *Almajirai* in the neighbourhood, including some of the "*Uwar Daki*" (see Chapter 7, section 7.2.2):

Yes. We have many reports of theft cases from the community members, it happens, I told you those with weak minds… The truth is that it depends, but in most cases, it is cell phones, they mostly steal cell phones (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Yeah, it happens sometimes, we have two experiences of such boys. There was a moment when many individuals within the community came and reported our Almajiri to us, regarding theft in the community. (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Usually, the Almajirai are reported by their 'uwayen daki' for stealing or abandoning their designated work and running away (Mallam Hadi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

The implication though is that theft committed by a few *Almajirai* can be a reason for criminalizing all *Almajirai*, including those that do not steal. Therefore, most of them are

often blamed for theft in many situations, which could be the reason some of them believe that they are often scapegoated for crimes when the actual perpetrators of the act cannot be identified. Thus, the emphasis on stealing by some *Almajirai* expressed by individuals may overestimate its actual occurrences. Some respondents felt that the *Almajirai* were criminalised, more than they were actually involved:

Most of the time, Almajirai are blamed for stealing from the farm, even if it is stolen by community members… Well, they can be caught stealing from the farms. But the fact is that they are always blamed for what they didn't do (Sule Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

On study-free days, during the morning sessions, we always warn and remind them not to befriend other children from the community. Because, if they commit any offence, like fighting, or stealing, in the end, the Almajirai will be blamed for the offence. (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

No, we do not have. Mostly we are even the victims of such crime. I told you about our student who was stabbed with a knife in this room. We went to the police and reported the case, but in the end, we understood they were not ready to help us, just because we are Almajirai. (Mallam Hamisu, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Despite the reported incidences of theft committed by *Almajirai* within and outside the *Tsangaya*, it is clear that the extent to which the incidence occurs is affected by the immediate environment and depends on the individual *Almajiri* in the situation, because not every *Almajiri* has the motivation for theft, even in desperation (see Chapter 8 section 8.3). The data supports the assumption of routine activity theorists that – the intersection of a motivated offender, a suitable target and a capable guardian – creates a setting favourable for offending behaviour (Lawrence and Marcus, 1979). On the other hand, some *Almajirai* perceived that there is exaggeration in the extent to which they are linked with stealing in their host communities. This is corroborated by the quantitative data, which indicates that petty theft is rarely committed. In essence, for an *Almajiri* to commit theft there must be an atmosphere in the society that either harbours the act or accepts it as an alternative to a situation, which can make it a common practice not commonly available for all, and requires some effort to be achieved, as argued by Cloward and Ohlin (2001). The analysis confirms this by indicating that theft opportunities vary across locations. Even though the petty theft by the *Almajirai* does occur across both urban and rural areas, the extent and circumstances under which they commit the act suggest that there is exaggeration in attribution of theft to them, to scapegoat the theft committed by other youths. It should be recalled that the PSJ's (2022)

has confirmed that 70 per cent of Nigerian youth embrace criminality because of poverty (see Chapter 1), but this analysis suggests few *Almajirai* are involved even in petty theft.

6.2.2 Not Our Thing! *Almajirai* and Substance Abuse

Substance abuse is also considered one of the serious criminal acts often committed by youth, particularly in Northern Nigerian Hausa societies (Casey, 2014; Dawha, 1996; Salaam, 2011). However, in the case of *Almajirai*, the findings of the survey further indicate an absence of substance abuse among *Almajirai* in both self-report (m = 0.00, SD = .050) and colleagues' involvement (N = 00, 00%). Substance abuse is by far an uncommon act among *Almajirai*.

No, no one is into substance abuse. Smoking is seen as an extreme form of criminality. Whosoever smokes can do any criminal act (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

I have never encountered any Almajiri who is into substance abuse. Traditionally smoking is a detested act of immorality, it affects the image of an individual and causes us a loss of respect (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Here we do not have Almajiri who engages in drug abuse, alcoholism, or any other similar vices (Mallam Tahir, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

No, no, no, it is unlikely. Throughout my life as an Almajiri, I have never seen any Almajiri who is into substance abuse, never! (Sule Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

No, there are no smokers here in the Tsangaya (Jari Aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

That is a serious issue; I have never seen such cases among Almajirai. To be honest, it is not easily possible. Yes, it is not (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

Substance abuse, be it in the form of smoking substances or taking any oral substance for intoxication, is highly considered a serious act of immorality, by cultural definition in the *Almajirai*. This results from widely held operational values regarding smoking and intoxication within Northern Nigeria (see context in Chapter 1). This clearly explains the reason for there being a lack of any reported cases of substance abuse in the data. Some *Almajirai* perceive substance abuse as a pathway to engagement in other forms of criminality, and the strong resistance to it, is in itself suggestive of a very different understanding of crime to that in the Global North. Qualitative data corroborates the quantitative analysis, with regards to the non-existence of substance abuse among the

Almajirai, with no difference between rural and urban *Almajirai*. One of the *Malamai* further highlights that:

It is not easily possible to see an Almajiri in substance abuse, and whenever such is found, then it must be related to what I told you previously, relating to getting the privilege of having freedom, because of privilege over other students. Having more money than necessary will attract drug users to become his friends, and in the end, they can influence him to be one of them (Mallam Hadi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

The explanation here for any involvement in substance use is related to a 'lifestyle' outside of the expectations of the *Tsangaya* system, having access to money and freedom to purchase that this allows. Moreover, some data suggest that the tendency for an *Almajiri* to be engaged in substance abuse would be related to some circumstances of pre-*Tsangaya* life or background (see Chapter 10).

6.2.3 Fighting for Status: *Almajirai* Involvement in Fighting

The act of fighting expresses hostility and violence against other individuals. The law governing the area of this study criminalizes any "acts of physical aggression towards any person, such as slapping, hitting, kicking, and beating" (Jigawa State, 2021, p.4). However, it is considered a petty crime because it is not regarded as a serious crime by the public perception within the context of where this study is conducted. In the present analysis, the focus was on the reported and observed level of *Almajirai* involvement in fights in the *Tsangaya* among themselves, and with other children in the neighbourhood. The self-report quantitative analysis shows a low level of involvement in fighting by *Almajirai* in the neighbourhood (m = 0.15, SD = .383, see Table 6.1).

Analysis of the data further reveals that 50.8% (N = 406) *Almajirai* respondents believed their peers do not get involved in fighting, whilst 46% (N = 368) reported their colleagues rarely get involved in fighting, and some 3.3% (N = 26) reported frequent involvement of their peers in fights (see Table 6.2). The survey analysis also finds there is a higher involvement in fights by urban-based *Almajirai* (m = 0.20, SD = .427), than their rural counterparts (m=0.002, SD=.122), but the difference is not statistically significant (see Table 6.1), implying the outcome is likely due to chance rather than true effect. Moreover, the analysis reveals 47.5% (N = 285) of urban *Almajirai*, and 41.5% (N = 83) of rural *Almajirai* believe their colleagues often engage in fights. A few *Almajirai* (urban 3.5%, N = 21; and

rural 0.1%, N = 01) reported frequent involvement in fights by their peers. Thus, the quantitative data suggests relatively high involvement in fights by *Almajirai*, with those in urban settings having higher involvement in fights than those in rural communities. The interview data expands on the pattern and extent of this involvement:

The Mallam warns us that we should maintain our status as Almajirai. We should not fight other children in the community, or disrespect elders. But to show courage some of us fight against other individuals (Mamman aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Well, this often occurs among Almajirai themselves. For instance, some of us do fight. Also, if one Almajiri pushes the other Almajiri to the wall, he can report him to the Mallam, but if reporting to the Mallam itself signifies some weaknesses, he can take revenge, resulting in fighting among them, where they can injure themselves (Amadi aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Fighting is common between Almajirai and other children. Some of them fight in the community, it happens often, and sometimes it turns out to be violent. (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

Yes, it happens. We do fight with other children… Yeah, I do, but now, I am grown, I do not fight that much… They always tease and provoke me, calling me names, because I am an Almajiri (Jari aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

Fighting between *Almajirai* and other children in the neighbourhood is one of the concerns of some *Malamai*. Fights can originate from how *Almajirai* are treated as migrants (as discussed in Chapter 7). Therefore, in anticipation of facing such insulting words, *Almajirai* are cautioned by their *Malamai* to avoid fighting with other children. Despite these instructions, some *Almajirai* consider fighting other children as a way of displaying courage and settling status. Perhaps, to cope with status deprivation through discrimination and rejection, they face in the neighborhood. The situation is described analogously by both urban and rural *Almajirai*. Sometimes, fights occur amongst *Almajirai* themselves, and in either situation, such fights can occasionally turn into severe violence.

Even though fighting is considered a petty crime, being an act that commonly occurs among youth, and not considered as serious crime, in some situations, it can be serious when it involves serious bodily harm (Sellin and Wolfgang, 1964). During my fieldwork, in one of the urban *Tsangaya* I visited, I observed a situation whereby an *Almajiri* was injured, and bleeding from his forehead, resulting from fighting with another *Almajiri*, over ownership of a begging bowl. I promptly alerted the *Mallam*, who took the injured *Almajiri* to a nearby

hospital for treatment. I managed to ask the *Almajirai* there if such a situation had ever happened in the *Tsangaya* previously. They reported to me that it happens, but it is very rare. Given such violent aggression and hostility towards others, one of the *Malamai* revealed that:

Yes, if an Almajiri is attacked, in such a situation he can take anything to use against his opponent. For instance, in fighting, Almajirai can engage and beat up the opponent to show the strength of their nerve, which attracts them respect, even though it is not right to fight it is an offence (Mallam Danladi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

The responses show such violent fighting rarely occurs among *Almajirai*. However, the quantitative data signifies a lower involvement in fighting by rural *Almajirai*, compared to those in urban settings. Given the connections made in the interviews, this may be related to the lower level of discrimination and rejection experienced (see Chapter 7) by the *Almajirai* in the two different social settings, which in turn influences the level of self-concept and hostility towards others.

Moreover, the self-concept and desire to gain status by winning fights both amongst *Almajirai* themselves and against other children in the community have become incorporated into the *Almajirai* culture of dealing with their situation and identity. Beating up the opponent, and winning the fight appears to be important to them.

I do fight with boys of the community, and I beat them up! (Danliti aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, there are complaints about fighting between the children in the community and our Almajirai, mostly involving our younger students, with other small kids in the community (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Essentially, the qualitative data indicates that the tendency to fight by the *Almajirai* is often relative to how they experience discrimination from other children in the neighbourhood, the perception of *Almajirai* on the phenomenon of fighting another individual, and how the *Mallam* of each *Tsangaya* handles issues related to fighting between *Almajirai*, and with other children in the neighbourhood in which they live. There were moments when I observed the *Almajirai* being beaten up by older individuals. In such situations, I asked the *Almajirai* if there was anything they could do about it, but they replied that their vengeance will come from God.

6.2.4 *Almajirai* and Other Criminal and Deviant/Anti-Social Acts

Other serious crimes, and petty deviant and anti-social acts were reported in an open-ended space in the questionnaire and explored through interviews and observations. These acts are considered by the *Almajirai* and their *Mallam* as deviant and anti-social acts in the neighbourhood in which they live. The acts as reported by the *Almajirai* include criminal acts such as sexual assault and petty crimes such as animal poaching through hunting. Anti-social behaviours include, for example, open defecation around the neighbourhood, violation of *Tsangaya* rules, scavenging on the dumped waste, and rough playing. The quantitative analysis indicates exceptionally low involvement in these other delinquent acts, by both self-report data (m = 0.01, SD=.122) (Table 6.1), and peer report (m = 0.02; SD = .160) (Table 6.2). Similarly, both the self-report and peer-report data indicate no significant difference (p=.180) between urban (m=0.02; SD=,134) and rural (m=0.01; SD=.071) *Almajirai* (see Table 6.1), (Urban – m=0.03; SD=.180 and Rural= 0.00; SD=.171) (see Table 6.2). The interview data provides some context for engagement in such acts:

There are common acts among us, you see we go hunting, we hunt rodents like squirrels or snakes. We kill them and cook to eat (Jari aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

We don't have any toilets to be precise, most of them go to uncompleted buildings, especially at night. An Almajiri has to go and find somewhere to ease himself. There is nothing we can do. And it is in such situations that the students usually defecate in front of people's houses, sometimes even in front of their accommodations (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Traditional hunting or poaching of wild animals such as rodents and reptiles is prohibited by the Nigerian Endangered Species Decree of 1985 now CAP. E9, 2004 Act, (Law Nigeria, 2018). The Act defines wild animals as "any animal not habitually found in a domesticated state" (Federal Ministry of Environment, 2016, p.5). The Act categorically stated that "no person shall hunt, capture, trade-in or otherwise deal with an animal species specified in the Second Schedule to this Act (being animals which, though not necessarily now threatened with extinction, may become so threatened unless trade in respect of such species is controlled) except where he has a license issued under this Act" (ibid. p.2). Therefore, in many situations, even traditional hunters must strategize ways to evade arrest and prosecution by law enforcement bodies (Paul Mmahi & Usman, 2020). The *Almajirai* usually get involved in such acts of hunting reptiles and rodents, on their study-free days. During my

fieldwork in one of the urban areas, I met an *Almajiri* holding two big (dead) pythons, in an *Almajirai* gathering spot, who told me that hunting is a normal activity they engaged in on their study-free days. They were going to cook them for their dinner. He further informed me that they usually hunt squirrels and other rodents. I was also told the same, in a similar incident by a rural-based *Almajiri*. However, the act of poaching vermin and hunting are criminalised by state laws. The acts of poaching vermin called *'Kore'* and hunting *'Farauta'* are two distinct acts commonly identified as deviant and antisocial acts engaged mostly by *'Yan Farauta* in Hausa society.

Given the level of deprivation among the *Almajirai*, living without full parental care, lack of effective supervision by their guardians, and the typical survival practices they engage in (see Chapter 10), sexual abuse is identified as a serious form of criminality that occurs in rare cases amongst *Almajirai*, either as victims or perpetrators. Throughout my data collection, I did not come across any report of such an act, other than a reported instance of an attempted molestation, at another *Tsangaya*.

The sexual molestation, never happened here, but there are such Tsangaya where cases like that happened, I have heard about it. As a leader, I was invited to one such Tsangaya for a probe, and we found out that it was an attempt, but the molestation never took place (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Whenever we find an attempt at sexual abuse within Tsangaya, we seek to find out the problem and how it happens. We cannot take someone who commits such acts to his parents. Instead, we try to see how we can change his situation. If our student was the victim, we faced the perpetrator directly, or met his parents Mallam Danladi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

The data does not dispute the occurrences or attempts of acts of sexual assault among *Tsangaya* students. Some existing literature, such as Sarkingobir, Sambo, Hamza, Tambari, and Sahabi (2020), discuss an incident where a *Mallam* was found sexually assaulting his *Almajirai* and using them for sexual services for other individuals. From the present study's data, the incidence of sexual abuse is rare.

Much more frequently within the *Tsangaya* are *Almajirai* violating the rules of their *Malamai*, identified as deviant and antisocial act:

Sometimes, an Almajiri might deliberately be late to school, even though he knows that amounts to punishment. But he would still do it, to reveal his bravery and stubbornness and impress his colleagues (Musa aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

We set rules against going to the river, but many times, our students take the risk of going swimming in the river, to the extent some of them can lose their life. We have lost about four of our Almajirai through swimming in the river (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

There are Almajirai that commit such offensive acts; for example, when they go to the riverside, one might be afraid to enter the river, and another one might lead them all into the river. (Mamman aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

In every *Tsangaya* the *Mallam* set rules to control their *Almajirai*, such as returning to *Tsangaya* after intermittent study sessions or other study-free hours. However, some *Almajirai* violate the rules set for them, and as evidenced above some of them return to the *Tsangaya* late. Others visit prohibited places, such as going to the river to swim, particularly in *Tsangaya* schools in communities close to rivers, a sign of demonstrating courage and bravery through rule-breaking. The rule violations and visiting places that are highly dangerous, such as the rivers may, however, also indicate low self-control (Grasmick, Tittle, Bursik, & Arneklev, 1993). Consequently, there were experiences reported by some who lost their lives. The data reveals peer influence on risk-taking and rule transgression as a means of displaying courage to earn respect among peers as the key factors for the *Tsangaya* rule violation.

6.3 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the likelihood for *Almajirai* to engage in serious crimes such as sexual assault and substance abuse is very rare. Yet, some *Almajirai* often engaged in petty crimes such as petty theft and fighting. The petty theft occurs both in and outside of their *Tsangaya*. However, the findings are complicated by a very low self-reporting of petty theft (which is not unusual in such studies) and fairly high (about 50%) reports of others being involved. Even if it was accepted that participants were commenting on separate individuals, this means that about half of the *Almajirai* are not believed by their peers to be involved in theft and fighting. The opportunities for theft vary across communities and *Tsangaya* schools. With regards to fighting, *Almajirai* get involved in the act mostly to display courage and earn status, to deal with the situation of discrimination, rejection, and sometimes experience being beaten up by older individuals. However, when engaging in fighting, some *Almajirai* turn out to be more violent, leading to serious bodily harm. The extent of the involvement in fighting is higher in urban areas than in rural settings. Moreover,

the findings indicate that serious crimes such as substance use and sexual assault are highly detested acts by moral definition and are not commonly found among *Almajirai*. Sexual abuse is known to occur but is rare.

Reportedly, *Almajirai* also engaged in other deviant and antisocial acts, including open defecation, poaching vermin, scavenging solid waste, and violating *Tsangaya* rules. In most cases, the chapter findings show that the petty crimes and deviant behaviours committed by the *Almajirai* are often responses to deprivation, as they suggest adopting illegitimate opportunistic methods and strategies for survival. The petty crimes and deviant behaviours that result from social harms such as severe deprivation, are described by criminologists as consequences of injustice by the policy elites, through marginalising some social groups, relegating them to a state of disadvantage, and even criminalising their alternative ways of survival by the law created by the elites, constructing them as individual pathology (see for example, Heather, 2013; Quinney, 1982; Vegh Weis, 2017; Young, 1999). Essentially, it is explicit in Shari'a law governing the social context of the locations where this study is conducted that acts committed in desperation, in the absence of other alternatives, are not regarded as unlawful (see Zahra & Herman, 2023).

By implication, this chapter demonstrates the relevance of strain, routine activity, social learning and self-control theories in explaining the context of offending and deviant behaviours in the *Almajirai*, because the occasional and petty crime and deviant acts in them are often influenced by factors such as absolute needs and dealing with deprivation, opportunity, peer influence, and risk-taking behaviour. It further highlights the need for social justice emphasised by critical and Marxist criminologists. The following two Chapters analyse the depth of deprivation experienced by *Almajirai* and how it relates to crime.

Two dead pythons unskinned by an *Almajiri* before cooking (Photo: Mamun Usman)

CHAPTER SEVEN

UNDERSTANDING THE DEPTH OF DEPRIVATION IN *ALMAJIRAI*

7.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses the data relevant to further understanding levels of absolute and relative deprivation in the *Almajirai*, and how this is impacted by context across urban and rural locations. The distinction of measures between absolute and relative deprivation is a source of debate (Pettigrew, 2015), but such a distinction is made in the literature review. In measuring the depth of deprivation Gordon et al (2003, p.6） suggested that "deprivation can be conceptualized as a continuum that ranges from no deprivation, through mild, moderate and severe deprivation to extreme deprivation at the far end of the scale". In this study, I similarly sought to explore depth on a range of 0 - 3 (0 = never, 1 = rarely, 2 = often, 3 = more often), indicating access to/or deprivation from absolute to relative indicators. The descriptive mean score represents 3 - 'no deprivation', 2.9 – 2 mild deprivation, 1.9 – 1.5 moderate deprivation, 1.49 - 1 severe deprivation, and 0.1 - 0.9 extreme deprivation. The values were decided based on the provision of the depth and severity measures of deprivation by Delamonica and Minujin (2007) and Gordon et al.（2003). However, where deprivation is measured as perceived discrimination, rejection, or worse off in comparison to others, scores represent the following levels of deprivation: extreme 3 - 2, severe 1.9 – 1.5, moderate 1.4 – 1, mild 0.9 – 0.1, and 0 as none. The measures are considered based on the extent of access to resources and experiences of discrimination.

The data evidences the depth of absolute and relative deprivation as they vary across urban and rural locations, demonstrating the relationships between depth of deprivation and opportunities in connection with location. Understanding the level of deprivation is an important prerequisite in explaining behavioural outcomes, such as criminality (Agnew, 2001; Runciman, 1966). Thus, this chapter provides a basis for empirically assessing any potential relationship between deprivation and criminality amongst the *Almajirai*, discussed in Chapter 8.

7.2 The Level of Absolute Deprivation in the *Almajirai*

The level of absolute deprivation experienced by participants is measured by levels of access to basic life necessities such as safe water for drinking, food, clothing, and accommodation, as suggested in the thresholds proposed by Gordon et al. (2003) as an initial set of basic minimum requirements for life. Other indicators used, such as level of inclusion and income, have been proposed by previous studies (See, for example, Ladin, 2014; Burraston, McCutcheon, & Watts, 2017; Greitemeyer & Sagioglou, 2019).

Descriptive analysis (see Table 7.1) reveals the level of absolute deprivation in the *Almajirai* participants. The mean score on the range indicates access to the indicator resources. The greater the mean score, the lower the level of deprivation, and vice versa. Other than in the spheres of measuring discrimination and rejection, where the mean scores directly indicate the extent of the social exclusion faced by the participants.

Table 7.1 Descriptive Analysis of Level of Absolute Deprivation in the *Almajirai* (N = 800, Range = 0-3)

Indicators		Mean	Std. Deviation
Access to adequate safe water	General	1.49	.615
	Urban	1.51	.641
	Rural	1.44	.526
Access to adequate food	General	1.22	.434
	Urban	1.26	.451
	Rural	1.13	.361
Access to adequate clothing	General	1.24	.474
	Urban	1.27	.499
	Rural	1.12	.369
Parental provision of money	General	1.05	.766
	Urban	1.06	.753
	Rural	1.03	.805
Personal effort to generate money	General	1.16	.505
	Urban	1.18	.525
	Rural	1.13	.436
Experience of discrimination in the neighbourhood	General	1.01	.707
	Urban	1.08	.711
	Rural	0.80	.741
Experience of rejection in the community	General	0.92	.726
	Urban	0.98	.741
	Rural	0.72	.643

The standard deviation （SD） indicates the range between the mean and the values; meaning the smaller the standard deviation, the closer it is to the mean of the data set, the larger the standard deviation the farther the values are from the mean (Rumsey, 2011).

7.2.1 Access to Safe Water

The data show a moderate level of deprivation for access to safe water (*m* = 1.49; SD = . 615）on the range of 0-3. Access to safe water is measured by the adequacy of the sources, distance from the sources, and the safety （purity） of the source itself, as suggested by Gordon et al （2003). The analysis indicates the depth of deprivation from access to adequate safe water is higher among rural-based *Almajirai* (*m* = 1.44, SD = .526） than in urban-based *Almajirai* (*m* = 1.51, SD = .641） (see Table 7.1).

In some of the *Tsangaya* I visited, I observed that there are constructed boreholes and hand pumps within the schools, which are the main sources of water for the *Almajirai* and in some situations for other members of the neighbourhood. Other schools use plastic rubber tanks to get the water and store it for their collective use. When asked about their sources of water, distance from the sources, and the water purity, the responses varied across *Tsangaya*:

"*We have a borehole as our major source in the Tsangaya. There is also a tank that is used for storing the water……There is another water hand pump nearby; we go there to get the water when our own gets damaged. There is also a hand pump somewhere around. We also go there to fetch water whenever the water booster is faulty*." (Mamman Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

"*Because of the inadequate electrical power supply, we have difficulties; we must buy diesel to use a power generator and draw the water up to the tank. Sometimes, the generator gets faulty, as you can see now, the repair is going on. In some certain situations, like now, I have to send some of the students to go somewhere far and get the water for my family."* (Mallam Usman, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

"You can see, we have the overhead water tank, and solar boreholes all available in this Tsangaya. This helps the entire neighbourhood, as it serves as the main source of water for all." (Amadi, Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Some participants from urban *Tsangaya* explain that they have invested a financial effort to construct boreholes, hand pumps, and overhead tanks, as their sources of water supply. This is because the public sources of water function with electric power, but with continuous interruption of electrical power supply, *Tsangaya* opt for diesel power generators to draw

water from the borehole to be stored in plastic tanks. This shows the financial costs associated with access to water in *Tsangaya*. In some situations, when the sources of water become faulty, the *Almajirai* must walk long distances to get water for themselves and the family of their *Malamai*. From what I observed, the distance usually ranges up to three kilometres. This indicates a clear manifestation of deprivation. However, for *Almajirai* in Kano urban area, the experience is even worse:

We have an open well in our house, which we get water from. Now, it has gone dry for about seven months. Therefore, we use a borehole nearby, and a hand pump close to the mosque there. And in case the hand pump got faulty, we usually contribute money among ourselves for its maintenance… In most cases, hand pump sources rarely taste good, and are not good for drinking compared to public taps and borehole sources." (Mallam Tahir, Urban Teacher).

We have to walk long distances before we get water from other hand pumps or boreholes in the community. Sometimes we must beg some households around to allow us to get it from their taps…. We have big containers where we store the water. It is scheduled for all students. Each one of us belongs to a team that works on getting the water for the Tsangaya, on a particular day in the week. We work three times on each day our duty turns; early in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the night." (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

My late father built a well in his house, and the well has never run dry for about forty to fifty years, and seasonally a cleaning exercise is conducted to purify it, which also boosts the flow of the water. All the Almajirai and some of our neighbours rely on the well as their source of water, but now as you can see, we have a public tap very close to the Tsangaya." (Mallam Mahdi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya)

"To be precise we don't have any source of water in the school, our students rely on public and commercial boreholes around the neighbourhood. They beg for it, and they are allowed to get some. We also have plastic drums, where we store the water, we purchase from vendors. As a routine duty, each day some students are assigned on a daily shift, to get the water and fill the drums. They have a scheduling table for the task, and each one of them knows his duty day" (Mallam Hamisu, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

In a large and old urban community such as Kano, the tradition of utilizing open wells, which contain some impurities, is still practised among residents and in *Tsangaya* schools. In such *Tsangaya*, access to safe water is a challenging task. Even the open wells often go dry after rainy seasons. The responses indicate inadequate safe water supply as an endemic problem within the neighbourhood in which most *Tsangaya* schools are situated. The *Almajirai* must rely on public boreholes and hand pumps, usually found amid the host communities, some distance away from the *Tsangaya*. In some *Tsangayu*, it is routine for students to get water

in their free time. Moreover, the *Malamai* must make financial contributions to repair the community sources when they get faulty, as a gesture to establish themselves as eligible beneficiaries of the community sources. I observed that the community sources are mainly boreholes powered by solar power, electric power generators, and the government-owned power supply company. Some of the borehole sources are privately owned by individuals, who use them as a source of income. The *Almajirai* also get access to safe water for drinking, when they ask for it from the households that have portable sources of water in their domains.

Some of the *Tsangaya* schools scheduled shared responsibility for water collection among the students, within the weekdays. The students fetch water from relatively distant locations, and it is stored in tanks and other containers. I observed that the storage included large plastic containers, large empty drums, and sometimes a big pot made from clay. *Almajirai* also visits commercial boreholes or households to beg for water. In some rural-based *Tsangaya* schools, the experiences reveal some similarities with the urban-based *Tsangaya* in terms of utilizing general community sources:

We have a lot of hand pumps and one solar-powered tap in this community. So, we go there to get water anytime we need it." (Sule Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

We get water from a hand pump and borehole and store it in a large pot … the borehole source is tastier compared to the hand pumps. But the problem is that if you want to get water from the borehole you must follow the queue. There is a crowd always. (Jari Aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The rural-based *Almajirai* have more access to hand-pumps than boreholes, which in my observations, was the most common source of water in rural communities. These boreholes rely on the supply of electricity, which is often unavailable. The qualitative data highlights and elaborates the representation of the quantitative data, suggesting moderate and sometimes severe deprivation of access to safe water by the *Almajirai*, which relies heavily on the peculiarities of the host communities, the time of year, and the capability of the *Tsangaya* to establish its source.

7.2.2 Access to Food

The data reveals severe food deprivation in *Almajirai*, with a mean access score of 1.22 (SD = .434), which is lower among rural participants (*m* = 1.13, SD = .361) compared to their urban counterparts (*m* = 1.26, SD = .451） (see Table 7.1). Those interviewed provided more details on how *Almajirai* access food in both settings:

We all go out to beg and work to get food or money… An Almajiri can sometimes spend a day without getting the food. There are Almajirai who do not go begging, while others go; they go house to house to beg for food. However, the food obtained from begging is also served to some older Almajirai." (Mamman Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

No one can guarantee himself access to food unless he has a surrogate mother. Some of us go to work in the households and are given food. (Amadi Aged 15, student Urban Tsangaya).

When they get enough food from begging, they keep the remainder for the next morning. In the morning, they warm it and eat it. Sometimes they add some spices to make it tasty. (Mallam Saminu, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

One major known means of accessing food by *Almajirai* is through begging in the neighbourhood and earning income through work, unlike students in formal schools, who are fed by the government. During fieldwork, I observed that the *Almajirai* moved from house to house begging, chanting a song with words connoting humility and wishing fortunes to whomever gives the beggar. Sometimes, *Almajirai* work as errand boys to many married women in purdah. These women are called '*Uwayen Daki'* (plural) or '*Uwar Daki'* (singular), which literally means a 'surrogate mother' or a caretaker, denoting a contract relation between them and the women and *Almajirai*. The *Almajiri* is engaged in menial jobs and sent on errands, while the woman rewards the *Almajiri* with daily meals and sometimes with money. The relationship guarantees access to food for the *Almajiri*, as begging does not always guarantee access to food. The *Almajirai* who do not have *'Uwar Daki'* have to beg or use the money they earn through other income-generating activities to buy food to eat. This indicates that the *Almajirai* typically struggle to feed themselves. The interview data further explains that the food often accessed by the *Almajirai* is not adequate for what they desire to eat:

Sometimes, one can be lucky to get enough food. For instance, if there is a ceremony somewhere, and you attend the place, one can get enough leftover food, which one likes." (Mamman Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Sometimes we eat to satisfaction. Even though most of the time we can't get what we want to eat, often we do get enough to be satisfied, but not all the time. (Rabilu aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Adequacy of food and access to a preferred variety indicates the level of food deprivation. The experience of the *Almajirai* shows that they mostly do not have access to sufficient food, and do not always get what they want to eat, except on rare occasions. This can be related to the dependency of the *Almajirai* on the leftovers of others. Of course, not every household has access to eating a preferred variety of meals, but in the case of the *Almajirai*, the situation is even worse because they mostly wait to eat from the remains of such households. It is a common phenomenon to see the *Almajirai* gathered and waiting for leftover food, in restaurants, or wherever they come across individuals or groups eating food. Some of them work for more than one '*Uwar Daki'*, to access an adequate variety of food:

Some of us have more than one surrogate mother, but they do not reveal it to the Mallams. The logic also is that, when one of the surrogate mothers is absent, you can access food from the other for security (laugh). Also, one can choose the better food obtained from the two houses, he can eat the better and take the other to his Mallams (Rabilu, Aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya)

*Having a surrogate mother does not guarantee getting enough food. She may give food which is insufficient. If an Almajiri couldn't get any food, which is unlikely, then he can get some food in the house of the Mallam, or from his colleagues. (*Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

In case someone doesn't get food from begging, he has to go back to the Tsangaya for a study session by 8:00 p.m., until after the session somewhat around 10:00 p.m., some of the students can be seen that time taking their bowls and going out for begging, because they are hungry (Amadi, Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The severity of food deprivation was further explained by the participants - that regular access to food cannot also be guaranteed by having "*Uwar Daki'*. In the situation of having no surrogate mother from whom to get food, and not accessing the food through begging, an *Almajiri* must return to begging after study sessions. This shows how a severe situation can arise and sometimes the deprivation from accessing food becomes extreme, even though, in some situations, an *Almajiri* can eat from the bowl of his peers. I observed this many times, the *Almajirai* gathered and ate together, showing support to each other, and tasting varieties of food collected from different households. I have also observed on numerous occasions in

the market and within neighbourhoods, the *Almajirai* scavenging food, such as fruits from waste bins. In a situation where an *Almajiri* could not access food in all these ways:

He (Almajiri) will have to resist the hunger, or explain the situation to his Mallam (Gardi)… He will have to resist the hunger until another break." (Mamman Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

He should use the money he is saving to buy something like tea and bread, or someone can help him in the Tsangaya among his friends, he can get some money from someone. If he couldn't get all this, then he should drink water and remain patient, until another chance is available." (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

There is nothing I can do than to sleep like that, if I can't get it in the night …... I have to remain like that." (Jari aged 14, student rural Tsangaya).

Earning income appears to be an important indicator of absolute deprivation, particularly in the context of the *Almajirai*, because earnings can be used to buy food when they cannot get it another way. If an *Almajiri* has no money, he can ask for help from others. The other alternative is to observe patience until another break or to resist the situation until another chance is available. If the *Almajiri* cannot resist, he can report his situation to his supervisor *Gardi.* It is the case, however, that some *Almajirai* go to sleep without eating.

In my observation, I noted that it is widespread practice for the *Almajirai* to attend restaurants, transport stations, markets, and other places where food vendors are available. Indicating the extreme level of their deprivation, some *Almajirai* were observed picking remnants from food waste. This was confirmed by one participant:

When we can't get enough food, we go to the market, especially after evening study sessions, and pick some groundnut, tiger nut, and other food from the waste in the market." (Ali Aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya)

The data analysis indicates severe to extreme levels of food deprivation among the *Almajirai*. The struggle to access food through begging, working for households, earning money, visiting places like restaurants, and markets, waiting for leftovers, and picking food waste is precarious and does not guarantee access to the present or next meal. The *Almajirai* are left with little choice but to resist hunger when all the possible ways of getting food fail. The situation of accessing the sources of food, its adequacy, and choices for a variety of meals signifies severe and extreme levels of food deprivation, are determined by the situation in which an *Almajiri* finds himself.

7.2.3 Access to Clothing

The data analysis finds a severe level of deprivation in accessing clothing among the *Almajirai* (*m* = 1.24; SD = .474) (see Table 7.1). There is a marginal difference concerning the location of the residency, with the urban-based *Almajirai* having more access to clothing than those in the rural areas (urban *m* = 1.27, SD = .499, and rural *m* = 1.12, SD = .369. During fieldwork, I observed that *Almajirai* often roam the community wearing tattered and dirty clothes. The interview data highlights the connections between clothing and the socioeconomic statuses of the parents:

There are orphans among our students, some come from poor backgrounds, and some are from moderately well-off families, but not necessarily those that serve their families well, we have all these categories (Mallam Hadi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

We come from our families with few clothes, but as time goes by, we must also beg for clothes, to get more (Musa Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The responses of the respondents indicate that some *Almajirai* experience insufficiency of clothes. In this regard, it is important to note that most *Almajirai* hail from poor rural backgrounds (Hoechner, 2018). Some parents can provide clothing support for their children, but some are orphans, under the care of guardians, who do not provide sufficient clothes for them. Therefore, begging remains one common way for *Almajirai* to get clothing, and as in the way they deal with food deprivation, the *Almajirai* also use savings to buy clothes.

Some get clothes from home when they request from their parents. Some use their money to buy. Some surrogate mothers give to their Almajirai, especially on Eid days, and from the used clothes from the children in the surrogate mothers' family, when they don't need them (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

We save our money, go to the market, and buy the clothes of our choice. Some Almajirai get clothes through begging. People in the community give us used clothes. However, some Almajirai like those of my age work to get money and buy clothes (Mamman Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

A few *Almajirai* get clothes from their parents when they request them. However, since the system trains them to fend for themselves, the *Almajirai* save the money they earn from the work they engage in, to buy new sets of clothes. This is because, like every other individual, *Almajirai* also need specific sets of clothes with changing weather, or when the old ones get damaged. Others beg for clothes in the neighbourhood, like their familiar food begging, when

the need arises. Moreover, some *Almajirai* access used clothes from the households in which they work. At some special occasions like Muslims' Eid celebration, some *Almajirai* get new clothes from the household they work for, and others from their parents. This, however, depends on the socioeconomic well-being of the household they work for.

Honestly, not every Almajiri has sufficient clothes. Even those few we are having got some damages, and we usually get them through begging. Some of the Almajirai have no more than two sets of wears. (Mamman Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

All of my clothes are ripped, except this one I am wearing (Ghali Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Observations within their *Tsangaya* spaces to public places show that some *Almajirai* wear tattered and dirty clothes. A few, however, look clean and tidy, which indicates differences in the extent of their access to clothing. Some have only one set, which they wear every day without change. Some have other sets for special occasions such as *Eid* celebrations. This further indicates uncertainty in maintaining adequate clothing daily.

The *Almajirai* living in rural areas experience greater challenges because opportunities for accessing used clothes through begging are not available. Hence in rural areas, the *Almajirai* save money to buy used clothes, fabrics for new sets, or approach their *Mallam* for help:

As you can see, here is a rural area, and those who you expect to give also do not have enough to wear, so it is hard to get clothes here. We usually save money and buy some fabrics and pay tailors to sew new clothes for us or buy used ones from the market (Sule aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

I came with some, and on some occasions like during Eid celebrations, Mallam buys me new ones. No one gives us clothes in this community. (Jari aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

Observations of the *Almajirai* suggested that those in rural areas looked dirtier and wore more torn clothes than their urban counterparts.

7.2.4 Access to Accommodation

The interview and observation data provide broad explanations on the adequacy of accommodation space, level of overcrowding, and availability of basic facilities, such as toilets, and sleeping arrangements. Collectively, these indicators are considered in explaining access to accommodation amongst the *Almajirai*:

We are permanently staying all year round, and some come during dry season… There are about eight sleeping rooms here in this Tsangaya…. For now, we haven't yet started sleeping in the rooms due to the hot weather, we sleep outside in the Tsangaya compound…. Everyone gets accommodated (Mamman aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

All of the *Tsangaya* schools I visited operate all year-round, where *Almajirai* stay permanently, with occasional family visits. A few *Tsangaya* schools open seasonally, a system termed *'Rani'* meaning seasonal system. However, there is also a mixed method system in some *Tsangaya* schools, where seasonal students *'Yan Rani'* arrive after harvest during winter and return to their parents at the beginning of the rainy season, to help them in farming, until the harvest period. After harvest, students return to the *Tsangaya* and continue with their study. Therefore, *Tsangaya* schools usually become fully functional during the winter season, with the return of permanent *Almajirai*, and the arrival of *Yan Rani*. Thus, the form of *Almajirai* enrolment seasonal or all-year-round has direct implications for the adequacy of accommodation in the *Tsangaya*:

We sleep inside this room only because of necessity, because it leaks from the roofing in the rainy season, and there is a stench coming out from the toilet adjoined to the room. It disturbs us whenever we go to sleep. Some of us must stay standing when it is raining until the rain stops, then they can get some space in the compound and sleep." (Amadi aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Some of us sleep on the porches of our neighbours' houses, and others use the rooms of the Tsangaya, where we keep our belongings. Sometimes in the hot weather, some of us sleep outside in the school compound, except in the cold weather of winter, or in the rainy season, when everyone is looking for a space to help themselves to get some warm space or to keep away from rainfall. So, in such a situation the rooms become congested. Now, winter is approaching, and students are still coming, soon the school will be congested, and even now we have started experiencing a shortage of spaces to keep our bags, because of congestion (Sani aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Sometimes, when it is raining, some of us have to take refuge in the porches of some houses in the neighbourhood, because the accommodation is not adequate for us (Rabilu aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

We just gather and sleep anyhow, we are congested, but that is how we manage…. most of the rooms were borrowed by Mallam from his friends (Sule aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The nature of the *Tsangaya* accommodation does not provide comfort. Some students utilize the few rooms owned by the *Tsangaya*, and because of overcrowding in the rooms, many *Almajirai* are granted permission to sleep on their neighbors' houses' porches. I observed that

most of the *Almajirai* accommodation was overcrowded, and felt suffocating, because of poor ventilation. The condition of overcrowding can easily spread communicable diseases among them while sleeping outside the rooms in harsh weather conditions can also provoke existing illnesses. Thus, in such conditions, many *Almajirai* must inevitably be deprived of adequate sleep time. Regarding this, in many instances, the *Almajirai* were observed sleeping on the side of streets, mosque verandahs, and other available spaces they found during their study-free times.

There appears to be little difference between urban and rural *Tsangaya* schools' accommodation, concerning access and living conditions. Porches in neighbours' and *Malamai* houses were utilized by both urban and rural *Almajirai*. In some rural areas, I observed *Almajirai* using thatch materials for walling their compound, which indicates poorer circumstances compared to the urban centres. Another difference between rural and urban *Tsangaya* manifests in accessing rooms free of any payment for the rural *Tsangaya*, while the urban-based *Tsangaya* pays money to rent rooms:

We the teachers that run the affairs of the Tsangaya, make some contributions especially when the payment time is close, to make sure we maintain the rented rooms…. (Mallam Danladi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Some older students, that earn some money through labour, and get some support from their parents can rent rooms that are close to the school and live in." (Mallam Hamisu, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

In some of the urban *Tsangaya*, incomplete buildings within the neighbourhood are utilized as accommodation, while in others there are classrooms built by the government as part of planning integration of *Tsangaya* into the formal education system, under the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC). The classrooms alongside other rooms in the houses of the *Malamai* are used as accommodation and learning spaces for the students. Despite all the rooms in the *Tsangaya*, there is still congestion. In some *Tsangaya*, accommodation is constructed with mud, which cracks easily and can endanger the lives of the students. A dangerous incident was reported in one of the *Tsangaya* schools, where the building collapsed with the students at night, as a result of heavy rainfall. Consequently, many were injured, and one of the students died:

We live in a small room in an uncompleted building in the neighbourhood…. It is not sufficient (Ghali Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Some of the Almajirai live in this accommodation close to my house built as support by the Universal Basic Education Commission, which serves as a learning and living room for the students…. To be precise, there is congestion in all our rooms. (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

One night in the rainy season, the building collapsed upon the students when they were asleep, some were injured, to the extent, that one of them lost his life." (Mallam Usman, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

In all the *Tsangaya* schools I visited, I noticed packed sleeping materials, mostly consisting of sheets, rags, and sometimes blankets wrapped in plastic mats. These observations corroborated claims that the *Almajirai* use plastic mats and blankets as sleeping materials. Some have pillows, while others do not have either a pillow or even a plastic mat to sleep on. They must share mat spaces with their friends. I also observed that most *Almajirai* use mosquito protective nets when they sleep in the rooms or outside in the *Tsangaya* compound, to protect themselves from mosquito bites. The data shows the importance of possession of mosquito nets as a necessity for the *Almajirai*, where those who do not have any, seek to share with those who do, some three to five *Almajirai* share one protective net, meant for one person.

Most of us have plastic mats and blankets. The only problem is more of the mosquito protective net. Some Almajirai do take away the nets that do not belong to them, and that is painful (Amadi aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya)

I bought a plastic mat from a colleague at the rate of fifty naira when he was about to go back home…. Before then, I was sharing space with my friend, he allowed me to sleep together with him (Ghali aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

In most of the *Tsangaya* schools, *Almajirai* lack adequate toilet facilities. The respondents report on the situation:

We don't have any toilets to be precise, most of them go to uncompleted buildings, especially at night. An Almajiri has to go and find somewhere to ease himself. There is nothing we can do. And it is in such situations that the students usually defecate in front of people's houses, sometimes even in front of their accommodations (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Well, there are about 170 Almajirai in total, you know in our system, others come, while others leave continuously. We have two latrines as well as two bathrooms. (Mallam Tahir, Teacher Urban Tsangaya)

We have one bathroom, and when it is dark at night, they can bathe in the compound without going into the bathroom, since an individual cannot be seen clearly…. They can go to the bush, and hide behind shrubs (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

No, we have no toilet, just a bathroom. We bathe and urinate in it only. Someone must go to the bush in case of other needs (Sule aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

In some situations, the number of the *Almajirai* overstretches the toilet facilities available, and in some urban and rural *Tsangayu*, there are none. The students must walk to nearby ponds, when in need of easing themselves. Other students use incomplete buildings when they cannot endure walking to the bushes or ponds, especially in the darkness of night. Some use open spaces within the neighbourhood to defecate. The situation remains the same in rural *Tsangaya* schools, where most of them provide a bathroom only, and open defecation is the only option for the *Almajirai* to ease themselves, mostly by hiding themselves behind shrubs in the bush. This act could have implications for the health of the *Almajirai* and members of the neighbourhood. It also creates a source of conflict between *Almajirai* and community members, as explained in Chapters Six and Seven.

7.2.5 Access to Financial Support (Sources of Income)

Financial support from parents and personally generated income provide the means for the *Almajirai* to access their necessities, in addition to begging. They use this hard-earned money to buy what they deem necessary. The extent to which an *Almajiri* can generate income through labour and parental support is thus considered one of the indicators of absolute deprivation. Previous studies consider income as a measure of absolute deprivation because it represents the financial capacity of an individual to afford necessities (Burraston et al., 2017; Greitemeyer and Sagioglou, 2017, 2019). In this study, the quantitative analysis finds a low level of income earning capacity of *Almajirai* (m = 1.16, SD = .505), with insignificant difference between urban (m =1.18, SD = .525） and rural *Almajirai* (m = 1.13, SD = .436). Similarly, parental financial support is also low (m = 1.05, SD = .766), with no significant difference between urban (m = 1.06, SD = .753) and rural *Almajirai* (m = 1.03, SD = .805) (see table 7.1). Participants explained the different ways they can earn income, for example:

Well, most of their work includes cobbling, nail-cutting, laundry services and disposing waste from people's houses which happens weekly." (Mallam Tahir, teacher urban Tsangaya)

We do some other work. Like, going to the market to do apprentice work… others go to work on rice farms to be paid for… some of us are paid money only for specified works at surrogate mothers' houses (Mamman Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Some go to their surrogate mothers' houses to do menial jobs and wash clothes, and they are paid for that, either monthly or weekly, like 1000 Naira or more (Amadi Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Almajirai often engaged in a non-formal income-generating activities, particularly during their study-free times. Within neighbourhoods, I observed them engaging in different jobs such as refuse collection activities using wheelbarrows. Some of them walking on the streets advertise their services by clicking scissors for manicure work or clicking special cobbling (shoeshine) wooden-made boxes. Some *Almajirai*, are hired for farm labour, such as rice farming in riverine areas, but menial jobs for households are the commonest work they practised, where they are sent on various errands, and are paid for in daily meals. Some get meals twice a day, and in a few situations, three meals a day are guaranteed with other bonuses, such as a gift of new clothes on special occasions, as discussed above (see food deprivation section).

In the rural areas, the *Almajirai* engage in income-earning work related to the available economic opportunities in their host communities. They work on farms as labourers, which is the commonest labour available for all. In some rural areas, I observe that there is flexibility in attending study sessions for the students, whenever there is a high demand for farm labour, such as during the harvest period. The *Almajirai* in the rural areas around river basins, stand to have better chances of being employed as labourers all year round, because of the availability of irrigation farming activities, even after the rainy season. In addition, rural-based *Tsangaya* students also go to the bushes around them to collect dried tree trunks, and stalks, which they gather and sell to some households, who use it as a source of fuel for cooking.

It depends, sometimes they go to farms to work as labourers, and in their leisure time, they go to the riverbank. They get money from the work (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya)

We stay at home, and sometimes we go to the bush and get some firewood bundles and sell it (Jari Aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

In addition to the employment for income, some *Almajirai* also get financial support from their parents:

It can take a long time before an Almajiri receives any money from the parents. Someone can spend two years without any support from parents. Unless, if he is lucky to get some labour, like load taking. If not so, we don't get money. (Amadi Aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya)

They do sometimes, but it is rare, and not sufficient. Just a little amount of money or food stuff (Mamman Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Honestly, some parents send money while others do not. However, some of us must go and work to get money for ourselves. That is the means of making livelihood among us (Amadi Aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Some of the parents send detergents, soap, and ground grains to their kids (Musa Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

No, they have never sent me anything (Jari aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The support sent by parents varies, as some parents spend years without sending any form of support to their children. Those who send support generally do not send enough. This indicates, to some extent, a very low demonstration of care as a parental obligation, with some of the *Almajirai* reporting the conscience of the absence, or inadequacy of support from their parents to contribute to their upkeep. The experience of neglect is higher among the *Almajirai* living in rural areas. This absence, or inadequacy of support from parents can be linked with the socioeconomic background of the *Almajirai*, or the belief of the parents that the students will survive through begging and by engaging in income-generating activities. The respondents also explained that the income they earned, and the parental support combined are inadequate to serve basic needs:

No, it is not sufficient, that is why most of the time you can see an Almajiri with torn clothes because the money he can get will not be sufficient to serve all the needs. He bought some soap and detergent for washing and bathing with the little he gets (Amadi Aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

They cannot satisfy all their needs, but at least they do their best, because they mostly rely on begging than earning income and saving their few earnings. (Mallam Saminu, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

In summary, despite their youthful ages, and lacking any formal or professional skills, the *Almajirai* engaged in labour to earn money, with which they supported their survival.

Sometimes supplemented with a little support from parents experienced by few *Almajirai*, the analysis suggests that personal earnings and parental support are insufficient in serving basic needs. This implies an absence of guardian obligation and overall incapability of earning to access basic life necessities, such as food and clothing. In this situation, begging remains the major way to access material resources.

7.2.6 Experiences of Discrimination and Rejection

The quantitative data analysis suggests mild levels of both discrimination (*m* = 1.01, SD = . 707) and rejection (*m* = 0.92, SD = . 726) experienced by some *Almajirai* (see Table 7.1). It further suggests the experiences of discrimination and rejection are slightly higher in urban settings (*m* = 1.08, SD = .711, *m* = 0.98, SD = .741), than in rural communities (*m* = 0.80 SD = .741; *m* = 0.72, SD = .643) (see Table 7.1). The context and the depth of the experience were elaborated in interviews:

Yes, it often happens with us, such as when we get a place to rest, sometimes we are chased away because some people don't like us (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Yeah, it happens, you see anywhere Almajiri sits, anywhere he passes by, he can face insults (Amadi Aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Most of those that live around us do not interact with us with admiration. Only a very few households around us accept and welcome our Almajirai. Most of them don't even allow Almajirai to sit in front of their houses (Mallam Tahir, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Indeed, certain people do not like Almajirai to visit their houses. So, if an Almajiri went there looking for work, or to have a surrogate mother, they face rejection, sometimes with harsh and disgusting words, like 'go back to your parent ! ' and so on (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Before we built and settled in this Tsangaya, our Almajirai suffered so much. They were using the porches of neighbours' houses to sleep. Sometimes, they are chased out of these spaces, without any notice, and such occurs often when it is late in the night (Mallam Usman, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

The reaction and treatment that *Almajirai* face in their host communities indicate an experience of discrimination and rejection. Some individuals do not like seeing *Almajirai* close to their residential areas. This can be related to the common perception of criminalised labelling created by the media and reinforced in the public (see Chapter 1). Therefore, for fear of becoming victims of their criminality, some people chase them away. The *Almajirai* experience insults, which creates an awareness of being disliked by others. This indicates

how *Almajirai* might perceive the attitudes of others towards them, even by not revealing the reasons why others choose to treat them in such a manner. This discrimination and rejection by other individuals do not dispute the fact that the *Almajirai* are employed by households to help with domestic functions. Being aware of the treatment of their *Almajirai*, some of the *Malamai* warn them of situations where they might be blamed for the actions of others:

We always warn and remind our Almajirai not to befriend other children from the community. Because, if the other children commit any offence, like fighting, or stealing, in the end, the Almajirai will be blamed for the offence (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, it happens, we are blamed for many things that we didn't do. For example, if the community hand pump or water borehole spoilt, the blame is directed placed on Almajirai! Even though we are not the only ones that are using the borehole." (Rabilu Aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Most of the *Malamai* had the experiences of being *Almajirai* themselves, which helped them to exercise their roles as guardians, by suggesting ways on how the *Almajirai* can avoid being scapegoated for the problems in the community, particularly criminal acts such as stealing and fighting. The use of discriminatory language in the host communities was reported by the *Almajirai*:

Almajirai are seen as strangers, they don't belong to the community, and so on (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

Yes, it happens, we are treated as non-indigenes. Sometimes we are rained with insulting words… I know because I am an Almajiri. Lots of people hate us." (Jari Aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

Even in the rural setting, where the material life is poor for most people, some individuals still treat the *Almajirai* as strangers, which the *Almajirai* perceive as offensive and as an expression of hatred, specifically concerning their identity. However, in some rural settings the situation can be different:

Okay, in this regard I can assure you, we interact with the youth of this community without any discrimination, we feel like members of the community, not strangers anymore. Well, I think, if there is discrimination it is not much, and that can be shown by the little children in the community, not the adults." (Sule Aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

I cannot say there is no discrimination or rejection. Yes, it happens but the level of its occurrence is very low. This is because the Almajiri system was the origin of establishing

this community. This is what everyone in this community found to be a tradition in his family." (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

In the cases of the rural social communities, they appeared more adaptable and friendly to an *Almajiri* life. This can be related to the egalitarian atmosphere of the social settings, and the similarity of socioeconomic backgrounds the *Almajirai* share with most of the children from poor families of rural communities. It can be recalled that poverty is higher in rural areas than in urban communities particularly in Northern Nigeria (see Chapter 1). Another reason for this, as revealed by the data, is that discrimination seems to be less where the *Tsangaya* system has been a familiar and central part of the community's history.

7.3 The Level of Relative Deprivation in the *Almajirai*

This section explores the level of relative deprivation in the *Almajirai*, as a perceived disadvantage in comparison to other children as a reference group. A useful way of conceptualizing relative deprivation as suggested by Merton (1968) is the consideration of self-comparison relating to a reference group, and as "the judgment that one is worse off compared to some standard" by Smith, Pettigrew, Pippin, and Bialosiewicz (2012, p. 203). Four indicators of subjective perceptions of feeling worse off in comparison to other children by the *Almajirai* are therefore considered, which focus on 1) parental obligation through provision for basic needs. 2) perceived parental affection 3) access to a supported system of education by the government, and 4) access to welfare provision by the government.

Table 7.2 Descriptive Analysis of the Level of Relative Deprivation in the *Almajirai* (Urban N=600; Rural N=200)

S/N	Indicators		Mean	SD
1.	Feeling worse off for seeing other children enjoying care through the provision for basic needs by their parents	General	0.85	.800
		Urban	1.03	.789
		Rural	0.29	.527
2.	Feeling worse off for parental affection through visits in comparison to other children who live with their parents	General	1.11	.811
		Urban	1.13	.807
		Rural	1.07	.824
3.	Feeling worse off as a student of Tsangaya school, by self-comparison to other children that go to formal schools.	General	0.74	.745
		Urban	0.90	.749
		Rural	0.27	.498
4.	Feeling worse off in access to deserved welfare from the government as a citizen in comparison to other children	General	0.31	.507
		Urban	0.34	.520
		Rural	0.24	.459

7.3.1 Feeling Worse-Off Concerning Parental Care Through Provision of Basic Needs

The analysis finds mild levels of feeling worse off by observing other children enjoying care through the provision for basic needs by their parents (*m* = 0.85; SD = .800) (See Table 7.2). the feeling is comparably higher among urban-based *Almajirai*, (*m* = 1.03; SD = .789) than the rural-based *Almajirai* (*m* = 0.29; SD = .527). The interview data provides some background:

Yes, I know they are better than me here in their community because I am an Almajiri. But whenever I go back to my parents, I know they are not better than me, because my parents can provide me with what their parents provide for them (Sani aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

When I was much younger, I used to look at other non-Almajirai children and wish myself their lives (Musa aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

I know they live with their parents. But I am not living with my parents. Suppose my father is alive, I would have been in a formal school like them. He would not have taken me to Tsangaya school (Ghali aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

I know we have good friends among such children, some of them give us clothes. I think Almajiri is here to study, the most important thing is to focus on the study only, not worldly pleasure. In this regard, we are not the same as the children who live with their parents, because they are well cared for. So, I don't think Almajiri should be counting on the lives of others (Rabilu aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya)

The *Almajirai* are aware of the differences between them and other children, observing how other children are cared for by their parents, while in their case, they take care of themselves, which at times creates a sense of perceived disadvantage in them. In the perception of the *Almajirai*, this situation helps constitute their identity of the *Almajirai*, as a crucial factor that shapes their self-conception, and humility. Whilst the survey data suggested only a mild effect regarding provisions of basic needs, it indicates the absence of parents (whose roles include supporting children through the provision of basic needs) as the source of their deprived situation and serves as a measure of feeling worse off. This feeling is possibly higher in younger *Almajirai* and reduces as they grow older. Living around their parents can guarantee access to a certain amount of care and provisions for basic needs, but the *Almajirai* primarily fend for themselves because most do not live with their parents.

7.3.2 Feeling Worse-Off Concerning Parental Affection

Showing affection and love by parents to their children serves as a protective factor for criminality in youth, as suggested by social control theorists (see Chapter 4). In the case of *Almajirai*, love and affection can be felt when the parents visit them and spend time with them, as other children experience more often when they live within the presence of their parents. The quantitative analysis reveals moderate perceived disadvantage (*m* = 1.11; SD = .811), with regards to experiences of deprivation from experiencing parental affection, which is marginally higher for urban-based (*m* = 1.13; SD = .807), more than the rural-based *Almajirai* (*m* = 1.07; SD = .824). The qualitative data suggests that the experience can be severe for some *Almajirai*, irrespective of location:

We have never been visited by anybody since the day we left home. Sometimes I cried because of my situation. I think we are here for about four or five years" (Ghali aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya)

I have been here for more than five years now, and my father visited me only once when I was newly brought here. It hurts me a lot, I wish I was close to my parents, but I must endure it." (Jari aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

This indicates that some *Almajirai* miss parental affection, which does not differ by location, especially among younger *Almajirai*.

7.3.3 Feeling Worse-Off Concerning Support for System of Education

The survey data finds mild levels of feeling disadvantaged through comparison of *Almajirai*, being students of the *Tsangaya* system with other children who attend formal public schools (*m* = 0.74; SD = .745) (see Table 7.2). This is stronger for urban *Almajirai* (*m* = 0.90; SD = .749) than their rural counterparts (*m* = 0.27; SD = .498). In interviews, *Almajirai* indicated that they see formal education as a secularized form of education, aimed at achieving only worldly material gains. This makes the formal system superior in a secularistic sense, which differs from the *Tsangaya* system which is built solely for achieving moral and spiritual status, and the pleasure of God. Therefore, the *Tsangaya* system and the '*Almajiri'* identity are perceived by *Almajirai* as spiritually superior over formal education. This esteemed appeal of the definition of *Tsangaya* and *Almajiranci* sometimes plays a role in mitigating the magnitude of perceived disadvantage, in comparison to other children who go to formal

schools, because *Almajirai* do not see the students at public schools as being reference group to them:

Yes, we are different. They are of worldly material aspirations, but Almajiri education is aimed at the pleasure of God and hereafter (Mamman Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Well, we think the government loves them more. However, we see our Tsangaya education as a path to heaven, and achievement in this world (Musa Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

We feel that the students at public schools have more deserved care from the government, they have chairs and tables, and they don't beg for food. But we must beg to eat and sit on the ground, or on the rounded trunks of trees to study (Sule Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The *Tsangaya* education does not negate achieving material aspirations, as perceived by the *Almajirai*. Some of them consider it as an avenue for achieving both material and spiritual goals. This occurs through learning skills for self-reliance, through engaging in income-generating activities, upon which some *Almajirai* develop their occupational career throughout their lives. The school infrastructures in formal schools are marked as an indicator that some *Almajirai* perceived as a crucial difference that exists between their traditional *Tsangaya* and the formal system. Despite the differences, in some communities, other children are also enrolled to study the Quran alongside the *Almajirai* in *Tsangaya*, after the closing hours of the formal schools.

Most of the students in formal schools have their study slates in the Tsangaya. They study together with the Almajirai, at various study periods when the formal schools are closed (Mallam Saminu, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

This indicates that the *Tsangaya* system is believed to be a way of earning religious education, even among parents who send their children to Western education schools. By tradition, this usually occurs in the evening session, upon returning from formal schools. Signifying how parents utilise schools as space for controlling the movement of the children. Similarly, some *Almajirai* also enrol themselves in formal schools, with the permission of their *Malamai*, as *Sule* reports:

I also go to formal school despite being an Almajiri. So, I participated in the afternoon and night sessions in the Tsangaya, after I returned from the formal school (Sule Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

Yes, I always feel one day, by God's will, after I graduate from this Tsangaya, if I get the opportunity, I will get enrolled in public school. This is what I always hold in my mind. I want to join the system one day so that I can get something. (Amadi Aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).
I can assure you, despite my condition as an Almajiri, if I get the opportunity, I can join a formal school, I would love to be a student at a formal school as well. (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The Almajirai wish they can enjoy the same privilege of attending formal school and also going to Tsangaya for religious studies. (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

However, enrolling *Almajirai* in a formal school so they undergo the two educations at once is not a widespread practice. Only a few Almajirai get the opportunity, even though many among them express their desire and interest in the formal system. These discussions indicate a constructive interaction between the two systems, which signifies how easy it might be to integrate one into another, an approach which can help decrease discrimination and perceived disadvantage. Admiring students at formal school and wishing to be enrolled in the system signifies a perception of inferiority by *Almajirai*. The desire for material prosperity is particularly evident in urban *Almajirai*, going some way to explain higher levels of feeling worse off in urban communities when the Almajir*ai* compare themselves with formal school students.

7.3.4 Access to Care from the Government

The *Almajirai* report their perceptions as citizens who deserve welfare by the government, even though they study in an non-formal setting. The quantitative analysis finds a severe level of perceived deprivation from access to government care compared to other non-*Almajirai* children in the community (m = 0.31; SD = .507). The perception is marginally higher in rural *Almajirai* (m = 0.24; SD = .459) than in urban *Almajirai* (m = 0.34; SD = .520) (see Table 7.2). More descriptively, the interview data explains the depth of perceived disadvantage among *Almajirai* and their *Malamai* concerning the government:

The government officials used to visit the Tsangaya and ask us about our needs, but in the end, the support was not there. As far as I am concerned, I don't know if there is any support given to Almajirai by the government. We have Almajirai associations, but all of the associations are also complaining of neglect from the government (Mallam Hadi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

The government provides us with all these identification cards. However, they have never given us any assistance. Honestly, there has never been anything from the government (Mallam Tahir, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

There is nothing like support from the government. It will be better if I work hard to earn the achievement than to wait for the government…. For them, their rewards are from what the government pays them. But for me, I have to work hard to earn what I need to spend (Sani aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya).

As far as we are concerned, there is not any connection between our system and government…. You see, we are not against the government, but we learned that they only visit us for political campaigns. For instance, previously there was a plan that our Almajirai would be taught Western education, in their study-free days, but the attempt failed because they were not serious about it (Mallam Danladi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Government! No, to be precise. I have never seen any help from the government, we have no business with them…. I don't care about them, or hate them (Jari Aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The *Tsangaya* system has been in operation since the precolonial rule period, and continued as a non-formal setting, off the radar of the government's sponsorship. The relevance of the institution is usually considered on the eve of political elections when the large size of the institution's adherents can add value to helping politicians win office. Some *Malamai* were visited on several occasions by government officials, showing some concern over the *Tsangaya* system. However, they report that they are yet to see the impact of such visits. The absence of positive feedback, in the form of support from the government, creates perceived neglect in the *Almajirai* and their *Mallam*. Some *Almajirai* perceive the gesture of the government as an exclusion. The situation creates a sense of disconnection or lack of belonging of the non-formal *Tsangaya* system with the government and a high feeling of disadvantage in accessing an 'entitled' and 'deserved' citizenship care by the *Almajirai*. The perceived entitlement and deservingness in an individual or group level was described by relative deprivation theorists to have implications that can result in collective action against the experience (see Feather, 2015).

Furthermore, the responses show that the *Almajirai* are not hostile towards formal institutions, including the government and the formal schools, as claimed by some writers. Rather, there is a strong perception of betrayal of the *Almajirai* and their *Tsangaya* institutions by the state officials. This can additionally be a reason for choosing the *Tsangaya*

system by some disadvantaged parents as an affordable alternative, which they trust to instill morality and religious spirituality, more than formal schools they cannot afford.

In a previous discussion under accommodation, there were reports of classes constructed by the government in some *Tsangaya* schools under UBEC. I observed buildings of modern classrooms constructed by the government, in preparation for the integration programme, but now they are used by *Almajirai* as accommodation and learning space, especially during winter.

Well, the government has attempted to provide us with formal education, and had the programme been successful, some of us would have excelled in life. The government also built those rooms outside, which some of us use as accommodation. And this borehole and water tank (Musa Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The data also indicated that the integration plan was not successful. This indicates the government's failure to fulfil a planned programme of integrating Western education into the *Tsangaya* system, by teaching basic formal education in the study-free times of the *Almajirai*. The planned programme brought hope for some *Almajirai* but was not successful because of poor commitment by the government. During my fieldwork, I observed that some classrooms were constructed by the government in some *Tsangaya*, and one of the *Mallam* showed me some teaching aids brought in preparation for the basic education programme, which he kept for a long time with none of the officials showing up again.

The perception of the *Almajirai* suggests that they experience discrimination from the formal sector, such as the state and its service deliveries, which often manifests in depriving them of accessing public resources, such as mosquito preventive nets distributed in their host communities. Such gestures are perceived by the *Almajirai* as discriminatory, suggesting they are not eligible beneficiaries of community resources. Also, indicating that consideration of the *Almajirai* is not always given due attention by the officials. Some of these manifestations of discrimination, such as treating them as migrants, were explained in the subsection of discrimination under absolute deprivation above. Despite these experiences, the *Almajirai* show no feeling of hatred against the government officials:

This year when they were distributing mosquito nets, the distributors refused to give to any Almajiri. Almajirai were denied, common mosquito nets…. I don't think the government has

any concern about Almajirai, or the system of Almajirai (Sule aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

When we see them, we only wish we were also civil servants." (Mamman aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Almajirai don't care about the government and its officials, we have different paths. An Almajiri is more concerned about his life, how to survive and worship God. If you can ask me now, there are many things about government that I don't know, and I don't care about it. Because if I want to get close to the government, I must be like them, which I cannot. An Almajiri has no stake in governance and has nothing to do with the officials, but whenever they come to us, we respect them, that's just it." (Mallam Hadi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Such responses reveal an expression of perceived disconnection between *Tsangaya* as an non-formal institution of education and the government. Despite this, some *Almajirai* wish they could be government officials. The situation influences the feeling of inability to access public resources and seeing themselves as ineligible beneficiaries of everything related to government. By implication, this partly helps in reinforcing their identity of '*Almajirai'*, and their expectations regarding entitlement within the wider society. Some of the respondents perceived the government and all its programmes negatively:

"You know this government has been trying to sabotage or even bring an end to the Tsangaya system of education in general. How do you expect them to support the Almajiri? They are not ready for that. Even the so-called support and integration programme is not built on the right channel. If the intention of the government is a good one, then we would have been happier than the government. Because our perception is that, the government is fighting us directly…., they came here many times taking data from us, but nothing follows, apart from the data taking…. The thought is that they don't like the Tsangaya system, some of us have the thought that the hatred emanated mostly from the greediness of the leaders, and the secularism which has no respect for religious issues, and the holy Quran in particular." (Mallam Hamisu, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

A lot of Almajirai think the government officials don't like them or have any concerns about their lives. Sometimes, the Almajirai discuss that, and we all believe that, if the government officials have the power, they will bring an end to the system of Tsangaya, they will end it…. Government officials have no concern for Almajirai lives. That's just it!" (Sule Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The common perception among the Almajirai is that they are secluded from government concerns. The Tsangaya system is even treated as wrong, which is why the system is not supported (Mallam Saminu, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

At the extreme, some of the *Malamai* and *Almajirai* perceived that their *Tsangaya* system is disliked by the government officials. This category of the *Almajirai* considers the

government as a saboteur, that fights against the *Tsangaya* system. They feel safe when not involved in any relation with the government, and see the government as secular, having no serious appeal to Islamic religion, which formed the basis for the formation of the *Tsangaya* system. Some *Almajirai* feel the *Tsangaya* system is treated as an errant system of education. Even though the interviews did not ask about how the *Almajirai* were treated during the COVID-19 pandemic, reports have indicated that the *Almajirai* were depicted as "Breeding Ground for Covid-19" (Shuaibu, 2020), and as a consequence many *Tsangaya* schools were forcibly cleared by officials (Azu, 2020). These labelling and treatments experienced by *Tsangaya* schools compound the separation from the government encourages some writers to describe the system as subversive, one that radicalizes youth, providing cheap recruits for insurgent groups.

7.4 Conclusion

Existing studies and criminological theories relating to deprivation have suggested the importance of understanding the depth of deprivation as the basis for exploring its likelihood of leading to criminality (see Chapter 2). Therefore, this chapter explored the depth of absolute and relative deprivation in the *Almajirai* and the survival strategies used by the *Almajirai* in response to their experiences of deprivation.

Regarding the depth of absolute deprivation, the findings of the chapter suggest that there is moderate and sometimes severe deprivation in accessing safe water amongst *Almajirai*, which depends on the situation in their communities, and the capability of the *Tsangaya* to construct boreholes. In many instances, the *Almajirai* walked long distances, endured discrimination, relied on public resources, and sometimes begged for water in their neighbourhood. Others utilize open wells as their source of water, which is often unclean and goes dry seasonally. The *Almajirai* also experience severe food deprivation. The major sources of accessing food are begging and working for surrogate mothers, which do not guarantee access or sufficiency of food. The sources are often supplemented by using savings to buy food or eat from the bowls of colleagues. In extreme situations, the *Almajirai* scavenge unhygienic food from waste bins. Sometimes, the *Almajirai* go hungry, until further chances of accessing food come around. Moreover, the participants experienced severe clothing deprivation, and most of them were observed to wear dirty and tattered clothes. Those in the rural areas looked dirtier and were more likely to wear ripped clothes. The *Almajirai* access

clothes through begging, buying new sets using their savings, and the occasional provisions of clothes from parents or guardians.

The accommodation of the *Almajirai* is characterized by high levels of overcrowding, poor and inadequate sleeping materials, and inadequate toilet facilities. Therefore, the *Almajirai* resort to open defecation in the bushes, and within the neighbourhood. In many instances, they sleep in neighbouring houses' porches, with some gaining more time to sleep in the streets in their free time. The *Almajirai* earn insufficient income to support their lives, through personal efforts and very negligible amounts of parental support. They also experience discrimination and rejection, as they are described as migrants, and experience discriminating and insulting words, especially from other children, are often chased away from certain residential areas, and evicted out of the porches they use to sleep. The experience of this is higher in urban areas than in rural communities.

Relative deprivation in the *Almajirai* was measured through perceived disadvantage in comparison to other children. The findings suggest that perceived disadvantage through observing other children being provided with basic needs is higher in younger *Almajirai*, which reduces as they grow older. Moreover, the *Almajirai* experience frustration for not living around their parents, or the absence of parental visits during their stay in *Tsangaya*, and feel deprived of parental affection, particularly when they observe other children who live with their parents. The level of relative deprivation in the *Almajirai* is mild, regarding self-comparison as students of a *Tsangaya*, to other children as students at formal public schools. They perceived their system as religious which leads to God's pleasure, but also inferior in achieving material goals compared to formal education. The perceived inferiority of the *Tsangaya* system in comparison to the formal schools in terms of provision of support and care and achieving opportunities after graduation leads some *Almajirai* to see themselves as worse off. However, others still wish to be enrolled in formal education. Furthermore, the *Almajirai* and their *Malamai* consider themselves unimportant, and in comparison, to government-owned sectors, feel they are non-eligible beneficiaries of public resources within the wider society. Many also perceive government policies with suspicion. The implications of these findings on deprivation concerning their effect on engaging in criminal and antisocial behaviour are discussed in the following Chapter.

CHAPTER EIGHT
RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DEPRIVATION AND CRIMINALITY IN THE *ALMAJIRAI*

8.1 Introduction

Drawing upon the findings of the previous chapters 6 and 7, this chapter examines the relationships between the depth of deprivation and involvement in criminality using descriptive and inferential statistics for the quantitative and thematic analysis of the qualitative data, respectively. The quantitative analysis sought to explore any direct relationship between absolute and relative deprivation with involvement in criminality using linear regression and descriptive analysis in reporting peers' involvement in criminality. A thematic analysis of the qualitative data explored the behavioural manifestations that might signify the effect of absolute and relative forms of deprivation, in prompting petty criminality in the *Almajirai*. This is important because previous studies suggest a strong need for empirical evidence of the relationship between early youth deprivation and crime involvement, and differences in study contexts can result in different outcomes (Antonaccio and Botchkovar, 2015).

8.2 Relationship Between Deprivation and Criminality

Most criminological theories that are concerned with deprivation focus on relative deprivation as a predictor of criminality, more than absolute deprivation (Cohen and Short Jr, 1958; Dennison and Swisher, 2018; Merton, 1968; Webber, 2021; Young, 1999). Recently, research has sought to make comparisons between the two to better understand predictors of underlying drives for criminality (Burraston et al., 2019; Greitemeyer and Sagioglou, 2019). The outcomes of these studies conducted in the Global North suggest a complimentary association between the two forms of deprivation in predicting criminality, but relative deprivation has a stronger effect. The current study finds severe levels in most of the indicators of absolute deprivation, and mild levels in most of the indicators of relative deprivation in *Almajirai* (see Chapter 7). It further finds evidence of petty theft, and hostility towards others through fighting. Moreover, it finds the involvement of *Almajirai* in some criminalised acts such as poaching vermin and open defecation, as well as antisocial activities such as scavenging waste, and breaking *Tsangaya* rules as the common behaviours

(see Chapter 6). Hence, this chapter analyses the relationships between levels and forms of deprivation and *Almajirai* involvement in criminal and antisocial behaviour.

Table 8.1 Linear Regressions for the Relationships between Levels of Absolute Deprivation Indicators and Self-Reported Criminality ($P \leq 0.05$; N = 800)

	Using any intoxicant	Picking fights	Stealing from others	Other Criminal Acts
Access to adequate safe water	.316	.032	.250	.026
Access to adequate food	.747	.392	.580	.031
Access to adequate clothing	.691	.556	.871	.262
Parental provision of money	.909	.726	.588	.371
Personal effort to generate money	.700	.102	.454	.816
Experiencing discrimination in the neighbourhood	.561	.003	.257	.042
Experiencing rejection in the community	.286	.975	.834	.371

8.2.1 Absolute Deprivation and Criminality in the *Almajirai*

The linear regression analysis of self-report data reveals the non-existence of statistical significance of relationships between most absolute deprivation indicators and involvement in criminality such as using intoxicants and theft among the participants. The exception is a statistical significance in the relationship between access to safe water and fighting (p = 0.032). A significant relationship was also found between the experience of discrimination in the neighbourhood and fights (p = 0.003) (see Table 8.1). In accessing water to use, some *Almajirai* rely on public sources and often endure discrimination to access the water (see Chapter 6), and in the process, the *Almajirai* sometimes engage in fighting with other children as reported by the *Malamai*:

The fighting usually resulted from discriminating words used by other children against our students, or our students being chased away, while begging, and so on. So, if such happens between our Almajirai and other kids, the Almajirai react to them, and eventually, they end up fighting (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Just recently, one of the students and a girl from the community were fighting over taking turns at a borehole water spot. They fought persistently, to the extent, they came still fighting. The girl followed him up here. The girl even disrespects me, and claims she is going to kill the Almajiri (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

Yes, because they are Almajirai! I can remember there was a misunderstanding at the hand pump, a young boy from this community beat up an Almajiri student, he used all his strength to push the Almajiri over the pump, and to the floor (Mallam Saminu, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

The interview data illustrates the nature of the relationship between accessing water, discrimination, and fighting. The experience water deprivation and perceived discrimination results in fighting between *Almajirai* and other children. Fighting over accessing water does not appear to be location-specific. The crucial point here is the intersection between facing discrimination in accessing water, and consequential fighting, which sometimes turns more violent. As shown in Chapter 7, some *Tsangaya* schools in both urban and rural areas rely on public sources of water, which are always crowded, a situation that brought *Almajirai* into competition and conflict with other children. In such situations, the *Almajirai* are treated as migrants, and therefore non-eligible beneficiaries of public resources, in response to such treatment the situation results in fights.

Moreover, the quantitative analysis shows three indicators of absolute deprivation; water deprivation, food deprivation and experience of discrimination in the neighbourhood having a significant relationship with other survival criminality and anti-social acts, such as violation of *Tsangaya* rules, open defecation, scavenging on the dumped waste, and poaching vermin, (water deprivation $p = 0.026$, food deprivation $p = 0.031$, discrimination $p = 0.042$ see Table 8.1). This finding suggests that the levels of deprivation from accessing safe water and food, and experience of discrimination have significant relationships with involvement in other criminal and anti-social acts among the *Almajirai*.

The findings in chapters 6 and 7 provide a baseline for understanding the pattern of these relationships, particularly, through how some of these criminal and antisocial activities manifest as survival strategies in accessing necessities. These sources are, however, inadequate in either payment or availability in substantiating their basic daily needs. As such, they are supplemented by other activities, including deviant acts such as poaching vermin and scavenging dumped waste to search for valuable items sold to earn money. Some of the acts were highlighted as either criminalized by Nigerian law or providing opportunities to learn criminal acts (see Chapter 7).

On the other hand, the prevalence of open defecation reflects a strategy for dealing with the inadequacy of access to toilet facilities in most of the *Tsangaya* accommodations and is one of the reasons the *Almajirai* are disliked and consequently discriminated against in their host communities. This suggests a relationship between the experience of discrimination and antisocial behaviour, such as open defecation. The *Almajirai's* involvement in such antisocial acts as open defecation and other antisocial behaviours directly influences the level of discrimination, they experience from members of the community in which they live. The qualitative data further suggests a relationship between absolute deprivation and involvement in theft in *Almajirai*:

What Almajirai commonly steals from within the Tsangaya is food items. If an Almajiri has some food in his bag, another Almajiri can break the bag and steal the food item (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Something like vegetables, in the farm, or potatoes, fresh maize from the stalk, which one can pick to heat with fire and eat, and things like that… No, it is for eating, also other things like garden eggs, something like 4 or 5, just to eat…. (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

In both urban and rural *Tsangaya* schools, *Almajirai* get involved in petty theft of foodstuff, within and outside their *Tsangaya*, for eating. This suggests resorting to the theft of food items as a survival strategy in response to the severe level of food deprivation experienced (see Chapter 7) and stealing other valuable items such as mobile phones from peers to be sold for money to buy food (see Chapter 6). These relationships revealed by the qualitative analysis indicate a potential deficit of the self-report survey data, in showing an absence of a significant relationship between absolute deprivation and theft through inferential statistics. The relationship between absolute deprivation and theft, with the mediating effect of desperation, is discussed more broadly in section 8.3 of this chapter. Moreover, the reported theft of food-related items and clothes indicates a proclivity for engaging in crime to access necessities.

8.2.2 Relative Deprivation and Criminality in the *Almajirai*

The inferential statistics of the survey data find an absence of a significant relationship between most of the indicators of relative deprivation with criminality for *Almajirai*. An exception is that between fighting and feeling worse off for seeing other children enjoying

care from their parents (p = 0.001) (see Table 8.2). This can be understood and analysed by comparing some specific findings in previous chapters 6 and 7, particularly regarding the level of self-comparison to other children in terms of parental provisions of basic needs on the one hand, and on the other hand the level and pattern of involvement in fights by the *Almajirai*.

Table 8.2 Linear Regressions for Relative Deprivation and Self-Report for Criminality (P≤0.05; N = 800)

Relative Deprivation Indicators	Using any intoxicant	Picking up fights	Stealing from others	Other Criminal Acts
Feel worse off for seeing other children enjoying care from their parents	.989	.001	.098	.361
Feeling cared for through parental visits in comparison to other children who live with their parents	.249	.716	.242	.367
Feel worse off by self-comparison to other children that go to public schools	.661	.828	.637	.598
Perception on getting deserved care from the government as a citizen in comparison to other children	.366	.289	.482	.088

The findings in Chapter 6 indicate the existence of feelings of disadvantage in the *Almajirai* by observing other children enjoying care and affection from their parents. The feeling was higher in younger *Almajirai*, reducing as they grow older, and also higher in urban areas compared to rural *Almajirai*. The data on criminality (see Chapter 7) found that the *Almajirai* get involved in fighting mostly to display courage and earn status, to deal with the situation of discrimination, rejection, and status deprivation they face in their host communities. By implication, the two themes of feeling worse-off and fighting can be understood through how self-comparison with other children can be productive of felt deprivation and inferiority, and in response to the situation, fighting serves as a way of settling status deprivation:

Yes, it happens, some of the boys in the community will abuse us for being Almajirai, and such leads to fights as a result. It had been a long time since we lost a fight to them. Anytime we fight them, we win against them… (Sani aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Levels of relative deprivation were found to be higher in urban areas. This can be related to the level of affluence, being higher in urban areas than in rural communities. The *Almajirai* in urban areas are more prone to observe and be absorbed in the urban aspiration of a materially richer life, as indicated by previous literature (Hoechner, 2013). As such, they also experienced higher levels of discrimination and felt disadvantaged, than rural-based *Almajirai* (see Chapter 6). In a way, this indicates how material benefits in childhood emanate from parental circumstances and could suggest the existence of a relationship between fighting and feeling worse off for seeing other children enjoying care from their parents, highlighting a kind of perceived legitimisation of aggression, because of status deprivation highlighted by Cohen (1958). However, this does not suggest an escalation of hostility towards government agencies, as argued by other writers (see for example Abbo et al, 2017).

8.3 Desperation and Criminality in the *Almajirai*

The concept of desperation in this section is conceived as a behavioural outcome produced by deprivation, which triggers an action to resolve the issues associated with the deprivation experienced. It is worth noting that existing literature notes how desperation influences deprived youth to resort to risky and serious offending behaviours, such as sex-related crimes (Abdella et al., 2006; Dortch, 1986; Warf et al., 2013), substance abuse (Werse, 2021), and property crime (Brown, 2001; Leatherdale, 2012). This section focuses on explaining how desperation influences theft among *Almajirai*, based on the *Almajirai* understanding of the commonality of the practice among them.

The quantitative analysis shows the distribution of perceptions of *Almajirai*, on desperation caused by deprivation, and whether theft crimes can be caused by desperation. The data reveals that some 15.1 % of the respondents reported that it is okay for an *Almajiri* to steal when in desperation, while approximately one-fifth (20.3%) reported that it depends on the circumstance and the *Almajiri* involved. Further analysis reveals that 56.7% of the participants reported knowing an *Almajiri* who stole in desperation, while 43.3% reported not knowing this (see Table 8.3).

Table 8.3 Cross-tabulation on *Almajirai* Response on Peers' Desperation and Criminality (Urban N=600; Rural N=200; Total=800)

Questions	Location	No		Yes		It Depends	
		N	**%**	***N***	**%**	***N***	**%**
If they are in desperate need, is it okay for an *Almajiri* to steal from someone?	**Urban**	395	65.8	81	13.5	124	20.6
	Rural	121	60.5	40	20	39	19.5
	Total	516	64.5	121	15.1	163	20.3
Do you know of *Almajiri* who has stolen from someone when in desperate need?	**Urban**	269	44.9	331	55.1		
	Rural	78	39	122	61		
	Total	347	43.3	453	56.7		

This signifies the extent to which *Almajirai* perceive the involvement of their colleagues in criminality because of desperation. The interview data provides a richer description of the pattern of this relationship between desperation and theft. Responses from both urban and rural *Almajirai* indicated manifestations of theft concerning desperation amongst their peers. For instance, involvement in theft occurs in the pattern of engaging in income-generating activities, such as scavenging dumped waste, in search of valuable items that are then sold to recyclers:

Almajirai who scavenge on dumped waste have the habit of stealing from peoples' properties. In a situation where they cannot get any available item to sell, they can destroy other peoples' property to use it as waste and sell it. And that is stealing clearly. … I know some Almajiri can steal if they are desperate, even if it is food they can steal, some of them do that, especially in the market. Even here in the Tsangaya, when someone asks you for food you have it. If you did not give it to him, he can take it in your absence, and that is stealing as well (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, one can steal, for instance when someone is hungry and sees something that can help him, he can steal (Jari Aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

Well, it happens sometimes, mostly because of desperation, especially because of hunger, but others can steal even if they are not needy, but because of greediness. For instance, when they see certain things available, and no one sees them around, they can take it (Rabilu Aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, it happens. When hungry, an Almajiri can forcibly take food from younger children and run away. It happened many times. Because they are hungry. I mean there are incidents

*where little children were sent with foodstuff, and were attacked by Almajirai, who they can grab by force and run away (*Sule Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The circumstances that risk stealing in the *Almajirai* primarily relate to desperation, but there is an acknowledgement of greediness, in a setting favourable for the act, such as when no one is seeing them, or guarding the items targeted for the theft, underlining the relevance of routine activity theory in explaining the act of theft in the *Almajirai*. Another context is hunger caused by the severity of food deprivation (see Chapter 6). The situation of food deprivation was reported by the respondents as a major drive for desperation and involvement in theft. As shown by the data, some desperate *Almajirai* can forcibly grab food from younger children (who are sent to deliver food between families). It should be noted that meal packages are sometimes distributed within family and friends' networks and beyond, as a tradition among northern Nigerian Hausa communities. Young children are usually sent to deliver the meal packages, who in a favourable setting present as a suitable target that can easily be grabbed by some *Almajirai*. The data further reveals that behavioural dispositions can influence involvement in theft by the *Almajirai*:

An Almajiri can steal out of desperation because we are not the same. Some can endure stressful situations and live on, but others cannot. But my thought is that only a few Almajiri succumb to temptations of desperation to steal from someone. I am also a victim; my phone was stolen in the Tsangaya… There are such Almajirai that can commit crime to satisfy their needs… They also steal clothes to sell and get money (Mamman aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The qualitative data corroborates the quantitative to the extent to which the *Almajirai* can succumb to desperation and engage in theft, by indicating that only a few *Almajirai* are involved, those who find it difficult to endure the stresses of deprivation. The endurance mentioned here highlights a manifestation of self-control as a mediator for succumbing to desperation (Chapter 9 discusses the indicators and level of self-control in the *Almajirai*).

Furthermore, the data show theft does not necessarily occur because of desperation, but because of the exploitative role model of the *Malamai*. This characteristic can be developed gradually from successful involvement in the theft, enjoying the rewards of the acts, to eventual affiliation to the act as a resort to achieve material gain. The items that the *Almajirai* commonly steal are not limited to valuable items that are sold but also include

foodstuff, and sometimes clothes, which are also sold to get money. The findings in Chapter 6 show that the *Almajirai* get involved in theft within and outside the *Tsangaya* environment. Some *Malamai* however reported that desperation and involvement in theft can sometimes be influenced by the context of some *Malamais'* discipline:

They are more involved in stealing, which usually happens because of the strictness and greediness of the Mallams. You know some Malamai have rude habits, it is something known even among us the Tsangaya teachers. Let me tell you, there was a Mallam who beat up an Almajiri so badly because he failed to get some money for the Mallam (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

It is true if such a condition makes an Almajiri adopt a criminal way to escape desperation, that has to do with the kind of discipline he undergoes under his teacher (Mallam Hamisu, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Whilst the *Malamai* are supposed to be intimate caregivers, who should inspire good attitudes, contrasting accounts were offered of selfishness by some, which was a source of desperation in the *Almajirai*, through the imposition of compulsory money payments. The data in Chapter 6 has shown that the income earnings and support from parents are not sufficient for the *Almajirai*. Therefore, demanding money from them by some *Malamai* can further aggravate the situation of deprivation. Especially, when they know the severity of punishment awaiting whosoever fails to bring the sum to the *Mallam*. As such, there are occasions when desperation is created by the system, and the *Almajirai* seek every feasible way to earn money. In situations where students cannot find the opportunity to find the money, they resort to utilizing illegal ways to earn it. This indicates the significance of the role played by the *Malamai*, either in preventing criminal acts by the *Almajirai* or in creating the conditions for those acts to be perpetrated.

8.4 Conclusion

The quantitative and qualitative data analysis focused on the relationship between deprivation and criminality in the *Almajirai*, as some previous studies indicated (see Chapter 1) that the *Almajirai* tend to engage in criminal behaviour because of their social circumstances. In contrast to studies in the Global North, absolute deprivation has a stronger association with offending behaviour for the *Almajirai*, rather than relative deprivation. The present study has found that there is a significant relationship between some indicators of absolute deprivation, such as access to safe water and picking fights among the *Almajirai*.

Also, indicators of absolute deprivation including water deprivation, food deprivation and experience of discrimination in the neighbourhood show a significant relationship with other petty crimes and antisocial behaviour, which include poaching vermin, and open defecation. Moreover, anti-social acts, such as open defecation, occur because most *Tsangaya* schools in both urban and rural areas do not have adequate toilet facilities.

Once again, however, the findings are not clear-cut. So, for example, even if in desperation, it was found that most participants (64.5%) believed it was not acceptable for an *Almajiri* to steal. The *Almajirai* accounts reveal a level of satisfaction with few resources to sustain their lives, which can be accessed without engaging in crime. However, the majority across nine *Tsangaya* schools in urban and rural communities reported knowing an *Almajiri* involved in petty theft. The relationship between desperation and theft among the *Almajirai* varied because the *Almajirai* differ in their ability to cope with absolute deprivation - this is likely to be linked to such things as success in begging or working for households, and perhaps character, or level of religiosity. Some can endure the hardships of hunger and other material deprivation, but some cannot. Relative deprivation reveals little relationship with criminality among the *Almajirai*. An exception is a significant relationship between picking fights to settle status and feeling worse off for seeing other children experiencing care from their parents. The *Almajirai* are aware of their status, which is attached to their identity. The relevance of these findings concerning the criminological theories reviewed in Chapter 2 will be discussed in Chapter 10. However, as noted in Chapter 1, the *Almajirai* were linked with religious values that they learned in the *Tsangaya*, which coupled with deprivation in making them criminals. Chapter 9 draws on the data to examine this relationship.

CHAPTER NINE
RELIGIOSITY AND CRIMINALITY IN THE *ALMAJIRAI*

9.1 Introduction

Religiosity is one of the factors that serve as a protective element for criminality among youth. Previous discussions in the introductory part of this thesis explained how literature and local media suggest that economic deprivation and religious indoctrination are the key factors that risk violence and other forms of criminality in the *Almajirai* (Casey, 2007; Abbo, Mohd Zain, & Ali, 2017; Abdulmalik, Omigbodun, Beida, & Adedokun, 2009; Hansen, Jima, Abbas, & Abia, 2016; Salaam, 2011). Critics of this research, however, described the *Almajirai* as having no strong appeal to criminality as presented in these studies. Instead, they propose that the *Almajirai* are scapegoated for many crimes and that the values they learn in the *Tsangaya* play a role in protecting the *Almajirai* from becoming involved in crime (Akali, 2015; Hoechner, 2013). An earlier chapter explored the depth of deprivation and its relationship with crime involvement in the *Almajirai*. This chapter presents an analysis of the level of religiosity, to probe the possibility of religiosity as a protective characteristic with regards to crime in the *Almajirai*.

It is important to note that in this study, measuring religiosity in the *Almajirai* is limited to asking regarding perceived level of belief and practice only. Even though, during interviews, this study discovered that an appeal to identity, perceived as spiritual is essential in shaping actions and interactions amongst the *Almajirai*

9.2 The Level of Religiosity in the *Almajirai*

Given the ages of the *Almajirai* I studied, the measures of religiosity were adopted from studies of Muslim adolescents, (see for example, Mohd Dali, Yousafzai and Abdul Hamid, 2019; Ramzy et al., 2021; Jana-Masri and Priester, 2007), which emphasised that religiosity in Islam is measured by practice and belief. The belief component includes faith that Allah supervises all affairs, while the practice covers aspects of interpersonal relationships, morality in action, and obligatory and voluntary rituals. The questionnaire asked questions about the participants' conscious feeling of being supervised by God at all times, to understand the level of belief, and practice was explored by asking questions about the extent of skipping mandatory religious obligation. This is because, Islam as a religion, has five

pillars, a statement of the words of unity of God (*Kalimah Shahadah)*, five daily prayers (*Salat*), giving some portion of one's wealth (*Zakat*), fasting in the month of Ramadan (*Sawm*), and pilgrimage by visiting the holy house in Mecca (*Hajj*) (Hussain, 2012). The two pillars, Z*akat* (Almsgiving) and *Hajj* (Visit to the Holy Ka'abah), can be observed only with opportunity, while the *Kalimah Shahadah* is a statement of declaration and belief. The five daily prayers and fasting are the common acts that can be observed in others more frequently. Therefore, most of the questions on religious practice focused on the *Salat* (five daily prayers).

Table 9.1 Descriptive Analysis of Level of Religiosity in the *Almajirai* (N = 800)

			Skipping mandatory religious obligation		**Feeling watched and supervised by God**	
	N	**Range**	**Mean**	**SD**	**Mean**	**SD**
Urban	(600)	0-3	1.93	.721	1.39	.590
Rural	(200)	0-3	2.25	.638	1.04	.323
General	(800)	0-3	2.10	.715	1.30	.557

9.2.1 The Level of Religious Belief in the *Almajirai*

Feeling the presence or being supervised by God is one of the most important aspects that reflects a subjective level of belief in God, which provides an impetus for growth and development in faith within an individual Muslim (Ramzy et al., 2021). The quantitative analysis found that the *Almajirai's* feeling of being supervised by God is low (*m*=1.30, SD=.557), on a range of 0-3. Comparably, it is lower in rural areas (*m*=1.04, SD=.323) than in the urban *Almajirai* (*m*=1.39, SD=.590) (see Table 9.1). Whilst the low level can be true of the nature of young Muslims, such as the *Almajirai*, the qualitative data provides further details on the context of the *Almajirai*:

We train them to believe in being watched by God, and that they will be judged by whatsoever they did. Only that, some of them are too young to fully understand the implications of all beliefs. For such kids, reckoning being watched by God may happen only rarely (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Only the older students can have such thoughts, but for the younger ones, it is unlikely. Even in the preaching sessions we are holding for them to adopt certain good attitudes, the older students are more sensitive to the preaching, but for the younger ones, it is not likely (Mallam Hamisu, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Some of them can take what they learn in the sessions we hold, so they feel being observed by God, and so they can stay away from wrongdoings, but others may not have that faith. They only stay away from wrongdoing because of their fear of the Mallam (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

No, they are very little I don't think they have strong feelings of being watched by God in doing anything. But, as part of the faith expected in them, they may sometimes have the feeling (Mallam Danladi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

In some situations, some of them may feel being observed by God, but most of them do not bother about that, especially when they are about to satisfy their needs (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

The specific case of the *Almajirai* suggests by the data shows that listening to lecture sessions from their *Malamai* is one of the ways of instilling beliefs in the *Almajirai*, particularly belief and fear of God, by believing that God watches everything one does, and on the day of judgment, wrongdoers will be punished for their sins. However, given the varying ages of the *Almajirai* and internalisation processes of the tenets taught, the level of belief also varies amongst the *Almajirai*. The data indicates that age but not location matters in this regard. There is no surprise in this, as young people require more time to gain a deeper understanding of religious faith while still undergoing assimilation and building faith in the ideology. Some of the *Malamai* reported that the strength of belief among the younger *Almajirai* is low, suggesting that they require stronger cognitive development to internalise the aspect of that God supervise all affairs including themselves. Unlike older *Almajirai* who understand more about the suggestions made during the session. As highlighted by one of the *Malamai* (*Mallam* Rabe above), the behaviours of *Almajirai* are influenced by seeking satisfaction of basic needs, more than religiosity. The view is corroborated by the responses of the *Almajirai* regarding the belief in being supervised by God:

Not everyone among us feels being supervised by God at all the time, many don't have this thought. I believe most of us do not have the thought (Sani, Aged 14, Almajiri Urban Tsangaya).

We believe that we are always watched by God, and most of us remember it, but not always (Mamman, Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Sometimes, some of us skip obligatory prayer, especially young Almajirai. Some rarely become conscious that Allah sees them (Musa, Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Those who solemnly engage in obligatory religious practices always have the thought that God is watching them and is in control of everything. So, Almajirai with this capacity cannot

so easily deviate from doing things that are forbidden. In addition to that, our Malamai preach to us that we should not engage in anything wrong (Rabilu, Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The responses of the *Almajirai* suggest that most of them do not feel they are being supervised by God most of the time. This, however, does not suggest that they do not believe in what they have listened to or learnt in their *Tsangaya*. However, the consciousness of being watched by God does not always occur, although some do report faithfully listening and adhering to the religious instructions and attending to the divine and supernatural power of God. Such *Almajirai* can be identified by their strict adherence to religious practice, enjoining what is lawful, and forbidding what is identified as wrong.

9.2.2 The Level of Religious Practice in the *Almajirai*

The quantitative analysis indicates a high level of skipping mandatory religious obligations among the *Almajirai* (m = 2.10, SD = .715). Comparably, the act of skipping the mandatory religious obligations is higher in rural *Almajirai* (m = 2.25, SD = 638) than in their urban counterparts (m = 1.93, SD = 721) (see Table 9.1). Moreover, feeling supervised by God is low in the participants (m = 1.30, SD = .557), and it is lower in rural *Almajirai* (m =1.04, SD = .323) than in their urban counterparts (m = 1.39, SD =.590). The qualitative data provides a broader explanation of the religious practice by the Almajirai. Most of the respondents explained that age plays a role in determining the engagement of the *Almajirai* in religious practice, especially in the five daily prayers:

Some of us skip prayers, especially the younger Almajirai when they are out of Tsangaya, while others do not skip worship (Mamman, Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, some of them skip daily prayers, especially the younger ones who are not old enough to know much about God. However, the older students do not skip mandatory acts of religion, like daily prayers and fasting. And if anyone is caught violating the mandatory rules, like if anyone is seen eating in the daylight during the month of fasting, it will be reported to us. And we will deal with the violator (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya)

Yes, they do skip religious activities, because they are young kids, but they engage in prayers, especially when they are in the Tsangaya. Some can take a stone and rub it on their forehead thinking that it suffices for praying, but that is childish, and it is not okay (Mallam Rabe, Teacher Rural Tsangaya)

Like other people, Almajirai engage in religious practices, but it is common especially among younger Almajiri students, to skip some obligatory prayers, or to merge them. This

usually happens when the time to observe the prayer is coupled with other activities like working for their surrogate mothers, or any other work that can bring material benefit. Some Almajirai, who are even older, value their material gains more than the obligatory aspects of religion (Rabilu, Aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The older ones are serious about religious practice, but the younger ones do not care about praying. The reason I think goes with the popular saying that, if you do any act of worship as a kid, the reward goes to your parents, until you grow older and mature. That makes many of the younger Almajirai not bother themselves with mandatory religious practices like five daily prayers (Sule, Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

As these comments show, it is known in most *Tsangaya* schools that the younger *Almajirai* skip the mandatory prayers. This is related to their low level of understanding of the religiosity and weakness of conscience in God, as well as folk myth, which suggests that the reward for worship by young individuals belongs to their parents until they mature. Even though some *Tsangaya* schools enforce participation in religious activities, especially in the urban *Tsangaya* schools (see *Mallam* Jarimi above), in rural *Tsangaya* (e.g., *Mallam* Saminu above), there is an acknowledged flexibility. This suggests that, despite the role of age in the extent of engagement in religious practice, the *Tsangaya* schools and the *Almajirai* in the urban areas may be more committed to religious practice than their rural counterparts, thereby corroborating the analysis and findings of the quantitative data (Table 9.1). In some *Tsangaya*, practice is enforced, and supervision for identifying those who skip praying is practised by older graduates (*Gardawa*) as supervisors of the younger *Almajirai*.

Yes, we participate in daily prayers, some of us pray fully in every obligatory prayer, but some Almajirai do not unless they are forced to do so. Because of that, our Mallam complained that he cannot control many people at the same time, he cannot understand who does pray, and who does not pray. So, he is helped by some Gardi who also supervises the Kolo if they notice they did not pray, they ask them to pray. Then they go and pray, but even some responsible young Almajirai attend mosque and pray, without being told. This is because he learned that whosoever is not praying will be going to hell fire in the afterlife (Amadi, Aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

You see, praying is compulsory, they must do it, but we monitor them, how we do that, is we wake them up for early morning prayers every day. And we engage them in praying when the time is due if they are in the Tsangaya. We must check and make sure they are all present during praying time. If they are out of Tsangaya when they come back, we check the signs on their faces and feet… You know, how well the student engages in praying rests on how well the Mallam cared about that. The aim is to train them on the process as good Muslims. Even if praying cannot make them abstain from wrongdoing. They will be raised as good Muslims (Mallam Danladi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya)

Everyone in the Tsangaya is expected to perform prayer on time, but some do not pray on time; many students skip obligatory prayers! It is normal with them. Even in the school, there is deception some do, they wash their feet and pretend they pray, because when Mallam is checking those that do not pray (Sani, Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya)

They do but not consistently, what we do in this Tsangaya is that we set observers among them, who report to us what they are doing during religious practices, to make sure they attend prayers and do the right things. And on Thursday mornings we hold a session in which we guide them on the impact of becoming religious, such as showing them how successful they can be if they attend religious activities regularly. So, believing in what we told them makes them regular participants of prayers in the mosque (Mallam Tahir, Teacher Urban Tsangaya)

*Yes, but many are not properly following the mandatory religious practices, some of them can deceive the Mallams by washing their faces and legs, so that they cannot be noticed as prayer defaulters. We also ask others to confirm to us if they see them praying. The majority prayed in the congregation, but others ignored it, especially if they had some work to earn money (*Mallam Saminu, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

Supervision activity is possible when the *Almajirai* are in the *Tsangaya* during the time for praying. However, outside the *Tsangaya*, neither the *Mallam* nor the *Gardi* can know what they are doing. Even in the *Tsangaya*, some *Almajirai* deceive the *Malamai* or the supervisors by displaying wet faces and feet (symbolising that they performed ablution as a mandatory act before praying), but they dodge participation in praying. The interview data indicates that prayer skipping is a known practice among *Almajirai*. Thus, in some *Tsangaya*, the praying is enforced when the praying time is due, and the *Almajirai* are in the *Tsangaya*. The data also reveals that some *Almajirai* engage in religious practices, irrespective of their age and location, which can be connected to a moral appeal to religious values and spirituality. In some instances, there were moments when I observed *Almajirai* not paying attention to praying in congregation when other children of their age were in the mosque praying:

Almajirai kept their begging bowls aside while playing football with a rag-made ball… two of them were fighting… people came out from the mosque, including small children…. An older person shouted at the Almajirai to stop playing the game and leave the area. The *Almajirai* picked up their belongings, moved to the other side and sat under a tree. Some of them opened their bowls and started eating

During my data collection in one of the urban *Tsangaya*, there was a day when prayer was going on in a mosque nearby. The mosque was full of people of varying ages, including younger children of the *Almajirai* age, but the *Almajirai* were playing football on the street. After the congregational prayer ended, an older person from those who prayed in the mosque

shouted at them and asked them to leave the area. Instead of going to pray, they moved to another space and sat down. I have witnessed such incidences with different *Almajirai*, which does not indicate that the *Almajirai* will not pray afterwards but it is important to note that in Islam praying at a specific time and in a congregation is important. The scenario indicates either weak seriousness about praying, unless they are in their *Tsangaya*, under the supervision of their Mallam, or maybe another reason.

Table 9.2 Pearson Product Moment Correlation (*r*) between Self-Report on Religiosity and Criminality (N = 800).

Variables	Smoking cigarette	Smoking cannabis	Using intoxicant	Fighting	Stealing	Other criminality
Feeling supervised by God	.[a]	.[a]	-.029 .416	-.049 .166	.023 .523	-.002 .962
Skipping mandatory religious obligation	.[a]	.[a]	.039 .266	.193** .000	.068 .055	.039 .267

**。 Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
a. Cannot be computed because at least one of the variables is constant.

Table 9.3 Cross-Tabulation for Self-Report on Religiosity and Criminality (N=800; Range=0-3)

	Feeling supervised by God (Means, SD)				Skipping mandatory religious obligation (Means, SD)			
	Never	Rarely	Often	Frequently	Never	Rarely	Often	Frequently
Substance abuse	.00 .000	.00 .059	.00 .000	.00 .000	.00 .000	.00 .047	.00 .000	.00 .000
Fighting	.30 .675	.16 .387	.11 .346	.20 .407	.04 .230	.16 .384	.25 .483	.32 .477
Theft	.10 .316	.03 .171	.03 .175	.07 .254	.02 .180	.03 .160	.04 .206	.09 .294
Other	.10 .316	.01 .110	.02 .144	.00 .000	.01 .104	.01 .114	.02 .147	.05 .213

Table 9.2 presents the inferential statistical analysis examining the relationship between self-reported religiosity and crime involvement among the *Almajirai*, utilising Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation (r). The strength of association is assessed on a scale ranging from -1.0 to +1.0, where +1.0 indicates a perfect correlation, 0.9 to 0.7 signifies a very strong correlation, 0.6 to 0.5 a strong correlation, 0.3 to 0.4 a weak correlation, and 0.2 to 0.1 a very weak correlation, while values below 0.1 suggest no association. The level of significance is

set at ≤ 0.01. The findings indicate no statistically significant correlation between religiosity and criminal involvement among the *Almajirai* (see Table 9.2).

9.3 Relationship between Religiosity and Criminality in the *Almajirai*

The relationship between religiosity and criminality in *Almajirai* is tested using quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative analysis is done using inferential and descriptive statistics, through Product Moment Correlation, and cross-tabulation of mean scores of criminal acts across measures of religiosity, and the qualitative analysis through thematic analysis.

The inferential analysis in Table 9.3 indicates no association between indicators of religiosity measures - feeling supervised by God and skipping mandatory religious practices - with all the indicators of criminality and anti-social behaviour. Similarly, the descriptive analysis by cross-tabulation suggests no association between the measures of religiosity and criminality, except fighting, which also shows a very weak association with feeling supervised by God (*m*=.30, SD=.675), and with frequently skipping mandatory religious obligation (*m*=.32, SD=.477). The interview data provided insights into the circumstances and context of how religiosity affects criminality in the *Almajirai*:

Some of us remember that God sees them even when they are about to commit wrongdoings, and, when they remember they desist from committing the wrongdoing. However, others do not remember that God sees them; when they want to commit their wrongdoings, they go ahead to commit it (Mamman, Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Honestly, God-fearing comes to us sometimes only. It stops us from taking away other people's property (Musa, Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Some of the participants believed that their belief in God's supervision is strong enough to provide a protective effect for them, which instils God's fear and deters them from committing, forbidden acts, including criminality and antisocial acts. Despite this, there are some whose fear of God is weak, and whom some *Mallam* believe are more likely to commit forbidden acts:

The belief of being watched by God is enough to be a source of influencing their daily interactions. But, as I told you, some of them are too young to have a strong feeling of belief. I can say, they are more influenced by what they watch and do every day, within the Tsangaya and outside, even if it does not conform to the religion (Mallam Jarimi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

You can understand the religious ones among them by the fact that most of the religious ones among them are those that are less reported with any complaint, by the community members (Mallam Saminu, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

Some *Malamai* believed the involvement of the *Almajirai* in religious practices had a spiritual effect in protecting them from committing wrongdoings, such as antisocial behaviours and criminality. Others, especially the younger *Almajirai* are thought to be more easily influenced by daily social interactions and observations, suggesting the relevance of social learning theory. In this regard, it can be argued that religiosity sometimes offers a protective effect through attachment and commitment to religious belief, which are elements of control as proposed by Hirschi (2017). Regarding this, some *Almajirai* reported that religious practice does have some protective effects:

I believe the extent of engagement in religious practices amongst us has an impact on our attitudes, just like other individuals. Those who engage in wrong acts like stealing are among those who do not engage in obligatory religious practices. Sometimes, when we are together, we use to remind ourselves of God-fearing attitudes, and their rewards (Rabilu, Aged 14, Almajiri Urban Tsangaya).

Satan must have possessed any Almajiri who becomes delinquent! (Sani, Aged 14, Studen Urban Tsangaya).

Some respondents believe that their religious practices induce protection from involvement in criminality. Given the low level of religious practice revealed by both quantitative and qualitative analysis, it can be concluded that religious practices and beliefs can produce this protective effect, for only a few of the *Almajirai*. Therefore, it is a common belief in those few among them that whosoever engages in criminality is distanced and will be further distanced from God. For Sani, it is those with the most distance from God (those possessed by Satan), who are likely to engage in criminal behaviours.

This chapter found an intersection between low levels of self-reported religiosity and crime involvement in the *Almajirai*, suggesting a weak association between the two, because a high level of religiosity is expected to yield a low level of criminality through inducing effective control and vice versa. However, this chapter reports a low level of criminality, as well as religious belief and practice in the *Almajirai*. This suggests a weak effect of religiosity on offending behaviour in the participants, except among a minority. However, it can be noted that Chapter 7 highlighted the relevance of appeal to 'identity' in the *Almajirai* in shaping their self-concept. Even though religious identity is not measured as an indicator of

religiosity in this chapter, in many instances, its relevance emerged in the qualitative analysis. In this chapter and others (see Chapters 7, 8, and 10), the respondents highlight the relevance of their identity in shaping their attitudes. For instance, in Chapter 7, the respondents reiterated the effect of their identity in regulating the magnitude of both absolute and relative deprivation. Also, in Chapter 6 (section 6.2.2), all the respondents indicated that their system does not condone substance abuse. The *Almajiri* identity evolved from the Islamic religion (see Chapter 1) and grew stronger with followers who had deep beliefs. This corroborates Seto's (2021) explanation of the importance of 'spiritual but not religious identity' (see Chapter 3). The religiosity taught in *Tsangaya* focuses on belief and practice, it also induces contentment with little, as well as avoiding conflicts and criminal behaviour within and outside the *Tsangaya* schools. In essence, the values instilled a sense of frugality and ascetic behaviour, with strong esteem to identity in the *Almajirai*.

9.4 Conclusion

As noted in the chapter, the exploration of the level of religiosity in the participants is limited to examining the levels of belief and practice only. However, during interviews, the study found esteem to identity as strong in shaping attitudes and strengthening morality in the *Almajirai*. The chapter findings suggest that the nature of religiosity taught through the instructions by the *Malamai* focuses on belief and practice that instill pro-social behaviours and avoiding antisocial and criminal behaviours within and outside the *Tsangaya* schools. Belief measured by consciousness of being watched by God is found to be low, which is no surprise, given the ages of the participants. Therefore, the measure is found to be lower in younger than in older *Almajirai*, and lower in rural areas than in urban *Almajirai*. The belief in an afterlife and the notion of divine judgment based on one's actions appear to exert a significant influence on the ability of the *Almajirai* to endure life's hardships, maintain contentment with minimal material possessions, and demonstrate a deep commitment to religious practices.

The chapter also showed that, even though the majority of *Almajirai*, especially the younger ones, skip mandatory religious practices, such as five daily prayers. In this regard, the urban *Almajirai* are more committed to religious practices than their rural counterparts. The supervision of the *Almajirai* by their *Malamai* in the *Tsangaya* plays a significant role in improving their commitment to religious practices. Moreover, the chapter findings also

indicate an absence of a relationship between religiosity and criminal behaviour in most of the *Almajirai*. Although, levels of feeling supervised by God among some older *Almajirai* may provide a protective effect. In addition, the chapter reports data showing that motivation and protection from criminality can be influenced by factors other than religiosity, such as deprivation and respect for the identity of "*Almajiri*", as featured in many instances in Chapters 8 and 10 of this study. So far, it can be concluded that both deprivation and religiosity cannot adequately explain crime among *Almajirai*. The next chapter, explores other factors beyond deprivation and religiosity in explaining *Almajirai'*s involvement in criminality, and affiliation with gangs.

CHAPTER TEN

BEYOND DEPRIVATION: EXPLAINING CRIME AND THE ALMAJIRAI

10.1 Introduction

The previous three chapters examined and presented an analysis of the extent of and relationship between deprivation, religiosity, and criminality in *Almajirai*. The findings suggest severe levels in most of the absolute deprivation indicators and low levels in most of the relative deprivation indicators. Surprisingly, the self-report data on the *Almajirai's* involvement in crime is low, as the high levels of absolute deprivation and low levels of religiosity measured by belief and practice might have suggested higher levels of association with criminality. However, in other senses, it is not surprising. First, the quantitative data suggests that when commenting upon the involvement of their peers (rather than themselves), crime is much more prevalent among the *Almajirai*, suggesting there is a relationship between deprivation and low levels of religiosity. Second, the relationship between crime and deprivation is complex - not all deprived participants commit even petty crimes, and not all crime is committed by deprived participants. Third, the seriousness of nature and extent of involvement in crimes are likely to be linked to forms of deprivation. The focus in criminological theory since Mertonian strain theory has primarily been upon relative notions of deprivation. Merton's (1938) observations of deprivation outside of the cultural emphases upon material gain arguably helped to influence later approaches (e.g. Young, 1999) that suggested absolute deprivation was not an explanatory fact in the rising crime rates of post-WWII Western societies as those countries were becoming wealthier.

These observations suggest that while deprivation is important in understanding the *Almajirai* involvement in crime, it cannot be the only explanation, because, as was seen, while deprivation, particularly absolute deprivation, was pervasive, not all *Almajirai* are involved in crime. Hence, in this chapter, the focus is on additional factors that criminological theories suggest are important in explaining why the *Almajirai* may be involved in crime. The focus is on those that are related to the motivation for criminality, environmental effects, behavioural dispositions, as well as identity-related, whose understandings can help explain criminality in the specific context of the *Almajirai*.

This approach is consistent with the literature on the reasons why the *Almajirai* become involved in crime, which suggests a complex picture, even if authors tend to focus on one dimension – for example economic deprivation theory (Abbo et al., 2017; Hansen et al., 2016), religious radicalization (Emmanuel Osewe, 2016; Winters, 1987), and social learning (Casey, 2008; Dawha, 2021; Salaam, 2011). While this literature does not necessarily employ such an approach, it does suggest that explaining crime among the *Almajirai* is complex, and a single theoretical explanation is likely to be inadequate.

10.2 Strain and Other Criminological Theories in Explaining Criminality in the *Almajirai*

Strain theorists suggest that criminality is caused by a lack of access to legitimate opportunities to achieve socially sanctioned goals, relating to the social and economic needs of individuals, resulting from injustice and inequality in society, or adverse experiences in personal circumstances (Agnew, 1992; Merton, 1938). This usually occurs because of dissatisfaction with socioeconomic status and access to opportunities in comparison to the reference group (relative deprivation) (Merton, 1957). Further and more recent studies in this theoretical domain consider lacking access to the basic means of living (absolute deprivation) (Burraston et al., 2019; Song et al., 2022). The argument is that material deprivation (absolute or relative) creates a cumulative weight of desperation and feelings of disadvantage, anger, and frustration, described by Agnew (1992) as stress. Sometimes, the response to these stresses results in the adoption of illegal ways to achieve desired goals by individuals (what Merton (1938) called innovation). This perspective is examined in the sections below, concerning the demonstrated severe absolute and mild relative deprivation in the *Almajirai*, alongside the low level of crime involvement discussed in Chapters 6 and 7.

10.2.1 Economic Deprivation, Religiosity, and Criminality in the *Almajirai*

Given the levels of absolute deprivation among *Almajirai*, the findings in Chapter 7 are perhaps surprising, and arguably point to the inadequacy of economic deprivation theory to holistically explain the reasons why the *Almajirai* get involved in criminality. Absolute deprivation indicators are strongly correlated with fighting and other criminal and antisocial acts, such as poaching vermin, open defecation, and so on. Also, instances of how stealing occurs in response to the severe absolute deprivation were explained by both the *Almajirai*

and their *Malamai*, showing that some *Almajirai* steal from the bags of their colleagues within *Tsangaya*, from the farms of other people, and sometimes from within the neighbourhood. However, not all of the *Almajirai* commit such acts, nor do they commit them all the time. It can be noted that recent developments within the domain of strain theory suggest incorporating other predictors, such as personal morality and belief, in addition to the salient construct of a goal-means disjuncture (Hughes et al., 2018). In the case of *Almajirai*, this highlights the relevance of considering religiosity as a protective factor for preventing criminality amidst conditions of severe economic deprivation such as the *Almajirai*. In Chapter 8, the levels of religiosity measured by practice and belief were found to be low in the *Almajirai*. However, the influence of the '*Almajiri'* identity connected to religiosity and a perceived sense of humility and spirituality can be relevant. A *Mallam* and some *Almajirai* reported that:

It is not befitting for an Almajiri to smoke or steal. Mallam warns us every day to not touch other people's belongings, and not to associate with bad friends. We should always maintain and respect ourselves as Almajirai, the reward for our virtuous deeds is from Allah (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Do not fight, do not steal, respect your identity and status as Almajiri, and so on. (Musa Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

We do not want to see our students going to places that do not deserve their identity as Almajirai, such as markets, stations, and some places of committing crimes, or places of playing music, and so on. So, we always try to show them that those places do not deserve Almajirai (Mallam Hadi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

It is a common tradition that each *Mallam* holds sessions for instruction to instill values peculiar to the *Almajirai*, as students of religious teaching institutions, which they then expect to shape the actions of the *Almajirai*, particularly outside their *Tsangaya*. In Sani's comments, such instruction is presented as constituting an appeal to the spiritual element of the *Almajiri* identity. Sani may have internalised these instructions, and while the Tsangaya system creates a sense of humility and endurance in the *Almajirai*, the preaching inspires them to believe in their godly identity as specifically religious, which requires them to behave in a certain way. This is referred to as moral capital in the *Tsangaya* system (Hoechner, 2013). Instructions by the *Malamai* might not contain categorically religious practice or belief but rather create a sense of identity that can be a counter to the motivation of

criminality. This finding negates the notion of the *Tsangaya* system instilling values that promote violence against other institutions claimed by some writers (see for example Winters, 1987; Abbo, et al., 2017). In contrast, there is curiosity about such allegations and labelling rhetoric, particularly among teachers. Therefore, the instructions given to the *Almajirai*, as part of the curriculum of the system, mostly focus on avoiding crime and behaving in concert with the identity of the *Almajiri*.

The instructions offered by the *Malamai* specifically target activities external to *Tsangaya*, knowing fully well that the *Almajirai* are not accompanied by an overseer when they are outside and that the *Malamai* are aware that some *Almajirai* will attend places that are identified as criminogenic. This reveals another inadequacy of economic deprivation as a holistic perspective in explaining a causal relationship between the stresses of deprivation and criminality in the context of the *Almajirai*. Showing that the thought of the *Malamai* is influenced by the social construction of the street as a criminogenic space. Thus, a broader explanation beyond motivation through deprivation alone is required.

10.2.2 Strain, Social Setting, and Criminality in the *Almajirai*

Strain theorists consider adverse experiences as another predictor of criminality in youth. Robert Agnew, in his GST, explains adverse experiences in youth as an essential cause of criminality in youth, which occurs within the family or school environment. This also shows the importance of the environment to strain theorists. It is argued that a victim of adverse experiences might choose to escape through criminality if there is no other legitimate means to escape from the situation. (Agnew, 1985; Agnew, 1992). In most of the literature regarding the criminalisation of the *Almajirai*, concerns are more about economic deprivation, poor supervision, and religious indoctrination. Whilst these are considered major risk factors, they do not present all the adverse experiences of the *Almajirai*. This is because some of the studies overlook the views of the *Almajirai* as subjects under study. Even those who consider *Almajirai* as an important source of data, such as Hoechner (2018), were criticized for neglecting physical abuse and other adverse experiences that the *Almajirai* face within their *Tsangaya* (Thurston, 2019). In the present study, adverse experiences are presented as circumstances that can risk some *Almajirai* affiliating with gangs, a situation which has not been explored by previous studies. An instance was noted earlier in Chapter 7 that instead of

providing effective supervision, the younger *Almajirai* sometimes reported being exploited by the older *Almajirai* who were assigned for their supervision, which coupled with the context of severe corporal punishment as a means of control in *Tsangaya* leads to some *Almajirai* seeking to escape:

We have different punishments. But we must confirm that he committed the offence or violated the rules. First, we have caning, we beat them (as punishment). Secondly, we give them difficult and tiring tasks (Mallam Tahir, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Some of the students mentioned hunger as the main reason for running away from the Tsangaya, even if the reason is connected to crimes committed by them. Some of the students run away from the Tsangaya in fear of the consequences of punishment either by the Mallam or from the side of the parents (Amadi Aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Thus, despite living under severe absolute deprivation, some also face additional physical punishment. Such situations present stresses, especially when the *Almajirai* observe contrasting conditions of how other children enjoy care under their parents and attend formal schools, which can further exacerbate the *Almajiri's* predicament (see Chapter 7). When confronted with such severe conditions, the *Almajiri* may decide to return to his parents, viewing it as the sole means to escape. Sometimes, the *Almajiri* may run away in anticipation of sympathy from the parents, which might not turn out to be the case, and forcing his return to the *Tsangaya* usually compounds the problem, as some *Malamai* reported:

If coincidently, parents also insist that their child must go back and attend that Tsangaya, the child can be caught in a dilemma and begin to stressfully perceive hatred by both Mallam and the parents (Mallam Hamisu, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Especially, if the Mallam treats him badly, which further compounds his problems. Also, he might decide to run back home, and if his parents brought him back forcibly. So, to search for the solution to his problems, he can become a friend to bad boys in the community (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Consequently, the situation will affect his self-concept and attitude, gradually his thoughts will then start to change, inclining towards protesting the rules of the Tsangaya. He will begin to isolate himself and visit some places that motivate criminal acts. Eventually, the Almajiri will end up becoming affiliated with any street gangs, who share similar feelings, because the kids may not be able to discern wrong from right, and they can be lured, and introduced to substance abuse as a means of taking away their stresses (Mallam Hamisu, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Paradoxically, when parents are in support of their child attending the *Tsangaya*, this can place the *Almajiri* in a situation which he perceives as rejection and dislike from both sides. The perception can potentially compound the existing stressful condition and worsen the situation. Harsh punishment creates adversity and may lead such *Almajirai* to eventually run away from *Tsangaya*. Empirical findings from the Global North indicate that recurrent exposure to adverse treatment from teachers fosters criminal tendencies in youth, through frequent associations with criminal peers (Bao et al., 2012). In the context of the *Almajirai*, it is important to note that running away from school means taking refuge with the parents, and where the parents refuse to offer support, such *Almajirai* seek refuge in the streets and markets, keeping themselves perpetually on the run. The perceived danger (stated by *Mallam* Hamisu) is that, while interacting with others in the neighbourhood, such *Almajirai* may become associated with criminal peers, as they seek opportunities (legitimate or illegitimate) to sustain their lives.

It is at this point, that the pertinence of environmental explanations for criminality becomes apparent, offering insights into the social effects and mechanisms through which an *Almajiri* constrained in such circumstances may adopt criminal behaviours or associate with gangs. Such associations can expose the *Almajiri* to various forms of criminality. The propensity can be related to the characteristics of the neighbourhoods where the *Almajirai* often reside, particularly in certain urban settings. For example, Sani reports instances involving the *Almajiri* peers who lead transient lives within the neighbourhood, reinforcing the likelihood of criminal affiliations:

In the daylight, he is seen at a fruit market, as reported by another Almajiri who also ran away from Tsangaya. They were together, before the other made up his mind, and stopped running. So, the first Almajiri was reported to be feeding from the remaining food from people in the cattle market. In the night he sleeps in the abattoir. Currently, he left the place for another place… Yes, the first boy was chained with shackles several times, but he knows how to unchain himself and run away. The other boy who returned was taken back home because the parents were afraid that he may run away again… (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

They were chained with shackles around their legs. Because they were roaming in the town, they didn't attend any study sessions. So, when they were caught, they were chained, but they unchained themselves, escaped and sold the shackle, and they ran back to their parents (Ghali Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The practice of using shackles to chain *Almajirai* deemed deviant is common in *Tsangaya* schools, as a reforming mechanism, which restricts their movements. In addition to those experiences reported by Sani and Ghali, I also observed such *Almajiri* in one of the *Tsangaya* I visited, who was chained with a shackle around his legs. When I asked about him, the *Mallam* told me that the *Almajiri* had been on the run for months, because of a 'misunderstanding' between the *Almajiri* and the *Mallam*. He had been hiding in various places in the city, but was apprehended in the market, and forcibly taken back to *Tsangaya*. According to the *Mallam*, there was another who was also on the run, and up to that time living on the streets. The plan was to capture him and take him back to his parents. The chained *Almajiri* told me that he ran away because he did not feel comfortable within the *Tsangaya* system, and he did not know the way back to his parents. He reported to me that *"*there are lots of hardships, moreover, the *Gardi* that look after us burden me with much work. I feel tired with the workloads and hatred from the *Mallam* (*Gardi*), I escaped and lived in the market, and on the streets". Theoretically, the strain because of such adverse experiences means some *Almajirai* opt for survival on the streets and other specific places, which by implication can expose the *Almajirai* to setting that can prompt criminality, or unstructured interaction with other criminal peers, thereby learning or affiliating themselves with gang However, the assumption that they will interact and learn criminal behaviours strongly depends on the social setting that is favourable to making that happen. This highlights the need for considering ecological explanations of youth criminality, particularly in the context of *Almajirai*, for a plausible explanation.

10.3 Environmental-Related Explanations of Criminality in the *Almajirai*

Ecological criminologists suggest that youth residing in high-risk neighbourhoods have higher propensities for criminality unless their guardians have set rules on their activities with peers (Lahey et al., 2008). This is because unsupervised socializing by adolescents provides space for them to engage in unstructured activities where they can share their various experiences, and imitate others (Agustina and Felson, 2015). These views support the explanations suggested by social disorganization, routine activity, situational action, and social learning theorists, which might also help explain the relationships between the complex situation of the *Almajirai* and crime.

Table 10.1 Descriptive Analysis of Neighbourhood Structure in which *Almajirai* live (N = 800)

Perceptions	Range		General (*N*=800)	Urban (*N*=600)	Rural (*N*=200)
Perceived Physical safety	0-3	Mean SD	2.00 (.700)	1.90 (.701)	2.30 (.608)
The presence of gangs in the neighbourhood	0-2	Mean SD	1.09 (.699)	1.33 (.585)	0.39 (.508)

In my observations during data collection, I noted that most of the *Tsangaya* schools in urban areas are situated in slums, neighbourhoods that are denoted by poor housing, and a lack of sanitary infrastructure, indicating a high prevalence of poverty. Some of the *Tsangaya* schools are situated in the outer areas of the urban communities, areas with higher rates of heterogeneity in terms of the backgrounds of the members, a common trend in urban expansion in Nigeria (Fabiyi, 2004). In contrast to the urban areas, there is a higher level of homogeneity in the rural areas. The *Almajirai* live in both inner and outer parts of the rural communities.

The quantitative analysis in Table 10.1 shows a high perception of physical safety by *Almajirai* (*m*=2.00, SD=.700; Range 0-3), which is higher among rural-based *Almajirai* (*m*=2.30, SD=.608) than in their urban counterparts (*m*=1.90, SD=.701). The perceived safety and presence of gang activities are considered as measures to understand the strength of collective efficacy in the neighbourhood, as a social effort to maintain safety. The concept of collective efficacy is defined as the "combination of informal social control and social cohesion and trust" (Battin, 2015, p.43). Moreover, the analysis reveals the perceived presence of gangs is higher in urban areas (*m* = 1.33; SD = .585) than in rural areas (*m* = 0.39; SD =.508) (see Table 10.1). Hence, urban-based *Almajirai* are more likely to encounter gangs than those in rural settings, and so the possibilities for interaction, imitation, and learning from the gangs are higher in the urban areas.

Given the free time that *Almajirai* spend in the neighbourhood, presented in Table 10.2, some of the *Malamai* are aware that their *Almajirai* can visit culturally identified criminogenic places, and therefore categorically impose bans on visiting such places (see Section 10.2.1). This is because, some of these social settings such as transport stations are

known for unstructured interactions and are believed to serve as hubs for crimes and antisocial behaviours, those that do not deserve the identity of an *Almajiri*, as a religiously constructed symbol of moral serenity.

Table 10.2 Typical *Tsangaya* Time Schedule for the *Almajirai*

Days		**Saturday to Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**
Morning Activities	5 a.m. -7 a.m.	Subhi prayers and studies	Subhi prayers and studies	**Study-Free Day**
	7 a.m.–9 a.m.	Intermittent session	**Study-Free Day**	
	9 a.m.– 12 p.m.	Studies continue		
Afternoon Activities	12 p.m.- 2 p.m.	Intermittent session		
	2 p.m.– 6 p.m.	Afternoon prayer, studies, evening prayers, studies.		
Evening/Night Activities	6 p.m.– 8 p.m.	Intermittent session[5]		
	8 p.m.– 10 p.m.	Studies continue*		
	10 p.m.– 5 a.m.	Rest time and sleeping		

In Northern Nigeria, such places are termed as *Tasha*; meaning 'station' but by wider implication, the concept is loaded with meanings relating to an exhibition of immorality (see context in Chapter 1). Situational action theorists suggest that the level of exposure to crime-motivating places can elevate the propensity for learning and adoption of criminal behaviour, which can be "measured as the *number of hours a person has spent awake in settings with a specific characteristic, or combination of characteristics*, during the 20 days covered by the space-time budget" (Wikström et al., 2010, p.69).

In the questionnaire employed in the present study, an open-ended option was included to enquire about the places frequented by the *Almajirai* during their study-free periods. The responses elicited are significantly shaped by the respondents' geographic location, with distinctions observed between urban and rural settings. Participants residing in urban areas indicated involvement in diverse activities during their study-free times. These activities encompassed undertaking menial tasks at various households, engaging in neighbourhood begging, participating in load-carrying activities, undertaking apprenticeships in marketplaces, waiting at transport stations and restaurants for leftover

[5] A short time granted for the Almajirai to go out and make survival, afterwards to resume and continued with studies

food, and participating in income-generating labour, including refuse collection. Furthermore, some respondents in urban areas reported involvement in scavenging activities in discarded refuse to recover valuable items, subsequently sold for monetary gain. Additionally, a subset of participants disclosed engaging in hunting vermin. In the rural *Tsangaya* setting, options are notably constrained, providing minimal flexibility or alternatives. Temporal allocations are dedicated to either the *Tsangaya* or relocating to the outskirts of the community for study sessions in designated areas referred to as *'Kiskadi'* small, thatched huts specifically constructed for educational purposes. During the rainy season, the rural *Almajirai* dedicate a substantial portion of daylight hours to agricultural activities, either within the farms belonging to their *Malamai* or through engagements in labour on farms owned by other individuals. Additionally, a considerable proportion of the rural *Almajirai* allocate time to collecting firewood for commercial purposes and participating in menial tasks within the residences of their employers, like their urban counterparts.

'Kiskadi' (Sourced from *'Mu Koma Tsangaya'* Facebook Page)

The responses of urban-based *Almajirai* report on the presence of gangs within their neighborhoods, particularly in proximity to their *Tsangaya* schools which are situated near specific locations where gang members gather for their activities. These gangs are identifiable based on their recurrent criminal activities, including substance abuse and violence. Despite the pervasive awareness of the gangs' presence, the *Almajirai* exhibited fear of these groups, describing them as 'bad boys' due to their notorious reputation for engaging in dangerous behaviours, such as assaulting innocent individuals, as recounted by *Mallam* Hamisu below:

Yes, there are many of them, the gang of marijuana smokers… Yes, we can see them most of the time in the pond behind our Tsangaya. No, not always. They come in group, sometimes individually… they only come to the community in a gang, do their activities and leave (Mamman aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Yeah, there are many close to here. At the shore of the riverside, you can see many groups of substance abusers. The place has been marked and is well known in the town for the activity of substance abuse (Rabilu Aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya).

There are many gangs around us. Not long ago, in the heat of last summer, one of our students was attacked and killed by one of such gangs, who sneaked into this very room to steal the mobile phones of the students (Mallam Hamisu, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, we pass by them, unless when they are fighting, no one dares go close to the place. Because they can attack anyone who comes to cross their paths. They are extremely dangerous; they can injure individuals. Of course, there are lots of them. I cannot say the actual number of gangs in this community, and most of them are living with their parents. Their parents are aware of what they are doing (Sani Aged 14, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Unlike in the urban neighbourhoods where the gang activity can be seen within residential neighbourhoods, in rural areas, gangs often gather on the outskirts of the communities, and the tendency of coming across them by the *Almajirai* is therefore lower:

Yes, there are gangs, they usually gather outside the community behind the community school. They gather themselves far away from the community to smoke their substances, when preparing to go out for poaching (Sule Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

Yes, there are gangs, including drugs abusers… They usually gather under tamarind trees, a bit far from residents, near the river, that is where they sit and do their business (Jari Aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The community outskirts in rural areas serve as a convening spot for gangs, often for preparation and engaging in criminalised acts such as substance abuse and poaching. This corroborates the previous findings of the quantitative analysis, which indicates that the urban-based *Almajirai* live in more perceived disorganised neighbourhoods, with a higher presence of gangs, compared to those *Almajirai* in rural areas (see Table 10.1). Thus, social settings favourable for exposure and propensities for interaction and learning criminal behaviour are potentially higher in urban areas than rural areas. It is, however, important to note that even in the high-risk neighbourhood, adult supervision can be a protective factor that can prevent youth criminality, and set rules that are adopted by the youth in the situation whereby the movements are not accompanied by adult supervision (Agustina and Felson, 2015; Lahey et al., 2008). In the context of the *Almajirai*, the *Malamai* claim to set rules through continuous sessions before releasing the *Almajirai* to the neighbourhood after the study session. However, this also raises another important concern of supervision when they are out of *Tsangaya*.

Table 10.3 Descriptive Analysis of Level of Supervision Experienced by *Almajirai* (N = 800)

Supervision Indicators	Range	Locations	Mean	SD
The guardians know about all your whereabouts during your study-free time	0-3	Urban	0.92	.820
		Rural	1.36	.907
		General	1.03	.863
The guardians set rules about what to do when at Tsangaya	0-3	Urban	1.28	.673
		Rural	1.25	.693
		General	1.27	.678
The guardians set rules about what to do outside Tsangaya	0-3	Urban	1.13	.647
		Rural	1.25	.684
		General	1.16	.658

Generally, the *Almajirai* report a low experience of their *Malamai* knowledge of their whereabouts during their study-free times *(m*=1.03; SD=.863) (see Table 10.3), which is marginally lower among urban (*m*=0.92; SD=.820), than rural *Almajirai* (*m*=1.36; SD=.907). Additionally, the quantitative analysis indicates low rule enforcement within the *Tsangaya* (*m*=1.27; SD=.678), and outside *Tsangaya* (*m*=1.16; SD=.658), also with marginal difference between the rural and urban *Almajirai* (within *Tsangaya* Urban *m*=1.28; SD=.673.

Rural *m*=1.25; SD=.693, and outside *Tsangaya* Urban *m*=1.13; SD=.647, Rural *m*=1.25; SD=.684).

The qualitative interviews provide richer data for the *Almajirai* experiences of supervision by their guardians, concerning their whereabouts and rules within and outside their *Tsangaya*:

The Mallam does not know where everyone goes, to be honest, and no one follows us for supervision. Except that, some of us move in groups, consisting of older and younger Almajirai. Some are brothers, and others came from the same community. So, the older Almajirai look after the younger ones (Mamman Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

We usually instruct the older boys among them to make sure certain things belonging to people are not touched (Mallam Saminu, Teacher Rural Tsangaya).

No, he may not know exactly which direction they will go, or a specific place they intend to reach for work. But he (Mallam) is always aware that they are out for work (Sule Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The qualitative data complements the quantitative analysis by showing a low level of knowing the whereabouts of the *Almajirai* by *Malamai* as their guardians. This relates not only to the fact that the students are large in number but also that they move out of their *Tsangaya* in different directions to various places, with no record of where they are going. When the *Almajirai* move into the neighbourhood the older *Almajirai* often monitor the younger students, creating a mechanism for peer supervision. This mechanism can align peer influence when they move together, which can also be either positive (protective) or negative (a risk) in terms of learning and involvement in criminality, and which can also be extended with friendships even within the *Tsangaya*. Some *Tsangaya* schools with large populations are practising a hierarchy of supervision, where a *Gardi* can be assigned to look after some of the *Almajirai*:

There are students under the care of our graduates (Gardi). He (Gardi) has the responsibility for overseeing some specific number of students, five to nine at least (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

The *Gardi* is expected to supervise the affairs of the students attached to them, including monitoring their studies, and complaints relating to health issues, social interactions, and

relationships, which helps to ease the task of managing the *Tsangaya* by the Head-*Mallam*. However, the activities outside the *Tsangaya* are often unsupervised, but are guided by the rudimentary instructions of the *Malamai*, which are expected to influence the social interaction that can divert the *Almajirai* away from criminality:

We do not have written rules, but what we do is consistent warnings on the right thing to do or the wrong that must not be done. Every Thursday after morning prayer, we hold a session, reminding them (Almajirai) to be careful with making friends with other children in the community, becoming careful with the properties of the people, and so on (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

When in the neighbourhood, Mallam warns us frequently not to be involved in anything bad, we should focus on our work, when we work in other people's houses we should focus on our work, collect food, and leave immediately after work, so that we would not be blamed for anything that may get lost in the house. He also instructs us that, when we move in a group, we should not do anything in violation of the neighbourhood rules. If we engage in anything wrong and are ordered to stop by some adults in the community, we should listen to them and do the right thing (Amadi aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

We should not touch other peoples' belongings, just focus on our activities, get the food, and come back to Tsangaya (Musa Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

We are warned to be careful with other people's properties, and not to pick stuff from the farms that are yet to be harvested. Also, do not pick bundles of wood from others, cut from living trees, or take from farmers' hibiscus flowers they are drying on their farms (Sule Aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

In the usual instructions before being released out to the neighbourhood, both urban and rural *Malamai* reiterate warnings for their *Almajirai*, to avoid illegitimate acts, particularly relating to the theft of other people's properties, and fighting with other children. They aim to construct a positive image of the *Almajiri* identity and to protect the *Almajirai* from committing crimes, particularly as some *Malamai* have reported receiving complaints about their *Almajirai* concerning crimes (see Chapter 7). These instructions suggested the existence of an awareness of propensity in the *Almajirai* to engage in such criminal acts.

According to Wikström et al. (2010, p.67) "The concept of propensity refers to the likelihood someone will act in a specific way when exposed to environmental conditions. People vary in propensity, meaning that different people react differently to the same setting (environmental conditions)." This can be related to the known fact that the *Almajirai*

experience severe absolute deprivation and discrimination in the neighbourhood, because a non-*Almajiri* may not receive the same instructions from his parents. Environmental theorists believe that the absence of capable guardians to supervise youth's unstructured interaction increases the possibility of criminality, by setting a more favourable stage to commit a crime, especially if it is rewarding (Sandahl, 2016; Ward and Forney, 2020). However, some suggest that setting rules for peer socializing can reduce the tendency (Lahey et al., 2008). To what extent do the *Almajirai* adhere to the instructions of their *Malamai*? One of the *Almajirai* reports:

Some of us obey and follow all the instructions, yes, some follow, and you know, not everything said will be obeyed by all. Most of us follow the instructions, and that is the truth (Amadi aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Children do not always follow the instructions of their parents, even in their presence. Surprisingly, the response above shows most of the *Almajirai* follow the instructions set for behaviour outside the *Tsangaya*, without any adult supervision, and a few do not, and that might be the reason only a few *Almajirai* self-reported involvement in criminal behaviours such as fighting, stealing, and other criminal acts (see Chapter 7).

Moreover, there are issues reported by the *Malamai* suggesting a perceived risk for exposure and potential for learning criminal behaviours, through peer interaction outside the *Tsangaya*, which may have a significant effect on the *Almajirai's* behaviours:

If an Almajiri has a surrogate mother, gradually, he can become familiar with the children of the household he worked for, and I told you previously that Mallam can't know all the houses that his students attend. So, in the situation whereby the children of the household are spoiled, day in and day out, there is a high possibility for the Almajiri as a young boy also, to adopt whatever wrongdoing those children engage in. It can be substance abuse or stealing, and there are instances where such happened (Mallam Danladi, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Another key point is that, if an Almajiri works in the house of a rich family, the lifestyle of the family can change him, and if there are bad boys in the family, he will then adopt their attitudes, this is another reason (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

The *Almajirai* search for households to work for by themselves, and the *Malamai* do not know or monitor the whereabouts and work the *Almajirai* do, so there is uncertainty from

the *Malamai* what the households' lifestyles and immediate social surroundings hold for the potential learning of criminality by *Almajirai*. It can be noted that some *Almajirai* spent a significant amount of time in the *Uwayen Daki's* houses, which serve as important spaces playing an environmental role in shaping their behaviours, whereby intimate relationships with others, particularly youth of about the same age with them can arguably influence behavioural outcomes. *Danliti* an *Almajiri* in the urban city of Kano reports that:

I do not like this Tsangaya to be honest, it is my father's decision, but for sure this Mallam does not like us. You see, I do not have friends in this Tsangaya, but I have friends in the neighbourhood where I go for work. My friends and I go out to markets, such as Yan Lemo, and stations such as Unguwa Uku. I only present myself in the Tsangaya for the Mallam to feel okay... I do not smoke any substance, but once we were coming back from 'Yan Lemo a younger brother of my friend whom we went along with picked the remaining marijuana thrown away, and he smoked it, and instantly he complained of feeling dizzy, we must help him, and made him sit (Danliti, Aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya)

After my interview with *Danliti*, he told me that he wanted to become a soldier when he is old enough, a gesture symbolising a desire to show courage. He had big rubber bands in both hands. I asked him if they symbolised anything, and he responded, "No, it is just a style." *Danliti's* interaction with peers in the neighbourhood has led to behavioural learning, which is created because of poor supervision and interaction with peers, confirming the view of *Mallam Danladi* that some *Almajirai* interact with peers in the neighbourhood in which they work, thereby learning new behaviours.

To this end, it can be understood that deprivation as a factor for criminality requires an ecological setting to operate because even in a non-deprived condition, favourable settings offer situations to learn and commit a crime, as some criminal behaviours can be learnt from peer influence when youth engage in an unstructured interaction, without guardian's supervision. However, some theorists argue that while the situation of deprivation and social setting can be relevant factors for criminality, behavioural implications of morality induced by self-control equally have a strong influence on risking or preventing criminality among youth (DeLisi and Vaughn, 2015; Doebel et al., 2017; Gallupe and Baron, 2014). In the context of youth like the *Almajirai*, the level of religiosity and self-control can be relevant in shaping the behaviour employed to deal with such situations. Some studies argue that deprivation and religiosity affect self-control, which also impacts peer influence on potential

criminality (Doebel et al., 2017; Piff and Robinson, 2017; Reisig et al., 2012). In this regard, it is important to explore the level of self-control in the present study's participants.

10.4 Behavioural Dispositions and Criminality in the *Almajirai*

It is assumed in some criminological theories that individual morality and self-control predict the risk and protective levels for youth embracing criminality (Hirschi, 2017; Wikstrom and Butterworth, 2006). Self-control theory explains criminality as resulting from an inability to control emotions and actions when in need (DeLisi and Vaughn, 2015). It is also evidenced that self-control and religiosity play an associative role in inhibiting criminality (Klanjšek et al., 2012).

Table 10.4 Descriptive Analysis on the Extent of Low Self-Control in the *Almajirai* (N=800)

S/N	Measures of Low Self-Control	General		Urban		Rural	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
1.	Acting on the spur of the moment without stopping to think.	1.49	.621	1.43	.682	1.67	.550
2.	Devoting too much thought and effort to prepare for the future.	1.15	.594	1.17	.623	1.09	.493
3.	Often do whatever give you pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some distant goal.	1.57	.627	1.52	.656	1.71	.509
4.	More concerned with what happens to you in the short run than in the long run.	1.62	.692	1.61	.736	1.64	.540
5.	Often avoid projects that are difficult to accomplish.	1.61	.769	1.63	.821	1.54	.583
6.	Often do involved in doing things that are little risky.	1.15	.551	1.11	.531	1.28	.593
7.	Take risks just for fun.	1.05	.569	1.00	.542	1.21	.617
8.	Feel excited in doing things that might get you in trouble.	0.90	.552	0.88	.543	0.97	.575
9.	Sad situations get you provoked so easily.	1.07	.609	1.06	.609	1.11	.608
10.	Get influenced and react to others easily when in a sad condition.	1.02	.621	1.02	.660	1.05	.489
11.	Look out for yourself first, even if it makes things difficult for others.	1.53	.766	1.54	.814	1.51	.601

In the present study, the level of absolute deprivation was found to be severe (see Chapter 7), and religiosity, measured by practice and belief, was found to be low in *Almajirai* (see Chapter 9). However, the participants have revealed that when in desperation, the likelihood of criminality as a solution depends on the particular *Almajiri* caught in the situation, as some can endure, while others cannot (see Chapter 8). A potential explanation is the levels of self-

control. To explore this, indicators of impulsivity, simple tasks, risk-taking, physical activities, and self-centeredness proposed by Grasmick et al. (1993) were measured (Table 9.4). The first to fourth indicators measured impulsivity, the fifth measured commitment to simple tasks, the sixth to eighth measured risk-taking, the ninth and tenth measured temper, and the eleventh measured self-centeredness, all on a range of 0 – 3. It is assumed that an individual who lacks a moral code manifests a self-centred attitude towards gratification, focuses more on immediate goals, takes risks, behaves aggressively, and is more likely to commit crime (Wikstrom and Butterworth, 2006).

The level of self-centeredness measured by the sense of 'looking out for oneself first, even if it means making things difficult for others' is high in the *Almajirai* (*m*=1.53, SD=.766). As one *Almajiri* put it:

You see, in life here, everyone is struggling to get satisfaction; everyone struggles for himself (Amadi aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The quantitative analysis shows a high level of impulsivity in the participants, which is marginally higher among rural-based *Almajirai* than their urban counterparts across three of the measures. The highest was reported as more concern for short-term rather than long-run benefits (*m*=1.62, SD=.692). The difference can be related to varying social contexts, as argued by Doebel et al. (2017), that immediate-oriented behaviour is influenced by social norms, within the milieu of an individual. The interview data, however, suggests no difference among the *Almajirai*, but also corroborates the quantitative analysis in showing how the *Almajirai* focus more on their immediate satisfaction than longer-term issues:

I would rather focus on immediate satisfaction, but I can see some of us starving to save money. Why should I do that? When I have some needs that also need to be attended… For now, I don't bother about the future, that is the truth. I do not know, maybe later in my life, I will start thinking about it (Sani aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

As an Almajiri, I always focus on my present needs. I think about satisfying my immediate needs, I can compromise my future needs, especially when I am in dire need (Rabilu aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya).

I swear! An Almajiri always focuses on his immediate needs, such as getting some money to buy new clothes, detergents, and soaps, not saving for something with greater ambitions, an Almajiri would always choose to satisfy his present needs… Yes, some Almajirai talk about

future life, what they aspire to be, and how to become someone. But it is not something that they spend much time thinking about (Sule, aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The data indicates a certain relationship between focusing on immediate satisfaction – an indicator of impulsivity and absolute deprivation- by showing concerns for immediate needs, particularly basic needs, which makes everything look more like a struggle for survival. Deprivation appears to make the *Almajirai* more present-oriented than future-oriented, concerned with what happens in the short term. For some, thinking about the future appears to be a hope rather than a planned goal with clear strategies on how it will be attained. In such situations, theorists like Quinney (1980) showed that crime will be a viable alternative for survival.

Other evidence by Chen and Jacobson (2013) suggests that a prominent level of impulsivity, especially in the absence of parental warmth, produces criminality. The context of *Almajirai*, however, suggests a high level of impulsivity across three of the four measures, amidst severe deprivation and living away from parental care. While a self-reported level of crime is low, it is high in reporting peers. Regarding the *Almajirai* context, therefore, it can be suggested that the phenomenon of moral identity can be at play in influencing lower involvement in criminality. Moral and religious identity in individuals was proven to buffer prosocial and empathic behaviour (Hardy et al, 2017; Van Tongeren et al., 2021).

Moreover, the indicator of commitment to simple tasks, measured by avoiding difficult projects appears to be moderate (m = 1.6, SD =.769). Notably, this commitment indicator is higher among urban *Almajirai* (m = 1.63, SD = 0.821) more than their rural counterparts (mean = 1.54, SD = 0.583), as detailed in Table 10.4. The inclination toward simpler tasks may be associated with the idiosyncrasies of individual *Almajiri* and their strategic approaches to survival. Given that the lives of *Almajirai* are oriented towards both educational pursuits and survival, they tend to engage in activities conducive to day-to-day sustenance. Consequently, the preference for involvement in less challenging endeavours with substantial returns becomes more appealing. Nevertheless, this choice is contingent upon the endurance of the individual *Almajiri* and the availability of opportunities within the host community, as reported by them:

Some of us are tolerant and enduring. However, there are also Almajirai who are weak and need to be helped in doing their work (Mamman aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, not only work, enduring hatred is not easy as well, but we endure it. Concerning work, you can see many people come to Tsangaya to pick labourers to work for them because we did it very well. We go to the farm early in the morning and return late in the evening, some stay to labour until it is night, and we endure it (Amadi, aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

We endure every difficulty to be satisfied and after becoming self-sufficient in life… Yes, some are weak in the face of life challenges, but it depends on the personality of the individual (Almajiri) also (Musa, aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The interviews provide manifestations of commitment to hard tasks, exemplified by activities like agricultural labour, refuse collection, and scavenging from refuse, as discussed in Chapters 6 and 7. The *Almajirai* residing in rural communities also demonstrate commitment to demanding tasks, such as farm labour and collecting firewood bundles, as part of their efforts to secure a livelihood. Moreover, some participants also narrated instances of enduring adversity, discrimination, and rejection in their host communities. For them, spending time at work, as a moral commitment and making a livelihood, serves as a protection against crime involvement.

Risk-taking as another important indicator of self-control is reported as low, measured across involvement in doing things that are a little risky (m = 1.15, SD = .551), taking risks just for fun (m = 1.05, SD = .569), and feeling excited in doing things that might get them in trouble is low (m = 0.90, SD = .552) (see Table 10.4). The manifestation of risk-taking among the *Almajirai* in urban areas is most often reported as occurring outside the *Tsangaya*, where students engage in playing on the roads, or high-risk places, such as rivers for swimming, despite the *Mallam*-set rules against such acts:

Mallam has warned us against going to the river to swim. Despite that, some of us still go to the river to swim (Mamman aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Some of us steal food from the houses of people, when they notice the absence of the family, they sneak into the kitchen, take away the food, and run away… That is a common act among the Almajirai, you see we go hunting, and we hunt rodents like squirrels or snakes (Jari aged 14, Student Rural Tsangaya).

Some of us steal from the farm produce or cut down the trees on the farm, without fear of being caught. As well as hunting dangerous animals like snakes (Sule aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The responses also indicate risk-taking in activities relating to criminal and antisocial behaviours as ways of augmenting needs, through poaching animals such as snakes, climbing tall trees, cutting down trees and so on. Sneaking to steal in a household's residence or farms indicates risk-taking attitudes in committing criminality by some *Almajirai*. The fear of being caught should prevent the *Almajirai* from doing such acts, especially with the high expectation of harsh punishment when reported to their *Malamai*. This suggests evidence of risk-taking in some *Almajirai*, particularly taking advantage of situations of low supervision and severe absolute deprivation. During the fieldwork, I encountered incidences where some *Almajirai* were noticed or caught when attempting to steal foodstuffs, such as fish, tubers, and cereals in different markets. This further confirms the propensity for criminality through exposure to specific places by some of the *Almajirai*, particularly those with low self-control. For instance, in some of the strategic places I visited for non-participant observation, I observed a scenario where:

An *Almajiri* separated from his group of peers and approached the tables of fish sellers near where I was standing. He carried a polythene sack and a bowl adorned with many pictures… Seemingly, the *Almajiri* was unaware of the table laden with dried fish, he collided with it, causing some of the fish to fall to the ground. The fish seller immediately noticed the incident and, realising the *Almajiri's* actions, he attempted to apprehend the *Almajiri*, but the *Almajiri* ran away.

After observing the incident, I inquired about it from one of the fish sellers, who explained that this tactic is commonly employed by *Almajirai*. According to his account, the same *Almajiri* or others from his group would later return to collect the fallen dried fish, creating the impression that they were merely picking up discarded items.

Furthermore, the quantitative analysis indicates a moderate level of temper in the *Almajirai*, measured by participants' getting provoked easily when in challenging situations (m = 1.07, SD = .609) (see Table 10.4). The qualitative data finds evidence of differences between urban and rural *Almajirai* concerning getting easily provoked and reacting with hostility when pushed to the limit.

When he is wronged, like every individual, he will be angry and react… The worst action an Almajiri can take is to fight the person who irritates him (Mamman aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, to be honest, many among us can get angry so easily, but there are many, no matter what you do to them, who do not express anger because they cannot do anything…. Also, if one Almajiri pushes the other Almajiri to the wall, he can take revenge, resulting in fighting among them, where they can injure themselves (Amadi, aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya).

Not often, there must be a strong reason for an Almajiri to be angry, because we are always instructed to observe patience in demanding situations… but if pushed to the wall an Almajiri can use his reading slate to hit someone (Sule aged 15, Student Rural Tsangaya).

The data shows the *Almajirai* are not different from other people, particularly youth of their age group, regarding reaction or response to provocation. Previous discussion shows that the *Almajirai* get involved in fighting mostly to display courage and earn status in dealing with the experiences of discrimination, rejection, and status deprivation. However, when engaging in fighting, some *Almajirai* can be more violent when provoked, which is higher in urban than in rural settings (see Chapter 7). The interview responses show that the level of getting upset easily and reacting with hostility varies and depends on the source of provocation and the personality of an individual *Almajiri*. Some are easily provoked, while others are not. However, a resort to religious activities is a suggested response to provocation, which some consider as having a regulating effect.

It can be argued that the association between deprivation and low self-control is a consequence of the desperation to survive, and it is likely that the two variables can reinforce each other, as in the case of some *Almajirai*. In this study, absolute deprivation is more likely to be related to low self-control than relative deprivation. Moreover, the variation in low self-control between rural and urban participants measured by different indicators, such as impulsivity and risk-taking can be connected to a variation in the depth of deprivation experienced by the participants about their locations, as shown by previous studies (Doebel et al., 2017; Jackson et al., 2018), as well as variation in challenges faced through survival strategies, also related to the place of living (Per-Olof et al., 2010; Wikström and Treiber, 2007). This highlights an association between environmental and personal disposition factors in crime causation among the *Almajirai*.

Reasons for involvement in criminal acts for some *Almajirai* can be related factors embedded in the milieu they live in and the personal disposition they acquired through life circumstances, which are common features identified with other youth of their ages. While impulsivity and other indicators of low self-control can be characteristic of some youth, it has also been identified as a significant correlate of criminal behaviour in adolescents, particularly in contexts of perceived deprivation and low experience of parental warmth (see Baron, 2003; Wikstrom and Butterworth, 2006; Chen and Jackson, 2013). Thus, such attitudes found among some *Almajirai* do not justify the criminalisation of all *Tsangaya* students, as in some academic and media discourses (see Chapter 1).

10.5 Labelling and Criminalisation of the '*Almajiri'* Identity

Considering *Almajiranci* as an identity-related system, it is worth noting that labelling theorists suggested that individuals or groups are criminalised for engagement in acts and are often considered outcasts based on normative values of the majority or dominant group (Becker, 1997), showing that value judgement is a supporting factor in the criminalisation process (Millie, 2011). The theory also proposes that becoming criminal or deviant results from the criminalising an actor through a label, which often promotes primary deviance resulting from circumstances, into secondary deviance because of societal reaction through the label. The *Almajirai* live as migrants in their host communities, under a system which some modern Nigerians see as unproductive. It is assumed that in a situation whereby different social groups live in the same collectivity, guided by different values, the tendency of cultural conflict leads to the potential criminalisation of others because of stereotypical judgement (Sellin, 1938).

An *Almajiri* undergoes various experiences of consolidating self-identity, in relation to the system to which he belongs. The section on discrimination in Chapter 6 explained that the *Almajirai* are considered as 'strangers', 'migrants', 'non-indigene', 'abandoned', and 'social nuisance' in their host communities. That remains the reason some of them, especially those in urban areas, experience harsh treatment from others. The *Almajirai* often perceive themselves as disliked by many, including the state and its policies. Some of the responses by the *Almajirai* and *Mallam* highlighted that:

The government loves and cares for other people more than Almajirai, but we do not care because our Tsangaya system is a way to achieve God's pleasure to go to heaven, and to achieve a good future here on earth. I know a lot of people see us as nothing and less important. Some hate us, and they do not want to see us around them (Musa, Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The identity of Almajiri is perceived by some people as a situation of destitution and often perceived as criminals. Such people see the Almajirai as not complete human beings, and such perceptions grow to hatred against Almajirai (Mallam Hamisu, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

We always warn and remind them not to befriend other children from the community. Because, if they commit any offence, like fighting, or stealing, in the end, the Almajirai will be blamed for the offence (Mallam Gwani, Teacher Urban Tsangaya).

Yes, it happens, we are blamed for many things we did not do… (Rabilu Aged 15, Student Urban Tsangaya).

The *Almajirai* are conscious of others' perception of them. Still, some at least perceive their identity with esteem as godly and perceive challenges they face as inevitable ways to life success. There is perceived seclusion from the radar of government concerns. This can be the factor that reinforces spiritual affiliation, with a strong appeal to spirituality more than material life in the *Almajiri* identity, which also underscores the perceptions of the *Almajirai* regarding their identity attached to religiosity and that of formal settings governed by the state as secular. The *Almajirai* understand that they are blamed for many offences they did not commit, and they also face the challenge of being considered the source of social vices, including criminality, within their communities.

Some labelling theorists, such as Lemert and Kelley (1953), suggest that associating criminal identity with acts committed in the context of fundamental needs has implications for the potential acceptance of identity and involvement in criminality as a career. However, rather than succumbing to embrace the labels of criminality, most *Almajirai* resort to seeing their identity from within the frame of spirituality and religious holiness, as different from others who are far away from that and consider their system as uniquely closer to God. This perspective influences the *Almajirai's* choice to be well behaved and can be the reason contributing to the observed low levels of involvement in criminality by many of them. Earlier discussion on context (Chapter 1) pointed to how existing literature on the *Almajirai* depicts them as a deprived group who are linked with various criminal activities, affiliation

with street gangs and in some cases, insurgent groups such as *Boko Haram*. Thus, the *Almajirai* are labelled as criminals a priori, both within their communities and more widely in the media. As such, they are fully aware of the societal construction of the *Almajiri* identity and the reactions of others towards them, and members of their host communities are always vigilant to prove the common belief that the *Almajirai* are criminals. The offences committed by some *Almajirai* result in raising the expectation that most of the Almajirai are as such, and their identity is labelled with negative perception. As previously discussed in section 10.2.1, the rhetoric of the labelling of the *Almajirai* as easy recruits for religious insurgents and gangs is rooted in the assumptions of some writers that the system teaches values that instill religious indoctrination and radicalisation. (see Abbo et al., 2017; Hansen, et al., 2016; Winters, 1987). The empirical findings of the present study reject such claims on the basis that even though religiosity measured by belief and practice can be low amongst the *Almajirai*, their strong esteem for identity serves as a protective element for involvement with the gangs and induces frugality.

Table 10.5 Descriptive Analysis of the *Almajirai* Experience of Discriminating Words and Sympathy for those who discriminate against them (Range 0-3; N = 800).

Statements	**Urban**		**Rural**		**Total**	
	m	SD	*m*	SD	*m*	SD
Experiencing discriminating words	1.07	.723	0.83	.602	1.01	.702
Feeling angry for the discriminating words	1.29	.836	0.85	.613	1.18	.808
Lacking sympathy for those who discriminate against you	0.82	.812	0.58	.711	0.75	.794

Studies such as Abbo et al. (2017, p.205) claimed that for a long, the *Almajirai* have developed a hostile attitude against the government and all its institutions for marginalising them, and subsequently resort to embracing taking arms against the state. However, when asked about their experiences of discrimination the quantitative analysis in Table 10.5 shows that the levels of experiences of discrimination as moderate (*m*=1.01, SD=.702), although higher amongst urban (*m*=1.07, SD=.723), than rural *Almajirai* (*m*=0.83, SD=.602). The experience is also revealed to be associated with marginally higher feelings of anger (*m*=1.18, SD=.808), which is high in urban (*m*=1.29), and low in rural *Almajirai* (*m*=0.85, SD=.613). Therefore, to understand how the situation results in hostile feelings against others, the perceived lack of sympathy for those who discriminate against the participants is

low (*m*=0.75, SD=.794), with marginal differences between urban and rural locations (Range = 0 - 3).

Experiences discussed in Chapter 1 suggest that the *Almajirai* face various forms of discrimination including verbal discrimination. In a more elaborating manner, the qualitative interviews show how the *Almajirai* feel about the discriminating words used against them, and for those who discriminate against them:

Yes, it is disturbing to be hated, for being Almajiri. But there is nothing we can do about it. You see, anywhere we sit, anywhere we pass by, we can face insults. There is nothing we can do about it. (Amadi, Aged 16, Student Urban Tsangaya)

Every experience of discrimination has given me the courage to be a better and stronger person. We do not mind whatever happens to those who use abusive or discriminatory words against us. Despite being maltreated by other people; we still wish no harm to them. Some of us do not even bother to mind our discriminators. (Musa, Aged 17, Student Urban Tsangaya)

The responses affirm that the *Almajirai* are experiencing discriminating words, and the experience is hurtful, which suggests some feelings of frustration. However, the situation of being cast as a stranger, poor, criminal, and other labels, has a potentially daunting effect. Some *Almajirai* seem powerless to respond to the labels and discriminatory or abusive words that can be used against them. However, the situation also makes some of them stronger, to endure, and accept discrimination as an expected challenge for a better future. Despite the feeling of being marginalized by the government, as discussed in Chapter 7, the participants reported indifference and admiration, even to the government officials.

The discussions in Chapter 7 revealed a perception of ineligibility and disconnection from the government by the *Almajirai* and their teachers, following many experiences of disappointment. Despite the perception of being disliked, and marginalised, the responses demonstrate admiration mixed with indifference towards state officials. Admiration can be related to aspiration for status and material achievement, a means of addressing some of the sources of deprivation expressed by the participants in previous chapters. Moreover, the common magnitude of the deprivation is still bounded by the expression of faith in God,

affirming the effect of religiosity, particularly among older *Almajirai* in attenuating the extent of deprivation, which may produce greater frustration and eventual hostility.

10.6 Conclusion

This chapter made it clear that despite the severe level of particularly absolute deprivation in *Almajirai*, the level of their self-reported involvement in criminality is low, although reporting criminality of others is relatively high. These data suggest an inadequacy of a deprivation-focused approach in explaining why some *Almajirai* get involved in crime and others do not. Although religiosity was found not to be associated with crime, an upheld esteem for the identity of *Almajiri*, which has religious attribution, sometimes demonstrates effects in mitigating the magnitude of deprivation by accepting life's circumstances and difficulties as a tradition that prepares an *Almajiri* to achieve life goals. In the interviews, the *Almajirai* perceived their identity as spiritual and uniquely closer to God. While aware of being labelled with a criminalized identity within their host communities, they perceived the situation as an inevitable process to achieve material and spiritual success in later life and life after death.

Beyond deprivation and religiosity-related explanations, this chapter explores other sources of strain in *Almajirai* relating to adverse experiences and environmental factors in explaining criminality. This analysis found that not all *Almajiri* accept their difficulties and adverse experiences, such as harsh corporal punishment and living in impoverished conditions of the *Tsangaya* regime. For some *Almajirai*, the situation is too harsh to endure, encouraging them to run away from the *Tsangaya* and go back to their parents. In the rare cases whereby *Almajirai* fail to get parental sympathy and are forced to continue with study in the *Tsangaya*, their condition is exacerbated, causing them to eventually escape, seeking survival through available means, legitimate or illegitimate, in places such as markets and transport stations. Thus, they were dependent upon what the environment offered for their survival.

The situation of an escaped *Almajiri*, and even those who live with their *Malamai*, poses a need for further explanation through environmental theories of criminology. The thread of this relationship starts from absolute deprivation as a source of motivation for criminality. However, it is also the case that a 'setting' is required for a crime to occur. The setting might include, for example, such things as the disorganized nature of neighbourhoods,

and interaction with criminal peers. This is important in the context of *Almajirai*, especially for some who live in urban, high-risk neighbourhoods, characterized by the presence of gangs, and frequent places where illicit activities are thought to be practiced, such as stations (*Tasha).* The *Malamai* are also aware of such risks, and they offer sessions of instructional lectures, before letting the *Almajirai* go out of the *Tsangaya*, to set clear rules for the *Almajirai* within and outside the *Tsangaya*, to facilitate the avoidance of crimes, and that *Almajirai* behave according to their identity.

Using the situational action model, the chapter explains the circumstances under which the *Almajirai* can embrace petty crimes, within their host communities. This is because, in their free time, *Almajirai* move across the neighbourhood in search of their livelihood, without adult supervision, occasionally with peer supervision of older for younger, or through proxy by other adults in their places of work. The chapter has shown that group identity and severe absolute deprivation influence behavioural dispositions and subsequent criminal and antisocial behaviour in the *Almajirai*. Therefore, despite the instructions of the *Malamai*, some *Almajirai* violate the rules and commit petty crime, notably theft, within and outside the *Tsangaya* in the face of need, and sometimes with the likely influence of peers, and those they meet in their various places of work, such as the houses of '*Uwayen Daki'*. Those with low self-control are more prone to learn and commit the petty crimes. Behavioural disposition constituting morality and self-control varies among *Almajirai*, but both serve as factors mediating the involvement in the petty crimes among. While deprivation is a crucial factor for offending in *Almajirai*, its effect is further influenced by other factors, including religious-related identity, environmental effects, and self-control.

My project 'empower and prosper' or *'Dogaro da kai'* (in Hausa) sponsored by the Friends of Lancaster University in America's (FLUA) trains dozens of *Almajirai* cohort in an agribusiness value chain. (Photo sourced from *Almajirai Dogaro Da Kai* LinkedIn page)

CHAPTER ELEVEN
CONCLUSION

11.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 1, the *Almajirai* and the *Tsangaya* system are rhetorically criminalised by some media and academic discourses, relating their perceived criminal behaviour to experiences of living under deprived conditions and religious indoctrination. Hitherto, these views have been supported by little empirical evidence, but without any official statistics on the extent to which the *Almajirai* engage in any form of crime. In this context, the research reported in this thesis was undertaken, as an empirical response, using a mixed-method approach to explain the relationships between the conditions of the *Almajirai* and the extent and nature of their crime involvement. In particular, consider the insights of the *Almajirai* themselves in exploring the depth of deprivation in its varied forms (absolute and relative) and religiosity as an essential basis for understanding its relationship with risk or protection for criminality among them.

The findings of this thesis were informed by four research questions, relating to the nature and extent of crime involvement, the depth of the experienced deprivation, the relationship between the two concepts (deprivation and criminality), and the role of religiosity as a protective or risk factor for the *Almajirai's* criminality and gang involvement. This chapter reflects on how the thesis answers the research questions by focusing on research methods, contributions to criminological theories, policy recommendations, and suggestions for future research.

11.2 The Nature and Extent of Criminality amongst the *Almajirai*

Exploring the nature and extent of crime involvement by the *Almajirai* provides an understanding of the types of crimes committed by the *Almajirai* and the extent to which they commit them in connection to their social context and living circumstances. This is done by categorisation of the crimes; such as substance abuse, sexual assault, armed robbery, knife crime, and others considered big crimes in public and media discourse in Nigeria (see for example Olaniyan & Yahya, 2016); Oleyede, 2022; Sarkingobir & Dikko, 2020) and petty crimes, such as survival crimes like poaching, petty theft, fight and so on. The categorization is guided using measures of seriousness of crimes by criminologists (see for example Sellin and Wolfgang, 1964; Parton, Hansel, and Stratton 1991; Stylianou, 2003). Studies in

Northern Nigeria noted that in Hausa societies where most of this study is conducted, youth crimes are more often linked to gangs (‘*Yan Daba)*, who engage in various forms of crimes including forcible phone snatching, substance abuse, interpersonal violence in connection to politics, and inter-group violence (Casey, 2014; Dawha, 1996; Salaam, 2011). In this regard, neither an official data, nor the studies and media discourses that linked *Almajirai* with crimes and affiliation with Islamic insurgents (Abbo, Mohd Zain, & Ali, 2017; Amzat, 2015; Hansen, Jima, Abbas, & Abia, 2016), did account for the nature and extent to which the *Almajirai* are involved in such crimes, especially from the insights of the *Almajirai* themselves.

The present study found that some *Almajirai* are involved in petty theft both in and outside their *Tsangaya*. The extent of involvement in the crime is reportedly occasional according to self-reported data but more frequent when making observations of others, which also varied across communities and *Tsangaya* schools. The context of petty theft among the *Almajirai* depends on opportunities, which vary across communities and *Tsangaya*, often committed to getting access to a means of survival. This mostly involves valuable items that can be sold to get money and farm produce that can be eaten, which the *Almajirai* often come across in their routine activities. Even though respect for their identity sometimes helps some of the *Almajirai* endure the hardships of material deprivation and exercise self-control by refraining from theft, for others, this is not the case. The *Almajirai* also engaged in other petty crimes and antisocial acts, including open defecation, poaching vermin, scavenging solid waste, and violating the *Tsangaya* school rules. Some of these acts, such as poaching and open defecation, were criminalized by state laws. However, in most cases, they are committed by the *Almajirai* as a response to necessity, as they suggest the adoption of illegitimate opportunistic methods for survival. Hence, the aforementioned are categorically survival crimes committed by the *Almajirai*. The *Almajirai* also get involved in fighting mostly to display courage and earn status, and to deal with the experience of discrimination, rejection, and sometimes experience being beaten up by older individuals. Sometimes, the *Almajirai* turn out to be more violent when fighting. The involvement in fighting is higher in urban areas than in rural settings.

Throughout my study, I did not find any evidence of serious crimes such as sexual-related offences and substance abuse among the *Almajirai*. This is most likely because such

offences occur only rarely. Concerning this, my findings are explained by smoking and intoxication being highly detested acts by moral definition in the *Almajirai*, as is the case in most Hausa societies. Hence, an existing study on *Almajirai* involvement in substance use – drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes and cannabis, and consuming Kola nuts and coffee – by Abdulmalik et al. (2009), suggests a high level of involvement in such activity among *Almajirai*, contrasts sharply with the findings of my study. The difference in areas under study (my study was conducted in Northwestern Nigeria, while the study by Abdulmalik et al., 2009, in Northeastern Nigeria) might account for the differences, but that is unlikely. The notion of substance abuse reported by Abdulmalik et al. (2009), however, is problematic as some of the substances identified by them, such as kola nuts and coffee, are culturally licit substances that are consumed in Nigeria, not often by the *Almajirai*, who cannot afford them.

11.3 The Depth of Deprivation in the *Almajirai*

Understanding the depth of deprivation in the *Almajirai* is important to this thesis because it provides an essential foundation for understanding how it can influence criminal behaviours. Absolute and relative forms of deprivation have gained crucial consideration among criminologists (e.g. Merton, 1957) in explaining crimes resulting from deprivation. This is because strain theorists argue that deprivation is likely to cause crime when it produces a large amount of strain (see Agnew, 1992, 2002, 2012). This crucial point was overlooked by most of the studies on the *Almajirai*, which sought to link them with criminality by focusing on their economic (relative) deprivation only, without attempting to understand its depth. In this thesis, I sought to address this issue, through exploring two major forms of deprivation; absolute and relative - measured using a scale of no deprivation, mild, moderate, severe, and extreme deprivation. In measuring access to some indicators, such as water and food, adequacy, distance, and purity were considered important in this assessment.

I found that the *Almajirai* experienced severe absolute deprivation and mild relative deprivation. The severity of absolute deprivation covers a range of basic needs, such as water, food, clothing, accommodation, financial support, and experience of discrimination in their host communities. Differences were also found in the experience of deprivation across urban and rural contexts. Deprivation related to material needs such as safe water, food, clothing, and accommodation is higher among the *Almajirai* in rural areas, while the experience of discrimination and rejection is higher for urban-based *Almajirai*. The survival strategies in

response to these indicators of absolute deprivation differ in rural and urban contexts, depending on the opportunities available in the host communities. These include begging within the neighbourhood around houses, restaurants, and markets. As well as engagement in paid work, such as helping households, farm labouring, apprenticeships, and scavenging dumped refuse. Some of the *Almajirai* walked long distances to access water and food, with no guarantee of getting adequate, or clean and nutritious supplies. Some *Almajirai*, for example, access food from remnants in dumped refuse and many rely on open wells to get water.

Most of the accommodations of *Almajirai* are overcrowded without adequate ventilation and sleeping materials, and often lacking in toilet facilities, which leads the *Almajirai* to resort to open defecation. Few of them get little financial or food support from their parents. Some experience mild discrimination, but the majority were rejected and discriminated against by being called names, such as migrants, especially in the urban areas. They were also chased out of public and private places and denied equal access to public services, such as water in neighbourhood taps. These experiences of lacking adequate resources such as food, water, clothing, accommodation, and financial support; having to labour, beg, scavenge, and walk long distances to access means of survival, as well as experiences of discrimination and rejection, collectively suggested the severe level of absolute deprivation in *Almajirai*.

As suggested by existing studies, the effective measurement of relative deprivation should consider self-comparison with referent others. Accompanied by perceived disadvantage, this may lead to frustration (Merton, 1957; Pettigrew, 2015). Some writers on *Almajirai* used relative deprivation in explaining the connection between hostility against the government and crime in *Almajirai* (Abbo, et al., 2017; Hansen, et al., 2016). Such studies conclude that frustration – resulting from relative deprivation in *Almajirai* being students of an non-formal institution, through perceiving other people who are graduates of formal educational institutions as responsible for their deprivation from what they are entitled to as citizens, resulting in their predicament. The outcomes in this thesis contrasted with these studies because I found mild levels of relative deprivation in the *Almajirai*, measured through exploring levels of perceived disadvantage by self-comparison to other children who attend formal schools as their reference group. This mild level of relative deprivation is partly due

to the *Almajirai* perceiving other children as different, and not a similar reference group. In this regard, my study found that the *Almajirai* perceived their system as spiritual, leading to God's pleasure in this world and after, but also inferior in terms of gaining material goals compared to the formal, because they differ in objectives. Their perception of the *Tsangaya* system as aiming for spiritual goals plays a role in mitigating the magnitude of their perception of being worse off, in comparison with other children. When the *Almajirai* observe other children who live with and are being cared for by their parents or attending formal education they do not feel hostility towards them, rather it makes some of them miss their parents, or wish they could have such experience, which is often the case among the younger ones, but reduces as they get older. Whilst some appreciate and admire the formal education system, the *Almajirai* perceive their path in life as entirely different. They are trained to see the spiritual superiority of their system, as it leads to heaven, while still preparing them for achievement in the material world.

The thesis also found that the *Almajirai* and their *Malamai* are aware that policy elites in the government have less concern over their *Tsangaya* system, which creates a perceived disconnection with the government. Thus, making them perceive government institutions as structures that do not have an attachment to them. Consequently, some of them consider government plans for *Tsangaya* as suspicious and trying to undermine the values of the *Tsangaya* system. This perception can be connected to the historical transformation leading to the marginalization of the *Tsangaya* system, which started from colonial rule, through the subsequent post-colonial administrations (Abdulqadir, 2003). This marginalisation of the *Tsangaya* system means that the *Almajirai* also lack access to government welfare programmes, such as funding for infrastructure and upkeep, as in the precolonial entities in Northern Nigeria it was provided through *Zakat*. This contributes to their present deprived condition. In some communities, where discrimination against them prevails, the *Almajirai* perceived themselves as non-eligible beneficiaries of public resources within the wider society. This, however, does not mean they develop hostility towards formal education, rather some are either interested or hoping for a chance to be enrolled in the formal schools, even if it means undergoing the two educational systems concurrently.

The situation of deprivation in the *Almajirai* highlights problems inherent in the Northern Nigerian socio-political structure, for subjecting approximately ten million

Almajirai (UBEC, 2010) to a situation of severe absolute deprivation, resulting from government policies that do not anchor the *Tsangaya* as an educational system that can be fully supported. The problem can be connected to the experiences of poor governance, which do not seem to be considered beyond the interest of a few elite groups, not general citizens, and is characterised by high levels of corruption, which supports the domination of few and reduces most to subjugation. Corruption in Nigeria remains a strong factor that hinders comprehensive and effective welfare delivery by an economic redistribution that can transcends to all, including the *Tsangaya* system. Notably, the 2023 global indicator of corruption in the public sector ranks Nigeria 145th out of 180 global countries with a score of 25/100, below the worldwide average of 43, and even below the sub-Saharan African average of 33 (Transparency International, 2024).

The experience of severe absolute deprivation is more likely to lead to petty crimes in the *Almajirai* than relative deprivation. Theoretically, a mild level of relative deprivation is expected to produce a mild magnitude of strain, and so the likelihood of criminality is diminished. In contrast to this study, studies from the Global North show high feelings of disadvantage as an outcome of relative deprivation, which is associated with aggression and criminality in youth (see, for example, Martínez-Ferrer and Stattin, 2017). Such a situation of severe absolute deprivation has been described by existing studies as creating inequality and the marginalisation of some social groups from a wider social institution, particularly in the Global South (Magashi, 2015; Sengupta & Mukherjee, 2018; S. A. Thomas & Shihadeh, 2013). In Nigeria, such situation has consequently reduced many citizens to involvement in survival acts that are criminalised by the state.

11.3 The Relationship between the Depth of Deprivation and Extent of Involvement in Criminality amongst *Almajirai*

The third question of the thesis aimed to explore the relationships between the depth of deprivation and the extent of crime involvement among *Almajirai*. The previous sections have explained that *Almajirai* experience severe absolute and mild relative deprivation and that some *Almajirai* commit petty crimes. In the same vein, the study found that the relationships between absolute deprivation and involvement in the petty crimes by the *Almajirai* manifest in various ways. For instance, petty theft revealed an often-desperate response by some *Almajirai*, because of the severe absolute deprivation. Thus, involvement

in theft occurs among both rural and urban *Almajirai*, depending on the opportunities available to them. This is because, while absolute deprivation can influence the *Almajirai* to steal, it is not the whole story. The opportunity to steal is also important, as are more individual factors, such as levels of self-control.

Another dimension of the relationship is between access to basic needs such as safe water and fighting with other children by the *Almajirai*, occurring when faced with discrimination in accessing water, especially public sources of water. The *Almajirai* engaged in fighting mostly to display courage to earn status, and deal with the discrimination, rejection, and status deprivation they face in their host communities. Engagement in fighting is more common among urban-based *Almajirai* than those in rural areas. As noted earlier, the discrimination rate is higher in the urban areas compared to rural settings. In some rare situations, the *Almajirai* can turn violent when fighting even among themselves. Moreover, I found that *Almajirai* engage in other petty crimes and antisocial acts, which include open defecation, poaching vermin, scavenging solid waste, and violating their *Tsangaya* rules. These activities were found to have relationships with deprivation in accessing food, water, accommodation, and experience of discrimination in the neighbourhood. Most anti-social acts, such as open defecation, occur because the majority of *Tsangaya* schools in both urban and rural areas do not have adequate toilet facilities.

In contrast to those researchers who linked relative deprivation with criminality in the *Almajirai* (Abbo, et al. 2017; Hansen, et al. 2016), my study found no significant relationship between relative deprivation and criminality. An exception to the effect of relative deprivation was found in an inferential statistic, suggesting a relationship between picking fights to settle status and feeling worse off seeing other children experiencing care from their parents. This occurs often when the *Almajirai* are discriminated against, especially in the urban areas. Thus, my study contrasted sharply with previous studies (such as Abbo, et al., 2017; Hansen, et al., 2016) that suggest the existence of a relationship between relative deprivation and hostility in the *Almajirai*, which led to their involvement in violent crimes. Moreover, my study contrasts with the existing empirical evidence in some youth populations in the Global North that relative deprivation is associated with criminality more than absolute deprivation (for example, Balsa, French, & Regan, 2014; Bernburg, Thorlindsson, & Sigfusdottir, 2009; Cloward & Ohlin, 2001; Cohen, 1955). For instance, In

the Global North, some studies suggest that relative deprivation is associated with substance abuse and violence (Balsa et al, 2014; Richardson & Vil, 2015). More importantly, the intensity of self-comparison to other youth living with their parents and attending formal schools is mitigated by the perceived in-group identity of *Almajirai*, symbolizing humility and religiosity with potential rewards in the afterlife. Consequently, the *Almajirai* are more focused on their survival than self-comparison to others. Nevertheless, occasional observations of other children being cared for by their parents evoke a sense of inferiority and a perception of being worse off. Additionally, living in a non-formal educational settings, witnessing government service delivery in formal schools, and encountering discrimination in accessing public resources contribute to a perceived disadvantage associated with the *Almajirai* identity. However, this perception does not manifest in violence directed at government officials or state agencies, as assumed by some writers, but may lead to conflicts with other children when discriminatory language is used against them.

My research found that the severe level of absolute deprivation among the *Almajirai* was a better predictor of petty crimes than the mild levels of relative deprivation. The relationship between absolute deprivation and criminality in the *Almajirai* is explicated through the manifestation of desperation coming from the quest for necessities such as food, water, clothing and accommodation. In most cases, the criminal and antisocial acts engaged in by the *Almajirai*, such as theft of food, clothes, and valuable items, as well as poaching vermin, open defecation, and scavenging for items of value to be sold for financial gain are responses to absolute deprivation, involving the adoption of illegitimate ways of securing a legitimate end (survival). Furthermore, frequent engagement in fighting with peers and other children in their immediate milieu is observed as a means for the *Almajirai* to establish status and garner respect. The engagement in fights by the *Almajirai* served as a sort of legitimization of aggression to address deprivation related to status suggested by Cohen (1955).

Additionally, the research found that the relationship between deprivation and criminal behaviour in the *Almajirai* is also influenced by other factors, including adverse experiences within and outside *Tsangaya*, environmental settings, individual differences in levels of self-control, as well as esteem of identity. For instance, I found that some *Almajirai* experience adverse experiences, such as physical abuse by being beaten up by older

individuals, especially in urban areas, while others experienced adversities in the *Tsangaya* regime (but not all), which included enduring harsh corporal punishments, engaging in work and begging to survive, as well as living in impoverished conditions. In this context, a few *Almajirai* run away from the *Tsangaya* and go back to their parents, and the effort by the parents to enforce their return to the *Tsangaya* sometimes results in making the *Almajiri* run away from both the parents and the *Tsangaya*, and seek survival in the streets, transport stations, markets, and other places that are risky for the *Almajiri*. Such *Almajirai* are those who are at risk of affiliating with gangs, as their fate depends on what the environment offers them to survive.

This highlights a potential lack of awareness among the *Almajirai* concerning how to handle their adverse situation by, for example, reporting to local enforcement agencies, such as State *Hisbah* Command, and international human rights organisations, such as Amnesty International and Save the Children Nigeria. The *Hisbah* command is an Islamic police force, formed in some Shari'a practising states in Northern Nigeria. They are popular in resolving civil cases, including abuse within households and youth rehabilitation. Amnesty International offers help in countries including Nigeria, concerning human rights violations against children, through advocacy for stronger child protection laws, exposing abuse against children, and working with local and international organisations to render support to victims and survivors. Save the Children, on the other hand, provides advocacy for children's rights, rescues children from exploitative labour, abuse, and trafficking, and ensures legal protection for vulnerable children.

The living environment, therefore, plays an important role as a milieu that shapes the behavioural adaptations of the *Almajirai*. In this regard, some writers adopt explanations through the lens of environmental theories, viewing the unsupervised and unstructured interaction of the *Almajirai* leading to interaction with criminal peers, gangs, and eventual affiliation with gangs (Casey, 2008, Dawha, 2021; Salaam, 2015). This however, depends on the milieu in which *Almajirai* live. In the same vein, I found that the experience of committing crimes related to deprivation requires environmental settings in which criminality can be possible, particularly the theft that the *Almajirai* are involved in. As highlighted by existing ecological studies, a high-risk environment for the adoption of criminal behaviour is characterized by interaction with criminal peers, weak collective

efficacy, as well as lack of effective formal and informal social control. My study found that some *Almajirai*, especially those in urban areas, live in high-risk neighbourhoods, with a presence of gangs, and criminogenic places. Even though the *Almajirai* are afraid of the gangs, and interactions between them occur rarely, the *Almajirai* visit places marked as criminogenic, such as stations (*Tasha).* The *Malamai* know that they do not have complete control of where the *Almajirai* go in their free time, because they move and spread in the neighbourhoods without adult supervision, except peer supervision, of the older for the younger *Almajirai*. For most of the time when the *Almajirai* leave their *Tsangaya*, the *Malamai* do not know their whereabouts. Therefore, they often offer instructional lectures reminding the *Almajirai* to avoid illegal activities and certain places, before letting them go out of the *Tsangaya*, to mitigate against criminal behaviour. Appeals are made to their identity as *Almajirai* so that in the face of need and opportunity, appeals to identity can prevent crime involvement. However, where the effect of identity is weak, and peer interactions are quite influential, then criminal behaviour is possible. This study found that some behaviours among the *Almajirai* can be influenced by the various environments of their work, such as the households they work for. However, the accounts from the *Malamai's* and the *Almajirai's* insights revealed this occurs mainly for those who admit to a propensity for risk-taking behaviour accompanied by low levels of self-control, as they are more likely to violate the *Mallam's* rules and engage in criminality. Concerning this, the study found moderate levels of impulsivity and risk-taking, which is marginally higher among the rural, compared to urban *Almajirai*. The difference can be related to varying social contexts, as argued by Doebel et al. (2017), that immediate-oriented behaviour is influenced by social norms within the milieu of an individual. Therefore, even absolute deprivation as an important factor for criminality is arguably influenced by environmental, behavioural, and religious-related perceived identity in the *Almajirai*.

11.4 Religiosity as a Protective or Risk Factor for *Almajirai* Gang and Criminal Involvement

The fourth question this thesis sought to answer is the balance between the protective and risk effects of religiosity amongst the *Almajirai*, for affiliation with gangs or involvement in criminality. This is because religious affiliation has been a factor considered by many writers in describing the *Almajirai* as a group who support and engage in religion-related conflicts,

and a pool from which gangs and religious-related insurgent groups such as *'Yan Daba*, *Maitatsine* and *Boko Haram* recruit their members. One major problem with this assumption is the absence of official statistics that can provide information on the extent to which *Almajirai* join or support such groups. Rather, most of the writers rely on structural analysis, and some erroneously used relative deprivation theory to explain how religious values instigate violence among the *Almajirai* (Abbo, et al, 2017; Hansen, et al., 2016; Winters, 1987).

The present study did not focus on the presence or processes of radicalization among the *Almajirai*, and the data collected for this study is not obtained from the areas that are currently affected heavily by Islamic insurgency and terrorism. The explanation of the effect of identity in this study has shown that accentuating the *Almajiri* identity, which has a religious basis and attributions, sometimes attenuates the magnitude of deprivation – for example, an acceptance of the life circumstances and difficulties, as a tradition that prepares an *Almajiri* for achieving life goals. The *Almajirai* in the present study perceived their identity as spiritual and uniquely closer to God but were still aware of being cast with a criminalised identity within their host communities, often understanding their situation as an inevitable process to achieve material and spiritual success in their later worldly life and after. Their awareness of how they are labelled and treated by others makes them choose the best way to behave, which suits their identity. Therefore, instead of accepting the criminalised labels, they often become committed to demonstrating behaviours that fit the *Almajiri* identity, which they subjectively perceive as a holy and religious-affiliated identity. This corroborates a view by Hoechner (2013) that the *Tsangaya* system shapes *Almajirai* attitudes through the impartation of values for humility and self-sufficiency.

My study did not come across any evidence of problematic values being taught by the *Malamai*. Rather, the nature of religiosity taught through instruction instils Islamic belief and practice, the consciousness of identity, an adoption of prosocial behaviours, and the avoidance of antisocial and criminal behaviours within and outside their *Tsangaya* schools. The religiosity studied in this thesis is limited to exploring levels of perception concerning being watched by God all the time as a sign of strength of belief, and attending mandatory five daily prayers as the commonly observable religious practice. The religious belief, taught

through instructional sessions, as well as the religious practice are reportedly low in the *Almajirai*, and even lower in the *Almajirai* in rural areas and younger *Almajirai*.

The quantitative survey data did not find any association between indicators of religious belief and practice with criminal behaviours in *Almajirai*. However, in interviews, participants claimed that in some situations, the religious belief of feeling supervised by God, and esteemed respect for the *Almajiri* identity provide a protective effect, by influencing their behaviour. This prevents some *Almajirai* from being involved in criminality. An exception is when identity and religiosity are overwhelmed by severe levels of absolute deprivation, and low self-control in an individual *Almajiri*, as noted above (see 11.3). The influence of perceived identity is connected to the self-concept in *Almajirai*, which induces humility and endurance, amidst an indigent life, discrimination, and rejection, which is considered by some *Almajirai* as elements that drive them to succeed. Thus, the context of religiosity in *Almajirai* is serving a protective factor for criminality among some. In this regard, my study contrasted with such studies that described the *Tsangaya* system to be instilling socially problematic behaviours (see, for example, Hansen et al., 2016; Winters, 1987). None of these studies sought to explore the level of religiosity in the *Almajirai* or how the values taught to them negate or promote involvement in crimes and violence. A recent study in Northern Nigeria explained the source of Islamic radicalisation and insurgency as ideological, which can draw members irrespective of their socioeconomic and educational statuses (Thurston, 2017).

Furthermore, the *Almajirai* I interacted with in this research were afraid to get close to gangs such as *'Yan Daba*, because they perceived them as dangerous. In this regard, my study contrasts the views of numerous Nigerian newspapers and academic publications that labelled the *Almajirai* as the main pool from which *'Yan Daba,* militants and Islamic insurgents such as *Maitatsine* and *Boko Haram* recruit their members. Importantly, I found that some *Almajirai* are aware of this depiction and perception, associating their identity with social vices, including criminal behaviour. The *Almajirai* reported a heightened awareness of the labelling and treatment they receive from others; a dynamic that significantly influences the attitudes they exhibit in the construction of their identity. However, rather than passively accepting the criminalised labels, most have committed to demonstrating prosocial behaviours that align with the *Almajiri* identity.

11.5 The Contribution of the Thesis to Criminological Theories in the Context of the Global South

Criminological theories relating to deprivation and beyond are mostly proposed and tested in the context of the Global North, where the focus has been on relative deprivation, concerning explanations of rising rates of crime in increasingly affluent societies (Merton, 1938). Existing studies have shown that testing theories in other cultural contexts can result in varying outcomes. The present study suggests that the Global North's explanation cannot adequately explain the context of the Global South, where absolute deprivation prevails as important in understanding the relationship between deprivation and youth crime. This is because countries in the Global South are comparably poorer, as the consequences of exploitative international economic relations, resulting from longstanding colonial legacies, poor governance, and widespread poverty. In other words, in terms of theories of deprivation related to crime, the dominant approaches of the Global North are not very helpful in the Global South, because their history and contexts vary, and so are the effects of other mediating factors, such as culture, law and identity that can lead to varying outcomes, as in this study. However, the standard of crime construction originating from legacies of colonialism is perpetuated across post-colonial administrations in some countries of the South, extended beyond political administration, to being visible in academic theorising. Hence, theories developed in the North provide the lens for crime analysis in the South.

Even though the theories used in this thesis are pretty old, they still provide lenses for evaluating differences in the empirical outcomes observed in this study and the previous ones, which sought to understand the context of crime among *Almajirai*. Moreover, drawing upon the theoretical discussions, elucidating the context of *Almajirai*, it can be asserted that no single criminological theory can provide a comprehensive explanation of the motivations for crime among the *Almajirai*, for while they are undoubtedly severely deprived in an absolute sense, they are also discriminated against and live with criminalised identities, And, yet, not all the *Almajirai* do engage in crime (only a tiny percentage based on self-reporting and about half based on the reporting of others). A plausible theoretical explanation of their situation concerning criminality, therefore, requires a dialogue between various criminological theories to contribute to an enhanced understanding of the risks, motivations,

processes, and circumstances underpinning involvement in the criminality of the *Almajirai*. For instance, when structural and psychological strain theories can explain, the motivation for crime emerging from the attempts to escape deprivation from necessities and harsh regimes, it is also important to acknowledge that for criminal acts to take place (such as theft), as survival strategies, a favourable setting is required, as suggested by other perspectives, such as routine activity and situational action. Hence, this thesis argues that theoretically it is not enough to point to the deprivation of the *Almajirai* alone in explaining any involvement in crime they might have. Other factors, such as the organisation/disorganisation of the neighbourhood, opportunities for social learning from peers involved in crime, the immediate setting of the crime, the self-control of the individual *Almajiri*, the presence or absence of capable guardians, and so on stand between deprivation on the one hand and crime on the other hand. Hence, a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between crime and deprivation arguably requires environmental theories.

11.6 The Insights of the *Almajirai* in the Thesis

This study considers giving a chance to the youth under study, for them to explain understandings of their circumstances offer them a voice and deeper insight into the circumstances that prompt crime among them (Yates, 2004). As noted earlier, much of the media and academic rhetoric on *Almajirai* do not consider the insights of *Almajirai* in making conclusions on their circumstances of deprivation, religious values, and involvement in criminality. The present study utilised the insights of *Almajirai* as the main source of data for drawing conclusions. It also informed the choice of a mixed-method approach, which offered the *Almajirai* an opportunity to explain their situations as research participants, making the study richer concerning understanding and explanation of their situation concerning deprivation, religion, and crime.

11.7 Implications for Policy Consideration

The conclusions derived from the empirical findings of this study have offered insightful implications for policy consideration in establishing justice for the *Almajirai*. In particular, the condition of deprivation in the *Almajirai* is found to have resulted from the injustice of living not under parental care and the failure of the government to provide social welfare provisions that can integrate their system into the formal structure of education. It is of note

that many of these children and their whereabouts are largely unknown, outside of their individual *Tsangaya*. Given the severe level of their absolute deprivation, this can prompt behaviours that are socially problematic, the situation therefore need to be addressed. This is most likely to be successful through combined efforts from the parents and government-provided social welfare service delivery. Even though, it can be challenging, considering the estimated size of the *Almajirai* across Nigeria (about ten million), but it is still necessary and important, because the future of these children is requires guidance by an organised institution.

The recommendations outlined below from this study are of great relevance to the new *Almajiri* and Out-Of-School Children Commission, as an official body created and vested with the responsibility of shaping *Almajirai* and *Tsangaya* affairs as they seek to minimise levels of deprivation, which has the potential to reduce the propensities of crime involvement in the *Almajirai*. The delivery of such provision in a non-formal setting of the *Tsangaya* system can be realised through a systematic formalisation of the system's extant operations. Keeping up-to-date essential data on the *Almajirai*, including, for example, each *Almajiri's Tsangaya*, ward, local government, state of residence, state of origin, parental or guardian information, age, and the *Gardi* responsible for the *Almajiri's* care, is needed. The dataset can serve as an impetus, upon which subsequent plans should be designed by the government. The data will serve as the foundation for facilitating comprehensive planning and welfare service provision. This structured approach will help in identifying each *Almajiri* by his origin and *Tsangaya*, as well as in the integration of the *Tsangaya* system into the government's purview. It will give them an official identity and make them visible and can provide a platform for collaborative efforts involving the *Tsangaya* structure, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders to establish a conducive learning environment and ensure adequate access to necessities, through welfare provisions:

1. To operationalize the enactment of governmental policies within the *Tsangaya* system, it is recommended that each state government institute a commission tasked with overseeing *Tsangaya* affairs. Such a commission would facilitate the formalization, integration, and monitoring of the *Tsangaya* system. It should also be entrusted with responsibilities encompassing data collection, collation, and the assigning of unique reference codes to individual *Almajiri*. Additionally, the

commission should play a pivotal role in the provision of welfare services aimed at mitigating the severity of the *Almajirai's* deprived living conditions. Furthermore, the commission needs to exert supervisory control at the *Tsangaya* level, to ensure effective implementation and adherence to prescribed social standards, which will minimise the depth of deprivation, and prevent involvement in antisocial and criminalised behaviours, such as theft, fighting, vermin poaching, scavenging waste, open defecation, interaction with criminal peers.

2. The establishment of a structured mentoring and supervision system in each *Tsangaya* will help in monitoring the movement of the *Almajirai* within and outside their *Tsangaya*. This involves designating each of the *Gardi* with the responsibility of monitoring a few (I suggest five) *Almajirai* within each *Tsangaya*. The government may formulate a model that can be proposed to all the *Tsangaya* schools for adoption concerning the supervision and monitoring schedule. The contact details of each *Gardi* and the respective parent or guardian should be incorporated into the comprehensive data profile of each *Almajiri*. This inclusion will add strength to the perception of being monitored by individual *Almajiri*, ensure traceability and facilitate prompt communication in emergency needs. The systematic supervision and monitoring mechanisms proposed herein serve to diminish tendencies for criminal behaviour, both within and outside the *Tsangaya*, particularly by enhancing awareness of the whereabouts of the *Almajirai* during study and study-free intervals.
3. In this context, the government should initiate a *Tsangaya* Support Fund (TSF) as a charity and government support, with offices of operation within each local community. This fund would aim to garner diverse support for the *Tsangaya* students from public and private entities. Oversight of the funds could be entrusted to a committee comprising *Malamai*, parents, and traditional leaders within the local community, supervised by local government authorities. This framework will enhance community involvement and can reduce tensions between the *Almajirai* and community members and provide a groundwork for the government integration of the *Tsangaya* system into centers for the delivery of basic education services. Furthermore, it can pave a way for the establishment of vocational training centers for the *Almajirai*, providing them with essential skills for self-sustenance after

graduation, that will shape their free time with attachment, commitments, and involvements, in addition to the embedded religious curriculum taught by their *Malamai*.

4. Upon the formalisation of the system, the participation of parents/guardians of the *Almajirai* in the process will help to ensure parental responsibility. This can be achieved through the provision of legislation that requires parental participation as part of their obligation in the upkeep of their children in the *Tsangaya* schools. Also, the *Almajirai* should be able to visit their parents throughout the year. This will help reduce the perceived neglect among the *Almajirai* and foster parental responsibility and obligation.
5. To make this framework effective and achievable, there is a need for the inclusion of experts in the field of education, social work, youth justice, the *Tsangaya Malamai*, parents of the *Almajirai*, and community members, in designing a realistic and acceptable framework for all. For instance, involving non-governmental organisations working on children's rights, such as *Hisbah* Amnesty International, Save the Children Nigeria in the affairs of the *Almajirai* can reduce possible abuse and discrimination, in the field of education, knowledge production concerning human rights and personal security, and hygiene, for example, can be made available to the *Almajirai* by decolonising the text, through publications in *Ajami* (using Arabic text for writing education in local language). As *Almajirai* are fully literate in Arabic text, and the use of *Ajami* was the main method of writing literature and imparting knowledge in some pre-colonial West African countries (see, for example, Donaldson, 2020; Ngom and Castro, 2019; Ngom, Taylor, and Kurfi, 2019; Nobili, 2017).

11.8 Implications for Future Research

The focus of this study is confined to elucidating the relationships between deprivation, the extent of religiosity, and criminality within cohorts of the *Almajirai* aged 14-17 years. However, extending this inquiry to encompass younger Almajirai below 14 years, for example, concerning the adverse childhood experiences and the social circumstances of graduate *Almajirai* aged 18 and above, could yield a more nuanced comprehension of the evolving dynamics of these relationships as the *Almajirai* cohort matures. Moreover, this

study does not preempt consideration of *Almajirai's* affiliation with insurgents, but the existence and relationship between deprivation in *Almajiranci*, radicalisation, and joining insurgents such as *Boko Haram* require systematic enquiry. Furthermore, future research should focus on evaluating the viability of the policy recommendations noted above. This involves assessing the efficacy of government intervention measures for the formalisation of the *Tsangaya* system, provision of social welfare, and the implementation of effective supervision mechanisms to monitor the activities of the *Almajirai*. The proposed framework aims to tackle the depth of deprivation experienced by the *Almajirai* and mitigate potential propensities towards criminality. Specifically, future investigations should explore strategies for enhancing religiosity, identity, and self-control among the *Almajirai*, thereby buffering the protective factors against any involvement in crime.

Future research might also consider the efficacy of criminalising the *Almajirai's* efforts to address their absolute deprivation through acts deemed to be criminal (such as petty theft). There are scholarly works on such issues that suggest strong connections between inadequate social welfare delivery, with social harms such as absolute deprivation and poverty, which can lead to survival strategies that are criminalised by the state (examples are Heather, 2013; Quinney, 1982; Vegh Weis, 2017; Young, 1999). They suggest that such acts are consequences of injustice by the policymakers but are treated by law as individualised pathology. This is important to this thesis, reflecting the jurisdiction of the Islamic Shari'a law claimed to be practised in the social context where the *Almajirai* live. Relevant works have indicated that in Islamic law, survival acts in conditions of desperation are not treated as criminal acts (see, for example, Zahra & Herman, 2023).

Dogaro Da Kai participants at training (Photo from *Dogaro Da Kai* Facebook Page)**.**

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX-1

Participant Information Sheet (Students' Questionnaire) NB: will be read to the participants and their guardians in the local language version

For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research purposes and your data rights please visit our webpage: www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protectionwww.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection

I am a PhD student at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom, and I would like to invite your students to take part in a research study that aims to explore their experience of being *Almajiri* students. The survey will ask them questions about their life as *Almajirai*, their needs and how these are (or are not) met, and how they live within and outside their *Tsangaya* School.
Please take time to listen to the following information carefully before you decide whether you wish them to take part.

Why have I been invited?
You are being approached as a *Mallam*, because I am interested to hear about your students' experience, how they experience and structure their routine activities weekly, the strategies they adopt to live, the kind of people they interact with, the discrimination and other life difficulties they might be facing in their *Tsangaya* and host neighbourhood, and the implications of all these experience for their well-being. I would be incredibly grateful if you would agree to allow them to take part in this study.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?
If you decide they can take part, this will involve the following: we will go to a convenient place with the selected students among them and have an interview, where we will complete a questionnaire. Some of them may be asked to participate in an in-depth interview, which will be longer than the questionnaire interview.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?
Their participation is an opportunity for them to share their experiences as students of the *Tsangaya* system, and make their voice heard to the research community, which will help in understanding the clear context of their educational system, the problems and difficulties they face as *Almajiri* students, and how their conditions can be improved. These are some of the problems that are not clear to many researchers and policymakers.

Do I have to take part?
No. It's completely up to you to decide whether they will or they will not take part. Their participation is voluntary.

What if I change my mind?
If any of them change his mind, after the interviews has been conducted, it is not possible to withdraw his participation in this study. Because it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people's data. Therefore, you cannot withdraw once your response has been recorded in the questionnaire.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part. The outcome of the study will help in improving *Tsangaya* system of education, its teachers, and students. However, taking part in the Questionnaire Interview will mean investing for about 20 minutes.

Will my data be identifiable?

After the interview, only I, the researcher conducting this study and my supervisors will have access to the ideas you share with me. I will keep all personal information about them (e.g. names and other information about them that can identify them) confidential. That is, I will not share it with others. If anything, they tell me in the interview suggests that someone else, or themselves might be at immediate risk of harm, I am obliged to share this information with you *Mallams*, my supervisor and/or Save the Children Nigeria as, human rights activists group, but I will discuss this with the student first.

How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?

I will use the information they have shared with me for research purposes only. This will include my PhD thesis and other publications, such as journal articles. I may also present the results of my study at academic conferences, or in a written report to inform policymakers about my findings. As well as all ways that can improve the system.

When writing up the findings from this study, I would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas they shared with me. I will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from my interview with them), so that although I will use your exact words, all reasonable steps will be taken to protect your anonymity in my publications.

How my data will be stored?

All the data will be stored in encrypted files (that is no-one other than me, the researcher will be able to access them) and on password-protected computers. I will destroy the hard copies of any data securely. I will keep data that can identify you separately from non-personal information (e.g. your views on a specific topic). In accordance with university guidelines; I will keep the data securely for a minimum of five years.

What if I have a question or concern?

If you have any queries, or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please feel free to contact me through my phone number 08032136964 m.m.usman@lancaster.ac.uk, or my supervisors; Professor Corinne May-Chahal +447935452539 c.maychahal@lancaster.ac.uk, and Professor Chris Grover c.grover@lancaster.ac.uk

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact: Head of Sociology Department, Lancaster University, Professor Imogen Tyler i.tyler@lancaster.ac.uk +44 (0)1524 594095

If you have any complaints that you wish to discuss with someone who can offer help after the interview, please contact;

Mallam Abdullahi Ibrahim Magama, of Save the Children Nigeria. Jigawa State Office, through +2348065944635

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

APPENDIX-2

Participant Information Sheet (Malamai and Students In-Deth Interview) NB: will be read to the participants' guardians in local language version

For further information about how Lancaster University processes personal data for research purposes and your data rights please visit our webpage: www.lancaster.ac.uk/research/data-protection

I am a PhD student at Lancaster University in the United Kingdom, and I would like to invite your student(s) to take part in a research study that aims to explore their experience of being *Almajiri* student. The survey will ask them questions about their lives as *Almajirai*, their needs and how these are (or are not) met, and how they live within and outside *Tsangaya* School.

Please take time to listen to the following information carefully before you decide whether you wish to take part.

Why have I been invited?

You are being approached because I am interested to hear about your students' experience, on how *Almajiri* students experience and structure their routine activities weekly, the strategies they adopt to live, the kind of people they interact with, the discrimination and abuses they might be facing in their *Tsangaya* and host neighbourhood, and the implications of all these experience for their well-being. I would be incredibly grateful if you would agree to take part in this study.

What will I be asked to do if I take part?

If you decide to agree with your students' participation, this will involve the following: we will go to a convenient place and have an in-depth interview, for about an hour and 15 minutes which will be longer than the questionnaire interview.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Their participation is an opportunity for them to share their experience of the *Tsangaya* system, and make their voice heard by the research community, which will help in understanding the clear context of *Tsangaya* educational system, the problems the students face as *Almajirai*, and how their condition can be improved. These are some of the problems that are not clear to many researchers and policymakers.

Do I have to take part?

No. It's completely up to you to decide whether the students take or not to take part. Their participation is voluntary.

What if the participants change their minds?

If they change their mind, they are free to withdraw up to 2 weeks after the interview, as I will use a pseudonym to identify their response. If they want to withdraw, please let me know, and I will extract any ideas or information (data) they contributed to the study and destroy them. However, it is difficult and often impossible to take out data from one specific participant when this has already been anonymised or pooled together with other people's data.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

It is unlikely that there will be any major disadvantages to taking part. However, taking part in the in-depth Interview will mean investing for about an hour 15 minutes maximum.

Will my data be identifiable?

After the interview, only I, the researcher conducting this study and my supervisors will have access to the ideas they share with me. I will keep all personal information about them (e.g. their name and other information about them that can identify you) confidential. That is, I will not share it with others. I will remove any personal information from the written record of their contribution. If anything, they tell me in the interview suggests that the students or somebody else might be at immediate risk of harm, I am obliged to share this information with you *Mallams*, my supervisors and/or Save the Children Nigeria as, human rights activists group, but I will discuss this with the respondent first.

How will we use the information you have shared with us and what will happen to the results of the research study?
I will use the information they have shared with me for research purposes only. This will include my PhD thesis and other publications, such as journal articles. I may also present the results of my study at academic conferences, or in a written report to inform policymakers about my findings. When writing up the findings from this study, I would like to reproduce some of the views and ideas they shared with me. I will only use anonymised quotes (e.g. from my interview with them), so that although I will use their exact words, all reasonable steps will be taken to protect their anonymity in my publications.

How my data will be stored?
Your data will be stored in encrypted files (that is no one other than me, the researcher will be able to access them) and on a password-protected computer. I will keep data that can identify them separately from non-personal information (e.g. their views on a specific topic). In accordance with university guidelines; I will keep the data securely for a minimum of five years.

What if I have a question or concern?
If you have any queries, or if you are unhappy with anything that happens concerning your participation in the study, please feel free to contact me through my phone number 08032136964, or my supervisors; Professor Corinne May-Chahal through c.may-chahal@lancaster.ac.uk +447935452539 and Professor. Chris Grover c.grover@lancaster.ac.uk

If you have any concerns or complaints that you wish to discuss with a person who is not directly involved in the research, you can also contact: Head of Sociology Department, Lancaster University, Professor Imogen Tyler i.tyler@lancaster.ac.uk +44 (0)1524 594095

If you have any complaints that you wish to discuss with someone who can offer help after the interview, please contact Mallam Abdullahi Ibrahim Magama, of Save the Children Nigeria. Jigawa State Office, through +2348065944635

Garba Abubakar, The Chairman Nigerian Bar Association, Dutse Chapter, +234(0)7062155365

This study has been reviewed and approved by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and Lancaster Management School's Research Ethics Committee.

Thank you for your participation!

APPENDIX-3

CONSENT FORM

For the Malamai (Teachers)

Project Title: The study of *Almajiri* students in Northern Nigeria
Name of Researcher: Mohammed Mamun Usman
Email: m.m.usman@lancaster.ac.uk

Please read and tick each box appropriately

1. I confirm that I have read, or had read to me, the information sheet for the above study and I understand it. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily	..
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during my participation in this study and within 2 weeks after I took part in the study, without giving any reason. If I withdraw within 2 weeks of taking part in the study my data will be removed.	..
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications, or presentations by the researcher/s, but my personal information will not be included, and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.	..
4. I understand that my name/my organisation's name will not appear in any reports, articles, or presentations without my consent.	..
5. I understand that any interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.	..
6. I understand that data will be kept according to university guidelines for a minimum of 5 years after the end of the study.	..
7. I agree to take part in the above study.	..

_____ _____ _____

Name of Participant Date Signature

I confirm that the participant was allowed to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____ **Date** _____Day/month/year

- **One copy of this form will be given to the participant and the original kept in the files of the researcher at Lancaster University**

APPENDIX-4

CONSENT FORM

(for the guardian/*Mallam* on behalf of the *Almajirai* students)

Project Title: The study of *Almajiri* students in Northern Nigeria
Name of Researcher: Mohammed Mamun Usman
Phone number: +2348032136964 **Email**: m.m.usman@lancaster.ac.uk

Please read and tick each box appropriately

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have these answered satisfactorily	¨
2. I understand that my students' participation is voluntary and that there is no chance to withdraw after they took part in the study, without giving any reason. If I withdraw within 2 weeks of taking part in the study my data will be removed.	¨
3. I understand that any information given by me may be used in future reports, academic articles, publications, or presentations by the researcher/s, but my personal information will not be included, and all reasonable steps will be taken to protect the anonymity of the participants involved in this project.	¨
4. I understand that my name/my organisation's name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentation without my consent.	¨
5. I understand that any interviews will be audio-recorded and transcribed and that data will be protected on encrypted devices and kept secure.	¨
6. I understand that data will be kept according to university guidelines for a minimum of 10 years after the end of the study.	¨
7. I agree to take part in the above study.	¨

_____ _____ _____
Name of Participant/guardian Date Signature

I confirm that the participant was given an opportunity to ask questions about the study, and all the questions asked by the participant have been answered correctly and to the best of my ability. I confirm that the individual has not been coerced into giving consent, and the consent has been given freely and voluntarily.

Signature of Researcher /person taking the consent_____ **Date**_____ Day/month/year

One copy of this form will be given to the participant and the original kept in the files of the researcher at Lancaster University

APPENDIX-5

VERBAL CONSENT PROTOCOL (for the *Almajiri* assented consent)

I have approached you because your Mallam has given me the chance to meet you and have an interview with you concerning your experience as an Almajiri student and because of the unique insight that you can provide to this study;

1) Your teacher has agreed to give consent on your behalf after reading the Participant Information Sheet, are you willing to participate in this study?

• YES =>

The interview will take us some 20 minutes concerning your time budget and how you spend it daily as an Almajiri student.

Ask if everything is clear and if they have any queries. Answer any questions about the study. Then ask: **do you have any comments or special wishes regarding preserving the anonymity of yourself/your *Tsangaya*?**

o If YES => discuss the participant's wishes and make a note of them, commit to respect them if feasible. In the unlikely event that the participant would request something that you may not be able to do (like use their real name or agree to talk but not agree to be quoted), this participant would be ineligible for participation in the study and the interaction would have to end.

o If NO => proceed to question (2)

• NO => review and discuss the PIS there and then. In case of special wishes proceed as above.

2) Do you agree to participate in the study on the terms discussed in the PIS?

• YES => Thank you, make note of consent, proceed to questions.

• NO => Thank you, gather feedback if any, end interaction.

APPENDIX – 6

Questionnaire for the study of Almajirai in Northern Nigeria

A	**Socio-Demographic Data**	
1.	How old are you?	
2.	In which city/town/village do you live?	
3.	Are your parents alive and living together?	a. Yes b) No. *(if no state the status of the relationship)*
4.	What is the occupation of your father?	
5.	What type of educational system was attended by your father?	*a) None b) Tsangaya c) formal*
6.	Which tribe do you belong to?	
7.	What do you think is the reason for your parent's/guardian's decision to enroll you in *Tsangaya* School?	
8.	At what age were you enrolled into the *Tsangaya* system?	
9.	How often do your parents/guardians visit you to see how well you are doing with your studies?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
10.	Are you okay with the *Tsangaya* system of education?	*a) Nob) a little c) yes*
B	**Social Disorganization**	
11.	To what extent do you have access to portable water for drinking when you need it?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
12.	To what extent do you get enough food to eat?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
13.	To what extent do you have the clothes to wear that you need?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
14.	To what extent do you think your physical safety is guaranteed in the neighbourhood you are living in?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
15.	Is there any presence of delinquent gangs around your neighbourhood?	*a) they don't b) a little c) a lot*
16.	Do the *Almajiri* do have some interactions with these gangs?	*a) never b) monthly c) weekly d) daily*
C	**Routine Activities and Rational Choice**	
17.	Where do you go most in your study-free time?	
18.	Have you ever come across a young person breaking the law in these places?	*Yes (go to Q. 19) No (go to Q.21)?*

19.	How often do you come across young people breaking the law during your study-free times?	*a) rarely b) often c) more often*					
20.	Do you spend much time in those places?	*a) not much b) some time* *c) quite a lot of time*					
21.	Do your guardians know your whereabouts during your study-free time?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
22.	Do your guardians set any rules about what you do when at school?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
23.	Do your guardians set any rules about what you do outside school?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) frequently*					
24.	Do your guardians know where you go to work?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
25.	Do your guardians agree with your employers about all the work you do?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
26	Do you give money you earn/receive to your *Mallams*?	*a) never b) often c) weekly d) daily*					
D	**Social Learning Theory**						
27.	How many people do you or other *Almajiri* students interact with do you think do the following;	*Never*		*Rarely*		*Often*	
	Smoke cigarettes						
	Smoke cannabis (marijuana)						
	Use any intoxicant						
	Pick fights or beat up someone						
	Steal from someone (house or shop)						
	Other delinquent act(s)……						
28.	Among your friends how do you think the following affects respect;	*Decreases*		*No effect*		*Increases*	
	Smoking cigarettes						
	Smoking cannabis						
	Breaking social rules						
	Stealing						
	Fighting or beating up someone						
	Other actions mentioned in Q29						
29.	Do you or any other *Almajiri* students get involved in the following acts: (Never, Often, Frequently)	*Me*			*Others*		
	Smoking cigarettes	*N*	*O*	*F*	*N*	*O*	*f*
	Smoking cannabis						

	Using any intoxicant						
	Picking fights						
	Stealing						
	Other delinquent act(s)……						
30.	What are those acts that are forbidden by society but often happen among your peers?						
E	**Social Strain**						
31.	Do your parents provide money for your basic needs?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
32.	Do you generate enough money to take care of your needs?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
33.	If they are in desperate need, is it okay for an *Almajiri* to steal from someone?	a. *Yes b) No c) it depends*					
34.	Do you know of *Almajiri* students who have stolen from someone when in desperate need?	a. *Yes b) No*					
35.	Have you ever experienced discrimination among your peers in the *Tsangaya*?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
36.	Have you ever experienced discrimination from other children in the neigbourhood?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
37.	Have you ever experienced rejection by the members of your host community?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
38.	Do you think the government is giving you deserved care as citizens?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
39.	Do you feel worse-off when you compare yourself with other children that go to public schools?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
40.	Do you miss your parents' care in your life?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
41.	Do you feel worse-off when you see other children cared for by their parents?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
42.	Are discriminating words used against you for being Almajiri?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
43.	If yes, do you feel angry?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
44.	Do you feel a lack of sympathy when something bad happens to those that discriminate against you?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*					
45.	What is your major goal in life?	*a) I can't say b) to become a Mallam c) to be a businessman d) other(s)……*					

46.	Do you think you are getting enough support to achieve your life goal?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
47.	Do you feel like quitting *Tsangaya* School?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
48.	How do you get on with the *Malami*?	*a) very badly b) badly c) well d) very well*
E	**Self-Control**	
49.	Do you act on the spur of the moment without stopping to think?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
50	Do you devote too much thought and effort to prepare for the future?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
51.	Do you often do whatever gives you pleasure here and now, even at the cost of some	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
52.	Are you more concerned with what happens to you in the short run than in the long run?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
53.	How often do you avoid projects that are difficult to accomplish?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
54.	How often do you get involved in doing things that are a little risky?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
55.	Do you take risks just for fun?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
56.	Do you feel excited about doing things that might get you in trouble?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
57.	Do sad situations get you provoked so easily?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
58.	Do you get influenced and react to others so easily when in a sad condition?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
59.	How often do you look out for yourself first, even if it means making things difficult for others?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
60.	Do you feel you are supervised by God when deciding to do any wrong act?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
61.	How often do you skip conducting some mandatory religious obligations?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*
62.	How often do you think other *Almajiri* students skip some religious obligations?	*a) never b) rarely c) often d) more often*

Will you agree to participate in an In-Depth Interview, which will take about an hour and 15 minutes? YES [ ] NO [ ]

APPENDIX – 7

Themes for In-Depth Interviews

Social Disorganization

1. Opening Question: What is the general living condition of the *Tsangaya* Students

Prompts: *Hygiene, health, clothing, access to safe water, food, accommodation*

2. How does enrollment occur?

Prompts: *All year round or Seasonal?*

3. I want to ask about the students' sense of community, both inside and outside the school

Prompts: *Do the Tsangaya students come from the same or diverse backgrounds?*

Do people in the neighourhood have a lot in common?

What is the extent of collective efficacy of residents in the neighbourhood in dealing with social problems like delinquency?

Is there any presence of delinquent gangs in the immediate neighbourhood?

Routine Activities and Rational Choice

4. Opening Question: Tell me about the Almajiri students' routine.

Prompts: *How do Almajiri students organize activities in their weekdays?*

Where do Almajiri students mostly visit during their study-free times?

5. Do the students encounter situations that might get them into trouble?

Prompts: *Do the Almajiri usually come across some delinquent activities or crime motivating places during their study-free times?*

How long do the Almajiri students stay in such places for interaction with others?

6. To what extent are the Almajiri students monitored and supervised?

Prompts: *Do the Mallams know the whereabouts of Almajiri students during their study-free times?*

What are the rules the Mallams set for the Almajiri students on what they must do when they are in the Tsangaya School?

Then, what about outside the Tsangaya School?

How well do the Almajiri students follow the rules set by the Mallams?

Do the Mallams know where all their Almajiri go for work?

What do the students contribute to their Mallams?

Social Learning Theory

6. Opening Question: Do *Almajiri* students imitate delinquent acts from peers (among fellow *Almajiri* or adolescents outside the *Tsangaya* School)?

Prompts: *Do the Almajiri students interact with peers (among fellow Almajiri or adolescents outside the Tsangaya school) who do things like smoke cigarettes, use drugs, or get into trouble for stealing, or fighting?*

Are there certain acts that Almajiri students consider doing to earn respect from friends, or solve problems of needs, even if they might get into trouble?

Structural and Psychological Strain

7. Opening Question: What are the sources of provision of basic needs for *Almajiri* students?

Prompts: *Are the sources adequate? And how about sources of provision for enjoyment or activities beyond basic needs?*

8. Do *Almajiri* students experience rejection in the neighbourhood for being Almajiri?

Prompts: *In what way does the experience of rejection affect Almajiri students in building their life aspirations?*

What is Almajiri students' perception of those people that reject them in their host communities?

Do the Almajiri students experience physical, psychological, or sexual victimization in the Tsangaya School, or in the neighbourhood?

If students have experienced physical, psychological, or sexual victimization do they get support? Or know where they can go for help?

9. How well do the *Almajiri* students get support from the government in helping them to achieve their life goals as citizens of their nation?

Prompts: *What are the thoughts of Almajiri students on the government workers and officials in relation to their condition?*

In what ways do Almajiri students compare themselves with the other non Almajiri adolescents in their host neighbourhood?

Do you think engagement in delinquent activity is an escape for Almajiri students when they experience stressful conditions?

Self-Control and Religiosity

10. Opening Question: How often do the *Almajiri* students get involve in risky behaviours without considering the consequences?

Prompts: *Do they act without stopping to think?*

Do Almajiri students get angry quite easily?

What are the dangerous behaviours that an Almajiri student can exhibit when angry?

11. To what extent do *Almajiri* students focus on their immediate needs at the cost of long-term goals?

Prompts: *Do Almajiri students devote much thought and effort in preparing for their future?*

12. How do struggles in life instill self-reliance in Almajirai?

Prompts: *How often do Almajiri students endure hard tasks, even those that stretch their strength?*

13. How much do the religious principles (feeling being supervised by God) and practices (obligatory expectations) shape *Almajiri* students' decisions and daily activities?

APPENDIX – 8

The Observation Schedule

Theoretical Interest	Items	Description	Frequency
Social Disorganization	Living conditions		
	Neighbourhood		
	Social Interaction		
	Criminal gangs		
Routine Activity Theory	Daily routines		
	Places visited		
	Time spent		
Social Learning Theory	Imitation		
	Violation of norms		
	Respect for delinquent acts		
Structural and Psychological Strain	Evidence of inequalities		
	Treatment in the neighbourhood		
Self-Control and Social Control	Disciplinary measures		
	Risk Taking		
	Perseverance		
	Anger		
	Religious Practices		

Indicator Guide

Social Disorganization Indicators:

- Living condition of the *Tsangaya* School (crowding, hygiene and health, clothing, access to safe water, food, and accommodation).
- Conflict between *Almajiri* students within the school environment?
- Watch out if there is any proxy presence of delinquent gangs around the neighbourhood *Almajiri* students live?

Routine Activities and Rational Choice Indicators:

- Daily routines of *Almajiri* students across a week.
- Places *Almajiri* students visit most during study-free times.
- How the *Almajiri* students behave in the neighbourhood during their study-free times.

- Time spent in the places *Almajiri* students visit.
- *Almajiri* student interaction with peers in the neighbourhood?
- Context of interaction between *Almajiri* students among themselves, and when interacting with non-*Almajiri* others.
- Strategies used for supervision of Almajiri students in *Tsangaya* schools.
- Strategies used for supervision of Almajiri students outside *Tsangaya* schools in the neighbourhood.

Social Learning Theory Indicators:

- Incidents where *Almajiri* students imitate delinquent acts from peers (among fellow *Almajiri* or adolescents outside the *Tsangaya* School).
- Incidents where delinquent acts committed by *Almajiri* students earn respect from peers
- Incidents where there is acceptance by peers that delinquent acts solve problems of needs.
- Examples of how *Almajiri* students adhere to societal law and norms, and reactions to violation of norms.

Structural and Psychological Strain Indicators:

- Deprivation from necessities of life.
- Legitimate and illegitimate activities employed by *Almajiri* students in settling their needs.
- How *Almajiri* students are treated in the neighbourhood.
- Situations that accentuate *Almajiri* students' inequalities.

Self-Control and Social Control Indicators:

- Disciplinary measures practiced by the *Tsangaya* schools.
- *Almajiri* students' involvement in risk taking behaviours.
- Perseverance of *Almajiri* students in challenging tasks.
- Frequency of *Almajiri* students becoming angry.

Observation of religious principles (feeling of being supervised by God) and practices (obligatory expectations) on *Almajiri* students' daily activities.