

The Experiences of Muslim Child Beggars in *Dagbon* of Northern Ghana: an Exploratory Study from the perspective of Salutogenesis

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Abstract

Introduction and objectives: Begging is a phenomenon that is prevalent in different parts of the world. The involvement of children in begging is a worrying factor to organisations, agencies and governments at both national and international levels as it infringes on the fundamental human rights of the children. It is a form of child labour based on the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) definition and affects the future of these children because they beg at the expense of their education. The usually quoted justification for people's involvement in begging is poverty. Africa, which is noted for being a continent with a lot of problems in relation to wars, hunger, disease, poverty and human rights violations, has its share of the child begging issue. A lot of research that has been conducted in the continent has revealed how children are allowed to beg under extreme harsh conditions. Begging has been in existence in Ghana dating back to the colonial era but the laws of the country prohibit it. The children's act of Ghana is to protect children and the country is also a signatory to international conventions that seek to protect the rights of children. In spite of the existence of these systems, child begging persists in the country. These children experience a lot of stressors but strangely, they continue with begging. Studies on Muslim children who beg whilst staying with their parents are scanty. Most of the studies look at Muslim child beggars in the context of those who stay with the *mallam* or *marabouts*.

Objectives: The research addressed four objectives; Objective 1 looked at the stressors of the Muslim child beggars in *Dagbon*, Objective 2 dealt with the resources that enabled these children to cope with the stressors of begging, Objective 3 addressed the position of *Dagbon* clergy on child begging and Objective 4 touched on the reasons that cause parents to allow their children to beg.

Theoretical framework: The salutogenic theory, which stresses on the notion of what creates health rather than what causes disease, was used in this study. The theory dwells on two main constructs, Sense of Coherence (Antonovsky) and Generalised Resistance Resources (GRRs). In exploring the resources that make it possible for the children to move on with begging despite the adversities in it, what creates health among these child beggars became evident.

Methods: A phenomenological approach was used in this study. Draw and tell, in-depth interviews and focus group discussions were used to gather the data from the participants from July to September, 2015. The participants of the study included 8 children, 6 parents and 3 *mallams*. The research instrument for the children was draw and tell, in-depth interviews for

the *mallams* and focus group discussions for the parents. All interviews were conducted in *Dagbani*. I took recordings of all the participants' responses to questions which were then translated into English after which transcription was done. The Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services (NSD) gave permission for the research to be carried out in Ghana. I also obtained approval from the ministry of Gender Children and Social Protection in Ghana. All the children who took part in the study signed the assent forms and the parents and *mallams* signed the consent forms.

Findings and discussion: A lot of stressors were identified in relation to the Muslim child beggars. However, there were resources that enabled these children to cope with begging. The stressors included physical factors like being beaten by people, exposure to bad weather; psychological factors as in insults, encounter with fearful animals and long term consequences like missing school. The resources that enabled them to cope with begging included family, friends, gains they make from begging, their belief that begging is temporal for them and more importantly, as contribution to their families. Educational success was in the hearts of these children and part of the reason for their engagement in begging was to enable them pay for their examination fees though begging undermined their attendance to school.

The findings showed a divergence of opinion between the *mallams* and the parents and between the male parents and their female counterparts. Whilst the *mallams* maintained that begging is unacceptable in Islam, the parents were of the opinion that Muslims are beggars. The female participants accepted responsibility for the children's begging but the males insisted the children were a spoilt generation who were into begging for their personal gains.

Conclusion: It emerged from the study that the children had a lot of stressors like insults, beatings and exposure to bad weather, but at the same time they had resources like family, friends and making a contribution to the family which made it possible for them to counter the effects of begging an indication that most of them had a strong sense of coherence. The desire of these children to attain secular education is unquestionable. The findings revealed that one of the reasons for their involvement in begging was to cater for their educational costs. This exposes the laxity in the state's approach to the provisions contained in the various conventions or documents at international and national levels that stress on the education of the child. The right to education is a human right issue therefore, the government of Ghana must make urgent commitments and moves towards the protection of this right and all the rights that a child must enjoy as better conditions for the children today reflect better future position of the nation.

Acronyms and abbreviations

ACRWC	African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CNS	Central Nervous System
GES	Ghana Education Service
GHC	Ghana Cedi
GRR	Generalised Resistance Resource
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service
IPEC	International Programme for the Elimination of Child labour
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JHS	Junior High School
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NLCD	National Liberation Council Decree
PHC	Population and Housing Census
SOC	Sense of Coherence
STIs	Sexually Transmitted Infections
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations' International Children Emergency Fund
WHO	World Health Organisation

Terminology from Dagbani and Arabic

Afa or *Mallam*: These two terms are used interchangeably to mean an Islamic cleric in *Dagbon*. Whilst *mallam* is the Hausa derivation of the Arabic word *muallim*, Alfa is the Yoruba derivation of the same word both of which are co-opted into the lexicon of *Dagomba* to mean the same.

Almanjiri : A Hausa word borrowed from the Arabic word Al-muhajirin. It means Quranic student but used by some people to mean a beggar

Almajiranci : A Hausa word for the state of being an almanjiri

Ataaya : Tea prepared from Chinese or natural herbs

Barimaanbihi : Dagbani word for beggars

Bid'a : An Arabic word which means an innovation into the Islamic religion

Dagbani : The language of the Dagomba

Dagbon : The geographical area occupied by the Dagomba tribe

Dagomba : The majority tribe in Northern region of Ghana

Fatiha : Name of the first chapter of the Quran

Haram : An Arabic word which means illegal

Hijab : An Arabic word which means a garment mostly worn by women

Kafaara : An Arabic word which means atonement for a crime committed

Karim : A Dagbani word meaning studies

Karimba : A Dagbani word which means a teacher

Karimbanima : Plural of *karimba*, meaning teachers

Karimbia : A Dagbani word meaning a student(mostly used for Quranic student)

Karimbihi : Plural of *Karimbia* meaning, Quranic students

Marabout : Used in Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau to mean a Quranic teacher

Makaranta : Used in Dagbani to mean an Islamic school

Ramadan : The ninth month of the Arabic calendar in which Muslims fast for 29 or 30 days consecutively

SAW : Abbreviation for "*sallallaahu allaihi wassalam*" recited by Muslims anytime the prophet's name is mentioned.

Talibes : Used in Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau to mean a student of a Quranic school

Tamale : The Capital of the Northern region of Ghana

Tingsheli : A particular locality in *Dagbani*

Waara : A book of selected chapters of the Quran

Zakat : One of the five pillars of Islam which means a percentage of one's property that is paid to the needy.

Zakatul fitr : Alms, mostly in a form of food, calculated on each head in a family and given to the needy a day prior *Idul-fitr* (Islamic ceremony marking the end of fasting).

Map of Ghana Showing Northern Region



CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Begging is a phenomenon that attracts international attention especially when it involves children because of their vulnerabilities and the negative factors that are attached to it. The age of a child places him in a vulnerable position and one of the greatest vulnerability areas is child begging (Mace, 2016). The younger a child is the more vulnerable he is physically and psychologically (Kaushik, 2014). Studies across the globe expose the varying difficult and sometimes dangerous conditions children work as beggars. Surprisingly, these child beggars are continuing with begging in spite of the adversities associated with it.

Child begging, by the ILO's defining characteristics, is a form of forced child labour (IPEC, 2015). Milne (2015) and Nwazuoke and Igwe (2016) argue that child labour is a global problem and that there is no country in the world where nuances of the problem cannot be found. The ILO's estimates globally revealed that, as at the year 2012, about 168 million children were involved in child labour representing 11 percent of the world's population of children (IPEC, 2015). Currently, it is estimated that, there are about 215 million children who are child labourers in the world and majority of them live in sub-Saharan Africa (Mace, 2016).

Many factors have been cited as underlying drivers of child begging or begging in general across the globe but the frontline factors are religion and poverty. For example, Bukoye (2015), Einarisdóttir, Boiro, and Geirsson (2010) Delap (2009) and Zoumanigui (2016) report how the quest for Islamic education causes parents to give their children to the *mallams* or *marabouts* who in turn allow these children to beg. Poverty is also the often cited causal factor of begging as pointed out by Abebe (2008), Thorsen (2012), Weiss (2004) and (Magashi, 2015).

Child begging, in the opinion of many institutions, organisations and agencies at national or international levels symbolises an abuse of the child and has become one of the child rights issues to various bodies in contemporary times. It is an infringement on the fundamental human rights of the child, particularly the right to education, right to good health and the right to mental and physical development (Unicef, 2004).

Issues on the rights of children at the international level gained prominence in 1989 when the Convention on the Rights of the Child, CRC, was formulated. This is a comprehensive policy document (Okyere, Imoh, & Ansell, 2014) that is tasking all countries to ensure the safety of all children. Article 18 (b) of the Convention states that state parties should assist parents in

their child rearing duties when the need arises. Article 28 (a), urges state parties to make education free and compulsory at the basic level for all children. Additionally, article 32 obliges states to protect children from economic exploitation and from performing hazardous work that will interfere with their education or be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development (UNICEF, 1989).

A year after the United Nation's (UN) convention, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC) was adopted in July, 1990. Article 11 of this Charter, mandates African countries to be proactive in educational matters by making child education at the basic level compulsory and free for all children. Additionally, article 15 states that children should be protected from any forms of economic exploitative means and from engaging in dangerous works that can interfere with their physical, mental, spiritual, moral, or social development. Article 31 places responsibility on the African child towards showing respect to their parents, superiors and elders, and to preserve and strengthen African cultural values in their relations with other members of their communities. (UNICEF, 1990). It must be noted however that, this article is found only in the ACRWC but not in other child rights documents.

The Ghana government enacted the Children's Act of 1998 in line with the provisions of the CRC and the ACRWC. Section 87 (a) and (b) of the act prohibit the use of children for any exploitative labour which deprives them of their right to basic health, education and social development. Section 16 places official responsibility on the District Assemblies to protect the welfare of children and to promote children's rights within their area of authority. Section 18,1(g) stipulates that a child is in need of care and protection if he is begging or receiving alms or is found in any street, premises or places for the purpose of begging or receiving alms. The minimum working age as stipulated in the act is 15 years G.O.G (1998) in line with convention 182 of the ILO's minimum age for working (IPEC, 2015).

Begging is illegal in Ghana dating back to the pre-independence era when the Control of Beggars and Destitute Ordinance of 1957 was enacted as an official response to public protest against the beggar population in the capital city of Ghana, Accra (Weiss, 2007). Post-independence Ghana saw the reaffirmation of the attitude of those at the top echelon of state authority towards begging through the passage of a decree known as the Beggars and Destitute Act in 1969 which was not at variance with the 1957 ordinance. Under the Beggars and Destitute Act (NLCD 392), section (2), begging is a criminal act in Ghana and offenders are to be imprisoned, fined or suffer both penalties (G.O.G, 1969).

Table 1: A Comparative Table

The table below shows contemporary measures at national, continental and global levels and how key elements in relation to children are captured.

	<i>CRC 1989(Global)</i>	<i>ACRWC 1990(continental)</i>	<i>ACT 560 1998(Ghana)</i>	<i>BEGGARS ACT 1967(Ghana)</i>	<i>MDGs(Global) MDG2</i>
<i>Education</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>
<i>Child labour</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>absent</i>
<i>Begging</i>	<i>absent</i>	<i>absent</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>absent</i>
<i>Child's responsibility</i>	<i>absent</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>absent</i>	<i>absent</i>	<i>absent</i>
<i>Parents' responsibility</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>absent</i>
<i>Governments' responsibility to parents</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>present</i>	<i>absent</i>	<i>present</i>

What needs to be emphasised here is that though begging is not specifically mentioned in both the CRC and ACRWC, implicitly, it is captured in those documents. Also worth noting is that the responsibility placed on the child in the ACRWC cannot represent economic responsibility to the point where the child is engaging in tedious coercive work at the expense of getting formal education. The laws of Ghana, including Act 560, do not even capture this aspect of the Charter. If it had, that will have given some parents and guardians the justification and legal impetus to interpret the engagement of the children in works as a sign of the children showing respect to them as found in the ACRWC.

1.2 Problem Statement

In the statutory books of Ghana, begging is an illegal activity but in practice however, it is pervasive in many parts of the country with many of the beggars being children notably, those in *Dagbon* of Northern Ghana. These children go through negative experiences in their involvement in begging like their peers in other parts of the world. For instance, Perry (2004), Ennew (2003) and Kaime-Atterhög and Ahlberg (2008), capture the difficult conditions that street children, most of whom beggars are living in Africa. In the Northern region of Ghana, research shows how children are involved in begging either directly where they themselves beg (Al-Hassan & Abubakari, 2015) or indirectly where they act as guides to adult beggars (Ahmed & Abdul Razak, 2016).

In spite of these difficult conditions that these children go through, they are able to continue with the act of begging but much is not known about what makes them move on with it even with the difficulties related to the practice. It is therefore imperative that knowledge is obtained in relation to what makes them cope with this condition to help enhance their health status and well-being.

1.3 Context

In Ghana, studies have been done in relation to street children, begging and child abuse. For example, Kassah (2008) reveals that some of the beggars in the capital of Ghana Accra, are susceptible to abuse. Begging is a historical phenomenon in Ghana dating back to the 1930s (Weiss, 2007). Even at that time, Weiss reveals, the beggars in Accra, the capital of the then Gold coast were seen as public nuisance and therefore, must be sent back to where they came from. Those who were Ghanaians were said to be destitute Muslims coming from the then Northern Territories now the three Northern regions. This shows how the poverty situation in Ghana is interpreted with religious and geographical undertones. Poverty is high in the Northern region of Ghana where according to Samuel, Thomas, Christian, and Ezekiel (2013), about 74.0% of the population are engaged in subsistence agriculture and only 0.4% of the rural folk are into clerical or professional work or employment. Samuel et al. (2013) also reveal that the overall illiteracy rate in the region for 11years and above stood at 62.5% and with the exception of three districts, over 50% of the people in all the districts in the region have never attended school. Alenoma (2012) reports that parents and guardians in *Tamale*, the capital of the Northern region of Ghana, allow children to be on the streets to get pocket money to go to school the next day due to poverty.

1.4 Literature on child begging

Several studies have been carried out on child begging in Asia, Europe, South America and Africa. The overarching discourses in the literature point to how the rights of these children are abused which is linked to parental irresponsibility, poverty and seeking of religious knowledge.

Children are affected academically as a result of their involvement in child labour or begging (Helleiner, 2003; Manjengwa, Matema, Tirivanhu, & Tizora, 2016). Also, Swanson (2007) reports that in Ecuador, children's involvement in begging has been masterminded by their parents because they represent symbols of sympathy. Also in Africa, studies show children, notably among them are street children, who are beggars and whom the United Nation's International Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF), categorises as "children of the street" and

"children on the street" (Unicef, 2004). The "children of the street" are those whose permanent abode is the streets. They have no family connections and are therefore to fend for themselves in the streets by engaging in all kinds of menial jobs including begging. The "on the street children" on the other hand, have strong family ties and stay with their parents who sanction their act of begging. Sometimes however, it is done out of the children's own volition all in an effort to supplement the family's earnings (Kaime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008). Bøås and Hatløy (2008), Fiasorgbor and Fiasorgbor (2015), Delap (2009) and Gheorghîță and Vădăsteanu (2015) also report that child begging is a form of child labour. Furthermore, Einarsdottir and Boiro (2015) notes the divergent views expressed by child rights activists and parents of Bissau- Guinean *Talibes*. Whilst the NGOs and child rights activists regard the sending of the children by the parents to the *marabouts* for Quranic studies as child trafficking, the parents are of the view that they are acting in the best interest of the children. Ennew (2003) and Milne (2015) observe that research with children tend to depend on assumptions of adults instead of capturing the voices of the children. Even when drawings are involved, researchers use psychological tools to understand what they mean instead of asking the children themselves to uncover their secret worlds through the drawings (Ennew, 2003).

With all these studies giving significant insights into the issue of child begging, there are gaps in the literature. The coping strategies these child beggars rely upon to cope in spite of these adversities have not been given much attention as most studies are inclined to the stressors. Additionally, there is a gap in the literature of a theoretical explanation of what makes the begging children cope and from the perspective of Muslim children who are staying with their parents. The available literature on begging looks at it in the context of those who are with the *mallams* or the *marabouts* for Quranic studies with the focus mainly in the capital cities ignoring what happens in rural areas. Moreover, few studies exist where *mallams*, parents, and the child beggars are involved in one study, a gap that needs to be filled.

1.5 Terminology

The term "child" as defined in the (ACRWC,1989) as "..... every human being below the age of eighteen years", will be used interchangeably with children to mean the same throughout the thesis. Child Beggars is used here to refer to those children who engage in begging by moving from village to village.

1.6 Aim and objectives of the study

1.6.1 Aim of the study

To explore the stressors and coping strategies of Muslim child beggars in *Dagbon* of Northern Ghana.

1.6.2 Research objectives

1. To explore the stressors that affect Muslim child beggars in "*Dagbon*"
2. To understand the resources that the children use to cope with begging.
3. To understand the position of "*Dagbon*" clergy on child begging.
4. To explore the opinions of parents regarding child begging.

1.6.3 Research questions

1. What are the stressors that Muslim child beggars face?
2. What are the strategies that the child beggars apply to cope?
3. What is the position of "*Dagbon*" clergy on child begging?
4. What are the opinions of parents in relation to child begging?

1.7 Structure of thesis

Chapter 1 of the thesis is the introduction which is followed by chapter 2 where I discuss relevant literature on child begging and also show gaps in the literature. In this chapter also, salutogenesis as a theoretical framework is introduced and its applicability to Muslim child beggars in *Dagbon* of Northern Ghana is shown. Chapter 3 is the methodology section and chapter 4, the results part, follows. In chapter 5, I do the discussion and analysis of the results in line with the literature and my personal reflections. Here, I also apply the salutogenic theory vis-a-vis the findings and show the limitations of the study. Chapter 6 is the conclusion chapter where I draw conclusions and give some recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0 Introduction

Children, particularly those in the African continent, are often labelled with diverse negative conditions in which they find themselves which affect their health and well-being. For instance, there are a lot of words that are prefixed with the word “child” to connote the type of adverse conditions that the child from the global scene is associated with. For example, we have child trafficking, child soldiers, child labour, child begging and child molestation that are been used in both print and electronic media to capture the exact difficult situation of the unfortunate child. Child begging, one of the difficult conditions that children find themselves in, is prevalent in many parts of Africa, especially Ghana and in the Northern region in particular. Abebe (2008) is of the opinion that the views of the child beggars are rarely heard but rather their photographs and stories are publicised for reasons that are not beneficial to the begging child.

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Literature on the stressors

The stressors that child beggars face can be grouped into psychological abuse, physical stressors which include health risks and involvement in activities which have long term consequences for their well-being as adults.

Several studies mention that beggars experience psychological abuse such as verbal aggression, harassment, public hostility and contempt as well as stigmatising and dehumanising responses (Adama, 2014; Calheiros, Monteiro, Patrício, & Carmona, 2016; Einarsdóttir et al., 2010; Kassah, 2008; Kochar, Ittyerah, & Babu, 2015). In some cases, the harassment is official, carried out by police because begging is prohibited by law as in Ghana, Kenya, America, Morocco and India (Kaime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008; Kassah, 2008; Roblee-Hertzmark, 2012). There have been frequent verbal abuses on the child beggars generated from people whom they beg for alms (Adama, 2014; Delap, 2009; Kochar et al., 2015; Roblee-Hertzmark, 2012).

Child beggars often suffer harsh physical stressors. They frequently beg in dangerous areas like traffic junctions or lorry parks (Abebe, 2008; Kassah, 2008; Scarboro, Ay, Aliyu, Ekici, & Uylas, 2013) and they continue to beg in all-weather condition (Abebe, 2008; Bukoye, 2015;

Kassah, 2008; Scarboro et al., 2013). Perry (2004) mentions the long hours they work and the fact that they have poor living conditions like unsuitable places for sleeping and washing. Child beggars may be beaten by the people from whom they beg or their parents who forced them to go and beg and sometimes the *marabouts* or *mallams* (Delap, 2009; Einarsdottir & Boiro, 2015; Zoumanigui, 2016). Additionally, child beggars face health risks Al-Hassan and Abubakari (2015) through exposure to substance and sexual abuse (Kaime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008; Orme & Seipel, 2007). When child beggars are working in harsh weather conditions such as low or high temperatures, snow or rain it poses health risks to them and they may end up being infected with disease (Chen et al., 2014; Gheorghiuță & Vădăsteanu, 2015). Children can get melanoma (a skin cancer) when their bodies are exposed to sunburns because the two are correlated (Oliveria, Saraiya, Geller, Heneghan, & Jorgensen, 2006). This implies that children who work in all-weather conditions as beggars will be susceptible to this dangerous disease condition.

The psychological stressors may have long term impact on the child beggars. It is argued that in some situations, the effects of verbal aggression exceed those of physical aggression and can affect the development of certain brain regions leading to psychiatric and temperamental problems (Teicher, Samson, Polcari, & McGreenery, 2006). Verbal aggression also affects cognitive functioning of children and this has negative effects on their performance in school as compared to those who have not been verbally abused (Kochar et al., 2015). Verbal aggression also leads to the development of low self-esteem (Calheiros et al., 2016; Kochar et al., 2015). In some situations, child beggars are accused of stealing from people and theft is a negative label which changes a person's perception of his identity and this can lead him to accept and act out the label that he is associated with (Gheorghiuță & Vădăsteanu, 2015).

2.1.2 Long term consequences

In addition to the above long term impact of the psychological stressors, there are other long term effects emerging from the children's involvement in begging. Begging sometimes compels some child beggars to engage in criminal acts like stealing meanwhile they are well aware of the consequences of theft (Fiasorgbor, Mangotiba, Caroline, & Francisca, 2015; Kaime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008; Kudrati, Plummer, & Yousif, 2008). Magashi (2015) argues that the involvement of children in begging has the tendency of making them prone to criminality or they tend to be victimized by criminals.

Children's involvement in begging affects their academic achievement because the combination of work and academics leads to poor school attendance rates which invariably affects their success at completion (Helleiner, 2003; Manjengwa et al., 2016). This will definitely have long term consequences on the children as adults in relation to their economic circumstances.

2.1.3 Literature on the Positive Resources

Studies that focus on the positive resources that child beggars rely upon to thrive are fewer nonetheless, some research findings have given the underlying reasons for children's perpetual engagement in begging even though they are faced with multiplicity of difficult experiences.

John (2015) notes that in Africa children are involved in works that are beneficial to their families. It is observed that one of the reasons for children's involvement in begging is their families' economic circumstances. They believe their families are poor and begging is a route through which they can positively make a contribution to their families' income (Abebe, 2008). Group dynamics also explain why the children are able to cope with the begging environment. Interactions that go on among the begging children in the field work out to their admiration. As a result, they always want to join one another where they can hang out freely with their colleagues to enjoy that symbol of independence. These group dynamics that go on are important social mechanisms that make the children always want to be with their colleagues because they see it as rewarding (Abebe, 2008; Ballet et al., 2010). Repackaging begging to mean work or business is also another technique of coping that the beggars adopt. For example, in Ethiopia and Ghana begging has been euphemised to mean work or business (Abebe, 2008; Kassah, 2008). Rebranding begging is good for the beggars because it is no more seen as a negative phenomenon which leads to stigmatisation but rather a legitimate economic venture that requires perseverance and skills. Conversely, the beggars are raised from lower status to a state of revaluation (Kassah, 2008).

Social contacts of child beggars also play a role in their continuity with begging. Though they experience difficult conditions, they are able to cope with the situation because of their family ties and friends who are their sources of encouragement (Abebe, 2008; Orme & Seipel, 2007). The authors maintain that the children, whilst in the streets, still have contacts with their families and that they do send their earnings back home and return to the streets again.

The above literature shows clearly both the negative experiences and positive resources of child beggars from different parts of the world. The various authors have done great work in bringing to the fore the plight of these children across Africa, Europe and Asia. Even with the extensive work being done by these authors, there is none showing how the children are able to cope with the adverse conditions of begging using a theoretical model and from the perspectives of parents, children who stay with their parents and *mallams* in a single study. This is evidence of gaps that still exist in the literature. This study aims at filling those gaps.

2.1.4 Literature on the voice of Islam

Poverty is a deeply rooted issue throughout Muslim countries across the globe (Clarke & Tittensor, 2014) but Islam discourages begging because it is an undignified profession (Bhat, 2015; Soemitra, 2014). Though Religion has an influence on begging, Islam frowns upon the use of children to beg as means of getting food for the family. It also discourages the involvement of children in works that affect them physically, mentally and psychologically (Al-Hassan & Abubakari, 2015). Muslims are admonished to work to earn a living rather than beg (Adebayo & Hassan, 2013; Bhat, 2015; Wilson, 2013).

The act of offering alms to the poor is an important pillar in Islam (Budiman, Mohd Amin, & Adewale, 2015; Olanipekun, Brimah, & Sanusi, 2015; Weiss, 2004; Zoumanigui, 2016), to the extent that people, including those who are not adherents of the Islamic faith, do take advantage of that and use any means to become beneficiaries of that benevolence gesture. An example is in Ethiopia where non-Muslims beg in mosques on Fridays by putting on a garment known as *hijab* to make themselves distinctively visible to potential donors (Abebe, 2009).

The Muslim clergy in the Northern region of Ghana opined that begging is a shameful act and those who are practising it in the regional capital *Tamale*, are dodging the stigma that is associated with it from their communities (Weiss, 2007). The clerics believe that it is not Islam that is implicated in why the people beg but rather the alms that are given reinforce those in the begging business. Though it is embarrassing to see people begging, nothing could be done about it, the clerics maintained (Weiss, 2007). The responsibility lies in the hands of governments to see to it that policies are put in place to address this social problem, Ekong (2016) and Weiss (2007) to ensure that the health needs of the children are catered for.

Taking proper care of the child especially in matters of education is a salient factor in Islam (Al-Hassan & Abubakari, 2015) and other world religions and the responsibility either from

legal or moral perspective hinges on the parents (Magashi, 2015). However, the *almanjiranci* prevails in societies because parents and governments have reneged on their responsibilities and claims by other researchers that the impoverishment of parents justifies their action of allowing the children to beg are debatable because some do it out of ignorance (Magashi, 2015).

Societies and religious scholars share the blame of the incidence of begging in the communities. The society for instance, has now remained aloof with regards to offering assistance to the *almajiranci* who are without any alternative means of survival except begging (Magashi, 2015; Omeni, 2015). The religious scholars' strict adherence to obsolete religious traditions that are not in tune with our current social and economic order is also a factor (Magashi, 2015). Magashi further notes that Sunni Muslims see begging to be an unacceptable practice in Islam declaring it as anti-Islamic (*bid'a*) because it dehumanises the children. Delap (2009) argues that in most situations some Quranic teachers ride on the back of the teachings of humility and charity as found in the Quran and therefore force their students to go and beg. This implies the complicity of some *mallams* when it comes to the issue of Muslim child begging. The description of the *almajiri* as Quranic students living with the *mallams*, makes them different from the children in this study but their working environment and experiences are similar.

However, it is argued that, the *mallams* cannot be blamed for allowing the children to beg because their services as Quranic teachers to the children are free as their parents do not pay for their education. The *mallams* or marabouts sometimes depend on charity or on the magnanimity of individuals because they are economically incapacitated to cater for the needs of these children who are staying with them (Einarsdottir & Boiro, 2015; Magashi, 2015; Thorsen, 2012).

2.1.5 Literature on Child Education and Parental Responsibility

The level of literacy in the Northern region of Ghana has not been encouraging looking at the overall literacy rate of the region which stood at 4.9% for people 11 years and above whilst the national figure was 21.9% (Samuel et al., 2013). The report, which analysed the Ghana statistical Service's (GSS) figures for the 2010 Population and Housing Census (PHC), further revealed that in the Northern region, 62.5% of the people are not literate in any language and that only 19.5% of the people are literate in English and a Ghanaian language. In the district where the research was conducted, an abysmal figure of less 6% literacy rate was reported by the (Samuel et al., 2013). These figures show literacy deficits in the region more especially in

the district where the research was done. The figures are damning but it appears that the parents of these child beggars are not perturbed about the consequences that the current status of these children as beggars will be later in their lives.

Education is a key element that will create a pathway for people to liberate themselves from the grips of poverty and a safety net upon which the future of a country can dwell (Delap, 2009). That means that an individual's educational success does not only lead to his or her economic status enhancement but to the development of his or her country at large. Lack of education leads to joblessness and pushes people into despondent and debilitated situation rendering them inept (Magashi, 2015). Lynch (2005) argues that, the decision as to whether children should beg is taken by the parents and rarely the initiative of the children and the parents sometimes use force for the children to go and beg (Kaushik, 2014) or in some cases it is psychological manipulation (Ballet et al., 2010). It stands to reason here that a child cannot decide to start to beg without the parent's consent. Therefore, if children are begging, the blame is put squarely on their parents because they can stop them from engaging in it if they so desire.

In the Northern region of Ghana, about 70% of the people are living below the poverty line (Al-Hassan & Abubakari, 2015). Poor economic circumstances of parents or guardians are mostly the underlying reasons for children's involvement in begging (Abebe, 2008; Bukoye, 2015; Delap, 2009; Fiasorgbor et al., 2015; Magashi, 2015; Thorsen, 2012). It is argued that the main factors for people's involvement in begging are ignored in areas where these beggars are found and policy makers, the media and the clergy do not properly capture this issue properly in their discourses (Scarboro et al., 2013; Swanson, 2007). Swanson (2007) cites Ecuador as an example where the descriptive language associated with beggars include child exploitation, child delinquency, idleness and deceitful manipulation of public to stir up their sympathy. In Turkey, liars, dishonest, shameless and lazy people are the discourses used against beggars (Scarboro et al., 2013). This stance by the society regarding the issue of begging perpetuates the problem because efforts will not be put in place to tackle the root causes to stop it except to enact laws that criminalise it.

The level of education of parents is a determining factor in the educational successes of their children. It is observed that the higher a parent's educational level, the higher the likelihood of his children attaining higher education and the vice versa (Antoninis, 2014). The aspirations that parents have for their children is exemplified by the parents of the Muslim child beggars, (the *Talibes*), under the tutorship of the *marabout* in Guinea-Bissau and Senegal who indicated

their preparedness to get better education for their children (Thorsen, 2012). Broader form of education where children study both Islamic and secular education and other skills that will widen the children's future job prospects is what parents aspire for their children (Einarsdottir & Boiro, 2015; Thorsen, 2012). However, the cost of education sometimes serves as impediment to the achievement of higher education (Thorsen, 2012). Waite (2016) notes that the cost of education continues to increase even in the developed world like in America and the poor are victims of these perpetual hikes in school fees. In Senegal, most *Talibes* left school for Quranic studies because their parents could not bear the cost of their education in secular schools (Thorsen, 2012). Magashi (2015) and Ekong (2016) observe that central governments have not done enough in invoking laws that protect the rights of children from the exploitative arms of their parents or guardians. From the authors' point, it means that the children's rights are being violated by allowing them to be engaged in begging when they should have been in school.

In spite of begging being on a negative spotlight, the involvement of children in the act has positive impact on their lives because, it is the pathway through which they build their future as the proceeds from begging help them to finance their education (Stones, 2013; Swanson, 2010). Begging has been a gate way through which children can learn business skills and financial independence (Abebe, 2008; Stones, 2013). Begging is a survival strategy for street children in India, Kaushik (2014) and a means that brings economic relief to the family (Scarboro et al., 2013). Additionally, the involvement of children in begging teaches them humility (Omeni, 2015). Milne (2015) notes that the discourses used in describing the plight of children by researchers, child right activists, agencies and organisations are adult conjectures and therefore contestable. These discourses do not really reflect the position of the children whose voices are ignored in matters that involve them and that the universal applicability of child rights the basis for these descriptions is even problematic.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study used the salutogenic theory to understand the stressful conditions Muslim child beggars in *Dagbon* go through and what coping strategies they implore for survival. The salutogenic approach to health was propounded by a renowned medical sociologist, Aaron Antonovsky of Israeli-American descent.

Antonovsky (1979) expresses worry about the lack of theoretical foundation for health promotion and consequently came out with the salutogenic model, a conception of health which departs significantly from the medical model. He emphasises that the focus ought to be on the resources that are available to people to enhance health rather than concentrating on ill health and disease. Eriksson and Lindström (2005) indicate that the orientation towards finding solutions to problems and the ability to use available resources are key elements of the theory.

The salutogenic model rests on the domains of two constructs, Sense of Coherence (SOC) and Generalised Resistance Resources (GRRs). The SOC is defined as;

"a global orientation that expresses the extent to which one has a pervasive, enduring though dynamic feeling of confidence that the stimuli deriving from one's internal and external environments in the course of living are (1) structured, predictable and explicable (2) the resources are available to one to meet the demands posed by the stimuli, and (3) these demands are challenges worthy of investment and engagement"(Antonovsky, 1987, p. 19).

According to Lundberg (1997), one has a strong and everlasting feeling of confidence by seeing stimuli emanating from the environment as comprehensible, meaningful and manageable which forms the basic units of the Sense of Coherence. According to the author, man is bound to come into the daily confines of contradictory and confusing turmoil of stimuli which sometimes evoke tension within the person. Resolution of these conflicts moves the person away from chaotic and negative stress.

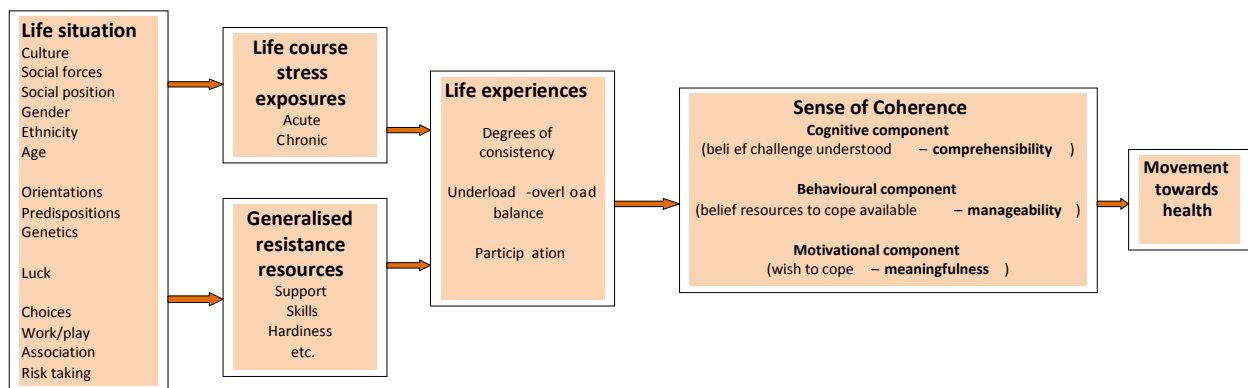
Comprehensibility as a component of SOC, according to Wolff and Ratner (1999), refers to the degree to which an individual interprets the idiosyncrasies of life as refined, arranged and structured. They state that manageability relates to a person's perception that, there are available resources to cope realistically with the negativities of life. The authors note that meaningfulness is at the level of a person's emotional interpretation of life as sensible and a readiness to move along effectively with negative stimuli that one is confronted with.

Generalised Resistance Resources (GRRs) are the multiplicity of resources at the disposal of an individual to mitigate the effects of life's stressors that are encountered (Wolff & Ratner, 1999). These authors mention material resources, knowledge or intelligence, coping strategies, social support and ties, cultural stability and many others as the Generalised Resistance

Resources. They opine that availability of GRRs and the capacity of an individual to identify and use them is an essential determinant of whether a stressful experience or life’s challenge will produce a weaker or stronger SOC, which will result in either undesirable or neutral effects.

Figure 1: The Salutogenic model adapted from (Mittelmark, 2010)

Figure 1: The salutogenic model adapted from ((Mittelmark, 2010)



In the Salutogenic model shown in figure (2) above, illustrations are made on how a person moves towards good health. It shows aspects of life situation in which people normally find themselves in. These inter-alia include: culture, age, ethnicity and social position. It is evident in the diagram that a person's life situation exposes him or her to life course stressors which could be acute or chronic. At the same time, it indicates that life situation is the source of the GRRs at his or her disposal to overcome the stressors. Savolainen et al. (2005) state that the interaction between the GRRs and the life course stressors influence people's perception of their life's experiences which model their SOC. There is consistency when an individual realises that acting in a particular way produces certain results. In that case, life becomes predictable. Overload is encountered when a person is overwhelmed by stimuli from the environment, making it impossible to deal with the stressor(s). The GRRs are at the disposal of a person to be used to counter confronted stressors. However, a person may not be exposed to too stressful conditions making the utilisation of the available resources very minimal. In such situation under-load occurs. For optimum health, there must be a balance between the GRRs and the life stressors that a person is exposed to. That is, the GRRs ought to be in appropriate proportion in dealing with the life course stressors. According to Eriksson, Lindström, and Lilja (2007), in a person's life, major decisions are made and that is what participation as a component of the model is all about.

Muslim child beggars in *Dagbon* experience numerous stressors as a result of their association with begging. To be called a beggar is a stressor in its own right. Living in an environment where younger children can sometimes be pushed into begging against their will by their parents is also an additional stressful situation. Being a child beggar involves walking long distances from village to village in all weather conditions and encountering all manner of strange people which can lead to undesirable outcomes. The life-course stressors from humans or attributable to environmental conditions are what the children are exposed to in their day to day begging errands. However, having a strong SOC makes it possible for the child beggars to be able to make meaning out of their daily experiences in the field as beggars and see them as manageable and predictable.

The child beggars who are able to identify resources within their environment and utilise them give signal that they are having some GRRs at their disposal that assist them to move on with life in spite of all the adversities. Their social contacts and thought processes might be some of the resources that they are relying upon to thrive in these difficult circumstances. Getting an understanding of what the resources are and how to utilize them will help enhance their SOC and thus improves the health status of these child beggars and this is at the centre of this research.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY

3.0 Research design

The hallmark of a qualitative research is to find "answers to questions about the "what" "how" or "why" of a phenomenon" (Green & Thorogood, 2014, p. 5) but not merely about numbers or quantity. Also, the focal point of qualitative research is to comprehend global issues through the views of participants (Green & Thorogood, 2014). Creswell (2014) explains that phenomenological research points out people's lived experiences in relation to the phenomenon in the way it has been described by participants. In this research, I explored the lived experiences of Muslim child beggars in *Dagbon* of Northern Ghana as well as the views of parents and the Muslim clergy in the area on child begging therefore, the choice of a phenomenological design was appropriate.

3.1 Study area

The data collection was conducted from July to September 2015 in the Northern region of Ghana on the basis that, through observation, child begging is widely practised there. "*Tingsheli*" is the pseudonym for the precise research area. A pseudonym was used because it helped the researcher to ensure that the ethical code of ensuring participants' anonymity and confidentiality of the information obtained from them was not compromised. *Tingsheli* which is a small farming community was chosen for this particular research because, though there are child beggars in the district but, of all the surrounding villages where it is located in *Dagbon* of Northern Ghana, it is virtually the only village whose children are engaged in begging making it an exceptional community.

3.2 Participants (inclusion and exclusion)

The aim of a phenomenological study is to get in-depth understanding of a phenomenon which can be achieved through purposive sampling. This type of sampling is a deliberate choice of participants who have rich information about the phenomenon under study that will enrich the data (Creswell, 2014). Tongco (2007) defines purposive sampling as a deliberate choice of participants by a researcher due to the qualities they have. The characteristics of my research participants required careful selection procedure. For example, the research dealt specifically with child beggars not all children and more importantly, about children who beg regularly and

parents whose children are regular beggars in the area. Consequently, seventeen (17) participants were purposively sampled as participants for the research.

3.2.1 Inclusion

Only Muslim *Dagomba* boys from the ages of 10-14 years who were regular beggars participated in the research. This age group was chosen because, in this district, most child beggars fall within this age range. Eight children were involved in the study. Creswell (2014) notes that saturation, which is a point at which new data do not spark new insights, is of prime importance in qualitative research rather than large numbers. Guest, Bunce, and Johnson (2006) suggest that, for studies where the aim is to comprehend the perceptions and experiences of a group that is relatively homogenous, 12 interviews should be enough to reach saturation. In this study, I had three different homogenous groups but none of them was up to twelve participants. Nevertheless, using three different group of research participants helped in triangulating the data Green and Thorogood (2014) which is essential in qualitative research as it might have offset the shortfalls or lapses that would have emanated if only one group of participants was used.

Six parents (three males and three females) whose children were engaged in begging but were not among the child participants were involved in the focus group discussions. The involvement of the parents was for insights into social norms and to triangulate the data from the children and the *mallams*. Three local *mallams* were also included one of whom was from the village where the research was carried out and an owner of a *makaranta*. This was to get a background opinion on the phenomenon of Muslim *Dagomba* child begging in that community. The second was an old *mallam* to expatiate on Islam and its historical link to begging in general and the third *mallam* was one with a firm knowledge of the *Hadith* and Islamic jurisprudence. A young *mallam*, who was not a participant in the research, was the gate keeper to access the community. He identified the potential participants using the criteria of the kind of children I needed for the research. Also, he contacted the parents and told them about my desire to involve their children in the research before I personally met them and explained further the purpose of the research and for them to sign the consent forms for their children's participation. For the participating parents, he only identified potential participants whom I met personally and explained to them the purpose of the research. He played a greater role in organising the children and the women during their sessions of the research activities. I did not have an

interpreter because the participants and I belong to the same tribe and communicating in *Dagbani* was not a barrier to our interaction.

3.2.2 Exclusion

Beggars above the age of 14 were not part of the study because those ones will be considered as adolescents. Also, children who were not regular beggars were excluded and parents whose children were not begging were also exempted. In addition, children who were non-Muslims were excluded and parents whose children were part of the research were also excluded. The exclusion of parents of the participating children was to give the children the opportunity to be able to express themselves freely in the research process. The children might have been apprehensive if their parents were also going to be interviewed on the same issue that they were also interviewed and that could make them hold back salient information that might have enriched the data. Their parents' exclusion was communicated to them (children) earlier during the briefing stage of the research for them to be psychologically prepared before the research activities commenced.

3.3 Research instruments

Varying research instruments were applied in this study to enable the researcher get a comprehensive perspective on the research phenomenon. These instruments included; draw and tell, focus group discussions and individual in-depth interviews.

To get the lived experiences of the Muslim child beggars, the best instrument to use was "draw and tell." This is a novel research instrument purposely for research that deals with children. With this, each of the children was asked to draw two things. One was something that makes him like begging and the second was something that makes him hate begging. Their opinions on child begging and what motivates them to continue to beg were also sought by discussing the drawings afterwards. The interview guide is found in appendix (I). Spyrou (2011) notes that research that gives voice to children enables researchers to comprehend childhood and also, it serves a moral duty where social justice is dispensed on children. The right of children to express their views as found in the CRC extends to research (Swadener & Polakow, 2011). Angell, Alexander, and Hunt (2015) note that hitherto researchers on issues that affected children tended to ignore their views. These authors indicate that in doing research with children, it is essential that researchers stand on the philosophical principle that children are unique and talented functional members of the society. Angell and Angell (2013) observe that children have unique talents and the capacity of expressing themselves regarding their thoughts

and feelings. It is also argued that children with language and writing deficiencies may find it easy to express themselves freely when images are involved (Spyrou, 2011).

Though there are other methods like story telling that could have been chosen for this research in dealing with the children as in (Grover, 2004; Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, & Lowrance, 2004), draw and tell was the appropriate method. This method is a child centred approach of research that enables children to participate in the research with autonomy because the interpretation of the drawings is done by them not the adult researcher (Angell et al., 2015). Skovdal and Abebe (2012) explain that draw and tell is a good method to choose in doing research with children because it addresses the issue of the silent gap between the researcher and the participant. That, it gives the researcher ample opportunity to listen to the explanations of the drawings by the children and to probe them further to get a deeper understanding of why certain drawings were chosen. Also, the advantage with draw and tell as used in children research is that, it effectively deals with the problem of power relations (Horstman, Aldiss, Richardson, & Gibson, 2008). The children might have found it difficult to speak directly to me, so conducting one-on-one interviews with them would not have elicited the needed responses demanded of the research questions. Horstman et al. (2008) also report that allowing children to draw is a relaxed means to elicit information from them even if the information is a sensitive one like something that links to self-esteem. With this method, children can control or negotiate their participation. However, the authors argue that it is not all children who are enthused with drawing and that alternative methods have to be looked at for those who do not have interest in drawings.

So, when they were asked to draw, their concentration was on their drawings rather than the researcher. When it came to the telling part, it was easier for the children to explain their drawings because they were not looking into the researcher's face but what they drew was their focus of concentration and that was good for them to explain in detail what their drawings meant and that effectively dealt with problem of power differential.

A school block located outside the community was where the research activities of the children were carried out instead of the *madrasat*. Intrusion and obstruction by people could divert the attention of the children and since the *madrasats* were located within the community they could not be immune to these issues. Green and Thorogood (2014) maintain that the physical environment of where the meeting is to be held for research activities should be a quiet and less intimidating place to the participants. The school block being a familiar environment to the children and a quiet place was the appropriate choice made. The focus group discussion for

the women was also held there. However, the discussion for the men was carried out at the residence of one of them after they had agreed to do it there instead of the premises of the school because they said the house was also as quiet as the school and that no detractors would be experienced.

Table 2: Research participants (Boys)

Participant	Age	Class in school	Staying with
Jacob	12	Primary 5	Both parents
Kabsu	14	Primary 6	Both parents
Awal	14	Primary 6	Both parents
Shirazu	14	Primary 6	Father and step mother
Suale	14	J.H.S 1	Father and step mother
Abdulai	14	J.H.S 1	Both parents
Mashud	13	Primary 5	Father and stepmother
Zaaku	14	J.H.S 1	Both parents

Another research instrument that was used was focus group discussions involving two groups. This was done on the part of the parents from whom I sought a broader perspective on what they thought were the good ways to raise children, the importance of education and why they send their children to beg. The parents were brought in to get social norms and to triangulate the information from the children and focus group discussions are appropriate in achieving these. Morgan (1996) defines focus groups as a meeting where a researcher-determined topic is discussed through group engagement. It also refers to a smaller number of people about (6-12) Munodawafa, Gwede, and Mubayira (1995), who gather to discuss a pertinent issue through the guidance of a facilitator with topic guide (Green & Thorogood, 2014). Basch (1987) asserts that focus group discussions are used by researchers as tools to acquire data about the emotions and feelings from smaller number of participants regarding an existing fundamental issue.

This method was chosen because it generates a lot of information within a short period and enables the researcher to observe social norms from the interaction amongst participants (Green & Thorogood, 2014). It is also an avenue through which sensitive issues are discussed than in one-on-one interview (Green & Thorogood, 2014; Morgan, 1996). The details of the topic guide are found in appendix (I).

This was a natural group where the participants knew each other already and would socialised after the meeting. Natural groups help to maximize interaction and to facilitate the production of knowledge and its content. When seeking information from participants, their cultural values must be taken into consideration (Green & Thorogood, 2014). The authors argue that the sensitivity of information is culturally specific and the composition of a group has an effect on the kind of information that will be generated or produced. Coming from the same cultural and religious background with the participants, I knew it was not appropriate putting the men and the women together. All the women were in their marital homes and the men were either their husband's younger or elder brothers whom culturally, they must accord respect like their husbands. Green and Thorogood (2014) note that cultural factors can limit the views some participants expressed and in many settings the views expressed by women can be marginalised. For example, a study by Coreil (1995) in Rwanda, showed how the women who were in the meeting with the men talked less because traditionally there were not supposed to be there. So taking a cue from Coreil's study was necessary. Green and Thorogood (2014) opine that flexibility in approach is required when using natural groups. I had to approach the whole process in a manner that would not temper with the women's marriage and at the same time give me rich information that I required from the women as participants.

If the purpose of the research was to understand group dynamics on how dominance of a particular group emerges and how marginal ones are silenced then, it would have been appropriate putting the women who were lower in the social hierarchy and the men together (Green & Thorogood, 2014). However, attaining rich information was the prime focus for the research and measures had to be put in place to achieve that. Additionally, the women were within the traditional setup of the *Dagombas* and would clearly be in the lower status hierarchies. Therefore, it became apparent that splitting the group into two was the best choice that would give the needed information.

Consequently, there was one group of three women and another group constituting three men. The gender specificity of the groups was important for the reasons explained above. Separating

the women from the men gave the women absolute liberty to express their views without any hindrance though their number did not meet the 6-12 participants as set out in (Green & Thorogood, 2014; Munodawafa et al., 1995). However, Creswell (2013) notes that the number of participants chosen is relative to the research design adopted by a researcher and that in a phenomenological study 3-10 participants will be enough. Though Creswell's notion is about research design but not instruments, having three per group will not be considered as deviation from standard research practice since my study was a phenomenological one which met the minimum of three participants as stipulated by Creswell (2013).

A female research assistant was employed to conduct the focus group discussion with the females. The rationale for this was that, since the researcher was a male, the same issue of cultural and religious consideration was likely to arise thereby inhibiting the manner the women might have expressed their views. Like in Zimbabwe, because of the sensitivity of the information and for cultural reasons, Munodawafa et al. (1995) assured the female participants of non-inclusion of males in the focus group discussion and recruited female research assistants to moderate the discussion.

The rules of their engagement were explained to them. I told them that everyone was free to express himself or herself without any hindrance from fellow participants and that no one was the boss in the process of their discussion. One factor that emerged however, was that the answers to the questions were based on the order of seniority. The senior most amongst them were leading the discussions in both the men's and women's focus group discussions though they were told that no one was superior to the other. Questions were not directed at specific participants except probing ones, but the young ones would always allow the elderly ones to speak first but that did not affect a thorough discussion of the issues. Being a *Dagomba*, I do know that among the *Dagombas*, it is a norm that the elderly one speaks first before the younger one so the discussions could not deviate from the existing social norms.

Table 3: Research participants (Parents)

Participant	Gender	Age	Occupation	Educational qualification
Awabu	Female	48	None	Nil
Asana	Female	46	None	Nil
Abiiba	Female	44	None	Nil
Gagbundoo	Male	49	Farming	Nil

Nyazaa	Male	47	Farming	Nil
Sheini	Male	39	Farming	Nil

Also, in-depth semi- structured interviews were conducted with three (*mallams*) in the *Dagbon* area. This was to get their opinions on Muslim child begging in relation to what the Holy Scripture (Quran) says about the phenomenon and why it is associated with Islam. This is because what the Quran says is regarded as sacred and must be adhered to by all Muslims. According to Green and Thorogood (2014, p. 96), semi structured interviews "produce rich, detailed accounts from the perspectives of the interviewees". Boyce and Neale (2006, p. 3) define in-depth interviewing "as a qualitative research technique that involves intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspective on a particular program or situation." These authors maintain that in-depth interviews should be used when you want to distinguish individual opinion about a phenomenon. They posit further that in-depth interviews can be time intensive and prone to bias but their core advantages are that they give a lot of detailed information and also provide a relaxed atmosphere for obtaining information from participants. The individual opinions of the *mallams* on Muslim child begging were being sought in this research making the use of in-depth interviews a relevant and justifiable method in collecting data from them. As they are well versed in the Quran and matters regarding Islam, they provided rich information in relation to Islam's perspective on this phenomenon of Muslim child begging in the area and why it is continuing though it is not supported by Islam and the culture of *Dagombas*. Details of the questions for the in-depth interviews are found in appendix (I).

Table 4: Research Participants (Mallams)

Participant	Age	Qualification	Sect
Mal- 1	81	Masters in Islamic studies	Ahlul- Sunnah
Mal- 2	49	PhD(Hadith and Islamic Jurisprudence)	Ahlul- Sunnah
Mal- 3	62	Diploma(Islamic studies)	Ahlul- Sunnah

3.4 Data management

Recordings from participants is especially needed in group discussions (Green & Thorogood, 2014). As a result, I recorded the responses of all the participants which were stored in a password protected computer for their security and as a measure of ensuring that the information from participants was confidential and as a guarantee of their anonymity. For fear of losing the data, I also saved it in a backup memory stick which I kept safe in a locked cupboard. In the transcribed documents, only pseudonyms are used to identify participants. There is no way that the identities of the participants can be traced.

3.5. Data Analysis

Data were analysed using Attride-Stirling (2001) thematic network analysis. Thematic network analysis reveals the embedded meanings in text at different stages. A step by step method is followed when using this procedure so my analysis was a step by step process. Open code, which is a computer software that facilitates the coding of raw data was used. The entire set of data went through four stages of analysis. These included coding, generating basic themes from the codes, categorising the basic themes into organising themes and deducing a global theme from each set of organising themes. The coding/thematic table is found in appendix (VI).

Step 1: coding

I first made myself conversant with data by listening to recordings several times. With the guide of my research questions, I established a coding framework in relation to stressors and resources of the child beggars, the position of Islam on child begging and why parents allow or send their children to beg. I divided my data into three categories: data of the children, data of the *mallams* and data of the parents. I then picked the issues one after the other and coded until new themes were not emerging anymore. For example, the issue of stressors of the children was first taken and coded exhaustively by noting recurring issues before I turned to resources. Codes that were similar were given an identity of an alphabet. This process was repeated across the different set of participants under the three data categories mentioned.

Step 2: Developing basic themes

After going through the entire process of coding, I looked through the coded text and grouped related codes into basic themes. Each set of these categorisations was given a short definition. In all, a total of 48 basic themes were generated from the coded text. I checked through the text to ensure that I did not repeat some emerging themes.

Step 3: Formulating organising themes

Based on the definitions given to the basic themes, they were regrouped in a condensed fashion into organising themes which are a bit abstract. Thirteen (13) organising themes were formulated from the basic themes with their definitions that were representative of the direction or meaning of the clusters of basic themes.

Step 4: Global themes and networks construction

Here, I used a hybrid approach so out the 13 organising themes, I deduced my global themes which represented key underlying issues that the whole research then revolved. Each of the global themes reflected one of my research questions which means I had four global themes. So for example, I picked stressors of the child beggars as a global theme and through one-to-many mapping using lines, all organising themes which represented cluster of codes/basic themes that related to difficulties that the child beggars were facing were connected to the global theme. That means each organising theme also had a cluster of codes/basic themes that represented it. Voice of Islam as a global theme for example had four organising themes and each organising theme had four codes/basic themes that formed it, so the network explicitly showed the linkages. After arriving at the global themes, a meticulous organisation of the basic, organising and global themes was done. I then drew interacting lines to show linkages and relationships of these three components of the networks.

3.6. Trustworthiness (validity, reliability and generalizability)

Trustworthiness is an important aspect of qualitative research encapsulating key concepts such as validity, reliability and generalizability. Yilmaz (2013) states that the terms validity and reliability are quantitative terminologies which can also be used in qualitative research though their usage is contested. Several methods or approaches are employed in qualitative research in an attempt to achieve validity and reliability. Transparency is also a tool in the validity and reliability processes of a research and refers to the conciseness of the methods used in the research so that the reader can follow the research trail with ease (Green & Thorogood, 2014).

3.6.1 Validity

According to Green and Thorogood (2014), validity in qualitative research refers to the researcher's ability to be truthful in the interpretation of findings from participants. Alternatively, validity is the degree to which researchers' instruments actually measure what they intent to measure (Green & Tones, 2013). The use of draw and tell, focus group discussion

and in-depth individual interviews in this research were triangulation mechanisms that enhanced validity. The research area being a familiar environment, and to spend an optimum period of time there for purposes of the research, provided me with ample opportunity to interact intensively with the children and their parents to get rich understanding of the phenomenon of Muslim child begging. All these were measures that ensured the validity of the research findings.

3.6.2 Reliability

This is the consistency of the researcher's approach across different researchers (Gibbs, 2007). A tape recorder was used to capture responses from participants during interview sessions and focus group discussions after I had sought their permission to do so. This helped me to get the precise words from each participant and to make cross checking of participant`s perspectives where necessary which increased the reliability of the research. Creswell (2014) states that there are many ways in which reliability can be enhanced by researchers. One of the ways is to check transcripts to ensure that there are no avoidable mistakes which I did throughout the whole process. Moreover, interview guide was used and I conducted all the interviews except the women`s focus group discussion which was moderated by a research assistant. All these were measures that enhanced the reliability of the findings.

3.6.3 Generalizability

According to Green and Thorogood (2014), generalizability is the degree to which the findings of a study can be related to the broader segments of the society and of different contexts. Qualitative researchers may opine that generalizability is not a salient consideration because the import of qualitative research is to offer "thick" description of phenomena with little emphasis on how it can be generalised. Green and Thorogood (2014) argue that if qualitative researchers want their findings to be seen as relevant, then they must ensure its applicability beyond the population or context of the research itself. Also, they argue that since qualitative research is viewed as non-credible, because of generalizability issues, it remains essential that qualitative researchers point out in their research, the relationship their findings have with other populations or settings. In the discussion chapter, I have situated my findings within the wider debates of existing literature in the field to enhance its generalizability as it gives meaning to the applicability of the findings across different settings.

My research was carried out in rural Northern Ghana by looking at the experiences of Muslim *Dagomba* child beggars using the Salutogenic approach. Findings of the research may not be

limited specifically to Muslim *Dagomba* children in rural Northern Ghana but it can also be related to children found in other places and of different tribes in Ghana who are in similar situations. Since child begging is a global phenomenon, the research findings can apply to children in different African regions or to children in different parts of the world when approached using the salutogenic model.

3.7. Role of the researcher (Reflexivity)

The researcher plays a central role in qualitative research in the collection and interpretation of data. It is therefore imperative that his or her personal biases or prejudices are bracketed off from the point of data collection to data analysis and interpretation. This forms part of reflexivity because as opined by Skovdal and Abebe (2012), socio-ethical research becomes successful on a platform of reflexivity and mutual dialogue between the researcher and the researched including children. They further stated that institutional approval alone is not enough in upholding ethical standards in doing research but it must be supported with a reflexive appreciation of the social environment in which the research is being carried out. Therefore, I consistently reflected on my role as a research especially as I was dealing with people whom I have some social ties with. Also, at the point of transcription, I ensured, as much as possible that the transcripts did not contain mistakes. Coding was done comprehensibly by making sure that they were properly defined to avoid ambiguities in their meanings. Therefore, I persistently compared them with data available.

I am a professional teacher so handling the children was not a problem since I applied my professional skills and knowledge there, especially when I was going to engage them in activities that might trigger negative emotions. I initially engaged them in a casual conversation to set their minds at ease before the research activity commenced. The atmosphere prior to the research activity was so lovely that the children asked me questions about Europe and told me what they hope to become in future. The child participants knew my professional status and conducting interviews or engaging them in the activities could be a problem because there was a potential tendency of the children to think that I knew better than them. In order to solve this problem, I made it known to them that in this research, they were knowledgeable because they had the information that was needed. They had experiences which I have never experienced, indirectly they were rather to "teach" me. Also, involving them in the draw and tell activity was a better way by which the problem of the silent gap between the researcher and the participants was overcome.

4.0 Ethical considerations

Research with children is a delicate matter and as a result, permission was first sought from the Norwegian Social Sciences and Data Services before the research was carried out in Ghana. Skovdal and Abebe (2012) argue that researchers should always subject themselves to laid down ethical codes in order to conduct good research the approval of which may be sought from a relevant ethical committee. The permit is attached as appendix (IV). Section two (2) of the children's act of Ghana, states that the interest of the child must be paramount in any matter dealing with children (Laird, 2002). Therefore, clearance was also attained from the Ministry of Children, Gender and Social Protection of Ghana and appendix (V) shows the permission from Ministry. The chief of the area was contacted for his permission to conduct the research in the community. This is in line with *Dagbon* custom of showing respect and recognition to the chief and his people. It was also for my security because in the course of the research something negative could have happened in relation to the children and once the chief was aware of my presence in the area for the research, I could easily report to him. Therefore, by doing this, I was shielded by the chief against untoward happenings.

Participants were briefed about the purpose of the research. The content of the consent forms was read and translated into *Dagbani* for all the participants before they signed them (see appendix II). The child participants signed the assent forms after their parents signed the consent forms for their involvement in the research. These consent forms and assent forms for the children are attached in appendix (III). I told them that the information they would give was going to be confidential and also promised them of their anonymity as pseudonyms will be used in place of their names throughout the work. I made all participants aware that they were at liberty to decide not to answer a question if they did not want to and could also withdraw from participation any time they felt there was no need being part of the research. Audio tape recordings were taken after participants had agreed that I could record their responses. The research was carried out at a time in Northern Ghana known as farming season. Since all participants of the research were peasant farmers, it became prudent that the most convenient time was chosen for the parents and the children so that they did not lose farming hours. Fridays are the less busy days for the people in the village as most of them do not go to farm on that day because of the congregational prayer. I, with the consent of the participants, fixed Fridays as the days for the research activities.

CHAPTER FOUR FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

Muslim child begging is not an isolated phenomenon. Therefore, to get a broader and comprehensive understanding of the issue, I used a three pronged approach in line with my research objectives where the experiences of the children involved in begging were explored regarding the stressors they face as beggars and the resources at their disposal to cope with their condition as child beggars. The position of Islam was also obtained from the Muslim clergy and the views of the parents on the phenomenon sought in relation to why they send their children to beg. In this section, results from those three broad domains will be presented.

4.1 Stressors

The Muslim child beggars are faced with an array of stressors. This came to light when they were explaining the meanings of their drawings which symbolised the things that make them hate begging. What I noticed was that all the children encounter negative experiences in the field of begging.

4.1.1 Negative daily experiences

From the accounts of the children, it emerged that their experiences in the field as beggars are characterised by negative outcomes. They are either insulted, chased by dogs and monkeys and sometimes beaten by people. For example, *Kabsu*, one of the participants, in response to why he drew a dog as something that makes him hate begging said,

"like sometimes when you are to enter some of the houses the dogs bark at you or even chase you". (Kabsu, Child participant)

When I asked him whether he had ever been chased by a dog he said,

"Yes I have ever been chased and it is not something that one can count."

This participant narrated how frightening the situation is when dogs start to bark at him or are advancing dangerously towards him with their exposed teeth.

Figure 2: A dog

The picture below is the drawing of a dog by *Kabsu* as an explicit expression of one of the negative experiences he encounters in the field of begging.



Participants, *Jacob* and *Suale* both narrated how they encountered monkeys on separate occasions in their fields of begging. They expressed their shock and bewilderment why people keep monkeys in their homes when they are supposed to be in the bush. For *Jacob*, he was not chased by the monkey but he used the exclamatory word "woi" which in *Dagbani*, is an expression of awe or shock about the gravity of a situation or state of something mostly in a disbelief connotation. Below is the drawing by *Jacob* of a monkey a symbol of his hatred for begging.

Figure 3: A monkey



Jacob indicated that something has to be done about the monkeys' presence in people's homes because their sight is so frightening. He said that when he saw it he was so frightened that he had to run. *Suale* also recounted how he was chased by a monkey. He said;

*"It was in the house and immediately I entered it rushed on me so I took to my heels.
I was so frightened because I had never expected a monkey to be with people"*

Other daily negative experiences that confront these children are insults from their colleagues and adults from the places where they go to beg. This issue of insults was reported by four of the children. These verbal aggressions sometimes cannot be accommodated so they will react which undoubtedly lands them into worse situations. They explained that sometimes people will be staring at them as if they are not human beings, a behaviour they described as extremely irritating. In explaining how he got himself into trouble, *Mashud* recounted how he was insulted by a girl and that he was so annoyed by her insult that he had to chase her until he got her and gave her a knock on the head. He said begging on that day was truncated because he was mercilessly beaten by some adults in the village and the only option for him that day was to go back home. Even though the issue of being beaten emerged only from two participants, it shows how perilous the terrain of begging is. So it is not only the insults that they are prone to, there is also that element of physical aggression towards the child beggars who are defenceless by their age and by the situation according to the children. Despite the fact that they claimed they are defenceless, *Mashud* beat the girl who insulted him. May be their defencelessness is in relation to adults who are stronger than them.

Figure 4: A woman



The above figure represents a woman who insulted one of the children, *Shirazu*. When I asked him why he had drawn the woman that way, he explained that the picture shows exactly the posture of the woman when she was insulting him. He said,

"She stood with her legs wide apart and both arms in the air. Because of the way the woman insulted me I had to ask to know her name which was given as Kubura."

Additionally, these Muslim child beggars expressed sentiments about their exposure to the vagaries of the weather conditions. From the narrations of their experiences, it emerged that they always walk long distances without wearing sandals; just bare footed. In the dry season, the Northern region of Ghana is one of the hottest regions in the country with daily temperatures sometimes rising as high as 40 degrees celcius. On such days, the ground becomes very hot and walking barefooted in the sand is an unpalatable experience and nearly impossible. Therefore, according to the children, what they do as they walk along the roads or paths is to hop from one shrub to another standing on the fresh leaves which they explained, gives them temporal relief of cooling down their feet. They explained that when they do that and get the momentary comfort, they can move for another short distance. Explaining why they do not wear sandals, *Zaaku* said,

"sometimes your sandals will be worn out and they have not bought one for you yet."

He further explained that sometimes they have but they deliberately refuse to wear them to go for begging because they (sandals) are always stolen. When I asked him how, he said they normally leave their sandals or slippers at the entrance of any house they are to enter to beg. That, in most cases, they come out only to realise that the sandals are nowhere to be found.

On their exposure to the vagaries of the weather, I personally witnessed one of such incidents during my field work at the research locality (*Tingsheli*). It was Friday the 14th of August, 2015 when I went and sat at one of the usual routes of these child beggars. At about 8:30 am they appeared with their little sacks stuck in their armpits. I engaged these three boys in a casual conversation. I asked them where they were going, how the begging life was and when they would return. They told me why they were begging and what they do with their earnings. All the three boys said that whatever is got is given to the parents. One of them said that for their father, if they do not go he will cane them. This boy's narrative that they are been beaten if they do not go to beg is an instance of forced child begging and by extension, forced child labour. When I asked them whether begging offered them some modicum of excitement, they all said no, that they would have liked to be in school. They told me probably by 1:00pm they would be back. So at exactly 1:00 pm, I was at that location again just to get an opportunity to interact

with them. It was until 5:30 pm that they were coming back but unfortunately, I did not have the opportunity to interact with them this time because of a torrential rain. The clear and warm morning weather had turned into one of stormy and cold weather in the evening with heavy rain. These boys, walking bare footed and wearing pairs of shorts and thin mini T-shirts, were soaked in their clothing. So, even though I did not get the chance to interact with them to gain their day's experiences, what I witnessed was enough to tell me something about the experiences they go through as child beggars. They had spent close to 10 hours in the field of begging on a Friday which was a school day so they should have been in school as they wished.

I must state that this was not part of the research plan but an idea I developed when I got to the field just to acquaint myself with their experiences and to compare them with those I got from the beggar participants. Interestingly, the accounts given by these boys did not differ from the ones given by the child beggars of this research.

More so, the children reported being forced by their parents to go and beg. What it therefore means is that, it is sometimes not the will of the children that they are begging but they are being coerced by their parents to be engaged in the act. It appears as though begging is a routine and obligatory activity to the children from the standpoint of the parents. So, days that the children want to absent themselves will be the days they are at loggerheads with the parents. Accounts from the parents confirmed the children's assertion that sometimes it is not their will that they go to beg but pressure from the parents compels them to do so.

"Really they go to beg on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. The rest of the days if you want them to go and beg they will not agree but we are praying that conditions become better for us economically so that they concentrate on their education rather than begging." (Abiiba, a parent).

"My thought on that is that currently it is compulsory on us either than that most of us don't like it. I think we should stop it but it is compulsory on us that is why." (Suale, a child participant).

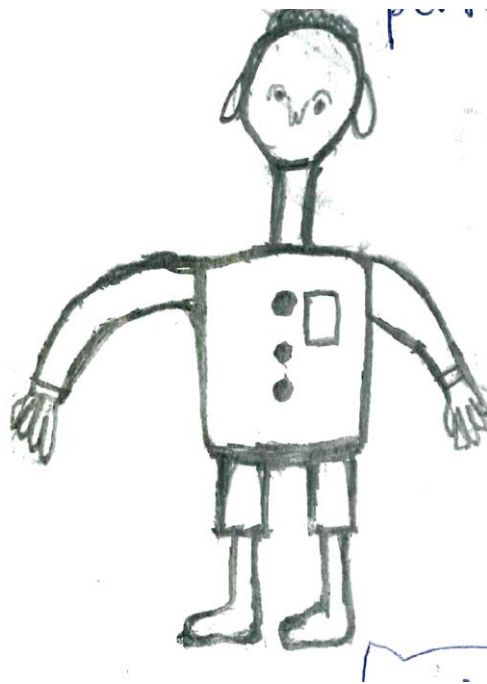
These testimonies by the parents and the children point to the fact that there are times the children are forced to go to beg.

4.1.2 Long term consequences

Missing school also emerged as a stressor to the child beggars. Their thoughts about the implications of their absence from school was another factor that came up during my interactions with them. The drawing of *Abdulai* appeared to be a picture of man but in his

explanation, he told me the picture was not a man but a representation of the students he sees anytime he goes to the villages to beg. When I asked him how were the students a cause of his hatred for begging, he told me that anytime he sees them, he looks at himself who is also a student but not in school and rather in the villages begging. He stated that it will definitely affect their future academic endeavours because as they are not regular in school there are a lot they will miss in class. For him, the adults should have been those involved in begging whilst they, the younger ones, stay in school. The drawing below depicts the students at the villages where *Abdulai* goes to beg and the cause of his hatred for begging.

Figure 5: A student



"Anytime I go to beg and see them it pains me as to why I am not in school but involved in begging making me become angry and demoralised", Abdulai bemoaned.

This idea about the need for them to be in school was expressed by all the eight children who were involved in this study. It was clear, based on their narrations that, begging was not the best thing for them as children. They explained that their gains in begging are transient because a time will come when they will have to stop because they will have grown above the begging age. *Awal* stated,

"There is age limitation to begging but with education it is not like that."

This shows that the children are aware that a bleak future awaits them if they do not go to school and concentrate on their education.

Also, the children face accusations of crime related activities like stealing. *Sheini*, narrated how a theft case was brought to the village against one of the child beggars. He was accused of stealing from a house where he had entered to beg. When I asked what could cause the children to resort to stealing instead of begging, one of the parents explained,

"There are bad days and good days for them. So in a bad day if a child enters a house when people are not around he may be tempted to take something." (Gagbundoo, a parent).

However, one of the parents was with a contrary opinion that sometimes the villagers accuse them without any basis. In his opinion, in most cases, the crimes are committed by people within the villages but because the children's visits coincide with the time the crimes happen they just accuse them without any evidence. This means there is pressure on the child to go home with proceeds but if he does not get because of the day's bad luck, there is a greater temptation to steal given the slightest opportunity. It shows clearly that the children are exposed to these opportunistic behaviours which have dire consequences on them and the society at large. Looking at the above negative conditions that the children face, it was therefore not a surprise that their answers were almost unanimous in relation to the question of what their opinions were regarding child begging. This is because all of them, except one, said it was not good. Even the dissenting one did say it will be good for them to concentrate on their education though he found no problem with child begging.

Vulnerability to join bad groups also emerged as one the dangers that these child beggars face. The participants narrated that creating such condition, where the children move about from village to village to beg when their movement is not being monitored, was capable of making them prone to easy deception by bad groups like armed robbery gangs or hard drug users like marijuana.

".... that is also exposing them to some ill practices. Someone can see him that way and introduces him into bad deeds which later make him become an armed robber, thief, cocaine addict or seller. This is because a child sees the adult to be perfect. Therefore, if some grown up shows little sympathy for him and knows how to deceive him, that is all". (Mal-2).

The reports above show that apart from the daily negative experiences that the children face, their involvement in begging also has future negative implications on their lives.

4:2 Resources

In spite of the difficult conditions that the Muslim child beggars are immersed in, their act of begging continues unabated. They have the zeal, the energy and the courage to defy all odds and go about begging. This part of the chapter looks at the motivators or positive resources that keep these children in begging.

4.2.1 Self-motivation

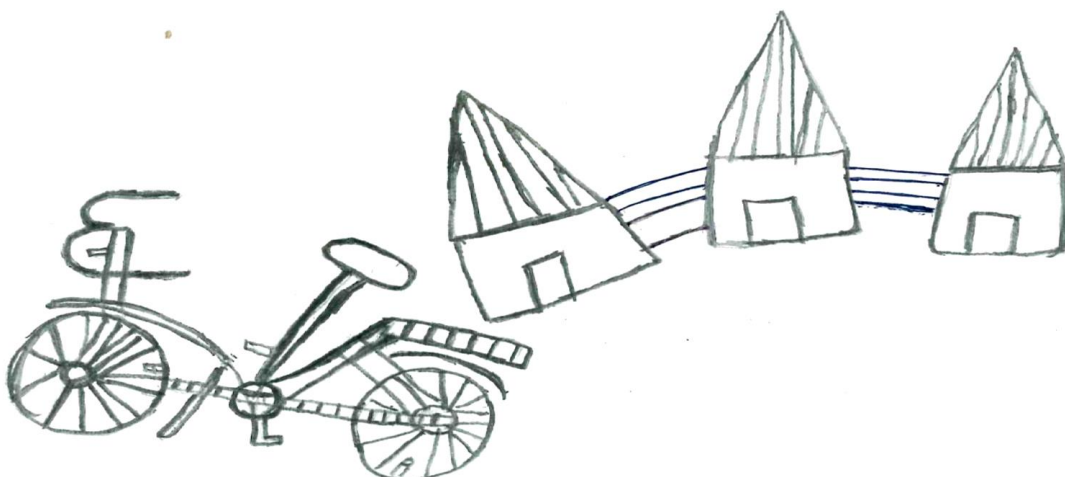
One of the positive resources that keep these children glued to begging despite the engrained adversities is that they see it as a form of assistance they render to the families. So for them, they are contributing their quota towards the upkeep of their families. Six out of the eight boys indicated that their begging helps their families in terms of food. Providing food for the family is like a shared responsibility between them and their parents. For instance, *Zaaku*, in explaining his drawing of a house as something that encourages him to beg, indicated that even though he is sometimes not being forced to go to beg, he usually goes without being told when he sees that the food is about getting finished.

"As I am going it helps the family because the maize I will bring will be what my mother sometime uses to prepare food" (*Zaaku*, child participant).

"I go to beg out of compulsion because if I don't go we will not get food to eat." (*Suale*, child participant).

The drawings below are pictorial representations that give *Zaaku* the urge to engage in begging despite his daily encounters with negative experiences as a child beggar.

Figure 6: A house and a bicycle



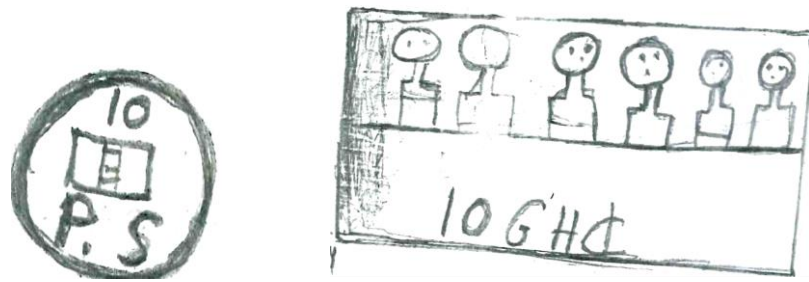
Another positive resource that strengthens these children to beg is the personal gains they make out of it. They reported that through begging they can buy things that they want. When I asked them whether their parents will not give them money to buy their needs, the response was that sometimes they give them but it will not be up to the required amount or they do not give them at all. In such instances, it is through begging that they will get the money needed. Related to this issue of the monetary gains as an overt influential factor that keeps the children in begging is the issue of examination fees. All the children except one, mentioned examination fees as one of the ways begging is helpful to them because it enables them pay to write examination at the end of the academic term. This child, *Mashud*, who appeared sluggish at the beginning of my interaction with him was so excited when he started talking about the ways begging has helped them especially in the payment of the examination fees. Begging, from the reports given by the children in this context, enables them to meet their educational aspirations which have direct links to their future prosperity.

"if you are able to pay the exam fees you will be able to write the exams which helps you to measure how you have understood what you have been taught." (*Mashud*, Child participant).

The drawing of money below, a 10 pesewa coin and a 10 GHC bank note by *Abdulai*, represents his motive for begging. Even though they get money from begging, it is not an exciting economic activity to them and they wished they were in school. The denominations of the coins of the Ghana currency are 1p, 5p, 10p, 20p and 50p and the notes are 1GHC, 2GHC, 5GHC, 10GHC, 20GHC and 50GHC respectively. This child's drawing aroused my curiosity as to why he chose 10 in each of the denominations. His explanation showed how ingenious these children can be. He said,

"We beg because of money but the truth is that we don't get what we expect to get so the coin represents what we get as we go to beg and the note is our expectation. People will not give one or five pesewas the minimum they will give is 10 pesewas but it will not also be possible for them to give 20 or 50 GHC note so the maximum we always expect is 10GHC" (*Abdulai*, child participant)

Figure 7: Money

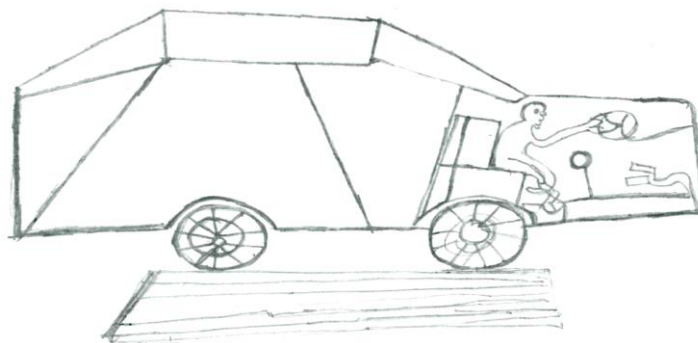


This boy's explanation represents the reality in the begging business. Mostly, what they are given is coins and notes are rarely given.

The drawing below is a lorry drawn by *Zaaku* which represents his reason for begging. He indicated that since the family is poor, his desire is to beg and get enough money to buy a commercial vehicle which will yield money for the sustenance of the family. As unrealistic as the desires of *Zaaku* may be, it shows how the children negotiate their way into the hierarchies of their families where they regard themselves as part of the responsibility network to strive for the family good and this could generate income over time.

"This lorry is not for my personal use but for commercial purposes. You know my family is poor so when I beg and get much money I will buy a lorry to help my family"

Figure 8: A lorry



The characteristics of these child beggars explicitly show why the children defy all odds and persist in begging. In the focus group discussion with the parents, they reported that child begging was not good and that something needed to be done to curb it. All the three men in the focus group discussion had one voice which was that the children were motivated to beg because of their selfish gains. They noted that what reinforces the children, and makes it impossible for them to stop the practice, is buying of mobile phones, bicycles, movies and the preparations of "Ataaya." They admitted that some of the children are from poor homes whom they know but that majority of them take it as business so they cannot stop it. Actually, when

the children came to the school for the research activity, I noticed that two of them were holding mobile phones. I asked them whether those phones were theirs and their responses were in the affirmative.

"These days begging is at a different level where you see a child who has finished begging at a particular village, he brings out a phone from his pocket and calls a friend to know where he is." (Gagbundoo, a parent).

Jacob, during my interaction with him mentioned "Ataaya" and preparation of rice as some of the reasons he continues to beg even though it is difficult. Also, Kabsu reported that some of his colleagues go to beg for no apparent reason, just for fashion. He said;

"some of them their parents will even stop them but they will force themselves and go."

These testimonies from some of the children appear to be corroborating the views of the male parents who indicated that the children beg for their own personal gains. That, even when you stop them they sneak out and go. In fact, some of the children indicated that they are not being coerced to go to beg but they do it on their own accord.

However, the women in their focus group had opinions which directly contrasted the views of the men. For the women, the children were offering help to the families because what they bring is what is being used to prepare food. They reported that normally, what husbands do is to provide food for their families but sometimes it becomes a challenge to them and it is the children who go to beg for food to be available in the house. They further narrated that the fathers do not give the children money to go to school so the children go to beg and get money which they save with the mothers so that when they are to go to school they give them some pocket money out of their savings.

Another positive resource at the disposal of these children which makes them move on with begging is their understanding that it has an end. Five out of the eight children told me that they know they will not continue to be beggars for life. They said they know that their status as beggars was a temporal one and age as a compelling force, will strip them of such status as beggars.

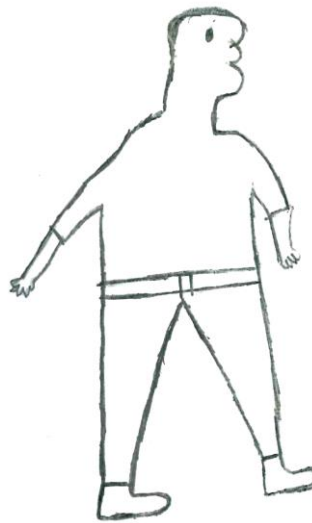
4.2.2 Relationships

The families of these children also play a major role in their act of continuous begging. They sometimes talk to the children in a manner that will definitely compel them to go and beg. In expressing what makes him like begging, *Awal* drew a man and told me that the man was his father and that he goes to beg because of what his father told him some time ago. I asked *Awal*

what the father told him and he said that one day he called him and told him to help him(father) by going to beg because he was poor and would not be able to cater for his needs.

"He called me one day and told me that I should assist him because the way it is, it will be difficult for him to take care of us so I should start to go and beg. He explained to me that begging was not bad for children because they also begged when they were children". (Awal, a child participant)

Figure 9: A man



The drawing above shows the father figure drawn by *Awal* to illustrate the reason behind his continuous engagement in begging.

Friends of these children also contribute significantly to why they continue to beg. They keep them emotionally adjusted through their persuasions that begging is not a bad thing for them as children.

"My friends always tell me that begging is not a bad thing and that we do it because we are children that when we are grown we will stop it. And when they go and come back you see them buying a lot of things which they could not have bought if they had not gone to beg." (Shirazu, Child participant).

During my interaction with the children, I asked them whether something could be done about the issue of child begging in the area. For the children, it must be stopped so that they can go to school.

"I think that our parents should be the ones to beg since we are children it is not just good that we are engaged in begging. They are old so they should be the ones to beg and allow us to go to school but you can't say this to them" (Abdulai, Child participant)

There was however, a heated argument from the male parent participants when the same question of whether something could be done about the children's begging was posed to them. One of them indicated that the best way to disseminate information regarding the issue of child begging to the people in the area was to see the Imam to integrate the issue of child begging in the Fridays' sermons.

"Look, what you are saying cannot work at all. What moral justification does the Imam have to tell people about child begging when his children are also begging. He himself will not even make the attempt to go there."(Nyazaa: a parent)

4.3 The voice of Islam

As I have mentioned earlier, the issue of child begging is a complicated phenomenon which touches on Islam that appears to be one of the base factors in the children's involvement in begging. The views of the Muslim clergy in *Dagbon* were collected through in-depth interviews I conducted with them for a thorough understanding of the issue of child begging from the stand point of Islam.

4:3:1 Acceptable practices in Islam

The position of Islam on child begging was a straight forward statement from the *mallams* whom I interviewed. They produced the same response when I asked them whether child begging was an acceptable practice in Islam. They all condemned the practice as not Islamic and stated that the religion frowns upon such practice. *Mal-I* indicated that there is nowhere in the Quran where begging is advocated for but said that the Quran however emphasises the doing of good things to one another. In their narrations, they indicated that the religion takes the rights of children seriously and therefore prescribes some acceptable practices that are geared towards a better upbringing of the child.

The *mallams* narrated that the most important thing that needs to be done is to first of all provide the child with what he eats, drinks and what he wears. Once that is done, then the child should be trained on the principles of Islam, the responsibility of which rests on the father. They also narrated that child upbringing is of prime importance in Islam. That, it has a laid down hierarchical structure of responsibility to cater for a child's needs. They stated that such responsibility starts with the father.

"In the event that the father dies without appointing someone to take care of the child, then it is the grandfather who takes up the responsibility. If the

grandfather is not there the responsibility goes to the senior paternal uncles down to the child's brothers and then to the maternal side." (Mal-3).

Mal-3 explained that the rationale for this structure is to ensure that there is no vacuum created in terms of who should take the responsibility of taking care of the child at any point in time.

Another acceptable practice that was mentioned was the need to educate the child. They stated that knowledge acquisition was very important when it comes to the proper way to raise a child.

"Let him seek knowledge on Islam and secular educations (knowledge of the moment).

When a child is engaged in all these he will not think of begging." (Mal-1)

So it means that Islam, by their narrations, places high premium on child education.

Additionally, learning of vocational skills was also mentioned as an acceptable practice in Islam by the *mallams*. They indicated that all the past prophets had some professional skills through which they earned their living. They stated that God has created man in a manner that he does not have to be dependent on others. That means teaching children vocational skills will make them become economically independent in the future. What was also mentioned was the involvement of children in income earning activities which they said is encouraged in Islam. This may not be applicable to children because it will then be described as child labour which contravenes the UN's convention on the right of the child. Mal-2 narrated how somebody came to the prophet, Muhammad (SAW), to beg and he asked him if he had nothing in the house. The man mentioned what he had as two blankets and bowl which they use to serve food in the house.

"the prophet made him bring one of the blankets which he auctioned to one of his disciples and gave the money to the beggar to go and buy an axe. The man bought the axe and brought it to the prophet. Then he fixed it for him and asked him to go to the bush to cut firewood for sale. That, according to the prophet, was better than begging." (Mal-2).

The *mallams* explained that the prophet did that to exemplify the fact that begging was a bad practice in Islam and that it was also to give a signal to people to as much as possible get something doing to earn a living rather than begging. In my interviews with the other *mallams* they repeated this same example that Mal-2 gave. They indicated that if you look at the category of people who can beg, there is no where children are mentioned. Mal-2 stated that some sections in the Quran talk about begging and that what those two sections talk about is our attitude towards those who beg and how God sees begging. On our attitude towards those who

beg, he stated that God admonishes us to be kind and tolerant to those who come to us to beg whilst the second part is about how God praises those who are poor but are able to conceal their poverty without resorting to begging.

4.3.2 Unacceptable practices in Islam

One of the unacceptable practices in Islam as narrated by the *mallams* is begging in general and more especially when it involves children. In part, *Mal-3* said that the prophet of Islam stated that each parent is considered a shepherd. They are caretakers of the children they give birth to which means what the child eats, wears and drinks must be provided by the father.

".....each of us should know that on judgement day we shall account for how we looked after our children." (Mal-3)

In his opinion, it will be very difficult for people to tell God that they allowed their children to be involved in begging instead of raising them in accordance with the principles and dictates of Islam. All the three *mallams* refuted the claim that it is poverty that pushes these children into begging. *Mal-3* said that for some people, here is a television and a video deck and what the children do is to go and buy new films to come and watch. *"Is that poverty?"* he queried.

Also mentioned as unacceptable was irresponsibility on the part of parents to cater for the needs of their children.

"If you know you cannot take care of a child then you do not bring him onto the earth because once you produce a child his responsibilities are on you and there is no excuse for not meeting his needs." (Mal-3).

They noted that child begging is a great mistake which completely deviates from Islamic jurisprudence and that sending the children to beg is a clear case of sheer irresponsibility. They explained that according to Islamic practice, if the situation becomes so worse for you as a parent and your last resort is to beg to take care of the child, you should not let the child know that you are taking care of him through begging because it has psychological implications on him. *".... now what harm are parents causing to these children by allowing them to beg?" (Mal-2).* *Mal-3*, in an answer to the question of why the religion is associated with begging especially child begging, further explained that in the past, they were two reasons behind Muslim child begging. One of them was when they were to buy a reading book called *"Wara"*. This was necessary when they were to graduate from reading on slates. He explained that in such situations, the *mallam* did not have money and the father too did not give money to you to buy so the *mallam* will ask you to go and beg.

The second reason according to *Mal-3* was the payment of a token amount of money to the *mallam* when a child was to move to another level of learning the Quran. It was meant to motivate the *mallams* and to show appreciation to them for teaching the Quran and the religious knowledge. These days, he said,

".....it is very common to see a begging child who cannot even recite Fatiha"

The *mallams* also argued that it is not acceptable in Islam to subject children to emotional or physical torture. So beating of children is disallowed in the religion. They explained that what can be done is to tell a child the negative consequences of his actions or the benefits of acting in a particular way so that the child gets the opportunity to make comparisons. That, you have to insist he does what he is supposed to do without subjecting him to beating.

"At age ten, you can issue threats to him by telling him that if he does not go to school he will be beaten but you are not going to beat him, just threats for him to know that you are serious about what you are telling him. He will then say that the way it is, if I don't abide by what I am told to do I may be beaten." (Mal-3).

4.3.3 Exceptional circumstances for begging.

My interaction with the *mallams* revealed that even though Islam speaks strongly against begging, there are exceptional circumstances under which a Muslim can beg. One of the exceptional circumstances which was mentioned was people in destitute conditions. All the three *mallams* mentioned that the religion allows people in extreme hardships to look for assistance from fellow human beings. That, in such state of complete impoverishment, they can beg to solve their needs. However, *Mal-1* indicated that even in such situation, there shall be three witnesses who can testify that the person is really poor. He stated that, that is where the religion's name pops up in relation to begging. The existence of the exceptional circumstances indeed creates a paradox in relation to Islam's stance on begging.

Another exceptional circumstance under which a Muslim can beg is when the person is an orphan which was captured in the responses from *Mal-2* and *Mal-3*. However, *Mal-2* elaborated on this issue of orphans in section (4:3:1). In his explanation, he indicated that the way the religion has structured the responsibility process of who should be in charge of taking care of a child, it will be extremely hard for a gap to be created such that there is confusion as to who is to take the mantle of responsibility in taking care of the child. He said it is highly unlikely for a child not to have a family relation from both the maternal and paternal sides. So even orphans' begging is not possible according to him.

Moreover, a person who is being hit by a calamity can resort to begging to come out of it. This was explained to mean for example, if a person commits manslaughter and has to compensate the family of the person he has accidentally killed. *Mal-2* said it may happen that neither the one who has committed the crime nor his family has such money. In such circumstance, he can beg to get money to pay for the compensation and the begging stops there. He should not take it as a form of business.

Furthermore, in their explanations, a person can also beg to come out of his indebtedness.

"A highly indebted person can also beg if he does not have readily available option of settling the debt. Either than this, those who beg are swallowing hell fire when they spend their gains" (Mal-2)

He stated that apart from these categories of begging which are situational in outlook, any form of begging is *haram*.

4.3.4 Forms of assistance in Islam

The *mallams* gave an outline of measures that are put in place to help those who are in difficult economic circumstances so that it guards against these people engaging in begging. Here, one of the *mallams* remarked, "*Allah is indeed great*", He has asked those who have to take a token out of their riches at the end of every year to be given out as *Zakat*. *Zakat* is an obligation and one of the five pillars of Islam where the rich must give part of their earnings to the poor in the society yearly.

Another measure that the *mallams* mentioned was "*sadaqqa*." This, they said, is voluntarily giving anything valuable to the needy in society. They said that even though it is not compulsory, the religion encourages it because it cushions those in difficult economic conditions. They stated that people should not come to us to beg but rather we should identify them and give the alms to them.

Zakatul-Fitr, which is a form of charity given at the end of the month of *Ramadan* was also mentioned as one of the measures adopted by Islam to help the poor in the society. It is to be given, preferably, a day prior to *Idul-Fitr*.

"Zakatul- Fitr is meant to give the poor in the society who might have gone out on that day to beg to have some enjoyment in their homes". (Mal-1).

Kafaara was the last thing that was mentioned as a measure to curb the occurrence of begging among the Muslim community. *Kafaara*, as it was explained, is atonement for a bad deed

committed against God. For example, deliberately missing one of the days of fasting in the month of Ramadan. In doing *Kafaara*, one was to set a slave free in the past but for now, they explained that one can get some money and give it out as '*Sadaqqa*' (alms) to the poor in society. According to them, all these measures are prescribed in the religion to guard against begging.

4.4 Education and child upbringing.

This section of the chapter captures the perspectives of parents when I engaged them in the focus group discussions as a way of getting in-depth knowledge on the issue of child begging. Though the main purpose for involving the parents was for social norms and to triangulate the data from the children, it was also to explore why they send their children to beg. It was therefore approached from a wider perspective where their knowledge on child upbringing, education and its importance, their aspirations for their children and why they send them to beg were explored. On the issue of child upbringing, all the parents in the focus group discussions actually knew their obligations as parents and the good way to raise their children.

4.4.1 Good ways of raising a child

From their stand point, the parents believed that there are several ways by which a parent can follow to raise the child in a proper way. The various ways that were identified by the parents will be presented in detail.

One of the ways they mentioned was giving the child education. Education to the parents, means sending the child to both Arabic and secular education. They believed when the child attains both the religious knowledge by learning the Quran and the principles of the religion and combines it with secular education, it will inure to his benefits in the future. *Awabu* and *Abiiba*, both of whom were the female participants indicated that as a parent, you have to advice the child all the time and let him attend both the Arabic and English schools.

"In the morning you have to tell him to go to "karim" after closing then he goes to school, that is the way it is." (Abiiba, a female parent participant).

The parents also noted that another way by which a child can be raised in a good way is to train him to acquire skills that will earn him a living in the future. They stated that as they were farmers, what they do is to let the children learn how to farm and to acquire the different farming skills. That, when you are working you have to let the child be closer to you to observe closely what you are doing. As he does that, he is learning the skills gradually until he can

practice them independently. In their opinion, sending the child to school or "*makaranta*" is not enough unless you do something for the child to benefit from his education.

".... some children, you enrol them into Arabic and secular education but you do not do anything. What you know is to just put them there. They will gain some knowledge but after coming from school They roam aimlessly which derails their academic progress." (Sheini, a parent)

This implies that parents should not just put their children in school but they have to ensure that they monitor them closely after school.

Additionally, they stated that as parents, it is highly important to give the child peace of mind by being patient in your dealings with him. They stressed that if you are too temperamental when training the child, it will affect him in the house.

"A child needs patience from you the parent when you are training him in life. If you shout at him all the time it confuses him". (Abiiba, a female parent participant)

It therefore means that the parents know that behaviours such as shouting at a child will have emotional effect on him which can affect his learning and that will have a negative impact on his future development.

4.4.2 Aspirations of parents

I also obtained from parents the aspirations they have for their children. It emerged from my discussion with them that they have greater aspirations for the children. Their hope is that their children should one day become greater scholars in both Arabic and secular education. So their prayer is that the toils of their children in their educational careers should bear fruits one day so that their efforts do not end on rocks. Furthermore, it was the aspirations of the parents that their children occupy high positions in the future. They want them to attain status that are higher than theirs.

"Our hope is for the children to become scholar in two domains, religious and English. These days, knowledge in these two areas is significant. If you are not in either of these then life will be difficult for you. If you have the religious knowledge or secular knowledge, then you have created a vast gap between you and poverty." (Sheini, a male parent).

4.4.3 Importance of education

Additionally, I sought from the participants their perspectives on education and its importance. It appeared that all the participants had knowledge about the existing educational system and how government stresses on child education. They enumerated a lot of benefits or importance of education. For instance, they indicated that previously, whenever a letter was sent to them, they had to send it to a faraway place to be read for them but now it is not like that. They have students in the village who can read their letters for them.

"Nowadays we don't send our letters elsewhere to be read for us. Any time a letter comes, you just call a student here in the village and he reads for you". (Nyazaa, a male parent).

Moreover, they stated that through education, developmental projects can be brought to a community. This implies that if a person is educated he can get developmental projects for his or her people. *Sheini* indicated that even though he has not been able to get direct benefits from some of his relatives who are educated, he has seen what people who have acquired education have done in the village and other surrounding villages. He stated that they have come back to rebuild their houses in magnificent fashion and their people are living differently from the other members of the community. For them, education really changes the lives of people and they fully embrace it for their own benefit if not now but in the near future. They also narrated that education is so important that those who are educated even farm more than them though they call themselves farmers. They stated that it is as a result of education because they have money to cater for the nutrient requirements of the crops to get good harvest when they do not even touch a hoe as they do.

"I know of a man whose son who is educated has even bought a tractor for him"
(*Sheini* a male parent participant).

These were the testimonies from the parents on the importance of education.

4.4.4 Challenges of the educational system

Though the parents were aware of the importance of education, they however expressed concerns about the current educational system. They revealed that sometimes government does not honour its promises regarding educational matters. They explained for example that, government sometimes promises to give the children books and furniture but they are not seen at all.

"For example, sometimes they tell you that they will give you furniture to replace the broken ones that are packed in the offices but you don't get them. Also, they will say they will distribute books and uniforms but you don't get them. All these are problems." (Gagbundoo, a male parent).

Additionally, the parents also lamented about the high school fees. They noted that the current educational system is for sale and those of them who are poor will find it difficult educating their children. That, sometimes the children write their examinations and pass but because of the high schools fees they remain at home with them. For the parents, the government must do something about the escalating school fees.

4.5 Why parents allow children to beg

If parents are well aware of the good ways to raise a child, have aspirations for their children and know about the importance of education what reasons do they have for allowing their children to engage in begging instead of going to school regularly? The next section looks at why parents allow children to beg.

4.5.1 Casual factors of child begging.

My interaction with the parents revealed a lot of factors behind child begging in "Tingsheli", my research community. One of the factors responsible for child begging as mentioned by the participants is poverty. The participants see themselves as poor so allowing the children to beg will give them some economic relief.

"My opinion on child begging is that it gives us some relief. Sometimes you will be struggling but when the child goes to beg and comes back you get some relief because it can feed you and the child". (Asana, a female parent).

The issue of poverty being one of the reasons the children beg however became a contentious issue among the male participants with two of them having strong opposing views. Whilst one strongly believed it was poverty the other one said it could not be poverty at all.

Another reason for these children's begging with the parents' approval is for selfish gains. This was expressed by the three different research group of participants. That is the children, the *mallams* and the parents. They stated that there are some people who are well to do but they allow their children to go to beg for them to amass wealth. They indicated that those who are poor are known. This is what was said in relation to the issue of cheating.

"There are interested in cheating and want to get things cheap because some of them store their farm produce to be sold when prices are high and rather depend on what the children get from begging". (Gagbundoo, a male parent).

This parent's assertion was a counter argument to her colleague who had explained that if not poverty, the children will not be seen begging.

Furthermore, it also emerged from my interviews with the participants that children beg because it is a tradition of the area. This view was expressed by one of the children and two of the women in the study. So if it is a tradition, they do it sometimes without any tangible compelling reasons. It appeared that, for them, once you are a Muslim, you are free to beg if you wish even if the situation does not call for begging as prescribed by the religion.

"When you see a child begging then he is from a Muslim community."

(Awabu, a female parent)

"We are still in begging because we benefit from it. A Muslim cannot say you don't benefit from begging ". (Asana, a female parent).

In this case what qualifies a person to beg is being a Muslim not the economic circumstance. Also, the children have the cognition that begging has been a life long tradition of the community. This belief system makes begging a justifiable venture to them because their grandparents and their parents were also beggars before, legitimising their current status as beggars.

"One day I went to a certain village to beg then one woman saw me and wondered why should a fine boy like me be involved in begging instead being in school. I told her that is the tradition of my community. If you want, you can engage in begging without it being a problem. She told me to stop begging and rather attend school. I was annoyed at first but later I realised it was a good advice." (Suale, Child participant).

Additionally, giving the children to *mallams* was also mentioned as part of the reasons the children are begging. In this situation, it is not the parent (father) who sends the children directly to beg but they are put in conditions that compel them to become beggars. People continue to give their children to the *karimba* for Quranic studies. In explaining the historical link of Islam and begging, this was what was said.

"In the olden days during the advent of Islam, when a child was given to a "karimba" to be taught Islamic education, the teacher had his knowledge but did not have food

that was enough for him and the child. In such situation he would ask the child to go and beg." (Mal-1).

So here, for purposes of learning the Quran, a parent gives his child to the *karimba* even if he goes and engages in begging. The practice of parents giving their children to the *karimbanima* still exists especially at *Tingsheli*, my research locality.

Moreover, the inability of the fathers to give the children money to go to school was also mentioned by the women participants as a reason for allowing the children to beg. According to them, the husbands give food for cooking for the family only, and that when the children are to go to school there is no money for them. The children are therefore allowed to go to beg so that what they obtain is kept for them so that when they are to go to school they take some and give to them. *Abiiba*, one of the female participants said;

"As they are going to school, it does happen that some days you don't have money so what he gets from begging will be what you keep and give some to him daily to go to school."

This appears ambiguous because it is the school days that they use to go to beg (Monday, Thursday and Friday). The number of days spent by the child in begging is more than the days he is in school. Three days of begging and two days in school so it is incomprehensible how and why a child begs for three days to enable him get money to go to school for only two days.

4.6 Results summary

The lived experiences of the Muslim child beggars were reported in this chapter by presenting the stressors and resources of the children as they engage in begging. The findings revealed the negative experiences of these children but it has also shown the resources the children rely upon to cope with those stressful conditions as beggars. From the children's perspective, what also emerged, showed that their act of begging is an ambivalent one because it is both compulsory sometimes but also voluntary in other situations. These were the complexities that emerged in the findings. Some of the children may be begging for their personal gains but what also came out was that they are not completely independent of their parents when it comes to begging. Even though the children may be begging for selfish reasons, the findings showed that all of them had strong wish to be in school. The fact that most of them mentioned examination fees as a reason for their involvement in begging means there is an explicit desire by the children to get formal education.

I also presented the position of Islam when it comes to child begging. From the accounts of the *mallams*, one would have said that Islam cannot be blamed for this child begging phenomenon but there are exceptional instances when one can engage in begging. This makes the whole issue of begging nebulous. For example, on the issue of the highly indebted persons or the destitute in the society being qualified to beg, there are some fundamental questions that need clarification. What criteria are to be used to determine that a particular person is really in desperate economic need or assistance? Also what level of indebtedness qualifies a person to beg? How do we evaluate these people objectively without our personal biases filtering in? How are we going to make sure that these forms of assistance as prescribed in Islam really go to the right people? These are but a few questions that need some answers.

What also came up was that whilst the female parents admitted that they were aware of the children's begging and accepted responsibility, the men never wanted to admit that they were part of the problem. They were all blaming the children creating some contradictions. For example, in their report, they stated that they are instances when parents will be begging for money from the children when they come from begging. Also, all the women had hopes on divinity so they were all referring to God for a positive change in their circumstances.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

5.0 Introduction

This research touches on a wide spectrum of knowledge domains where it is linked to broad literature and also situated in the salutogenic model. Additionally, responses from the participants also give insights that point to some directions thus making it possible for some assumptions to be made. In this part of the thesis, I discuss the findings in relation to these broad scope knowledge areas.

5.1 Discussing the stressors and the resources

5.1.1 Negative daily experiences (psychological factors)

In their daily engagement in begging, the Muslim child beggars at *Tingsheli* come to their world of reality where they encounter "dangerous" animals such as dogs and monkeys which sometimes chase them. The children expressed in (4.1.1) of the findings section that, their encounters with dogs and monkeys, especially dogs are innumerable. They are being chased by these animals which evokes fear from them according to their narratives. Their encounters with these animals do not only lead to emotional distress to them, but it can also lead to physical injuries because the children could be bitten by the animals. Though none of the children reported ever being bitten by any of those animals, they pose danger to them and has the potential of giving them some diseases like rabies which is a disease condition associated with dog bites. Rabies, attacks the central nervous system (CNS) and if an infected person does not receive treatment quickly it progresses steadily to cause brain swellings, epilepsy, confusion, paralysis, coma and death (Knobel et al., 2005).

Other stressful conditions these children face as child beggars are the insults they receive from their colleagues or adults in places where they go to beg. Insults are forms of verbal aggression which can have negative impact on the emotional and psychological well-being of the children. The issue of verbal abuse as experienced by the child beggars of this research is similar to the experiences of the *Talibes* in Senegal and child beggars in Turkey who, according to Thorsen (2012) and Scarboro et al. (2013), also suffer a lot of abuse including verbal as they go about begging. As a result of these aggressive behaviours of the public towards the children, they most often move in groups sometimes for self-defence purposes (Thorsen, 2012). This is an example of the negative reaction of the public towards beggars in many parts of the world.

Calheiros et al. (2016) indicate that verbal abuse of children affects them psychologically. Not only are they psychologically disturbed but, as Teicher et al. (2006) report, sometimes the negative effects of verbal aggression are more devastating than physical aggression and that it can even be a precursor to the impaired development of certain brain regions that can lead to psychiatric problems and anger-hostilities. Could it be that the children are already expressing signs of anger-hostility symptoms which are the effects of verbal aggression as stated by Teicher et al. (2006) because, according to the parents of these children, some of them have become extremely defiant and express temper tantrums when they are to advise them. The children took insults to be very painful experiences because during my interaction with them none of them disclosed to me the nature or form of the insults they received from people in their begging expeditions. When I asked those who indicated that they had been insulted by people to tell me what the insults were, they refused by cleverly digressing. Some of them just told me bluntly that I should ask further questions an indication that they did not take kindly to the insults. These insults may have long lasting impact on the health status of these children as indicated above.

Moreover, research shows that a negative correlation exists between verbal abuse of children and their cognitive abilities which directly link to academic performance. This is well articulated in Kochar et al. (2015) where they assert that verbal aggression on children affects them cognitively which definitely affects academic performance as compared to non-verbally abused children. What they found was that the verbally abused children lacked concentration on cognitive task performance as the abusive words served as detractors. They also indicate that it leads to low self-esteem and worthlessness in the victims. In this study, all the children were in classes that were lower than the classes they were supposed to occupy by their ages. With this Muslim child beggars' exposure to such verbal abuse by people, there is no way that one can say confidently that they are immune to these negative effects especially when the classes in which they were in school were far lower than the classes they were supposed to be looking at their ages.

This verbal abuse is tied with physical abuse where the parents force the children to go and beg by sometimes subjecting them to beating. Kaushik (2014) also reports of how parents in India prevail on their children authoritatively to engage in begging. Some of the children in this study also reported being beaten by people in their begging areas which has multiplier negative effects on them. There appears to be public and official attack on the beggar population around the globe. For instance, Bukoye (2015) and Roblee-Hertzmark (2012) report on child beggars

in the streets of Nigeria, Cameroon, Senegal, Gambia, India and America who are arrested by security forces using physical force for involving in anti-social behaviour (begging). Though begging affects the rights of these children in various forms in relation to their health, well-being and education, the approach adopted by authorities to control it is even worse than the act of begging itself because such attacks affect their physical, psychological or emotional well-being.

What has to be emphasised also is that the involvement of these children in begging is a form of child labour, an unacceptable practice in the face of the UN and the ILO (IPEC, 2015). It is also an affront to the principles of Islam (Scarboro et al., 2013) and a violation of the laws of Ghana. The UN Charter on the rights of the child stipulates that child labour is an unacceptable practice and that states must take it as an obligation to educate children and adults on their (children) rights (UNICEF, 1989). Studies by Magashi (2015), Zoumanigui (2016) and Einarsdottir and Boiro (2015) believe that governments have a responsibility in protecting the children whose rights have been abused by their parents or care takers. Ghana being a signatory to international child rights documents like the CRC and ACRWC, and crafting out its own children's act, Act 560, places huge responsibility on the government to ensure that the rights of children in the country are protected.

Article 18 of the CRC places responsibility on governments to intervene in instances where parents face difficulties in the performance of their child rearing duties. But the problem with this article is that it does not prescribe the nature and form of help referred therein. Doek (2009) believes that having legislative instruments alone does not alter the existing realities about the plight of children and that the challenge is the availability of human and financial resources for their implementation. With the ailing economies of African states, governments find it difficult to provide the basic necessities of life to its citizenry. As noted by Okyere et al. (2014) that the implementation of aspects of the CRC has been minimal in Ghana. However, it points to critical issue of the states' responsibility in the upbringing of the child. So as much as it is the responsibility of parents to take care of their children, the state also shares the blame if the children's needs are not well catered for.

5.1.2 Negative daily experiences (physical factors)

The children in this study were also exposed to the vagaries of the weather as they walked long distances from village to village to beg which indeed is a tedious exercise for them. This is related to Abebe (2008), Kassah (2008) and Scarboro et al. (2013) where they report of the bad

weather conditions that children in their studies were working as street children or beggars in Ethiopia, Ghana and Turkey respectively. Also, Ahmed and Abdul Razak (2016) report how guide children to adult beggars in *Tamale* lamented about the harsh weather conditions they operate as guides. Similarly, Perry (2004) indicates that the children in Senegal who were with the *marabouts* were working for prolonged periods in peanuts farms. All these studies fit into the difficult circumstances of the children in this study

This practice of begging by the children of this study which I will call errand begging is different from what has been found in the studies of Abebe (2008) and Kassah (2008), where the children who were involved in begging were localised beggars and were concentrated at lorry parks, traffic junctions, church premises or mosques and sometimes market places. For the children in this study, they move from village to village and return to their village of abode in the evening. This movement from house to house to beg in the villages as done by the children is not peculiar to Ghana's *Dagbon* Muslim child beggars (*barimaanbihi*). Massey, Rafique, and Seeley (2010) and Quadri (2013) report that in India, Bangladesh and Nigeria, the beggars travel from village to village and move from house to house to beg. If the children who beg at designated places are working under the mercy of bad weather condition, then the difference I have mentioned above will not only be about the geography of operation but also about the extent of exposures to extremely bad weather conditions. This study relates well with their studies as the children are all exposed to the vagaries of the weather. They are similarly diverse based on the severity of their exposures, with the children in this study being at the highest risk. This also calls to question the functionality of section 18,1(g) of Ghana's Act 560 which tasks the district assemblies to protect children who are begging and also section 87 (a) and (b) of the same act which prohibits the use of children for exploitative work.

The children's exposure to these harsh weather conditions is tantamount to physical abuse which deviates from standard Islamic practice as found in section (4.3.1) of the findings chapter and (Adebayo & Hassan, 2013; Tekin, 2015; Zoumanigui, 2016). It is also an affront to the laws of the country and calls for immediate action through the legal system as enshrined in the Beggars and Destitute Act (G.O.G, 1969). If the laws had been enforced in relation to the use of children exploitatively, it would have served as a deterrent to potential culprits but invoking the penal part of the act, that is section 2, is rarely heard or not heard at all maybe for political expediency. This is because in Senegal, as Zoumanigui (2016) reports, the government's voice has been an inactive one in dealing with the issue of the *talibes'* involvement in begging because of political patronage as there is fear of losing political support.

The parent participants in this study indicated that some the children use bicycles to go to beg, but only two children in this research had bicycles the rest go to beg on foot. Even those who have bicycles sometimes walk on foot to the villages to beg. They do not wear sandals; they walk bare footed irrespective of the weather condition. They are not only exposed to the scorching sun or the cold harmattan of the dry season in Northern Ghana but also, the stormy and rainy weather conditions of the rainy season. The situation where these child beggars are walking barefooted is related to the findings of Bukoye (2015) in Nigeria where most of the Young "*Almajiri*" were walking bare footed irrespective of the weather.

Even though diseases that affect the children and could be attributed to their exposure to the bad weather condition are beyond the scope of this research, the probability of the children getting some diseases out of these exposures cannot be dismissed. The children narrated the sometimes hot weather conditions under which they operate as beggars. Indeed, the Northern region is one of the hottest regions in the country. This makes them prone to any disease condition that is brought about by the high temperatures. This can be related to the research of Gheorghiuță and Vădăsteanu (2015) and Scarboro et al. (2013) in which they intimate that the exposure to bad weather conditions like low or high temperatures, snow or rain endangers the lives of child beggars. This situation in which the children find themselves is giving more meaning by the study of Chen et al. (2014) where they found that exposures to very high temperature or very cold weather conditions can be linked to a short term effect of hand, foot and mouth diseases.

5.1.2 Long term consequences

Accusations were also reported as one of the stressful conditions that these child beggars have been confronted with. It must be made clear that this issue was not reported by the children. The parents who participated in the study brought in the issue of the children being accused of stealing. Theft is negative label and has the tendency of affecting the psychological well-being of the one accused. However, in section 4.1.2 of the findings chapter, it is indicated that the involvement of children in begging exposes them to ill practices such as stealing and armed robbery in the future. The issue of negative labels and their effects can be related to the research of (Gheorghiuță & Vădăsteanu, 2015). They posit that a label, when attached to a person, is likely to cause him to have altered feelings about his identity which may result in him accepting and acting out such descriptive attributes. The implication therefore is that these children, who are currently being accused of stealing, may become thieves with the passage of time. The issue

of stealing in relation to child beggars is also reported of the child beggars in *Bawku* of Northern Ghana who sometime steal in the course of begging Fiasorgbor et al. (2015) and the street children in Kenya (Kaime-Atterhög & Ahlberg, 2008). If the society regards them as thieves when they cannot prove their innocence, the social fabric of trust from the society is broken and the child may decide to engage in stealing because that is what he is seen to be and this has dire consequences. Also, once a person has been accused of stealing, chances of him being accused of stealing again anytime in the future are high which makes him lose the trust people will have on him and this will bring about low self-esteem resulting in behaviours that are unwarranted.

The fearful encounters with the animals as described by the children in (4.1.1) in the findings chapter, can also be a precipitating factor for the development of phobias in the children particularly zoophobia (generalized fear of animals). Muris and Field (2010) indicate that the development of animal phobias starts in childhood when children's encounter with animals evokes fear in them or when they witness fearful reactions of people who encounter some animals. That means the children in this study are not exempted and also stand the same risk as any other child in developing phobias later in life with their current encounters with these animals which evoke fear from them as they described.

Also, Oliveria et al. (2006) conclude that there was a positive correlation between sunburn and melanoma (a dangerous skin cancer). Their findings suggest that childhood exposures to sunburns is a high risk factor in the development of melanoma later in life. So for these children who have been in the sun begging for most of the time, it is not only the short term consequences that they are likely to suffer as a result of their continuous exposure to the sun, but a long term condition of developing skin cancer later in life. Additionally, it will have an impact on their education because if they develop these disease conditions their academic pursuits will definitely be affected.

5.2 Discussing the resources

This section looks at the resources or factors that help these child beggars to cope even under such extremely difficult conditions. These resources include, self-motivation, monetary or personal gains, cognitive processes and friends and family. The details of these are presented below.

5.2.1 Self-motivation

One of the factors that make the children keep on with begging is the gains they make out of it. From the proceeds, they are able to buy many things and regularly pay for their examination fees. For example, during my interaction with the children, I was surprised that some of them had expensive mobile phones. Some of their drawings also depicted their future financial commitments of buying bicycles and lorries. Since the children have recurrent expenditures relating to their daily needs and academic pursuits, it stands to reason that they can do everything possible to meet those pressing needs hence their unflinching desire to engage in begging despite the adversities associated with it. This issue of material gains as a reason for the children's engagement in begging is in line with the research findings of Abebe (2008) and Swanson (2007) where one of the factors that drove the children to begging was material gains. Here, there appears to be financial autonomy on the part of the children because they are using the proceeds or some of it independently without any control. As much as this may make them self-reliant as stated by Abebe (2008) and Swanson (2005), it also has the potential of exposing them to impulse spending which will result in the children resorting to any means of acquiring money which may include theft, a criminal act which has been discussed earlier under future consequences of begging.

What also serves as a motivational factor for the children's continuous stay in begging is their understanding that it has an end. For the children, it is not an infinite act but there is a terminal point to it and that is when they reach a certain age. There appears to be an age factor in relation to begging because this children's notion of withdrawal from begging at a certain age is related to what Abebe (2008) and Swanson (2007) found in their research with child beggars in Ethiopia and Ecuadorian Andes respectively. For the children in Ecuadorian Andes, the threshold age is 14 after which they are no longer tolerated in the streets. One possible explanation that can be posited is that child beggars are seen as vulnerable and therefore evoke sympathetic emotions from the society but as they advance in age, there is the tendency of such public sympathy to wane and the gains they make will automatically and drastically be reduced making begging a no longer lucrative enterprise. After attaining a certain age, the children may also see it as shameful to go into houses to beg. For example, in section (4.1.1) the children reported that it was degrading and dehumanising engaging in begging. The child beggars in Ethiopia, Abebe (2008) reports that after reaching certain age, leave begging and engage in other income generating activities and one of their reasons was that it was embarrassing, affirming the explanation above. The issue of begging becoming non profitable as they advance in age also holds. For, as noted by Gheorghiuță and Vădăsteanu (2015) and Thorsen (2012), the probability of children engaging in begging diminishes with increasing age because the

sympathy and vulnerability label enjoyed by children in begging is reduced and on that basis their earnings fade with age.

5.2.2 Friends and family

Another factor that has made the children keep pace with begging is their friends. The children have developed a social niche that has a listening ear and a supportive heart. They are each other's keeper and share their problems with one another. They give encouragements to one another for a strong spirit of perseverance and that keeps them in the begging trail. Some of the children in this study indicated that they are able to continue to beg without any problem because their friends have been supportive by giving them words of encouragement (4.2.2). This practice of social support services the children render to one another is re-established by Abebe (2008) and Fiasorgbor and Fiasorgbor (2015) that the children are not just isolated in their begging environment but have social ties that connect and bond them together. They share their food and material possessions with their colleagues and showed love and concern for one another. This implies that the children will have emotional and psychological stability to operate as beggars in spite of the difficulties associated with it.

5.3 Child education and parental responsibility

The Northern region of Ghana has a very high illiteracy rate in the country as already elaborated in section (1.3) in the introduction chapter. These figures show literacy deficits in the region more especially in the district where the research was done. As discouraging as the figures look, it appears that the parents of these child beggars are oblivious of the consequences that the current status of these children as beggars will be later in their lives.

Obviously the dream of every parent will be to see his children attaining greater status and achieving something meaningful in life. It was therefore not surprising that the parents in this study had a lot of aspirations for their children. For the parents, their future life's stability will be determined by what the children will become in future. Consequently, their aspiration is that the children attain higher academic laurels in both Islamic and secular education. The parent's aspirations are related to Abubakari and Iddrisu (2013) who indicate that the future status of the child is of prime importance to the *Dagombas*. It is also fitted into Fiasorgbor et al. (2015) when they opine that child education is a clarion call by Islam for all Muslims to adhere to and that negligence by parents in their children's education becomes a responsibility issue. The *mallams* in this study also stressed that educating is an important obligation on the parent to

the child (4.3.1). The desires and aspirations of the parents in this study do not depart from those of the parents of the *talibes* under the tutorship of the *marabout* in Guinea Bissau and Senegal. Thorsen (2012) notes that the parents of the *Talibes* indicated that their affection for their children was unparalleled and that they wanted their children to get broader form of education where the study of Islam is combined with secular education and other skills that will expand the children's future job prospects.

Ironically, these expectations and aspirations of the parents are not in conformity with the conditions in which the children find themselves. They are involved in begging to the detriment of their academic endeavours. Begging and the desires of the parents for the future prosperity of their children are contrasting dimensions as begging cannot lead the children to the destination of sound economic and intellectual advancement which is the wish of the parents. Abubakari and Iddrisu (2013) observe that *Dagomba* parents exhibit a natural tendency of showing affection to their biological children. All the children in this study were living with their parents and yet they were begging to the detriment of their academic pursuits as already mentioned above. However, it can tentatively mean that such kind of affection thrives under sound economic circumstances but not a precarious one as being experienced by the parents in this study. The ILO clearly stipulates that schooling and child labour are incompatible and that a negative correlation is established between child labour and educational achievement (IPEC, 2015).

The issue of child begging is a complex phenomenon and has been the concern of some researchers to unravel the reasons that underlie it. Lynch (2005) indicates that parents are the ones who often decide that their children should go and beg rather than the children themselves. In this study, most of the children indicated that their parents are the ones that compel them to go and beg, a corroboration of Lynch's assertion. Kaushik (2014) also observes that in India parents coerce their children to engage in begging. So, in line with the authors' observation, since all the children in this study were staying with their parents, they (parents) were brought in for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon by getting their perspectives regarding the reasons behind their approval of their children's begging in the area at the expense of their (children) education.

The underlying reason for parents sending their children to beg was given as poverty (4.5.1). Indeed, the Northern Region of Ghana is one of the impoverished regions in the country. The majority of the people are peasant farmers who engage in subsistence farming (Samuel et al.,

2013). Several studies also support the notion of poverty as a causal factor for child begging in Africa and different parts of the world (Abebe, 2008; Ahmed & Abdul Razak, 2016; Bukoye, 2015; Ekong, 2016; Gheorghiuță & Vădăsteanu, 2015; Kassah, 2008; Kaushik, 2014; Lynch, 2005; Stones, 2013; Thorsen, 2012). The clergy in Northern Ghana however lamented that people in the Muslim communities were not mapping out income generating activities to change their lot and their sole hope was that God will help them to overcome their economic challenges (Weiss, 2007).

One striking difference between the female parent participants and their male counterparts was the acceptance of responsibility or blame for their children's begging. Whilst the women were forthright in accepting responsibility for child begging in the area, the men were far from accepting that they were part of the problem. They attributed the blame to the children regarding them as "spoilt generation." The male parents' stance here, goes contrary to the assertion by Lynch (2005) as indicated above that it is often parents who decide that their children should beg but not the children. With this position of the male parents, it makes the understanding of the issue of child begging in the area a really difficult one. If a parent fails to provide the needs of the child, how to raise him properly then becomes a challenging task and a dent on parental responsibility. The behaviour of some parents is sheer irresponsibility in the welfare of their children as stipulated by the *mallams* in (4.3.1), Fiasorgbor et al. (2015) and (Quadri, 2013).

Responses from the female participants revealed the probable reason for the fathers' reluctance to take responsibility for child begging in the area. They indicated that the fathers do not give the children money to go to school so they allow them to go to beg so that the money they get will then serve as their pocket money to go to school (section 4.4.2). This assertion by the female participants corroborates that of Alenoma (2012) where the author reports of the parents and guardians of the street child beggars in *Tamale*, the Northern regional capital, who maintained that the children on the streets do so to get pocket money to go to school the next day. This is also in line with the study of Ballet et al. (2010) in Antananarivo where the child beggars were living with their parents and were coerced psychologically to beg to fend for themselves and the families. If the fathers in this study accept responsibility for the children's involvement in begging, it will mean that it is because they do not meet the children's needs and have lost control over them that is why they are into begging. Perhaps they wanted to conceal this by distancing themselves from the begging of the children but rather put the blame on them. Einarsdottir and Boiro (2015) observe that begging is a sensitive and complicated

phenomenon so the observations I have made about the parents regarding their decision to distance themselves from the children are tentative. Nevertheless, Ballet et al. (2010) indicate that at a certain age threshold parents no longer have exploitative control over their children and therefore become indifferent of what they are doing which may lend credence to my assertion above.

It must be noted that though the female parents' explanation regarding the reason for the children's begging gives some insight into the issue, it is not justifiable for the children to miss school three days in a week for purposes of begging because of their academic pursuits as claimed by the parents. That logic is inconvincible and some underlying reasons may best explain this further because it contradicts their own desires and aspirations for their children as found in (4.2.2). In section (4.4.1), the parents catalogued the good ways by which a child can be raised but begging is not mentioned there. One wonders how it then becomes an integral part of raising the child. Studies show that child labour affects the educational achievement of children because those children record poor performance in school (John, 2015; Manjengwa et al., 2016). This is a clear indication that these children stand the chance of being affected academically though part of the reason for their involvement in begging was for their educational advancement. Also worth noting is the claim that begging is seen as an academic pursuit trajectory for some child beggars whose academic advancement is intertwined with begging (Stones, 2013; Swanson, 2010). That means it has a positive functional locus in the academic lives of these children.

Some of the children also gave testimonies to the effect that their parents told them to support the family and that begging was not bad at all. This relates to Scarboro et al. (2013) where in Turkey, reportage on begging is skewed to the benefits aspects to the neglect of the human rights violations associated with it. But as has been stated earlier in the chapter, it gives the children a feeling of importance and they perceive themselves being recognised as important members in the family hierarchy. However, creating the impression that begging is not bad is one of the ways that the children are forced into begging by their parents who are psychologically manipulating their minds as noted by (Ballet et al., 2010). It is nothing but just playing on the vulnerable and gullible minds of these boys. Obviously, this information from the children to the effect that their parents ask them to beg contrasts the position of the male parents that the children were begging for their personal gains. The testimonies show that the children were active participants in the upkeep of their families. None of the child rights documents places responsibility on the child to take care of his family. It is only the ACRWC

that places responsibility on the child but that has to do with the child showing respect to his family, elders, superiors and to uphold African cultural values (UNICEF, 1990). However, Milne (2015) argues that the discourses used in the child rights documents are Western adult conjectures and do not reflect the position of the children because their voices are not heard.

Another point that makes the claim by the women doubtful in this situation is their own statements. They intimated that the involvement of the children in begging was a life-saving practice and their only saviour was God. So basically, it is not only because they want to get money to give to the children to go to school but the entire families are direct beneficiaries as they are dependants of the proceeds. This belief in divinity makes the situation very complex because divine help cannot come out of the blue. Something has to be done practically in an attempt to change one's circumstance without resorting to divine expectations. The position of the women reflects the findings of Weiss where the Muslim clergy were lamenting about the "God will provide for us" (Weiss, 2004, p. 2) syndrome. In the views of the clergy, some people in the Muslim communities are in a state of learned helplessness where they think they are incapable of doing anything for themselves.

Additionally, for the children in this study, part of their responsibility was to ensure that there was food for the family. They see themselves as an integral part of the family structure and its sustenance is a collective responsibility. Therefore, for some of them, they are not being told to go and beg they go voluntarily anytime they notice that food is getting finished. Begging is seen in this light as the means through which they can contribute their quota for the survival of their families (4.2.1). This assertion being held by these children is similar to that of the child beggars in the streets of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Abebe (2008) who also indicated that they were not being abandoned by their parents and that they were begging for the livelihood of their families.

These children have a sense of motivation in begging for the family perhaps to carve out an identity and a position within the family hierarchy. By providing food for the families they are accentuating their position and significance in the family which leads them to feel important and could be the starting point of the children's gendered role identity formation. In Abebe (2008), the children stated that by begging to get food for their families it makes them feel that they are worthy and important within the family structure and that "participation in family livelihoods restores their sense of confidence and self-reliance" Abebe (2008, p. 276). The feeling of worthiness, confidence and of being self-reliant are the overarching and symbolic

drivers of these children's defiance of the negative experiences associated with begging. For them, the attainment of this social status was significant. This then makes the issue of child begging in the area or elsewhere in the same context where the children harbour such feelings of worthiness and confidence an intricate phenomenon. What substitutions are to be made in an attempt to take these children out of this act which they have seen as blissful and one of their responsibility as it places them in significant positions within the family structure?

Thorsen (2012) observes that in West and Central Africa, children involved in begging derived a kind of meaning and responsibility from it and especially the contribution they make to the family. The author states that taking the children off begging without a tangible substitute of the meaning and status that they attach to their act of begging will breed worst outcomes. It is like a form of initiation by means of indoctrination where parents tell their children to start begging to help the family and that it is not a bad act (4.2.2), so detaching them from it will be a herculean task.

One critical dilemma worth nothing here is superiority of discourse in relation to the suppressed voices of the children against the dominant discourses of NGOs, agencies and organisations at national and international levels that are championing child rights. As Milne (2015) observes, children are not consulted when it comes to determining issues that confront them and that the discourses are adult machinations which do not reflect the real position of the children. If the children say that they feel a sense of importance in making contributions to their families when in the adult discourse it is regarded as child labour, which of them is to be ignored?

Surprisingly, the same Muslim child beggars in this study were not oblivious of their future circumstances and were therefore worried that they were missing school in exchange for begging eventhough it gives them a feeling of importance and a position within the family. Noting that begging was a temporary business engagement, they believe education is the best tool that will salvage their impoverished conditions. Though the school performance records of these children were not obtained, the class levels they occupied at the time of the research were revealing enough regarding what their performance in school would be. None of them was in a class that he was supposed to be. Table 2, as shown in the methodology chapter, captures the class each of them was occupying. What it reveals, as already mentioned earlier, is that none of them was in a class that tallied with the age. As a professional teacher, I know that by GES standards, a child is supposed to complete primary by age 11to 12 and by age 14 he or she should be completing Junior High School (JHS). However, a look at the table in the

methodology section, shows that for those who had turned 14 years at the time of the research, only two of them were in their first year in JHS whilst their age counter parts were still in primary school occupying classes way below their age requirements.

Records available indicate that prior involvement in child labour relates to poor academic achievement which consequently leads to indecent jobs that do not conform to basic decent living criteria (IPEC, 2015). Ekong (2016) notes that when children are involved in child labour it affects their class participation which directly affects their performance and they withdraw from school to engage in child labour. One can project that with the current academic levels of the children, their future educational prospects towards achieving better living conditions may be greatly affected. The implication then is that their current economic position as poor people will perpetuate and the cycle of child begging will continue because without education, like their fathers, the vicious cycle of poverty will be difficult to eradicate making begging a bequeathed phenomenon or transmissible ‘legacy’ from their parents.

Educational achievement by people in the Northern part of Ghana has been on a low profile. The reasons behind the backwardness of the North in terms of access to, and achievement in formal education (secular education), dates back to the colonial era but it is not the focus of this research. This assertion of the lower levels of literacy in Northern Ghana is re-echoed by Akyeampong (2004) where he indicates that literacy rate among adults in Northern Ghana was below 5% of the adult population and that for children up to fourteen years, only 40% were in school. As shown in table 3 in the methodology chapter, none of the parents in this study had any formal education and their source of income was farming, that is in the case of the men. For the women, there was nothing that there were engaged in as a source of income generating activity. Zereyesus, Ross, Amanor-Boadu, and Dalton (2014) maintain that there is a positive correlation between level of education and economic status. The illiteracy status of the parents means that there is no way that they will get employment in the formal sector for enhanced economic conditions. With this poor economic circumstances, their ability to properly cater for the needs of their children will be hampered so they end up allowing the children to beg. This analysis fits into Ekong (2016) who observes that the level of education of parents links directly to child labour and Nwazuoke and Igwe (2016) and Bukoye (2015) where the authors indicate that illiteracy which is a precursor of poverty was a precipitating factor of child begging in Nigeria. This can be extended to Ghana where one can argue that the illiteracy status of the parents of these child beggars contributes to the children's begging.

5.4 Discussing the Voice of Islam

From the finding it is stated categorically that Islam does not support begging and it is against the principles of the religion to allow children to beg. This was stressed by all the three *mallams* who participated in this study and it is captured in section (4.3.1) of the findings chapter. This view as expressed by the *mallams* is similar to Victor (2011), Soemitra (2014) and Bhat (2015) where they stated that there is no link between Islam and begging because the religion discourages it. The position by the *mallams* also corroborates the report in Magashi (2015), Sharif and Bao (2013) and Soemitra (2014) who established that some Muslims regard child begging as un-Islamic because of its dehumanising nature. Therefore, begging is an act of illegality in the face of Islam. As much as penal measures cannot be preferred against those who violate the Islamic principle by allowing their children to beg because of the secular status of Ghana, the country's laws also prohibit begging and through that, sanctions could have been applied to control it. The problem however is about enforcement of the laws that seek to protect children. This has been a major challenge in Ghana because of the dormancy of the laws and the wanton abuse of children continues. What pertains in Ghana is related to what happens in other African countries like Senegal, Zoumanigui (2016) and Nigeria, Ekong (2016) where the state is seen not to be doing enough to enhance the welfare of children. This poses a challenge to governments to prioritise issues about children's rights to protect their future.

Though the religion prohibits begging, there are exceptional cases or situations when some category of people is given the greenlight to beg. This includes orphans, the highly indebted, the destitute and people under difficult circumstances (4.3.3). This issue of permissibility leverage given to some Muslims to beg in Islam is also captured in (Poonawala, 2015; Quadri, 2013). The difficulty here is how do we mediate between the country's law which prohibits begging and the exceptional circumstances in Islam that allow people to beg for specific reasons and within a time frame. The exceptional circumstances create a paradoxical situation where the distinction of who qualifies to beg and who is not are shrouded in complexity.

On the issue of orphans being qualified to beg, the *mallams* pointed out there is no way a gap can be created such that at any particular time a child will not have anybody to take care of him. This is because of the way the religion structures the responsibility hierarchies of taking care of the child in the family. Orphans' involvement in begging as explained by the *mallams* is practically a distant possibility (4.3.1). The irony however is that, none of the children in this study met the criteria prescribed by Islam as situational circumstances under which one can

beg. Children are not even mentioned except in relation to orphans which has been refuted by the *mallams* (4.3.3). So the inclusion of orphans in the exceptional situations for begging is just to cater for the unlikely event that such a situation arises.

As much as the religion gives room for some people to beg, it also recommends Muslims to endeavour to work to earn a living through their toils instead of resorting to begging (Bhat, 2015; Wilson, 2013). This is exemplified by the prophet's advice to a man who had come to him to beg and whom he gave an axe to go for firewood to sell as noted by the *mallams* in section (4.3.1) of the findings chapter. Adebayo and Hassan (2013) and Soemitra (2014) also capture the prophet's example as a clear case of how begging is abhorred in the religion. Therefore, there is doubt whether the fact that the religion gives some people the opportunity to beg based on their economic circumstances means universal applicability of the act where any Muslim should jump into the fray of begging anytime he or she so desires without recourse to laid down principles that govern the act in Islam.

One significant aspect of the findings section yet muddy has to do with the point where the *mallams* indicated that there are economic mitigating measures in Islam to curb the incidence of begging among Muslims. These, they mentioned as *zakat*, *kafaara*, *sadaqqa* and *zakatul-fitr* (4.3.3). *Zakat* is obligatory in Islam as noted by (Budiman et al., 2015; Clarke & Tittensor, 2014; Scarboro et al., 2013; Zoumanigui, 2016). *Zakat*, as a mitigating measure to reduce the practice of begging within the Muslim community, is laudable because it is a divine admonition for Muslims to support their fellow adherents of the Islamic religion to alleviate their suffering (Clarke & Tittensor, 2014; Scarboro et al., 2013). Though good economic intervention, it comes with a lot of questions hanging on it especially in the Ghanaian context in relation to how it is monitored. There is no mechanism in place to monitor how it is given to the potential beneficiaries and how it is utilized to ensure that it really takes people out their economic predicaments.

Additionally, how to identify the needy to whom *zakat* is to be given is a matter of an individual discretion rather than the principle of real need. This is the result of lack of a common national fund which will be in charge of *zakat* through the formulation of comprehensive regulatory processes and mechanisms in terms of collection of the *zakat*, the identification of the beneficiaries and the disbursement of the fund. This reaffirms the findings of Thorsen (2012) and Weiss (2004) that the use of *zakat* is not in clear standing and does not lead to the improvement in people's lives the reason for which it is meant. They argue that there is the

need to institutionalise *zakat* by establishing a national treasury. It is stated in (Weiss, 2004) that the Muslim community is being rhetorical in extolling the virtues of *zakat* rather than looking at its practical application and sustenance. Based on these findings, one can argue that the existence of *zakat* as instituted by Islam as a safety net would have solved the problem of Muslims begging if it was well structured. For instance, Al-Qardawi (1999) states that *zakat* is meant to bridge the gap between the destitute and the rich in society and to reorganise the needy economically. But as much as there exist people in the streets, at corners in towns and in the country side begging, like the children in this research, it shows that *zakat's* existence is not yielding the desired outcomes.

The very people whose interest *zakat* purports to serve point at Islam as pre-requisite qualification for their children's involvement in begging. For some parents, the qualification to beg was the religion. They indicated that a Muslim is a beggar and once they are Muslims they cannot do away with begging (section 4.4.4) under the findings chapter. For them, the religion gives them the green light to beg but a reflection has to be made on the conditions that a person must meet to be qualified to beg under Islamic practice. There is the question of whether the parents are even aware of these conditions. The parents' position regarding begging relates to Scarboro et al. (2013) who indicate that *zakat* and begging are fundamentally bound. The authors note that as *zakat* gives economic relief to the beggar, it also serves a religious function where it enables Muslims to fulfil a religious obligation. Conversely, the *mallams* in this study, stressed that *zakat* is given through proper identification of those living in real destitution. They ought not to come to the rich to beg for it as captured in (4.4.3) of the findings chapter. Therefore, it is evidential in this context that, parallelism exists between begging and *zakat*.

From the findings chapter it appears that Islam is complicit in this issue of begging and child begging in particular. One reason is the exceptional circumstances as expressed by the *mallams* in section (4.3.2). It creates a window of opportunity for people to be engaged in begging because there is no criteria or mechanism in place to really determine the economic circumstances of those involved. Once their economic identities cannot easily be determined, the grounds are safe for all manner of people to go into begging. This explains why people who are not even Muslims feign their real doctrinal identities through the use of attires associated with Islam to negotiate their way into begging. Abebe (2009) reports that in Ethiopia people who are non-Muslims dress in the *hijab* to attract the attention of potential donors. This is because *zakat* and *sadaqqa* are encouraged in Islam but there are not regulatory mechanisms in place to check who gives and who takes. However, the encouragement of *sadaqqa* and *zakat*

by Islam should not be misconstrued to mean the religion's endorsement of begging (Victor, 2011).

One point worth clarifying is the destitution status that qualifies a person to beg under the principles of Islam. Ghana is a secular country and its laws are supreme over any other enactment or rule from either cultural or religious perspectives. The destitute status of a person is a relative term and people may portray themselves as being in the realm of destitution but that must be in conformity with who is legally recognised as a destitute by the country's laws. Under the Beggars and Destitute Act 1969, the outstanding characteristics of a person to be recognised as a destitute include; being homeless and wandering about, having no permanent residence and employment, insufficient means of sustenance and being defective, abandoned or neglected (G.O.G, 1969). By these defining features of who a destitute is under Ghanaian law, the qualification of the child beggars as destitute is contestable. These are children who are staying with their parents, being physically fit, not rejected or abandoned and not qualified to seek employment. There may be reasons that are given by these people to deem themselves destitute but lay interpretations are not legal representations.

5.5 Dichotomy of opinions: *Mallams* versus Parents

Opinions of the parent participants on child begging and those expressed by the *mallams* were on divergent paths based on the research findings. Whilst all the *mallams* in this study were emphatic that begging was an act of illegality in the face of Islam (4.3.1), all the parents were of the opinion that begging was part of the religion. For the women, it is simple; a Muslim is a beggar. If the parents are holding these views, it is probably because they have never had any contrary version to the effect that child begging or begging in general is illegal or unacceptable in Islam and in Ghana. This then poses a task on the *Dagbon* clergy and government to disseminate information about the stance of Islam and the state on child begging. This can be done through radio programmes, or using the Friday sermons.

However, it appears that using the Friday sermons to disseminate information in an effort to end child begging will suffer some hiccups. This is because, during my interaction with the parents, I asked them what they thought could be done to, if not eliminate the incidence of child begging in the area but, put it at the barest minimum. One suggestion from a parent was that the Friday sermons could be the medium through which the desired information will reach the targeted audience. But that idea was completely rejected by other participants on grounds that

the Imam will not have the moral authority and courage to advise people not to send their children to go and beg because his children are also begging.

The question that then arises is, are people turning a blind eye on a religious, global, continental and national position on the issue of child begging or they are acting on the spate of ignorance? This is because, from a religious point and from the various Conventions, Charters and Acts, one can conclude without malice that begging is illegal from the global, African and Ghanaian context. The reason is, it is exploitative, hazardous and more importantly, interferes with the educational pursuits of the children involved. But Omeni (2015) argues that begging teaches children humility. It is also seen as a survival strategy for the begging children (Kaushik, 2014). This idea that begging contributes positively regarding some aspects of the children's lives is well noted. However, there is the issue of voice here because the children in the study have an expressed desire to be in school so their voices must be listened to.

Additionally, Islam's role in child begging was highlighted by the *mallams*. The accounts given by these participants revealed the historical link of child begging and Islam in *Dagbon* of Northern Ghana. The "*Karimba*" or *Afa* was the reservoir of religious knowledge and people, desirous of giving their children religious knowledge, will give their children to the *Afa* for religious training. The *Afa* was not paid a dime but depended on people's magnanimity for survival. With many children in the house, he had no other option than to allow the children to go out to solicit for people's kindness through begging. The historical link between Islam and begging as described here by the *mallams* resonates with that of (Einarsdottir & Boiro, 2015). The *Afa* in *Dagbon* is similar to the *marabouts* in Gambia, Senegal and Guinea Bissau who have also allow their students to beg in the streets (Thorsen, 2012) and (Einarsdottir & Boiro, 2015). It is imperative for a clarification to be made here that the historical link of begging and Islam in *Dagbon*, as given by the *mallams*, has nothing to do with this current child beggars in the area. These children, unlike their colleagues in Nigeria, Senegal, Gambia and Guinea-Bissau are living with their parents not the *mallams* and the parents allow or sometimes force them to engage in begging.

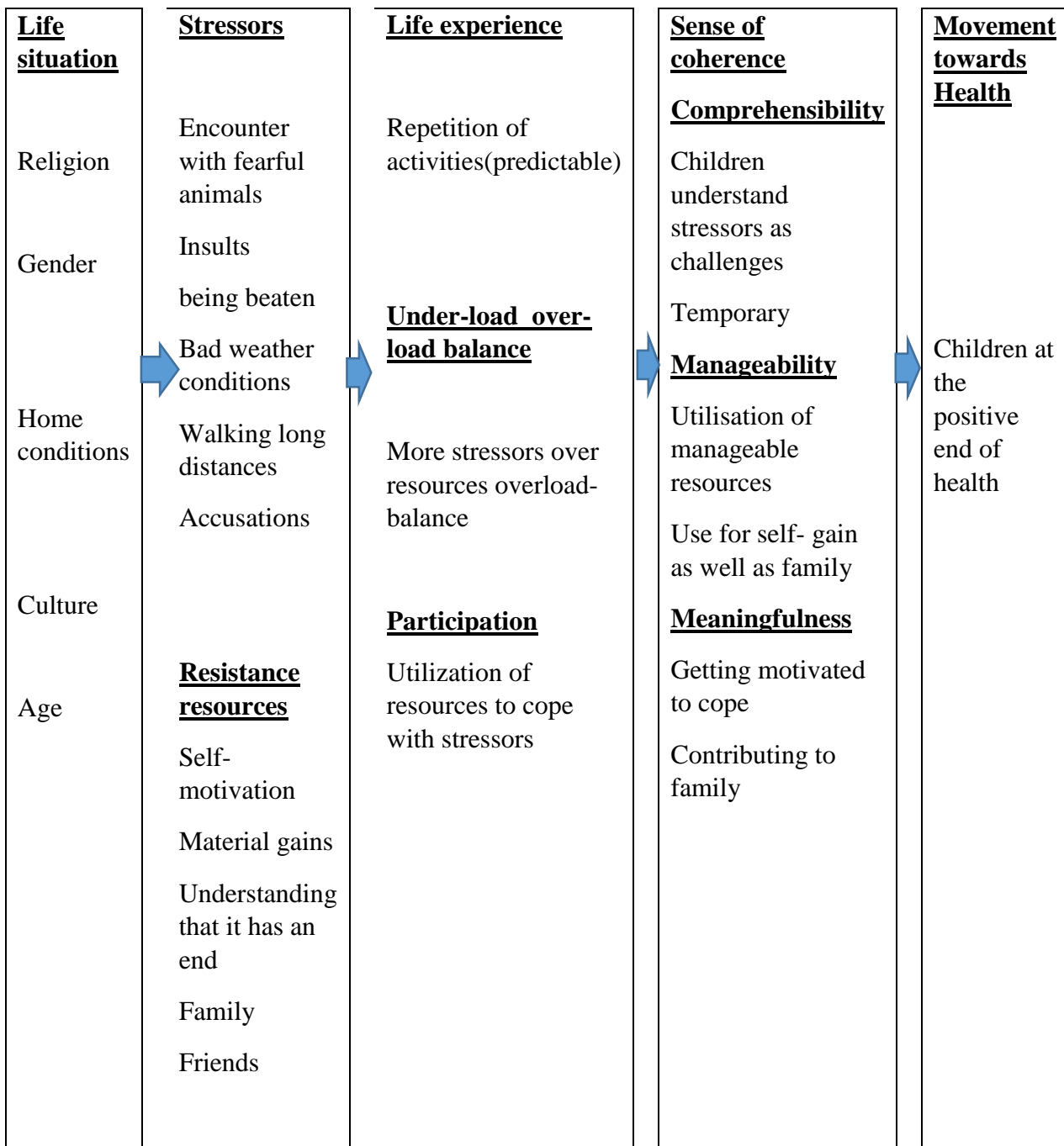
The nexus then is, since the *Afa* or *Karimba* who was seen as more knowledgeable did not see anything wrong in sending their students to beg, it opened the door for people to think that Muslim child begging was an acceptable practice and therefore, children who were not in the same situation as the *Karimbias* were pushed out by their parents to go and beg. This could be the reason why it is only boys who are involved in begging in the area because girls were never

given out to the *Karimba* for religious studies. Therefore, this current act of child begging in the area can be traced to what pertained in the past during the *Makaranta* system under the *Karimba*. This system has almost phased out in the cities and remnants of it are found in the villages.

5.6 Discussing the findings in relation to the theory of salutogenesis

The concept of salutogenesis has already been mentioned earlier in chapter two under the literature review and theoretical framework. The main focus of the salutogenic theory is on people's perceptions about life, how to make meaning out of life's situation and then be able to utilise existing resources to address the challenges emanating from the environment as stressors. All these are fitted into the Sense of Coherence (Lindström & Eriksson, 2006). This research will expand knowledge on the salutogenic theory because it depicts how the Muslim child beggars' utilization of the GRRs shapes their SOC and thus makes an impact on their movement towards health.

Figure 10: The Salutogenic Model applied to this Study



As shown in the diagram above, the Muslim child beggars are immersed in situations emerging from their religious affiliation, gender, home conditions and age which have influence on their lives. These factors put pressure on the children the results of which make them become beggars. Their status as beggars is not something that they are enthused with which puts them into stressful situations. However, they must overcome the stressors and this is only possible

when they are able to identify and utilise readily available resources to be able to cope with the situation.

5.7.1 Stressors and Generalized Resistance Resources

The Muslim child beggars in this study have a lot of negative experiences that can be described as stressful. For example, in their daily engagement in begging, they come into situations when they are being chased by animals like dogs and monkeys. This makes the begging life very stressful for the children. They are also insulted or beaten by people at the places where they go to beg and are affected by the weather as they sometimes go to beg under extreme weather conditions. One thing that is certain in all these circumstances is that the begging life for the children at *Tingsheli* is not easy. However, they have the energy and desire to go on with begging despite the fact that they have negative experiences associated with the act. Their earnings, family, friends and their inner thoughts are their sources of motivation for their continuous engagement in begging though they face many challenges. These factors can be termed as their Generalized Resistance Resources (GRRs) which Antonovsky (1996) explains as the property at the disposal of a person that makes him capable of coping with a stressful condition.

5.7.2 Life Experiences

The continuous engagement of the children in begging means they have accumulated enough experiences to be able to determine the consequences of their actions. For instance, they go to beg on Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays and they are aware that in the course of begging, they may be insulted, chased by dogs or even beaten by people. They do not have control over the days that begging should be done. It is out of the domains of their own individual choices and they have to strictly abide by the prevailing conditions. They also know that means through which they reach their places of begging is walking and they are the ones who determine which particular village to go without being dictated to. These are recurring experiences on weekly basis which become more internalised hence more understandable to the children which makes it possible for them to make predictions about their begging life.

Despite the fact that the children can make predictions about their begging life, it is not all instances that they are capable of making accurate forecasts. For example, the children know that insults, encounters with fearful animals and beatings are associated with begging but, it is not possible for them to know which community people will insult or beat them or what might trigger those nasty incidences of physical and verbal aggression. This becomes a difficult

situation to manage and a source of anxiety to them. Begging therefore, is seen as demeaning or dehumanizing because it points to the reality that it is not everything that humans are capable of taking charge completely.

5.7.3 Under load-overload balance

The situation of under load balance is noted at the instance of life experiences culminating in excess resources over stressors. Conversely, overload marks a situation when the existing stressors overshadow available resources (Antonovsky, 1996).

Undoubtedly, the children have resources at their disposal which they use to counter the effects of the stressors but it appears that the resources available to them do not commensurate the stressors so they are not excited with the situation. What is implied here is that stressors are inevitable elements in our lives so eliminating them completely will be difficult. This supports Antonovsky (1979) assertion that stressors are in multitudes in human existence. The gist of the above explanation is that the children are overwhelmed by the stressors and since they (stressors) are part of human existence at all times, what is to be done is for the children to realise the resources available to them and be able to use them to thrive in spite of the difficult conditions they are in. The children's notion of begging being a temporary activity is a resource that brings balance. This is the salient factor that underlies the salutogenic concept.

5.7.4 Participation

Antonovsky (1996), indicates that the determining factor of the strength of one's Sense of Coherence is participating in socially cherished decision processes. This could mean the interplay between the resources available to an individual and how he uses them to overcome the stressors that confront him. In the context of the Muslim child beggars, they have resources like friends and family with whom they discuss their problems for solutions to be found. For instance, through their interactions with their families, the children have come to the realisation that they are significant members within their families and their circumstances as child beggars are interpreted to mean contribution to the family's well-being. This relates to Antonovsky's premise above, that the significant factor in salutogenesis is to have a strong SOC as an enabling factor to use the resources available to deal with the stressors.

5.7.5 Sense of Coherence

The children, in interpreting their life situation as beggars, see that it makes sense to them thereby resulting in the emergence of strong SOC which has been explained in chapter two (2).

With a strong SOC, the children see their condition as meaningful, manageable and comprehensible.

5.7.6 Comprehensibility

These children have their desires to fulfil which serves as motivators. They see begging as something that they do for the sustenance of their families. This secures them a position in the family hierarchy which makes them feel important and they see their begging life worthy of explanation and a right course of action. Also, their thoughts about the discontinuity with begging due to age limitation means that the situation was predictable and consistent. Additionally, the social connections they have and which they rely upon in times of need or difficulty make life a structured one for them. All these are the internal and external stimuli which Antonovsky (1987) describes as the cognitive processes that make it possible for one to utilise the existing resources to deal with the stressors. The cumulative effect is that the children find their begging life more comprehensible.

5.7.7 Manageability

The children's experiences as they engage in begging have really shaped their SOC. For example, they confer with their friends and family what their problems are, and are given words of encouragement from these significant others which help them to manage the stressors. This illustrates the fact that the children are aware of the need to maintain good health which can be achieved by using the resources available to them such as the social connections. Their reflective thoughts also contribute in helping them to view life in a positive light and making meaning to them which makes it possible for them to move towards good health.

5.7.8 Meaningfulness

This is an aspect of the SOC that makes an individual desirous of maintaining good health because life is meaningful. Lindström and Eriksson (2010) describe this as the motivational aspect of the SOC. The Ottawa Charter, WHO (1986) describes health as a resource for everyday living. If that is the case, the children in this study will do everything to continue to stay healthy to keep on with life. They will achieve this by drawing on the existing and available resources to them. Their testimonies that, sometimes they go voluntarily to beg, point to the fact that they see their begging life as a worthy course of action. They will therefore want to maintain good health to be able to work towards helping to sustain their families through begging.

5.7.9 Movement towards Health

How the child beggars move towards health will greatly depend on the strength of their SOC which Antonovsky says, as has been indicated earlier, is the salient determinant of how a person moves towards health.

The children in this study will be described as those with a strong sense of coherence. This is because, one of the conditions to be met for participation in this research was for the participants to be a regular beggar. There are other children in the village who are beggars but are not regularly involved in it. Perhaps, they are not regular because their SOC is weak making them incapable of identifying the resources available to them to deal with the stressors associated with begging and being able to utilize those resources. This will affect their movement towards good health. Those who are regular beggars are able to capitalise on their social affinities and freely involve themselves in family activities which they see as normal occurrences which is a sign of strong SOC.

This research with the Muslim child beggars at *Tingsheli* has contributed knowledge by bringing to the fore the applicability of the theory of salutogenesis in the population of Muslim child beggars. It has revealed the reasons behind the children's engagement in begging in spite of the adversities associated with it. This I will say, is an example of how, with a strong SOC, "misfortunes" can be changed to "blessings" from the perspective of salutogenesis.

5.8 Limitations of the study

There are some limitations as far as this research is concern and these are presented. One thing which I thought could have enriched the data was to include the school teachers of these children to verify from them whether begging was affecting their class performance. This could be done by looking at the class attendance and their examination scores in their various classes and then compare them with those of the non-begging children. This will have made it possible to conclude that begging was having an effect on their academic performance.

Also, I felt I should have asked the children who introduced them to begging. I realised the importance of such a question during my interaction with the parents in the focus group discussions especially the men, who vehemently denied any association with the children's begging. For them, the children were doing it for themselves but how the children started it would have been appropriate to ascertain the veracity of the parent's assertion.

Coincidentally, all the *mallam* participants were from the *Ahlul-Sunna* sect of Muslims. Though they constitute majority of the Muslim population in Ghana and the Northern region in particular, it would have been appropriate if all the various sects of Muslims in the area were captured to get their perspectives on Muslim child begging. This would have made the findings more representative of the position of Islam on child begging.

There were few participants in this study which might raise questions when it comes to generalisation. However, it does open the door through which the experiences of Muslim child beggars in *Dagbon* of Northern Ghana are brought to the fore which can illuminate further research into the issue. This was due to limited time of three months for the data collection but even with that, during the data collection, I was able to achieve saturation.

The use of a female research assistant could have also in some way undermined the quality of the data. For example, when I listened to the recording after the focus group discussion, I noticed that some probing questions were needed at certain points to give clarity to certain statements but they were never asked.

Additionally, the number of participants for each focus group as used in this research is another limitation because it is suggested by researchers like Green and Thorogood (2014) that the required number for a focus group discussing should be between 6 and 12 participants. As much as I had six participants, their split into two gender specific groups of three participants per group might have affected the way the discussion would have gone though there were genuine reasons for their separation.

CHAPTER SIX CONCLUSION

This study aimed at identifying the resources at the disposal of the Muslim child beggars in *Dagbon* of Northern Ghana that enable them to cope in spite of the difficult conditions they face in their engagement in begging. Questions about the context and the circumstances in which these children beg encouraged the researcher to explore the phenomenon of Muslim child begging in the area from a broad scope by involving the children, *mallams* and the parents to get a comprehensive picture of the issue.

The children in this study enumerated the stressors they face as they engage in begging day after day. For instance, encounter with "fearful animals" such as dogs and monkeys was reported to be a common feature in their begging terrain. These animals sometimes chase them evoking fear and panic in the children. This has physical and psychological consequences such as being bitten by these animals like the dogs which can result in rabies. Additionally, exposure to the vagaries of the weather was another stressor to the children. Walking bare footed in the hot sun in the dry season of Northern Ghana is not a palatable experience. These exposures to high temperatures can cause skin cancer later in the lives of these children. So their current conditions as beggars may be having a negative score on their lives in the future.

Furthermore, these children are also recipients of verbal attacks from people at places where they go to beg which makes them feel dehumanized. This can lead to low self-esteem and may even affect their academic performance. Related to the verbal attack is physical attack on the child beggars by a section of the public. These attacks signal some degree of indifference regarding the plight of these children from a section of the populace from whom the children beg. This is an indication that the generosity signals of the Ghanaian society are eroding. These caveats of indifference exhibited by some people within the modern economic trends means parents risk causing harm to their children if they allow them to beg. But the society has to take a critical look at the issue of child begging with an objective lens. It is when that is done that these children will be taken out of the bracket of blame so that the best method in dealing with the issue can be realised.

Similarly, absence from school was a major stressor to these children. They believe this will affect their future with their current status as child beggars which is a transient economic venture with the gains decreasing as one advances in age. In their opinion, which is a reality, they should have been in school not trekking from village to village to beg. Interestingly, one

of the reasons for the children's involvement in begging was for payment of examination fees. This is a very serious aspect of the children's begging mantra because leaving school to beg for examination fees stands to perpetuate the very reason that makes them beggars, which is poverty. With no employable vocational skills and no formal education in the modern economy, the children will end up resorting to the primitive methods of farming as their fathers are currently engaged in which will definitely result in abject poverty creating a vicious cycle. What should also not be glossed over is the hidden levels of intelligence in these children. This is well illustrated by the excellent artistic work by some of them through their drawings and the explanations attributed to them. This calls for a concerted effort to ensure that the children realize their full potential through education. Though begging may be beneficial in some aspects to them, their desire to be in school ought to be fulfilled.

The parents in this study were fully aware of the importance of education and expressed their resolve to ensuring that their children get the desired education so that they can also come out of the economic doldrums in the near future. In this locality, the children are enrolled into both secular and religious education where they go to the *makaranta* early in the morning which they rarely miss, before they close at seven o'clock and then come home to prepare to go for the secular education. However, the desires of the parents and their action of allowing the children to beg are diametrically opposite to championing the course of better education for the children because begging is far from being a determinant of a child's academic success.

One major reason that makes the parents to send the children to beg is poverty. Indeed, reports show that the Northern region is one of the poorest regions in Ghana. It has little economic and employment opportunities with most of the people engaged in subsistence agriculture. The fact however is, begging is not an escape route to poverty but rather, it perpetuates it because the future prospects of these children are destroyed through the abuse of their innocence by making them become victims and solutions to the 'destitute' conditions of their parents.

A fundamental issue that was also raised by the parents was the high cost of education. Article 11 of the ACRWC stresses on the need to make education at the basic level universally free and compulsory for all children. Ghana being a signatory to the Charter means adhering to the dictates of its content. Practically however, there is a missing link between the contents of the ACRWC and the Children's Act which both emphasise children's education on one hand and what exists in reality on the ground on another hand. If at the basic level pupils are buying

books, furniture and paying examination fees, then the notion of "free" education as found in the ACRWC, Act 560 and the MDG2 is a pure rhetoric and needs to be properly redefined.

Child upbringing is a shared responsibility between the state and the parent. A close look at table 1 in the introduction chapter reveals that the state and the parent are almost at par in terms of catering for the needs of the child. It is therefore surprising that state agencies are sometimes at the forefront in harassing these children. Enacting penal laws, arresting and detaining these children does not come closer to the provisions of the international documents that seek to protect the rights of the child. The continuity of the act of begging even with the existence of these harassments which sometimes are in brutal fashion, points to the structural economic imbalances in our system which authorities must pay attention to and arrest, as it is the problem that compels people to resort to begging.

The opposing views held by the female parent-participants and their male counterparts in relation to who is responsible for the children's involvement in begging makes it even more complicated. For the females, the parents were the ones who send the children to beg but their male counterparts in this study were of the opinion that the children were doing it for their personal gains. The expensive mobile phones some of the children were holding were symbolic enough to support the views expressed by the male parents but the children cannot be blamed for begging for their personal financial gains. Why they started begging and those who introduced them to it are to blame not the children who ought not to be beggars in the first place. This has to do with parenting style and the lukewarm attitude of the state authorities and some parents to cater for the needs of their children by citing economic constraints. From both cultural and religious perspectives, it is not children who should provide for themselves and the family the basic needs such as food. What pertains in this instance is responsibility reversal where parental responsibility is exchanged with the children in which families are direct beneficiaries of the children's toils as they then become hewers of wood and drawers of water.

What emerged from the study in relation to Islam and begging in general and child begging in particular was that, it is unacceptable practice in the view of Islam. All the three *mallams* who were interviewed held this position of the unacceptability of begging in the religion. This makes the views of the parents and the *mallams* divergent because in the opinion of the parents Muslims are beggars which runs contrary to the position of Islam according to the *mallams*. However, from the explanations of the *mallams*, a Muslim can beg under certain circumstances which include people in destitution, orphans, the highly indebted and those involved in

calamities. If the religion creates this window of opportunity, then implicitly some Muslims will capitalise on that to be involved in begging since there are no exact bench marks in existence for the determination of these categories of people. For instance, the level of destitution at which a person can then beg is difficult to determine so, a lacuna is created which makes it easy for people to fall into this category and qualify to be beggars.

The *mallams* in this study indicated that there are economic mitigating measures in the religion to assist the poor and the needy to curb the incidence of begging among Muslims. These include *kafaara*, *sadaqqa*, *zakatul- fitr*, and *zakat*. With the exception of *zakat*, the other three are optional. Even with *zakat*, it depends on people's economic status and their willingness to give making it also, to some extent, optional because defaulters can neither be identified nor forced to pay especially with the poverty situation of Northern Ghana. This depicts an existing problem in relation to these economic safety nets prescribed by the religion because there is no Islamic regulatory body to see to the functionality of these economic mitigating measures.

The children in this study, surprisingly however, were not deterred by these negative experiences and continued with begging. The reason behind their continuity with begging in spite of the adversities was the availability of positive resources or Generalised Resistant Resources at their disposal that enabled them to counter the negative effects of begging. Words of encouragement from their friends and family, their own belief systems, where they see their current status as beggars to be temporal, the gains they were making out of begging and more importantly their belief that they were making significant contributions to their families were the salient factors contributing to their ability to cope with begging.

The children also had a strong Sense of Coherence which is manifested across the three components of comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness that define it. With regards to comprehensibility, the children understood their status as child beggars and the challenges engrained in it. Manageability means their appraisal of the situation and accepting that there are resources that they can employ to deal with it which they did. In relation to meaningfulness, it means the children really see the challenges as worthy of investment which the children had done that made them cope with begging.

This study has contributed empirical knowledge on the experiences of Muslim child beggars from their own perspective focusing on those who are coping. It therefore makes a significant contribution in feeling the gaps in the literature in relation to Muslim child beggars especially

at the instance where their parents and the *mallams* are brought together in a single study like this. These findings can be applied to child beggars in similar conditions in Africa or elsewhere.

In conclusion, the child beggars in the study have stressors like being beaten, insults and missing school, but at the same time there have resources that enable them to cope with those negativities. Moreover, the children show strong sense of coherence by being able to use the resources available to them which makes it possible for them to cope with the adverse conditions. Regrettably however, one reason that all the children mentioned as a factor for their involvement in Begging was the payment of school fees calling to question the functions of state institutions charged with the responsibility of catering for the welfare of the child.

Recommendations

The issue of child begging is a complex phenomenon especially when attempts are to be made to eradicate it. As delicate and complex as it appears, certain steps can be taken to gradually eliminate it from the communities where it exists.

The first step is putting in place a vibrant national child policy. Luckily, Ghana has a child policy which is Act 560 but it appears to be dormant. Therefore, many are not even aware of its existence especially when majority of the population are illiterates. It therefore behoves the leadership of the country to initiate policies that will be consistently functional as a way of making them inure to the benefit of the children. The district assemblies should also liaise with the assembly men of areas where child begging exists as a measure of working in partnership with those communities to eliminate the problem. Discussing the problem with the people and giving them the opportunity to initiate their own solutions will make them feel empowered in solving their own problem.

Additionally, governments must take the initiative of distributing school uniforms, bags and exercise books to school children. This will take off some of the economic burdens of the parents who have to buy uniforms and books for their children. This will help keep the children in school. Also, the School Feeding Programme for deprived areas should be a priority of the government through district assemblies.

The Muslim clergy must also step in to re-educate the Muslim communities on the relationship between begging and Islam. This will help disabuse the minds of parents who think Islam and begging co-exist.

Further research should look at including the school teachers of these child beggars to be able to get their comprehensive academic progress report. The question of who introduced the children to begging will also be an interesting aspect in further research. Furthermore, I will suggest that further research should look at the issue of the *mallams* by including the various sects of Islam to get a representative position of the religion.

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APPENDICES

Appendix (I): Interview guides

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE MALLAMS

1: Is child begging an acceptable practice in Islam

what does Islam say about child upbringing?

2: Are there references in the Qur'an on begging?

(a) who should beg?

(b) who should not beg?

3: Why is begging associated with Islam?

Example non-Muslims using the Islamic attire for purposes of begging

4: Why do parents send their children out to beg?

5: What is your position on child begging?

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

1: What is the good way to raise children?

2: What are the things that can harm children?

(a) How does begging affect children?

3: How is schooling important?

What is the family's position on education?

4: What does government say about education?

How do you see the current educational system?

5: What do parents hope their children to become?

6: What is your experience on begging?

7: Why will parents send their children to beg?

DRAW AND TELL FOR CHILDREN

1: Draw something that makes you like begging

What other things make you like begging?

2: Draw something that makes you hate begging

What other things make you hate begging?

3: Each participant to explain his drawings

4: What do you hope should be done about child begging?

Appendix (II): Explanation of the study to participants and parents whose children are participating

EXPLANATION OF THE STUDY TO THE MALLAMS

This study is in fulfilment of the requirement for the master's programme that I am pursuing at the University of Bergen, Norway. It is not a funded research project. The project however touches on important issue of child begging. I believe that working with you on a topic like this will bring your experiences to bear on the issue which will definitely enrich my data as realistic accounts of the phenomenon of child begging in this community will be produced. Whatever is been discussed and recorded will never be passed on to anybody in the community or elsewhere except my supervisor in Norway and your names will not be included in the report. The recordings will be destroyed after transcription is done.

You are free to withdraw from participation anytime you feel you no longer want to be part of the research process. You are also at liberty to refuse to answer any question that you do not want to answer.

Kindly read and sign this attached form if you agree to participate.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Fuseini Tufeiru.

Tel: 0244412872

EXPLANATION OF THE STUDY TO THE PARENT PARTICIPANTS

This study is in fulfilment of the requirement for the master's programme that I am pursuing at the University of Bergen, Norway. It is not a funded research project. The project however touches on important issue of child begging. I believe that working with you on a topic like this will bring your experiences to bear on the issue which will definitely enrich my data as realistic accounts of the phenomenon of child begging in this community will be produced. Whatever is been discussed and recorded will never be passed on to anybody in the community or elsewhere except my supervisor in Norway and your names will not be included in the report. The recordings will be destroyed after transcription is done.

You are free to withdraw from participation anytime you feel you no longer want to be part of the research process. You are also at liberty to refuse to answer any question that you do not want to answer.

Kindly read and sign this attached form if you agree to participate.

Thank you very much for your co-operation

EXPLANATION OF THE STUDY TO PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN WILL BE PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY.

This study is in fulfilment of the requirement for the master's programme that I am pursuing at the University of Bergen, Norway. It is not a funded research project. Your child is needed to participate in the research and your consent is being sought for his participation. The study touches on an important issue of child begging. I believe that working with your child on a topic like this will bring his experiences to bear on the issue which will definitely enrich my

data as realistic accounts of the phenomenon of child begging in this community will be produced. Whatever is been discussed and recorded will never be passed on to anybody in the community or elsewhere except my supervisor in Norway and his name will not be included in the report. The recordings will be destroyed after transcription is done.

He is free to withdraw from participation anytime he feels he no longer wants to be part of the research process. He is also at liberty to refuse to answer any question that he does not want to answer.

Kindly read and sign this attached form if you agree to his participation.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

Fuseini Tufeiru.

Tel: 0244412872

EXPLANATION OF THE STUDY TO THE CHILDREN

This study is in fulfilment of the requirement for the master's programme that I am pursuing at the University of Bergen, Norway. It is not a funded research project. The project however touches on important issue of child begging. I believe that working with you on a topic like this will bring your experiences to bear on the issue which will definitely enrich my data as realistic accounts of the phenomenon of child begging in this community will be produced. Whatever is discussed and recorded will never be passed on to anybody in the community or elsewhere except my supervisor in Norway and your names will not be included in the report. The recordings will be destroyed after transcription is done.

You are free to withdraw from participation anytime you feel you no longer want to be part of the research process. You are also at liberty to refuse to answer any question that you do not want to answer.

Kindly read and sign this attached form if you agree to participate.

Thank you very much for your co-operation.

APPENDIX (III): Consent and assent forms

CONSENT FORM FOR THE PARENT-PARTICIPANTS

The purpose of the study has been explained to me and it is well understood. Three groups will be involved in the study with sessions lasting about an hour each.

I am also told that my name will not be mentioned anywhere in the report and whatever is been discussed will not be traced to me. The information I provide will not be passed on to anybody in the community except the researcher's supervisor in Norway. I am also aware that the recordings will be destroyed after the researcher has transcribed the data. I can also withdraw from participation anytime I do not want to be part of the research.

Name :

Signature :

Date :

CONSENT FORM FOR THE MALAMS

The purpose of the study has been explained to me and it is well understood. Three groups will be involved in the study with sessions lasting about an hour each.

I am also told that my name will not be mentioned anywhere in the report and whatever is been discussed will not be traced to me. The information I provide will not be passed on to anybody in the community except the researcher's supervisor in Norway. I am also aware that the recordings will be destroyed after the researcher has transcribed the data and that I can withdraw from participation anytime I desire so

Name :

Signature :

Date :

ASSENT FORM FOR THE CHILDREN

The purpose of the study has been explained to me and it is well understood. Three groups will be involved in the study with sessions lasting about an hour each.

I am also told that my name will not be mentioned anywhere in the report and whatever is been discussed will not be traced to me. The information I provide will not be passed on to anybody in the community except the researcher's supervisor in Norway. I am also aware that the recordings will be destroyed after the researcher has transcribed the data.

Name :

Signature : Date :

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS WHOSE CHILDREN ARE PARTICIPATING

The purpose of the study has been explained to me and it is well understood. I have given consent for my child's participation in the research which is going to be in three sessions with each lasting about an hour.

I am also aware that the information that my child provides will not be passed on to anybody in this community or elsewhere except the researcher's supervisor in Norway. I am also told that my child is at liberty to withdraw from the research anytime he feels he does not want to be part of it.

That the recordings will be destroyed after the data are transcribed

Name

Signature

Appendix (IV) : Letter of permission (NSD, Norway)

Norsk samfunnsvitenskapelig datatjeneste AS
NORWEGIAN SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA SERVICES



Harald Hårfagres gate 29
N 5007 Bergen
Norway
Tel: +47-55 58 21 17
Fax: +47-55 58 96 50
nsd@nsd.uib.no
www.nsd.uib.no
Org.nr. 985 321 884

Marguerite Daniel
HEMIL-senteret Universitetet i Bergen
Christiesgt. 13
5015 BERGEN

Vår dato: 10.06.2015

Vår ref: 43411 / 3 / AGL

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

TILBAKEMELDING PÅ MELDING OM BEHANDLING AV PERSONOPPLYSNINGER

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 10.05.2015. Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

43411	<i>The experiences of Muslim child beggars in Dagbon of Northern Ghana, an exploratory study from the perspective of salutogenesis</i>
Behandlingsansvarlig	Universitetet i Bergen, ved institusjonens øverste leder
Daglig ansvarlig	Marguerite Daniel
Student	Tufeiru Fuseini

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres.

Personvernombudets tilråding forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema, <http://www.nsd.uib.no/personvern/meldeplikt/skjema.html>. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en offentlig database, <http://pvo.nsd.no/prosjekt>.

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 06.09.2015, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Audun Løvlie

Kontaktperson: Audun Løvlie tlf: 55 58 23 07

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Avdelingskontorer / District Offices

OSLO: NSD, Universitetet i Oslo, Postboks 1055 Blindern, 0316 Oslo. Tel: +47-22 85 52 11. nsd@uio.no
TRONDHEIM: NSD, Norges teknisk naturvitenskapelige universitet, 7031 Trondheim. Tel: +47 73 59 19 07. kyrr.svarva@svt.ntnu.no
TROMSØ: NSD, SVI, Universitetet i Tromsø, 9037 Tromsø. Tel: +47 77 61 43 36. nsdmaa@svi.uib.no

Personvernombudet for forskning



Prosjektvurdering - Kommentar

Prosjektnr: 43411

The purpose of this research is to explore stressors and the coping strategies of Dagomba Muslim child beggars in Northern Ghana as child begging is common phenomenon within that area which is occupied by the Dogombas who are predominantly Muslims.

The sample will receive written information about the project, and give their consent to participate. The letter of information is well formulated, but we ask that a date for the end of the project is added (6th September 2015).

Please note that when children actively participate in research, participation is always voluntary, even though parents have given their consent. Children should be given information adapted to their age, and it must be made sure that they understand that their participation is voluntary and that they can withdraw at any time.

There will be registered sensitive information relating to ethnic origin and religious beliefs, and health.

The Data Protection Official presupposes that the researcher follows internal routines of Universitetet i Bergen regarding data security. If personal data is to be stored on a private computer/portable storage devices, the information should be adequately encrypted.

A research assistant is data processor for the project. Universitetet i Bergen should make a data processing agreement with the research regarding the processing of personal data, cf. Personal Data Act § 15. For advice on what the data processor agreement should contain, please see:
<http://www.datatilsynet.no/English/Publications/Data-processor-agreements/>.

Estimated end date of the project is 06.09.2015. According to the notification form all collected data will be made anonymous by this date. Making the data anonymous entails processing it in such a way that no individuals can be recognised. This is done by:

- deleting all direct personal data (such as names/lists of reference numbers)
- deleting/rewriting indirectly identifiable data (i.e. an identifying combination of background variables, such as residence/work place, age and gender)

Please note the data processor (research assistant) must delete all personal information connected to the project.

Appendix (V): Permission from Gender and Children Ministry-Ghana

DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN

(MINISTRY OF GENDER, CHILDREN AND SOCIAL PROTECTION)

In case of reply, the
Number and date of this
Letter should be quoted.



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

C/o Regional Coordinating Council
Post Office Box 713
Tamale, Northern Region
Tel: 03720-22379

Our Ref DoC/NR/15/01

Your Ref.....

Date: 21st July, 2015

e University of Bergen,
HEMIL- senteret,
Christian gate 13,
5015, Bergen.

PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

The Department wishes to give the bearer (Tufeiru Fuseini) of this letter the permission to carry out his research titled **“the experiences of Muslim child Beggars in Dagbon of Northern Ghana, and exploratory study from the perspective of Salutogenesis”** in partial fulfillment for the Award of a Master of Philosophy in Health Promotion.

It is our hope that the bearer will be given the necessary assistance and support.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully


IDDRISU S. AZABU

cc.

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Appendix (VI): Table: Thematic network

Basic themes	Organising themes	Global themes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Being forced to go to beg ➤ Insults ➤ Fearful encounters with animals ➤ Being beaten ➤ walking long distances ➤ Bad weather 	Negative daily experiences	Stressors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Missing school ➤ Vulnerable to join bad groups ➤ Accusations of stealing 	Long term consequences	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Monetary/material gains ➤ Contributing to family ➤ Understanding begging has an end 	Self-motivation	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Parents ➤ Friends persuasion 	Relations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching children good morals ➤ Educating the children ➤ Learning of vocational skills ➤ doing good to others ➤ Engage in income earning activities 	Acceptable practices in Islam	The voice of Islam
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Begging of all form ➤ Parental irresponsibility ➤ Beating of children 	Unacceptable practices	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ People in serious economic crisis ➤ Orphans ➤ People involved in calamity ➤ Highly indebted individual 	Exceptional cases on begging	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Zakat ➤ Zakatul-Fitr ➤ Giving alms ➤ Atonement (Kafaara) 	Forms of assistance in Islam	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Getting letters read ➤ Not being cheated ➤ Building good houses ➤ Buying tractors 	Importance of Education	Child education and parental responsibility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government not providing basic facilities ➤ High school fees 	Educational challenges	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Children to become scholars ➤ To occupy higher positions ➤ Learning the Quran secular education 	Parental aspirations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Teaching children good morals ➤ Give them peace of mind ➤ Be patient with them ➤ Education ➤ Give them vocational training 	Good ways of raising a child	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Poverty ➤ Tradition of the area ➤ Selfish gains ➤ Fathers not giving children money to go to school ➤ Mallams 	Casual factors of begging	