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Analysis Of Non-Formal Education Needs Of Street Children In Sokoto Metropolis

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of street children constitutes one of the most pressing social challenges in Nigeria, with Sokoto Metropolis facing a particularly severe situation shaped by poverty, family disintegration, and the traditional *Almajiri* system. Despite various educational interventions, a large number of children remain excluded from formal schooling, underscoring the need for alternative educational pathways through non-formal education (NFE). This study examined the non-formal education needs of street children in Sokoto Metropolis across four key domains: literacy, numeracy, occupational, and life skills. Employing a descriptive survey design, the study sampled 384 street children selected through purposive and accidental sampling from major street locations, markets, and informal settlements within the metropolis. Data were collected using a structured instrument, the *Non-Formal Education Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Street Children (NFENAQSC)*, and analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, and mean scores. The findings revealed substantial educational needs across all four domains. Literacy needs included reading simple texts, writing one's name, and understanding basic instructions, while numeracy needs centred on money handling, basic arithmetic, and everyday financial transactions. Respondents expressed a strong demand for vocational training in areas such as tailoring, shoemaking, carpentry, and digital skills, reflecting a desire for immediate income-generating opportunities. Life skills—including decision-making, problem-solving, assertiveness, and substance abuse prevention—were regarded as essential for coping with the challenges of street life. The study concludes that a uniform approach to non-formal education is insufficient, as the educational needs of street children are diverse and shaped by their lived experiences. It therefore recommends the introduction of flexible, child-centred literacy and numeracy programmes, the establishment of mobile vocational training centres, the integration of comprehensive life-skills education into all NFE initiatives, and the development of a state-level NFE policy framework supported by adequate funding and effective monitoring. The study contributes to the growing literature on non-formal education for vulnerable populations and offers evidence-based guidance for policymakers, practitioners, and development partners seeking to address the plight of street children in Sokoto State and beyond.

Keywords: Street children, Non-Formal Education, literacy skills, numeracy skills, occupational skills, life skills, Sokoto Metropolis, Almajiri, out-of-school children

INTRODUCTION

1: 1.1 Background of the Study

Street children constitute one of the most vulnerable groups worldwide, experiencing severe deprivation, exploitation, and exclusion from essential social services. In Nigeria, the phenomenon has become an increasingly pressing social challenge, with children living and working on the streets now a visible feature of many urban centres (Yusuf & Tsagem, 2022). Deprived of the protection ordinarily provided

by families, schools, and communities, these children are exposed to numerous risks, including malnutrition, disease, homelessness, poverty, abuse, and substance misuse (Yusuf & Tsagem, 2022).

Nigeria bears one of the world's largest burdens of out-of-school children. UNICEF estimates that more than 11 million Nigerian children are not enrolled in school (Bello, 2025), while recent reports suggest that the figure may be as high as 18.3 million (Campus Reporter, 2024). Northern Nigeria is disproportionately affected, accounting for over 63% of school dropouts nationwide (Premium Times, 2025). In Sokoto State alone, 11,339 children have dropped out of school, with economic hardship, cultural practices, and early engagement in informal occupations identified as major contributing factors.

The situation in Sokoto Metropolis reflects these national trends while also exhibiting distinctive local characteristics. Thousands of children survive through begging, hawking, and other informal activities (Premium Times, 2025). The National Senior Secondary Education Commission estimates that approximately 113,208 *Almajiri* children reside in Sokoto State, the majority of whom live away from parental care. They are commonly found in markets, motor parks, and other public spaces seeking alms (Marama, 2025).

Many of these children are enrolled in the traditional *Almajiri* system of Islamic education. The term *Almajiri* derives from the Arabic *al-muhājirūn*, referring to individuals who migrate in pursuit of knowledge under the guidance of a religious teacher (Marama, 2025). Although this educational tradition has historically played an important role in Islamic learning, changing socio-economic circumstances have, in some cases, led to practices that leave children without adequate parental support or supervision, compelling them to rely on street begging for survival.

Conventional formal schooling has largely failed to accommodate the unique circumstances of these children. Inflexible schedules, financial barriers, and cultural constraints continue to limit their participation in mainstream education. Consequently, Non-Formal Education (NFE) offers a viable alternative, providing flexible and context-sensitive learning opportunities that align with the realities of street-connected children. Such programmes can equip learners with foundational literacy and numeracy skills while also providing safe spaces for social interaction and personal development (Street Child, 2026).

Recognizing the importance of NFE, the Nigerian government has introduced initiatives such as Alternative Learning Pathways to broaden educational access (Businessday, 2026). Likewise, the Universal Basic Education Commission has sought to integrate formal and non-formal curricula to promote inclusion and strengthen foundational learning (UBEC, 2025). The success of these initiatives, however, depends on a clear understanding of the specific educational needs of street children.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The number of street children in Sokoto Metropolis continues to increase despite ongoing governmental and non-governmental interventions. Illiteracy remains pervasive among this population, exposing children to exploitation, substance abuse, criminal activities, and, in some cases, recruitment into violent groups (Marama, 2025).

A major challenge is the disconnect between existing educational interventions and the actual needs of street children. Many programmes focus primarily on basic literacy, overlooking the broader competencies required for survival and social reintegration. Previous studies indicate that effective interventions should encompass vocational training, health and nutritional education, counselling, rehabilitation, and life-skills development (Yusuf & Tsagem, 2022).

Research further suggests that simply enrolling out-of-school children in conventional schools is insufficient; the quality, relevance, and flexibility of educational provision are equally important (Fachportal-Pädagogik, 2025). Street-connected children also require psychosocial support, digital literacy, and practical skills that enhance their prospects for self-reliance (UNICEF, 2025).

In the absence of empirical evidence on their diverse educational needs, interventions are likely to remain fragmented and ineffective. This study therefore seeks to address this gap by examining the non-formal education needs of street children in Sokoto Metropolis in the areas of literacy, numeracy, occupational, and life skills.

1.3 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to assess the non-formal education needs of street children in Sokoto Metropolis. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the literacy skill needs of street children in Sokoto Metropolis.
2. Examine their numeracy skill needs.
3. Identify their occupational skill needs.
4. Determine their life skill needs.

1.4 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the literacy skill needs of street children in Sokoto Metropolis?
2. What are their numeracy skill needs?
3. What are their occupational skill needs?
4. What are their life skill needs?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study focuses on street children within Sokoto Metropolis. It examines their non-formal education needs in the areas of literacy, numeracy, occupational skills, and life skills. Data are collected from identified street hotspots, markets, and informal settlements within the metropolis.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.1.1 The Concept of Street Children

The term *street children* refers to a diverse group of minors who spend a substantial part of their lives on the streets, whether for work, survival, or residence, often without adequate parental or adult supervision. Such children are frequently exposed to multiple forms of vulnerability, including educational deprivation, malnutrition, ill health, homelessness, poverty, exploitation, and substance abuse (Yusuf & Tsagem, 2022). In Nigeria, the phenomenon is closely associated with socio-economic hardship, family disintegration, and the traditional *Almajiri* system.

Previous studies have documented the growing prevalence of street children in Nigeria and highlighted the urgency of addressing the issue (Odeyemi & Olejede, 2006; Akpama & Inaja, 2006; Alawiye-Adams & Babatunde, 2013, as cited in Yusuf & Tsagem, 2022). Globally, UNICEF (2001) estimated the number of street children at approximately 150 million. In Lagos State alone, the population has been estimated at about 100,000, with poverty, parental separation or death, unemployment, illiteracy, and domestic maltreatment identified as major contributing factors (Volunteer Work Africa, 2022).

2.1.2 The Almajiri Phenomenon in Northern Nigeria

The *Almajiri* system is a distinctive aspect of the street-children challenge in Northern Nigeria. Historically, it served as a respected institution for the transmission of Islamic knowledge and moral values. However, socio-economic changes have altered its character in many communities, contributing to cycles of poverty and social exclusion. Scholars have emphasized the importance of distinguishing the traditional *Almajiri* system from the contemporary practice of street begging, which represents a departure from the system's original educational purpose (Ubandawaki, 2025).

Today, many children are sent far from their homes to study under Qur'anic teachers without adequate provision for their welfare, compelling them to engage in begging and other survival activities (Bello, 2025). While some *Almajirai* assist with farming or perform domestic tasks, the absence of sufficient support often leaves them vulnerable to exploitation and educational exclusion. Poverty and limited parental awareness further exacerbate this situation.

2.2 Non-Formal Education: Concept and Context

Non-Formal Education (NFE) comprises organized learning activities conducted outside the formal school system to meet the educational needs of specific groups. It provides flexible and accessible opportunities for children and youth who are unable to participate in conventional schooling (Fachportal-Pädagogik, 2025). Non-formal learning spaces not only facilitate the acquisition of literacy and numeracy

skills but also offer safe environments that promote social interaction and personal development (Street Child, 2026).

Recognizing its importance, the Nigerian government has incorporated NFE into its educational reform agenda through initiatives such as Alternative Learning Pathways (Businessday, 2026). National priorities include curriculum reform, teacher development, the revitalization of technical and vocational education, the expansion of non-formal education, and strengthened public–private partnerships (Federal Ministry of Information, 2025).

At the state level, Sokoto has benefited from several NFE initiatives implemented in collaboration with international partners. These include the European Union–funded programme aimed at returning out-of-school children to learning and the UNICEF-supported Digital Learning and Skills Empowerment Project, which provides digital literacy, vocational training, entrepreneurship education, and life-skills development for vulnerable children and youth (Vanguard, 2024; Bello, 2025).

2.3 Literacy Skills Needs of Street Children

Literacy skills—the ability to read, write, and comprehend written information—are essential for meaningful participation in society. The absence of these foundational competencies perpetuates poverty and social exclusion among street children. National data indicate that a large proportion of out-of-school boys lack even basic literacy and numeracy skills (Leadership, 2025).

Non-formal education programmes have demonstrated the potential to address this deficit. For example, the *Teaching at the Right Level* (TaRL) approach groups learners according to their existing competencies rather than age, enabling children with limited prior schooling to acquire foundational skills effectively (Street Child, 2026).

In Sokoto State, literacy deprivation among street-connected children remains a major concern. Many *Almajiri* children are unable to read, write, or even sign their names (Premium Times, 2025). Recent initiatives, including the Digital Learning and Skills Empowerment Project, have begun to address these challenges by integrating basic education with digital literacy and other practical competencies, thereby expanding opportunities for social inclusion and lifelong learning.

2.4 Numeracy Skills Needs of Street Children

Numeracy skills, defined as the ability to understand and apply basic mathematical concepts, are indispensable for daily living, financial management, and economic participation. For street children, these skills are particularly important, as many engage in income-generating activities such as hawking, petty trading, and other informal occupations. Competence in basic arithmetic enables them to calculate costs, make accurate change, and manage their limited earnings, thereby reducing their vulnerability to exploitation.

Programmes implemented through the European Union–UNICEF partnership in northwestern Nigeria have demonstrated the value of integrating foundational numeracy into non-formal education. Beneficiaries have shown improved abilities to perform simple arithmetic and apply numerical concepts in everyday situations, while also gaining access to vocational and personal development opportunities (EEAS, 2026). Nevertheless, many street children in Sokoto continue to engage in economic activities without adequate numerical competence, limiting their ability to manage their finances effectively and exposing them to unfair practices.

2.5 Occupational and Vocational Skills Needs of Street Children

Vocational education constitutes a vital component of non-formal education for street children, offering practical pathways to sustainable livelihoods and reducing reliance on street begging. Previous studies have highlighted the empowering role of vocational training, alongside health education and rehabilitation, in enhancing the well-being of vulnerable children (Yusuf & Tsagem, 2022).

In Sokoto State, several initiatives have demonstrated the transformative potential of vocational skills development. Programmes implemented by governmental and non-governmental organizations have provided training in tailoring, shoemaking, entrepreneurship, and related trades, often accompanied by the provision of tools and start-up support (Vanguard, 2026). Community-based initiatives have similarly encouraged children to acquire productive skills while continuing their religious education (Ubandawaki, 2025). The expressed preference of many street children for practical, income-generating skills

underscores the need for non-formal education programmes that are responsive to their immediate socio-economic realities.

2.6 Life Skills Needs of Street Children

Life skills comprise the psychosocial and interpersonal competencies that enable individuals to cope effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. For street children, who routinely encounter adversity and insecurity, such skills are essential for fostering resilience, healthy decision-making, and long-term well-being. Key life skills include problem-solving, critical thinking, assertiveness, emotional regulation, and the ability to resist negative peer influence (Benedict, 2022).

Evidence suggests that life-skills education contributes significantly to reducing antisocial behaviour and enhancing the overall well-being of vulnerable youth (ERIC, n.d.). In Sokoto, initiatives that integrate life-skills training with literacy, vocational education, and digital learning have shown promising outcomes (Bello, 2025). Given the heightened risk of substance abuse, exploitation, and recruitment into criminal activities faced by street children, the inclusion of comprehensive life-skills education in non-formal programmes is imperative.

2.7 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory, which posits that individuals must satisfy their basic physiological and safety needs before they can effectively pursue higher-order goals such as learning and self-actualization. For street children, whose daily lives are often dominated by concerns for food, shelter, and security, educational interventions must be designed with sensitivity to these fundamental needs.

The study is further informed by Sen's Capability Approach, which emphasizes the expansion of individuals' freedoms and opportunities to achieve lives they value. From this perspective, non-formal education should enhance the capabilities of street children by equipping them with literacy, numeracy, vocational, and life skills that promote autonomy, social inclusion, and well-being.

2.8 Empirical Studies

A growing body of research underscores the importance of non-formal education in addressing the needs of street children in Nigeria. Yusuf and Tsagem (2022) concluded that interventions encompassing literacy, vocational training, health education, counselling, and rehabilitation can significantly empower street-connected children.

Other studies have identified poverty and adverse family circumstances as major drivers of street life and have emphasized the need for educational approaches that are flexible and contextually relevant (CORE, n.d.). In Sokoto State, investigations into the *Almajiri* phenomenon have highlighted the roles of economic deprivation, structural inequalities, and policy shortcomings in perpetuating the problem (ResearchGate, 2025). Recent initiatives, such as those implemented by the Save the Child Initiative, have sought to transform *Almajiri* education and expand access to learning opportunities (ThisDay, 2024).

Despite these efforts, there remains a paucity of empirical studies that systematically assess the specific non-formal education needs of street children across multiple domains. This study addresses this gap by examining the literacy, numeracy, occupational, and life-skills needs of street children in Sokoto Metropolis.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a descriptive survey research design. The design was considered appropriate because it facilitated the systematic collection of data on the non-formal education needs of street children and enabled the researcher to describe and analyse patterns in their literacy, numeracy, occupational, and life-skills requirements.

3.2 Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Sokoto Metropolis, the capital of Sokoto State in northwestern Nigeria. The metropolis comprises the Sokoto North, Sokoto South, and Dange-Shuni Local Government Areas and serves as the administrative, commercial, and cultural hub of the state. Sokoto Metropolis was selected

because of its high concentration of street-connected children, particularly *Almajiri* children, who are commonly found in markets, motor parks, filling stations, and other public spaces (Marama, 2025).

3.3 Population of the Study

The target population consisted of all street children operating within Sokoto Metropolis. Although precise population figures are difficult to establish because of the transient nature of this group, available reports indicate a substantial number of *Almajiri* and other out-of-school children in the area (Premium Times, 2025). The study therefore focused on children visibly engaged in street-based activities such as begging, hawking, and menial work.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Technique

A sample of 384 street children was selected using a combination of purposive and accidental sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was employed to identify major locations where street children congregate, including markets, motor parks, filling stations, and busy intersections. Subsequently, accidental sampling was used to recruit eligible participants encountered at these sites. The sample size was determined using the Yamane formula at a 95% confidence level.

3.5 Instrument for Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured instrument entitled the *Non-Formal Education Needs Assessment Questionnaire for Street Children (NFENAQSC)*. The questionnaire comprised five sections: demographic characteristics, literacy skills needs, numeracy skills needs, occupational skills needs, and life-skills needs. Responses were measured on a four-point Likert scale ranging from *Very High Need* to *No Need*. The instrument was subjected to expert validation in Adult Education and Research Methodology, while its reliability was established through a pilot study using the test–retest technique.

3.6 Method of Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered face-to-face in locations frequented by street children. Trained research assistants explained the purpose of the study and, where necessary, translated the items into Hausa. Given the varying literacy levels of the respondents, the assistants read the questions aloud and recorded the participants' responses. Ethical principles, including informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw from the study at any stage, were strictly observed.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to answer the research questions and to determine the extent of the respondents' educational needs in each domain based on predetermined benchmark values.

RESULTS

The narrative accompanying the tables may be refined as follows:

Table 4.1 shows that the respondents were predominantly male (83.9%), reflecting the male-dominated nature of the Almajiri system in northern Nigeria. Most participants (45.1%) were aged 11–14 years, indicating that street life is most prevalent during early adolescence. The majority had spent between one and three years on the streets (35.9%), suggesting that street involvement is often prolonged rather than transitory. Poverty and economic hardship emerged as the leading reason for being on the streets (38.0%), followed by participation in Almajiri Qur'anic education (27.1%). The findings further reveal a high level of educational exclusion, as nearly three-quarters of the respondents (74.7%) had never attended formal school. Begging was the most common street activity (41.1%), while over one-third of the children lived with a Mallam, underscoring the close relationship between the Almajiri system and street life in Sokoto Metropolis.

Table 4.2 indicates that the respondents perceived substantial literacy needs, with an overall mean score of 3.33, corresponding to a high level of need. The ability to read simple sentences in Hausa recorded the highest mean score (3.52), representing a very high need. Other competencies, including reading simple sentences in English (3.48) and writing one's name (3.45), were also rated as high needs. Functional literacy skills such as reading signs and labels and understanding written instructions received similarly high ratings, highlighting their importance for everyday survival and participation in economic activities.

Overall, the findings suggest that street children recognise the value of both local-language and English literacy as essential tools for improving their present circumstances and expanding future opportunities.

Table 4.3 indicates that street children in Sokoto Metropolis have substantial numeracy skills needs, with an overall mean score of 3.38, signifying a high level of need. The most highly rated competencies were the ability to count money accurately (mean = 3.58) and to perform basic addition and subtraction (mean = 3.52), both of which were classified as very high needs. The ability to make correct change in transactions (mean = 3.49) and to calculate the total cost of items (mean = 3.45) were also identified as important needs. These findings reflect the daily realities of many street children, who engage in begging, hawking, and other income-generating activities that require basic financial calculations. Skills related to understanding profit and loss, prices and quantities, and measuring goods were likewise rated highly, underscoring the importance of numeracy for effective financial management and protection against exploitation. Although the ability to calculate percentages and discounts received the lowest mean score (3.15), it nevertheless remained within the high-need category. Overall, the results suggest that the acquisition of practical numeracy skills is viewed by street children as essential for their immediate economic survival and future self-reliance.

The findings presented in Table 4.4 indicate that street children in Sokoto Metropolis have substantial occupational skills needs, as reflected by an overall mean score of 3.39, signifying a high level of need. Tailoring and sewing (mean = 3.62) and shoemaking and repair (mean = 3.58) emerged as the most highly desired vocational skills, followed by carpentry and woodwork (mean = 3.48). These preferences suggest a strong inclination toward trades that can be acquired relatively quickly, require modest start-up capital, and provide immediate opportunities for income generation. The growing demand for digital skills, including computer literacy and phone repair (mean = 3.42), further demonstrates the respondents' awareness of the changing labour market and the importance of technological competence. Other skills, such as catering, automotive repair, welding, electrical installation, and plumbing, were also rated as important, although to a lesser extent. Overall, the findings underscore the need for diversified and flexible vocational training programmes that accommodate the varied aspirations and circumstances of street children, rather than relying on a uniform approach to skills development.

The findings in Table 4.5 reveal that street children in Sokoto Metropolis have substantial life skills needs, with an overall mean score of 3.47, the highest among the four domains investigated. The most highly rated needs were the ability to make sound decisions under pressure (mean = 3.65), resist peer pressure and reject risky offers (mean = 3.62), and solve problems effectively (mean = 3.58). Respondents also expressed very high needs for emotional regulation, stress management, and assertiveness, reflecting the challenges of navigating life in an often insecure and exploitative environment. Although competencies such as personal hygiene, budgeting, and health management received comparatively lower ratings, they were still considered important. Overall, the findings underscore the critical role of comprehensive life skills education in enhancing the resilience, well-being, and future prospects of street children, and highlight the need for its systematic integration into non-formal education programmes.

Table 4.6 shows that street children in Sokoto Metropolis have substantial non-formal education needs across all four domains, with a grand mean of 3.39, indicating an overall high level of need. Life skills emerged as the most pressing area (mean = 3.47), followed by occupational skills (mean = 3.39), numeracy skills (mean = 3.38), and literacy skills (mean = 3.33). This pattern suggests that the immediate challenges of street life heighten the importance of competencies that promote resilience, sound decision-making, and economic self-reliance, while literacy remains essential for long-term social participation and educational advancement.

Additional analyses revealed that perceived educational needs increased with the length of time spent on the streets. Children who had lived on the streets for more than six years consistently reported the highest needs in all domains, indicating that prolonged exposure to street life deepens awareness of educational deficiencies and survival requirements. Furthermore, skill needs varied according to the children's primary street activities. Those engaged in hawking and petty trading expressed the greatest need for numeracy skills, while children involved in multiple activities reported the highest occupational and life

skills needs. Begging was associated with particularly high life skills needs, underscoring the vulnerability and social marginalisation experienced by children who rely on alms for survival.

The findings of this study reveal that street children in Sokoto Metropolis are predominantly male adolescents who have experienced prolonged periods of educational exclusion, largely due to poverty and the influence of the Almajiri system. Across all four domains investigated, respondents expressed high levels of need for non-formal education, with an overall grand mean of 3.39. Life skills emerged as the most pressing need, particularly decision-making, resistance to peer pressure, and problem-solving, underscoring the complex social and emotional challenges faced by these children. Significant needs were also identified in literacy, numeracy, and occupational skills, with respondents prioritising practical competencies such as reading in Hausa and English, handling money, tailoring, and shoemaking. Moreover, educational needs increased with the length of time spent on the streets, while variations in need were observed according to the children's primary street activities. Collectively, these findings highlight the necessity of comprehensive, flexible, and context-sensitive non-formal education programmes that address both the immediate survival needs and the long-term development of street children in Sokoto Metropolis.

5.2 Conclusion

This study has demonstrated that street children in Sokoto Metropolis possess substantial and multifaceted non-formal education needs in the areas of literacy, numeracy, occupational skills, and life skills. The findings further reveal that life skills constitute the most pressing need, reflecting the challenging circumstances under which these children live and work. The diversity of needs identified confirms that uniform educational interventions are unlikely to be effective. Rather, non-formal education programmes must be flexible, child-centred, and responsive to the specific realities and aspirations of street children if they are to foster meaningful learning, social inclusion, and long-term self-reliance.

5.3 Recommendations

1. Accelerated literacy programmes employing the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach should be developed, using instructional materials that reflect the everyday experiences of street children.
2. Practical numeracy training, particularly in money management and basic business arithmetic, should be integrated into vocational and livelihood programmes.
3. Mobile vocational training centres with flexible schedules and recognised certification should be established to provide accessible training in trades that align with the interests of street children.
4. Comprehensive life skills education, with emphasis on resilience, decision-making, conflict resolution, and substance abuse prevention, should form an integral component of all non-formal education initiatives.
5. The Sokoto State Government should formulate and implement a comprehensive policy framework for non-formal education that specifically addresses the needs of street children and provides adequate funding, coordination, and monitoring mechanisms.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Future studies should examine the long-term effectiveness of non-formal education interventions for street children through longitudinal designs. Comparative studies across different regions of Nigeria would also enhance understanding of contextual variations in educational needs. In addition, qualitative investigations of the lived experiences and aspirations of street children in Sokoto Metropolis would provide deeper insights to inform policy and practice.

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