

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Assessing the impact of environment on life styles and life chances among out of school youths in Lagos metropolis**

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**This research is motivated as a result of rapid changes in the lifestyle of our youths and the increasing deterioration of their welfare in terms of the increase in the number of out of school youth in the country, high incidence of child participation in economic activities and incidence of street children in Nigeria. Although, many researches have been conducted in areas of child welfare, most of these researches neglected the determining factors of these welfare indices as well as relationship between environment, poverty and life styles and life chances of our youth. This may have contributed to poor policy response to youth welfare in Nigeria as the literature has shown that child welfare continues to deteriorate. This study was based on primary survey data collected in Lagos between 7th and 21st of April, 2009 from 200 youth (boys and girls) aged 10-24. The sample, a one-stage purposive sampling, is representative of the city of Lagos. This stage increases the use of accidental sampling to select respondents around the Oshodi Motor parks. The individual based questionnaire schedule consists of 60 questions under six sub-sections. The purpose of the survey was to collect information on youth and vocational training. Retrospective longitudinal data were collected concerning residence, education, occupation, sexual unions, family backgrounds, and social attachments among others. Both male and female youth were asked about their perception on vocational training and skills acquisition. The quantitative data were entered, edited, transformed and cleaned. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in analyzing the data. Simple statistical techniques like Percentile and cross-tabulations were carried out. The study found among other things that participation in school or work is dictated by region, sector, child, parent and household characteristics. The study also noted that incidence of street children is a response to poverty, parental interest and regional and environment differences. The study thus suggested that policies aiming at improving child welfare in Nigeria should consider environment, sector, region, child, parents, household and community characteristics in their policy.**

**Key words:** Lagos, lifestyle, youth, Oshodi motor park, Nigeria.

## **INTRODUCTION**

African societies are characterized by a very slight quantitative population pressure on the environment but, this does not necessarily imply better management of natural resources. Therefore, for a better understanding of the situation, particularly the assessment of the impact of environment on the life styles and life chances of any

age cohort in any given society, the population variable should be considered within a wider social framework. The situation in Nigeria is a little bit different from other African countries because of the rate at which the Nigeria population is growing. According to the 2006 population census figures, Nigeria population stood at well over 140 million. To avert the danger population pressure might have on the environment due to such dramatic and unprecedented increases in the population resulting from the improved health facilities and decrease in the mortality

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rate, concerted efforts must be made to address the issue of population on the environment in Nigeria on the one hand and the impact of the environment on the life styles and the life chances of the citizenry on the other.

Having said the above, the relationship between population and the environment in African countries depends mainly on a variety of factors. Therefore, the lifestyles characterizing the behaviour of certain categories or groups of the population (particularly the youth) are important for understanding the interactions between youth population and environment. Also, several recent population changes seem rather important due to their impact on the environment. Put differently, until now, research on man-environment interactions had mainly centred on the physico-chemical monitoring of the environmental impact of man's various activities, while little attention was paid to the demographic aspect and to the different impact which the various population segments, such as men, women, the youth, the elderly, adults, families with different structures and economic conditions have on the consumption of natural resources. Unfortunately, too often in the past, development projects have taken place in developing countries, particularly in Nigeria without environmental impact assessment (EIA) studies or conscious efforts to predict and mitigate adverse environmental impacts (Mills-Tettey, 1989; Biswas, 1992; Olokesusi, 1992). Hence, in most cases, such projects have not only become destructive to the environment, but they have also endangered the very basis on which continuity and sustainability of development depends, on the one hand, and the health and socio-economic well being of the vulnerable groups such as the youth in the society on the other hand.

The youths are regarded as the most vulnerable in society. Therefore, their welfare in a society is an index of social and economic development of that society. The more important reason why youth welfare has to be monitored is because their contribution to the society in adulthood is determined to a large extent by their treatment in their childhood (Ray, 1998). Crucial as this matter is, youth welfare is included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (UNESCO, 2004). Youth is defined internationally as any person aged between 5 and 15 years while in Nigeria a youth is defined as any person between the age of 5 and 24 years. Child welfare indices consist of child labour, child schooling, street children and child health. Child labour and child schooling are regarded as two sides of the same coin. This is because the two are mutually exclusive activities. Child labourer which is different from street children in terms of their activities are therefore referred to as any person within these age brackets (5–15 years internationally or 5 and 24 years in Nigeria) engaged in work or employment on a regular basis with the aim of earning a livelihood for themselves or for their families. Exploitative child labour occurs when children, especially young ones, are exposed to long hours of work in dangerous environment

or are entrusted with too much responsibility without compensating psychosocial reward, or work. In addition, such activities are carried out at the expense of schooling; thereby children are not adequately prepared for the future in a modernizing society (Grootaert and Kanbur, 1995; UNICEF, 2004; FME, 2004). The out-of-school youth on the other hand is defined as any child who may have parents or guardians in the locality or elsewhere but are living and working in the street. Most often, street children are not distinguished in child labour analysis.

It is important to observe that the government in the pre-independence era was not indifferent to child welfare. For instance, the Children and Young Persons Law (CYPL) in several states in Nigeria contained laws regulating street trading and the fact that in the 1960s, at least four ILO conventions prohibiting children's work in various hazardous occupations and conditions were ratified (NBS, 2001). However, the enactment of the Labour Code in 1974 with several provisions to limit the age of admission into employment in various occupations as well as limits of working hours and exposure to hazards was a decisive legal action, which demonstrated the stance of government towards addressing child welfare. The ratification and signing of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) in 1991 represented the climax in government's positive stance to combat child labour in view of the fact that one of its articles targets the elimination of the phenomenon (Oloko, 1999). Article 32 enjoins state parties to recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development (UNICEF, 2001). In addition, the effort of government on child welfare precipitated President Olusegun Obasanjo to sign into law the child right bill in June 2006. However, it is sad to note that these efforts have made marginal impact on improving child welfare or specifically reducing incidence of child labour and out-of-school youth or street children (UNICEF, 2001). This is largely because these measures have been uncoordinated, not well implemented and largely un-enforced. For instance, studies conducted by various researchers in Nigeria (Oloko, 1990; 1992 and 1999; UNICEF, 2004; Imam, 1998; Onuikwe, 1998; and Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2006) show that the child labour and out-of-school youth or street children phenomenon are increasing in both practices and characteristics. It was also reported that gender restrictions in the involvement of children in work in certain crafts were found to have been eroded such that increasingly out-of-school boys and girls were found along our major streets and motor parks in urban centers engaged in most occupations. In other countries, studies attest the same story. UNICEF reported that in the year 2000 there were 233 million children between the ages of

5 and 18 years in urban areas in developing countries, doing one kind of paid work or the other (UNICEF, 2004). This development has grave economic and developmental consequences. Many studies have condemned child participation in economic activities and worst form of it (out-of-school youth or street children).

Demographically, about one-third of the world's population is between 10-24 years of age and four out of five people live in developing countries. This figure is expected to increase to 87% by the year 2020 (Friedman, 1993; Ainsworth and Over, 1994). In many countries, majority of young people are sexually experienced by the age of 20 and premarital sex is common among 15-19 years old (Rivers and Aggleton, 2005). Early sexual experience has been seen as one consequence of early exposures to certain lifestyle. This exposure is a product of human social environment. The physical and biological environments have effects on human behavioural development, but the social environment is the most influential of all. However, man is always confronted with certain basic questions like: How does the world around us operate? How do things work? Who are the people around us? etc.

The answer to these questions would give man full control over the environment. This situation may be handled well by the adult, but for the youths, it is a different ball game. This is because the environment has greater influence than any other factors in the lives of the youths and more so, children or the youths are found to be characterized by role confusion and the will to go against the normative construct of the society.

Weber (1864 – 1920) believes that where the life chance is determined by the class to which the individual belongs, lifestyle is determined by the status of another. Lifestyle is the totality of human social behavior, which separates one status from another and therefore increases social closure (Haralambos et al., 2004). Where class is a product of market situation, status is determined by respect, prestige, dignity and recognition. There is a complex interplay between lifestyle and life chances but the environment influences lifestyle.

As the world is characterized by inequalities, certain children enjoy benefits of life while others are deprived of it. Where some live in luxury, others live in penury, where some are under the care and protection of the parents. Others are all alone on the street, and where some children are hopeless cases, vandals, and uncultured, some are full of hope and expectations for a bright future. All of these are presence of latent problems in the future. With the increase number of unprotected youths living under the great influence of the environment, these children are made to be uncultured, vulnerable and are potential miscreants even at a very young age. The consequences of bad environment can be far-reaching for young people as it may trigger negative social reaction. These social reactions may not affect only the lives of these children, but the lives of all the people in their immediate environment and far beyond.

Given the significant number of young people living in developing countries who are exposed to these dangers, it is crucial that this work is undertaken to ensure that they are orientated, supported, protected and provided with basic necessities of life. This way, the better and greater future of the environment is unhindered and guaranteed. The general objective of this study is to critically assess the impact of environment on the life style and life chances of out-of-school youth in Nigeria. While the specific objectives of the study include: To examine the relationship between environment and the life style of our youths; To determine the net effects of the family socio-economic background on the life chances of out-of-school youths or street children; To evaluate the socio-concomitant effects of the increasing number of out-of-school youth on sustainable human development in Nigeria and to assess government policies on youth welfare in Nigeria.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study is based on primary survey data collected in Lagos between 7th and 21st of April 2009 from 200 youth (boys and girls) aged 10 – 24. The sample, a one-stage purposive sampling, is representative of the city of Lagos. This stage increases the use of accidental sampling to select respondents around the Oshodi Motor parks. The target sample size was 200 individuals. Since the purpose of the study is to find out information on the life style and life chances of out-of-school youths, effort was made to identify youth (both boys and girls) engaging in economic activities during the school hours in the study area. Youth within the age cohort 10 – 24 (boys and girls) who were found engaged in economic activities such as bus conductor, food vendor, sales in confectionaries, petty trading, hawking, etc in the park were included in the sample. The individual based questionnaire schedule consists of 60 questions under six sub-sections was used as a guide for the interview. The purpose of the survey was to collect information on youth and vocational training. Retrospective longitudinal data were collected concerning residence, education, occupation, sexual unions, family background, and social attachments among others. Both male and female youth were asked about their perception on vocational training and skills acquisition.

The areas of study are the Oshodi Motor Parks. These parks are under four different local government areas. These are Ikeja, Oshodi, Isolo and Ilupeju local government areas of Lagos State. These areas constitute a centre point of commercial activities in Lagos State. It is a haven for drop out youths and also known for anti-social behaviours due to its thick population structure. The parks serve as terminals for vehicles plying virtually all parts of Nigeria. There is also heavy presence of industrial establishments and markets especially around Ilupeju and Ikeja areas. The quantitative data were entered, edited, transformed and cleaned. The Statistical Package for the social Sciences (SPSS) was used in analyzing the data. Simple statistical techniques like Percentile and cross-tabulations were carried out.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Socio-demographic data

The male respondents out-numbered their female counterpart with 71.5% whereas there were 28.5% of the

**Table 1.** Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Sex</b>	
Male	71.5
Female	28.5
<b>Age range</b>	
10 – 14	6.5
15 – 19	31.5
20 – 24	42.0
25+	20.0
<b>Ethnic group</b>	
Yoruba	1.0
Hausa	15.0
Igbo	2.5
Others	
<b>Religion affiliation</b>	
Christian	45.5
Muslim	51.0
Traditional	1.0
Others	2.5
<b>Marital status</b>	
Single	88.0
Married	8.0
Separated	2.0
Divorced	1.5
Others	0.5
<b>Educational qualification</b>	
No formal education	11.0
Primary	23.5
WASC/NECO	32.0
NCE/OND	2.0
HND/First Degree	1.0
Professional/Technical Certificate	2.5

Source: Field Survey (2009).

respondents being female. This implies that there were more male out of school youth in the study area as at the time of the survey (Table 1).

In terms of the age of the respondents 6.5% were between 10 and 14 years. 31.5% were between 15 and 19 years. 42.0% were between 20 and 24 years, while the remaining 20.0% were more than 25 years. This allocation was based on the assertion that young people constitute the largest percentage of human population. From this data it is obvious that the magnitude of our school youth studied were adolescent and young adults.

This finding could have implications for continuous process of acculturation and the acceptance of many behavioural patterns, which may be unacceptable in the larger society.

About the ethnic group of the respondent, the Yoruba recorded 81.5%, while the Hausa recorded 1% as against the Igbo with 15.1%. However, very few respondents noted that they belong to other ethnic groups such as the Igala, Tiv, Ijaw and Itsekiri. This finding is not far from expectations given the geographical setting of the survey, which is pre-dominantly Yoruba.

Concerning the religion of the respondents 45.5% were Christians. 51% were Muslims while those affiliated with traditional and other religion recorded 1% each. However, just 1.5% of the respondent refused to disclose their religious identity. This finding shows that there were more Muslims out of school youth than their counterpart in other religions. This could be attributed to the significant relationship between Islam and Polygamy, which is a major factor for marital problems in which some youth are adversely affected.

There is a significant relationship between the age of the respondents and their marital status based on the following data: 88% of the respondents were single while 8% were married as against 2% who disclosed that they were separated. Also, 1.5% was already divorced. The pre-dominance of the respondents who are single is in consonance with their age, which is below 25 years.

In terms of the respondents' educational qualification, 32% had WASC/NECO. 23.5% completed primary school while 11% never attended school. However, 2% had NCE/OND, 1% had HND/First Degree while 2.5% had other educational qualification such as technical certificate. From this finding it can be deduced that the majority of the respondents did not go beyond secondary school due to problems such as financial constraint, family crisis, peer influence and personal reasons. In view of respondents perception about their low educational qualification 65=4% disclosed that they would go back to school if they had opportunities while the remaining were not ready to go back to school, they prefer to go for vocational training.

### **Economic activities**

84% of the respondents were working as at the time of the survey while the remaining were not. The implication of this finding is that majority of out of school youth engaged in one form of economic activity or another (Table 2).

Specifically, conducting, hawking, transport union work and driving were the top four economic activities among out of school youth studied. Other economic activities include vulcanizing, load carrying, as well as roadside mechanic. This finding shows that majority of out of school youth work in the informal sector of the Nigerian Economy.

**Table 2.** Economic activities of the respondents.

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Respondents' working status – Are you working?</b>	
Yes	84.0
No	16.0
<b>Hours of work (per day)</b>	
4	3.5
9	31.5
14	42.5
19 – 24	5.0
No response	12.5
<b>Income (per day)</b>	
N500:00	38.0
N1,000:00	21.5
N2,000:00	6.5
N2,500:00	5.0
N3,000:00	3.5
<b>Savings</b>	
Less than N5,000:00	6.5
N5,000:00 and above	50.0
No savings	32.0
<b>Adequacy of earning</b>	
Decline	62.5
Affirmative	28.0
Undecided	9.5
<b>If any other source of income</b>	
Yes	21.0
No	60.5
No response	18.5
<b>Job satisfaction</b>	
Yes	31.0
No	13.0
<b>Next thing to do</b>	
Schooling	32.0
Getting another job	24.5
Apprenticeship	65.0
IT training	21.0
Undecided	26.5

Source: Field Survey (2009).

In terms of working hours per day 42.5% worked for about 14 h, 31.5% work for about 9 h while 5% each for either about 19 h or between 20 and 24 h. However, only 3.5% work for about 4 h per day while 12.5% did not

respond because they were not working. This finding shows that the majority of out of school youth work for between 5 and 14 h per day.

In terms of the respondents' income per day, 38% earned at most N500, 21.5% earned at most N1, 000 while 6.5% earned at least N2, 000 as against 5% and 3.5% earning at most N1, 500 and N2, 000. Considering the respondents' working hours per day it is obvious that their daily income is relatively low.

6.5% noted that despite their low income they had savings even though more than 50% of them had low savings of at most N5, 000 as at the time of the survey. However, 32% did not have any money in save keeping due to the inter-play of economic hardship, family problem as well as financial constraint and personal reasons. From this finding it is obvious that the majority of out or school youth would find it difficult to sponsor themselves in education or vocational training due to their relatively low level of savings.

In terms of respondents' opinion about whether their present earning was adequate for their needs, 62.5% declined while 28% answered in the affirmative. However, only 9.5% were undecided about the issue. The implication of these findings is that majority of out of school youth would find it difficult to meet their needs despite their long working hours and daily income.

On whether the respondents had other sources of income, majority (60.5%) disclosed that they do not, while he remaining (21%) agreed to the statement and noted that their other sources of income include friends, relatives, parents and good Nigerians. This finding shows that majority of the out of school youths rely on their personal efforts due to lack of other income sources. Those who had other income sources received between less than N500 and N2, 000 daily. In the same piece majority of those that had no other income sources were just managing.

About the answered in the affirmative while 31.5% noted that they were satisfied with their current job as against 13% who were not planning to change job. From this finding it can be deduced that majority of out of school youth were satisfied with their current job as at the time of the survey.

On what the respondents would want to do next, schooling" predominated with 32%, followed by "a job" with 24.5% as against apprenticeship and IT training which recorded 21% and 65%, respectively. However, 26.5% were undecided in realization of the foregoing the majority of out of school youth would like to live a new life in terms of any of the following go to school, a new job apprenticeship and IT training.

### Family relationship

Majority of the respondents claimed that their parents are still alive. This population is presented by 89.5% of the whole. The remaining 10.5% however claimed that their

**Table 3.** Family relationship of the respondents.

<b>Are your parents alive</b>	
Yes	89.5
No	10.5
<b>Are parents living together</b>	
Yes	50.5
No	47.0
No response	2.5
<b>Fathers occupation</b>	
No response	13.5
Jobless	8.0
Farming	13.0
Driving	14.5
Technician	6.0
Trading	15.5
Civil servants	9.5
Private workers	3.5
Others	16.5
<b>Mothers occupation</b>	
No response	11.0
Jobless	1.5
Civil servants	9.0
Petty traders	61.5
Farming	5.5
Hairdressers	3.5
Fashion design	3.5
Others	3.0
<b>Living arrangement</b>	
No response	12.0
One room	41.5
Room and parlour	17.0
Small apartment	11.0
2 bed room flat	11.0
Bungalow	2.0
Duplexes	2.0
Homeless	3.5
<b>Ever living with grandparent</b>	
Yes	43.0
No	55.0
No response	2.0
<b>Reasons for not living together</b>	
No response	59.0
Separation	20.5
Divorce	11.0
Others	9.5
Nature of abode	

**Table 3.** Contd.

Around park	11.0
Area park	10.0
Within park	10.5
Vehicle	6.5
Outside Lagos	6.0
Other places	22.5
Parents not alive	
Fathers dead	12.0
Mothers dead	7.5
Both dead	5.0
No response	75.5
<b>Duration of stay with grandparents</b>	
No response	58.0
One year	9.0
Two years	12.0
Three years	2.5
Four years	5.0
Five years	2.0
Six years	2.0
Seven years	2.5
Eight years	7.0
<b>Still living with parents</b>	
Yes	4.5
No	60.0
No response	35.5
<b>Visits to parents</b>	
Yes	35.5
No	9.0
No response	28.0
<b>Family of orientation size</b>	
One	1.5
Two	4.0
Three	11.0
Four	20.5
Five	13.5
Six	14.0
Seven	24.0
Eight	3.0
<b>Position in the family</b>	
One	22.5
Two	17.5
Three	22.5
Four	17.5
Five	8.0
Six	5.5
Seven	3.0
Eight	2.5

Source: Field Survey (2009).

**Table 4.** Cross-tabulation of sex and economic activity of father.

Sex	Economic activity of father (%)							
	Jobless	Farming	Driving	Technician	Trading	Civil service	Private work	Others
Male	5.5	8.5	8.0	4.5	11.0	7.5	2.0	13.0
Female	2.5	4.5	6.5	1.5	4.5	2.0	1.5	3.5
Total	8.0	13.0	14.5	6.0	15.5	9.5	3.5	16.5

Source: Field Survey (2009).

**Table 5.** Cross-tabulation of sex and person(s) the out-of-school youth stays with.

Sex	Person(s) staying with (%)			
	Friends	Relative	Oneself	Unknown
Male	15.0	14.5	18.5	17.0
Female	4.0	4.5	17.0	7.5
Total	19.0	19.0	35.5	24.5

Source: Field Survey 2009

parents are dead. This only brings to the fore fact that the absence of parents has insignificant effect on the children's aspiration (Table 3).

Contrary to the belief of people that parental divorce/separation/absence is a vital factor for youth delinquency; this study found that absence or presence of parents is insignificant. Parents of 50.5% still live together, while 47% said parents are either separated or divorced. About 2.5% however chose not to give any response.

When our respondents were asked about their father's occupation, 13.5% gave no response; 8.0% claimed that their fathers were jobless; 13.0% said that fathers were farmers, 14.5% maintained that fathers were drives, 6.0% said fathers were technicians like electrician, motor mechanic, plumber etc. 15.5% were traders, 9.5% were in the civil service, 3.5% were private workers, while the remaining 16.5% were bakers, painters etc. The significance of this section is that majority of these fathers are manual workers and an insignificant few are into white-collar jobs. These imply that most fathers of out of school youth are into demanding jobs with less-lucrative pay.

On mother's occupation, 11.0% gave no response, 1.5% said mothers were not working, 9.0% claimed that mothers were into civil service, 61.5% are petty traders, 5.5% are farmers, 3.5% are hairdressers, another 3.5% are fashion designers, while the others are caterers, and others manual staff. The implication of the majority being petty traders is that even mothers of out of school youth are into even less lucrative jobs than the fathers.

If housing unit or accommodation was an index of class, then some more facts could be deduced here as majority of these parents live in the small units of accommodation.

12.0% of our respondents gave no response, 41.5% stay in one-room apartment, 17.0% stay in a room and a parlour apartment, 11.0% of the respondents stay in small apartments without kitchen, toilet and bathroom, but these apartments are even smaller than 2 or 3-bedroom flats another 11.0% stay in 2 or 3 bedroom flats, 2.0% stay in bungalows, another 2.0% stay in duplexes while the remaining 3.5% are either residents in the parks or were as homeless as some of the children.

When respondents were asked for the reason why their parents were not living together, despite the fact that they were alive, 59.0% gave no response as parents are still alive and staying together, 20.5% said parents are separated either by death or they have simply chosen to stay apart, 11.0% said parents are divorced, while the remaining 9.5% gave reasons why parents are not together anymore aside from death, separation and divorce.

For the out of school youths whose parents were not alive, 12.0% said fathers were dead, 7.5% said mothers were dead, 5.0% claimed both parents are dead, while the remaining 75.5% gave no response as both parents were still alive.

When asked where respondents were staying presently, as they were not staying with parents, 11.0% stay within the Oshodi area like "Okomola", 10.0% stay outside Oshodi area. 10.5% stay within the park. 6.5% sleep inside the vehicle, 6.0% stay outside Lagos, while the remaining 22.5% gave other responses. These responses were dependent on their various destinations as they are vagabonds (always on the move) because they live in any park that they find themselves.

Grandparents in most cases are known for pampering children as those who have lived with grandparents before

always appear over-pampered. This study then found that 43.0% of the respondents have lived with grand parents before while 55.0% have never lived with them before the remaining 2.0% however, gave no response.

When the respondents were asked about the duration of stay with the grandparents 58.0% gave no response as they have never stayed with grandparents before or have simply chosen not to talk, 9.0% stayed for about 1 year, 12.0% stayed for 2 years, 2.5% stayed for about 3 years, 5.0% stayed for 4 years, 2.0% stayed for 5 years, another 2.0% stayed for 6 years. 2.5% stayed for 7 years, while the remaining 7.0% stayed for 8 years or more.

The study probed further to confirm if respondents were still living with grandparents, an insignificant 4.5% were still living with grandparents, while 60.0% were no longer living with grandparents. The remaining 35.5% gave no response, as they have never lived with grandparents.

Old people are always in need of visitations and all other elderly necessities. When our respondents were asked if they still get in touch with the grandparents despite not living with them, 46.0% claimed they still do, 33.0% claimed they do not visit them anymore as some even said they were dead. The remaining 21.0% gave no response, as some never met their grandparents alive.

19.0% of respondents were presently living with friends, another 19.0% stay with relatives, 22.5% were staying on their own, and 24.5% were staying in the park, while the remaining 15.0% gave no response.

Despite not living with parents, the study found out the frequency of respondents visit to their parents – 12.5% of the respondents visit the parents very often. 23.0% visit the parents rarely, while 9.0% do not visit parents anymore. 28.0% however gave no response, as parents were dead.

In the past, findings have revealed that large family size is a vital factor for developing juvenile attitude. This study found similar assertions. 1.5% said parents have only 1 child. 4.0% claimed they were only 2 children, 11.0% said they were 3 in the family. 20.5% said they were 4 children. 13.5% said their parents had 5 of them. 14.0% said their parents have 7 children, while 24.0% said parents have 8 children and above. 3.0% of the respondents did not give any response because of the traditional belief that you do not reveal the size of a family to an outsider. The fact remains that large size of the family is a factor for youth incapability of achieving aspiration.

When asked the number of male children, an insignificant 1.0% gave no response, 6.5% said there was only 1 male child, 22.5% said there were 2 male children, another 22.5% said there were 3 male children. 13.5% claimed that there were 4 male children, 7.5% said there were 5 male children, 8.0% said they had 6 male children, 5.5% said there were 7 male children, while the remaining 13.0% said they had in their families 8 and above male children. The significance of male children in any family cannot be nullified, as they are responsible for the continuity of such family.

Criminologists and Sociologists in the past have revealed that the position of a particular child in the family is fundamental for the care of such child. This was why the study probed further to ask for the position of our respondents in their various families. First and last children it is assumed always have the attention of the parents while the in-between do not get such attention. 1.5% gave no response, 22.5% said they were first children, 17.5% said they were second children, 22.0% said they were third children, another 17.5% said they were fourth in the family. 8.0% claimed to be in the fifth position, 5.5% said they occupy the sixth position in the family, 3.0% occupy seventh position in the family, while the remaining 2.5% said they occupy 8th position or more in their various family.

When asked about the relationship between the respondents and other children in the family, 2.0% gave no response, 53.5% said the relationship was still very cordial as they share same fate, 30.0% said the relationship was cordial, while the remaining 14.5% said the relationship was not cordial at all.

On the relationship with parents, 3.5% gave no response, 51.5% said the relationship with parents was still very cordial, 26.5% said the relationship was cordial, while the remaining 28.5% said they have no cordial relationship at all. The implication of these two set of data above is that family bond is always very difficult to break; time, space, or behaviour would take a very long time before succeeding in breaking the ties.

### **Correlates of lifestyles**

This study sought to identify the likely correlates of peculiar lifestyles of the inhabitants of Oshodi Motor Parks. These correlates include: Influences of peer group or ordinary groups. Educational attainment (as a factor of aspiration), membership of association, poverty, size of the family; presence of the parents, the influence of others, occupation of parents etc. in the face of the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of the population of study.

The study found that there is a significant relationship between gender and the economic activity of the father. This is to buttress the place of the father as the vital provider (though secondary) for the family members. 11.0% said fathers were traders, 7.5% said fathers were private civil servants, 2.0% said fathers were private workers, while 13.5% said fathers were bakers, bricklayers, and the others. Among the females 4.5% said fathers were traders, 2.0% said fathers were civil servants, 1.5% said fathers were private workers, while 3.0% said fathers were bakers, welders and involved in other economic activities. Out of the total population, the traders represent 15.5%; civil servant represent 9.5%; private workers represent 3.5%, while 16.5% represent the others.

Among these youth, majority of the father engage in

economic activities that are not lucrative and highly demanding. Therefore, in most of these families, the background of the children is poor. To a very large extent, there is a great influence of poverty on the welfare of family members. The lower the income of a particular family the higher the susceptibility of the members of the family to dangers of social living like abandonment, homeless, ill-health, illiteracy etc. This susceptibility or vulnerability is at different degrees when compared on gender level. Where the boys are more likely to opt for such opportunity in the presence of poverty, the girls are less-likely to do so, unless when in an extreme situation. The boys develop adaptive qualities earlier and faster than the girls and as such, the girls experience high level of vulnerability in such environment.

The study also found a correlation between gender and the person(s) the youth are staying with. Among the males, 15.0% stay with friends; 14.5% stay with relatives, 18.5% stay on their own, while 17.0% stay with unknown individuals, and others. Among the females, 4.0% stay with friends, 4.5% stay with relatives, another 4.0% stay on their own, while the remaining 7.5% stay with unknown individuals, in the bus, and wherever they find themselves.

Despite the fact that some of these youths do not stay with their families, this study sought to know the regularity of visit to the family members. This is because the visit to the immediate family may have certain level of influence on one's behaviour, as it may work as behavioural stabilizer. Among the males, 8.0% go home very often, 18.5% go often, and 23.0% rarely go home, while 8.0% do not go home at all. Among the females, the percentage was surprisingly lower. 4.5% go home very often, the same percentage go home often and rarely go home, while 1.0% do not go home at all. Smaller population of females could account for the difference in percentage.

The absence of the parents or the very significant others in the lives of these youth have certain negative effects on their behavioural patterns. The presence of these people serves as a factor for curbing the exhibition of certain behaviours. Their presence curtails behavioural excesses and seems to exert certain control in their lives. This way, the youth are less likely to behave in certain unwarranted and unwanted manners. To buttress the point above, these youth do not go home on a regular basis; the irregularity of their visits gives more room for bad behaviour. These behaviours are aggravated, as there is no presence of individuals who can control these youths.

Poverty might be correlated of out – of – school youth, but certain other factors can lead to the occurrence of poverty itself. The large size of a family would bring to the fore the need of good income to cater for these members. Unlike in the past where children are economic assets, today children are economic liabilities. The parents are expected to provide, protect and cater for

these children until when they are old enough to cater for themselves. When children are 'pushed out' for economic purposes, it is today referred to as 'child abuse'. As such, they are expected to so many dangers of the world including early sexual experience.

The study further found a positive relationship between the sizes of the family gender. This could buttress the assertion that "as the size of the family is increasing, so is the decline in the care of the family and its members". Among the males, 3.4% said the family has 2 children, 7.5% said family has 3 children. 17.0% reported 4, 7.0% reported 5, 12.5% reported 6 children, 5.0% reported 7 children, while 18.0% reported 8 children and above. Among the females, 1.5% reported only 1 child, 0.8% reported 2 children, 3.5% reported 3 children, another 3.5% reported 4 children, 6.5% reported 5 children and 1.5% reported 6 children, 3.5% reported 7 children, and 6.0% reported 8 children and above. Majority of the population here have number of children that is more than 4.

The study eventually found the final relationship between gender and membership of any group or association in the Park. Among the males, 18.0% belong to one association or the other, while 50.0% do not belong to any association. Among the females, 0.5% belongs to one association/group or the other while 25.5% do not belong to any association.

## Conclusion

To a very large extent, development of personality is determined by, heredity, family background, experience, and environmental influence. At adolescence, the development of personality is much more affected by the influence of the peers. As a result, the peer influence may negate the expectations of the society. At this level, there is the likelihood of misbehaviour as a group that does not reckon with societal forces that controls most of these youths. The youth would then see among these groups' models that must be appreciated and emulated. The findings of this study was in consonance with Atere et al (2004), in their studies on Child Abuse and Juvenile Gangs: A study of social miscreants in Oshodi/Isolo Local Government of Lagos State, Nigeria, in which they found that the inability of most parents or guardians to provide adequate opportunity for qualitative education for their children, probably due to the poor economic conditions forced children into child labour in order to survive. Thus, the child is exposed to the challenges of a working life and lifestyle which he or she is neither physically nor emotionally prepared for and this condition of life experienced by the child gives rise to a series of unpalatable consequences and the rise in their vulnerability. This condition or lifestyle of the youth in the study area can further be situated within the position of Intelligence theory which emphasize the possibility of an

individual gaining certain amount of control over the environment. The theory, however maintained that, certain individuals are incapable of handling a situation like this as a result of a situational of restricted potentialities. Consequently, the person so affected is incapable, even at maturity to adopt and adapt to his or her physical environment. This is the situation with the condition of the out-of –school youth in Nigeria. As far as living in the community is concerned, certain requirements are needed from everyone. For instance, one needs to be sociable and be considerate for others while fending for him or herself.

The findings of this study also supported the earlier position of lifestyle theory which examines the situation and conditions of an individual from the perspective of the life style and life choices individual adopted. The theory further maintain that, except an individual changes his or her life choices and lifestyle, a person may be vulnerable to victimisation, which is also the situation with the youths in the study area. The immediate environment would then have more control over these youths than the society at large.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This research has therefore come up with the following recommendations:

1. Creation of regular orientation programme: The creation of orientation programmes would help in altering the attitude of the out of school children. Once on the streets, they are branded by society as ‘hopeless cases, vandals, uncultured etc’, they are then stereotyped. An orientation Programme may make people to understand the hardship of these children on the street as they are with little or no family control.
2. Creation of alternative economic activity: These out of school children should be better empowered economically so that they can as well be assured of a better future.
3. Encouragement of youth participation in programme design and participation: To buttress the earlier recommendation, children must be encouraged to participate in these programmes that are initiated for better implementation.
4. Offer improved access to education and health services: Provision of health and educational opportunities as part of these programmes would gradually encourage these children to embrace other programmes created for them.
5. Responses to diversity of youth problems and their needs: Programmes, which fail to recognize diversity in young people and provide opportunities, may never succeed. It is important for adults to suspend their stereotypes and presuppositions about young people on the street and then listen to their expressed needs.

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