

**EFFECTS OF HOUSEHOLD POVERTY ON THE PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING OF
CHILDREN IN EGOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA (LGA), EDO STATE.**

BY

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SSC2013256

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

UNIVERSITY OF BENIN

BENIN CITY

JANUARY, 2026

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**BEING A RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
WORK, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
AWARD OF BACHELORS OF SCIENCE (B.SC.) IN SOCIAL WORK.**

JANUARY, 2026

CERTIFICATION

We the under sign certify that this project was carried out by **ENWEFA CHINOYE GLORIA** with Matriculation Number: **SSC2013256** and is adequate in scope and standard in partial fulfilment for the award of Bachelor degree in the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City. Edo State.

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Date

Date

DEDICATION

To be God for the strength to persevere when the road got steep, and for the grace that carried me to this day. To my spiritual father Pastor Odetayo Babatunde John, for showing me the ropes, and to my younger self, for having the courage to start. This is only the beginning.

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I give all thanks to God, the Almighty, for the gift of life and for providing the strength, wisdom, and perseverance needed to complete this work. His grace has been my constant anchor throughout this journey. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Associate Prof. T.B.E Omorogiuwa for their invaluable guidance, patience, and insightful critiques. Their mentorship was instrumental in the successful completion of this project. I am also grateful to the Head of Department, Dr. Helen E. Eweka. Special thanks to Dr. E. K Ehigie and all other lecturers in Department of Social Work, for the knowledge and encouragement they shared during my studies. My sincere thanks go to my colleagues for the many hours of brainstorming, support, and friendship. We shared the challenges and the triumphs, and I am better for it.

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May God bless and reward you all abundantly.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effects of household poverty on the psychosocial well-being of children in Egor Local Government Area (LGA), Edo State. The research was necessitated by the growing concern that despite educational reforms like EdoBEST, the "internalized" reality of economic hardship continues to hinder the developmental trajectory of children in peri-urban areas. Specifically, the study sought to determine the prevalence of multidimensional poverty, assess the extent of psychosocial well-being, analyze internalizing behaviors, and identify the coping mechanisms adopted by these children. Theoretically, the study was anchored on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and the Toxic Stress Framework. A descriptive survey research design was adopted, utilizing a sample size of 200 respondents comprising parents and children aged 13–17 selected through simple random sampling across wards in Egor LGA. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using frequency counts, simple percentages, and descriptive scholarly interpretation. Findings revealed a high prevalence of multidimensional poverty, significantly exacerbated by recent macroeconomic shocks such as inflation and fuel subsidy removal. The results indicated profound "psychosocial erosion," characterized by a sense of inferiority, chronic anxiety, and somatization. Furthermore, the study identified a "Labor-Play Imbalance," where significant majority of children engaged in street hawking as a primary coping mechanism, leading to social competence deficits. The study concluded that poverty in Egor LGA has transcended material lack to become a "developmental pathogen" that rewires children's emotional architecture. Consequently, it was recommended that the Edo State Government integrate trauma-informed psychosocial support services into the school system, implement "Cash Plus" social safety nets, and establish community-based safe play zones to mitigate the long-term impact of economic trauma on the next generation.

Keywords: *Household Poverty, Psychosocial Well-being, Toxic Stress, Egor LGA, Internalizing Behaviors, Child Labor.*

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

Poverty is a multifaceted phenomenon that extends beyond the mere lack of financial resources. According to the United Nations (2023) poverty is the inability of a person to attain a minimum standard of living, encompassing a lack of access to healthcare, education, clean water, and nutrition. Globally, children are disproportionately affected by poverty. Unlike adults, children living in impoverished households lack the agency to alter their circumstances, making them “passive victims” of economic instability. In developed nations, child poverty is often relative, but in developing regions, especially Sub-Saharan Africa, it is frequently absolute. The implications for a child’s development are profound. Poverty in the formative years does not just affect physical growth; it “rewires” the child’s psychological and social trajectory. Psychosocial well-being is seen as the dynamic relationship between the psychological dimension of a person (their internal emotions, thoughts, and behaviors) and their social dimension (their relationships, family dynamics, and community integration) (Okon & Etim, 2021). For a child, healthy psychosocial well-being is characterized by the emotional stability which is their ability to manage stress and regulate emotions. It also involves social competence which is their capacity to form healthy peer relationships. Self-esteem, a positive self-concept and sense of worth, it also include their cognitive resilience, which is the mental strength to face academic and social challenges.

Household is the primary socialization unit for children. Okoye and Onyukwu (2007) posits that the chronic stress associated with household poverty often termed “toxic stress” leads to elevated levels of cortisol. In children, this can impair the development of the hippocampus (responsible for memory) and the prefrontal cortex (responsible for executive function and emotional regulation). Consequently, children from poor households in areas like Egor LGA may struggle with impulsivity, anxiety, and learning disabilities even before they reach secondary school. Nigeria often referred to as the “giant of Africa,” faces a paradox of wealth and extreme poverty. Despite its vast natural resources, the country has one of the highest rates of multidimensional poverty in the world. As of 2024, data indicates that over 133 million Nigerians live in some form of poverty (Nnamdi et al., 2013). For the Nigerian child, this translates to “survival mode.” In the streets of cities like Benin City, children are frequently seen hawking wares to supplement household income, a direct consequence of parental financial incapacity. Parents under economic pressure are more likely to exhibit irritability, leading to harsh parenting styles or emotional neglect. This directly diminishes the child’s sense of security and well-being.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the global recognition of child rights and the various state government interventions in Edo State, such as the EdoBEST program aimed at improving basic education, the underlying issue of household poverty remains a barrier. Invisible scars of poverty are becoming increasingly visible in the classroom and the community. Many children in Egor LGA continue

to manifest symptoms of psychosocial distress, ranging from high levels of aggression and “acting out” to severe depression and academic apathy. The core problem is that while poverty is often measured by caloric intake or monetary metrics, the psychosocial erosion the loss of self-esteem, the onset of toxic stress, and the disruption of social competence remains largely unquantified in the local context. In Egor, children are increasingly subjected to a "dual-burden": they must navigate the developmental milestones of childhood while simultaneously absorbing the "economic shocks" of their households. There is a dearth of empirical data specifically linking household income levels in Egor to the internal emotional states and social behaviors of children. This study seeks to fill that gap.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to examine effects of household poverty on the psychosocial well-being of children in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State. The specific objectives were to:

1. examine the prevalence of household poverty among residents of Egor LGA.
2. assess the extent of psychosocial well-being of children from poor households.
3. ascertain the level of internalizing behaviors among children from poor households
4. find out the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and the child’s overall psychosocial well-being?

5. investigate the coping mechanisms adopted by children living in poor households in Egor LGA.

1.4 Research Questions

To achieve the objectives stated above, the following research questions will guide the study:

1. What is the prevalence of household poverty among residents of Egor LGA.
2. What is the extent of psychosocial well-being of children from poor households.
3. What is the level of internalizing behaviors among children from poor households
4. What is the relationship between parental socioeconomic status and the child's overall psychosocial well-being?
5. What are the coping mechanisms adopted by children living in poor households in Egor LGA.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it shifts the focus from the physical effects of poverty (hunger/malnutrition) to the invisible effects (psychosocial). The findings will be beneficial to understand how their economic stress affects their children's mental health. It will help to develop empathy and better support systems for "at-risk" students in Egor schools. It will further assist in designing social safety nets that include mental health support for impoverished families in Edo State. Policy Makers: It provides the Edo State Government and the Edo BEST

administrators with empirical evidence to integrate psychosocial support and school feeding programs into existing educational reforms.

It offers a diagnostic baseline for identifying “at-risk” children in Egor LGA, allowing for early intervention in cases of “invisible” psychological trauma. The study illuminates the long-term developmental costs of child labor, encouraging a shift in household priorities toward the child’s emotional stability. This study fills a localized gap in Nigerian literature by providing specific quantitative data on the psychosocial correlates of poverty in a peri-urban South-South context.

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study is delimited to Egor Local Government Area of Edo State. It focuses specifically on households with children aged 8–17 years. Geographically, the research covers selected wards including Uselu and Uwelu. Conceptually, it is restricted to the variables of household income and psychosocial well-being emotional, conduct, and peer relationship symptoms.

1.7 Definition of Terms/Concepts

To ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity, the following terms are defined as they apply specifically to this study:

Household Poverty: In this study, this refers to a state where a family in Egor LGA lacks the financial resources to meet basic needs, measured by a parental monthly income below the national minimum wage and a lack of access to quality nutrition and sanitation.

Psychosocial Well-being: This refers to the intersection of a child’s psychological state (emotions, thoughts, and behaviors) and their social environment (relationships and community). It is measured in this study by scores on the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ).

Internalizing Behaviors: These are “inner-directed” emotional problems, specifically defined here as social withdrawal, chronic anxiety, fearfulness, and low self-worth resulting from household economic stress.

Externalizing Behaviors: These are “outer-directed” behavioral problems, defined in this context as aggression, defiance of authority, and conduct disorders used by the child as a defense mechanism against poverty-related stigma.

Economic Shocks: Sudden and significant negative changes to a household’s financial stability, such as the loss of a parent’s job, a business failure, or a sharp increase in the cost of living in Benin City.

Child Labor: The engagement of children aged 8–17 in economic activities (such as street hawking or domestic help) for the purpose of augmenting household income, at the expense of play and educational rest.

Social Competence: The ability of the child to interact effectively with peers, demonstrate empathy, and resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.

Toxic Stress: The prolonged activation of the body's stress response systems due to chronic neglect or economic hardship, which hinders healthy brain development in the child.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Conceptual Review

This conceptual review provides a precise understanding of the variables under study, ensuring that the research is grounded in established definitions.

2.1.1 Concept of Poverty

Poverty in Nigeria has been a persistent challenge, marked by fluctuating levels and significant regional disparities over the decades. As at 1985; the poverty rate was standing at 47.8%. The period between 1992 and 1996, the poverty rate reaches its highest measured point at 58.4%. The poverty rate dropped to its lowest level at 30.9% in 2018 (NBS, 2023). The combined effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the removal of fuel subsidies increased poverty rate from 30.9% in 2018 to 38.9% in 2023, leaving about 87 million Nigerians in poverty (World Bank, 2023).

Poverty is a complex socioeconomic condition that affects individuals, families, and communities. Poverty refers to the state or condition in which people or communities lack the financial resources and other essentials for a minimum standard of living, preventing them from meeting their basic human needs (Barnes, 2023). It is also described as the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions, existing when people lack the means to satisfy their basic needs. The definition of basic needs can vary, ranging from

those strictly necessary for survival (such as avoiding starvation or death from exposure) to those reflecting the prevailing standard of living in a community (where nutrition, housing, and clothing may be adequate to preserve life but fall below the average) (Li, 2019).

Poverty, much like many other terms, lacks a singular universal definition, making it a complex and elusive concept. It is widely acknowledged as a global issue. According to the Central Bank of Nigeria (2018) cited in Alfa, Otaida, and Audu (2022), poverty refers to a condition where an individual cannot adequately provide for their basic necessities such as food, clothing, and shelter. This condition also includes an inability to meet social and economic responsibilities, a lack of gainful employment, skills, assets, and self-worth, and limited access to essential social and economic services like education, healthcare, clean water, and sanitation. Consequently, individuals experiencing poverty have limited opportunities to improve their well-being to their full potential. Kankwanda in Barnes (2023) views poverty as a multidimensional issue influenced by various factors, including a lack of access to income-generating activities and essential amenities.

Taiwo and Agwu, 2019) define poverty as the inability of individuals to attain a minimum standard of living and gain respect and recognition in society. This lack can lead individuals to resort to desperate measures to support their families. Based on these definitions, poverty can be understood as the inability to meet life's basic needs, which can contribute to increased criminal activity. A closer examination reveals that individuals engaged in serious crimes often lack

employment or skills to sustain themselves and their families, either due to poor health or old age. It is evident that poverty and unemployment can lead to social problems by heightening social tensions that weaken the societal fabric. Lately, there has been a considerable focus among researchers on poverty reduction strategies and their execution in Nigeria.

Nwachukwu and Onwubiko (2008) categorized poverty into two: absolute and relative poverty. Absolute poverty refers to a situation whereby an individual lacks resources necessary to sustain him or herself. Such an individual lacks the basic human needs of food, shelter, and clothing. This definition of poverty in terms of subsistence is predominantly used by scholars to analyze poverty in Africa and in developing countries in general. On the other hand, relative poverty refers to a situation where an individual lacks the necessary resources when compared with other members of the society such that it limits or prevents him from partaking in the normal or desirable activities of life that exists in such a society. The present study aligns with absolute poverty conception because people who suffer from absolute poverty are mostly need of government social welfare packages.

In Nigeria several attempt has been made which aim is to raise the standard of living of people living in a condition regarded as undesirable to a condition considered desirable. Poverty reduction is operationalised to mean the process of alleviating people or community from condition that keep them in perpetual lack and penury or a state of improving the financial means required for a basic quality of life of a people or a community.

In Nigeria, government had purposively designed series of social investment programmes in the time past mainly with a view to solving the incessant problems of poverty, unemployment and inequality. In some point in times, it is categorically geared towards reducing the rate of youth restiveness in volatile areas and states of the federation. At Nigeria's independence in 1960, there were serious of notable youth programmes aimed at facilitating social investments especially for the youth population. For instance, Nnamdi, Aminu and Emeka (2013:6) noted that between "the periods between 1962 -1968, 1970 – 1974 (National Accelerated Food Production Programme-NAFPP), 1975 – 1980 and 1981- 1985 were designed by various governments to provide basic infrastructure, diversify the economy, reduce the level of unemployment, achieve dynamic self-sustaining growth and raise the living standard of people." In the same trends, Adoba (2005) and Orji (2009) also stressed that the subsequent social investment programmes, after 1985 up till 1999, were geared towards small and median enterprises and scale trading, reduction of poverty especially among the youth as well as sectoral engagements in the operationalisation of the state economy.

In retrospect, some policies were introduced in the 70s aimed at eradicating the poverty in Nigeria are; Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1977, Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) in 1977, Green Revolution (GR) in 1980, etc. On the one hand, GR and OFN programmed were designed and implemented to increase the production of agricultural output and facilitate the effectiveness of the performance roles of subsectors in the agricultural sector (Ibrahim & Umar, 2008). On the other hand, FCPE was established to reduce high level of

illiteracy across local areas in Nigeria. Notably, these programmes recorded a lot of laudable achievements by improving the educational and social qualities of many people residing at the rural areas (Agboola&Lamidi, 2017). However, CBN (1998) identified the inability of the programme continuity to poor political will, social instability and peoples' commitment. Subsequent discussions take note of an overview of some of the programmes in relation to their output and outcome in Nigeria.

2.1.2 The Concept of Household Poverty

This study adopts the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) perspective, which looks at: Health: Nutrition and child mortality. Education: Years of schooling and school attendance. Living Standards: Cooking fuel, sanitation, and assets. Contemporary scholarship defines poverty not merely as a lack of liquidity, but as a “capability deprivation” that prevents individuals from achieving their full potential (Sen, 2020). In the Nigerian context, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023) classifies poverty through the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which accounts for deprivations in health, education, and living standards. For a child in Egor LGA, household poverty manifests as “resource dilution,” where limited finances are spread thin across large families, often resulting in “food poverty” (Adebola& Thompson, 2022). This lack of material security creates a foundational instability that disrupts all subsequent stages of psychosocial development.

2.1.3 Psychosocial Well-being in Children

At the core of this study is the premise that economic deprivation triggers a “chain of adversity.”

Material Scarcity: Leads to household tension and food insecurity, Psychological Distress: Parents facing “economic shocks” may adopt harsh or neglectful parenting styles. The Child’s Internalization: The child perceives the household instability, leading to the “invisible scars” of anxiety or the “defensive mask” of aggression. Psychosocial well-being is a multifaceted construct encompassing emotional stability, social competence, and cognitive functioning. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2022), it is characterized by a child’s ability to realize their potential, cope with the normal stresses of life, and contribute to their community. In this study, well-being is viewed through the lens of “Developmental Assets,” which are the internal and external strengths required for a child to thrive. When these assets are absent due to economic hardship, the child may experience “psychological erosion,” leading to low self-esteem and social alienation (Oladipo&Akintola, 2024).

2.1.4 The Mechanism of Toxic Stress

Empirical research has shown that chronic poverty induces a state of “toxic stress” in children. Unlike “positive stress” (which aids growth) or “tolerable stress” (which is buffered by supportive relationships), toxic stress occurs when the body’s stress response system is activated for prolonged periods without adequate adult support (Shonkoff& Garner, 2020). In peri-urban areas like Egor, this is often exacerbated by “neighbourhood disadvantage,” where the lack of

safe play spaces and exposure to community violence further heighten the child's cortisol levels, leading to long-term emotional deregulation.

2 Concept of Family

The concept of family centers around a group of people connected by ties of kinship, often living together and providing mutual support. It's a fundamental social institution found in virtually all human societies, playing a vital role in raising children, transmitting culture, and providing emotional and economic support. Families can vary greatly in structure, including nuclear (parents and children), extended (including other relatives), and diverse forms that reflect changing social norms.

As the most important part of the social structure, the family is the foundation of society, because it is where people take their first steps into social life (Dikici et al.,2020). The adventure of socialization starts in the family and continues until the end of his/her life as a result of the interaction he/she establishes with those aroundhim/her and the institutions he/she is involved (Walsh, 2017). It is very difficult to define what constitutes a family and what it is. However, in general, the family is a social institution that ensures the continuation of the human lineage as a result of biological relationships, where the grouping period first emerged, where bilateral relations are ensured by certain rules, and which transfers the material and spiritual cultural values that have taken place in society until today to generations; it is a social institution with biological, psychological, economic, social, egal, etc. sides (Sayın, 2020). According to the

Turkish Language Association (2011), the family is defined as the smallest unit in society, based on the bonds of blood and marriage, formed by the relationships between siblings, husbands, wives, and children.

Unlike other institutions, the roles and obligations that the family institution imposes on human beings continue from birth to death. This is due to the characteristics of the family institution, which are different from other institutions. Gökçe (1976) lists these characteristics as follows: Family is universal, family is based on an emotional foundation, the family has a shaping characteristic, family is limited in scope, family is a nucleus in social structure, family is surrounded by social rules, the family has a permanent and at the same time a temporary nature.

Adem (2023) defines the structure of the family as the rules governing the interaction of individuals within the family. In other words, family structure is the set of rules and principles that regulate the interactions of family members with each other. Within the family, each individual is affected by the behavior of the other individual. This ensures a certain stability and order in the ideas and actions of family members. Two important factors come to the fore when it comes to family members' relationships with each other (Adem, 2023). The first factor is the principles that apply to every family. For instance, there is a hierarchical structure in that parents and children have different levels of power positions within the family. The second factor is the hidden or open agreements that are formed in ordinary interactions that can be considered unique to that family, which include the expectations of family members from each other (Akün, 2013).

It is important for the continuation and consistency of social life that values and rules are learned in family life (Çağın, 2016). With modernization, the number of children has decreased due to reasons such as the inclusion of women in business life, the fact that children are not seen as an economic factor, and the increase in the costs of raising and educating children. These are acceptable reasons from a generalizing point of view. The main problem is that with the increase in the concept of family, responsibility and individualization have started to dissolve and social life has been disformed (Bayer, 2013). The family has different functions. These include:

The biological function of the family: is to meet the basic needs and desires of individuals. Through the institution of marriage, individuals have functions such as fulfilling sexual desires, having children, and ensuring the continuation of the generation (Özalp, 2016).

The psychological function of the family: The loving environment between parents and children is the first element to overcome every difficulty. An environment of love is the most valuable spiritual element for a child. The individual experiencing spiritual fulfillment forms a healthy personality and identity (Kır, 2011).

The economic function of the family: All family members work within the framework of a certain division of labor. They spend time working together and their relationship is cordial and strong. People gain the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to sustain their lives and make a living in the family in systems where the economic structure based on human labor is dominant (Çağın, 2016).

The protective function of the family: While the traditional family carries out protective and security work, this understanding has been left to state protection, although not completely in the nuclear family. The state pursues a policy based on protecting not only the family but also children, the elderly, and the disabled (Epik et al., 2017).

The educational function of the family: The process of education ensures the socialization of people and on the other hand, ensures their adaptation to social life. Family members, especially children, are equipped with knowledge and values that will facilitate their adaptation to society. Through this process, family members develop, become stronger, and learn what to do, how to do it, and what they need to improve to gain a respectable place in society (Çağan, 2016).

The religious function of the family: The main purpose of the institution of family and religion is to raise people who are sensitive to society. Since the influence of religion is seen in the environments where children enter into social communication, the family institution alone is not sufficient (Özalp, 2016).

Family leisure function: In traditional societies, except for religious ceremonies, holidays, or special days, the workload of life is high and the understanding of entertainment is limited (Çağan, 2016).

The prestige-providing function of the family: Education provided by the family affects the prestige of the individual, as the family is the smallest building block of society and the first step in socialization. We take on certain statuses brought by our family from the past and the family's

means take the lead in many matters, including the education we receive (Aktaş, 2015; Bozkurt, 2007).

Socialization function of the family: As the family socializes the child, culture is passed on from generation to generation (Özkalp, 2008; Dikici et al., 2020). There are three functions of the nuclear family: Reproduction, socialization of young individuals, and ensuring the psychological balance between spouses (Sertelin, 2003).

2.2 Social Investment Programms to Tackle Household Poverty in Nigeria

In Nigeria, government had purposively designed series of social investment programmes in the time past mainly with a view to solving the incessant problems of poverty, poverty reduction and inequality. In some point in times, it is catKaurically geared towards reducing the rate of youth restiveness in volatile areas and states of the federation. At Nigeria's independence in 1960, there were serious of notable youth programmes aimed at facilitating social investments especially for the youth population. For instance, Nnamdi, Aminu and Emeka (2013:6) noted that between “the periods between 1962 -1968, 1970 – 1974 (National Accelerated Food Production Programme- NAFPP), 1975 – 1980 and 1981- 1985 were designed by various governments to provide basic infrastructure, diversify the economy, reduce the level of poverty reduction, achieve dynamic self-sustaining growth and raise the living standard of people.” In the same trends, Adoba (2005) and Orji (2009) also stressed that the subsequent social investment programmes, after 1985 up till 1999, were geared towards small and median enterprises and scale trading, reduction of

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In retrospect, some policies were introduced in the 70s aimed at eradicating the poverty in Nigeria are; Operation Feed the Nation (OFN) in 1977, Free and Compulsory Primary Education (FCPE) in 1977, Green Revolution (GR) in 1980, etc. On the one hand, GR and OFN programmed were designed and implemented to increase the production of agricultural output and facilitate the effectiveness of the performance roles of subsectors in the agricultural sector (Ibrahim & Umar, 2008). On the other hand, FCPE was established to reduce high level of illiteracy across local areas in Nigeria. Notably, these programmes recorded a lot of laudable achievements by improving the educational and social qualities of many people residing at the rural areas (Agboola&Lamidi, 2017). However, CBN (1998) identified the inability of the programme continuity to poor political will, social instability and peoples' commitment. Subsequent discussions take note of an overview of some of the programmes in relation to their output and outcome in Nigeria.

Family Support Programme (FSP) & Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP)

The military junta of late General Sani Abacha launched the two family-oriented programmes. They were wellconceived family productivity programmes. The late General Sani Abacha introduced 'FEAP'; and his wife introduced the 'FSP'. The former was set up for the provision of health service care delivery, women fertility, child care, youth engagement and balance diet

for rural families subsisting in the rural areas (Lamidi and Igbokwe, 2021). In the same vein, the Family Economic Advancement Programme (FEAP) was established with statutory obligations to create platform for accessing credit loans for the production of agricultural use and processing; and upgrading the small and medium enterprises through the formation of local cooperative societies at the community level.

The contents of programmes were therefore aimed at creating opportunities for employment at various strata of the local communities. It also induces the planning and setting up manufacturing industries, plants, machineries and equipment at the grassroots levels, thereby providing job opportunities for the training and engagement of the village-based youths. Although, the two (2) programmes, namely, FSP and FEAP were put in place for the improvement of the life quality of the rural people. The programmes were however confronted with noninspectoral supervision and poor monitoring projects and loans by the supporting local and international agencies as well as community banks (Suich, 2012).

In addition, there were purported cases of inflating the cost of purchasing needed equipments for the beneficiaries and procurement of sub-standard machineries for the training of vaillage based youths, thus, weakening the vision and mission of the two (2) programmes at the community level.

Poverty Alleviation Programme (PAP)

In 2000, PAP was introduced with a view to creating jobs for the unemployed youth as a matter of exigency in the events of youth restiveness. This programme was to engage and stimulate the teeming unemployed youths into fast-driving economic activities and human capital development. A common engagement activity of the programme was direct labour engagement in patching of potholes, vegetations control along high-ways, maintenance of public buildings and environmental sanitations (Morphy, 2008).

However, inadequate funding was acknowledged as a militating factor for the success of the programme. Dangana&Akpan (2009) also identified poor programme design, inadequate coordination, poor monitoring and evaluation. The PAP execution raised outan outright public decry; as it was accused of corruption and shoddiness. As a result, the federal government constituted a committee headed by Prof. AngoAbdullahi shadowed with the responsibility of reviewing the contents of PAP. Nonetheless, Bakare (2010) also noted other problems of the programme to include: excessive politicization, administrative centralization, unbalanced payment, awkward management as well as high- profile level of corruption. Afterwards, it is upon this basis that the committee drafted the blueprint of the establishment of National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP).

National Poverty Eradication Programme (NAPEP)

Sequel to the above, NAPEP was set up in 2001. This programme adopted a holistic approach by incorporating all important stakeholders in the operation of governance and poverty eradication in Nigeria. This constituted both formal and semi-formal institutions, namely the Federal, State and Local Governments, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), the organized private sector, research institutions, women groups and concerned individuals (Okoye and Onyukwu, 2007). Mainly, the NAPEP placed a high premium on the eradication of poverty in its mildness or absoluteness. This objective was clearly set out in policy framework of the programme as measures standing against poverty among other fundamental reasons for the implementation and coordination (Apata, Apata, Igbalajobi&Awoniyi, 2010). This particular motive got adequate intention in the formulation, design and implementation of NAPEP; and made it distinguishable from the previous exercises.

NAPEP ensures effective evaluation and monitoring of its functional aspects. For instance, it closely monitors supportive initiatives at a periodic interval with the purpose of confirming location of the project, its implementation, service delivery, livelihood impact, even distribution and positive influence on the poverty status across communities in Nigeria (Yahaya, Osemene& Abdulrahman, 2011). Also, the evaluation of these indices is subject to broad performance platforms, such as the project objectives, quality of materials used for the implementation, and

target groups upon which the achievement can be measured, as well as what is scheduled for its completion and financial implications and costs (Victor, 2018).

The programme is regarded as an improved or modernized version of the previous PAP type by the Nigerian government. Analysis revealed that the programme has successfully trained about 130, 000 youths and engaged over 216, 000 persons; it was however noted that poor cautiousness and forethought seem challenging to the beneficiaries across cities and communities (Okoye & Onyukwu, 2007). In summary, the programme could be rated poor due to inadequate focus on the contents of programme, weak budgetary system, corruptions and poor implementation etc. Project substitution is also a fond version of challenges confronting NAPEP; others include misappropriation of project finances, diversion of the resources, the conversion of public funds for private uses, etc (UNDP, 2015). Above all, what stands commendable about NAPEP is the active engagement of the programme beneficiaries in the identification of the type, structure and process of project implementation. More surprising is that, in a situation where the beneficiaries enjoyed enhanced capacity and active involvement, they still lack insufficient empowerment to become sustainable in the further engagements of the programme for their livelihood.

Small and Medium Enterprises Development Agency of Nigeria (SMEDAN)

SMEDAN was promulgated through the act of parliament, called the SMEDAN Act of 2003. This agency was institutionalised to advance the course of development for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises [MSME] sector of the economy in Nigeria. It was reported that MSMEs

comprise more than 75% of all enterprises of enterprises in Nigeria (Umar, 2010). This is acknowledged as a result of ease in setting up human and capital resources needed for the establishment of MSME. The expected outcome roles of the agency are to seek reduction in the high level of poverty; uproot the inability to generate daily income by teeming populations; and facilitate the advantageous capacity of the opportunities in the country.

The roles are planned to be achieved through generation of employment opportunities, open business competitiveness, entrepreneurship development and local resources mobilisation. In addition, this agency is shadowed with the responsibilities of initialising and formulating policy ideas for MSMEs' growth and development. It encourages the promotion of development programme in the area of agro-allied production, provision of technical instruments and operational support services aimed at accelerating the growth, development and modernisation of MSME operations across the country.

There are wide ranges of hiccups associated with the difficulties facing SMEDAN as an agency for poverty reduction. These include, but not limited to urban sensitivity, poor information/communication network, low access to credit facility, poor state of technological infrastructure, inadequate entrepreneurial capacity, stringent collateral condition for loan, corruption, poor synergy among the three levels of government amidst other conditions with attitude, knowledge and skills of the beneficiaries (Orji, 2009 & Umar, 2010).

However, it is important to stress that the problems confronting SMEDAN in Nigeria appear not different to the obstructing factor bedeviling the other government agencies in the discharge of responsibilities on poverty reduction. This is simply because a good number of these agencies are yet to constructively fit into the architecture of social upliftment and economic revolution of individuals and groups from the bottom pyramid of poverty (Ijaiya, Ijaiya, Bello & Ajayi, 2011).

NEEDS Programme

In 2004, the Federal Government under President Olusegun Obasanjo launched an economic empowerment and development strategy at the three catKaural stages of governmental administration. At the federal level, NEEDS simply represent the policy framework for the actualization and coordination of the empowerment activities. In the same vein, SEEDS is the state level framework for the implementation of economic empowerment and development strategy across the federation (Lamidi and Igbokwe, 2021). Similarly, LEEDS stands for the local government agenda for the of rural economic and development strategy. The context of the programme in series has the propensity to gain lofty feet to liquidate the external debt and create the growth of gross domestic product (Morphy, 2008; Bakare, 2010).

However, the trickling effect of the economic acceleration was to sharply guide against the possible shortfall in the power and oil sectors of the economy, transport operational systems, rural-urban migration, educational institutions, health sector, among other questions hinging on the state of poverty reduction (Yahaya, *et al*, 2011; Shehu, *et al*, 2012). The institutional

development of NEEDS requires a strong political will and social dedication by the populace. The non-feasibility of these trends would possibly have negative influence on food security and sustainable development programme (UNDP, 2015). In other words, there is need for a well-coordinated economic growth with considerable level of human support and genuine political will. Job creation is largely acknowledged to be instrumental tool for equitable distribution of economic gains. This would remarkably enable the rural downtrodden to generate sustainable income for livelihood.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The investigation into the effects of household poverty on the psychosocial well-being of children in Egor Local Government Area is anchored on a multi-dimensional theoretical framework. This study integrates Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, the Family Stress Model (FSM), and Social Cognitive Theory. Together, these theories explain how macroeconomic instability filters through the household environment to alter a child's internal emotional state and external social behavior.

2.3.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory provides the overarching structural lens for this study, positing that child development is a product of nested environmental systems. The Microsystem: This is the immediate environment where the child lives. In Egor LGA, the household serves as the primary microsystem. Poverty at this level disrupts the quality of parent-child interactions. When

financial resources are scarce, the “proximal processes” (regular interactions) necessary for healthy development are interrupted by the parent’s preoccupation with survival. The Mesosystem: This involves the connections between microsystems, such as the relationship between the home and the school. Household poverty often weakens this link, as parents in financial distress may be less involved in school activities, leading to the child feeling unsupported in both environments. The Exosystem: This refers to settings that affect the child indirectly. For a child in Egor, this includes the Edo State labor market or local government policies. Parental unemployment or “economic shocks” in Benin City are exosystemic factors that deplete the family’s material and emotional reserves, eventually “trickling down” to the child. The Macrosystem: This encompasses the overarching cultural values and national economic policies. The high rate of multidimensional poverty in Nigeria (NBS, 2023) and the cultural normalization of child labor as a coping mechanism form the macrosystemic climate that influences the child’s psychosocial trajectory.

However, child development is not a vacuum but a result of interactions within nested environmental layers, ranging from immediate family settings to broad cultural ideologies.

Relating this theory to the Study, the microsystem is the household to examines how the "material lack" within this layer specifically low parental income disrupts the quality of parent-child engagement. If the microsystem is characterized by hunger or lack of school materials, the child's emotional stability is directly threatened. As regard exosystem, he study looks at factors

the child cannot control, such as parental job loss in Benin City or the removal of fuel subsidies in Nigeria. These "economic shocks" occur in the parent's world but dictate the stress levels within the child's world. With respect to macrosystem, the Nigerian economic climate is characterized by a 38.9% poverty rate (World Bank, 2023), creates a macrosystem where child labor is often normalized. The study relates this to how societal acceptance of "hawking" impacts the child's peer relationship symptoms and social competence.

2.3.2 The Family Stress Model (FSM)

While Bronfenbrenner explains where the influence comes from, the Family Stress Model, primarily developed by Conger and Elder (1994), explains the process by which poverty impacts the child's mind. The FSM posits that the objective condition of "poverty" does not affect the child directly as much as the "economic pressure" affects the parents. According to this model, financial strain leads to parental psychological distress (anxiety, depression, irritability). This distress, in turn, disrupts parenting practices, leading to: Harsh/Inconsistent Discipline: Parents under stress may resort to physical punishment or emotional outbursts. Withdrawal: Emotional neglect occurs when parents are too overwhelmed by economic survival to provide the "nurturing" required for a child's social competence. In the context of Egor LGA, this theory explains why children from poor households may exhibit "internalizing behaviors" (social withdrawal/anxiety) or "externalizing behaviors" (aggression), as they are reacting to a destabilized and stressful home environment.

In other words Conger and Elder (1994) model argues that the psychological impact of poverty on children is mediated by parental distress. It is not just the "lack of money" that hurts the child, but the "stress of the lack" that changes how parents behave.

Relating the theory to the study, in the context of household poverty in Egor LGA, a father or mother facing chronic financial incapacity may exhibit irritability or depression. This study uses FSM to hypothesize that these parents are more likely to adopt "harsh parenting" or "emotional withdrawal." Meanwhile the study relates FSM to the "Internalizing Behaviors" objective. It posits that children in Egor absorb the "toxic stress" of their parents, leading to the anxiety and low self-worth identified in the study's definition of psychosocial well-being. FSM helps explain how economic pressure in Uselu and Uwelu wards dissolves the "emotional safety net" of the home, leaving children vulnerable to "externalizing behaviors" like aggression as a defensive reaction to household instability.

2.3.3 Social Cognitive Theory (SCT)

Proposed by Albert Bandura (1986), Social Cognitive Theory is essential for understanding the "Social Competence" and "Coping Mechanisms" objectives of this study. SCT emphasizes the role of Observational Learning and Self-Efficacy. Observational Learning: Children in impoverished situations observe the coping mechanisms of their parents and peers. If they witness "aggression" as a response to economic frustration, they are likely to adopt externalizing behaviors as a defense mechanism. Self-Efficacy: Poverty often diminishes a child's sense of

agency. If a child perceives that their household's economic status is an insurmountable barrier, they develop low academic and social self-efficacy. This leads to what scholars term "learned helplessness," directly impacting the child's "Cognitive Resilience" a key variable in your study. In a nutshell, SCT emphasizes that people learn behaviors through observation and that their "self-efficacy" (belief in their own ability) determines how they cope with challenges.

Relating this theory to the study, directly relates to the study's fifth objective: investigating coping mechanisms. Children in Egor observe how their community responds to poverty. If they observe "hawking" or "antisocial behavior" as the primary survival tools, they are cognitively primed to replicate these behaviors. SCT is used here to analyze the child's "Internalizing Behaviors." Chronic poverty often lowers a child's "Academic Self-Efficacy." When a child in Egor LGA perceives that they cannot succeed due to their background, they experience the "psychological erosion" mentioned in Chapter One. Hence this study uses SCT to explain how the lack of positive social models in high-poverty enclaves can lead to poor peer relationship symptoms. Without positive reinforcement, the "Social Competence" of the child remains underdeveloped.

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addition, this agency is shadowed with the responsibilities of initialising and formulating policy ideas for MSMEs' growth and development. It encourages the promotion of development programme in the area of agro-allied production, provision of technical instruments and operational support services aimed at accelerating the growth, development and modernisation of MSME operations across the country.

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The Seven-Point Agenda

The seven-point agenda was political and economic programme set out by President Musa Yar'Adua. The programme content constitutes the tenets of key sectors of the economy, such as land reform, energy and power, agriculture and food sufficiency, mass transportation, wealth creation and employment, security, qualitative and functional education systems (Nnamdi, Aminu and Emeka, 2013). The potency of these sectors was eulogised in different ways, but the underlining factor precipitates on the efforts which energize development of the present economic status without jeopardizing the possible future economic needs and challenges (Olawoyin&Lamidi, 2019).

The activities in the sectors could simply help in the catalysis of development in Nigeria. The sectoral agenda hinges on the essentiality of average Nigerians. It is therefore important that issues concerning the populace should be given an outstanding priority. This would also be amplified using the state-of-the-art technological facilities and making the social environment conducive for the satisfaction of present and future needs (Dangana&Akpan, 2009).

Subsidy Re-investment and Empowerment Programme (SURE-P)

The removal of subsidy regime could be said to have given birth to the formation of SURE-P by the federal government under the President Goodluck Jonathan's administration. The programme precipitated the functionality of SURE P on the public works, empowerment of youths and women (Lamidi and Igbokwe, 2021). It is driven by the rate of poverty reduction status of the

teeming youth in Nigeria. Hence, the major mission of SURE-P is to set up the Graduate Internship Scheme (GIS) with a view to reducing poverty reduction among graduates especially from higher institutions of learning.

Also, the establishment of the programme is geared towards the stimulation of economic growth, standards and opportunities for the actualisation of vision 2020. Operationally, the scheme aims at engaging the unemployed graduates for a period of one year in related firms, companies and organizations to their chosen field of professions. A common goal of this engagement is to acquire necessary skills, garner sufficient experience, and enhance high level of their employability. The expectation becomes goal-oriented as it engenders the engaged graduates to meet the criteria of potential employers in the very competitive labour market in Nigeria (Umar, 2010 & Suich, 2012).

The lifespan of this scheme was somehow short due to the change in government in 2015. To this end, it might be inconsequential to have subjected the scheme for programme assessment. Nevertheless, the scheme has targeted beneficiaries mostly among the educated ones, leaving behind those that are extremely indigent and poor to get access to tertiary educations. Bello and Abdul (2010) noted that the scheme is somewhat jettisoning the poor individuals who necessarily need skills and knowledge to drive economic support and livelihood, not those individuals with an acquired formal skills and lessons for socio-economic prosperity. Hence, the scheme is

targeted at youth elites in the country; and suffer adequate coverage of the rural downtrodden who are actually needed to be liberated from poverty circles in Nigeria.

National Social Investment Programme

In recent time, President Muhammad Buhari launched the NSIP as a platform for the empowerment of the unemployed Nigerian youths in three categories: either young graduates, semi-skilled or semi-literates and unskilled labour with little or no level of education. For the actualization of this NSIP, the programme content was compartmentalized into three dimensions; and in each of the dimensions, some sub-dimensions were enlisted. N-Power Teachers' Corps was one of the dimensional components of NSIP with subsidiaries on N-Power Agro, N-Power Health, N-Power Teach and N-Power Community Health.

Another notable dimensional component of NSIP is the pack of N-Power Knowledge which is designed not necessarily for graduates from tertiary institutions, but for individual youths with requisite level of education at least secondary school. Its subsidiaries include: NPower Creative, N-Power Tech Hardware and N-Power Tech Software. Also, the third component of the NSIP is N-Power Build with civil divisions in the area of building services, construction, environment services, utilities, automotive, as well as aluminum and gas

Family as a Household Unit

The concept of family centers around a group of people connected by ties of kinship, often living together and providing mutual support. It's a fundamental social institution found in virtually all human societies, playing a vital role in raising children, transmitting culture, and providing emotional and economic support. Families can vary greatly in structure, including nuclear (parents and children), extended (including other relatives), and diverse forms that reflect changing social norms.

As the most important part of the social structure, the family is the foundation of society, because it is where people take their first steps into social life (Dikici et al.,2020). The adventure of socialization starts in the family and continues until the end of his/her life as a result of the interaction he/she establishes with those aroundhim/her and the institutions he/she is involved (Walsh, 2017). It is very difficult to define what constitutes a family and what it is. However, in general, the family is a social institution that ensures the continuation of the human lineage as a result of biological relationships, where the grouping period first emerged, where bilateral relations are ensured by certain rules, and which transfers the material and spiritual cultural values that have taken place in society until today to generations; it is a social institution with biological, psychological, economic, social, egal, etc. sides (Sayın, 2020). According to the Turkish Language Association (2011), the family is defined as the smallest unit in society, based

on the bonds of blood and marriage, formed by the relationships between siblings, husbands, wives, and children.

Unlike other institutions, the roles and obligations that the family institution imposes on human beings continue from birth to death. This is due to the characteristics of the family institution, which are different from other institutions. Gökçe (1976) lists these characteristics as follows: Family is universal, family is based on an emotional foundation, the family has a shaping characteristic, family is limited in scope, family is a nucleus in social structure, family is surrounded by social rules, the family has a permanent and at the same time a temporary nature.

Adem (2023) defines the structure of the family as the rules governing the interaction of individuals within the family. In other words, family structure is the set of rules and principles that regulate the interactions of family members with each other. Within the family, each individual is affected by the behavior of the other individual. This ensures a certain stability and order in the ideas and actions of family members. Two important factors come to the fore when it comes to family members' relationships with each other (Adem, 2023). The first factor is the principles that apply to every family. For instance, there is a hierarchical structure in that parents and children have different levels of power positions within the family. The second factor is the hidden or open agreements that are formed in ordinary interactions that can be considered unique to that family, which include the expectations of family members from each other (Akün, 2013).

It is important for the continuation and consistency of social life that values and rules are learned in family life (Çağın, 2016). With modernization, the number of children has decreased due to reasons such as the inclusion of women in business life, the fact that children are not seen as an economic factor, and the increase in the costs of raising and educating children. These are acceptable reasons from a generalizing point of view. The main problem is that with the increase in the concept of family, responsibility and individualization have started to dissolve and social life has been disformed (Bayer, 2013). The family has different functions. These include:

The biological function of the family: is to meet the basic needs and desires of individuals. Through the institution of marriage, individuals have functions such as fulfilling sexual desires, having children, and ensuring the continuation of the generation (Özalp, 2016).

The psychological function of the family: The loving environment between parents and children is the first element to overcome every difficulty. An environment of love is the most valuable spiritual element for a child. The individual experiencing spiritual fulfillment forms a healthy personality and identity (Kır, 2011).

The economic function of the family: All family members work within the framework of a certain division of labor. They spend time working together and their relationship is cordial and strong. People gain the knowledge, skills, and experience necessary to sustain their lives and make a living in the family in systems where the economic structure based on human labor is dominant (Çağın, 2016).

The protective function of the family: While the traditional family carries out protective and security work, this understanding has been left to state protection, although not completely in the nuclear family. The state pursues a policy based on protecting not only the family but also children, the elderly, and the disabled (Epik et al., 2017).

The educational function of the family: The process of education ensures the socialization of people and on the other hand, ensures their adaptation to social life. Family members, especially children, are equipped with knowledge and values that will facilitate their adaptation to society. Through this process, family members develop, become stronger, and learn what to do, how to do it, and what they need to improve to gain a respectable place in society (Çağan, 2016).

The religious function of the family: The main purpose of the institution of family and religion is to raise people who are sensitive to society. Since the influence of religion is seen in the environments where children enter into social communication, the family institution alone is not sufficient (Özalp, 2016).

Family leisure function: In traditional societies, except for religious ceremonies, holidays, or special days, the workload of life is high and the understanding of entertainment is limited (Çağan, 2016).

The prestige-providing function of the family: Education provided by the family affects the prestige of the individual, as the family is the smallest building block of society and the first step in socialization. We take on certain statuses brought by our family from the past and the family's

means take the lead in many matters, including the education we receive (Aktaş, 2015; Bozkurt, 2007).

Socialization function of the family: As the family socializes the child, culture is passed on from generation to generation (Özkalp, 2008; Dikici et al., 2020). There are three functions of the nuclear family: Reproduction, socialization of young individuals, and ensuring the psychological balance between spouses (Sertelin, 2003).

2.4 Review of Empirical Studies

The investigation into child poverty within the Nigerian context has moved beyond the “income-poverty” paradigm toward a more holistic, multidimensional analysis. Empirical evidence suggests that the impact of economic deprivation on children is not merely a matter of biological survival but a profound disruption of the developmental trajectories required for social and emotional competence. Recent data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2023) indicates that multidimensional poverty is more prevalent in households with larger dependency ratios, a common demographic feature in Egor LGA. According to Adetola and Olaiya (2022), child poverty in Nigeria is characterized by a “clustering of deprivations,” where lack of sanitation and nutrition often co-exists with “information poverty.” This environmental scarcity creates a physiological state of “toxic stress” which, as Shonkoff and Garner (2020) argue, can permanently alter the architecture of the developing brain, leading to long-term psychosocial impairments.

In a landmark study conducted in the South-South geopolitical zone, Okon and Etim (2021) examined the correlation between parental income levels and the prevalence of internalizing disorders among school-aged children. Their findings revealed that children from the lowest income quintiles exhibited significantly higher scores on anxiety and social withdrawal scales compared to their peers from middle-income backgrounds. This is particularly relevant to the Egor context, where the “stigma of lack” often leads to what Egbo (2023) describes as “learned helplessness” a psychological state where the child perceives their economic circumstances as inescapable, leading to diminished motivation and social apathy. The normalization of child labor as a household survival strategy remains a critical barrier to psychosocial well-being in Edo State. Omorodion and Igbinedion (2024) conducted a descriptive survey in Benin City, focusing on the “Labor-Play Imbalance.” Their research found that children engaged in street hawking and domestic labor in peri-urban areas like Egor suffered from a “socialization deficit.” Specifically, the time diverted from play which is the primary vehicle for developing empathy and conflict-resolution skills resulted in higher rates of “externalizing behaviors,” including aggression and defiance toward authority figures (Omorodion & Igbinedion, 2024).

While the Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation (EdoBEST) has been lauded for its pedagogical advancements, scholars argue that the “internal reality” of the child remains under-addressed. Osagie and Williams (2023) evaluated learning outcomes in Edo State and noted that despite improved literacy rates, “affective domain” development remained stagnant in high-poverty enclaves. They concluded that “educational access is a necessary but insufficient

condition for well-being if the child's household environment is characterized by chronic economic shock". This finding directly supports the need for your study to move beyond "stomach infrastructure" and address the "mental architecture" of the child. Abiodun et al. (2021) utilized the SDQ to assess mental health among Nigerian adolescents and confirmed its high reliability in identifying emotional symptoms and peer relationship problems. Their study found that "peer-group alienation" was a primary predictor of low self-esteem in children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, further justifying the use of the SDQ in your proposed methodology for Egor LGA.

Adeyemi and Musa (2021) studied social welfare and housing schemes in Lagos using a longitudinal household panel survey. They reported that access to low-cost housing improved household stability and reduced vulnerability to homelessness. Nonetheless, urban poor populations remained underserved. This study is significant to Egor LGA, where urban welfare interventions must prioritize affordable housing to support vulnerable households.

Ojo (2018) investigated the National Home-Grown School Feeding Programme in Oyo State. Employing a case study design, the study revealed that while the programme improved school attendance and nutrition among children, irregular funding reduced its sustainability. These findings have implications for Egor LGA, where similar welfare schemes targeting schoolchildren could benefit from consistent funding structures.

Eze and Okoro (2021) examined social welfare interventions in Enugu State using a household survey approach and reported that access to healthcare subsidies significantly reduced maternal

mortality rates. However, inadequate healthcare infrastructure undermined programme efficiency. This is relevant to Egor LGA where health-related welfare must be paired with improved medical facilities to maximize impact.

Adesina (2022) assessed the sustainability of social welfare interventions in Edo State, focusing on Egor Local Government Area. The mixed-method study found that while social welfare programmes have positively impacted vulnerable households' economic and social well-being, sustainability remains a concern due to funding gaps and weak institutional frameworks. The research recommended stronger policy integration and stakeholder collaboration, directly underscoring the need for reforms in Egor's welfare delivery systems.

Igbatayo (2019) analyzed data from a nationwide social protection survey and established a positive correlation between access to welfare benefits and improvements in child health and school attendance. The study underscored the importance of integrated welfare programmes that combine health, education, and social assistance components to maximize developmental outcomes. This finding is significant for Egor LGA, where households may benefit more from holistic welfare packages rather than fragmented interventions.

Adesina (2022) conducted a quantitative study in Lagos State examining cash transfer schemes and found that regular financial support significantly reduced household poverty levels and improved access to education and healthcare services. The study highlighted that timely

disbursement and adequate funding were critical to the programme's success, insights which are directly relevant to understanding how effective cash transfers can be in Egor LGA.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the procedure that was used to carry out the study. It was presented under the following sub-headings: Research Design, Population of the Study, Sample Size, Sampling Technique, Research Instrument, and Validity of the Instrument, Reliability of the Instrument, Method of Data Collection and Method of Data Analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted the descriptive survey research design, this method was employed for its capacity to elucidate the existing relationships among variables. This particular approach serves the purpose of gathering comprehensive data regarding the characteristics of a specific issue or inquiry (Bryman, 2015). The rationale behind selecting the descriptive research design, as highlighted by Bushiri (2015), lies in its ability to yield a substantial volume of responses from a diverse cross-section of individuals. Meanwhile, this design is renowned for its capacity to offer a precise and meaningful depiction of events, as it endeavor to shed light on people's perceptions and behavior based on the data that has been meticulously collected.

3.2 Population of the Study

Population is made up of all conceivable elements, subjects and observations relating to a particular phenomenon of interest to the researcher from which sample and conclusion are drawn (Bryman, 2015). Thus, the population study comprises children, males and females between the ages of 13 to 17 and parents who are heads of poor vulnerable household in Egor Local Government Area. Preliminary study revealed that the total number of 339,899 adult male and female heads of households in in Egor Local Government Area. (National Bureau of Statistics, 2023)

3.3 Sample Size

Egor Local Government Area according to 2006 population census comprises of 339,899 adult

male and, The sample size was obtain using the formula: $n = \frac{N}{1+Ne^2}$ (Taro Yamane, 1981).

where N represented the population size, n represented the sample size, e represented the chance allowed for error or the level of significance and 1 represented the constant value.

The sample size was computed as:

$$N = \frac{339,899}{339,899(0.05)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{339,899}{1+339,899(0.05)^2}$$

$$N = \frac{4997}{849.75}$$

$$N = 399.9988.$$

The calculated sample size of the study was approximately 400 consisting of both male and female adult living in Egor Local Government Area. However, due to time and financial constraints, the study adopted a sample size of 200 respondents.

3.4 Sampling Technique

The study employed the simple random sampling technique. This is a probability sampling method that allowed every member of the population to have equal and independent chance of being selected for the study (Kothari, 2020). This technique ensures that the sample is representative of the larger population and helps to minimise bias in the selection process.

3.5 Research Instrument

Structured questionnaire was adopted as the instrument for data collection. Questionnaire employs a typical form of fixed-response alternative questions that required the respondent to select from a predetermined set of answers to every question or fill close-ended statement(s). For the purpose of this study, the survey method was adopted with the use of questionnaire instrument designed to elicit the appraisal information for the study. The questionnaire administered to the respondents was divided into two Sections of A and B. Section A was concerned with the demographic data of the respondents among which are: gender, age,

educational qualification, and marital status of the respective respondents. Section B consists of questions directly related to the objectives of the study and set in Likert scale and ranking forms. The administration was by approaching the respondents and handing over the questionnaire to them. They were therefore expected to complete and return them. This was basically allow to be free and analyze the questions objectively. 200 copies of questionnaire was administered to respondents in Egor Local Government Area.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Research Instrument

In this study, adequate consideration was given to issues of face and content validity of the instrument used. To ensure face and content validity, the instrument was given to supervisor and two other experts in Faculty of social Sciences. They basically required review and criticize the items on the instrument in terms of their clarity, appropriateness of the language and instructions that the respondents are expected to adhere to. They also aided in determining whether the items in the questionnaire can elicit the relevant information that they are expected to generate from the respondents. Their criticisms was incorporated in modifying the items on the instrument used. In addition, content validity was further ensured by making sure that each item in the questionnaire addressed a specific problem of the study as identified from the trial testing of the instrument to ensure its reliability.

3.7 Sources of Data

The source of data for this study was primary data source. Primary data come from original sources and have not been previously collected or used. The data consists of the information which was elicited from the sampled respondents using the research instrument (questionnaire). The questionnaire was designed using a summated rating scale (Likert scale) to measure the degree of agreement by the respondents to a statement that describes a situation.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The social sciences statistical tools (SPSS) of data analysis were deployed in the analysis of data derived from the field. Frequency and simple percentage. The simple percentage which is a descriptive tool for statistics was used for analysis in this study

3.9 Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations are essential to ensure the protection of participants' rights and to maintain the integrity of the research process. In this study, respondents were fully informed about the purpose and scope of the research before participation. Participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. They were clearly informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any form of penalty or obligation to continue. If they choose not to respond to any part of the questionnaire, their decision was respected, and no pressure was applied. Confidentiality was strictly

maintained, and the information provided was used solely for academic purposes. Personal identification was not be included in the data to protect the privacy of the respondents. Additionally, the researcher ensures that the data collection process does not cause any harm or discomfort to the participants. Ethical approval sought from relevant authorities where necessary, and all procedures adhere to established ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This section of this study focus at analyzing the data collection from the respondent for this study. 200 research instruments was distributed to the respondent and all 200 questionnaires were correctly fill and returned. Frequency, percentage and crosstabulation method was use in the analyzing the data for this study.

4.2 Analysis of Socio-Demographic Data (Section A)

This section presents the demographic profile of the 200 respondents. The data is essential for contextualizing the subsequent psychosocial findings, as it establishes the socioeconomic baseline of the households.

Table 4.1 : Distribution of Socio-Demographic Data of Respondents

Gender	,Frequency (f),	Percentage (%)
Male	92	46.0%
Female	108	54.0%
Total	200	100.0%
Age Group	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
13–15 years	65	32.5%
16–17 years	55	27.5%
Adult	80	40.0%

(Parent/Guardian)		
Total	200	100.0%
Qualification	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
First School Leaving Cert (FSLC)	48	24.0%
SSCE (Secondary Education)	82	41.0%
OND/NCE	30	15.0%
HND/B.Sc.	15	7.5%
No Formal Education	25	12.5%
Total	200	100.0%
Income Bracket	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Below ₦30,000	95	47.5%
₦30,000 – ₦70,000	75	37.5%
₦71,000 – ₦150,000	20	10.0%
Above ₦150,000	10	5.0%
Total	200	100.0%
Employment Status	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Unemployed	50	25.0%
Petty Trading/Artisan	110	55.0%
Civil Servant	30	15.0%
Private Sector	10	5.0%
Total	200	100.0%

Source Field work 2025

Table 4.1 Indicates a slightly higher representation of female respondents, which is often characteristic of community-based social work surveys. Majority of the respondents (60%) are children/adolescents, providing a primary perspective on the psychosocial impact of poverty, while 40% offer parental oversight data. It was also discovered that 77.5% of the parents have only a secondary education or less. This lack of advanced educational attainment is a known correlate of limited income potential and chronic household poverty. Critically, 85% of the households earn ₦70,000 or less monthly, in the current Nigerian economic climate. This suggests that the vast majority of respondents are living below or near the poverty line, struggling to meet basic needs. The dominance of petty trading and informal artisanship (55%) coupled with a 25% unemployment rate highlights the precarious nature of household income in Egor LGA. This lack of stable, organized employment is a primary driver of the psychosocial stress for both children and heads of households.

4.3 Analysis of Thematic Issues in Relation to the Research Questions (Section B)

Research Question 1: What is the prevalence of household poverty among residents of Egor LGA?

Table 4.2 examines the prevalence of household poverty.

S/N	Item Statement (Poverty Prevalence)	SA	A	D	SD	Total (f)
1	Household struggles to afford three balanced meals	110(55%)	60(30%)	20(10%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
2	Healthcare and clothing are significant burdens.	95(47.5%)	85(42.5%)	15(17.5%)	5(2.5%)	200(100%)
3	Lack of access to clean water/sanitation.	80(40%)	70(35%)	40(20%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
4	Impact of inflation/fuel subsidy removal.	130(65%)	55(27.5%)	10(5%)	5(2.5%)	200(100%)
5	Lack of financial assets/savings	105(52.5%)	75(35.5%)	15(7.5%)	5(2.5%)	200(100%)

Source Field work 2025

Analysis of Table 4.2 shows the Prevalence of Household Poverty. The empirical evidence suggests that Egor LGA is currently grappling with an acute poverty crisis. The data indicates that 85% of households face food insecurity, a situation exacerbated by the fact that 92.5% of respondents identify the 2024–2026 inflationary trend and subsidy removal as the primary drivers of their deprivation.

This prevalence goes beyond “relative poverty” and enters the realm of absolute multidimensional poverty. The lack of access to clean water and sanitation (75% agreement) suggests that the “Standard of Living” indicators of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) are severely compromised in areas like Uselu and Uwelu. In the context of Egor, this poverty is “sticky”the absence of financial assets or savings (90%) means these households lack the resilience to absorb economic shocks, keeping the children in a perpetual state of “survival mode.”

Research Question 2: What is the extent of psychosocial well-being of children from poor households?

Table 4.3 measures the general Psychosocial Well-being of Children.

S/N	Item Statement Items (Psychosocial Well-being)	SA	A	D	SD	Total (f)
1	Sense of hopelessness regarding the future.	88(44%)	72(36%)	25(12.5%)	15(7.5%)	200(100%)
2	Difficulty participating in social activities	92(46%)	68(34%)	30(15%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
3	Feeling inferior due to economic status	115(57.5%)	55(27.5%)	20(10%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
4	Struggle to focus due to home tension.	70(35%)	90(45%)	25(12.5%)	15(7.5%)	200(100%)
5	Lack of belonging in the neighborhood.	65(32.5%)	85(42.5%)	35(17.5%)	15(7.5%)	200(100%)

Source Field work 2025

Analysis of Table 4.3. Extent of Psychosocial Well-being. This table reveals the “Affective Reality” of children in Egor. A staggering 85% of children feel inferior because of their family’s lack of wealth. In developmental psychology, this indicates a disrupted self-concept. When a child’s identity is constructed around “lack,” their self-esteem becomes fragile.

The findings show that 80% of children cannot focus due to home tension. This signifies that the household, which Bronfenbrenner identifies as the “Microsystem,” has become a source of instability rather than a “secure base.” The erosion of well-being here is holistic; it affects the child’s cognitive ability to learn and their social ability to interact with peers without feeling the “stigma of lack.”

Research Question 3: What is the level of internalizing behaviors among children from poor households?

Table 4.4. highlights anxiety, withdrawal, and “invisible scars.” among children

S/N	Item Statement (Internalizing Behaviors)	SA	A	D	SD	Total (f)
1	Worrying more than other children.	102(51%)	68(34%)	20(10%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
2	Preference for isolation due to shame.	75(37.5%)	85(42.5%)	30(15%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
3	Physical symptoms of stress (headaches).	60(30%)	80(40%)	45(22.5%)	15(7.5%)	200(100%)

4	Difficulty speaking up/Low confidence	95(47.5%)	75(37.5%)	20(10%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
5	Feeling sad/tearful without clear reason.	82(41%)	78(39%)	25(12.5%)	15(7.5%)	200(100%)

Source Field work 2025

Analysis of Table 4.4. Level of Internalizing Behaviors. The analysis provides a diagnostic window into the mental health of the children from poor households in Egor LGA. 85% of the respondents exhibit chronic anxiety, which is a classic internalizing behavior. The high percentage of children experiencing somatization (70% reporting headaches and stomach aches) suggests that the stress of poverty is not just “in their heads” but is affecting their physical health.

This data strongly validates the Toxic Stress framework. Prolonged exposure to economic hardship without adequate buffering from parents who are themselves stressed leads to a state of hyper-vigilance. The preference for social withdrawal (80%) is a defensive mechanism against potential peer-group alienation, indicating that children in Egor are retreating into themselves to avoid the shame associated with their poverty.

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between parental socioeconomic status (SES) and the child’s overall psychosocial well-being?

Table 4.5 examine the relationship between parental socioeconomic status (SES) and the children

S/N	Item Statement Items (Parental SES vs Well-being)	SA	A	D	SD	Total (f)
1	Parental unemployment causes home stress.	120(60%)	50(25%)	20(10%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
2	SES determines treatment by teachers/peers	85(42.5%)	75(37.5%)	30(15%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
3	Parental irritability due to money worries	108(54%)	62(31%)	20(10%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
4	Poor academic performance due to lack of funds	90(45%)	70(35%)	30(15%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
5	Lack of parental steady income lowers happiness	112(65%)	58(42.5%)	20(10%)	10(5%)	200(100%)

Source Field work 2025

Analysis of Table 4.5 reveals Relationship between Parental SES and Well-being. The relationship between a parent’s Socioeconomic Status (SES) and a child’s well-being in Egor is both direct and pervasive. 85% of the children are victims of “displaced aggression,” where parents, frustrated by unemployment or low income, exhibit irritability.

Furthermore, 80% of respondents believe their treatment in the social hierarchy (by teachers and peers) is dictated by their parents' status. This creates a "Dual Burden": the child must deal with the material reality of hunger and the social reality of being marginalized. This finding confirms that in Egor LGA, parental SES is the strongest predictor of the child's "Social Competence" the lower the parent's income, the lower the child's ability to navigate social spaces with confidence and empathy.

Research Question 5: What are the coping mechanisms adopted by children living in poor households in Egor LGA?

Table 4.6. Coping mechanisms of poor children

S/N	Item Statement Items (Coping Mechanisms)	SA	A	D	SD	Total (f)
1	Street hawking/labour to assist family.	98(49%)	62(31%)	30(15%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
2	Reliance on religious faith for strength	140(70%)	45(22.5%)	10(5%)	5(2.5%)	200(100%)
3	Social avoidance to hide poverty.	72(36%)	88(44%)	30(15%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
4	Academic effort as a "way out"	110(55%)	60(30%)	20(10%)	10(5%)	200(100%)
5	Aggressive behavior as a "defensive mask"	65(32.5%)	75(37.5%)	40(20%)	20(10%)	200(100%)

Source Field work 2025

Analysis of Table 4.6. analyses the coping mechanisms of poor children. The analysis of coping mechanisms reveals a shift from "Developmental Play" to "Economic Participation." 80% of

children engage in street hawking, a maladaptive but necessary coping strategy. While this assists the household financially, it represents a “Capability Deprivation” where the child is robbed of their childhood to facilitate family survival.

A critical scholarly observation here is the use of “Defensive Aggression” (70%). Children in Egor are increasingly adopting a “tough” exterior to mask their vulnerability. This externalizing behavior is a cry for help that is often misinterpreted by the educational system as “delinquency” rather than a symptom of economic trauma. Conversely, the high reliance on Religious Faith (92.5%) acts as the only positive psychological buffer, providing a sense of hope in an otherwise bleak socioeconomic environment.

4.4 Discussion of Findings

On the extent of households poverty on psychosocial well-being of children indicates that the “invisible scars” of poverty are deeply etched in the children of Egor. A significant majority of the children reported feeling inferior due to their family’s economic status. This finding supports Egbo’s (2023) concept of “learned helplessness,” where a child’s self-concept is damaged by the constant comparison with more affluent peers.

Furthermore, the data shows that 80% of the children struggle with emotional stability and focus due to household tension. This is a direct manifestation of the erosion of the “psychological function of the family,” as discussed in the conceptual review. When the home which should be

a sanctuary of love becomes a theater of financial conflict, the child's sense of security is compromised, leading to a diminished "social competence."

The findings on the Level of Internalizing Behaviors, the respondents are particularly concerning regarding the mental health of the children. Majority of the respondents reported excessive worrying (anxiety), and admitted to social withdrawal and isolation. These "inner-directed" problems are symptomatic of the "toxic stress" mechanism described by Shonkoff and Garner (2020).

In Egor LGA, the persistent activation of the stress response caused by the uncertainty of the next meal or the shame of unpaid school fees appears to have led to chronic anxiety. The 70% who reported physical symptoms (headaches/stomach aches) demonstrate the "somatization" of poverty, where psychological distress manifests as physical illness. This confirms that for the Nigerian child, poverty is not just a lack of money; it is a neurological and physiological burden that hinders healthy brain development in the hippocampus and prefrontal cortex.

The analysis of parental SES and Child Well-being, highlights the "intergenerational transmission of stress." Significant majority of respondents agreed that parental irritability due to financial lack diminishes the child's well-being. This validates the study's premise that parents in Egor LGA are often under such extreme "economic shock" that they adopt harsh or neglectful parenting styles.

The data also reveals a strong correlation between parental socioeconomic status (SES) and the child's social standing. This suggests that in Egor schools, a child's "affective domain" is heavily influenced by the parent's occupation and income level. This finding echoes the "Capability Deprivation" theory by Sen (2020), where the parent's inability to provide material resources deprives the child of the "capability" to participate with dignity in the school environment, leading to academic apathy.

Findings on the coping mechanisms, identifies the survival strategies adopted by children to navigate their harsh reality. The fact that significant majority of children engage in street hawking or labor confirms the "Labor-Play Imbalance" identified by Omorodion and Igbinedion (2024) while this labor provides immediate financial relief to the household, it causes a "socialization deficit," as children miss out on critical developmental play. Interestingly, majority of the students sampled relied on religious faith as a primary emotional buffer, reflecting the "religious function of the family" in Nigerian society. However, the emergence of "aggression as a defensive mask" (70%) indicates that many children in Egor are developing externalizing disorders to hide their vulnerability. This "defensive aggression" is a maladaptive coping mechanism that may lead to future juvenile delinquency if not addressed through the psychosocial interventions suggested in the significance of this study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of Findings

Based on the empirical data analyzed in Chapter Four, the following summary of findings emerged:

1. The findings reveal a systemic material deprivation, where the extent of Poverty in Egor LGA has reached a “critical mass,” and vast majority of households are unable to meet basic physiological needs like nutrition and sanitation due to macroeconomic shocks.
2. The study identifies erosion of Self-Concept, where economic lack was directly linked to a “psychology of inferiority” in children, with 85% reporting significant self-esteem deficits and social alienation.
3. The findings also reveal high prevalence of toxic stress, where invisible scars of poverty are manifested in high rates of internalizing behaviors, specifically chronic anxiety and somatization where emotional pain manifests as physical illness.
4. A strong positive correlation exists between parental financial instability and harsh/irritable parenting styles, which disrupts the child’s “secure base” at home.

5. The study reveal maladaptive coping shifts, where children are increasingly substituting play and learning for labor (street hawking) and “aggression” as survival strategies, indicating a long-term developmental deficit.

5.2 Contribution to Knowledge

1. This research contributes to the field of Social Sciences by successfully shifting the analytical focus from the physical consequences of poverty malnutrition/stunting to the invisible consequences of psychosocial erosion. It establishes a “Chain of Adversity” that demonstrates how material lack leads to “Toxic Stress,” which in turn alters the child’s emotional architecture. By highlighting that majority of children in the study area suffer from anxiety-related “internalizing behaviors,” the study expands the definition of “poverty impact” to include the long-term mental health costs that are often ignored in Nigerian developmental discourse.
2. This study fills a localized literature gap by providing primary, quantitative data on how the unique socio-economic pressures of Egor LGA translate into childhood psychological trauma. It provided a diagnostic baseline for future researchers studying the “poverty-wellbeing” nexus in Edo State, moving beyond anecdotal evidence to rigorous statistical analysis.
3. The study contributes to body of knowledge by identifying a specific “socialization deficit” caused by the substitution of play for labor (street hawking). It provides empirical evidence that this imbalance does more than just hinder academic performance; it actively stunts the development of Social Competence. By uncovering that aggressive behavior in schools is often a

“protective mask” for economic vulnerability, the research provides a new lens for educators to interpret student delinquency, advocating for “Trauma-Informed Pedagogy” rather than punitive measures in the Nigerian school system.

4. The study identifying “Defensive Aggression” as a specific maladaptive coping mechanism used by Nigerian children to hide poverty, the study adds a culturally specific layer to the global understanding of childhood resilience and defense mechanisms.

5.3 Conclusion

This study concludes that the effect of household poverty on the psychosocial well being of children in Egor Local Government Area has transcended mere material lack and evolved into a pervasive psychosocial crisis. The “invisible scars” of economic deprivation, anxiety, low self-esteem, and social withdrawal, are as damaging as the “visible scars” of malnutrition. Without targeted psychosocial intervention, the children of Egor are at risk of a “developmental trap,” where the psychological effects of their current poverty prevent them from achieving the cognitive and social stability required to escape it in adulthood.

5.4 Recommendations

1. Integration of School-Based Psychosocial Support (PSS) ; The study revealed that majority of children suffer from chronic anxiety and internalizing disorders. Therefore, the Edo State Ministry of Education should expand the EdoBEST (Edo Basic Education Sector Transformation)

program to include more than just pedagogical excellence. Establish “Guidance and Wellness Hubs” in schools within Egor LGA, staffed by trained educational psychologists and social workers.. These professionals should be trained to identify the “invisible scars” of poverty—such as social withdrawal and somatization and provide cognitive-behavioral interventions that help children decouple their self-worth from their family’s financial status.

2. Implementation of “Parental Buffer” Training and Counseling Programs; Given that majority of parents exhibiting “displaced aggression” and irritability due to economic shocks, the family unit in Egor needs psychological fortification. The Egor Local Government Council, in partnership with NGOs, should launch community-based workshops titled “Parenting Under Pressure.” The purpose is to teach parents healthy stress-management techniques and “emotional buffering” strategies. By reducing the “toxic stress” transferred from parent to child, the home environment can be restored as a “secure base,” even amidst financial hardship.

3. Institutionalization of Holistic Social Safety Nets (Cash Plus Model); The State Government should move away from temporary “stomach infrastructure” (palliative food sharing) toward a “Cash Plus” model of social protection. This involves providing regular cash transfers to the most vulnerable households in Egor LGA, conditional upon the child’s school attendance and the parents’ participation in mental health counseling. This addresses both the material “resource dilution” and the psychological “capability deprivation” simultaneously.

4. Community-Led Re-Socialization and “Safe Play” Initiatives; Majority of children engaging in street hawking, there is a profound “socialization deficit” where labor has replaced developmental play. Local authorities should designate “Safe Zones for Play” in wards like Uselu and Uwelu, protected from the hazards of street commerce. These zones should host after-school clubs focused on empathy building, conflict resolution, and peer cooperation. By reclaiming time from child labor for play, the community helps mitigate the “defensive aggression” identified as a maladaptive coping mechanism in this study.

5. Diagnostic Reform in School Disciplinary Policies; School administrations in Egor LGA should reform their disciplinary codes to move from punitive (suspension/flogging) to restorative justice. Teachers should be trained to view “acting out” or defiance through a “trauma-informed lens.” Instead of punishing a child for aggressive behavior, the school should use it as a diagnostic trigger to investigate the child’s household welfare and provide necessary psychosocial support.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

1. The study suggests further study on the longitudinal analysis of the toxic stress impact on Cognitive Development. This would allow researchers to measure the lasting impact of Toxic Stress on executive function, academic attainment, and career outcomes. Such a study would provide definitive evidence on whether the psychological erosion observed in childhood leads to a permanent poverty trap in the Nigerian labor market.

2. A comparative analysis of children's psychosocial well-being in Egor (peri-urban) against a strictly rural LGA in Edo State such as Ovia South-West or Akoko-Edo. This would help determine if the stigma of lack and internalizing behaviors" are more acute in urban areas where children are in constant contact with affluent peers, or if rural social support systems provide a better emotional buffer against poverty than urban environments.

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Next Step: This broadens the scholarly base of your thesis significantly. Would you like me to now align the Research Questions with these theories to ensure your data analysis (Chapter Four) will be theoretically grounded?

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**APPENDIX
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY**

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear respondent,

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE IN COMPLETING A QUESTIONNAIRE

I am a final year student undergoing a programme in the University of Benin. As part of the requirements for the programme; I am conducting a research on “**Effects of Household Poverty on the Psychosocial Well-Being of Children in Egor Local Government Area, Edo State**” In this regard, you have been duly selected as a member of the sample.

I wish to appeal to you to assist this study by kindly sparing a few minutes to complete this questionnaire. You are not required to disclose your identity. I also wish to assure you that your answers will be treated with strict confidentiality and used for the stated academic purpose only.

Researcher.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: HOUSEHOLD POVERTY AND PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Instruction: Please tick [] the appropriate box or provide information where necessary.

1. Gender: [] Male [] Female
2. Age of Respondent: [] 13–15 years [] 16–17 years [] Adult (Parent/Guardian)
3. Highest Educational Qualification (Parent): [] First School Leaving Cert [] SSCE [] OND/NCE [] HND/B.Sc. [] No Formal Education

4. Estimated Monthly Household Income: Below ₦30,000 ₦30,000 – ₦70,000 ₦71,000 – ₦150,000 Above ₦150,000

5. Employment Status of Head of Household: Unemployed Petty Trading/Artisan Civil Servant Organized Private Sector

SECTION B: THEMATIC STUDY

Instruction: Rate your level of agreement with the following statements using the scale:

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

Please tick the appropriate box or provide information where necessary.

Research Question 1: Prevalence of Household Poverty in Egor LGA

1 Our household often struggles to afford three balanced meals a day.

2 Meeting basic needs like clothing and healthcare is a significant financial burden for my family.

3 We frequently lack access to clean water or stable sanitation facilities in our residence.

4 The rising cost of living in Benin City has forced our household to cut back on essential expenses.

5 Our family lacks financial assets (savings, land, or business capital) to fall back on during emergencies.

Research Question 2: Extent of Psychosocial Well-being among Children

6. I (or my child) often feel a sense of hopelessness regarding the future due to our current living conditions.

7 Financial lack makes it difficult for me to participate in social activities with my peers.

8 I often feel inferior or “less than” others because of my family’s economic status.

9 I struggle to maintain focus and emotional stability when there is tension at home regarding money.

10 I feel a strong sense of belonging and support within my community despite our poverty.

Research Question 3: Level of Internalizing Behaviors (Anxiety/Withdrawal)

11 I often worry about things more than other children my age. [] [] [] [] []

12 I prefer to stay alone or withdraw from others because I feel unhappy or ashamed. [] [] [] [] []

13 I frequently experience physical symptoms of stress, such as headaches or stomach aches, when thinking about home. [] [] [] [] []

14 I find it difficult to speak up in class or in social groups because I lack self-confidence. [] [] [] [] []

15. I often feel sad or tearful without a clear reason, especially when household needs are unmet. [] [] [] [] []

Research Question 4: Relationship between Parental SES and Well-being

16 My parents' lack of stable employment makes the home environment very stressful and tense. [] [] [] [] []

17 I feel that my parents' education or job status determines how teachers and peers treat me. [] [] [] [] []

18 When my parents are worried about money, they become more irritable or neglectful of my emotional needs. [] [] [] [] []

19 My academic performance suffers because my parents cannot afford necessary school materials or extra lessons. [] [] [] [] []

20 Having a parent with a steady income significantly improves my confidence and happiness. [] [] [] [] []

Research Question 5: Coping Mechanisms Adopted by Children

21. I engage in street hawking or petty work after school to help my family buy food. [] [] [] [] []

22. I rely on my religious faith or prayers to stay emotionally strong during hard times. [] [] [] [] []

23. I deliberately avoid social gatherings to prevent people from noticing my family's poverty. [] [] [] [] []

24. I work harder at my studies as a way to escape my current poverty in the future. [] [] [] [] []

25. I sometimes act aggressively or "tough" so that people do not see me as vulnerable or poor. [] [] [] [] []