

Human Trafficking and Modern-Day Slavery: An Appraisal of Causes and Effects in Nigeria

Goddy Uwa Osimen¹, Olu-Owolabi, Fadeke E², Apeloko Olubunmi David³, Edith Abisola Awogu-Maduagwu⁴

Abstract

Human trafficking is widely recognized as a form of contemporary slavery with a range of socioeconomic ramifications. In Nigeria, this form of contemporary slavery is common. Nigeria, regrettably, is a source, transit, and destination country for trafficking, which is a disgusting position to hold. With the associated effects and implications on people's life in the nation, the epidemic has taken on complicated dimensions and grown elusive. It is on this backdrop this study looks at the causes and effects of the scourge in Nigeria, using Edo State as a case study. The study which adopts the descriptive survey research design method. Data collected were analysed and expressed descriptively. The study revealed among other things that, poverty and unemployment are the main drivers of human trafficking in Nigeria. The necessity to build coordinated and well-articulated initiatives that fight human trafficking in Nigeria is thus suggested, among other things.

Keywords: *Human Trafficking, Modern Slavery, Human Exploitation, Effect, Nigeria.*

1. Introduction

Slavery and human trafficking have a very long and primordial history. There is enough proof to conclude that affluent individuals have employed slaves for physical satisfaction or manual labor since the beginning of time. Africans were once sent as slave labor to many nations throughout the world after being transported over the Atlantic Ocean. Although British colonists founded in the New World, they were also at first liable for and proponents of the slave trade in Africa. However, Britain later emerged as the country spearheading efforts to put an end to the slave trade in Africa. It is estimated that the global market for human trafficking, a modern-day form of slavery that involves the unlawful trade of individuals for financial gain or human exploitation, is worth \$150 billion (Anti-trafficking Alliance 2017). According to a study by Pathfinders Justice Initiative (2018), the majority of this sum (\$99 billion) is generated by pansexual-sexual trafficking and exploitation, with an additional \$51 billion being generated by unintentional forced labor such as domestic labor, agricultural activities, and other economic achievements. Additionally, according to current estimates released by the Global Slavery Index between January and July 2018, there are approximately 40.3 million victims of modern slavery worldwide, 71% of whom are young women or girls and 25% of whom are children under the age of 18. Likewise, current reports on human trafficking, which were released in September 2022 by several international organizations

¹ Department of Political Science & International Relations, Covenant University, Ota-Nigeria, goddy.osimen@covenantuniversity.edu.ng

² Department of Political Science & International Relations, Covenant University, Ota-Nigeria

³ Department of Political Science & International Relations, Covenant University, Ota-Nigeria

⁴ Department of Languages, Covenant University, Ota, Nigeria

and NGOs including the Walk Free Foundation, ILO, and IOM, show that there are roughly 49 million victims of contemporary slavery worldwide or over 49.5 million people. It is important that the UNODC's 2020 comprehensive report on trafficking in persons also gives an estimation of the number of children in slavery at about 30% of worldwide victims, whereas 79% of persons trafficked for sexual exploitation which is the more rampant practice of human trafficking, are young women and girls. Also, 99% of the 4.8 million preys of commercial sexual exploitation in the previous years were mostly of women and girls, with one out of five being children, a claim by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2017).

NAPTIP (2020) further revealed that Nigerians who are victims of human trafficking are frequently mistreated and exploited both domestically and abroad. Most and most current publications on human trafficking in Nigeria by international organizations also said that domestic human trafficking accounts for the bulk of Nigerian victims of trafficking. Therefore, the NAPTIP figure for victims who were saved does not necessarily reflect the total number of victims of both domestic and international trafficking in Nigeria. It is evident that human trafficking in Nigeria has an impact on people of all ages, genders, and geographic regions within the country (Adepoju, Gberevbie & Ibhawo, 2021).

However, modern slavery and human trafficking have historical antecedents. The history of slavery and human trafficking teaches us that harsh and exploitative behaviors from the past are still practiced today, especially in Africa. The outdated perception of slavery holds that individuals are enslaved, controlled, or purchased and exchanged like products and services. Even if it may not always take the typical forms that people were accustomed to in the past, slavery is still very much a reality in today's world. The majority of state laws recognize that slavery may originate through a number of alternative mechanisms, such as through;

control of movement, control of physical environment, psychological control, measures taken to prevent or deter escape, force, threat of force, coercion or deception, assertion of exclusivity, subjection to cruel treatment and abuse, control of sexuality and force labour and power to use services without commensurate compensation.

As a result, human trafficking is a type of contemporary slavery that involves "the hiring, shipping, movement, containing or getting of individuals; by using or threatening the use of kidnapping, violence, deceit, fraud or coercion, or by the exchange or receipt of illegal benefits or compensation in order in order to obtain the approval of an individual having custody of another person, and for the aim of sexual assault or compelled labor in which they are manipulated and utilized for gain (UNODC, 2020). Criminals exert influence and establish control over people via force, fraud, or coercion. Human trafficking is a growing criminal industry even though it is against both international and domestic laws. People who have been the victims of human trafficking may be coerced or compelled to labor in a variety of jobs, both covertly and publicly. Instances are working for web chauffeur services, on corners of streets, as kidnapping victims, or in private households, as well as in manufacturing facilities, factories, farmland, slums, and spas. The sectors of the economy most frequently associated with human trafficking are those related to agriculture, construction, apparel and textile manufacture, catering and restaurants, domestic labour, entertainment, and the sex business. Even though human trafficking affects everyone in society, the majority of victims come from vulnerable backgrounds.

These weaknesses are a result of behaviors and policies that marginalize whole groups of people, leaving them especially open to victimization.

Nigeria continues to have a serious problem with people trafficking despite several efforts and initiatives by the large government. The impact of criminal syndicates, the ongoing loss of young women and children to sexual and forced labor exploitation, and the need for coordinated and ongoing focus are all issues that must be addressed in order to combat trafficking and bring those responsible to justice. Government, foreign

organizations, NGOs, and civil society will need to put up more effort, skills, and resources to better combat human trafficking in Nigeria and its detrimental consequences on the entire Nigerian population.

Therefore, the justification for this study is partly due to the current increase and intensification of human trafficking and its effects in Nigeria. Though, the study was carried out in Nigeria, but was further narrowed down to Edo State, Nigeria. The choice of Edo State is because of its nature of prevalence and occurrences. Secondly, to investigate the new wave of human trafficking and its socio-economic effects it posed on Nigeria.

2. Conceptual and Theoretical Discourse

Even though human trafficking has existed for a very long time, the international community did not agree on a normative definition of the crime until the UN Protocol to Avoid, Combat, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children on the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, later known as the Palermo Protocol, was adopted in late 2000. This Protocol popularly known as the ‘Palermo Protocol’ or ‘Trafficking Protocol’ complemented the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2013). Article 3, of the paragraph (a) of the Protocol of United Nations (2013) defines human trafficking as:

“Trafficking in Persons (TIP) will mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of office or of a position of vulnerability or the giving or receiving of payments or remunerations to achieve the consensus of a person having control over other person for the purpose of exploitation”.

Further to this definition, article 3 paragraph (b) states;

“the consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in paragraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in paragraph (a) have been used”.

Preamble to the Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and for the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (2013) defines exploitation:

“Exploitation shall comprise, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, involuntary labour or services, slavery or practices related to slavery, services or the harvest of organs”.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in “Trafficking in Human Beings, regarded Trafficking in Human Beings as:

“all acts includes the recruitment, capture or abduction, transport either within or across the borders, safe, transfer, concealing, or receiving of persons; through the means of threat or use of force, trickery or deception, coercion that could involve any form of abuse of power, or debt servitude; with the sole tenacity of insertion or holding such individual, whether for payment or not, in force servitude, involuntary or bonded labour, or in slavery-like circumstances; within a community other than the person home or which the person stayed at the point of the original trickery, force or debt bondage”.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2021), trafficking in human beings occurs when:

“An immigrant is illegally chosen, kidnapped, sold, bought, and/or migrated from his or her place of birth, either inside or outside the frontiers; traffickers during any part of this process gain financial or other profit through trickery, force, and/or other forms of misuse under conditions that violate immigrants' basic human rights.”

Anti-Trafficking Alliance (2017) which is Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), the International Human Rights Law Group and the Foundation Against Trafficking in Women (STV) in conjunction with other related NGOs across the world refer trafficking as:

“Any behaviour or act involving the recruitment, transference either within or across national borders, exchange, sale of transaction, handover, housing or reception of an individuals by means of deception, constraint (including the use of force or the abuse of authority) or by way of debt bondage with a view of insertion or upholding the person involved, with or without monetary concern, in a position of servitude like domestic, sexual exploitation or procreative in involuntary labour or in circumstances related to slavery, in an environment other than that which the person lived until the period of the deception, restraint or debt bondage was conveyed .”

Therefore, for clear understanding of human trafficking and factors responsible for such act, this study abducts rational choice theory to build or explain the synergy between trafficking and human action. Many other social scientists have expressed resentment toward this evident achievement and its bearing. Most social scientists have attempted to construct theories around the idea that all acts or behavior are inherently "rational" in nature and that people weigh the likely costs and profits of any action before deciding to perform it or not. This theoretical approach is known as rational choice theory, and it submits to social contact in the shape of exchange theory. Numerous social scientists have, of course, acknowledged that people engage in rational behavior, but they have also noticed other types of behavior alongside rational ones, viewing human behavior as containing both rational and non-rational components. These interpretations of behavior differentiate between sorts of action that are entirely logical as well as accustomed or routine, capable or emotional, and other types of value-oriented behavior. For instance, in the 20th century, Max Weber developed a well-known form of action based on precisely these ideas. Talcott Parsons (1937) adopted his ideas, and they later shaped sociological standards. People have viewed human trafficking as a behavior comprising both rational and irrational elements. The idea that trafficking can be a way to make life better has been maintained because victims of trafficking send payments of their foreign advantages home from the beginning of their stay in foreign countries and because many of them used social media to present an improved and beneficial image of their living conditions. This is a kind of social interaction that often takes the form of exchange theory between the trafficked and traffickers to lure or deceive their victims. Some of victims often believed that their traffickers are helping them or provided them with good opportunity for greatness or what the trafficking on their own perceived as an opportunity for social mobility though; statistics shows that the girls are often having this complex relationship with their sponsors (Joshua, Gberevbie & Onor, 2021).

The rational choice principle is the presumption that intricately woven social phenomena may be reduced to their simplest components and then explained in terms of the underlying human behavior that makes them up (Elster, 1986 cited in Tibor, 2019). Most often, traffickers—often referred to by their victims as "madams"—are based in Nigeria and actively seek out young women and girls to be their victims. However, some madams who are situated in Europe frequently travel to Nigeria to do the same thing directly or through intermediaries. They send their lovers to Nigeria to inspire, persuade, and recruit people for their madam, among others. To trick their victims, they employ a variety of techniques and strategies. According to rational choice theories, people are driven by the desires or objectives that represent their "preferences." They act within well-defined parameters and in accordance with the facts they have learned about the circumstances in which they are acting.

At its simplest, the relationship between preferences and constraints can be seen in the purely technical terms of the relationship of a means to an end. As it is not possible for individuals to achieve all of the various things that they want, they must also make

choices in relation to both their goals and the means for attaining these goals which are mostly responsible for the business of sex trafficking in Nigeria. However, not all proponents of the rational choice theory have utilized behavioral psychology in this manner. In fact, many people are purposefully agnostic regarding what influences people's behavior in the long run. Although it is debatable whether the term "human trafficking" encompasses the application of violence, threats of force, or other kinds of intimidation, as well as kidnapping, fraud, and deceit, for the goal of exploitation; however, not all occurrences of trafficking are based on coercion or threat of force because many of the victims of trafficking often give their permission to the practice.

3. Method and Materials

This study was designed to look at the socio-economic effect of human trafficking in Nigeria using Edo State as a study area. Edo State was selected because of its known area for sex trafficking in Nigeria. Edo State is among the 36 states in Nigeria, with a population of about 8,000,000 people. The state has 18 local governments, and is located in the South-South region of Nigeria. The research design in this paper involved the distribution of questionnaires to respondents, facts gotten from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and other related law enforcement agencies in Nigeria. The sample population for this study comprises of residence and workers of different sex and age groups in Edo State in Nigeria. The research sample comprised of hundred (100) respondents which includes both male and female. The respondents were randomly selected for the survey using stratified random technique or procedure. The independent variable measured in this study was the effect of human trafficking on Nigeria. The authors intend to know the degree of effects human trafficking has on Nigeria.

The instruments used in the course of this study were questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire consists of two sections which are sections A and B, section A was on respondent's bio-data which includes sex, age, marital status, nationality, academic qualification and occupation of the respondents of which the name, phone number and address of the respondents was not needed.

The section B comprises of some questions in line with the topic of this research which was divided into four parts. The first part was on general questions on human trafficking, the second part was on the causes of human trafficking, the third part was on the effects of human trafficking while the last part was on the possible remedies of human trafficking. The respondents had the options of picking between Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). The respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree with each perceived item by ticking () in either of the options. The interview aspect was conducted mostly among the staff of the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) being the foremost agency charged with the responsibilities on matters related to human trafficking in Nigeria.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Personal characteristics of the Respondents

One hundred copies of questionnaires were prepared and administered based on gender, age, religion, marital status, academic qualification and occupation of which the researcher got only ninety-seven back. Therefore, the 97 questionnaires were used in data analysis as the remaining three were either not returned or poorly completed, giving a response rate of 97%.

38 respondents representing 39% of the total population sampled were male while 59 respondents representing about 61% of the total respondents were female. It can be inferred from the study that the responses from the questionnaires are fairly gender balance.

Secondly, the above data shows that 25 respondents representing 26% fall within age bracket of 18-25 years while 22 respondents representing 23% were within 26- 33 years and 25 respondents representing 26% of the respondents fall within the age of 34-41 years while, 19 respondents (20%) falls within the age bracket of 51- above years.

It was revealed that 43 (44%) respondents were Christians, 32 (33%) respondents were Muslims, 22 (23%) respondents were practicing other religion. This suggests that the questionnaire was open to all religions and was not limited to a specific kind of religion. It demonstrates the work's neutrality regarding religion.

Similarly, the academic qualification of the respondents as revealed from table above showed that 29 respondents representing 30% of the total respondents had the Secondary education. The percentage of people with OND/NCE stood at 19%. Also, 31 respondents representing 31% of the sample surveyed were HND/B.Sc Degree holders while, 12 respondents representing about 12 % of the total respondents had either a master degree or Ph.D certificates. However, 8 respondents were without any formal education.

On marital status, as revealed above, 39 respondents representing about 44.2 % were single. The number of married stood at 56 representing about 57.7%, the highest of all the marital status. Only one of the respondents was a widow, representing 1.03 % of the respondent while about 1.03% of the sample was not in the categories listed above.

The bulk of people who responded to the questionnaire were civil servants. The result showed 39 respondents representing about 40.2 % were civil servants. 22 respondents were students and this represent about 22.7 % of the total population surveyed. In addition, 15(15.5%) of the respondents were self-employed while 8(8.2%) worked in the banking sector. There were 12 others that are not in the categories listed above.

Ten important questions related to basic knowledge on human trafficking were asked and which includes: level of awareness; victims of human trafficking; vulnerability, prevalence; average occurrence; voluntary submission; parental consent; age brackets of the traffickers and their standard of living.

The result revealed that the degree of awareness is very high in the state. Records also show that 71 respondents representing about 73.95 percent of the sampled population strongly agreed that they were well aware of the existence of human trafficking business in Edo State. 24 respondents (25 percent) agreed while only 1 respondent representing about 1.04 percent strongly disagreed.

This outcome is consistent with Sophia Samyn's 2020 study, which discovered that many poor and lower/middle-class residents of Benin City do, in fact, prioritize having relative's member overseas as the only means of achieving advancement in society:

“Families with no members overseas see themselves (and are perceived as being less fortunate of any possibilities for improvement and social advancement) because of instances of social achievement related to migration in general, whether real or fictitious. Most first-born children, especially females, are obligated to give up themselves for the socioeconomic success of the entire family, and this mentality is undoubtedly applicable to them. The study discovered that when it comes to forced or involuntary prostitute migration, there is a type of shared collaboration in most of the Edo State. Additionally, it was found that most residents of Edo State are aware of prostitution and regard it as morally honorable because many of them typically profit from it. The fact that numerous victims of trafficking continue to make every effort to remit money to their loved ones back home during the early stages of their overseas stay gives an appearance that they

have better lives or living conditions, and this has over time assisted in reinforcing the idea that trafficking can lead to a brighter tomorrow.”

Records indicated that 57 respondents (59.37 percent) strongly agreed while 38 respondents (39.58 percent) agreed with this proposition. Our result however shows that just only 1 (1.04 percent) of the respondents during the survey strongly disagree. The number of the respondents who strongly agreed that children and women are the most vulnerable groups stood at 54. This represents about 56.24 percent of the respondents surveyed. 39 respondents (40.63 percent) agreed while just only 2 (2.08 %) strongly disagreed with this view. To support this view respondents, we examined the age brackets of the traffickers and the result revealed that 55 respondents representing about 59.78 of the respondents falls within the age bracket of 15- 25. It was also noted that 4 respondents (4.34%) vehemently disagreed with this submission.

In addition, it was also established from numerous sources that Edo State is among the states with the highest percentage of human trafficking in Nigeria. Available empirical result indicated 44 respondents (45.83 %) strongly concurred with the view. The total number of people with divergent view stood at 5 and this represent about 5.21 percent of the sampled population. In an average of every ten persons, there is usually a victim of human trafficking in Edo State as revealed by this study. Although, the number of those that strongly agreed with this proposition is minute, result of the survey still point to the fact that majority still agreed with this fact. Forty-four respondents representing about 47.92 percent of the sampled population still agreed while another 25(26.04%) disagreed.

Another point of contention is whether trafficked victims enter the business voluntarily or are forced or pressured to do so. It was found that 21 respondents strongly disagreed, whereas 36 respondents strongly agreed. The closeness of this number suggests that most victims may not have given themselves up willingly to be trafficked. This is supported by the fact that over 44 (48.35%) of the respondents think that parental and guardian approval is typically obtained before trafficking takes place. Previous studies have also shown that many parents, particularly mothers, frequently start the trafficking of their (oldest) daughters by connecting with the families of madams situated in Nigeria. The international media has begun to cover this topic. According to sources, numerous women or girls in Edo State frequently offer themselves up for active human trafficking or for chances to travel to Europe with traffickers. In this context, Sophie Samyn's research made the following observations:

‘Most women often contact themselves on trafficking issues in Edo State, thereafter, use the same medium to contact those who approach their friends in overseas for sponsors and the sponsors who are always willing and always very accessible to do so.

Conversely, 23.08 percent felt otherwise and the figure of those in this category stood at 21.

Those harmed often go to different witch doctors for swearing and confidentiality. Each time they go to the witch-doctors, they either remove their finger nails, their public or private hairs, their eyelashes, and their hair from the center of their head, or they may obtain their clothes and even wood (wood signifies money before the native doctors). This statistic was supported and corroborated by an interview conducted with a member of the NAPTIP staff in August 2022. To uphold the oath's secrecy, they may also have sexual relations with the witch doctors. They make sure to place anything they collect from the victims in the shrine of the witch-doctors, and they are frequently forced to make a vow before the shrine not to tell anyone the secret lest they die or go insane. This secrecy also applies to their respective families, who will either perish or go insane if they break it. The witch- doctors will retain anything collected in a safe place in the shrine; those things collected will be return back to the victims after the payment is made completely. He continued by saying that when victims are discovered and their debts are unpaid, it typically leads to significant problems. He claimed that NAPTIP usually helps

the victims by accompanying them to the witch doctors to have the oath reversed, and then takes care of them through government support programs while the traffickers are detained and brought to justice. The victims could also be established by being trained in various skills, and those who want to continue their education are frequently sponsored by the government so they can support themselves.

Juju is a colloquial phrase for voodoo, an African traditional religion in which "spirits or supernatural beings are thought to govern the earth and every aspect of human survival," according to the 2015 EASO study. It is also a synonym for many types of "traditional" therapy and black magic. In addition to referring to the real fortunate charms/fetishes that are employed to achieve this purpose, it also refers to the employment of "supernatural power to act on natural forces.

‘Most of the people interviewed as whether the use of "juju" as part of agreement, they claimed to the use of rituals as prerequisite for the process, as they are subjected to undergo before the journey, but also to the object that signifies the promise and that is contained the items used during the oath of allegiance or to the symbolisation of the deities used during the rituals.... to this, juju is an indispensable part of Edo State customary justice system, by which oaths, and charms are used to seal ‘oaths of allegiance. It was showed that juju could become an instrument of psychological compulsion once victims fail to live up to the agreements of their traffickers. Most of the victims testified that juju is powerful as cases of those who wanted to escape their traffickers reported high levels of fear for the consequences of breaking their oaths due to past experiences.’

The survey also showed that most trafficking victims might not be familiar with the type of work they would be doing in their destination. The number of those who have this information as well as those who do not have it stand at 34(35.41%) and 33(34.37%) respectively. However, this is to show that there is synergy between the former and the latter and it is very hard to reliably conclude that victims were well aware of where they will work as they are taken out.

Another debate on whether trafficking victims can raise their own and their family' standards of living ended in impasse. An investigation into this claim yielded mixed reactions. While 30 respondents (32.25%) agreed, another set of 30 respondents (32.25%) strongly disagreed.

4.2 On the Causes of Human Trafficking in Nigeria

The present financial state in the nation; the socioeconomic standing of the traffickers and their prey; impoverishment and joblessness; inexperience and lack of education; absence of an adequate organizational framework; victims' unrestrained sexual urges; victims' upbringing; and a lack of affection from the government and some other agencies that are tasked with the responsibility of combating the problem (Ibietan, Abasilim & Olobio, 2018).

Records indicated that 41 respondents representing about 42.70 percent of the sampled population strongly agreed that poverty and lack of job opportunities are the major cause of human trafficking in Nigeria. 43 respondents (44.79 percent) agreed while only 9 respondents representing about 9.37 percent strongly disagreed. Records indicated that 39 respondents (41.05 percent) strongly agreed while 35 respondents (36.84 percent) only agree with this proposition.

Poverty and related issues like unemployment still remain the major root causes for human trafficking in Nigeria as revealed by a stakeholder's workshop on trafficking organized in 2018. According to the findings:

.... ‘The causes of human trafficking appeared to be many, intertwined, and overlapping one another. But the report also emphasized how different levels of the causes of

susceptibility, such as destitution, joblessness, low levels of literacy and schooling, substantial amounts of state fraud, violent conflict, lack of social security, subpar customs, social or religious abuse, a weakening of values, and few options for safe and legal migration, created different vulnerabilities to trafficking. Over half of those surveyed by Human Rights Watch for research on the experiences of victims who were deported to Nigeria dropped out of basic or secondary education for financial reasons, according to the study on the aggregate demand for sex and cheap labor. Although Edo is not one of the poorest states in Nigeria when looking at the state of the economy, its residents do endure relative poverty.

The CLEEN Foundation and Pathfinders Justice Initiative did a similar study in 2018 and found that traffickers were more inclined to contact "the impoverished and most disadvantaged" as well as the ignorant and mentally fragile:

'The main demographic that recruiters focus on for their victims is people who are financially vulnerable and concerned. Families that are unable to educate their children or provide the necessary social and economic welfare are the ones who will be targeted. One of the main informants said that "in recent times, many human traffickers appear to be very intelligent, and they are aware of how to play to the wits of the victims. They will try to persuade you if you don't have a strong enough will to resist their temptations with worldly goods. Despite this, poverty may cause parents to sell their daughters to a prospective husband, and child marriage can result in the impoverishment of women through separation, divorce, or abandonment.

The state of the nation's economy was thought to be the main cause of human trafficking in Nigeria, in addition to incompetence and ignorance. The result of our survey showed that 31 respondents representing about 32.29 percent of the total population strongly agreed while 42 respondents representing about 43.75 percent of the total population agreed. Only 9 respondents (9.37 percent) strongly disagreed with this proposition.

About 21.64 percent, 32.29 percent, and 33.33 percent strongly linked the causes with socio-economic status of the victims, poor family upbringing and lack of goodwill on the part of government respectively. All these showed that socio-economic status of the victims, poor family upbringing and lack of goodwill on the part of government are important causative factors of human trafficking in Nigeria. The result showed that only 8 respondents out of the 97 respondents strongly agreed that unbridled sexual urge was an influential factor in human trafficking while about 31 respondents (32.97 percent) disagreed with this position.

4.3 On the Effects of Human Trafficking in Nigeria

There were numerous effects, and they include: effects of human trafficking on nation's building; on the country's image abroad; on the rate of violence and crime and on child's development. According to the study's findings, of all the negative repercussions of human trafficking in Nigeria, the country's reputation overseas has suffered the most damage. In Edo State for instance, it is a commonplace to see youths in their teens being trafficked to Italy and Spain every year. Majority of the people involved are going into prostitution, menial jobs and other shady deals. This did not portray a good image for the country and if anything at all, Nigeria's image among the comity of nations is seriously being smeared with thick mud. Hence, 60 respondents representing about 66.85 percent of the total respondents strongly support the fact that the country's image is at stake when being quizzed on the deleterious effect of human trafficking in Nigeria. Still, another 33 respondents (34.02%) agreed while just only 2 respondents strongly disagreed.

The increasing risk of HIV/AIDS among the victims of human trafficking in Edo State is also a notable result of this crime. The 53 respondents (55.78%) who strongly agreed and the additional 37 respondents (38.94%) who only agreed support this claim. This figure is a sharp contrast with the respondents who strongly disagreed that stood at 3.13 percent.

Still, another negative effect of human trafficking in Edo State as revealed in this study is the increase rate of school drop outs and consequently, retards child's development. 44 respondents (45.36 %) strongly argued for this case and another 46 respondents were on the same page with those who strongly supported this stance. However, 5(5.15 %) disagreed completely. According to UNICEF (2018) demonstrated the relationship:

between poverty, conflicts, and trafficking as the factors promoting the effects of HIV/AIDS. Young women and girls are trafficked for prostitution which makes them the most vulnerable groups open to HIV infection. Inadequately informed, seduced or forced to have unguarded sex, once infected with HIV/AIDS, they are frequently left starved of care or without support. Also, orphaned children due to AIDS are often vulnerable to trafficking owing to high level of poverty of their households and societies, and as a result of the stigmatization, rejection, or disregarding to which they are exposed by their immediate societies.

It is impossible to overstate how detrimental this social illness will be to the development of the country as well as the rate of crime and violence (Udoh, Folarin & Isumonah, 2020). For instance, the percentage of those that strongly supported that human trafficking has significant effect on nation building stood at 35.10 percent. This is fairly high to draw up useful conclusion on the debilitating effect of human trafficking. Also, 33 respondents claimed that human trafficking increases the rate of violence and crimes in the society. The percentage of the respondents who pitch their tent with this notion stood at 34.73 percent.

4.4 On the Possible Remedies in Eradicating Human Trafficking in Nigeria

The development of employment opportunities as well as jobs for individuals is at the top of the agenda. From the result also, about 58 respondents (65.90 %) strongly admitted that job creation will go a long way to ameliorate if not eradicate the prevalence of human trafficking in Edo State. In addition, 25 respondents agreed while 4 disagreed.

A legislation that forbids it and makes offenders subject to punishment can also help Nigeria's ongoing human trafficking problems. The results showed that 41 respondents (47.12%) strongly agreed with this thesis, while another group of 41 respondents agreed and 3 others opposed, totaling roughly 2.29 percent. Information leakage, retribution, and cooperation with governmental organizations and the international community are further strategies for preventing human trafficking.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

According to data from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and responses from the respondents, the severe economic hardship experienced by the African continent, particularly Nigeria, over the past three decades is what caused the problem of trafficking in persons (TIPs) to become prevalent and noticeable. The study has established the degree of its prevalence across Nigeria as well as the multifariousness of its implications. There is no doubt that the increase rates of human trafficking in Nigeria have made it to be perceived as one of the major problems that need urgent attention to put an end to in striving for national growth and development. It revealed that the menace of human trafficking is indeed a national problem that has extensive and various dimensions in the country. It was also revealed that poverty and unemployment are the major causes of human trafficking in Nigeria.

In addition, it revealed that trafficking in Nigeria has a multifaceted socio-economic and political basis linked to larger, global processes. Though, various efforts had been made to address trafficking in human beings, but without huge success recorded. Being that human trafficking cannot always tackle poverty or related concerns of vulnerability and prejudice in durable ways, it is not merely a social or moral matter to be solved with

casual actions. Trafficking is an evolving issue that requires a solid, comprehensive, and unified strategy that is founded on based on rights values, concepts, and norms. Combating the problem of human trafficking therefore offers some of the most difficult legal and social concerns of our time. It takes the efforts of the individual, the neighborhood, the political will of the government, multisectoral methods, as well as well coordinated international measures, to effectively combat the scourge of human trafficking. The decision to create jobs and employment prospects for people, especially for young people who are vulnerable, must therefore be made. In order to decrease the prevalence of human trafficking in Nigeria, it is also necessary to plan out robust security forces at and near the country's borders. A legislation that forbids it and makes offenders subject to punishment can also help Nigeria's ongoing human trafficking problems.

In accordance with the nation's plan of action and with the active participation of every major stakeholder, including the government, NGOs, and international organizations, among others, it is crucial to develop synchronized and well-articulated strategies to combat human trafficking in Nigeria.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) affirmed no possible conflicts of interest with reverence to the study, authorship, and/or publication of this research article.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their gratitude to the administration of Covenant University Center for Research, Innovation and Discovery (CUCRID) for providing the framework for this study as well as publication assistance in the form of paper processing fees. The authors acknowledge the reviewers as well for their insightful remarks.

References

- Adepoju, O.A., Gberevbie, D.E., & Ibhawoh, B. (2021). Culture and Women Participation In Peacebuilding In Africa: Perspective Of National Culture And Social Role Theories. *Academy of Strategic Management Journal*, 20(3), 1-8.
- Anti-Trafficking Alliance (2017) Beyond borders trafficking in the contet of migrant labour and worker's rights: GAATW International Members Conference 2017. <http://www.gaatw.org.publication.report.pdf> Retrieved May, 2019.
- CLEEN (2020) Foundation & Pathfinders Justice Initiative, Pathway to Prevention: A Research Report on Recruiters of Sex Trafficking in Oredo LGA, Benin City, Edo State, Nigeria, <https://pathfindersji.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/pathway-to-prevention-complete-Final.pdf>, accessed 12 February 2021
- EASO (European Asylum Support Office), EASO Country of Origin Information (COI) (2015) Report Nigeria Sex Trafficking of women, October, <https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/public/BZ0415678ENN.pdf>, accessed 15 February 2021 .
- Elster. J. (1986) Introduction' In *Rational Choice*, ed Jon Elster, pp 1-33. New York: New York University Press.
- Global Slavery Index (2018) Walk Free Foundation, 2018, url, p.140 https://downloads.globalslaveryindex.org/ephemeral/GSI-2018_FNL_190828_CO_DIGITAL_P-1616599065.pdf, accessed 22 March 2021
- Ibietan, Abasilim, U.D., Olobio, T. (2018). An evaluation of deregulation policy of the downstream petroleum sector and Nigeria's economy. *Pertanika Journal of Social Science and Humanities*, 26(3), 1843-1864.
- IOM (International Organization for Migration), (2020) Irregular migration routes to Europe: West and Central Africa, January-June, <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/IOM>

- Mediterranean Developments - Flows from WCA - June 2020 - EN - VF.pdf, accessed 18 February 2021
- IOM (2021) (International Organization for Migration), Flow Monitoring Surveys – Italy, February 2021, Europe — Flow Monitoring Surveys in Italy in 2020 | Flow monitoring (iom.int), accessed 18 March 2021
- International Labour Organization ILO,(2017) Combating Trafficking in Children for Labour Exploitation in West and Central Africa, Synthesis Report. Geneva.
- International Labour Organization (ILO) (2017). National child labour survey. http://www.unicef.org/WCARDNigeriafactsheets_childtrafficking.pdf. Retrieved June, 2019.
- Joshua, S., Gbrevbie, D., & Onor, K. (2021). Building Security through Insecurity: The Nigerian Military and Counter-Violence Campaigns in the Fourth Republic. *Armed Forces and Society*, 47(1), 177-200.
- NAPTIP (National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons),(2018) National Policy on Protection and Assistance to Trafficked Persons in Nigeria, 2008
- NAPTIP (National Agency for Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons), (2019) Data Analysis in 2019, <https://www.naptip.gov.ng/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/2019-Data-Analysis.pdf>, accessed 27 February 2021
- Pathfinders Justice Initiative, (2018) Edo state human trafficking bill signed into law by governor Obaseki, 24 May, <https://pathfindersji.org/edo-state-passes-new-law-against-human-trafficking/>, accessed 5 February 2021
- Samyn, S., Seksmigratie als deel van de overlevingseconomie in Nigeria [Sex migration as part of the survivealeconomyinNigeria],2020,https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341001454_Seksmigratie_als_deel_van_de_overlevingseconomie_in_Nigeria/link/5ea9647645851592d6a89d95/download, accessed 23 February 2021
- Tibor, R. (2019). For an integrative theory of social behaviour: Theorising with and beyond rational choice theory, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 10.1111/jtsb.12204, 49, 3, (298-311),
- Udoh, O.D., Folarin, S.F., Isumonah, V.A. (2020). The influence of religion and culture on women’s rights to property in Nigeria. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 7(1), 1750244
- UNESCO (2016). Human trafficking in Nigeria: root causes and recommendations. Paris: 11-12
- UNICEF, (2018) Multi-Indicator Cluster Survey, February 2018, url, pp. 223-224 <https://www.unicef.org/nigeria/media/1406/file/Nigeria-MICS-2016-17.pdf>, accessed 10 February 2021
- United Nations (2013). “Global Initiative to fight human trafficking: A regional response to trafficking in West Africa”. [http:// www.unfigh.org/ungift/en/stones/a-regional-response-to-trafficking-in-west-african.html](http://www.unfigh.org/ungift/en/stones/a-regional-response-to-trafficking-in-west-african.html).
- UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2014, 2014, https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/GLOTIP_2014_full_report.pdf, accessed 10 December 2022
- UNODC(2020) Strengthening the policy framework and response to human trafficking in Nigeria (2020 – 2021), (<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking>).
- UNODC (2020) (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), NAPTIP kick-off process to develop a new national action plan against human trafficking, 23 November 2020, <https://www.unodc.org/nigeria/en/press/naptip-kick-off-process-to-develop-a-new-national-actionplan-against-human-trafficking.html>, accessed 20 February 2021
- Walk Free Foundation (2022) The Global Slavery Index 2022, https://downloads.globalslaveryindex.org/ephemeral/GSI2018_FNL_190828_CO_DIGITAL_P1616599065.pdf, accessed 22 March 2023