

The Impact of Limited Access to Quality Education on Child Trafficking in Calabar Municipality, Cross River State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The phenomenon of child trafficking in Nigeria has become multi-dimensional and many people are involved at both family and community levels, as well as at border or international transactions. This problem has been associated with several factors such as poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and harsh economic conditions. The study examined the impact of limited access to quality education on child trafficking in the Calabar Municipality area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was the ex post facto approach. With a sample size of 40 respondents, a random sampling procedure was used to generate primary data for the study. The data collected through the questionnaire were processed using frequency tables and using the Chi-square statistical technique. The analysis of primary data shows that in Table 2, the calculated chi-square (X²) value was 6.25, while the table value at the .05 level of significance was 5.99. The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate accepted, which states that there is a significant relationship between access to quality education and child trafficking in Calabar Municipality. Based on these findings, the study draws specific conclusions and recommendations. Based on the result of data analysis, the study concludes that there is a significant relationship between access to quality education and child trafficking in Calabar Municipality.

Keywords: *Quality education, Child trafficking, Labour mobility*

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Background to the Study

Human trafficking has existed in many parts of the world in various forms but was not considered a serious social problem until recent official discourse and media reporting (Weitzer, 2014). Slavery, the precursor of human trafficking became an issue in the 19th century following advances in transportation and technology, which resulted in increasing rates of migration. With industrialization came the migration of people from rural to urban areas. Technological advances of the 19th century helped to bring about the new and greater international mobility of labour and this made it possible for traffickers to react quickly to the growing demand for the sex trade and cheap labour (Badejo, 2016). The beginning of mass migration and technological development is significant because it is a trend that has continued to the present. Technological advancement and globalisation enabled and encouraged people to migrate to places with better economic and social opportunities. This means that as many people migrate legally, many are forced to migrate illegally in the form of child trafficking. Advances in technology and globalization also made it easier and more efficient for those involved in the trafficking process to network and operate more efficiently. Over the years, child trafficking has been identified as a heinous crime that exploits the most vulnerable in society (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2013).

The United States government considers child trafficking to include all the criminal conduct involved in forced labour and sex trafficking, essentially the conduct involved in reducing or holding someone in compelled service (United States Department Report, 2013). Child labour is a violation of fundamental human rights and has hindered children's development. Over the years, trafficking has been identified as a heinous crime that exploits the most vulnerable in society (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2013). Children are easily exploited and abused on account of their vulnerability. The vulnerability of these children is even greater when they arrive in another country where they do not have contact with their families and are at the mercy of their employers. Children may be forced into domestic servitude and along the way they are sexually abused. At times, minors are forced into marriage to give the family financial stability or to pay off a debt (UNICEF, 2011). Traffickers operate “baby factories” often disguised as orphanages and maternity homes where young girls are held against their will, raped, and forced to carry and deliver children. The children are then sold, sometimes with the intent to exploit them in forced labour and sex trafficking (Huntley, 2013).

Nigeria, like most African countries, is bedeviled by problems such as poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and harsh economic conditions (Kwagyang, Saulawa & Daud, 2016). The phenomenon of child trafficking in Nigeria has become multi-dimensional and many people are involved at both family and community levels, as well as at border or international transactions (Njoku, 2016). Within Nigeria, girls are trafficked primarily for domestic servitude and commercial sexual exploitation. Boys are trafficked for forced labour in street vending, agriculture, and as domestic servants. Islamic religious teachers also traffic boys called Almajiri for forced begging (United States Department Report, 2009). Besides prostitution, forced marriage, and forced labour, some of the victims are used for rituals, begging, and even for organ transplanting (Ndifon, Apori & Ndifon, 2012). While lots of people blame poverty as the basis for child trafficking in the country, other causes of the

outrageous rate of child trafficking in the country are said to include ignorance, desperation, and the promotion and commercialization of sex. Others are migration, unemployment, and harsh economic conditions.

Efforts have been made by the Nigerian government to tackle this menace of child trafficking, for instance, Nigeria ratified most of the important international instruments fighting human trafficking and protecting women and children. Among them are the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000) the Palermo Protocol in 2001, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Optional Protocol to it on the Sale of Children. Nigeria enacted the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Law Enforcement and Administration Act 2003 and the Child Rights Act 2003 (Huntley, 2013). The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and other related matters were established to combat human trafficking. However, despite Nigeria's legislative efforts to combat child trafficking, it still thrives in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Child trafficking has become an issue of worry and concern at global and national levels. Despite the abolition of the slave trade, this obnoxious trade still thrives in our society (Onyeizugbo, 2011). The traditional practice of child fostering has been manipulated by traffickers to exploit children. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO, 2009), child fostering which was used for centuries as a socio-economic regulation mechanism within extended families is increasingly being used by traffickers to take the children away from their families for forced labour or sexual exploitation. In Nigeria, children are bought, sold, and smuggled like modern-day slaves, often beaten, starved and forced to work as prostitutes or to take up jobs as domestic servants, restaurant or factory workers with little or no pay. Nigeria is one of the leading countries in child trafficking among African countries (UNESCO, 2009).

Trafficked children are exploited in different economic sectors for various purposes. In Nigeria, children are trafficked for many purposes, ranging from sexual exploitation, begging, underpaid, and exploited forced labour in the agricultural, manufacturing, and construction industries, domestic service, and organ transplanting (UNODC, 2016). Nigeria has enormous natural and human resources, but debt burden and institutionalized corruption take a serious toll on the country's economy. Nigeria is a country rich in resources but with widespread poverty. Destitute families are vulnerable to persuasion to hire out or sell their children because they lack adequate resources to provide for their families (Kwagyang, Saulawa & Daud, 2016). According to UNODC (2011), trafficked victims mostly women and girls are recruited by means of threat and are often sent into the sex trade or forced to get involved in manual and servitude work.

Most children trafficked for forced labour and domestic work often end up being sexually exploited by their employers. Children are often trafficked, employed, and exploited because compared to adults, they are more vulnerable, cheaper to hire, and less likely to demand higher wages or better working conditions. In recent years, traffickers in Nigeria have started

exploiting their victims for baby harvesting which is a more dangerous and complex form of child trafficking (Huntley, 2013). Teenage girls are brought by traffickers to the baby factory with false promises of jobs or safe abortions; and as a result, they are confined and forced to give birth. Some of the victims are trafficked while pregnant; others are later impregnated by men specially hired for such a purpose. Consequently, their babies are sold for international or domestic adoption, rituals, slave labour, or sexual exploitation (Huntley, 2013).

Research Question

This study attempted to answer the question; How has limited access to quality education led to child trafficking in the Calabar Municipality area of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Objectives of the Study

The objective of this study is to examine the impact of limited access to quality education on child trafficking in the Calabar Municipality area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Hypothesis

There is no significant effect between access to quality education and child trafficking in the Calabar Municipality area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Concept of Child Trafficking

Trafficking in Persons was first defined in international law through the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children. This Protocol popularly known as the 'Palermo Protocol' or 'Trafficking Protocol' supplemented the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (2000). Article 3, paragraph (a) of the Protocol states;

“Trafficking in Persons (TIP) shall 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 benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation”.

The preamble to the Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons and for the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949): “Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, services or the removal of organs”. This definition is the most widely endorsed and provided the essential basis for national law reform. 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”. In other words, wherever any of the elements of trafficking in persons is used the consent of the victim is meaningless. The three elements of trafficking include the act (what is done): The operational concept of movement and transportation for example recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons.

The means (how is it done): this means the intervention of an intermediary noting that most often the means is present before the act could take place namely threat or use of force, coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, abuse of power, of vulnerability or giving payments or benefits of a person in control of the victim. The purpose (why it is done): for the purpose of exploitation which includes exploiting the prostitution of others, sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery or similar practices, and the removal of organs (Abudulraheem & Oladipo, 2010).

In the Europol Convention of 1995, Traffic in human beings is defined as follows: “Subjection of a person to the real and illegal sway of other persons by using violence or menaces or by abuse of authority or intrigue with a view to the exploitation of prostitution, forms of sexual exploitation and assault of minors or trade-in abandoned children”. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in “Trafficking in Human Beings: Implications for the OSCE” defines Trafficking in Human Beings as:

“All acts involved in the recruitment, abduction, transport (within or across borders), safe, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons; By the threat or use of force, deception, coercion (including abuse of authority), or debt bondage; For the purpose of placing or holding such person, whether for pay or not, in involuntary servitude, forced or bonded labour, or in slavery-like conditions; in a community other than the one in which the person lived at the time of the original deception, coercion or debt bondage”.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), trafficking in human beings occurs when: “- a migrant is illicitly engaged (recruited, kidnapped, sold, etc.) and/or moved, either within national or across international borders; intermediaries (traffickers) during any part of this process obtain economic or other profit by means of deception, coercion and/or other forms of exploitation under conditions that violate the fundamental human rights of migrants”.

The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GAATW), the International Human Rights Law Group, and the Foundation Against Trafficking in Women (STV) in conjunction with similar NGOs around the world defined trafficking as: “Any act or attempt involving the recruitment, transport within or across national boundaries, exchange, sale, transfer, lodging or reception of a person by means of deception, constraint (including the use of force or the abuse of authority) or by means of debt bondage with a view of placing or maintaining the person in question, with or without financial consideration, in a position of servitude (domestic, sexual or reproductive) in forced labour or in conditions analogous of slavery, in a community other than that in which the person lived until the moment the deception, constraint or debt bondage was brought to bear.”

The Geneva Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, adopted by the League of Nations in 1926 and joined by a Supplementary Convention in 1956, provides a precise definition of slavery and trafficking. The Convention described Slavery as the possession of a person and exercise over the same of any or all the powers attributed to the right of ownership. The

Geneva Convention described trafficking as a practice that includes the act of capturing, acquisition, or conferment of a person to reduce the same to slavery, as well as every act of acquisition or conferment by sale or exchange, and, in general, every act of trading or transport of slaves (Adesina, 2014).

The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Child, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2002) defines Trafficking in Minors in Article 2(a) as: “any action or transaction that transfers a child from one person or group of persons to another for remuneration or for any other benefit”. Trafficking is outlawed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others (1949), the Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1979), the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) with its supplementary Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography (2002); Convention No. 182 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Relating to Prohibition of the Worst Forms of Child Labour (1999) and the Charter of the International Criminal Court (Rome, 1998). According to a report on “Trafficking in Persons: Global Patterns,” published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in April 2006, “Governments need to get serious about identifying the full extent of the problem so they can get serious about eliminating it. The fact that this form of slavery still exists in the 21st century shames us all. Virtually no country in the world is unaffected by the crime of human trafficking for sexual exploitation or forced labour”. The report further identified 127 countries of origin, 98 transit countries, and 137 destination countries (Badejo, 2016).

According to Ali, Muhammad, and Abdullah (2014), African countries are source, transit, and destination countries for human trafficking. For instance, Nigeria is a source, transit, and destination country for trafficked women and children who are usually trafficked to Europe, the Middle East, and other countries in Africa for the purposes of forced labour, domestic servitude, and sexual exploitation. Recent studies carried out by the Nigerian Embassy in Rome, Italy revealed that 80% of trafficked persons from Africa are young girls including minors of 8 between 12-16 years (Braithwaite, 2013; Dada, 2013; Badejo, 2016).

Huntley (2013) stated that smuggling of Migrants is a crime involving the procurement of financial or other material benefit of illegal entry of a person into a State of which that person is not a national or resident. Migrant smuggling affects almost every country in the world. It undermines the integrity of countries and communities and costs thousands of people their lives every year. UNODC, as the guardian of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Organized Crime Convention) and the Protocols thereto, assist States in their efforts to implement the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air (Smuggling of Migrants Protocol). The Smuggling of Migrants Protocol supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime defines the smuggling of migrants as the:

"Procurement, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit, of the illegal entry of a person into a State Party of which the person is not a national or a permanent resident." (Article 3, Smuggling of Migrants Protocol). To comply with the Smuggling of Migrants Protocol, Article 6 requires states to criminalise both the smuggling of migrants and enabling of a person to remain in a country illegally, as well as aggravating circumstances that endanger lives or safety or entail inhuman or degrading treatment of migrants. Virtually every country in the world is affected by this crime, whether as an origin, transit, or destination country for smuggled migrants by profit-seeking criminals (International Labour Organization, 2008). Smuggled migrants are vulnerable to life-threatening risks and exploitation; thousands of people have suffocated in containers, perished in deserts, or dehydrated at sea. Generating huge profits for the criminals involved, migrant smuggling fuels corruption and empowers organized crime (Dada, 2013).

International Labour Organization (2013) disclosed that data is too scattered and incomplete to paint an accurate picture of the number of people who are smuggled each year and the routes and methods used by those who smuggle them. Still, available evidence reveals the following trends and patterns: Criminals are increasingly providing smuggling services to irregular migrants to evade national border controls, migration regulations, and visa requirements. Most irregular migrants resort to the assistance of profit-seeking smugglers. As border controls have improved, migrants are deterred from attempting to illegally cross them themselves and are diverted into the hands of smugglers. Migrant smuggling is a highly profitable business in which criminals enjoy low risk of detection and punishment. As a result, the crime is becoming increasingly attractive to criminals. Migrant smugglers are becoming more and more organized, establishing professional networks that transcend borders and regions.

The modus operandi of migrant smugglers is diverse. Highly sophisticated and expensive services rely on document fraud or 'visa-smuggling'. Contrasted with these are low-cost methods which often pose high risks for migrants, and have led to a dramatic increase in loss of lives in recent years. Migrant smugglers constantly change routes and modus operandi in response to changed circumstances often at the expense of the safety of the smuggled migrants. Thousands of people have lost their lives because of the indifferent or even deliberate actions of migrant smugglers.

Kwagyang, Saulawa, and Daud (2016) noted that a child or children are minors under the age of 18 years. Child labour includes those children (minors under age 18) working in the Worst Forms of Child Labour (WFCL) as outlined in International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 182 and children engaged in work that is exploitative and/or interferes with their ability to participate in and complete required years of schooling, in line with ILO Convention 138. ILO Convention 182 defines the WFCL as:

All forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, the production of pornography or for pornographic performances, the use, procuring, or offering of a child for illicit activities, for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; and work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children (International Organization for Migration, 2012).

According to ILO Convention 182, hazardous work "shall be determined by national laws or regulations or by the competent authority, after consultation with the organizations of employers and workers concerned, taking into consideration relevant international standards..." As this suggests, forms of work identified as "hazardous" for children [Article 3(d)] may vary from country to country. ILO Recommendation No. 190, which accompanies ILO Convention 182, gives additional guidance on identifying "hazardous work." ILO Recommendation No. 190 states in Section II, Paragraph 3 that "[i]n determining the types of work referred to under Article 3(d) of the Convention [ILO Convention 182], and in identifying where they exist, consideration should be given, inter alia to:

1. Work which exposes children to physical, psychological, or sexual abuse;
2. Work underground, under water, at dangerous heights, or in confined spaces;
3. Work with dangerous machinery, equipment, and tools, or which involves the manual handling or transport of heavy loads;
4. Work in an unhealthy environment which may, for example, expose children to hazardous substances, agents, or processes, or to temperatures, noise levels, or vibrations damaging to their health;
5. Work under particularly difficult conditions such as work for long hours or during the night or work where the child is unreasonably confined to the premises of the employer" (Makinde, 2016).

Child labour spans nearly every sector and kind of work. Children harvest cotton in Uzbekistan, work as domestic servants in Haiti, and mine diamonds in the Central African Republic. It is important to recognize that not all work performed by children is exploitative. Children of legal working age who perform work that does not hinder their mental, physical, or emotional development can be an asset to their families' welfare and their nations' economic development. Activities that would qualify as non-exploitative under these international standards include performing household chores, assisting parents in a family business outside of school hours, and working in non-hazardous activities after school or during vacations to earn extra income.

The internationally recognized definition of forced or compulsory labour is found in ILO Convention 29. According to this Convention, forced or compulsory labour is "all work or service which is exacted from any person under the menace of any penalty and for which the

said person has not offered himself voluntarily." ILO (2013) Convention 105 further specifies that forced labour should never be used for the purpose of economic development or as a means of political coercion, discrimination, labour discipline, or punishment for having participated in strikes. Forced labour can happen in any industry but is especially prevalent in industries that require low-skilled labour, such as agriculture and mining, or occupations hidden from public views, like domestic service. Until the 20th century, most of the world's forced labour was rooted in traditional social stratification systems and patterns of discrimination, agrarian production structures, conquest, colonialism, and the slave trade. Certain castes, religious minorities, and Indigenous peoples have long been vulnerable to forced labour.

Adesina (2014) explained that forced labour is not just a historical problem. Today, as in the past, some governments force their citizens to carry out infrastructure projects, produce goods, raise crops, and perform other forms of work. Indeed, the ILO estimates that 10 percent of forced labour worldwide is state-imposed forced labour. This includes prison labour where victims are imprisoned without a conviction by a court of law, and made to perform work or service (Adesina, 2014). Global economic migration has also given rise to new forms of forced labour. The push factors of poverty and lack of jobs where people live, combined with the pull factor of employer demand for cheap labour, have caused many migrants to seek economic opportunities in other countries or in other parts of their own. Migrant workers make up a significant proportion of the workforce in certain industries and parts of the world (Adesina, 2014). They are especially vulnerable to labour recruiters and other intermediaries, organized crime syndicates, and employers offering false contract terms and other fraudulent schemes. Many migrants pay fees to such recruiters or intermediaries and become trapped in debt bondage: cyclical debt, often including unreasonable interest or other terms that their wages are insufficient to repay. Cycles of debt bondage can also occur when employers deduct from workers' wages for housing, food, and other costs, leaving them with little or no take-home pay (Adesina, 2014).

Abudulraheem and Oladipo (2010) stated that many migrant workers are required to sign contracts in languages they cannot read; many others have informal employment relationships with no contract at all. Some are required to turn over their identity documents to employers, leaving them without the option to escape. Migrants can also be especially vulnerable to confinement in workplaces, including through various forms of physical and/or psychological coercion since they are often unfamiliar with their surroundings and local languages or cultures (Abudulraheem & Oladipo, 2010).

Modern dynamics of global production have also increased worker vulnerability to forced labour. For instance, buyer pressure on suppliers to keep prices low and to complete orders quickly, commonly implemented through production quota systems, often leads suppliers to rely on excessively long schedules, in some cases rising to the level of forced overtime. While poverty can push people into exploitative work, it is important to distinguish between very poor working conditions and forced labour. A lack of economic alternatives, such as other jobs, does not by itself qualify a situation as one of forced labour (Adesina, 2014). Forced

labour is distinguished by the worker feeling a threat of penalty, exacted by his or her employer or an agent of the employer, such as a supervisor or recruiter, and completing the work involuntarily (Adesina, 2014).

Quality Education and Child Trafficking

Education continues to play a crucial role in the growth and development of nations, including Nigeria (Nwokeoma, 2010). Around the world, countries, especially developing nations, strive to enhance the quality of their education systems. Nigeria is no exception and has undergone a significant shift towards achieving high-quality education for its population. With a history of British colonization, Nigeria witnessed the introduction of formal or Western education on December 19, 1842, in Badagry by Mr. and Mrs. William De Graft and Rev. Thomas Birch Freeman of the Wesleyan Methodist Church (Tete and Matthew, 2020). Their primary objective was to provide missionary education to convert the local population to Christianity. These missionary organizations actively pursued their mission, incorporating religious interpretations into various subjects of instruction. The Bible often served as the main textbook, while moral education was emphasized to instill exemplary values in students (NTI, 2007).

The Nigerian educational system is overseen and managed by the federal, state, and local governments. Education falls under the shared responsibility of these authorities. The Federal Ministry of Education plays a role in setting national policies and ensuring quality control across the education system. It is also responsible for overseeing higher education at the federal level. State governments oversee administering secondary school education, while local governments handle basic education within their jurisdiction. Nigeria's educational system comprises three levels: primary school education (lasting nine years), post-basic/senior secondary education (spanning three years), and higher education which lasts for four to six years, depending on the program of study (Samuel & Jacob, 2020).

Ofuoku (2010) said, that a lack of quality education leads to fewer job options and a lack of or limited awareness of rights, which traffickers take advantage of. Furthermore, early childhood education can equip youngsters to change their communities as they get older, making it more difficult for traffickers to operate. Onyeizugbo (2011) reiterated that the lack of education is a significant contributor to human trafficking. The more educated you are, the more likely you will be able to find a decent job to support yourself and your family. If a person does not have access to education since they cannot afford it, they may be forced to work long hours for little pay and no benefits. These jobs frequently involve hazardous conditions, such as working in pesticide-treated crop fields or cleaning up toxic waste dumpsites without any protective gear. Due to a lack of education, victims struggle to find jobs that pay a living wage, limiting their opportunities for independence from traffickers or other forms of exploitation (Onyeizugbo, 2011).

Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights identifies education as a human right. "Everyone has a right to education," the text declares. It continues by stating that technical and professional education should be made "generally available" and should be free

(at least in the primary and fundamental phases). All people should have equal access to higher education based on their merit. Poor education has an adverse effect on a person's life as well as the lives of their family members, which includes their offspring. Potential for income is a major factor in this. Without education, it is far more difficult to leave poverty (Owolabi, 2012). Additionally, there are more cases of trafficking in industries like agriculture, mining, fishing, construction, and domestic service, which often do not require a college degree (Rahman, 2011).

“Some of those people who are being trafficked don't have education. And those who are educated don't have awareness and do not know how human trafficking works and so they fall into the traps of human traffickers because most of the traffickers, what they do is deceive them and they tell them that they are going to give them a lucrative job abroad. But only when they get there, that is the time, they will now realize that it's not a lucrative job they have come to do. They have come to do forced labor. And they are coming to do commercial sex” (Ministry of Education staff 1/Lagos/, 2023).

Theoretical framework

The study is anchored on Rational choice theory. Rational choice theory originated during the late 18th century with the work of Cesare Beccaria (1738-1794) on “Crime and Punishment” in 1764. Since then, the theory has been expanded upon and extended to include other perspectives such as deterrence, situational crime prevention, and routine activity theory. Rational choice theory also known as choice or rational action theory is a framework for understanding and formally modeling social and economic behavior.

Rational choice theory is based on the fundamental tenets of classical criminology which holds that people freely choose their behaviour and are motivated by the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of pleasure. Individuals evaluate their choice of actions in accordance with each option's ability to produce advantage, pleasure, and happiness. Rational choice theory adopts a utilitarian belief that man is a reasoning actor who weighs means and ends, costs and benefits, and makes a rational choice (Cornish & Clarke, 1987). Keel (1997) in support of rational choice theory posits that people have the freedom to choose their ways of behavior and that they make decisions based on rational calculations.

The basic or central premise of rational choice theory is that people are rational beings whose behavior can be controlled or modified by fear of punishment. The theory also focuses on the determinants of the individual choices. Rational choice theory then assumes that an individual has preferences among the available choice alternatives that allow him to state which option he prefers. It is assumed that crime is a purposive behavior designed to meet the offender's needs for such things as money, status, sex, and excitement and that meeting these needs involves the making of decisions and choices. Crime is calculated and deliberate; all criminals are rational actors who practice conscious decision-making (Cornish & Clarke, 1987). The rational choice theory is significant in this study. Based on the thesis of the study, child traffickers take advantage of people's vulnerability and enslave them. The traffickers also become easily vulnerable for fear of punishment and deprivation. Limited access to quality education among other variables is key to child trafficking in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The research design adopted for this study was the ex post facto approach. Ex-post facto is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables because they are inherently not manipulability. In effect, there was no manipulation of the independent variables used in this study because their manipulations occurred before the researcher began the investigation. Ex-post facto research design is a situation where causes are studied after variables have presumably exerted their effects on other variables before the researcher got there. The design was suitable for assessing the determinants of child trafficking in the area.

Area of the Study

The study was conducted in Calabar Municipal Local Government Area of Cross River State. The Municipality is one out of the eighteen (18) Local Government Areas that make up the State. Calabar Municipality lies between latitude 04° 15' and 5° N and longitude 8° 25' E. In the North, the Municipality is bounded by the Odukpani Local Government Area in the northeast by the great Kwa River. Its Southern shores are bounded by the Calabar River and Calabar South Local Government Area. It has an area of 331.551 square kilometers.

Calabar Municipal Government Area plays a dual role. Apart from being the Capital city of Cross River State, it also plays its role as headquarters of the Southern Senatorial District. Two ethnic groups form the indigenous population. These are the Quas and the Efiks. However, because of its cosmopolitan status, there are people from all parts of the state and Nigeria in the city. By virtue of its location along the waterfront, the Efiks embraced Western culture. They carried on successful trade with early Europeans. Fishing is another occupation identified with them. The Quas on the other hand occupy the bulk of the hinterland of Calabar where farmers, hunters, traders, and blacksmiths are found.

Population and Sample of the Study

The projected population as of 2016 of adult residents in Calabar Municipality is 137,241. From this population figure, 69,519 are males while 67,722 are females (National Bureau Statistics, 2017). The target population was adult residents who had attained the age of 20 years and above and could respond to the research questionnaire. The rationale behind using this set of people for the study was that they are parents and guardians to the supposed trafficked children. A sample size of 40 respondents was randomly selected within the Municipal area. This number represents the sample of the study.

Sampling Technique/ Procedure

A random sampling procedure was used to generate primary data for the study. Calabar Municipality has ten (10) wards. Randomly, the researcher selected 4 adults in each political ward, both male and female and administered the research instrument: a questionnaire. In the end, all the administered questionnaires were filled and returned.

Sources of Data

Data are obtained from primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained from extant literature, while the secondary data were obtained with the aid of a research questionnaire.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire were processed using frequency tables and using the Chi-square statistical technique.

Presentation and analysis of biodata

This section is concerned with the presentation of data gathered during this investigation. Data were collected from a variety of respondents considering their socio-demographic characteristics. The frequency distribution of the respondents based on their personal characteristics is as shown in Table 1:

Table 1: Classification of Respondents based on their Socio-demographic Characteristics

S/No	Personal variables	Classification of respondents	N	Percentage
1.	Sex	Male	25	62.5
		Female	15	37.5
		Total	40	100.00
2.	Age	15-25 years	12	30.0
		26-35 years	13	32.5
		36-45 years	10	25.0
		46 years above	5	12.5
		Total	40	100.00
3.	Marital Status	Married	23	57.5
		Unmarried	15	37.5
		Divorce	2	5.0
		Total	40	100.00
4.	Academic qualification	FSLC	6	15.0
		SSCE	10	25.0
		B.Sc/HND	20	50.0
		Others	4	10.0
		Total	40	100.00

Source: Field survey, 2023.

Table 1 shows the classification of respondents based on their socio-demographic characteristics. The sex classification shows that 25 (62.5%) respondents were male while 15

(37.5%) were female. The classification of age ranged as follows, 15 -25 years were 12 (30.0%) respondents. 13 (32.5%) were within the age range of 26-35. 10 (25.0%) were within the age range of 36-45, while 5 (12.5%) respondents were within the age range of 46 and above. This shows that the sample population was matured. The classification in the table also shows that 23 (57.5%) were married, 15 (37.5%) were unmarried and 2 (5.0%) respondents were divorced. Finally, the classification for academic qualification is as shown; 6 (15.0%) had a First School Leaving Certificate. 10 (25.0%) respondents possessed Senior Secondary Certificates. 20 (50.0%) respondents possessed bachelor's Degrees and Higher National Diplomas, while 4 (10.0%) had other forms of qualifications. The implication of this is that the sample population is literate.

Test of Hypothesis

Hypothesis: There is no significant effect between access to quality education and child trafficking in Calabar Municipality area of Cross River State, Nigeria

Table 2: Chi-square (X^2) response on access to quality education and child trafficking in Calabar Municipality area of Cross River State, Nigeria

Variables	Responses				Total
	SA	A	D	SD	
Access to quality education	2 (1.7)	2 (1.7)	7 (8.1)	6 (5.53)	17
Child trafficking	2 (2.3)	2 (2.3)	12 (11.0)	7 (7.48)	23

Calculated X^2 6.25, Table value of Chi -5.99, Level of significance -.05, df- 2

Response in Table 2 showed that the calculated chi-square (X^2) value is 6.25, while the table value at a .05 level of significance is 5.99. Since the calculated value of X^2 is greater than the table value of chi, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative. The result obtained shows that there is a significant relationship between access to quality education and child trafficking in Calabar Municipality.

Discussion of Findings

From the analysis of the data above, there is a significant relationship between access to quality education and child trafficking in Calabar Municipality. Ofuoku (2010) supports the position of the findings when he states that a lack of quality education leads to fewer job options and a lack of or limited awareness of rights, which traffickers take advantage of. Onyeizugbo (2011) confirms this with the assertion that the lack of education is a significant contributor to human trafficking. The more educated you are, the more likely you will be able to find a decent job to support yourself and your family.

Conclusion

The study examined the impact of limited access to quality education on child trafficking in the Calabar Municipality area of Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for this study was the ex-post facto approach. With a sample size of 40 respondents, a random sampling procedure was used to generate primary data for the study. The data collected through the questionnaire were processed using frequency tables and using the Chi-square statistical technique. The analysis of primary data shows that in Table 2, the calculated chi-square (X^2) value was 6.25, while the table value at the .05 level of significance was 5.99. The null hypothesis was rejected and the alternate accepted, which states that there is a significant relationship between access to quality education and child trafficking in Calabar Municipality. Based on these findings, the study draws specific conclusions and recommendations. Based on the result of data analysis, the study concludes that there is a significant relationship between access to quality education and child trafficking in Calabar Municipality.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research work, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should be free education in both primary and secondary schools. This can enable children from poor family backgrounds to go to school and escape the preying eyes of traffickers.
2. State government should create job or skill acquisition centers for the upcoming generation to reduce the number of unemployed youths in the communities.

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