Socio-Cultural and Economic Predictors of Child Trafficking in Abia State, Rivers State, Nigeria

ABSTRACT

The issue of child trafficking has continued to attract the attention of policymakers, international multilateral agencies as well as academics over the years. This notwithstanding, the problem still persists with different dimensions bothering on social, cultural, economic and spiritual concerns. It is against this backdrop that this study examined the sociocultural and economic predictors of child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria. The main objective was to provide empirical evidence concerning the interplay between variables such as; family size, poverty, unemployment and child trafficking in the study area. To achieve the objectives of the study, information was collected from a sample of 380 questionnaire respondents and 12 in-depth interview participants over a period of time. Hence, relying on the theoretical assumptions of the culture of poverty perspective, Marxist Political Economy and Robert K. Merton's Strain and Anomie theory as well as relevant analytical methods such as percentages, frequencies, descriptive models and the Chi-Square Statistical Test (χ^2), the study revealed that large family size especially having many children, low income of households (poverty) and widespread unemployment are all significantly related to child trafficking in the study area. Interestingly, child trafficking is perceived to have the positive effect of increasing household income justifying the fact that poverty and unemployment are major enablers of the problem. Based on this findings, the study suggests among others that poverty alleviation programmes targeting households as well as youth employment interventions through skills and empowerment schemes should be embarked upon by the government. The findings and recommendations of this study have strong implications for child trafficking policy formulation in Abia State and Nigeria in general.
Keywords: Socio-cultural, economic, predictors, child trafficking, Abia State

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I.   Introduction

The problem of child trafficking has continued to attract academic and policy concerns from both local and international organizations alike. At the apex of these concerns, is the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) with several publications that address global and regional dimensions to the problem. Global statistics reveal thatchild trafficking is one of the fastest growing organised crimes with an estimated 3.5 million victims per year, of which 42% are Africans (ILO/UNICEF, 2017).However, from a country specific point of view, the NAPTIP/UNICEF (2014) survey of the situation in Nigeria reported that over 46% of repatriated victims of external trafficking in Nigeria are children, with a female to male ratio of 7:3 and that most trafficked children are engaged mainly in prostitution (46%), domestic labour (21%), forced labour (15%) and entertainment (8%).

From the information presented above, it is clear that the issue of child trafficking is a seriousproblem in Nigeria and these requirescommensurate actions from both policy and academic domains. Realizing the physical, psychological, health and economic challenges associated with child trafficking, the government of Nigeria through NAPTIP and other policy frameworks has been trying to address the problem. In spite of all the efforts by the government to address the issue, the problem still persists with incremental challenges for society. In addition to government efforts, a number of academic research works have been done on the issue of child trafficking in Nigeria. Interestingly, these works have highlighted the causes, effects and remedies of child trafficking in separate works without any holistic empirical outcome that addresses the sociocultural and economic dimensions in a single research report. For instance, the UNICEF (2007) and Adesina (2014), in an independent study have pointed out the causes of child trafficking such as; poverty, large family size and unemployment, with emphasis on the role of baby factories in exacerbating the problem. Similarly, the NAPTIP/UNICEF (2014), survey revealed that child trafficking has psychological, economic and social effects on the trafficked person and society in general. In addition to this, Makinde (2018), in his study has proffered some useful suggestions on how the mitigate the problem of child trafficking with strong emphasis on job creation and poverty reduction.

Although the above studies have contributed to our knowledge, it is quite clear that these attempts have been rather fragmented to the extent that none of them was able to provide a holistic study on the socio-cultural factors such as family size, with economic indices such as income level or poverty and unemployment in determiningthe issue of child trafficking. Especially, none of the studies covered Abia State in particular. It is against this foregoing that this work is set to examine the socio-cultural and economic predictors of child trafficking in Nigeria with a focus on Abia State as its case study.

Research Questions
The following questions shall be answered in the course of this study:
Is there any link between family size (number of children) and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria?
Is there a relationship between poverty and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria?
Is there a link between unemployment and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria?
What is the effect of child trafficking on individual households and Abia State in general?

Objectives of the Study
Examine if there is any relationship between large family size (number of children) and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria.
Examine if there is a relationship between poverty and child trafficking inAbia State, Nigeria.
Find out if there is a positive link between unemployment and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria.
Determine the effect of child trafficking on individual households and Abia State in general.

Research Hypotheses
There is a relationship between large family size (number of children) and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria.
The there is a relationship between poverty and the incidence of child trafficking in AbiaSignificance of the Study

II.　　Literature Review
Social, Cultural and Economic Dimensions of Child Trafficking
In trying to aggregate the available literature that discussed the social dimension of child trafficking around the world, it is easy to see that most of them converge on the notion that weak social institutions such as the family and the state provide incentives for this to happen. For instance, Badru (2016), is of the view that one of the major incentives for child trafficking in most parts of Africa is the failure of the family institution. In this regard, families have been blamed for providing the necessary incentive that enables the increase in the illicit trade in children. The premise for this scholarly argument is that the family is losing its value in terms of being the foundational socialization agent and this is having significant adverse effects on child upbringing.

Makinde (2018), is of the opinion that the family in modern day Nigeria is largely to blame for the widespread involvement of persons in the illicit trade in children. However, he based his

argument not on the erosion of values, but on the background of most families. According to him, the educational, economic and cultural background of most families makes children in such families vulnerable to exploitation and subsequently they become victims of the illicit trade in children. This perhaps why, Badru (2016), opined that children are pushed into child trafficking and subsequently into child labour by factors such as dysfunctional families, households, personal problems, gender discrimination, traditional marriage practices, or children's desire to make quick money. Children's own curiosity and pervasive consumerism often determine the ways in which boys and girls work, migrate or are enticed for trafficking.

Another social dimension that has been strongly indicted for the illicit trade in children or child trafficking is the issue of widespread violent conflicts in most parts of the world (International Labour Organization, 2014; Badru, 2016). In Africa for instance, persistent social conflicts is noted as one of the major drivers of family displacements that undermine the capacity of people to sustain themselves during and after such conflicts. The end result is that women and children become largely vulnerable to trafficking for money. In Nigeria, the United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF, 2018), has posited that violent conflicts especially in the Northern parts, is a major driver of child trafficking as merchants cash into the social chaos and the increasing displacement of families to engage in the illicit trade.

Drawing from above, the International Labour Organization (ILO), has clearly argued that "children are often the most affected by crises, which places them at increased risk of becoming victims of child trafficking (ILO, 2014, p. 126)". Conflicts and the social crises arising from them have led to a growing incidence of some of the unconditionally worst forms of child trafficking, such as the use of children in armed conflict and trafficking of children to feed an expanding international sex industry. Conflict and economic crisis have led to a growing incidence of some of the unconditionally worst forms of child labor, such as the use of children in armed conflict and trafficking of children to feed an expanding international sex industry.

The last social dimension of child trafficking in the literature is the gender perspective. Here, focus is more on the trafficking in girl children and women. There have been reported cases of trafficking in women and children for illegitimate purposes, especially using them for sexual labour. While the nature and magnitude of the trade has remained vastly unknown, immigration officials throughout Europe have reported an influx of Nigerian females ensnared and sold into prostitution in such European countries as the Netherlands, Italy, and the Czech Republic (UNICEF, 2016). For instance, Italian officials deported hundreds of commercial sex workers to Nigeria; Spanish officials deported 16 such workers while other European countries have deported similar numbers. Also, based on the narratives of some young deportees, there are assertions that some Nigerian crime syndicates have employed "indebtedness, threats of beatings and/or rape, physical injury to the victim's family, arrest and deportation to persuade those forced into sex work from attempting to escape" (AFROL Gender Profile-Nigeria: 2002).

The cultural dimension to the problem of child trafficking in Africa seem to have more scholarly attention in the literature than other places in the world. This is perhaps due to the fact that African culture tend to be more sensitive to instilling the value of labour on children from an early age (Ayeni, 2015). Hence, while society may abhor the practice of child trafficking, there is the indication that it originated from the African attitude of sending young people to live with affluent relatives, thus pointing to the fact that prevention strategies should begin at the community level. For instance, Salazar and Alancor (as cited in Bidemi& Michael, 2007, p. 81) reported that "some cultures see child labour as a way of bringing up the child as it is good for character building and skill development". This cultural belief is known to have telling consequences on the act of child trafficking since in most cases, it provides the gateway for child labour.

In most parts of Africa children become vulnerable to child trafficking because of the cultural practice of sensing children to live with relatives. While providing a cultural and economic buffer for most families, the extended family which is characteristic of most societies in Africa also serves as a platform that enables the illicit trade in children. Makinde (2018), had reported in his study that most children end up being trafficked when they find themselves outside their immediate parental homes. In other words, children who are sent to live with extended families as part of the cultural practices of

a people end up being vulnerable to child trafficking and by extension early labour.

In the Northern part of Nigeria, some cultural practices give way for easy trafficking in children especially those that have to do with marriage preparation. For instance, as observed by Bidemi and Michael (2007), the Federal Ministry of Health in 1990 reported that in the northern part of Nigeria, street trading serves as marriage preparation for girls, since they are expected to meet their suitors during trading, and help their mother accumulate a dowry without which marriage loses esteem. Interestingly, while this simple cultural act in itself does not translate to child trafficking by virtue of definition, it can expose the girl child to trafficking. This is perhaps why Halidu (2016), posited that most young children that end up being trafficked in the north become victims due to exposures occasioned by street begging, hawking and or trading. His position is that sending children to trade in the streets as precondition for marriage puts such children at risk of being trafficked.

While the above represents a cultural activity that serves as a gateway to child trafficking because it only exposes children, the act of men getting married to teenage girl children in the Northern part of Nigeria and Mali is a major driver of the illicit trade in female children. In Mali for instance, Issa (2019), providing a report on the cultural drivers of child trafficking argued that child smugglers in Mali, engage in a thriving business as a result of the marriage culture of the people which allows men to marry under aged girls mostly by force. What is even sad about this culture is that the parents of the victims are enabled by culture to support the forceful abduction of their children for the purpose of marriage. This is even worse when the suitor is a wealthy business man or politician.

A similar scenario presents itself in the Northern part of Nigeria where the culture of the people permits early marriage. Hence, like the Mali case, under aged female children are forced into early marriage and in most cases trafficked from Nigeria to faraway places where they are used for sexual toys and domestic labourers. The case of Nigerian girls in Libya who were forcefully married to rich men from that country is a particular reference point (Issa, 2019). Report has it that Nigeria is one of the countries with the highest incidence of slavery. For instance, the Global Slavery Index (2018), places Nigeria at the rank of 32 out of 167 countries with the highest number of slaves. In fact, the report puts child slavery population in Nigeria at 1.38 million. While Nigeria has the institutional framework and laws against trafficking, at least one million people are trafficked every year, according to the country's National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP, 2018).

By far the most robust literature on child trafficking in the world have focused more on the economic dimension of the problem. This is because, economic issues provide very telling consequences on households and this tend to push poor homes into engaging in several survival strategies. Hence, poverty as a socioeconomic condition has been accorded a strong primacy in the literature as a causal or contributory factor for child trafficking (Badru, 2016). Makinde (2018) sees "Child trafficking as a product of market forces and this he said responds to the forces of demand and supply taking in the behaviour of employers, as well as of individual households. He further noted that wide-scale poverty is among most of the reasons why the syndicate structure of child trafficking functions, progresses and is sustained in society.

The importance of poverty as a cause of child trafficking and subsequent labour has been explored by the World Bank and ILO. ILO (2014) further observes that while poverty is almost always a context for the trafficking and early entry of children into regular work and into child labour, poverty can also be a trigger for child trafficking because it: (a) creates access to labour markets and income-raising activities; (b) drives family members of working age not having appropriate skills to match market needs in the area to trade on children; (c) is an enablement to mitigate unemployment in the area where the family lives; (d) serves as a lever of hope where conflict, illness or natural disaster have taken away the bread winner of the family, leaving a dependent household with no one to depend on. These situations, which are caused by social and economic inequality is summed up by Iwariemie-Jaja (2009, p. 38), thus

"social inequality indicates that men are unequally placed in society, especially in a modern society of the 21st century where some citizens are proud and others are ashamed of themselves; where some have rights and others have no rights; where some are not neglected and others are neglected; where

some are trained and educated and others are untrained and uneducated; where some are freemen and others are slaves; where some who are males dominate those who are females; where some feel superior and others inferior"

Another important determinant of child trafficking is social risks to families and their risk management strategy. The lack of accessible and relevant alternatives such as social safety nets can exacerbate the "push" factors of child trafficking. Poor families also turn to child trafficking in times of constrained access to credit or unexpected income shocks. Impoverished households believe that the returns from the illicit trade are significantly higher than those from education. According to Badru (2016), child traffickingis a major lifeline out of poverty, especially for poor households. The children contribute as much as one-third of household income in poor families and such income could be seen as significant in poverty reduction in poor households.Angus (2016), further observes that many families lack access to regular income as a result of lack of productive employment. Some of the parents who migrate to the cities are either unemployed or under-employed because they lack requisite experience and qualifications. As a result, they may resort to sending their children to relatives or to hawk as a way of raising their household income. By doing this, they put the children at risk of being trafficked either for forced labour or sexual work. As observed by Onipide (2018, p. 7), "Poor households engage their children in activities that exposes them to predatory child smugglers who rove the cities looking for their victims. Hence, children are at high risk of bring trafficked and forced into early labour or sexual work when a rural family migrates to the town and come face to face with the reality of a new and unknown environment and labour situation. As a result of the instability and insecurity that this causes, the children are often easy prey for the illicit trade".

It is common phenomena to see hordes of children operate as hawkers, beggars or thieves on Nigerian highways and streets (Olley, 2006). What obtains today is that probably due to poverty, parents in the rural areas hand over their children to urban dwellers who most often fail to put them through school, and rather trade them out to other people to who use them as unpaid servants or street hawkers (Mbakogu, 2014). Perhaps, this is why the syndicate structure of child trafficking is becoming increasingly difficult to manage given that the family network is strongly involved in the illicit trade.

Scholars have strongly converged on the knowledge that among the major factors associated with child trafficking and their subsequent use for sex of industry based work is parental poverty (Angus, 2016; Onipide, 2018). For example, Makinde (2018), presented the argument that child traffickingis a function of the need to make economic ends meet both for those who deal on the children and for households provide the children. In other words, the demand and supply structure of the trade is driven by the same economic forces that drive the sale in normal goods in the market place. Studies on household income and child trafficking have been very revealing in terms of their findings. For instance, a study of household economic status in Bangladesh by Amin, Quayes and Rives (2004), established a relationship between poverty and child traffickingespecially on the grounds that the economic foundation of most households provide the necessary incentives for child trafficking as well as child labour to thrive. In the same way, Salmon (2015) used the 2000 Labour Force Survey (LFS) of Bangladesh and found evidence that poverty is a major cause of child trafficking especially in the city centres. Also, Khanam (2016), in a research on child trafficking and school attendance in Bangladesh, found that parental characteristics such as education of the father and mother, occupation of the mother and father, have significant impact on child trafficking and schooling decisions. The researcher also found that household characteristics such as the number of children in the home raises the expectation that a school-age child will 'study only relative to the probability that the child will 'work only' or 'work and study', but it has no effect on the probability of 'neither work nor study'.

Following these studies, it becomes clear that poverty is central to the challenges which confront majority of Nigerian families and the ultimate illicit trade in children. The poor economy makes life, for families, terribly excruciating and debilitating. This is why Onipide (2018, p. 12), contends that in the study of Kano, it was observed that, "not all girls engage in street trading, as this depends on the attitude of parents, their income, and sometimes, on the inclination of the child." Still commenting on the adverse and cyclical effect of poverty on the child, Issa (2019), observed that poverty is responsible for the academic backwardness of the children from poor homes as

malnutrition prevents them from growing to their mental and physical potentials, a situation which further aggravates all other kinds of illness. This observation by Angus (2016), sharply describes the devastating situation when he argued that children of the poor have reduced access to education. In many cases one of two things happens to them, they either stay at home because there is no money to send them to school or they wait longer years before starting school to enable their parents gather some money for that purpose. Even when they start school, children of the poor have greater chance of dropping out and when they manage to complete primary education, malnutrition and ill-health retard (their) performance. In other words, the children of the poor cannot have adequate education and because of this, they too become poor later in life.

III. Theoretical Framework
The Culture of Poverty Theory

The theory of culture of poverty explains child trafficking from the perspective of the fact that poverty is a culture amongst certain group of people and this predisposes them to get involved in the illicit trade. The idea of a culture of poverty was introduced in the late 1950s by an American Anthropologist, Oscar Lewis (Fagade, 2018). He developed the concept from his fieldwork among the urban poor in Mexico and Puerto Rico. He contends that everywhere poverty is found to exist, it makes people in those places exhibit feelings of marginality, helplessness, inferiority and dependence. In Nigeria, the poor often develop various coping strategies by which they cope with their conditions in the form of doing things their own ways.This collection of behaviours associated with poverty is what Lewis aggregates into a cultural cycle that he referred to as the culture of poverty.

These traits or ingredients of poverty constitute the cultural circle and this ordinarily compel poor people to take actions and engage in many activities that will ensure a quick escape from the realities of poverty, one of which is child trafficking. According to Lewis (1996), the "culture of poverty" theory has the following elements on the level of the individual, the parents, care givers and guardians who experience the above feelings. These elements are; they suffer from weak ego structures, lack impulse control and show little ability to defer gratification; have a sense of resignation; fatalism and an unstable family structure. These qualities, therefore, make them to believe that they only source of hope is by involving in illicit commercial activities, one of which is the trade in children which in most cases is geared towards child labour in view of earning extra income for the upkeep of the family (Ering, 2000). Lewis is of the opinion that those who fall within the purview of the assumptions of the culture of poverty theory, show a great deal of self-perpetuating patterns and echoes of poverty which succeeding generations could imbibe and exhibit as lifestyles, beliefs and values that are not simply an adjustment to low income. This cultural continuity defines a social structure of intergenerational poverty and behaviour that propels subsequent involvement in illicit trade like child trafficking. Here in lies the cyclic nature of the culture of poverty theory as proposed by Lewis.

In light of the study, the theory allows us to see why sociocultural attitudes associated with the poor provide enough incentives for child abuse, trafficking and labour to thrive amongst them. While the theory does not in any way suggest that all poor people eventually get involved in child trafficking, it nevertheless sees poverty as a major driver of the illicit trade in children. Abia State in the Eastern parts of Nigeria represents a typical society where widespread poverty may dovetail with the insatiable materialist culture of the people to promote an enabling environment for child trafficking.

IV. Methodology

Abia State is the setting or study area for this research work. The study adopts the survey research design. The target population for this study is household heads which, according to the Abia State Ministry of Housing (ASMH, 2012), is put at 160, 237. The sample size for the study is approximately 400 household headsin addition to 20 In-depth Interview members. Hence, the total sample size is 420. The sampling technique adopted in this study is the multistage sampling. As the name implies, multistage sampling technique is a complex form involving a combination of different types of sampling techniques. In this case, four sampling techniques were combined together at different stages to select the respondents for this study. These are the cluster, simple, systematic

random and purposive sampling techniques. Abia Statewas divided into three clusters based on the Senatorial Districts (Abia-Central, Abia-South, and Abia North). Two senatorial districts were randomly selected for inclusion in the sample. One Local Government Area (LGAs) each was selected from each of the clusters and thereafter, one urban community was randomly selected from each of the two LGAs. To draw the 400 respondents, the systematic random sampling method wasadopted. Hence, 200 household heads each were selected from the two communities to make up the sample size of 400. In addition to the 400, the sample for the IDI was selected using the purposive sampling technique. This was done to target 4 staff of NAPTIP, 10 children who have experienced child trafficking before and 6 staff of the Abia State Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. A self-designed questionnaire, in-depth interviews and observation methods were used to generate data for this study. Descriptive statistical parameters such as tables, percentages, charts and cross-tabulations were used to analyze data related to information derived from socio-demographic and research questions. However, the chi-square (x^2) statistical technique was employed to determine relationship between variables identified in the stated hypotheses. Finally, the thematic approach shall be deployed to analyze the information gathered through the in-depth interviews.

Results and Discussion
Evaluation of Research Questions
Q1: Examine if there is any relationship between large family size (number of children) and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria.

Fig. 4.1: On whether families with more children can be linked with child trafficking

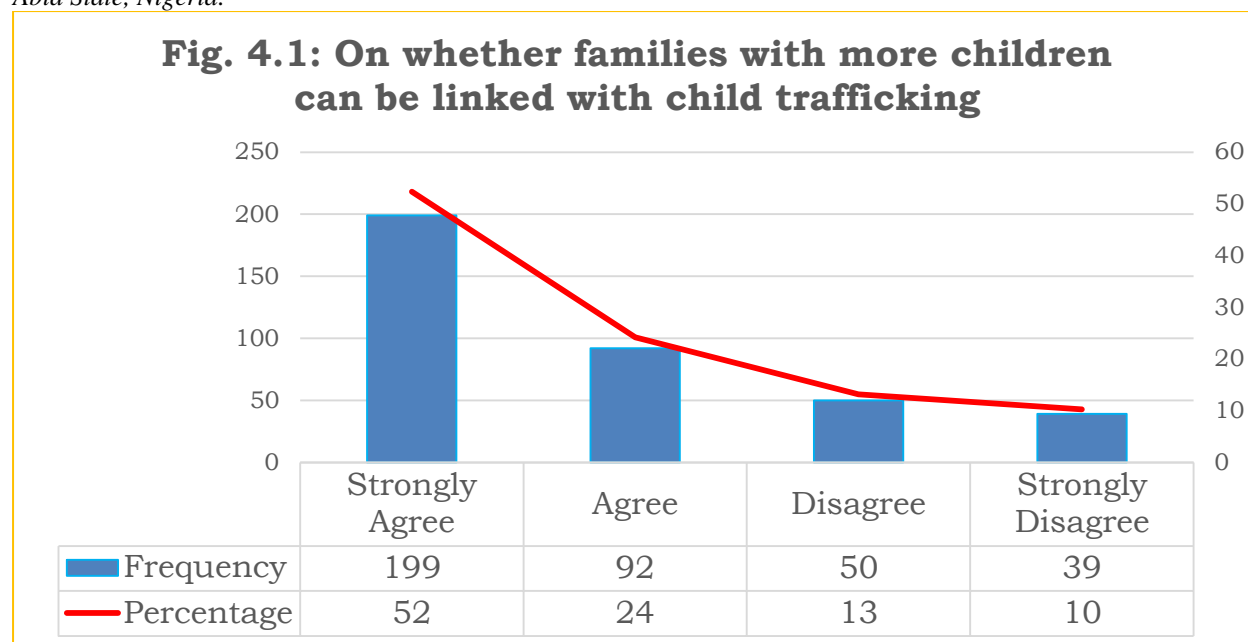|	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Frequency	199	92	50	39
Percentage	52	24	13	10

Figure 4.1 above presents information on the whether large family size especially having more children can be linked to child trafficking in the study area. Based on the data in the chart, it can be seen that 199(52%) of the respondents strongly agreed that large family size is strongly linked to child trafficking, 92(24%) of them agreed to this, 50(13%) of them disagreed, while 39(10%) of the respondents strongly disagreed.

Q2: Examine if there is a relationship between poverty and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria.
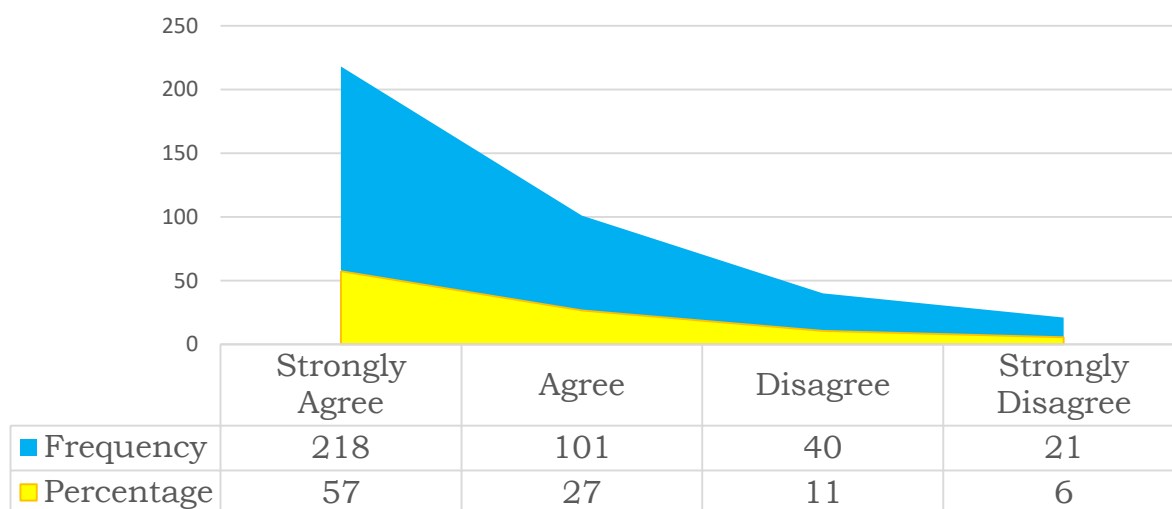
Fig. 4.2: On whether poverty has a link with child trafficking

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
■ Frequency	218	101	40	21
■ Percentage	57	27	11	6

Figure 4.2 above reveals information on whether poverty can be linked to child trafficking in the study area. From the data, it can be seen that 218(57%) of the respondents strongly agreed that poverty is linked to child trafficking, 101(27%) of the respondents agreed to this, 40(11%) of them disagreed, while 21(6%) of the respondents strongly disagreed to this.

Q3: Find out if there is a positive link between unemployment and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria.

Fig. 4.3: On whether unemployment can be linked to child trafficking

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
■ Percentage	52	37	8	3
Frequency	198	140	31	11
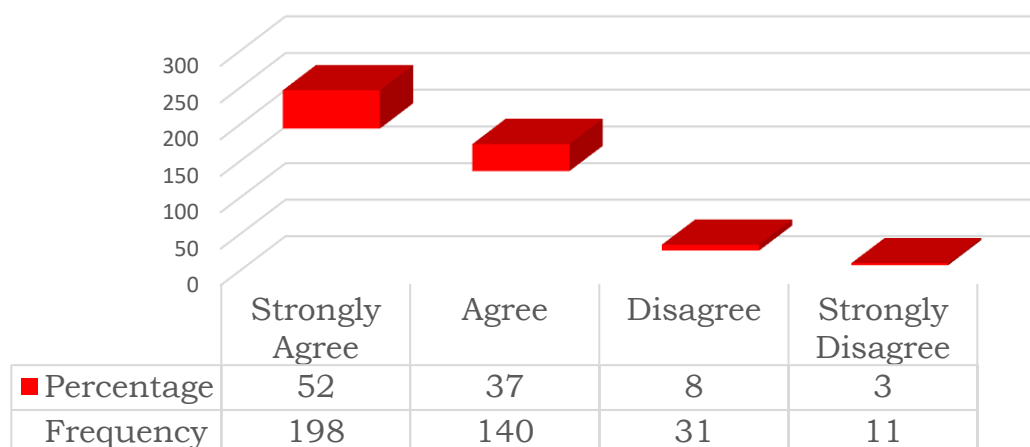
Source: Field survey, 2019

Figure 4.3 above highlights information on whether unemployment is linked to child trafficking. Based on the data presented in the chart, it is clear that 198(52%) of the respondents strongly agreed that unemployment has a link with child trafficking in the study area, 140(37%) of the respondents agreed to this, 31(8%) of the respondents disagreed, while 11(3%) of them strongly disagreed.

Q4: Determine the effect of child trafficking on individual households in Abia State.

Fig. 4.4: On the effects of child trafficking on households in Abia State
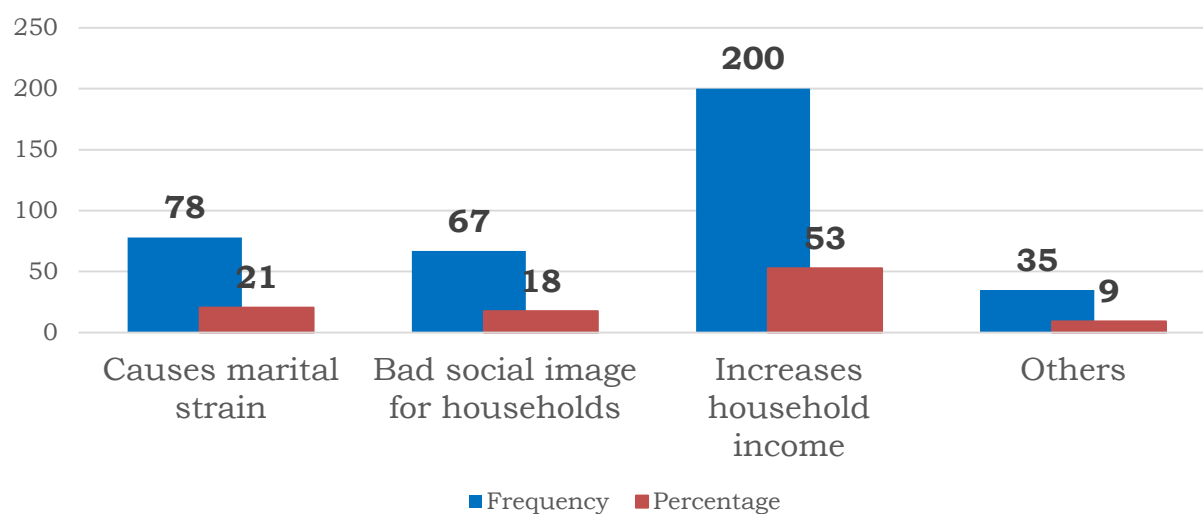
Source: Field survey, 2019

Figure 4.4 above shows information on the effect of child trafficking on households in the study area. The data in the chart captures the fact that 78(21%) of the respondents believe that it causes marital strain or instability, 67(18%) of the respondents said bad social image for households, 200(53%) of the respondents said it increases household income, while 35(9%) of them said child trafficking has other effects on households.

Test of Hypotheses

Ho_1: *There is no relationship between large family size (number of children) and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria.*

H_1: *There is a relationship between large family size (number of children) and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria.*

Table 1: Family size, especially number of children has a relationship with child trafficking

Respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Ikwuano LGA (Omuegwu)	99	70	11	9	189
Umuahia North (Umuahia)	89	50	32	20	191
Total	188	120	43	29	380

Table 1 above shows information on the relationship between family size and child trafficking in the study area. From the data, it is easy to see that 188 of the respondents strongly agreed, 120 of them agreed, 43 of them disagreed, while 29 of the respondents strongly disagreed. The data is further subjected to a chi square test in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Chi Square Computation for Hypothesis 1

Category	O	E	O-E	(O-E)2	(o-e)2/e
Ikwuano LGA (Omuegwu)	99	93.51	5.49	30.19	0.32
	70	59.68	10.32	106.42	1.78
	11	21.39	-10.39	107.89	5.04

9	14.42	-5.42	29.42	2.04
Umuahia North (Umuahia)	89	94.49	-5.49	30.19	0.32
	50	60.32	-10.32	106.42	1.76
	32	21.61	10.39	107.89	4.99
	20	14.58	5.42	29.42	2.02
Chi-Square	$\chi^2 =$		**18.28**		

From the table above, the chi-square χ^2 calculated value for hypothesis 1 is as follows:

Chi-Square= $\chi 2 = \frac{(o-e)\mathbf{2}}{\mathbf{e}}$

Where o= observed frequency

      e= expected frequency

Note that expected value is calculated by multiplying the row total by column total for each response and dividing by total number of respondents. After this, chi-square calculated value is compared with chi-square table value based on the calculated Degree of Freedom (DF). Hence, to ascertain the degree of freedom the following formula applies.

DF = (R-1) (C-1)

= (2-1) (4-1)

   = 1x3

Therefore DF =3

At 3 DF, the table value of $\chi 2$ at 0.05 level of significance is = 7.81.

Decision Rule

      The general accepted decision rule for the application of chi-square $\chi 2$ test states that: Accept null hypothesis if calculated value is less than the table value and reject hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than table value. In this study, since calculated value for $\chi 2$ is 18.28 and table value is 7.81, the null hypothesis which states that "there is no relationship between large family size (number of children) and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria" is hereby rejected. In its place, the alternate hypothesis which states that "there is a relationship between large family size (number of children) and child trafficking in Abia State, Nigeria, is hereby accepted and upheld. This leads to the conclusion that family size has a strong link to child trafficking in the study area.

      Ho_2: The there is no relationship between poverty and the incidence of child trafficking in Abia State.

      H_2: The there is a relationship between poverty and the incidence of child trafficking in Abia State.

Table 3: Poverty is likely to have a relationship with child trafficking

Respondents	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Total
Ikwuano LGA (Omuegwu)	99	78	6	6	189
Umuahia North (Umuahia)	85	56	30	20	191
Total	184	134	36	26	380

Table 3 above provides data on the relationship between poverty and child trafficking. Based on the information in the table, 184 of the respondents strongly agreed that poverty has a relationship with child trafficking, 134 of them agreed, 36 of them disagreed, while 26 of the respondents strongly disagreed. The data is further subjected to a chi square test in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Chi Square Computation for Hypothesis 2

Category	O	E	O-E	(O-E)2	(o-e)2/e
Ikwuano LGA (Omuegwu)	99	91.52	7.48	56.01	0.61
	78	66.65	11.35	128.88	1.93
	6	17.91	-11.91	141.74	7.92

6	12.93	-6.93	48.05	3.72
Ikwuano LGA (Omuegwu)	85	92.48	-7.48	56.01	0.61
	56	67.35	-11.35	128.88	1.91
	30	18.09	11.91	141.74	7.83
	20	13.07	6.93	48.05	3.68
Chi-Square	X2=				28.21

From the table above, the chi-square χ^2 calculated value for hypothesis 2 is as follows:

Chi-Square= $\chi2 = \frac{(o-e)2}{e}$

Where o= observed frequency

   e= expected frequency

Note that expected value is calculated by multiplying the row total by column total for each response and dividing by total number of respondents. After this, chi-square calculated value is compared with chi-square table value based on the calculated Degree of Freedom (DF). Hence, to ascertain the degree of freedom the following formula applies.

DF = (R-1) (C-1)

= (2-1) (4-1)

   = 1x3

Therefore DF =3

At 3 DF, the table value of $\chi2$ at 0.05 level of significance is = 7.81.

Decision Rule

   The general accepted decision rule for the application of chi-square $\chi2$ test states that: Accept null hypothesis if calculated value is less than the table value and reject hypothesis if the calculated value is greater than table value. In this study, since calculated value for $\chi2$ is 28.21 and table value is 7.81, the null hypothesis which states that "the there is no relationship between poverty and the incidence of child trafficking in Abia State",is hereby rejected. As a result, the alternate hypothesis which states that "the there is a relationship between poverty and the incidence of child trafficking in Abia State, is hereby accepted and upheld. Since the calculated chi square value is far higher than the table value, it is safe to submit that poverty has a significant relationship with child trafficking in the study area.

In-depth Interview Analysis

   As stated under the section on data analysis in chapter three, the In-depth Interview session targeted 20 participants made up of4 NAPTIP Staff, 10 children who are victims of child trafficking and 6 government officials working with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. However, this was not feasible as only 12 interviews were conducted due to some unforeseen circumstances. This notwithstanding, all the key sectors targeted were represented in the end. In the course of analyzing the interviews, three themes reoccurred or emerged. Hence, the analysis is done below based on these three themes.

Theme 1: Size of Family and Child Trafficking

   Drawing from the various interviews conducted, there was a general consensus that family size especially having too many children is a major driver of child trafficking in the study area. Most of the interviewees were united in agreement that too many children puts pressure on the economic resources of the family especially for those households that are not high income or middle income ones. It is the belief of most of the interview participants that large family size coupled with low income are strong incentives for trafficking in children. In fact, one of the NAPTIP staff who participated in the in-depth interview shared the opinion that:

> *Most of the time, it is easy to find that a significant number of cases the agency had handled is either related to low income or large family sizes. She further pointed out that children from large families stand the risk of being sent out as house helps which provides a gateway for them to be trafficked (IDI Participant, Female NAPTIP Staff, aged 38 years).*

Drawing from the above, it can be deduced that while child trafficking is enabled by large family size and further reinforced by low income, parents most often do not directed traffic their children. However, when these children are sent out to close relatives or other persons who may have requested for them, the chances become high that such children may end up being trafficked. This perhaps justifies the position of another interviewee who had this to say "I have a large family with nine children and I have not sent any of them to leave with my relatives or serve any other person at that matter because I know that the care that my children will get from outside cannot be compared to what they will get from their biological parents" (*Male IDI participant, Ministry Staff, aged 42 years*). In addition, another interviewee pointed out that:

> *"Family size is not the problem but low income. He however, agreed that when large families with plenty of children lack money to take care of the children, there is a high chance that the family make seek the option of sending some of the children to other homes outside of theirs as a way of mitigating the problem of catering for them" (Male IDI participant, NAPTIP Staff, aged 46 years).*

One of the strongest validation of the fact that large family size is a major incentive for child trafficking came from one of the victims of child trafficking who participated in the interview session. According to the girl, "having too many children in a household that can barely feed is a major contributor to trafficking in children. She narrated how her parent sent her to stay with a relative in Lagos State and how she ended up being sold to another family who tortured the hell out of her until she was rescued by NAPTIP officials (*IDI participant, child trafficking victim, aged 17 years*).

From the few interview outcomes presented so far, it is clear that child trafficking is strongly enabled by large family size. However, the interview sessions have equally shown that family size alone may not be sufficient enough to traffic in children but that low income plays a strong role in enabling this dimension of the problem. This strongly supports the outcome of the data presented in page 57 above as well as the result from the Chi Square test of hypothesis one in pages 62 and 63 above.

Theme 2: Poverty, Unemployment & Child Trafficking

It is important to start the analysis here by pointing out that the discussion almost all the interviewees see poverty and unemployment as major drivers of child trafficking in the study area. In fact, the participants were unanimous on the fact that unemployment and poverty provide both necessary and sufficient reasons for child trafficking. In the various interviews that were conducted, poverty and unemployment reoccurred several times showing that these socioeconomic variables have strong relationship with child trafficking. While some of the participants blamed the government for the problem, some however, blamed families. One of the interviewees had this to say:

> *"Poverty and unemployment are a big problem to most families and the government is to blame for this especially because very little has been done to provide jobs for people. This makes it hard for most families to survive and when this is coupled with having plenty of children, the best option is usually to send them out with the chances of their being trafficked" (Female IDI participant, Ministry Staff, aged 40 years).*

It is the opinion of most of the interviewees that a significant number of households in the study area are poor and most of the youths are unemployed. This according to them affects families adversely creating possibilities for child trafficking to occur. However, an interesting dimension to the interview came with one of the participants pointing out that "Poverty and unemployment does not just push families to send their children out of their homes alone, it also increases a criminal dimension to the problem where youths who do not have jobs engage in child trafficking by kidnapping and selling off children to child traffickers from outside the state" (*Male IDI participant, NAPTIP Staff, aged 42 years*). This was reechoed by a number of the participants especially those from the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development. In fact, one of the Ministry participants adduced that:

> *"Most unemployed youths have now seen child kidnapping for ransom as a way out of poverty. However, the worrisome dimension is that even after ransom is paid most of the times, they end up selling the children they have kidnapped to buyers from other places who are mostly traffickers" (Male IDI participant, Child Traffic Victim, aged 18 years).*

It is clear from the interviews that poverty and unemployment play a very crucial role in exacerbating the problem of child trafficking from two dimensions. The first is that families that are unemployed and thereby poor are most likely to be more prone to sending their children into child labour and by extension child trafficking. The other dimension of the problem is the unemployed and poor youths who now engage in child abduction or kidnapping for trafficking purpose. The outcome of the interview sessions supports the results derived from data presented in pages 58 and 59 above. This is further strengthened by the result of the test of hypothesis 2 as presented in pages 65 and 61 above respectively that dealt with poverty and in pages 68 and 69 respectively that dealt with unemployment.

V.   Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it is safe to conclude that a significant number of the household heads that participated in this study had a healthy knowledge of the issue of child trafficking especially its causes and consequences. It is very clear from the study that poverty is a strong predictor of child trafficking especially when this is reinforced by large families where there are too many children that the caregivers can handle. In other words, poverty which often is a product of low or no income at all unites with large family size to provide incentive for child trafficking in the study area.

In addition, unemployment is another strong predictor of child trafficking. This is actually related to the poverty as unemployed people are mostly poor since they do not have any means of income. The submission therefore, is that unemployed youths have now seen the trafficking in children as a major source of income for them in the study area. This has given a strong economic impetus for child trafficking to continue to rise as more unemployed youths engage in child kidnapping for the purpose of trafficking. Hence, child trafficking is a major source of income for most poor households as well as some unemployed youths.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the conclusions reached in this study, the following recommendations are proffered.

Economic Dimension

There to strands to the suggestion under economic dimension. These are poverty reduction and employment generation. Although the latter may enable the former, it is important to ensure that both are treated with utmost seriousness by the state and federal governments. Employment creation programmes especially skills development and empowerment targeted at youths should be widely and sustainably embarked upon by the government. This will go a long way to strengthen the economic base of young people and possibly deter them from their involvement in child trafficking. If this is effectively done, the next thing is to target household heads through other poverty alleviation programmes especially for women.

Sociocultural Dimension

The first part of this recommendation is to engage in a widespread orientation programme by the government that clearly educates households on the need to maintain a moderate size of family. Families should be encouraged to have the number of children they can cater for without seeking help from outside or family members who live elsewhere. In addition, there is the strong need for reorientation of the minds of the people in order for them to desist from sending their children to relatives as part of maintaining family or cultural ties.

Sanction Dimension

There should be a strong sanction or punishment for child traffickers in the state. In fact, child trafficking should be equated with armed robbery and treated as such. Those who are caught trafficking in children should be treated as armed robbers and appropriate sanctions meted on them.

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