

## **Family Size and Parental Education on Predisposition to Female Trafficking in Southern Nigeria**

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### **Abstract**

*This study investigated the influence of family size and parental education on predisposition to female trafficking in southern Nigeria. Stratified Random sampling procedure was used to select the 150 parents from various ethnic groups consisting of Yoruba, Igbo, Bini, and Ibibio/Efik among others. A researcher-constructed parental attitude towards female trafficking questionnaire was the instrument used for data collection. One-way Analysis of Variance and Fisher's Least Square method were used to test the two hypotheses formulated for this study. The findings showed that there is no significant influence of family size on parental predisposition to female trafficking in Southern Nigeria. However, the educational status of parents had a significant effect on their predisposition to female trafficking. On the basis of these findings, it was recommended that the family structure should be strengthened to continue to serve as a haven of love, security, safety and tranquillity since it is the primary institution through which every individual is socialized. In addition,, the role of the family in social rehabilitation and re-integration of victims of female trafficking must not be overlooked. It is therefore important that any scheme for rehabilitation and re-integration of victims of female trafficking must be family-centred if it is to achieve meaningful results.*

**Keywords:** Family size; female trafficking; Parental education.

### **Introduction**

Nigeria is a multicultural country with diverse ethnic and religious identities, with a population of over one hundred and forty million people, according to the 2006 population census. She is the most populous black country in the World. These diverse ethnic groups share several cultural values such as respect for the dignity of womanhood. In recent times, Nigeria has witnessed, unfortunately, the social scourge of trafficking in human beings, particularly women and children to various parts of the world, especially Europe. Popoola (2001) had observed that trafficking in human beings, particularly women and children; for the purpose of sexual exploitation (including prostitution, homosexuality, etc) is a complex phenomenon whose roots are deeply embedded in the socio-cultural conditions as well as the economic structure of modern societies.

The international community considers trafficking in persons a modern form of slavery and a gross violation of human dignity. Trafficking affects the mental and physical health of the victims as well as their social conditions and future life. It also has legal implications and damaging effect on all spheres of the society. Trafficking of young women for commercial sex work is the most popular form of trafficking. In all sincerity, many women migrate knowing that they will be working in the sex industry. However, many are not in control of their work and earnings. Other women, through deceit or force, find themselves in the sex industry against their will. On getting to their destination, they experience debt bondage, withholding of travel documents and wages, beatings, mental and psychological abuses, sexual assaults and confinement. In their attempts to protest against their in-human treatment, their captors act faster by either murdering their victims or set them up for police arrest and eventual deportation (WOTCLEF, 2001).

Trafficking in persons has numerous consequences including stigmatization of the victims and their families. This makes it difficult for the victims to return to their families, who may not welcome them. It may also be hard to get acceptance and support from the community at large; and even harder if the victim is believed to suffer from HIV or AIDS. There will be limited opportunities to marry and have a family and it may be difficult to get a job (Fagbohunbe 2000).

Figures published by a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) the Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF, 2001) show that between March 1999 and April 2001, about one thousand one hundred and twenty-six (1,126) trafficked girls were deported to Nigeria from various European countries especially Italy. This has serious implications on public health and the international image of Nigeria. Female trafficking is a complex sociological and psychological problem with some implications on the rights of women. It is against this background that this study examined family size and parental education as determinants of parental predisposition to female trafficking and its implication on social adjustment among female youths in Southern Nigeria.

### **The Problem**

Trafficking in women and children is an international scourge that is not confined to the borders of any one country as there are hundreds of networks of traffickers who are running and controlling the heinous business world wide; a lucrative business generating \$7 to \$10 billion annually for traffickers (UNICEF,2003) in which 1.2 million women and children who have become victims of traffickers are brought from one place to another, (ILO-IPEC, 2002) usually through an intermediary who sells the victim to another person, pays the victim's family and promises to educate the victim or find her/him a good job.

Instead of this, long years of exploitation often await the victim. Defenceless and intimidated by the unfamiliar surroundings, victims cannot fight their exploiters and if they attempt to do so, they are forced into submission. The international community and development partners

have raised alarm about the growing scope and trans-national complexity of trafficking which if unchecked would continue to grow. Urgent efforts need to be intensified and co-ordinated at all levels if the scourge is to be stopped.

Unfortunately, despite its widespread nature and its devastating consequences on the victims, their families and communities, very little is known and reported about this hydra headed monster. This under-reporting is perhaps due to its clandestine nature. For the development of effective policies, it is important to have a clear and accurate overview of the prevalence, nature, geographical patterns and processes of trafficking worldwide, to understand the most vulnerable groups and those involved and the predisposing factors. The central problem of this study was therefore to determine if family size and the educational background of parents are significantly related to their predisposition to trafficking in the girl child.

## **Review of Literature**

### **Meaning**

Although simple to describe, the definition of trafficking continues to be the subject of debate, and there seems to be no conclusive or even commonly agreed definition globally, regionally or even nationally on this and according to the International Save the Children Alliance (2007), this is in itself indicative of the degree of ideological contention which marks the discourse on trafficking and other related issues. In view of this definitional lacuna, the 2003 UN protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially women and children provided a comprehensive definition of trafficking that attempts to detail its nature and provide its basic elements that are widely agreed upon.

It defined Child trafficking as the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploiting them by intimidation or the use of violence or other forms of force, by abduction, deception, fraud, the misuse of power or a position of vulnerability or by giving or receiving money or favours to obtain the consent of a person who hold control over another person. Its basic elements are violence, deception, coercion, deprivation of freedom of movement, abuse of authority, debt bondage, forced labour and slavery-like practices and other forms of exploitation or use of force. Essentially, trafficking always involves a journey, often from rural to urban areas within a country or across borders from poor to richer countries.

Trafficking can be for the following purposes:

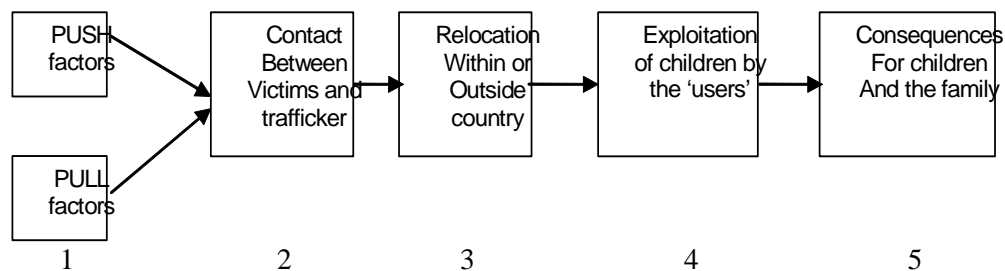
- Exploitation through work (including slave labour and bonded labour);
- Sexual exploitation (including prostitution and pornography);
- Exploitation through illegal activities (including begging and drug trafficking);
- The adoption trade;
- Marriage brokering

As noted by ILO-IPEC (2002) many persons are involved in the trafficking process including recruiters, intermediaries, counterfeiters, transporters, employers, brothel operators and even

friends and family members. The common means used by traffickers to trap the victims include persuasion, threats, intimidation and in some cases it is the victim themselves or their families who take the initiative to approach the traffickers.

### The Process of Trafficking

Several studies have demonstrated that trafficking is basically a process consisting of a combination of five events as depicted in figure I.



**Figure 1: The chain process of child trafficking**

**Source: Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (2006). Child Trafficking: How to Protect Children from Exploitation, Policy brief, 3, 2**

**1. Causes of trafficking in persons (Supply and demand factors).** Trafficking in persons is seen to start with a mix of push (supply side) and pull (demand side) factors which are the root causes of trafficking. According to the demand-supply perspective, trafficking occurs because there is a market for child labour and in sex trade and this demand is matched by abundant supply of children and women.

The supply side or push factors implicated as the causes of trafficking include poverty and a desire for better life (ILO-IPEC, 2002), lack of educational opportunities (Kelland, 2002; ILO-IPEC, 2005) crisis, conflicts and natural disasters including HIV/AIDS (Fitzgibbon, 2003; UNAIDS, 2004) cultural attitudes and discrimination against women (Fitzgibbon, 2003). Another basic cause of child trafficking highlighted by PuktunWomen (2007: 2) include extreme poverty which is seen as the leading cause of girl- child trafficking. Other major causes include illiteracy, particularly in the lowest socioeconomic strata in the district, unemployment, lack of sex and health education in curriculum, large size of the average family within the illiterate population, lack of access as well as proper family planning and contraception, lack of welfare for the poor, an extremely weak and anarchic judicial system, lack of access to print and electronic media, lack of advocacy and awareness campaigns by both the NGOs and the government against such practices and the disinterest of police and other government agencies to watch and punish traffickers.

The demand side causes or the pull factors associated with trafficking include economic growth disparities, the demand for cheap labour (ILO –IPEC 2002) and the growing demand of children for commercial sex.

**2. Contact between victim and trafficker.** Children may become victims of trafficking by abduction or kidnapping but the majority are trapped in more subversive ways such as persuasion and false promises. Many children also voluntarily seek and go with traffickers while Dottridge (2004) found that in a horrifying number of cases, the individuals who ensnare children into trafficking are either close relatives or close friends of the family. The contact between the victim and the trafficker may therefore be either voluntary or coercive.

**3. The process of relocation.** According to Maastricht Graduate School of Governance (2006), in many countries children are trafficked from rural to urban areas within a country for exploitation in labour and in commercial sex while UNICEF (2003) reports that cross-border trafficking has become more widespread as economic differentials between neighbouring countries widen and transport as well as communication methods have improved all over the world.

**4. Exploitation.** Victims of traffickers are usually involved in various forms of exploitation including adoption, marriage, commercial sex, use of organs or other body parts, slavery, bonded and hazardous labour, begging, illicit activities (carry out theft or house breaking or drug peddling) and as army recruits for both government and militias in war thorn areas (Human Rights Watch, 2002).

**5. The consequences of Trafficking.** Evidence abound to suggest that the consequences of trafficking on the victims, their families and communities are multiple and devastating. The physical harm of trafficking to the victims include poor feeding, little or no rest, no access to healthcare and ILO-IPEC study in Nigeria (2000) reports, one out of every five trafficked children dies from accident or disease. The physical and emotional damage of pre-mature sexual activity, exposure to sexually transmitted disease, unwanted pregnancy and early motherhood, reproductive illnesses and violence are often reported as some of the physical consequences of trafficking. Psychologically, victims of trafficking are often isolated in strange environments, suffer discrimination and are more likely to suffer post-traumatic stress disorder.

### **Purpose of Study**

The major purpose of this study was to examine the effects of family size and parental educational qualification on parental predisposition to female trafficking in Southern Nigeria. Solutions for reducing the prevalence of female trafficking within Southern Nigeria will be sought.

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised for this study:

1. To what extent does family size influence perceived parental predisposition to female trafficking?
2. To what extent does parental educational qualification influence perceived parental predisposition to female trafficking?

### **Research Hypotheses**

Two hypotheses were postulated to guide the direction of this study thus:

1. Family size does not significantly influence perceived parental pre-disposition to female trafficking.
2. There is no significant influence of perceived attitude of parents with different levels of Education on female trafficking.

### **Methodology**

#### **Research Design**

The research design used for this study is the survey research design. A researcher-constructed questionnaire was used as survey instrument to reach at the respondents. The instrument has two parts. Part one sought the personal information of parents with respect to the sex, marital status, family size, family type, ethnic group and educational qualification. Part two comprised 12 statements measuring parental predisposition to female trafficking. Responses to each statement were placed on a 5-point Likert Scale of Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Not sure (NS), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD). The sum of all responses in the two parts comprised the respondents' rating on the variable.

The researchers used stratified random sampling procedure to select parents who participated in this study; stratification was based on family size, as well as level of education. A total of 150 parents were randomly selected from Bini, Igbo, Ibibio/Efik and Yoruba ethnic groups in Southern Nigeria.

The content and face validity of the instrument was determined by expert opinion of the researchers who certified the instrument as appropriate for use in the study. A pilot study was carried out using test-retest method to establish the reliability of the instrument. In the study, thirty parents had the instruments administered to them twice given a three-week interval; thereafter scores on first and second administration were correlated using Pearson Product Correlation procedure. A calculated r-value of 0.87 was obtained. This co-efficient of relationship was accepted as reasonably high given the complexity in human behaviour being measured hence appropriate for use in this study.

#### **Data analysis**

To test the two hypotheses formulated in the study, one-way Analysis of Variance and Fisher's Least Square Statistics were used.

#### **Results**

The first hypothesis states that family size does not significantly influence parental predisposition to female trafficking. To test this hypothesis, the participants were classified according to their family size before using the items measuring predisposition to trafficking to calculate the mean score and standard deviation for each group. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: ANOVA test of the influence of family size on predisposition to female trafficking**

Family Size	n	X	SD	
Small	26	49.19	6.56	
Moderate	44	48.20	5.46	
Large	52	48.06	5.77	
Very Large	28	48.89	5.15	
Sources of Variation	Sum of squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean of Square	F-ratio
Family size	30.47	3	10.16	0.31
Within group	4791.17	146	32.16	
Total	4821.64	149		

\*Not significant at 0.05; df = 3 and 146; critical F = 2

Table 1 shows that a calculated F-value of 0.31 resulted as the influence of family size on parental predisposition to female trafficking. This calculated F-value of 0.31 is not significant since it is less than the critical F-value of 3.06 given 2 and 146 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This led to the acceptance of the null hypothesis that family size does not significantly influence parental predisposition to female trafficking.

Hypothesis two stated that there is no significant influence of the attitudes of parents with different levels of education on female trafficking. One way Analysis of Variance was used for data analysis and the results of the analysis are presented in Table 2

**Table 2: Effects of parental level of education on their predisposition to female trafficking**

Education	n	X	SD	
Higher Degree	18	52.00	3.87	
1 <sup>st</sup> Degree//HND	46	50.61	4.57	
ND/NCE	38	46.58	5.62	
WASC/TCII	35	47.71	5.11	
Others	13	42.92	6.52	
Sources of Variation	Sum of squares	Degree of freedom	Mean of squares	F-ratio
Education	990.09	4	247.52	7.52
Within group	4772.37	145	2.91	
Total	5772.46	149		

Significant at 0.05; df = 4 and 145; critical F = 2.43

Table 2 shows that a calculated F-value of 7.52 resulted as the influence of parental educational qualification on their predisposition to female trafficking. This calculated F-value of 7.52 is significant since it is greater than the critical F-value of 2.43 given 4 and 145 degrees of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis, which states that there is no a significant influence of attitude of parents with different levels of educational qualification on female trafficking.

Based on the significant F-value observed, a further analysis of data was called for hence the use of Fishers Least Square method to do a pair-wise comparison of group means to determine which groups differ from the other on the variable. The result of the comparison is presented in table3.

**Table 3: Protected t-test analysis of differences in parental predisposition to female trafficking due to their educational qualification**

<b>Qualification</b>	<b>Higher 1<sup>st</sup> Degree/ Degree n =18</b>	<b>OND/NCE HND n =46</b>	<b>WASC/TCII n = 38 n =35</b>	<b>Others n =13</b>	
Higher Degree	<b>52.00</b>	0.87	3.31*	1.99	4.34*
1 <sup>st</sup> degree/HND		<b>50.61</b>	3.20*	1.53	4.25*
ND/NCE			<b>46.58</b>	-0.59	1.99
WASC/TCII				<b>47.71</b>	2.07*
Others					<b>42.92</b>

Table 3 shows that parents with ND or NCE qualification significantly have higher predisposition to female trafficking than either those with higher degrees or those with 1<sup>st</sup> degree or HND. Similarly, parents with educational qualification below WASC/TCII significantly have higher predisposition to female trafficking than those with either WASC/TCII or 1<sup>st</sup> Degree/HND or Higher degree qualification respectively. All other comparisons were not significant.

### **Discussion of Findings**

The findings which emerged after analyzing the data for hypotheses one shows that family size did not significantly influence parental predisposition to female trafficking. The findings contradict ILO-IPEC (2002) and PukhtunWomen (2007) reports that large family size predisposes a resource poor family to seek broad strategies for filling resource gaps, one being trafficking in children. However, this finding is contentious as trafficking is a multi-dimensional problem that cuts across every family whether large or small. It has also been suggested that poverty, sex preference and cultural attitudes and discrimination against women (Fitzgibbon, 2003) make women and children more vulnerable to traffickers and buyers.



The Catholic Bishops Conference of Nigeria (2001) in a Pastoral letter stress that poverty, unemployment, greed, abdication of parental responsibility and moral decadence are driving factors that propel parent's predisposition to female trafficking. In other words, family size is insignificant to parental predisposition to female trafficking. In Nigeria, parents have been known to sell houses and other landed property to assist and raise money for their daughters to travel to Europe, not because their families are large or small.

The findings for hypothesis 2, highlighted education as a major factor impacting on parental predisposition to female trafficking. As the findings have demonstrated, parents with middle level education (ND/NCE) showed higher predisposition than parents with HND and above. Similarly, parents with lower educational qualification (WASC and below), showed higher predisposition to trafficking in persons. This finding therefore tends to suggest that level of education to a large extent is a factor in the predisposition of parents to trafficking. This finding supports the findings of PukhtunWomen (2007) which contended that women and children are the group that is most vulnerable to trafficking given their limited resources and low status in society. Those women and children who are trafficked are usually from low-income families, they have low educational level and many had dropped out before completing primary and secondary school education.

Eghafona, Kalu, Okogie & Okogie (2003) also claimed that many families, unable to cope with the exorbitant cost of education are forced to withdraw their girls from school hence there is high rate of illiteracy among women. In their findings, the Catholic Bishop Conference of Nigeria (2003) Pastoral letter contends that with the high rate of illiteracy in Nigeria, many parents can neither read nor write, while their children are attending fourth rate schools, where they learn next to nothing. As a result, both groups are easily deceived by fairy tales of milk and honey flowing bountifully in Europe, where people simply pick hard currency off the street.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that there is no significant influence of family size on parental predisposition to female trafficking. It was also found that there is a significant influence of parental educational qualification on their predisposition to female trafficking.

### **Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings for this study the following recommendations are made:

1. Family structure should be strengthened to continue to serve as haven of love, security, safety and tranquillity since it is the primary institution through which every individual is socialized.
2. Policies, procedures, programmes and training in relation to the principles and ways of reducing trafficking should be implemented.
3. Everybody in the society especially parents should be made to observe the legal right of the child. These are rights to affection, peaceful environment, love, care, education,

opportunity to develop and explore.

4. It is also recommended that any scheme for the rehabilitation and reintegration of victims of female trafficking must be family-centred if it is to achieve meaningful results.
5. Educational planners should ensure that the curriculum has courses in sexuality education, marital guidance, psychosocial development and adjustment for children right from pre-primary level to university level. Again, teachers should be involved in adolescents' socialization and adjustment processes better than what is obtainable at present.
6. There is an urgent need to build a protective environment for children, women and other vulnerable groups through legislation and enforcement of human right laws and combining this with measures to
  - a. prevent trafficking such as education especially of the girl child, economic support to families, awareness raising and advocacy to parents, the police, health and social workers and civil society groups.
  - b. protect the victim of trafficking through counselling, shelter, access to education and healthcare and reintegration assistance.
7. Sex preference which is traditionally rooted in Nigeria and is based on social constructs of the role and values of males and females need be neutralized through appropriate re-orientation.

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