Socio-Economic Determinants of Children's Vulnerability to Trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria.

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Abstract

Child trafficking, the cankerworm that is eating deep into the Nigerian society has become an issue of concern at both global and national levels. Child trafficking is a crime that exploits children for numerous purposes including labour and sex trafficking. This study was conducted to examine socio-economic determinants of children's vulnerability to trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria. Rational choice theory was adopted as theoretical framework for the study. Mixed methods research design was employed in the study. The multistage sampling procedure was used in selecting respondents in the study. A sample size of 384 was generated using Cochran's formular for determining sample size. Structured questionnaire and in-depth interview were quantitative and qualitative instruments used for data collection. Quantitative data generated from the study were processed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Windows, Version 17. Also, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequency tables, simple percentages, and graphic illustrations. The data collected from in-depth interviews were analyzed using content analysis. Findings of the study indicated that child trafficking is a widespread phenomenon and a serious crime which violates the rights of the child. Results of the study also showed that greed and poverty are major factors responsible for children's vulnerability to trafficking. It was recommended among others that government should intensify awareness campaign on child trafficking. The study further recommended that government should implement genuine poverty alleviation programmes in the society.

Key Words: Children, child trafficking determinants, perception, vulnerability.

Introduction

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 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 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 were forced to migrate illegally in form of child trafficking. Advances in technology and globalisation 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 which exploits the most vulnerable in the 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 which exploits the most vulnerable in the 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 is rich in resources, but political instability and widespread corruption have facilitated trafficking in persons and hindered the progress towards reducing poverty. Nigeria is a source, transit and destination country for children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking. Trafficked victims from Nigeria are recruited from rural areas, especially the country's southern regions and to a lesser extent urban area. Girls are victims of domestic servitude and sex marriages, and boys are victims of forced labour and bonded labour in street vending, domestic service, stone quarrying, agriculture, and begging (UNODC, 2016). Many of the young boys studying in Quranic schools, commonly known as Almajiri are subjected to forced begging. In Nigeria, Boko Haram forcibly recruits and uses child soldiers and abduct girls in the Northern region. The children are subjected to domestic servitude, forced labour, sexual slavery through forced marriages and suicide

attacks in Nigeria, Cameroon, and Chad Republic (US Report, 2017). The incidence of human trafficking involving many Nigerians began in 1990s as a result of the decline in the economy of the country and consequent increase in unemployment, poverty, inflation, low wages and general social misery among the masses (Njoku, 2016). Consequently, many Nigerians especially the youths began to migrate into Europe, Middle East and lately Asia in search of better economic opportunities (Njoku, 2016).

Nigeria, like most African countries is bedeviled by problems such as poverty, unemployment, insecurity, and harsh economic condition (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 commercialisation of sex. Others are migration, unemployment, and harsh economic condition.

Efforts have been made by 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) and 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 Child Rights Act 2003 (Huntley, 2013). The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and other related matters was established to combat human trafficking. However, despite Nigeria's legislative efforts to combat child trafficking, it still thrives in Nigeria. It is against this background that the study focused on the determinants of child trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Child trafficking has become an issue of worry and concern at global and national level. Despite the abolition of 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 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, under paid 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 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 family (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 are 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 purpose. Consequently, their babies are sold for international or domestic adoption, rituals, slave labour or sexual exploitation (Huntley, 2013).

Though, efforts have been made by Nigerian government to tackle this ugly menace of child trafficking, child trafficking remains a serious problem in Nigeria and Anambra State in particular. Thus, in view of the aforementioned problems, the researchers examined socio-economic determinants of vulnerability of children to trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What categories of children are most vulnerable to trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria?
2. What are the factors responsible for child trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria?
3. What is the major factor responsible for child trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria?
4. What are the category of parents whose children are more vulnerable to trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, Southeast, Nigeria?

Review Of Related Literature

Determinants of Child Trafficking

Ali, Muhammed and Abudullah (2014) carried out a study in Peshawar, the provincial capital of Khyber, Pakhtunkhwa on familial factors that contribute to child trafficking. The study used comprehensive questionnaire for data collection. Random sampling was used to select a sample size of 392. The study found that there is a positive relationship between family's demand and greed of economic gain and child trafficking. It could be summed up that family greed and demand of economic gain provide chances for traffickers to easily convince parents with false promises of employment for children and thus they put their children at the sole discretion of the traffickers without realizing the danger involved. The study also discovered that illiteracy and ignorance of parents has relationship with child trafficking. However, contrary to common understanding, the study rejected the idea that trafficked children are mostly those who come from large sized family.

Dada (2013) conducted a study on determinant factors and the effects of Child Street hawking in Agege, Lagos State, Nigeria. Purposive sampling method was used to select the sample of 100 from Agege Local Government Area of Lagos State. Simple percentages and frequency distribution tables were methods of data analysis used. The study found that the level of awareness of the dangers inherent in child hawking among the affected children was low. The study also revealed that parent's level of education, parents' occupation and the sizes of the family were significantly related to the problem of child labour. Poverty forces poor families to send their children to work to contribute and provide financial support to their families.

Perception of Child Trafficking

Nwokeoma (2010) carried out a study on comparative examination of opinions and perceptions on factors affecting human trafficking in Imo and Edo States of Nigeria. The study adopted cross sectional survey design and used multi-stage sampling procedure to achieve a required sample size of 1200. The study utilised both primary and secondary sources of data. The findings established a high level of human trafficking in both states. In Edo State however, there was a higher level of trafficking in women, but the researcher recorded high level of child trafficking in Imo State. The study found that the traffickers were mostly close relatives and parents. The age groups of persons with most vulnerability of being trafficked are 15-24 years for women and 6-15 years for children. The study also found that the unemployed and out of school persons were mostly the victims of trafficking. Another important factor that was found to be significantly related to human trafficking was families with large number of children.

Ndiora (2011) conducted a study on public perception of Onitsha inhabitants on female trafficking and organised crime in Nigeria. The study adopted cross sectional survey design and used cluster and systematic sampling methods to select the sample size of 636 respondents. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected through the use of questionnaire schedule and in-depth guide. The study found that many inhabitants in Onitsha are not aware of the phenomenon of trafficking in females and that there is a positive relationship between poverty and female trafficking. The study also found that level of education has significant relationship with trafficking and that the desire to make money is the major motivating factor for traffickers.

Theoretical Orientation

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 involve the making of decisions and choices. Crime is calculated and deliberate; all criminals are rational actors who practice conscious decision making (Cornish & Clarke, 1987). Child traffickers must have resolved within themselves to engage in the criminal act after considering the risk of breaking the law and being caught and then their need of money and personal values.

 Methods

This study adopted a mixed methods research design. Mixed methods research is a methodology for conducting research that involves collecting, analysing and integrating both quantitative (e.g. experiments, survey) and qualitative (e.g. focus groups, interviews) data in a single study or series of studies (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). This study design was adopted because it was easy to conduct, economical and consumes less time. The study was conducted in Awka South Local Government Area of Anambra State, Southeast, Nigeria. Awka South Local Government Area is one out of the twenty-one (21) Local Government Areas that made up Anambra State. The Local Government Area remains the most heterogeneous Local Government Area in Anambra State, as it accommodates people with different cultural background. Awka South Local Government Area comprises nine (9) towns with the headquarter at Awka. The towns include, Awka, Amawbia, Nibo, Nise, Ezinato, Isiagu, Mbaukwu, Umuawulu and Okpuno. Awka South Local Government Area was created in 1989 from Awka Local Government Area. Geographically, Awka South Local Government Area is bounded on the North by Awka North Local Government Area, on the East by Oji-River Local Government Area of Enugu State, on the South by Anaocha Local Government Area and on the West by Njikoka Local Government Area. Awka South Local

Government Area is known basically as the seat of indigenous technology and craft. Carving and iron works industry predominate the area. In the past, the people of Awka South Local Government Area were well known for blacksmithing; however, presently they are respected among the Igbo people of Nigeria for their technical and business skills. The natural resources found in Awka South Local Government Area are agricultural produce and iron ingots. The researcher selected Awka South Local Government Area as study area because of the high rate of child trafficking in the area and other parts of Anambra State. The projected population as of 2016 of adult residents in Awka South Local Government Area is 137,241. From this population figure, 69,519 are males while 67,722 are females (National Bureau Statistics, 2017). The target population were adult residents who have attained the age of 20 years and above that can respond to the research questionnaire. The rationale behind using this set of people for the study was since they are parents and guardians to the supposed trafficked children. A sample size of 384 was determined using Cochran (1977) formula for generating sample size. Multi-stage sampling procedure involving successive random sampling was used in selecting communities, villages and households and respondents in this study. Awka South Local Government Area has nine (9) communities and balloting method was used to select four (4) communities from the nine communities. Simple random sampling technique of hand-drawing method without replacement was used to select two villages each from the four communities. Again, systematic sampling technique was used to select households from the selected villages, and this was done by choosing every fifth household in the selected villages till the researcher got the desired number of 96 respondents from each of the four villages and to ensure gender balance the researcher alternatively choose one sex from the selected household and another sex in the next. The respondents for in-depth interview were selected using purposive sampling technique which is a type of non-probability sampling method based on the relevance and position they occupy in the society. The in-depth interview respondents were eight (8) in number, which comprised two (2) members of NAPTIP in Enugu. Enugu is where the NAPTIP umbrella office for the Southeast Zone of Nigeria is located, since Awka South Local Government Area falls under the South East Zone of Nigeria, there is therefore need for information from NAPTIP office in Enugu, also four (4) stake holders from the selected communities and then two (2) Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) members, this gave the total of eight (8) respondents for the IDI. Quantitative and qualitative instruments for data collection such as questionnaire schedule and in-depth interview guide were used in the study. The researcher administered the copies of questionnaire with the help of two (2) research assistants who were recruited and trained on the methods and objectives of the study. These field assistants were graduates and residents in the area. The rationale behind the selection of these set of people is that they are conversant with the area under study and were able to interpret the questions to the respondents. The copies of questionnaire were administered on a one-on-one basis to all respondents to ensure uniformity in interpretation of concepts and recording of responses. In in-depth interview, the researcher conducted the interview at a time and place that was suitable and convenient for the respondents. The researcher moderated the interview, one research assistant recorded the responses with tape recorder while the other research assistant took down notes. The data collected through questionnaire were processed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Descriptive statistics such as the frequency tables, percentages and graphic

illustrations were used in analysing the quantitative data. The data collected from the in-depth interviews were analysed using content analysis.

Results

Out of 384 copies of questionnaire administered to the respondents, 358 copies were correctly filled, returned and used for analysis while 26 copies were not filled correctly, discarded and were not included in the analysis. The response rate was 93.2%. The findings are presented in the tables and figures below:

Table 1: Socio- demographic characteristics of respondents

Variable		Frequency	Percent
Sex	Male	172	48.0
	Female	186	52.0
	Total	358	100.0
Age	18 – 27	74	20.7
	28 – 37	98	27.4
	38 – 47	74	20.7
	48 – 57	58	16.2
	58 – 67	19	5.3
	68 and above	35	9.8
	Total	358	100.0
Marital status	Married	217	60.6
	Single	105	29.3
	Divorced	6	1.7
	Widowed	21	5.9
	Separated	9	2.6
	Total	358	100.0
Educational qualification	No formal education	29	8.1
	FSLC	27	7.5
	SSCE/GCE	86	24.0
	OND/NCE	58	16.2
	B. Sc/HND	121	33.8
	M.Sc./PhD	37	10.4
	Total	358	100.0
Occupation	Unemployed	74	20.7
	Farmer	38	10.6
	Civil servant	123	34.4
	Trader	93	26.0
	Clergy	10	2.8

	Artisan	7	2.0
	Self employed	13	3.7
	Total	358	100.0
Religious affiliation	Christianity	335	93.6
	Islam	15	4.2
	African Traditional Religion	8	2.2
	Total	358	100.0
Number of children	1 – 3	170	47.5
	4 – 6	158	41.1
	7 – 9	21	5.9
	10 – 12	5	1.4
	13 – 15	3	.8
	22 and above	1	.3
	Total	358	100.0
Annual income	100- 400000	66	18.4
	400001 – 800000	33	9.2
	800001 – 1200000	26	7.3
	1200001 – 1600000	4	1.1
	1600001 - 2000000	55	15.4
	2000001 - 2400000	11	3.1
	2800001+	24	6.7
	Don't Know	139	38.8
	Total	358	100.0

The findings showed that 172 (48%) of the respondents are males whereas 186 (52%) of them are females. This shows that there are more females in the distribution. Age distribution of the respondents has a mean age of 37-64 years, a standard error of mean of 0.640, a median age of 36 and a model age of 30. The distribution also has a standard deviation of 11.541, a minimum age of 18 years and a maximum age of 76 years. Table 1 also shows that 98 (27.4%) of the respondents are 28-37 years old while 36 (9.8%) of the respondents are 68 years old and above. The marital status of the respondents shows that majority 217 (60.6%) of the respondents are married while the least number of the respondents are separated. On the educational attainment of the respondents, it shows that majority 121 (33.8%) of the respondents have B.Sc./HND while 27 (7.5%) of them have FSLC. This is expected because people in this area know the importance of education. A look at the occupation of the respondents shows that those who are not employed formed 74 (20.7%) of the respondents, 38 (10.6%) are farmers, 123 (34.4%) are civil servants, 93 (26%) are traders, 10 (2.8%) are clergy, 7 (2%) are artisans and 13 (3.7%) are self-employed. The religious affiliation of the respondents shows that majority 335 (93.6%) of the respondents are Christians while 8 (2.2%) are African Traditional Religion worshippers. This is not surprising since people in South- East Nigeria are predominantly Christians and the study area is located in this geo-political zone. On the number of

children in a household, majority 170 (7.5%) of the respondents have between 1-3 children while the least number 1 (.3%) of respondents have 2+ number of children. Last but not the least is the annual income of the respondents, majority 66 (18.4%) of the respondents earn between ₦100.00 - ₦400,000.00 annually while the least number 4 (1.1%) earn between ₦1,200,001.00 - ₦1,600,000.00 annually.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Research Question One. What categories of children are most vulnerable to trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria?
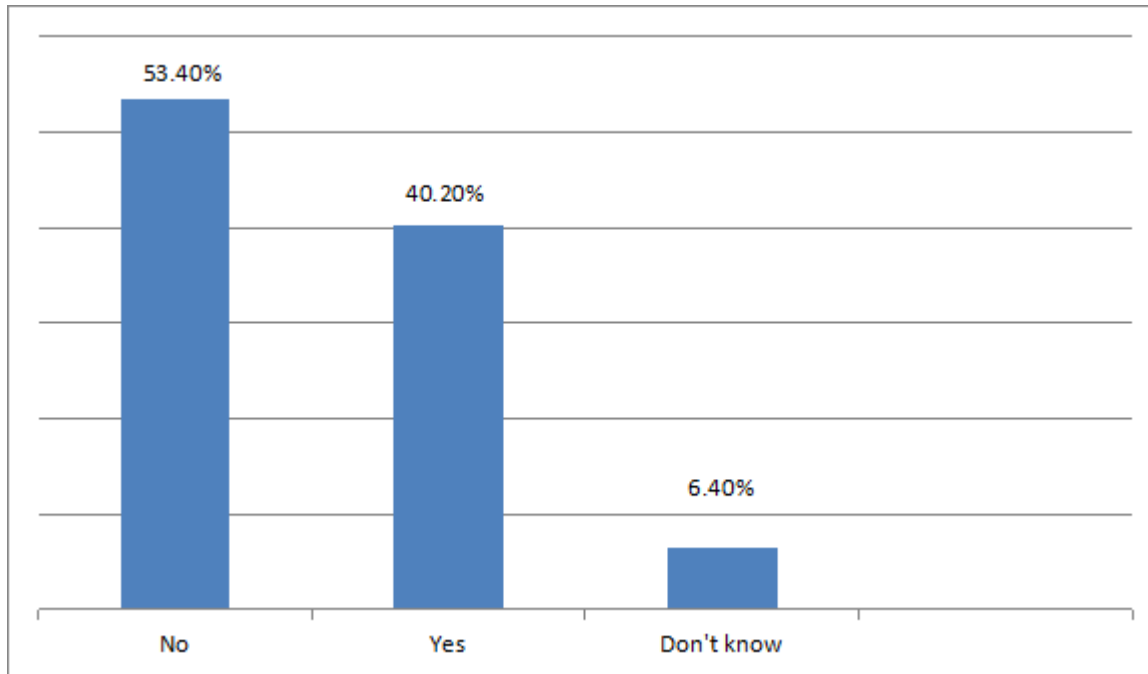
Fig. 1: Respondents' views on whether only children from poor families are trafficked

Fig 1 above shows that majority 191 (53.4%) of the respondents believed it is not only children from poor families that are being trafficked while 144 (40.2%) of the respondents said that it is only children from poor families that are being trafficked. Thus from the responses one can say that both children from rich families and those from poor families can fall victims of child trafficking.

Research Question Two: What are the factors responsible for child trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria?

Table 2: Respondents' views on the factors responsible for child trafficking

| Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	94	26.3
Illiteracy/Ignorance	76	21.2
Unemployment	74	20.7
Greed	56	15.6
Large family size	43	12.0
School drop-out	15	4.2
Total	**358**	**100**

Table 2 above shows the respondents' views on factors responsible for child trafficking which include poverty 94 (26.3%), illiteracy/ignorance 76 (21.2%), unemployment 74 (20.7%), greed 56 (15.6%), large family size 43 (12.0%) and school drop-out 15 (4.2%). These are all factors responsible for child trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria. The implication is that poverty is the major factor influencing childrens' vulnerability to trafficking in the study area.

Research Question Three: What is the major factor responsible for child trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria?
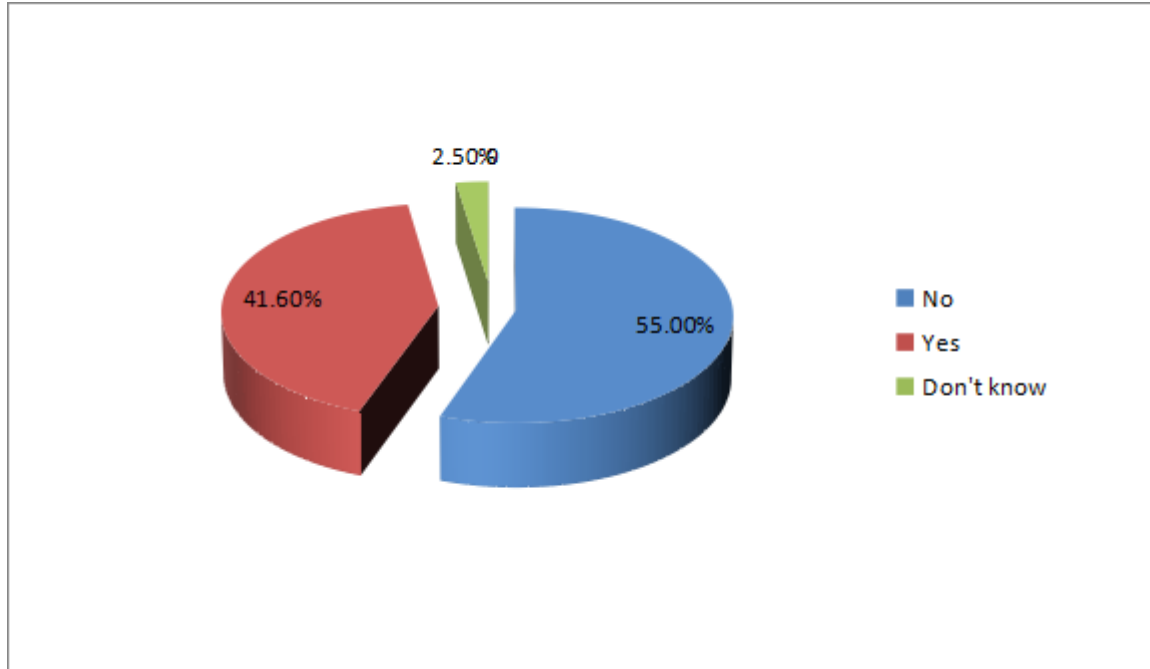
Fig. 2: Respondents' views on whether poverty is the major factor responsible for child trafficking

Fig 2 above shows that majority 200 (55.8%) of the respondents were of the view that poverty is not the major cause of child trafficking. However, 149 (41.6%) of them indicated that poverty is the major cause of child trafficking. The respondents who said that poverty is not the major cause of child trafficking were further questioned to know the major cause of child trafficking if poverty is not the major cause. Their responses are presented in fig. 3 below:
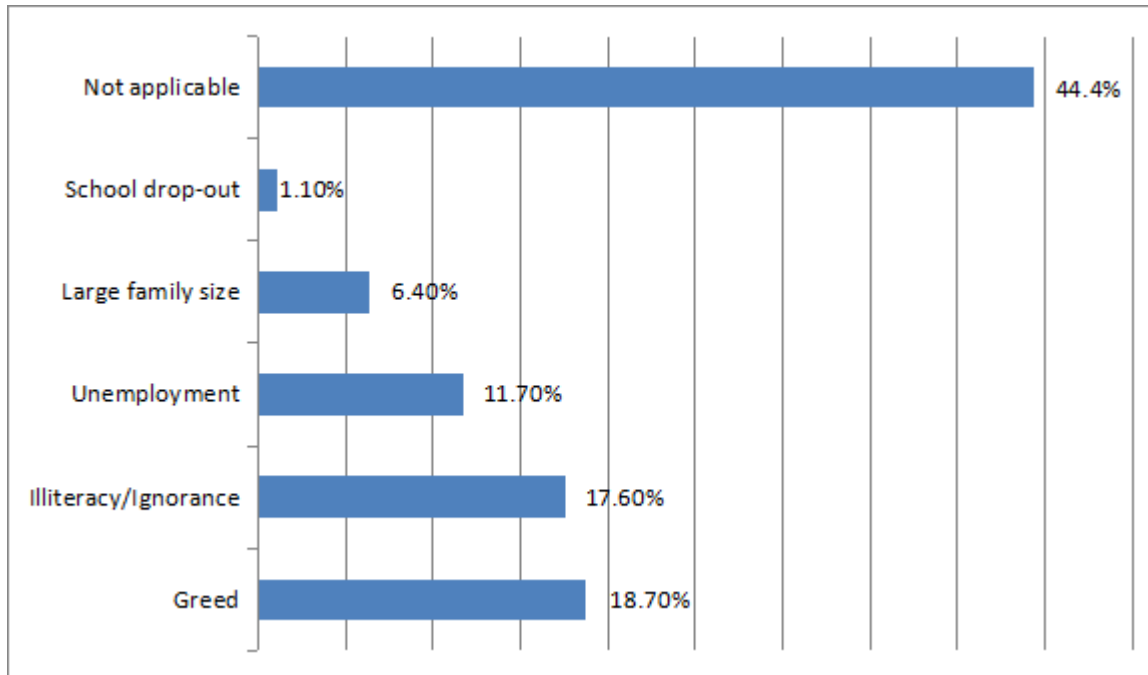
Fig. 3: Respondents' views on the major factor responsible for child trafficking

From fig. 3 above, it is evidently clear that the majority 67 (18.7%) of the respondents were of the view that greed and not poverty is the major cause of child trafficking. An IDI respondent in Nibo community noted that:

> It surprises me to hear that a parent who gives birth to a child will conspire to sell the child just to get money in exchange. There are people that are poor, yet they would rather share the little they have with their family than to give out or sell their children. It is greediness and not poverty that compel people to sell their children or try to steal other people's children. (Male, 55years, Stakeholder, Nibo town).

One will then rightly say that though poverty is a very strong factor responsible for child trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, however, it seems not to be the major factor facilitating child trafficking in the area. Greed is a strong factor responsible for child trafficking in the area.

Research Question Four: What category of parents and their children are more vulnerable to child trafficking in Awka South Local Government Area, Anambra State, South-East, Nigeria?

Table 3. Respondents' views on the category of parents that their children are more likely to be trafficked

Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	147	41.1
Employed	9	2.5
Parents in good business	8	2.2
Parents out of business	37	10.3
Educated parents	5	1.4
Uneducated parents	151	42.2
All of the above	1	.3
Total	**358**	**100**

Table 3 above shows that majority 151 (42.2%) of the respondents said that the category of parents that their children are most likely to be trafficked are uneducated parents while 5 (1.4%) of the respondents said that the category of parents that their children are most likely to be trafficked are the educated parents. The implication of this finding is that illiteracy of parents is a contributing factor to child trafficking.

Discussion

In this study, it was found that greed, poverty, illiteracy/ignorance, unemployment, and large family size are determinants of child trafficking in Awka South LGA. Findings from the study corroborate with findings from Ali, Muhammed and Abdullahi (2014) study where they also observed that family greed and economic gain are the determinants of child trafficking. However, contrary to the general belief that poverty is the major factor responsible for child trafficking, in Awka South Local Government Area, the study found that greed is the major determinant of child trafficking. Findings of the study further showed that financial status of parents has positive relationship with child trafficking. Dada (2013) study in Agege, Lagos State, Nigeria also showed that parents' level of education, occupation, and family size influence child trafficking. The country is rich in resources but bedevilled by so many problems such as poverty, unemployment, harsh economic condition, political instability and widespread corruption, some parents desperate for any additional source of income have pushed their children into the arms of traffickers. Results of the study were also supported by the findings of Nwokeoma (2010) in Edo and Imo State where it was observed that unemployed and out of school children are the most vulnerable group. Findings from the qualitative data agree with the findings from the quantitative data which indicated that greed and poverty are major factors responsible for children's vulnerability to trafficking. The rational choice theory supports the findings of the study because it posits that an individual has preferences among the available choice alternatives that allow him to state which option he prefers. Crime is

calculated and deliberate; all criminals are rational actors who practice conscious decision making (Cornish & Clarke, 1987). Child traffickers must have resolved within themselves to engage in the criminal act after considering the risk of breaking the law and being caught and then their need of money and personal values.

Conclusion

The problem of child trafficking has persisted in Nigeria despite several campaigns, conferences, workshops, and seminars organized by the government and NGOs to curb the menace. Therefore, there is need to tackle this phenomenon as child trafficking is a violation of children rights, their wellbeing and it denies them the opportunity to reach their full potential in life. The existing laws should be strengthened, implemented and made more functional in a bid to address this obnoxious and unpleasant practice.

Recommendations

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

1. Government should intensify public awareness campaigns on child trafficking by organizing sensitization programmes such as workshops, seminars and campaigns to educate and enlighten both parents and children on the social, emotional and psychological consequences of child trafficking on the victims
2. Genuine poverty alleviation programmes should be planned and judiciously implemented especially at the state and local levels.
3. State government should create job or skill acquisition centers for upcoming generation to reduce the number of unemployed youths in the communities.
4. There should be free education in both primary and secondary schools. This can enable children from poor family background to go to school and escape the preying eyes of traffickers.
5. Parents should protect their children from the deceit of traffickers and be ready to report any suspected case to the authorities concerned with child trafficking.
6. Religious institutions should join in the campaign against child trafficking through their teachings by organizing workshops and seminars to sensitize the people on the consequences of child trafficking

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