



## CHILD ABUSE, PARENTAL NEGLIGENCE AS PREDICTORS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING IN AKWA IBOM STATE

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### Abstract

The study assessed Child Abuse, parental negligence as predictors of human trafficking in Akwa Ibom state. In determining Child Abuse, parental neglect as predictors of human trafficking in Akwa Ibom state four (2) scales were used namely; Childhood Trauma questionnaire (CTQ) and Attitudes Towards Victims of Human Trafficking Scale Participants were 220 students of University of Uyo, Uyo, Akwa Ibom state. The sample for this study included 107 males and 113 females selected using purposive sampling technique. The design used in this study was cross sectional survey design and statistics used for this study was mean deviation. The result of the study showed that there is an average and positive relationship between sexual abuse and human trafficking ( $B = .331$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Parental negligence have a significant positive relationship on human trafficking independently ( $B = .129$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Emotional abuse have a significant positive relationship on human trafficking independently ( $B = .324$ ;  $P < .05$ ). Physical abuse have a significant positive relationship on human trafficking independently ( $B = .143$ ;  $P < .05$ ). There was a significant joint prediction of sexual abuse, parental negligence, emotional abuse and physical abuse on human trafficking ( $F(2, 329) = 10.79$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). Therefore, the null hypotheses were rejected and recommendation and suggestion for further study was also advanced.

**Keywords:** child abuse, parental negligence, human trafficking

### Introduction

Human trafficking, like slavery is the social sanction of involuntary servitude imposed by one person or group upon another. The intercontinental slave trade, which involved Europeans and Africans, was carried on through four continents of Europe, Africa and the two Americas. Although slave trade ended in 1808, nearly 200 years ago, a contemporary form of slavery, that of the trafficking in women and girls for exploitative sexual and commercial labor in Europe and America from Third world countries, particularly Africa, has been on the upward swing in recent years (Sigmon, 2008).

Several socio-political, cultural and poverty related issues may have accounted for the phenomenon of the trafficking of women in Nigeria. Trafficking of children and women for exploitative purposes in Nigeria is of two dimensions: internal and external. Internally, children are procured as domestic workers, while external trafficking provides girls and women for prostitution rackets in Europe and in some cases, unsuspecting young girls and women have fallen preys to traffickers who use them for rituals. The inception of a democratic regime in Nigeria in 1999 seemed

to have placed the issue of human rights, especially women and children's, on the front burner of national agenda with the government, individuals and civil society campaigning against the phenomenon of women trafficking (Alvarez & Alessi ,2012).

In Nigeria, trafficking is often associated with especially children being sold or lured into labour exploitation. United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Article 3 of the Protocol provides the concept of trafficking as: "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery.

In order to distinguish between trafficking and child trafficking, the subparagraph (c) of the UN Protocol goes on further to clarify that, the consent of the victim of trafficking in persons for exploitation set forth in sub-paragraph (a) shall cease to be relevant where any of the means set forth in the sub-paragraph have been used. Thus: "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered as 'trafficking in person' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in the sub-paragraph (a) of this article" (Child Welfare Information Gateway. (2008).).

In the other hand, Child abuse coupled with its adverse effects on the individual have been revealed to be a major problem (). Being exposed to such maltreatment in childhood will result in psychological health problems in adolescence and adulthood (). Healthy development of a child can be achieved through a healthy relationship with the parents (). This relationship does not only affect the current behavior of the child, but it also plays a critical role in the determination of future behavior. At times, a parent-child relationship can develop negatively as a result of parental neglect and abuse (). As neglect and abuse of a child by an adult, such as the mother, father or caregiver, inhibits and limits child development, such behavior is also considered wrong or detrimental by social rules and professionals. Such actions or inactions, physically, psychologically, sexually or socially harm the child, as well as, threatens his/her wellbeing and safety ).

Maltreatment towards children has a heavy cost on society, as it causes lifelong social and health problems, among which arise several adverse outcomes, such as psychological problems, developmental delay, posttraumatic stress disorder, depression, low self-esteem, aggressive behavior, and health problems, such as pulmonary, hepatic and cardiovascular diseases, poor academic and work performance, learning disorders, difficulties in peer relationships and criminal tendencies (). The present study aimed at investigating the types, causes, impacts of child neglect and abuse, as well as making useful recommendations for its prevention. According to the definition stated by the World Health Organization (WHO) in the year 1985, an intended or unintended act by an adult, society or country, which adversely affects a child's health, physical growth, or psychosocial development, is considered as child abuse. In other words, abuse is defined as intentionally using physical force directly, or by threat against oneself, another person, a group or a society in a way that ends or might probably lead to injury, death, psychological trauma, developmental disorder or loss.

Abuse does not only include physical conducts, but also attitudes and behaviors that could harm children's sexual and emotional health and limit their development. With respect to the type of

treatment a child is subjected to, the causes of these treatments and their impacts on the child, child abuse is categorized as physical, sexual, economic or emotional abuse, whereas, child neglect is categorized as physical or emotional neglect. These different forms of abuse and neglect has become a public health issue affecting the society, social institutions and organizations, legal systems, educational systems and businesses, as well as, families.

Physical abuse is any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person or animal by way of bodily contact. In most cases, children are the victims of physical abuse, but adults can also be victims, as in cases of domestic violence or workplace aggression. Physical abuse means any non-accidental act or behavior causing injury, trauma, or other physical suffering or bodily harm. In addition to shared experiences of abuse and manipulation, domestic violence is a demonstrated 'push factor,' making individuals vulnerable to trafficking. Children exposed to domestic violence in the home may run away in order to avoid abuse; research indicates that runaway and homeless youth are at particular risk of being trafficked ( ), with the National Center for Missing Exploited Children showing that one in six of reported runaways indicated signs of experiencing sex trafficking ,

Sexual abuse is using sexual activity as a means of threatening, intimidation and control. Sexual abuse can be physical or verbal. Exposing a child to sexual language, rape with or without consent, using a child in pornography or for prostitution, displaying pornographic materials, indecent exposure, physical contact with a child's genitals, and inducement or coercion of a child to touch an adult's genitals are all considered as sexual abuse(Schatz, & Furman, (2002), Merrick, Litrownik, Everson, & Cox, 2008),.

Sexual abuse and child abuse are both traumatic crimes, premised upon the power, control, abuse, and exploitation of another human being. Neither human trafficking nor sexual assault has a single perpetrator or victim profile. It is factual that sexual abuse victims and perpetrators can be found among the ranks of men, women, transgender persons, minors, seniors, and persons with disabilities. Furthermore, perpetrators of sexual abuse largely prey upon marginalized populations, such as the neglected ones by the parents, minorities, economically disadvantaged persons, and persons with disabilities. Sequel to the foregoing, sexual assault or abuse is a direct predictor of human trafficking (Corby, 2006,Evans, Hawton, & Rodham, 2005).

Emotional abuse, being another area the of interest is a way to control another person by using emotions to criticize, embarrass, shame, blame, or otherwise manipulate another person. The experiences associated with trafficking can lead to lasting psychological challenges. Children experience physical and emotional trauma associated with removal from their families, homes, and communities; their subsequent encounters involve substantial harm through physical, emotional, and sexual abuse (Holt, Fergusson, Horwood, & Lynskey, 1997; Dubowitz, & Bennett,2007; English, Widom, & Brandford ,2004; Busch-Armendariz, Nsonwu, & Heffon, 2018 and Alexandria, M. L. 2013). Although empirical studies have not assessed the psychological impact of child trafficking, case studies have reported adverse emotional effects among trafficked children, including depression, hopelessness, guilt, shame, flashbacks, and nightmares, loss of confidence, lower self-esteem, and anxiety. The negative messages they routinely receive can influence their sense of worth, leading to feelings of self blame ( ), Ethier, Lemelin, & Lacharite, (2004), Hussey, Chang, & Kotch, (2006), Jordan, & Sketchley, (2009)).

Parental negligence also known as child neglect is a form of child abuse, and is a deficit in meeting a child's basic needs, including the failure to provide adequate supervision, health care, clothing, or housing, as well as other physical, emotional, social, educational, and safety needs. All

societies have established that there are necessary behaviors a caregiver must provide in order for a child to develop physically, socially, and emotionally. Causes of neglect may result from several parenting problems including mental disorders, unplanned pregnancy, substance abuse, unemployment, over-employment, domestic violence, and in special cases, poverty.

While neglect generally refers to the absence of parental care and the chronic failure to meet children's basic needs, defining those needs has not been straightforward. In "Working Together", the Department for Education and Skills (United Kingdom) defined neglect in 2006 as: ...the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or caregiver failing to provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment); protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger; ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers); or ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

Child neglect depends on how a child and society perceives the parents' behavior; it is not how parents believe they are behaving towards their child, Parental failure to provide for a child, when options are available, is different from failure to provide when options are not available. Poverty and lack of resources are often contributing factors and can prevent parents from meeting their children's needs, when they otherwise would. The circumstances and intentionality must be examined before defining behavior as neglectful. Parental negligence is the most frequent form of child abuse, with children born to young mothers at a substantial risk for neglect. In 2008, the U.S. state and local Child Protective Services (CPS) received 3.3 million reports of children being abused or neglected. Seventy-one percent of the children were classified as victims of child neglect ("Child Abuse & Neglect"). Maltreated children were about five times more likely to have a first emergency department presentation for suicide related behavior, compared to their peers, in both boys and girls.

Children permanently removed from their parental home because of substantiated child abuse, are also at an increased risk of a first presentation to the emergency department for suicide related behavior, Neglected children are at risk of developing lifelong social, emotional and health problems, particularly if neglected before the age of two years.

A study by), a professor at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, and his colleagues, showed for the first time that children under the age of 18 when they were moderately neglected in some manner by their caregivers had a 3 times likely risk of stroke over those with moderately low levels, after controlling for some common risk factors (they interviewed 1,040 participants ages 55 or older; after 3 1/2 years, 257 of them died and 192 were autopsied, with 89 having stroke evidence upon autopsy and another 40 had a history of it). Neglect, bullying, and abuse have previously been linked to changes in the brain's grey matter and white matter and to accelerated aging\* Maas, Herrenkohl, & Sousa, (2008, Mills, )2004), Brodsky, & Stanley, (2008)).

Researchers investigating maltreated children have repeatedly found that neglected children in the foster and adoptive populations manifest different emotional and behavioral reactions to regain lost or secure relationships and are frequently reported to have disorganized attachments and a need to control their environment. Such children are not likely to view caregivers as being a source of safety, and instead typically show an increase in aggressive and hyperactive behaviors which may disrupt healthy or secure attachment with their adopted parents. These children seem to have learned to adapt to an abusive and inconsistent caregiver by becoming cautiously self-reliant, and are often

described as glib, manipulative and disingenuous in their interactions with others as they move through childhood,<sup>9</sup> Brown, Cohen, Johnson, & Smailes, (1999); Bromfield, Gillingham, & Higgins, (2007)). Children who are victims of neglect can have a more difficult time forming and maintaining relationships, such as romantic or friendship, later in life due to the lack of attachment they had in their earlier stages of life.

While child abuse and neglect almost always occur within the family, the impact does not end there. Society as a whole pays the price for child abuse and neglect. The impact of child abuse as well as parental negligence spans from the immediate to long term problems. The immediate physical effects of abuse or neglect can be relatively minor from bruises or cuts to severe like broken bones, hemorrhage, or even death, the long term effect could lead to many other issues like child trafficking. Trafficked children are used for child labour, denied of education and disposed of when they are no longer needed and will ultimately face social exclusion when they grow into adulthood. Thus, apart from viewing child trafficking as a crime against children, it is also necessary to consider such practices as a destructive force that contributes to the social vulnerability and instability of communities. The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between Physical Abuse, Sexual Abuse, Emotional Abuse and Parental negligence and human trafficking

### **Research questions**

1. What is the relationship between Physical Abuse and human Trafficking?
2. What is the relationship between Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking?
3. What is the relationship between Emotional Abuse and Human Trafficking?
4. What is the relationship between Parental negligence and human trafficking in Akwa Ibom State?

### **Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no significant relationship between Physical Abuse and human Trafficking?
2. There is no significant relationship between Sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking?
3. There is no significant relationship between Emotional Abuse and Human Trafficking?
4. There is no significant relationship between Parental negligence and human trafficking in Akwa Ibom State?

### **Research Methods**

This chapter presents the design of the study, population, sample and sampling techniques, instruments for data collection, validity of instruments and methods of data analysis. The study adopted a cross sectional survey design. In this type of design, questionnaires are used for data collection since it is a survey, and the participants share key characteristics which might be of interest to the researcher, but may differ in some other characteristics such as age, gender etc.

This study was conducted in Uyo, using university of Uyo, here in Akwa Ibom State. Uyo is the capital of Akwa Ibom state in the south-south region of Nigeria. A total number of two hundred and twenty university of Uyo students consisting of one hundred and seven (107) males and one hundred and thirteen (113) females selected using simple random sampling technique participated in this study. Balloting system was used to select twenty students (20) from each lecture hall in the sampled university.

Two instruments were used in this study; they include the following: Childhood Trauma Questionnaire by Mickey T. Kongerslev, Bo Bach, Gina Rossi, Anne M. Trauelsen, Nicolai

Ladegaard, Sille S. Lokkegaard, Sune Bo. The instrument was developed by 7 persons named above. The instrument contains 25 items. The five identified sub scales are: Emotional Abuse (5 items), Physical Abuse (5 items), Sexual Abuse (5 items), Emotional Abuse (5 items) and Physical neglect (5 items). Each item is scored on a 5 point Likert scale (1- never true, 2- rarely true, 3- sometimes true, 4- often true, and 5- very often true. All items were directly scored so that a higher score ranging from 48 and above reflects a more stigmatizing attitude while lower scores below 48 does not. Attitudes Towards Victims of Human Trafficking Scale (AVHTS) was developed by Carolyn M. Yeager, M.S., M.A., Charles C. Benight, PH.D., and Robert Durham, Ph.D. (2016). Currently there are no measures for understanding these attitudes towards human trafficking.

A pilot study was conducted to ascertain the reliability of the scales using 50 students of university of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State. Cronbach alpha was used to get a reliability coefficient of .80 was obtained. The reliability coefficient for item by item correlation ranged from .36 to .77. All the items are directly scored. The main study was carried out in the same institution. With the help of research assistants, the questionnaires were distributed to the participants in person. The participants were asked to carefully read the instructions before filling them to avoid oversights. Afterwards, the questionnaires were retrieved from the participants so that properly filled ones were scored and analyzed. A total of 217 filled questionnaires were returned for collation out of the 220 copies distributed. Therefore, a total of two hundred and seventeen secondary school students participated in the study. A descriptive Statistics was used to analyze the data obtained during this research. The chosen statistics was able to state the level of relationship that exists between the variables.

## Results

**Table 1: The relationship between physical Abuse and Human Trafficking**

Variable	$\Sigma X$ $\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2$ $\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	<i>r-cal</i>	Remark
Physical Abuse	1740	12342.37	3976876	0.84	High and positive
Human Trafficking	2078	16938.56			

From Table 1, the r value of 0.84 was found to be of high correlation and positive. Therefore, there is a high and positive relationship between physical abuse and Human Trafficking

**Table 2: The relationship between Emotional Abuse and Human Trafficking**

Variable	$\Sigma X$ $\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2$ $\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	<i>r-cal</i>	Remark
Emotional Abuse	1739	12218.11	3953756	0.76	high correlation
Human Trafficking	2078	16938			and positive

From Table 2, the r value of 0.76 was found to be of high correlation and positive. Therefore, there is a high correlation and positive relationship between Emotional Abuse and Human Trafficking

**Table 3: The relationship between sexual Abuse and Human Trafficking**

Variable	$\Sigma X$ $\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2$ $\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	<i>r-cal</i>	Remark
Sexual and Abuse	1753	12768.13	4006490	0.92	positive and high correlation
Human Trafficking	2078	16938			

From Table 3, the r value of 0.92 was found to be of high correlation and positive. Therefore, there is a high correlation and positive relationship between sexual abuse and Human Trafficking

**Table 4: The relationship between parental negligence and Human Trafficking**

Variable	$\Sigma X$ $\Sigma Y$	$\Sigma X^2$ $\Sigma Y^2$	$\Sigma XY$	<i>r-cal</i>	Remark
parental negligence	1725	12011.37	3905290	0.72	high correlation
Human Trafficking	2078	16938			and positive

From Table 4, the r value of 0.72 was found to be of high correlation and positive. Therefore, there is a high correlation and positive relationship between parental negligence and Human Trafficking.

**Table 5: Pearson's product Moment correlation Analysis of the relationship between physical and human trafficking in Akwa Ibom State**

Variables	r- cal	r-crit.	Decision
Physical abuse Human trafficking	0.84	0.32	Reject H0

The above table 5 shows calculates r value of 0.84 is greater than the critical value of 0.32 at 0.05 level of significant with 218 degree of freedom (df). Hence, the hypothesis which stated that there will be a significant relationship between physical abuse and human trafficking is rejected. This implies that physical abuse is significantly related to human trafficking in Akwa Ibom state.

**Table 6: Pearson's product Moment correlation Analysis of the relationship between Emotional Abuse and human trafficking in Akwa Ibom State**

Variables	r- cal	r-crit.	Decision
Emotional Abuse Human trafficking	0.76	0.32	Reject H0

The above table 6 shows calculate r value of 0.76 is greater than the critical value of 0.32 at 0.05 level of significant with 218 degree of freedom (df). Hence, the hypothesis which stated that there will be a significant relationship between Emotional Abuse and human trafficking is rejected. This implies that Emotional Abuse is significantly related to human trafficking in Akwa Ibom state.

**Table 7: Pearson's product Moment correlation Analysis of the relationship between sexual abuse and human trafficking in Akwa Ibom State**

Variables	r- cal	r-crit.	Decision
sexual abuse Human trafficking	0.92	0.32	Reject H0

The above table 7 shows calculate r value of 0.92 is greater than the critical value of 0.32 at 0.05 level of significant with 218 degree of freedom (df). Hence, the hypothesis which stated that there will be a significant relationship between sexual abuse and human trafficking is rejected. This implies that sexual abuse is significantly related to human trafficking in Akwa Ibom state.

**Table 8: Pearson's product Moment correlation Analysis of the relationship between parental negligence and human trafficking in Akwa Ibom State**

Variables	r- cal	r-crit.	Decision
parental negligence Human trafficking	0.72	0.32	Reject H0

The above table 8 shows calculate r value of 0.72 is greater than the critical value of 0.32 at 0.05 level of significant with 218 degree of freedom (df). Hence, the hypothesis which stated that there will be a significant relationship between parental negligence and human trafficking is rejected. This implies that parental negligence is significantly related to human trafficking in Akwa Ibom state.

### Discussion of Findings

The result revealed that physical abuse significantly relates with human trafficking in Akwa Ibom State. The finding is consistent with the earlier findings of Holt, Fergusson, Horwood, & Lynskey, (1997), Dubowitz, & Bennett, (2007), English, Widom, & Brandford, (2004), Busch-Armendariz, Nsonwu, & Heffon, (2018) and Alexandria, M. L. (2013) who reported that physical abuse is significantly related to human trafficking.

The result equally revealed that emotional abuse significantly relates with human trafficking in Akwa Ibom State. The finding is also consistent with the earlier findings of Corby, (2006), Evans, Hawton, & Rodham, (2005), Ethier, Lemelin, & Lacharite, (2004), Hussey, Chang, & Kotch, (2006), Jordan, & Sketchley, (2009) who reported that there is a significant positive relationship between



emotional abuse and human trafficking. The findings of this study is also in agreement with the earlier findings of Holt, Buckley, & Whelan, (2008) who reported that emotional abuse is significantly related to human trafficking.

The result shows that sexual abuse significantly relates with human trafficking in Akwa Ibom State. The finding of this study is consistent with the earlier findings of Schatz, & Furman, (2002), Merrick, Litrownik, Everson, & Cox, (2008), who reported that there is a significant positive relationship between sexual abuse and human trafficking. The findings of this study is also in-line with the earlier findings of Moody, Cannings-John, Hood, Kemp, & Robling, (2018) who reported that sexual abuse is significantly related to human trafficking. It is consistent also with the earlier findings of Schrader, & Wendland, (2012), and Sloan, L., & Wahab, S. (2000) who reported that there is a significant positive relationship between sexual abuse and human trafficking.

The result in table 43 revealed that parental negligence significantly relates with human trafficking in Akwa Ibom State. The finding is consistent with the earlier findings of Maas, Herrenkohl, & Sousa, (2008, Mills, )2004), Brodsky, & Stanley, (2008) who reported that parental negligence is significantly related to human trafficking. The finding is also consistent with the earlier findings of Haskett, Nears, Ward, & McPherson, (2006) who reported that there is a significant positive relationship between parental negligence and human trafficking. The findings is agreement with the earlier findings of Brown, Cohen, Johnson, & Smailes, (1999); Bromfield, Gillingham, & Higgins, (2007) who reported that parental negligence is significantly related to human trafficking.

## Conclusion

Based on the finding of this study- Child abuse, Parental negligence as predictors of Human trafficking. It was concluded that Child abuse have a significant relationship with Human trafficking. It was also concluded that parental negligence has a significant relationship with human trafficking.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations were made due to the findings of the present study.

- 1 Parents should give birth to a lesser number of children of which they can Carter for, to avoid abuses which may consequently lead to the child being trafficked.
- 2 Government agencies should make laws that abolish that abuse of children and human trafficking in the country.
- 3 Parents and caregivers should often create time for their family to avert negligence.

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