

Psychological Impact of Human Trafficking on Christian Students in Tertiary Institutions in Edo State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study is an investigation into “Academic Impact of Human Trafficking on Christian Students of Tertiary Institutions in Edo State, Nigeria”. The main objective of the study is to investigate Academic Impact of Human Trafficking on Christian Students in Tertiary Institutions in Edo State, Nigeria. A survey research design method was used for the study, with a population of ten thousand three hundred and eighty-nine (10,389) Christian students in the state and a sample size of one thousand and nine (1,009) Christian students in the state. A structured questionnaire and interview schedule were used. The major findings of the study are: the study reveals that, school enrolment is low due to human trafficking in Edo state. Those in school were becoming less interested with schooling due to success stories of human trafficking. Schools at all levels were against human trafficking in the state. Education sector seeks to put forth framework for advocacy and relevant ways to fight human trafficking. The following recommendation is made: Parents in collaboration with Government should give information about the activities of their wards to government where necessary and encourage them to acquire pragmatic education in the state.

Keywords: *Psychological, Impact, Christian Students, Human, Trafficking*

Introduction

Human trafficking is a global crime that tragically impacts individuals and communities around the world. The issue manifests uniquely in different regions, including Europe, Africa, and Nigeria, each requiring specific attention and tailored solutions. Europe faces significant internal trafficking, with vulnerable groups like refugees, migrants, and undocumented individuals at risk. Forced labour in industries like agriculture, construction, and domestic work is prevalent. Complex criminal networks often exploit victims, making it difficult for authorities to track and dismantle these operations. The European Union has established frameworks to combat trafficking, including the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive, which mandates member states to implement prevention, protection, and prosecution measures.

Africa faces both internal and external trafficking, with victims often trafficked within their own countries or across borders. Forced labour in agriculture, mining, and domestic work is common. Poverty, lack of education, and political instability are major factors contributing to vulnerability to trafficking in Africa. The African Union has adopted the Protocol to Prevent,

Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, which provides a framework for regional cooperation on the issue.

Nigeria is considered a major source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking. Children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, often forced into labour or prostitution. Emerging forms of trafficking, such as online recruitment and exploitation through digital platforms, pose new challenges in Nigeria. The Nigerian government has enacted legislation like the Trafficking in Persons (Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act to address trafficking.

Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a form of modern-day slavery involving the illegal transport of individuals by force or deception for the purpose of labour, sexual exploitation, or activities in which others benefit financially. Human trafficking is a complex and multifaceted crime that involves the movement and exploitation of individuals, often across borders, for the purpose of generating profit through forced labour or sexual services. To Elena (2016) it is a form of modern slavery that involves the exploitation of individuals for labour or sexual purposes, through force, fraud, or coercion. David (2015) agrees with Elena but added that human trafficking is a modern form of slavery that involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons, by means of force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of exploiting them for profit. Louise (2014) contends that human trafficking is an illegal trade in human beings for the purposes of forced labour, sexual exploitation, or other forms of exploitation. Gallagher (2013) also reveals that human trafficking is a complex phenomenon that involves the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of persons, by means of force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of exploitation.

Psychological Impact of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking has devastating psychological impacts on victims, leaving lasting scars and complex challenges to overcome. The specific impacts vary depending on individual experiences and circumstances, but some of the most common psychological impacts include:

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): This is a common consequence of exposure to extreme trauma, and can manifest in symptoms like nightmares, flashbacks, anxiety, and emotional numbing. Studies have shown high rates of PTSD among trafficked individuals, with estimates ranging from 34.5% to 58.3% (Choe, Kim, Shim, & Park 2018).

Depression and Anxiety: The prevalence of depression and anxiety remains high, with research indicating rates of 33.8% to 61.5% for depression and 31.2% to 70.4% for anxiety. Survivors often struggle with low mood, loss of interest in activities, difficulty concentrating, and excessive worry (Bhugra & Basile, 2021).

Dissociation: Dissociation remains a significant coping mechanism for many survivors, with reported rates ranging from 29.7% to 58.3% (Zimmerman & Borland, 2023). However, it may contribute to feelings of detachment, depersonalization, and difficulty connecting with others.

Substance Abuse: The use of alcohol and drugs to manage trauma and emotional distress remains prevalent among survivors. Estimates suggest that 27.3% to 42.1% of trafficked individuals engage in substance abuse (Basile, Chen, Walker, and Jackson).

Shame and Guilt: Feelings of shame and guilt continue to be significant burdens for survivors, with 41.2% to 56.7% reporting such experiences. These feelings can hinder healing and prevent survivors from seeking support (Zimmerman & Borland, 2023).

Suicide ideation and Self-Harm: The psychological pain associated with human trafficking can lead to suicidal thoughts and self-harming behaviors. Recent studies suggest that 18.3% to 29.4% of survivors report suicidal ideation, and 12.5% to 21.2% engage in self-harm (Afolabi, Oladele, & Popoola, 2022).

Types of Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a horrific crime that exploits people for forced labor, sexual exploitation, or organ harvesting. It can take many forms, and traffickers use a variety of tactics to lure and control their victims. Here are some of the most common types of human trafficking:

Sex Trafficking

Description: Sex trafficking involves the illegal movement of people for the purpose of commercial sexual exploitation. This can include forced prostitution, forced pornography, and sex tourism.

Victims: Sex trafficking can affect people of all ages and genders, but women and girls are disproportionately targeted.

Tactics: Traffickers often use deception, coercion, and violence to control their victims. They may lure them with promises of jobs, education, or a better life, only to ensnare them in a web of exploitation (UNODC, 2020).

Labor Trafficking

Description: Labor trafficking involves the illegal movement of people for the purpose of forced labour. This can include forced work in factories, farms, construction sites, or domestic servitude.

Victims: Labor trafficking can affect people of all ages and genders, but men and boys are often targeted for work in dangerous or demanding industries.

Tactics: Traffickers may use debt bondage, threats of violence, or confiscation of travel documents to control their victims. They may also isolate them from their families and communities (The National Center for Victims of Crime, 2020).

Organ Trafficking

Description: Organ trafficking involves the illegal removal of organs from a living or deceased person for the purpose of transplantation.

Victims: Organ trafficking can affect people of all ages and genders, but those who are poor or desperate for money are particularly vulnerable.

Tactics: Traffickers may offer to buy organs from people in need, or they may coerce or deceive them into donating organs without their consent (World Health Organization, 2015).

Debt Bondage

Description: Debt bondage is a form of human trafficking in which a person is forced to work to pay off a debt. This debt can be real or imagined, and it can be passed down from generation to generation.

Victims: Debt bondage can affect people of all ages and genders, but those who are already in debt or who come from poor and marginalized communities are particularly vulnerable.

Tactics: Traffickers may lend money to people at exorbitant interest rates, or they may charge them for food, shelter, or other necessities. They then force them to work to pay off the debt, often in dangerous or exploitative conditions (Anti-Slavery International, 2023).

Forced Marriage

Description: Forced marriage is a form of human trafficking in which a person is forced to marry against their will. This can be for reasons of money, power, or social status.

Victims: Forced marriage can affect people of all ages and genders, but girls and young women are particularly vulnerable (Polaris Project, 2023).

Research Question

What are the impacts of human trafficking on the psychological mood of Christian students in Edo State, Nigeria?

Research Hypothesis

H01. There is no significant difference between the opinions of young and old Christian students on the impact of human trafficking on the psychological mood of Christian students in tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria.

Methodology

A survey research design method was used for this study and structured questionnaire. A total of one thousand and nine (1,009) copies of the questionnaire were administered using research assistants to ensure effective administrative and retrieval of the copies of the questionnaire. To this end, nine hundred and fifty nine (959) which is ninety-six percent (95 %) were found to be successfully completed and valid for the study. To find out the impact of human trafficking on the academic pursuit of Christian students in tertiary institution in Edo state, Nigeria, a number of items were suggested on which the respondents expressed their views. Table 1 shows the frequencies and percentages with mean scores computed on the four modified Likert scale.

Table 1: Opinions of the Respondents on Impact of Human Trafficking on the Psychological State of Mind of Christian Students of Tertiary Institutions in Edo State, Nigeria

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std
1	Many have gone into depression due to human trafficking	381	325	155	97	3.1	1.37
2	So many victims of human trafficking have contemplated suicide	312	315	160	172	3.0	1.08
3	Many have post- traumatic stress disorder as a result of human trafficking	266	426	130	137	3.0	0.98
4	Some face shame and guilt	277	429	118	135	3.0	0.98
5	Many are positive in their thought in the midst of their predicament	253	328	164	214	3.0	1.09
6	Some are not ashamed of their situations	238	444	168	109	3.0	0.92
7	Some have encouraged themselves to live normal	320	495	78	66	3.1	0.82
Total						3.0	1.03

Item 1 on table 12 is on how many have gone into depression due to human trafficking. With three hundred and eighty-one (39.7%) and three hundred and twenty-five (33.9%) of the respondents strongly agree and agree that many have gone on depression. But only one hundred and fifty-five (16.2%) and ninety-seven (10.1%) of the respondents differ in their opinions on the item. With a mean score of 3.1, it revealed that majority of the respondents have similar response on the item.

In another related impact of the human trafficking, item 2 discloses how so many victims of human trafficking have contemplated suicide. Three hundred and twelve (32.5%) and three

hundred and fifteen (32.8%) strongly agree and agree on the item, while one hundred and sixty (16.7%) and one hundred and seventy-two (17.9%) disagree and strongly disagree on the item, with a mean score of 3.0.

Item 3 on table 12 addressed how many have post- traumatic stress disorder as a result of human trafficking. Two hundred and sixty-two (27.7%) and four hundred and twenty-six (44.4%) of the respondents strongly agree and agree on the item. While, one hundred and thirty (13.6%) and one hundred and thirty-seven (14.3%) disagree and strongly disagree on the item. With mean score of 3.0, which implied that, there is an agreement on the item by majority of the respondents which also represented the opinions of large percentage of the respondents.

However, item 4 is on how some face shame and guilt. Two hundred and seventy-seven (28.9%) and four hundred and twenty-nine (44.7%) strongly agree and agree on the item. But one hundred and eighteen (12.3%) and one hundred and thirty-five (14.1%) disagree and strongly disagree on the item, with a mean score of 3.0.

Thus, item 5 tends to look into how many are positive in their thought in the midst of their predicament. Two hundred and fifty-three (26.8%) and three hundred and twenty-eight (34.2%) strongly agree and agree on the item, while one hundred and sixty-four (17.1%) and two hundred and fourteen (22.3%) disagree and strongly disagree on the item, having a mean score of 3.0.

Item 6 reveals how some are not ashamed of their situations. With two hundred and thirty-eight (24.8%) and four hundred and forty-four (46.3%) strongly agree and agree that they were resilient, while one hundred and sixty-eight (17.5%) and one hundred and nine (11.4%) disagree and strongly disagree on the item, with a mean score of 3.0.

Item 7 on the table delved into how some have encouraged themselves to live normal. Three hundred and twenty (33.4%) and four hundred and ninety-five (51.6%) strongly agree and agree on the item. However, seventy-eight (8.1%) and sixty-six (6.9%) disagree and strongly disagree. The item has a mean score of 3.1. The cumulative mean score on the table 1 is higher than 2.5 bench mark decision with a standard deviation of 1.03, it is an implication that, there is agreement from the majority respondents on the psychological impact of human trafficking on Christian students in Edo state, Nigeria.

Test of Null Hypothesis

Two Sample t-test Procedure on impact of Christian Religious Studies in Curbing Human Trafficking in Tertiary Institutions in Edo State on the Psychological State of Mind of Christian Students by Age

Age	N	Mean	Std.Deviation	Std.error	t-value	DF	t-crit	P-value	Remark
Young 18-25	485	136.57	14.93	0.67	2.36	957	1.96	0.018	Sig
	474	138.83	14.71	0.71					

Old 26
and
Above

(t-critical at 1.96 DF=957 at P=0.05)

The result in the table discloses that young and old Christian students were significantly different in their opinions on the psychological impact of human trafficking in Edo state. The observed t-value (2.36) obtained at 957 degree of freedom is higher than the critical value of 1.96 at the same degree of freedom. The observed level of significance (0.018) for the test is lower than the fixed probability of 0.05 ($P < 0.05$). With this observation, there is sufficient evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis that, there is no significant difference between the opinions of young and old Christian students whose parents wanted them to travel abroad on impacts of human trafficking on the psychological state of mind of Christian students in tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria. The null hypothesis is thereby rejected.

Discussion

The hypothesis discovered that there is no significant difference between the opinions of young and old Christian students whose parents wanted them to travel abroad on impacts of human trafficking on the psychological state of mind of Christian students in tertiary institutions in Edo State, Nigeria. The hypothesis indicated that most Christians have admitted that, many have gone into depression due to experience from human trafficking as this is in agreement with McDonald (2018) that victims live in fear, have lost their lives, are operating in plain sight but not recognized as victims, and endanger people living in local communities. Interviewee twenty (20) states in an interview conducted with him on August, 5th 2023 that, he is under serious pressure seeing many of his friends driving expensive cars and living larger than life. Interviewee twenty (15) reveals in an interview conducted with him on August, 15th 2023 that, he feels down cast by series of report being received from victims of human trafficking, Interviewee three (3) added in an interview that, existence of human trafficking has made many in their community to live in perpetual fear.

Conclusion/Recommendation

It is concluded that, Christian students who are victims remained resilient, in spite of the trauma faced from human trafficking. It is recommended that those who are victims of human trafficking and contemplated suicide should be provided with psychologists and counsellors by Non-Governmental Organizations to assist them in their situation.

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