Vol. 7 No.1 June (2024)
JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND TOURISM EDUCATION
ISSN: 2659-0794 (PRINT) ISSN:2659-0808(ONLINE)
Content Available at: **https://jeate.net/index.php/Jete/issue/archive**

Love of Money and Undergraduates' Proneness to Being Victims of Transnational Human Trafficking in the South-South Zone of Nigeria

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Keywords

Love of money, Proneness, Victims, Transnational and Human Trafficking.

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between love of money and undergraduates' proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking. To achieve this, one research hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. The study was correlational, which made use of a sample of two thousand one hundred (2100) male and female undergraduates spread across the Universities in the South-South Zone Nigeria. The selection was done through stratified random sampling, technique. Human Trafficking Questionnaire (HTQ) was used for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validation by experts in Measurement, Evaluation and Psychology. The reliability coefficient estimates of the instrument was .81 established through Cronbach reliability coefficient. The data analysis technique used in the study was Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient which was thereafter converted to t-value and tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the analysis revealed that there is a significant relationship between love of money and undergraduates' proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking. It was at this point recommended among others that parents should endeavour to raise morally disciplined children by instilling in them the credo that emphasizes the love of money as the root of all evil.

Introduction and background

Trafficking in persons otherwise referred to as human trafficking is not exclusively Arican phenomenon, rather it is a global problem that cuts across continents. In fact, the evil associated with it calls for an urgent attention and measures aimed at its outright elimination. This transnational nature of this inhuman treatment of man by his fellow man did not escape the attention of the international community which regularly took both protective and preventive measures as well as strengthening of international and regional cooperation yet human trafficking still menacingly festers.

Human trafficking is of course, a form of modern-day slavery. Traffickers often prey on individuals who are poor, unemployed or who may lack access to social safety nets predominantly women and children. Victims are lured with false promises of good jobs and better lives, then forced to work under brutal and inhuman conditions (Salt, 2016).

Again, to enhance their trade, traffickers recruit victims through fake advertisement, mail order bride catalogues and casual acquaintances. Upon arrival at their destination, victims are placed in conditions controlled by traffickers while they are exploited to generate revenue. Many are physically confined, their travel or identity documents are taken away and they or their families are threatened if they do not cooperate. Women and girls forced to work as prostitutes are blackmailed by threat that traffickers will inform their families. Trafficked children are dependent on their trafficker for food, shelter and other life basic necessities. Traffickers also play on victims' fear that authorities in foreign countries will prosecute or deport them if they ask for help (Taylor, 2017).

Indeed, it was the International Labour Organization – ILO (2000) that first created awareness of the incidence of human trafficking, particularly in the third World. It confirmed the existence of internal and external trafficking in Nigeria. In internal trafficking, children are procured to work as domestic and agricultural workers, while external trafficking provides girls and women for prostitution rackets in Europe and Middle East. The Nigerian immigration service has identified Edo, Delta, Akwa Ibom, Cross River, Ondo, Rivers Ebonyi, Imo, Enugu, Lagos and Kano as source states (Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation – WOTCLEF, 2015).

Impressively, concerted efforts have been made at various levels to sensitize the Nigerian public on trafficking and child labour, for instance, the Nigerian Press such as "Daily Sun" has increasingly published cases of child labour. Conference organized by the Nigerian government and NGOs, with support from international agencies, have also contributed immensely to creating awareness of the existence of human trafficking in Nigeria, yet trafficking still persists.

In the South-South Zone of Nigeria where this study was carried out, human trafficking as a deadly disease has brought about increased prostitution, forced labour, street hawking, kidnapping and other vices (Odion, 2015). However, some schools of thought believe that human trafficking is mainly a product of poverty. If this assertion is correct, then the question that needs to be asked is: what then are the other factors that could make undergraduates prone to being victims of transnational human trafficking.

It is in answering this question that this study seeks to find out the relationship between love of money and undergraduates' proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking in the South-South Zone of Nigeria. Indeed, love of money and its role in international human trafficking have garnered significant attention from researchers in recent years. Scholars have explored various aspects of this complex issues, including the recruitment process, trafficking routes and the impact of love of money on both victims and traffickers. In the light of this, Ter-Saakian (2014) found out that individuals with higher materialistic values were more likely to engage in unethical behaviour for financial gain. This no doubt suggests a potential link between materialism and participation in illegal activities, including human trafficking.

Also, studies have indicated that financial motivations play a significant role in the perpetuation of human trafficking. It noted that individuals involved in trafficking may be driven by the desire for monetary gain, as profit from trafficking can be substantial. Consequent upon this, Smith, Johnson and Williams (2018) in a study found out that traffickers are often motivated by the potential financial rewards associated with exploiting individuals like undergraduates. The study indeed highlighted the need to address the economic incentives that drive human trafficking in order to effectively combat the menace.

Furthermore, the love of money or greed can influence undergraduates to participate in various roles within the trafficking process. For instance, undergraduates may engage in recruitment, transportation or exploitation of victims due to the potential financial benefits involved. This is evident in the study conducted by Johnson and Williams (2017), which explored the financial motivations of individuals involved in human trafficking. The findings emphasized the role of love of money or greed in driving individuals to perpetuate the exploitation of others for monetary gain.

At the organizational level, greed or love of money can also play significant role in human trafficking. Criminal networks and organized crime groups may engage in trafficking activities as a means of generating profits. These organizations often prioritize financial gain over the well-being and rights of the trafficked individuals. Supporting this view, Lee and Lee (2019) in their study examined the financial motivations of organized crime groups involved in human trafficking and highlighted the need for targeted interventions to disrupt their financial networks which demonstrate absolute greed and high love for money.

To Kwankye, Logon and Codjoe (2018), there exist a positive correlation between greed and human trafficking. They decried the situation when they posited that victims of trafficking are often sold or placed in brothels and made to engage in the sex trade either willingly or against their will in order to recover the cost incurred in transporting them to the destination area. They mentioned that these traffickers exercise great control over the incomes of the trafficked because of greed.

Similarly, numerous studies have highlighted the role of financial incentives in driving human trafficking. For instance, in their study on the economics of human trafficking, Cho, Dreher and Neumayer (2020) found out that the profitability of trafficking operations, coupled with the potential for high financial returns, serve as a powerful incentive for traffickers.

Furthermore, research has shown that the love of money or greed can influence individuals to engage in various roles within the trafficking process. For example, individuals may be driven by the desire for monetary gain to participate in recruitment, transportation or exploitation of victims. Musto (2019) in his study found out that the pursuit for financial rewards often overrides ethical considerations for those involved in trafficking.

Salt (2016) opined that trafficking in human beings, especially women and children has become one of the most rewarding illegal economic activities that can be put at par with drug trafficking and arm smuggling. He noted that as a result of this, some criminals in recent times have identified trafficking in human beings as one of the easy sources of income and have transferred the knowledge and network they were using for their drug business to the trafficking business where the risk of being caught is low. He observed that, like their drug counterparts, traffickers in persons are well organized in some countries and are known to exist by names such as the "snake heads" of China. In Ghana or Nigeria, traffickers are known as "connection men" or "visa contractors" and described as self-styled businessmen or women who promise their victims jobs and better economic well-being if they are assisted to travel abroad.

To Adomako-Ampofo (2017) trafficking in persons like illegal drugs has assumed international dimension with huge amounts of money changing hands with an international network of hidden collaborators. He explained that because of the huge earnings involved, people irresistably get into the business. For example, he noted that traffickers earn between 5 and 8 billion US Dollars annually transporting within and outside national borders an estimated four million irregular migrants, many of whom are women and children.

At the systemic level, greed can fuel the involvement of organized crime groups in human trafficking. This groups prioritize financial gain above all else and exploit vulnerable

individuals for profit. This was confirmed in a study by Jensen (2018) who examined the role of organized crime in human trafficking.

In addition to criminal organizations, legitimate industries can also be influenced by the love of money, inadvertently contributing to human trafficking. For example, the demand for cheap labour in industries such as agriculture, construction and manufacturing can create opportunities for exploitative practices. Corroborating the foregoing Musto (2018) in a study explored the connection between labour exploitation, corporate greed and human trafficking and discovered that there is a strong correlation.

To Madunagu (2017) human trafficking flourishes because of the urge to make money quickly in order to wear expensive clothes and drive flashy cars. She stated that a story was told of a girl from Ntak Inyang in Akwa Ibom State who was taken to Europe and came back with so much money, which turned her fortunes and that of the family overnight (building houses over the place and driving expensive cars). She observed that other girls who saw this were carried away and only waited for their opportunity to also make it. At this point, whatever preaching to dissuade them would fall on deaf ears.

In another development, Maliki and Ngban (2006) posited that poverty is the major cause of undergraduates' proneness to being victims of transactional human trafficking. They noted that it is very obvious that poverty is endemic in developing countries of the globe. They further stated that it has been estimated that at least 50 per cent of the poor in sub-Saharan Africa live in East Africa and Nigeria. In Nigeria, World Bank estimates (2015) also indicated that over 45 per cent of the country's population live below the poverty line. The same body indicated that poverty in the country will rise by two-third and almost half the population will be below poverty line by the year 2020. By these projections, it becomes clear that Nigerians particularly the in the South-South Zone will become vulnerable to the machinations of traffickers in order to earn a living.

Similarly, Obaseki and Onwioduokit (2017:13) stated that: "from whatever angle one looks at it, the fact remains that poverty is undesirable. It is an economic and social malaise a ravaging phenomenon that must be tackled if we must give an answer to the problem of human trafficking".

Basically, the poor are those who lack a stable income, have little property and cannot maintain a healthy living. They also lack an adequate level of education. In general, they have no access to basic necessities of life including adequate food, clothing and shelter. They are unable to meet social and economic obligations, lack skills and gainful employment, have few physical assets and sometimes lack self-esteem. Being aware of these disadvantages, Saricho (2016) and Olayemi (2015) both posited that a poor man does anything possible to break away from the shackles of poverty. This state of desperation makes him a ready market for exploitation.

Statement of the problem

The current incidence of human trafficking is increasingly becoming worrisome because of the growing number of victims it leaves in its toll day by day. More worrisome are the various measures adopted by traffickers to recruit their victims such as false promises of good jobs and better lives, fake advertisements of various job opportunities and sometimes fake marriage promises. Given the poor condition of living in Africa, particularly Nigeria where undergraduates find it difficult to feed well, pay their school fees, buy textbooks, pay for accommodation, buy clothes, pay hospital bills and sometimes meet up with some basic necessities of life, it becomes most mind-boggling if these conditions will not increase the chances of undergraduates becoming vulnerable to transnational human trafficking

Consequently, there have been blames and counter blames on either parents, peer group pressure, love of money and poverty as being possible factors that may cause undergraduates to be prone to being victims of transnational human trafficking. It does appear that the factor(s) responsible or such proneness has not yet been ascertained. For instance, Convention for the Eradication of all forms of Discrimination against Women – CEDAW (2017) suggested factors such as open borders, wrong government policies and poor parenting styles as being responsible while Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2017) on its part mentioned poverty as the principal factor that push people to becoming vulnerable to trafficking. Surprisingly, up till date nothing has been done to the best of my knowledge aimed at identifying this specific factor.

The problem of this study, therefore, is to identify if love of money makes undergraduates in the South-South Zone of Nigeria prone to being victims of transnational human trafficking with a view to suggesting ways that the social, psychological, economic and moral menace can be addressed.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between love of money and undergraduates' proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking in Sonth-South Zone of Nigeria.

Research question

1. To what extent does undergraduates' love of money relate with their proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis was formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between students' love of money and their proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking.

Methodology

The research design used in this study was the correlational design. Correlational design was used because the research concerned itself with discovering or clarifying relationships among variables through the use of correlation coefficient. South-South Zone of Nigeria was the area for the study. The area comprises Six (6) states namely: Edo, Delta, Cross River, Bayelsa, Akwa Ibom and River state. There are one hundred and nine (109) local government areas. The target population of this study consists of 393, 194 undergraduates made up of 214,054 males and 184,840 females in all the 36 universities spread across the South-South Zone of Nigeria. The researchers adopted a stratified random sampling technique. Stratification was based on ownership to ensure that the federal, state and private universities are adequately represented in the study. The researchers thereafter used simple random sampling technique to select the respondents. A sample size of 2100 respondents was used for the study.

The instrument that was used was Human Trafficking Questionnaire (HTQ). The instrument had two sections. Section A elicited information on demographic data of the respondents such as student's university, gender, age and family size. Section B had two parts, Part one had 15 items which measured the respondents' proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking while the second part had 6 items which measured the love of money.

Copies of the questionnaire were face validated by two research experts in the University of Calabar. To establish the reliability of the instrument, a trial testing was done using thirty (30) undergraduates who were not included in the study. The data generated was analyzed to establish its internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient Method. The result showed that the reliability estimates of the sub-scales ranged from 0.71 to 0.88. The questionnaire was administered by the researchers with the assistance of fellow lecturers in the sampled universities. A return rate of 99% was achieved since the collection was done directly (see table for sample).

Table 1: Sample distribution per universities in South-South Zone of Nigeria

S/No	Universities	Sample		
		Males	Females	Total
1	University of Uyo	70	80	150
2	Federal University, Otuoke	72	78	150
3	University of Benin	76	74	150
4	University of Calabar	75	75	150
5	Nigerian Maritime University, Okerenkoko	79	71	150
6	University of Port Harcourt	73	77	150
7	Akaw Ibom State University, Ikot Akpaden	70	80	150
8	Niger Delta University, Yenegoa	80	70	150
9	Ambrose Ali University, Ekpoma	77	73	150
10	University of Cross River State	78	72	150
11	Delta State University, Abraka	76	74	150
12	Rivers State University	70	80	150
13	Benson Idahosa University, Benin City	80	70	150
14	Arthur Javis University, Akpabuyo	74	76	150
	Grand Total	1050	1050	2100

Results and discussion

In this section the hypothesis is restated in the null form, the variables are identified and results of the statistical analysis carried out to test the hypothesis are presented and interpreted. 0.05 level of significance was used to test the hypothesis.

Null hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between undergraduates' love of money and their proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking. The independent variable in this hypothesis is love of money while the dependent variable is proneness to being victim of transnational human trafficking. The statistical analysis technique used to test this hypothesis was Pearson Product Moment Analysis. The results of the analysis are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis of the relationship between love of money and undergraduates' proneness to human trafficking (N = 2100)

Variable	ΣX ΣY	EX^2 EXY^2	ΣXY	df	r-value	t-value
Love of money (X)	32957	524263				
			1246265	2098	0.240*	11.320
Proneness to human trafficking (Y)	79034	3060672				

*Significant at 0.05, df = 2098, critical t-value = 1.96

The results of the analysis in table 2 reveal that the calculated t-value of 11.320 is seen to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance with 2098 degrees of freedom. Hence the result is significant. Since the calculated value is greater than the critical table value, the null hypothesis was therefore rejected. What this implies is that there is a significant relationship between love of money and students' proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking. It could further be observed from the table that the value of "t" is positive, indicative of the fact that the more students have love for money, the more prone they are to being victims of transnational human trafficking.

Discussion of findings

This section is concerned with the discussion of findings of the hypothesis guiding the study. The results generated from the testing of this hypothesis in this study revealed that there is a significant relationship between undergraduates' love of money and their proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking (see table 2). It therefore follows that the more undergraduates have love for money, the more prone they are to being victims of transnational human trafficking. It is a well known fact that the love of money is the route of all evil (1 Timothy 6:10). This incessant crave for money has pushed many persons into becoming victims of human trafficking. Accordingly, the findings of this hypothesis is in line with Kwankye, Logon and Codjoe (2018) who posited that there exists a positive correlation between love of money and proneness to being a victim of human trafficking. Little wonder then, that the incurable and strong desire for money by students make them prone to being victims of trafficking.

Also, the findings of this study supported that of Madunagu (2017) as she asserted that human trafficking flourishes because of the urge to make money quickly in order to wear expensive clothes, build big houses and drive flashy cars. She noted that a story was told was of a girl from Ntak Inyang in Akwa Ibom State who was taken to Europe and came back with so much money, which turned her fortunes and that of the family overnight (building houses all over the place and driving expensive cars). She maintained that other girls who saw this were carried away and only waited for their opportunity to also make it as well. It therefore goes without saying that, if undergraduates from the South-South Zone experience this same situation, they will not behave differently. At this point, whatever preaching to dissuade them from Trafficking would fall on deaf ears.

Furthermore, the findings of this hypothesis align with that of Johnson and Williams (2017), who explored the financial motivations of individuals involved in human trafficking. Their findings established the role of love of money or greed in driving individuals to perpetuate the exploitation of others for monetary gain. Indeed, the love of money or greed can influence undergraduates to participate in various roles within the trafficking process. For instance, undergraduates may engage in recruitment, transportation or exploitation of victims due to the potential financial benefits involved.

Contrary to the findings of this hypothesis Maliki and Ngban (2006) posited that poverty is the major cause of undergraduates' proneness to being victims of transactional human trafficking. They noted that it is very obvious that poverty is endemic in developing countries of the globe. They further stated that it has been estimated that at least 50 per cent of the poor in sub-Saharan Africa live in East Africa and Nigeria. Collaborating this position, World Bank estimates (2015) indicated that over 45 per cent of the country's population live below the poverty line. The same body indicated that poverty in the country will rise by two-third and almost half the population will be below poverty line by the year 2020. By these projections, it becomes clear that Nigerians particularly those in the South-South Zone will become vulnerable to the machinations of traffickers in order to earn a living.

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it was indeed concluded that there is a significant relationship between love of money and undergraduates' proneness to being victims of transnational human trafficking. This ostensibly underscores the significant role of the love of money, greed and economic factors in driving human trafficking. While further research could be needed to fully comprehend this intricate dynamics, it is clear that economic vulnerabilities and values play a substantial role in perpetuating this global issue.

In the light of the findings of this study therefore, the following recommendations were made:

i. Parents should endeavour to raise morally disciplined children by instilling in them the credo that the love of money is the root of all evil.
ii. Students should stop desiring to make it fast. They should not feel obliged to sacrifice their lives to release their parents from poverty while still growing up. Rather their focus should be on acquiring education and skills first, after which they can help their parents out of poverty when they start working.
iii. Government should evolve a comprehensive strategy that would address the underlying factors of human trafficking such as poverty, lack of education and social inequality.
iv. Nigerian families should be motivated to embrace the value of self-esteem, dignity of labour, patriotism and de-emphasize the "get rich quick" syndrome.

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