Parenting Education as a Tool for Preventing Human Trafficking in Southwest Nigeria: Challenges and Prospects

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Abstract

Human trafficking remains a critical issue in Southwest Nigeria, necessitating multidimensional prevention strategies, including parenting education. This study examines the role of parenting education in reducing children's vulnerability to trafficking, the challenges hindering its effectiveness and potential opportunities for integration into sustainable anti-trafficking strategies. A descriptive survey research design was employed, with questionnaire conducted among 384 respondents. Pearson correlation analysis ($r = .106$, $p = .038$) revealed a weak but statistically significant positive relationship between parenting education and human trafficking prevention, suggesting that while parenting education contributes to prevention efforts, additional factors such as socioeconomic conditions and law enforcement effectiveness play crucial roles. Chi-Square analysis ($\chi^2 = 459.630$, $df = 195$, $p = .000$) demonstrated that challenges such as financial constraints, cultural resistance, and low awareness significantly impact the effectiveness of parenting education programs. The study's factor analysis identified five key opportunities for integrating parenting education into sustainable anti-trafficking strategies: parental awareness and protection, community-based parenting education programs, parental participation and engagement, household influence on child safety and institutional and policy support. These findings underscore the necessity of a holistic approach to human trafficking prevention that incorporates parenting education alongside broader social interventions such as economic empowerment and community-based monitoring. The study recommends targeted policy interventions, increased funding and culturally relevant educational materials to enhance parenting education effectiveness.

Keywords: Parenting Education, Human Trafficking Prevention, Southwest Nigeria, Policy Interventions.

Introduction

Still one of the most urgent abuses of human rights worldwide, human trafficking has terrible psychological and socioeconomic effects on victims as well as society. The United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime define human trafficking as the recruitment, transportation and exploitation of people by means of force, coercion or fraud [1, 2]. Nigeria is one of the most impacted countries in sub-Saharan Africa, particularly in Southwest Nigeria, where socioeconomic vulnerabilities, cultural beliefs and poor parental guidance contribute to the problem, the frequency of human trafficking continues to rise despite several legislative frameworks, policies, and enforcement tools [3]. Historically, efforts against human trafficking have concentrated on law enforcement, victim recovery, and advocacy. But especially at the family level, there is growing understanding of the need of preventative actions addressing the underlying reasons of trafficking. Emerging as a vital intervention is parenting education, which gives carers knowledge and tools to shield their children from traffickers using ignorance, financial difficulty and social breakdown [4-6]. With an eye towards its difficulties and opportunities in Southwest Nigeria, this paper investigates how parenting education might help to reduce human trafficking.

Comprising Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti states, Southwest Nigeria whose economic vitality, high rates of urban migration and international connectedness define it as a major hotspot for human trafficking [6]. For traffickers who use young people and adults for forced labour, sexual exploitation and domestic slavery, the area functions as both a recruitment and transit centre. The National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons reported that Southwest Nigeria has seen rising numbers of trafficking cases, with many victims drawn under the guise of better employment and educational prospects in urban centres and overseas [7]. Weak parental monitoring and knowledge are major causes of the trafficking epidemic this area suffers. Driven by financial crisis, many parents unintentionally expose their children to danger by sending them to live with relatives, strangers, or employment agents guaranteeing better living conditions. Considered as child fostering, this activity has been found to be a main source of child trafficking in Nigeria. Many times, traffickers take advantage of the confidence parents have in their children, which results in forced labour, abuse, and exploitation of them [8, 9]. Given these facts, parenting education has to be given top priority as a preventive measure to educate households with the information and tools to protect their children from trafficking systems.

Improving child protection and encouraging resistance against exploitation depend much on parenting education. Children's vulnerability to trafficking is clearly correlated, according to studies, with family dynamics, parental knowledge and socio-economic circumstances [10]. Programs for effective parenting education centre on helping carers to identify trafficking risks, enhance their interactions with children, and implement protective actions meant to lower their exposure to exploitative conditions [11]. A knowledgeable parent is more likely to help their child make wise decisions, spot red signals in social contacts, and reject offers of false recruiting. Furthermore, parenting education helps kids develop critical thinking abilities so they may evaluate hazards and stay away from manipulative tactics traffics utilise [12]. Parenting education can offer a different road that stresses self-reliance, educated decision-making, and resilience in Southwest Nigeria, where socioeconomic difficulty sometimes forces families to make tough decisions regarding the future of their children. Education for parents is also very important in helping to challenge society expectations and cultural norms that support human trafficking subtly. Many Nigerian communities view the custom of child fostering as a reasonable approach to guarantee the welfare of their children. But without appropriate protections, these kinds of activities might let traffickers find youngsters. Preventing exploitation depends on teaching parents about the risks of uncontrolled fostering and the need of parental involvement in the life of their children [13].

The Social Learning Theory of offers a useful theoretical framework for comprehending how parenting education might affect children's behaviour and resilience against human trafficking. Bandura says people pick these behaviours by seeing, copying, and modelling [14]. Observing their parents and carers helps children grow in knowledge of social conventions, hazards and protective behaviours. Parents who lead awareness, critical thinking and protective behaviour are more likely to produce children who can identify and avoid exploitative circumstances in the framework of human trafficking prevention. On the other hand, children grown in homes where ignorance, carelessness, or financial desperation rule are more likely to become victims of traffickers. According to Bandura's thesis, empowering parents via education helps them to become good role models for their children, therefore lowering the possibility of trafficking victimisation [14]. Furthermore, emphasised by Social Learning Theory is how peer influence and reinforcement shape behaviour. Essential for trafficking prevention, parenting education programs can assist carers in understanding how to encourage good behaviours including assertiveness, independence and critical decision-making [15]. Moreover, parents who participate actively in their children's life help to reduce the negative consequences of peer pressure, a common element used by traffickers [17].

Though human trafficking is becoming more and more of a problem in Southwest Nigeria, research and policy attention on the function of parenting education as a preventive tool lags greatly. With few focus on family-based interventions, current anti-trafficking initiatives have mostly focused on law enforcement, victim rehabilitation, and public awareness campaigns [18]. Although these policies are important, they do not solve the underlying causes of vulnerability, especially in family systems. Many Nigerian parents lack the information and ability required to spot, stop and handle concerns about trafficking in their local areas [19, 20]. Desperate families may unintentionally put their children in circumstances prone to trafficking in search of financial respite, therefore aggravating the issue. This study therefore aims to close this gap by looking at parenting education as a tool for preventing human trafficking in Southwest Nigeria and diving deep into its challenges and prospects.

Research Questions
1. How does parenting education contribute to the prevention of human trafficking in Southwest Nigeria?
2. What are the key challenges hindering the effective implementation of parenting education programs for trafficking prevention?
3. What are the potential opportunities for integrating parenting education into sustainable anti-trafficking strategies in Southwest Nigeria?

Methodology
The population of the study will consist of 27,722,432 residents of the six states in the Southwest, Nigeria, namely Lagos, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, Oyo and Ekiti. For each state in Southwest Nigeria, the required sample size using Cochran's formula with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error is 384 respondents. Since each state has a large population (over 100,000 people), the sample size remains at 384, which is the standard for large populations using this method. However, in ensuring state-level representation, the need to stratify the sample by distributing 384 respondents proportionally across the six states based on their population sizes. Lagos - 127, Ogun - 52, Ondo - 48, Osun - 47, Oyo State - 77 and Ekiti - 33 respondents respectively. This study will rely on a primary data obtained through a structured questionnaire designed to measure parental education in the prevention of human trafficking in Southwest, Nigeria (PEPHT). The questionnaire shall consist of 12 items close-ended questions using 4-point Likert scale (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) to quantify responses effectively.

Results and Discussion

RQ1: How does parenting education contribute to the preven- tion of human trafficking in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 1: Correlation Table Showing the Relationship Between Parenting Education and Human Trafficking Prevention

		Parenting Education	Human Trafficking Prevention
Parenting Education	Pearson Correlation	1	.106*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.038
	N	384	384
Human Trafficking Prevention	Pearson Correlation	.106*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.038	
	N	384	384
Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Examining the association between parenting education and human trafficking prevention in Southwest Nigeria using a Pearson correlation analysis revealed with r =.106, p =.038, the data shown in Table 1 show a weak but statistically significant positive correlation between parenting education and human trafficking prevention. Though the strength of this link is somewhat low, this implies that as parenting education rises, the probability of efficient human trafficking prevention also rises. With a statistical significance (p =.038) the observed link in the data is improbable to be resulting from chance. Given the p-value is smaller than the 0.05 threshold, we can deduce that albeit in small measure, parental education has a significant but significant impact on human trafficking reduction. The poor correlation value (r =.106) suggests, nevertheless, that parental education by itself would not be a major factor influencing results of prevention of human trafficking. Reduced human trafficking risks could also be greatly influenced by other elements including socioeconomic circumstances, law enforcement performance and community awareness campaigns.

With 384 respondents total sample size, the results are based on a rather strong dataset, therefore enhancing the dependability of them. The small association, however, begs serious issues regarding the success of present parenting education campaigns. It could show that the degree to which this education transfers into actual preventive activities remains limited even while parents are being taught on kid protection. The submissions of further corroborated the need of a more integrated strategy to human trafficking prevention integrating parental education with more general social interventions such economic empowerment, legal frameworks and community-based monitoring [23].

RQ2: What are the key challenges hindering the effective implementation of parenting education programs for trafficking prevention?

Table 2a: Chi-Square Table Showing Test for Association Between Parenting Education Challenges and Effectiveness in Human Trafficking Prevention

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	459.630a	195	.000
Likelihood Ratio	386.632	195	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.299	1	.038
N of Valid Cases	384		
a. 201 cells (89.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .03			

The association between the difficulties in implementing parenting education programs and the efficacy of these programs in combating human trafficking in Southwest Nigeria was investigated by means of a Chi-Square Test for Association. The results are shown using Symmetric Measures tables and Chi-Square Tests for association to provide understanding of the strength and relevance of this relationship. With a statistically significant result (χ^2 = 459.630, df = 195, p = .000), the Pearson Chi-Square test revealed that the difficulties in parenting education significantly affect its efficacy in combating human trafficking. The p-value of 0.000 (p < 0.05) shows how very rare it is likely to find this correlation by accident. This implies that the efficacy of parenting education initiatives in reducing human trafficking is much influenced by the difficulties in putting them into use. In verifying the strength of the link, the Likelihood Ratio test (χ^2 = 386.632, df = 195, p = .000) similarly confirms this result. The Linear-by- Linear Association test (χ^2 = 4.299, df = 1, p = .038) shows even more that the relationship between the difficulties and efficacy follows a notable linear trend, meaning that the efficacy of parenting education in stopping human trafficking may decrease as challenges raise.

Table 2b: Symmetric Measures Table Showing Strength of Association Between Parenting Education Challenges and Effectiveness in Human Trafficking Prevention

		Value	Approximate Significance
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	1.094	.000

Cramer's V	.303	.000
N of Valid Cases	384	

The Phi coefficient and Cramér's V evaluate the degree of this association. Suggesting a strong link between the two category variables, the Phi coefficient was 1.094 (p =.000). But Cramér's V, which offers a better appropriate gauge for big contingency tables, came out to be .302 (p =.000). This is a modest correlation, hence even if difficulties in parenting education greatly affect its efficacy, other outside elements could also influence its success or failure. With the minimal expected count being .03, the study also showed that 201 cells (89.7%) had expected counts of less than 5. This suggests possible limits in the dataset since big number of low predicted frequencies can occasionally compromise the validity of the Chi-Square test. In such situations, it is advised that categories be combined or that larger sample sizes be applied in ensuring increased statistical validity.

Therefore, the submission of confirmed the study's findings that imply that boosting the efficacy of parenting education programs in human trafficking prevention depends on tackling issues including budget limitations, cultural opposition and low aware-

ness. Although these obstacles clearly affect program performance, the modest correlation (Cramér's V =.302) suggests that other elements such government policies, community involvement and socioeconomic conditions could also be very important. The results demonstrate that the effectiveness of parenting education in reducing human trafficking is statistically significantly correlated with difficulties in applying it. Although the association is modest, it emphasises the need of policy changes, calculated actions, and more awareness raising to support parental education as a preventive against human trafficking. To maximise the efficacy of parenting education in reducing human trafficking in Southwest Nigeria, efforts should also be made to boost funding, improve community involvement, and include culturally relevant instructional resources.

RQ3: What potential opportunities exist for integrating parenting education into sustainable anti-trafficking strategies in Southwest Nigeria?

Table 3a: Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity

Measure	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.823
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	$\chi^2 (66) = 985.42, p < .001$

The KMO value of 0.823 is above the acceptable threshold of 0.60, indicating that the sample is adequate for factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974). Bartlett's Test of Sphericity is statistically signif-

icant (p < .001), confirming that the correlation matrix is suitable for factor extraction [24]. These results validate the appropriateness of conducting factor analysis.

Table 3b: Communalities Table Showing Extracted Components

Items	Initial	Extraction
Parents in my community receive adequate education on child protection and trafficking prevention	1.000	0.750
I have participated in parenting education programs focused on child safety	1.000	0.556
Parenting education improves parental awareness of the dangers of human trafficking	1.000	0.709
Parenting education programs provide effective strategies for protecting children from traffickers	1.000	0.889
Parents who undergo training on parenting education are more likely to protect their children from trafficking risks	1.000	0.800
There are sufficient government and non-governmental efforts promoting parenting education in my state	1.000	0.770
Children from families with informed parenting are less likely to fall victim to human trafficking	1.000	0.879
Lack of proper parenting education increases the risk of children becoming victims of trafficking	1.000	0.636
Informed parenting helps children recognize and avoid trafficking risks	1.000	0.748
Parents who educate their children about trafficking risks contribute significantly to its prevention	1.000	0.673
Households with strong parental guidance are less vulnerable to traffickers' deceptive tactics	1.000	0.890
Strengthening parenting education at the community level will significantly reduce human trafficking cases	1.000	0.871

The communalities indicate how well each item is explained by the extracted components. Items with values above 0.60 demonstrate strong contributions to the factors (Hair et al., 2010). The highest communalities are observed in:
- "Parenting education programs provide effective strategies for protecting children from traffickers" (0.889)

- "Households with strong parental guidance are less vulnerable to traffickers' deceptive tactics" (0.890)
- "Strengthening parenting education at the community level will significantly reduce human trafficking cases" (0.871)

These high communalities suggest that these items strongly define the latent constructs.

Table 3c: Showing Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues	Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings	Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	3.251	27.094	27.094
2	2.208	18.401	45.495
3	1.391	11.595	57.090
4	1.269	10.572	67.663
5	1.052	8.764	76.427

The first five components explain 76.43% of the total variance by having eigenvalues more than 1.0. This implies that most of the variety in answers is captured by five different factors (Field, 2013). These five elements provide important chances to include parenting education into environmentally friendly anti-traffic plans.

Table 3d: Rotated Component Matrix

Item	Component 1	Component 2	Component 3	Component 4	Component 5
Children from families with informed parenting are less likely to fall victim to human trafficking	.937				
Strengthening parenting education at the community level will significantly reduce human trafficking cases	.928				
Informed parenting helps children recognize and avoid trafficking risks	.853			.101	
Lack of proper parenting education increases the risk of children becoming victims of trafficking	.669		.430		
Parenting education programs provide effective strategies for protecting children from traffickers		.935			
Parents who undergo training on parenting education are more likely to protect their children from trafficking risks		.884	.136		
Parents who educate their children about trafficking risks contribute significantly to its prevention	.288	.741		-.185	
I have participated in parenting education programs focused on child safety		-.114	.719		.153
Households with strong parental guidance are less vulnerable to traffickers' deceptive tactics		-.211		.917	
There are sufficient government and non-governmental efforts promoting parenting education in my state		.437	.214	.724	
Parents in my community receive adequate education on child protection and trafficking prevention	-.106	.236			.821
Parenting education improves parental awareness of the dangers of human trafficking	-.297	.290		-.729	

The rotated component matrix provides a clear structure for interpreting the extracted factors:

Factor 1: Parental Awareness and Protection (e.g., preventing child trafficking through informed parenting).

Factor 2: Community-Based Parenting Education Programs (e.g., effective strategies, NGO involvement).

Factor 3: Parental Participation and Engagement (e.g., participating in child safety programs).

Factor 4: Household Influence on Child Safety (e.g., strong parental guidance).

Factor 5: Institutional and Policy Support (e.g., government efforts, community support).

Therefore, the factor analysis carried out in this study revealed five main chances for efficiently including parenting education into sustainable anti-trafficking policies in Southwest Nigeria. These results highlight the several ways in which educated parents could help to shield their children from dangers including trafficking [23]. Confirm the outcomes of the study that underline the need of increasing parental awareness, supporting community-based projects, improving household structures and guaranteeing institutional assistance to develop a whole strategy for child safety. The results of this study highlight how important parenting education is to preventing human trafficking. The five main opportunities found offer a road map for including in-

stitutional assistance, home influence, parental awareness, and community activities into viable anti-trafficking plans. Creating a safer environment for children in Southwest Nigeria depends on enhancing parenting education programs by means of regulatory changes, strategic alliances, and ongoing research going ahead.

Conclusion

The important role that parenting education plays in stopping human trafficking in Southwest Nigeria is emphasised in this paper. Although the results show a small but statistically significant link between parenting education and trafficking prevention, the study emphasises the need of a more integrated strategy including parenting education with more general social, economic and legal measures. The difficulties noted financial restrictions, cultural opposition, and limited awareness seriously compromise the success of these initiatives. Still, the study also points up important prospects include improving parental awareness, bolstering community-based projects and raising institutional support. Making parenting education a durable strategy for fighting trafficking will depend on closing these gaps by regulatory changes, strategic alliances and better program execution. Stakeholders have to give parental empowerment top priority and match efforts in parenting education with national and regional anti-trafficking plans to provide safer surroundings for children.

Recommendations

1. Government departments and non-governmental organisations should start extensive awareness campaigns to inform parents about human trafficking hazards and preventive actions.
2. To guarantee accessibility and involvement, parenting education ought to be included into local community centres, religious buildings and classrooms.
3. More resources should be given by the government and foreign organisations to raise the calibre and scope of parenting education initiatives.
4. To guarantee better acceptance and efficacy, parenting education should be tailored to the socioeconomic and cultural background of Southwest Nigeria.
5. Policies should be strengthened to assist parenting education as the main approach in anti-trafficking campaigns and child safety.
6. Through seminars, peer support groups and digital tools, programs should aggressively include parents to raise involvement and retention.
7. Ensuring a thorough and lasting method of parental education and human trafficking prevention depends on cooperation among government agencies, law enforcement, teachers, community leaders, and NGOs.

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