The Scourge of Job Deceit: Teenager’s Prostitution and Baby Factories in Nigeria

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Abstract

Could ignorance on the part of parents and economic hardship be the reasons they fall prey to job deceit, which might have led to teenager prostitution and baby factories, or could the parents be aware of the practice and just want to use their child as a survival wage? It was against these backdrops that this study examined ‘the Scourge of Job Deceit: Teenagers’ Prostitution and Baby Factories in Nigeria’. The research design is explorative in nature. The sample size for the study was 35 residents in cities and towns who identified as having experienced this act. A questionnaire was developed, titled Job Deceit: Teenagers’ Prostitution and Baby Factories in Nigeria, which has a reliability coefficient of 0.75. In scoring the instrument, the study adopted the measure of central tendency (the mean score). The highest possible mean average was 4.00, while the least was 1.00; the mid-point mean was 2.50 (since it was a four-point scale). Content analysis was used for the newspaper review. Findings from the study revealed that people complain that most jobs’ posters or banners with phone numbers promising huge pay are deceitful. On this note, the study concluded that teenagers are lured into prostitution and babymaking in baby factories on the premise of employment and financial liberation from poverty for their struggling families. A recommendation was made that parents should desist from the act of giving their teenage children to people who promise to help get them jobs in the city without prior notice.

Keywords: Job Deceit, Teenagers’ Prostitution, Baby Factories.


Introduction

Today, a new wave of this hydra-headed crime has resurfaced in Nigeria, with new and more worrisome dimensions in the form of baby factories and teenagers being deceived into prostitution. The first reported cases of these social evils in Nigeria were reported in 2006 by UNESCO. It specifically referred to three Nigerian states, namely: Abia, Ebonyi, and Lagos (Myne, 2013). These societal menaces have engulfed the thirty-six states of the federation, and states sharing boundaries with other nations are the hotspot zone for these crude practices. Poverty levels are particularly higher in rural areas, making women and children more vulnerable to baby factory and teenager prostitution. The perpetrator of this crime uses job offers to vulnerable parents as a way of promising to empower the wards with a better standard of living if they are taken into their custody and will occasionally remit funds to the parents. Could ignorance on the part of parents and economic hardship be the reasons they fall prey to job deceit, which might have led to teenager prostitution and baby factories, or could the parents be aware of the practice and just want to use their child as a survival wage?

Rimamsikwe and Ayesukwe (2019) believed that poverty and high unemployment rates, particularly in rural areas, are noticeable key factors responsible for the eruption of baby factories, underage labour, and prostitution in Nigeria. In this post-fuel subsidy removal era, untold hardship is piercing harder on couples with larger children but with no adequate resources to cater for their basic needs. It is said that
“the mothers of the babies are usually young women who are vulnerable, impoverished, and very poorly educated, rural or ghetto dwellers that can be very easily intimidated or manipulated by the operators of the baby farms or factories” (Okosun, 2013). Poverty, gender inequality, and abusive or unstable family environments in Nigeria all contribute to the soaring rate of teenage prostitution and baby labor. Victims are mostly vulnerable people from poor backgrounds or people searching for better lives. The study by Okoronkwo (2019) reported that young women in Edo State believe that teenagers’ prostitution and baby factories lead to wealth creation and economic gains for women. The effects are both short-term and long-term, with far-reaching effects on the victims, their families, and communities. The teenagers are traumatised upon discovering they have been deceived into prostitution under the guise of employment and will still have to produce babies for sales. In the hands of the employer, they suffer from these syndromes: a high rate of physical and sexual violence, psychological issues, sexually transmitted diseases, domestic services, and serious mental health problems. Deshpande and Nour (2013) add that the costs to society include the degradation of human and women’s rights, poor public health, disrupted communities, and diminished social development. Virtually all individual countries have also created agencies and even full-fledged government ministries to safeguard children from predators such as paedophiles, traffickers, and drug barons. For instance, in Nigeria, the federal government has created the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development and the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP), among others; it is sponsoring and bankrolling a significant amount of cash annually to look after the millions of poor and vulnerable children scattered around the states in Nigeria.

The insalubrious but now very common practice of producing babies to sell to the highest bidders in Nigeria, commonly referred to as a baby factory, is an issue among others that has called into question the viability and competencies of the various protocols, conventions, child-centred agencies, and their managers. Charles, Akwara, and Andeshi (2014) argued that the baby factory phenomenon in Nigeria is now moving into the realm of a pandemic, and it is time for all and sundry to roll up their sleeves to curb this socio-economic and systematic rot that has exposed the underbelly of our casino capitalist system of government and governance. Smolin (2007) reported that teenagers into prostitution and baby factories launder into the act, which involves obtaining children by engaging in pseudo-promises or financial inducement. Globally, child trafficking is a huge business, with an annual return of over $33 billion from this crime to the pockets of those who muster the courage to indulge in it, according to the United Nations (Vanguard, July 30th, 2011). Despite all the mechanisms that have been developed on the continent to advance children’s wellbeing, the current state of children is still very far from normal. In fact, the abuse of children has nosedived to the point that some of the children are now specifically being deceived into prostitution with the pretense of getting them employment in urban areas and also being forced to produce babies for their adductors, sold to desperate couples seeking children, and also by terrorists who trained these children to become suicidal bombers (Onyemelukwe-Onuobia, 2013).

The development of baby factories as an avenue for illegal adoption has gained some scholarly attention in recent times. The baby factory phenomenon is the perverse commercialization of human newborns in the manner of economic animals such as chickens, pigs, goats, and cows (Kabo, 2019). Adewole (2016) sees the baby factory as primitive, debasing, dehumanising, immoral, and despicable, and at variance with moral principles, social norms, and natural justice. This is done by the use of job deceit, coercion, or obtaining consent by fraud and undue influence, by keeping young pregnant girls or by abducting and kidnapping young girls and having them impregnated while being held hostage by the abductors (Tope, 2017). The baby factory involves the use of men who impregnate the girls, nurses, and medical experts who assist in cases of complications. The newborns are usually taken from the girl and sold to people who need them for whatever reasons. In fact, some parents are known to have sold their children to raise money to solve pressing personal problems. Some of these babies end up as adopted children of childless people in a society where childlessness is stigmatized. Some of these babies who are not fortunate are used for voodoo money rituals and slaughtered by those who trade in human parts, trained to engage in anti-social behaviour like drug sales and other related crimes, etc. Whatever the reason(s), poverty or childlessness cannot be a justification for the sales or dealings of new-born babies in our society.
The baby factory is a menace. It is a vice that breaks the anti-human trafficking laws and amounts to another form of slavery, which is the abduction of young girls through job deceit and child theft, which are against the law. Describing the criminal nature of baby factories, the International Crime Database Reports state that the phenomenon of baby factories in Nigeria is a widespread crime that is systematic in nature since some of the operators are allegedly serial human trafficking networks (Huntley 2013). Some of the principal actors deceiving teenagers with job promises and getting them trapped in prostitution and baby factories are medical practitioners who run their businesses with the help of their nurses and other employees, among whom they may be specifically hired to impregnate women and girls. For instance, in 2008, police arrested Dr. Akunne for running a baby factory disguised as a maternity and social welfare home, where he forcefully impregnated teenage girls and confined them in a facility against their will. In order to seal his crime and prevent the girls from contacting their relatives for help, he would take their cell phones and delete the contacts. Dr. Akunne has been arrested three times for child trafficking and operating baby factories, before his last arrest and prosecution in 2008.

There are three categories of mothers that may be found in baby factories. The first category includes schoolgirls deceived into prostitution with the hope of getting meaningful employment and getting impregnated, school dropouts, and some other teenage girls and young women who have unplanned or unwanted pregnancies. These teenagers, in order to avoid social stigma and shame, approach these baby factory operators secretly for acceptance in their facilities until their babies are born (Agbo, 2020). Sometimes, these unfortunate pregnant teenagers are deceived into believing that they are getting humanitarian services or aid, not knowing that their babies will be sold off while they themselves will be kept hostage for another set of pregnancies. It was against these backdrops that this study examined ‘the Scourge of Job Deceit: Teenagers' Prostitution and Baby Factories in Nigeria’.

Purpose of the Study

The essence of the study is to examine; the scourge of job deceit: teenagers' prostitution and baby factories in Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Identify the forms of job deceit and teenager prostitution.
2. Identify the form of job deceit and baby factory

Research Question

The following research questions were postulated in line with the specific objectives of the study:

1. What are the forms of job deceit and teenage prostitution?
2. What are the forms of job deceit and baby factories in Nigeria?

Rational Choice Theory

Rationality is the underlying tenet of rational choice theory. When deciding whether or not to commit a crime, they assess the advantages and disadvantages of the consequences before the offenders act. Andresen (2010) maintained that the theory was proposed by Ronald Clarke and Derek Cornish in their works (1986a, 1986b, and 1987). Ronald Clarke and Derek Cornish make the assumption that there are a lot of potential criminals among us. Depending on the situation and opportunity available to the criminal, these potential offenders may or may not actually commit a crime. The rational choice theory is concerned with criminal possibilities and how individuals choose to engage in criminal activity when presented with such an opportunity. Rational choice theory is adopted for this work because it is very cogent in explaining the activities of culprits who engage in deceptively adopting teenagers for the sole purposes of prostitution and baby factories. They take advantage of the victim’s family's economic status and, by extension, the victim’s social conditions of vulnerability (poverty, maltreatment, domestic violence, lack of care, and teenage pregnancy) and act upon them for their personal gains. Perpetuators of these crimes are aware that the probability of them being caught is very slim, as most of them operate in the form of registered hospitals, orphanages, and foundations run by professionals of good will with clear intention. According to the awareness facts, having carried out a mental calculation, they cogently
engage in the act for personal gain, usually at the detriment of the victim, their family, and the state in general, knowing that the propensity of them being caught is slim and that even when caught, they can easily escape the punishment attached to the crime.

Methodology

The research design is explorative in nature. It employs both a quantitative and qualitative approach. Survey research was used to sort out people's opinions on a job deceit related to teenagers' prostitution and baby factories in Nigeria, as well as a critical review of the national newspaper as it relates to the title of the research work.

Population of the Study

The target population for the study was residents of cities in Nigeria that have reported occurrences of teenager prostitution and baby factories.

Sample of the Study

The target population for the study was residents of cities in Nigeria that have reported occurrences of teenager prostitution and baby factories.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was developed by the researchers as it related to the study. The questionnaire has two parts. Part ‘A’ contains bio-data such as age, gender, and class, while Part ‘B’ contains two sections: Section ‘A’ has five items, and Section ‘B’ has three items as they relate to the survey. Job Deceit: Teenagers' Prostitution and Baby Factories in Nigeria.

Reliability of the Instrument

The questionnaire Job Deceit: Teenagers' Prostitution and Baby Factories in Nigeria has a reliability coefficient of 0.75.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher with the some research assistants, distributed copies of the questionnaires to the respondents, briefed them on what it was all about, and collected the filled copies on the spot.

Method of Data Analysis

The instrument was structured in a four-point scale format with responses on a range of 4–1: Always Often (AO); Sometimes Often (SM); Rarely (R); and Never (D), respectively. In scoring the instrument, the study adopted the measure of central tendency (the mean score). The highest possible mean average was 4.00, while the least was 1.00; the mid-point mean was 2.50 (since it was a four-point scale). Hence, a mean average between 2.50 and 4.00 indicated a high level of job deceit, teenage prostitution, and baby factories. Content analysis was used for the newspaper review.

Results

Research Question One: What are the forms of job deceit and teenage prostitution?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Some young teenagers have been lured to the city by job promises that impel them into prostitution.</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. People complain that most jobs’ posters and banners with phone numbers promising to pay above 80,000 for a nanny job are job deceitful and have pushed teenagers into prostitution.

3. Close relatives have been used to carry out the scheme that has led to teenager’s involvement in prostitution.

4. Parents, out of ignorance and poverty, have sent their teenage daughters to friends, relatives, or strangers who offer to send them a monthly stipend. No one knows; they are now turning into sex workers.

5. Ladies who are already experts in the act have lured teenagers into the trade without divulging the true job identified to them at the first instance.

<table>
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<th>S/N</th>
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<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>People complain that most jobs’ posters and banners with phone numbers promising to pay above 80,000 for a nanny job are job deceitful and have pushed teenagers into prostitution.</td>
<td>3.58</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Close relatives have been used to carry out the scheme that has led to teenager’s involvement in prostitution.</td>
<td>2.94</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Parents, out of ignorance and poverty, have sent their teenage daughters to friends, relatives, or strangers who offer to send them a monthly stipend. No one knows; they are now turning into sex workers.</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Ladies who are already experts in the act have lured teenagers into the trade without divulging the true job identified to them at the first instance.</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total grand mean 3.29

Results in Table 1 show that the grand mean average of 3.29 is greater than the midpoint (2.50); hence respondent’s opinion of the form of job deceit and teenager prostitution is high. The item that most depicts a high level is that people complain that most jobs’ posters or banners with phone numbers promising to pay above 80,000 for nanny jobs are job deceitful and have pushed teenagers into prostitution.

Research Question Two: What are the forms of job deceit and baby factories in Nigeria?

Table 2. Respondents Opinions of the Form of Job Deceit and Baby Factories in Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Teenagers who got pregnant, not knowing the paternity, engaged in the baby factory trade as a means to raise capital to survive.</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Teenagers in the prostitution business are being forced to sell their babies when they get pregnant by their madam or boss.</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Some teenagers lured from the village to the city with the hope of getting a legitimate job have been lured into baby factories with the promise of high returns.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>Accepted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 3.08

Results in Table 2 show that the grand mean average of 3.08 is greater than the midpoint (2.50); hence respondent’s opinion of the form of job deceit and baby factories in Nigeria is high. The item that most depicts high levels is that some teenagers lured from the village to the city with the hope of getting a legitimate job have been lured into baby factories with the promise of high returns.

Explorations of Various Newspapers

Excerpt from various newspapers on the incidences of job deceit, teenage prostitution, and baby factories.

The Punch of 18th August 2018 reported: The Tales of Delta teenage schoolgirls lured into prostitution in Lagos:

According to two of the victims, Oke and Efe, who are in Senior Secondary School 3, needed money to enrol in the West African Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination, while their third friend, Gift, wanted to raise funds for tuition ahead of the next session, when she will resume for SSS 1, if she passes her Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination. The three victims were travelling from Delta State to Lagos with the hope they would get a job to fund their life dreams, not knowing it was a job deceit. They were coerced into sleeping with different men, age enough to be the father, by the lady named Sunday, who brought them to Lagos State. It was a good Samaritan who came to their rescue, and the matter was reported to appropriate authorities, who said Madam was arrested.
The Punch report of 6th December 2020: How We Were Deceived, Lured to Ogun Baby Factories –Pregnant Teenagers:

A young girl, age 14, and other friends were transported, with the aid of a lady, to Ogun State and further to other states in the disguise of securing their security jobs. These teenagers go by their names: Gift Etim, 20, from Rivers State, is the eldest, followed by Favour Christopher, 17, from Rivers; Julianah Wilson, 17, from Akwa-Ibom; Okechukwu Ifunaya, 17, from Ebonyi; Igwe Blessing, 15, from Imo; and Orji Gift, 19, from Imo.

The Nigeria lawyer’s news on 15th of June 2022 reported: Anambra Police Bursts Baby Factory, Teenage Prostitution Ring, Rescues 35 Girls:

About 35 teenage girls used for commercial sex slavery have been rescued, with about five of them pregnant. The girls were kept in the hotel at Umunwume, Nkpor, Idenik North local government area, where they were used to engage in commercial sex and the money was paid to their "madam." They are currently on the run following an intelligence
gathering on June 1, 2022, that stormed the premises of the GallyGally Hotel, Umusiome, Nkpor, Anambra State, where several young girls between the ages of 14 and 17 were used as sex toys by the hotel management, who collected money on their behalf and allowed men to sleep with them for a fee.

Thisday Newspaper of 5th of July 2023: Tackling the Growing Menace of Child Prostitution in Anambra:

Nine girls, ages 15 to 23, were rescued during a raid on a facility in Anambra State, Nigeria. Three of the girls, who are just 2 weeks old, narrated that they were deceitfully lured by two ladies (Chika and Ifeoma) from their village, Izza, in Ebonyi State, Nigeria. They (victims) maintained that it was made possible because of the ladies (culprits) relationship with their family, stressing that they were lured by the trust that they would be giving jobs, but unfortunately they were forced into prostitution.

The Punch of 19th March 2023 report: How fake modeling agents lure teenagers into prostitution:

“He kept saying that there was no way I would be able to do the job if I was not ready to 'sacrifice'. As I say this, I feel used,” she said. Munachi said Mr. Gee used to ‘force himself’ on her whenever he wanted, and she would not be able to stop him. With the help of Munachi, this reporter contacted more than five other ladies who, speaking anonymously, claimed that they were all ‘used’ by Mr. Gee for sex work under the guise of modelling.

Prime progressing News of 5th of June, 2023: Unmasking The Dark Trade: Baby Factories Exploiting Vulnerable Women In Nigeria

In a shocking operation that exposed the grim underbelly of Nigeria’s illegal baby trade, 21 of your girls were rescued in a baby factory in Ohafia, Abia State. To their astonishment, they were all pregnant. On investigation, it was realised that the facility was owned and managed by a lady under the deceptive guise of a registered ‘Charity Home’ with the Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development.

Discussion of Findings

Findings from both research questions and two revealed that the incidence of job deceit, teenager prostitution, and baby factories in our country today is on the increase. Job imposters have capitalised on the naivety of parents or teenagers as an opportunity to enrich themselves by manipulating the gullible into believing they have a job for them. One of the reasons the perpetrator of this act keeps on recruiting girls and also attracting traffic is because, over the years, their activities have been kept under check by the government, and even when they are caught in the act, they have a way of evicting justice. The work of Huntley (2013) affirmed this finding that some of the principal actors deceiving teenagers with job promises and getting them trapped in prostitution and baby factories are medical practitioners who run their businesses with the help of their nurses and other employees, among whom they may be specifically hired to impregnate women and girls. For instance, in 2008, police arrested Dr. Akunne for running a baby factory disguised as a maternity and social welfare home, where he forcefully impregnated teenage girls and confined them in a facility against their will. In order to seal his crime and prevent the girls from contacting their relatives for help, he would take their cell phones and delete the contacts. Dr. Akunne has numerous records of arrests in cases associated with child trafficking and operating baby factories before his last arrest and prosecution. Also, Agbo (2020) reports that, sometimes, these unfortunate pregnant teenagers are deceived into believing that they are getting humanitarian services or aid, not knowing that their babies will be sold off while they themselves will be kept hostage for another set of pregnancies.

Conclusion

Teenagers are deceitfully manipulated into prostitution and babymaking in baby factories on the premise of employment and financial liberation from poverty for their struggling families. The principal actors take advantage of the teenager’s naivety and are charged with the keen spirit to make a living by providing financial support to their parents, not knowing what is awaiting them in the job they have been promised. It is a dagger that stabs education for schoolgirls, school dropouts, and other teenage girls of school age.
They are their target, as they are mostly the victims of this act. This denied them the chance for a basic education and the acquisition of skills for self-reliance.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made:

1. There should be consistent raiding of suspected baby factories as well as the arrest and prosecution of operators and their clients by law enforcement agents. Before this, the operators should be paraded in public places and have their names, pictures, and stories published on social media to shame them as a form of deterrence to the offender and others.

2. Parents should desist from the act of giving their teenage children to people who promise to help get them jobs in the cities without prior notice and clarification from the Nigeria Police Force and other agencies involved to assist in profiling the person who has offered to help.

3. Public awareness should be created by civil society about the menace of teenagers and baby factories. Families should be counselled to build strong family relationships, foster trust and confidence, and enhance effective communication between parents and daughters.

4. Families should be counselled to build strong family relationships, foster trust and confidence, and enhance effective communication between parents and daughters.

**Reference**


The Punch. (2020). How we were deceived, lured to Ogun baby factories –Pregnant teenagers. Retrieved from https://punchng.com/how-we-were-deceived-lured-to-ogun-baby-factories-pregnant-teenagers/


