Underlying Factors Influencing Child Labour and Child Trafficking in Gombe Local Government Area, Gombe State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: Using primary data collected from 379 respondents through a mixed-methods survey, this research investigates the causes of child labor and child trafficking in the Gombe Local Government Area of Gombe State, Nigeria. The analysis through frequency counts, percentages, correlations and binary logistic regression (Basu & Van 1998; Fan 2011; Zapata et al. 2011) using a survey revealed the respondents were primarily low-income middle-aged females, with 43.27% earning less than N5,000 a month. Findings reported that 74.41% of children worked in family-operated business or farms, 74.67% of the families reported having child laborers, and 56.20% had been personally involved with child trafficking. The main drivers of poverty (38.79%) and unemployment (21.90%) were identified, which affected both male and female children (41.42%). The study highlights the need for further research and targeted policies designed to relieve economic vulnerability and protect children in the area.

Keywords: *Child Labour, Child Trafficking, Poverty, Gombe Local Government Area, Household Income*

1.1 Introduction

In regard to areas with immense poverty without educational or economic opportunities, child labour and trafficking persists

within the confines of Nigeria (Mahmud, et all, 2025). A case study of such circumstances is Gombe Local Government Area (LGA), where economic deprivation remains the dominant form of Gombe's LGA. UNICEF (2021) states, "There are millions of children of school age in Nigeria doing all sorts of works, the majority of which are exploitative and hazardous." The same troubling scenario Jafaru (2024) described, in which families with chronic poverty substratum, relies on the income generated by children to make ends meet. There is no question that scenario is a serious affront to children and their health.

The disparity between child labour and trafficking is an issue that is gradually gaining traction within scholarly discussions. Economic labour supply theories suggest that child labour is more easily exercised when household income is stagnating due to the necessity of income to supplement family earning (Basu & Van, 1998). The dilemma of impoverished families and the empirical literature, which argue that they are more amenable to letting their children work or being targeted by economic traffickers, are in concord (Okafor, 2010; ILO, 2017). The supply of underdeveloped institutional frameworks and gaps in social protection systems which are prevalent in Gombe LGA, compounded by the extreme informal and subsistence economic structures, do not simplify matters. The association between impoverished families and child labour, or trafficking, is structural, and not merely coincidental.

There lies a multitude of sociocultural and demographic factors that, in addition to economic factors, continue to sustain these problems. Some of the factors that influence the use of child labor are cultural norms that support childhood freedom and interest in child work, especially within larger families (Aliyu and Garba, 2020). Furthermore, the lack of quality education and weak child protection systems continue to reinforce poverty and exploitation (Yakubu et al, 2025). In the case of the Gombe LGA, the impact of post-regional insecurity in the area has been made worse by the fact that it has displaced families and weakened the traditional social systems that, in the past, offered some level of protection to children (UNODC, 2020).

Therefore, to attempt to resolve issues of child labor and trafficking, it is essential to analyze the structural, cultural and political factors. This paper seeks to highlight the specific gaps that continue to sustain these practices. This kind of research is

necessary in the formulation of specific preventive and responsive legislation and policy frameworks to curb child labor and trafficking in the region. Focus on specific elements of the household, especially income and its determinants, will aid policymakers and other relevant actors in formulating practical and research-based policies to address the issues within the region.

The issue of child labour and trafficking in Nigeria is intricately linked to a range of socioeconomic and structural inequalities (Magaji, Musa and Ismail, 2025). This study attempts to provide evidence on how household income affects the experiences and outcomes of children in this context. The outcomes would be integrated into the ongoing discussions on child rights and social protection tied to poverty in Nigeria. Moreover, advancing SDGs, especially Goals 1 (No Poverty), 4 (Quality Education), and 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), need deeper comprehension of such linkages.

2.1 Review of Concepts

2.1.1 Household Income

The household income is the aggregate income of all the members of a household which comprises wages, salaries, profits, rents, and other kinds of income.

This also reflects the family's economic standing and serves as an indicator for determining whether or not a family can afford basic necessities, such as food, housing, schooling, and health care, as posited by Enaberue et al (2024). Within the context of poverty, such as is the situation in most areas of Nigeria, low household income forces families to adopt difficult strategies, such as sending children to school (Gabdo et al, 20205) or enabling children to work to earn income to support the family (Magaji et al., 2015). Low income is constitutively cited as a root cause of child labour (Musa et al, 2024) and child exploitation (Basu and Van, 1998).

2.1.3 Child Trafficking

As Yunusa et al. (2024) describe, child trafficking constitutes the unlawful acquisition, movement, and harboring of children for the purpose of their exploitation, an example of which includes forced servitude. Child trafficking, unlike child labor which is sometimes prevalent within families or communities, is always

associated with the use of violence, fraud, and trafficking and is most commonly practiced across countries or regions (UNODC, 2020). Child trafficking is particularly prevalent in economically disadvantaged families. Parents' and families' desperation is exploited by traffickers who falsely offer jobs, education, and an improved life for their children (Lamiya et al., 2025). Lack of adequate law enforcement because of the poor socio-economic conditions in the country makes child trafficking a major problem in Nigeria, specifically in Gombe State.

2.2 Review of Theory

2.2.1 Child labor theory based on the luxury premise

Basu and Van (1998) describe luxury as an axiom theory in which child labor is economically theorized as a theory of a family. In this theory, children are presumed to not be put to work as long as the adult earning in the family is able to satisfy the family's basic consumption needs.

Child labor is often seen as an economic choice. However, an argument suggests that its presence in households is because of economic self preservation, as its adoption is a still an option when the income available is not enough to meet the bare minimum of the consumption. From this perspective, the theoretical framework that the study is undertaking might be appropriate because it shows how living in a poor household increases the risks of child labor, thus, raising the susceptibility of a child to child trafficking. Using the Luxury Axiom to understand the income dynamics of parents in the Gombe Local Government Area, one of the most impoverished regions of Nigeria, helps explain why parents are willing to subject their children to work or pay ransom to child traffickers (Basu & Van, 1998).

2.2 past research analysis

Akpotaire (2024) assessed the degree to which the child trafficking problem is being dealt with in Nigeria and how the country's judicial system, in particular, is performing, and provided some recommendations for improvement. The research undertook a doctrinal and critical analysis of international and domestic legal instruments including the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, and the Trafficking in Persons

(Prohibition) Enforcement and Administration Act (2015). Based on information obtained from the National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) and unpublished case law, the research conducted for the period 2011 to 2020 maintains that child trafficking can be effectively combated through implementation of constitutional amendments, legislative reforms, political will, victim rehabilitation, education, and capacity building.

Adabor (2024) in addition to controlling for the issue of endogeneity examines the association between child labor and household poverty in Ghana. The author attributes child labor and excessive working hours to the worsening of poverty, which in turn exacerbates the risk of injuries, burns, and skin diseases among working children. The results underscore the importance of government policies aimed at not only the elimination of child labor but also the alleviation of poverty in order to eliminate the problem of child labor.

Using informal employment and household poverty as mediators, Adabor and Ayesu (2024) studied the role of ethnic diversity on child labour in Ghana. The scholars have observed an association between increased ethnic fractionalization and child labour, and increased child labour in boys and children who live in rural areas. The analysis on the role of those mediators indicated that school and household poverty are the crucial areas through which ethnic diversity contribute to the child labour problem.

In a study of the effect of remittances on household labour supply in Nigeria, Alhassan, Maswana, and Inaba (2024) probed more than 61,000 survey respondents. With the implementation of a probit and Tobit analysis using an instrumental variable, the authors showed that in Northern Nigeria, remittances reduced agricultural employment and increased the population's participation in non-farm activities, particularly among the less educated. The result of remittances on Government Source of Income (GSI) was more pronounced among the higher GSI households, which illustrates the indirect influence remittances exert in determining employment opportunities.

Musa and Magaji's logit regression analysis in 2023 was used to understand the correlation between child labor and income on the households' income in

Northeastern region of Nigeria. They pointed out that the primary reason behind child labor and human trafficking was found to be poverty. The authors offered government policies aimed at boosting income and employment as possible ways for reducing the region's child exploitation.

Musa and Magaji (2023) as a case study designed a questionnaire and interviewed 50 people in the Bauchi Local Government Area in order to study child labor of the household and income level. Out of the entire sample, majority (80) were found to be unsupported in a government system and , as per Chi square and percent analysis, it is argued that the household income is subsistence level is the primary reason as to why children do work. The study was aimed at income enhancement and employment generation. Magaji, Musa, and Aluko (2022) used a logit model to analyze the relationship between child trafficking and unemployment in Nigeria based on primary data. There is a positive increase in the rates of child trafficking in correlation to the rates of unemployment.

The study has suggested that the government should formulate more robust employment strategies and revise the existing anti-trafficking policies. It also suggested that the government should strengthen the field of community-based organizations for the purpose of trafficking prevention.

2. 4 Gap in the Literature

While previous studies have explored the phenomenon of child labour and trafficking in the context of household poverty (Adabor, 2024; Musa and Magaji, 2023), legal frameworks (Akpotaire, 2024), inter ethnic and intra ethnic diversities (Adabor and Ayesu, 2024), unemployment (Magaji et al., 2022), and emigration remittances (Alhassan et al., 2024), an under researched area of integrative studies that concentrate solely on household is glaring. It is also the case that much of the studies have focused on sub-Saharan Africa, and more specifically, Ghana. Furthermore, legal and socio-economic factors on child labour and trafficking are predominant in the literature, while the studies that attempt to combine are few, and do so in relation to the income depletion eexposed to negliacted enforcement, or socio-cultural constraints to child labour and trafficking. This gap underscores the importance of context-specific studies, and more so for Gombe LGA, that are sensitive to the legal,

socio-economic, and political interplays, and are more likely to yield practical, targeted strategies.

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The survey research design employed in this study is well known for its effectiveness in collecting information from a given population using a set of standardized questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). The design enabled the integration of both qualitative and quantitative approaches in a flexible and systematic manner in terms of data collection and measurement. Quantitative dimensions consisted of highly structured and scored questionnaires while qualitative dimensions involved open-ended questions and detailed descriptions, capturing more nuanced insights within their focal areas, including the dynamics of managerial structures involved. The survey design is also quite pertinent with respect to the focus of this study, which is on socio-managerial issues, since it aids in the extrapolation of the acquired data to other areas of comparable nature (Singleton and Straits, 2009). Furthermore, the survey's reach to a large and geographically dispersed population enhanced the study's credibility and relevance, particularly the combined use of online and offline data collection techniques (Ndiyo, 2016).

3.2 The place of study.

Gombe enjoys the status of a state since 1996 when it was curved out of Bauchi state. It is located at the North-East geopolitical zone in Nigeria. It is bordered Bauchi state, Taraba, Borno, and Yobe. It consists of eleven Local Government Areas (LGAs) with Gombe City being the capital and the center for the other commercial and cultural activities in the region. Gombe LGA alone is the center of the Gombe Central Senatorial District and boasts an economic area in the state. It houses an approximate area of 20265 km squared. As of 2022, Nigeria's state population stood at an estimated 3.96 million with Gombe LGA alone accounting for half a million. This region's rapid urban migration facilitates settlement which economic activity (National Population Commission, 2022) confirms. This urbanization, in conjunction with the population boom, creates (more than it solves) economic, infrastructural,

and administrative challenges which necessitate effective authoritative planning and governance (NPC, 2022).

3.3 Population of the Study

This study will be conducted among the citizens living in the Gombe Local Government Area whose population stands at over 551,000 (Wikipedia, 2022). The Gombe LGA is ethnically and socioeconomically diverse and comprises people of different age groups, making the population of this region heterogeneous. Gombe LGA is not geographically isolated as it serves as an urban center where people from the surrounding LGA come for employment, better living standards and access to services in addition to education and trade. This group will provide a suitable context for the study as it will facilitate the evaluation of the socioeconomic behaviors and relationships within the community, which are the core objectives of this study. This will help in understanding the underlying local patterns, social problems, and socio-economic developmental gaps with the rest of the region as it would assist in understanding the everyday realities of the people that serve as the basis for informed social policy and program formulation. Sample Dimensions and Methodology: The population under study is sufficiently represented by the sample size.

The size of the sample was considered adequate and representative of the target population.

This research applied random sampling to assess the given variables. The sample size will be calculated based on the formula of Taro Yamani. The formula by Yamani (1968) for calculating sample size has been applied for this study as mentioned below;

$$n = N/〚1+N(e)〛^2$$

where n = Sample size,

N = Population size and

e = Error margin (0.05) at 95% CI.

To ascertain the sample size, an appropriate tool for data gathering was used to validate the statistical data obtained.

As the main strategy to obtain primary data for the study, participants will be given structured questionnaires. This region was selected because it is the most practical area to contact large numbers of people in the Gombe Local Govenment Area. The questionnaires will be designed in a way to facilitate clean data for more insightful examination of the collected data. Theform's introductory section aims to capture vital socioeconomic data for the respondents such as age, gender, level of education, occupation and some demographic data.

This it is by establishing facts, the study has situational profiling for the population, which is necessary for the element which follows, and to make sure that the element speaks to the appropriate range of community sentiments.

In the respondent's second section of the questionnaire, the researcher is interested in phy gathering the executives to their thoughts on what the most fundamental reason to the significant problems is, which includes Child labor and Child trafficking in the case of the Gombe Local Government Area. This section aims to elucidate the intricate link between economic conditions and the existence of such social problems and how changes in conditions may increase the chances of child exploitation. Respondents will be asked to rank the degree to which they think families in poverty are forced to consider resorting to child labor and to trafficking children. With the help of these perspectives, the study attempts to construct changes and relations that may aid community leaders, social workers, and policy makers understand the child labor and human trafficking in the area. in the end, these outcomes are intended to construct appropriate strategies to aid children and families in need.

3.6 Data Type and Source

In order to fully cover the examined subjects, both primary and secondary data sources are utilized.

The Gombe Local Government Area was useful for the researchers as primary source data due to the field surveys that were conducted there. The surveys facilitated the collection of relevant data on the socioeconomic characteristics and attitudes as well as the ways in which these attitudes affected child labor and trafficking. Understanding the first-hand experience of these people, who are directly affected by

such social issues, would be the main emphasis of the study. This would, on the one hand, ensure credibility of the research findings and, on the other, strengthen the relationship of the researchers with the local population, allowing for more discreet exploration of the factors at play.

Along with primary data collected from the surveys, secondary data were collected from many professional and academic books, journals, seminar papers, and any other written documents related to the topic. This secondary material was needed to comprehend the literature and the theoretical framework about the contemporary concerns of child labor and trafficking, along with the socio-economic framework of the region. The gaps which the current study intends to bridge and its ability to add to the existing body of knowledge and situate its results within the wider scholarly debate, along with secondary sources, helped to define the scope of the research. In research, the secondary data sources were also used to reinforce analysis by providing the context and trends of child exploitation. The combined use of primary and secondary data enhances the reliability of the research, and its intended policy and practice contributions to the field.

3.6.1 Data Collection Method

To collect and synthesize information from the field, two primary data collection methods were used along with the secondary sources listed above.

Surveys and face-to-face conversations were the primary techniques employed, and the outcomes shall offer elabourate data for evaluation. The surveys integrated both closed and open questions such that respondents offer their answers to certain metrics and also provide their responses to the questions. This methodical process would facilitate the thorough gathering of information and also allow the participants to elaborate and scrutinize their experiences and opinions on the goals of the study. In order to augment the questionnaire data, personal interviews were conducted with the purpose of exmplifiyng the individual stories and opinions. Participants, while informally conversing during oral interviews, were able to elaborate on the intricacies of child labor and trafficking in the Gombe Local Government Area.

Moreover, the other sources of data were important in complementing the primary research efforts. These sources were, indeed, relevant to the topic since they are publications of books, academic journals, papers, and other written reports. By analyzing these resources, researchers were able to situate their findings vis-a-vis the existing literature and to integrate their findings across the work of prior researchers. Beyond contributing to the construction of the theoretical framework of the study, the examination of the other data sources also determined some of the gaps that the primary data collection would fill. Ultimately, the research was able to provide a reasoned account of the socio economic factors of child labor and trafficking in Gombe State and also shed some light on the possible factors that could be used to formulate sound policy and intervention measures. This was the outcome of the integration of both primary and secondary sources of information.

3.6.2 Methods of Analyzing the Data

A number of statistical instruments were applied to the data collected through the surveys in order to give a holistic understanding of the data.

The respondents' distribution of characteristics and opinions were identified using frequency counts to assess the number of times participants offered certain responses. This quantification of data made it easier to work with and assess pattern and trend data. Furthermore, the reporting of the data underlying a basic comparison of the different covariates and demographic groups was facilitated by basic percentage work. Correlation analysis was used to understand the interaction between the key variables, which in this case were the prevalence of child labor and child trafficking. This technique helped the researchers understand the important relationships of variables and the probable determinants of different income levels faced to the imperative social challenges. The research was able to provide important insights to the stakeholders and decision makers regarding the Gombe Local Government Area using clear conclusions drawn from this research because of the multiple and complex data analysis techniques used.

3.7 Model Details

The analytic model for this research was constructed using the work of Fan (2011), Zapata et al. (2011) and Basu and Van (1998) as a basis for the work. The implicit form of the logit model is given as follows:

$$Z_i = b_o + b_1 x_{ik} + u_i \quad \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where: Z_i = Financial Inclusion (dummy where = Trafficking and Child Labor and 0 otherwise).

Bo is a constant.

B1 is the collection of and explanatory variables (i = 1, 2,.. k) that corresponds to the coefficient X_{ik}.

Ui is the error term for random disturbance

$$Z_i = InP_i \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots\dots (2)$$

$$1 - P_i = b_o + b_1 x_1 + b_2 x_2 + b_3 x_3 + u_i \text{ is the explicit model. } \dots\dots\dots\dots\dots (3)$$

where, if dummy, 1 = Child Labour and 0, otherwise, Z_i = Child Labour.

bn = estimate parameters, bo = constant term.

1 = household income, 0 otherwise;

X1 is the household income.

Poverty is equal to X2 (1=poverty, 0 otherwise).

X3 is equal to unemployment (1 is unemployed, 0 otherwise).

Ui is the name for random disturbance.

The following is a definition of the model.

Hs, E, S = Trafficking, Child Labor = f (Hs, E, S)

Where

Hs = size of the household.

E = Employment.

S = Skill Child Trafficking and Labor = f (E)

Where

E = Employment.

Next is a definition of the model.

The Econometrics of this rest predominantly involves the application of the computer-aided and mathematics of the equation.

Besides the flexibility of mathematical computations, the binary logistic model was so chosen for its ability to accommodate multiple variables and for consistent interpretation.The main aim of this research study was to figure out the most important factors to consider when making a decision with two possible alternatives and how flexible and convenient the user model is. Given the independent variable is binary, the OLS approach would be the most appropriate for estimation.

3.8 Methods and Procedures for Estimation and Evaluation

The Omnibus Test

This diagnostic tool is used to decide whether to accept or reject the complete model. The P-value is used to reach a decision, and any figure lower than 0.05 indicates the model is a good fit for the data. The null hypothesis in this case states the model does not fit the data well. Consequently, the test helps ascertain the validity of the entirety of the model.

Goodness of Fit:

This is the measure of how well the the predicted outcomes with the actual outcomes. It determines how much of the variability in the dependent variable is accounted for

by the independent variables, and ensures that each independent variable is sufficiently explanatory to the changes in the dependent.

Odds Ratio: the ratio of odds tells you the chances of a given outcome-event and how stable the Predictor X affects the probability of the event.

Many times, this is referred to as 'relative risk' in a logistic regression context. It concerns the odds of y being equal to 1, as opposed to y being 0. A 2 to 1 ratio, for example, means that y equals one is more likely than y equals zero. While the values greater than 1 indicate the probability 'y' equals to 1 is greater, the values lower than one represent the probability 'y' equals zero is greater, and odds ratio of 1 represents equal chances.

Nagelkerke's R-squared and R-squared for Cox and Snell R-squared, the latter is often regarded as the top pseudo R-squared cage, while this one is a revisioned version. Because their values lie between 0 and 1, interpretation is easy. It represents the proportion of variance in the dependent variable that is accounted for by the independent variables in the model.

Predictive likelihood: It is within the context of the model that the computation of the probability that the dependent variable for each observation equals one is done once the estimates for the model have been obtained. Accurate forecasts are obtained by this method. The probability statement is expressed as $P = pr [y = 1/x] = F(x'\beta)$.

The expected probability which is anticipated that the value of y equals 1 is always constrained between 0 and 1.

Testing Hypotheses:

The alternative hypothesis (H1) is that $\beta 0$ does not equal to 0 (the parameter is not statistically significant). The null hypothesis (H0) is that $\beta 0$ equals 0 (the parameter is statistically insignificant). We reject H0 with the decision rule H0 is alive if the p-value is above 0.05.

Each parameter's statistical significance and the model's predictive power dictate whether the hypotheses will be accepted or rejected. In the case of a two-tailed test,

the null hypothesis is rejected whenever the p-value is lower than 0.05; otherwise, it is retained. Similarly, H0 is rejected whenever the calculated value is lower than the tabular value of the standard distribution table; otherwise, it is accepted. Finally, the model predicts y=1 if the expected probability is less than 0.05; otherwise, y=0.

4.1 Presentation of Data

Out of the 400 questionnaires that sought to understand the causes of child labor and human trafficking given to adult household heads in the Gombe Local Government Area, 379 were returned. Since enumerators both issued the questionnaires and provided clarification and interview services as necessary, the technique proved very effective in achieving its objectives. This strategy aided in the accuracy and thoroughness of the responses. Respondents' participation aided in untrustworthy participation, thus enhancing accountability and trust. Therefore, the dataset was reliable and provided comprehensive insights regarding child labor and human trafficking and, thus, aided in policy formulation and community-based programs.

4.1.1 Rate of Reaction

Table 4.1 illustrates the outcomes of the survey. In all four study sites, 379 out of the 400 questionnaires sent were accurately filled and returned, resulting in a 95% response rate. It was established that 379 valid responses, in line with the predetermined sample size, were used in the analysis.

According to Brooks (2008), most research only requires a response rate of at least 60% to be considered adequate. Hence, for this study, a response rate of 95% is considered to be more than enough for rigorous academic research.

4.1.1 Response Rate

The outcome of the survey is presented in Table 4.1. Out of 400 questionnaires administered, 379 were accurately completed and retrieved, representing a 95% response rate across the four selected study areas. All valid responses were included in the analysis, consistent with the targeted sample size. Brooks (2008) suggests that a response rate of 60% or higher is generally acceptable in academic research.

Therefore, the 95% achieved here is considered excellent and sufficient for producing credible research outcomes.

4.1 Descriptive Analysis

Table 4.2: Distribution of Responses Based on Age of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18–30	41	10.82
31–40	206	54.35
41–50	103	27.18
50 & Above	29	7.65
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.2 shows the age distribution of participants. A smaller group of 41 respondents (10.82%) were within the 18–30 age range, indicating that younger adults were less represented. The majority, 206 respondents (54.35%), were aged 31–40, highlighting that middle-aged adults formed the dominant group in the sample. This demographic is often key in family decision-making and income generation, both of which directly affect child labour and trafficking issues. Another 103 respondents (27.18%) fell within the 41–50 category, further reflecting the dominance of mature adults. Meanwhile, 29 respondents (7.65%) were aged 50 years and above, representing the smallest group. Overall, the data reveals that perspectives largely come from middle-aged adults, a demographic highly relevant to socio-economic issues surrounding children.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Responses Based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	203	53.56
Male	176	46.44
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

As indicated in Table 4.3, female respondents made up 203 (53.56%) of the total, slightly higher than males at 176 (46.44%). This suggests that women were more represented in the study. Their dominance highlights women's active involvement in household and child welfare issues, consistent with traditional caregiving roles. This gender balance ensures that women's insights into family welfare, child labour, and trafficking are well documented, offering an important gender-based understanding of the problem.

Table 4.4: Distribution of Responses Based on Family Income

Income	Frequency	Percentage
Less than ₦5,000	164	43.27
₦5,000 – ₦50,000	178	47.00
₦50,000 – ₦100,000	30	7.92
₦100,000 & Above	7	1.81
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The figures in Table 4.4 show a predominance of low-income households. A total of 164 respondents (43.27%) earned less than ₦5,000, reflecting economic hardship. The majority, 178 respondents (47%), fell into the ₦5,000–₦50,000 range, making it the most common category. Only 30 participants (7.92%) earned between ₦50,000 and ₦100,000, while just 7 (1.81%) reported incomes above ₦100,000. These results emphasize that most households fall within the low-to-moderate income range, pointing to financial constraints that may encourage child labour and trafficking.

Table 4.5: Distribution of Responses Based on Child Help

Child Help	Frequency	Percentage
No	97	25.59
Yes	282	74.41
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

As Table 4.5 reveals, 282 respondents (74.41%) confirmed that their children assist in farms or family businesses, while 97 (25.59%) reported otherwise. This indicates that children play a significant role in household survival strategies. The high reliance on children's labour reflects economic pressures on families. Meanwhile, the quarter of respondents who do not engage their children may be influenced by factors such as schooling or the nature of parents' work.

Table 4.6: Distribution of Responses Based on Household Size

Household Size	Frequency	Percentage
2 – 3	19	5.01
4 – 8	82	21.64
9 – 14	186	49.08
15 & Above	92	24.27
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The results in Table 4.6 reveal that 19 households (5.01%) had 2–3 members, while 82 (21.64%) had between 4 and 8 members. The largest group, 186 respondents (49.08%), reported having 9–14 members, suggesting the dominance of extended families. Additionally, 92 households (24.27%) had 15 or more members. These findings suggest that large households are common, reflecting communal living traditions, resource sharing, and increased reliance on children's contributions to family labour.

Table 4.7: Distribution of Respondents Based on Child Labour

Child Labour	Frequency	Percentage
No	96	25.33
Yes	283	74.67
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The data in Table 4.7 indicates that 283 respondents (74.67%) confirmed the presence of child labour in their households, while 96 (25.33%) did not. This shows

that child labour is widespread and mostly driven by economic need. Families not engaging children may reflect better financial stability or prioritisation of education.

Table 4.8: Distribution of Responses Based on Child Trafficking

Child Trafficking	Frequency	Percentage
No	213	56.20
Yes	166	43.80
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

As shown in Table 4.8, 166 respondents (43.80%) reported child trafficking cases, while 213 (56.20%) did not. Although slightly more households denied involvement, the high percentage reporting trafficking demonstrates its seriousness within the community.

Table 4.9: Distribution of Responses Based on the Gender of Children Affected by Child Labour and Trafficking

Gender Affected	Frequency	Percentage
Female	72	19.00
Male	36	9.50
None	114	30.08
Both	157	41.42
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.9 reveals that 72 respondents (19%) reported female children being affected, while 36 (9.50%) noted male children. Notably, 157 respondents (41.42%) indicated that both genders were affected, showing that the problem cuts across boys and girls. Meanwhile, 114 respondents (30.08%) stated no children were affected. This underscores the need for interventions that address both genders, although girls appear somewhat more vulnerable.

Table 4.10: Distribution of Responses Based on the Causes of Child Labour and Trafficking

Causes	Frequency	Percentage
Poverty	147	38.79
Low Level of Education	5	1.32
Unemployment	83	21.90
Greed	3	0.79
Large Family Size	27	7.12
School Dropout	18	4.75
All of the Above	96	25.33
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The results in Table 4.10 identify poverty as the main driver, with 147 respondents (38.79%) citing it. Unemployment followed at 21.90%, while 25.33% attributed the problem to all listed causes combined, recognising their interconnectedness. Other causes such as large family size, school dropout, and low education were reported by smaller percentages.

Table 4.11: Distribution of Respondents Based on Parents' Level of Employment

Employment Status	Frequency	Percentage
Unemployed	142	37.47
Employed	44	11.61
Underemployed	193	50.92
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.11 shows that underemployment was reported by 193 respondents (50.92%), highlighting its strong influence on child labour and trafficking. Unemployment accounted for 37.47%, while 44 respondents (11.61%) indicated that even employed parents still faced challenges. This demonstrates that inadequate or unstable jobs drive children's exploitation.

Table 4.12: Distribution of Responses Based on Parents' Level of Skill

Skill Level	Frequency	Percentage
Skilled	62	16.36
Unskilled	208	54.88
Semi-skilled	109	28.76
Total	**379**	**100**

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Table 4.12 highlights that 208 respondents (54.88%) identified unskilled parents as the most vulnerable group, followed by 109 (28.76%) semi-skilled, while only 62 (16.36%) were skilled. This indicates that a lack of employable skills significantly contributes to household poverty, making children more at risk of labour and trafficking.

4.3 Presentation and Analysis of Regression Results

The regression results, displayed in Table 4.13, examine the hypothesis and provide statistical evidence on the determinants of child labour and trafficking.

4.3.1 Test of Hypothesis

The third hypothesis was assessed using the logit regression model:

H0: There is no significant relationship between the determinants and child labour/child trafficking in Gombe LGA.

Table 4.13: Regression Results on Underlying Factors Linking Household Income to Child Labour and Trafficking

Independent Variable	Child Labour	Child Labour with Income	Child Trafficking	Child Trafficking with Income
Household Size	7.1138*** (1.0645)	1.462396*** (0.18360)	2.7500*** (0.2863)	0.7103*** (0.0721)
Employment	0.2964 (0.3281)	-0.4326*** (0.0862)	0.0822 (0.1371)	-0.2181*** (0.0867)

Independent Variable	Child Labour	Child Labour with Income	Child Trafficking	Child Trafficking with Income
Skill	0.3631 (0.5342)	-0.8729*** (0.1363)	-0.1821 (0.2463)	-0.5235*** (0.1012)
N	379	379	379	379

*Note: Standard error in parentheses; *** Significant at 1%*
Source: Author's Computation, 2025

The regression analysis indicates that household size has a significant positive effect on child labour and trafficking, especially when income is included, showing that larger families are more dependent on children's labour. In contrast, employment and skills demonstrate negative relationships when adjusted for income, suggesting that stable jobs and better skills reduce the risks. Thus, income serves as a mediating factor: while larger households are more vulnerable, employment and skill development act as protective measures.

4.4: Results and Discussion

The most prominent correlates of child labor in this case are the dimensions of the household, the home, the employment status, and the skill set. In this case, the only dimension that matters as statistically significant is the size of the household. In this particular case, the two other dimensions do account for a lot of variability of child labor, though home income is the more dominant factor.

It is also worth noting that there is a strong negative association regarding employment and child labor, as well as a negative association with skill set. Employment and skill set do significantly reduce the chances of child labor, with coefficients of 0.43 and 0.87, respectively. It is clear that income, as well as the size of the household, and employment have a direct influence on child trafficking.

While household size and wealth show strong links with child trafficking, work does not, and neither does home income with child trafficking; however, with household income, the effect of affluent households is significant and deeply associated with child trafficking (coefficient 0.71). With linkages from home income to employment

and skills, there is a statistically significant decline in child trafficking. The employment and skills coefficients are 0.22 and 0.52, respectively.

Reporting on the research article, it can be stated that there is a positive correlation between household size and child labor and child trafficking with household income. Conversely, employment and skill advancement are detached from child labor and child trafficking.

The findings from the research indicate that indeed high household sizes and low household income are contributors to the increased child labor and trafficking in Gombe Local Government. In contrast, the lack of employment and skills is associated with child labor and child trafficking. It is important to highlight that in Gombe Local Government, child labor is far more prevalent than child trafficking.

5.0 Final Thought and Suggestion

This article has explained the complex relation of household income with child labor and trafficking in the Gombe Local Government Area in detail.

The evidence certainly indicates that a household's financial problems coupled with increased unemployment rates and the presence of large families, dramatically amplifies a child's vulnerability to such predatory behavior. Child labor and the existence of Child trafficking, in the context of a socially dominant and economically desperate country, raise a flag, especially in light of the insights carried with the responses. Again, the desperate need for intervention pointed at the mechanisms governing social order also stems from the helplessly high unemployment and poverty rates. It is the conclusion of this study that children's exploitation and the success of a family economically seems to be two sides of the same coin, and so the more we try to eradicate child labor and trafficking, the more we are bound to fail in the absence of any such basic economic security.

In light of such findings, it is decidedly recommended that efforts to curtail Child labor and trafficking in the Gombe Local government in Nigeria be done in an integrated, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinary fashion. There is immediate need

to address the problem of sustainable employment for adults in a household if we are to increase the income at the household level,

Thisenezista's economic vision would drive me to tailored initiatives supporting responsible return investment, Margaret Wendy Harper applied strides with micron finance, socio prisatic entrepreneurship to the social business projected paramount importance.

Furthermore, raising awareness is critical to equipping parents and communities with knowledge on the adverse and intergenerational impacts of child labor and human trafficking as well as cultivating the notion that children need to be taught about their future. Social assistance programs, on the other hand, need to be strengthened so that the most at-risk families are able to support themselves without having to resort to child labor. More protective laws on child exploitation, coupled with protective services for the children affected, will only be possible if there is a minimum level of safety and caring for all children in the region. This will need better collaboration between state bodies, the NGO sphere, and community leaders.

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