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Perceived Satisfaction and Effectiveness of Rehabilitation of Victims of Human Trafficking in Nigeria: Implications for Political and Psychological Interventions

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author one designed the study, supervised the work, carried out field work and performed the statistical analysis. Author two wrote the first draft of the manuscript while author three managed the literature searches and edited the manuscript. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the perceived satisfaction and effectiveness of rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking in Nigeria. Survey design was adopted and two hundred and six participants were selected for the study using snowball sampling technique. The age range of the participants was between 19-32 years with mean of 21.6 years and standard deviation of 2 years. They were all females rescued from foreign countries and within the country. Perceived Benefit of Rehabilitation Programme Questionnaire (PRPQ) was developed and used to collect data. The findings revealed that most beneficiaries appreciated the provision of accommodation and feeding but believed that facilities available could be better. The beneficiaries did not condemn the psychological and

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emotional interventions provided but argued that it could be improved upon. It was concluded that recovery of human trafficking victims may require very rich programmes designed by different professionals such as social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, medical personnel, legal professionals etc.

Keywords: Rehabilitation; trafficking; intervention; social work.

1. INTRODUCTION

Societal discrimination against women leads to their increased vulnerability to human trafficking, as “social and cultural prejudices and the prevalence of gender violence present additional challenges to their effective protection from trafficking” (UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre, 2003) [1]. Women are left economically vulnerable through widowhood, and divorce, separation, or abandonment, and often are forced to migrate in search of wage labour where they must accept substandard employment in order to survive. Gender discrimination and an attitude regarding the expendability of women and girls often serve as a fatal rationale for indifference towards child prostitution and trafficking in women and girls Millions of these vulnerable individuals often found themselves in the net of human traffickers.

The economic marginalization hypothesis positions that the economic disadvantage of women, such as low level of educational opportunity, high levels of unemployment and poverty predisposes them to involvement in human trafficking and other (Heimer, Wittrock, & Unal, [2] Hunnicutt & Brody, [3].

However, with the efforts of governments in both developed and developing nations, victims of human trafficking especially women are either set free by law enforcement agents or manage to escape. But, they mostly live under the effects of psychological and physical trauma they have faced or witnessed. The gory conditions they were exposed to stem from inhumane living conditions, poor sanitation, lack of sexual protection, physical and emotional attacks, occupational hazards and lack of preventative healthcare (USAID, 2005) [4]. They were prone to common health issues such as HIV/AIDS, pelvic pain, UTI, pregnancy, infertility, infection or mutilations, malnourishment and infectious diseases. Most of these victims were prone to abuse substances either from being led to it by their traffickers or by turning to substance abuse as a coping mechanism to help cope or escape their desperate situations. The common types of

psychological trauma faced by these victims includes, depression, stress related disorders, disorientation, phobias and panic attacks. Posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been focus of nearly all studies related to psychological and mental health needs of victims of trafficking (International Organization for Migration, Pico-Alfonso, Zimmerman et al. [5,6,7]). However, to bring back the confidence and faith of the victims that they have lost, well maintained rehabilitation centers are necessary.

Edwards and McGorry [8] recognise the importance of providing holistic care continuously and assertively during the critical years after the stressful events. The programme of rehabilitating victims of human trafficking is a process designed to enable them to reach and maintain their optimal physical, emotional, social, and spiritual functional levels (Anthony, Mental Health Commission, [9,10]). It also aims at helping these individuals achieve the highest level of independence and quality of life possible (Harper, [11]).

However, as lofty as these objectives are, they are rarely achieved. The rehabilitation of victims of human trafficking and child labour in Nigeria has been the joint efforts of both government agencies and non-governmental organisations. Some of them include; Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation (WOTCLEF) and National Agency for Prohibition of Traffic in Persons and Other Related Matters (NAPTIP). For example, the Counselling and Rehabilitation department of NAPTIP is empowered to develop and implement programmes and policies that will enhance a smooth rehabilitation and reintegration of victims into self sustaining and productive members of the society. Some of the rehabilitation and residential house for victims of trafficking in Nigeria has variety of facilities for the victims where they feel as comfortable as home. These houses provide the victims with shelter and three times meals. Some of them run comprehensive rehabilitation programmes which included vocational training as well as provision of equipment and start-off grants to facilitate re-

integration (WOTCLEF), [12]. They provide psycho-social care and legal assistance to the victims which Johnson [13] regarded as most important. The centers provide services in the area of formal and informal education which include human rights awareness and vocational skill building training to make the beneficiaries economically empower. The reunification and reintegration of victims to the society and follow-up are part of the programmes that are very essential. However, some of these rehabilitation homes engage in recreational activities to keep beneficiaries entertained and busy. This may assist in healing the wound faster. These activities should help them forget their pain and misery and to think of new life again. The combination of the TIP Report which highlights the "three P's"— prosecution, protection, and prevention and the victim-centered approach to trafficking that suggested the "three R's"— rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration should be employed. The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000, as amended, makes it clear from the outset that the purpose of combating human trafficking is to ensure just and effective punishment of traffickers, to protect their victims, and to prevent trafficking from occurring. The last "p"-prevention should be the major target of the developing nations' governments. If legislation proves inadequate in curbing the scourge of human trafficking in highly technological societies like Europe and America what is the hope of developing or underdeveloped countries like Nigeria? If corruption and weak law enforcement are hampering efforts to combat human trafficking can solutions be found elsewhere? Yes, victims can be used to promulgate the message against human trafficking by sharing their experiences to vulnerable people but these victims must be helped recover completely before they can be useful to the society.

There is a need however to evaluate the services being provided by these homes from the beneficiaries' perspectives. Victim satisfaction is thought by some to be the ultimate outcome of the delivery of rehabilitation services. Victim satisfaction is a critical component of quality service because it provides information on the provider's success at meeting those victims' expectations in matters on which the victims are the ultimate authority. Satisfaction equally quickens recovery. Recovery is described by Anthony [9] as a "deeply personal, unique process of changing one's attitudes, values, feelings, goals, skills, and/or roles. It is a way of living a satisfying, hopeful, and contributing life

even with limitations caused by the stressful events. There is a general understanding that the victim is the person directly injured by a crime and realization that the rehabilitation system should be responsive to the victim's needs. In order words victims must be benefited from rehabilitation.

2. METHODS

2.1 Design

This study adopted a survey design. However, two methods of data collection were used; the questionnaire and personal interview.

2.2 Sample

The snowball sampling technique was used to select participants for this study. Snowball sampling is a method typically used with rare populations like victims of human trafficking. Members of this population are difficult to locate (Spren, [14]). This population comprised all beneficiaries of services provided by rehabilitation homes for human trafficking victims. Two hundred and six participants agreed to participate in this study. Seventeen of these participants were interviewed (10 from government and 7 from NGOs rehabilitation homes). All these victims benefitted from rehabilitation services provided by NGOs and government agency. Their ages range from 19 to 32 years with mean of 21.6 years and standard deviation of 2years. These participants spent various months in rehabilitation homes ranges between two to six months. They were all females rescued from foreign countries and within the country.

2.3 Instrument

Perceived Benefit of Rehabilitation Programme Questionnaire (PRPQ) was developed by the researcher and used to collect data. The bio-data were measured with 4 items (age, type of rehabilitation home and country of rescue). There were 16 items on PRPQ, out of which 3 items measured the nature of essential facilities provided (accommodation, security and health). There were 4 items that measured beliefs about the positive outcomes associated with services provided in rehabilitation homes. These include; improved health, safety, empowerment and skill acquisition, emotional stability and improved self esteem etc. The perceived benefits were

measured with 9 items. The internal consistency was found to be adequate with Cronbach Alpha of .88 across age and test-retest reliability of .68 over 3 months.

3. RESULTS

Data on age status as presented in Table 1 shows, 97 (47.1%) of the participants were between 19-20years of age, 53 (25.7%) were between 21-22years of age, 33 (16%) were between 23-24years, 3 (1.5%) were between 25-26years, 8 (3.9%) were between 27-28years of age, 4 (1.9%) were between 29-30years and 8 (3.9%) were between 31-32years.

Table 1. Age of the participants

Age	Freq	Percent
19-20 years	97	47.1
21-22 years	53	25.7
23-24 years	33	16
25-26 years	3	1.5
27-28 years	8	3.9
29-30 years	4	1.9
31-32 years	8	3.9
Total	206	100

Data on the place of rescue of the victims as presented in Table 2 shows that 97(47.1%) of the victims were rescued from foreign countries while 109 (52.9%) of the victims were rescued within Nigeria.

Table 2. Place of rescue of the victims

Place	Freq	Percent
Victims rescued from foreign countries	97	47.1
Victims rescued within Nigeria	109	52.9
Total	206	100

3.1 Answer to Research Questions

3.1.1 Answers to research questions raised for this study are presented below

Research Question 1: Who are the operators of rehabilitation home for the victims of human trafficking in Nigeria?

The data as presented in Table 3 shows that government operates most of the rehabilitation homes that catered for the victims of human trafficking in Nigeria. Despite the fact that several NGOs exist in the country, very few are interested in rehabilitation programmes as only

28% of the participants were from homes operating by NGO against 72% from government homes. In other countries they are recognised as partners in progress. The nature of the independent role played by non-governmental organisations in rehabilitation of victims within Nigerian society calls for real participation. The response of one of the interviewees supported this view.

Table 3. Operators of rehabilitation home of the participants

Operators	Freq	Percent
Government	148	72
NGOs	58	28
Total	206	100

There are few NGOs that have involved themselves in rehabilitation of human trafficking victims; they are majorly in the areas of education, human rights and advocacy work.

Research Question 2: How do participants rate the facilities available in rehabilitation homes?

The appropriateness of accommodations provided in rehabilitation homes as presented in Table 4 was rated using facilities such as space available, lightning, beddings etc. The quality of shelter provided for victims at rehabilitation centers was perceived as fair by majority of participants (54.36%).

Shelters are essential because it is the first destination for victims of trafficking, following a rescue by law enforcement agents or escape by victims. They provide refuge for a few days or months. The participants were of the opinion that NGOs may not have resources at their disposal like government. 'Fundraising for NGO presents several challenges, in fact some operators often complain'; one of the interviewees lamented. Another interviewee commented that;

NGOs are expressing difficulty in finding sufficient, appropriate and continuous funding for their work. They find accessing donors as challenging as dealing with their funding conditions. This is the reason for their low participations.

Security of the rehabilitation centers is a major concern. The fear of outside break-ins by their formal abductors and escape from the shelter by victims are the two important reasons while security provision is paramount. The participants in government rehabilitation centers, as

Table 4. Rating of accommodation available in rehabilitation homes

Categories	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor
Government	11 (5.34%)	16 (7.77%)	67 (32.52%)	54 (26.21%)
NGOs	7 (3.40%)	6 (2.91%)	45 (21.84%)	-
Total	18(8.74%)	22(10.68%)	112 (54.36%)	54 (26.21%)

Table 5. Level of security in rehabilitation homes

Categories	Highly secure	Moderately secure	Fairly secure	Not secure
Government	102(49.51%)	30(14.56%)	16 (32.52%)	-
NGOs	5 (2.43%)	4 (1.94%)	43 (20.87%)	6 (2.91%)
Total	107 (51.94%)	34(16.50%)	59 (53.39%)	6 (2.91%)

presented in Table 5, rated the provision of security very high (49.51%) while their counterparts in NGOs' described the security provision as fair(20.87%) in their centers.

Victims of trafficking often require special attention. For example, they may suffer permanent and/or chronic medical conditions requiring intensive and lifelong treatment. Some of them have experienced sexual assault during their trafficking experience, putting them at risk for an increased number of associated health and mental health issues. The provision of health facilities in rehabilitation centers is essential. The findings revealed, as presented in Table 6, that participants in government rehabilitation centres rated health facilities available as high with over 30% either see these facilities as excellent or good against only 10% participants from NGOs' homes reported good health facilities. The response of one of the interviewees revealed inadequate personnel to handle health related issues in NGOs facilities.

NGOs have limited resources to mobilize health personnel and are often not looking for funds that are available locally, preferring to wait for international donors to approach them.

Research Question 3: What types of intervention were you exposed to in rehabilitation home?

Victims need assistance that extends beyond the end of their exploitation and any criminal prosecution. Vocational training can reduce the risk of them being sucked into exploitative situations again. Many survivors of human trafficking face double jeopardy, in addition to the trauma of sexual assault and abuse, victims are often blamed for what has happened to them. Ostracized and shouldering a burden of guilt for having shamed their families, many of them have nowhere to turn. There is a need to provide for victims of sexual violence the opportunity to participate in individual and group counseling in a safe environment so they can heal from their trauma and reclaim their dignity, self-worth and overall mental health. This should be geared towards providing professional counselling for victims of sex crimes which are known to reduce related concerns like post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), addiction and suicide. Participants reported inadequacy of counselling services in both government and NGOs' homes as presented in Table 7.

Table 6. Level of health facilities in rehabilitation homes

Categories	Rating	Freq	Percent
Government	Excellent	24	16.22
	Good	30	20.27
	Fair	82	55.41
	Poor	12	8.10
	Total	148	100
NGOs	Excellent	-	-
	Good	6	10.35
	Fair	32	55.17
	Poor	20	34.48
	Total	58	100

Research Question 4: What are the benefits you derived from rehabilitation homes?

Participants reported as presented in Table 8 that rehabilitation homes provided accommodation, feeding and safety which were essential to their process of recovery after traumatic events.

Research Question 5: What is the impact of the rehabilitation programme on the participants' psychological well being (emotional stability and self esteem)?

Participants rated the impact of the rehabilitation programme on their psychological well being (emotional stability and self esteem). The data as presented in Table 9 shows that most of them reported fairly improved psychological well being (50% in government homes against 39.7% in NGOs' homes).

Research Question 6: What is the rating of your satisfaction or otherwise of the rehabilitation programme for victims of human trafficking in Nigeria?

In all, majority of the victims, as presented in Table 10, were fairly satisfied with activities of operators of rehabilitation homes while only 29% in government and 22% from NGOs' homes were dissatisfied.

4. DISCUSSION

This study signified the availability of rehabilitation facilities for victims of human trafficking in Nigeria. The finding revealed collaboration between government and private sector in provision of rehabilitation for victims of trafficking in persons in Nigeria. This collaboration will help in victim identification. Victim identification is germane to victim support. Government officials should not remain in their offices and await victims to self-identify.

Table 7. Types of intervention in rehabilitation home

Categories	Interventions	Freq	Percent
Government	Vocational training	11	7.43
	life skills	16	10.81
	Psycho-social support	67	45.27
	Individual and group counselling	54	36.49
	Total	148	100
NGOs	Vocational training	7	12.07
	life skills training	6	10.35
	Psycho-social support	35	60.34
	Individual and group counselling	10	17.24
	Total	58	100

Table 8. Perceived benefits derived from rehabilitation homes

	Rating	Freq	Percent
Government	Accommodation	148	100
	Feeding	148	100
	Social support	100	67.57
	Skills	78	52.70
	Safety	84	56.77
	Socio-personal counselling	64	43.24
	Medical facilities	66	44.60
	Legal assistance	84	56.76
	Educational opportunity	84	56.76
NGOs	Accommodation	58	100
	Feeding	58	100
	Social support	50	86.21
	Skills	32	55.17
	Safety	52	89.66
	Socio-personal counselling	48	82.76
	Medical Facilities	42	72.41
	Legal assistance	34	58.62
	Educational opportunity	44	75.86

Table 9. Impact of the rehabilitation programme on the participants' psychological well being (emotional stability and self esteem)

		Freq	Percent
Government	Highly improved	16	10.8
	Moderately improved	32	21.6
	Fairly improved	74	50
	Not improved	26	17.6
	Total	148	100
NGOs	Highly improved	4	6.9
	Moderately improved	18	31
	Fairly improved	23	39.7
	Not improved	13	22.4
	Total	58	100.00

Table 10. Level of satisfaction of victims with rehabilitation programme

		Freq	Percent
Government	Highly satisfied	16	10.82
	Satisfied	24	16.21
	Fairly satisfied	64	43.24
	Not satisfied	44	29.73
	Total	148	100
NGOs	Highly satisfied	4	6.89
	Satisfied	8	13.80
	Fairly satisfied	33	56.90
	Not satisfied	13	22.41
	Total	58	100

The global best practices are to proactively seek victims through screening of vulnerable populations. This can only be done with collaboration with communities, non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

In the instances of routine raids of brothels, collaboration with NGOs can help police identify potential trafficking victims and refer them for protective services. However, with only 28% of victims being catered for by NGOs indicates minimal impact of private sectors. This may be due to non-availability of finances and limited resources.

Interestingly, the beneficiaries of both government and NGOs' centres rated accommodation facilities in NGOs' centres better than governments'. This may imply better management and effective monitoring that most private organisations enjoy when compare with government service provision. Security wise, the participants rated government centres higher than NGOs and the health facilities in government centres were rated higher NGOs centres.

The types of intervention provided though identical but NGOs seem to have richer

programmes than government rehabilitation homes. Prigatano [15] suggested that rehabilitation needs to address emotional and psychosocial issues and without that main objectives of the programme may be unrealizable. Scholars are of opinion that effective rehabilitation programmes are ways of encouraging people to compensate for consequences of traumatic events that victims have witnessed or faced (Wilson and Watson; Wilson [16,17]. The focus of rehabilitation programme for victims of human trafficking should be to help them to return to a productive lifestyle (Petrella et al. [18]. The success of rehabilitation programmes for victims of human trafficking should be measured by such outcomes. Increasing social skills and social relationships is an important part of rehabilitation (Johnson and Davis Ownsworth et al., Ylvisaker et al.) [19,20,21]. The two homes are beneficial but participants were more satisfied in government homes than NGOs rehabilitation homes.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study suggest appreciative efforts by the government and non-governmental

agencies towards rehabilitating victims of human trafficking. The aim of rehabilitation is geared towards empowering the victim of trafficking in persons to resume as full a life as possible. Therefore, meeting the immediate needs of victims of human trafficking after their identification is critical. Rebuilding the life of someone who has gone through horrific physical, psychological, and/or sexual abuse takes time and as a result well planned material, medical, psychological and social support is needed. It is paramount to take into consideration the victim's needs, problems, expectations, views and cultural references. But victim services that focus on providing support only until individuals are physically well enough to be sent on their way—or put in line for deportation—are insufficient. Those who have been enslaved have endured more than physical harm. They have been robbed of their freedom, including the freedom to make choices about their own lives. Medical care and a few nights in a shelter do not make a victim whole again. Even as the physical wounds are salved and begin healing, a major element of the recovery process is helping victims regain their dignity and the confidence to make choices about how to move forward with their lives. These will require a complete team work from different professionals' point of view such as social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, medical personnel, legal professionals etc. The present of rehabilitation homes for victims of trafficking in persons in Nigeria is a laudable programme and both private and government operators should be commended for such innovation. However, the programme could be better if the recommendations suggested below could be utilised.

6. RECOMMENDATION

1. More Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should be encouraged to partner with Nigerian government in her efforts to rehabilitate victims of human trafficking.
2. There is a need to avoid stagnation of rehabilitative innovation by introducing new component to rehabilitation programme. Enhancing creativity can improve rehabilitation effectiveness but requires a conscious effort on the part of operators.
3. There must be conscious efforts to ensure that all human trafficking victims in need of rehabilitation has equal access to it basis, regardless of social, religious, ethnic or other considerations. Special attention

should be given to vulnerable groups, such as women and children.

4. The administration of every rehabilitation home should conform to global best practices
5. There should be a multidisciplinary in-mate-management approach, which includes counsellors, social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, medical personnel, legal professional etc.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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