SOCIETY | RESEARCH ARTICLE

Child prostitution in Ibadan, Nigeria: Causes, perceived consequences and coping strategies

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Abstract: The article examined the causes, perceived consequences and coping strategies of child prostitutes in Ibadan, Nigeria. We used a mixed research method to elicit data from child prostitutes, pimps, and parents selected via convenience and purposive sampling techniques. Specifically, we conducted 32 in-depth interviews, 12 key informant interviews, and administered 434 copies of the questionnaire. We used frequency counts and simple percentages to analyze the quantitative data while the qualitative data were analyzed in themes. We found that neighbourhood and peer influence, weak financial, emotional and spiritual support, molestation experience were some causes of child prostitution in Ibadan. Some of the perceived consequences of child prostitution were rare medical ailments, stigmatization, and death. Last, this study identified the use of condom and spiritual "devices" as some of the coping strategies of child prostitutes. The study concludes that children are not necessarily forced into prostitution, as championed by the existing school of thoughts on the subject. Instead, the girl-child could venture into prostitution because of weak institutional support from parents/guidance and the personal experience and decision of the girl-child. The study suggests that parents/guardians, governmental and non-governmental bodies and child rights organizations alike should deploy strategies to massively create awareness about the consequences of engaging in multiple sexual acts among the girl-child. This will help discourage potential child prostitutes in the country.

Subjects: Sociology of the Family; Gender & Development; Sustainable Development

Keywords: Childhood; girl-child; prostitution; sex work; Ibadan

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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

Evidence has shown that countless girls all over Nigeria engage in prostitution, as some girls patrol the streets almost nude, while some position themselves at strategic geographical spaces such as nightclubs and hotels among others. Although various studies have examined the menace of prostitution. However, our knowledge of child prostitution is limited. Hence, the study examined the causes and consequences of child prostitution and the coping strategies of child prostitutes in one of the largest urban space in the country—Ibadan. In achieving this aim, the study used a mixed research method to elicit requisite information from children involved in sex work as well as pimps, residents and parents.
1. Introduction

Care for children is usually the sole responsibility of their parents as well as guardian such as members of extended families and the neighbourhood. However, the economic situation most developing countries, Nigeria inclusive, have brought about poor parental socio-economic status, leading to a high rate of children’s need deprivation. This has several implications for their children’s upbringing (Adewusi, 2018). Hence, the need to continually provide for the family amid adverse conditions has led these children, especially the girl child, to engage in economic activities that are exploitative and those that expose them to severe physical, medical, and moral dangers.

The engagement of children ranges from hawking at spaces susceptible to the risk of selling their bodies for financial reward. In corroborating this point, Choji (2013) noted that teenagers of secondary school age are now in competition with older women to offer their bodies to men. Similarly, Bamgbose (2002) asserted that young girls were taking over the business of prostitution from older women who, up to that time, were the dominant practitioners. These are indications that girl prostitution is becoming an “occupation” among girls of secondary school ages (Bello & Jamilu, 2016; Saphira & Oliver, 2002). However, it should be stated here that the problem of child prostitution is not peculiar to Nigeria as a report released by the Global March against Child Labour showed children involved in prostitution to be in every part of the world, with Africa and Asia having the highest prevalence rate (Bamgbose, 2002).

Although the legal status of prostitution varies from country to country, its existence has gone global and annually, the activity is estimated to generate over $100 billion (Tyoonande & Samson, 2021). However, prostitution is illegal in Nigeria (Chimaraoke, 2007). Despite the illegality of the act, Poroma et al. (2014) noted that countless girls all over Nigeria prostitute themselves, as some girls patrol the streets almost nude, while some position themselves at strategic geographical spaces such as nightclubs and hotels among others. Further, the Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that a growing number of children were being forced into prostitution and/or trafficked within or from Nigeria for sexual purposes (Child Rights Convention, 2003).

The exact numbers of children in prostitution are not known because of the problem with the sensitivity of the subject and locating the children affected, which makes the available statistic defective. The total number of children involved in prostitution is estimated to be as high as 10 million worldwide (Bang et al., 2014; Willis & Levy, 2002). Child prostitution, in this study, was defined as the sexual services rendered by a girl-child of less than 18 years of age for any form of compensation, but mainly financial in nature.

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the rights of children include the right to develop; the right to protection from harmful practices, exploitation and abuse, the right to survive and the right to take part in family, cultural and social life fully. In recognition of this, countries that are signatory to this convention are expected to take all appropriate and effective measures to abolish any prejudicial practices to the children. More so, any deviation from the obligations enshrined in these conventions violates human rights (Child Rights Convention, 2003). Obviously, the involvement of children in prostitution violates their fundamental right of being free from exploitation and abuse. This is because child prostitutes are abused and irrevocably damaged by their experiences, and prostitution betrays their innocence, steals their childhood and ruins the rest of their lives (Bamgbose, 2002).

It was against these backdrops that this study examined the causes and consequences of child prostitution and the coping strategies of child prostitutes in one of the largest urban space in the country—Ibadan. In achieving this aim, the study used a mixed research method to elicit requisite information from children involved in sex work, pimps and parents. A major justification of this study was that children, especially the girl-child, is a pre-requisite of achieving growth and development in any country (Adebiyi et al., 2017; Aluko, 2018). However, the involvement of these human resources in exploitative “occupation” has not only adverse effects on them and
the society but also makes up a violation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Next, we review previous theories on the subject.

1.1. A review of existing theories on child prostitution

The assumptions of the Children Right scholars are one of the most prominent perspectives in the area of child prostitution. Article 34 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC, 1989) specified that the children must be protected from sexual profit making, of any nature and abuse that includes any form of coercion to partake in any illegal sexual activity and exploitative use in prostitution. The Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography (United Nations General Assembly, 2000) also emphasized the need to protect the girl-child from prostitution. Summarily, a major assumption of the children’s rights perspective is that they see the girl-child as victims of sexual trafficking and exploitation (Hounmenou, 2016; Montgomery, 2001; Pearce, 2014; Phoenix, 2007; Van Meeuwen et al., 1998). Scholars have empirically confirmed that trafficking is a major reason children are prostituted (Alobo & n.d.ifon, 2014; Arcilla, 2001; Prakash, 2013; Walker, 2002). While this theoretical assumption is profound, a major weakness of the Children’s Rights school of thought is the generalization that children must have been forced into prostitution (ECPAT International, 2011; Pearce et al., 2013; Stacey, 2009). Studies have found that some girl-child pragmatically decided to prostitute themselves without being forced (Alobo & ndifon, 2014; Arcilla, 2001; Prakash, 2013; Walker, 2002).

Next is the feminist perspective. The feminist writers have produced two approaches namely the radical and the liberal approaches. The radical feminist scholars believe that the power imbalance between male and the female gender in most patriarchal societies promotes prostitution among women (Phoenix, 2012). Similar to the Children’s Rights theorists, the proponent of radical feminism posits that “choosing sex work is impossible … sex work is per se a human rights abuse, and thus choice is negated, irrelevant” (Doezema, 2010, p. 25). They believe that there are limited opportunities given to women in most patriarchal societies. In a bid to survive, women engage in prostitution to keep the body and soul (Doezema, 2010). Scholars have also confirmed that the high prevalence of poverty among women causes them to engage in prostitution (Bello & Jamilu, 2016; Longford, 1995; Oyeoku & Azikwe, 2013; Saphiro & Oliver, 2002; Tyoanande & Samson, 2021). However, to Bamgbose (2002), girls from wealthy families are also found to partake in prostitution. This single study questions the validity of radical feminism in the African context.

However, the liberal feminists dismiss the assumption that women are forcibly prostituted. The liberalist acknowledges that sex work is a perilous route to livelihood. Hence, instead of criminalizing prostitution, this perspective calls for measures to protect women from abuse and exploitation, and criminalizing exploitative practices (Phoenix, 2012). Limitations of the liberal feminist perspective relate to its lack of attention to social divisions within the broader category of gender, and in particular, its failure to work through the implications for children who are involved in prostitution. In discussing the merits and limitations of children’s rights and feminist discourses, Phoenix (2007) argues that prostitution can better be understood by complementing the acknowledgement of agency (i.e., rejecting arguments that rest solely on victimhood) with closer attention to historical, cultural, political, legal, and economic factors that shape the structural conditions of prostitution.

In line with the shortcomings of liberal feminism, Bello and Jamilu (2016) and Saphiro and Oliver (2002) agreed that poor health system, inadequate housing, racism, weak schools, single-parent families, selfishness, teenage pregnancy, greed, family breakdown, prior victimization, family expectations, homelessness, poverty (Longford, 1995), lack of education, drug use, the isolation of indigenous and ethnic communities, growing consumerism and unemployment were some causes of prostitution in African countries. Similarly, scholars have identified factors such as parental ignorance, weak support, laziness, families and family structure, bad neighbourhood, peer group influence, recruitment by a big-sister figure and independent as some causes of prostitution (Alobo & n.d.ifon, 2014; Arcilla, 2001; Walker, 2002; Ogunkan et al., 2010; Oyeoku &
Azikiwe, 2013; Prakash, 2013). However, Bamgbose (2002) argued that girls from wealthy families are also found in the act. A major lacuna in these studies was that attention was placed mainly on adult females into prostitution while little or none examined child prostitution.

Furthermore, the various outcomes of prostitution have also been identified by previous researchers. For instance, Bamgbose (2002) and Sung et al. (2009) have identified multiple pregnancies, abortions, STDs, forced gang sex, physical abuse, untimely death, higher risks of maternal death, low birth weight of babies, premature birth, and high risk of infant morbidity and mortality, depression, severe trauma, anxiety, stress, drug abuse and self-medication as consequences of prostitution. Despite these adverse consequences, prostitution is still existing and widespread in Nigeria (Nwakanma, 2015). Nonetheless, these consequences were discovered among adult prostitutes while less attention has been given to the girl-child.

Although, Vidra et al. (2017) has stated that child prostitution is a severe problem of patriarchal power relations where vulnerable underaged children are sexually exploited, the foregoing revealed that the area of child prostitution had not been given the required attention even though the syndrome makes up a serious problem growth and sustainability of Nigeria.

Previous empirical studies have rather focused on the causes of prostitution among adult females, with less attention given to the menace among the younger generation of females, while none of them inquired into their coping strategies. Meanwhile, the chunk of existing discourses on child prostitution is based on syntheses of media articles as well as reports often commissioned by international NGOs. The hidden nature of the sexual exchange, as well as taboo and stigma attached to the commerciality of sex business among children in many African societies, could partly explain the limited empirical research about the illegal phenomenon. Besides, the knowledge stemming from empirical research that gathers data directly from prostituted child victims in countries in the Sub-Saharan regions are limited, especially in the areas of the motivations to, the perceived effect of and the coping strategies adopted by prostituted children in a city like Ibadan, the capital of Oyo state. We, therefore, ask: what are the causes and consequences and the coping strategies of child prostitutes in Ibadan, Oyo state? The next section discusses the research methods adopted by the authors.

2. Methods

2.1. Study area
The study was conducted in Ibadan, the capital of Oyo state. The city was chosen not only because of its expansive and diverse population but also because of scarce literature on girl-child prostitution in the city. Specifically, the study was carried out among girl-child prostitutes in Ibadan North and North East local government. The purposive selection of the two local governments from the eleven local governments in the city was informed by its popularity and heavy presence of child prostitutes in the area (Adelekan et al., 2017). Meanwhile, it should be stated here that many of the people in the core of Ibadan live below the poverty line, send their children to public schools, and engage many of their household members in activities that could ease their economic situations (National Bureau of Statistics, 2009).

2.2. Samples and sampling procedure
Since this research was aimed at girls of secondary school age involved in prostitution, the study considered child prostitutes in Ibadan north and Ibadan North-East local governments. To strengthen the research findings, information was elicited from other sources, such as parents/guardians and pimps. We also gathered insights from the residents of the two local governments that were surveyed. Our data was triangulated so that we can corroborate our finding and cushion the effect of any weakness of one data with the strength of the other, thereby increasing the validity and reliability of the results.
Although Estes and Weiner (2001) explained that girl’s average age of entry into prostitution was 12 to 14 years however, for this study, child prostitutes that were within the ages of 12–17 were considered. The expansion of the age interval was necessitated by the definition of child prostitution adopted by this study.

We purposively selected some of the child prostitutes operating in the study area because of the existing relationship they have with the researchers. However, the researchers only knew a few of the child prostitutes. Hence, we considered this a limitation that could affect our sample size, with ultimate implication on our findings. To resolve this limitation, we adopted the snowball sampling technique\(^2\) to select other child prostitutes. Thirty-two child prostitutes were considered for this study. We also made use of the snowball technique to gain access to about 12 parents of the child prostitutes as well as two pimps. The parents and pimps were considered as hidden to the researchers, which prompted the use of snowball technique. Lastly, convenience sampling was used to select 434 residents.

2.3. Data collection and analysis

The study used a mixed-method approach (i.e., qualitative and quantitative methods). The adoption of a qualitative approach will be predicated on the fact that the method has the significant strength of incorporating richness; depth nuances, multi-dimensionality as well as complexity, characteristics that are needed for exploratory research of this nature, making it the most suitable (Mason, 2002; Richie & Lewis, 2003). The quantitative method could solidify our findings. Put together, the triangulation of methods was necessary for the comprehensiveness, validity, and reliability of our findings. Besides, the triangulation of the methods was crucial because of the underlying assumption that when various methods complement each other, their respective shortcomings can be adequately compensated for (Nwokocha, 2004).

As shown in Table 1, 32 in-depth interviews, 12 key informant interviews and 434 copies of the questionnaire were conducted and administered among child prostitutes, residents, parents, and pimps. All research instruments were examined by three experts within the field of Sociology/Anthropology, Criminology, and Public Policy to ensure their suitability for the study. Suggestions and minor corrections were made on the instruments. Also, a pilot study was conducted in Lagos state to identify, correct and remove ambiguous items in the instrument.

The questionnaire was self-developed. The questionnaire was divided into four sections. The first section contains questions that relate to the socio-demographic features of the respondents, while the second and third sections elicited information about the perceived causes and consequences of child prostitution. The section on socio-demographics comprised 10 items, while the sections on perceived causes and consequences of child prostitution comprised nine and six items, respectively. The last two sections made use of two response categories namely; yes and no. We were able to develop the questionnaire after an in-depth review of previous studies.

We approach child prostitutes in their standing spots at Mokola, Bashorun, Total gardens, Queen Cinema, Iwo road and Agodi. We met with some child prostitutes while they were actively looking for “customers”, which was between 10pm—11pm. Although the few child prostitutes that were known to the researchers took part in the study, most of the other girls that were snowballed were highly disinterested while few were interested in the study. For those that were interested, they gave us a condition prior to their participation. They specifically requested for a reward of 500 naira. According to the participants, the reward will serve as their take-home pay since we want to take the time they are meant to use in actively search for “customers”. Altogether, it took us one month, including weekends, to interview the 32 child prostitutes.

The interviews conducted with child prostitutes, parents and pimps were conducted in Yoruba by the researchers. Besides, the researchers transcribed the content of the questionnaire before the participants were able to respond to the questions enlisted in the questionnaire. In all, the
researchers experienced a language preference, as it was discovered that the participants were more comfortable speaking in their local dialect. All interview sessions lasted for an average of 25 minutes. Also, interview sessions were tape-recorded and transcribed into English by experts proficient in Yoruba and English. These transcripts were rechecked subsequently to ensure that the original meaning of the initial interview responses was retained. All these were done to ensure that the data is rich enough to achieve objectives of the study.

Our qualitative data were analyzed in theme. The first is the open coding, which allowed us to extract similar and highly related interview quotes (Glaser, 1992). The second stage was the axial coding, which encompasses categorizing themes as reflected in the open codes “to form more precise and complete explanations” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 24). Lastly, we engaged in selective coding by categorizing the selected axial codes around a central explanatory concept until an “analytic gestalt” allows the theory to emerge (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 144). All these processes were achieved with the use of the Atlas ti software. However, frequency counts and simple percentages were used to process the quantitative data. We analyzed our data by using the findings from the qualitative data to validate those from our quantitative data and vice versa. The research question guiding the analysis was: What are the causes, consequences and coping strategies of child prostitution? We present the ethical guidelines adopted by the study in the next section.

2.4. Ethical considerations
The authors adhered to the international best practices such as anonymity, voluntariness, and non-maleficence during and after the research work. We did not mention any of the participant names in our research. This was done to ensure anonymity. Participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were at liberty to choose to withdraw from the study anytime they deem fit. There were no physical risks associated with participation in this study. However, should participants become uncomfortable with any of the questions and issues; they were advised not to answer such questions. We gave each taking part child prostitute 500 naira as benefit for participating in our study. This was also done to encourage them to take part in the study.

3. Findings
As shown in Table 2, more male residents took part in the study. The table also shows that, on average, the surveyed residents were 33 years of age, showing that most of the surveyed residents were adults. Also, married adults made up the bulk of the respondents considered for this study. Most of the surveyed residents were Yoruba, which can be linked to the fact that the study was conducted in Ibadan, which constitutes one of the cities in southwestern Nigeria, where the Yoruba are mostly found. Correspondingly, the average monthly income of respondents was ₦14,600, which was 19% less than the statutory minimum wage in the country. The table also shows that most of the respondents were parents with an average of 3 children. The essence of this parenting factor was considered helping fetched a somewhat objective assessment of the subject from the respondents.

Table 3 shows that child prostitutes in the surveyed geographical spaces were only two age categories—16 and 17. However, most of the girls were 16 years of age. The surveyed child prostitutes were mainly from the Yoruba ethnic group. Just like the ethnic affiliation of the significant others, the domination of child prostitutes affiliated to the Yoruba ethnic group can be adduced because the geographical spaces within which the study was conducted were part of the large area frequently referred to as the Yoruba nation. The education section of Table 3 shows less than half of these teenage prostitutes were able to complete their secondary education. The table also shows that the parents of child prostitutes primarily operate within the informal sectors of the economy. Meanwhile, the participants have an average of 5 members within their households and averagely occupy the second position. This implies that participants hold positions that could demand the need to care for their younger ones, prompting the need to venture into prostitution at an early age.
Data were also collected from pimps and parents. Table 4 shows that the parents/pimps age stood at 31 years. This is an important finding. This shows that the parents of the child prostitutes gave birth to the latter at a very tender age. The parents might see nothing wrong with entering sexual relationships and procreation at a very tender age. However, scholars have noted that teen maternal parenthood is detrimental to a child’s human capital accumulation as well as the child long-term outcomes (Addo et al., 2016; Furstenberg, 2007; Moore et al., 1997). Furthermore, more mothers were interviewed. The table also shows that majority of the interviewed pimps/parents were educated. More of the pimps/parents were affiliated to the Yoruba ethnic group. The domination of pimps affiliated to the Yoruba ethnic group is unconnected to the fact that the study was conducted in a space widely lived by the Yoruba.

4. Weak financial support
One of the major causes of child prostitution is the weak financial support given to the girl-child. Specifically, data from significant others (i.e., residents) revealed that 84.3% were of the opinion that the unavailability of strong financial leverage for the girl-child could lure them into prostitution. However, only 15.7% claimed that weak financial support was not a sufficient reason for the girl-child to venture into prostitution. This point was buttressed by a child prostitute when she claimed that a lack of financial resources to finance her education made him idle make up a core factor that encouraged her to engage in prostitution. She specifically said that:

It’s money. My intention was to further my education, but there was no money to achieve that. If not, for this reason, I would have loved to have further my education. However, when I got to the street, it was very hard to get money, so I started this job as I couldn’t further my education.

One of the parents engaged for this study buttressed this point by stating that the weak financial status of a girl-child family could be a major factor that could stir the girl-child into prostitution. She also stated that a girl-child could engage in prostitution unwillingly by mystifying employment promises. However, they get trafficked to neighbouring countries for prostitution, hoping to enhance the financial status of their family of orientation:

Some young girls may engage in prostitution because of their family’s poor financial status. Some parents don’t have the money to finance their children to school instead; some of these girls sponsor themselves with monies they get from their sugar daddies. Some are even taken from their parents with the promise of helping the child get a job that could help improve the financial status of her family, only for them to find that they are been trafficked for prostitution in geographical spaces that are far from their homes. We have heard stories of girls been taking to Libya, for example, for prostitution purpose.

To further buttress the weak financial support point, one of the discussants argued that one of the factors that influence a girl-child to participate in prostitution was because some of these young children shoulder the responsibilities of their family as a result of lack of financial infrastructure.

| Table 1. Study Population by Data Collection Techniques |
|-------------------------------------------------------|
| **Participants** | **Sampling Method** | **Questionnaire** | **IDIs** | **KII** | **Total** |
|------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------|--------|----------|
| Girl-child      | Purposive and       | 32               |         |        | 32       |
| prostitutes      | Snowball            |                  |         |        |          |
| Residents        | Convenience         | 434              |         |        | 434      |
| Parents          | Snowball            | 10               |         |        | 10       |
| Pimps            | Snowball            | 2                |         |        | 2        |
| Total            |                     | 478              | 32      | 12     |          |
The participant suggested that such a situation can predispose a girl-child into prostitution as the respondent asserted that:

Table 2. Socio-Demographic Features of Residents (Questionnaire)

| S/N | Variables                     | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|-------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1   | Sex                           |           |            |
|     | Male                          | 143       | 32.9       |
|     | Female                        | 291       | 67.1       |
|     | Total                         | 434       | 100.0      |
| 2   | Age (Mean)                    |           | 33 years   |
| 3   | Marital Status                |           |            |
|     | Single                        | 121       | 27.9       |
|     | Married                       | 299       | 68.9       |
|     | Unmarried                     | 12        | 2.8        |
|     | Divorce/Separated             | 2         | 0.4        |
|     | Total                         | 434       | 100.0      |
| 4   | Religion                      |           |            |
|     | Christianity                  | 306       | 70.5       |
|     | Islam                         | 124       | 28.6       |
|     | Traditionalist                | 4         | 0.9        |
|     | Total                         | 434       | 100.0      |
| 5   | Educational Attainment        |           |            |
|     | No formal Education           | 4         | 0.9        |
|     | Primary Education             | 30        | 6.9        |
|     | Secondary Education           | 323       | 74.5       |
|     | Tertiary Education            | 77        | 17.7       |
|     | Total                         | 434       | 100.0      |
| 6   | Ethnic Group                  |           |            |
|     | Yoruba                        | 325       | 74.9       |
|     | Hausa                         | 40        | 9.2        |
|     | Igbo                          | 69        | 15.9       |
|     | Total                         | 434       | 100.0      |
| 7   | Occupation                    |           |            |
|     | Traders/Business              | 238       | 54.9       |
|     | Civil Service                 | 106       | 24.4       |
|     | Private Organization          | 31        | 7.1        |
|     | Religious Organization        | 9         | 2.1        |
|     | Unemployed                    | 50        | 11.5       |
|     | Total                         | 434       | 100.0      |
| 8   | Average Monthly Income        | N14,600 ($40.2) |
| 9   | Parenthood                    |           |            |
|     | Yes                            | 384       | 88.5       |
|     | No                             | 50        | 11.5       |
|     | Total                         | 434       | 100.0      |
| 10  | Average number of Children    |           | 3 Children |

The participant suggested that such a situation can predispose a girl-child into prostitution as the respondent asserted that:
I think the number one factor that motivates the girl-child to venture into prostitution is a financial problem, and they consequently take up the financial responsibilities at home. I must confess that some girls are the breadwinners of their households. They become the financial backbone of some families. I know of some young girls that ventured into prostitution as a result of their family responsibilities.

The study gathered a response that proved the above finding as one of the child prostitutes stated that she ventured into prostitution “game” due to lack of financial resources to treat her sick mother and the up-keeping of her child:

I wasn’t involved in it [i.e., prostitution] prior to this time, but my mother became sick, and there was no one to turn to; we had to get drugs for her. I also had a child that stayed with her. I need to feed too. I had an elder sister who lives in Lagos, but she doesn’t come home and has been far away from us. Despite that, we had several relatives that could have helped in one way or the other, they could not help. These are the reasons I decided to get

Table 3. Socio-demographic Composition of Child Prostitutes (IDIs)

| Variables and Categories                        | Frequencies | Percentages |
|------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| **Age (Mean = 16 years)**                       |             |             |
| 16                                              | 20          | 62.5        |
| 17                                              | 12          | 37.5        |
| **Religion**                                    |             |             |
| Islam                                           | 15          | 46.9        |
| Christianity                                    | 17          | 53.1        |
| **Ethnic Affiliation**                          |             |             |
| Yoruba                                          | 29          | 90.6        |
| Igbo                                            | 3           | 9.4         |
| **Educational Attainment**                      |             |             |
| No formal Education                             | 2           | 6.2         |
| Completed Primary Education                     | 1           | 3.1         |
| Uncompleted Primary Education                   | 6           | 18.8        |
| Completed Secondary Education                   | 12          | 37.5        |
| Uncompleted secondary Education                  | 11          | 34.4        |
| **Parental Status**                             |             |             |
| Parentless                                      | 2           | 6.2         |
| Only Father Alive                               | 10          | 31.3        |
| Only Mother Alive                               | 12          | 37.5        |
| Both parents Alive                              | 8           | 25.0        |
| **Occupation of Parents/guardian**              |             |             |
| **Mother**                                      |             |             |
| Trader                                          | 26          | 81.3        |
| Artisan                                         | 6           | 18.7        |
| **Father**                                      |             |             |
| Businessman                                     | 13          | 40.6        |
| Clergy                                          | 2           | 6.3         |
| Artisan                                         | 17          | 53.1        |
| **Total**                                       | 32          | 100.0       |
| **Average Household Size**                      | 5 Members   |             |
| **Position in the household**                   | 2nd position|             |
money by prostituting myself in order to make sure my mother is well and healthy and my child feeds well. Although my mother is not in support of my source of livelihood, I also had to solve the issues on ground; I can’t just watch my mother die in pains and fold my arms till my child starve to death.

IDI/Girl-Child prostitute/IBNELG/2018

5. Perceived laziness/greediness
Table 5 shows that 70% of the respondents were of the opinion that greediness/laziness could be responsible for the participation of the girl-child in prostitution. This finding was corroborated by one of the study’s discussant when she argued that girls are naturally lazy, and they look for “shortcuts” to success. She stated that these child prostitutes could have engaged in street hawking and other menial jobs like their mates instead of selling their bodies at a very young age. The discussant specifically said that:

I think young girls of nowadays are too lazy to engage themselves in activities such as street hawking and sweeping, among others just to survive just like their mates. They usually search for “shortcuts” to success, which could account for the increasing number of these teenage girls currently into prostitution.

KII/Pimp/IBNLG/2018

6. Neighbourhood influence
79.0% of the respondents believed that the geographical area within which the girl-child lives is capable of (de)motivating them to engage in prostitution. However, 21.0% were of the opinion that the neighbourhood does not influence the decision of the girl-child to participate in prostitution. This finding was in tandem with Prakash (2013) and Ogunkan et al. (2010), who stated that female children who live near brothels or in the company of immoral persons become used to seeing prostitution and come to accept it as being normal. More so, girls who get exposed to prostitution will want to have these galvanized experiences at the first opportunity available to them, as their exposure to prostitution is undesirable and contaminate moral decadence. Furthermore, facts were revealed to support these assertions during one of the interview sessions. A particular respondent that is one of the parents considered for this study had this to say:

The environment plays a very critical role in influencing and shaping these girls. An environment where most girls around are involved in prostitution can influence other girls to engage in it. In such an environment, one could find that girls that range from 12 to 14 years old are sleeping with men, and by the time such girls are between 16–19 years old, they already went haywire.

KII/Parent/IBNELG/2018

More so, another participant argued for the participation of the girl-child in prostitution via neighborhood influence, however, at a more micro-level. She specifically maintained that a girl-child who stays with a mother that frequently brings different men home, especially overnight, could perceive her mother’s actions as normal and could use any opportunity to engage in similar acts. She specifically said that:

It might not actually be the environment that we all know about (i.e., neighbourhood). For example, a child who stays with a mother that entertains different men over the night could think that her mother is doing the right thing thus engage in it too.

KII/Pimp/IBNLG/2018

It can be extrapolated from the above findings that neighbourhood (both micro and macro) could influence the decision of a girl-child to venture into harlotry.

7. Peer influence
Peer influence (89.6%) was also found to constitute one of the causes of child prostitution. These findings were further buttressed by one of the child prostitutes interviewed during the fieldwork. She specifically said that:
My friends pushed me into it. I was staying in Lagos before I came to Ibadan. Whenever I am with my friends in Ibadan, they would go out while I prefer to stay behind. When they return, they will scold with words, accuse me been dowdy, that I should go out with them so they could socialize me to being smart. Since I already knew they were into prostitution, I usually tell them that my boyfriend won't allow it but they assured me they will not let him discover about it. I ended up joining them after much persuasion.

Aside from being influenced by her friends, one of the respondents explained that her father pushed her to mingle with friends that later introduced her to the prostitution business:

My father always makes the statement “go and do what your mates are doing” whenever I ask him for something, especially money for my upkeep. My father frequently denied me of my needs, so I had to tell him I wanted to move with some of my friends in Ibadan, and he never objected. When I moved in with my friends, I was always indoor, and they were responsible for my upkeep, but they soon got fed up of feeding me and suggested that I should join them in doing “runs” (i.e., prostitution business)

Another participant has this to say:

There is a popular Yoruba adage that reads aguntan to ba ba aja rin, a je igbe aja, meaning a sheep that walks with a dog will eat from the dog's faeces. But I will also say that the condition surrounding the sheep could actually motivate the sheep to eat the dog's faeces .... The fact here is that my friend showed me the way into prostitution.
Moreover, the majority of the parents interviewed agreed to the fact that peer influence goes a long way in shaping the lives of children nowadays especially girl-child as one of the parents opined that:

What we parent do is to give advice to our children as we don’t determine who they mingle with because when they go out there, they mingle with other children/friend and when they go to school, they can be easily influenced by their friends to do things they don’t do on a normal day

KII/Parent/IBNELG/2018

8. Self-made decision

While child prostitution could be caused by peer influence, some of the child prostitutes argued that they were into prostitution based on their own decision:

After my father died, there was no one to take care of us and things were tough. My elder ones were in Lagos facing their own family, so I was left with my mother and my younger ones. My mother was very sick then, so I worked as a house girl for some time but the wages I was given were not enough to feed us (i.e., my mother and younger ones). When I could not watch us all suffer anymore, I had to go into sex business, which I knew that it doesn’t demand any special skill.
Also, aside from going into prostitution based on her free will, one of the participants noted that she did not want to become a burden to her mother and decided to get things done on her own as she maintained that:

I just decided on my own that I want to fend for myself after my father died because I don’t want everything to be on my mother

9. Lack of sex education

Majority of the respondents, representing 81.8%, believed that lack of sex education predisposes a girl-child into prostitution. Perhaps this might be because they believe some girls may not be knowledgeable enough to understand that they have to protect themselves via their sexual life. One of the respondents opined that:

Some girls may go into prostitution because they lack sex education from their parents. When a parent fails to educate their girl-child about sex, the girl may eventually learn it from a wrong source, maybe through friends, without knowing that she might learn the wrong thing

The above statement depicts that a girl-child could venture into prostitution because of a lack of sex education. Sexuality education is a process of gaining knowledge and skills and forming attitudes, beliefs, and values regarding human sexuality. Sex education is a very crucial topic that parents are usually enjoined to guide their children, especially a girl-child, on sex-related matters.

10. Weak/Lack of emotional support

Respondents also perceived weak/lack of emotional support (64.7%) as one of the causes of child prostitution. This is, perhaps, because a girl-child may develop emotions (such as love, anger,
hatred) that are not properly guided. This was complemented by one of the participants during the interview session:

As parents, we must pay sufficient attention to the emotions of our children … it is not something to toy with, especially with our girl-child. We should support them and listen to whatever they have to say before it turns into an uncontrollable behaviour. Children that are prostitutes today maybe be as a result of their parent’s insensitiveness to the emotions of their children

KII/Parent/IBNELG/2018

11. Weak/Lack of spiritual support

More than half of the respondents representing 57.8% considered weak/lack of spiritual support of a girl-child as one of the predisposing factors of child prostitution. This point was buttressed when one of the respondents noted that:

Parents need to pray concerning their children. If we (i.e., parents) don’t support our children, especially our girl-child with prayers, she is bound to behave wrongly and venture into certain anti-social behaviour. I have seen cases and heard stories of some girls been cursed into venture into prostitution. When the family is not spiritually strong, such a curse may come to pass

KII/Parent/IBNELG/2018

12. Sexual abuse or molestation experience

Child sexual abuse or molestation is a situation in which an adult or older adolescent uses a child for sexual stimulation (Lee et al., 2021). Much of the respondents (80%) perceived sexual abuse as a cause of prostitution among girls. This is, perhaps, because a girl is fragile and, when sexually abused, may resort to prostitution. This was further buttressed during IDI session, and she has this to say:

I have been sexually abused not only by a particular cousin of mine, but also my elder brother. When I lost my father, I stayed with relatives and this licensed my cousin to sexually harass me by touching some of the sensitive parts of my body (such as breast and buttocks). I couldn’t report because he threatened to beat me up if I report him. The second incident was with my brother, and this happens when I visited him. There was a particular day I visited him at dawn, which demanded that I sleep over. At midnight, I felt someone touching me, only to wake up to see my elder brother trying to have sex with me. I fought my way through because I was naive and a saint then; though I threatened to either kill him or kill myself or I report to our mother because our mother is a disciplined person

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Another participant has this to say:

I have been abused severally by my step-father, and I also lost my virginity as a result of rape by an unknown person when my mother sent me away from her place

IDI/Girl-child prostitute/IBNLG/2018

13. Frequent urge for sex

Table 5 also shows that 77.6% of the respondent claimed that a girl-child that frequently has an urge for sex is likely to venture into prostitution. This point was buttressed by a child prostitute who claimed that she had to leave where she lives because she is being restricted to have a boyfriend and perhaps, sex:

If I don’t have sex I don’t know what will happen … I left my father’s aunt house because she is always preventing me from having a boyfriend or have sex. I cannot function properly if I don’t have sex

IDI/Girl-child prostitute/IBNLG/2018

14. HIV/AIDS

As shown in Table 6, a significant number of respondents claimed that HIV/AIDS (95.2%) could be a consequence of child prostitution. In buttressing this point, a particular child prostitute claimed
that, although certain girls have gotten someone to marry them while participating in “runs” livelihood, she immediately stated that one of the bad sides of prostitution is getting contacted HIV/AIDS. She particularly stated that:

For me, the consequence of prostitution is twofold: some people have gotten husbands from this job [i.e., prostitution] and have made money from this job too. However, the adverse consequence I know it can bring is an ailment such as HIV/AIDS, which has been responsible for the death of some girls

Besides this, another participant maintained that HIV is the most common consequence and that one should forget the fact that one uses protection as she averred that:

It can lead to contracting diseases like HIV. At this point, one should forget the fact that most us (i.e., child-prostitutes) use a condom as there are some mad boys who pierce condom, and you won’t know

One of the parents interviewed for this purpose also stated that:

The consequences of girls into prostitution are likely to encounter are enormous. For instance, a girl with multiple sex partners does not need any prophet to tell her that the more sex partners she has, the higher the tendencies of her contracting HIV, Gonorrhea and the likes

Aside from the perceived benefit of securing a marriage partner, the foregoing finding establishes that HIV/AIDS could be one of the consequences of girl-child prostitution.

15. Early pregnancy
Also, a significant size of the respondent stated that early pregnancy (89.9%) could be one of child prostitution consequences. Furthermore, one of the respondents maintained that when a girl-child gets involved in prostitution, she ends up having issues relating to unwanted pregnancy if she eventually keeps the baby by asserting that

Sleeping with different men at a very tender age can lead to early pregnancy or unwanted pregnancy. This may unavoidably lead to premature labour, as the organs of a girl-child may not have developed properly to accommodate a child

One of the respondents also explained that some of these girls get impregnated at early ages however, that does not encourage them from quitting prostitution as he opined that

They (i.e., child prostitutes) get impregnated at an early age and when they get pregnant, some stop, but we have some that do “runs” with the pregnancy

16. Stigmatization
A significant number of respondents agreed that girl-child prostitution could result in stigmatization. This could be linked to the general perception held by Africans, perhaps Nigerians, about girls/women that sell their body for financial reward. A particular respondent described the behaviour of people towards child prostitutes as stigmatizing. She specifically said that:

People do not want to associate with us (i.e., child prostitutes). The way they look at us or behave towards us it’s as if we (i.e., child prostitutes) are not humans, but I don’t care. It’s not as if many people know what I do aside from my peers
Similar to the above statement, another participant explained no ideal parent would allow their child to relate with a prostitute. She said:

I think they (i.e., child prostitutes) are stigmatized because nobody would want his/her children especially a girl-child to socialize with such girl involved in prostitution.

KII/Parent/IBNLG/2018

It can be inferred from the data gathered that child prostitutes are often stigmatized.

17. Death

Additionally, the majority of the respondents representing 88.7% agreed that the aftermath of girls who venture into prostitution could be death. Responses gathered from interview sessions buttressed this point as one of the respondents noted that:

The consequence could be death. Even among us (i.e., child prostitutes), we have some girls that call her fellow girl for “parole” even when the former knows fully well that the latter might be killed. The caller would have been paid hugely, and she will not care about what she has done to her fellow “runs” mate. We also have some girls that discovered that they had been used for rituals after 3-4 months they were slept with. We also have seen some of us releasing maggots from their vagina, and some go for “parole”, and they are nowhere to be found till today.

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The foregoing establishes that death constitutes one of the consequences of child-prostitution. This could be linked to the findings of Sung et al. (2009) and Bamgbose (2002) that identified untimely death as one of the outcomes of prostitution.

18. Rare medical ailments

Closely related to the death consequence, a participant also stated that child-prostitutes could contact rare medical ailments during “runs” sessions. She mainly referred to the use of charms on girls by their clients:

Some “clients” use charms to rub vagina of some girls. During this act, the girl will not be conscious of what has been done to her. I know of a girl in Lagos that is also an “ashewo”.5

What happened to her was that she lost weight rapidly. When they tried to question her about what might have caused her condition, she then said that she noticed the last person who slept with her used a handkerchief to rub her vagina, and that’s was all

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The study also revealed that vagina discharge could be as a result of prolonged prostitution among the girl-child. This could be in the form of a water-like discharge from the vagina that could disrupt and somewhat embarrassing the girl in question in social gatherings with friends, among others. She specifically said that:

One consequence I know is that if one stays long in this job, vagina could start releasing water uncontrollably, and this could restrict one from social gatherings to avoid embarrassment. I even have some girls who put on diaper as a result of this. It will be difficult for a girl like this to secure a marriage partner or stay long in marriage. Who wants to marry someone wearing diapers? I bet that no man wants to

IDI/Girl-child prostitute/IBNELG/2018

Moreover, another participant buttressed these points by stating that girl-child prostitution results in diseases that could be detrimental to the life of the girl-child. She referred to the discharge of maggot from the girl’s vagina:

There are a lot of things that could happen to girls that are into prostitution, aside from being at the risk of being used for rituals. For instance, when a client uses a condom and the
girl did not ensure that the condom and its content were flushed in the toilet, anything can happen to such girl because that used condom could be further used for anything. Some people even use charm to touch girls, and the girl won’t be able to control herself. Some girls contract *jerijeri*, a sexual disease that entails the release of maggots from the vagina

KII/Pimp/IBNLG/2018

19. Coping strategy

19.1. Use of condom

The primary coping strategy of child prostitutes is condom use. They consider the use of a condom as the ultimate strategy for protection against sexual “evils” such as STDs and being used for rituals, among others. A particular respondent opined that she makes sure that her client uses a condom, irrespective of the money she is being offered. This is not only to protect her from sexual evils but also because she was breastfeeding her baby while engaging in prostitution. She specifically said that:

I protect myself by using condom and no matter the amount of money a customer may offer me for sex without condom I don’t agree. I protect myself because I am aware of HIV/AIDS. Besides, I’m breastfeeding my baby.

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In bolstering this, another child prostitute stated that she only has condom-free sex with her boyfriend. However, she said that she does not have intercourse with any man without a condom.

It’s via condom. I can’t have sexual intercourse with any man without making use of a condom except with my boyfriend. I usually have it “raw” with my boyfriend

IDI/Girl-child Prostitute/IBNELG/2018

20. Use of spiritual “Devices”

Majority agreed that protection via condom is not guaranteed. This is because condoms only protect them from contracting STDs, but it does not protect them from being used for rituals. Hence, some of the child prostitutes stated that they use specific spiritual strategies that alert them whenever a client or potential client has incongruent aims. For instance, one of the participants stated that she usually has a shock-like encounter whenever a client or prospective client has other motives other than sleeping with her. She specifically said that:

There is no “runs” girl on the street that does not have something (i.e., spiritual protection device) on her. For me, if anyone wants to have sex with me and it’s for the bad, I will know because I will experience a form of shocked that alerts me of the client’s evil intentions. That is how I have been protecting myself.

IDI/Girl-child prostitute/IBNLG/2018

Additionally, this study revealed a triangulated protection adopted by a particular child prostitute. Aside from that, she has a pastor and an Alfa whom she consults for protection. She also stated that she makes sure her clients use a condom before having sex with them. In her words, she said:

I usually have a pastor that prays for me. If he sees any vision about my job and/or myself, he will call my attention to it. Also, I meet him every night before setting for any “parole” and, often, he gives me a perfume that I use for my protection; no matter what the person has on him (such as charms), I will be alerted. This alert makes me reject their offer; irrespective of the money the client will pay me. I also have an Alfa who I go to for protection. He gives me something to rub on my chest. Despite all these, I make use of a condom.

IDI/Girl-child prostitute/IBNLG/2018

21. Discussion of findings

This study understudied the causes and consequences of child prostitution as well as the coping strategies of child prostitutes in Ibadan, Nigeria. Data were obtained from multiple sources and exciting findings were made. First, neighbourhood and peer influence, weak financial, emotional and spiritual support, molestation experience were some causes of child prostitution in Ibadan.
Some of the perceived consequences of child prostitution were rare medical ailments, stigmatization, and death. Lastly, this study identified the use of condom and spiritual “devices” as some of the coping strategies of child prostitutes. We now discuss these findings in the preceding paragraphs.

First, our study found that weak financial support for teenage girls could stir them into engaging in prostitution. The foregoing finding support the findings of Arcilla (2001), Saphira and Oliver (2002), Walker (2002), Prakash (2013), and Alobo and Ndifon (2014), and Bello and Jamilu (2016) who all agreed that family expectations, poverty and lack of education, as a result of weak financial support from parents were some causes of prostitution in African countries. Similarly, this finding can also be linked with the finding of Longford (1995), who noted that poverty had been the most frequently cited factor in explaining the involvement of large numbers of children in prostitution. Furthermore, these findings were similar to that of Tyoanande and Samson (2021), who opined that millions of women are forced out of school by their parent’s financial incapability and given out to people who at the end exploit them by recruiting them into prostitution. Supporting the above view, Oyeoku and Azikewe (2013) asserted that girls from lower socio-economic backgrounds are not adequately provided with the basic necessities of life and force some of them into prostitution.

Our data also revealed an alignment between the quantitative and qualitative data that peer influence is one of the major causes of prostitution. This was similar to the finding of Oyeoku and Azikewe (2013) who opined that influence from peers is one of the many reasons teenagers and adults are involved in the prostitution business. Although they are considered too young to decide for themselves, data revealed that teenage girls also decide to go into prostitution. This correlates with Alobo and Ndifon (2014) that individuals make a pragmatic decision to enter the profession of prostitution to make more money based on economic necessity, poor job market, and limited skills. Therefore, a self-made decision is also a major factor that makes girl-child venture into prostitution.

Furthermore, findings revealed that laziness could be one of the causes of prostitution among teenage girls in Ibadan city. This was reflected on the general belief that certain individuals (such as the pimps) who perceive the chunk of current generations as lazy could find their way to engaging in “sexual businesses”, one of which is prostitution. This finding was similar to the finding of Ogunkan et al. (2010) that laziness is one factor that predisposes females to prostitution. Also, the data showed that molestation experience could be a major predisposing factor of girl-child prostitution in Ibadan. This
finding corroborates the submission of Bello and Jamilu (2016) and Saphira and Oliver (2002), who stated that prior victimization could be a major cause of prostitution. Similarly, this finding establishes that child prostitutes are abused and irrevocably damaged by their experiences, and prostitution betrays their innocence, steals their childhood and ruins the rest of their lives (Bangbose, 2002).

This study also revealed that weak emotional and spiritual support could stir teenage girls into prostitution. The aforementioned findings are exciting and challenge the assumptions of the Child rights school of thought. Specifically, our findings dislodge the assumption of child rights and radical feminist theorists is that children are forcibly prostituted. However, in line with the liberal feminists, the study found that children are not necessarily forced into prostitution. Instead, the study concludes that the girl-child could venture into prostitution because of weak institutional support from parents/guidance as well as the personal experience and decision of the girl-child.

Our finding establishes that HIV/AIDS could be one of the consequences of girl-child prostitution. This finding was similar to that of Sung et al. (2009) and Bangbose (2002) who identified HIV/AIDS and STDs as some outcomes of prostitution. Stigmatization was also found to be one of the implications of child prostitution, This was similar to the findings of Heilemann and Santhiveeran (2011) and Prakash (2013), who explained that prostitutes suffer from social stigmatization but also moral collapse and lose their status and position, which other people enjoy in the society. They are being hated, and people avoid their company and want to isolate them in society. The study also found that girl-girl-child could lead to early pregnancy. This finding is exciting because of its connection with the age at which the parents of the surveyed child prostitute gave their first birth. By implication, early pregnancy could be a phenomenon that is transferred from mother to child. This is because these mothers may not consider early pregnancy as a bad idea since they also went through the same process. Regrettably, scholars have noted that teen maternal parenthood is detrimental a child’s human capital accumulation as well as the child long-term outcomes (Addo et al., 2016; Furstenberg, 2007; Moore et al., 1997).

The foregoing shows that child prostitutes experience several risks such as unwanted pregnancy, insecurity to lives and property, societal condemnation and sexual infection (Alobo & Ndifen, 2014; Bangbose, 2002; Tyoanade & Samson, 2021). All these risks can threaten the sanity and lives of the female, fortunes of the business and the moral value of the society. Therefore, it has shown a series of challenges to womenfolk and society. Although these girls are aware of the aftermath of prostitution, they still indulged in it, believing that they would use protection such as condoms. However, findings from the study of Ogunkan et al. (2010) show that condom is not 100% reliable as it may get damaged during sexual activity, resulting in some consequences mentioned above. This could be connected to the reason some of these child prostitutes opt for spiritual protection from religious experts such as pastors and Alfas.

22. Summary, conclusions and recommendations
This study examined the causes and consequences of child prostitution as well as the coping strategies of child prostitutes in Ibadan, Nigeria. Through the questionnaire administration and several interviews that were conducted, this study found that the causes of child prostitution are weak financial, emotional and spiritual support, perceived laziness/greediness, peer and neighbourhood influence, lack of sex education, abuse or molestation experience and self-made decision. The general assumption of child rights and radical feminist theorists is that children are forcibly prostituted. However, in line with the liberal feminists, the study concludes that children are not necessarily forced into prostitution. Instead, the study concludes that the girl-child could venture into prostitution because of weak institutional support from parents/guidance as well as the personal experience and decision of the girl-child. Other important findings of the study is summarized in Figure 1.

This study also concludes that HIV/AIDS, early pregnancy, stigmatization, death, and rare medical ailment were the consequences of child prostitution. However, the use of condom and spiritual “devices” were deployed by child prostitutes to curtail these consequences. Besides, prostitution among girl-child violates their right to develop, their right to protection from harmful practices, exploitation and abuse,
their right to survive and the right to participate in family, cultural and social life fully. Therefore, there is a need for parents/guardians, governmental and non-governmental bodies and human right activists to take all appropriate and effective measures, such as those suggested in this study, to engage in activities that will abolish any prejudicial practices, such as prostitution, to the children, especially the girl child.

It is clear from the foregoing analyses that child prostitution constitutes a menace; thus, the need for urgent pragmatic and viable suggestions to curb this problem cannot be overemphasized. As a result of this, the study made some suggestions.

Foremost, there is a need for parents/guardians to wake up to their responsibilities, part of which is to support their girl-child financially, emotionally and spiritually. This is necessary because some of the significant causes of child prostitution were weak financial, emotional, and spiritual support from parents/guardians. Therefore, it is important for parents/guardians to provide for these children, especially the girl child, with their needs. This will help eliminate the need to venture or the thoughts of venturing into unethical but exploitative means of survival such as prostitution among the girl-child. In corroborating this effort, there is a need for religious institutions such as the church and mosques to support the family institutions to orientate young female children towards discouraging prostitution among young females in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Closely related to the above, there is a need for parents/guardians, governmental and non-governmental bodies and child rights organizations alike to deploy strategies to massively create awareness about the consequences of engaging in multiple sexual acts among the girl-child. This will help discourage potential child prostitutes in the country. In supporting this initiative, there is a need for public and private school administrations to include sex education as a subject to be taught throughout secondary schools.

Third, this study suggests policy intervention programmes for parents/guardians with girl-child that are incapacitated to provide the financial needs of their children. This policy should be designed in such a way that financial assistance is offered to parents/guardians with girl-child who cannot get the needed financial support for the sponsor of girl-child education. Alternatively, this study suggests that education should be made free at all levels for female children. This will not only help to reduce the participation of girl-child in sex-for-money activities but also reduce or eliminate the need for young girls to shoulder responsibilities they are too young to fulfil.

Also, there is a need for parents and guardians alike to ensure that they pay attention to the friends their children, especially the girl child, keeps. This was important, as the study found that some of the surveyed girl-child ventured into prostitution through their friend’s influence. Therefore, there is a need for parents and guardians to socialize their girl-child in such a way that she keeps friends that could influence them positively, irrespective of the kind of neighbourhood they find themselves.

Due to the developmental, moral and cultural implications of prostitution on society, there is a need for governmental bodies and human right activists to deploy their personnel to various child prostitution sites in Ibadan metropolis. The aim of this is to apprehend child prostitutes for rehabilitation. Therefore, there is an urgent need for the establishment of rehabilitation centers for child prostitutes in Ibadan. This will reduce the multiplier effect child prostitution has on the Nigerian society.

Lastly, the government of Oyo state, perhaps Nigeria, should enact a law that restricts not only child prostitution but also persecute girl-child molesters or abusers and parents/guardians that fail to perform their responsibilities to their girl-child. This is quite important, as molestation experience was found to ginger the girl-child into prostitution.

22.1. Study limitations and suggestions for future studies
The study is limited on three grounds. First, the objective of this study was to examine the causes, consequences, and coping strategies of child prostitutes. However, it ignored the examination of
some of the practical policy interventions that could be deployed to eradicate child prostitution in Ibadan. Hence, we implore other researchers to practically explore the different policy interventions that could bring children out of prostitution in Ibadan and reintegrate them into the normal way of life of the society. Relatedly, another limitation of this study is methodological in that it adopted a cross-sectional approach. Therefore, future studies should adopt more sophisticated, such as longitudinal approach, in examining prostitution among children of school ages. This would help follow-up and monitor, in real-time, the impact of different policy interventions among child prostitutes. Thirdly, the study was limited in scope in that it focused on child prostitutes in Ibadan metropolis. Hence, we encourage future researchers to broaden and substantiate our findings by examining our research objectives among child prostitutes operating in the other parts of Oyo state and other states in Nigeria.

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**Notes**
1. Someone who controls prostitutes and arranges clients for them with the aim of taking a percentage of their earnings in return.
2. This is a sampling method whereby existing participant helps researchers to identify other participants that are unknown to the researchers.
3. The exchange rate was 363 to a dollar as at the time of this study.
4. A slang used to address a prostitute.
5. Means “Muslim clerics”

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