

**STUDIES ON ANTECEDENT FACTORS PROMOTING BABY FACTORY BUSINESS
AND ITS PROLIFERATION IN NIGERIA*****Udochi M. Nwosu**

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ABSTRACT

Baby factory (BF) is an emerging public health nuisance involving human organ harvesting, breeding, kidnapping, trafficking, adoption and abuse of mother and child health. It was first documented in 2006 by UNESCO as occurring in only four Eastern states in Nigeria. Presently, BF business has proliferated into almost all the 36 states of Nigeria. The aim of the study is to identify factors promoting BF business and its rapid proliferation in Nigeria and suggest ways of stopping the nuisance. A descriptive survey was carried out in three health institutions in Abia State, Nigeria. Doctors and nurses in each of the institution were systematically selected from the payroll register. A sample size of 400 respondents was calculated systematically using sampling interval of two. Data were collected using a 22 item questionnaire designed in 5 points Likert scale rating. Data were analyzed using percentages. Chi-square statistic was used in testing the 22 items for statistical significance at alpha level of 0.05. Factors promoting BF business and its proliferation were broadly categorized into four; those traceable to government actions or inactions $P < 0.05$, those attributable to the society $P < 0.05$, family $P < 0.05$, and personal life style $P < 0.05$. Efforts to stop baby factory business and its proliferation should start by eradicating the identified factors that significantly contributed to its promotion and proliferation.

KEYWORDS: Factors, Nigeria, Baby Factory, Promotion, Proliferation.**INTRODUCTION**

The antecedent factors that stimulated the start of slave trade in the olden days seem to have resurfaced again, this time, infants and teenagers are commodity for the neo-slave trade rather than adults. Neo-slave trade has taken various names and dimensions such as Baby Factory (BF), Baby Farm, Baby Harvesting, Baby Dump, and Baby Abandonments.^[1-5] BF has been described as buildings or institutions such as hospitals, maternity, orphanages, motherless baby homes, clinics that have been converted into shelters for the hide out of young pregnant girls and women for the purpose of delivery and selling off their babies.^[6-8] Recently, some small scale industries and factories previously producing sachet water, water proof bags, soft drinks, under wears, have disguised into baby factories and now producing "babies" for sale.^[1] Other activities that go on behind doors in those factories include baby breeding, baby dumping, abandoning, force impregnation, confinement of kidnapped teens and young women, illegal adoptions of babies human trafficking, human organ harvesting, buying and selling of human beings or human parts for ritual sacrifices to deities or gods of a named shrine.^[1]

Proprietors of baby factory network include business merchants, medical doctors, nurses, mid-wives,

community health workers and auxiliary health workers.^[4,9-11]

Baby Factory (BF) has been described as a hide out for heinous crimes and activities ranging from child breeding to child adoption and trafficking within and outside the borders.^[1,6]

BF was first documented in 2006 in a UNESCO report paper to have involved four states.^[8] in Eastern Nigeria but presently it has engulfed almost the whole 36 states of the Federation. Previous research works on BF identified and described the places where BF business goes on, its syndicates and modus operandum.^[12,13] Many kidnapped and confined girls have been reported rescued by law enforcement agents.

The question in the minds of many Nigerians is what are the factors promoting BF business and its proliferation in Nigeria? How can it be stopped? It is against this background that the study is aimed at identifying factors promoting BF business and its rapid proliferation in Nigeria. It also seeks to proffer people oriented opinion on how to stop the nuisance.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive survey was carried out in three health institutions in Abia State, Nigeria. Doctors and nurses in each institution were systematically selected from the payroll register. A sample size of 400 respondents was systematically selected for the interview using a sampling interval of two. Instrument for data collection was a 22 item questionnaire designed in five points Likert scale rating- Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). The questionnaire was validated for its content by six experts in Public Health. The test re-test reliability co-efficient of 0.85, using the split half method. The questionnaire was self administered. Data collected were analyzed using percentage and chi-square static was used in testing each of the 22 items (factors) to know those that significantly influenced the promotion of BF business and its proliferation in Nigeria at alpha level of 0.05. Thus if the calculated chi-square value, was greater than the tabulated chi-square value, that factor was accepted as contributing to the promotion of BF and its proliferation otherwise that factor was rejected.^[14-15]

Ethical consideration

Approval to conduct the study was sought and obtained from the institution management board, before embarking upon the project. Personal consent of the individuals interviewed were sought and obtained before administering the questionnaire on them. Data collected were held in strict confidence.

RESULTS

Majority of respondents were within the age bracket of 35-49 years, females (75.25%), married (76.75%), nurses (74.75%), highly educate (73%) and monthly income above \$50.00(83.75%). Identified factors contributing to the promotion of Baby Factory (BF) and its proliferation were broadly categorized into four; those traceable to government actions or inactions, those attributable to society, family and individual lifestyle. A close look at table 2 shows that out of the four factors identified to have influenced the promotion of BF and its proliferation, only three were significant ($p < 0.05$). Inability of the government to create job opportunity for her teaming unemployed youths was the highest government factor contributing to the promotion of BF and its proliferation. About 113(28.25%) respondents strongly agreed (SA) to this ($\chi^2 = 54.36, 4 \text{ df}, p < 0.05$).

The government factor that did not significantly contribute to the promotion of BF and its proliferation was lack of legal backing for surrogacy, abortion and fertility centers ($\chi^2 = 2.19, 4 \text{ df}, p > 0.05$).

Identified society factors that contributed to the promotion of BF were nine in number, only two were not significant in promoting BF and its proliferation. These were Terrorist activities, $p > 0.05$ and Rapping $p > 0.05$. However, the following factors were significantly promoting BF, human trafficking, adoption, kidnapping, economic recession effects, human organ harvesting, stigmatization of infertility, teenage pregnancy, corruption and law of demand and supply (Table 3).

Identified family factors promoting BF business were four in number, but only one factor literacy level was not significant ($\chi^2 = 8.37, 4 \text{ df}, p > 0.05$).

Table 5 presents personal life style contributing to the promotion of BF and its proliferation. All the identified five factors were statistically significant in promoting BF business. These factors include, joy of prostituting in developed countries, unwanted pregnancy, greed and desire to get rich quick, violation of medical and nursing ethics and unemployment.

Table 6 presents respondents opinion on ways to stop baby factory business. About 200(50%) of 400 respondents agreed that re-enforcement of the ban on illegal adoption, trafficking, harvesting, kidnapping, buying and selling of children is a way to stop BF business in Nigeria. However 20% of respondents preferred government creating job opportunities for the teaming unemployed youths, while 12.50% of respondents preferred strict sanctions against BF business proprietors and their accomplice in the crime by prosecuting and jailing them without option of fine. Public enlightenment through mass media and town criers on the social and health implications of BF business (9.25%) and lastly by giving legal backing to surrogacy, safe abortion and fertility centers involving invitro fertilization and assisted reproductive technology (8.25%).

TABLE: 1 Socio-demographic and economic characteristics of respondents
(n=400)

Variables	Description	Frequency	Percentage
Age (years)	<20	35	8.75%
	20 – 34	130	32.50%
	35 – 49	172	43.00%
	50 and above	63	15.75%
Sex	Male	103	25.75%
	Female	297	75.25%
Marital status	Married	307	76.75%
	Single	93	23.25%

Works status	Medical doctors	101	25.25%
	Nurses (including auxiliary nurses)	299	74.75%
Education	Primary	0	0
	Secondary	108	27%
	Tertiary	292	73%
Monthly income	Below \$50.00	54	14.25%
	Above \$50.00	343	83.75%

TABLE 2: Identified government factors promoting baby factory business proliferation

Factors		SA	A	U	D	SD	DC	X ²
Inability of the government to create job for the youths	O	113	110	36	77	64	Accept	54.36
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Lack of effective sanctions against BF proprietor	O	109	119	44	78	50	Accept	57.01
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Inability of the government to stop internal and cross-boarder adoption and trafficking.	O	104	98	50	78	70	Accept	28.80
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
No legal backing for surrogacy, abortion and fertility centers	O	75	73	75	86	91	Reject	2.19
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P>0.05

Legend: SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree

DC = Decision, U = Undecided, O = Observed, E = Expected

BF = Baby factory

TABLE 3: Identified society factors promoting baby factory business proliferation

Factors		SA	A	U	D	SD	DC	X ²
Human adoption and trafficking	O	128	121	32	73	46	Accept	93.15
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Kidnapping	O	120	121	33	66	60	Accept	76.07
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Economic recession	O	117	97	23	84	79	Accept	60.54
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Human organ harvesting	O	106	110	40	73	71	Accept	41.32
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Stigmatization of infertility and teenage pregnancy	O	103	111	39	79	68	Accept	69.45
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Corruption	O	103	101	53	72	71	Accept	22.04
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
The law of demand and supply	O	99	116	47	68	70	Accept	37.37
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Rapping	O	77	85	66	87	85	Reject	3.79
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P>0.05
Terrorist Activities	O	75	86	64	88	87	Reject	5.77
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P>0.05

Legend: SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree

DC = Decision, U = Undecided, O = Observed, E = Expected

TABLE 4: Identified family factors promoting baby factory business proliferation

Factors		SA	A	U	D	SD	DC	X ²
Poverty	O	130	121	32	61	56	Accept	91.77
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Quest for male child	O	116	95	27	86	76	Accept	54.77
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Family support for adoption and prostitution of teenagers	O	100	131	28	67	75	Accept	73.87
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Illiteracy	O	74	99	64	84	79	Reject	8.37
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P>0.05

Legend: SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree

DC = Decision, U = Undecided, O = Observed, E = Expected

TABLE 5: Personal lifestyle promoting baby factory business proliferation

Factors		SA	A	U	D	SD	DC	X ²
Greed and desire to get rich quick	O	135	114	32	73	46	Accept	115.12
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Joy of prostituting in developed countries	O	107	110	33	75	75	Accept	48.59
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Violation of medical & nursing ethics	O	105	110	38	69	78	Accept	42.67
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Unemployment	O	99	119	43	70	69	Accept	43.39
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05
Unwanted pregnancy	O	101	105	41	84	69	Accept	34.04
	E	80	80	80	80	80		P<0.05

Legend: SA = Strongly agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly disagree
DC = Decision, U = Undecided, O = Observed, E = Expected

TABLE 6: Respondents Opinion on Ways to Stop Baby Factory Business (n=400)

Opinion	Frequency	%
Re-enforcement of the ban on illegal child adoption trafficking, harvesting, kidnapping, buying and selling.	200	50
Create job opportunities for the teaming unemployment youths.	80	20
Strict sanctions against baby factory business proprietors and prosecution of offenders.	50	12.50
Public enlightenment through mass media town criers on the social and health implications of baby factory business	37	9.25
Give legal backing to surrogacy, safe abortion and fertility centres	33	8.25
Total	400	100

DISCUSSION

The finding that baby factory (BF) business which was first documented by UNESCO in 2006 as thriving in only four south eastern states of Nigeria has almost engulfed all the 36 states of Nigeria is in keeping with other recent research work on BF.^[1,2,16,17] The finding that government inability to create job for her youths and stop international and domestic child adoption, stop child trafficking, sanction BF proprietors are factors promoting BF business and its proliferation in Nigeria is in agreement with the report of other researchers.^[1,6,13,18,19]

The finding that lack of legal backing for surrogacy abortion and fertility techniques for procreation did not significantly influence the promotion of BF in the study area, is because of the belief and religion of the people. The people believe that it surrogacy is an abominable act to the land. They also have illusory fear or believe that Assisted Reproductive Technique (ART) and Invitro fertilization procreation products don't live to celebrate their first birth day. Ojelabi, Osamor and Owumi opined that due to stigma associated with infertility, many infertile women in Nigeria do not opt for adoption or surrogacy.^[20] A study in Nigeria found that religious leaders (both Christians and Muslims) do not approve of surrogacy as a form of procreation.^[21]

The finding that societal factors such as human trafficking and adoption, stigmatization of infertility and teenage pregnancy, kidnapping, economic recession effects, human organ harvesting, the law of demand and

supply, and corruption in Nigeria significantly influence the promotion of baby factory business and its proliferation in Nigeria, corroborate the works of other researchers.^[1,4,6,9,13,18,19]

The fact that terrorist activities and rapping did not significantly influence promotion of BF in the study area could be as a result of the fact that the terrorist group operating in Nigeria and commonly known as "Boko Haram group" are only found in the North eastern part of the country. Some researchers reported that terrorist kidnap and confine their victims and brainwash them for suicide mission.^[1,2,3]

The finding that family factors such as poverty, quest for male child, family support for adoption and prostitution of teenagers significantly promote BF business in Nigeria is in agreement with the report of previous researchers.^[1,14,15]

Literacy level of a family did not significantly promote BF business. This is because both literate families and illiterate families are involved in this shady business because of the enormous wealth generated from it.^[9]

The finding that personal life style factor such as greed and desire to get rich quick, Joy of prostituting in developed countries, violation of medical and nursing ethics, unemployment, unwanted pregnancy are driving forces promoting BF business in Nigeria is in keeping with the report of these researchers.

In respondents' opinion, to stop BF business and its proliferation in Nigeria, government should re-enforce the ban on illegal child adoption, trafficking, harvesting, kidnapping, buying and selling. Government should live up to her responsibility by providing job opportunity to her teaming Unemployed youths. Strict sanctions should be placed on BF business proprietors and their accomplice in crime by prosecuting and jailing them without option of time.

Furthermore, public enlightenment through mass media and town-criers on the social and health implications of baby factory business should be carried out to the grass root level from time to time. Lastly government should consider giving legal backing to surrogacy, safe abortion, invitro fertilization and assisted reproductive technique.

CONCLUSION

About 22 items or factors were identified as promoting baby factory (BF) business and its proliferation in Nigeria. On further analysis using chi-square statistic to test for their significance in promoting BF business and its proliferation at alpha level of 0.05, eighteen factors were significant while four were not.

The three most important factors driving the promotion of BF business and its proliferation in Nigeria were, greed and desire to get rich quick 135(33.5%), poverty 130(32.5%) and human adoption and trafficking 128 (32%).

In respondents' opinion, to stop baby factory business and its proliferation in Nigeria, government should live up to her responsibilities by providing job opportunities to the teaming unemployed youths, re-enforce the ban on illegal child adoption and trafficking, child organ harvesting, kidnapping, buying and selling of children. Government should also place strict sanctions against BF business proprietors and their accomplice in the crime by prosecuting and jailing them without option of fine. Public enlightenment campaign through mass media and town criers on social and health implications of BF business should be carried out from time to time.

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