Migration and Human Trafficking: The A Case Study of the Deceived Sub-Saharan African Women in Turkey

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Abstract

Since the mid-1990s, Turkey has experienced a massive increase in sub-Saharan African migrants. According to the U.S. Department of State's 2021 report on trafficking in Turkey, in 2019, there were 276 victims of human trafficking. This paper examines the issue of human trafficking through the lens of the concept of deceptive trafficking. The cases of eight victimized women trafficked to Turkey from sub-Saharan Africa are examined, and their responses are thematically analyzed using migration theories with a focus on Van Hear's model. The testimonies of these sub-Saharan African women exploited by human traffickers serve as the foundation for this study. The paper reveals the circumstances that give rise to the practice of human trafficking and the factors that maintain its existence in sub-Saharan African countries. The results highlighted the vulnerability of African women as a target for international and transnational human trafficking.

Introduction

African countries are struggling to deal with significant problems of human trafficking. Many researchers, including Bello and Olutola (2020), Adepoju (2005), and Adetula (2014), term human trafficking in Africa a threat and abuse of fundamental human rights in sub-Saharan Africa. Since the mid-1990s, Turkey has experienced a massive increase in sub-Saharan African migrants as irregular, regular, transit, and asylum seekers (Yükseker and Brewer, 2011). Immigrants from sub-Saharan African countries in Turkey have been less studied, as researchers and policymakers have focused more on migrants from Turkey's neighboring countries, such as Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran, Syria, Greece, and the former Soviet Union (IOM, 2013; Şaul, 2017). The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (2022) portrayed Turkey as one of the top destinations for victims of human trafficking. In addition to international trafficking, there is also significant intra-regional or domestic trafficking going on in sub-Saharan Africa. This research investigates how the

recent reconfiguration of the methods of human trafficking is being enacted at the level of the subject, as well as the impact that these methods have on individuals' perceptions of gender difference and sexuality. Human traffickers employ a wide variety of strategies to locate and recruit potential victims.

West Africa accounted for 3336 of the 4799 victims that were discovered in 26 nations in sub-Saharan Africa. Of these victims, 2553 were children. According to the data provided by UNODC, over 80 percent of victims in West Africa were exploited for forced labor, which is still the most prevalent form of exploitation in the region (UNODC, 2022).

The concept of "deceptive trafficking," which is generally understood to refer to a process by which persons are purposefully recruited for forced labor or exploitation in the sex industry by methods of force or deception, is the lens through which I analyze these transitions.

For this study, the testimonies of eight victimized women from sub-Saharan Africa serve as the foundation to provide insight into the more systemic shifts that have taken place in labor markets. The purpose of this study is to investigate the circumstances that give rise to the practice of "human trafficking" and the factors that maintain its existence. The study further reveals the tricks used by human traffickers to mislead and deceive the victims.

The study uncovers and analyzes the experiences of African women who have been victimized by human traffickers. The major objective of this study is to understand how these sub-Saharan African women end up in the hands of human traffickers and the underlying reasons for their migration patterns. The study further tracks the journeys of the victims, how they were deceived, and how they survive in the hands of the human traffickers. Furthermore, the study outlines and analyzes cooperation and migratory decision-making between victims and traffickers.

Inquiries and Research Questions

This study examines the migration routes, causes of migration, trafficking risks, experiences, and self-remedies of African trafficked women in Turkey, as well as the role of third parties in their trafficking. Poverty, lack of education, and high unemployment are the root causes of child and woman trafficking, with vulnerable and poor individuals being the targets of traffickers. Human trafficking is portrayed as a dominant new model in migration trends, with Sub-Saharan African nations being one of the primary locations for this phenomenon.

In this study, I used Van Hear's (1998) migration order model to examine victimized women's experiences. Van Hear's framework explains distinct trafficking experiences throughout the continuum of known migration theories, showing that popular

understandings of trafficking focusing on domestic workers, sex slaves, or sex workers do not reflect the entire spectrum of components in a trafficking flow.

This research aims to investigate the fundamental factors contributing to the migration of African women, focusing on understanding the mechanisms through which girls and women are deceived and subsequently fall victim to human traffickers. It also explores the impact of factors such as gender inequalities, poverty, domestic violence, and limited employment opportunities on the prevalence of human trafficking in sub-Saharan African countries.

This study provides a more comprehensive analysis and examination of the factors influencing the victims' travel, including their personal choices, migratory patterns, occupations, educational backgrounds, lived experiences, and interactions with other entities such as third parties and human traffickers. Key determinants that drive African women to engage in migration are one of the points this study seeks to uncover. Factors such as poverty, domestic violence, and a lack of employment are examined as potential migration motivation factors. This study also attempts to determine push and pull factors for this type of migration. Additionally, this study endeavors to provide answers as to how these migrants became trafficking victims and discover if they were aware of the terms and conditions of their travel. Lastly, this study inquiries about the migrant's decision to travel, to determine if it was their own choice or to determine if they were influenced by family members, friends or the media.

Literature Review

Background Information: What is trafficking?

Organizations such as the International Organization for Migration, Europol, and the European Commission define "human trafficking" as the use of force, deception, or compulsion to obtain labor or sexual services for profit. The three most prevalent types of human trafficking are sex trafficking, forced labor, and debt bondage. The International Organization for Migration labels "trafficking in women" and "forced prostitution" as processes that encompass transporting women legally or illegally and engaging in trade for economic gain, with the ultimate objective of coercing them into prostitution, forced marriage, or other forms of sexual exploitation. Forceful actions encompassing physical, sexual, or psychological dimensions are also included. According to the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner, "trafficking in persons" is a process or movement that involves recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons by threat or use of force.

Trafficking in persons includes prostitution, sexual exploitation, forced labor, slavery, and organ removal (United Nations, 2000). The following definitions are employed for

this study; (1) trafficking is any act that moves a person from where they usually live and makes them work against their will, and (2) a person who has been trafficked is someone who has been hurt or harmed because of this process.

Conceptualization

For many experts, trafficking is a concern in terms of morality, labor rights, human rights, organized crime, and migration (Wijers and Van Doorninck 2002). Responding to these alleged challenges, they explore the options for repression or empowerment. The women, however, know that these interventions are often pushed upon them and that they don't necessarily have a voice in how they are carried out.

The term "human trafficking" is debatable. A major source of contention is the wide range of activities involved (Oluwaniyi 2009). This may explain in part why Gould and other researchers referred to it as "a leaking concept" that is, difficult to grasp (Gould et al. 2018). Furthermore, the debate over traditional vs. modern practices might make it difficult to grasp the concept's true meaning. Western democracies' depictions of human trafficking may differ from those in Africa. It's possible that a youngster selling items on the street could be perceived as exploitation, yet in some Western African civilizations, it may be seen as a typical practice for a child (Bello et al. 2020).

Statistics on the Practice of Modern Slavery in Sub-Saharan Africa

Africa, with 17% of the global population, faces contemporary enslavement due to factors like political instability, impoverished conditions, armed conflicts, climate change, and the COVID-19 pandemic. The incidence of forced marriage and labor varies across the continent, with over 3.1 million Africans subjected to forced marriage and 3.8 million engaged in forced labor. Factors such as conflict, poverty, and traditions contribute to these challenges.

Eritrea, Mauritania, and South Sudan have the highest prevalence of contemporary slavery, while Mauritius, Lesotho, and Botswana have the lowest. About 4% of the African population is subjected to forced labor, primarily women and children in mining, agriculture, fishing, domestic work, and sex industries. Traffickers often exploit Africans seeking work overseas, and children are exploited for education (Global Slavery Index Report, 2022). The primary contributors to modern slavery in sub-Saharan Africa are economic hardship, including poverty and a high level of unemployment; conflicts, including war, abuse, and displacement; and environmental and humanitarian crises.

Geographically, the portion of the African continent that may be found south of the Sahara Desert is referred to as sub-Saharan Africa. According to the United Nations, it is comprised of all the African countries that are located wholly or partially south of the Sahara Desert. The United Nations Development Program labels 46 of Africa's 54

countries as sub-Saharan Africa. Algeria, Djibouti, Egypt, Libya, Morocco, Somalia, Sudan, and Tunisia are not considered to be part of the sub-Saharan African region (UNODC, 2020).

Figure 1. 2020 report on human trafficking

Each nation is given a ranking in the TIP Report based on its compliance with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA). This ranking is not based on the severity of the trafficking problem in a country; rather, it is based on the government's efforts to meet the basic standards established by the TVPA for eradicating human trafficking. The United States Department of State analyzed the data that was provided by various foreign governments and other sources (U.S. Department of State Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2022).

The Origins and Pathways of Human Trafficking in Sub-Saharan *Africa*

North Africa is a focal point for human trafficking, with nearly all countries involved. However, each country has a slightly different number of trafficking victims. Traffickers target undocumented migrants from Mali, Niger, Cameroon, and Nigeria, who are vulnerable due to their illegal status and linguistic limitations. These migrants often fall prey to traffickers while trying to enter Europe illegally. Illegal migrants often run out of money and seek ways to survive due to long distances and transportation costs. Regions such as the Arab Gulf and Maghreb countries are responsible for a significant proportion of the victims of human trafficking originating from sub-Saharan African countries.

Methodology

This section discusses the ethical and methodological issues of design, implementation, sample, fieldwork, respondents' demography, and research questionnaires. This research uses the action research method based on Armitage's (2010) "conscientization" and dialogical procedures. This approach has been used by researchers such as McIntyre (2002) and O'Brian (2001) to investigate previously unknown or poorly understood conceptions of identity among various communities. Action research aims to help people with urgent problems and advance social science by studying a system and collaborating with its members to positively change it. This dual-purpose activity demands researcher and research participant engagement, highlighting the importance of co-learning in the study process. Participatory action research, also known as action research, combines discussion and open communication to combat tyranny. However, some argue that participatory action research can impose western individualistic values on non-western peoples and communities and their traditional collectivist ways of dealing with issues, especially issues involving oppression and violence.

The Study Groups

The scope of this study focuses on African women who were victims of human trafficking in Turkey. Interviews were conducted with eight victims from Sub-Saharan African countries. Three of the respondents are victims whom I met in person and helped rescue from the traffickers. Additionally, I could speak the native language of four of the participants, which gave me a way to understand their feelings clearly and communicate effectively with them.

A semi-structured, in-depth interview methodology was employed to gather and analyze data from the participants. The collected information and data from the participants were subjected to analysis and afterwards classified into many thematic categories, including factors such as victims' migration patterns and experiences related to human trafficking, as well as other topics.

Fieldwork

The study cohort consisted of eight female victims of human trafficking. The fieldwork phase extended from July 2018 through May 2022. The initial data was collected in 2018 in Bolu, where an Ivorian woman was rescued from an Arab family from Kuwait, who came with the victims to Turkey for a long holiday. The impetus for this study derived from my encounters with multiple victims of trafficking originating from sub-Saharan African countries.

I was part of the protection process for four participants, working with local police, immigration, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to free them from

their perpetrators. As a polyglot and African, I voluntarily facilitate communication and translation for the victims. Although the victims' experiences varied, they were all, to varying degrees, deceived, and manipulated by traffickers. One-fourth of the participants were married and had children. Some were taken directly to Turkey, while others were taken to different countries before arriving in Turkey. Most respondents reported occurrences of violence and exploitation that diverged from other forms of suffering associated with human trafficking.

The data was collected through face-to-face interviews, and the snowball technique was also used. Six of the respondents were interviewed face-to-face and another two were interviewed on WhatsApp video calls. Socio-demographic information was collected under different titles, such as age, gender, education level, occupation, length of residence in Turkey, and country of origin. For confidentiality and ethical reasons, "R" was used as a substitute to represent each respondent's name.

Demography

Table 1

Number	Name of Respondents	Gender	Age	MaritalStatus	Number of Children	Nationality
1	R1	Female	38	Widow	2	Ivory Coast
2	R2	Female	26	Single	1	Guinea
3	R3	Female	25	Divorcee	1	Guinea
4	R4	Female	28	Single	2	Liberia
5	R5	Female	27	Single	1	Nigeria
6	R6	Female	29	Divorcee	2	Nigeria
7	R7	Female	30	Divorce	3	Uganda
8	R8	Female	22	Single	0	Uganda

The age range of the participants varied from 22 to 38 years. From the group, there were a total of eight individuals, with one being a widow and four being unmarried, while the remaining three were formerly married but divorced. Except for the youngest respondent (R8), the rest of the respondents had children. The participants in the study were individuals from several sub-Saharan African countries, including an individual from Ivory Coast, two individuals from Guinea, one from Liberia, two from Nigeria, and another two from Uganda.

Regarding the educational background of the participants, it is noteworthy that none of them pursued or achieved higher education. The individuals who exhibited the highest educational attainment were those who successfully completed secondary school.

Respondent R1 is the sole participant who did not receive any formal education. Respondent R2 possessed primary school qualifications, while the remaining respondents obtained secondary school qualifications. According to the data that was gathered, it can be observed that among the individuals studied, only R2 had engaged in professional tailoring work. On the other hand, R1 was working as a domestic worker, while the remaining individuals were unemployed prior to their migration.

Respondents R4, R5, and R7 were coerced into engaging in sex work by the traffickers, while respondents R1, R2, R3, R4, and R6 were compelled to perform domestic work. Additionally, respondent R8 had employment as a bartender. During the period of study, the duration of participants' stays in Turkey ranged from 2 months to 3 years.

Table 2

Number	Name of Respondents	Level of Education	Occupation before Migration	Occupation after Migration	Duration of Stay in Turkey
1	R1	N/Education	Domestic	D/Work	4 months
2	R2	P/School	Tailor	D/Work	2 months
3	R3	High School	Unemployed	D/Work	1 year
4	R4	Junior High	Unemployed	Sex Work	2 years
5	R5	High School	Unemployed	Sex Work	2 years
6	R6	High School	Unemployed	D/Work	3 years
7	R7	High School	Unemployed	Sex Work	8 months
8	R8	High School	Unemployed	Bar-tender	1 year

Findings and Analysis

This section discusses the victims of trafficking and the many reasons that lead to women's trafficking. This research examines migration ideas to explain why people participate in trafficking.

This study also examines and analyzes the decisions behind sub-Saharan African women's migrations. Trafficked women's origins and motives are equally examined. I argued that the assumptions about sub-Saharan Africa's human trafficking are faulty, and the ideas need to be re-examined. This study highlights sub-Saharan African women's recruitment and exploitation processes by human traffickers. Conventional societal norms and practices are examined as causes for some young women to go for greater personal freedom and traditional family life indicators. This study describes how sub-Saharan African women escape harmful customs. To escape repressive norms, many women, especially divorced women, turn to trafficking. The study also describes how gender inequality and poor economies in sub-Saharan African countries contribute to human trafficking.

Since misunderstandings have obscured women's life experiences and goals, it is harder for them to overcome patriarchal enslavement. Repatriating victims of human trafficking to undesirable places is undesirable and inhumane because it may perpetuate the trafficking of women who want to escape discrimination, unfairness, and restricted chances.

Root Causes of Migration (Poverty and Economic Hardship)

Human trafficking flourished in the sub-Saharan region due to a combination of causes, including intensifying poverty, deteriorating living conditions, continuous unemployment, violence, human suffering, and hopelessness. Women's and children's trafficking is a significant violation of human rights; however, the primary cause of child maltreatment and neglect in Sub-Saharan African countries is deteriorating economic conditions (Adepoju, 1997).

Under the guise of providing them with the opportunity to achieve decent employment and better lifestyles, rural poverty compels impoverished families to give up their children to traffickers (Mike, 2002). When young people are destitute, lack access to education, are unemployed, have lost a parent to death or divorce, or are experiencing economic hardship, they are an easy target for traffickers (ILO, 2003; Moore, 1994).

In this aspect of the study, the respondents were asked two questions to understand their migration-related thoughts and experiences. What caused their migration, and how did they end up in the hands of human traffickers?

> My parents only have two children: me and my little sister. My parents are unemployed, and we have no assistance. I used to support my parents and pay for my little sister's education through my tailoring employment. But I did not earn enough to solve all their problems, so my aunt promised to take me to Europe so that I could assist my family. (R2, 26 y/o, Guinean) I aspired to secure employment overseas to enhance my financial prospects and provide educational opportunities for my children, as my own upbringing was marred by poverty and a series of disappointing relationships. (R4, 28 y/o, Liberian)
> Most of my colleagues travel abroad, and they are sending remittances to their families. My parents convinced and supported me to travel abroad so I might help them and my siblings. (R8, 22 y/o, Ugandan)
> My husband passed away and left me with two children. I had no job and no money to sustain my children and send them to school. One of my friends told me about some people who are helping women get jobs abroad with good salaries and benefits. So, I decided to join them, and they took us to Kuwait for work. After we arrived, they never fulfilled any

of their promises, and we were used as domestic workers with no pay. They would have sex with us at any time they wanted. (R1, 38 y/o, Ivorian)

The prevailing viewpoint among the participants indicates that each of them encountered varying degrees of hardship, prompting their decision to migrate in pursuit of improved living conditions. Each participant identifies poverty, unemployment, marginalization, and economic adversity as significant determinants of their decision to migrate. A subset of the participants expressed a desire to give their family a better life; they perceived overseas as the sole viable option to augment their income and offer economic assistance to their family back home. The economic challenges experienced in sub-Saharan African nations are undeniably a contributing factor to the migration of individuals and their subsequent vulnerability to exploitation by human traffickers. Consequently, it is imperative for sub-Saharan African countries to prioritize a resolution of this alarming issue and prevent women and children from being exploited.

Financial Support for the Expedition

Migration, whether internal or cross-border, cannot occur in the absence of financial resources or other forms of assistance. Many human trafficking victims fall into human traffickers' traps when they rely on traffickers to prepare their passports, visas, flights, and other arrangements for their trips. As a result, the traffickers impose debt bondage on them. In many cases, victims make deals with traffickers by agreeing to their terms and conditions. However, when they get to their final destination, they often regret their choice. As a result of this trend, some trafficking is carried out in the form of smuggling. Human trafficking involves the exploitation of an individual for forced labor, commercial, or sexual activities, while human smuggling refers to the facilitation of unauthorized entry into a foreign country by providing those seeking illegal immigration with various forms of assistance, such as transportation or counterfeit documentation (UNODC, 2020). In this part of the study, the respondents were questioned regarding the monetary aspects of their migration, specifically with regard to help, services, and sponsorship.

My aunt, who resides in Germany, promised me that she would help me get there. She sent 300 euros to prepare my passport and get me a Turkish visa. She said that she would come and get me from Istanbul so we could travel together to Germany. My aunt sent an old Turkish man, whom I never knew before, to pick me up at the airport when I arrived. The old man took me to Çanakale, and after a few days, I understood that my aunt had sold me to the old man in marriage. (R2, 26 y/o, Guinean)
I was so eager to travel, but I didn't know how until my friend who lives in Qatar connected me with an agency in Abuja, but I couldn't afford the trip from Kano. My friend paid for my journey to Abuja to meet the agency. I

met the agency and signed their terms and conditions to take me abroad
for work and pay them back with benefits, as they do for every girl and
woman they help. (R6, 29 y/o, Nigerian)

We were a total of five women from identical locations looking for jobs
abroad. A friend of mine's uncle recommended an agency that facilitates
employment opportunities in Kuwait and Qatar. We were required to re-
mit a sum of 62,000 CFA Francs per individual for the acquisition of our
passport and visa. (R1, 38 y/o, Ivorian)

About half of the women who were part of this study reported that their parents
were cognizant of their travel plans and provided financial assistance in some way. Some
of the victims had been sold out by a third-party unknown to them. It is reported by
the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) that traffickers use social
media to locate potential victims. Their recruitment method is to identify and com-
municate with victims; they make use of personal information that is accessible to the
general public and the anonymity afforded by internet sites (UNODC, 2020). The fi-
nancial aspect of the respondent migration was done through different methods. Some
of them received sponsorship from their parents, some from family members and close
friends, some from their friends, and some were financially supported by human traffick-
ing organizations.

Unemployment

The respondents were asked about their employment status in their respective countries
prior to their migration. The participants in this study who originally considered them-
selves "wives" did not consider female unemployment in their respective countries to be a
strong motivation for migration, as they expected after having children not to work out-
side of the home or only do casual work if they did. The widowed and divorced women
among them said that society's stigma and lack of support for their children after their
husbands' deaths or divorce made them want to move. The single women, on the oth-
er hand, said that they left because they didn't have opportunities or funds to cater to
themselves and their children. Among the participants, only two had a job prior to their
migration. R2 was a skilled artisan tailor, and R1 was a domestic employee. The rest of
the respondents were unemployed. The respondents were asked about their employment
before their migration.

In my country, men are assigned the majority of the work. Before my hus-
band died, he was working as a construction contractor, and he was sus-
taining us through the little he was gaining. I was a domestic employee.
After the death of my husband, I started suffering a lot with my children,
and I couldn't even afford to send them to school, so I decided to find an

alternative by going abroad for a better life. (R1, 38 y/o, Ivorian)

I have been a tailor for almost ten years, and at one point I ran my own shop with seven apprentices. Because my aunt had agreed to take me to Germany, I had to sell all of my sewing machines and hand over responsibility for my apprentices to one of my coworkers before I left on my trip. (R2, 26 y/o, Guinean)

Unfortunately, in my country, women are seen as housewives and domestic workers. Generally, there is no freedom or opportunity for women in Africa. As a woman, even if you go to school, it is difficult for you to acquire a high position in society. No one gives importance to girls' education, and we don't get any recognition. After high school, I never had money to go to college or acquire a job. (R7, 30 y/o, Uganda)

I never had a job. The most common work for women in my country is domestic work. The elderly women are market sellers. They take goods from the wholesalers and go to the market to resell them and make small profits. Normally, young girls are street vendors, selling vegetables and fruits in the street to help their parents, and some of the girls even do this to get their school fees. (R3, 25 y/o, Guinean)

I was unemployed. In my country and other African countries, the notion is that as a young girl or woman, you are expected to get married and become a housewife, taking care of the children and looking after the elderly people in the house. If you are privileged to be from a rich family, your parents or husband might give you money to do business. (R6, 29 y/o, Nigerian)

The respondents' responses suggest that there aren't many job opportunities for women in their countries of origin. It seems like many sub-Saharan African countries are practicing a patriarchal system in their cultural notch. The African cultural norm of limiting women as housewives affects women's employment and freedom. The respondents unanimously agreed that there were no job opportunities for women in their respective countries. The findings show that women are referred to as domestic workers and girls as street vendors. We can say that gender inequality is one of the factors influencing African women to migrate, which exposes most of them to human trafficking.

Literacy

According to some scholars, such as Kelly (2004), Avdan (2012), and Jahic et al. (2005), there is a prevailing belief that those with lesser educational attainment face a heightened vulnerability to becoming victims of human trafficking. Around 70% of the participants in this study possess a minimum of a high school diploma. Among these individuals, one has completed junior high school, while another has received primary education.

Additionally, one participant has not received any type of formal education. Two of the participants had initiated their college education prior to their migration but were unable to successfully complete it due to financial constraints.

> Coming from a family that never prioritized education is a big blow. My parents never went to school, and neither did I. It is so unfortunate to not even know how to write your name. I never wanted my children to be illiterate like me. After the death of my husband, I decided to move abroad so that I could provide a better life for my children and support their education. (R1, 29 y/o, Ivorian)
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> As a woman, having a degree in my country does not guarantee you employment or a good life. Why would I need a degree? In my country, finishing high school is a big achievement for girls. Is that enough to get what I want? I don't think so, but what I need is many children that will take care of me tomorrow. (R4, 28 y/o, Liberian)
>
> I only attended four years of primary school. I started to live on my own at the age of 15, and I had a child at the age of 16. I never obtained any degree; I think that having the skill to make money and take care of my family's needs is the most important, and moreover, my society doesn't value girls' education. (R2, 26 y/o, Guinean)

This aspect of the study is really intriguing. Within the cohort of participants, a limited number were able to successfully fulfill the requirements of secondary education while facing hindrances such as poverty, gender inequity, and a dearth of opportunities specifically impacting women, hence impeding their progression towards tertiary education. Some societies and cultural norms in sub-Saharan African countries exhibit a lack of appreciation for the importance of girls' education. Females are restricted to roles that mostly include housewives, street vendors, market sellers, and domestic laborers. The prevailing trend observed among the participants is that women perceive acquiring knowledge and physical skills in a certain domain such as tailoring, hairdressing, entering into matrimony, and having a substantial number of children as crucial factors contributing to a prosperous life.

According to World Bank Data, the literacy rate in Sub-Saharan Africa experienced a marginal increase of 0.21% from 2019 to 2020, reaching a level of 67.27%. The literacy rate in sub-Saharan Africa in 2019 witnessed a modest improvement, with a 0.92% increase compared to the previous year, reaching a total of 67.06% (World Bank Data, 2020). We might presume that one of the main causes of human trafficking in the sub-region is the lack of advancement in girls' education and the high rate of illiteracy in sub-Saharan African countries.

Arrival in Turkey

Turkey's geographical position at the intersection of Asia, the Middle East, and Europe, its diverse political boundaries, and its extensive coastline, along with the presence of cross-border organized crime, contribute to its dual role as a transit nation and a destination for human trafficking. Turkey, a nation that has demonstrated political and economic stability within its region, has been subject to both regular and irregular migratory movements since the conclusion of the Cold War and the emergence of globalization. Turkey is increasingly becoming recognized as a transit hub for migration and human trafficking, with its geographical location and the European Union's stringent border restrictions contributing to the growing desire for it as a destination country.

All the respondents arrived in Turkey under different circumstances. The study identified two groups of people: the first group consisted of those who fell victim to traffickers' deception and later learned that they were deceived and exploited. The second group of respondents was aware of the traffickers but agreed to their terms and conditions because they wanted to travel abroad. On the other hand, it is essential to point out that all of the victims were made to endure a variety of techniques of coercion, manipulation, and compulsion by the traffickers. The findings indicated that every single respondent legitimately entered Turkey, including R1, who initially traveled to Kuwait before being taken to Turkey. The most prevalent visas held by those victims were tourism and visiting visas.

> Due to difficulties in life, I surrender myself to the organization that will take me abroad. They give me a list of three different countries (Qatar, Kuwait, and Turkey) from which I can choose where I would like to go. I chose Turkey because it is close to Europe, so I might get more opportunities there. They prepared all my documents, including my visa and flight tickets. I never paid a cent. The agreement was for me to come and work for them. After I paid their money, I would be free. When I arrived, I worked days and nights as a hookup. The agreement was for me to pay seven thousand dollars in order to be free. Luckily for me, I met a friend in Istanbul who helped me escape. (R4, 28 y/o, Liberian)
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> My destination was to be Germany; however, I never had any idea that my aunt had sold me out to a Turkish man. She got me a Turkish visa with the promise of picking me up in Istanbul so we could travel together to Germany. To my utmost surprise, I found myself in the hands of an old Turkish man who claimed that he marries me from my aunt. (R2, 30 y/o, Guinean)
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> There is an entity in Uganda that has its head office in Istanbul. They claimed to be pioneers in providing opportunities for young people in Turkey. My dad took credit from the bank and paid the sum of $2000

> USD to their representative in Kampala. I was promised a domestic job and that my salary would be around $1000 USD every month. Sadly, when I arrived, they used me in the bar as a bartender. I used to work from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., serving alcohol and taking care of the customers. I was paid 1200 Turkish lira per month. (R8, 22 y/o, Ugandan)

The traffickers conned these women by promising them lucrative work and, in some cases, a prosperous life with high incomes. However, it turned out that the traffickers deceived them with fake promises.

> I was doing domestic work for an Arab family in Kuwait. They didn't pay me for 6 months. And later on, they decided to come to Turkey for a holiday, and they got a visa for me to come with them. We spent 3 months in Turkey in a city called Bolu. While in Turkey, they never paid my money. When I requested my money to send it to my family, they planned to kill me because they thought that the money was too much for them to pay me. They refer to me as a slave who doesn't have any right to earn money. (R1, 38 y/o, Ivorian)
>
> Initially, my plan was to go to France, but I never had the chance or finances. My friend encouraged me to come to Turkey through an organization that will help me go to France if I work for them for two years. And I got stuck in Istanbul without knowing what I was doing. (R3, 25 y/o, Guinean)

Assaults, Exploitations, and Sexual Harassments

Human traffickers are notorious for participating in a range of illicit behaviors, such as perpetrating physical attacks, engaging in exploitative practices, and committing acts of sexual harassment. Every single female who becomes a victim of the crime of human trafficking is subject to various forms of abuse and exploitation by those who are involved in the act. As per the definition provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, sexual exploitation encompasses the act or endeavor to exploit an individual's vulnerability, power dynamics, or trust for the purpose of obtaining sexual favors. This exploitation may involve the provision of monetary or non-monetary incentives, such as social, economic, or political advantages, and can manifest in various forms, including prostitution and trafficking. Sexual exploitation may encompass the practice of exploiting an individual for the purpose of obtaining sexual favors from them. (UNHCR, 2020).

The term "human trafficking" encompasses situations wherein individuals are coerced into labor, sometimes receiving minimal or nonexistent compensation, while facing the threat of punishment for noncompliance. An individual may be compelled to engage in

certain actions by the implementation of diverse strategies, including the utilization of physical intimidation or psychological coercion. (UNODC, 2020).

> I was promised to be paid 500 USD per month as a domestic worker. I worked for 6 months, and they never paid me a cent. They seized my passport and phone. I was unable to communicate with my family. They used me as a slave, and I was not allowed to go anywhere alone. I used to eat a meal once a day. My boss's 14 and 19-year-old sons used to record me whenever I was taking a shower. (R1, 38 y/o, Ivorian)
>
> I stayed with the old man for a month. He used to drink a beer every night and force me to sleep with him. He used to treat me badly because we didn't have anyone else living with us; it was just him and me. He seized my passport for some days, but I was able to take it from him. He threatened to kill me if I refused to sleep with him because he had paid a lot of money to my aunt and supported my trip to Turkey. But I never knew all of this because it was between him and my aunt, and I was deceived by my aunt. (R2, 26 y/o, Guinean)

Sexual abuse includes acts of non-consensual and coerced interference of a sexual nature. The subjects covered in the discourse include sexual enslavement, pornography, child abuse, and assault, as stated by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugee.

Sexual harassment encompasses unsolicited sexual behavior that has the potential to cause offense or humiliation to others in the workplace. Sexual harassment is defined as the occurrence of sexually improper conduct that hinders work performance, becomes a requirement for employment, or contributes to the creation of an intimidating, hostile, or unfavorable work atmosphere. Sexual harassment encompasses both isolated occurrences and recurring patterns of behavior. When assessing the level of offensiveness, it is imperative to consider the viewpoint of the victim.

> I was staying with my guardian; he was one of the guys who sponsored my trip to Turkey. While staying with him, every night he used to bring sex clients to make money. He also used to coerce me into having intercourse with him when he needed it. It was like a horror movie for me (R7, 30 y/o, Ugandan)
>
> We were about four girls living in the same house. The same madam brought us all from Uganda. She used us for sex and serving in the bar and disco. Every week we have to provide at least 500 USD to Madam; otherwise, you will be punished. No matter what happens, you have to provide the money. (R8, 22 y/o, Ugandan)

> I was kept in the house for a month. I was staying with my guardian, who helped me come to Turkey. He took possession of my passport and phone. During the day, he will go out and come back in at night. He told me he was working, but I never knew the kinds of work he was doing. I was just in the house doing nothing besides cooking for him and satisfying his sexual desire. (R3, 25 y/o, Guinean)

Sexual harassment can come in many forms, like sexually suggestive looks, words, or touches. Assaults, including but not limited to rapes, attempted rapes, and sharing or displaying sexually indecent images or videos in any format, are all examples of sexual harassment. Other examples include making inappropriate sexual gestures, such as pelvic thrusts; unwanted touching, pinching, or patting; and sending sexually suggestive communication. According to the findings, every single one of the women who were investigated was subjected to and experienced some form of sexual assault, as well as exploitation, intimidation, and other forms of workplace sexual harassment. They were forced to comply; their passports were taken away from them to avoid escaping.

Rescue from the Traffickers

In the 2000s, anti-trafficking efforts gained international traction. As an active international contributor, Turkey signed the Palermo Protocol early. The abolished Turkish Penal Code No. 765 could be regarded as criminalizing human trafficking. Turkey fulfilled its commitment as a Protocol signatory by designating human trafficking as a separate offense in the penal code. Article 80 of the Turkish Penal Code No. 5237, which took effect on June 1st, 2005, criminalizes human trafficking. Before this rule, actions were only penalized for other offenses. Human trafficking is now a separate offense under the Palermo Protocol. Since signing the Protocol, Turkey has done much to stop human trafficking. (Turkish Ministry of Interior, 2020)

The participants were asked about the manner in which they were rescued from the perpetrators involved in human trafficking as well as their present circumstances. The rescue of all the victims was executed through a variety of methods by distinct individuals or collectives. The Turkish government successfully managed to save a portion of the resources. While some individuals required the aid of their acquaintances, philanthropists, and advocates in order to be rescued, I am among the individuals engaged in humanitarian and activism efforts who contributed to the rescue of three individuals among the respondents.

> During the weekend, we used to go to various clubs, bars, and discos to look for sex clients. Luckily for me, I met a Nigerian friend in a nightclub who helped me escape and allowed me to stay with her. I am currently in Istanbul, but I plan to go to Europe. (R5, 27 y/s, Nigerian)

Because our madam and her bodyguards were in charge of our daily activities, it was extremely difficult for me to flee. We used to spend the whole day at home and then serve the sex clients at night. I was lucky that one of my constant sex clients fell in love with me, and he has to pay all the money that my madam spent to bring me to Turkey. He paid 6,000 USD to my madam for my freedom. I am currently living with him; he is now my boyfriend, and we are planning to get married. (R4, 28 y/o, Liberian)

The former client of Respondent R4 made a substantial financial payment in order to secure her release, but Respondent R5's Nigerian acquaintance played a crucial role in her rescue. The findings suggest that individuals who have experienced trafficking may occasionally encounter fortuitous circumstances when they encounter empathetic others who attentively listen to their narratives and aid in extricating themselves from such exploitative situations.

Our madam took care of our accommodation and food. We were four Ugandan girls living together. One day, our madam and her bodyguards were drunk. They fought, and the people in our neighborhood called the police. On that day, our stories were revealed to the police, and we were rescued. I am currently working at a hotel in Istanbul. (R8, 22 y/o, Ugandan)

My employers brought me to Turkey for a vacation from Kuwait. We stayed in Bolu for almost three months. They planned to kill me because I requested that my nine-month salary be paid. One day, they just packed all of their stuff and left me in the house with no money and nothing. I can't speak the Turkish language to call for help. After they left, a Turkish woman living in the next apartment saw me crying and came to me, and I informed her through sign language that the people had left me alone and gone back to Kuwait. The woman called the police, but we couldn't understand each other. They took me to the police station, where they called Faruk, who was the president of the foreigners in Bolu. Luckily, Faruk speaks both French and my local language (Bambara). Faruk did everything possible in his own capacity, along with the immigration office in Bolu, to rescue me. They provided shelter and accommodation for me for one month. With the help of Faruk and Bolu's immigration office, the UNODC office in Istanbul bought me a flight ticket to go back to Ivory Coast, and they gave me 800 USD. (R1, 38 y/o, Ivorian)

I contacted one of my old friends, who is living in the United States, through Facebook Messenger. I explained my situation to him, and he called Faruk to rescue me. He gave my WhatsApp number and address to

Faruk. Faruk went to Çanakkale and rescued me. My friend in the United
States bought me a flight ticket to go back to my country. I am currently
in Conakry, trying to start life over again. (R2, 26 y/o, Guinean)

After I was introduced to R1 and listened to her story, I was motivated to take proac-
tive measures to intervene and rescue three individuals who were victims of perpetrators
engaged in illegal human trafficking activities. The presence of governmental entities was
noted in specific rescue endeavors, whereas alternative instances were executed by inde-
pendent volunteers. Advocating for the protection of human rights and raising awareness
about human trafficking are among the key motivators that compel me to pursue study
in this particular area. This experience has made me aware of my keen interest in explor-
ing genuine encounters of individuals who have fallen victim to human trafficking, as
well as the precise circumstances in which they were subjected to exploitation.

Conclusion

The concept of "deceptive trafficking," which is generally understood and referred to as a
process by which persons or groups of people are purposefully recruited for forced labor
or exploitation in the sex industry by methods of force or deception, is the lens through
which this is analyzed in this paper. However, the topic of deceptive trafficking is only
one aspect of this paper. The research participants represent a sub-Saharan African pop-
ulation of trafficked women in Turkey, and they represent themselves as being a typical
population. The experiences of the eight victimized women are thoroughly investigated
and analyzed.

All of the research participants in this study point out poverty and economic hard-
ship in their country as the major root causes of their migration. In sub-Saharan Africa,
rapid urbanization and low economic performance have given poverty a new face. Slums
and shantytown settlements have become commonplace outside of large cities. UN-Hab-
itat estimates that 70% of urban Africans live in slums (UN-Habitat 2020). Flahaux et
al. (2016) proposed three assumptions about African migration: extreme poverty, malnu-
trition, violence, and environmental devastation combine to depict African despair (Fla-
haux et al., 2016). Researchers and academics such as Cuttitta et al. (2020), Goldschmidt
(2006), and Baldwin-Edwards (2006) report that migration from sub-Saharan Africa and
the Maghreb region to Europe is associated with international crime, trafficking, and ter-
rorism. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) asserts that human
trafficking is a means through which the world's most impoverished individuals can be
robbed and murdered.

Baldwin-Edwards (2006) reports that the women who have been victims of hu-
man trafficking from sub-Saharan African countries are mostly taken to the Arab Gulf
and Maghreb countries. However, in the last decade, Turkey has become a hub for

immigrants and traffickers due to its favorable location. The findings indicate that trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa takes place both within the region and beyond. Scholars such as Zulu et al. (2011) and Brockerhoff and Brennan (1998) report that the number of countries in which child and women traffickers operate has increased, particularly in Turkey, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Traffickers in the sub-region, Europe, and Arab nations force children and women into prostitution. Domestic work, sexual exploitation, and pornography equally affect children and women. The participants unequivocally state that the trafficking agents provide them with passports and visas to facilitate their travel abroad. By providing passports and visas to those women, the trafficking agents are making sure to give their victims the benefit of the doubt regarding their travel.

In recent years, the number of people smuggling to, from, and within Africa has increased. Trafficking victims are typically exploited in ways that resemble slavery. Many countries struggle to manage human smuggling because they lack strong anti-trafficking policies. They can't respond appropriately since there are no national laws or regulations to address the situation. The general public is not aware of all aspects of human trafficking, including the degree to which organized crime is involved or the outcomes for those who are trafficked.

Parents and guardians of exploited children and adolescents often misunderstand victimization. According to a UNICEF report, children's trafficking is worse than that of women. Trafficking was an issue in 70% of West and Central African nations and 33% of East and Southern African countries (UNICEF, 2020).

Sub-Saharan Africans were unaware of trafficking, especially of women, until lately. They consider women's trafficking routine. Sub-Saharan Africa prioritizes the elimination child trafficking over the trafficking women. Thus, awareness initiatives in every region and community must be considered in light of women's trafficking. Some academics and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime have identified three main types of trafficking in the region: men and children for labor like construction and factories; women, mostly for domestic work within the region; and young girls and women, mostly for sex industries in western countries and the Arab peninsula (IOM, 2020). Women and girls are trafficked for domestic work and sexual exploitation.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of migration demonstrates gendered attributes, impacting adults in disparate ways. The phenomenon described can be traced back to the establishment of a globalized division of labor, which created a demand for female migrant workers in specific sectors, particularly in sex industries, domestic work, and caregiving. Gender stereotypes place limitations on the autonomy and decision-making abilities of women, thereby increasing their vulnerability to the systematic violation of their basic human rights. While poverty undoubtedly contributes to the prevalence of trafficking in

sub-Saharan Africa, it is important to acknowledge that vulnerability to trafficking cannot be solely attributed to one factor.

The findings of the study suggest that several reasons, such as gender inequality, restricted possibilities for women, cultural norms, the devaluation of girls' education, and social stigmatization towards widowed and divorced women, played a role in influencing their choice to relocate. It is imperative for theorists to recognize that the pursuit of poverty alleviation (IFAD, 2006) is unlikely to have a substantial impact on the decisions made by women who aspire to leave Africa in order to escape unfavorable personal conditions, such as unemployment, lack of education, poverty, limited opportunities, and societal exclusion.

Moreover, the data suggest that those who rely on cash as their primary means of sustenance and reside in urban areas are more likely to experience congestion, inadequate sanitation, feelings of insecurity, limited access to social healthcare services, engagement in risky sexual activities, living in close-knit communities, and frequent relocation. Due to the causes previously discussed, women who find themselves in desperate circumstances often resort to taking risks and complying with the demands of human traffickers. The individuals hold the belief that the sole resolution to their predicaments lies in embarking on international travel with the aim of securing an improved livelihood for themselves and their family.

The findings further highlight that rural origin is not necessarily a prerequisite for human trafficking in sub-Saharan regions. As a result of pressures and high living costs, the prevalence of social media, lack of employment, and economic hardship are exposing those living in urban areas to human trafficking. Some researchers have a bias in their conceptualizations of trafficking in sub-Saharan Africa based on a misconception, which is problematic. The particular relevant factor when thinking about migration motivation and decision-making in relation to the push factors that are present in a place is thought to be the place of origin and how these vulnerabilities can then be overcome. By gaining a better understanding of the reasons why trafficked women migrate, we have to understand and analyze what trafficked women expect from migration, what really makes them want to leave their country of origin, and what might be luring them to a certain country. In order to solve this problem, sub-Saharan African countries need to establish a ruling and penalty for trafficking. Additionally, the sub-regional organizations, the African Union (AU), and the NGOs need to amalgamate strategies to eradicate trafficking. Moreover, empowering African women through the lens of education, promoting gender equality, reducing poverty, and creating avenues for women to learn new skills can be the amicable solution that will eradicate trafficking in the sub-region.

In conclusion, the issues of migration and human trafficking, particularly in the context of sub-Saharan African women who are deceived, underscore the pressing necessity

for a comprehensive and multifaceted strategy. The eradication of modern-day slavery and the protection of the rights and dignity of all individuals affected by these egregious crimes necessitate various measures, including collaboration, the establishment of stringent legal frameworks, public awareness campaigns, addressing root causes, empowering vulnerable populations, and fostering international cooperation. Through the implementation of proactive measures, it is possible to work towards the establishment of a global society in which migration is both secure and voluntary while simultaneously ensuring that human trafficking becomes an historical occurrence that is relegated to the annals of the past.

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