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**PERCEPTION OF COUNCILLORS AND SOCIAL WORKERS ON CHALLENGES OF  
DOMESTIC GIRLWORKERS IN NIGER STATE: COUNSELLING IMPLICATIONS**

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**ABSTRACT**

*It is a fact that domestic girl workers play significant roles in the families, petty trading and hawking in market places, manufacturing and construction firms in Nigeria and elsewhere. However, they are prevented from enjoying human rights, rights to education, women rights, health care, safety and some of them are subjected to forced labour, hunger, and torture. This study was aimed at instigating abuse and deficiencies that characterize domestic girl workers as perceived by counsellors and social workers in Kwara and Niger States. Three hypotheses were generated and tested in the study. The population for the study consisted of all the counsellors and social workers in Kwara and Niger States. Stratified random sampling techniques was used to select 400 counsellors and social workers. The study adopted self-developed questionnaire captioned "Perception of Counsellors and Social Workers on Challenges of Domestic Girl Workers". (PCSWCDW) with a test-retest reliability index of 0.82. Data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics. Hypotheses 1-3 were tested using t-test of independent sample. The findings of the study showed that majority of the counsellors and social workers indicated positive responses on challenges of domestic girl workers as there were no difference between counsellors and social workers on the basis of gender, location and professional status. The result indicated some of the challenges such as forced labour, infringement of Childs rights, human rights, women rights, torture, hunger, intimidation to delay wages, sexual harassment and premarital pregnancy. Conclusion and recommendations were proffered that counsellors should adopt counselling strategies, techniques and methods, such as; community-based counselling through the media, and rational emotive therapy to enlighten the public on these*

*challenges the need for girl-child education and its dividends such as; self sustainability and national development.*

**Keywords:** *Counsellors, Social Workers, Challenges, Domestic Girls Workers, Counselling Implications.*

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## **Introduction**

Domestic girl workers are girls who are engaged in labour, who live in or outside houses of their employers who are engaged with hard labour, care of children farm work house hold work, gardening, care of pets, loading, off-loading, hawking, petty trading, shop keeping, food vendors, factory and construction work. Some are full-time or part-time, employed by a single or multiple employers or working in a country of which she does not belong to (migrant domestic workers). some of them can easily be forced to work anywhere between 12-16 hours a day, seven days a week (International Labours Organization ILO, 2015).

Saiduand Kibiya (2017) stated that in 1887, a labour union official in Boston city declared that the demand for female labour is an insidious assault upon the home and according these researchers, these girl domestic workers were described as the Knife of the assassin who aimed at the family circle. Despite this clarion warning, United Nations (2008) estimated that there over 15.5 million children domestic workers all over the world. Later U.N. (2013) estimated that there are more than 50million people may of which are females involved in house helps.

ILO (2015) also reported that the number of domestic workers globally rose to 53 million who work in private households. Out of this, 73% of them are girls between 5 and 17 years' households. 1 billion was realized in a year as a result of the exploiter under pay of these workers. Domestic girl workers are mostly found in developing countries and few in developed countries.

Usman (2014) reported that many Nigerian parents are not left out of the phenomenon of commercial exploitation of female folks. According to him, parents involve their children in commercial labour either because of illiteracy or poverty, despite the fact that some girls attend schools. Some of these girls become vulnerable to various social ills girls and abuses in the society, in form of forced labour, haw king, petty trading, vendoring, shop keeping, prostitution, human trafficking and victims of kidnaping, Many

national surveys such as United Nations International Children Educational Fund (UNICEF), International Labour Organization (ILO) in 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries in Lagos, Enugu, Katsina, Kaduna, indicated that many in school and out – of – school children resort to all kinds of socially unapproved jobs and life styles in society.

Some are involved in hawking and some while hawking in the streets and garages are being kidnapped. Some others particular girls, are being subjected to sexual inducement, pre-mature pregnancy, abortion, pre-mature marriage and some are vulnerable to HIV/AIDS and Vasco Vagina Fistula (VVF). Any act of the children labour put girls in unhealthy circumstances and negatively affect the physical, physiological, psychological, emotional social, intellectual and moral wellbeing of victims of child labour. (U.N., 2013; Usman, 2014 and ILO. 2015). Hence, the aim of this paper is to provide counselling measures to address domestic girl exploitation at all levels.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Saidu and Kibiya(2017) reported that the girl domestic workers are modern slavery, because they are physically assaulted, physiologically humiliated and forcefully malnourished, as they are denied even the food cooked for the family and are left with the option teat left over or even lower food value like cassava granular (gari). According to Eze (2010) some girl workers indulge in illicitat sexual relations.

Some with the husbands or his grown up adolescent, causing broken homes, family crisis of which Acquired Immense Deficiency Syndrane(AIDS) epidemicsuicideHIV/AIDS is spread through hetero sexual relations, of which some children of some families lost their lives.Aihie (2009) reported that two-thirds of the girls involved in domestic works are suscenable to physical, psychological moral, social or sexual violence harassment. Badri (2014) stated that in Nigeria, some girls escape to either parents, some change houses and some to unknown places. They are subject of child abuse and neglect as their locations are some sometimes not even known to parents. Some face risks of beating, kicking, knocking, flogging, punching, choking confinement, bruises, fracture, rape, defilement and battling (Ezee, 2010, Badri 2014) Oni, Ademiyi, Osibajo and Heirsmac (2014) and ILO, (2015). Suggested that counselling strategies need to be print in place in this hideous deal.

As result of the pathetic situation of domestic girlworkers, the national and the international governmental and non-governmental organizations have put in place series of policies to prevent commercial girls-labour such as girls right, human right, woman right, as endorsed by Federal Government of Nigeria, the UNICEF, the UN, ILO, to mention a few, yet the phenomenon remains unmitigated. Some of the previous researchers such as Eze (2010), Badri (2014), Oni, Adeniyi, Osibanyo and Heirsmac(2014) and ILO (2015) adopted their investigations on child trafficking, child hawking, child labour including boys and girls. In this current study, the investigation is on challenges of domestic girl workers. Not only this, the study has provided counselling strategies to mitigate or to address all sorts of commercial exploitation of the girl-child that are domestically inclined in Nigeria, particularly in Niger state under study.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study are as follow:

- To investigate the perception of counsellors and social workers on challenge of domestic girl workers in Niger State on the basis of gender
- To discover the perception of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic girl workers in Niger State on the basis of location
- To find out the perception of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic girl workers on the basis of profession

### **Research Questions**

Based on the purpose of the study the only research questions are as follows:

- What are the perceptions of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic girl workers on the basis of gender?
- What are the perceptions of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic workers on the basis of location?
- What are the perceptions of counsellors and social works on challenges of domestic workers on the basis of professional status?

### **Hypotheses**

Based on the above research questions, the hypotheses raised for this study are as follows:

Ho<sub>1</sub>, There is no significance difference between the perception of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic girl workers on the basis of gender.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significance difference between the perception counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic workers on the basis of location.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significance difference between the perception of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic workers on the basis of professional status.

### **Research Design**

The design used for this research was descriptive survey, which the research considered appropriate. Following the postulation of Emaika (2006), survey research is the type of research that gathers data from a large number of respondents to obtain empirical knowledge of a contemporary level, by providing data about value, attitude or belief, whether small or large population. This method was used to enable the researcher to investigate perception of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic girl workers in Niger and Kwara State on the basis of gender, location and professional status.

### **Population and Sampling**

The population of the study consisted of all the counsellors and social workers in Niger and Kwara State. A total sample of 400 counsellors and social workers were selected in the two areas of the study, following the method of Emaika (2006). To ascertain proportionate site and equal representation of the cohorts, stratified random sampling techniques was used. The strata were gender, location and profession.

### **Research Instrument**

The study used a self-design questionnaire by the researcher captioned i.e. "Perception of Counsellors and Social Workers on Challenges of Domestic Girl Workers" (PCSWCDGW). The researcher presented the draft to 3 experts for screening and review. The corrected version was finally typed for administering to respondents used for the study, the instrument has two sections, 'A' and 'B'. Section 'A' deals with demographic data while section 'B'

deals with items containing attributes of challenges of domestic girl workers in Niger and Kwara State. It consists of 20 items to be responded to as a point Likert type of Agree (A) Strongly Agree (SA) Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The Cronbach alpha reliability of the scale was adopted and the index of 0.82 was obtained. Thus, it has reliability internal consistency.

### Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher presented letter of introduction to the organizations of the respondents, and the researcher was given go-ahead to administer the questionnaire. Four hundred and twenty questionnaires were administered in case there might be some filled ones that might be mutilated or incorrectly filled. Finally, four hundred were eventually picked for analysis. Research assistants were selected from each school, local government secretariats and ministries where the respondents were based. The researcher retrieved all the questionnaires successfully, although some got lost but those that were legibly filled with necessary information were used for the study.

### Method of Data Collection

The data collected for this research were analysed by using independent sample t-test to test the three hypotheses. The responses of the subjects used were also analysed to answer the three research questions raised in the study. The question and answer were based on gender, location and professional status.

Result: To answer the research question one, the mean for male 30.99 and that of females 30.78 gives no wide margin and so, the perception of males and females are almost the same.

This findings of the study and the data analysis in line with the hypotheses are discussed in this section as follows:

H<sub>01</sub>: There no significant difference between the perception of councillors and social workers on challenges of domestic girlworkerson the basis of gender.

**Table 1: T-test Analysis on Perception of Counsellors and Social Workers on Challenges of Domestic Girl Workers on The Basis of Gender.**

Group	N	X	SD	DF	T-TEST	T-CRITICAL
Male	200	30.99	4.86			
				380	0.849	1.96

Female	200	30.78	4.88
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Not significant at 0.05 level

The above table shows that t-calculated of 0.849 is less than the t-critical of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted.

To answer the research question one, the mean for male 22.44 and that of female 18.99 did not create wide margin and therefore, the perception of respondents in the two states are almost the same.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significance difference between the perception of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic girl workers on the basis location.

**Table 2: T-test Analysis on Perception of Counsellors and Social workers on Challenges of Domestic Girl-Workers on the basis of location**

Group	N	X	SD	DF	T-TEST	T-CRITICAL
Kwara	200	22.44	7.55	380	0.899	1.96
Niger	200	18.99	5.98			

Not significant at 0.05 level

The above table shows that the t-calculated of 0.899 is less than the t-critical of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was accepted.

To answer research question two, the mean for Kwara, 22.57 and that of Niger 21.77 gives little margin and therefore, the perception of respondents are almost the same based on location.

H<sub>03</sub> There is no significant difference between perception of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic girl-workers on the basis of location.

**Table 3: T-test Analysis on Perception of Counsellors and Social Workers on Challenges of Domestic Girl Workers in Niger and Kwara States on the Basis of Location.**

Group	N	X	SD	DF	T-TEST	T-CRITICAL
Counsellors	200	22.44	7.88	380	0.929	1.96
Social Workers	200	21.77	6.94			

Not significant at 0.05 level

The above table shows that the t-calculated of 0.929 is less than the t-critical of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. Hence, the null hypothesis was accepted. To answer the research question three, the mean for counsellors is 22.44 and the mean for social workers is 21.77. this depicts that there is little margin between the two cohorts. Therefore, the items in the questionnaire constitute challenges of domestic girl workers.

### Discussion

Hypothesis one postulated that there was no significant difference between the perception of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic girl workers on the basis of gender. The t-calculated is less than the t-critical of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. The study revealed that, there was no significant difference in the perception of counsellors and social workers. The interpretation of this result shows that the perception of counsellors and social workers are the same. This finding discovered that some of the challenges of domestic girl-child workers were loneliness or home sickness, mal treatments such as flogging, battering, services are under hazardous and unhygienic conditions, hunger, malnourishment and with little wages which girl workers use for early marriage expenses. The findings of this study is tune with Eze (2010), Usman (2014) and Badri (2014). These previous studies reported that domestic girl workers face a lot of challenges that are not friendly to human beings and that the employers can not maltreat their children in the way and manner they do handle these girl servants. Saidu and Kibiya (2017) refer to these girls who are victims of domestic work as "modern slaves" because, according to him, these girls are physically assaulted, psychologically humiliated and forcefully malnourished, as they are denied even the food cooked for the family. That they rather take food with less values like garri if there is left over food eaten by family members.

Hypothesis two postulated "there was no significant difference in the perceptions of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic girl workers on the basis of location. The research finding revealed there was no significant difference in the perception of counsellors and social workers. The result showed that t-calculated 0.899 is less than t-critical of 1.96; meaning that the perception of the professionals are almost the same. The respondents indicated that challenges of domestic girl workers include; school drop-out and some girl that still attend school do report late and sometimes

don't go at all as they are involved in labour. Some are attacked by malaria and no adequate medical attention is given by their master employers. This finding is in line with Tayo (2009) Aihie (2009) Oni, Adeniyi, Osibanjo and Heirsmac (2014) and ILO (2015) whose studies reported that because of the work given to domestic girl workers, they always look bored, tired and emotionally disturbed and they look unfriendly and that because of unhealthy condition, masters or employers do not cater for their health as they cater for their own biological children in the family.

Hypothesis three stated that "there is no significant difference between the perception of counsellors and social workers on challenges of domestic girl workers". The result showed that the t-calculated of 0.929 is less than the t-critical of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance, meaning that the null hypothesis was accepted. That is, the perception of the professionals are almost the same. The respondents indicated among other things, that, the challenges of domestic girl workers in Niger and Kwara States, are that some domestic girl workers used to be sexually seduced particular those involved in hawking, shop keeping, labour work in factories and construction sites; while some are sexually abused with concomitant pre-mature pregnancy, abortion, infections of HIV/AIDs and VVF. This finding is in line with Usman (2011), Usman (2014) ILO (2015), Saidu and Kibiya (2017). These previous studies reported that since these girl victims of domestic works are not with their parents and they are determined to get money for themselves and their families, they are forced to adopt to whatever situations they find themselves in terms of feeding, shelter, safety and general welfare. Usman (2014) and Saidu and Kibiya (2017) reported that the unconducive circumstances being faced by these girls constitute infringement of human right, children's rights and women's rights which are indices of child neglect and child abuse. This calls for counselling intervention.

### **Counselling Implication**

This study discovered that there are many challenges being faced by domestic girl workers in Niger and Kwara state on the basis on the basis of gender, location and professional status. Some of the challenges are that, the girls are subject of child abuse and neglect, parents release girls for sometimes months and years without having face - to - face contact with them, these girls are always saddled with series of responsibilities such as child caring minding,

washing of cloths, places, toilets, houses, hawking, shop keeping, labour in factories and construction places, and some are sexually abused or fragmented pre-maturely.

These inconveniences negatively affect their physical, social, moral, intellectual, emotional, psychological wellbeing of these girls who, Saidu and Kibiya (2017) referred to as modern slaves. Counselling in intervention becomes very paramount in this type of maltreatment being faced by these girls. Counsellors should adopt play way method, role – play, simulation, drama for students in various schools so as to showcase some of the challenges being faced by the victims of domestic workers. Counsellors should also give talk in the assembly on the challenges of girls in this type of services, do face with their employers.

Community-based counselling, group counselling and cognitive restructuring could be adopted through the community leaders and leader of social groups or unions in the community. Counsellors can organize group counselling in the village or town to enlighten and sensitize community members on the challenges of domestic girl workers and to emphasize on the importance of girl –child education. The counsellors should also liaise with government or non-governmental organizations such as UNICEF and ILO to educate the community through, the use of media such as radio, television and local newspapers so as to serve as advocacy campaign against child labour.

### **Conclusion**

This study discovered that counsellors and social workers perceived that there are challenges being faced by domestic girl workers as shown in the analysis of t-test in the three hypotheses tested in the three hypothesis tested. The findings depicted that the negative consequence of domestic girl working class denied these girls from attending their various schools, some who attend are not always regular or punctual or come late and some miss evening prep and games which are part of child development. That these girls are physically, emotionally, morally, intellectually and socially assaulted which affect their health and wellbeing now and in their future lives. These circumstances, conditions and situations being faced by these girls prompted this study to adopt various counselling strategies, so that girl-child domestic work or child labour could be eradicated in all its ramification, and formal

education would now be the option for sustainable development and nation-building.

### Recommendation

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendations are proffered:

- Enforcement of child's right Act should be revisited, reviewed and monitored by federal government by using counsellors, social workers and security agents
- Parents who fail to send their girls to school should be sanctioned.
- Domestic girl-child labour or child-labour should be totally banned and the perpetrators (employers) be asked to face the wrath of the law.
- Counsellors should organize individual or group counselling in schools and in community to enlighten, educate and sensitize them on the challenges of engaging girls in domestic work on commercial basis and the need to enrol these girls in schools, where they can be empowered to make their contributions in nation building.
- The government and non-governmental organizations should use media to campaign in local languages against child-labour, child-trafficking, domestic-girl-child work which are being practiced in various communities in Nigeria.
- More schools for girls should be established or expanded and free education and scholarship awards be given to females generally to encourage female education in the country.

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