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## Exploiting Vulnerability: The Impact of Crises on Human Trafficking in Nairobi County, Kenya (2015-2023)

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**Abstract:** Human trafficking remains a pressing global issue, with crises exacerbating vulnerabilities. Guided by the push-pull theory, this study examined the relationship between crises and human trafficking in Nairobi City County, Kenya from 2015 to 2023. A sequential explanatory design was employed, with 384 participants including stakeholders, victims, and at-risk populations. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. Findings revealed that 95.1% of respondents experienced crises, primarily floods (29.7%), fires (44.3%), and political unrest (26%). Economic challenges emerged as the main push factor (72.9%), while false promises of employment (66.4%) were the primary pull factor. Victims were predominantly female (78.9%), aged 10-25 (52.1%), with limited education (50.8% less than high school). Rural-to-urban migration within the county correlated with trafficking (94.3%), and international migration patterns influenced trafficking dynamics (96.1%). Although 87.5% were aware of anti-trafficking policies, only 24.7% found them very effective. Challenges included political barriers (81.5% very significant), social factors (83.1% very high impact), and legal gaps (78.1% very severe). The study concludes that comprehensive, targeted interventions addressing root causes and specific vulnerabilities are crucial. It recommends a program combining disaster preparedness, economic support, educational initiatives, and multi-stakeholder collaboration to reduce trafficking risks and enhance community resilience.

**Key words:** *Crises, Exploitation, Human trafficking, Victims, Vulnerability*

### 1.1 Introduction

Human trafficking, the illegal activity of forcibly transporting people for financial gains, has been on the rise globally. Between 2008 and 2019, the number of victims increased from 30,000 to approximately 120,000 (Statista, 2022). Victims are usually transported for sexual exploitation, forced labor, criminal activities, marriages, and organ removal, with women and underage girls being the most targeted (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic played a role in worsening vulnerabilities among populations prone to trafficking, noting that lockdowns and movement restrictions worsened economic hardships globally, especially for migrant workers and marginalized groups in Southeast Asia (Buckley et al., 2022) and Europe (Burgos et al., 2021; Breuil, 2023).

Political instability in regions such as Kosovo and Haiti, and the presence of peacekeepers, coincided with increased trafficking of women and children for sex work (Toledo & Braga, 2020; Bell et al., 2018). Similar trends are observed in Africa, where political and economic crises in countries like Ethiopia and Nigeria lead to heightened trafficking, with vulnerable populations seeking better conditions but facing exploitation instead (Tefera, 2018; Gezie et al., 2021; Uwa et al., 2022).

In Kenya, COVID-19 and economic hardship amplified trafficking risks among internally displaced and economically marginalized populations, including orphans and young women (Asekenye et al., 2022; International Organization for Migration, 2018). Furthermore, natural disasters like droughts and floods have intensified vulnerabilities, pushing affected individuals, especially in counties dependent on agriculture, into situations where traffickers exploit their desperation (Malinowski & Schulze, 2017; Malinowski, 2016). However, gaps remain in the literature, particularly regarding migration routes, specific victim profiles, and the quantitative scope of trafficking cases, which are essential for targeted interventions.

While existing literature provides views into the dynamics of trafficking amid crises, further research was necessary to address these gaps. This study, thus, aimed to expand empirical knowledge and contribute to effective counter-trafficking measures guided by the research question “Which crises and human trafficking incidents occurred in Nairobi County between 2015 and 2023?”. The study examined specific vulnerabilities, migration patterns, and the socio-economic profiles of victims in Nairobi County, Kenya.

## 1.2 Theoretical framework

The push and pull theory guided the study. The theory, which is frequently linked to studies on migration, postulates that people are driven to relocate by a mix of "pull factors" that draw them to their new location and "push factors" that force them to leave their current location. The theory was adapted to understand the dynamics of human trafficking. The theory was initially introduced by Ernst Ravenstein, a German-English geographer; he explained that people migrate steadily and step by step geographically as they are attracted by the positive aspects of different locations (Zanabazar et al., 2021). The theory served as the basis for the study on the nature of crises and human trafficking by examining the crises (push factors) in Nairobi County that may raise a person's susceptibility to human trafficking and the trends in human trafficking or pull factors.

## 1.3 Methodology

The study adopted a sequential explanatory research design, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. Nairobi County was the study area, and the target population included stakeholders from non-governmental organizations, government officials, social workers, counsellors, marginalized populations, and victims of human trafficking. Purposive sampling was used to sample relevant government officials and stakeholders from non-governmental organizations. Simple random sampling was used to select the vulnerable population and snowball sampling was used to sample survivors of human trafficking. A final sample size of 384 was determined from a population of 32,994 using Yaro Yamane's formula. Data was collected through questionnaires, key informant interviews, and secondary data analysis. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Ethical considerations were adhered to ensure the integrity of the research.

**Table 1: Target Population**

Category	Percentage (%)
Marginalized Communities in Starehe Constituency	91.3
Ministry of Labour and Social Protection	0.6
Anti-Human Trafficking and Child Protection Unit, DCI	0.5
Department of Immigration	4.5
Victims of human trafficking	3.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>

**Source:** (KNBS, 2019; UNODC Report, 2019; Ministry of Interior, 2023)

## 1.4 Discussion of findings

### *Nature of Crises and Human Trafficking*

#### *Types of Crises*

Respondents were asked to list any significant crises that they may have experienced in Nairobi County between 2015 and 2023. The findings are shown in Table 2 below.

**Table 2: Types of Crises**

*n*=384

Type of crisis	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
Floods	29.7	3.5521	1.70926
Political unrest	26		
Fire	44.3		

**Source:** Field data, 2024

Table 2 indicates 29.7% mentioned floods, with an average of 3.5521 and a standard deviation of 1.70926. Additionally, 44.3% experienced fire disasters, while 26% faced political unrest. Floods emerged as a significant crisis experienced by 29.7% of the respondents, with an average rating of 3.5521 and a standard deviation of 1.70926. This suggests that floods have been a recurring and impactful issue in Nairobi County over the past eight years. The relatively high average rating indicates that floods have had a substantial effect on the lives of those who experienced them. The standard deviation of 1.70926 suggests some variation in the severity or frequency of floods experienced by respondents, indicating that while floods are a common crisis, their impact may not be uniform across all affected individuals or areas.

Fire disasters also stand out as a prevalent crisis, with 44.3% of respondents reporting having experienced them. This high percentage indicates that fire disasters have been widespread and have touched the lives of a significant portion of the population in Nairobi County. The impact of fire disasters can be devastating, leading to loss of property, livelihoods, and even lives. Key informants were asked to provide specific examples of crises and their impact on the community. Several themes emerge from the interviews, shedding light on the specific examples of crises and their consequences. One prominent theme is the devastating impact of floods on the community. Key informants consistently mention instances of severe flooding that led to the destruction of homes, displacement of families, and disruption

of livelihoods. They describe how floods have caused damage to infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, hindering access to essential services and markets. The interviews also reveal that floods have contributed to the spread of waterborne diseases, worsening health vulnerabilities within the affected communities.

The existing literature both corroborates and diverges from this study's findings on the impact of crises on urban communities. Studies such as Amoako (2016) on floods in Accra, Ghana, and Ahsan and Warner (2014) in Dhaka, Bangladesh, align with findings on the vulnerability of low-income areas to flood damage and health risks. Twigg et al. (2017) similarly confirm the destructive consequences of fire disasters in Cape Town's informal settlements. Chen and Carre (2020) echo observations on economic hardship during crises, particularly noting COVID-19's effect on informal sector workers in the Global South. However, some studies provide alternative insights, like Adelekan (2010), who found that social capital in Lagos aids resilience during floods, and Ajibade et al. (2013), who highlight women's active roles in crisis response, countering narratives of passive victimhood.

### ***Push and Pull Factors Leading to Human Trafficking***

Respondents were asked to state out of the listed factors, which trend or pattern led to human trafficking in Nairobi County. The findings are indicated in Table 3 below. Table 3 shows economic challenges, such as unemployment, were cited by 72.9%, displacement due to conflicts (16.7%), displacement due to natural disasters (3.9%), and limited access to education (6.5%) as push factors, with an average of 1.4401 and a standard deviation of 0.84678. Furthermore, 66.4% mentioned false promises of employment and a better life, demand for low-cost labor (9.4%) and false marriage and education opportunities (24.2%) as pull factors, with an average of 1.5781 and a standard deviation of 0.85450.

**Table 3: Push and Pull Factors that led to Human Trafficking**

*n*=384

Category	Response	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Push Factors	Economic challenges i.e. employment	72.9	1.4401	0.84678
	Displacement due to conflicts	16.7		
	Displacement due to natural disaster	3.9		
	Limited access to education	6.5		
Pull Factors	False promises of employment and a better life	66.4	1.5781	0.85450
	Demand for low-cost labour	9.4		
	False marriage and education opportunities	24.2		

**Source:** *Field data, 2024*

Table 3 shows that economic challenges, particularly unemployment, emerge as the most significant push factor, with 72.9% of respondents citing it as a key driver of human trafficking. This high percentage indicates that the lack of economic opportunities and the struggle to secure stable livelihoods

make individuals more vulnerable to trafficking. The limited options for gainful employment may push people to seek alternative means of survival, even if it means engaging in risky or exploitative situations. Displacement due to conflicts (16.7%) and natural disasters (3.9%) also feature as notable push factors, highlighting the impact of forced migration on human trafficking. When individuals are displaced from their homes and communities, they often face heightened vulnerabilities, such as the loss of support networks, assets, and a sense of security. These circumstances can make them more susceptible to the false promises and deceptive tactics employed by traffickers.

Limited access to education, mentioned by 6.5% of respondents, is another push factor that warrants attention. Education plays a crucial role in empowering individuals and enhancing their opportunities for personal and professional growth. When access to education is restricted, individuals may be more likely to fall prey to traffickers who exploit their lack of knowledge and skills. On the pull side, false promises of employment and a better life emerge as the most significant factor, with 66.4% of respondents identifying it as a key driver of human trafficking. This finding suggests that traffickers often lure victims with deceptive offers of lucrative job opportunities or improved living conditions. The desire for a better life and the hope of escaping poverty or difficult circumstances can make individuals more susceptible to these false promises.

The demand for low-cost labor, cited by 9.4% of respondents, is another pull factor that contributes to human trafficking. This finding highlights the role of exploitative labor practices and the willingness of some employers to take advantage of vulnerable individuals to minimize costs and maximize profits. The lack of regulation and enforcement in certain industries may create an environment that enables the trafficking of individuals for forced labor.

False marriage and education opportunities, mentioned by 24.2% of respondents, also serve as significant pull factors. Traffickers may use the guise of arranged marriages or scholarships to lure victims into exploitative situations. The desire for marriage or education can be a powerful motivator, especially for individuals who face limited options or societal pressures.

The average and standard deviation values show the distribution and variability of responses. The average of 1.4401 for push factors indicates that respondents, on average, identified between one and two push factors. The standard deviation of 0.84678 suggests some variation in the number of push factors identified by respondents. Similarly, the average of 1.5781 for pull factors indicates that respondents, on average, identified between one and two pull factors, with a standard deviation of 0.85450 indicating some variability in responses.

Existing literature provides both supporting and contrasting perspectives on the push and pull factors of human trafficking, aligning with Nairobi County findings in several ways. Studies by Aronowitz (2009) and Jobe (2010) confirm that economic hardships, particularly unemployment, drive trafficking vulnerabilities, as does displacement from conflicts and disasters, as noted by Shelley (2010) and Bowersox (2018). Additionally, false promises of employment align with findings from Gjermeni et al. (2008) in Albania and Aghazarm and Laczko (2008) in Southeast Asia, while demand for cheap labor is echoed by Bales (2007) and Crane (2013). Divergent insights include Mahmoud and Trebesch's (2010) findings in Eastern Europe, where higher education levels were linked to trafficking risk due to heightened aspirations, and the relative significance of false marriage and education offers, which, though noted by Tyldum and Brunovskis (2005), vary across contexts.

### ***Migration Patterns in and out of Nairobi County***

Respondents were asked to state internal and international migration patterns and the findings are shown in Table 4. Table 4 indicates internal migration patterns within Nairobi County, where 94.3% of respondents observed correlations with human trafficking, with an average of 1.0573 and a standard deviation of 0.2327. Moreover, 97.9% noted individuals migrating from rural to urban areas within the county, with an average of 1.0208 and a standard deviation of 0.14301. International migration patterns involving Nairobi County were reported to influence human trafficking dynamics by 96.1% of participants, with an average of 1.0391 and a standard deviation of 0.19400. Regarding the facilitation or mitigation of human trafficking by border areas and neighboring countries, 93.2% indicated facilitation, with an average of 1.0677 and a standard deviation of 0.25157. Only 6.8% suggested that these regions were mitigating human trafficking.

**Table 4: Internal and International Migration Patterns**

*n=384*

Statement	Response	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Dev
<b>Internal:</b> Observed patterns of migration within Nairobi County correlating with human trafficking	Yes	94.3	1.0573	0.2327
	No	5.7		
There were indications of individuals migrating from rural to urban areas within the county	Yes	97.9	1.0208	0.14301
	No	2.1		
<b>International:</b> International migration patterns involving Nairobi County influenced human trafficking dynamics	Yes	96.1	1.0391	0.19400
	No	3.1		
Border areas and neighbouring countries facilitated or mitigated human trafficking	Yes	93.2	1.0677	0.25157
	No	6.8		

**Source:** *Field data, 2024*

Table 4 shows that a significant majority of respondents (94.3%) observed patterns of migration within Nairobi County that correlated with human trafficking. This high percentage suggests that internal migration within the county is closely linked to the occurrence of trafficking. The mean value of 1.0573 and the low standard deviation of 0.2327 indicate a strong consensus among respondents regarding this



correlation. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of respondents (97.9%) indicated that there were indications of individuals migrating from rural to urban areas within the county. This finding highlights the prevalent trend of rural-to-urban migration within Nairobi County. The mean value of 1.0208 and the very low standard deviation of 0.14301 demonstrate a high level of agreement among respondents about this pattern.

The correlation between internal migration and human trafficking in Nairobi County suggests that individuals who migrate from rural to urban areas may be particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Factors such as limited economic opportunities, lack of support networks, and unfamiliarity with urban environments may increase their susceptibility to exploitation by traffickers. The promise of better prospects in urban centers may also make individuals more likely to take risks or trust dubious offers of employment or assistance. The findings also reveal significant international migration patterns involving Nairobi County that influenced human trafficking dynamics. A vast majority of respondents (96.1%) affirmed this relationship, with a mean value of 1.0391 and a low standard deviation of 0.19400, indicating a strong consensus. Moreover, 93.2% of respondents agreed that border areas and neighbouring countries facilitated or mitigated human trafficking. The mean value of 1.0677 and a slightly higher standard deviation of 0.25157 suggest that while there is an overall agreement, there may be some variation in the perceived role of border areas and neighbouring countries in the trafficking context.

The international migration patterns highlight the transnational nature of human trafficking and the importance of considering cross-border movements in understanding the dynamics of trafficking in Nairobi County. The county's location and its connections to neighbouring countries may make it a transit point or destination for trafficked individuals from the region. Border areas may serve as entry points for traffickers and their victims, while neighbouring countries may act as source or destination locations. The findings show the need for a collaborative and regional approach to combat human trafficking. Strengthening border controls, enhancing cooperation with neighbouring countries. Existing studies on migration patterns and human trafficking largely align with the Nairobi County findings, confirming links between internal migration and trafficking risks. Aronowitz (2009) and Mahmoud and Trebesch (2010) note that rural-to-urban migration, driven by poverty and limited opportunities, often increases vulnerability. Similarly, international migration and trafficking are interrelated, as Shelley (2010) discusses the role of globalization in facilitating cross-border trafficking, and Aghazarm and Laczko (2008) highlight risks associated with informal cross-border movements in Southeast Asia. Divergent perspectives are offered by Gjermeni et al. (2008), who emphasize that migration alone does not cause trafficking but intersects with factors like poverty and gender inequality, and by Piper (2005), who argues against conflating voluntary migration with trafficking. Regarding border areas, Molland (2012) supports their role in trafficking networks, while Keo et al. (2014) highlight community-based initiatives in border areas that combat trafficking. Lastly, Brennan (2005) and Brunovskis and Surtees (2007) underscore the need for comprehensive support services for trafficked individuals, who often face barriers to assistance due to deportation fears, language issues, and unfamiliarity with their rights.

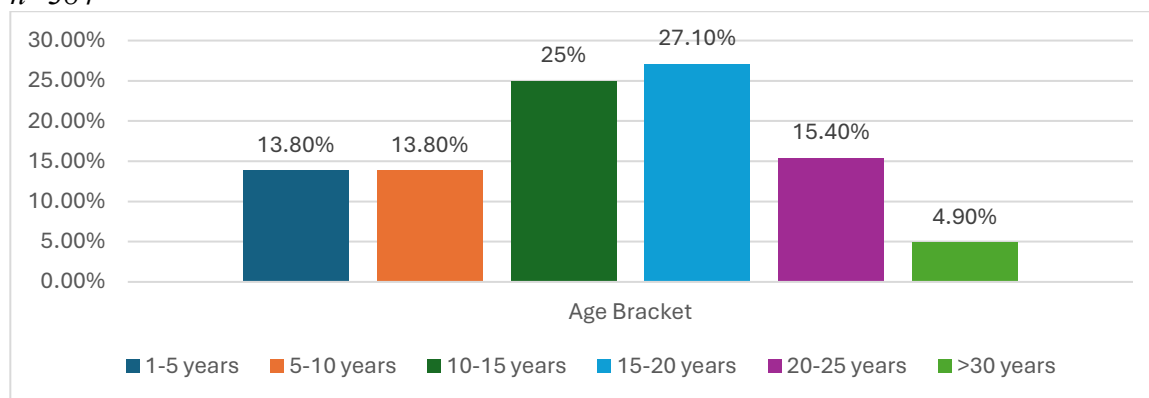
### ***Victim Profiles***

Respondents were asked to state the demographic characteristics, occupational background and social vulnerabilities victims were exposed to and the findings related to age are shown in Figure 1 below. Figure 1 shows the age distribution of the victims, 1-5 years (13.8%), 5-10 years (13.8%), 10-15 years

(25%), 15-20 years (27.1%), 20-25 years (15.4%) and above 30 years (4.9%). The findings reveal that a significant proportion of trafficking victims are children and young adults. The age group of 15-20 years has the highest percentage of victims at 27.1%, closely followed by the 10-15 years age group at 25%. This indicates that adolescents and young adults are particularly vulnerable to trafficking in Nairobi County. The high prevalence of trafficking among these age groups could be attributed to several factors. Adolescents and young adults may be more susceptible to the lure of false promises and deceptive job offers, as they are often in search of opportunities for education, employment, or a better life. They may also lack the experience, knowledge, and support networks to identify and protect themselves from exploitative situations.

**Figure 1: Victim Age Profile**

*n*=384



**Source:** Field data, 2024

Notably, the findings in Figure 1 also show that children under the age of 15 constitute a significant proportion of trafficking victims. The age groups of 1-5 years and 5-10 years each account for 13.8% of victims, while the 10-15 age group represents 25% of victims. This highlights the disturbing reality that very young children are being trafficked in Nairobi County. The trafficking of young children may be facilitated by factors such as poverty, lack of access to education, and the absence of adequate child protection mechanisms. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds or dysfunctional families may be particularly vulnerable to trafficking, as they may be targeted by traffickers who exploit their innocence and dependence. The findings also reveal that 15.4% of trafficking victims are in the age group of 20-25 years, while 4.9% are above 30 years old. This suggests that while adolescents and young adults are the primary targets, trafficking also affects older individuals, albeit to a lesser extent. The literature supports the finding that children and young adults constitute a large proportion of trafficking victims. The UNODC (2018) reported that nearly one-third of trafficking victims globally are children, who are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and forced labor. Similarly, Oram et al. (2012) found high trafficking rates among young women and adolescents, attributing their vulnerability to limited life experience and a desire for independence. Greenbaum et al. (2018) corroborates Nairobi County findings, noting that trafficked children in the U.S. are often around age 15 and frequently come from disadvantaged backgrounds. However, Silverman et al. (2007) in Nepal identified that 44% of victims were trafficked before age 18, emphasizing child trafficking's prevalence, while Aronowitz (2009) in Europe noted that older women also face trafficking risks, particularly for labor exploitation, highlighting varied vulnerabilities across age groups.



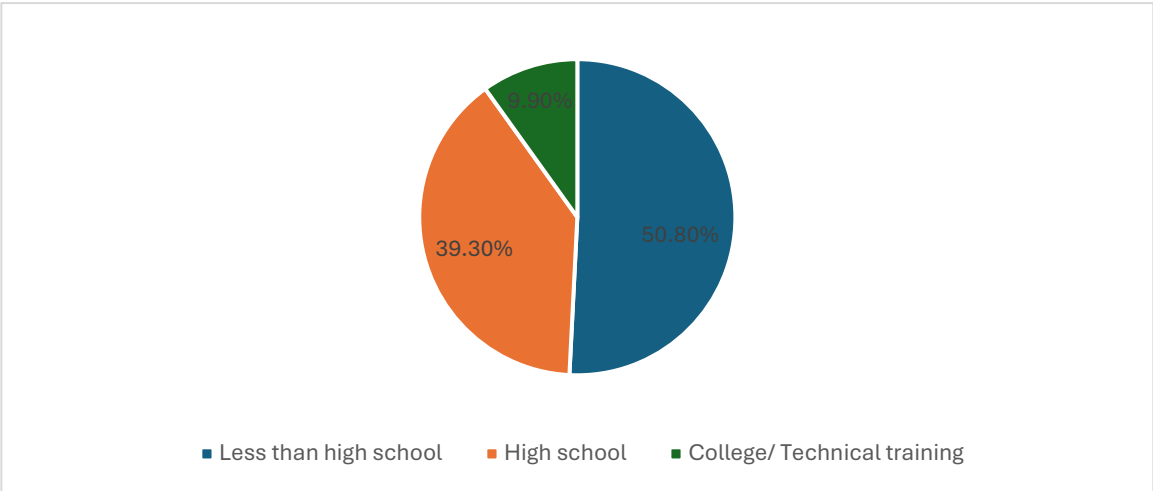
**Table 5: Victims Gender Profiles***n=384*

Statement	Response	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Dev.
Gender mainly affected	Male	21.1	1.7891	0.40851
	Female	78.9		
Gender disparities among identified victims	Yes	78.9	1.7891	0.40851
	No	21.1		

**Source:** *Field data, 2024*

The findings in Table 5 reveal a significant gender disparity among identified victims, with females comprising the vast majority at 78.9% and males accounting for only 21.1%. This indicates that trafficking in Nairobi County is highly gendered, with women and girls being disproportionately affected. The high prevalence of female victims suggests that gender-based vulnerabilities and inequalities are critical in trafficking dynamics. Women and girls may be more susceptible to trafficking due to factors such as poverty, limited access to education and employment opportunities, and societal norms that perpetuate gender discrimination and subordination. The findings also show that 78.9% of respondents acknowledged the existence of gender disparities among identified victims, while only 21.1% did not perceive such disparities. This suggests a strong recognition among stakeholders of the gendered nature of trafficking in Nairobi County. The mean value of 1.7891 and the standard deviation of 0.40851 for both genders are mainly affected and the recognition of gender disparities indicates a relatively high level of agreement among respondents regarding the predominance of female victims and the existence of gender-based vulnerabilities. Existing literature largely supports the finding that females are disproportionately affected by trafficking. The UNODC (2018) reported that women and girls make up 72% of global trafficking victims, with heightened vulnerability to sexual exploitation. Similarly, Oram et al. (2012) found most trafficking victims to be female, attributing this to demand in the sex industry and gender inequalities. However, some studies highlight male victimization, such as Surtees (2008), who found men in Ukraine trafficked for labor in industries like construction and agriculture, challenging the female-centric trafficking narrative. Cockbain et al. (2018) also noted that boys in the UK are frequently trafficked, while Kiss et al. (2015) identified significant male trafficking for labor in Southeast Asia, particularly in fishing industries, underscoring diverse gender vulnerabilities across regions and contexts.

**Figure 2: Victim Educational Background Profile**  
*n=384*



**Source:** *Field data, 2024*

The findings in Figure 2 on the educational background of trafficking victims in Nairobi County show the significant role that education plays in shaping vulnerability to trafficking. The findings reveal that a staggering 50.8% of victims have less than a high school education, while 39.3% have completed high school, and only a mere 9.9% have attained college or technical training. This reality highlights the fact that limited educational attainment is a major risk factor for trafficking in the region. There are several reasons why individuals with low levels of education may be more susceptible to trafficking. Firstly, limited education often translates to fewer economic opportunities, making individuals more likely to fall prey to false promises of employment and financial stability offered by traffickers. Secondly, those with less education may lack the necessary knowledge and critical thinking skills to identify and assess potential risks, rendering them more vulnerable to deception and manipulation. The literature largely aligns with the finding that low education levels increase vulnerability to trafficking. The UNODC (2016) reports that many trafficking victims globally have only primary or no formal education, making them susceptible to traffickers’ deceptions. Aronowitz (2009) corroborates this in Europe, suggesting limited education restricts access to resources, heightening vulnerability. However, other studies add complexity; Mahmoud and Trebesch (2010) in Eastern Europe found that even educated individuals can be trafficked, especially when seeking migration for economic reasons. Brunovskis and Surtees (2010) in Southeast Europe and Duong (2015) in Vietnam emphasize that education alone does not predict trafficking risk, as broader structural factors like poverty and social marginalization also play key roles.

**Table 6: Occupational and Social Profile of Victims**  
*n=384*

Statement	Response	Percentage (%)	Mean	Std. Deviation
Victims share a common occupational background	Yes	57.6	1.4245	0.49491
	No	42.4		

Social factors such as family structure or community ties contribute to vulnerabilities	Yes	91.9	1.0807	0.27277
	No	8.1		
Occupation background	Blue collar jobs	76.3	1.7630	0.42578
	White collar jobs	23.7		
Certain socio-economic backgrounds or communities were more susceptible	Yes	95.6	1.0807	0.27277
	No	4.4		

**Source:** *Field data, 2024*

The findings presented in Table 6 shed light on the occupational and social profiles of trafficking victims in Nairobi County, highlighting the factors that contribute to vulnerability. One key aspect explored is whether victims share a common occupational background. The findings in Table 6 reveal that 57.6% of respondents believed that victims share similar occupational backgrounds, while 42.4% did not perceive such commonalities. This suggests that while occupational factors may play a role in shaping vulnerability to trafficking, they are not the sole determinant. When examining the specific occupational backgrounds of victims, the findings show a striking disparity between blue-collar and white-collar jobs. A significant majority of victims (76.3%) were identified as having blue-collar occupations, while only 23.7% were associated with white-collar professions. This finding indicates that individuals in lower-skilled, manual labor jobs may be more susceptible to trafficking compared to those in higher-skilled, professional roles. Several factors may contribute to the heightened vulnerability of individuals in blue-collar occupations. These jobs often involve low wages, irregular employment, and limited access to labor protections, making workers more susceptible to exploitation. Additionally, blue-collar industries such as construction, manufacturing, and domestic work may have informal recruitment practices and less oversight, providing opportunities for traffickers to operate with impunity. However, it is important to recognize that trafficking can affect individuals from all occupational backgrounds, and the presence of victims in white-collar professions highlights the need for a comprehensive approach to prevention and protection efforts.

Beyond occupational factors, the findings highlight the significant role of social factors in shaping vulnerability to trafficking. An overwhelming majority of respondents (91.9%) believed that social factors such as family structure and community ties contribute to vulnerabilities, while only 8.1% did not perceive such links. This suggests that the social context in which individuals live and operate plays a crucial role in determining their risk of being trafficked. Family structures characterized by poverty, instability, or dysfunction may increase vulnerability to trafficking, as individuals may be more likely to seek alternative means of support or be targeted by traffickers who exploit their vulnerabilities. Similarly, community ties and norms that perpetuate gender inequality, normalize violence or limit access to education and economic opportunities can create conditions that enable trafficking to flourish. The findings also reveal a strong consensus among respondents (95.6%) that certain socio-economic backgrounds or communities are more susceptible to trafficking, while only 4.4% did not perceive such distinctions. This highlights the importance of understanding the specific socio-economic contexts that shape vulnerability and tailoring prevention and protection efforts accordingly. Factors such as poverty, marginalization, and lack of access to resources and services can create conditions that make certain communities more vulnerable to trafficking. Traffickers may target these communities deliberately,

exploiting the lack of economic opportunities, social safety nets, and legal protections. The literature largely supports the finding that trafficking victims often have backgrounds in low-skilled, blue-collar occupations. The ILO (2017) reports that most trafficking victims globally are exploited in labour-intensive sectors like agriculture, construction, and domestic work, which lack formal protections. Aronowitz (2009) similarly finds that low-wage, low-skilled occupations make individuals more susceptible to trafficking due to poor working conditions and limited legal safeguards. However, Brunovskis and Surtees (2010) in Southeast Europe and Owens et al. (2014) in the U.S. note occupational diversity among victims, identifying cases in higher-skilled industries, suggesting that a narrow focus on low-skilled occupations may overlook some trafficking risks. Regarding social profiles, UNODC (2016) and Perry and McEwing (2013) align with findings from Nairobi County, highlighting the role of family dysfunction, community violence, and social marginalization in trafficking vulnerability. In contrast, Weitzer (2014) argues for a more nuanced view, asserting that factors like poverty and social marginalization do not uniformly impact all individuals, underscoring the importance of a contextualized approach to trafficking vulnerability.

### 1.5 Conclusion

The research question of the study was “Which crises and human trafficking incidents occurred in Nairobi County between 2015 and 2023?”. The study therefore reveals that crises in Nairobi County, including economic hardship, natural disasters, political unrest, and internal displacement, have significantly heightened vulnerabilities to human trafficking, especially among children, young adults, women, and those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.

### 1.6 Recommendation

The study therefore recommends a comprehensive program combining disaster preparedness, economic support, and educational initiatives to strengthen community resilience and reduce human trafficking vulnerabilities.

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