Addis Ababa University

College of Education and Language Studies

School of Psychology

Internal Child Trafficking in view of the Knowledge, Attitude, and Preventive Practices of Residents of the Origin Community for Trafficking: The Case of Wolaita Sodo Town

PhD Dissertation Report

This Dissertation Report is submitted to the School of Psychology of Addis Ababa University in fulfillment of the Requirements for the PhD Degree in Social Psychology

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June, 2026

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Addis Ababa University

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Tigist Solomon Desu

Ph.D. Dissertation

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Declaration

I, Tigist Solomon Desu, hereby state that the dissertation paper titled "**Internal Child Trafficking in view of the Knowledge, Attitude, and Preventive Practices of the Origin Community for Trafficking: The Case of Wolaita Sodo Town**" is my original work. It has not been presented, or even partially presented, to obtain any degree, diploma, or qualification at this or any other university.

The information and materials utilized in this work have been properly referenced.

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SUPERVISOR'S APPROVAL

This dissertation has been presented to undergo examination with my approval as the principal supervisor.

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Acronyms

ANPPCAN	African Network on the Prevention and Protection of Child Abuse and Neglect
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
CRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution and Trafficking
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FSCE	Forum on Sustainable Child Empowerment
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights
ILO	International Labor Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MCDP	Multi-Purpose Development Program / Current name: MCD- Mission for Community Development
TIP	Trafficking in Persons
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNICEF	United Nations Development Fund for Children
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Abbreviations

ATTCT	Attitude towards child trafficking
ATTP	Attitude towards preventive practice
BoJ	Bureau of Justice
BOLSA	Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs
BOWCA	Bureau of Women and Children Affairs
BOWSA	Bureau of Women and Social Affairs
E.C	Ethiopian Calendar
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
IN	Intentions
PBC	Perceived Behavioral Control
PP	Preventive Practice
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SN	Subjective Norms
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
TPB	Theory of Planned Behavior

Abstract

Child trafficking is a grave injustice that strips children of their rights, safety, and future, resulting in serious physical, psychological, and social harm. Despite its prevalence, internal child trafficking has received little attention. The major purpose of this study was to examine child trafficking knowledge, attitudes, and psychosocial determinants of preventive practices among residents of Wolaita Sodo town. To achieve this objective, the study employed a concurrent mixed-methods design. A total of 497 participants were involved in the study, including children, adult residents, and civil servants from the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs and the Bureau of Justice, as well as schoolteachers, parents, and caregivers. The study included 473 survey respondents, 16 focus group discussion participants, 3 key informants, and 5 participants for in-depth interviews. Sampling involved random selection of kebeles and systematic selection of survey participants, while FGD participants, key informants, and interviewees were chosen purposefully. Data analysis utilized statistical techniques such as Pearson correlation coefficients, factorial ANOVA, and path analysis for the quantitative data, while thematic analysis was used for the qualitative data.

Findings revealed several important insights. First, child trafficking prevalence was notable, with male adolescents at higher risk attributed to poverty and deceptive urban promises that expose boys to exploitative labor. Second, 249 residents (52.7%) demonstrated inadequate overall knowledge of internal child trafficking, though they showed stronger awareness of victims' profiles and vulnerabilities, indicating recognition of risk factors. Third, while most residents expressed positive attitudes toward victims and prevention, trafficked children reported stigma and discrimination, contributing to re-trafficking and revictimization. Fourth, preventive practice engagement was moderate, with 265 participants (51.6%) scoring above the mean, highlighting persistent challenges. Fifth, attitudes toward preventive practice, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control significantly predicted intentions and preventive practices. Six, the results of the study indicate that knowledge, attitude, engagement in preventive practices, and intention to engage in preventive practices vary as a function of residents' education status and perceived socioeconomic status, with no significant differences noted for gender and years of residence. Based on the findings of the study, several important conclusions and implications have emerged. First, it emphasizes the need for enhanced community education and awareness programs. Second, targeted economic and social interventions are essential to address both push and pull factors. Third, fostering community trust and improving reporting systems is crucial. Fourth, engaging community leaders and families can help challenge harmful cultural practices. Fifth, integrating the theory of planned behavior (TPB) into prevention interventions is important, as attitudes and social norms significantly influence preventive actions. Finally, further research is needed to understand rural perspectives, long-term trends, and structural issues, including institutional capacity.

Keywords. Child Trafficking, Knowledge, Attitude, Preventive Practices, Origin Community

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, issues related to the background of the study, a description of the problem statement, the research questions the study aims to address, the objectives of the study, the scope of the current study, the rationale behind the study, and the definitions of important terms used in the study are discussed.

1.1 Background of Study

Human trafficking is a modern form of slavery and a serious crime against humanity. It affects millions of people worldwide annually (Shamshudeen, 2022). It is an act that involves the exploitation of men, women, and children for the purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labor, and other illegal activities.

The United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children, supplementing the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol), defines human trafficking as "the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation" (UN, 2000, p.2).

Human trafficking is a multinational and organized crime where the exploitation of human beings can take on different forms (UNODC, 2004). This dissertation specifically focuses on internal child trafficking. "Child trafficking refers to the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation, regardless of the use of illicit

means, either within or outside a country" (UN, 2000, p.2). The Palermo Protocol's definition of child trafficking is notably broader than the general definition, acknowledging the specific vulnerabilities of children by not requiring proof of illicit means or a specific type of exploitation. This broader understanding reflects that any act exploiting a child, regardless of circumstances, constitutes trafficking.

Child trafficking is widely recognized as one of the fastest-growing criminal industries, affecting millions worldwide (ILO, 2017; UNODC, 2021), and has reached enormous proportions globally. Estimating the exact number of child trafficking victims is inherently difficult due to the clandestine nature of the crime. However, reports from international organizations provide crucial insights into the scope of the problem. For instance, the ILO's (2017) report indicated that one out of four victims of human trafficking is a child, while the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) estimated in its 2024 Global Report on Trafficking in Persons that children comprise a significant portion of identified trafficking victims, accounting for (38%) of detected victims globally (UNODC, 2024).

Child trafficking directly violates rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to education, protection from exploitation, and freedom from slavery (UNODC, 2020). Children are often seen as easy targets for traffickers due to their heightened manipulability and control, their lack of knowledge and experience to recognize dangers, and their inability to understand exploitation (Reid,2014; Rafferty, 2013). Traffickers exploit children's innocence, trust, and need for love and attention to lure them into trafficking situations (Franchino-Olsen, 2019; Greenbaum et al., 2022; Rafferty, 2013).

When children are trafficked away from their families, communities, and support networks and secluded in unfamiliar environments, they become highly susceptible to various forms of

exploitation (Alinka, 2022). Victims become dependent on their traffickers for basic needs and often fear retaliation against themselves or their families (Peter et al., 2011). Their survival and development are severely jeopardized as they are forced into harsh living conditions, denied basic human rights to education, health, and protection (Greenbaum & Bodrick, 2017; UNICEF, 2005). Generally, victims experience poor living conditions, physical and psychological abuse, neglect, and denial of fundamental human rights, resulting in serious health problems (Greenbaum & Bodrick, 2017; Wood, 2020; Franchino-Olsen, 2019).

Over the years, significant attention has been given to human trafficking in general, with child trafficking receiving specific focus from national and international communities for over a decade. Historically, transnational trafficking is the most recognized feature (Chawla et al., 2009; Peter et al., 2011; Misaye,2018). Yet, alongside this international dimension, domestic child trafficking has increasingly been perceived by traffickers as an attractive and profitable opportunity due to the ease of moving children domestically without requiring extensive legal documents or border crossings. This absence of formal checkpoints provides fertile ground for traffickers to operate at minimal cost, sometimes enabling the trafficking process to be organized at a local level and involving community members, such as family or local transport providers (Shen et al., 2013; Mapp, 2019; Offia, 2020).

Child trafficking is a complex global issue that affects every region, particularly in developing countries like Ethiopia, where various social, cultural, and economic factors contribute to its persistence. Societal structures and cultural practices, such as forced marriages and gender discrimination, exacerbate this issue by oppressing women and children (Aden & Shanta, 2019; Lemma et al., 2021; Lee, 2013; Ochanda et al., 2009; Rezene, 2014). Economic hardship

increases vulnerability, while societal inequalities and harmful traditional practices can expose children to exploitation (Perry & McEwing, 2009; UNODC, 2015).

Research indicates that poverty, gender discrimination, a lack of awareness regarding children's rights, and inadequate law enforcement drive children from rural areas to urban centers, rendering them vulnerable targets for traffickers (Tatek, 2013; Girma, 2014). Traffickers exploit this vulnerability by luring children with promises of better opportunities, particularly in labor-intensive sectors such as traditional weaving and domestic servitude (Edan & Singh, 2018).

Furthermore, the existing literature underscores the expansion, scale, and ongoing drivers of child trafficking (Ashema, 2010; ILO, 2002; Tefera & Seifu, 2010; Yoseph et al., 2006; Zewdneh, 2010). As children migrate to urban areas, they become increasingly susceptible to trafficking due to factors like gender discrimination, high family-to-land ratios, weak law enforcement, and low community awareness of children's rights (Tatek, 2013; Girma, 2014), with poverty identified as the primary catalyst for this migration (Atnafu et al., 2014).

The US State Department report (2015 to 2019) identified Ethiopia as a source country for forced labor and sex trafficking of men, women, and children, noting insufficient government action on internal child trafficking. The report notes that limited economic opportunities and extreme poverty, combined with pressure from families, cause a significant number of minors to leave their homes and move to urban areas, towns, and sometimes even foreign countries. Previous studies conducted in the Wolaita Sodo town area have shown that there is a high prevalence of child trafficking in the region. Researchers Kastro and Dullea (2018), Temam and Alemu (2016), and Yishak and Asrat (2018) have identified the Wolaita as a major hub for children being trafficked to various towns and cities in Ethiopia, including Addis Ababa, where most victims are subjected to severe exploitation in various informal sectors, in a situation like slavery. Given this

documented prevalence and the severe consequences faced by trafficked children, it becomes essential to examine how communities themselves understand and respond to the issue.

Understanding community knowledge, attitudes, and preventive practices of child trafficking is crucial for a better understanding of the phenomenon of child trafficking. Identifying gaps in awareness and addressing cultural misconceptions, and empowering communities to take action against this issue. Additionally, exploring existing challenges and resources can help develop tailored interventions to protect vulnerable children.

Two primary factors motivated the researcher to undertake this study. First, a personal observation of children being exploited by their own relatives was deeply troubling and heartbreaking. It is distressing to witness children as young as seven being taken advantage of by those who promised to care for and protect them. This experience serves as a powerful catalyst for my dissertation on child trafficking and the knowledge parents have regarding this issue.

The second factor stems from a strong interest in addressing the pressing issue of child trafficking, as highlighted by frequent national and international news coverage and documentaries. These sources have evoked an emotional response and a sense of urgency to explore the root causes, societal perceptions, and practices surrounding this crime. The research aims to assess awareness among parents about the signs and risks of child trafficking, ultimately working towards preventing such atrocities against innocent children.

Through this dissertation, there is an opportunity to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on child trafficking, raise awareness about its impact, and advocate for policies and interventions that prioritize the protection of vulnerable children. By critically analyzing the attitudes and

practices prevalent within source communities, it becomes possible to identify gaps in knowledge, challenges in addressing the issue, and potential areas for intervention and education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Child trafficking remains one of the most widespread violations of children's rights, yet the global focus on transnational cases often overshadows internal child trafficking. While international trafficking attracts significant attention because of its links to organized crime and migration patterns, the issue of internal trafficking is rooted in local socioeconomic conditions such as poverty, unemployment, family instability, and cultural norms that normalize child labor or migration (Tolla & Singh, 2019). These factors make exploitation less visible and harder to detect, especially within source communities where awareness is influenced by local information channels, community leaders, schools, NGOs, and local media, and where enforcement mechanisms differ widely (Olivius, 2018). Although children constitute a large portion of trafficking victims worldwide, domestic cases remain underreported and understudied compared to international trafficking (UNODC, 2024).

In Ethiopia, this invisibility is especially concerning given the country's socioeconomic realities, where poverty, rapid urbanization, and cultural practices such as child fostering or migration for work can unintentionally obscure trafficking risks. Studies confirm that internal trafficking is prevalent and complex, driven by intertwined economic, social, and governance problems (Tolla & Singh, 2019; Yishak & Asrat, 2018; Ayalew et al., 2013; Temam & Alemu, 2018; Tefera, 2019). While much of the literature focuses on transnational trafficking (e.g., Abebaw, 2012, 2013; Tolla & Singh, 2019; Gezie et al., 2021; Selamwait, 2013; Wako, 2020), research also points to internal drivers such as poverty, unemployment, and family breakdown. This gap in

recognition underscores the need for more comprehensive responses that go beyond documentation and extend to prevention.

Despite the severity of child trafficking, targeted actions to prevent and counteract it are limited. Responses often emphasize government and policy frameworks rather than community-level attitudes and practices. Preventive measures are fragile, with awareness campaigns stopping at information dissemination rather than shaping behavior (Chimdessa, 2022; Kastro & Dullea, 2018; Tola & Shing, 2021). This leaves children vulnerable to exploitation through forced labor, sexual abuse, and domestic servitude.

Research from multiple Ethiopian regions confirms that children are widely exploited through trafficking, forced labor, and sexual abuse, with domestic trafficking particularly severe yet under-recognized (Chimdessa, 2022; Kastro & Dullea, 2018; Tola & Shing, 2019). Weak enforcement, poor coordination, and low community knowledge exacerbate the problem, undermining children's rights and perpetuating cycles of abuse.

Moreover, existing literature in Ethiopia has mainly focused on victim experiences, including severe harms it imposes on women and children, including labor and sexual exploitation, trauma, stigma, and challenges of reintegration (Abebaw, 2012, 2013; Choiet et al., 2020; Gezie et al., 2019; Misaye, 2018) and structural causes highlighting poverty, unemployment, limited land, gender discrimination, political instability, weak services, corruption, and entrenched migration culture as recurring push factors (Megbaru & Engdaw, 2024; Gezie, 2021; Beck, 2017; Tolla &Shing, 2019; Kastro & Dullea, 2018; Ansha et al., 2014). Other studies examined root causes and interventions (Tola & Shing, 2018; Temam & Alemu, 2016; Yoseph et al., 2006). Some argued that child mobility is mistakenly categorized as trafficking (Belay, 2019; Boyden & Howard, 2013; Boyden & Howard, 2022; De Regt & Mihret, 2020; Zewdie et al., 2024).

However, evidence on community KAP remains limited but is emerging. A scoping review notes that Ethiopian trafficking research is still early-stage, largely qualitative, and focused on women and economic causes, calling for mixed-methods and socio-ecological approaches (Sisay, 2024). Community prevention studies, such as those in Wolaita, rely on interviews and focus groups with organizations rather than systematic household surveys (Kastro & Dullea, 2018). Findings underline how community attitudes, such as valuing children abroad or devaluing local low-skill jobs, shape risky migration decisions (Acha,2020; Gezie, 2021). Communities often fail to intervene in irregular migration, reflecting low vigilance and conditional cooperation with authorities (Gezie, 2021), while stigma against street children reduces protection and heightens vulnerability (Chimdessa, 2022).

This study investigates the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to in-country child trafficking in Ethiopia, focusing on psychosocial and community-level factors influencing preventive practices. By analyzing individual, interpersonal, and community-level dynamics, the research aims to fill the gap in understanding and contribute to more effective prevention strategies.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What has been the pattern of child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town over the past three years?
2. What is the level of knowledge and sources of information among the residents of Wolaita Sodo regarding child trafficking?
3. What are the attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intentions, and practices of Wolaita Sodo town residents regarding child trafficking?

4. To what extent do knowledge, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intentions of origin communities predict preventive practice concerning child trafficking?
5. Is there a relationship between knowledge, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intentions, preventive practice concerning child trafficking, and demographic factors of origin communities?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of the current study is to assess child trafficking knowledge, attitudes, and practices among residents of Wolaita Sodo town. The specific objectives are to:

- Identify the pattern of child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town
- Assess the knowledge level of residents of Wolaita Sodo town regarding child trafficking and identify the sources of information.
- Assess knowledge, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intentions, and preventive practices of residents of Wolaita Sodo town concerning child trafficking
- Assess whether knowledge, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intentions of residents of Wolaita Sodo town are predictors of the actual behavior or practice of preventing child trafficking.
- Determine the relationship between sociodemographic factors and knowledge, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, intention, and behavior/ practice of Wolaita Sodo community members toward child trafficking

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study aims to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and actions of communities regarding in-country child trafficking. The study will furnish valuable insights for various stakeholders to formulate and execute impactful interventions. The outcomes of this study will inform the creation of relevant policies and tools to enhance prevention measures against child trafficking, leading to a more effective response to this problem. The results of this study will be beneficial for both policy development and implementation. This study has the potential to provide invaluable insights to professionals in the social sciences, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of communities' knowledge, attitudes, and preventive practices regarding child trafficking. With this knowledge, they can offer more effective services and support and develop more impactful intervention strategies to address this critical issue. Additionally, this study can serve as a foundation for future research by identifying gaps in policy, practice, and research that must be addressed.

1.6 Delimitation of the Study

This study is intended to assess the knowledge and attitudes towards child trafficking of the residents of Wolaita Sodo town and the practices employed to prevent child trafficking in the community. In this regard, this study is intended to delimit its participants to only residents of Wolaita Sodo town. The study did not include participants from other major source areas of child trafficking in the region. The research focused on examining the various factors that affect the intention to partake in preventive practices as well as the actual participation in these practices, all within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior. While acknowledging the broader framework of child protection and human trafficking, the research did not delve into

the specifics of international child trafficking or the complex operations of trafficking networks, aside from examining the community's perceptions of vulnerability and prevention.

In terms of the method, the study employed a mixed research design, which involves surveys to assess knowledge and attitudes, alongside interviews or focus groups to gain deeper insights into prevention practices. The results aim to offer an understanding of community-level views and behaviors that are important for prevention initiatives, aiding in the development of targeted intervention strategies instead of delivering an exhaustive national or global evaluation of child trafficking.

1.7 Definitions of Terms

Attitude: Any preconceived ideas about child trafficking and its interventions, participants' feelings/emotions towards aspects of child trafficking.

Preventive Practice: Actions or measures that can counter child trafficking or minimize the incidence of child trafficking

Intentions to engage in Preventive Practice: Respondents' thoughts on self-readiness to engage in the fight against child trafficking

Child trafficking: An act of recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of a child for exploitation, regardless of the use of illicit means (UN,2000, p2)

Child: Person below the age of eighteen (Article 1, UNCRC)

In-country trafficking: The act of recruitment, transportation, purchase, sale, and transfer or harboring, or receipt of a child for exploitation within Ethiopia

Knowledge: Respondent's degree of understanding of child trafficking, its forms, components, and progression.

Perceived Behavioral Control: Respondents' appraisal of their ability to engage in anti-child trafficking activities, which include skills, resources, and any other prerequisites to engage in the fight against child trafficking.

Subjective Norms: Respondents' perceived social pressure to engage or not to engage in the fight against child trafficking.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature and theoretical framework that inform this study. Specifically, the review of the literature addresses:1) Global perspectives on the phenomenon of human trafficking, including debates surrounding its definitions, history, prevalence, factors supporting its existence, monetary context, and definitions;2) Trends of child trafficking in Ethiopian contexts and views regarding child trafficking;3) Child trafficking knowledge, attitude, and practice 4) Relationship between knowledge, attitude, and practice;5) Approaches to address the problem of child trafficking; 6) Nature of studies on child trafficking and 7) Theoretical framework to guide the research. Finally, the Theory of Planned Behavior, the study's guiding theoretical framework, is discussed in relation to the study's issue.

2.1 Global Perspectives on Human Trafficking

Human trafficking is a complex global phenomenon, and there is a lack of consensus among different agencies on its precise definition (Burke et al., 2022). It is essential to establish a consensus on a working definition of human trafficking for several reasons. A clear definition is instrumental in creating laws that specifically address human trafficking and prevent confusion with related crimes such as smuggling or forced labor (Weitzer, 2014; Skrivankova, 2010). Moreover, it plays a pivotal role in improving data collection by enabling more accurate identification and reporting of trafficking cases, which ultimately leads to a better understanding of the scope of the problem. While this highlights the importance of definitional clarity, it does not fully address the political and institutional barriers that make consensus difficult, which limits its practical applicability.

Furthermore, scholars such as Gallagher (2010), Tyldum and Brunovskis (2005) suggest that a standardized definition contributes to the enhancement of international cooperation and the development of targeted interventions, highlighting the importance of a shared understanding of human trafficking for international collaboration in prevention, prosecution, victim protection, and resource allocation to effectively address human trafficking. Although this perspective assumes that consensus will automatically foster cooperation, it overlooks how differences in state capacity, priorities, and enforcement mechanisms may hinder the translation of definitions into effective action. This limitation becomes more evident when considering Winkler's (2021) observation that the absence of a universally agreed-upon definition creates practical challenges, particularly in victim identification and law enforcement**.** Winkler indicated that the lack of consensus mainly complicates the identification of trafficking victims, potentially leading to overlooked situations. Furthermore, disagreements about the definition of trafficking can impede law enforcement efforts and hinder the ability to secure convictions. A clear and comprehensive definition is crucial for ensuring victims receive the necessary support and protection. Winkler's analysis is valuable in linking definitional ambiguity to victim protection, but it remains limited in exploring how political agendas and institutional interests shape these definitional disputes

Other scholars (Hussein, 2015; Chuang, 2010; Annison, 2013) also indicated problems associated with the lack of agreement on defining human trafficking. The use of different terms like alien smuggling, trafficking of aliens, illegal immigrant smuggling, human trafficking, trafficking in human beings, and trafficking in persons is an indicator of this challenge (Kleemans & Smit, 2014; Campana & Varese, 2015) highlighting the challenges in differentiating between smuggling and trafficking, particularly when migrants are forced into labor or sex trafficking to repay smuggling debts. Concerning this, Kleemans (2011) noted that

most often, governments and NGOs use different methods and data to define the problem. This, in turn, creates a vicious cycle of inconsistencies and discrepancies. Moreover, there is a tendency to focus on a victim-oriented, one-sided viewpoint that simplifies the multiple interactions and relationships between various parties involved in the trafficking process. While this literature effectively exposes terminological confusion and methodological inconsistencies, it tends to remain descriptive, offering little analysis of how power dynamics and institutional interests perpetuate these overlaps. It is precisely against this backdrop of definitional fragmentation and conceptual ambiguity that the international community sought to establish a unified framework.

The first-ever agreed-upon definition of human trafficking was incorporated into the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress, and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (Palermo Protocol, 2000). Regarding the Palermo Protocol, Laura (2013) stated that the Palermo Protocol stands as the first international instrument to acknowledge the various dimensions of trafficking. While preceding international human rights treaties had acknowledged the issue of trafficking, the Protocol was the pioneer in furnishing a comprehensive definition of trafficking. This encompassing definition set the groundwork for the development of international and domestic laws aimed at addressing the predicament. The provision also stipulates that the trafficking of a child for exploitative purposes, whatever means are used, should be considered as a crime. Several writers and researchers (e.g., Archer, Boittin, & Mo, 2016; Katharine & Todd, 2020; Rafferty, 2008; Sheldon, 2022) underlined that the definition given in Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women, and Children is the most endorsed international definition of human trafficking and provides a crucial basis for national law reform.

The protocol primarily focuses on the criminal prosecution of trafficking perpetrators and the rights and needs of women and children who fall victim to traffickers. However, much must be done by the states that ratified the Protocol in reviewing their domestic laws and national legislation, considering the document to effectively mitigate the problem. Countries, including Ethiopia, that ratified the protocol have a prime obligation to consider their national laws and legislation. Consequently, Ethiopia has produced national legislation and law reform by introducing a proclamation to provide for the prevention and suppression of trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, which is commonly known as Proclamation number 1178/2020, a Proclamation on the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and the Smuggling of Persons.

On the other hand, despite its comprehensiveness, the Palermo Protocol is not the most consistently adopted instrument across the world. For instance, Rafferty (2013) argued that though the Palermo Protocol is the most widely endorsed, it has not been consistently adopted across the world, impeding attempts to estimate the number of children being trafficked.

2.2 In-country Child Trafficking in Ethiopia

According to UNODC (2022), knowledge of international trafficking is considerably higher than in-country trafficking. Reports have confirmed that internationally, more attention has been paid to the trafficking of children between nations. However, the number of victims of domestic trafficking is increasing from time to time (Hussen & Mekonnen,2023; Yishak & Asrat, 2018; Tolla& Singh, 2021). This imbalance in focus reveals a research bias that privileges cross-border trafficking while neglecting domestic realities, which may distort policy priorities and resource allocation. Domestic or in-country trafficking may involve movement from rural to urban areas or from towns to cities (Shoa, 2022). Children may migrate from poorer and less privileged

places to cities and towns for a better life and education (Kastro & Dullea, 2018). This migration pattern is closely linked to increased vulnerability to trafficking, exploitation, and adverse outcomes for children (Boyden & Howard, 2013; De Regt & Mihret,2020; Beck et al., 2017). While these studies highlight migration as a driver of vulnerability, they often understate the role of structural factors such as weak social protection systems, entrenched poverty, and cultural practices that normalize child mobility, which limit the explanatory depth of the literature. These works also establish a strong correlation between migration and exploitation; nevertheless, they tend to remain descriptive, offering limited analysis of how policy failures or community-level attitudes intensify these risks.

Although domestic child trafficking is a recognized problem in many African countries, it is barely addressed in research (Kithaka-Karanja, 2024; Kiss et al., 2022). Likewise, in-country child trafficking in Ethiopia is a less studied issue compared to other countries (Beck et.al, 2017; Kastro & Dullea, 2018). This gap in research is critical, as it perpetuates the invisibility of domestic trafficking and undermines the development of context-specific interventions. The literature identifies the absence of research but does not sufficiently interrogate why domestic trafficking remains marginalized in academic and policy discourse, leaving an important area underexplored.

According to the US State Department report of 2024, Ethiopia has been taking substantive steps to tackle child trafficking, primarily by establishing robust legal frameworks such as Proclamation No. 1178/2020 to comprehensively criminalize both sex and labor trafficking in line with international standards. Enforcement efforts include setting up specialized police investigation and prosecution units, which have led to hundreds of convictions and the prosecution of complicit officials, alongside the finalization of a National Referral Mechanism

(NRM) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for victim identification. Furthermore, the government collaborates with NGOs to provide victim protection through hotlines (like 8797) and shelter services and incorporates anti-trafficking education into the school curriculum (TIP report, 2024).

Despite the scarcity of adequate and reliable data on the magnitude of in-country child trafficking in Ethiopia, reports of some agencies and occasional news reports in the media reveal that in-country/domestic child trafficking is a problem that is gradually increasing from time to time. Concerning this, Senthil (2015) stated that Ethiopia is a source country for children subjected to trafficking persons and exploited in forced labor and forced prostitution. Girls from rural Ethiopia are exploited in domestic servitude and commercial sexual exploitation in towns and cities (Shoa, 2022), whereas boys are exploited in forced labor such as traditional weaving, agriculture, herding, and street vending (Ayalew et al, 2013).

Studies, for instance, Tolla and Singh (2019), Kastro & Dullea (2018), Ayalew et al (2013), and Senthil (2015) indicated that domestic child trafficking is becoming a challenge in different parts of the country. Boys and girls are trafficked to be exploited in numerous informal sectors and forced to work for long hours with little or no pay. According to these studies, children are subjected to different psychological and physical abuse, including hunger, beating, and sleep deprivation. In a similar vein, Negash (2017) revealed that the main purpose of child trafficking in Ethiopia is to exploit them in different informal sectors like domestic servitude, weaving industry, street vending, construction, domestic work, commercial sex work, farm labor, begging, etc, and the problem continues to worsen.

Despite the severity of the problem, many trafficking cases are not reported or known since human trafficking is by its very nature a clandestine matter (US State Department TIP report,

2013). Moreover, there is a shortage of systematic inquiries that examine the nature of child trafficking in Ethiopia. Although studies show that child trafficking is a significant problem in towns and cities of Ethiopia, it has not received much attention from concerned bodies, including scholars. Some researchers even argued that most of the cases of child trafficking in Ethiopia are related to the issue of child out-migration or internal displacement rather than child trafficking.

For instance, Boyden and Howard (2013) argued that child movement has been widely mixed with trafficking. This confusion of the concept of child migration with child trafficking has a significant impact on policy development. They further noted that no evidence shows that children's movement echoes the horror stories that dominate the trafficking narrative. Children's migration experience is often viewed as contributing to household income. It also increases opportunities for children to learn important skills, thereby justifying their transition to adulthood.

Tatek (2013) stated that child migration is seen both by parents and wider society as a door to a new opportunity for jobs, schools, and a better life. According to Tatek, often children and families of migrant children gain substantial advantages as a result of migration, mainly by improving their income, access to education and health, and improved prospects for their children. Generally, it is considered a way of contributing to the household economy and an opportunity to develop skills and get a better education. In relation to this, Kiros et al. (2021) indicate that children's mobility is influenced by various factors, including the desire to pursue opportunities in urban settings, particularly appealing to adolescents and girls, who may move due to familial issues or marriage. This includes adhering to virilocal marriage traditions, where women relocate to their husband's communities. Additionally, some children may move to live

with extended family members following a family crisis, such as parental death, divorce, or extreme poverty. Thus, parents, extended families, and neighbors play a vital role in encouraging children to move to cities and towns.

Zewdineh (2010) states that the Amhara and SNNPR regional states have served as lucrative sources for children who can be given away in trafficking, domestically and internationally. Trafficked children are exploited in different sectors, including commercial sex work, forced marriage, illegal adoption, and labour exploitation, such as providing cheap or unpaid labor work as housemaids or beggars (Ashma, 2010; ILO, 2002; Tefera & Seifu, 2010; Yoseph et.al, 2006; Zewdineh, 2010).

Similarly, studies (e.g., Ezro, 2019; US Department of State, 2018; World Vision, 2012) indicate the prevalence of child trafficking in different regions of Ethiopia. According to these studies, children are trafficked from rural areas to Addis Ababa and to other regions of the country, mainly for forced labor in the weaving industry (where children work as weavers) and in urban areas to sell lottery and other items. In relation to this, Zewdineh (2010) stated that children from the SNNPRS, particularly from Wolaita, Arbaminch, and Hadiya, are trafficked to Addis Ababa to work in the traditional weaving industry and engage in lottery vending on the streets, where they earn a small amount of money. Children are also trafficked to cities and towns for exploitation in domestic work. In some cases, it is common to see full-fledged child employment carried on in the taxi business as assistants, in tearooms, and in restaurants. They are often trafficked to highland farms, where they are exploited in rural areas that lack access to modern education and development opportunities.

Similarly, Temam and Alemu (2016) reported the prevalence of child trafficking in the southern parts of the country. This study also identified a lack of information about child trafficking

among children and their parents, and positive attitudes towards child migration as the main factors associated with the high prevalence of child trafficking in the region.

Child movement in general and child trafficking, in particular, are facilitated by different pull and push factors in Ethiopia. According to Heissler and Porter (2010), most Ethiopian children are driven from their homes due to poverty, harmful traditional practices, or the breakdown of societal values. Moreover, low levels of awareness, divorce, addiction, similar problems, poverty, or parents having more children than they can support are said to be common causes (Addisu, 2010; Ayalew, 2010).

Boyden and Howard (2013) indicate that poverty and crisis provide a strong economic imperative for child relocation within or outside the extended family. According to Boyden and Howard, families move their children in response to localized economic shocks, as well as to maximize household and family production and enable accumulation for essential outgoings such as school expenses. They are both reactive and proactive, as is necessary in such a context.

In this regard, Meaza and Mesfin (2015) asserted that child migration and trafficking are often facilitated by factors such as peer pressure, seeking a better life in the urban area, seeking job opportunities in cities, poverty, lack of job opportunities, lack of information, and being from a dysfunctional family. However, Boyden and Howard (2013) further argue that while economic hardship provides a strong ground for many young people to leave their natal homes, they rarely migrate out of economic necessity or following a crisis. According to Mebratu et al. (2017), children did not only migrate for economic reasons, but rather migration is an aspiration for the majority of migrant children. They further illustrated that migrant children believe that migration offers them the freedom to pursue their interests and to receive and spend compensation for their labor without hindrance or reprimand.

Conversely, unlike various other types of violence directed at children, child trafficking appears to be misunderstood by the families of the victims and the broader community. Often, child trafficking is confused with child migration and seen as an opportunity for children to go to towns and cities where they can pursue their education, acquire new skills, and earn money so that they can support their families and themselves.

Furthermore, child trafficking research in Ethiopia reflects both growing awareness and persistent methodological shortcomings. Although trafficking is widely recognized as a pressing social problem, this awareness is unevenly distributed and often fails to translate into actionable prevention (Kastro & Dullea, 2018; Sisay, 2024). Empirical studies remain fragmented, relying heavily on qualitative interviews, descriptive case studies, or narrow regional surveys that limit generalizability. Reviews such as Beck et al. (2016) and Sisay (2024) emphasize that evidence is often focused on women or economic drivers, while child-specific trafficking patterns are underexplored. Quantitative and mixed-methods approaches are rare, leaving prevalence estimates unreliable and weakening policy integration. Scholars like Choi et al. (2020) further highlight challenges in identifying hidden populations, definitional inconsistencies, and poor coordination between research and service delivery. Collectively, this literature underscores the need for rigorous mixed-methods designs capable of capturing both prevalence and the political, institutional, and socio-economic determinants that sustain trafficking in Ethiopia.

In summary, the reviewed literature on child trafficking in Ethiopia reveals significant advancements in legal frameworks and enforcement, alongside comprehensive documentation of exploitation patterns across various regions and sectors. However, there remain notable limitations in several areas. Evaluations of government measures often overlook implementation gaps, and prevalence estimates tend to depend on periodic reports rather than systematic

investigations. Research often provides descriptive accounts of exploitations, highlighting them without delving into the underlying structural factors such as weak governance and cultural norms. Additionally, the frequent mixing of child migration with trafficking tends to obscure the complexity of children's mobility and its exploitative aspects. While regional and sectoral evidence is certainly valuable, it often falls short in terms of longitudinal and comparative depth. Furthermore, community perceptions that view migration as an opportunity can inadvertently normalize harmful practices. Overall, the literature demonstrates awareness of the problem but remains constrained by methodological weaknesses, conceptual ambiguities, and insufficient investigation of political, institutional, and socio-economic forces that sustain child trafficking in Ethiopia.

2.3 Child Trafficking Knowledge, Attitude, and Practices

In this study, Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) are understood as interrelated constructs that collectively explain preventive practices against child trafficking. Knowledge provides the informational foundation for what individuals know about trafficking risks, causes, and protective measures. This knowledge shapes attitudes, which reflect evaluative judgments about the importance and feasibility of prevention. Attitudes, together with Subjective Norms and Perceived Behavioral Control, influence Intention, the strongest predictor of actual Behavior. Finally, Practice represents the observable, routine actions individuals take, such as reporting suspicious activity or engaging in awareness campaigns.

By embedding KAP within TPB, the study recognizes that knowledge alone is insufficient; attitudes, norms, and perceived control must align for intention to translate into consistent practice. Methodologically, this framework is deployed through validated scales and path analysis, allowing the researcher to test both direct and indirect pathways. This integration

ensures that psychosocial determinants (knowledge, attitudes, norms) and structural constraints (institutional capacity, socio-economic conditions) are captured, providing a comprehensive explanation of why awareness sometimes fails to become preventive practice.

Child trafficking is a crime that involves the exploitation of children for various purposes such as forced labor, sexual exploitation, and recruitment into armed groups (Greenbaum et.al, 2018). Knowledge of child trafficking is essential for individuals to recognize the signs and identify potential victims. Understanding the causes and consequences of trafficking is equally important, as it helps to grasp the complexity and seriousness of the problem. Furthermore, having a thorough understanding of the current laws and regulations on child trafficking enables residents to take appropriate measures and promptly report suspected cases. By being well-informed about these aspects, adult residents can contribute significantly to the prevention and intervention efforts aimed at combating internal child trafficking.

According to Botchkovar et al. (2016), attitudes towards child trafficking encompass society's beliefs, perceptions, and values about the issue; thus, promoting a desirable attitude towards trafficking and a strong belief in the rights and well-being of children is vital. Additionally, developing a supportive and empathetic attitude towards trafficking victims and survivors is vital for their recovery and reintegration into society (Honeyman et al., 2016). Practice refers to the actions taken to prevent child trafficking, including identifying potential cases and supporting victims, as well as implementing and enforcing laws and policies that protect children from trafficking, providing education and training to individuals and communities to recognize and report trafficking, and establishing adequate support and rehabilitation services for survivors. Thus, working to enhance the level of knowledge and changing the attitude and behavior of the target group is an important element in the fight against child trafficking. Researchers assume

that knowledge, attitude, and practice are related and that knowledge and attitude directly influence practice. Studies conducted in different parts of the world show that child trafficking is a rampant problem among marginalized communities characterized by low levels of knowledge and a tolerant attitude toward such behaviors.

For example, a study conducted in Bahr Dar on awareness of trafficking and related factors among young girls found that 59.7% of the participants had read or heard about human trafficking (Malukan et al., 2014). Similarly, a survey conducted in Nigeria among some vulnerable segments of communities indicates that most of the participants think that they know about human trafficking. However, they failed to identify elements of human trafficking and what constitutes human trafficking when later asked open-ended questions. Moreover, most of the participants associate human trafficking with the smuggling of migrants and the smuggling of drugs or contraband goods (UNODC, 2012).

Numerous studies carried out within at-risk populations across various regions globally suggest that there is a limited understanding of human trafficking overall, and specifically child trafficking, along with a lenient perspective towards the issue prevalent among susceptible community segments. For example, in a KAP study, Botchkovar et al. (2016) addressed two countries known as source countries for both national and transnational human trafficking. They reported that a low level of knowledge was evident among the participants in the study. Moreover, although the participants reported that they are well informed about human trafficking when they were asked to define human trafficking and its components, most of the participants seemed to have a low understanding; they narrowed human trafficking only to the trafficking of women for sexual exploitation. Similarly, Winrock International Cambodia (2012) reported that a

lack of knowledge and a favorable attitude towards human trafficking among vulnerable groups of communities.

Studies have also found that participants' levels of knowledge varied according to their sex, age, and level of education. In relation to this, Sanghamitra and Ritwika (2023) in their KAP study revealed that boys reported relatively higher levels of desirable attitudes and practices than girls. In contrast, Winrock International Cambodia's (2012) study shows that female participants are more aware of what trafficking is, who the traffickers are, and the means of recruitment than their male counterparts. On the other hand, Sanghamitra and Ritwika (2023) found that children's level of knowledge was significantly higher than their reported attitudes and practices, indicating that having good knowledge alone is not a guarantee for adopting necessary precautions.

Participants' level of education seems to be positively correlated with participants' level of knowledge. For instance, Malukan et.al (2014) indicate that educated participants were 2.22 times more likely to be aware of trafficking than illiterate participants. Similarly, Winrock International's (2012) knowledge regarding child trafficking varied according to their sex. Winrock International's study shows that female participants are more aware of what trafficking is about, who the traffickers are, and the means of recruitment than their male counterparts.

Thainiyom's KAP survey (2011) also shows that limited knowledge and positive attitudes towards human trafficking in general and child trafficking in particular were evident among vulnerable groups. Furthermore, the study also found that a lower level of adherence to recommended preventive practices.

Studies (Botchkovar et al., 2016; Malukan et al, 2014; Thainiyom, 2011; UNODC, 2012; Walakira et al, 2015) indicated various misconceptions regarding child trafficking. For instance,

Walakira et al. (2015) confirmed a low level of knowledge and misunderstanding surrounding child trafficking. According to Walakira et.al, child trafficking is often understood by the public as exploiting children to work in towns for extremely low pay, child labour (working for non-relatives), stealing children, reselling children, forced early marriage, kidnapping children, migration of children, hard labour, and children providing cheap labour in towns. Though some of the above-mentioned acts can be considered as components of child trafficking (e.g., exploiting children for very low pay, reselling children, and forced early marriage) some of the acts (e.g., migration of children, child labour (working for non-relatives), stealing children, and kidnapping children) are not equivalent to an act of child trafficking.

In a similar vein, Botchkovar et al. (2016) revealed various misconceptions associated with trafficking and the fight against it. Their study found that the majority of the participants of the study believe that only women and children, ethnic minorities, children from vulnerable families, teenage girls, and children from rural areas are vulnerable to both sex and labor trafficking, whereas men and boys are the least vulnerable to human trafficking. Regarding the role that the public should play in the fight against human trafficking, the participants tend to see the government as the sole actor in combating human trafficking.

Several studies confirmed that children are more vulnerable to human trafficking and victims of human trafficking compared to adults. Generally, children between the ages of 6 to 18 are most vulnerable to human trafficking (Botchkovar et.al, 2016; Winrock International, 2012; UNODC, 2012; Walakira et al., 2015). Various factors may make children susceptible to trafficking at the individual, family, community, and societal levels. In addition to these risk factors, the youthful age of children and their relatively inexperienced cognitive, emotional, and physical development further intensify their vulnerability (Greenbaum et al,2018)

Similarly, Wood (2020) indicates that the risks of harm to the children are heightened when their social networks, including family and community, are disrupted due to various factors such as societal tensions, rejection based on identity (such as gender, religion, or disability), armed conflict, persecution, breakdown of law and order, climate emergencies, and resulting migration

Different perspectives exist concerning the reasons for children's vulnerability. Children are primarily at risk of being trafficked since they typically do not have the capacity to enter into agreements voluntarily. Frequently, a family's economic struggles are a key factor that places these children in danger of being trafficked. For example, Dottridge (2004) states that in Africa, trafficked children are usually either sent away by their families because it is too expensive to have another child at home, or because of the potential economic benefit a child can send back through labor away from home. On the other hand, studies (e.g., Franchino-Olsen,2019; Greenbaum & Bodrick,2017; Warria, 2022) show that vulnerable children are those who are poor and homeless and separated from their families. While vulnerability to child trafficking is very different, the commonality remains that children are at a high risk when there is a weak or delicate economic situation. To sum up, economic vulnerability is one of the factors that can "push" children into a condition where they can be trafficked. The regions from which children are trafficked are generally areas experiencing significant economic problems, though there is no single economic indicator that can point to the likelihood of trafficking.

2.4 The Relationship between Knowledge and Preventive Practice

Studies using knowledge, attitude, and practice surveys assume that knowledge and attitude are related and that knowledge and attitude affect practice. However, in most of the KAP studies, even though the participants demonstrated knowledge and a desirable attitude, several studies found a low relationship between knowledge and practice. Studies (e.g., Ajzen et al. 2011;

Kharkar & Bowalekar, 2012) are of the position that the presence of knowledge regarding a particular problem is no guarantee of leading to desirable behavior, nor is ignorance necessarily the main antecedent of undesirable behavior. Various determinants, which are often hard and difficult to change, influence behavior. The discrepancy between knowledge and practice has been documented in several other areas of study as well. The relationship between knowledge and practice cannot be taken as automatically positive. This point is attested by different findings. For instance, Nafissi et al. (2012); Kharkar and Bowalekar (2012) revealed that although the participants demonstrated good knowledge of breast self-examination and related matters, only 12.9 % carried out the practice of breast self-examination regularly. According to Kharkar & Bowalekar (2012), despite having a good knowledge about and a positive attitude toward reporting adverse effects, only 18.5 % reported adherence with reporting of adverse effects of drugs to government agencies.

In their systematic review of studies conducted in HIV-related matters, Wallace (2002) and Ajzen et al. (2011) indicated that there is no simple relation between knowledge and practice. Similarly, Abiy et al. (2014) in their studies of vulnerable groups found that, while knowledge about AIDS, its causes, and the mode of transmission is good, practices of safer sex can remain low.

Ketema et al (2012) in their study of self-care behavior among patients with diabetes found that patients with good knowledge of diabetes did not exhibit strong adherence to the recommended practices. Malathy et al.'s (2011) study also confirmed the weak relationship between knowledge and practice.

On the other hand, Ajzen et al. (2011) states that a person’s intention to perform a behavior is associated with an individual’s knowledge, and it is affected by attitude towards a specific

behavior. Alena and Bilal's KAP study (2015) found that knowledge has a significant positive effect on consumers' purchase intentions. Therefore, it is important to investigate other variables that better explain the relationship between knowledge and behavior, such as intention to perform behavior, perceived behavioral control, and subjective norms.

Early research indicates that the relationship between knowledge and behavior is significantly more complex, showing that it is potentially reciprocal and dynamic (Alexander & Dochy, 1995; Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977). Hence, an individual's understanding of a specific issue can shape their perspective on that issue, and their feelings towards it can subsequently affect their actions or practices.

According to Glasman and Albarracin (2006), attitudes can be connected to behavior, indicating that, particularly when attitudes are easily accessible, stable over time, and based on relevant information. Behavior can influence attitudes, and attitudes are influential in intention (Olson & Stone,2005). Thus, attitudes can affect what an individual sees and therefore impact knowledge gains indirectly. In contrast, some scholars argue that neither knowledge nor attitude is necessarily a strong predictor of behavior. For instance, Ajzen (1989) states that researchers have often failed to find support for attitude-behavior relationships. Ajzen further suggested that it is considerably more likely that attitudes will be unrelated or only slightly related to behaviors. Other psychological constructs, such as intentions and locus of control, had stronger relationships with behaviors than attitudes. Similarly, Bomberg and Maser (2007) indicated that there is only a moderate relationship between knowledge and behavior, while Bechler et al. (2021) argue that the relationship between these variables are not always linear, considering the findings from different study, one may conclude that the relationship between knowledge, attitude, and behavior is not as simple as it seems on the surface. It is beneficial to consider other

variables, such as behavioral intentions, social norms, and attitudes toward the practice, that best describe the relationship among these three variables when conducting the present type.

2.5 Approaches in dealing with child trafficking

Human trafficking is one of the issues that attracts the interest of different groups. Consequently, different actors advocate different policy responses to the problem. Child trafficking may be understood within contexts such as transnational organized crime, human rights violations, violence against children, modern-day slavery, or a combination of the above. Generally, international instruments used to tackle child trafficking developed so far fall within at least one of the approaches utilized and deployed to promote understanding and combat trafficking of human beings, namely criminal justice, human rights, migration, and the worst form of child labor. However, these instruments are not free from criticism regarding their practical implications in solving the problem. For instance, Gozdziak and MacDonnell (2007) argued that the chief role of these instruments is to prompt the realization of basic human rights, including the right to life, right to security, right to privacy, access to health services, and right to self-determination of the trafficked persons.

On the other hand, ILO (2009) indicates that the existing conceptual frameworks for combating human trafficking are not mutually exclusive. The major distinctions between these frameworks emanate from the way they conceptualize human trafficking and the measures they propose for combating the problem.

2.5.1 Human Rights Approach

The human-rights-based approach focuses on the primacy of the protection of human rights in designing and realizing anti-trafficking initiatives. It conceptualizes human trafficking as a phenomenon involving a serious violation of human rights and human dignity.

The human rights approach can be understood as a conceptual framework to address a phenomenon such as trafficking, which is normatively based on international human rights principles and that is operationally directed to promoting and protecting human rights (UN, 2010). It needs examination of how human rights violations arise throughout the trafficking cycle, as well as states' responsibility under international human rights law. It recognizes the discriminatory practices and inequitable distributions of resources that promote trafficking and factors that retain impunity for traffickers and deny justice to victims of trafficking.

Bravo (2009) asserted that in a human rights-based approach, every aspect of the national, regional, and international response to trafficking is related to the privileges and requirements recognized by international human rights law. Consequently, the protection of the human rights of victims of trafficking is considered as main guiding principle for adopting policy and legislative measures to tackle this problem (Elizabeth, 2009)

The analysis of child trafficking must be based on the child rights perspective rather than on matters of crime control, since the protection and promotion of fundamental human rights is the prime interest of the state government. The broad protection approach is attached to human rights in general and children's rights in particular. This approach assumes that building a world that is fit for children is the surest way to reduce and eventually eliminate all threats to their well-being, and ultimately to that of their families, communities, and society. This overarching

goal underpins all actions for and with children, including actions aimed specifically at combating child trafficking.

On the other hand, critics argue that the human rights approach is not a perfect universal remedy to heal and eradicate trafficking. For instance, Bahar (2011) stated that the first limitations of this approach come from the weakness of the enforcement mechanism in the human rights regime. Treaty monitoring bodies are allegedly overdue with caseloads and backlogs. Bahar further noted that the nonbinding nature of the recommendations, opinions, and general comments of these bodies hinders the meaningful recognition of a human rights-based approach.

In relation to this, Bravo (2009) stated that the human rights approach accomplished very little for trafficked persons or victims. The human rights approach suffers from the limitations of inadequate enforcement, as well as the pertinent monitoring bodies' constrained ability to assess or impose meaningful sanctions against violators or grant relief to victims. Similarly, Gallagher (2011) argued that the human rights approach has contributed very little to combating human trafficking. The lack of political will on the side of state parties to promote and protect human rights could be an indication of the inadequacy of this approach to combat human trafficking. The other point, which critics often raise as a limitation of this approach, is that the human rights regime has not developed a practical obligatory system of holding non-state actors responsible for human rights violations. It has been widely held that the primary perpetrators of human trafficking crime are non-state actors, such as organized crime groups, individuals, brokers, and so forth. There are no human rights frameworks developed to hold these non-state actors directly accountable for human rights violations (Bahar, 2011; Joy, 2010; Gallagher et.al, 2011; Obokata, 2010).

2.5.2 Labor Rights Approach

The labor rights approach focuses on migrants' labor and policies on migration, accessibility of employment prospects, globalization of the economy, and the development of strategies. Advocates of a labor rights framework primarily focus on a wider aspect of the phenomenon, mainly stressing the exploitation of the forced labor of the victims over the exploitation of their sexuality (Bravo, 2007). It highlights the violation of internationally recognized and enforceable labor rights and draws attention to migrant and would-be migrant laborers as a key source of trafficking victims.

Shamir (2012) indicates that the labor rights framework operates on the understanding that a trafficked individual is a worker who is exploited in the market context. It addresses the individual's weak bargaining power, substandard working conditions, and lack of workers' rights. It seeks to tackle human trafficking through the encouragement of governments to recognize and endorse the labor principles overseen by the International Labor Office. Several ILO instruments could be applicable in this framework (Bravo, 2009).

Since child trafficking is a channel to the worst forms of child labor states that ratify the Convention (ILO No. 182) are obliged to take immediate and effective measures to prevent and eliminate the worst forms of child labour including bonded labour, all forms of slavery, or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking in children, production and trafficking of drugs or other work that is likely to harm their health, safety and overall physical and mental development, child use and procurement for prostitution and pornography, and child use, procurement and offering for illicit activities.

Accordingly, the ILO defines child labour as a condition where a child takes up a job but has not yet reached the legal minimum age for work; this is considered 'child labor.' When children are

employed in hazardous or other exploitative circumstances, such as slavery and slavery-like situations, in commercial sexual exploitation or illicit activities, they are in the worst form of child labor. Hazardous work, according to the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention (No.182) 1999, is "work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children".

Hazardous work is defined by each country in consultation with the government, workers, and employers by developing a list of sectors (for example, underground mining) or tasks (for example, handling loads over 10 kilos) that constitute hazardous work. No child under 18 should be in the worst form of child labour. Children under 15 (or 14 in some countries) should not be in regular work, and children under 13 (or 12 in some countries) should not even do light work according to ILO Convention No. 138 on the minimum age of employment.

Regarding Ethiopia, the country has ratified several of ILOs' conventions. Among these ILO minimum age conventions, No. 138 (1973), and the worst forms of child labor convention, No. 182 (1999). Moreover, the FDRE constitution provides for the protection of children from exploitive practices by stating in article 36(1) (d) that children have the right not to be required to perform work that is hazardous to their safety, health, and education. Regarding the minimum working age, the Labour Proclamation (No 377/2003) forbids the employment of children under 14. Children between ages 14-18 are classified as young workers by the same law, and they are allowed to work in occupations that are non-hazardous and have no detrimental effect on their safety, health, and developmental prospects (ILO, 2014)

On the other hand, studies (Blagbrough, 2008; ILO, 2009; Rafferty, 2013) have shown that trafficked children are specifically vulnerable to hazardous work. Mostly, they are separated from their loved ones and communities may be secluded in a country or places where they do

not speak the language, cannot get assistance, and do not know how to go back to their home. This taking of the child away from home, local community, support, and safety mechanisms into an environment where the child is isolated and exploited by others physically, sexually, and emotionally significantly increases the child's vulnerability and makes child trafficking predominantly appealing to the worst form of child labour (Boonpala & Kane, 2002). Moreover, trafficked children are entirely at the pity of their employers or the people who are controlling their lives. Therefore, they are at risk of sexual aggression, starvation, loss of liberty, beatings, and other forms of violence.

2.5.3 The Law Enforcement Approach

This is conceivably the most common, dominant, and now accepted framework at the national and international level to combat human trafficking, which has been in existence since the early periods of the 20th Century (Takele, 2009). Most of the international anti-trafficking instruments previously adopted have been informed and influenced by this framework. According to Bravo (2007), some of the components of this framework are evident in a few international and domestic instruments. For instance, the trafficking protocol, despite the unique lobbying of human rights communities for adopting a human rights-based approach, the framework gives much importance to the primacy of the law enforcement framework (Nilanjana, 2006).

The law enforcement framework considers human trafficking as a crime and a border issue that demands aggressive criminal law and border enforcement. The law enforcement framework focuses on crime and border control responses. The investigation, prosecution, and punishment of offenders are core aspects according to the framework (Bruch, 2004). Gallagher and Holmes (2008) asserted that the law enforcement framework suggests criminalization of human

trafficking and related offenses, such as prostitution, immigration, and labor law, as sole tools to combat human trafficking.

Moreover, prosecution of the traffickers and restricting illegal migration and organized crime through strict law enforcement and border control measures are central elements of this framework. On the other hand, unlike the human rights framework, the issue of "victims" protection measures is based on victims' willingness or ability to cooperate in the process of the prosecution of traffickers.

In the law enforcement framework, crime prevention is a prime concern compared to the violation and exploitation of victims. Victims' interests and well-being are matters that come next to crime prevention. The basic assumption in the law enforcement framework is victim's interest and well-being are addressed by stopping the criminals (Nilanjana, 2006).

Similarly, Chuang (2006) indicated that the basic components of the law enforcement framework are criminalization, prosecution, and border control, which support the assumption that developing strong legislation could reduce human trafficking. Thus, it suggests effective identification and prosecution of traffickers and increased penalties for trafficking. Proponents of this framework argued that stronger punishments and strict border controls would discourage traffickers from operating.

The law enforcement approach has the potential to discourage traffickers from engaging in human trafficking by depicting trafficking as a low-return and high-risk business, which is possible through criminalizing trafficking and setting stronger penalties in criminal legislation (Gallagher & Holmes, 2008; Joy, 2010). On the other hand, the law enforcement framework offers the potential for direct prosecution of traffickers and a tangible way of enforcing international law.

However, like other frameworks meant to combat human trafficking, this approach is also not free from criticism. Critics say that it is not necessarily the best-equipped framework to promote a holistic approach to address the causes, processes, and consequences of human trafficking crime. It is widely criticized for its alleged lack of protection measures for trafficked persons. For instance, Obokata (2005) argued that it offers little protection for victims of trafficking since it views trafficking as a problem of crime and a border matter. According to Obokata, the provisions of the Trafficking Protocol dealing with protection aspects of trafficked persons are couched in somewhat soft language, while the provisions related to punishment are made obligatory.

Moreover, this approach has left little room for victims to assert or protect their rights and interests. It is also criticized for subordinating the protection of victims of trafficking as a secondary matter, portraying trafficking as a crime against the state rather than as a human rights violation and crime against humans. Thus, victims of trafficking are addressed primarily as witnesses or informants, rather than as victims of a serious crime. This framework left little room for victims' needs and best interests (Bahar, 2014; Dina, 2004; Elizabeth, 2009).

Several national governments take measures that portray trafficked persons as only important for the prosecution of traffickers. This implicates trafficked persons as offenders for breaking immigration law. Like any other undocumented immigrants, the trafficked persons are placed in detention, prosecuted, and then deported. It has been noted that law enforcement officials tend to prosecute trafficked persons since it is relatively easier to charge them with prostitution, document fraud, or immigration or labor violations than to charge the difficult cases of traffickers.

The law enforcement approach should not rely solely on prevention. Measures to tackle trafficking will not be effective or sustainable unless the underlying social, economic, and political factors that create favorable conditions for trafficking are addressed. Women and children who are trafficked are vulnerable to being re-victimized and re-trafficked and breaking the vicious cycle of trafficking is challenging (Todres 2014; Robinson 2002). In this context, Djukanovic (2012) added that the law enforcement framework has prioritized protecting the human rights of victims and considering the reality of migration. Viewing trafficking simply as a criminal offense or a law-and-order issue often overlooks the broader issue of the demand for cheap and exploitable labor within global markets.

2.5.4 Children's Rights

Studies continue to show that women and children represent the largest portion of those people whose rights are abused and who end up being trafficked. Child trafficking is viewed as a child rights violation. According to Todres (2014) children's rights framework attempted to combat human trafficking by focusing on the rights of children that are recognized and agreed to by states in international instruments. The recognition and enforcement of the rights of children by governments of different countries will lead to a decrease in child trafficking.

The main international instruments enacted to protect children's rights include: The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the ILO Convention 182 on Worst Forms of Child Labor (Bravo, 2007; Todres, 2014).

Regardless of these approaches and the vigorous efforts of many advocates, there is little evidence that child trafficking has declined (Gozdziak & Bump, 2008; Johnny & Amanda, 2009;

Maria, 2011). This points to the limitations of existing international instruments and the need for the development of better international agreements regarding the situation of children and the approval of additional, more focused, instruments to combat child trafficking

2.5.5 Psychological Approach to Deal with Child Trafficking

Child trafficking, from a psychological perspective, is a deeply concerning issue that involves the exploitation and victimization of children for various purposes, primarily sexual exploitation and forced labor. This perspective seeks to understand and address the psychological impact that child trafficking has on the victims' mental well-being. Psychologically, child trafficking poses severe and long-lasting consequences for the victims. Numerous studies (Oram et al.,2012; Clay-Warner et al., 2021; Richards, 2014) reported the incidence of physical abuse, as well as symptoms shaped by violent and stressful conditions

According to Rafferty (2016), trafficked children are often subjected to traumatic experiences, including physical and sexual abuse, deprivation of basic needs, and constant fear and manipulation. Such traumatic exposure can lead to a range of psychological disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, depression, dissociation, and other psychological consequences.

Studies (Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al., 2014; Rafferty, 2013a, 2013b) indicate that the degree of experienced violence ranges from coercive strategies (physical and verbal threats, forced use of drugs, and alcohol) to extreme abuse (physical, sexual, and emotional), negative exposure to communicable disease, or torture-like violence. In response, child victims may develop a range of mental health needs and interpersonal problems, including depression, hopelessness, anxiety, posttraumatic stress disorder, hostility, and irritability (Rafferty, 2013a). Furthermore, children may experience complex trauma, meaning the short and long-term consequences following

exposure to multiple traumatic events, because of life-threatening events, persistent stress, and repetitive or chronic dangers associated with trafficking (Cecchet & Thoburn, 2014; Hardy et al., 2013; Ijadi-Maghsoodi et al, 2016). In extreme cases, the psychological and physiological symptoms manifested by victims have been compared to those identified in children involved with armed conflict and victims of torture (Conradi, 2013).

In a similar vein, Wood (2020) indicated that child trafficking affects the victims' development and identity formation. Due to their experiences, these children may struggle with trust, form unhealthy relationships, and have difficulties in emotional regulation and self-esteem. They may suffer from developmental delays, academic challenges, and exhibit behavioral problems. Survivors of child trafficking require multidimensional support from mental health professionals, social workers, and advocates. Psychological interventions aim to address trauma, build resilience, and provide a safe environment where the victims can heal and reintegrate into society (Nguyen et al, 2023; ILO, 2006).

In conclusion, the psychological perspective on child trafficking emphasizes the profound impact it has on the mental well-being and development of the victims. Understanding these psychological aspects is essential in designing and implementing effective interventions to support survivors and combat child trafficking.

2.5.6 Social Approach to Deal with Child Trafficking

A social approach to addressing child trafficking emphasizes community-based strategies that strengthen awareness, social networks, and collective responsibility (Cudjoe-Mensah,2025). It involves educating families, schools, and local leaders to recognize risks, mobilizing community structures to monitor and report suspicious activities, and reducing stigma through reintegration and psychosocial support for victims (Rigby & Malloch, 2020). By challenging harmful cultural

norms and promoting solidarity, communities can transform attitudes toward child protection. In relation to this, Claudia et al (2024) highlight the importance of linking grassroots efforts with policy initiatives to ensure that prevention is socially embedded, culturally sensitive, and supported by trust-building mechanisms between residents, civil society, and government institutions. Scholars, e.g, Irabo (2019), Lutya and Lanier (2012), argued that various social and cultural beliefs, attitudes, and stereotypes facilitated trafficking in persons. Child trafficking often occurs due to interdependent and interconnected factors within the social community and establishments that facilitate it.

Social approaches are crucial in addressing and combating child trafficking, as children are often viewed as investments that generate profits for their parents. In many African societies, the principle of filial piety dictates that children are expected to provide care for their parents, while older siblings often assume responsibility for the upbringing and nurturing of younger siblings (Ochanda et al., 2009). Within this framework, individuals from poor backgrounds may experience exploitation through the extended family's network of trust, as economic obligations are unevenly distributed. In relation to these dynamics, Marcos' (2025) study demonstrates that societal expectations frequently compel male to leave home in search of job opportunities, a trajectory that significantly heightens their vulnerability to forced labor. Taken together, these findings underscore how cultural norms, familial obligations, and socioeconomic pressures intersect to shape migration pathways and expose young men to exploitative labor conditions. Thus, to address these societal factors that account for child trafficking, the social approach focuses on prevention, protection, and the overall well-being of children affected by trafficking (Gautam et al., 2018). These approaches encompass various aspects of dealing with child trafficking. Among these, awareness and education, strengthening child protection systems,

collaboration and cooperation, building resilience and empowerment, and victim support and rehabilitation are the major aspects that the approach emphasizes (Rigby & Malloch, 2020).

Enhancing public understanding about the prevalence and risks of child trafficking is vital. Educational programs can be implemented in schools and communities to teach children and families about the signs of trafficking, safety measures, and available support services (Kennedy, 2024). According to Sharapova (2014), efforts should be made to raise public awareness of the problem of human trafficking through public information campaigns and other means. In the case of victims, public information campaigns should also address basic human rights standards and make victims aware that trafficking is a crime, that they are being victimized, and that they can seek protection under the law. Campaigns should be designed in a fashion that will be understood by victims, using materials and appropriate languages adapted for and relevant to the target audience.

scholars, e.g, Dhakal et al. (2019), Kennedy (2024), suggest that promoting child protection mechanisms is also another vital element in addressing child trafficking. These encompass developing and strengthening child protection systems at local, national, and international levels, establishing laws and policies that explicitly criminalize child trafficking and guarantee the prosecution of traffickers and their accomplices, as well as creating child-friendly procedures for reporting, investigating, and providing support to victims.

Child trafficking is a global issue; thus, combating this crime demands an integrated and coordinated effort of various parties, including government bodies, NGOs, law enforcement agencies, and international organizations, which should act jointly to share information, coordinate efforts, and develop effective strategies to combat this problem (Muraya & Fry, 2016; Greenbaum & Bodrick, 2017). Moreover, building resilience and empowerment is an important

element in the fight against child trafficking. As noted by Kastro and Dullea (2018), empowering children and families with knowledge, skills, and resources is an essential element in the fight against child trafficking. Suggesting community-based programs that focus on child rights, life skills training, vocational training, and support for vulnerable families, strengthening protective factors such as education, social support networks, and economic opportunities can also assist in reducing the risk of trafficking.

According to Rafferty (2018), providing comprehensive support and rehabilitation services for child trafficking victims and providing safe and supportive environments, access to healthcare, counseling, legal assistance, and educational opportunities also has paramount importance in the fight against child trafficking, suggesting that collaboration among various professionals working in this area, such as social workers and therapists, is important in addressing the psychological, emotional, and physical needs of the victims of child trafficking (Greenbaum & Bodrick, 2017).

On the other hand, scholars, e.g., Rafferty (2013), Masant (2024), noted the need to target the traffickers and networks that exploit and profit from child trafficking by implementing stricter regulations, raising awareness about the consequences of purchasing trafficked children, and conducting investigations to prosecute offenders. In summary, social approaches in dealing with child trafficking encompass prevention, protection, empowerment, and support for victims. By addressing the systemic factors that contribute to child trafficking and promoting child rights, these approaches aim to create a safer environment for children and combat this heinous crime.

Generally, all approaches are prone to criticism, mainly due to their inadequacy to systematically address social, psychological, and economic theories and principles that have a significant contribution to explaining the dynamics of human trafficking. In relation to this, Abebaw (2013)

and Bravo (2007, 2009) underlined the inability of these frameworks to consider the deep-seated economic principles and forces, such as supply and demand, and their impacts on both legal and illegal mobility of people. Moreover, most of these approaches give much attention to providing solutions to the problems, whereas social and cultural contexts in which trafficking occurs seem to be conspicuously absent from anti-child trafficking approaches and agendas, and remain overlooked by concerned bodies.

In addition, most of the approaches seem to pay attention to the knowledge and attitude of the source community as an issue that is vital in combating the problem. Knowledge of both sending and receiving communities' needs improvements as the nature and structural causes of human trafficking shift in response to border socio-economic and political changes (Martinho et al., 2021; Mobasher et al., 2021; Nayoyos-Refugia, 2022). Therefore, it is vital to systematically examine human trafficking from different angles. Accordingly, the present study aims to approach child trafficking from social and cultural contexts; the KAP and TPB models will guide the study.

Ethiopia, the country, has made some changes in terms of adapting the human rights, law enforcement, child rights, and labour rights approaches into the national laws and legislation, which may help to tackle in-country child trafficking (Beck et al., 2017; Kastro & Dullea, 2018; Kebede & Schmidt,2018). Accordingly, Ethiopia has ratified different international conventions, including the ILO conventions, such as ILO Convention 138, which deals with the minimum age for work, and ILO Convention 182 that addresses the worst forms of child labor. Ethiopia has also ratified different UN conventions related to children, such as the UN Child Rights Conventions, the UN Child Rights Conventions Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict, the UN

Child Rights Conventions Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution, and Child Pornography, and the Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons.

It has also incorporated provisions in the constitution and in the criminal code, such as Article 18.2 of the constitution; Articles 597, 635, and 637 of the Criminal Code; and Proclamation No. 1178/2020. i.e., the Proclamation to Provide for the Prevention and Suppression of Trafficking in Persons and Smuggling of Migrants is among the major frameworks intended to tackle trafficking in persons in Ethiopia. Generally, most of these international conventions addressed the issue of child trafficking indirectly. At the same time, the ILO's Convention 182 and the UN's Palermo Protocol established a comprehensive legal framework that defines and explicitly prohibits all forms of child trafficking, requiring states to combat it even when it occurs entirely within their borders.

2.6. Theoretical Framework

As noted by De Hass (2021), human mobility has been among the least theorized topics in recent decades, suggesting that its theoretical frameworks have been contested for many years, with several relying on push-pull models or neo-classical assumptions focused on individual income maximization. De Hass argues that people's capacity and motivation to move are influenced by the geographic opportunities they perceive. He distinguishes between the practical aspects and the intrinsic elements of human mobility, offering a perspective where both the decision to relocate and the choice to remain in place are viewed as linked expressions of migratory agency. Human mobility is defined as the capacity of individuals to choose their place of residence, encompassing the possibility of staying in one location rather than simply engaging in the act of moving or migrating.

The theoretical framework that guides this research comes from the Theory of Planned Behavior and the KAP model. The primary purposes of the present study are to assess knowledge, attitude, preventive practices, and various individual and social factors that facilitate or hinder child trafficking prevention among residents of Wolita Sodo town, and to examine the relationships among these constructs. The researcher asserts that this model serves as a valuable framework for current research. It is essential to consider both individual and social factors when examining behavior, and the Theory of Planned Behavior has been endorsed by numerous researchers to explore the interplay between the social and psychological dimensions of individual behavior.

The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is a psychological framework that connects a person's beliefs and attitudes to their actions. It asserts that the intention to engage in a particular behavior is the most accurate indicator of whether someone will carry out that behavior. Intention, in turn, is determined by three factors: these are attitude toward the behavior, their perception of social pressure to perform it (subjective norms), and their belief in their ability to perform it (perceived behavioral control) (Ajzen,2020).

The TPB can predict behaviors and intentions in various domains by incorporating individual and social factors into a single model (Armitage and Conner, 1999; Ursin, 2016). It is a widely applicable theory to various human behaviors. It explains and identifies predictors of individual behavior in areas such as health, environmental concern, mass transit use, risk communication, and technological adoption (Knabe, 2012). Ajzen (1991) stated that the theory of planned behavior provides a conceptual framework to address complex social behaviors. It defines central concepts in social and behavioral sciences, allowing the prediction of behaviors in specific contexts.

The theory of planned behavior has been applied to explain a variety of human behaviors, including gambling behavior and the use of hormone replacement (Cameron, 2010). It has been noted that the theory of planned behavior is the most frequently cited and influential model used in various research to explain human social behavior (Ajzen, 2011). Armitage and Conner (1999) highlighted the significance of the theory of planned behavior in elucidating various human behaviors. They affirmed that the theory's capability to forecast a wide range of human behaviors has been validated by several meta-analytic reviews conducted by different researchers on various behaviors.

KAP assumes that knowledge, attitude, and practice are related and that knowledge and attitude directly influence practice. Knowledge, attitude, and practices of communities are important elements that need to be studied before planning the interventions (Mbamba et al.,2022; Cudjoe-Mensah et al.,2025). Several models have been developed over the years to explain practices or behavior. However, the theory of planned behavior (TPB) is one of the most prominent theories in predicting different types of behavior. It has been employed in different fields of study to understand the barriers to behavior or practice (Alzghoul & Abdullah, 2015; Freya, Aidan, Julia, & Milne, 2014).

According to TPB, a central determinant of human social behavior is the intention to perform the behavior in question. TPB aims at explaining behavior over which people can exert self-control (Kagee & Van der Merwe, 2006). Ajzen (2007) noted that a substantial amount of change in behavior/ practice can be explained by examining the intention to perform a behavior of interest and the perception of control over the behavior.

The Theory of Planned Behavior has further assumed that the probability of an individual engaging in a specific behavior is highly correlated with the strength of his or her intention to

engage in the behavior (Ajzen et.al, 2011). Intentions are defined as a person's motivation to perform a specific behavior. It is a very crucial element to assess one's predisposition to engage in a specific behavior. Studies, e.g., Hagger et al. (2022), Khazaei et al. (2024), and Yulihardi et al. (2025), identify that behavioral intention is a good predictor of the likelihood of carrying out the behavior/action. Consequently, a person's intention to engage in specific behavior is determined by three contributing factors. These are the attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control. In other words, these are the key components of the model (Bilic, 2005; Ajzen et al., 2011).

Attitude is considered a primary factor that influences one's intentions (Vamvaka et al., 2020; La Barbera and Ajzen, 2020). It refers to the extent to which a person has a favorable or unfavorable appraisal of the behavior or action in question. It requires considering the consequences of carrying out the behavior. Attitude is a crucial factor in decision-making. It refers to the internal psychological tendency to evaluate ideas or potential actions (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). In the context of child trafficking, when parents contemplate sending their children away in search of better opportunities for both the child and the family, their attitudes toward the potential benefits and perceived risks play a crucial role in the decision-making process (Mbamba et al., 2023). An individual's perception of risk significantly influences how they assess the pros and cons involved in such a choice (Prikhidko & Kenny,2020).

The second determinant is a social factor known as "subjective norm". It is the social pressure an individual has on whether to comply with the behavior or not (Ajzen,2020). This is a person's belief that the salient referent thinks he or she should (or should not) perform the behavior. The third determinant is called perceived behavioral control and refers to the person's assessment of

his or her ability to perform the behavior. Each of these factors acts as an antecedent toward the intention to engage in a specific behavior and is further followed by beliefs (Ajzen et al., 2011).

There are three types of beliefs which are crucial in guiding the attitude, subjective norm, and perceived behavioral control i.e. behavioral, normative, and control beliefs. Behavioral beliefs are assumed to govern attitudes toward behavior. Similarly, beliefs about the expectations and behaviors of others (normative beliefs) are assumed to determine subjective norms. Beliefs about possible constraining determinants (control beliefs) are assumed to determine perceived behavioral control. Attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, in turn, combine to yield intentions which, together with actual control, determine performances of the behavior (Ajzen et al., 2011).

2.7 Conceptual Framework of the Study Based on the Theory of Planned Behavior

TPB assumes that a person's intention to carry out a particular behavior emanates from an informational basis that thoroughly relates to knowledge. Individuals have certain beliefs, which in turn affect their behavior or practice. These beliefs do not necessarily refer to the level of knowledge of the individual. The three groups of beliefs, namely behavioral, normative, and control beliefs, can be applied to the assessment of communities' response (practices) against child trafficking. Behavioral beliefs represent the association between a specific behavior and a consequence that follows this behavior (Ajzen et al., 2011).

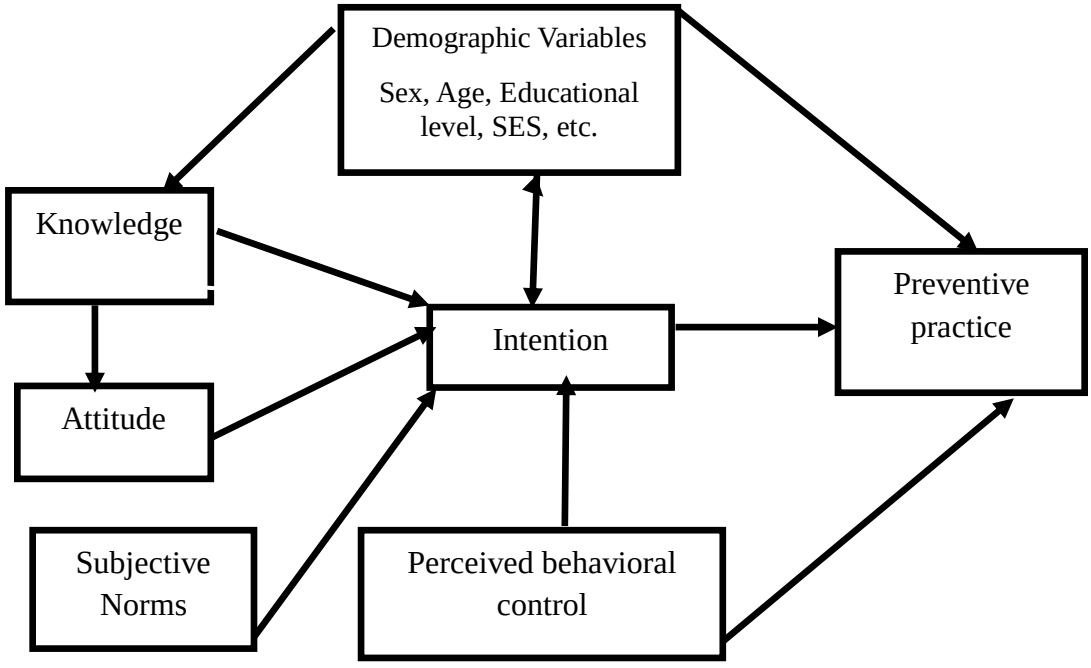
On the other hand, normative beliefs would show the relation between a specific anti-child trafficking-related behavior and the belief the individual has due to the decreed behavior (Ajzen et al., 2011). The subjective norms refer to the perceived social pressure to engage or not to

engage in the behavior. It consists of the perceived and expected evaluation of the behavior by others that can affect the individual's behavior.

The researcher goes beyond the theory of planned behavior for this dissertation as a conceptual model by making some changes to meet the intended purpose. Knowledge and attitude toward child trafficking are included as an additional factor in the model. In addition, various background information, including sex, level of education, socioeconomic status, and years of residence, is assessed to test whether these demographic variables relate to participants' knowledge, attitude, and preventive practices concerning child trafficking.

Figure 1

Conceptual Model Adopted for the Study



2.8. Methodological Basis for the Study: The Pragmatic World View

The philosophical worldview provides the conceptual underpinning for the selection of the method of study. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), a worldview is a set of beliefs that guides the action and general philosophical positioning of the world and the nature of the

research that a researcher will apply in the study. The present study is guided by a philosophical worldview, namely a pragmatic worldview.

According to Creswell (2008), quantitative research is an approach for testing objective theories by examining relationships among variables. Data are collected in numerical form, analyzed deductively, and used to test hypotheses while controlling for bias and alternative explanations. This allows findings to be generalized and replicated. Similarly, Corbetta (2003) emphasizes that quantitative methods rely on standardized questioning procedures with representative samples to examine correlations among variables.

In contrast, Creswell (2005) notes that qualitative research takes place in natural settings, employing observations, interviews, and document reviews as primary and secondary sources. Patton (2002) further explains that qualitative findings emerge from in-depth and open-ended interviews, direct observation, and written documents. Interviews yield direct quotations reflecting participants' experiences, emotions, and understandings, while document analysis provides excerpts from organizational records, reports, diaries, and open-ended responses.

Within a pragmatic worldview, these two approaches are not seen as competing but as complementary. Pragmatism values methodological pluralism and emphasizes choosing methods that best address the research problem. Quantitative methods provide measurable patterns and correlations, while qualitative methods capture context, meaning, and lived experience. Together, they offer a fuller understanding of complex social issues such as child trafficking by integrating statistical evidence with narrative insights. This alignment with pragmatism underscores the rationale for adopting a mixed methods design, where the utility of knowledge and its practical consequences take precedence over strict adherence to a single paradigm.

Creswell (2008) indicates that the pragmatic worldview is a philosophical underpinning for mixed methods studies and focuses on the research problem in the social sciences research, whereby pluralistic approaches are used to derive knowledge about the problem. It is a worldview that arises out of action, situations, and consequences. Instead of a focus on methods, the vital feature of research is the problem being investigated and the questions posed. In other words, much emphasis is placed on the research problem, and all approaches available are applied to understand the problem.

Similarly, Morgan (2014) argues that pragmatism offers a flexible and problem-centered philosophical foundation for research, especially in the social sciences. Rather than aligning strictly with positivist or constructivist traditions, pragmatism emphasizes the practical consequences of inquiry and values knowledge for its usefulness in addressing real-world problems. It provides a strong rationale for mixed methods research, since it allows researchers to combine quantitative and qualitative approaches as complementary tools guided by the research question. Pragmatism rejects rigid dichotomies between objectivity and subjectivity, instead promoting methodological pluralism and adaptability. In this way, it serves as a bridge between paradigms, enabling researchers to integrate measurement and meaning-making in pursuit of practical, actionable insights

Therefore, for the mixed methods researcher, pragmatism offers the chance to employ multiple methods, diverse worldviews, and various assumptions, as well as different methods of data collection and analysis in the mixed methods study. Accordingly, the researcher believed that it is appropriate to examine child trafficking from a pragmatics worldview or generate data using both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

2.9 Summary and Implications of the Reviewed Literature

So far, studies related to in-country child trafficking (knowledge, attitude, practice), socioeconomic and demographic factors, and their relationships have been reviewed. Accordingly, one of the understandings that can be drawn from the reviewed literature is that studies on human trafficking mainly focus on the trafficking of persons for forced labor and domestic servitude as the main purposes of trafficking. However, labour exploitation and domestic servitude are not the only reasons that children and minors are trafficked. Many children are trafficked for adoption or are forced into petty crime.

Additionally, the reviewed literature indicates that internal child trafficking is not as extensively researched as international trafficking. It does not receive as much focus as international trafficking, often due to factors such as lower visibility, the intricacy of investigations, and misconceptions.

International trafficking often entails crossing heavily monitored borders, making it more susceptible to detection by law enforcement. Conversely, internal trafficking takes place within national borders and is therefore less conspicuous. Furthermore, investigating internal trafficking necessitates coordinated efforts among various local agencies, presenting their own set of challenges. Conversely, international trafficking often requires international cooperation, which can result in more efficient processes. It's commonly misunderstood that trafficking only occurs across long distances. Children are often trafficked within their own countries, which can make the issue seem less severe. Awareness efforts typically emphasize the risks of strangers trafficking children, while internal trafficking often involves individuals known and trusted by the child. These factors combine to create an unfortunate situation where internal child trafficking doesn't receive as much attention as it deserves, despite being a significant problem.

From the reviewed literature, it is clearly understood that research on human trafficking in general and child trafficking in particular is inclined towards qualitative approaches in terms of the methodology used. Moreover, limitations in systematically collected data were also observed from several previous studies. There are several reasons for this. These include a lack of literature based on empirical data, a lack of transparent methodology to estimate the scope of the problem, an inability of researchers to move beyond estimating the scale of the problem, mapping roots and relationships between countries of source, transit, and destinations, and reliance of studies on overviews, commentaries, and anecdotal information.

Furthermore, the reviewed literature indicates that the existing data related to human trafficking is mixed with data related to human smuggling and illegal migration, which inflates the number of victims and amplifies the extent of the problem. Some of the studies are small-scale mostly based on secondary sources. Some are based on surveys and interviews with victims and stakeholders. Moreover, many studies that are related to human trafficking were carried out by organizations responsible for working on trafficking, such as the IOM and ILO. It seems that academicians are not much involved in research on human trafficking. In addition, research in this area is more from the professions of criminology (law) and sociology. Research from social psychologists and psychologists seems limited.

This review implies that while multiple conceptual frameworks, human rights, labor rights, law enforcement, children's rights, psychological, and social approaches have been developed to address child trafficking, each remains limited in scope and effectiveness when applied in isolation. The human rights and labor rights approaches emphasize victim protection and labor standards but suffer from weak enforcement and inadequate accountability mechanisms; the law enforcement approach prioritizes criminalization and border control, often neglects victim

welfare; and the children's rights framework, though normatively strong, has not significantly reduced trafficking prevalence. Meanwhile, psychological and social perspectives highlight the profound trauma experienced by victims and the socio-cultural drivers of trafficking, but they are frequently marginalized in policy responses. Collectively, these findings imply that fragmented and siloed strategies fail to address the structural, cultural, and economic determinants of trafficking, thereby necessitating an integrated, multidimensional approach that combines legal, social, psychological, and economic interventions to achieve sustainable protection and prevention outcomes.

On the other hand, the fact of situating trafficking under the domain of law enforcement can limit researchers' access to information and may bias the information they obtain due to the victims' fear of repercussions. Additionally, the broader socio-cultural and economic context in which migration in general and human trafficking takes place is often overlooked.

One of the observations that can be made from the reviewed literature is that knowledge, attitude, and practice concerning child trafficking are related to socioeconomic and demographic contexts. Concerning this, several theoretical and empirical studies showed that knowledge and attitude are related, and practice/ behavior is determined by the intention to perform the behavior, whereas intention is influenced by attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control.

Generally, from the reviewed theoretical perspectives, it is clearly understood that intention to engage in preventing child trafficking is an important predictor of actual practice. In addition to this, the reviewed literature has also shown that individuals' level of knowledge, attitude, and practice varies depending on some demographic factors (sex, socioeconomic status, and level of

education). The theoretical perspectives reviewed shed light on why it is important to examine knowledge and attitudes regarding child trafficking.

In conclusion, the abovementioned theoretical perspective also makes clear that several factors (i.e., level of knowledge, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, intention, and practice/ behavior) may hinder efforts to combat child trafficking

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides an in-depth overview of the study's design, site, data sources, sampling methods, instrument development and validation procedures, data collection process, pilot study, and data analysis procedures, along with ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a concurrent mixed-methods research design to answer the research questions. This design was primarily selected to collect information and analyze the information using quantitative and qualitative research in a single study at different stages of the research process: formulation of research questions; sampling; data collection; data analysis, and interpretation (Greene, 2008; Kadushin, Hecht, Sasson, & Saxe, 2008). A mixed-method design is appropriate to deal with the research questions in this study, as the current research intends to complement data generated with a quantitative method with qualitative findings to get a richer and more nuanced understanding of the issues being investigated in this study.

A mixed-research design involves collecting various types of data to gain a comprehensive understanding of a research question. This approach combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide breadth and depth of understanding. According to Creswell (2008), mixed methods research utilizes diverse approaches for data collection and analysis, rather than relying on a single method. By incorporating different perspectives, researchers can gain a more complete understanding of the topic being studied.

In the current study, it was crucial to use both qualitative and quantitative methods. The basic aim of combining these methods was complementarity (i.e., results from qualitative data analysis

are used to enhance, illustrate, or clarify findings obtained through the quantitative method). The strengths of both types of research can be utilized, leading to a more comprehensive data-integrated understanding of the subject. Additionally, using mixed methods allows for data analysis and integration at any stage of the research. This approach is particularly valuable in studies related to human trafficking, which are often criticized for relying too heavily on qualitative research methods (Tyldum, 2010; Twis & Preble, 2020; Schroeder et al., 2022). Combining both types of research allows us to provide a more balanced and accurate depiction of the situation.

Subsequently, the present study aimed to integrate and complement data generated through various methods and sources. Thus, a concurrent triangulation design was employed. According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), Concurrent triangulation occurs when the researcher uses concurrent timing to implement the quantitative and qualitative methods during the same phase of the research process and keeps each of the methods independent during analysis and then mixes the results during the overall interpretation. The researcher quantitatively analyzes the data generated using quantitative methods and qualitatively analyzes the data from the qualitative method. For Creswell et al. (2011), concurrently gathering both quantitative and qualitative data is useful since it enables the researcher to evaluate the themes identified in the qualitative data analysis with the statistical results in the quantitative analysis to search for compatible findings. Moreover, it enhances the rigor, i.e., the convergence of findings from different methods, and strengthens the overall validity and trustworthiness of the research. It can also help to reduce the bias. Employing two distinct data collection methods helps minimize potential bias that might arise from relying solely on one approach.

3.2 Participants

3.2.1 Target Population

The target population for this study was divided according to its methodological components. For the quantitative survey, the participants were residents from the general community, selected through multi-stage random sampling to measure knowledge, attitudes, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, intentions, and preventive practices related to child trafficking. In contrast, the qualitative study engaged civil servants and key stakeholders, including focal persons from the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs, the Bureau of Justice, schoolteachers, parents, and caregivers, who were purposively selected to provide deeper insights into institutional perspectives, community attitudes, and contextual factors influencing prevention. This distinction ensured that the quantitative data captured broad community patterns, while the qualitative data illuminated institutional and psychosocial dimensions.

In this study, Sodo Town was the primary focus for the research. While numerous towns in Ethiopia are known as origin, transit, and destination points for trafficked children, they differ in various aspects, such as the gender of victims and the purpose of trafficking. Previous research has suggested that the southern region of the country, specifically Wolaita, Sidama, Hadiya, and Gamo Gofa, are primarily known for trafficking children for labor exploitation in traditional weaving and farm industries (Kastro & Dullea, 2018; Temam & Alemu, 2016; Yisak and Asrat, 2018).

According to Zewdinah (2010), children from Wolaita Sodo, Arba Minch, and Hadiya are trafficked to Addis Ababa to work in the weaving industry for extremely low pay. He further noted that children from the South are also trafficked to rural highland farms to work there. In some cases, children are engaged in full-day work, such as assisting taxi drivers in the taxi

business, working in tea rooms and restaurants, and in other informal business sectors. Based on the data from previous studies mentioned above and personal observations, the researcher chose to conduct the study in one of the localities that has been indicated as the origin of trafficked children, namely Wolaita Sodo town in the southern parts of Ethiopia.

In Wolaita, there exist various socio-cultural challenges that result in child migration and trafficking. According to various studies, e.g, Yisak and Asrat (2018), Kastro and Dullea (2018) (2017), Mebratu et al. (2014), and Temam and Alemu (2016), factors such as poverty, insufficient awareness on the subject, inadequate child rearing, limited access to social services, and lack of economic opportunities are among the issues that impact vulnerable children and serve as pushing factors for migration and the consequent trafficking.

3.2.2 Description of the Study Site

This study was conducted in Wolaita Sodo Town, which is located in the Wolaita zone. It is one of the zones in the newly formed Southern Ethiopia Regional State. It shares borders with Gamo and Gofa Zone in the South, Dawro Zone in the West, the Sidama Region in the East, the central Ethiopia region in the North, and the Oromia regional state in the Northeast. The total area of the zone is 4,471.3 km² or 447130 hectares. This zone comprises 16 woredas and 6 towns, including Wolaita Sodo town (WZFED, 2013). In the administrative hierarchy, the Town has equal status with other woredas. Sodo town is surrounded by Sodo Zuria woreda. It is located at a distance of 380 km and 170 km south-west of Addis Ababa and Awassa, respectively. The town is situated at 6°51′18″North and 37°46′51″East latitude and longitude. The altitude of the Town ranges from 1600 to 2100 meters above sea level (Sodo Town Municipality Office, 2017.

Wolaita Sodo, the rapidly growing city that serves as the administrative capital of Wolaita Zone, has also emerged as the seat of the regional administration for Southern Ethiopia in recent

studies. This growth can be attributed to both natural population increases and substantial in-migration (Teferi et al., 2018; Masha et al., 2025). The town's sociodemographic profile is marked by youthful, family-oriented households, a mix of formal and informal livelihoods, and ongoing challenges related to poverty and food insecurity.

The town has three sub-cities and 11 Kebeles, which are lower administrative units. According to the data from the Ethiopian Statistical Service (2024), previously known as the Central Statistical Agency, the town has an estimated total population of 223,730 residents, with 113,359 males and 110,371 females. Generally, more recent studies confirm continued expansion, with a near-balanced sex composition and large, family-centered households that are strongly linked to poverty and food insecurity (Esrael et al., 2024; Tantasa, 2020; Tantu et al., 2017). Education levels show mixed progress, with evidence of growing school infrastructure: 10 secondary and 20 primary schools reported in one study (Teferi et al., 2018), but persistent disadvantage across the wider Wolaita area (Dabara, 2020).

Livelihoods are diverse, with households combining on-farm, non-farm, and off-farm activities, though non-farm and off-farm work dominate (Borku et al., 2024). Most of the people in the town earn their livelihood through small and medium businesses like running hotels, selling cereals, operating flour mills and bakeries, making traditional clothing through weaving and sewing, and selling livestock products. The town has only a few industries, mostly small-scale, like grain mills, wood and metal workshops, and block and hollow concrete production centers. These industries are not sufficient to keep up with the current population growth of the town.

Overall, Wolaita Sodo’s sociodemographic profile is best understood as that of a fast-growing administrative center under demographic and livelihood pressure. Rather than a stable urban middle-class town, it is marked by large and vulnerable households, multidimensional poverty,

and substantial socioeconomic inequality (Esrael et al., 2024; Tantu et al., 2017; Dabara, 2020. The most striking gap in existing research is the limited systematic measurement of migration-linked social change, despite clear evidence that in-migration and urban expansion are reshaping the town's population structure and neighborhood dynamics (Masha, 2025; Delango, 2019). This context makes Wolaita Sodo a critical site for examining how rapid urbanization, poverty, and household vulnerability intersect with broader social issues such as child trafficking and migration.

3.3 Sampling and Sample Size

Before deciding on the sampling method and techniques, the researcher examined a document from the central statistical agency. According to the document, the town is divided into three sub-cities: Mehal, Merkato, and Aroge Arada. These sub-cities are further divided into 11 kebeles, as per the Wolita Sodo City Municipality.

Three kebeles, namely Kere, with 8,110 residents, Gido, with 9,674 residents, and Dili-Betigil, with 7,716 residents, were randomly selected. Then, after consulting the Kebele administration, the list of residents and their respective house numbers was obtained from the selected Kebeles. The researcher believes that Kebele administrations were the most appropriate contexts for making direct contact with and selecting adult residents. Finally, once the list of individuals and their corresponding house numbers was carefully examined, the actual selection of the participants was carried out using a systematic random sampling technique. Accordingly, every 48^{th} household interval was selected based on the respondents' name list and house number. Lastly, informants for the focus group discussion were selected using purposive sampling to secure the most resourceful individuals/key informants. This was done with the help of institutions in which the informants worked or resided.

A total of 497 individuals participated in the study. Of these, 473 respondents completed the structured questionnaire, while qualitative data were obtained from 3 adult key informants, 5 child informants, and 16 participants engaged in two focus group discussion sessions (FGDs). The study employed a combination of probability and non-probability sampling techniques to ensure both representativeness and depth of insight. For the quantitative component, participants were selected through a multi-stage random sampling procedure, whereas participants for the qualitative component were recruited purposively to capture diverse perspectives from stakeholders directly involved in or affected by child trafficking. Key informants included representatives from the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs (BoWSA), consisting of one male and one female, as well as a representative from the local police authority, and five working children (two males and three females), capturing perspectives from institutional, enforcement, and personal experiences. The focus group discussions comprised 3 schoolteachers (M=1, F=2), 8 parents (M=4, F=4), and 3 caregivers (M=1, F=2), along with 2 representatives (M=1, F=1) from the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs, whose roles contributed to a contextual understanding of children's vulnerabilities and the dynamics at the community level.

Regarding sample size, Yamane's (1967) formula was employed to determine the sample size: n = N/ (1 + e^2). Where N is the population size and 'e' is the level of precision, thus, the sample size for the present study was calculated as follows using the above formula

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N \cdot e^2} \; n = \frac{25{,}500}{1 + 25{,}500 \cdot (0.05)^2} \approx 394$$

Assuming a 95% confidence level with a proportion (p) of 0.5, the calculated sample size is 394 individuals. In survey research, it is common practice to increase the base sample size by approximately 10% -15% to account for potential non-response, attrition, or incomplete data. In

the present study, however, the adjustment was set at 35% to ensure greater methodological robustness. This increase was not only intended to compensate for possible dropouts but also to address the design effect associated with complex sampling procedures, which can inflate variance and reduce the precision of estimates. By incorporating a larger buffer, the study protects statistical power, improves representativeness, and ensures that the final sample size is sufficient for valid inference, despite potential stratification effects. This made the total sample for the current study 533.

Table 1

Summary of Samples Drawn from each of the Sampling Frames

No	Sub-city	Selected kebele's	Sample frame %			Selected Samples			
			M	F	Total	M	F	Total	%
1	Merkato sub-city	Kere	4431	3679	8110	93	76	169	31.70%
2	Areda sub-city	Gido	4303	3413	7716	88	73	161	30.20%
3	Mehal-ketema sub-city	Dili-Betigil	5261	4413	9674	111	92	203	38.10 %
	Total		**13995**	**11505**	**25500**	**292**	**245**	**533**	**100%**

3.4 Instruments of Data Collection

In the present study, a diverse array of data collection methodologies was utilized to ensure comprehensive analysis. Qualitative data were gathered through various instruments, including focus group discussion (FGD) guides, in-depth interview guides, and key informant interview guides. In parallel, quantitative data were obtained through the administration of structured questionnaires, facilitating a robust examination of the research questions posed. This was done to complement the results from different sources, as per Onwuegbuzie and Collins' (2007)

suggestion. Specifically, a questionnaire was employed to assess the knowledge, attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norm, behavioral intention, and behavior of the participants. Data was collected through key informant interviews with key informants and a focus group discussion with participants to gain insight into their knowledge, attitudes, and practices regarding child trafficking.

3.4.1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire consisting of rating and Likert-type scales was employed to assess knowledge, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, intention to engage in preventive practice, and practice. The questionnaire was initially prepared in English, as it was developed directly from existing literature and theoretical frameworks. To ensure accessibility, it was translated into Amharic by a language expert and then back-translated into English to check for semantic consistency before pilot testing. This process safeguarded against loss of meaning and ensured that the items retained their conceptual equivalence. However, the instrument was not translated into Wolaitigna, since the researcher does not speak, read, or write the language. Relying entirely on external translators was considered a risk to the accuracy and reliability of the instrument, and therefore the study prioritized Amharic as the medium of administration. This decision balanced methodological rigor with practical feasibility, ensuring that the questionnaire remained both valid and manageable within the researcher's linguistic capacity. (see Appendix A and B for details of the questionnaire scales)

3.4.1.1 The Knowledge Scales. The questionnaire meant to measure knowledge consists of 20 rating scale items adopted from the Trafficking Awareness Survey (2003) and Sharapova (2015). The Child Trafficking Knowledge Scale consists of different items intended to assess the knowledge of participants regarding the definition of child trafficking, knowledge of victims,

knowledge of recruiters, knowledge of the purpose of trafficking, knowledge of vulnerabilities, means of recruitment, and experience with trafficking. Concerning the psychometric properties of the instrument, the researcher tried to make sure the instrument is both valid and reliable. In other words, the content validity of the scale was assessed by a panel of experts, and construct validity (discriminant and convergent validity) was examined using factor analysis (see Appendix I).

3.4.1.2 Scales for measuring attitude, perceived behavioral control, subjective norms, behavioral intention, and behavior/ preventive practice. Attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, behavioral intentions, and practices were assessed using a questionnaire developed from items employed in previous research by Botchkovar (2016), Winrock International Cambodia (2012), and Thainiyom (2011). It was further reviewed using the guideline manual for constructing questionnaires on the theory of planned behavior by Francis et al. (2004). Accordingly, a five-point Likert-type questionnaire consisting of the following scales was used: 9 items for attitude towards child trafficking, 7 items for attitude towards preventive practice, 8 items for subjective norms, 7 items for perceived behavioral control, 6 items for behavioral intentions to engage in preventive practice, and 8 items for self-reported practice.

To ensure the accuracy of the instruments, the researcher assessed their reliability and validity. The instrument's reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. Additionally, the construct validity of the instruments was examined through factor analysis during the pilot study stage (see Appendix I).

This was further confirmed through confirmatory factor analysis during the main study. The data collection process occurred at the homes of the participants. In cases where participants were

unable to read and write, data enumerators were hired to read the questionnaire items aloud and accurately record responses. Their selection was based on their prior experience, educational background, and familiarity with the culture of the community. Before administering the questionnaire, the enumerators underwent a half-day training session to become familiar with all the items and learn how to minimize social desirability effects caused by participants' fear of strangers, as well as how to reduce inaccurate responses resulting from their reading speed. The data enumerators spoke the local language (Woliategna) as well, in case the participants had difficulty understanding Amharic.

The survey was conducted in person. The lead researcher and assistant data collectors were available throughout the data collection process to explain the purpose of the questionnaire and address any questions or concerns participants may raise in the survey questions.

3.4.2 Key Informant and In-depth Interview Guide

The purpose of conducting key informant interviews and in-depth interviews was to gather detailed insights from individuals who hold valuable information. These interviews can provide relevant knowledge about a community's attitudes, intentions, and existing preventive practices toward child trafficking. By conducting these interviews, a deeper understanding of the problem's causes, magnitude, and current interventions is obtained. The information obtained through these interviews was meant to complement the data collected via questionnaires. To ensure a successful interview and encourage participants to share their personal experiences, a guide with 11 semi-structured and open-ended questions was developed. Similarly, a semi-structured interview guide comprising 10 items was developed to facilitate an in-depth interview. This guide was created with the purpose of the study and previous studies in mind,

aiming to keep the conversation focused and allow for probing when necessary (see Appendix C and D for sample interview guides)

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussion

In the current research, Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were utilized because they enable the selection of a small group of participants (typically between 6-12) strategically from the target population (Basnet, 2018); providing valuable insights into prevailing values, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs (Sagoe, 2012); as well as the creation of group interaction data and treating the group as a unit for analysis (Creswell, 2012). The researcher developed a focus group discussion (FGD) guide that includes 10 broad topics to help maintain participant engagement during the discussion. For examples of the FGD guide items, please refer to Appendix D.

3.5 Procedures

3.5.1 Instrument Validation Procedure

This study established the content validity of data collection tools, including the questionnaire, the key informant interview guide, and the FGD guide. The first step in assessing content validity is to conduct a systematic review of literature related to child trafficking issues and the theory of planned behavior. This includes clearly defining the theoretical concepts being measured and developing a pool of items that comprehensively represent the constructs. To assess the content validity of data collection instruments, both quantitative and qualitative approaches were utilized. The content validation process is carried out using a panel of experts. Accordingly, 3 experts purposefully selected from the fields of Psychology, Sociology, and Social Work were involved in the content validation process.

A quantitative approach to content validity involves measuring the statistical validity index introduced by Aiken (1980). The item validity index (V) is an item statistic that is used in rejecting or keeping specific items from the preliminary item pool. Aiken (1980) suggested that the total content validity is assumed to be higher if the value of the V is closer to 1. In this approach, the experts were requested to rate the items on a four-point scale (4 = very relevant, 3 = relevant, 2= needs modification, and 1 = irrelevant). The validity index proposed by Aiken is formulated as follows.

$V = \Sigma\ s / [n\ (c - 1)]\ s = r - l_o$

Where V is the item validity index; s refers to scores assigned by each rater minus the lowest score in the used category ($s = r\text{-}l_o$, with r = rater category selection score or the rating by an expert, and l_o, the lowest possible validity rating. i.e., Usually, this is 1 on the Likert scale; n is the number of raters, where c is the maximum score on the grading scale. The V index value ranges from 0 to 1. The closer an item is to 1, the better it is because it is more relevant to the indicator. Generally, Aiken's V index of 0.80 indicates good content validity of the measure (Aiken, 1980)

In addition to the quantitative content validation procedure, qualitative methods of content validation are also employed. Some open-ended items for the assessment of content validity are incorporated in the instrument for which the panelists are asked to provide written comments on aspects such as clarity, adequacy, and appropriateness of the items and directions as well as to recommend which items need to be reworded, added, or eliminated.

3.5.2 Results of Instrument Validation

Initially, the questionnaire items were developed as a four-point scale. A panel of experts was subsequently engaged to rate the relevance of each item, utilizing a scoring rubric where 4 denoted "very relevant," 3 "relevant, "2 "less relevant, and "1" irrelevant. The responses obtained from the experts were assembled by counting the number indicating "4 = very relevant, 3 = relevant, for each item, and were analyzed to compute the content validity (CVI) for each item based on Aiken's 1980 formula. Then, for each item, the CVI was estimated and evaluated for statistical significance at the ($\alpha = 0.05$) level, as recommended by Aiken. Accordingly, in the present study, the content validity coefficient for items ranged from .67- 1.00. Finally, among all items of the questionnaire scale, 7 items from the knowledge scale, 1 item from the attitude scale, 2 items from the preventive practice scale, 5 items from the subjective norms scale, 1 item from perceived behavioral control scale, and 1 item from the intention scale (total=17 items) having low values were eliminated from the questionnaire scales while a total of 66 items those having V values greater than 0.78 in the scale were retained in the final instrument kept for the pilot study.

The addition of both open- and closed-ended items in the validation format has been considered essential and appropriate by content panelists. The panelists suggested the elimination or reintegration of some redundant items. They also recommended rephrasing/ rewording some items, improving language deficiencies (grammar, sentence structure, conceptual integrity, flow of ideas), and rearranging item ordering (sequence).

In general, all the panelists' comments were carefully reviewed, and accordingly, appropriate changes, as well as revisions, were made on the item wordings, redundant items, item orderings, and concept clarification to improve the overall quality of the instruments (See Appendix A&B

for questionnaire, Appendix C, D &E for key informant interview guide, FGD**,** and In-depth interview guide).

3.5.3 Instrument Translation Procedure

All data collection instruments for the present study were originally prepared in English, as they were developed directly from existing literature and theoretical frameworks. To ensure accessibility and linguistic accuracy, the instruments were translated into Amharic, a language widely spoken and understood in Wolaita Sodo town. The translation was conducted by a language expert, followed by back-translation into English to verify semantic consistency before pilot testing. Although Wolaitigna is also spoken in the research site, the researcher does not speak, read, or write in that language. Relying entirely on external translators for Wolaitigna was considered a methodological risk, as it could introduce inaccuracies or loss of meaning during data collection and subsequent translation. To avoid this, the study deliberately prioritized Amharic as the medium of administration. This choice ensured that the instruments remained both linguistically accessible to participants and manageable within the researcher's own linguistic capacity, thereby safeguarding methodological rigor and reliability.

Generally, three language experts (two PhD students in teaching English as a foreign language and one Amharic language teacher with a PhD) were involved in the process of instrument translation. Of these experts, one expert conducted the forward translation from the English language into the Amharic language, while another performed the backward translation to verify consistency with the original version. The third expert was responsible for reviewing, editing, and reconciling discrepancies between the two versions to establish semantic and cultural equivalence. Final editing and confirmation of equivalence were undertaken by the researcher,

thereby ensuring that the instrument was both linguistically valid and contextually appropriate for the study population

3.5.4 Scoring Procedure

3.5.4.1 Knowledge scale The Knowledge Scale has fourteen items with rating scales and six open-ended items. The items deal with different components of knowledge. Each item on the scale was rated on a 2-point scale, 1(correct) and 0 (incorrect). Generally, the knowledge scale, which consists of 14 rating-type items, yielded a total raw score ranging from 0 to 14. Thus, higher scores indicate the existence of a good level of knowledge on child trafficking.

3.5.4.2 The Attitude Scale. The attitude scale has two subscales: the attitude toward child trafficking and the attitude towards preventive practice subscales. The attitude toward child trafficking subscale has 9 items, whereas the attitude towards preventive practice subscale has 7 items. The subscale scores were computed separately as the sum of raw scores assigned to all items composing each subscale. The attitude toward child trafficking subscale and attitude towards preventive practice subscale are two measures used in assessing the attitudes of the participants. The former yields a total raw score ranging from 9 to 45, while the latter yields a total raw score ranging from 7 to 35.

3.5.4.3 Practice scale. The practice scale has 8 items. Each item on the scale was rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (Never) to 5 (Always)**.** Similarly, the mean score for the scale was calculated, where a high score on a scale indicated the participants' adherence to preventive practices.

3.5.4.4 The subjective norm scales. The scale for the subjective norm comprises two subscales, namely normative beliefs (which includes 4 items) and motivation to comply (which

includes 4 items). The subscale scores were calculated by adding up the raw scores for each item within that subscale. Both the normative beliefs subscale as well as the motivation to comply subscale have a total raw score range of 4 to 20 each. Every item of the subscales was rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

3.5.4.5. Perceived behavioral control. Perceived behavioral control was assessed using a seven-item subscale designed to capture respondents' self-reported capacity to engage in child trafficking preventive practice. Each item was measured on a five-point Likert-type scale, with response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Scale scores were computed by summing the raw scores across the seven items, yielding a possible range from 7 to 35. Higher scores indicated greater perceived behavioral control, whereas lower scores reflected diminished perceptions of control.

3.5.4.6. The Intention scale. The scale for assessing intentions comprises six items. The scale scores were calculated by adding up the raw scores for each item within that scale. The scale has a total raw score range of 6 to 30. Every item of the subscale was rated on a 5-point scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)

To reduce the risk of response bias, certain items were phrased in a reversed manner. Positive statements were assigned a score of 5 for 'strongly agree', 4 for 'agree', 3 for 'don't know', 2 for 'disagree', and 1 for 'strongly disagree'. Conversely, for negatively worded items, 'strongly agree' was scored as 1, 'agree' as 2, 'don't know' as 3, 'disagree' as 4, and 'strongly disagree' as 5. To facilitate a structured interpretation of the average scores derived from the five-point Likert scale items, a three-tier classification system was employed using the equal interval method, a conventional approach in quantitative social science research (Koo & Yang, 2025; Joshi et al, 2015; DeVellis, 2017) enabled a descriptive analysis of participants' attitudes, subjective norms,

and perceived behavioral control within the framework of the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2005). For the attitude scale, mean scores were categorized as negative (1.00–2.59), neutral (2.60–3.39), and positive (3.40–5.00). In parallel, scores for practice, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and intention scales were classified as low (1.00–2.59), moderate (2.60–3.39), and high (3.40–5.00). This categorization provided a standardized framework for interpreting responses, thereby supporting meaningful comparisons across constructs and facilitating the identification of prevailing trends within the data (DeVellis, 2017).

3.6 Pilot Testing

3.6.1 The purpose of the pilot testing

A pilot study was carried out to evaluate the feasibility of data collection tools, address and refine any limitations of the tools, and determine the reliability of the scales used. The pilot test enables the researcher to evaluate the reliability of the scales and ascertain the adequacy and appropriateness of the length, wording, and instructions of the questionnaires to determine the initial response rate. 460 individuals took part in the pilot test. A questionnaire was given to 448 participants, who were selected using systematic random sampling, while 8 individuals were involved in a focus group discussion. Additionally, two adults and 2 children participated in key informant interviews and in-depth interviews, respectively. The participants were requested to provide their consent before the data-gathering tools were administered, and their participation in the pilot study was based on their agreement. The researcher herself facilitated and directed all the instrument administration throughout the entire pilot study. The participants were informed of the objective of the research and what was expected of them during the study's duration at the outset.

3.6.2 Characteristics of the pilot test participants

A total of eight participants took part in the FGD session, which included two primary school teachers, two community elders, one religious leader, two brokers, and one representative from the Bureau of Social and Labour Affairs. The session lasted for more than 90 minutes and was held at a Kebele office. Additionally, two key informant interviews were conducted, each lasting 45 minutes, with one key informant from BOLSA and one from BOWCA. These interviews were conducted in the respective offices of the informants.

The questionnaire scales underwent a pilot test with 448 participants who are believed to share similar characteristics with the main study samples. While opinions vary on the appropriate sample size for a pilot test, as a rule of thumb, 30-50 participants is a common range for pilot studies in general (Machin et al., 2018; Hertzog,2008). However, a minimum of 5 participants per item on the survey is considered acceptable, but only under certain conditions. These conditions include good data quality and a strong, well-defined factor structure. Yet, Neuman (1997) recommends a modest sample size of at least 20.

However, in this study, the choice to utilize 448 was a strategic and complex decision. It provided improved psychometric validation for the multi-item scales, leading to more reliable assessments; it helped reveal subtle issues with item clarity among various participants, ensuring that the main study's interpretation was optimal; and it allowed for more accurate preliminary estimates for the power analysis of the main study, thus enhancing its methodological robustness and efficiency.

Table 2

Summary Statistics of the Pilot Study Participants

Variable	**Label**	**Figure**	**%**
Sex	Male	269	57. 14
	Female	175	42.86
Education level	Illiterate	70	17
	Read and write only	86	14.0
	Primary education completed (1-8 grades)	69	14.4
	High school completed (9-12 grades)	103	30
	Post-secondary training of less than 3 years	84	25
	First Degree and above	32	4.4
Socioeconomic status	Better than most people	69	15.5
	Same as most people	244	55.0
	Worse than most people	131	29.5
The residential period in the current site	1-3 years	29	6.5
	3.1-6 years	71	16.0
	6.1-9 years	151	34.0
	>9 years	193	43.5
Speak Amharic	Yes	419	94.4
	No	25	5.6

3.6.3 The Procedures and Results of Reliability Indices

The study used Cronbach's alpha to assess the internal consistency of the scales. Internal consistency is one aspect of reliability, indicating how well the items within each scale measure the same underlying construct. According to George and Mallery (as cited in Gliem, & Gliem, 2003), a rule of thumb for interpreting Cronbach alpha coefficient is as follows: $\alpha \geq .9$ is excellent, $.8 \leq \alpha \leq .89$ is good, $.7 \leq \alpha \leq .79$ is acceptable, $.6 \leq \alpha \leq .69$ is questionable, $.5 \leq \alpha \leq .59$ is poor, and $\alpha \leq .5$ is unacceptable. The data collected from participants in the pilot study were

entered into the SPSS 26.0 package to compute reliability indices. Construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha. The result shows that the attitude toward child trafficking scale with nine items has a reliability of .834, the attitude toward preventive practice scale with seven items has a reliability of .815, and the preventive practice scale with eight items with α=.893 was found to be reliable. The subjective norm scale, comprised of eight items, demonstrates a reliability coefficient of .869. The perceived control scale, consisting of seven items, has an alpha value of .814. Lastly, the intention scale, which includes six items, shows a reliability of α = .802, indicating that it is also reliable**. Table 3**. Presented the reliability coefficients for the multi-item scales, which encompass attitudes towards trafficking, preventive practices, attitudes towards preventive practices, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intention.

Table 3

Simple Statistics of Cronbach's Alpha's Output

scales	No of Items	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
ATTCT	9	26.80	6.10	.834
ATPP	7	21.39	4.99	.815
PP	8	27.26	5.80	.893
SN	8	25.57	5.63	.869
PBC	7	21.27	4.86	.814
IN	6	19.19	4.35	.802
KN	14	9.58	3.53	.807

Note: ATTCT – Attitude towards child trafficking

ATTP- Attitude towards preventive practice, PP- preventive practice, SN- subjective norms

PBC- perceived behavioral control, IN- Intentions

The researcher used a reliability index to determine which items to remove or retain in the scales. Items with an inter-item correlation of less than 0.3 are deleted only if their removal significantly increases Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, the factor loading is weak, and there is no strong theoretical reason to retain the item. This decision was made based on the belief that a reliable scale should have items that correlate positively with the total score and with each other, as

recommended by existing literature. In addition, after analyzing reliability data, items with low item-total correlations underwent scrutiny for any potential issues with phrasing or grammar in the questions. Consequently, these are thoroughly revised and modified for the main study. They are restructured, edited, and reworded to ensure they are more coherent and meaningful.

3.6.4 The Procedures and Results of Exploratory Factor Analyses

Exploratory factor analysis (EFA), a statistical technique, was utilized to uncover the underlying structure of a large set of variables (Yong & Sean, 2013). It is a vital method to find out the latent patterns within the data. In the pilot study, the use of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) aimed to uncover the components present in the data set or identify the items that had the strongest association with the underlying variable. To understand the dimensions of the underlying variables and establish the connection of each item to the factors, EFA was performed using SPSS version 26.0. Oblique rotation was utilized to simplify and clarify the structure of the data. According to Kimani (2019), when factors are uncorrelated, oblique rotation yields practically the same result as orthogonal rotation. Oblique rotation is favored over orthogonal rotation because it offers a more realistic depiction of how factors are interconnected (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007)

In addition, there has been an incorrect traditional belief that researchers must employ orthogonal rotation. However, in social science, it is anticipated that factors will be correlated. Consequently, oblique rotation is favored as it can generate almost indistinguishable outcomes from orthogonal rotation if the factors are not correlated (Field, 2013). Similarly, Field mentioned that when it comes to data involving human beings, orthogonal rotation does not have any significance because there is no psychological construct independent of other psychological constructs.

Table 4

Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Child Trafficking Knowledge Scale

	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
KN1	0.763			
KN2	0.677			
KN3	0.577			
KN4		0.667		
KN5		0.877		
KN6		0.904		
KN7		0.637		
KN8			0.898	
KN9			0.803	
KN10		0.759		
KN11		0.802		
KN12		0.828		
KN13				0.524
KN14				0.878
KN15				
KN16				

To investigate the factorability of the knowledge concerning the internal child trafficking scale, 14 items underwent exploratory factor analysis with oblique rotation. A cutoff for factor loading was set at 0.50. Furthermore, the commonality of the scales was assessed to evaluate the level of variance within each dimension. The results demonstrated that all communalities exceeded 0.50.

The overall significance of the correlation matrix was examined using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which assesses the likelihood that the correlation matrix contains substantial correlations among its components. The results were significant, with Bartlett's test yielding $\chi^2 =$ (1645.978), $p < .001$, indicating that the correlation is sufficient for factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure confirmed the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = 0.801),

supporting the factorability of the items. An initial analysis was conducted to obtain eigenvalues for each factor, while small coefficients (absolute value < 0.4) were suppressed.

Similarly, the attitude toward child trafficking scale, all 9 items were subjected to exploratory factor analysis with an oblique rotation. The cutoff for factor loading was established at 0.50. The commonality of the scales was also evaluated to assess the level of variance in each dimension. The findings indicate that all communalities exceeded 0.50.

The significance of the correlation matrix was assessed using Bartlett's Test of Sphericity, which evaluates the likelihood that the correlation matrix contains meaningful correlations among its components. The results indicated significance, with Bartlett's test showing a value of χ^2= 1475.261 and a p-value of less than .001, confirming that the correlations are sufficient for conducting factor analyses. Additionally, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure indicated good sampling adequacy for the analysis, with a KMO value of 0.821, further supporting the factorability of the items. The Maximum Likelihood (ML) extraction method was utilized, and an initial analysis was conducted to obtain eigenvalues for each factor, suppressing small coefficients with absolute values less than 0.4.

Nine items reported on a five-point Likert scale were loaded onto three factors. Accordingly, four items were loaded on factor one, explaining 40.67% of the variance with factor loadings from .648 to .879. Three items were loaded on factor two, which explained 13.61% of the variance, with loadings from .784 to .821, whereas two items were loaded on factor three, which explained 10.02% of the variance. Finally, three factors with eigenvalues above the Kaiser criterion of 1.0 were retained.

Table 5:

Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Attitude toward Child Trafficking Scale

Items	1	2	3
ATCT1			.784
ATCT3			.796
ATCT4		.753	
ATCT5		.813	
ATCT6		.758	
ATCT2	.857		
ATCT7	.756		
ATCT8	.821		
ATCT9	.869		

Note: *ATTCT – Attitude towards child trafficking*

Similarly, the validity of the practice scale was also established using exploratory factor analysis. It results in two-factor solutions. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis (KMO = 0.883). Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi 2$ =1387.961, p<.001, indicating that correlation is adequate for factor analyses. Factor one comprises three items reported on a five-point Likert scale that explained 43.54% of the variance with factor loadings ranging from 0.77 to 0.885. Five items were loaded on factor two with factor loadings of .659 and .861. It explained 13.41 % of the variance.

Table 6

Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Preventive Practice Scale

Items	1	2
PP2		.819
PP3		.698
PP4		.759
PP5		.672
PP8		.861
PP1	.864	
PP6	.778	
PP7	.885	

Note: *PP- preventive practice*

To explore the factorial structure of attitude toward preventive practice, subjective norms, perceived control, and intention, all items of the scales were subjected to an exploratory factor analysis. The minimum factor loading criteria were set to be 0.5. The commonality of the scale, which indicates the amount of variance in each dimension, was also assessed to ensure an acceptable level of explanation. The results show that all communalities were above 0.5. Specifically, the ATPP scale was tested using exploratory factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO=.871. Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi 2$ =804.994, p<.001, indicating that the correlation structure is adequate for factor analyses. An initial analysis was run to obtain eigenvalues for each factor, and small coefficients (absolute value<0.4), and yield a two-factor solution as the best fit for the data. Factor one comprises five items designed on a five-point Likert-type scale and explains 50.19% of the variance with loadings that range from .62 to .73, while the second factor comprises two items that explained 15.12% of the variance with loadings of .720 and .873.

Table 7

Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Attitude toward Preventive Practice scale

Items	1	2
ATPP1		.720
ATPP5		.873
ATPP2	.637	
ATPP3	.585	
ATPP4	.672	
ATPP6	.552	
ATPP7	.709	

Note: *ATTP- Attitude toward preventive practice*

Similarly, the validity of questions from the subjective norm, perceived control, and intention was also tested using exploratory factor analysis. EFA was conducted using eight items from the subjective norm scale. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the

analysis, KMO=.886, Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi 2$ =1549.639, p<.001, indicating that the correlation structure is adequate for factor analyses. The eight items were loaded on two factors. Factor one comprises four items reported on a five-point Likert scale and explains 42.03% of the variance with factor loadings that range from .552 to.709, two items were loaded on factor two, with factor loadings of .637 and .869, and explained 11.71 % of the variance.

Table 8

Exploratory Factor Analysis of the Subjective Norm, Perceived Control, and Behavioral Intentions Scale

Subjective norm	Factors	
Items	1	2
SN1	.863	
SN2	.827	
SN3	.610	
SN4		.742
SN5		.637
SN6		.699
SN7		.794
SN8		.869
Perceived behavioral control	Factors	
Items	1	2
PBC1		.869
PBC2		.861
PBC6		.773
PBC3	.799	
PBC4	.782	
PBC5	.771	
PBC7	.778	
Behavioral intentions	1	2
IN1		.606
IN2		.886
IN4		.620
IN3	.820	
IN5	.882	
IN6	.823	

Note: *SN- subjective norms, PBC- perceived behavioral control, and IN-Intentions*

An EFA was performed for perceived behavioral control using principal component analysis with a minimum criterion set to be 0.4. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO=.75, Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi 2$ =1177.15, p<.001, indicating that the correlation structure is adequate for factor analyses. Seven items reported on a five-point Likert scale were loaded on two factors and explained 48.42 % and 18.49% respectively of the variance, with the item loadings that range from .771 to .869.

Finally, EFA was performed on questions intended to measure intentions to engage in preventive practices. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure verified the sampling adequacy for the analysis, KMO=.808. Bartlett's test of sphericity $\chi 2$ =885.958, p<.001, indicates that the correlation structure is adequate for factor analyses. Six items reported on a five-point Likert scale were loaded on two factors and explained 56.07 % and 17.97% of the variance respectively, with the item loadings ranging from .61 to .89. The reliability of the subscale is .80

3.6.5. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

A confirmatory factor analysis was carried out using Amos version 23 to assess the extent to which the latent variables affect the indicator variables. CFA is one of the most used techniques for checking whether the observed variables accurately measure the intended factors. A pooled confirmatory factor analysis was employed. Pooled Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) is also called a full measurement model CFA, which means analyzing all latent variables and their indicators at once within one model. This approach is important for researchers using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) because it gives a complete view of the entire measurement model, ensuring that all constructs and their relationships fit the observed data well. A main benefit of pooled CFA is that it provides a framework within which discriminant validity can be tested and evaluated by allowing all latent variables to change together, thereby confirming that

theoretically distinct constructs are indeed empirically distinguishable. Also, achieving a good-fitting pooled CFA is necessary before assessing the supposed causal pathways in the structural model. It ensures the measures are sound when considered together. Although it can be trickier to identify or fix issues with model fit, its thoroughness makes it the favored choice for validating measurement scales in multivariate analyses (Kline, 2016).

The chi-square to degrees of freedom ratio (CMIN/DF) was 2.62. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.995. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was 0.038, and the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was 0.034. P-CLOSE was equal to **.**550. Additionally, all item loadings were significant and exceeded 0.5, which indicates that over 50% of the variance is explained by the latent factors.

3.6.6 Implications of the Pilot Study

From the procedures of instrument administration and the analysis of the pilot test results, significant lessons were learned and utilized for the main study. One of the main lessons taken away from the validation of instruments for the main study was that the tools (questionnaire scales, FGD guides, and interview guides) were considered valid and acceptable for use as assessment tools. Another crucial lesson drawn from the validation process was that having subject matter experts evaluate data gathering tools before large-scale research helps ensure the instruments are adequate in measuring the designated psychological constructs, refine the final tools by integrating the feedback provided, and improve the usability of the instruments for their intended purpose. Findings from the pilot study also showed that all the questionnaire scales have sufficient and acceptable internal consistency and that the actual data collection could proceed using these scales.

It is noteworthy to mention some of the challenges the researcher experienced during the administration of data collection tools. For example, while conducting the focus group discussion (FGD), one challenge the researcher encountered was the dominance of a few participants. Furthermore, in both the FGD and interview pilot tests, the researcher relied only on field notes taken at the site for transcripts and did not record audio. Thus, an important lesson learned from this field experience and applied to the main study was the necessity of combining field notes with audio recordings to enhance the validity and reliability of data transcriptions. Another significant takeaway for the main study was the need for participants to be thoroughly informed about the importance of providing accurate answers for each item on the questionnaire, as well as the serious consequences of delayed responses on the research quality. It also appears vital to prepare data enumerators to have a clear understanding of the backgrounds of the respective participants before data collection and to administer the questionnaire scales under these backgrounds while adhering to research ethics.

In summary, the pilot study, which was conducted with a representative sample, provided valuable insights that helped validate and improve the research instruments and methodology for the main study, and with the approach ensuring feasibility and reliability, the next section will proceed to the main study, which used a larger sample to address the core research objectives.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure for the main Study

3.7.1 Administration of the FGD Guide

FGD was conducted to gather insights into the community's current level of knowledge about child trafficking, their attitudes towards it, and the measures they have taken thus far to combat this problem. Before selecting the appropriate participants for the FGD and deciding on the right place and time for carrying out the FGD, the respective Kebele administrations and relevant

government bureaus, such as BoWSA and BoJ, were consulted. Generally, the identification and selection process of the potential informants for the FGD, as well as the decision to choose the right time and venue for conducting the FGD, was facilitated in consultation with focal persons from key government bureaus. The participants for the FGD were purposively selected based on their experiences and relevance to the topic, which included schoolteachers, parents, caregivers, and focal persons from the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs.

Before conducting the FGD, the researcher reached out to participants to obtain their consent to participate in the study and provided them with an overview of the study's purpose. Additionally, the FGD participants were briefed on the type of information that would be required of them, how to effectively utilize their time during the discussion period, and the significance of turn-taking and perspective-taking. In a similar vein, the assistant data collectors were given guidance on how to record the discussion session through audio recordings, while the principal researcher facilitated the entire session and took field notes.

An FGD guide consisting of 10 general items was developed and employed during the discussion period to properly guide the discussion session and keep the participants attentive in initiating and forwarding their responses. Probes were utilized to obtain more detailed information from the informants, where needed. The FGDs lasted for approximately 90 minutes and 120 minutes. Both field notes taken on-site and audio recordings were used to document the FGD responses. Participants' actual names were deliberately removed from both the transcription and analysis of FGD data to maintain the confidentiality of the participants' responses. Instead, codes such as F1P1, F2P1…, and F1P8, F2P2, where F1 represents focus group session 1, and P1, P2…, and P8 represent participants 1-8 in the sessions, were used. The FGD transcription was coded in line with the study's conceptual framework and guided by the Theory of Planned Behavior. The

coding scheme was developed deductively. Five primary themes were predetermined: knowledge about in-country child trafficking, attitudes towards child trafficking, preventive practices, attitudes towards preventive practices, subjective norms, and intention to engage in preventive practices. Using predetermined themes ensured that the analysis remained focused on constructs central to the research questions and allowed comparability with prior studies on trafficking prevention

3.7.2 Administration of Questionnaires

Four hundred seventy-three participants with varying levels of education, ranging from illiterate to well-educated, were involved in completing self-report questionnaire scales. The questionnaire was translated into Amharic to ensure that participants could understand the questions and answer them freely. For those who were unable to read and write, data enumerators were available to assist in reading the questionnaire items and recording their responses accurately. Before administering the scale, data enumerators were given one-day training on reducing inaccurate responses and were introduced to the items on the scales, as well as being ethical, which includes the importance of getting participants' full consent and ensuring participants ' anonymity of their identity as well as confidentiality. Data collection using the questionnaire was carried out through a face-to-face approach. At every step of data collection, the principal researcher was personally present along with the data enumerators to provide information about the questionnaire and its purpose.

3.7.3 Administration of the Key Informant Interview and In-depth Interview Guides

The interview process is a crucial means for researchers to obtain in-depth information from participants on a given issue. In the case of this study, the method was particularly helpful in enabling the researcher to gain a better understanding of the thoughts, feelings, and actions of

key informants about child trafficking. The selection of well-informed individuals who had direct experience and a willingness to participate was paramount to obtaining rich and detailed information. Accordingly, two key informants, focal persons from the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs and the Police (child protection unit), took part. In addition, five migrant children also took part in the interview. All the children interviewed were children who migrated from rural areas to the town and engaged in different tasks to make a living. The researcher gathered comprehensive information about the general situation of child trafficking, as well as the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to preventing child trafficking and understanding its trends in Wolaita Sodo town through interviews conducted with key informants and children. To ensure a thorough and structured approach, interview guides were designed and used to facilitate the sessions with both adult and child participants. The interview sessions lasted between 40 to 60 minutes. Throughout the interviews, the researcher carefully took field notes, while a trained data collector recorded the participants' responses.

To sum up, in the present study, multiple data collection techniques were employed, including key informant interviews, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and structured questionnaires. In addition to these primary methods, the researcher initially planned to incorporate document analysis as a supplementary source of information, with the aim of triangulating findings and enhancing the robustness of the study. Despite persistent and repeated efforts to access relevant documents from concerned government bureaus and administrative bodies, the attempt was ultimately unsuccessful, as the institutions were unable to provide the required data. After several unsuccessful consultations and follow-up requests, the researcher was compelled to discontinue the plan of utilizing document analysis. Consequently, the study relied exclusively on the qualitative and quantitative data obtained through interviews, FGDs,

and questionnaires, which together provided sufficient empirical evidence to address the research objectives.

3.8. Data Analysis Procedure

The data analysis techniques employed in this study were triangulated, integrating qualitative (thematic) and quantitative (inferential) approaches to ensure methodological rigor. Qualitative data, obtained through focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews, were systematically analyzed through transcription, coding, and thematic identification. Thematic analysis was utilized as the primary qualitative method, facilitating the categorization of data and the identification, analysis, and interpretation of recurring patterns within the dataset. This approach, as outlined (Ahmed et al., 2025; Braun & Clarke, 2006), provides a structured yet flexible framework for qualitative inquiry, enabling researchers to derive meaningful insights from textual data.

The quantitative data from the questionnaire were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 28.0 and AMOS Version 23. A variety of statistical techniques were employed, including correlation analysis, multiple regression, logistic regression, and factorial ANOVA. These methods are effective for analyzing interval and ratio-level data (Tabachnick and Fidell 2007). Furthermore, path analysis was performed to examine the mediating variables' roles while simultaneously assessing the direct effects of the predictor variables on the outcome variable. It was performed to answer whether knowledge, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, and behavioral intentions of origin communities significantly predict preventive practice concerning child trafficking.

Furthermore, factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine whether attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, intentions to engage in preventive practices, and preventive behavior differ significantly based on these demographic factors, namely age, sex, perceived

socioeconomic status, years of residence, and level of education. A factorial ANOVA was therefore selected as the most appropriate statistical technique because it allows for the simultaneous examination of multiple independent variables and their potential interaction effects on several dependent variables. For all statistically significant F-values derived from the univariate analysis, the least significant difference (LSD) post hoc test was conducted to identify which group's mean significantly differs. The LSD test was used since it detects any difference among groups, and it will not substantially increase error rates (Mishra et al., 2019). Additionally, all inferential statistical procedures employed in this study were preceded by an assessment of model assumptions, including normality, linearity, and homogeneity of variances. The alpha level of statistical significance was set at 0.05 in all cases. Furthermore, based on the results of model assumption tests and the Central Limit Theorem (CLT), which posits that large sample sizes approximate a normal distribution, the researcher applied parametric statistical tests to analyze the quantitative data obtained through the questionnaire scales (N = 473). These methodological choices ensure the reliability and validity of the statistical inferences drawn from the study.

3.8.1 Data Screening and Testing Model Assumptions

Before initiating the quantitative analysis derived from the questionnaire, a comprehensive data screening process was conducted to ensure the integrity and reliability of the dataset. This process involved verifying the accuracy of data entry, identifying and addressing missing values through appropriate methodological approaches, detecting potential outliers, and establishing suitable strategies for their management. Additionally, the normality of the data distribution was assessed, with corrective measures implemented for any deviations from normality.

The accuracy of data entry was assessed using frequency distributions, while missing values were addressed through the mean replacement method. Outliers and extreme values were systematically examined, with some cases being eliminated to mitigate their influence and enhance the normality of the data. Before determining the appropriate statistical tests, parametric or non-parametric, the assumptions of normality, linearity, homogeneity of variance, and multicollinearity were thoroughly evaluated. Normality was assessed using histograms, kurtosis, and skewness within the range of acceptance (-1.0 to +1.0), and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk tests, all of which confirmed that the dataset adhered to normality criteria. Linearity was tested through scatter plots, collinearity diagnostics, and the significance of correlation coefficients between independent and dependent variables. Visual inspection of the scatterplots indicated a reasonably linear relationship, and the correlation coefficients exceeded the recommended threshold ($r > .30$). In addition, the overall model fit was supported by the significant F-value in the ANOVA table. Taken together, these results provided evidence that the linearity assumption was met.

Similarly, Levene's test was performed to verify the assumption of homogeneity of variance, with results indicating non-significance (>.05), thereby confirming the equality of variances across relevant scales. Lastly, collinearity diagnostics, including tolerance values exceeding 0.10 and variance inflation factors (VIF) below 2, indicated the absence of multicollinearity within the dataset.

3.9 Ethical Issues

An approval to conduct this study was granted by the School of Psychology, AAU, under the auspices of my dissertation research supervisor. Then, an invitation letter was distributed, inviting selected individuals to participate in the study and requesting their informed consent (see

Appendix G). All participants were informed that their participation was completely voluntary, and they were also informed that only individuals who provided explicit consent would be included in the study, which included completing the questionnaire, participating in focus group discussions (FGDs), and engaging in key informant interviews. Participants were assured that their responses would be treated with strict confidentiality and utilized solely for research purposes. Furthermore, they were informed that pseudonyms, rather than their actual names, would be used in the research report to maintain anonymity. Participants also had the right to access information regarding the purpose and outcomes of the study, and they were explicitly informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time, should they experience discomfort or mistreatment.

Additionally, the assurance of children's willingness to participate in interviews was established. As part of the duty to protect the safety and well-being of every child involved in the research, the researcher and her team were morally obligated to prevent or reduce any potential harm during the data collection sessions. This necessitated being attentive to the possible impacts on the child throughout the research process. Children who were included in the study were assured that they were safe from any harm. In this context, training was provided to assistant data collectors on research ethics, which included safeguarding the well-being of participating children and adults, as well as maintaining the confidentiality of the information gathered. Most importantly, for any research involving children, it is necessary to obtain consent from their parents or legal guardians; therefore, primary caregivers granted their permission to gather data from the children.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

The primary purposes of this study were to assess the knowledge, attitudes, and practices related to child trafficking among residents of Wolaita Sodo town, as well as to examine the relationships among these factors. This chapter will attempt to examine both quantitative and qualitative data to answer the research questions. The results of this study are structured and presented based on the key themes identified in these questions. Each type of data was analyzed independently, in line with the guidelines of the concurrent triangulation design applied in this mixed-methods research. For the analysis of quantitative data, all scales yielded interval-level data. As a result, the statistical methods used for this data included correlation coefficients, regression analysis, path analysis, and factorial ANOVA.

4.1 The Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Table 9

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

S.N.	Variable	Label	Participants	Per cent
1	Sex	Male	255	53.91
		Female	218	46.09
2	Age	19-30	147	31.07
		31-45	193	40.80
		>45	133	28.11
3	Level of education	Illiterate	72	15.22
		Read and write only	90	19.17
		Primary education completed (1-8 grades)	73	15.42
		Secondary school completed (9-12 grades)	110	23.32
		Post-secondary training of less than 3 years	89	18.97
		First Degree and above	39	8.30
4	Perceived socioeconomic status	Better than most people	73	15.4
		Same as most people	255	53.8
		Worse than most people	145	30.8
5	The residential period in the current site	1-3 years	29	6.25
		3.1-6 years	79	16.41
		6.1-10 years	164	34.38
		>10 years	201	42.69

The demographic variables outlined in **Table 9** indicate the appropriateness of the study participants as primary sources for completing the questionnaire scales. The dataset demonstrates equitable representation across key demographic categories, including gender, age, educational attainment, perceived socioeconomic status, and duration of residence. Additionally, demographic distribution supports the feasibility of extrapolating findings and drawing generalizable conclusions about the target population based on the sample's characteristics.

4.2 Patterns of Child Trafficking in Wolaita Sodo Town

This section presents a thorough analysis of data collected from residents of Wolaita Sodo regarding their observations and experiences related to child trafficking within their community. The primary aim of this study is to systematically explore the perceived patterns, prevalence, and underlying factors contributing to child trafficking as understood by individuals who live in the area and may have direct or indirect exposure to such incidents. To accomplish this objective, participants were engaged in a structured inquiry in which they were asked to report any known instances of child trafficking, specifically inquiring whether any children from their immediate or extended families had been subjected to trafficking. By gathering firsthand accounts and community perceptions, this investigation aims to shed light on local attitudes toward trafficking, identify potential risk factors, and evaluate the extent to which residents recognize and respond to this issue within their environment.

Table 10

Summary of Responses on Child Trafficking Patterns in Wolaita Sodo Town

Number of trafficked children		Frequency	Percent
No		394	83.4.
Yes		79	16.6
Male Female **The age at which they were trafficked** >11 11-17		58 21 10 69	73.80 26.58 13.09 86.9
The year in which those children were trafficked			
2003- 2010 EC or 2010-2017 GC		33	41.67
2011- 2016 EC or 2018-2023 GC		46	58.33
By whom were those children trafficked			
		Frequency	Percentage
Close relatives		44	55.95
Brokers		18	22.62
Friends		8	10.71
Distant relatives		5	5.95
Neighbor		4	4.76
Strangers		0	0
The age at which boys and girls in the community are usually trafficked			
Sex	Age group	Frequency	Percentage
Boys	6-11 12-17	107 366	22.64 77.36
Girls	6-11 12-17	72 401	15.20 84.84

Source: Primary data collected by the researcher through a questionnaire (2025)

The data presented in **Table 10** provides a critical assessment of the prevalence of child trafficking based on community perceptions. A substantial majority **(**83.4%**)** of respondents reported that no children from their family had been trafficked. In contrast, 16.6% of participants

confirmed that at least one child from their family had experienced trafficking, signifying the presence of this issue within the population in Wolaita Sodo**.**

The demographic analysis of trafficked children in the Wolaita Sodo population reveals a significant gender disparity, with 73.80% of the identified victims being male. In comparison, female victims account for 26.58% of the total cases. These findings indicate potential gender-specific vulnerabilities and recruitment patterns that merit further examination. In terms of age distribution, the study reports that the youngest victim was just 8 years old, while the oldest was 17. Most trafficked children are within the 11–17-year age range for both genders.

Similarly, the data generated through qualitative methods also revealed that pre-adolescent and early adolescent children are particularly vulnerable to trafficking, potentially due to factors such as peer pressure, economic hardships, limited access to resources, and deceptive recruitment strategies. One of the key informants has said the following concerning this:

> *Young adolescents in this locality are particularly vulnerable to trafficking. Traffickers and recruiters actively target this age group by strategically presenting the urban environment as an attractive and glamorous alternative, often emphasizing promises of improved living conditions, educational opportunities, and economic prosperity. This urban allure is frequently communicated through persuasive narratives that are tailored to appeal to the aspirations and limited experiences of these young individuals (KII1)*

Additionally, the majority of FGD participants in both FGD sessions underlined the critical role that returnees play in promoting the narratives of ‘glamorous city life.’ The FGD participants claim that their narratives and perceived achievements act as potent endorsements of the alleged

advantages of urban migration. They often portray the urban lifestyle as attractive as possible. By doing so, they persuade potential migrants that moving to a city and getting a job elsewhere is an easy option to alter their current situation. In some instances, they unintentionally contribute to the recruitment process as local role models. Because the endorsements of returnees frequently result in a greater flood of teenagers, drawn by the promise of a better life in the city, this dynamic feeds a cycle of vulnerability.

Regarding the gender of trafficked children in their locality, reports from key informants and focus group discussion (FGD) participants indicate that both male and female children are vulnerable to trafficking. However, they have reported that there is a disproportionately high demand for boys compared to girls. Regarding this, FGD_2P_3 reported the following:

> *Children in this region are frequently susceptible to trafficking, a phenomenon significantly influenced by a longstanding tradition of child out-migration, particularly within the Wolita community. Notably, the migration patterns demonstrate a predominance of boys migrating to urban areas and towns, which raises critical concerns regarding their vulnerability in such contexts.*

The data generated through key informant interviews also indicated that the phenomenon of child trafficking in this region is deeply intertwined with historical migration patterns, particularly within the Wolaita community, where migration has been a prevalent socio-economic practice for generations. This tradition of seeking opportunities beyond one's home village has created conditions in which children, especially boys, are disproportionately exposed to exploitative labor and trafficking. This is further explained by one of the key informants from the Bureau of labour and Social Affairs, stating the following:

> *In this society, migration is widely viewed as a route to economic opportunities, especially for boys, who are socially conditioned from a young age to pursue work in urban areas. Families experiencing financial difficulties often encourage or permit their sons to migrate in search of employment. This expectation fosters an environment where boys become more vulnerable to trafficking networks that exploit them through deceptive recruitment practices (KII2)*

The qualitative findings from the focus group discussions (FGDs) also further confirmed the quantitative findings, reporting a high prevalence of trafficking in boys compared to girls from their locality and consistently highlighting cultural and economic factors that contribute to this issue, noting that boys are often encouraged or expected to migrate to urban centers in pursuit of employment opportunities. The participants noted that social norms related to the migration trends in that locality unintentionally put boys at risk of trafficking since they often lack formal protection and legal safeguards while looking for opportunities in informal labor markets. Traffickers intentionally recruit boys for trafficking; they are often viewed as resilient to tough working conditions, and as a result, they are frequently drawn into industries where cheap labor and exploitation are common, such as weaving, street vending, construction, and waste collection. Although trafficking of girls is reported, their migration is less noticeable due to societal gender norms that place stricter limitations on females' mobility. Nonetheless, girls are still at risk of trafficking, particularly in domestic work and the service industry, where they encounter a greater risk of labor and sexual exploitation and abuse.

Regarding the time frame, the findings reveal that child trafficking has remained a persistent issue over several years. Out of 79 reported cases, 33 cases (41.67%) occurred between 2003 and

2010 in the Ethiopian calendar (EC) or 2010-2017 GC, whereas a higher number of cases, 46 incidents (58.33%), occurred between 2011 and 2016 EC (2018-2023 GC), indicating an increase in trafficking. This trend implies the evolving nature of child trafficking patterns and raises essential questions regarding the underlying factors contributing to this rise.

The qualitative data obtained through key informant interviews also further confirms this finding. Participants in the FGDs and key informants also emphasized that child trafficking and child migration have been steadily increasing in their town over time, including increased frequency and sophistication of methods used, a shift in modus operandi, and diversification of exploitation methods. Regarding this, one of the key informants has said the following:

> *In the past three years, the region has witnessed a significant rise in child trafficking cases. This increase aligns with a notable shift in the tactics used by traffickers, who have adopted increasingly sophisticated methods. They have integrated advanced communication technologies and employed deceptive recruitment strategies specifically aimed at hiding their illegal activities from law enforcement and other agencies concerned with this issue (KII3)*

Similarly, most of the participants in the focus group discussion (FGD) conveyed that child trafficking is an increasing issue in their hometowns. Participants noted that the phenomenon appears to be rising over time, not only in terms of frequency but also in the complexity of its manifestations, and attributed it to several interrelated factors, including economic instability, insufficient enforcement of protective policies, and the growing sophistication of the traffickers. In elaborating on this phenomenon, one of the FGD participants said the following:

> *Child migration and trafficking are not only on the rise but are also becoming more sophisticated, making them difficult to address. In my view, several interrelated factors contribute to it, notably economic instability that paves the ground for vulnerabilities traffickers can exploit. As financial hardship spreads, families and children become more susceptible to manipulation and exploitation. Parents and children seeking better economic opportunities may unknowingly find themselves in perilous situations or be deceived into circumstances where they feel they have little choice but to comply (FGD_1P_8)*

Regarding the traffickers and recruiters, the current study revealed the various agencies that are involved in the trafficking of the reported child trafficking cases. These include family members, friends, distant relatives, and neighbors. As depicted in **Table 10**, children are trafficked in towns and cities by close relatives, which accounts for 44 (55.95%) of reported of child trafficking, followed by brokers, friends, distant relatives, and neighbors which account for n=18 (22.62%), n=8 (10.71%), n=5 (5.95%), and n= 4 (4.76%) of child trafficking cases respectively.

Results from qualitative findings also confirmed that children are frequently taken to urban areas by someone known to them or their families. In-depth interviews further substantiated this, with all five children reporting that their relocation was facilitated by someone they knew, including close relatives and friends. Concerning this, a 17-year-old child participant shared her experience in the following way. "*When my parents faced financial difficulties, a relative of theirs brought up a job offer mentioning a family in Hawassa that was seeking a caregiver for their infant". My parents quickly consented, confident that I would take on the role of a babysitter…."* (CI_4). These findings indicated the key role trusted individuals, such as family members and

acquaintances, play in facilitating the trafficking of children, and this engagement of relatives and familial members implies the complexity of the issue, as they exploit existing relationships and trust.

In addition, the data generated from key informant interviews offers significant insights into the complex mechanisms underpinning child trafficking in the region. This qualitative data reveals that multiple entities, beyond traditional criminal syndicates, actively participate in the recruitment and transportation of children to various localities for exploitative purposes. Regarding this, one of the key informants has said the following:

> *Some local brokers and intermediaries play a significant role in facilitating the movement of children by leveraging established personal connections with both parents and children to persuade families to consent to the relocation of their offspring. They capitalize on trusted relationships; these agents effectively reduce parental resistance, thereby enabling the transition of children to environments where they may be exploited. (KII_3)*

The above narratives elucidate the involvement of local brokers, community intermediaries, and other informal networks that leverage established relationships of trust to facilitate child movement. Participants were also asked the age at which boys are usually trafficked in their locality. For boys, most participants (n = 366, 77.36%) reported that trafficking typically occurs between the ages of 12 and 17, whereas a smaller proportion (n = 107, 22.64%) identified the age range of 6 to 11 years. In the case of girls, only (n = 72, 15.20%) participants reported trafficking between the ages of 6 and 11, while a substantial majority (n = 401, 84.84%) indicated that trafficking most often occurs during adolescence, specifically between the ages of 12 and 17.

These findings suggest that, in the studied area, both boys and girls are perceived to be most vulnerable to trafficking during early to mid-adolescence.

Qualitative findings also corroborate this finding. For instance, one of the key informants, a police officer, has said the following:

> *Children taken to towns and cities under the pretense of being placed with relatives often face a precarious reality in which their safety and well-being may not be prioritized. While younger children, typically ages eight and nine, may initially be placed in the care of relatives, older children, usually between the ages of 10 and 16 or 17, are at an even greater risk. Older children are the most preferred by both traffickers and employers compared to the younger ones, as they are often perceived as strong enough to work while still being young enough to be easily controlled (KII_1).*

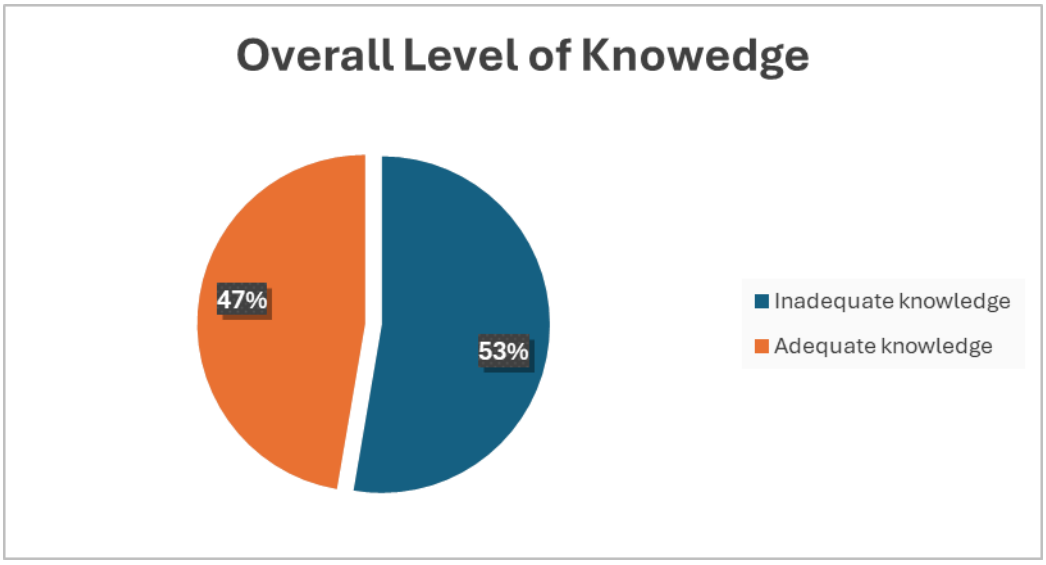
Both qualitative and quantitative findings indicate that children are brought to cities under the pretext of living with relatives yet are often subjected to exploitation and abuse.

4.3 Residents' Level of Knowledge and Sources of Knowledge

This section was intended to measure residents' level of knowledge on child trafficking. Their knowledge was measured using a set of questions in which each statement was answered with "correct" or "incorrect. A single summary score was obtained by summing the number of correct items. Higher scores indicate greater knowledge. In this study, 249 (52.7%) of the participants have inadequate knowledge about internal child trafficking

Figure 2

Level of Knowledge of internal child trafficking



The findings revealed residents' understanding of internal child trafficking, with an average knowledge score of 9.58 (SD = 3.53) out of 14. Notably, participants demonstrated the highest levels of knowledge regarding victims' profiles (M = 2.71, SD = 1.41) and vulnerabilities (M = 2.09, SD = 0.99), suggesting a broad recognition of the factors that place children at risk. Moreover, while knowledge of traffickers and their techniques they used (M = 1.81, SD = 1.19), knowledge of the psychosocial plights experienced by affected children (M = 1.37, SD = 0.65), and knowledge of the definition of child trafficking (M = 1.69, SD = 0.62) is relatively low. The findings indicate that while participants recognize trafficking patterns and victim profiles, they tend to have limited knowledge of the very definition of child trafficking.

Table 11

Knowledge of internal child trafficking

No	Categories	Correct		Incorrect	
		N	%	N	%
A.	*Knowledge about the definition of child trafficking*				
1.	In-country child trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of children within a country for exploitation	229	48.4	244	51.6
2.	In-country child trafficking involves the exploitation of a child	224	47.4	249	52.6
3.	In-country child trafficking may involve abuse of power or a position of vulnerability	179	37.74	294	62.26
B.	*Knowledge about the victims' profiles*				
4.	Victims of in-country child trafficking are children forced to work to repay a loan	298	63.04	175	36.95
5.	Victims of in-country child trafficking can be child domestic workers who are abused by their employers	318	67.19	155	32.81
6.	Children who are forced to work longer hours than were promised can be victims of in-country child trafficking	329	69.56	144	30.44
7.	Working children who do not receive wages or have their wages withheld by their employers are victims of in-country child trafficking	340	71.93	137	28.07
C.	*Knowledge about the psychosocial plight experienced by trafficked children*				
8.	In most cases, victims of in-country child trafficking experience physical abuse	353	74.70	120	25.3
9.	In most cases, victims of in-country child trafficking experience psychological abuse	293	62.05	180	37.95
D.	*Knowledge about the vulnerability to child trafficking*				
10.	Children from urban areas are vulnerable to in-country child trafficking	292	61.66	181	38.34
11.	Children from rural areas are most often vulnerable to in-country child trafficking	317	66.99	156	33.01
12.	Children from poor families are more vulnerable to in-country child trafficking than other children	336	70.94	137	29.6
E.	*Knowledge about traffickers and techniques*				
13.	Acquaintances, strangers, friends, neighbors, family friends, relatives, and private companies could be among recruiters	389	82.21	84	17.79
14.	Children are recruited into trafficking through false promises	409	86.57	64	13.43

As presented in **Table 11**, a lack of knowledge is evident among slightly more than half of the participants in identifying the definition of child trafficking. Participants were provided with a definition of child trafficking, which states it is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of children within national borders for exploitative purposes, and they were asked to rate it as correct or incorrect. 244 (51.6%) of the participants did not recognize it as a correct statement. Similarly, when they were asked about the statement that states, "In-country child trafficking involves the exploitation of a child, 249 (52.6%) of the participants rated it as incorrect, despite its factual accuracy. When asked to assess the statement, "In-country child trafficking may involve abuse of power or a position of vulnerability," 294 (62.25%) participants rated it as incorrect.

The data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) revealed a lack of clear understanding of child trafficking among a few participants. Some participants associate child trafficking solely with kidnapping or forced abduction. For instance, FGD_1P_5 defined child trafficking in the following way: "*My perception of child trafficking is that it refers to a circumstance where children are forcibly removed without their consent*." This perspective overlooks the more common methods traffickers use, such as deception, coercion, and manipulation, especially in luring children to towns and cities. Likewise, some participants in the focus group discussion (FGD) did not acknowledge that child trafficking can happen within a country's borders, even though children are often trafficked within their communities or nations.

Concerning this, FGD_1P_7 argued, "*I don't believe there is something referred to as internal child trafficking. I always consider that a person is trafficked only if he or she has been illegally taken out of the country*." Findings from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) indicate that participants associate child trafficking with concepts such as child labor, forced labor, coerced

begging, and broader forms of exploitation for personal gain, which indicates a shared understanding of trafficking as a mechanism through which children are subjected to various forms of economic and social abuse. For example, one of the FGD participants (FGD_2P_7) described child trafficking in the following way: "*Trafficking is taking children to do domestic work, but not just age-appropriate work, rather letting them do a lot of work which is not meant for children*." The discussions among participants of the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) revealed a concerning trend regarding child trafficking. What may initially be presented as a legitimate arrangement can gradually devolve into exploitative situations that may be equated to trafficking.

The traditional child placement in the houses of relatives or employers, in exchange for care, education, or to some extent, work opportunities, can often lead to systematic violations of children's rights. In this regard, the key informant interview revealed important insights into the complexities of child trafficking, demonstrating a strong understanding of how child movement can lead to exploitation. A key informant, a police officer from a child protection unit, defines child trafficking, explaining its multidimensional nature as follows. "*In-country child trafficking encompasses the recruitment, transportation, transfer, or receipt of a child with the intent to exploit, and this exploitation can be forced labor, domestic servitude, sexual abuse, or involvement in criminal activities* (KII_1). The above-mentioned informant further elaborated that traffickers are very deceptive and easily manipulate children and their parents with false promises, only to lure children into situations where their rights and freedoms are taken away.

The key informant mentioned above also highlights the crucial role intermediaries, brokers, and even families and acquaintances play in contributing to the initial relocation of children under the

excuse of an offer of better opportunities. This process, which seems legitimate, often complicates efforts to identify and address the underlying issues for authorities and families.

Furthermore, children indicate different levels of knowledge regarding child trafficking, with only two out of five interviewed children mentioning knowing about the issue before. This suggests that children may remain unaware of the risks of child trafficking, making them more vulnerable to exploitation. For instance, a 16-year-old female participant who reported knowing about child trafficking said the following: "*Child trafficking is when employers make children earn money but pay them a little while keeping the rest of the money for themselves*" ($CI_{3,}$ a girl who migrated from "Boditi" village to Sodo at the age of 12). This perspective underscores the recognition of a prevalent trafficking pattern whereby migrant children, frequently displaced by poverty, conflict, or a lack of opportunities, become targets for exploitative employers and traffickers exploit these children's vulnerability status, employing deception to draw them into abusive labor conditions. These children are often subjected to long working hours, wage theft, working in unsafe environments, and physical and psychological abuse as psychological manipulation.

The results of the study indicate that participants had adequate knowledge of the main features of child trafficking. The majority, with n=318 (67.19%), identified the statement that states that abused child domestic workers might be trafficking victims as correct, and n=329 (69.56%) children forced to work long hours are considered victims of trafficking as correct. Additionally, n=298 (63.04%) of the participants identified that children working to pay off debt qualify as victims of local child trafficking, and n=340 (71.93%) understood that withholding wages is a form of exploitation as correct.

This finding is further supported by the results from focus group discussions and key informant interviews, where participants knew the indicators of child trafficking. Within the country, child trafficking presents itself through various forms of exploitation, particularly in labor settings where children are forced to work in hazardous conditions. Regarding this, one of the FGD participants has said this, "*In some instances, children are compelled to work to repay debts, resulting in a cycle of servitude that strips them of their rights and freedoms* (FGD_2P_3). While another FGD participant added the following: "*Child domestic workers often face abuse from their employers, suffering both physical and psychological mistreatment, which further heightens their vulnerability* (FGD_1P_1). Similarly, key informants have also expressed greater knowledge regarding the indicators of child trafficking.

For instance, the Key informant from the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs has said the following: "*Children who are forced to work longer hours than initially agreed upon, or whose wages are withheld, clearly fall victim to trafficking, as these conditions reflect systematic coercion and exploitation* (KII3)". The key informants emphasized that the withholding of wages or salaries significantly worsens the situation, stripping children of their financial independence and reinforcing a system of control that hinders them from pursuing alternative opportunities. They further noted that, in numerous instances, trafficked children remain unaware of their rights or lack the resources to contest their circumstances, enabling exploitative practices to continue unimpeded.

The current study assessed participants' knowledge of the various forms of abuse experienced by trafficked children, placing particular emphasis on physical and psychological harm. The results indicate that 353 participants (74.70%) possessed a clear understanding of the widespread occurrence of physical abuse among victims whereas, 295 (62.08%), participants acknowledged

the prevalence of psychological abuse experienced by trafficked children, though recognizing the visible physical harm is evident, the psychological harm trafficking victims endure is seem to less recognized or unnoticed by the study participants compared to the physical abuse. The qualitative findings lend support to this finding. In both FGD sessions, participants noted that victims of child trafficking are subjected to different psychological and physical abuses, including beatings, deprivation of basic needs, and other forms of bodily harm inflicted by traffickers and exploitative employers. Regarding this, one of the FGD participants said the following

> *A few years ago, one of my nieces relocated to Adama after a woman from the local area promised to help her find a babysitting position with one of her relatives. However, for almost a year, the employer restricted any communication with the girl, which raised alarms within the family. As suspicions grew, the family asked the intermediary for clarification on the matter, the woman from the neighborhood who had arranged the job. After many arguments and misleading explanations, she finally sent the girl back. To the family's astonishment, when the girl came home, she was in a state of severe malnutrition and had numerous burns and bruises on her body. According to her story, both the employer and the employer's older daughter were responsible for the injuries* (FGD_2P_4).

The FGD participants underlined that the abusive nature of child trafficking and labor exploitation is common in the circumstances where at-risk children are lured to what seemingly legitimate job situations, only to experience exploitation. They pointed out that often migrant children from disadvantaged socioeconomic backgrounds are deceived by false promises of

employment, education, or a better life, often end up in exploitative conditions that might cause a detrimental impact on their physical, psychological, and social well-being.

The study assessed participants' level of knowledge regarding vulnerability factors to in-country child trafficking with three items rated as correct or incorrect. The results of the study show that the item stating that children from urban areas are vulnerable was rated as correct by 61.66% (n = 292) of participants, and 66.99% (n = 317) indicated that children from rural areas are at high risk of child trafficking. The item stating that children from poor families are more vulnerable was rated as correct by most of the participants, 70.94% (n = 337).

Data generated through FGD and key informant interviews also shows that different factors make children vulnerable to trafficking. The findings from the FGD indicate that child trafficking flourishes in environments where vulnerability is accompanied by poverty, poor infrastructure, limited access to education, and poor knowledge about child trafficking and child rights. According to the results from the focus group discussion, poor rural families who often struggle with financial hardship unknowingly place their children in exploitative situations, hoping that they are securing better opportunities for their children by placing them in the houses of economically better-off households in the city, or in some instances, in rural households. Regarding this, one of the FGD participants said the following

> *Faced with the exigencies of poverty in rural settings, families frequently make arrangements for their children to reside with more affluent households in urban or, at times, other rural locales. This strategy is often undertaken with the sincere aspiration of providing children with access to educational opportunities or an improved standard of living. However, it is a matter of worrisome as these arrangements can, in some instances,*

devolve into situations of severe exploitation, leaving children in such dire circumstances that their only perceived recourse is to abscond (F_2GDp_7)

Furthermore, the FGD participants indicate that in numerous remote and underdeveloped rural areas within the region, the scarcity of basic infrastructure, including educational institutions, healthcare facilities, and employment opportunities, fosters a sense of despondency and desperation among children and their parents. These adverse conditions frequently compel them to pursue improved prospects through migration to proximate urban centers. Traffickers see their desperation as a chance to take advantage of them, twisting their dreams of a fresh start into a nightmare. The idea of the city being this amazing escape turns into a scary trap, leaving them even more open to being hurt and abused by people who are just looking to exploit them. Concerning this, a key informant from BOWSA illustrates it as follows

The frequent migratory patterns of children from impoverished rural Woredas in our zone to the proximate urban centers sadly relate to their aspirations for improved socioeconomic well-being. Driven by a naturally understandable pursuit of better life prospects, children often undertake journeys that may jeopardize their well-being. Once they arrive in urban settlements, they are often engulfed by a multifaceted and challenging reality. The lack of safe housing often leads to homelessness, subjecting them to increased susceptibility (KII2)

In addition, the FGD participants and the interviewed children indicated that often children from rural areas migrate to nearby towns and cities, where they experience language difficulties, which in turn impedes their communication and integration with the communities at their destination, and this can significantly contribute to difficulty in accessing viable job

opportunities and put them in an exploitative condition. They further noted that these interrelated vulnerabilities can lead to adverse outcomes, with some children experiencing homelessness and the associated danger, while others are compelled to endure severely exploitative living conditions, including vulnerability to trafficking.

Furthermore, the data gathered from in-depth interviews with children and key informant interviews reveals a complex interplay between child trafficking and various socioeconomic vulnerabilities. These vulnerabilities are not isolated conditions; rather, they are interconnected structural factors that together enhance the risk of exploitation. Severe household poverty stands out as a critical factor, as economic deprivation limits access to education, healthcare, and necessities, creating an environment that traffickers can exploit by preying on children's desperation.

Regarding this, the key informant from BOWSA said:

> *Children of poor rural families are always at risk. Many disadvantaged rural families are willing to send their children away, hoping that their children will get an opportunity for education and new skills. Some send away with the hope of getting economic support from the remittance.*

Similarly, deficient infrastructure in rural communities, manifested in inadequate schools, health facilities, and transportation networks, limits opportunities for local development and compels children to seek alternatives elsewhere. For instance, Child interviewee 4, a 17-year-old female migrant child working as a lottery ticket seller, has said this

> *The situation at home is a bit difficult. You headily find money even to buy school materials or detergents to clean yourself and your clothes. In that regard, when*

> *you come to town and get yourself a job, you earn money. Therefore, you can provide not only for yourself but can even send money home during special occasions like "Gifata".*

On the other hand, the absence of protective family structures further contributes to vulnerability. Orphaned children, deprived of parental guardianship, are particularly exposed to coercion and manipulation, while those from dysfunctional households characterized by neglect and abuse may actively seek escape from adverse domestic conditions.

Regarding this, *a 16-year-old child participant said this:*

> *My father left us when I was nine years old. I have two brothers and two sisters. My mother and my two older siblings are* petty traders. *After our father left us, things were very difficult for us since the family entirely depended on our father's income for a living. But even though my mother and the other two were working, providing a meal for everyone was getting harder day by day. Therefore, I had to come to Sodo and earn money so that I could support myself and other family* members

In both cases, traffickers exploit the lack of familial support by presenting themselves as providers of care, stability, or opportunity. These familial vulnerabilities intersect with broader structural inequalities, reinforcing the unstable position of children within marginalized communities.

Finally, aspirational migration driven by the glamorization of urban life constitutes a significant dimension of vulnerability. Media portrayals and community narratives often equate city life with wealth, modernity, and opportunity, fostering a desire among children to relocate to urban

centers. Regarding this, an 18-year-old migrant has this to tell on his own pattern of migration to Addis Ababa:

> *I decided to migrate to Addis Ababa, inspired by peers my age who had already undertaken the journey and returned to visit their families during the holidays. To begin my migration, I first traveled to Sodo. Leaving my village with very little money, I took on various jobs to save enough for transportation to Addis Ababa. After nearly ten months of hard work and saving, I finally managed to move to Addis Ababa alongside a few other kids from my village…. (CI_5)*

This aspirational desire for socioeconomic advancement is often exploited by traffickers who offer false promises of employment, education, or prosperity in urban areas. Collectively, these findings suggest the cumulative impact of overlapping vulnerabilities, revealing that child trafficking is not simply a matter of individual choices.

Regarding the traffickers, the result from the quantitative study shows that 82.21% (n=389) of participants rated the statement that states "acquaintances, strangers, friends, neighbors/family friends, relatives, and private companies could be potential traffickers" as correct, and 86.57% of participants (n=409) accurately recognized false promises as a recruitment strategy.

These findings converge with qualitative findings from the FGD and the key informant interviews. The results from the FGDs show that child migration /trafficking is often facilitated by different agencies, including peers/friends, family members, relatives, both close and distant, to some extent, strangers such as long-distance drivers, brokers/ 'Dalales'. Regarding this, in both FGD sessions, the majority of the FGD participants argue that, even though numerous agencies are involved in the trafficking of children, children's strong desire to leave their home village took the lion's share in their relocation.

In a similar way, the qualitative data generated via in-depth interviews with all the interviewed children showed that their relocation was facilitated by someone they knew, including friends, relatives, both close and distant. These children did not identify the individuals who facilitated their relocation as traffickers. This is evident among children who migrated voluntarily to find a better life elsewhere, according to one of the child participants:

> *When I first left home for work, I followed the boy from our neighborhood. He helped many children on their way to Addis Ababa. He took me to his big brother, who lived in Addis Ababa, and he assisted newcomers from our neighborhood in getting jobs and finding them a place to stay* (CI3).

Finally, regarding techniques traffickers use to lure children to towns and to convince parents and lure children, the results from the FGD indicate that traffickers often use false promises and deception to convince both children and their parents and often abuse their position of vulnerability to trap them. Regarding this, one of the FGD participants said the following:

> *Traffickers often target families in tough economic situations. Recently, a widow with five children, the oldest being 13 and the youngest just 1, was approached by someone who offered to send two of her children to Addis Ababa for work and education. Desperate for help, she sent her oldest daughter. However, six months later, she received no payment, and her daughter is not enrolled in school as promised. (FGD_2P_2)*

Traffickers insidiously exploit the aspirations of children and the precarious socioeconomic circumstances of their families through the strategic fabrication of false promises of opportunities, including job offers within urban centers, such as positions within the hospitality sector or as domestic staff. However, these claimed prospects only last for a very short time upon

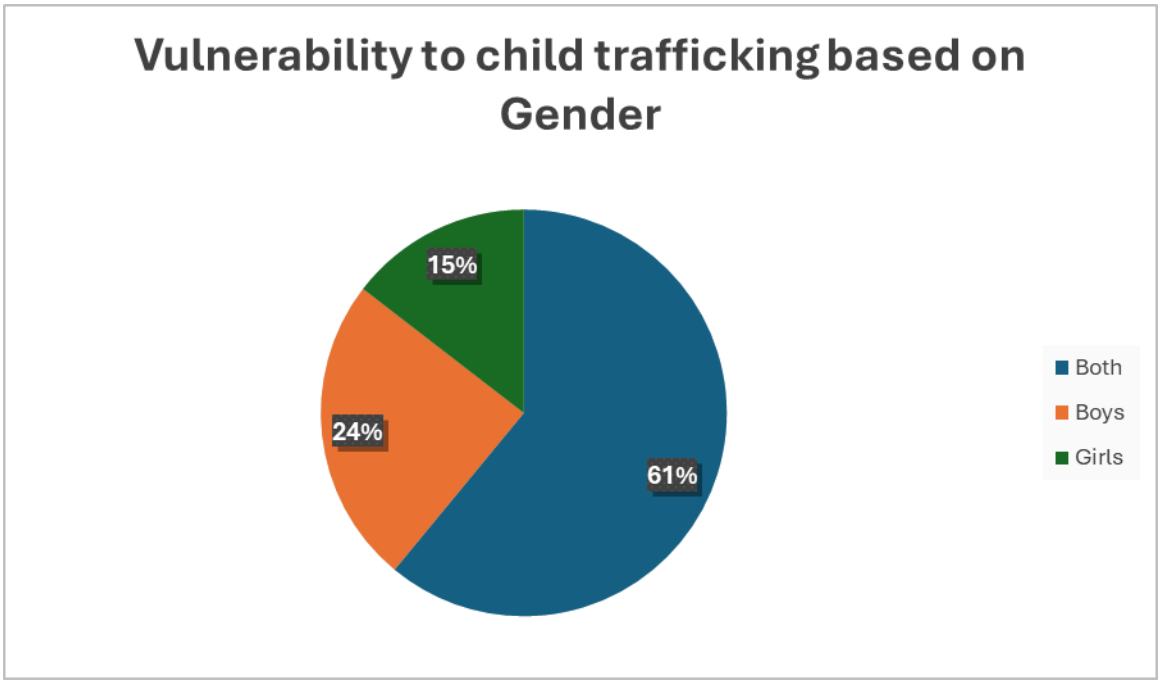
the child's arrival, often culminating in their subjection to exploitative labor arrangements or outright unemployment, thereby negating the very premise of their relocation. According to the key informant from BoWSA, "*Sometimes, they'll even offer quick cash to the family, making them feel like they owe something, which then traps the child in a cycle of working like slaves to pay back made-up debts*" (KII_3). While in other cases, traffickers and some returnees paint a beautiful picture of city life, nice homes, and enough food in the mind of naive children, which is the opposite of the hard life back home, making these vulnerable children desperate to go, only to find out the city is way tougher than they ever imagined.

Participants were also asked in the semi-structured questionnaire section about their perceptions regarding the most vulnerable gender to child trafficking. The results indicate that the majority, 289 (61.1%) of participants, perceive that both boys and girls are highly susceptible to trafficking, and 115 (24.5%) of the respondents stated that boys are the most trafficked in their communities, while 69 (14.58%) identified girls as the most frequently trafficked group.

However, the qualitative findings contradicted the previous findings, indicating that while both boys and girls are vulnerable to trafficking, there is a higher demand for boys. According to key informants and focus group discussion (FGD) participants, the motivations behind trafficking boys and girls differ. Boys are often targeted for roles such as taxi assistants, shoe shiners, and lottery vendors, while girls are more commonly trafficked for domestic labor, babysitting, and sales work in shops.

Figure 3

Vulnerability to trafficking based on gender



Participants were also asked about the age at which boys and girls are usually trafficked from their communities. The majority, n=317 (67%) of the participants reported that boys aged 10-17, and n=345 (73%) of the participants reported that girls aged 12-16 are highly vulnerable to child trafficking in their locality. To sum up, the participants exhibited different levels of understanding regarding child trafficking. While some provided a detailed explanation, others focused on specific aspects.

Lastly, participants were asked how they came to know about child trafficking. Participants reported multiple sources of information about child trafficking. As shown in **Table 12**, the most common source was radio programs (n = 172, 36.4%), followed by personal acquaintance with someone trafficked (n = 147, 31.1%).

Television news programs were also a notable source (n = 83, 17.5%). Less frequently reported sources included documentaries (n = 24, 5.1%), films (n = 13, 2.7%), and the Internet (n = 32, 6.8%). Very few participants indicated learning about trafficking through interpersonal communication (n = 2, 0.4%).

Table 12

Sources of Information About Child Trafficking (N = 473)

No	Items	N	%
1.	I personally know someone who was trafficked	147	31.1
2.	Someone I know told me about it	2	.4
3.	I watched a news program on TV	83	17.5
4.	I watched a documentary on TV	24	5.1
5.	I watched a film on TV	13	2.7
6.	I listened to a program on the radio	172	36.4
7.	I read about it on the Internet	32	6.8

4.3.1 The Relationship between Knowledge and Demographic Variables

To determine the demographic variables associated with knowledge about internal child trafficking, a bivariate analysis was done and computed for each independent variable. In the bivariate analysis, at $p<0.05$, age, perceived socio-economic status, education status, and having a trafficked family member were the variables that showed statistically significant association with the outcome variable, which is knowledge about internal child trafficking.

Accordingly, the odds of having good knowledge about internal child trafficking among residents aged between 31-45 (AOR=1.301, 95% CI=1.132-1.522), and those aged above 45 (AOR=1.260, 95% CI=1.113-1.464) were likely to have adequate knowledge compared to those in the age

group of 19-30. Participants with an educational level of first degree and above (AOR=3.25, 95%CI=1.197-8.810) were more likely to have adequate knowledge compared to illiterates.

In addition, participants who perceived their socioeconomic status as better than most people (AOR=1.395, 95% CI=1.26-1.54) were more likely to have adequate knowledge about internal child trafficking. Similarly, the odds of having good knowledge about internal child trafficking among residents with trafficked family members were 2.35 times higher (AOR=2.35, 95% CI=1.53, 6.81) when compared to residents who have no trafficked family members.

Table 13

Multivariate Analysis between Socio-Demographic Characteristics and Knowledge of In-Country Child Trafficking Among the Participants

Predictors			95% CI	
		AOR	Lower	Upper
Age	19-30 (ref.)	1.00		
	31- 45	1.301**	1.132	1.522
	above 45	1.260**	1.119	1.464
Gender	Male (ref)	1		
	female	1.185	0.839	1.674
Level of Education	Illiterate	1		
	Read and write only	.989	0.493	1.981
	Primary education completed (1-8 grades)	.879	0.308	1.373
	High school completed (9-12 grades)	1.177	0.998	1.937
	Post-secondary training of less than 3 years	1.130	0.958	1.324
	First Degree and above	3.25**	1.197	8.810
Trafficked family member	No	1		
	Yes	2.35**	1.536	6.807
Perceived socioeconomic status	Worse than most people	1		
	Same as most people	0.873	588	1.298
	Better than most people	1.395**	1.260	1.544

4.4 Attitude, Practice, and Intention to engage in Child Trafficking Prevention

4.4.1 Attitudes toward Child Trafficking

Attitudes toward child trafficking were assessed using nine items that were meant to assess their level of concern, attitude toward the victims, and willingness to be involved in preventive actions. Participants scored an average of 29.94 (SD = 4.01, Min = 20, Max = 41) out of a possible 45 points on the attitude scale. The highest scores were for the attitude toward the victims (M = 10.19, SD = 2.25), followed by willingness to be involved in preventive action (M = 10.05, SD = 2.36), and level of concern (M = 9.69, SD = 1.63).

Table 14

Descriptive statistics on Attitudes towards In-country child trafficking

No	Items	Mean	S. D
1	In-country child trafficking is a serious problem in Wolaita Sodo town	3.07	.99
2	It is not difficult to identify a child trafficking situation in Wolaita Sodo	3.51	.93
3	Children who end up being trafficked do so by their own choice	2.57	.93
4	If those trafficked children were poor to start with, at least now they have a job	2.Submission44	.98
5	People I know say children who are trafficked deserve what they get	2.59	1.13
6	I would be willing to report suspected cases of child trafficking to the authorities	3.51	.92
7	Internal child trafficking is a significant societal problem in Wolaita Sodo town that deserves more attention	3.13	1.02
8	I would be interested in attending a workshop on how to identify and prevent child trafficking	3.57	.96
9	I would feel comfortable talking to my neighbors about child trafficking prevention	3.72	.92

Note: N= 473. The decision was based on the following categories, whereby Negative (1.00–2.59), 'Neutral' (2.60–3.39), and Positive (3.40–5.00).

The result of the study indicates mixed perceptions among the participants regarding in-country child trafficking. Items reflecting recognition of the seriousness of child trafficking (M = 3.07,

SD = .99) and its societal significance (M = 3.13, SD = 1.02) were rated as neutral, suggesting that while respondents acknowledge the issue, their concern is not strongly pronounced.

These findings are corroborated by qualitative data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which revealed that child trafficking is a serious problem requiring the attention of various concerned bodies, whereby five out of the eight participants in FGD1 and six participants in FGD2 reported that child trafficking is an issue of significant concern. They further indicated that numerous children are frequently deceived by traffickers, often lured by promises of improved living conditions elsewhere or by following established migration routes of returnees. Discussants further explained that Sodo town serves not only as a source but also as a transit point and destination for children trafficked from neighboring Zones, Woredas, and Kebeles. Regarding this FGD_1P_5 indicated that

> *Child migration/trafficking has gotten worse in the past couple of years, as many children came to our town from neighboring kebeles and Woreadas to Sodo. At the same time, many children from this town also migrate to various towns and cities, including Addis Ababa, Hawassa, Jimma, Adama, and Shashemene*.

The data from the FGD sessions indicates that the increase in child migration and, simultaneously, child trafficking, has appeared as a noticeable socio-demographic challenge in recent years. This problem is predominantly evident in towns like Sodo, which have become significant nodes in child mobility patterns. They have further reported that many children arrive in Sodo every season from surrounding rural kebeles and woredas, whereby the town acts as an attractive destination due to perceived opportunities or as a transitional point in broader migratory flows. However, there were some disagreements regarding the movement of children

in their region. FGD1P8 and FGD2P3 specifically emphasized that the movement of children in their locality is more akin to voluntary migration, often taking place with the knowledge of the parents of migrant children, and is closely associated with the long history of migration that society has practiced.

Adding on the above notion, FGD_1P_5 reported that: "*Children's mobility in their town is more of an internal migration in which the local people view it as an opportunity, and migrating to urban centers like Hawassa, Addis Ababa, or other towns can render a great potential for a better life and education*". The data from FGD participants indicates that there are some gaps among the community in marking the boundary between migration and trafficking, in which migration is associated with acquiring knowledge and skills that can contribute to a brighter future, as well as seen as a means for escaping poverty, earning money, and providing opportunities to improve their financial and social capital.

The key informants also shared the views of the FGD participants. According to the key informants, most parents of trafficked children and the children themselves equate trafficking with migration, and migration for work is considered a positive experience, both by children and the community in which children lay the foundation for their future lives, despite the hardship children experience**.**

Concerning this, a key informant from the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs said: "*It is like a custom among some rural households to let children follow established migration routes of returnees*" (KII 2). Child migration, even though it often results in exploitation, is considered an opportunity by society, owing to the deceptive tactics employed by traffickers and the idealized perceptions that children and parents hold about life in a city. Furthermore, the FGD participants in both sessions noted that, for some families in rural areas, there is a tradition to send their

children off for work along paths well-known by those who have gone and returned, which is not merely a random choice but rather it is a deeply ingrained practice, an unwritten rule that has been passed down through generations. These "established routes" are not just lines on a map; they are pathways forged by the journeys of past travelers. The stories and, at times, the financial rewards brought back by returnees lend these journeys an air of legitimacy and promise. For many, leaving home is viewed as an essential step toward a brighter future.

4.4.1.1 ***Attitudes toward Victims of Child Trafficking.*** The residents' attitudes toward victims of child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town were measured using three items. These statements were intended to gauge potential victim-blaming attitudes, exploitative situations, and social acceptance of negative myths about victims. For example, agreement with the statement that trafficked children benefit by having a job (M = 2.44, SD = .98) and that they deserve what they get (M = 2.59, SD = 1.13) and, the belief that children are trafficked by their own choice (M = 2.57, SD = .93) fell within the negative category, showing rejection of exploitative rationalizations. This lower mean score suggests a more sympathetic, empathetic, or less victim-blaming attitude. It indicates a strong rejection among the residents of the notion that trafficked children are responsible for their predicament. This finding suggests a prevalent understanding that child trafficking is not a matter of choice for the victim but rather a result of exploitation and vulnerability.

These findings are partially supported by qualitative findings in which the data generated through FGD and key informant interviews revealed that the residents seem to be empathic toward victims of child trafficking. The FGD participants agreed on the fact that child migration, particularly when younger children migrate or are trafficked to cities and towns, makes them prone to various forms of exploitation. Child trafficking can expose children to various

socioeconomic problems, such as homelessness, forced labour, and physical and sexual exploitation. Their education might be at risk, and their health is also at risk due to the ill-treatment trafficked children have experienced; their whereabouts may not be known. It may jeopardize their well-being, education, and health; as a result, their physical, psychological, and social development can be impaired. When children are subjected to exploitation, they are victims, and their presence in such circumstances is not attributable to their culpability. They are rather victims who have been deprived of their formative years and fundamental rights.

Similarly, five out of eight FGD1 participants have indicated that trafficked children are just victims of abuse and exploitation, in which they are often subjected to different problems and dangers, including long hours working per day, denial of education, and no or little time to play, sleep, and read schoolbooks, which may contribute to poor physical and psychological development. FGD2 participants also agreed on the fact that trafficked children are victims of modern-day slavery, in which there is a huge chance for them to experience the worst issues, such as losing the connection they have with their parents and siblings. Their whereabouts may not be known for a long time, which puts the parents of those children under difficult circumstances. Regarding this, FGD1P6 has shared his observation in the following way:

> *Eight years ago, an incident happened involving a relative of mine from a nearby rural village. A local broker, known in the community for facilitating job opportunities for children in various towns and cities, contacted a family. He managed to convince the child and her parents to send their then 16-year-old daughter away, given the family's challenging economic situation at the time. Tragically, it was later discovered that the broker had not secured a legitimate opportunity for the daughter. Instead, he had sold*

> *her into domestic servitude to a rural household, where she was subjected to different forms of exploitation and abuse. Upon her unfortunate return, no one blamed the young woman. Instead, the relatives and neighbors sympathized with her condition. They thought that she was a vulnerable child, easily deceived by the manipulative and false promises and predatory actions of the broker.*

On the contrary, trafficked children reported otherwise; the lived experiences of trafficked children indicate the stigma and discrimination they have experienced due to trafficking. Far from being seen as victims of unfortunate circumstances, these children frequently report being labeled as '*duriye*.' This local term carries a negative connotation, essentially referring to someone lazy, irresponsible, and disinclined to contribute to their family's well-being, preferring to wander without employment. While some child trafficking victims managed to return to their home communities, they have reported experiencing a significant challenge that emerges from the phenomenon of re-victimization, where they are often exposed to renewed exploitation. This is evident as most of these children are targeted by former or new exploiters who consider them "experienced" or "skilled" workers due to their prior engagements. As a result, most of these returned children find themselves tied to similar, or even worse, exploitative situations in which they are frequently denied basic rights, including access to education, which is crucial for their long-term development, and adequate healthcare services.

This cycle of exploitation can be attributed to a systemic failure in assisting victims and highlights the need for vigorous reintegration programs that prioritize the holistic well-being and protection of these vulnerable groups. Regarding this, one of the child participants shared her experience as follows.

> *My 'uncle' took me to Addis Ababa when I was twelve years old and promised to put me in school, something I had never had the chance to do, and I was told that my job is to assist with housework in exchange. But when I got there, his real motivation became clear. He made me work as a street vendor and demanded at least three hundred Birr a day, although I was only allowed to have one hundred Birr for breakfast and dinner. I would endure physical abuse, beatings, and occasionally even starvation if I didn't reach my daily goal of 400 Birr. Eventually, I managed to run away and return home, anticipating a warm welcome from my parents and relatives. To my dismay, our neighbors forbade their children from speaking or playing with me, uttering the hurtful words, "You'll become a 'duriye' like her." This rejection forced me to leave my village once more. I moved to Sodo, where I started working as a street vendor, but this time, with no boss, just me (An eighteen-year-old girl working as a street vendor around Mhael Ketema).*

This stigmatization manifests in various insidious ways. Trafficked children often experience guilty feelings, which arise from a misperception of the victims as lazy, which is unfairly associated with them. They are subjected to prejudice that attributes their unfortunate experience to a personal failure or lack of motivation rather than viewing them as victims, which, in turn, hinders successful rehabilitation, reintegration and perpetuates a cycle of marginalization, making it even more challenging for them to overcome the profound challenges inflicted by their trafficking experiences.

4.4.1.2 Willingness to engage in prevention. Items related to proactive engagement such as willingness to report suspected cases (M = 3.51, SD = .92), interest in attending workshops (M = 3.57, SD = .96), and comfort in discussing prevention with neighbors (M = 3.72, SD = .92), were rated positively, indicating a readiness among respondents to participate in preventive and awareness-raising activities.

This finding is also supported by qualitative data from Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), which revealed that child trafficking is a serious problem requiring the attention of various concerned bodies. Six out of eight FGD1 participants agreed that it is indeed a widespread problem of great concern and emphasized the importance of participating in the intervention. Moreover, they have also mentioned that there are challenges related to the wider belief among the community. Discussants further explained that the town serves not only as a source but also as a transit point and destination for children trafficked from neighboring Zones, Woreadas, and Kebeles.

However, there were some disagreements regarding the movement of children in their region. FGD1P8 specifically underlined that the movement of children in their locality is more of a voluntary migration that often takes place with the knowledge of the parents of the children. Similarly, FGD1 Participant 5 also reported that local people tend to believe that children migrating to urban centers like Hawassa, Addis Ababa, or other towns have the potential for a better life and education. Migration is associated with acquiring knowledge and skills that can contribute to a brighter future. Furthermore, FGD participants in all sessions argued that migration is considered by a wider local population as a means for escaping poverty, earning money, and providing opportunities to improve their financial and social capital.

The key informants also shared the views of the FGD participants. According to the key informants, most parents of trafficked children and the children themselves see it as a migration

for work in which children lay the foundation for their future lives, despite the hardship children experience. The fact that child movement, which often results in exploitation, is considered an opportunity by society is closely linked to the deceptive narratives traffickers use and the glamorized perceptions that children and parents hold about life in a city.

Consistent with the quantitative data and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews confirmed that child trafficking is a significant issue in the region and specifically in Sodo town. Informants reported that child trafficking is a worrisome matter, as the number of children victimized by trafficking is on the rise. When asked about the severity of the problem, the key informant at BoWSA stated: *"It is a rampant problem that needs much attention. Children are not only trafficked from this town; they are trafficked to this town as well".* In addition, the key informants indicated that child trafficking as well as child out-migration poses a significant social problem that perpetuates a cycle of victimization, as migrant children are left to navigate the harsh realities of life, further increasing their risk of trafficking and re-victimization. The key informants emphasized the inevitability of people's mobility, including that of children. Thus, it is important to manage child migration as best as possible, since what starts as child migration might end as trafficking. They further noted that child migration has become part of the community's culture. According to the informants, there are instances in which children leave their home village and family without even consulting their parents, which puts them at risk of child trafficking.

FGD participants agreed on the fact that child migration, particularly when younger children migrate or are trafficked to cities and towns, makes them prone to various forms of exploitation. They can engage in different work, such as domestic servants, in traditional weaving industries, and as street vendors. Child trafficking can expose children to various socioeconomic problems,

such as homelessness, forced labour, and physical and sexual exploitation. Their education might be at risk, and their health is also at risk due to the ill treatment the children went through; their whereabouts may not be known. It may impose severe risks to their well-being, education, and health. Their physical, psychological, and social development is in jeopardy.

Concerning this, five out of eight FGD1 participants have indicated the difficulties and dangers to which trafficked children are exposed, including long working hours per day, denying education, and no or little time to play, sleep, and read schoolbooks, which may contribute to poor physical and psychological development. All FGD2 participants agreed on the fact that trafficked children may lose the connection they have with their parents and siblings.

Children were also asked about their experiences with trafficking and the potential impact it can have on their lives. Child participants also mentioned the fact that trafficking may lead to a range of negative outcomes, including poor health conditions, malnutrition, and homelessness. Moreover, some children have shared the challenges they have experienced at the hands of their employers at various times. For instance, in describing his experience, child interviewee 2, a 14-year-old male, stated:

> *I was taken to Hawassa by a distant relative following the death of my mother when I was just 10 years old. He told my father and grandmother he would take good care of me. He promised to provide for my every need. But that was a lie. He made me work from 5:00 AM to 12:00 pm without paying me anything or providing for my needs at his restaurant as a dishwasher.*

Five of the children interviewed reported that their education was greatly impacted, and for some children, returning or reunification with their families was a difficult process. Despite this, some FGD participants seem to question the existence of child trafficking in their locality, indicating

that it is migration and the challenges associated with it. They try to justify the 'advantage' children and communities get in terms of social and financial capital because of the process. They tend to view it as a means for children to form their claim-cash, create social systems, as well as learn abilities that will help in their future life. In describing this, FGD 2 participant three reported that:

> *Sending away children for work may benefit children differently. In addition to earning money of their own and developing their social network, it also helps them to be self-reliant since they must do a lot of things by themselves. I believe that it helps children to be strong and self-reliant and helps them build other qualities that would help them in their adult life. (FGD2P3)*

Despite experiencing significant abuse and exploitation at the hands of their employers, the interviewed children primarily framed their experiences through the lens of migration. Rather than dwelling on the negative aspects of their situation, they emphasized the resilience they demonstrated in overcoming adversity.

Child interviewee 3, a 16-year-old female migrant, has said the following.

> *It is obvious that when a child leaves home, the burden on the family is somehow eased because children entirely depend on their parents for every need, whether they can provide it for them or not. On the other hand, some children are brave enough to make savings in all the hardships and exploitive conditions they have been through, and they make some contributions at critical times. Some of them saved for a couple of years to buy their family cattle, which can help them produce better on their farm.*

According to the participants, relief from the burden of the family and dependence on oneself is more valued, even if the cost is being trafficked, exploited, or misused, or experiencing difficult living conditions. Despite this, children reflect on their experience as educational as well as beneficial in many ways. According to these child informants, they strongly believe that their previous exploitative experience helps them gain a better understanding of what life is like in a city. Beyond that, they think that their labour is more valued since it leads to the generation of income.

Generally, the fact that child migration, which often results in exploitation, is considered an opportunity by society, owing to the deceptive tactics employed by traffickers and the idealized perceptions that children and parents hold about urban living. Both key informants and FGD participants emphasized the inevitability of people's mobility, including that of children. Thus, it is important to manage child migration as best as possible, since what starts as child migration might end as trafficking. Moreover, key informants and FGD participants further noted that child migration has become part of the community's culture. According to the informants, there are instances in which children leave their home village and family without even consulting their parents, which puts them at risk of child trafficking.

4.4.2 Attitude toward Preventive Practice

Table 15

Descriptive statistics on Attitude toward Preventive Practices Regarding In-Country Child Trafficking

No	Items	Mean	S. D
1.	Reporting any suspected cases of child trafficking to the police will be helpful in the fight against child trafficking	3.49	1.12
2.	Collecting information about child trafficking would be good for preventing child trafficking	3.61	1.07
3.	Sharing any information concerning child trafficking with friends would help me contribute my share to the fight against child trafficking	3.73	1.01
4.	For me, informing my friends that some children migrating for work could be vulnerable to child trafficking is helpful in the fight against child trafficking	3.50	1.11
5.	I think it is good to speak to your children about the dangers of child trafficking	2.89	.98
6.	I feel that offering advice to someone to seek accurate information before deciding to send a child for a job elsewhere is good in the fight against child trafficking	3.68	1.12
7.	Educating members of my community about the risk of child trafficking is useful	3.69	.99

Note, 'Negative' (1.00–2.59), 'Neutral' (2.60–3.39), and Positive (3.40–5.00).

The findings of the study indicate that participants revealed a generally positive attitude toward preventive practice, with most items rated above the threshold of 3.40. Participants expressed positive attitudes toward collecting information (M = 3.61, SD = 1.07), sharing information with friends (M = 3.73, SD = 1.01), informing peers about vulnerabilities of migrating children (M = 3.50, SD = 1.11), offering advice to seek accurate information before sending children for work (M = 3.68, SD = 1.12), and educating community members about trafficking risks (M = 3.69, SD = .99). The results indicate significant support for preventive practices that are rooted in community engagement and interpersonal relationships.

On the contrary, the mean score of two of the items falls under a neutral category. Reporting suspected cases to the police (M = 3.09, SD = 1.12) and speaking directly to children about trafficking dangers (M = 2.89, SD = .98) received moderate endorsement, indicating that respondents may feel less confident or less inclined to engage in formal reporting or direct child-focused communication.

Generally, these findings are supported by data from the key informant interviews and FGDs. The analysis of the qualitative findings shows that participants tend to have a positive attitude toward preventive practice and recognize the importance of preventive measures, though they faced significant challenges. Some participants acknowledged the inherent difficulties, while others believed that preventive actions are always possible and necessary to deter children from migrating. Six of the FGD1 participants, along with all participants from the second session, emphasized the significance of a community's positive attitude toward addressing child trafficking and having a proactive and supportive community can foster a safe environment where victims feel more at ease and seek help.

Furthermore, participants in both sessions underlined that such an attitude can enhance the effectiveness of awareness-raising efforts and facilitate education and collaboration among stakeholders, which is an essential element in preventing and addressing child trafficking. The participants stressed the crucial role of cultivating a culture of vigilance, empathy, and support within communities to protect vulnerable children and hold traffickers accountable. They pointed out the necessity for a collective effort to create safer environments for children, which in turn contributes to the overall well-being of the community. However, according to the participants, a lack of resources impedes the translation of their positive attitudes into actionable steps. Additionally, they identified several challenges impacting effective prevention within the

community, including bureaucratic obstacles, societal attitudes, and hesitance from certain relevant organizations, which hinder prevention efforts.

4.4.3 Preventive Practice

Participants were asked several questions regarding how often they engaged in preventive practices in the past twelve months. These questions were meant to assess practices related to information (sharing /gathering) and involvement in practical action. Participants scored an average of 27.65 (SD = 5.71, Min = 16, Max = 39) out of a possible 40 points on the preventive scale. Of the total participants, 265 (51.6%) scored above the mean on the preventive practice scale.

Table 16

Engagement in Preventive Practices Regarding In-Country Child Trafficking

No	*Items*	*Never*	*Rarely*	*Sometimes*	*Often*	*Always*	*Mean*	*SD*
1.	Report to the police any suspected cases of child trafficking	4.0 0.85%	108 22.9%	112 23.7%	187 39.7%	62 13.2%	3.42	0.99
2.	Find information about child trafficking	5.0 1.0%	58 12.3%	138 29.2%	169 35.8%	103 21.7%	3.68	0.98
3.	Spoken to your children about the dangers of child trafficking	4 0.85%	207 43.7%	79 16.6%	123 25.9%	61 13.0%	3.07	0.99
4.	Share any information you have with friends concerning child trafficking	23 4.9%	150 31.81%	211 44.7%	87 18.4%	2 0.4%	3.75	1.11
5.	Offer advice to someone to seek accurate information before deciding to send a child for a job elsewhere	5.0 1%	144 30.4%	132 27.9%	137 29.1%	55 11.7%	3.19	0.84
6.	Refused an offer for your child to work because you suspected it might be trafficking	3.0 .6%	23 4.86%	165 34.8%	214 45.32%	68 14.44%	3.71	1.03
7.	Reported suspected child trafficking activity to the authorities	3.0 0.6%	118 24.9%	91 19.3%	198 41.6%	62 13.2	3.43	0.79
8.	Collect independent information before supporting someone's decision to send a child for a job elsewhere	3.0 0.6%	111 23.5%	115 24.3%	183 38.7%	61 12.8	3.39	1.02

The cut-off point is based on these three categories, whereby Low' (1.00–2.59), 'Moderate' (2.60–3.39), and 'High' (3.40–5.00).

The quantitative data analysis reveals varying levels of engagement in actions related to child trafficking prevention. As illustrated in **Table 16**, the assessment of engagement in preventive practices among participants indicates that reporting suspected cases of child trafficking to the police was practiced often (M = 3.42, SD = 0.99), with most participants indicating they had "sometimes" or "often" reported. Similarly, reporting suspected trafficking activity to the authorities was endorsed at a comparable level (M = 3.43, SD = 0.79), suggesting consistent engagement with formal reporting mechanisms.

However, the data generated by FGD reveal otherwise, whereby lower levels of engagement in these activities. Suggesting fear of retaliation, uncertainty about appropriate channels, and concerns about the effectiveness of legal intervention as major barriers that impede reporting practices among the residents. Regarding this, one of the FGD participants said the following:

> *"Reporting suspected cases of trafficking to authorities is a significant challenge for most of us, which often prevents us from acting. A primary concern is the fear of being implicated in the crime; many of us worry that we may inadvertently become entangled in the crime we are reporting. The fear of being associated with the matter, coupled with the perceived bureaucratic hurdles within both law enforcement and judicial systems as well as the complex and often lengthy processes involved in investigations and court proceedings, can be overwhelming, leading people to deliberately avoid participation* (FGD1P7).

Generally, the FGD participants in both sessions noted that residents are very hesitant toward reporting suspected cases of child trafficking and exploitation. Concerns regarding retaliation and ineffective legal responses deter individuals from acting. They further suggested the need for the

development and improvements in anonymous reporting systems, and strengthening institutional accountability, which may encourage more proactive engagement in preventing child trafficking. This is further corroborated by the key informants. The key informant from the child protection unit highlighted a gap between the community's readiness to report suspected child trafficking and their actual reporting actions by stating the following:

> *In general, although residents often express a willingness to notify authorities, this intent is frequently obstructed by significant concerns. These issues primarily stem from different systemic and contextual obstacles: insufficient reporting channels, complex bureaucratic processes within the legal system, and a widespread fear among residents of being linked to the crime or its offenders. I think both logistical and procedural difficulties, coupled with social apprehensions, significantly diminish the chances of transforming positive reporting intentions into actual reporting behavior (KII1)*

When asked about their engagement in seeking information on child trafficking, participants reported that their frequent engagement with the act (M = 3.68, SD = 0.98), with a substantial proportion of participants reporting that they had “often” or “always” sought such information. Sharing information with friends was also highly reported (M = 3.75, SD = 1.11), indicating that informal peer-to-peer communication is a common practice in prevention efforts.

Participants were also asked whether they had declined any suspicious job offers for children in the past twelve months. The analysis for this item resulted in a mean score of (M=3.71, SD=1.03), indicating the participants' ability to discern and reject potentially exploitative work opportunities for children. This finding is partially supported by qualitative evidence.

Participants in the focus group discussions (FGDs) indicated that residents are particularly interested in specific areas of preventive practices, indicating a desire for sharing information concerning child trafficking, as participants in both FGD sessions expressed a collective desire to better understand this issue. The participants recognized the importance of awareness, as it is a valuable preventive measure. In this regard, FGD1P3 shared his observation as follows:

> *Often, NGOs and concerned government bodies working in the area have provided different resources and training to obtain accurate and reliable information on this issue for residents. They often prepared awareness-raising campaigns at school and different social events, disseminated flyers and brochures, etc. The community has come to realize that having information empowers individuals to identify the risks associated with trafficking and improves their ability to engage in the fight against child trafficking and protect vulnerable children.*

Furthermore, the FGD participants highlighted existing misunderstandings about the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders in the fight against child trafficking. This results in gaps in understanding, coordination efforts, and hinders the effectiveness of preventive and intervention measures intended to combat child trafficking. Except for one participant in Focus Group Discussion one (FGD1), all participants in FGD2 reported that combating child trafficking is a task that needs to be done by the government, noting that it is a widely held perception among the community.

Specifically, in holding traffickers accountable and enforcing the laws intended to address this issue, combating child trafficking effectively is a main challenge, as there is a lack of resources, expertise, and services within the community. All FGD participants across the sessions

underlined these limitations, indicating that the limited capacity of the community has greatly impeded their contribution, suggesting the need for sustainable solutions to address the various aspects of child trafficking and the need to devise and implement a comprehensive and long-term approach to effectively combat this issue.

Similarly, the key informants from the Bureau of Women and Social Affairs (BOWSA) acknowledged the existence of occasional awareness campaigns made by various concerned bodies on child trafficking, though their effectiveness remains questionable and linked to a lack of coordinated effort between the stakeholders, and this, in turn results in fragmented efforts, reducing the impact of preventive measures at the grassroots level. Furthermore, the key informants underlined the importance of adopting multidisciplinary interventions in child trafficking prevention efforts, which combine law enforcement, education, and social services and create a comprehensive framework for intervention, since different stakeholders have different roles to play in the fight against child trafficking. Although there are some awareness-raising campaigns, the problem continues to exist, and these efforts are insufficient in addressing the problem. In illustrating this, a key informant from BOWSA has said the following:

> *NGOs and concerned government bodies disseminate occasional awareness-raising messages and resources and provide training in both urban and rural settings. Although these initiatives have an immense role in educating the target groups about the dangers of child trafficking, they are not sufficient to address the underlying issues fueling the problem. There is a long-standing tradition of migration, which influences people's decision-making when considering opportunities elsewhere. Moreover, few job opportunities in the rural areas, as well as a high unemployment rate,*

> *combined with deep-rooted poverty, serve as a factor pushing young people and children to seek alternatives beyond their immediate locality. Because of this, migration is viewed by many as a pathway to financial stability and better prospects, often overlooking the risks involved. Thus, a more comprehensive approach is necessary, one that combines education with economic empowerment, job creation, and interventions intended to address the root causes of migration-driven vulnerabilities (KI2)*

While campaigns raise public consciousness, they often lack mechanisms for sustained engagement and behavioral change. The key informants highlighted the need for community collaboration and trust-building initiatives for meaningful impact, in which they underscored that in the absence of active local community participation, preventive efforts may fail to address the root causes of trafficking, such as economic vulnerability, misinformation, and lack of access to credible resources.

On the other hand, the data from the quantitative discussion indicated a moderate level of adherence among the residents regarding certain preventive practices. Participants were asked how often they had spoken to their children about the danger of child trafficking in the past twelve months. The result shows that it was less frequent (M = 3.07, SD = 0.99), with nearly 45% of participants reporting they had "rarely" engaged in such discussions.

The qualitative data generated through the focus group discussions and key informants also lend support to this finding, which reveals that there is a recognized lack of communication between parents and their children regarding several topics. Despite a growing recognition of child trafficking and the increasing efforts from various stakeholders to equip families with the knowledge and understanding needed to protect their children from this grave danger, the

residents do not explicitly teach their children about human trafficking in a formal, structured way. These are mainly attributed to various socio-economic and cultural factors, including poverty and economic hardship, lack of awareness, community culture, traditional cultural taboos, and communication gaps, and a focus on transnational trafficking. In elaborating this, one of the FGD participants said the following:

> *The culture of having communication with children on different matters, including reproductive health, exploitation, and so forth, is generally very limited in our society. On top of that, there's no significant knowledge among parents about the true dangers of human trafficking and the deceptive tactics used by traffickers. Many parents don't recognize the signs of exploitation or the severe risks involved. Child migration is viewed as one way of improving household economy and means of contributing to families' household income, unaware of the potential for abuse, exploitation, and forced labor or sexual exploitation (FGD2P5).*

Additionally, advising others to seek accurate information before sending a child to work results in a mean score of (M=3.19, S. D=0.84). This result implies that participants exhibited a moderate level of engagement in advising others to verify employment opportunities before allowing a child to work elsewhere. Results from the qualitative findings indicate several factors that hinder engagement in preventive practices, which include misinformation, economic pressures, and limited access to credible sources, suggesting that strengthening the outreach efforts through awareness campaigns and providing accessible resources on safe employment practices could enhance these preventive measures.

Participants were asked about their adherence to the practice of gathering independent information before endorsing a child's employment decision over the past twelve months, resulting in a mean score of (M = 3.39, SD = 1.02), which was moderately reported, reflecting recognition of its importance but less consistent practice.

On the other hand, the data from key informants show otherwise. According to the key informant from BoWSA, "*This phenomenon is best described in terms of the culture of silence and normalization in which people are unwilling to speak out against child labor or exploitation because they are either involved or have normalized the problem"* (KII2). In addition, the qualitative data from the FGDs also shows that there is a lack of community action against child trafficking.

Despite knowledge of brokers and traffickers, community members remain passive, failing to question or challenge their actions. One of the FGD participants reports her concern about an increase in child migration and exploitation within the community. In describing this, she has said the following: "*I think the community chooses to ignore child exploitation, in which it has become a common practice to see a child as young as 10-12 years serving as a coffee attendant in traditional coffee shops as a full-day worker" (FGD2P6)*. Generally, the findings from the FGD data, key informant interviews, and child interviews indicate that despite the residents' awareness of child trafficking, they often hesitate to engage in prevention efforts.

4.4.4 Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Intention

Participants were asked several questions to assess the role of subjective norms in shaping their behavior. These questions were meant to assess perceived social pressure and motivation to comply. Participants scored an average of 25.59 (SD = 5.68, Min = 14, Max = 39) out of a possible 40 points on the subjective norms scale.

Table 17

Descriptive Statistics on Subjective Norms, N=473

No	Items	Mean	S. D
1.	People who report suspected child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town are generally well-respected by others	2.98	1.11
2.	My close friends disapprove of others who do not report suspected child trafficking.	2.91	.77
3.	People who know me would think I am a bad person if I did not report suspected child trafficking.	4.07	.85
4.	If I knew about a child trafficking incident in Wolaita Sodo town, I would feel obligated to report it.	3.81	.87
5.	Reporting suspected child trafficking would make me feel like I am helping to protect children.	3.52	1.07
6.	I would feel guilty if I did not report suspected child trafficking, and a child was harmed.	2.81	1.01
7.	Reporting suspected child trafficking is important to me because I want to keep my community safe	2.71	1.03
8.	I need to do my part to prevent child trafficking in my community	2.76	1.08

Note N= 473, Low' (1.00–2.59), 'Neutral' (2.60–3.39), and 'High' (3.40–5.00).

As shown in **Table 17**, the findings indicate that participants' mean scores ranged from neutral to high threshold on key items related to social norms surrounding child trafficking prevention practices. The analysis of subjective norms related to reporting child trafficking revealed consistently higher mean scores across some items**.** Participants agreed that failing to report suspected trafficking would make them appear as a bad person (M = 4.07, SD = .85), indicating a strong perception of social disapproval for inaction. Similarly, participants expressed a sense of personal obligation to report incidents (M = 3.81, SD = .87), suggesting that moral responsibility plays a significant role in shaping reporting behavior. In addition, reporting was

perceived as a way of contributing to child trafficking prevention (M = 3.52, SD = 1.07), further reinforcing positive subjective norms toward preventive action.

However, participants' responses to items related to social expectation revealed mixed responses. Participants seem to be uncertain about whether reporting is respected (M = 2.98, SD = 1.11) and whether close friends disapprove of non-reporting (M = 2.91, SD = .77), indicating that social recognition is not a major driving force behind reporting. Likewise, the perceived social pressure from close circles was not significant, as evidenced by a nearly neutral response to the statement.

In addition, intrinsic motivators displayed uncertainty; participants were mostly neutral about feeling guilty if they failed to report and a child was harmed (Mean = 2.81, S.D. 1.01), and they did not agree that 'Reporting suspected child trafficking is important to me because I want to keep my community safe' (Mean = 2.71, S.D. 1.03). Lastly, the feeling of personal responsibility or agency was also not consistently pronounced, as reflected in the neutral response to 'I need to do my part to prevent child trafficking in my community' (Mean = 2.76, S.D. 1.08). These results collectively suggest that while broader community expectations may exist, several more specific social and intrinsic motivators for reporting and prevention are not strongly or consistently present among the population.

This is further supported by data from the qualitative findings, which reported fear of being stigmatized by society, lack of trust in law enforcement, or the perception that reporting makes no difference, all contributed to this lower attitude. The FGD participants in both FGD sessions underlined that individuals who report suspected trafficking may be viewed negatively by the community. Regarding this, FGD2P4 has said that "…. *Reporting issues to the police or authorities is often seen as a dishonorable act, especially when it involves family members.*

Neighbors or community members may perceive you negatively." According to the FGD participants, in some instances, reporting is associated with betrayal, interfering, or breaking social norms, especially when the act is committed by someone known to the community. This fear of being associated with an act of betrayal can lead to silence, even in the face of clear wrongdoing.

In addition to that, the qualitative result also shows that a lack of confidence in the integrity, responsiveness, or protection provided by authorities is evident among the wider community. Concerning that, one of the FGD participants has said the following: "*Most people in our community believe that reporting will not lead to meaningful intervention*" (FGD2P7). Participants in the focus group discussion expressed that there is a wider perception within the community that reporting trafficking cases to the police is unlikely to lead to the prosecution of the perpetrators. This skepticism arises from the fact that traffickers often skillfully conceal their involvement, frequently posing as close relatives of the children and framing their actions as attempts to help. Moreover, concerns about further harm discourage individuals from coming forward. This situation is particularly concerning in areas where past cases have been mishandled or where the relationship between the police and the community is strained.

This is also further supported by key informants, who highlighted significant skepticism and distrust within the community concerning formal reporting mechanisms for child trafficking. The key informants' concerns mainly stem from two main issues: the complex and often concealed nature of child trafficking, which often involves local individuals and concerns about retaliation, and the perception that the legal system is slow and cumbersome in resolving. He stated that "*the community's hesitance to fully engage with law enforcement is rooted in practical concerns regarding the justice system's capacity to effectively and swiftly address the distinct challenges*

associated with child trafficking, ultimately eroding trust in the effectiveness of police intervention." (KII1)

On the other hand, the key informant from the child protection police unit indicates that the perception that reporting is ineffective arises from the perception that reporting or acting against it will not change the outcome. This sense of ineffectiveness is linked to some failed past experiences or a lack of observable results of previous reporting and delayed or denied justice. The key informant from the child protection police unit illuminated the above point by stating the following:

> *The perception that reporting is ineffective develops from the belief that taking action will not change the outcome. This sense of ineffectiveness may be rooted in past experiences, rumors, or a lack of visible penalties for traffickers. "When individuals don't see tangible results from their previous reporting, or when justice is delayed, the motivation to report declines* (KI1).

According to the key informants, several factors foster a culture of inaction, despite the recognition of trafficking as a serious issue. Addressing them requires building public trust, ensuring protective mechanisms for reporters, and fostering a supportive environment that values and upholds the importance of civic responsibility in protecting vulnerable children.

4.4.5 Perceived Behavioral Control

Participants were asked several questions to assess their perceived behavioral control. These questions were meant to assess perceived self-efficacy and perceived control. Participants scored an average of 21.19 (SD = 4.85, Min = 13, Max = 33) out of a possible 35 points on the perceived behavioral control scale.

Table 18

Descriptive Statistics on Perceived Behavioral Control

No	Items	Mean	S. D
1.	I am confident that I can report any suspected cases to the police if I encounter	3.22	1.00
2.	I am confident that I can identify the signs of child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town	3.09	.98
3.	It is easy for me to refuse to participate in activities that might be related to child trafficking	2.89	.99
4.	Whether I report to the police a suspected case of child trafficking or not is entirely up to me	3.05	1.03
5.	The decision to report to the police a suspected case of child trafficking is not beyond my control	3.19	.95
6.	I am confident that my actions could make a difference in preventing child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town	2.78	1.02
7.	It is easy to intervene if I witness suspicious activity that could be related to child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town	2.99	1.11

Note N= 473, Low' (1.00–2.59), 'Neutral' (2.60–3.39), and 'High' (3.40–5.00).

Participants have reported different levels of confidence in their ability to engage in preventive practice. Although the participants show a moderate level of confidence in recognizing indicators of child trafficking, the score is above neutral, leaving some room for improvement. Participants slightly leaned toward the belief that the decision to report suspected trafficking lies within their control. However, the moderate score and relatively wide standard deviation indicate inconsistent perceptions of autonomy, possibly influenced by social, legal, or institutional barriers.

A slightly lower score on personal agency reporting suspected trafficking is also noted, although it is above neutral; this score suggests that some community members may still feel constrained. This finding is partially supported by qualitative results, which indicate that combating child trafficking is something that can only be done by the government. Regarding this, FGD participants emphasized that, although they believe in the immense role an individual can contribute to the fight against child trafficking, numerous factors hinder their involvement,

including societal attitudes, cultural aspects related to migration, poverty, and limited resources and knowledge capacity. Concerning this, FGD1P5 has said, "*In a society where migration is highly valued, you cannot be confident about making a difference in the fight against child trafficking*." On the other hand, most of the FGD participants across the sessions believe that they can engage in child trafficking prevention activities. Regarding this, FGD2 participant 6 said this.

> *In the fight against child trafficking, every one of us is responsible. I think I can surely do my part. For me, it is not difficult to engage in anti-child trafficking prevention. I believe that if you want others to do something, you first start doing it; therefore, I don't hire a child as a helper, nor do my relatives, because I know what it means to exploit a child. I am a parent, and I don't want my children to be exploited elsewhere, so why would I let others do the thing that I hate to be done to my children?*

The belief in self-efficacy and moral obligation can serve as a foundation for community-based child trafficking prevention activities. The strong belief in one's ability to make a difference, as evidenced by the FGD participant's strong declaration, "*each one of us is responsible for fighting this problem. I believe I can do my part*", this confidence counters the bystander effect. It encourages active efforts to prevent harm, like refusing to hire child helpers and influencing family members. This strong moral duty often comes from being a parent: as the above FGD participant noted, "I am a parent, and I don't want my children to be exploited elsewhere. A strong sense of civic responsibility and moral duties can potentially strengthen community ties and shared values, which leads to the emergence of a vigilant and protective environment and more sustainable anti-child trafficking measures, as it depends on the genuine commitment of

community members, not just outside influences. Moreover, residents' understanding of local issues can contribute to creating effective prevention strategies, whereby local ownership is encouraged, and this promotes reporting and vigilance. This mix of personal empowerment and shared responsibility directly impacts residents' ability to protect children.

Participants expressed a slightly positive tendency to believe that they can decline to take part in activities that might be associated with child trafficking. An average score slightly above the midpoint (3.00) is an indicator that the participants largely feel capable of tackling such practices. This level of self-assuredness indicates a better level of awareness and moral clarity regarding the types of activities that may facilitate trafficking. This finding is further corroborated by the results from the key informant interviews, which indicated that the parents' or children's ability to refuse may be affected by external pressures, including social expectations, familial obligations, or economic hardships. Regarding this, one of the key informants has said,

> *In societies like ours that value social ties and relations as well as a higher level of interdependence, identifying child trafficking from other forms of placement is not an easy task unless it is provided with exhaustive awareness campaigns and education" (KII3*).

The current study also revealed that participants expressed a moderate level of confidence and belief in engaging in preventive practices, and the possibility that their contribution will make a difference in the fight against child trafficking. As shown in **Table 18**, the participants scored relatively low on certain crucial items, such as the belief that individual action can make a difference. A mean score of 2.78 and S.D. of 1.02 is somehow an indicator of a weak belief

among participants that their efforts would significantly impact child trafficking prevention. This finding is quite alarming, since self-efficacy is a crucial element for behavior.

The qualitative finding also lends support to this finding, in which FGD participants, across different sessions, argued that their actions could not make a difference in the fight against child trafficking. They further noted that the long tradition of child placement in the homes of relatives makes it difficult to distinguish whether the child is a victim of trafficking or just living with their relatives. They also indicate that parents' resistance to seeing the situation as exploitative and deep-rooted household poverty complicated the fight against this problem. In explaining this, FGD2P8 has said this:

> *Child fostering and child placement are customs in our locality. Some people bring a child to their homes to live with them, while others traffic them. In both cases, when you ask them about the new child, all they tell you is that it is their relative's child, whom they brought here so that he/she can get an education, etc. Thus, it is difficult to be involved in such matters even though you know something is not right there (FGD2P8).*

According to the FGD participants, although there is a strong belief in individual agency and a moral imperative to prevent child exploitation, the fight is significantly impaired by various factors, including deep-rooted household poverty and a prevalent parental resistance to perceiving certain situations as exploitative, etc. In a similar vein, the data generated via key informant interviews highlighted the importance of carefully crafting public messaging that highlights successful community interventions and empowering individuals, which may help shift this perception. In explaining, one key informant said the following,

> *It is important to carefully design a public message that effectively helps to address the issue, as well as work on successful community interventions and actively empower individuals. Emphasizing these positive outcomes, such messaging can help challenge a predominant perception and inspire greater community engagement and participation. Such initiatives not only signify the impact of collective efforts but also develop a sense of reengagement and responsibility among members of the community, encouraging them to take part in transformative actions that benefit their neighborhoods* (KII1).

Similarly, the FGD participants generally call for a holistic strategy that combines effective communication with practical community action, all while understanding and addressing the psychological and practical barriers that might hinder individual participation. Similarly, participants were asked how difficult it is for them to intervene in cases of suspicious situations. The item yielded a mean score of 2.99 and an SD: 1.11. This finding suggests hesitation or discomfort in actively engaging in preventive practice when encountering suspicious activity. However, the relatively high standard deviation is an indicator of diverse levels of perceived control among the participants, with some participants possessing higher perceived control and while others are less confident. Overall, the finding indicates a moderate level of perceived self-efficacy and control among participants in engaging in child trafficking preventive practices. While the result shows a certain level of potential for individual engagement, such as recognizing signs and reporting, restraining oneself from the activities implicated with trafficking, there are gaps in areas like belief in the impact of preventive practice.

4.4.6 Intention to engage in preventive practice

Participants' intentions to engage in preventive practices against child trafficking were assessed using six *items (**see Table 19**).* The analysis of behavioral intentions toward child trafficking prevention revealed a mixed pattern of responses.

Table 19

Descriptive Statistics on Behavioral Intentions

No	Items	Mean	S. D
1.	I intend to report any suspected cases of child trafficking	3.04	1.05
2.	I intend to refuse to participate in activities that might be related to child trafficking	2.82	.95
3.	I intend to find information about child trafficking	3.68	1.01
4.	I intend to intervene if I witness suspicious activity that could be related to child trafficking	2.94	1.05
5.	I intend to inform my friends that some children migrating for work could be vulnerable to child trafficking	3.45	1.08
6.	I intend to offer advice to someone to seek accurate information before deciding on a child for a job elsewhere	3.78	.99

Note N= 473, Low' (1.00–2.59), 'Neutral' (2.60–3.39), and 'High' (3.40–5.00).

Items reflecting information-seeking and sharing practices were rated positively. These measures include seeking information about child trafficking (Mean 3.68, S.D. =1.01), raising awareness among friends about the vulnerability of children migrating for work (Mean=3.25, S.D. = 1.08), and providing advice to others to conduct thorough research before making decisions about child employment (Mean =3.78, S.D. =.99)

In contrast, items related to direct reporting and intervention behaviors were rated at a neutral level, indicating participants' uncertainty about whether they will take part in these actions in the future. These include reporting suspected cases (mean=3.04, S.D=1.05), refusing to participate in

activities that may contribute to child trafficking (mean=2.82, S.D=.95), and intervening in situations where they witness suspicious activity that could be linked to child trafficking (mean=2.94, S.D=1.05).

Similarly, the data from key informant interviews revealed that the informants have a strong desire to engage in preventive practice including: reporting to the police, sharing information on child trafficking, participating in anti-child trafficking campaigns, informing some vulnerable segments of the community about the risks and consequences of child trafficking, mobilizing the wider community giving a helping hand to needy families, and working on finding a way to improve the household income of disadvantaged groups. Concerning this, the key informant from BOWSA) acknowledges the existence of various campaigns addressing child trafficking and related issues. However, he believes that further community-level interventions are necessary. Despite community awareness, limited opportunities, and severe poverty hinder children's access to education. High unemployment rates further erode parental hope in education. The respondent acknowledges the efforts of BOWSA in collaboration with NGOs to reintegrate rescued children and prevent re-trafficking. He shows a strong intention to continue to contribute his share in the fight against child trafficking and support those who have been affected.

4.5 The Relationship between Major Variables in the Study

Pearson product-moment correlations were computed to check the correlations between the predictor variables and the criterion variable.

Table 20

Summary of Pearson Correlations between the variables

N=473		ATTCT	ATPP	SN	PBC	IN	PP
KN		.117*	.115*	.158*	.188*	.144**	.124**
ATTCT			.416**	.542** .	.474**	.520**	.264**
ATPP				.585**	.478**	.573**	.403**
SN					.520**	.531**	.397**
PBC						*.533***	*.316***
IN							*.409***

* = p< 0.05 (2-tailed), ** = p < 0.01(2-tailed)

Notes: KN- knowledge, ATTCT – Attitude towards child trafficking, ATTP- Attitude towards preventive practice, SN- subjective norms, PBC- perceived behavioral control, IN- behavioral intentions, and PP- preventive practice.

As summarized in **Table 20**, statistically significant correlations were found among all the variables. The findings reveal statistically significant correlations between knowledge about child trafficking and preventive practice scores ((r (473) = .124, p < .01), attitude towards child trafficking scores and preventive practice scores (r (473) = .264, p < .01), as well as between attitude towards preventive practice scores and preventive practice scores (r (473) = .403, p < .01). Additionally, significant correlations were identified between subjective norms scores and preventive practice scores (r (473) = .397, p < .01), perceived behavioral control scores and preventive practice scores (r (473) = .316, p < .01), and intention to engage in practice scores and preventive practice scores (r (473) = .409, p < .01). The correlation coefficients demonstrate medium a medium strength of association (r = .264, r = .403, r = .397, r = .316, and r = .409). Consequently, these five factors account for (ATTCT) 6.97%, (ATPP) 16.24%, (SN) 15.76%, (PBC) 9.99%, and (IN) 16.73% of the total variance in preventive practice scores, respectively. This indicates that attitudes (both towards child trafficking and preventive practices), subjective

norms, perceived behavioral control, and intentions to engage in preventive practice are moderately related to preventive practice. Furthermore, statistically significant correlations were obtained between the criterion variables.

Table 21

Summary of Regression Analysis for variables in predicting Preventive Practices (N=473)

	Variables	Adjusted R2	Beta	Adjusted R Square	t	Sig.	F
		.673a	.479	.445			64.07
	(Constant)		12.55		6.037	.000	
1	ATTCT		.123		2.659	.001	
2	ATPP		.291		5.862	.000	
3	SN		.155		2.632	.009	
4	PBC		.029		.477	.633	
5	IN		.266		4.282	.000	
6	KN		.065		1.888	.060	

Note: *ATTCT – Attitude towards child trafficking, ATTP- Attitude towards preventive practice, PP- preventive practice, SN- subjective norms, PBC- perceived behavioral control, IN- Intention, KN, knowledge*

A multiple linear regression analysis was performed to assess the influence of attitudes toward child trafficking, attitudes toward practice, subjective norms, and behavioral intentions on preventive practice.

As depicted in **Table 21**, the results of regression analysis revealed that the independent variables have a significant contribution to the dependent variable ($R = .479$, $F (6, 467) = 64.07$, $p < .05$).

This means that, in combination, all the predictor variables were found to explain substantial variation (43.69% of the total variance) in the criterion variable.

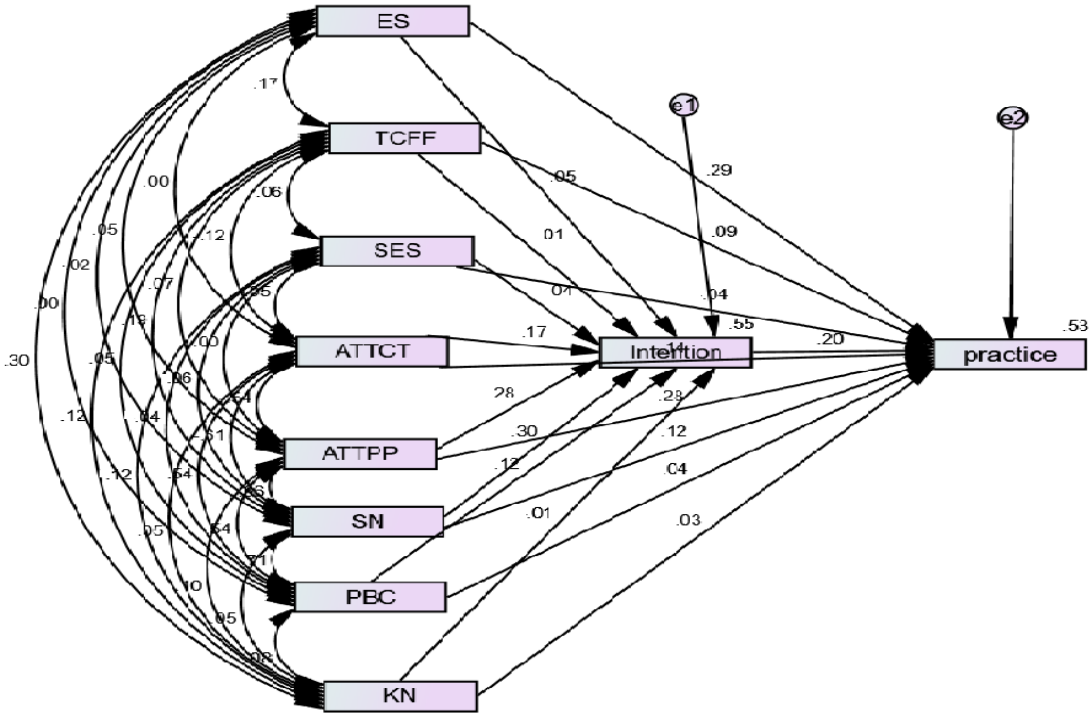
To evaluate the contribution or influence of each independent variable on the criterion variable, we can see the Beta value. Accordingly, the attitude toward preventive practice made a statistically significant positive contribution to predicting the dependent variable with a Beta value of 0.291. This implies that this predictor variable had a statistically significant influence on explaining or predicting the dependent variable, preventive practice. Similarly, intention to engage in preventive practice, subjective norms, and attitude toward child trafficking made the second, third, and fourth strong positive influences in predicting the dependent variable, with a Beta value of 0.266, .155, 0.123 respectively. Although perceived control and knowledge about internal child trafficking were included in the model, their contributions were less significant in influencing preventive practice (PP), $p > 0.05$.

4.5.1 Contribution of Attitudes, Norms, Control, and Intention in the Prediction of Preventive Practices

To determine the extent to which attitudes, subjective norms, perceived control, and behavioral intention influenced preventive practices, a statistical method called multivariate path analysis was performed. AMOS version 23 was utilized, and to check the goodness-of-fit of the model, standard measures such as the chi-square statistic, CFI, TLI, and RMSEA were examined, and the results depicted a good model fit: χ^2 (2) = 2.62, p = .106; CFI = .995; TLI = .982; RMSEA = .034 (90% CI: .000, .112). These findings imply that the proposed model accurately reflects the relationships observed in the data.

Figure 4

A Path model for predicting child trafficking preventive practice



Note: *ES-Educational status; TCFF- trafficked child from the family; SES- socioeconomic status, ATTCT – Attitude towards child trafficking; ATTP- Attitude towards preventive practice; PP- preventive practice; SN- subjective norms; PBC- perceived behavioral control; IN- Intention, KN- knowledge about child trafficking.*

The model encompasses the following endogenous variables: intention and preventive practice, while the observed exogenous variables are educational status, trafficked child from the family, socioeconomic status, attitude toward preventive practice, subjective norm, perceived behavioral control, attitude toward child trafficking ATTCT, and knowledge about internal child trafficking.

Unobserved exogenous variables are e1 and e2. Hence, 12 variables, including the two error variables, are indicated in the model. The numbers on the arrows indicate the regression weight, while the number on the curve indicates covariance.

Table 22

Unstandardized Regression weights of each variable are given in the following table

			Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Label
Intention	<---	ES	0.024	0.007	4.435	***	
Intention	<---	TCFF	0.014	0.061	0.231	0.817	
Intention	<---	SES	0.046	0.037	1.219	0.023	
Intention	<---	ATTCT	0.024	0.006	4.253	***	
Intention	<---	KN	0.001	0.007	0.163	0.871	
Intention	<---	PBC	0.018	0.007	2.628	0.009	
Intention	<---	SN	0.039	0.007	5.655	***	
Intention	<---	ATTPP	0.04	0.006	6.674	***	
practice	<---	IN	1.601	.371	4.320	***	
practice	<---	ES	1.05	0.138	7.621	***	
practice	<---	TCFF	1.25	0.504	2.477	0.013	
practice	<---	SES	0.443	0.307	1.445	0.149	
practice	<---	ATTCT	0.182	0.045	4.009	***	
practice	<---	ATTPP	0.381	0.05	7.681	***	
practice	<---	SN	0.187	0.056	3.342	***	
practice	<---	PBC	0.072	0.056	1.277	0.202	
practice	<---	KN	0.059	0.056	1.038	0.299	

N =473, *** p < .001, ** p < .01, * p < .05

The results presented in the table above elucidate the relationships among key constructs influencing intention (IN) and preventive practice (PP). The variables examined include educational status (ES), trafficked child from the family (TCFF), socioeconomic status (SES), attitude toward preventive practice (ATPP), subjective norm (SN), perceived behavioral control (PBC), and attitude toward child trafficking (ATTCT), with their effects on intention (IN) and preventive practice (PP). The standardized regression weights of the variables are what directly appear on the model and are presented in the following table.

Table 23

Standardized Regression Weights

			Estimate
Intention	<---	ES	0.051
Intention	<---	TCFF	0.008
Intention	<---	SES	0.042
Intention	<---	ATTCT	0.174
Intention	<---	KN	0.005
Intention	<---	PBC	0.118
Intention	<---	SN	0.296
Intention	<---	ATTPP	0.284
practice	<---	ES	0.292
practice	<---	TCFF	0.085
practice	<---	SES	0.044
practice	<---	ATTCT	0.136
practice	<---	ATTPP	0.283
practice	<---	SN	0.123
practice	<---	PBC	0.036
practice	<---	KN	0.035
practice	<---	IN	0.204

Note: Note: *ES-Educational status; TCFF- trafficked child from the family; SES- socioeconomic status, ATTCT – Attitude towards child trafficking; ATTP- Attitude towards preventive practice; PP- preventive practice; SN- subjective norms; PBC- perceived behavioral control; IN- Intention, KN- knowledge about child trafficking*

Results from the path analysis show that attitudes toward preventive practices (ATPP), subjective norms (SN), and perceived behavioral control have a statistically significant positive influence on intention to engage in preventive practice (IN). Specifically, SN is the strongest predictor of intention to engage in preventive practice (β=.296, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that a one-unit increase in SN corresponds to a 0.296-unit increase in intention to engage in preventive practice. ATTP is the second strongest predictor of intention to engage in preventive practice (β=.284, $p < 0.001$), which implies that a one-unit increase in perceived social pressure enhances intention by .284 units. Similarly, attitude toward child trafficking (ATTCT) has a significant positive effect

on the intention to engage in preventive practice (IN) (β =.174, p < 0.001). However, compared to attitude toward preventive practice (ATPP) and subjective norm (SN), the effect is smaller. Intention to engage in preventive practice (IN) is also found to be a significant predictor of preventive practice (PP) (β =.204, p < 0.001), in which for each one-unit improvement in intention, there is a change of 0.204 units in preventive practice. This implies the strength of connection and underlying intention as an important element in mediating the relationship between attitudes, social norms, and preventive practices.

In addition to its influence on intention, ATTPP is also the strongest predictor of preventive practice (PP) (β = .283, p < 0.001). This direct effect is much stronger than its indirect effect through intention (β=.283). This means positive attitudes toward preventive practices not only shape intentions but also directly encourage preventive actions. The subjective norm (SN) plays a significant role in shaping preventive practice (PP), demonstrating a considerable predictor of preventive practice with a beta value of (β=.123, p < 0.001). This implies that social norms are important not only in influencing intentions but also in directly impacting preventive behaviors. It is also worth noting that this effect is relatively smaller compared to intention and attitude toward preventive practice (ATPP). The noteworthy p-value and moderate critical ratio further reinforce the reliability of this relationship.

To assess the effect of each criterion variable on the outcome variable, based on the beta value, attitude toward preventive practice made a statistically significant positive contribution in predicting preventive practice (β = 0.283), which implies that this predictor variable had a statistically significant influence on explaining or predicting the dependent variable, preventive practice. The intention to engage in preventive practice (IN), attitude toward child trafficking

(ATTCT), and subjective norms (SN) made a significant contribution (β = 0.204), (β = .136), (β = .123), respectively, on predicting preventive practice (PP), $p < 0.05$.

Table 24

Summary table for total, direct, and indirect effects of predictor variables on outcome variables

Direct effect	**ATTCT**	**ATTPP**	**SN**	**KN**	**PBC**	**Intention**
Intention	0.174	0.284	0.296	0.005	0.118	0
Practice	0.136	0.283	0.123	0.035	0.036	0.204
Indirect effect	**ATTCT**	**ATTPP**	**SN**	**KN**	**PBC**	**Intention**
Intention						
Practice	0.035	0.058	0.06	0.001	0.024	0
Total effect	**ATTCT**	**ATTPP**	**SN**	**KN**	**PBC**	**Intention**
Intention	.174	.284	.296	.005	.118	
Practice	.172	.341	.183	.036	.060	.204

The total effect of IN on the prediction of PP is .204. That is, due to IN's direct effects on PP, which implies that this predictor variable had a statistically significant influence in explaining or predicting the dependent variable, preventive practice. Attitude toward preventive practice made the first significant direct contribution in predicting the dependent variable (β = .284) and an indirect effect (0.284 x 0.204 = 0.058) through the intervening variable intention. At the same time, subjective norm, attitude toward child trafficking, and perceived behavioral control made indirect contributions of (.296 x 0.204 = 0.06), (.118x 0.204 = 0.035), and (.183 x 0.204 = 0.024), respectively.

4.6 Difference in Major Study Variables as a function of Demographic Variables

In the present study, in addition to path analysis, a factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to examine whether key sociodemographic variables such as sex, age, educational status, socioeconomic status, and years of residence were associated with variations in attitude,

subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The analysis was designed to test whether these sociodemographic factors exerted significant main or interaction effects on participants' responses across the three dependent variables.

Before delving into the results of the factorial ANOVA, it is pertinent first to present the findings derived from the path analysis. As indicated in figure four, background variables including educational status, perceived socio-economic status, and having a trafficking family member were included in the model. The result shows that educational status and perceived socioeconomic status were found to be significant predictors of both intentions to engage in preventive practice and preventive practice. Educational status has a significant positive contribution in the prediction of preventive practice ($\beta = .292$, $p < 0.05$). See Table 22.

4.6.1 *Preventive practice as a function of participants' sex, age, and educational level*

A three-way factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of sex, age, and educational level, and their interaction effects on child trafficking preventive practices.

Table 25

Factorial ANOVA Examining the Effects of sex, Age, educational level, and their interaction on child trafficking Preventive Practice (N=473)

Variables	***df***	***MS***	***F***	***P***	***Partial η²***
Sex	1,449	74.58	2.55	.072	.111
Age	1,449	50.81	1.77	.782	.188
Education level	5,449	82.34	2.82	.000	.016
Sex * Age	1,449	134.27	1.59	.082	.033
Sex * Educational Level	5,449	99.83	1.42	.075	.005
Age*Educational Level	5,449	49.88	1.71	.300	.131
Sex*Age*Educational Level	5,449	33.03	1.13	.843	.343
Error	449	29.20			

R Squared = .159 (Adjusted R Squared = .116) [a]

To evaluate how each independent variable impacts the dependent variable, it was essential to examine the Tests of Between-Subjects Effect table. The overall model was statistically significant, $F\ (23, 449) = 4.53,\ p < .001,\ R^2 = .159,$ indicating that the predictors explained 15.9% of the variance in practice scores (adjusted $R^2 = .116$). Among the main effects, education level was statistically significant, F (5,449) =2.82, p=.016, $\eta_p^2 = .030$, suggesting that practice scores varied across educational groups. Neither sex nor age was a significant predictor. None of the interaction effects reached statistical significance. The sex × age interaction was non-significant, F (1,449) =1.60, p=.082, $\eta_p^2 = .010$, and the sex × education level interaction was also non-significant, F (5,449) =1.42, p=.075, = .037.Similarly, the age × education level interaction and the three-way interaction (sex × age × education level) were not statistically significant.

A Tukey post hoc test was conducted to examine differences in preventive practice across education levels. Results indicated that participants with a first degree or above reported significantly higher practice scores compared to all other education groups. Specifically, their scores were 5.94 points higher than those of illiterate participants (p<.001). Additionally, a noteworthy mean difference was found among participants who read and write compared to those with a first degree or above ($M_{diff} = 5.24$, $p < .001$). Similar findings were observed among individuals with primary education and a first degree or above ($M_{diff} = 5.16$, $p < .001$), as well as those with secondary education and a first degree or above ($M_{diff} = 3.81$, $p < .001$). Furthermore, a mean difference of ($M_{diff} = 3.18$, $p = .003$) was observed between participants with secondary education and those with a first degree or higher.

Similarly, participants with post-secondary training of less than 3 years also scored significantly higher than those with lower education levels, including those who read and write (M diff = 1.99,

p = .133, non-significant) and primary education (M_{diff} =2.07, p=.143, non-significant), but were significantly lower than those with a first degree or above (M_{diff} = -3.18, p = .003). However, no significant differences were observed among the lower education categories (illiterate, read and write, primary, secondary level education).

4.6.2 Difference in Preventive Practice as a Function of Perceived Socio-economic Status and Years of Residence

As depicted in **Table 26,** a factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of perceived socio-economic status, years of residence, and their interaction effects on child trafficking preventive practices.

Table 26

Factorial ANOVA Examining the Effects of Perceived Socioeconomic Status, Years of Residence, and Their Interaction on Child Trafficking Preventive Practice (N = 473)

Effect	***df***	**MS**	***F***	***P***	***Partial η²***
Perceived Socioeconomic Status	2, 461	76.44	2.42	.020	.010
Years of residence	3,461	16.32	0.52	.670	.003
Perceived Socioeconomic Status *Years of residence	6, 461	46.35	1.45	.187	.019
Error	461	29.20			

A factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of socioeconomic status (SES), years of residency, and their interaction on practice. The overall model was statistically significant, *F (11, 461) = 3.02, p < .001, R^2 = .069,* indicating that the predictors explained approximately 6.7% of the variance in practice scores (adjusted R^2 = .045). Analysis of the main effects revealed that SES was a significant predictor of preventive practice, F (2, 461) = 2.61, p = .020, η_p^2 = .010, suggesting that practice scores varied across socioeconomic groups. In contrast, years

of residency were not a significant predictor, F (3,461) =0.52, p=.670, η_p^2 = .003. Similarly, the interaction between SES * years of residency was not statistically significant, F (1,461) =1.47, p=.187, η_p^2 = .019, indicating that the effect of SES on practice did not differ by period of residency.

The result of a corresponding follow-up post hoc test revealed a significant difference in the mean score of preventive practice between those with better socioeconomic status and those who perceived their SES as the same as most people. Results indicated that participants who perceived their socioeconomic status as "better than most people" reported significantly higher practice scores compared to those who perceived their socioeconomic status as "same as most people" (M_{diff} =3.14, p <.001) and those who perceived themselves as "worse than most" (M_{diff} =3.31, p<.001). In contrast, no significant differences were observed between those who perceived their socioeconomic status as "same as most people" and "worse than most" (M_{diff} =0.10, p =.983).

4.6.3 Difference in Intention to Engage in Preventive Practice as a Function of Sex, Age, and Educational Status.

Table 25 presents the results of a factorial ANOVA examining the effects of sex, age, education level, and their interaction effects on participants' intention to engage in preventive practice.

Table 27

Factorial ANOVA Examining the Effects of age, sex, and education level, and their interaction on intention to engage in preventive practice

Effect	***df***	***MS***	***F***	***P***	***Partial η²***
Sex	1,449	1.393	.076	.783	.001
Age	1, 449	34.218	1.875	.174	.004
Education level	5, 449	15.960	3.866	.004	.050
Sex * Age	1, 449	10.407	.565	.453	.001
Sex * Education level	5, 449	34.811	1.889	.085	.008
Age*Education level	5, 449	16.768	.910	.474	.010
Sex*Age*Education level	5, 449	27.696	1.503	.187	.016
Error	449	18.424			

A three-way factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of sex, age, education level, and their interactions on intention. Analysis of the main effects revealed that education level was a statistically significant predictor of intention, $F(5, 449) = 3.87$, $p = .004$, $\eta_p^2 = .050$, suggesting that intention scores varied across educational groups. In contrast, neither sex ($F(1, 449) = 0.08$, $p = .783$, $\eta^2 = .000$) nor age was found to be a significant predictor ($F(1, 449) = 1.86$, $p = .174$, $\eta^2 = .004$). Similarly, the interaction effects, specifically the sex × education level interaction, were not statistically significant ($F(5, 449) = 1.89$, $p = .085$, $\eta_p^2 = .008$), indicating that the influence of sex on intention did not vary across different education levels. Additionally, the sex × age interaction ($F(1, 449) = 0.57$, $p = .453$, $\eta^2 = .001$), the age × education level interaction ($F(1, 449) = 0.91$, $p = .474$, $\eta^2 = .010$), and the three-way interaction (sex × age × education level) ($F(1, 449) = 1.50$, $p = .187$, $\eta^2 = .016$) were also found to be non-significant.

A Tukey HSD post hoc test was conducted to examine differences in intention across education levels. Results indicated that participants with a first degree or above reported significantly higher intention scores compared to several other education groups. Specifically, participants with a first degree or above scored higher than illiterates ($M_{diff} = 2.99$, $p=.003$), first degree or

above, and read and write (M_{diff} = 2.53, p=.015). Similarly, a significant mean difference was observed between participants with a first degree or above and those who completed secondary education (M_{diff} = 2.51, p=.020), between participants with a first degree or above and those who completed primary education (M_{diff} = 2.26, p=.042), and between those with a first degree or above and a college diploma (M_{diff} =2.09, p =.034). However, no statistically significant mean differences were obtained among the remaining groups.

4.6.4 Differences in Intention to Engage in Preventive Practice as a Function of Socio-Economic Status and Years of Residence

Table 28

Summary of Factorial ANOVA on Intention by Perceived Socioeconomic Status and Years of Residency

Effect	***df***	***MS***	***F***	***P***	***Partial η²***
Perceived Socioeconomic Status	2, 461	85.86	4.62	.010	.020
Years of Residence	3,461	17.65	.950	.416	.006
Perceived Socioeconomic status *Years of Residence	6,461	32.81	1.766	.104	.022
Error	461	18.58			

A two-way factorial ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of perceived socioeconomic status (SES) and years of residency on intention to engage in preventive practice. Analysis of the main effects revealed that SES was a significant predictor of intention, F (2, 461) = 4.62, p =.010, η_p^2 =.020, suggesting that intention scores differed across socioeconomic groups. In contrast, years of residency were not a significant predictor, F (3, 461) = 0.95, p =.416, η_p^2 =.006. The SES × years of residency interaction was not statistically significant, F (6, 461) = 1.77, p

=.104, η_p^2 =.022, indicating that the effect of SES on intention did not vary by length of residency.

Although the main effect of perceived socioeconomic status on intention was statistically significant, Tukey HSD post hoc comparisons did not reveal significant differences between specific SES groups (all P_S > .05). This suggests that the overall variance explained by SES reflects subtle differences across groups rather than distinct pairwise contrasts.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, an attempt will be made to make an in-depth analysis of the present study's major findings and interpret and draw meaning from the major findings of the study, based on the main themes of the research questions and the existing body of literature.

5.1 Patterns of Child Trafficking in Wolaita Sodo Town

The findings of the present study provide crucial insights regarding patterns of child trafficking in Wolita Sodo town. This section discusses the findings related to the patterns of child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo Town as identified by the study's findings in light of previous studies. The analysis of the result indicates that the majority of the participants reported that no child from their family had been trafficked, while 16.6% confirmed that at least one child had experienced trafficking. Even though the percentage of participants reported child trafficking incidence may seem relatively low, this result is important as it underscores the tangible presence of child trafficking within Wolaita Sodo. Since a seemingly lower incidence rate can have profound implications. These findings align with the research conducted by Edan and Singh (2021), who reported that approximately 20.1% of children in households studied in northern Ethiopia were trafficked, corresponding to roughly one in five children. These findings also align with previous research conducted in similar contexts and report that child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo, Southern Ethiopia, is a significant and growing problem.

The qualitative findings also revealed that child trafficking is a widely practiced activity in the area. The town of Sodo serves both as a transit and a destination for some children migrating from surrounding rural areas because of its strategic location. Regarding this, numerous previous

studies, e.g, Yisak & Aserat (2018); Ararso & Gebu (2016); Kastro& Duello (2018), confirmed that the SNNPR region in general is a hub for both in-country and cross-border child trafficking.

For example, Megento and Wolde (2018) stated that those children from the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region (SNNPR) have become a primary source for child trafficking, both domestically and internationally. Studies, e.g, Mulunesh (2022) and Ayalew et al. (2014), reported a high occurrence of trafficking of children for labour purposes in the Wolaita Zone of southern Ethiopia and exploited as domestic helpers, beggars, and weavers in traditional weaving industries.

Furthermore, the findings of the current study revealed that child trafficking is a multifaceted phenomenon in which trafficking practices are interwoven with local, social, economic, and cultural dynamics. A prominent pattern that emerged in this study is the reliance on trusted individuals, such as family members, close relatives, and acquaintances, as facilitators of trafficking. This reliance on familial social networks complicates the understanding of child trafficking. It impedes intervention measures because the very culture of child migration and child placement is being exploited for illicit purposes.

The current study’s findings indicate a pronounced gender disparity in the victimization of children, in which male children comprise the majority of the reported trafficking victims. The significant disparity between the two genders suggests that although both genders are vulnerable, male children appear to be significantly affected by trafficking activities in the study area. This finding aligns with previous studies, such as Yisak and Asrat (2018), which examined child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo and found that boys account for 70% of child trafficking cases, and similarly, in Liu Ling et al.'s (2023) study, boys also accounted for the majority of trafficked children.

On the other hand, it contradicts numerous previous studies, such as Ertl et al. (2020), Ottisova et al. (2018), and Kiss et al. (2022), which report that most identified victims are female, with 68–81% of trafficked children being girls. This inconsistency between these studies and the current findings can be attributed to numerous factors. To begin with, most of these studies focus on victims of sex trafficking, in which most of the cases are girls, while the other reason can be attributed to the smaller sample size used in these studies compared to the larger sample size used in the current study.

Consistent with numerous previous findings, e.g, Yisak and Asrat (2018), Girma (2014), Liu Ling et al. (2023), Mulunesh (2022), and Ayalew et al. (2014), the current study reveals a distinct age distribution among child trafficking victims. Young adolescents in this locality are particularly prone to trafficking, a phenomenon that is attributed to numerous interrelated causes. Research indicates that the developmental stage of early adolescence is characterized by a limited capacity to critically evaluate long-term risks, rendering these groups more susceptible to exploitation (UNODC, 2022).

The U.S. Department of State's Trafficking in Persons Report (2023) provides evidence regarding the demographic profiles of trafficking victims in Ethiopia, noting that adolescents are especially vulnerable due to issues like economic hardship and family instability, which relates to a peculiar pattern in which traffickers target children who are about to make a transition from childhood to adolescence. This phase is characterized by major developmental and social changes that can heighten their risk of exploitation. Global reports from organizations like the UNODC indicate that a significant number of trafficking victims typically fall within this age range. Traffickers often take advantage of this critical vulnerability.

In the current study, a range of individuals involved in the recruitment and trafficking of children was also found, including close and distant relatives, friends, and neighbors. This finding reveals how trust and relationships, often thought to be protective, can be exploited, and this involvement of trusted individuals not only hides the illegal nature of their actions but also complicates efforts to detect and intervene in trafficking cases. Several previous studies, e.g, Ayalew (2014), Desalegn (2021), and Shoa (2022), lend support to the current findings, indicating that involvement of various bodies in child trafficking goes beyond traditional criminal networks, whereby members of the victims' immediate and extended social circles took part in some cases.

The current finding is consistent with previous findings of Fabbri et al., (2023); Koomson et al (2023), and Shoa (2022) who noted that recruitment is often conducted by family networks, which can include parents, employers, peers, and recruiters at bus stations and informal job agencies, whereby they employ informal as well as flexible methods to lure children with false promises of better lives in cities. This is also corroborated by Desalegn's (2021) findings, which indicate the involvement of existing social networks or brokers in facilitating the trafficking process. A common practice involves soliciting kin in rural locales to dispatch a family member for employment opportunities. These opportunities may pertain to the operational needs of a business or domestic labor requirements. Employers may transparently disclose genuine rationale for seeking labor, or they might employ deceptive tactics, proffering assurances of an improved urban lifestyle to prospective workers, to secure their labor.

Supporting the study's findings, traditional child fostering in many African contexts (Mbakogu, 2021), where children are placed with known individuals, significantly increases their vulnerability to trafficking due to the potential for exploitation when customary obligations are

neglected. This is consistent with Cody et al. (2024), who found that such child placement, driven by socioeconomic factors like poverty, gender discrimination, and cultural migration practices in home villages, directly elevates child trafficking risks. Overall, these findings suggest a need to reassess the social and cultural factors that allow these recruitment practices to thrive, and these findings suggest the need for extensive interventions that challenge both the overt and covert mechanisms of child trafficking in local communities.

5.2 Child Trafficking: Knowledge and Sources of Knowledge

The results of this study offer an important understanding of child trafficking knowledge among the residents in Wolita Sodo town. Consistent with the findings of Boyden and Howard (2022), the result from the FGD discussion shows a prevalent understanding of child trafficking as a multifaceted phenomenon usually associated with various forms of child mobility and exploitation. The findings of the current study show misconceptions surrounding child trafficking. There is a tendency to confuse child trafficking with related concepts such as migration or arrangements such as traditional child placement practices, which are often centered around relocating a child to another family's home in exchange for tangible benefits, or the placement of children within the households of relatives, often with the stated purpose of facilitating their education.

This finding is consistent with earlier findings of Walakira et.al (2015), who noted numerous misconceptions surrounding child trafficking among Ugandians, vulnerable segments of society. Moreover, in the current study, the most severe manifestations of modern-day slavery were also recognized by the participants, including the abduction of children for forced begging. This is corroborated by previous studies of Bellocchio (2025), who noted that child begging is a form of

forced labor and is correlated with child trafficking and has a detrimental effect on the physical and mental well-being of its victims.

Participants perceived child trafficking as largely equivalent to the more extensive problem of forced child labour and hazardous work. However, hazardous work mainly refers to work that is damaging or exploitative for young people, while child trafficking for labor represents a specific type of trafficking involving the recruitment, transportation, or sheltering of children for coercive or exploitative work. This form of trafficking often overlaps with but remains distinct from the broader idea of child labor. As noted by Balch et al. (2024), these are two forms of exploitation that, though they may intersect, are not synonymous.

The present study's findings indicate a notable inadequacy in the overall level of knowledge regarding child trafficking among participants. This observation resonates strongly with prior research, where studies such as Yisak and Asrat (2018) and Megento and Wolde (2018) similarly documented a pervasive lack of awareness concerning child trafficking among their respective participant groups. Similarly, Fraley et.al (2019), who intended to assess findings across different studies that targeted different groups working on trafficking in persons, including service providers, mostly social workers and physicians, found a low level of awareness about trafficking in persons. Furthermore, the current study revealed diverse dimensions of child trafficking in their locality. This encompassed a knowledge of the enabling factors that contribute to its prevalence, the diverse exploitative aims pursued through trafficking, the shared attributes and susceptibility of those victimized, and the identifiable patterns and operational strategies employed by perpetrators.

The study also identified various social, economic, and cultural factors that facilitated children’s susceptibility to child trafficking. Children from poor and rural areas, broken/dysfunctional

families, abusive parents, large family sizes, single-parent-headed families, orphans, school dropouts, and street children are at the most risk of trafficking. In addition to these factors, the study found that peer pressure, stories from returnees that resemble success, and the perception that the wider community holds regarding life in a city also play a vital role in contributing to the widespread of the problem in the study area. Generally, the study shows that different pull and push factors including poor economic condition of their family, children's desire to support their family, peer pressure, search for better life in cities and towns, death of both or either of their parents, looking for a job, family pressure, lack of infrastructure in rural area also play vital role in facilitating child trafficking.

Numerous previous findings lend support to this finding, e.g, Senthil (2015), Malukan et.al (2014), Yisak and Asrat (2018), Aden and Singh (2021), Tekalign (2021), and Gezie et.al (2021) noted factors such as poverty, family breakdown, child abuse, poor infrastructure, and lack of job opportunities that pave a fertile ground for traffickers to lure vulnerable children to towns and cities where they can exploit them.

Although the factors that lead to child trafficking are complex, involving both push and pull elements that drive at-risk children toward urban areas. Studies consistently highlight poverty and severe economic hardships as major push factors, motivating children to assist their families and pursue better economic opportunities (Yishak & Asrat, 2018; Gezie et al., 2021; Tatek, 2013; Koirala, 2019; Walakira et al., 2015). In addition to these factors, other conditions such as limited opportunities combined with inadequate infrastructure in rural regions, as well as individual and social factors, such as the death of parents, peer influence, and expectations to provide financial support to family, contribute to the migration of children. Similarly, studies e, g Franchino (2019) Walakira et al.(2015) reported that several risk factors and vulnerabilities,

including child abuse and maltreatment, caregiver strain, being in a dysfunctional family, peer influence, violence at home, poverty, difficulty in school, death of biological parents, child fostering practices and conflict with parents, contribute to child trafficking.

Moreover, pressures from families, such as using common methods like providing false promises of lucrative employment and educational opportunities in urban areas (Tolla & Singh, 2021), contribute to child migration and the consequent trafficking. Generally, the combined effect of these interconnected factors paves the ground for a fertile environment for child trafficking to flourish in the current study site.

On the other hand, the quantitative results from the current study revealed that residents present an inadequate level of knowledge, specifically regarding the defining features of in-country child trafficking. In contrast to previous studies (e.g., Adhikari et.al, 2023; Gonçalves, Monteiro, & Matos,2019; Davy & Metanji,2022), where participants depicted good knowledge of the issue, the current study indicated a lower level of overall knowledge of child trafficking, as in other studies (Gezie et al.,2021; Exeni et al., 2022; Gonçalves et al.,2021; Sanghamitra & Ritwika, 2022). Significant gaps in knowledge persist, as many study participants did not recognize the defining features of in-country child trafficking.

This finding is consistent with the findings from previous studies (VanOrder, 2021; Yisak & Asrat, 2019; Sissoko & Jedy-Agba, 2012; Winrock International Cambodia, 2012; Temam and Alemu, 2016). For instance, Temam and Alemu's study noted that child trafficking is a serious problem in the Wolaita zone and is associated with inadequate knowledge of child trafficking. On the contrary, the current study shows that a significant majority tend to have adequate knowledge about the victims' profile, knowledge about the psychosocial plight that trafficked children experienced, knowledge about the vulnerability to child trafficking, and knowledge

about the traffickers and their techniques. Several previous findings, e.g, Botchkovar et al. (2016), Sharapov (2019), Gonçalves et al. (2021), Yisak and Asrat (2018), Manju et al. (2024), and Sabita et al. (2021), lend support to the present findings.

This inconsistency between the present findings and some previous findings can be attributed to several factors, including temporal changes that have likely played a role, including a rise in social media and public awareness campaigns, more interventions from local NGOs, and the spread of technology like smartphones and internet access. Secondly, methodological differences in which the current study employed, unlike previous studies, which mainly employed a single method, in the current study, attempts were made to triangulate data generated via various methods. Moreover, the present study goes beyond a general understanding of knowledge about child trafficking by examining its specific components. Finally, the context and environment in which the study was conducted are somewhat different, which might have contributed to enhanced knowledge, such as an increase in local trafficking activity, new anti-trafficking laws, or socioeconomic shifts like internal displacement, drought, and civil unrest that make the issue more visible and personally relevant to the community.

Lastly, consistent with numerous previous studies, e.g., Azage et al. (2014), Adhikari et al. (2024), Shrestha et al. (2015), the findings from the current study suggest that traditional media, particularly radio and television, remain the dominant sources of awareness about child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo. The high proportion of respondents who personally know someone trafficked underscores the visibility and prevalence of the issue within the community. In contrast, interpersonal communication and online sources contribute minimally to awareness. These results highlight the importance of strengthening radio and television programming as key

channels for anti-trafficking education, while also expanding digital platforms to reach younger audiences.

5.3 Attitude toward Child Trafficking and Preventive Practice

The present research provides valuable insights into the views of residents regarding child trafficking. Findings from the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) consistently revealed that child trafficking is a critical issue in the area, which demands the attention of concerned stakeholders. The town occupies a complex role, acting as a source, transit hub, and destination for children trafficked from both Sodo and other areas within the region and a trend which seems to be shaped by the area's longstanding migration history, which has normalized such movements, often with support from returning migrants and parents who genuinely perceive this as an opportunity for their children.

Furthermore, the FGD data revealed a dual perception of child mobility: it's seen as both a challenge and an opportunity. On the one hand, it is perceived as a viable means for alleviating poverty while generating income, and at the same time seen as an opportunity for children to acquire new skills and knowledge, ultimately enhancing their financial and social capital. For most impoverished households, this child mobility is even considered a vital means to improve. On the other hand, child trafficking is undeniably challenging as it leads to negative outcomes, such as when children experience homelessness, are exploited in forced labor, subjected to physical and sexual abuse, denied access to education and health services, and in cases where their whereabouts become unknown. This contrast emphasizes the intricate perspective the community holds regarding child movement, weighing the perceived advantages against tangible and serious dangers.

Secondly, the results obtained from the analysis of key informant interview data also revealed that child trafficking is a widespread problem in the study area, and the number of children becoming victims of trafficking is regularly on the rise over time. Moreover, a critical view emerging from both KII and FGD data is the presence of diverse and sometimes conflicting attitudes towards child trafficking among residents. Some people claim that observed movement of children constitutes migration rather than child trafficking, indicating a degree of voluntary agency and perceived opportunity for betterment. Conversely, other perspectives recognize this phenomenon as a dual-edged sword, presenting both significant challenges and potential opportunities. In both cases, what is evident is that children are moving from place to place every year with the hope of finding better education, earning money for themselves or their siblings, or as a placement in a relative's house.

Thirdly, the quantitative findings also showed a high level of concern among Wolaita Sodo residents regarding in-country child trafficking, implying consensus within the community about the seriousness of the problem. The residents not only perceive child trafficking as a serious problem in their locality but also believe it is identifiable and constitutes a significant societal concern, underscoring the need for immediate intervention, suggesting a collective awareness that extends beyond mere acknowledgement to a recognition of the problem's tangible presence and the need for proactive measures.

Generally, this finding is consistent with numerous previous findings eg (e.g., Botchkovar et al., 2016; Davy & Metanji, 2022; Sharapova, 2019), which indicate that trafficking is a matter of significant concern among numerous vulnerable communities, particularly those struggling with economic hardship and limited socio-economic opportunities. Studies, e.g, Murphy (2023), Sprang, Stoklosa, & Greenbaum (2022), indicated the immense role these challenges play in

aggravating trafficking in persons, and these challenges often manifest as increased vulnerability to human trafficking. In a similar vein, Davy, & Metanji's (2022) study, which intended to examine youth perceptions of human trafficking in Albania, reported a high level of concern among the surveyed participants, and over two-thirds expressed extreme or very high concern regarding the phenomenon.

Moreover, a study by Yisak and Asrat (2018) indicated that the vulnerable population depicted a higher awareness of the inherent dangers and acknowledged that child trafficking is a serious issue; however, this concern is often tangled with a sense of powerlessness to effectively prevent it. Families sometimes must make difficult choices that, while they may seem like a good option, put children at risk of exploitation. This often happens because there are not enough resources, strong institutions, or realistic ways to improve their financial situation. This situation is a paradox: even though communities care about protecting children, the lack of strong support and economic opportunities can unintentionally allow traffickers to thrive, making it harder for the community to take collective action.

The current finding also revealed an important finding regarding the residents' attitude toward victims of child trafficking. The residents generally hold a sympathetic and empathetic attitude towards victims of child trafficking, strongly disapproving of the notions of the victim-blaming view towards victims of child trafficking. Quantitative data and qualitative discussions consistently show that residents recognize the fact that child trafficking is neither a choice nor a legitimate form of employment, even for impoverished, economically disadvantaged children. The consensus among the participants of the present study is that trafficked children are susceptible to and victims of exploitation, facing forced labor, abuse, and the deprivation of fundamental rights such as education and healthcare, which hinder their overall development.

Nonetheless, this widespread empathy sharply contradicts the harsh realities endured by the children who have been trafficked. The children who participated in the interviews shared their experiences narrating otherwise, in which they faced continuous stigma and discrimination, frequently referred to as 'duriye,' a term implying laziness and unwillingness to contribute. This stigma, as demonstrated through a personal account, induces feelings of guilt and isolation among the affected individuals, impeding their access to vital support and perpetuating a cycle of marginalization that complicates their recovery and reintegration into society. This observation corresponds with earlier findings, such as those documented in IOM's (2020) study, which highlighted the considerable impact of social norms and stigma on exacerbating the vulnerability of victims and acting as a hurdle to effective reintegration for survivors of trafficking.

Children's revictimization is further aggravated by a poor and inadequate support system. Misaye (2018), in his research, highlights that the assistance provided in temporary rehabilitation centers is frequently insufficient to facilitate the recovery of internal trafficking victims from their traumatic experiences, which consequently contributes to the revictimization of these children.

The current finding is further corroborated by the findings of Fukushima, Gonzalez-Pons et al. (2021), who noted that a multiplicity of stigma is experienced by the survivors of human trafficking, where stigma occurred across three levels from micro, meso, and macro contexts. Generally, previous studies e.g, Niumai and Rajesh (2020) and Querol and Lerner (2024) indicated the prevalence of stigma and discrimination toward victims of child trafficking, which in turn impairs access to education, employment, and social services, making it challenging for survivors to achieve socio-economic stability. This instability increases the risk of being re-trafficked or exploited again.

5.3.1 Attitude toward Preventive Practice

The results of the current study provide insights into residents' attitudes toward child trafficking prevention practices, highlighting both areas of awareness and significant challenges in translating these attitudes into action. The results are consistent with established research on public health interventions, social behavior, and community engagement, while also highlighting unique contextual complexities. The results from the quantitative findings show that residents have moderate attitudes towards preventive practices such as reporting suspected cases, collecting information, and sharing information with others, suggesting a potential attitude-behavior gap.

Various studies, e.g., Fraley et.al (2020), Cunningham and Cromer (2016), Honeyman et al. (2016), on attitudes toward human trafficking have shown that a person's willingness to act is complex and depends on a mix of individual, community, and systemic factors. While it is promising that more people are recognizing the importance of community involvement, it is often difficult to turn these positive attitudes into real, on-the-ground action. Previous studies, e.g, (Cudjoe et.al, 2025, and Miskiah & Farhana, 2020), consistently show a gap between what people know and what they do when it comes to preventing child trafficking. A person may be aware of the issue and may have a positive attitude toward the prevention of child trafficking, but that doesn't always translate into taking direct action, like reporting a suspicious situation.

Community awareness campaigns and education programs may help to improve knowledge and create a more supportive environment, but they may not always lead to proactive behaviors. Lending support to the current study, previous studies by Khan & Talib (2025), Chang et.al (2022) indicate that reporting issues related to child trafficking can be challenging for several reasons, including a lack of resources, the absence of a clear system for reporting, fear of

punishment, or simply not being sure of what trafficking is. Thus, viable community participation beyond mere awareness is vital, which consequently enhances early detection and intervention. However, such engagement is often affected by coordination challenges and insufficient interagency collaboration. Bridging the gap between knowledge and action can be possible through the involvement of law enforcement, healthcare professionals, and community organizations in a multidisciplinary approach (Greenbaum, 2020; Rafferty, 2013).

Empowering communities with strategies that can translate knowledge into behaviors is vital. Fraley et.al (2019) in their systematic review, found that low awareness and negative attitudes towards the victims are barriers to effective intervention and suggest a multiphase educational approach and having content experts, including survivors, significantly improve knowledge uptake and translation. Despite having a good attitude toward preventive practice and recognizing the dangers of trafficking, they did not come forward to report it because of subdued norms and subdued economic circumstances that prompted them to remain reticent. This study has noted that participants appear reluctant to report any such suspicious cases of trafficking to the authorities. Previous studies have established that such an inclination not to report arises from fear of retaliation, or lack of trust in the authorities, or the belief that the issue is not going to be handled effectively (Kasper and Chiang, 2022; Laws, 2022; GAO, 2023). Such underreporting is attributed to the crime being hidden and the victims being afraid of law enforcement.

This study has shown that people mostly adhere to and are more aware of indirect ways to prevent. On the other hand, studies often show that a strong willingness and positive attitude toward broader awareness initiatives and educational programs can improve empowerment through knowledge. Community-based education is a crucial step in the fight against human

trafficking, as it provides people with the necessary knowledge to understand potential risks and vulnerabilities. This aligns with the idea that anti-trafficking efforts should address community-specific vulnerabilities and empower people at all levels. This approach, which has been supported by researchers like Savoia, Piltch-Loeb, Muibu, Leffler, Hughes, and Montrond (2023), ensures that prevention efforts are both comprehensive and effective.

This research, like findings from other studies, revealed a significant gap: even though parents are likely concerned about child trafficking, they are not directly talking to their children about the risks. While people may be concerned about an issue, that concern is not expressed through open and direct conversations with others. This finding is consistent with earlier research. Several studies, e.g, Kranrattanasuit (2024), Mbamba et al. (2023), and Nichols et al. (2024), reveal that the inadequate dialogue surrounding this critical issue consistently highlights a lack of sufficient conversation about the topic. This suggests that the issue is not being discussed as openly or as often as it should be. Open and continuous conversations between parents and children about safety, risks, and trusted adults are essential, as they give children the tools and confidence to protect themselves from exploitation (Franklin et al., 2024).

This is further supported by Franchino (2019), Mbamba, et al.(2024), and Nichols et al (2024) study which shows that the poor communication between parents and children about trafficking is explained in terms of diverse factors, including poverty, whereby families at extreme economic hardship give priority to survival over communication, while religious beliefs and community values also emerge as significant factors challenging frequent child-parent communication. Lack of open communication within communities often prevents parents from having effective and important conversations with their children about trafficking, and it is

attributed to diverse factors, including economic situations and cultural values. These findings are supported by multiple studies, including those by Adesina (2014) and Yisak and Asrat (2018).

The current study indicates a potential attitude-behavior gap in child trafficking prevention, where residents express moderate positive attitudes towards practices like reporting, yet exhibit reluctance to act due to systemic and social barriers. This aligns with extensive research indicating that willingness to act is complex, often impaired by inadequate reporting mechanisms, bureaucratic procedures, fear of association, and a general lack of trust in authorities, despite growing awareness. While awareness campaigns are beneficial, effective prevention necessitates bridging this knowledge-to-action gap through multidisciplinary engagement, empowering communities with practical strategies, and fostering open parent-child communication, which is currently inhibited by factors like poverty, religious beliefs, and cultural values, contributing to underreporting and persistent vulnerabilities

5.4 Preventive Practices of Child Trafficking

The current study reveals several important findings regarding the engagement of Wolita Sodo residents in child trafficking prevention practices. The findings indicated a moderate level of participation among residents in preventive measures. Preventive practices are generally divided into two main themes: one focused on information, which encompasses information gathering and sharing, and the other centered on taking practical action. The results of the current study show that residents tend to engage in activities related to collecting and sharing information about child trafficking. Notably, they prioritize finding information about child trafficking and sharing any relevant insights they have with friends. A higher score on these practices implies a proactive interest in understanding the issue. This is essential for any effective prevention strategy, as awareness is the first step toward recognition and action.

The current finding also shows the residents' willingness to engage in peer-to-peer education and awareness-raising, which indicates their readiness to teach and inform each other about child trafficking. Individuals' enhanced awareness serves a vital role in leading residents to move beyond themselves and become advocates in their social circles. It reflects a community that is not entirely passive but is actively seeking to comprehend the threat posed by child trafficking. The findings indicate that the community, despite facing ongoing challenges, shows a commendable degree of individual agency and an emerging ability to safeguard against child trafficking.

The awareness and prevention efforts observed could be a result of campaigns and initiatives that have successfully influenced personal knowledge and protective measures within households. Several studies, including those by Dutta (2021), Cudjoe-Mensah et al. (2025), and Kastro and Dullea (2018), supported the current findings, underlining the importance of community education and participation for effective prevention and intervention.

The essential role of community participation in preventing child trafficking has been extensively documented. Localized trust and knowledge are essential, as a top-down approach might be less effective given the hidden nature of the crime and specific community vulnerabilities (Dutta, 2021). On the contrary, community participation often relies on a bottom-up layer of measures for sustained prevention. This is further supported by Cudjoe-Mensah et al. (2025), who noted that community involvement facilitates earlier detection and intervention. Community members are usually the first to observe subtle behavioral changes, unusual new individuals, or suspicious job offers that may indicate trafficking.

In a similar vein, a study by Bekmuratova et al. (2024) highlighted that the local community possesses unique views regarding the local vulnerabilities, cultural practices, traditional

migration routes, and specific recruitment tactics. This community's understanding facilitates more targeted and effective prevention strategies than generic, one-size-fits-all approaches. In addition, community-based interventions often foster sustainability, and prevention efforts are more enduring when communities take ownership, allowing them to continue even after external funding or project cycles conclude, thereby embedding protective behaviors and norms within the social fabric (Dutta, 2021).

This is also further supported by the findings of Miskiah and Farhana (2020) and Ndolu and Pello (2020) highlighted the enormous role communities can play in mobilizing local resources, including volunteers, local expertise, social capital, and informal support networks, which are invaluable for both prevention and victim support. Numerous studies highlight that heightened community awareness and education are fundamental in identifying and preventing child trafficking. When individuals comprehend the signs, risks, and recruitment tactics of child trafficking, they are better equipped to protect themselves and their children.

A literature review by Cudjoe-Mensah (2025) on "the role of community engagement in preventing child trafficking" stressed that active community participation significantly enhances early detection and intervention, reducing the risk of trafficking, emphasizing the importance of continuous education to ensure that residents recognize the warning signs and broader implications of trafficking.

In addition, the current study also found community vigilance as the participants practiced some precaution measures in verifying job opportunities for children, refusing suspicious work offers within the past year, which is a noteworthy indicator of their vigilance suggesting the existence of awareness and practices in the protection of children from potential exploitation, which aligns

with the growing understanding that community-level action has paramount importance in preventing child trafficking, a crime often hidden and deeply embedded within social structures.

Although the study's results show positive outcomes in terms of community vigilance and the admirable level of precaution being taken, it is essential to acknowledge the diverse factors that hinder constant vigilance. This finding aligns with previous studies, e.g., Talib & Khan (2025), Zewdnesh et al (2023), Lewoleba and Harefa (2020), indicating that a key factor that can override a person's caution is extreme poverty. Families facing severe financial hardship are often more vulnerable to deceptive offers, even if they are suspicious of them, because of a desperate need for income. This financial pressure can make them more susceptible to exploitation. Poverty is often directly linked to a child's involvement in exploitative work, as families facing extreme economic hardship may rely on children's labor for survival, and sometimes occurs with the knowledge or implied agreement of the parents (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018).

According to a U.S. Government Accountability Office report, misperceptions about human trafficking can affect prevention efforts. For example, in a community where people believe migration is always linked to trafficking and that traffickers are only strangers, they might not recognize suspicious offers from people they know, such as family members. Additionally, traffickers utilize various deceptive tactics that are often highly complicated and adaptable, constantly evolving their recruitment strategies. Traffickers exploit existing relationships and build trust over time, or they use psychological manipulation to get past people's initial caution. This makes it difficult for even vigilant community members to recognize the real danger (Wheeler, 2022; Reid et al., 2023; UNODC, 2024).

Consistent with previous studies, e.g, Msuya (2017), UNCIF (2023), Mbakogu (2021), Musah et al. (2024), cultural practices play an immense role in hindering preventive practices. Cultural norms and long-standing traditional practices, such as informal child fostering, child migration for work labor, and certain forms of child labor, can unintentionally make children vulnerable to exploitation because these practices are widely accepted by the community. These embedded cultural norms may override individual caution if the offer adheres to accepted, albeit harmful practices.

On the other hand, the current study found a slightly lower level of adherence to preventive practices, such as reporting suspected cases to the police, speaking to their children about the dangers of child trafficking. The qualitative results indicate significant barriers to reporting, which include fear of retaliation, uncertainty about appropriate reporting channels, and concerns regarding the effectiveness of legal intervention. Participants in the focus group discussions conveyed concerns about the possibility of unintentionally being implicated in the crimes they are reporting, as well as frustration with the perceived bureaucratic obstacles in law enforcement and judicial procedures.

This reluctance highlights a significant need for enhanced anonymous reporting systems and reinforced institutional accountability to promote more active involvement from the community. This finding is consistent with various earlier findings such as Martinho et al. (2021) and Mbamba et al. (2023), that reported lower rates of reporting suspected child trafficking incidents to the police, linking it to barriers, including inconsistent understanding and recognition by authorities, insufficient knowledge or training among professionals, dependence on victim reporting, and various attitudinal, procedural, and systemic challenges.

Furthermore, researchers such as Musah et al. (2024), Cody et al. (2024), and Koomson (2023) lent support to the current findings, indicating the underlying socio-cultural practices that perpetuate child exploitation by normalizing it. These practices can obscure the issue of trafficking, as it is becoming accepted within the wider community, which significantly complicates the fight against child trafficking by fostering societal conditions that impede the identification of victims, the prosecution of offenders, and crime prevention (State Department, 2021; Abdullah et al.,2022).

Additionally, the study also identified the persistence of a demand for cheap services and easily controllable employees. According to the results of the FGD, one of the reasons children are trafficked is related to the fact that they can be easily controlled, while the salary for their service is cheaper compared to adult workers. Previous study (e.g., Aronowitz & Koning, 2015) support this finding, indicating that the acceptance of the idea of "low-cost products" by wider society in the form of human labor or sexual services creates fertile ground for traffickers to operate profitably, which is further aggravated by socioeconomic disparities, which create a constant pool of at-risk individuals who are seen as a potential resource for exploitative labor. Generally, engagement in preventive practices is hampered by numerous sociocultural norms, including acceptance of exploitation, stigma and discrimination, gender roles, and long-standing traditional practices.

5.4.1 Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, and Preventive Intention

The present study revealed significant findings related to subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, and intentions to engage in preventive practices.

5.4.1.1 Subjective Norms. The result of the current study shows that participants' scores ranged from moderate to high on key items related to social norms surrounding child trafficking

prevention practices. This suggests a moderate level of social reinforcement, limited personal responsibility, and significant barriers to participating in preventive measures. Many previous studies support the current findings. For instance, Alpert and Conroy (2024) suggest that social and cultural dynamics limit community support, indicating that survivors of trafficking often fear being judged by service providers and society, which further diminishes the social reinforcement necessary for preventive actions.

On the other hand, this finding also explains residents' "moderate or neutral attitude toward various preventive practices related to child trafficking," reported earlier in the study, particularly the reluctance to report suspected cases. It clarifies why individuals might possess general awareness but still struggle with direct intervention. The low level of agreement with the statement that those who report child trafficking are respected in Wolaita Sodo town points to a profound societal disincentive for reporting. As articulated by FGD2P4, "*Reporting issues to the police or authorities is often seen as a dishonorable act, especially when it involves family members. Neighbors or community members may perceive you negatively*." The lack of strong community disapproval of traffickers allows their activities to continue. In some areas, norms that tolerate or normalize exploitative practices, such as child labor and sexual exploitation, diminish the social pressure to hold perpetrators accountable. For instance, research from Nigeria indicates that, although the community often possesses negative attitudes toward traffickers and views traffickers as exploiters and economic usurpers, these feelings do not always lead to broad action or accountability. This is especially true when ordinary community members are less engaged than organizations, such as NGOs or faith-based groups (Olsen et al.,2022; Omotoso & Alokan, 2024).

A society's disapproval of trafficking is vital in combating human trafficking, whereby its absence can enable exploitative practices to thrive, particularly in regions where social norms accept or legitimize such behaviors. Societies' attitudes and misconceptions about child trafficking determine willingness to blame victims or sympathize with their situations (Cunningham and Cromer, 2016). A greater acceptance of these myths is associated with less accountability for the perpetrators. In communities where knowledge about child trafficking is lacking and misunderstandings are prevalent, misunderstandings about trafficking diminish social pressure to confront traffickers, highlighting the need for targeted education and empowerment initiatives (Navarro et al., 2021).

The finding from the present study reveals that there is a significant gap between the general support for child trafficking prevention and the real social barriers that hinder action. The results from the Focus group discussions (FGDs) indicate a common consensus on the importance of preventive measures. However, deeper qualitative investigations show that fear of social backlash, such as being labeled a "betrayer" or "interferer," often prevents individuals from reporting or intervening in suspected trafficking cases, suggesting that although communities recognize the theoretical importance of maintaining a proactive stance against trafficking, the practical execution of these beliefs is hindered by entrenched social norms.

Previous studies (e.g., Cudjoe et.al., 2025; Greenbaum, 2020; Todres, 2021) emphasize that social accountability plays a significant role in shaping behavior. When community members perceive reporting as socially sanctioned rather than penalized, they are far more likely to act. This lack of trust in the legal system has become a major challenge. The qualitative finding highlighted that persistent skepticism toward law enforcement effectiveness and fear of retaliation were significant barriers to reporting child trafficking. Supporting this, Bolger &

Walters (2019) and Zhang et al (2024) indicate that public trust in law enforcement and delays or denials in justice directly affect community cooperation, especially in cases involving vulnerable populations. According to Li et al (2024), several factors discourage reporting, including distrust in the legal system, past mishandled cases, and the absence of visible penalties or delayed justice. Suggesting that when communities view the police as ineffective or unjust, they are less likely to cooperate, which further perpetuates the cycle of underreporting.

Similarly, Bolger & Walters (2019) reported that when people see delays or denials in justice, their expectations for outcomes drop significantly, damaging their willingness to report. This contradicts the increased level of awareness participants had regarding community education, which suggests a preference for safer, less confrontational prevention methods when trust in formal reporting systems is low.

Furthermore, the results from the qualitative findings show how social, cultural, and subjective norms shape community behavior. Consistent with previous findings of Ali et al (2023) and Ortega et al,(2022), societal expectations and deeply rooted cultural norms, such as those that support economic exploitation, gender inequality, and victim stigma, create environments where trafficking can thrive, play a significant role in perpetuating child trafficking by normalizing exploitative practices, and contribute to the conditions where children are exposed to various forms of exploitation.

Similarly, studies, e.g, Abdullah et.al (2022) and Dwumah et al. (2023), indicate that social and personal norms play a significant role both in increasing vulnerability and blocking prevention efforts. In many communities, certain norms and expectations are so deeply ingrained that they often take precedence over international child rights standards, which often result in prioritizing family loyalty and obedience over the individual rights of children (Munthali,2018; Abdullah

et.al, 2022). Practice becomes normalized when parents and children perceive participation as essential to fit in with their social circles. Challenging deeply rooted beliefs requires community interventions that address the ideologies behind harmful practices that facilitate or contribute to child trafficking. Regarding this, Sriram et al (2020) noted that shifting restrictive gender norms and social attitudes can help to address child labor.

5.4.1.2. Perceived Behavioral Control. The present study reveals important findings concerning perceived behavioral control. First, the finding of the study shows that residents tend to have moderate confidence in their ability to report suspected cases of child trafficking and recognize trafficking indicators. The study's findings reveal a complex combination of beliefs and perceived abilities regarding child trafficking prevention among residents of Wolaita Sodo town. Although there is a growing willingness to engage in preventive measures, the results also highlight significant psychological, social, and structural barriers that undermine this enthusiasm. Participants showed a moderate level of confidence in their ability to report suspected cases. They felt capable of refusing to engage in activities associated with child trafficking. This belief connects to perceived behavioral control, which is the belief in one's ability to take effective action.

Research, including the study by Cudjoe et al. (2025), emphasizes the significance of perceived ability in preventing human trafficking. When community members feel empowered and believe they can make a difference, they are more inclined to participate in awareness campaigns, report suspicious activities, and collaborate with law enforcement to combat trafficking. Community-led initiatives, such as educational programs and advocacy groups, improve a sense of empowerment. It offers knowledge, resources, and support, which in turn help to enhance the active participation of community members in preventive actions. Additional support comes

from the study by Finigan-Carr et al. (2023) and Eisler et al. (2023), which suggests that strengthening perceived behavioral control through focused education, training, and community involvement is essential for encouraging proactive behaviors and ensuring a safe environment for children. Similarly, Miskiah and Farhana (2020) pointed out that a multi-stakeholder approach builds individuals' confidence and ability to act effectively in child trafficking prevention efforts.

Second, the results of the study reveal that residents have slightly moderate confidence that the decision to report suspected trafficking is under their control, which implies perceptions of autonomy and personal agency in engaging in child trafficking prevention practices. This result is consistent with numerous previous findings, e.g, Labriola et al. (2021), Massey & Rankin (2020), and Skeels & Bashir (2024) studies, which underlined the significant role of perceived autonomy in tackling trafficking.

However, although perceived autonomy is important, having this perception alone is not enough for effective engagement in child trafficking prevention. To close the gap between belief and action, interventions must not only build individual confidence but also create supportive environments that validate and encourage community-driven reporting and intervention efforts.

5.4.1.3 Intention to Engage in Preventive Practice. The result from the current study revealed that residents demonstrate moderate to strong intention to actively seek out information about child trafficking, along with a strong desire to encourage others to pursue accurate information before making decisions regarding a child's job opportunities elsewhere. The strong intention shows that residents clearly understand that having knowledge and making informed decisions are vital for preventing this practice.

Studies (e.g., Skeels & Bashir, 2024; Greenbaum, 2020; Martinho et al., 2021) suggest that by empowering communities with knowledge about trafficking dynamics, vulnerabilities, and deceptive recruitment tactics, people are better equipped to recognize warning signs, question suspicious opportunities, and guide others towards safer choices. The willingness of residents toward offering advice shows the interest of the residents in acting as trusted sources, spreading important safety information, and leading local prevention efforts. Previous studies, e.g., ILo (2024), Eric et.al (2024), indicate that this strategy is an increasingly recognized method for its effectiveness among vulnerable populations. Research indicates that when reliable community members share insights into trafficking risks, early detection and intervention significantly improve, resulting in lower victimization rates (Cudjoe, 2025; Martinho et.al, 2021; Miskiah & Farhana, 2020; Franchino,2019).

Numerous previous studies, e.g., (Rafferty, 2013; Cudjoe, 2025; Greenbaum, 2020; Chang et al., 2022), noted that effective prevention requires not only raising awareness but also empowering communities and individuals through education, establishing clear reporting mechanisms, and implementing supportive policies that reduce barriers to action. Creating safe environments that promote reporting and intervention can be accomplished through collaboration across different disciplines. Similarly, scholars, e.g, Rafferty (2013), Cudjoe (2025), Greenbaum (2020), and Miskiah and Farhana (2020) suggest that raising community awareness, providing practical tools, and fostering a culture of shared responsibility are essential for encouraging proactive engagement in the prevention of child trafficking.

The study found a crucial gap between residents' moderate intention to engage in preventive practices and their actual behavior, stemming from a complex interplay of systemic and socio-cultural factors. This aligns with numerous previous studies, e.g, Auguste et al (2024), Cody et.al

(2024), suggesting that while knowledge and positive attitudes are important, genuine on-the-ground action is frequently challenged by a lack of trust in authorities and the prioritization of survival over direct engagement.

Residents of the town show a strong intention to act as informal sources of warning information within their social networks. This finding is important given the complex factors involved in child migration. Their willingness to share warnings among peers and in community circles is especially crucial in situations where children often migrate for better opportunities. The importance of informal information sharing among residents becomes even more evident when considering the often-ambiguous distinction between independent child migration and trafficking. Davidson (2011) and Dottridge (2021) note that policies and practices can sometimes categorize different groups of child migrants together with trafficking victims. This oversimplification can ignore the specific needs of those who suffer the most serious harm. In regions like Southeast Asia and South America, established migration routes, along with socio-economic pressures, create large flows of child migrants. Restrictive migration policies can unintentionally put these children at greater risk of exploitation (Huijsmans & Baker, 2012; Van Doore, 2018).

In this complex situation, the dual role of social networks and cultural norms is crucial (Heissler, 2013; Howard & Boyden, 2013). While these networks can provide important protective functions, they can also unintentionally support exploitative practices. Sharing cautionary information is one of the vital ways to reduce trafficking risks; a careful approach is necessary. Researchers like Koomson and Abdulai (2021) and Huijsmans and Baker (2012) argue that anti-trafficking messages often promote a narrow view of childhood, which can lead to negative consequences. This narrow perspective may not result in true protection for migrant children

who don't fit these specific expectations. In response to these limitations, IOM (2020) underscores the need to recognize children's agency and the various motivations underlying their mobility. As Howard and Boyden (2013) further demonstrate, not all child migration is exploitative, and many children strive for better lives through these moves. Therefore, the information shared by residents must empower children and families with realistic assessments of risk, clarify the difference between exploitation and voluntary migration, and help guide them towards safer paths. Effective policy responses that protect against trafficking while respecting children's rights and agency and addressing underlying issues like poverty and lack of opportunity benefit from informed community vigilance.

5.5 The Relationship Between Major Variables in the Study

5.5.1 Predicting Practice from Intention, Attitude, Subjective Norms, and Perceived Control

The result from the present study shows that there is a significant correlation between the variables and indicates that attitude toward child trafficking and preventive practice, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are significant predictors of intention to engage in preventive practice. Several previous studies lent their support to this result. e.g, Babu et al. (2022), Alinka (2015). Their findings clearly showed that attitudes influence people to feel morally obligated and practically able to act when they suspect child trafficking. In a community that views trafficking as a violation of human rights, members develop stronger beliefs that stepping in is both necessary and personally important. This, in turn, increases their intentions to engage in prevention, such as reporting suspicious cases or supporting victims.

Conversely, blaming the victims for their situations or negative attitudes weakens empathy, impairs feelings of responsibility, and diminishes the intentions that lead to preventive actions.

Babu et al. (2022) conducted a study that found a positive correlation between people's willingness to help victims of trafficking and their attitudes toward those victims, indicating that those who held a non-stigmatizing, rights-based attitude were significantly more inclined to offer assistance compared to those with negative attitudes. This is further corroborated by the findings of Alinka (2019), who notes that negative attitudes, such as pointing blame on the victims for what happened to them and viewing victims as assenting, are common among key service providers, which in turn hampers effective victim identification and prevention intervention.

Likewise, the current study found a link between subjective norms and preventive practices. Subjective norms are important in either supporting or fighting against child trafficking. It can also contribute to the trafficking of children by creating an environment where the exploitation of children is tolerated or flourishes. Okech et al.s (2024) study lent support to the current findings, indicating that cultural norms that conflict with anti-trafficking laws create gaps in the enforcement of the laws. For instance, Okech et al, stated that in Sierra Leone, viewing child trafficking as a “family issue” or accepting child labor as a normal practice among the community weakens community action against it. Wood's (2020) research also emphasizes that the perception of social pressure affects key stakeholders' readiness to report trafficking. Similarly, numerous previous studies, e.g, Okech et al. (2024), Babu et al. (2022), La Barbera &Ajzen (2020), lend support to the current finding, indicating that perceived behavioral control and intention significantly correlate with practice/ behavior.

The results of the current study are closely aligned with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), which asserts that attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control are predictors of behavioral intentions, subsequently influencing behavior. In this framework, attitude toward preventive practices (ATPP) emerges as the most significant predictor, exerting considerable

effects on both intention (IN) and preventive practice (PP). The subjective norm (SN) has a dual role by influencing both the intention to engage in preventive practices and the practices themselves; however, its direct impact on preventive practices (PP) is less pronounced.

Perceived behavioral control (PBC) is a significant predictor of intention, in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), although its effect is relatively weaker. The attitude toward child trafficking (ATTCT) also has a meaningful impact, yet the factor may not be critical within this model compared to the attitude toward preventive practice. These findings suggest the need to foster positive attitudes toward preventive practices and employ social influences to improve both the intention to engage in preventive practices and actual participation in preventive practices.

Studies utilizing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in areas like child protection and the prevention of trafficking often show that the decision to take protective actions, such as reporting child abuse or actively supporting anti-trafficking efforts, is not always driven mainly by individual attitudes. Instead, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control stand out as strong factors. For instance, a study in Malaysia by Omar et al. (2020) found a strong link between social forms, perceived control, and a person's intention to report child abuse. The finding of the current study revealed that subjective norms and attitudes regarding preventive practices were the most significant factors influencing intentions, whereas attitudes toward child trafficking, the perceived social pressure to take action or refrain from doing so, and perceived behavioral control, essentially confidence in the ability to act, were considered to have less effect on the intention to engage in preventive practices.

Çoban and Özel's (2022) findings lent partial support to these findings, noted in their research on tourists' intentions regarding destinations possibly linked to child labor that all three main

components of the Theory of Planned Behavior, attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, positively influenced intentions, supporting the TPB model. Moreover, looking into the broader meta-analyses across various health and social behavior areas, these trends are further confirmed. Research by Karl and Fischer (2021), Hagger, et al. (2022), and La Barbera and Ajzen (2020) indicated that perceived behavioral control usually has the most significant effect on intentions to act; however, the result from the current study found that perceived behavioral control was not among the strongest predictors of intention to engage in preventive practice, and this difference might be related to the cultural context in which the study was conducted. Nevertheless, subjective norms consistently have a major influence, especially among the collectivist cultures where social expectations are essential, or when community standards are very clear.

These findings provide an important insight into creating interventions to prevent child trafficking, suggesting that trying simply to alter individual attitudes may not be enough; rather, an effective strategy needs to focus on building and reinforcing supportive social norms within communities, creating an environment where protective actions are accepted and encouraged, empowering individuals, and boosting their confidence in recognizing risks and acting. As suggested by Poudel and Barroso (2018), Omar et al. (2020), and Çoban and Özel (2022), meaningful intervention in a battle against child trafficking can be achieved by devising and implementing a holistic approach that addresses both social pressures and personal empowerment.

5.6 Differences in Intention and Preventive Practices as a Function of Demographic and Socioeconomic Variables

5.6.1 Differences in Intention and Preventive Practices as a Function of Sex, Age, and Education Level

The findings from the current study show a non-significant difference in preventive practices as a function of sex, age, and their interaction effect. Gender does not significantly affect child trafficking prevention practices, and the remaining variables in the study include intention to engage in preventive practice. Generally, studies on child trafficking and sex differences in preventive behaviors are scarce, but several studies provide context for the current findings. For instance, Sweileh (2018) points out that child trafficking, as a part of human trafficking, is less studied than adult trafficking. However, global awareness campaigns have improved public understanding of the problem across different groups, which may have impacted gender-based differences in attitudes and norms. This supports the non-significant findings, as widespread awareness might lead to uniform perceptions among the genders. Studies, e.g, Rafferty (2013), Flood, and Williamson (2021), reported that child trafficking is a problem that affects various populations and is seen as a universal social issue. Thus, a non-significant difference as a result of gender difference can be explained from this perspective, which could be related to a view among males and females that they may consider child trafficking as an immoral act, leading to comparable attitudes and intentions.

In this regard, studies, e.g, Mendenhall et al. (2025), show that individual traits like gender have minimal impact on influencing behaviors against child trafficking. These findings lent support to the current study's finding of no significant gender differences in child trafficking prevention

practices, which can be related to the fact that both genders may face similar social pressures and resources for preventing child trafficking

However, some studies suggest possible gender differences in related contexts that might contrast with these findings. For example, Adesina (2014) notes that women in low-income areas may participate more in community-based anti-trafficking efforts due to their roles as caregivers. Similarly, Europol (2016) emphasizes that trafficking prevention often requires community-wide involvement, which may reduce the impact of gender-specific roles in preventive behaviors. The non-significant results suggest that interventions to prevent child trafficking do not need to be customized by gender, as males and females display similar attitudes, intentions, and behaviors. However, the findings also highlight the need for more research to see if contextual factors, such as cultural norms or access to resources, affect gender differences in other populations.

Similarly, the current study also examined whether child trafficking preventive practices vary among different age groups. The result revealed that age did not predict participants' engagement in preventive practice, i.e, the study did not find significant differences between younger and older residents. This lack of significant mean differences among the groups seems to indicate that younger and older residents share similar attitudes and behaviors regarding child trafficking prevention practices. This result is consistent with findings from previous research, such as the one by Liu et al. (2023). They found no significant differences among different age groups in attitudes, subjective norms, or perceived behavioral control among stakeholders, whereby younger and older participants had similar intentions and practices, indicating that age does not influence the relationships outlined by TPB.

The non-significant results in the current study are reflective of Liu et al.'s findings, implying that age may not affect preventive or socially responsible behaviors, and they reinforce their

findings of similar intentions across age groups. This suggests that prevention of child trafficking, like environmental behavior, may be influenced by shared concerns rather than age-specific factors. Scholars like Martinho et al. (2021) argue that factors such as education level and access to information about trafficking are more indicative of knowledge and proactive attitudes than age. Additionally, Franchino (2019), Mbamba et al. (2023), and Cudjoe-Mensah et al. (2025) have observed that community-based prevention strategies, particularly educational programs and advocacy, are effective when they engage individuals across all age groups and foster a sense of collective responsibility. The current finding is supported by several prior studies, including Hagger and Hamilton (2024), which found no significant differences in the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) variables across different age groups. Furthermore, the study by Okech et al. (2024) also provided additional support for the present results, revealing no significant difference in attitudes toward anti-child trafficking initiatives or their perceived effectiveness in addressing child trafficking based on the participants' age.

However, the current findings don't confirm prior studies of Shrestha et al. (2015) and Jones et al. (2024), who documented important variations in awareness and attitudes based on age. For example, the research by Jones et al. (2024) found that older individuals had greater knowledge about trafficking but showed a lower willingness to seek assistance from various resources in exploitative situations. Generally, the absence of differences among age groups regarding attitude, practice, and intention to engage in preventive practice in the current study suggests that perspectives on child trafficking prevention are similar across different ages, which may be due to universal ethical concerns or a shared awareness within the community.

On the other hand, the current study found that educational level considerably influences child trafficking preventive practices and intention to engage in preventive practices. First, the findings

of the current study indicated that intention to engage in preventive practice varies as a function of residents' educational level. Results showed that well-educated residents tend to express a strong intention to engage in preventive practices more often than less educated residents. This implies that residents who have a better educational status tend to engage in preventive practices.

This result is consistent with the finding of Bekmuratova et al. (2024) who noted that people with greater educational exposure, such as those who completed anti-trafficking programs or had formal education on the issue, showed stronger intentions to take preventive actions, which include activities such as identification of trafficking signs, reporting trafficking cases, and talking about risks with peers, suggesting that individuals with higher educational attainment are more likely to follow practical steps compared to those with less education. Martinho et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review that found individuals with higher educational levels, such as professionals with specialized training and community members who have formal education, are more likely to intend to and engage in preventive practices.

Additionally, consistent with the current study, Greenbaum et al.'s (2018) study also reported a positive correlation between educational levels and intention to participate in the fight against trafficking, whereby community members with higher educational levels or access to trafficking-specific training were more likely to express intentions to engage in preventive actions and to follow through with those actions. Education raised awareness of trafficking indicators and reduced barriers to action, such as fear or lack of knowledge about reporting mechanisms. Less-educated individuals were less likely to take preventive steps due to a limited understanding of the issue.

A study by Donohue-Dioh et al. (2020) also suggests that education and awareness are the most important and feasible prevention strategies. Their research found that individuals with higher

educational status are more likely to engage in prevention activities, including community discussions and reporting, which are associated with increased knowledge of trafficking dynamics, underlining that education empowers individuals to recognize and act on trafficking risks. While individuals with less education are often more susceptible to misinformation and victim-blaming attitudes.

On the other hand, this finding suggests that although education influences intentions and preventive practices, it does not necessarily change attitudes, social pressures, or perceived control. This aligns with some literature. For example, a positive attitude toward preventing trafficking remains steady across all educational levels, possibly because of the ethical aspect of trafficking, which everyone understands, regardless of educational background. Greenbaum and colleagues noted a similar consistency in 2018, emphasizing how the moral significance of the issue contributes to these uniform views. It also makes sense that social norms would be similar in communities that share cultural values, much like Martinho et al. (2021) noted that when a community is widely aware of an issue, it can reduce differences in norms. The non-significance of perceived behavioral control might indicate external barriers, such as a lack of effective reporting mechanisms, that can persist regardless of education level. Donohue-Dioh et al. (2020) support this by pointing out that even educated individuals may face systemic challenges when trying to turn their intentions into action.

5.6.2 Difference in Intention and Preventive Practice as a Function of Socioeconomic Status and Years of Residence

In the current study, evidence was found that preventive practices vary according to residents' perceived socioeconomic status. However, no evidence was found for the remaining variables as a function of perceived socioeconomic status. The findings indicate that residents who perceive

their socioeconomic status as higher than most tend to engage in preventive practices more frequently than those of lower socioeconomic status. This suggests that residents who perceive their socioeconomic status as better than most people tend to report to authorities, share information, refuse suspicious job offers, and engage in open communication about the danger of child trafficking with their children. Although perceived socioeconomic status does not affect cognitive or normative precursors, it may influence behavioral outcomes due to variations in resources, access, or confidence.

Conversely, the absence of a significant difference in the other measures suggests that these psychological constructs, based on the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), are relatively consistent across different socioeconomic levels. Generally, studies that have examined the relationship between perceived socioeconomic status and intention to engage in child trafficking prevention practices are limited. Nevertheless, the current results align with prior evidence. For example, Greenbaum et al. (2018) in their study found that individuals with higher income and social status were more likely to take part in preventive actions, including reporting cases and participating in community education. This increased involvement can be attributed to access to resources such as social networks, more free time, and a higher level of confidence. Consequently, they tend to be more proactive compared to individuals from lower SES backgrounds.

Studies, e.g, Uduji et.al (2019), Turner et al (2020), noted that a lower socioeconomic status is often associated with being more vulnerable to trafficking and experiencing barriers to active engagement in anti-trafficking efforts. The current study's findings relate to those of Martinho et al. (2020), who reported a significant relationship between SES and practice. Martinho et al. attributed this to the universal ethical condemnation of trafficking, which tends to create

comparable attitudes and norms across different socioeconomic groups. Practical actions are influenced by access to resources and opportunities. The results from the current study also align with several previous findings, such Price and Bentele (2024) and Talib and Khan (2025) who noted that socioeconomic status (SES) significantly influences the intention and ability to prevent child trafficking, as poverty, lack of education, and economic inequality increase children's vulnerability to trafficking by limiting family resources and access to protective measures. On the other hand, higher SES is associated with greater awareness of child trafficking risks and available interventions. Parents and communities with more resources and education are better equipped to recognize, prevent, and respond to trafficking threats (Mbamba et al.2025).

The present study results showed that years of residence did not predict residents' intention to engage in preventive practice and preventive behavior. Although years of residency did not significantly predict preventive practices in the present analysis, this may reflect the fact that residency functions more as a contextual enabler than a direct determinant. As Goldma et al. (2020) note, effective child protection systems characterized by strong regulation, early risk identification, trained staff, and community-based support are essential for building trust in local institutions. Without these systems, longer residence does not necessarily translate to increased trust, as communities may witness or experience ongoing risks such as trafficking, abuse, or institutional exploitation. This implies that longer residence strengthens trust with local institutions only when communities have robust child protection systems. Similarly, Baglay et al. (2024) highlight the role stable residency status plays in enhancing access to services, but such benefits depend on the presence of effective support structures. Thus, the nonsignificant result in

this study may indicate that residency length alone is insufficient to drive preventive practices without accompanying institutional and community engagement.

On the other hand, the direct relationship between years of residence and child trafficking preventive practice is not well-studied. However, research on migrant and street children suggests that recent arrivals or those with unstable residence face higher risks due to a lack of social networks, unfamiliarity with local resources, and exclusion from protective systems (Chimdessa, 2022; Greenbaum, 2020; Beelmann et al.,2021). Stable, long-term residence may facilitate better integration and access to preventive services, but more targeted research is needed

In summary, the current study provides important insights regarding internal child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo. One of the most important contributions of the current study is the finding related to the perception of society regarding child trafficking and the discrepancy between public perceptions and the lived experiences of child trafficking victims in that locality, whereby trafficked children continue to face ongoing stigma and discrimination, resulting in a detrimental cycle of revictimization. Although the findings of the study show a positive attitude among the residents toward preventive practices and support for victims, it also reported a notable knowledge gap in defining child trafficking, whereby they confuse it with migration, child labor, or other forms of exploitation, and this conceptual uncertainty in turn may significantly hinder effective identification and intervention.

Additionally, the research reveals a gap between the willingness to participate in preventive measures and the actual engagement in these practices. Despite having a strong desire to engage in preventive practices, the actual participation remains insufficient. By uncovering these contradictions, the study underscores the need for more integrated, victim-centered approaches

and targeted educational efforts that clarify the defining features of trafficking and promote meaningful, stigma-free support systems.

The findings of this study imply that the implementation of international conventions and related agreements on children remains limited in practice in Ethiopia. Despite ratification of international instruments pertinent to children, including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Labour Organization's Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and amendment of its laws, the implementation of these laws remains very limited. The observed confusion among the participants and failure to distinguish between child trafficking, migration, and child labor suggest that there has been insufficient dissemination of standardized definitions of child trafficking and a lack of public education, which is a crucial element in implementing the laws. Moreover, the stigma and revictimization encountered by trafficked children are also an indicator of weak implementation of the rehabilitative and psychosocial protections specified in these conventions. Despite the positive attitude and strong intention to engage in preventive practice, the moderate level of actual engagement in preventive practice is an indication of the structural and institutional weaknesses in implementing the laws and involving the community.

These findings suggest that Ethiopia's inadequate adherence to international agreements emphasizes the need for extensive efforts to bridge the disparity between legal obligations and their practical execution by devising culturally aware, victim-centered strategies.

The present study blended the Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) framework with the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) and created a model that guides the study and determined it to be vital for the study's design and analysis. The KAP model provides a structured investigation of residents' knowledge, attitudes, and preventive practices regarding child trafficking, offering

an opportunity to identify critical knowledge gaps and attitudinal strengths. Meanwhile, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) provides a framework for examining the relationship between intentions and actual preventive actions, particularly in addressing the gap between strong preventive intentions and moderate levels of engagement. Overall, these frameworks promoted a comprehensive understanding of the cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions of the issue and helped to place the findings within broader psychosocial and structural settings. As a result, the conceptual framework not only aligned well with the objectives of the study but also enriched the analysis by providing explanatory depth and coherence throughout the study.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

6.1. Conclusion

The current study had two main purposes. The first was to assess child trafficking knowledge, attitudes, and practices among residents of Wolaita Sodo town. The second was to examine the relationship between the selected variables and their relationship with the major variable being studied. Considering the purposes of the study and the discussion of the results made above, the researcher draws the following conclusions.

The findings of the current study underscore that child trafficking remains a pressing and prevalent issue, affecting families in ways that highlight the urgent need for comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies. The study identified several push and pull factors that contribute to child trafficking. Notable push factors include poverty, family instability, large family sizes in relation to limited agricultural land, orphanhood, school dropout rates, and peer pressure. These elements compel children from disadvantaged areas to migrate to urban environments, where they frequently encounter labor exploitation, abuse, and a denial of their fundamental rights, including access to education. Conversely, urban aspirations and deceptive promises of enhanced livelihoods act as significant pull factors.

Second, the findings of this study underscore that social networks play a critical role in aggravating child trafficking within the study area. The involvement of trusted individuals, including family members, relatives, and acquaintances, who exploit cultural practices of child placement, complicates both identification and intervention efforts. In addition, the presence of informal agencies, such as brokers at bus stations, further exacerbates the problem by exploiting

trust, false promises, and family debts, leading some children to migrate voluntarily but under misleading circumstances.

Third, the study highlights a gender disparity in child trafficking, with male children disproportionately affected compared to female children. This pattern may reflect sociocultural norms and labor market demands that target boys for informal work such as weaving and farming. At the same time, the possibility of underreporting female trafficking, particularly in domestic settings, must be considered, as it complicates the full understanding of gendered vulnerabilities in trafficking. Moreover, the study highlights the heightened vulnerability of children in early adolescence, particularly those aged 13–17, whose limited risk assessment skills and increased mobility make them especially susceptible to exploitation. Economic hardship and cultural aspirations for migration further intensify these risks, with some parents complicit due to desperation or deception. Taken together, these dynamics underscore that children aged 8–17, especially those in early adolescence, represent the most at-risk group in the locality.

Fourth, community knowledge of child trafficking remains limited, with knowledge gaps and misconceptions contributing to a complex and often inaccurate view of the issue. While residents demonstrate awareness of victim profiles, vulnerabilities, and trafficking techniques, their ability to distinguish trafficking from other forms of child mobility, such as migration, fostering, or placement with relatives, remains weak. This conflation, often framed as educational or economic opportunity, obscures the defining features of in-country child trafficking and hinders effective prevention.

Fifth, the study underscores a persistent gap between positive attitudes and actual preventive actions. Although residents express strong intentions to share information and report suspicious activity, these attitudes are not consistently translated into practice, leaving children vulnerable to

subtle forms of exploitation. Prevention efforts are significantly constrained by social and cultural barriers, particularly the stigmatization of reporting and the absence of strong community support, both of which weaken collective resilience. These challenges are compounded by psychosocial dynamics that decisively shape preventive practices, underscoring the importance of addressing individual and community-level perceptions. Consistent with the Theory of Planned Behavior, attitudes toward prevention emerged as the most powerful predictor of both intention and practice, highlighting the centrality of personal commitment in driving behavioral change. At the same time, subjective norms exerted considerable influence, reflecting the pervasive role of social pressures in shaping community responses. In collectivist settings, norms that normalize child labor or frame trafficking as a private matter reduce accountability and discourage intervention. Perceived behavioral control contributed moderately, indicating that empowerment is constrained by structural impediments such as economic hardship, distrust in authorities, and socio-cultural pressures.

Sixth, knowledge, attitude, and preventive practice do not differ as a function of gender and age. The differences were not seen in subjective norms, intention to engage in preventive practice, and perceived behavioral control as well. The absence of differences might reflect widespread awareness and community efforts that promote similar views, as well as relatively similar access to anti-trafficking resources, which likely play a role in this consistency. While these findings suggest gender is not a determining factor in preventive engagement, local cultural norms and resource availability may still influence gender roles in other contexts, underscoring the need for continued attention to community-specific dynamics in prevention strategies.

On the contrary, differences emerged in preventive intentions and practices when examined by education and socioeconomic status. While attitudes and norms remained consistent across

educational levels and socioeconomic status, individuals with higher education and perceived socioeconomic status were more likely to engage in preventive behaviors, largely due to greater access to resources rather than shifts in personal beliefs.

To sum up, the current study provides important insights into the prevalence, dynamics, and psychosocial factors connected to internal child trafficking. It centers on two main purposes: assessing residents' knowledge, attitudes, and practices, and examining how demographic and socioeconomic factors influence these variables, as well as the relationship among these variables. The findings reveal that child trafficking is a major concern among residents. It is driven by push factors such as poverty, family instability, large family sizes, orphanhood, school dropouts, and peer pressure. Various factors contribute to the issue of child trafficking, including the appeal of city life and false promises. Sodo's location as a central hub, combined with existing social networks of trusted people and informal brokers, makes the situation worse, especially for male children, who are more vulnerable to the demands of the labor market. Furthermore, the study identified knowledge gaps and misconceptions about child trafficking, which are intertwined with child mobility practices. Despite having a positive attitude toward preventing child trafficking, their willingness to act can be impacted by numerous factors, including a fear of retaliation, a lack of trust in authorities, and cultural norms like shame.

The Theory of Planned Behavior framework shows strong connections between attitudes, subjective norms, perceived control over preventive practice, and intention to engage in preventive practice, with attitude toward preventive practice being the strongest predictor of preventive practice. Education level and perceived socioeconomic status significantly affect intentions and practices, while gender and age do not show significant differences, which implies

ethical concerns and community awareness are universal and emphasize education and access to resources as key drivers of action.

Finally, while the study offers useful insights into child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town, certain limitations should be recognized to understand the findings better and inform future research. The study used various data sources, including children, adults, and key informant interviews as well as other data collection methods, like focus group discussions, self-reports, and interviews.

The current study has some limitations. First, as a study that utilized a cross-sectional design, it only provides a single snapshot of the problem at one point in time. This makes it difficult to track if there are changes in knowledge and attitudes over time; thus, a better understanding of patterns, trends, and the effectiveness of prevention and intervention measures may be possible with longitudinal research.

Second, the study is limited only to residents of Wolaita Sodo town, which may hinder the generalizability of the findings to other regions or rural areas with different socioeconomic and cultural conditions, whereby the urban-focused sample may not represent the views of rural communities, where child trafficking often begins.

Third, social desirability bias may arise from using self-reported data to evaluate behaviors, attitudes, and knowledge. In this type of research, participants may have overreported or underreported their attitudes and behaviors due to cultural sensitivity or fear of being judged, especially when discussing a difficult topic like child trafficking.

Fourth, some research suggests that cases of female child trafficking might be underreported, particularly when it happen within families or in domestic settings. This could be due to existing social norms that make these situations less likely to be discussed or exposed. The study

identified economic hardship and distrust in authorities as barriers to preventive actions; however, it did not thoroughly examine structural factors, such as the capacity of local institutions or law enforcement bodies, which could significantly affect trafficking dynamics and prevention efforts.

The study identified significant misconceptions surrounding inter-country child trafficking, frequently conflated with other forms of child mobility. To better understand prevention practices, more qualitative research is needed to examine the influence of various factors, including economic, socio-cultural, and psychological elements. This information could then be used to create more effective and targeted interventions. The study's findings are valuable; at the same time, it also identifies key areas for future research, whereby a deeper understanding of child trafficking prevention could be achieved by addressing these limitations and focusing on different contexts.

6.2 Recommendation

Based on the discussions of the major findings made above and the conclusions drawn, the researcher forwards the following recommendations

1. Strengthen Community Education and Awareness activities: There are significant knowledge gaps and misconceptions about child trafficking, especially the confusion with other forms of child mobility. Awareness campaigns and programs should work to address these misunderstandings surrounding child trafficking. Concerned bodies need to devise and implement effective programs that explain the key features of in-country child trafficking and improve residents' knowledge of traffickers and their techniques, and the psychosocial effects of trafficking on the victims. It is also important to organize frequent community workshops

that involve local leaders and the media can help to clarify myths and encourage a better understanding.

2. Address Push and Pull Factors through Economic and Social Interventions. Poverty, family instability, large family sizes, and urban aspirations are identified as major drivers of child trafficking; thus, interventions should include poverty-reduction programs, like microfinance initiatives or vocational training for families, to lessen economic struggles. Family support services, like counseling and social welfare programs, can help stabilize households.
3. Improving community trust and reporting mechanisms is crucial to bridge the discrepancy between attitudes and actions regarding the prevention of trafficking in children, caused by fear of retaliation and distrust in authorities. This is an indication of the lack of clear and accessible reporting systems. Hence, building a community-based reporting mechanism backed up by trusted residents and ensuring confidentiality can encourage residents to report suspicious activities. There is also a need to provide extensive training to local law enforcement bodies to handle trafficking cases sensitively and effectively. This can help build trust.
4. As the result of the current study shows, male children between the ages of 8 and 17, particularly those in the adolescent subgroup (13–17 years), are immensely affected by the demands of the labor market; thus, targeted interventions for the vulnerable populations are vital. The prevention initiatives need to be designed to meet the specific needs of these groups and devise measures that prioritize the safety of children in these crucial age groups to prevent exploitation and trafficking. The study recommends age-specific, gender-sensitive, peer-driven, and community-embedded strategies. Special needs identified include

adolescent protection, gender-sensitive outreach, structural support, and cultural clarity. Together, these ensure prevention is both contextually relevant and practically actionable.

5. Traffickers often exploit trusted individuals and social networks to find victims. Therefore, prevention efforts must use these same networks to promote protective and educational goals instead. In this regard, engaging community leaders and parents in educational and awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in challenging and restructuring deeply rooted cultural practices, such as the informal placement of children with extended relatives, that may unintentionally contribute to their vulnerability. Furthermore, peer-led education programs serve as a strategic tool to respond to misleading stories and to the appeal of urban migration, which frequently contributes to the displacement and exploitation of young individuals.
6. Promote Education and Resource Access: The current study found an association between higher educational attainment and perceived socioeconomic status with stronger engagement in preventive practices. While direct access to higher education may be limited, these findings underscore the importance of integrating targeted educational components and awareness initiatives within existing community structures and educational platforms accessible to the population. Such efforts should focus on enhancing understanding of child trafficking risks and prevention strategies, particularly among individuals with lower formal education, to foster more robust preventive behaviors. Additionally, providing resources like legal aid or community centers for lower-SES groups can strengthen their ability to take preventive actions.
7. Concerned bodies working on interventions need to consider employing the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) in intervention measures. Given the strong effect of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived control on preventive practices, interventions employing the

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) can be effective. Focusing on people's beliefs, social pressures, and confidence in their ability to act can lead to better outcomes. Intervention measures should give due emphasis on altering attitudes toward prevention, encouraging community norms that disgrace child trafficking and exploitation, and enhancing residents' confidence in their ability to take action through skills-building workshops and support systems.

8. Strengthen Regional Collaboration: Since Wolaita Sodo is one of the trafficking hubs in the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples' Region, regional coordination among the regions is vital. Partnerships among local governments, NGOs, and law enforcement can enhance the monitoring of transit routes, disrupt trafficking networks, and offer rehabilitation services for victims.
9. Working to challenge cultural and social barriers, including cultural norms, such as the shame associated with reporting family members, can hinder prevention efforts. Community dialogues should challenge these attitudes by encouraging shared responsibility and re-conceptualizing reporting as an important protective measure. Engaging religious and cultural leaders can help change norms that unintentionally support trafficking.
10. Conduct Further Research: future research needs to investigate rural perspectives, long-term trends, and structural issues like institutional capacity to address the limitations of this study. In-depth qualitative studies are crucial for exploring cultural misconceptions and the underreporting of female trafficking. These studies can provide valuable information for creating more effective prevention strategies

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Appendices

Appendix A; English Version Questionnaire

Part I. Demographic Information

Direction: For each question below please give your correct responses by putting a (√) mark or by filling in appropriate phrases or figures in the space provided as required.

1. Sex male ☐ female ☐
2. Level of education _____
    a. Illiterate
    b. Read and write only
    c. Primary education completed (1-8 grades)
    d. High school completed (9-12 grades)
    e. Post-secondary training less than 3 years
    f. First Degree and above
3. For how long you have lived in Sodo town? _____
4. Do you speak Amharic? a) Yes b) No
5. Do you have children? a) Yes b) No
6. If your answer is yes to question number 5 how many children do you have? _____
7. Compared to most people in your community, how do you rate your socio-economic status
    a) Better than most people
    b) Same as most people
    c) Worse than most people
8. Average monthly income (birr) _____
9. Are there any children from your family who were trafficked? a). yes b). no
10. If your answer to question # 11 is yes please answer the following questions concerning the trafficked child/ children
    a. sex female ☐ male ☐
    b. How many _____
    c. At what age _____
    d. When _____

e. By whom _____

f. To where they are brought_____

Section II: Items for measuring knowledge concerning child trafficking

Using the scale below, please indicate whether the item is correct or incorrect by putting (√) on the box that best represents your response. There is no wrong answer. Whatever answer you give is acceptable.

No	Items	Correct	Incorrect
1.	In-country child trafficking is the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of children within a country for the purpose of exploitation		
2.	In-country child trafficking involves the exploitation of a child		
3.	In-country child trafficking may involve abuse of power or a position of vulnerability		
4.	Victims of in-country child trafficking are children forced to work to repay a loan		
5.	Victims of in-country child trafficking can be child domestic workers who are abused by his/her employers		
6.	A child who is forced to work longer hours than was promised can be a victim of in-country child trafficking		
7.	Working children who are not receiving wages and/or having their salaries withheld by their employers are victims of in-country child trafficking		
8.	In most cases, victims of in-country child trafficking experience physical abuse		
9.	In most cases, victims of in-country child trafficking experience psychological abuse		
10.	Children from urban areas are vulnerable to in-country child trafficking		
11.	Children from rural areas are most often vulnerable to in-country child trafficking		
12.	Children of poor families are more vulnerable to in-country child trafficking than children of others		
13.	Acquaintance, stranger, friend, neighbor/family friend, relative, and private companies could be among recruiters		
14.	Children are recruited into trafficking through false promises		

Please give your responses to the following items by circling or filling appropriate figures in the space provided as required. Multiple answers are possible.

15. Who are the victims of in-country child trafficking?

a) Male b) Female c) Both male and female

16. At what age are boys usually trafficked from your community? _____

17. At what age are girls usually trafficked from your community? _____

18. Who are typical recruiters in your community?

a) Male b) Female c) Both male and female

19. How do you get to know about child trafficking? Multiple answers are possible

a. I personally know someone who was trafficked
b. Someone I know told me about it
c. I watched a news program on TV
d. I watched a documentary on TV
e. I watched a film on TV
f. I listened on a program on the radio
g. I read an article in the newspaper
h. I read about it on the Internet
i. Other_____

Section III. items for measuring different types of attitudes.

Direction: Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by using the scale below, by putting (√) on the box that best represents your response

5= Strongly agree (SA), 4= Agree (A), 3= Don't know (DK), 2 = Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree (SD)

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1	In-country child trafficking is a serious problem in Sodo Town					
2	It is not difficult to identify a child trafficking situation in Wolaita Sodo					
3	Children who end up being trafficked do so by their own choice					
4	If those trafficked children were poor to start with, at least now they have a job					
5	People I know say children who are trafficked deserve what they get					
6	I would be willing to report suspected cases of child trafficking to the authorities					
7	Internal child trafficking is a significant societal problem in Walita Sodo town that deserves more attention					
8	I would be interested in attending a workshop on how to identify and prevent child trafficking					
9	I would feel comfortable talking to my neighbors about child trafficking prevention					

Direction; Items for Measuring Preventive practices

Please indicate how often you engaged in the preventive practices indicated below during the past twelve months by putting (√) on the box that best represents your response

1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Always

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1	Report to the police any suspected cases of child trafficking					
2	Find information about child trafficking					
3	Spoken to your children about the dangers of child trafficking					
4	Share any information you have with friends concerning child trafficking					
5	Offer advice to someone to seek accurate information before deciding to send a child for a job elsewhere					
6	Refused an offer for your child to work because you suspected it might be trafficking					
7	Reported suspected child trafficking activity to the authorities					
8	Collect independent information before supporting someone's decision to send a child for a job elsewhere					

Items for Measuring Attitude Towards Preventive Practice

Direction; Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by putting (√) on the box that best represents your response

5= Strongly agree (SA), 4= Agree (A), 3= Don't know (DK), 2 = Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree (SD)

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1
1	Reporting any suspected cases of child trafficking to the police will be helpful in the fight against child trafficking					
2	Collecting information about child trafficking would be good for preventing child trafficking					
3	Sharing any information concerning child trafficking with friends would help me contribute my share in the fight against child trafficking					
4	For me, informing my friends that some children migrating for work could be vulnerable to child trafficking is helpful in the fight against child trafficking					
5	I think it is good to speak to your children about the dangers of child trafficking					
6	Offering advice to someone to seek accurate information before deciding to send a child for a job elsewhere is good in the fight against child trafficking					
7	Educating members of my community about the risk of child trafficking is useful					

Items for Measuring Subjective Norms

Direction: Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by putting (√) on the box that best represents your response

5= Strongly agree (SA), 4= Agree (A), 3= Don't know (DK), 2 = Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree (SD)

No	**Item**	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
1	People who report suspected child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town are generally well-respected by others					
2	My close friends disapprove of others who do not report suspected child trafficking.					
3	People who know me would think I am a bad person if I did not report suspected child trafficking.					
4	If I knew about a child trafficking incident in Wolaita Sodo town, I would feel obligated to report it.					
5	Reporting suspected child trafficking would make me feel like I am helping to protect children.					
6	I would feel guilty if I did not report suspected child trafficking and a child was harmed.					
7	Reporting suspected child trafficking is important to me because I want to keep my community safe.					
8	I need to do my part to prevent child trafficking in my community					

Items for measuring Perceived Behavioral Control

Direction: Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by putting (√) on the box that best represents your response

5= Strongly agree (SA), 4= Agree (A), 3= Don't know (DK), 2 = Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree (SD)

No	Item	5	4	3	2	1
1.	I am confident that I can report any suspected cases to the police if I encounter					
2.	I am confident that I can identify the signs of child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town					
3.	It is easy for me to refuse to participate in activities that might be related to child trafficking					
4.	Whether I report to the police a suspected case of child trafficking or not is entirely up to me					
5.	The decision to report to the police a suspected case of child trafficking is not beyond my control					
6.	I am confident that my actions could make a difference in preventing child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town					
7.	It is easy to intervene if I witness suspicious activity that could be related to child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town					

Items for measuring intention to engage in preventive practices Direction: Please indicate your level of agreement or disagreement with each of the following statements by putting (√) on the box that best represents your response

5= Strongly agree (SA), 4= Agree (A), 3= Don't know (DK), 2 = Disagree, 1= Strongly Disagree (SD)

No.	Item	5	4	3	2	1
1.	I intend to report any suspected cases of child trafficking					
2.	I intend to find information about child trafficking					
3.	I intend to inform my friends that some children migrating for work could be vulnerable to child trafficking					
4.	I intend to seek independent information before supporting someone's decision to send a child for a job elsewhere					
5.	I intend to offer advice to someone to seek accurate information before deciding on a child for a job elsewhere					
6.	I intend to educate members of my community about the risk of child trafficking					

Appendix B. The Amharic Version of the Questionnaire

በአዲስአበባ ዩኒቨርስቲ

የስነ- በህርይና ትምህርት ጥናት ኮሌጅ

የሶሻል ሳይኮሎጂ ትምህርት ክፍል

ይህ መጠይቅ ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን በተመለከተ የወላይታ ሶዶ ነዋሪዎች ያላቸዉን እዉቀት፤ አመለካከት እንዲሁም ተግባሩን ለመግታት የተደረጉትን ጥረት ለመዳሰስ ነዉ ። እኔ የዚህ ጥናት አጥኚ በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የሶሻል ሳይኮሎጂ ትምህርት ክፍል የሶስተኛ ድግሪ (PhD) ተማሪ ነኝ ። የእናንተ ተሞክሮ ህገ-ወጥ የሕፃናት ዝውውርን በሚገባ ለመረዳት ከፍተኛ አስተዋፆኦ እንደሚያደርግ በጥብቅ አምናለሁ። የዚህ ጥናት መሠረታዊ አላማ የወላይታ ሶዶ ከተማ ነዋርዎች ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን በተመለከተ ያላቸዉን እዉቀት፤ አመለካከት እንዲሁም ተግባሩን ለመግታተ ያደረጉትን ጥረት ለመዳሰስ ነዉ።

በዚህ ጥናት ለመሳተፍ ፍቃደኛ በመሆኖ በቅድምያ አመስገናለሁ ።

ክፍል አንድ የግል መረጃ

የግል መረጃ

1. ዕድሜ----------
2. የትምህርት ደርጃ
   - ሀ.ማንበብና መፃፍ የማይችል/የማትችል
   - ለ. ማንበብና መፃፍ የሚችል/የምትችል (የጎልማሳ ትምህርት)
   - ሐ. የመጀመርያ ደርጃ (ከ1ኛ-8ኛ ክፍል) ያጠናቀቀ/ያጠናቀቀች
   - መ. የሁለተኛ ደርጃ (ከ9ኛ- 12ኛ ክፍል) ያጠናቀቀ/ያጠናቀቀች
   - ሰ. ሁለተኛ ደረጃ በኋላ ከ3 ዓመት ያነሰ ሥልጠና
   - ረ. የመጀመርያ ዲግሪ እና ከዝያ በላይ
3. ለምን ያህል ጊዜ ነዉ በሶዶ ከተማ የኖሩት_____
4. አማሪኛ ቋንቋ ተናጋሪ ኖት ? ሀ. አዎ ለ. አይ

5. ልጆች አለዎት ሀ. አዎ ☐ ለ. የለኝም ☐
6. ለተራ ቁጥር 5 መልሶዎ ‘‘አዎ’’ ከሆነ ስንት ልጆች አለዎት ----------
7. በአካባቢዎ ካሉ ሰዎች አንፃር የርሶዎን የኑሮ ሁኔታ እንዴት ይገልጹታል?
   - ሀ. ከአብዛኞቹ የታሻለ ነዉ
   - ለ. እንደ አብዛኞቹ ነዉ
   - ሐ. ከሌሎች ያነሰ ነዉ

8.በአማካይ የወር ገቢዎ ስንት ብር ነዉ ? ----------

9. ከቤተሰብዎ አባላት ውስጥ የህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሰለባ የሆኑ ህፃን/ህፃናቶች አሉ? ሀ. አሉ ለ. የሉም

10. ለተራ ቁጥር 9 መልሶዎ ‘‘አዎ’’ ከሆነ እባኮዎን የሚከተሉትን ጥያቄዎች ይመልሱ

ሀ. የህፃኑ/ዋ ዕድሜ------- ሴት ☐ ወንድ ☐ ብዛት ----------
የህፃኑ/ኗ ዕድሜ ----------

ለ. ህገ-ወጥ የህፃን ዝውውሩ የተፈፀመበት ጊዜ (ቀን ----------ወር -------- ዓ.ም.) –
ድርጊቱን የፈፀመው አካል ማነው---------- ህፃናቱ ወደየት ተወሰዱ ?----------

ክፍል ሁለት

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና ዓለማ የሀገር ውስጥ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ምንነትን በተመለከተ ምን ያህል ግንዛቤን እንዳለዎት ለማወቅ ነው :: ጥያቄዎቹ ‘‘ትክክለኛ’’ ወይም ‘‘ስህተት’’ የሚባል መልስ የላቸውም:: በጥያቄዎቹ ፊትለፊት በተሰጡት ሳጥኖች ዉስጥ የእርሶን ሀሳብ ይገልፀኛል በሚሉት ሳጥን ዉስጥ የትክክለኝነት ምልክት(√) በማስቀመጥ ይመልሱ።

ተ.ቁ	ጥያቄ	ትክክል	ትክክል አይደለም
1.	የሀገር ዉስጥ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር የህፃናትን ጉልበት ለመጠቀም ዓላማ ሲባል በመመልመል፣ በማጓጓዝ፣ ማዘዋወር፣ማስጠለል፣ ወይም መቀበልን ያካተተ ተግባር ነው።		
2.	የሀገር ዉስጥ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር የህፃናትን ጉልበት ብዝበዛን ያጠቃልላል።		
3.	የሀገር ዉስጥ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሥልጣንን አላግባብ በመጠቀም ፤ የሰዎችን ተጋላጭነት በመጠቀም ህፃናትን ለብዘበዛ ተግባር ሲባል ማዘዋወር ወይም መቀባበልን ያካትታል።		
4.	ዕዳ/ብድር ለመክፈል ስራ ለመስራት የሚገደዱ ህፃናት ለህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር የተጋለጡ ናቸው :::		
5.	በቤት ሰራተኝነት የሚያገለግሉ እና በአሰሪዎቻቸው ጥቃት የሚፈፀምባቸው ህፃናት ህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ ህፃናት ዝውውር ሰለባ የሆኑ ህፃናት ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ።		
6.	ቃል ከተገባላቸው የስራ ሰዓት ዉጭ ለረጅም ሰዓታት እንዲሰሩ የሚገደዱ ህጻናት ህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሰለባ የሆኑ ህፃናት ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ።		
7.	ስራ የሚሰሩ እና ለሰሩት ስራ ተገቢዉ ክፍያ የማያገኙ ወይም ደሞዛቸዉ በአሰሪዎቻቸዉ የሚያዝባቸዉ ልጆች ህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሰለባ የሆኑ ልጆች ናቸው::		
8.	አብዛኞቹ የህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሰለባ የሆኑ ህፃናት አካላዊ ጥቃት ይደርስባቸዋል::		
9.	በከተማ አካባቢ የሚኖሩ ህፃናት ለህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ተጋላጭ ናቸው::		
10.	አብዛኛው የህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሰለባ የሆኑ ህፃናት የስነ-ልቦና ጥቃት ይደርስባቸዋል::		
11.	በገጠራማ የአገሪቱ ክፍሎች የሚኖሩ ህፃናት የበለጠ ለህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር የተጋለጡ ናቸው::		
12.	በዝቅተኛ የኑሮ ደረጃ የሚገኙ ቤተሰብ ልጆች ከሌሎች ህፃናት የበለጠ ለህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር የተጋለጡ ናቸው::		
13.	ህፃናት በጓደኞቻቸው፣ በቤተሰብ አባላት፣ በጎረቤቶቻቸው ፣በሚያዉቁት ሰው/ በማያዉቁት ሰው እንዲሁም በግል ድርጅቶች አማካይነት ለህገወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሊመለመሉ ይችላሉ::		
14.	ሀሰተኛ ተስፋ መስጠት ህፃናትን ለህገወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር የመመልመያ ዘዴ ነዉ::		

ለሚከተሉት ጥያቄዎ ች በጥያቄዎቹ ፊትለፊት ከተሰጡት አማራጮች ውስጥ የእርስዎን ሀሳብ ይገልፀኛል የሚሉት አማራጪ በመምረጥ ይመልሱ። ከአንድ መልስ በላይ መመለስ ይችላሉ::

15 . ከፆታ አኳያ ለህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሰለባ የሆኑት የትኞቹ ናቸው? ፡

ሀ. ሴት ለ. ወንድ ሐ. ሁለቱም

16. በአከባቢዎ ወንድ ህፃናት በየትኛው የእድሜ ክልል ውስጥ ነው በአብዛኛዉ ለህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር የሚዳረጉት?----------

17. በአከባቢዎ ሴት ህፃናት በየትኛዉ የእድሜ ክልል ውስጥ ነው በአብዛኛዉ ለህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር የሚዳረጉት?----------

18. በእርሶ አካባቢ ህፃናትን ለህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር የሚመለምሉት የትኞቹ ናቸው?

ሀ. ወንዶች

ለ. ሴቶች ሐ. ሁለቱም

19 . እርስዎ ስለህገወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር እንዴት አወቁ ?

ሀ. በግሌ የህገወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሰለባ የሆኑ ህጻናትን አውቃለሁ

ለ. የማውቀው ሰው ነገረኝ

ሐ. በቴሌቪዥን ዜና ተመልክቼ ::

መ. በቴሌቭዥን ዶክመንተሪ ተከታትዬ

ሠ. በፊልም አይቼ

ረ የሬድዮ ፕሮግራም ሰምቼ

ሰ. በጋዜጣ አንብቤ

ረ. በኢንተርኔት አንበቤ

ክፍል ሶስት

ይህ የመጠይቅ ክፍል ተሳታፊዎች የህገወጥ ህፃናት ዝውውር በተመለከተ ያላቸውን አመለካከት እና ችግሩን ለመግታት ያደርጉትን ጥረት ለመዳሰስ የተዘጋጀ ነው። በጥያቄዎቹ ፊትለፊት በተሰጡት ቁጥሮች ስር የእርስዎን ሃሳብ ይገልፅልኛል በሚሉት ሳጥን ዉስጥ የትክክለኝነት ምልክት (√) በማስቀመጥ ይመልሱ። የቁጥሮቹ ውክልና በሚከተለው መልኩ ተዘርዝሯል::

5=**በጣም እስማማለሁ 4= እስማማለሁ 3=አላዉቅም 2= አልስማማም 1= በጭራሽ አልስማም**

ተ.ቁ	ጥያቄ	5	4	3	2	1
1.	ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር በወላይታ ሶዶ ከተማ ትልቅ ችግር ነው::					
2.	በወላይታ ሶዶ ከተማ ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ሁኔታን ለመለየት አዳጋች አይደለም::					
3.	የህገ-ወጥ ሀገር ዉስጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር ሰለባ የሆኑ ህፃናት በምርጫቸዉ ነው::					
4.	ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ቢያንስ ለችግረኛ ልጆች ስራ እንዲኖራቸው ይረዳል/ያደርጋል					
5.	እኔ የማውቃቸው አንዳንድ ሰዎች የህገወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሰለባ የሆኑ ህፃናት የሚገባቸዉን ነው ያገኙት ብለዉ ያምነሉ::					
6.	ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ነው ብዬ የጠረጠርኩትን ጉዳይ ሚመለከተዉ አካል ለማመልከት ፍቃደኛ ነኝ::					
7.	በወላይታ ሶዶ ከተማ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር በቂ ትኩረት ሊሰጠው የሚገባ ትልቅ የማህበራዊ ችግር ነው::					
8.	ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር ለመግታት ብሎም ለመከላከል የሚደረጉ ስልጠናዎች ላይ ለመሳተፍ ፈላጎት አለኝ::					
9.	ከጎራቤቶቼ ጋር ስለ ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር መወያይት ምቾት የሚነሳኝ ጉዳይ አይደለም::					

ክፍል አራት

ይህ የመጠይቅ ክፍል ተሳታፊዎች የህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን በተመለከተ ችግሩን ለመግታት ያደረጉትን ጥረት ለመዳሰስ የተዘጋጀ ነው፡፡ በጥያቄዎቹ ፊትለፊት በተሰጡት ሳጥኖች ዉስጥ የእርሶን ሀሳብ ይገልፀኛል በሚሉት ሳጥን ዉስጥ (√) በማስቀመጥ ይመልሱ።

ባለፉት ስድስት ወራት ግዜ ዉስጥ የሚከተሉትን ተግባራት ምን ያህል ጊዜ አከናውነዋል ?

1. በጭራሽ 2. አልፎ አልፎ 3. አንዳንድ ጊዜ 4. ብዙ ጊዜ 5. ሁል ጊዜ

ተ.ቁ	ጥያቄ	1	2	3	4	5
1.	ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ነው ብዬ የጠረጠርኩትን ማንኛውንም ጉዳይ ለፖሊስ አመልክቻለሁ፡፡					
2.	ስለህገ-ወጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር አዳዲስ መረጃ ለማግኘት ጥሬያለሁ፡፡					
3.	ስለህገ-ወጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር አስከፊናት ዘወትር ከልጆቼ ጋር እወያየለሁ፡፡					
4.	ህገ-ወጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር በተመለከተ ያለኝን መረጃ ለጓደኞቼ አጋርቻለሁኝ፡፡					
5.	ለስራ ወደ ሌላ ቦታ የሚልኩ ሰዎች ልጆቻቸውን ለመላክ ከመወሰናቸዉ በፊት አስፈላጊውን መረጃ እንዲሰበስቡ ምክር ሰጥቻለሁ፡፡					
6.	ህገ-ወጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር ሊሆን ይችላል ቢዬ ስለ ተጠራጠርኩ የልጆቼን/ ልጇን የስራ እድል አሻፈረኝ ቢዬ አውቃለሁ፡፡					
7.	ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ነው ብዬ የጠረጠርኩትን ጉዳይ ለሚመለከተዉ አካል አመልክቻለሁ፡፡					
8.	ልጆቻቸዉን ለስራ ወደ ሌላ ቦታ ለሚልኩ ሰዎች ድጋፌን ከመስጠቴ በፊት አስፈላጊውን መረጃ በግሌ ሰብስቤያለሁ፡፡					

ክፍል አምስት፡ ይህ የመጠይቅ ክፍል ተሳታፊዎች የህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግታት የሚደረጉ ጥረቶችን በተመለከተ ያላቸዉን አመለካከት ለመዳሰስ የተዘጋጀ ነው፡፡ በጥያቄዎቹ ፊት-ለፊት በተሰጡት ሳጥኖች ውስጥ የእርስዎን ሃሳብ ይገልፅልኛል በሚሉት ሳጥን ዉስጥ (√) በማስቀመጥ ይመልሱ። የቁጥሮቹ ውክልና በሚከተለው መልኩ ተዘርዝሯል፡፡

5=**በጣም እስማማለሁ 4= እስማማለሁ 3=አላዉቅም 2= አልስማማም 1= በጭራሽ አልስማም**

ተ.ቁ	ጥያቄ	5	4	3	2	1
1.	ማንኘውንም ህገ- ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ ተብለው የሚጠረጠሩትን ጉዳዮች ለፖሊስ ማመልከት ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግታት ይረዳል ብዬ አምናለሁ፡፡					
2.	ስለ ህገ- ወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ር መረጃ መሰብሰብ ድርጊቱን ለመግታት የሚረዳ ይመስለኛል፡፡					
3.	ህገ ወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉርን በተመለከተ ያለኝን መረጃ ለጓደኞቼ ማጋራት ድርጊቱን ለመግታት የበኩሌን ድርሻ እንድወጣ ይረዳኛል ብዬ አምናለሁ፡፡፡፡					
4.	አንዳንድ ለስራ ከመንደራቻዉ የሚሰደዱ ህፃናት የህገ- ወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የ ህፃናት ዝውውር ሰለባ ሊሆኑ እንደሚችሉ ለጓደኞቼ ማሳወቅ ህገ ወጥ የ ህፃናት ዝዉዉርን ለመግታት ይረዳል የሚል እምናት አለኝ፡፡					
5.	ስለህገ-ወጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር አስከፊናት ዘወትር ከልጆቼ ጋር መወያየት ችግሩን ለመግታት አስፈላጊ ነው፡፡					
6.	ልጆችን ለስራ ወደ ሌላ ቦታ ለመላክ ለወሰኑ ሰዎች ድጋፍ ከመስጠት አስቀድሞ ስለ ጉዳዩ አስፈላጊውን መረጃ ማሳባሰብ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግታት ይረዳል ብዬ አምናለሁ፡፡					
7.	ሰዎች ልጆችን ለስራ ወደ ሌላ ቦታ ለመላክ ከመወሰናቸው በፊት ስለ ጉዳዩ ትክክለኛ መረጃ እንዲያገኙ መምከር ህገ ወጥ የ ህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግተት ይረዳል ብዬ አምናለሁ፡፡					

ክፍል **ስድስት፡** ይህ የመጠይቅ ክፍል ሰዎች ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግታት በሚደረገዉ ጥረት ውስጥ የሌሎች ሰዎች ተፅዕኖ ምን እንደሚመስል እና ወደፊት ችግሩን ለመግታት ያላቸዉን ቁርጠኝነት ለመዳሰስ የተዘጋጀ ነው፡፡ የቁጥሮቹ ውክልና በሚከተለው መልኩ ተዘርዝሯል፡፡

5=**በጣም እስማማለሁ 4= እስማማለሁ 3=አላዉቅም 2= አልስማማም 1= በጭራሽ አልስማም**

ተ.ቁ	ጥያቄ	5	4	3	2	1
1	በወላይታ ሶዶ ነዋርዎች ዘንድ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ ተብለዉ የሚጠረጠሩ ማንኘዉንም ጉዳይ ለሚመለከታቻዉ አካላት የሚያመለክቱ ሰዎች እጅግ የተከበሩ ናቸው፡፡					
2	በቅርብ ጓደኞቼ ዘንድ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ ተብለዉ የሚጠረጠሩ ማንኘዉንም ጉዳይ ለሚመለከታቻዉ አካላት የማያመለክቱ ሰዎች ተቀባይናት የላቸዉም፡፡					
3	እኔን የሚያውቁ ሰዎች ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ሊሆኑ ይችላሉ ተብለዉ የሚጠረጠሩ ማንኘዉንም ጉዳይ ለሚመለከታቻዉ አካላት ባላመለክት ጥሩ ሰዉ እንዳልሆንኩ ያስባሉ፡፡					
4	በአካባቢዬ ላይ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር መኖሩን ከወቅኩኝ ለሚመለከታቻዉ አካላት ማሳወቅ ግዴታ እንዳለብኝ ይሰማኛል፡፡					
5	ህገ-ወጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር ሊሆን ይችላል ብዬ የተጠራጠርኩትን ማንኘዉንም ጉዳይ ለሚመለከታዉ አካል በማመለከት ህፃናትን ከህገ-ወጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር እንደ ተከላከልኩ እንድሰማኝ ያደርጋል፡፡					
6	ህገ-ወጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር ሊሆን ይችላል ብዬ የተጠራጠርኩትን ማንኘዉንም ጉዳይ ለሚመለከታዉ አካል ባለማሳወቄ እና ህፃናቱ ለይ ጉዳት ቢደርስ የጥፋተኝናት ስሜት እንድሰማኝ ያደርጋል፡፡					
7	ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ነው ብዬ የጠረጠርኩትን ጉዳይ ለሚመለከታዉ አካል ማሳወቅ ለእኔ አስፈላጊ ነዉ ምክንያቱም መህበረሰቤን ከችግሩ ይታደጋል፡፡					
8	በወላይታ ሶዶ ከተማ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግታት በሚደረገዉ ጥረት ዉስጥ የግሌን ድርሻ መወጣት ለእኔ ትልቅ ዋጋ አለዉ።					

ክፍል **ሰባት፡** ይህ የመጠይቅ ክፍል ሰዎች ህገወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግታት ያላቸዉን በራስ መተማመን፤ ፍላጎትና ፤ ቁርጠኝነት ለመዳሰስ የተዘጋጀ ነው፡፡ የቁጥሮቹ ውክልና በሚከተለው መልኩ ተዘርዝሯል፡፡

5=**በጣም እስማማለሁ 4= እስማማለሁ 3=አላዉቅም 2= አልስማማም 1= በጭራሽ አልስማም**

ተ.ቁ	ጥያቄ	5	4	3	2	1
1	ህገ- ወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ሊሆን ይችላል ብዬ የጠረጠርኩትን ማንኛውንም ጉዳይ ከጋጠመኝ ለፖሊስ እንደማመለክት በራሴ እተማመናለሁ፡፡					
2	በወላይታ ሶዶ ከተማ ህገ-ወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር አመልካች ሁኔታዎችን እንደሚለይ በራሴ እተማመናለሁ፡፡					
3	ህገ-ወጥ የህጻናት ዝውውር ሊሆን ይችላል ቢዬ ከተጠራጠርኩ የልጆቼን/ ልጄን የስራ ግብኣ አይሆንም ማለት ለኔ ቀላል ነዉ፡፡					
4	ህገ ወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ሊሆን ይችላል ብዬ የጠረጠርኩትን ማንኛውንም ጉዳይ ለፖሊስ ማመልከት እና አለማመልከት በኔ ፍላጎት ለይ የተመሰረተ ነዉ።					
5	ህገ ወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ሊሆን ይችላል ብዬ የጠረጠርኩትን ማንኛውንም ጉዳይ ለፖሊስ ማመልከት ከእኔ ቁጥጥር ዉጭ አይደለም፡፡					
6	ህገ ወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉርን በተመለከተ መረጃ ማግኘት ካስፋለገኝ ማግኘት እችላለሁ፡፡					
7	ህገ ወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉርን ለመግታት በሚደረገዉ ጥረት ዉስጥ የግሌን ድርሻ መወጣቴ ችግሩን ከመከላከል አንፀር ለዉጥ እንደምያመጣ እተማመናለሁ፡፡					
8	በአካባቢዬ ከህገ ወጥ የህገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ጋር ተዛማጅናት አለዉ ብዬ የምጠረጠር ጉዳይ ስገጥመኝ ጠልቃ ገብቶ መጣራት ለኔ ቀለል ነው					

ይህ የመጠይቅ ክፍል ሰዎች ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግታት ያላቸዉን ቁርጠኝነት ለመዳሰስ የተዘጋጀ

ተ.ቁ	ጥያቄ	5	4	3	2	1
1	ወደፊት ማንኛውንም ህገ ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ሊሆን ይችላል ብዬ የጠረጠርኩትን ጉዳይ ለፖሊስ አመለክታለሁ፡፡					
2	ከህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉርን ጋር ተዛማጅናት አለዉ ተብሎ ከሚጠረጠር ማንኛውም ጉዳይ እራሴን እከላከላለሁ፡፡					
3	ስለ ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር አዳዲስ መረጃ ለማግኘት ጥራት አደርጋለሁኝ።					
4	ከህገ ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ጋር ተዛማጅናት አለዉ ብዬ የጠረጠርኩት ጉዳይ ስገጥመኝ ጠልቃ ገብቼ ለማስቆም እጥራለሁ ፡፡					
5	ለጓደኞቼ አንዳንድ ለስራ ከመንደራቸዉ የሚሰደዱ ህፃናት የህገ- ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ሰለባ ሊሆኑ እንደሚችሉ የማሳወቅ ሃሳብ አለኝ።					
6	ልጆቻቸዉን ለስራ ወደ ሌላ ቦታ ለሚልኩ ሰዎች ልጆቻቸዉን ለስራ ወደ ሌላ ቦታ ለመላክ ከመወሰናቸው በፊት አስፈላጊውን መረጃ እንድሰበስቡ አሳስበለሁ፡፡።					

Appendix C. Guides for Key Informant Interview Focus Group Discussion

Addis Ababa University

School of Psychology

Guides for Key Informant Interview

This Interview is intended to collect data on the knowledge, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, attitude towards preventive practice, intention to engage in preventive practice, and preventive practice concerning in-country child trafficking among residents of Wolaita Sodo town.

A. Background Information

. Age_____

. Sex_____

. Your level of education_____

. What is your occupation? _____

. For how long have you lived in Sodo town? _____

Part Two: **Interview Guide**

1. How do you describe in-country child trafficking in your terms? Who is at risk most?
2. In your opinion, how knowledgeable is the community concerning in-country child trafficking?
3. How severe do you think is the problem of in-country child trafficking in Sodo town?
4. Is child trafficking an opportunity or a challenge for trafficked children? How?
5. How do you evaluate the role of the community in preventing child trafficking?
6. What socio-cultural factors do you think promote and sustain child trafficking in your locality?

7. What role do people who are important to you have in affecting your decision to engage in preventive practices? How?

8. In your opinion if you want to engage in preventive practices concerning in-country child trafficking, what would make that easy?

9. In your opinion if you want to engage in preventive actions concerning in-country child trafficking, how difficult do you think that would be?

10. Do you think in the future you will take part in the fight against child trafficking? If so how?

11. In your opinion what measures should be taken by the wider community to prevent child trafficking.

Appendix D. Guides for Focus Group Discussion

Addis Ababa University

School of Psychology

Guides for Focus Group Discussion

This FGD is to collect data on the knowledge, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, attitude towards preventive practice, intention to engage in preventive practice, and preventive practice concerning in-country child trafficking among residents of Wolaita Sodo town.

Focus group guide for FGD

1. What is child trafficking/ Who is at risk most?
2. In your opinion has it been increasing or decreasing in the past three years?
3. What factors prompt children to leave their own families/communities? What factors attract children to go to other towns and cities?
4. How severe do you think is child trafficking in Wolaita Sodo town? What type of children are most susceptible to child trafficking?
5. What "impact" does child trafficking have on the child, family, and wider community?
6. What actions do residents of Sodo town are taking practically to prevent in-country child trafficking? How do you feel about it?
7. What factors facilitate/ hinder the fight against child trafficking in your locality
8. In your opinion who influenced your decision to engage in a fight against child trafficking?
9. In your opinion if you want to engage in preventive actions concerning in-country child trafficking, how difficult do you think that would be?
10. In your opinion what measures should be taken by the wider community to prevent child trafficking

Appendix E. Guides for Key In-depth Interview

Addis Ababa University

School of Psychology

Guides for Key Child Interview

This Interview is intended to collect data on the knowledge, attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, attitude towards preventive practice, intention to engage in the preventive practice, and preventive practice concerning in-country child trafficking among working children in Wolaita Sodo town.

I. Background characteristics

- Age
- Sex
- Your educational level?
- Place of birth
- If migrated from other places
- From which area you came from?
- What motivated or initiated you to come to your current residence?
- Who helped you to come to your current residence?
- When did you come to this place?
- Whom you first met?

II. Parental Background

- Do both your parents are living together?
- If not, what happened?
- Where do your parents live currently?

- Do you have siblings?
- If yes how many?
- Your parents (both mother and father) educational level
- What do your parents do for a living?
- How do you rate your parents' socioeconomic status?
- Can you tell me your parents' average monthly income in Birr?
- Tell me how you were treated by or brought up by your family.

III. Items for measuring knowledge, attitude, social norms, intention to engage in preventive practice, and practice regarding in-country child trafficking?

1 Have you ever heard of in-country child trafficking? if yes, what is child trafficking?

2. Have you or anyone you know ever experienced or witnessed child trafficking?
3. How do you think child trafficking affects children and their families?
4. What are some of the warning signs of potential child trafficking that you have learned or observed?
5. Do you know where to seek help or report suspected cases of child trafficking? yes. I think police, women and children affairs, and lobour and social affairs
6. How do you feel about the issue of child trafficking and its impact on children?
7. What factors prompt children to leave their own families/communities? I think children leave their home village for several reasons. What factors attract children to go to other towns and cities?
8. In your case who influenced your decision to come here?
9. What measures do you think can be taken to prevent child trafficking?
10. Do you think in the future you will take part in the fight against child trafficking? If so, how?

Appendix F. Amharic Version of FGD , Key Informant and Interview Guide

በአዲስአበባ ዩኒቨርስቲ

የስነ- በህርይና ትምህርት ጥናት ኮሌጅ

የሶሻል ሳይኮሎጂ ትምህርት ክፍል

ይህ ቃለ መጠይቅ የሚመለሰዉ ቁልፍ መረጃ ሰጪ ናቸዉ ተብለዉ በሚገመቱ ግለሰቦች ሲሆን የመጠይቁ ዋና አላማ ህገወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን በተመለከተ ነዋሪዎች ያላቸዉን እዉቀት፤ አመለካከት እንዲሁም ተግባሩን ለመግታት የሚያደረጉትን ጥረት ለመዳሰስ ነዉ።

ክፍል አንድ የግል መረጃ

የግል መረጃ

1 ዕድሜ _____

2 ፆታ_____

3 የትምህርት ደርጃ_____

4 ሥራዎ ምንድን ነዉ_____

5 ለምን ያህል ጊዜ ነዉ በወላይታ ሶዶ የኖሩት _____

ክፍል ሁለት የቃለመጠይቁ መሪ ጥያቄዎች

1. ህገ ወጥ የሀገር ዉስጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉርን በራሶዎ እንዴት ይገልፀታል? የችግሩ ተጠቂስ እነ ማናቸዉ ?
2. በእርሶ አመለካከት የአከባቢዉ ማህበረሰብ ስለ ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ያዉቃል ብለዉ ያስባሉ?
3. የህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር በ ወላይታ ሶዶ ከተማ ምን ያህል የከፋ ችግር ነዉ ብለዉ ያምናሉ?
4. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ለህፃናቱ እድል ወይስ ፈታኝ ሁኔታ ነዉ?
5. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ህፃናትን ፣ ቤተሰብን ብሎም ማህበረሰብ ሊጠቅም ይችላል? ከሆነስ እንዴት?
6. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ከመግታት አንፃር የህብረተሰቡን ሚና እንዴት ይገመግሙታል?
7. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር እንዲስፋፋ እና እንዲቀጥል በማድረግ በአካባቢዎ ምን አይነት ማኅበራዊ እና ባህላዊ ሁኔታዎች አሉ?
8. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉርን በመከላከል ተግባራት ውስጥ ለመሳተፍ በሚያደረጉት ውሳኔ ላይ ተጽዕኖ ከማሳደር አኳያ ለእርስዎ አስፈላጊ የሆኑ ሰዎች ምን ሚና አላቸው? እንዴት?
9. የሀገር ውስጥ ሕገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግታት በሚደረጉ ተግባራት ውስጥ ለመሳተፍ ከፈለጉ ፣ ይህን ምን ቀላል ያደርገዋል?
10. የሀገር ውስጥ ሕገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግታት በሚደረጉ ተግባራት ውስጥ ለመሳተፍ ከፈለጉ ፣ ይህን ምን ከባድ ያደርገዋል?

11. ለወደፊቱ ሕገወጥ የሕፃናትን ዝውውርን ለመግታት በሚደረጉ እንቅስቃሴዎች ላይ የሚሳተፉ ይመስልዎታል? ከሆነ እንዴት?
12. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉርን ለመከላከል በሰፊዉ ማህበረሰብ ምን ምን ማዳረግ አለበት?

የትኩረት ቡድን ውይይት

የትኩረት ቡድን ውይይት ከባለ ድርሻ አካላት ጋር ስለ ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉርን በተመለከተ ይሆናል።

ተሳታፊዎች ከዚህበታች የተዘረዘሩት ህገ-ወጥ የህጻናት ዝዉዉርን በተመለከተ እውቀት ያላቸው የመንግስታዊና እንዲሁም የማህበራዊና ሀይማኖታዊ ተቋማት ተወካዮች ናቸው፡፡

የውይይቱ መሪ ጥያቄዎች፤

1. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ምንድን ነዉ? እነማናቸዉ በአብዛኛዉ የዚህ ችግር ተጠቂዎች?
2. ባለፉት ሶስት ዓመታት የችግሩ መጠን ጨመረ ወይስ ቀነሰ?
3. ህፃናት ቤተሰቦቻቸውን / ማህበረሰቦቻቸውን ትተዉ ወደ ሌላ አካባቢ እነዲሄዱ ያሚያነሳሷቸው/ ወዳ ከተሞች ያሚስቧቸዉ ምክንያቶች ምንድን ናቸው?
4. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር በ ወላይታ ሶዶ ከተማ ምን ያህል የከፉ ችግር ነዉ ብለዉ ያምናሉ? የትኞቹስ ህፃናት ናቸዉ የበለጠ ለዚህ ችግር የሚጋለጡት?
5. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ለህፃናት፣ ለቤተሰብ ብሎም ለማህበርሰብ ምን ተፅዕኖ አለዉ? አንዴት?
6. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ከመግታትአኳያ የወላይታ ሶዶ ከተማ ነዋሪዎች በተግባር ምን አከናወኑ?
7. በአካባቢዎ የህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ትባርን ለመግታት ምን ምን አመቺ ሁኔታዎች አሉ? ምንስ ተግዳሮቶች አሉ?
8. በእርሶ አመለካከት ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉር ለመግታት የደርጉት ዉሳኔ የነማን ተጽኖ ነበርበት?
9. ህገ-ወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመግታት በሚደረጉ ተግባራት ውስጥ ለመሳተፍ ከፈለጉ ፣ ይህን ምን ቀላል/ከባድ ያደርገዋል?
10. ህገ ወጥ የህፃናት ዝዉዉርን ለመከላከል ምን እርምጃ መወሰድ አለበት?

በአዲስአበባ ዩኒቨርስቲ

የስነ- በህርይና ትምህርት ጥናት ኮሌጅ

የሶሻል ሳይኮሎጂ ትምህርት ክፍል

ይህ ቃለ መጠይቅ የሚመለሰዉ ቁልፍ መረጃ ሰጪ ናቸዉ ተብለዉ በሚገመቱ ታዳግዎች ሲሆን የመጠይቁ ዋና አላማ ህገወጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን በተመለከተ ታዳግዎች ያላቸዉን እዉቀት፤ አመለካከት እንዲሁም ተግባሩን ለመግታት የሚያደረጉትን ጥረት ለመዳሰስ ነዉ።

ክፍል አንድ የግል መረጃ

ሀ. የግል መረጃ

- ዕድሜ _____
- *ፆታ*_____
- የትምህርት ደርጃ_____
- የትውልድ ቦታ_____
- ከሌላ ቦታ ከመጣህ/ሽ . ከየትኛው አካባቢ ነው የመጣህዉ/ሽዉ? .
- አሁን ወደምትኖሩበት ቦታ እንድትመጣ/ጭ ምን አነሳሳህ/ሽ? .
- አሁን ወደምትኖሩበት ቦታ ለመምጣት ማን ረዳህ/ሽ? .
- እዚህ የመጣህዉ/ሽዉ መቼ ነው?
- *መጀመሪያ ማንን አገኛህ/ሽ?*

ለ.የወላጆዎች ሁኔታ

- ሁለቱም ወላጆችህ/ሽ አብረው ነው የሚኖሩት?
- ካልሆነ ምን ሆኖው ነው?
- ወላጆችህ/ሽ በአሁኑ ጊዜ የት ነው የሚኖሩት?·
- ወንድም እና እህት አለህ/ሽ? ስንት ናቸው?
- የወላጆችህ/ሽ (የእናት እና የአባት) የትምህርት ደረጃ
- ወላጆችህ/ሽ ለመተዳደርያ ምን ይሰራሉ?
- የወላጆችህን/ሽን ማኅበራዊና ኢኮኖሚያዊ ሁኔታ እንዴት ትገመግመዋለህ/ሚዋለሽ
- የወላጆችህ/ሽን አማካይ ወርሃዊ ገቢ በብር ስንት እንደሆነ ልትነግረኝ/ርኝ ትችላለህ/ሽ?
- ስለ አስታዳደግህ/ሽ ንገረኝ/ርኝ

ይህ የመጠይቅ ክፍል ታዳጊዎች ስለ ህገ ወጥ የሀገር ውስጥ ህፃናት ዝውውር ያላቸዉን እውቀት፣ እንዲሁም ተግባሩን ለመግታት የሚያደረጉትን ጥረት ለመዳሰስ ነዉ።

1. ስለ ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ውስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር ሰምተህ/ሽ ታውቃለህ/የለሽ? አዎ ከሆነ፣ የህፃናት ዝውውር ምንድን ነው?
2. አንተ/አንቺ ወይም የምታውቀው/ቅው ሰው የህፃናት ዝውውር አጋጥሞት ወይም አይቶ ያውቃል?
3. ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ውስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር በህፃናት እና በቤተሰቦቻቸው ላይ ምን ተጽእኖ ያመጣል ብለህ/ሽ ታስባለህ/ሽ?
4. ከዝህ ቀደም ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ውስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር አመልካች ሊሆኑ የሚችሉ የማስጠንቀቂያ ምልክቶችን ያተገነዘብከ/ሽ ታውቃለህ/ሽ?
5. ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ውስጥ የህጻናት ዝውውርን ለመከላከል ወይም ጥርጣሬ ካለ የት እርዳታ ወይም ሪፖርት ማድረግ እንደሚቻል ታውቃለህ/ሽ? መልስህ/ሽ አዎ ከሆነ የት ነው?
6. ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ውስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውር በህፃናት ላይ ስለሚያመጣው ተጽእኖ ምን ይሰማሃል/ሻል?
7. ህጻናት የራሳቸውን ቤተሰብ/ማህበረሰብ ለቀው እንዲወጡ የሚያገድዳቸው ነገሮች ምንድን ናቸው? ።
8. ህጻናትን ወደ ሌሎች ከተማዎች እንዲሄዱ የሚያማልላቸው ምክንያቶች ምንድን ናቸው?
9. ወደዚህ እንድትመጣ/ጪ ላደረገህ/ሽ ውሳኔህ/ሽ ማን ተጽእኖ አሳደረብህ/ሽ?
10. ህገ-ወጥ የሀገር ውስጥ የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመከላከል ምን አይነት እርምጃዎች መወሰድ አለባቸው ብለህ/ሽ ታስባለህ/ሽ?
11. ወደፊት የህፃናት ዝውውርን ለመከላከል በሚደረገው ትግል እሳተፋለሁ ብለህሽ ታስባለህ/ሽ? አዎ ከሆነ፣ እንዴት?

Appendix G. Informed Consent Forms

Addis Ababa University

School of Psychology

Informed Consent Forms

Dear Participants,

I am a PhD student at the School of Psychology of Addis Ababa University. My doctoral dissertation is on: Internal Child Trafficking Knowledge, Attitude, and Preventive Practices of Residents of Wolaita Sodo Town. The purpose of this research project is to explore the Knowledge, Attitude, and Preventive Practices of Residents of Wolaita Sodo Town. This informed consent form will give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. Please take the time to read this form carefully and to understand any accompanying information. As part of my study, I am asking you to participate in this research study by completing a questionnaire survey or as a key informant in the in-depth interview and FGD. My goal is to analyze the materials from the focus group discussion, interview, and questionnaire to understand the participants' Knowledge, Attitude, and engagement with Preventive Practices. If all the participants

agree, the discussions and interviews will be audio-/or videotaped and later transcribed by the

researcher. Transcripts will be typed with codes and pseudonyms.

You may withdraw your consent if you feel you are inconvenient at any time. In signing

this form, you agree to participate in this study. I would be most happy to answer any

questions you might have. Please write or call.

Here is my:

 telephone number: +251973853660

 e-mail address: tgsol1999@yahoo.com

Thank you in advance,

Tigist Solomon Desu

Investigator

I, _____, have read the above statement and agree to

participate in this study as an informant.

Appendix H. Reliability of the Scales

a. Reliability of Knowledge about internal child trafficking with 14 items: Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.807	14

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
KN1	9.04661	10.036	0.411	0.797
KN2	9.05297	10.012	0.419	0.796
KN3	8.89619	9.783	0.531	0.787
KN4	8.90678	9.953	0.465	0.792
KN5	8.86441	9.667	0.591	0.782
KN6	8.84110	9.960	0.496	0.790
KN7	8.80932	10.027	0.494	0.790
KN8	8.77119	10.376	0.490	0.798
KN9	8.92373	10.338	0.427	0.803
KN10	8.92373	9.956	0.458	0.793
KN11	8.86653	10.027	0.457	0.793
KN12	8.82203	10.359	0.461	0.800
KN13	8.74153	10.561	0.442	0.801
KN14	8.69492	10.926	0.533	0.808

b. **Reliability of attitude toward child trafficking with 9 items: Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.834	9

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
GA1	23.7095	30.076	.477	.825
GA2	24.1419	31.824	.426	.828
GA3	24.5158	29.785	.656	.807
GA4	24.2725	31.156	.522	.819
GA5	23.6689	29.987	.588	.813
GA6	24.3131	31.344	.492	.822
GA7	23.9527	30.740	.549	.817
GA8	23.7613	30.281	.529	.819
GA9	24.3784	31.243	.476	.824

c. Reliability Statistics of preventive practices with 8 items Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.893	8

Item-Total Statistics for Preventive Practice

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PP1	23.8829	23.955	.865	.859
PP2	23.6126	25.357	.739	.873
PP3	24.3491	27.198	.489	.898
PP4	23.5315	27.654	.642	.883
PP5	24.1374	27.433	.499	.896
PP6	23.5563	28.446	.597	.887
PP7	23.8919	25.392	.719	.875
PP8	23.8829	23.955	.865	.859

d. **Reliability of attitude to word Preventive Practice 7 items Statistics**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.815	7

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
ATPP1	18.4324	18.418	.564	.789
ATPP2	18.4212	18.727	.572	.788
ATPP3	18.4730	19.577	.506	.799
ATPP4	18.4482	18.740	.556	.791
ATPP5	18.6149	19.524	.536	.794
ATPP6	18.1036	18.125	.570	.788
ATPP7	17.8716	19.119	.576	.788

e. **Reliability of items for measuring subjective norms with 8 items**

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.869	8

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
SN1	22.6014	25.048	.494	.870
SN2	21.5135	25.808	.685	.849
SN3	21.7635	25.562	.641	.852
SN4	22.0473	25.616	.619	.854
SN5	22.7568	23.394	.698	.844
SN6	22.8716	23.765	.715	.842
SN7	22.8153	23.799	.697	.844
SN8	22.6509	25.388	.503	.867

f. **Reliability of items for measuring perceived control with 7 items**

Reliability Statistics for PC

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.814	7

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
PBC1	18.0203	18.356	.578	.818
PBC2	18.1667	18.543	.566	.819
PBC3	18.3896	18.044	.548	.790
PBC4	18.1937	16.996	.653	.771
PBC5	18.0698	17.410	.670	.770
PBC6	18.5000	17.275	.627	.776
PBC7	18.2815	16.690	.632	.774

g.Reliability of items for intention to engage in preventive practices with 6 items

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.802	6

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
IN1	15.1577	13.605	.541	.775
IN2	15.3784	13.441	.543	.715
IN3	15.6149	13.045	.659	.748
IN4	15.2568	13.735	.522	.780
IN5	15.9685	12.983	.615	.758
IN6	15.6149	13.077	.679	.744

Appendix I. Rotated Factor Matrix for the Scales

Scale for Knowledge about internal child trafficking

	Factors			
	1	2	3	4
KN1	0.763			
KN2	0.677			
KN3	0.577			
KN4		0.667		
KN5		0.877		
KN6		0.904		
KN7		0.637		
KN8			0.898	
KN9			0.803	
KN10		0.759		
KN11		0.802		
KN12		0.828		
KN13				0.524
KN14				0.878
KN15				
KN16				

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Structure Matrix

Attitude toward child Trafficking scale

	factor		
	1	2	3
ATCT1			.784
ATCT 2	.857		
ATCT 3			.796
ATCT 4		.753	
ATCT 5		.813	
ATCT 6		.758	
ATCT 7	.756		
ATCT8	.821		
ATCT 9	.869		

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 5 iterations

Structure Matrix for Preventive Practice Scale

Structure Matrix

	Factor	
	1	2
PP1	.864	
PP2		.698
PP3		.759
PP4		.672
PP5		.758
PP6	.756	
PP7	.821	
PP8		.861

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood

Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations

Structure Matrix for Attitude Toward Preventive Practice Scale

	Factor	
	1	2
ATPP1		.720
ATPP2	.637	
ATPP3	.585	
ATPP4	.672	.435
ATPP5		.873
ATPP6	.552	
ATPP7	.709	

Structure Matrix for Subjective Norm Scale

	Factor	
	1	2
SN1	.863	
SN2	.827	
SN3	.610	
SN4	.508	.742
SN5		.637
SN6		.699
SN7		.794
SN8		.869

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.
a. Rotation converged in 3 iterations.

Structure Matrix for Perceived Behavioral Control Scale

	Factor	
	1	2
PBC1		.869
PBC2		.861
PBC3	.799	
PBC4	.782	
PBC5	.771	
PBC6		.773
PBC7	.778	

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 3 iterations

Structure Matrix for Intention to engage in preventive practices

	Factor	
	1	2
IN1	.415	.606
IN2		.886
IN3	.820	
IN4		.620
IN5	.882	
IN6	.823	

Extraction Method: Maximum Likelihood.
Rotation Method: Promax with Kaiser Normalization.
Rotation converged in 3 iterations

Appendix J. Model fit summary

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	**CMIN/DF**	GFI	AGFI	CFI	RMSEA	HOELTER.05
Default model	20	2.617	1	.162	**2.617**	**.998**	**.964**	**.998**	**.034**	**742**
Saturated model	21	.000	0	.000	89.675	1.000		1.000		
Independence model	6	1345.122	15			.430	.202	.430	.419	10

CMIN

Model	NPAR	CMIN	DF	P	CMIN/DF
Default model	20	**2.617**	**1**	**.106**	**2.617**
Saturated model	21	.000	0		
Independence model	6	1345.122	15	.000	89.675

RMR, GFI

Model	RMR	GFI	AGFI	PGFI
Default model	.236	**.998**	**.964**	.048
Saturated model	.000	1.000		
Independence model	11.287	.430	.202	.307

Baseline Comparisons

Model	NFI Delta1	RFI rho1	IFI Delta2	TLI rho2	CFI
Default model	**.998**	**.971**	**.999**	**.982**	**.995**
Saturated model	1.000		1.000		1.000
Independence model	.000	.000	.000	.000	.000

Parsimony-Adjusted Measures

Model	PRATIO	PNFI	PCFI
Default model	.067	.067	.067
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	1.000	.000	.000

NCP

Model	NCP	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	1.617	.000	10.644
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	1330.122	1213.450	1454.166

FMIN

Model	FMIN	F0	LO 90	HI 90
Default model	.005	.003	.000	.021
Saturated model	.000	.000	.000	.000
Independence model	2.664	2.634	2.403	2.880

RMSEA

Model	RMSEA	LO 90	HI 90	PCLOSE
Default model	**.034**	.000	.101	**.550**
Independence model	.419	.400	.438	.000

AIC

Model	AIC	BCC	BIC	CAIC
Default model	42.617	43.179	127.148	147.148
Saturated model	42.000	42.590	130.757	151.757
Independence model	1357.122	1357.291	1382.482	1388.482

ECVI

Model	ECVI	LO 90	HI 90	MECVI
Default model	.084	.081	.102	.086
Saturated model	.083	.083	.083	.084
Independence model	2.687	2.456	2.933	2.688

HOELTER

Model	HOELTER .05	HOELTER .01
Default model	**742**	**1281**
Independence model	10	12