

Socio-Economic Determinants of Child Labour in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract. This study was carried out to examine the socioeconomic determinants of child labour in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Data collected for this research was collected using the questionnaire. 400 questionnaires were administered in the five local governments of Ilorin metropolis. Data was analysed using descriptive statistical methods and inferential statistics of Chi-square. The result of the findings shows that poverty is a major determinant of child labour with respect to different households. Family size and the educational background of parents also affects and influence child labour respectively. Thus, this study recommends that poverty alleviation programmes, more family campaign programmes, and employment opportunities be implemented and provided to eradicate and reduce the effects of child labour in the country.

Keywords: Socioeconomic, Determinants, Child labour, Ilorin, Kwara state, Nigeria

1. Introduction

The issue of child labour remains a serious problem in the world today. According to International labour organisation (ILO, 2015), there are more than 250 million working children aged between 5-17 years in the world, most of them being from the developing countries. This means that one out of every six children is working instead of going to school, with nearly three quarters (180 millions) exposed to work that is dangerous not only to their health but also to their personal development. The phenomenon is growing rapidly over the years. In India for example, the number of child labourers is increasing by 12%

a year, according to the centre for communication and development.

In Nigeria today, with the introduction of the structural adjustment programme (SAP) in June 1986 and attendant policies of commercialization, money has become a dominant factor in the Nigerian society. The bad shape of the economy has brought unemployment, poverty and reduction in the real income of the people in the country. The actual number of children involved in exploitative or hazardous work in Nigeria is not known, owing to the wide dispersion of child workers, their employment in the informal sector and in agriculture, which are not monitored by labour inspectors, and the limited research in this field.

However, Oloko (2009) put the number of Nigeria children exposed to labour activities ordinarily meant for adults at about 8 million. Child labour should not occur in the organised private sector of the Nigerian economy. The labour Act of 1974 (revised in 1990) includes a wide range of provision in section 58-63, prohibiting or regulating various forms of child labour. Section 59 prohibits a child under the age of 12 from all works except where employed by his/her family on light work of an agricultural, domestic or horticultural character. Most child labour in Kwara State and many other states occur in agricultural and in the informal sector of the economy where these and other provisions of the labour act are neither monitored nor enforced. Child work in the agricultural sector is mainly within the household and involves helping the family in farming, fishing and cattle herding.

Even then, it tends to disrupt school attendance especially during periods of intense agricultural activities, such as planting and harvesting. Moreover, there are three categories of work in which the people are engaged namely; work in public places (such as markets and streets), work in cottage industries and mechanical workshop, and domestic services in private houses, visible working children which include street vendors, shoe shiner boys, car washers and touts. Some of those who are unemployed go into begging especially for organised groups.

The most visible street workers in Nigeria are thousands of children of both genders engaged in part-time and full-time street trading. This usually occurs in urban areas and semi-urban areas. Also, Oloko (2009) categorized scavengers and child prostitution as new types of exploitative child labour in urban areas. During the 1990s, it became increasingly common to find children offering to carry out any type of menial task. Street hawking is by far the largest single form of child labour, probably accounting for well over half of total urban child labour. Child labour exists in various forms in Kwara State. This ranges from street hawkers, bus conductors, servants, labourers at building sites, etc. The study will take place in Ilorin metropolis where all forms of child labour mentioned above exist, but the most prominent of them are street hawkers and child traders. These are the consequences of the socio-economic problems like poverty, unemployment etc.

2. Concept and Issues in Child Labour

The issue of child labour has emerged as one of the serious social problems that have engaged the attention of scholars, non-governmental organizations, professional social workers, policy makers, legislature, law enforcement officials and the general public over some decades. The idea that child labour is a social problem truncating the harmonious physical and mental development of the child is a relatively recent development.

Child labour becomes an exploitative and systematic process when in addition to the under

paid rate of exchange, children are used for jobs that are harmful, monotonous, strenuous and are unduly affected. Therefore, child labour is described as works that are essentially exploitative, injurious to the physical, social cognitive and moral development of a child. Child labour occurs when children especially young ones, are exposed to long hours of work in a dangerous or unhealthy environment, with too much responsibilities for their age and at the expenses of their schooling. This is similar to the view of Oloko (2014).

According to Omoluabi (2007), child labour is a condition in which a child works for several hours in a day with inadequate food or rest. Child labour is regarded as an abuse because the child's strength and capacity cannot sustain the long duration of work as well as the exertion of the work. The children who hawk in the streets in urban centres, even for a few hours in a day, which is also regarded as child abuse because they are exposed to the hazards of traffic accident, weather and other undesirable environmental conditions in the process of hawking. Child labour is a universal problem and a serious violation of children's legal right, the types and condition of work varies, but many children who work in exploitative and under hazardous situations are deprived of education and the opportunity for health development.

Child labour is both a consequence and a cause of poverty. Denial of the right to education traps children in a subsistence level of existence that is perpetuated from one generation to another. Child labour is the denial of the basic rights and needs of the child by parents, peers, governments and cultural community, occurring as acts of commission. Child labour occurs in dimensions; in familiar context and outside the familiar context. In familiar context, children are engaged in domestic services; work on the family farm and in economic chores such as bus conducting, kiosk operation, newspaper vendor, hawking or street trading and formal employment in the wage sector such as hotels and restaurants. Child labour could be regarded as any type of paid and unpaid or exploitative work which places the interest of the beneficiary well above those of the child workers and is

detriment to the physical, mental, social, moral or educational development of the child.

The phenomenon of child labour inculcates lots of exploitative practices and discrimination which hinders the child's perception of him/her and the society as a whole. The emergence of child labour seems more relevant in the urban centres than in the rural area and it has become typical of economic activities in every urban location in Nigeria. The problem of child labour has become compounded to the extent that some state governments have to promulgate edicts outlawing street hawking.

Child labour includes both paid and unpaid work and activities that are mental, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children. It covers work that deprives them of opportunities for school or that requires them to assume the multiple burdens of schooling and working at home and in other places, and work that enslaves them and separates them from their families. They are the works carried out to the detriment and endangerment of the child in violation of international and national legislation (Haspel & Jankanish, 2010).

In a similar vein, Edun (2009) argued that child labour occurs not only when the interest of the beneficiary is placed well above those of the child, but rather when children are entrusted with too many responsibilities without compensatory psycho-social rewards or work which acts as obstacles in the ability of the children to adequately prepare for the future.

3. Causes of Child Labour

However, despite all factors to tackle the problem of child labour, it has been on the increase. Therefore, the socio-economic factors sustaining child labour in Nigeria have been identified by the researchers. These are family, economy and education. The major cause of child labour is poverty. The children work to ensure the survival of their family and themselves due to low level of income. Nevertheless, they serve as contributors to family income in Kwara State particularly in Ilorin metropolis

Furthermore, the size of the family can be seen as one of the factors responsible for child labour. Gill (2007), revealed that the size of the family or number of children in the family is related to the likelihood of child maltreatment and abuse. He noted that the larger the family, the greater the risk of child labour. Any family that produces more children that they cannot effectively cater for, most of such children (Fayeye, 1995). According to the World Bank studies (2006), children from poor families in Nigeria have a set of basic tasks to do in their respective households.

The desire for large family size and polygamy, both of which constitute risk factors in child labour, stems from tradition. Culture and tradition works hand in hand, and has gone a long way to influence child labour in Nigeria and other under developed countries like ours. Some cultures in Nigeria see child labour as a means of livelihood, a means of training children and to survive. Instead of taking into the streets and engaging in criminal activities.

The nature of the economy in Nigeria especially in Kwara State has been hindered by poverty and unemployment. In 1996, about 65% of Nigerians lived below poverty line. Therefore, poverty has been on the increase and as worsen the economic capacity in Nigeria. Besides, unemployment has remained the nation's albatross. Unemployment leads to loss of earning capacity at individual level and loss of the contribution to the national economy. This high rate of unemployment leads to economic crimes, corruption, street hawking and so on (UNICEF, 2011). Parents who are educated understand the importance of schooling from personal experience. As a result, parental education plays a major role in determining children schooling and employment (Tienda, 2009). All over the world, formal education is seen as a basic way of acquiring skills and knowledge that can benefit individuals knowing about their lifetime.

In Nigeria, many children of school attendance age are found on the streets engaging in one form of economic activities instead of going to school. However, in the year 2000, the number

of children of school attendance age of 6-11 years group was 20,901,097 and those 12-17 years group was 16,237,951 (FOS, 2000). The slight increase in the number of school enrolment in year 2000 could be attributed to the success of the Universal basic education (UBE) launched by President Olusegun Obasanjo regime in October, 1999. The introduction of UBE by president Obasanjo has help to reduce the education of the less privileged in our society because education is now affordable and accessible to the average Nigerian from primary school level up to the junior secondary school level for all. This has help to reduce illiteracy in our society and helped to encourage people on the reasons and advantages of going to school. It has also encouraged them to try and further the educations more for them to be able to achieve more and become useful members of the society and also to themselves.

In every society, the family is considered the oldest institution and as such, it plays a crucial role. Throughout history, strong families have helped to make strong societies. The family is considered the best arrangement for bringing up children to be matured adults. For most homes in Nigeria, because of widespread poverty, feeding has become a major problem.

Hence, it is not uncommon to find thousands of homeless children roaming the streets or engaging in one kind of labour or the other. Many are escaping from abusive homes or are cast out by family that can no longer support them. This is a very important socio-cultural factor sustaining child labour because it has gone a long way to determine how an individual will become in the society and how he participates and interacts with other members of the society. Family has gone a long way in developing and providing a normal and conducive society for our convenience.

4. Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, most parents procreate large number of children to assist them in their domestic chores and farming activities. However, with increasing urbanization and the resultant growing complexity of urban social space, there

are emerging problems associated with the new mode of life including child labour. These problems give rise to environmental, socio-economic and cultural problems which include exploitation of children, sexual harassment and acquisition of deviant behaviour among others.

The problem of sexual harassment affects most female children that are trading on the streets and at motor parks. This usually results in unwanted pregnancies. Also, the fast moving vehicles on the street sometimes hit the child traders. Some young children even drop out of school due to lack of financial support for their education. Therefore, there has been an increasing rate of child labour throughout the whole country despite the effort of the federal government and International labour organization (ILO) towards reduction in the number of child labour. Consequently, these young people tend to be poorly educated and become parents themselves at an early age (Sidel, 2006).

In Ilorin metropolis, children perform various tasks which fall within the category of child labour. Many children work under abusive conditions which are dangerous to them. For example, many children do carriage services (alaru) at various markets such as Oja-Oba, Ipata market among other. Also many children are engaged in domestic services (Omo-Odo) at household and restaurants assisting in fetching water, washing plates and clothes, cooking food and so on.

5. Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of this study include:

- (i) To identify the causes of child labour in Kwara State.
- (ii) To analyse the effects of child labour on the child, family and society.
- (iii) To examine the relationship between child labour and poverty.

6. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in the study:

- (i) Family size will not significantly be a determinant of child labour.
- (ii) Poverty will not significantly be a determinant of child labour.
- (iii) Educational background of the parents will not significantly be a determinant of child labour.

7. Research Methodology

Descriptive method of survey research design was used for this study. The population of the study refers to the selected numbers of people living in the three local government areas of Ilorin metropolis (Ilorin East, Ilorin South, Ilorin West). The sample for the study four hundred (400) respondents selected from three local governments in Ilorin metropolis which include Ilorin East local government with head quarters at Oke-oyi, Ilorin South local government with head quarters at Fufu and Ilorin West local government with headquarters at Wara oja, Ilorin.

Using simple random sampling technique, One hundred and fifty-one (151) respondents were selected from Ilorin West local government, One hundred and thirty-eight (138) respondents were selected from Ilorin East local government and one hundred and eleven (111) respondents were selected from Ilorin South local government to make a total of four hundred (400) respondents. The research instrument used in this research is

a questionnaire which was validated and tested for reliability. This was administered through research assistants to the respondents. All the copies of the questionnaire administered were collected immediately and analysis was done through simple percentage (%) for a clear presentation and comparison of data, while Chi-square (X^2) was used to test the hypothesis at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance

8. Data Analysis, Results and Discussion Of Findings

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics Of Respondents N=400

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE (%)
FAMILY SIZE (people)		
1-5	142	33
6-10	108	27
11-15	72	18
16 and above	88	22
INCOME (Monthly)		
Below ₦8,000	70	35
₦8,001 - ₦25,000	60	30
₦25,001 - ₦32,000	40	20
Above ₦32,000	30	15
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND OF PARENT		
Primary	80	20
Secondary	128	32
Tertiary	112	28
None	80	20
TOTAL	400	100

Test of Hypotheses

TABLE 2 :- Result of X^2 Analysis on Family Size, Poverty Level and Educational Background of Parent N=400

Hypothesis	Variable	Degree of Freedom	Calculated (X^2)	Critical Value	Decision
1	Family size	18	48.05	28.87	H_0 Rejected
2	Poverty	28	62.16	41.34	H_0 Rejected
3	Educational Background of Parent	18	32.82	28.87	H_0 Rejected

$P \geq 0.05$

Table 2 showed that on Hypothesis 1; the calculated value of 48.05 was less than the

critical value of 62.16 with 18 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null

hypothesis is rejected. This means that family size will significantly be a determinant of child labour in Kwara State.

On Hypothesis 2; result of analysis showed that the calculated chi-square value of 28.87 was less than the critical value of 41.34 with 28 as the degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that poverty will significantly be a factor that will determine child labour in Kwara State. On Hypothesis 3; result of analysis showed that the calculated value of 32.82 was lesser than the critical value of 28.87 with 18 degree of freedom at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted. Meaning that educational background of the parents will significantly be a determinant of child labour in Kwara State.

9. Discussion of Findings

Based on the findings on hypothesis 1, which sought to find out the family size as a factor that determines child labour. This is in line with the findings of (Gill, 2007), who revealed that the size of a family or the number of children in the family is related to the likelihood of child maltreatment and abuse. This means the larger the family size, the greater the risk of child labour. The upsurge of child labour could be as a result of failure of family institution to serve as a protective buffer for the child and the society at large.

Based on the findings on hypothesis 2, poverty level determines child labour. The finding showed that poverty will significantly be a factor that determines child labour. This can be linked to the findings of (Omoluabi, 2007) who opined that poverty is a situation where the children are forced by their parents to work for several hours in a day with inadequate food or rest in order to contribute to the family upkeep.

Hypothesis 3 findings revealed that the educational background of the parents will significantly be a factor that determines child labour. This is in line with the findings of (Tienda, 2009), who asserted that parents who are educated understand the importance of schooling from personal experience. As a result,

parental education plays a major role in determining children school, employment and other child labour activities. Whereas, those parents that are uneducated tend to subject their children to labour. With this most young people tend to be poorly educated and become parents themselves at an early age.

10. Conclusion and Recommendations

In this time of global economic meltdown and economic recession in Nigeria, child labour is a serious problem. This has given serious concern to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF as well as many governmental and non-governmental organizations.

Child labour involves children working instead of going to schools and most of the time, these works are such that are injurious to their health. In Nigeria, most of the child labour works are in the informal sector like children participating in hawking of goods, prostitution, house helps and labourers in building sites. Child labour is an abuse and most of the time, these types of work they engage in, are not ordinarily for children. Various researchers have felt concern and done some work on the phenomenon.

In view of the purpose of this study and the findings of the result of this study, the study concluded that children involved in child labour as a result of large family size, low poverty level and uneducated parent. Therefore, the exploitation of children through child labour still persists in Nigeria. Child labour is one of the socio-economic problems in Nigeria and in most developing countries caused majorly by poverty.

The following recommendations are made:

- (i) Health educators should engage on more family planning campaign in Nigeria. This will reduce the dependency ratio of the family and parents will be able to take care of their children.
- (ii) The government should engage in poverty alleviation programmes to reduce the incidence of child labour in the country. This would provide

- more jobs to meet the demand of the working population and should also tackle the problems of retrenchment, pension scheme and low income to reduce family hardship that leads to child labour.
- (iii) Mass literacy campaign should be intensified so as to encourage parents to send their children to school.

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