

Parental Socio-Economic Status and Students' Engagement in Child Labour: Implication for Counselling

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Abstract

This study examines the Parental Socio-Economic Status on Students' Engagement in Child Labour. A structured questionnaire was designed and administered participants using simple random sampling techniques. 200 questionnaire were distributed and the data collected was analyse using correlation, regression and analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level. The result of the findings showed that there is a significant effect of parental socio-economic status on child labour practice. Also, findings also indicated that there is no significant effect of parental income status on child labour practice. In addition, the result also showed that there is no significant effect of parental education on child labour practice. Not only has that, findings also indicated that there is no significant effect of parental occupation on child labour practice. Consequently, the findings of this study indicated that there is a significant relationship between child labour practice and student's achievement. Based on the above, it is thus recommended that the economic situation of the country needs to be revamped so as to enhance the standard of living of the citizenry. Not only that, law should be enacted mandating all school-age children not to be found hawking during school hours. More so, Federal Government should, as a matter of urgency, ensure that the child right law is made operational and effective in all states of the federation, while attempts should be made to redistribute the national wealth such that a greater percentage is directed at taking care of citizen's welfare. Also, Governmental and non-governmental organizations should also endeavour to create care centres for the children of the destitute and the less privileged and Government and corporate bodies should create more jobs which will alleviate poverty, and the National Assembly must ensure that a social security bill is passed into law.

Keywords: Child labour, Parental Socio-economic Status, Counselling, Implication

INTRODUCTION

The International Labour Office (ILO) defines child labour as any activity other than study or play, remunerated or unremunerated, that is carried out by a person under the age of 15. According to this definition, the ILO estimates that over 200 million children are engaged in some form of child labour and over eight million are engaged in hazardous and exploitative forms of child labour. However, the issue of child labour is very complex – while on the one hand it may take the child out of school and adversely impact human capital accumulation and lifetime earnings, on the other hand, the labour a child does can be a crucial risk coping mechanism, which may be essential in alleviating the poverty of a household in the short-run (Dar et al 2002).

Child labour has been the main thrust of universal discussion over a period of time. Journalists, psychologists, sociologists, politicians, philanthropists and even literary artists have deliberated on and sought for ways of stopping this exploitative and hazardous phenomenon to no avail. The developed, developing and under-developed countries of the world are all

guilty of child labour. However, according to International Labour Organization (ILO) (1998), child labour is overwhelmingly a developing country phenomenon with Africa having the highest incidence. It further asserts that participation rates of child labour force are higher in sub-Saharan region, Nigeria inclusive. Since the period of industrial revolution, Charles Dickens (1812-1870) the author of "Oliver Twist" had the issue of child labour as his main theme. Today, the problem is still prevailing. Bequel and Boyden (1998) opine that all over the world, children are incorporated into a range of different employment relations either as wage labourers in factories or self-employed workers or are engaged in street trading.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) (1998) has estimated that 250 million of the world children between the ages of five and fourteen work. Human Right Watch Publications (2000) asserts that the age of children who engage in child labour ranges from four to seventeen years old. According to Oloko (1999) an estimated 8 million Nigerian children are said to be trapped under the yoke of child labour in spite of governments' effort at stopping it and ensuring the formal education for all children. Otubokun, (2000) claim that children are involved in exploitative work when they are too young to do so. He further asserts that the hours are too long and the work is too difficult for a small growing body. Hence Fatusi, Segun, Adeyemi and Odujinrin (2001) assert that adolescents are exploited under conditions that amount to a modern form of slavery. They rarely escape and are never in position to negotiate the conditions of their employment. Again, the International Labour Organization (ILO) (1998) estimated that the number of child labourers in Africa could surge from today's 80 million to over 100 million by the year 2020. This is as a result of a demographic explosion of impoverished people and inadequate levels of economic growth across Africa.

According to Williams, Finke, Warren, Bazan, Walgen and Cohen (2005), work ranges from taking care of animals, planting and harvesting food, to being in many kinds of small manufacturing companies for auto repair, making of footwear and textiles. The authors further claim that more boys than girls work outside their homes. Girls often work as domestic maids. Being someone's house help can be very risky. Maids are cut off from friends and families. This is one reason why many youngsters do not attend schools. For instance, in Port Harcourt, a story had it that a housewife forced her domestic maid into a deep freezer for failing to open the gate on time. Many children in hazardous and dangerous job get injured or even die. Today's children will join the work force tomorrow but this might be an illusion since many would have been destroyed due to the incidence of child labour. The worst form of child labour and abuse are seen where children are forced into prostitution, sex work and drug peddling.

Child labour is one of the greatest social ills facing Nigeria today, and Africa in general. Various researchers have paid not a little attention to the problem in their researches. The general findings of these researchers revolve around the fact that child labour is prevalent in Nigeria, and that drastic measures will be required to curb its ugly trend. Child labour exposes children to series of dangers. Togunde & Carter (2008) examined some of the consequences of child labour on working children. These include malnourishment which makes them susceptible to diseases, musculo-skeletal disorders from heavy labour, physical and sexual abuse, educational problem due to absence from and lateness to school. Many factors have been studied and found to be responsible for child labour practices. For example, Togunde and Carter (2008) attributed the phenomenon to several factors like globalization, population growth, socialization and violence within the family structure.

Other studies of interest on the phenomenon of child labour in the African context include that of Osiruemu (2007) who considered the nature and implications of poverty of parents on child

labour in Benin City, Nigeria. The outcome of the study revealed a significant positive relationship between poverty of parents and child labour. The analysis of data on the occupation of parents in the said study shows their concentration in low paying jobs. The study of Togunde & Carter (2008) earlier reviewed was in support of the fact that parents engaged their children in child labour in order to augment family income. They also found that the parent of child labourers tend to have low educational, occupational, and income attainments. Corroborating these findings was another study earlier conducted by Togunde & Richardson (2006) on household size and composition as correlates of child labour in urban Nigeria, various household sizes and composition were examined as implicating factors in child labour. The study concludes that most working children come from households with low parental socio-economic status.

Other demographic variables like parental educational achievement and number of children were found to influence child labour practices. Olawale (2009) reported a significant difference in the abuse and neglect of students from lower socio-economic background than those from higher socio-economic background. He also reported a significant difference in child abuse and neglect among parents of low educational status than parents of high educational status.

Child employment is seen as supporting financial resources for families. Lindert (1976) opines that children work to ensure the survival of their families and themselves. Adegoke (2003) asserts that many adolescents and young people start their working life too early and are unable to go to school. He further explains that they suffer from fatigue and a higher accident rate than adult workers. He concludes that these young people encounter new cultural patterns and hostile environments leading to mental/behavioural problems.

Fatusi et al (2002) posit that the level of illiteracy among Nigerian youth is generally high due to a number of factors such as poverty and social cultural problems. Many of them are not aware of the fact that their children are sold into slavery or used for prostitution. The middlemen that come to them falsely present a better lifestyle for these children. Out of sheer ignorance, they inadvertently give them out for these hazardous and dangerous works.

Fatusi et al (2001) explain that parents or guardians in rural areas give out their children who are taken to the urban areas and are either sold or lent out for a fee to be beer parlour or restaurant attendants, domestic servants or to brothels to work as prostitutes. Many families raise daughters solely to take over household duties in order to release the mother for paid labour. Such a cultural practice restricts the education of females and promotes child labour. Chemai (2005), among others asserts that parents of children who engage in child labour are mainly illiterates or semi-literates. He observes further that rural poverty, lack of employment problems or partial employment and illiteracy have given birth to majority of child labour.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEMS

Despite the fact that students are the leaders of tomorrow, most parents, guardians and even relatives in one way or the other still engage children and students in child labour. This phenomenon or act will not only affect the child alone, but also generations to come. Several factors had been identified as the courses of child labour, most especially in Nigeria and the rest of the world. It is on this therefore that this study was designed to examine the effects of parental socio-economic status on students' engagement in child labour.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to examine the effects of parental socio-Economic status on students' engagement in child labour. Specifically, this study was designed to examine the influence of parental Socio-Economic status on child labour practice viz-a-viz parental income on child labour practice. The study also examined the influence of parental educational background and occupation on child labour practice.

HYPOTHESES

Four research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study as follows:

H1: There is no significance effect of parental Socio-Economic status on child labour practice

H2: There is no significance effect of parental income status on child labour practice

H3: There is no significance effect of parental educational background on child labour practice

H4: There is no significance effect of parental occupation on child labour practice

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study examined the effects of parental Socio-Economic status on students' engagement in child labour in four selected public secondary schools in Oyo West Local Government Council Area of Oyo State.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The role youth and students in national development cannot be overestimated since they are leaders of tomorrow. To this regard, this research would also provide useful information for the parents on the implications and dangers of engaging students in child labour. Not only that, it will also assist the government of Nigeria to know the rate at which students are been engaged in child labour so as to device a modality to curb or reduce the incidence in Nigeria. In addition, it will also inform the students the implication of child labour as a detriment to their academic success and their growth and development towards achieving in life.

The study would contribute to research on child labour in Nigeria, Africa and the rest of the World and also create a platform for further research.

Research Design

This study makes use of descriptive survey research designed where no variable was manipulated. The nature of the problem duly considered in the study.

Population of Study

The population of the study consists of all the public secondary school students in Oyo-West Local Government Area of Oyo State.

Sample and Sampling Procedure

The samples used in this study consist of 300 students randomly selected from five school were randomly selected within Oyo West Local Government area of Oyo State. In each school, 60 students from SSS1 to SSS3 were selected to participate in the study.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher. The questionnaire has two sections, A and B. Section A sought for demographic and general information of the respondents such as sex, age, class, religion etc. While section B sought to obtain opinions of respondents on child labour and its relationship with parental socio-economic background and students performance. Each item was responded to using four

–point likert scale : strongly agree (SA) = 4, agree (A) = 3, disagree (D) = 2 , and strongly disagree (SD) = 1. This method of rating was adopted to clearly project the varying degree of intensity of the respondents option on the scale of preference from the rating scale with “strongly agree” (SA) being the highest in intensity with four (4) point to “ strongly disagree” (SD) , being the lowest in intensity of response with one (1) point . This was to help in eliminating the element of doubt and unnecessary vacuum, which are often caused by other method of rating score from respondents.

VALIDATION AND RELIABILITY OF INSTRUMENT

The instrument was subjected to test Re test with participants similar to the population but outside the population ara within the period of three weeks interval and the results gave a Pearson moment correlations of 0.78 at alpha level of 0.05 and caontent validity of the instrument was also ensured

Method of Data Analysis

The data generated was subjected to statistical test analysis using the percentile grade tabulation. The formulated research hypotheses tested using correlation, t-test and regression analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Analysis of Personal Characteristics of Respondents

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Sex

Sex	Frequency	%
Male	122	40.7
Female	178	59.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 1 presents the distribution of respondents by sex. The results of the analysis showed that 122(40.7%) of the respondents were males while 178(59.3%) were females. This shows that majority of the respondents that constitutes the sample size were female gender.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Age group

Age	Frequency	%
Below 13 years	37	12.3
13-15 years	164	54.7
16-18 years	92	30.7
Above 18 years	7	2.3
Total	300	100.0

Table 2 presents the distribution of respondents by age group. The results of the analysis indicated that 37(12.3%) of the respondents were below 13 years of age, 164(54.7%) were between 13-15 years of age and 92(30.7%) were between 16-18 years of age while 7(2.3%) were above 18 years of age. This showed that majority of the respondents that constituted the sample size were between 13-18 years of age.

ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: There is no significant effect of parental socio-economic status on child labour practice

Table 4: Regression analysis showing the effect of parental socio-economic status on child labour practice

Parameter	Coefficient	Standard Error	T-cal	Probability
Constant	24.53	3.53	6.95	0.000
Status	0.17	0.06	2.71	0.007
R²	0.024			
Adjusted R²	0.021			
F-Statistic	7.315			

Table 4 showed that socio-economic status as an independent variable accounts for 2.4% of the total variation in their child labour practice ($R^2 = 0.024$, $P < 0.05$). This result showed is significant. Therefore, parental socio-economic status plays a significant role in predicting child labour practice. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected and conclusion is made that there is a significant effect of parental socio-economic status on child labour practice.

H02: There is no significant effect of parental income status on child labour practice

Table 5: ANOVA showing significant effect of parental income status on child labour practice

Income	N	Mean	STD	F	P	Remark
< 18,000	30	32.96	4.31	1.225	0.301	Not Significant
18,000-40,000	97	34.43	3.62			
41,000-100,000	119	33.89	4.12			
Above 100,000	54	34.35	3.70			

The result in table 5 revealed non-significant outcome ($F = 0.301$, $P > 0.05$). This outcome implied that there is no significant effect of parental income status on child labour practice. The mean score of 32.96 recorded by students whose parents earn < 18,000 monthly, the mean (34.43) recorded for those income between 18,000-40,000, the mean (33.89) for those between 41,000-100,000, and the mean score of 34.35 recorded for those above 100,000 were not statistically significant. Hence, there is no significant effect of parental income status on child labour practice.

H03: There is no significant effect of parental education on child labour practice

Table 6: ANOVA showing significant effect of parental education on child labour practice

Education	N	Mean	STD	F	P	Remark
SSCE/Less	45	33.57	3.95	0.75	0.519	Not Significant
OND/NCE	68	33.94	4.05			
HND/BSC/BED	156	34.35	3.90			
Post-Graduate	31	33.48	3.95			

The result in table 6 revealed non-significant outcome ($F = 0.75$, $P > 0.05$). This outcome implied that there is no significant effect of parental education on child labour practice. The mean score of 33.57 recorded by students whose parents had SSCE or less, the mean (33.94) recorded by

for those with OND/NCE , the mean (34.35) for those between with HND/BSC, and the mean score of 33.48 recorded for those with post graduate education were not statistically significant. Hence, there is no significant effect of parental education on child labour practice..

H04: There is no significant effect of parental occupation on child labour practice

Table 7: ANOVA showing significant effect of parental occupation on child labour practice

Occupation	N	Mean	STD	F	P	Remark
Farming	38	34.184	4.23	1.087	0.363	Not Significant
Trading	70	34.028	3.85			
Civil Servant	123	33.650	3.95			
Artisan	38	35.157	3.97			
Others	31	34.225	3.79			

The result in table 6 revealed non-significant outcome($F= 1.087, P>0.05$) . This outcome implied that there is no significant effect of parental occupation on child labour practice. The mean score of 34.184 recorded by students whose parents were famers and those whose parents were traders, civil servant, artisan and others with mean of 34.02, 33.65,35.15, and 34.22 respectively showed that the mean difference were not statistically significant. Hence, there is no significant effect of parental occupation on child labour practice.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study indicated that:

1. that there is a significant effect of parental socio-economic status on child labour practice
2. there is no significant effect of parental income status on child labour practice.
3. there is no significant effect of parental education on child labour practice..
4. there is no significant effect of parental occupation on child labour practice..

DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The result of the findings showed that there is a significant effect of parental socio-economic status on child labour practice. These findings are relevantly contradistinctive to the findings of Osiruemu (2007) which also found a significant relationship between poverty of parents and child labour. Such an outcome as this is not unlikely in a socio-economic environment with high negative economic indices. Child labour is therefore exploited as a means of making the child augment the family income by contributing in their own little way to the economic survival of the family.

The findings also support the study of Olawale (2009) which found a significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and child abuse. There are several possible reasons for such an outcome like this. The customary penchant of the rich and wealthy to give good education to their children because of their access to wealth speaks true of what obtains in Nigeria. Most poor children and youths necessarily have to engage themselves in one form of labour or the other in order to fulfill the financial demands of schooling. It is no news in Nigeria that many children combine job with schooling while those in the villages may need to return to farm each day immediately after school. The rich in Nigeria like those in the other lands often do not need to engage their children in labour practices; they rather engage the children

of the less privileged ones to serve them. Also the findings were in line with that of Omokhodion & Odusote, (2005) who also report a significant relationship between parental socio-economic status and child abuse.

Also, findings also indicated that there is no significant effect of parental income status on child labour practice. These were in line with the work of Jeynes, (2002) who examining the effect of parental absence on the academic achievement of adolescents: The challenge of controlling for family income. Found out that income to some extent does not really affect child labour practices. This was also inline with that of Kothari, (2004) who also found out that there is no significant difference between income group of parent and child labour practice.

In addition, the result also showed that there is no significant effect of parental education on child labour practice. The result negate the findings of Olawale (2009) who reported a significant difference in the abuse and neglect of students from lower socio-economic background than those from higher socio-economic background. He also reported a significant difference in child abuse and neglect among parents of low educational status than parents of high educational status. Also with the findings of was another study earlier conducted by Togunde & Richardson (2006) on household size and composition as correlates of child labour in urban Nigeria, various household sizes and composition were examined as implicating factors in child labour. The study concludes that most working children come from households with low parental socio-economic status.

Not only that, findings also indicated that there is no significant effect of parental occupation on child labour practice. Consequently, the findings of this study indicated that there is a significant relationship between child labour practice and student's performance. The findings were in line with that of Omokhodion & Odusote, (2005); who found out in their study that child labour significantly affects student's academic achievement. Also in line with Togunde & Richardson, (2006) who report similar trend between child labour practice and academic achievement

RECOMMENDATION

1. The economic situation of the country needs to be revamped so as to enhance the standard of living of the citizenry.
2. Law mandating all school-age children not to be found hawking during school hours should be strictly enforced and violators should be prosecuted at levels of Governance..
3. Federal Government should, as a matter of urgency, ensure that the child right law is made operational and effective in all states of the Federation, while attempts should be made to redistribute the national wealth such that a greater percentage is directed at taking care of citizen's welfare.
4. Governmental and non-governmental organizations should also endeavour to create care centres for the children of the destitute and the less privileged.
5. Government and corporate bodies should create more jobs which will alleviate poverty on the part of parents to enable them keep their wards / children in school, and the National Assembly must ensure that a social security bill is passed into law.

CONCLUSION

This study concluded asserting that, poverty is a major cause of child labour, abuse and neglect in Oyo West Local Government Council, Oyo State, Nigeria. Therefore, the clarion call is directed at the government to intensify efforts on revalidating Universal Basic Education in a manner that will enable children of low income and agarian parents have access to formal

education at a critical formative stage of education delivery. This should come with full tuition-free both at the primary and secondary school levels.

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