

Determinants of Parents' Perception of Child Labour Practices in Southwest, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study examined determinants of parents' perception of child labour practices. The research design adopted in the study was descriptive design of the survey type. The population of the study consisted of all married male and female parents living in southwest geopolitical zone. The sample for the study consisted of 1,649 married male and female parents selected from three states in Southwest, Nigeria. A self-designed questionnaire tagged "Perception and Child Labour Questionnaire (PCLQ)" was used to collect data for the study. The validity of the instrument was ensured through content validity. The reliability of the instrument was determined by finding the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach alpha. This yielded a coefficient value of 0.83. The data collected from the questionnaire were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The findings of this study revealed that parents perceived child labour differently as most of them do not encourage child labour practices. The findings further revealed that there is difference in parent's perception of child labour practices based on their educational status, employment status, income status and location. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Government should intensify more effort on public enlightenment to create more awareness about detriments of child labour. Jingles should run on radio and television periodically in English and local dialect for better understanding of the evil called child labour.

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Introduction

Children are the bedrock of any society as such they need to be trained, adequately handled and protected. Yet most of these children are at early age exposed to dangerous and risky jobs that affect their mental, physical, social moral and emotional development. It is observed that children appear to be more vulnerable in child labour because of their total dependence on parents and adults for food, shelter, protection and care. In Southwest, Nigeria especially in big cities like Ibadan, Lagos, Ado Ekiti, Abeokuta, Osogbo, Iwo, Ede, Ilesha, Oyo and Akure, observation shows that it is a daily occurrence to see children below 18 years hawking wares and other products along the road side.

It also seems to be a usual practice in Nigeria, to see children far below the age of eighteen hawking items or commodities like sachet water, fruits, groundnuts, plantain chips, egg-roll, beverages and other goods too numerous to mention under harsh weather or condition. Some of these children are involved in jobs that have harmful effect on their physical condition and mental health, job like bus conducting, wheel barrow pushing, and they are prone to road accidents through reckless driving of some drivers. It has also been viewed that some of these children could be initiated into criminal act like robbery, prostitution and they could become victims of rape, thereby contracting sexually transmitted diseases like HIV/AIDS consequently untimely death.

Child labour is a prevalent problem all over the world and Nigeria is no exception. It is disappointing to note that juvenile cases and other social vices that characterized our society today are traceable to bad parenthood of many homes. Children who have passed through such homes were battered, abandoned, or abused in any other form. They were consequently toughened and eventually become liabilities to the community rather than assets. In Nigeria today, the rate of child labour has assumed a worrisome and alarming proportion (Oloko, 2007). It has become more or less an accepted norms and value to involve children in various works that are dangerous to their development and that can jeopardize their education (Adegun, 2013).

According to the Child Right's Act 2003, passed into law in the Federal Capital Territory Abuja, a child is a person who has not attained the age of eighteen years. On the other hand, labour can be defined as human and mental efforts used in creation of goods and services. Put together, the concept of Child Labour has probably been in existence almost as long as the history of mankind and connotes all economic activities carried out by children regardless of their occupational status (Oloko, 2007).

People seem to perceive what constitutes child labour differently. Child labour is captured and defined variously by different people from different background and cultures. However, there was a general consensus that it is a situation whereby a child engaged in a work to sustain self or support family. It is obvious that individual researchers and country alike try to address the definition of child labour within the context of their own unique enlighten, circumstances culture, laws institution and experience in general (Adewusi, 2012). Though various national and International bodies have perceived child labour almost in the same vein some see it as a terminology that has been in existence in various forms for a very long period of time, it is an aged long practice in the history of mankind practice in various forms even in various parts of the world since ancient times. The earlier form of child labour is perhaps slavery which was big business then, and it is practice by big business men and some well-placed members of the societies.

Several reasons have been put forward as predisposing perception to child labour. These factors include poverty, high cost of living, lack of sponsorship, poor school performance, single parenthood, large family size, peer group pressure, poor home conditions, lack of parental care, parents' unemployment, parental pressure, poor scholastic achievements (Fawole, 2003).

It was observed that parents in South West Nigeria involved their children in this practice because they were unable to differentiate between child labour and child work. Child work is seen as inevitable process of growth, development and integration of the child. It is an informal learning process whereby parents teach their son and daughters to be men and women, the primary emphasis is on learning, work schedule is flexible and responsive to the developing capacity of the child, it is voluntary, it encourages child decision in making progress that is beneficial to the child's emotional moral and cognitive development.

For the purpose of this study, some selected variables (Parents' Education status, employment status, income status and location) were considered to determine if they influence parents' perception of child labour practices. Education according to Femi (2011) is a vital instrument for social and economic mobility and instrument for transformation of society, a weapon for acquiring skills, relevant knowledge and habit for surviving in the changing world. It is important to note that the purpose of education is to guide human beings to achieve the basic life goals, multiply and act positively in caring for the environment and contributing to the society. Level of Education of parents appears to be an attribute that can determine ones perception of child labour.

Unemployment which is the lack of job opportunities for the proportion of labour force available for work is also identified as another reason for the high prevalence of child labour, both unemployment and underemployment labour impact was directly on the purchasing power of households. According to Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (2010), the current unemployment rate in Nigeria is 19.7%. Employment status of parents could determine if parents will encourage or discourage their children from engaging in child labour.

Basu and Tzannatos (2003) showed that level of income and income inequality appears to give rise to the incidence of children involved in the incidence of children working. The researcher observation collaborated with Ayoade (2011), which says, some parents are desirous of sending their children to school, but may not be able because of lack of economic power to realise a desire for a better prospect of the children.

Parents' location simply describes the settlement or area in which he/she is permanently situated. This settlement could either be urban or rural. Child labour practices may be influenced by the area in which the parents live or where the home is situated. Adebayo (2012) asserted that the reasons for variation in child labour practices can be as a result of geographic location of parents or guardian, income and available resources.

Based on the foregoing, the study investigated the determinants of parent's perception of child labour practices in Southwest, Nigeria. The study specifically examined:

- i. parents' perception of child labour practices in Southwest, Nigeria; and
- ii. the difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their educational status, employment status, income and location.

Research Question

This research question was raised for this study:

1. What is parents' perception of child labour practices in Southwest, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

These null hypotheses were generated for this study:

1. There is no significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their educational status
2. There is no significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their employment status
3. There is no significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their income
4. There is no significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their location

Methodology

The descriptive research design of the survey type was used in this study. It focuses on the observations and perception of the existing situation on child labour practices in Southwest, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of married male and female parents living in the Southwest geopolitical zone. It consisted of male and female parents residing in the six states in the geo political zone and these are Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti and Ondo States. The sample for this study consisted of 1,649 parents selected from three states in Southwest, Nigeria. Multi stage sampling procedure was used to select the sample for this study

A questionnaire designed by the researcher tagged "Perception and Child Labour Questionnaire (PCLQ)" was used to collect useful and relevant data for the study. The instrument was divided into two sections namely Section A and B. Section A of the instrument sought for comprehensive bio-data of the respondents among which are the educational status, employment status, income and location. Section B consisted of 15 items which sought for information on parents' perception of child labour practices. The instrument was worded on 4 point likert type scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) to Strongly Disagree (SD).

To ensure content validity, the experts of tests and measurement perused the items and ascertained that the items represent the factors specified in the research question and hypotheses and their observations were used to effect the necessary corrections on the instrument. The reliability of the instrument was determined by finding the internal consistency through a study carried out outside the sampled locations. The instrument was administered on 40 respondents in order to ascertain the reliability of the instrument, data collected were tested using Cronbach alpha and the internal consistency of the items was ensured yielded a co-efficient value of 0.83. This was considered adequate for the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analysed the data collected. Hypotheses 1 – 3 were tested using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) while hypotheses 4 was tested using t-test analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Descriptive Analysis

Research Question 1: What is the perception of parents towards child labour practices in Southwest, Nigeria?

Table 1: Perception of Parents towards Child Labour Practices

S/N	Items	N	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Mean	S.D	Decision
1.	Child labour is a normal practice	1649	561 (34.02%)	1088 (65.98%)	2.24	0.74	Disagreed
2.	Child labour is a means of training the child for future challenges	1649	330 (20.01%)	1319 (79.99%)	1.80	0.85	Disagreed
3.	Child labour is a welcome practice	1649	132 (8.00%)	1517 (92.00%)	1.73	0.69	Disagreed
4.	Child labour is a means of cheap labour	1649	331 (20.07%)	1318 (79.93%)	2.01	0.69	Disagreed
5.	Parent derives much benefits by engaging their children in child labour	1649	130 (7.88%)	1519 (92.12%)	1.61	0.72	Disagreed
6.	Economic situation of Nigeria encourages child labour practices	1649	660 (40.02%)	989 (59.98%)	2.41	0.85	Disagreed
7.	Poverty encourages child labour practices	1649	1023 (62.04%)	626 (37.96%)	2.80	0.77	Agreed
8.	A working child makes a responsible adult	1649	396 (24.01%)	1253 (75.99%)	2.06	0.81	Disagreed
9.	A child that works grows up to be wise	1649	561 (34.02%)	1088 (65.98%)	2.30	0.83	Disagreed
10.	Child labour is a means of training the child for future challenges	1649	231 (14.01%)	1418 (85.99%)	1.90	0.67	Disagreed
11.	Child labour practices help the child to be smart	1649	165 (10.0%)	1484 (90.00%)	1.71	0.64	Disagreed
12.	Involving children in paid job enhances their communications skills with both peers and adults	1649	132 (8.00%)	1517 (92.00%)	1.80	0.63	Disagreed
13.	Involving children in paid job enhances their self-confidence	1649	528 (32.02%)	1121 (67.98%)	2.26	0.69	Disagreed
14.	Work provides children with a sense of responsibility	1649	530 (32.14%)	1119 (67.86%)	2.27	0.77	Disagreed
15.	Engaging children in paid work keeps them out of trouble	1649	231 (14.01%)	1418 (85.99%)	1.72	0.80	Disagreed
	Mean Average				2.04		

Mean Cut-off: 2.50

Table 1 shows parents' perception of child labour practices, 561 (34.02%) respondents agreed that child labour is a normal practice while 1088 (65.98%) disagreed. Only 330 (20.01%) agreed that child labour is a means of training the child for future challenges while 132 (8.00%) agreed that child labour is a welcome practice. Majority of the respondents disagreed that child labour is a means of cheap labour as only 130 (7.88%) respondents agreed that parent derives much benefits by engaging their children in child

labour. Less than half of the respondents agreed that economic situation of Nigeria encourages child labour practices while 1023 (62.04%) agreed that poverty encourages child labour practices.

Most of the respondents (75.99% and 65.98%) disagreed that a working child makes a responsible adult and a child that works grows up to be wise respectively, 1418 (85.99%) disagreed that child labour is a means of training the child for future challenges. Only 165 (10.00%) agreed that child labour practices help the child to be smart. Only few of the respondents agreed that involving children in paid job enhances their communication skills and self-confidence. About 1119 (67.86%) disagreed that work provides children with a sense of responsibility while 1418 (85.99%) respondents disagreed that engaging children in paid work keeps them out of trouble.

It can be concluded that the majority of the respondents perceived what constitutes child labour as negative and undesirable, and most of the respondents do not encourage nor support child labour practices.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their educational status

Table 2: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for difference in Parents' Perception of Child Labour Practices based on their Educational Status

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	32864.908	3	10954.969	573.497*	.000
Within Groups	31422.855	1645	19.102		
Total	64287.762	1648			

* $P < 0.05$

The result presented in table 2 showed that F-cal value of 573.497 is significant because the P value (0.000) < 0.05 at 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their educational status. In order to investigate the source of the differences observed, Post – hoc analysis (Scheffe) with mean difference was carried out.

Table 3: Scheffe Post – hoc test and mean for observed difference in Parents' Perception of Child Labour Practices based on their Educational Status

Groups	N	Mean	Primary	S.S.C.E	Post-Secondary	Post-Graduate
			38.71	33.14	29.02	24.30
Primary	231	38.71				
S.S.C.E	462	33.14	*			
Post Secondary	626	29.02	*	*		
Post Graduate	330	24.30	*	*	*	

* $P < 0.05$

In table 3, significant differences were found between perception of child labour practices of parents with primary school certificate and secondary school certificate, primary school certificate and post-secondary certificate, and primary school certificate and post-

graduate certificate. Also significant differences were found between the perception of child labour practices of parents with secondary school certificate and post-secondary certificate, and secondary school certificate and post-graduate certificate. Lastly, there is significant difference between perception of child labour practices of parents with post-secondary school certificate and post-graduate certificate.

It can be concluded that there is significant difference in perception of parents towards child labour practice based on their educational status.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their employment status

Table 4: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for difference in Parents' Perception of Child Labour Practices based on their Employment Status

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	8321.203	3	2773.734	81.527*	.000
Within Groups	55966.560	1645	34.022		
Total	64287.762	1648			

* $P < 0.05$

The result presented in table 4 showed that F-cal value of 81.527 is significant because the P value (0.000) < 0.05 at 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is not accepted. This implies that there is significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their employment status. In order to investigate the source of the differences observed, Post – hoc analysis (Scheffe) with mean difference was carried out.

Table 5: Scheffe Post – hoc test and mean to observed difference in Parents' Perception of Child Labour Practices based on their Employment Status

Groups	N	Mean	Not Employed	Self Employed	Private Employed	Government Employed
			36.80	30.73	29.77	28.45
Not Employed	165	36.80				
Self-Employed	692	30.73	*			
Privately Employed	429	29.77	*	*		
Government Employed	363	28.45	*	*	*	

* $P < 0.05$

In table 5, significant differences were found between the perception of child labour practices of parents who are not employed and those who are self-employed, parents who are not employed and those who are privately employed, and parents who are not employed and those who are government employed. Also, significant differences were found between the perception of child labour practices of parents who are self-employed and those who are privately employed, and parents who are self-employed and those who are government employed. Lastly, there was significant difference between the perception of child labour practices of parents who are privately employed and those who are government employed.

Based on the above, it is concluded that there is significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practice based on their employment status.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their income

Table 6: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their income

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3377.908	2	1688.954	45.642*	.000
Within Groups	60909.855	1646	37.005		
Total	64287.762	1648			

* P < 0.05

The result presented in table 6 showed that F-cal value of 45.642 is significant because the P value (0.000) < 0.05 at 0.05. Hence, the null hypothesis is not accepted. This implies that there is a significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their income. In order to investigate the source of the differences observed, Post – hoc analysis (Scheffe) with mean difference was carried out.

Table 7: Scheffe Post – hoc Test and Mean for Observed Difference in Parents' Perception of Child Labour Practices based on their Income

Groups	N	Mean	Low Income	Moderate Income	High Income
			31.52	30.79	27.14
Low Income	693	31.52			
Moderate Income	725	30.79			
High Income	231	27.14	*	*	

* P < 0.05

In table 7, significant differences were found between the perception of child labour practices of parents who are low income earner and those who are high income earner, and those who are moderate income earner and high income earner. However, there is no significant difference between the perception of child labour practices of parents who are low income earner and those who are moderate income earner.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their location

Table 8: t-test Analysis for Parents' Perception of Child Labour Practices based on their Location

Variations	N	Mean	SD	df	t _{cal}	P
Urban	825	30.16	5.42	1647	2.784*	0.01
Rural	824	31.01	6.95			

*P<0.05

Table 8 shows that the t-cal value of 2.784 is significant because the P value (0.01) < 0.05. This implies that null hypothesis is not accepted Hence, there is significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their location.

Discussion

The study revealed that the respondents perceived child labour differently, most of the parents do not encourage nor practice it, they see it as something negative and undesirable while few respondents perceived it positively, they see it as something normal and rational because of their educational and employment status. This finding is in agreement with the

study of Adegun (2013) who found out that the perception of parents whose children are involved in labour greatly differs from those of parents whose children are not involved.

The study revealed that there is significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their educational status. The probable reason for this finding might be because parents with high education status saw child labour as an unwholesome practice. In support of this finding, Kim and Zepeda (2004) found that the higher the parents' educational level, the higher the probability that parents will not involve their children in labour.

It was also revealed that there is a significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their employment status. The result showed that most of the respondents who are gainfully employed have negative perception of child labour practice. In support of this finding, Alexander (2012) found out that children whose parents work in professional occupation generally outperform other pupils as they are able to provide all materials and not likely to involve their children in child labour practices.

The study further revealed that there is a significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their income. The result showed that, parents who are highly income earner have negative perception towards child labour practices because they earn better salary, why parents with low income earner has positive perception towards child labour because they earn lesser salary. In support of this finding, Nweke and Owo (2014) concluded that children of poor families have to help generate family income by involving their children in labour, so as to compensate for economic discrepancies in the society.

Conclusively, the study revealed that there is significant difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their location. It was revealed from the study that parents from urban areas have negative perception of child labour practice because they were educated, whereas parents from rural have positive perception of child labour practice because they were illiterate and poor.

Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of this study, it was concluded that parents perceived child labour as undesirable as most of them do not encourage the practice. It was also concluded that there is difference in parents' perception of child labour practices based on their educational, employment, income as well as location.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

1. Government should intensify more effort on public enlighten to create more awareness about detriments of child labour. Jingles should run on radio and television periodically in English and local dialect for better understanding of the evil called child labour.
2. Scholarship should be awarded by corporate bodies, individual, non-governmental agencies and government to students from poor backgrounds to encourage schooling.
3. Government should also try as much as possible to introduced free education at all level, as this would encourage children of poor parents to attend school.

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