

Practices of Child Labour Among Parents in Ekiti State, Nigeria: Implication for School Administrators

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Abstract

The study investigated the practices of child labour among parents in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The descriptive research design of the survey type was used for the study. Multistage random sampling technique was used to select four hundred (400) parents living in Ekiti State. A self-designed questionnaire was used as instrument for the study. The face and content validity of the instrument was ensured by experts while the reliability of the instrument was ensured using test-retest method. The reliability coefficient of 0.84 was obtained. The data collected was analyzed using t – test, one way ANOVA and scheffe post hoc analysis. One general question and four hypotheses were generated for the study. The study confirmed the existence of child labour practice in the state and that it is predominant in the domestic sector. The study revealed that there was significant difference in the practice of child labour by male and female parents; there was also significant difference in the practice in terms of marital status and employment status of parents. There was no difference in the practice of child labour among parents of different religions. It was recommended among others that parents should be economically empowered to reduce poverty and urge to involve their children in labour. Laws on child labour should be enforced by relevant agencies with a view to reducing incidence of child labour on our streets. School administrators should implore various organisations like the media, religious bodies and others to campaign against the practice of Child Labour.

Key words: Child labour, school administrators, parents, prevalence, practice.

1. Introduction

The family is one of the first institutions established by God for the purpose of procreation. According to the Holy Bible the family system had been in existence since the dawn of humanity. Within the family, children are exposed to various values, attitudes and responsibilities. They are showered with love, warmth, affection, guidance, and appropriate discipline and monitoring by both the immediate and extended family members. However, children are traditionally taught to respect and contribute to the progress of the entire family. It was a common practice to engage family members in helping each other with the domestic chores. Each child is to participate commensurately to his or her chronological age and gender. It is in line with this that it becomes more or less an accepted norm to involve children in various works. But with the advent of modernization, life for almost all began to take a new dimension. Both the family system and their life style changed for obvious reasons ranging from demands being more than supply and changes in economic fortunes of various countries. With this development children were obviously not left out, they found themselves being engaged in various works that are conventionally dangerous to their chronological age. Observations show that childhood, a time of hope and promise, could be a time of hardship and problem particularly in a developing state like the study area where the burden of poverty appears to be on the young ones.

Ida (1999) defined child Labour as the engagement of children below 15 years of age in income generating activities such as working in construction companies, hawking of goods, working as domestic and agricultural work that is commensurate with their age within the households of their parents. He stressed that child labour is when the task performed by a child is excessive and detrimental to his development, interfere with his education and hinder his preparation for adult roles and responsibilities.

The international Labour Organization (2003) identified child Labour as a social problem, and defines it as work and activities that are mentally, physically and socially dangerous and harmful to children. It involves works that enslaves children separates them from their families and jeopardizes their mental, emotional and moral developments. It was observed that parents in Ekiti State of Nigeria appear to involve in child labour practices. Possibly because they are not able to differentiate between child labour and child work. Child work which according to Anma, Baghdellah, Kiondo, Madhi; Mwandayi and Soko (2000) is described as the general activities that children undertake whether at home or outside the home. They seem to believe that work done by a child below 15 years of age is an avenue to provide additional income to the family. Whether in rural or urban settings, parents seem to involve their children in hazardous work because of poverty. Rich and educated parents appear to also get involved in child labour practice to satisfy their own selfish interest by making use of the children of others as house helps. Illiterate and poor parents sometimes involved their wards in child labour to augment the family income by making children to sell different kinds of goods like bean-cake, bread and

provisions before going to school in the morning. Poor parents appear not hesitant in releasing their wards to be domestic servant to the rich and educated parents who need their services. The reason being that they are not economically buoyant to feed and care for the children. It is no longer rare to see children as young as six or seven years old hawking specializing mainly in the sale of sachet water in motor parks, at bus stops and in go slows on busy urban highways, they are at high risk of hazards and dangers at this very young age.

Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) revealed that in Nigeria there is no legal minimum age for starting work while the International Labour Organization (ILO) recommended that children should be in school until the age of 14. The Federal Office of Statistics (FOS) in 2003 reported that more than 15million Nigerian children under the age of 14 were working, mostly to help pay their school fees and help their parents for daily up keep. Further report by International Labour Organization (ILO) (2006) showed that over eight million of the country's working children were also attending school. The children said they were forced to work part time in order to pay for their school fees and books justifying the existence of abject poverty.

In 1995, statistical data for child Labour was 12million while by 2006 the number has risen to 15million children. Even though the Labour Act of 1974 prohibits the employment of children under the age of 15 in commerce and industry and restricts Labour performed by children to home based agricultural or domestic work, yet the statistical reports reveal the existence and practice of child Labour in Nigeria. Siddiq, and Pathos (2006) and Kolo (2005) stated that the causes of child labour in the African continent in which Nigeria is included and Ekiti State inclusive are ignorance, high incidence of poverty, high population growth and low education participation while the International Labour Organization (2006) identified natural disasters, ignorance, misplacement of priorities and misinformation as major causes.

Okpukpara and Odurukwe(2009) confirmed that the prevalence of child labour is predominant in the formal sector in Nigeria. In 1996, the child welfare League reported that in Lagos alone there were 100,000 boys and girls living and hawking on the streets. In the northern Nigeria children known as the Almajiri survive on the street by begging. Kolo (2005) acknowledge that child labour is widely spread in Nigeria in various forms and locations and it involves children of both sexes.

The United Nation Education Fund (2006) indicated that the South Zone of Nigeria has the highest percentage of 20.1% of children involved in economic activities while south East recorded the highest percentage of activities while attending schools. On children involved in housekeeping activities without school attendance, Sokoto State recorded the highest percentage of (49.0%) with Jigawa State (47.0%) Yobe State 44.3% and Gombe State (32.9%) while across the zone, north west has the highest percentage of (25.4%) followed by north East (24.6%) and north central (11.4%) of these working children (59.4%) are found attending school while (40.6%) are not attending (United Nation Education Fund 2006).

The study of Okuniola (2003) stressed that there was no significant difference between male and female parent practice of child Labour while Oloko 2002 also discovered that there was no disparity in parents practicing of Child Labour irrespective of their religion.

The National Planning Commission (2001) emphasized that children exposed to harsh and dangerous work are vulnerable to social, physical, health, emotional and moral problems. They can suffer from mental psychological and physical exhaustion, stunted growth, deformities and diseases. Bass (2004) opined that child Labour can make a child to remain uneducated and have low productivity as an adult. Arat (2002), Aderinto (2000) and Hope 2005 discovered that children involved in child Labour suffer from various diseases such as respiratory problems, injuries, and accidents, physical assault, sexual abuse, police harassment, malnourishment and participation in harmful or delinquent activities.

Moreover the educational implications of child Labour are emphasized by the studies of Ezewu and Tahir (1997), and Oloko (1994). They discovered that child labour deny children educational opportunities. A study in the riverine area of the South -South Zone (Bonny/Andoni, Brass/Kalabari and Segbama/Yenagoa) found that 76 percent of children aged 6 – 16 were not attending school, either because of the difficulties of access to schools or the involvement of children in fishing. Another study by Oloko (1994) who compared the educational achievement of working and non-working children in Lagos discovered that working pupils performed consistently and significantly worse than non-working pupils.

Observations in Ekiti State also revealed that some children hawk very early in the morning before going to school and on market days some either absent themselves so as to sell some items in the market or come late to school. They sometimes dodge into the school compound after the morning market sales. After the closing of the school, some are back to the street and market hawking, only to get back home at the late hours. Some of these children are often used as house helps, sales boy/girl or even conductors of vehicles assisting the driver to collect money from passengers. As a result of all these observations and discoveries it is the concern of the researcher to investigate the practices of this phenomenon in Ekiti State in Nigeria which is a real problem for school Administrators. The researchers intend to investigate the perception of parents in the state about child labour practices. The study found out the existence of child labour in the state, to establish the difference in the

practice among male and female parents, marital status of parents, employment status and the influence of religion affiliation in the practice.

The following research hypotheses were raised for the purpose of the study.

- (1) There is no significant difference in the practice of child labour between male and female parents in Ekiti State.
- (2) There is no significant difference in the practice of child labour on the basis of parents' marital status.
- (3) Types of job will not significantly differentiate parents practices of child labour.
- (4) Religious affiliations will not significantly differentiate parents practices of child labour.

2. Methods:

The study was a descriptive research design of the survey type. The design enables the use of information obtained from a sample of population to describe situations as they exist. The population for the study consisted of all the parents in Ekiti State. The sample for the study was selected using a multistage sampling technique. The first stage was to select two out of the three senatorial districts in the state. Five local governments were selected from the two senatorial districts two towns were selected in each local government and forty parents were selected in each town making a total of 400 parents in all. A self designed questionnaire titled "Practices of Child Labour" (PCLQ) was used for the collection of data for the study. The questionnaire consisted of two sections. A and B. Section A deals with the bio data of the respondents such as sex, religion, employment status and religion. Section B contained 22 items eliciting information on practices of child Labour. The validity and reliability of the instrument were ensured. The instrument was judged to have face and content validities by experts. Test re-test method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and the result revealed 0.84 at 0.05 level of significance. The shows that the instrument was high enough and reliable to be used for the study.

The instrument was personally administered to the participants by this researcher. Explanations were given to the respondents on how to respond to their feelings and experiences. The respondents were urged to respond without interference, fear, threat or intimidation. The completed questionnaires were collected from the subject immediately after completion for analysis. The data collected were analyzed using One Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t – test. Hypotheses 2, 3 and 4 were tested using one way ANOVA and t – test analysis was used for testing hypotheses 1. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Question One: To what extent is child labour practiced among parents in Ekiti State?

Types of child labour	N	Practice		Non-Practice	
		F	%	F	%
Economic Sector	140	80	57	60	43
Industrial Sector	110	65	59	45	41
Domestic Sector	154	100	67	50	33

The result in table above revealed that 80 respondents representing 57% indicate in economic sector that they practice child labour, while 60 respondents representing 43% said that they did not involve in the practice. 65 respondents representing 59% in industrial sector admitted that they practice child labour while 45 respondents representing 41% admitted that they did not practice it. 100 parents representing 67% in domestic sector agree that they practice child labour while 50 representing 33% disagree.

Therefore there is existence of child labour practice among parents in Ekiti State and it is prevalent in domestic sector than other sectors.

3. RESULTS:

Ho1 There is no significant difference in the practice of child labour among male and female parents in Ekiti State.

Table 1: Summary of paired t – test showing the significant difference in the practice of child labour among male and female parents in Ekiti State.

Source	N	Mean	SD	df	t - cal	t- table	Result
Male	191	2.66	1.073	398	19.97	1.96	Significant
Female	209	2.86	1.020				

P<0.05

Table I revealed t – calculated as 19.97 at df = 398, t – value was found to be 1.96. It implies that t – calculated is greater than the corresponding t – value at 0.05 significant level. This implies that there is significant

difference in the practice of Child Labour among male and female parents in Ekiti State. Hence the hypothesis was not accepted.

Ho2: There is no significant difference in parent's practice of Child Labour on the basis of their marital status.

Table 2: Summary of One – way ANOVA showing significant difference in the practice of Child Labour among parents in Ekiti State by marital status.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MSS	f - cal	t- table	Result
Between Groups	7.336	2	3.668			Significant
Within Groups	339.504	397	1.006	3.645*	3.00	
Total	406.840	399				

P<0.05

It is evident from table 2 above that the F calculated was 3.645 while the table value was 3.00 at 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis was rejected thus there is significant difference between parents practice of child labour based on their marital status. The location of the significant difference is shown by the post – hoc analysis in table 3.

Table 3 Post – hoc analysis showing parents practices of child labour based on their marital status.

Source of Variation	Mean	Group 1 window	Group 2 Divorced	Group 3 Married
Widow	2.00			*
Divorced/separated	2.80			
Married	2.21		*	

*P <0.05 (significant result)

The above table shows that there is significant difference in the practice of child Labour among parents based on their marital status. This result implies that the hypothesis is rejected.

Ho3: Types of job will not significantly differentiate parent's practices of child labour.

Table 4: ANOVA Summary on practice of child labour showing whether type of job will significant differentiates parents Practice of child Labour in Ekiti State.

Source of Variation	SS	df	MSS	F –cal	F -table	Result
Between Groups	17.490	3	5.830			Significant
					3.00	
Within Groups	396.950	396	.987	5.90*		
Total	408.440	399				

*P <0.05 (significant result)

The table shows that F – calculated is 5.90 while its corresponding table value of 0.05 level is 3.00 since the calculated value is greater than the table value, then the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore there is a significant difference in the practice of child labour among parents in Ekiti State based on type of job.

Table 5. Post Hoc Analysis showing parents practices of child labour based on the types of job.

Source of variation	Mean	Group 1 Self Employed	Group 2 unemployed	Group 3 Private Establishment	Group 4 Government Establishment
Self employed	2.50			*	
Unemployed	2.45			*	
Private employed	3.06	*	*		
Government employed	2.83		*		

*P <0.05 (significant result)

The table shows that there exists significant difference between private establishment and the self-employed those in Government establishment and unemployed. This implies that there is a significant difference in the parents practice of child labour based on their employment status. The hypothesis is hereby rejected.

Ho4: Religions Affiliation will not significantly differentiate parent's practice of Child Labour in Ekiti State.

Table 6. Summary of one way ANOVA Showing whether religious affiliations significantly differentiate parents

practice of Child Labour in Ekiti State.

Source of Variation	SS	Df	MSS	F –cal	F -table	Result
Between Groups	1.724	3	0.575	0.553	3.00	Not
Within Groups	411.836	396	1.040			Significant
Total	413.560	399				

P>0.05

Table 6 shows that the F calculated value of 0.553 is lesser than the F – table value of 3.00. This shows that religious affiliation will not significantly differentiate parent’s practice of Child labour. Therefore the null hypothesis is hereby accepted.

4. Discussion

The findings revealed that there is child labour practice among parents in Ekiti State and that it is more prevalent in the domestic sector in the State. This finding could be because most parents are civil servants especially women who needed somebody to take care of their children and homes while they are away to work. It may also be as a result of some female parents who would not be able to cope with heavy duties at home, except they get the assistance of someone else as such seek for assistant of a young person as house help. Invariably child labour is being practiced.

The study revealed that there is difference in the practice of child labour by male and female parents. It is discovered that child labour is more rampant among female than male parents. It is believed that women are saddled with the responsibility of caring, clothing and providing some essential needs of the children. The burden been carried by these women are so much that they often need the assistance of their children. Such women involve their children below 15years of age in hazardous works. They sometimes give the children out as domestic servant and collect money, or allow them to hawk different kinds of goods before going to school in the morning. This study negate the finding of Okunlola (2003) who said that there was no significant difference in the practice of child labour among male and female parents. Besides, female parents make use of the children as house helps or assistance at home especially in house-hold duties.

The study also found that there is no difference in the practice of child labour among parents based on their marital status. The practice of child labour depend on whether the parents are married, divorced/separated or widow. Child labour is found to be mostly practiced among divorced parents than widow and married in the study. This may be due to the fact that married parents would support each other in the child’s upbringing and up keep but the divorced or separated may not have any help other than to involve their children in labour, to earn more money for the family. The finding supports the study of Odusanya (2000) who discovered that 62% of children involved in child labour are from divorce parents.

There is difference between the practices of child labour among parents based on type of job they do. The parents involved are either in government establishment, self employed, private establishment or unemployed. The type of job and the income parents earn have influence on the practice of child labour. The finding supports Siddiq (2000) who stressed that poverty reinforced the need for children to work since parents cannot afford to cater for them.

The study further discovered that there is no difference in the way parents of different religions practice child labour. The religious referred to here are Christianity, Islam and traditional. This implies that parents whatever their religion get involved in the practice of child labour. The study is however supported by Oloko (2002) who reported that there is no disparity in parents practice of child labour irrespective of their religion.

5. Implications for School Administrators

The study has implication for school administrators and the educational system in general. The practice can deny children educational opportunities and remain illiterates forever if efforts are not made to curb the menace. This can also lead to truancy and failure by the pupils who attend school and still hawk. The practice can erode the promising future of the students. The school administrators should therefore implore various organizations like the media, religious bodies, non-governmental organizations and others to campaign against the practice of child labour. There should be periodic counseling of students by school administrators against their use for labour rather they should face their studies for better school outcomes. School administrators should orientate students and parents to face their studies and reduce truancy. The Parents Teachers Association is to ensure compliance and support school administrators by parents in Ekiti State. The school administrators should ensure good community relationship for understanding the need in curbing this social menace. There should be proper supervision of teachers and students by school administrators most especially in the area of attendance throughout the day in the school. There should be proper monitoring of students by the administrators especially on market days.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed the existence of child labour practice among parents in Ekiti State. Female parents are found to be more involved than male. There is difference in the practice among parents of different marital status and employment but no disparity is found in the practice among different religious groups. It is thereby recommended that parents should be economically empowered to reduce poverty and the urge to involve children in labour. Corporate bodies, non-governmental agencies, individuals and government should encourage schooling by giving scholarship to children from poor backgrounds; subsidize their school fees and other related expenses. The government should try to make school fees affordable as much as possible at all levels; this would discourage children from working at the expense of schooling. School administrators should counsel parents and encourage them on the need to send their children to school rather than use them for labour.

Educational planning and programming officer should pay special attention to possible mechanisms for diminishing the negative consequences of child labour with respect to educational access and learning achievement. There must be a strong legislation against all forms of child labour. The police should be empowered to arrest underage children hawking in the street as it is been done in civilized nations and in fact all existing laws on child labour should be enforced by relevant agencies with a view to reducing incidence of child labour in our streets. Relevant educational materials should be provided for pupils to aid their educational pursuit and also helping in reducing the burden on their parents.

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