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Educated Parents' Practice of Child Labour in Ekiti State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Child labour has been observed to be a common practice among illiterates due to poor socio-economic background. Some parents and guardians keep their children in child labour in order to supplement family income. Educated parents who should know the risks involved and enlighten the illiterate parents seem to engage children in hazardous work that directly endangers their health and moral development. This paper examined educated parents' practice of child labour in Ekiti state. Descriptive survey research design was adopted with a sample of 600 educated parents selected among civil servants working in Local Government Secretariats through multi stage sampling procedure. One research question and three hypotheses were generated for the study. A questionnaire tagged "Educated Parents' Practice of Child Labour Questionnaire (EPPCLQ)" was used to collect data. The instrument was subjected to screening by experts to ensure validity and reliability was determined through test re-test method that yielded 0.85 reliability coefficients. The study revealed that level of child labour practice among educated parents was moderate, practice of child labour differed based on gender and location of educated parents while the study found no significant difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on income. Based on this, it was recommended among others that parents should desist from engaging children in child labour which has been found to be

injurious and detrimental to their health and moral development and families need to look for other means of sourcing for income in order to fight poverty and discourage the practice.

Keywords: Educated parents, Child labour, Practice, Child work, Poverty

Introduction

Family was the first institution founded by God for the purpose of procreation. Within the family, children are subjected to diverse standards, manners and tasks. They are surrounded with care, affection, fondness, suitable regulation and supervision by immediate and extended members of the family. Children contribute to the family circle tasks like plates washing, running errands, care taking of the young ones and assisting parents in other menial home tasks. This is direct child work willingly done at the level of the family by nearly all children under supervision to get them ready for the task of an adult which does not denote unfair treatment. According to Hesketh, Gamlin, Ong, and Camacho (2012), the domestic work of the child is habitually established in the societies where it subsists, and it is usually sighted as a secure kind of service. Child work is an essential part of responsibilities and training which a child must undergo to make him or her fit into the society (Filani, 2018; Nkok and Chukelu, 2019). Traditionally, most of the works carried out by children were of immense benefit to them as such works were done under the guidance of parents or senior members of the family. As children do the work, they have sense of responsibility, take pride in doing most of it to help family survival and such works promote easy progression from childhood to adulthood.

Owing to transformations in financial chances of diverse countries, peoples' ways of life changed and children found themselves being involved in diverse hazardous jobs. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2014) provided some indices that can be used to measure child engagement in labour. They are children that work at premature age; engaging children in labour that upshot in extreme bodily, communal tensions and do not ease the mental growth of the imaginative aptitude of the child; inducing children to expend lots of hours on work resulting to undue exhaustion; and denying children of their rights. International Labour Organisation (ILO, 2013) acknowledged quantity of risks to which child household workers are chiefly susceptible. A number of the most general hazards children confront in household service consists of extensive and exhausting days of working, haulage of weighty loads, dodgy items' handling, for instance axes, cutlass, knives and hot pans; inadequate or too little food and room, mortifying, callous or demeaning conduct as well as substantial and spoken aggression, and sexual exploitation.

Child labour is work that is unfair, detrimental to the corporeal, communal, ethical and psychological advancement of the child. In the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2017), child labour entails work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and deprives them of opportunities for schooling and development. UNICEF (2021) declared that at the beginning of 2020, roughly 160 million children were subjected to child labour globally. Almost half of them were in hazardous work that directly endangers their health and moral development. The Agency Report (2018) pointed out that 50 percent of Nigerian children engage in child labour. The overall survey showed that 50.8 percent of Nigerian children between ages five and 17 are involved in child labour. Obiejesi (2018) reported that in the 2017 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey carried out by the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS), Southwest Nigeria has 38percent of their children involved in child labour. 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. After school, some go back to the street and market hawking and get back home at late hours. Some of these children are used as house helps and sales boy/girl. Child labour seems to be a common practice among illiterates due to poor socio-economic background. Parents and guardians make the preference of keeping their children in child labour in order to supplement the revenue of the family owing to the limitation experienced in gathering needs. These jobs include being street vendors, beggars, car washers or watchers and shoe shiners. Others work as apprentice to mechanics, hairdressers and bus conductors while a large number work as domestic servants and farm hands. Elegbeleye and Olasupo (2012) described indices of child labour in Nigeria to include street vending, street begging, shoe shining, car washing, bus conducting, phone call hawking, domestic servants and child prostituting.

The problem of child labour seems to have become prominent and the high rate of this practice is very disturbing even among educated parents who should know the risks involved. Child labour can result in extreme bodily and mental harm, and even death. It can lead to slavery and or economic exploitation. In nearly every case, it cuts children off from schooling and health care, restricting their fundamental rights and threatening their future (UNICEF, 2021). Omokhodion and Uchendu (2009) suggested measures to control child labour as addressing the issue of household poverty, public enlightenment about the ills of child labour and free education up to junior secondary level. For children living in poverty, UNICEF (2004) recommended that government should define and measure child poverty, ensure that povertyreduction strategies focus on fulfilling children's rights, expand basic social and education services and ensure universal access, mobilise

stakeholders towards meeting MDGs, promote the family, eliminate gender discrimination, and encourage local community participation.

In recent times, it appears educated parents also involve children in child labour to please their self-centeredness as poor and illiterate parents seem not to hesitate in releasing their wards to be family servants to learned parents. Parents who are well educated hardly engage their children in child labour, neither do they engage them in activities that deprive them of their rights. Owing to selfish interest, they seem to prefer to enslave children of the poor, illiterate and ignorant parents. UNICEF (2021) gave reasons children may be driven into work such as when families face financial challenges or uncertainty-whether due to poverty, sudden illness of a caregiver or job loss of a primary wage earner. According to ILO experts, the main reasons for the emergence of child labour in bigger cities are unhealthy family life and economic deprivation. Another important cause mentioned by the experts is the overall social and economic situation in the country.

Educated parents in this research are parents who have secondary school certificate as minimum qualification. A child is a person below 18 years of age in Nigeria. Some educated parents appear to violate the rights of children by employing them to join the labour force at a tender age, compelling them to work, burdening them with responsibilities that are beyond their capacity, denying them adequate rest, food, education and medical care. Such educated parents seem not to have adequate knowledge of child labour which might have influenced their practice. Their attitude can be attributed to shallow knowledge and inability to differentiate between child labour and child work. They seem to believe that work done by children is an avenue to provide additional income for the family. Educated parents who are supposed to enlighten illiterates on problems associated with child labour have been observed to be engaging in the practice which may be more dangerous to the child and the society. Adebayo and Olaogun (2019) opined that some educated parents do not understand what constitutes child labour. Some see child labour as traditional norm for children to work while some see it as a training ground for children and do not mind the effects it can have on their psychological, emotional and intellectual growth.

In Adegun (2013), it was declared that parents who maintained positive views about the value of education and who hold high academic qualifications are not likely to involve their children in child labour. This submission does not imply that educated parents do not engage other peoples' children in child labour. Owoyomi (2018) found a significant relationship between parental educational status and occurrence of child labour in Lagos metropolis. Owoyomi added that there is an association between socio-economic incidence of child labour as well as years of education of parent. Hence, participation of children in paid employment is high where parents'

educational level is low and the rate of participation reduces as the educational status of the parent improves. Owoyomi's submission presupposes that rate of participation in child labour among parents with high educational qualifications is lower than that of parents with low level of education. These two authors do not totally absolve educated parents from child labour practice. Some factors such as gender, location and income were considered in this study to determine their influence on educated parents' practice of child labour. The role of female parents in the development of any child cannot be underplayed. They are the pillars of support, guidance, and love. Involvement of children in child labour arose from the need to supplement family income. In a study conducted by Omokhodion and Uchendu (2010) in Ibadan, Southwest Nigeria, the result showed that 39 percent of parents indicated that they thought their school-aged children should work; more women than men, those from polygamous homes and those with lower educational status held the view. This implies that women with low educational status agreed that children must work to supplement family income. Adegun (2013) in another study confirmed the existence of child labour practice in Ekiti 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. Adebayo and Olaogun (2019) claimed that female being the household head might lead to different outcomes than male being the household head because preferences of a female and male are normally different. Adebayo and Olaogun (2019) opined that female parents in African countries seem to involve their children more in child labour due to factors like poverty, support for the family and raising money for children education. Female parents have a higher chance of involving children in child labour because they are more attached to them, they spend more on the family, they keep and maintain the house and they engage in petty trading.

Child labour practice is possibly motivated by the vicinity in which the parents live or where the home is located. Adebayo (2012) explained that the bases for difference in child labour practices could be as an outcome of geographical location of parents or guardian, income and available resources. As a result of privilege or richness, persons from urban areas effortlessly induce pitiable parents from rural areas to release their children to them with a variety of guarantees of healthy existence and schooling. Unknown to the parents, these children often become house aid in cities that are very far from home. Hoyano and Keenan (2007) declared that parents in rural areas involved their children in child labour practices than those in urban areas. According to Tauson (2009), parents in rural areas desire their children to work since they deem it helpful for them as they learn work dexterities. Etim and Udofia (2013) documented that poverty in Nigeria is fundamentally a rural occurrence as the majority of the insolvent inhabitants (about 70 percent) live in rural

areas where they get their source of revenue from farming. Farmers involve their children in marketing of the products of the farm and vital merchandise in market places. Children in rural areas are likely to be engaged in farm works that are not commensurate with their age and are hazardous to their wellbeing. Odey and Sambe (2018) in a research carried out in Cross River State in Nigeria stated that people engaging children as child labourers in urban areas are mostly business owners/operators while parents engage children as child labourers in rural areas. Child labourers work to earn money in urban areas. In rural areas, they do not expect payment for service rendered. The study of Adeoluwa and Francis (2020) revealed a significant difference in parents' attitude towards child labour practices based on their location; parents from urban areas have negative attitude towards child labour practice because they were educated, whereas parents from rural areas have positive attitude towards child labour practice because they were illiterate and poor. Inequality in parents' income is a factor that may influence prevalence of child labour. The household would not be proficient to live on the wages of the adult unaided if adult income is excessively low. Thus, households might be induced to propel their children to work consecutively so as to add their earnings to that of adults for the families to meet up with fundamental demands. Based on the conclusion by Kwankye, Nyarko and Tagoe (2007) parents with little or no earnings who cannot meet up with the family needs, compel their children into child labour to augment family income due to unemployment. Ayoade (2011) asserted that some parents who are eager to send their children to school might not be capable as a result of economic power shortage. Therefore, these children possibly will work to attain the instant and current necessities of their suffering families. Education and occupation of the parents are as well connected with the income of the family. Although, Alexander (2012) was of the view that those parents that are educated but with different income levels are not likely to involve their children in child labour practices, Elegbeleye and Olasupo (2012) revealed that a significant relationship exists between parental socio-economic status and child labour (parents of low income status showed significant high tendencies toward child labour practices than their high income counterparts). In another finding by the authors, the result obtained when the attitudes of low income parents and high income parents to child labour was compared shows that there was a significant difference in child labour practices to the advantage of high income parents who indulge their children less in the practice. This implies that parents with low revenue rank confirmed considerable high propensities toward child labour practices than their high earnings equivalents. Nweke and Owo (2014) concluded that there is a link between parents' marginal incomes as a result of employment status. In Adeoluwa and Francis (2020), significant difference was found

between the attitude towards child labour practices of low income parents and those who are high income earners.

According to Akpotor (2018), in a family living in the poverty threshold, parents tend to shift attention on children as major stakeholders or contributors to family income. Involvement of children in child labour has implications. Child labour is a symbol of displacement and disassociation of the family. Children wellbeing is harmfully influenced, as they are open to communal sickness and hazards. Children living in poverty face many deprivations to their human rights: survival, health and nutrition, education, participation, protection from harm, exploitation and discrimination. Moneva, Rozada and Sollano (2019) explicated that similar to every other parts of employment of the children, child labour in marketing and services in developing nations has an unhelpful impact on educational level accomplished, school turnout, scores, literacy, instructing time, and formation of general human assets.

It must be noted that most of the literature reviewed and available authors cited did not really work on educated parents. This is to reiterate that there seems to be scarce materials on practice of child labour among educated parents and this forms the gap which this study was set out to investigate. In view of the above, this research was conducted to examine the practice of child labour among educated parents in Ekiti state, Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine:

- i. level of child labour practice among educated parents in Ekiti State, Nigeria;
- ii. difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on gender;
- iii. difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on location;
- iv. difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on income.

Research Questions

This research question was raised to guide the study:

1. What is the level of educated parents' practice of child labour in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were generated for this study:

1. There is no significant gender difference in educated parents' practice of child labour.

2. There is no significant difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on location.
3. There is no significant difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on income.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design was employed for this study. The design was deemed suitable for the study because it allowed analysis, interpretation, and stating the relationships that exist amid the variables emphatically. Population contained 11,078 parents who are civil servants working in Local Government Secretariats with Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE) as minimum qualification. The sample consisted of 600 educated parents selected through multi stage sampling procedure. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 100 civil servants working in the six selected Local Government Secretariats with Senior Secondary School Certificate (SSCE) as minimum qualification.

A questionnaire tagged "Practice of Child Labour Questionnaire (PCLQ)" was used to collect data with a Likert type rating scale worded Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). The instrument was subjected to screening by experts in Social Studies and Tests and Measurement to ensure its validity. Reliability was determined through test-retest method that yielded 0.849 reliability coefficients after pilot study was carried out and the instrument was administered twice on selected respondents outside the sample using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Statistics for analysis. The instrument was administered and data collected were analyzed employing descriptive statistics such as frequency count, percentages, mean and standard deviation for research question and inferential statistics for hypotheses. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using t-test, hypothesis 3 was tested with Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question: What is the level of educated parents' practice of child labour in Ekiti State, Nigeria?

Table 1. Level of educated parents' practice of child labour

Levels of Practice	No of Respondents	Percentage
Low (15.00 – 20.23)	209	34.83
Moderate (20.24 – 33.32)	305	50.83
High (33.33 – 60.00)	86	14.33
Total	600	100

Table 1 shows the level of educated parents' practice of child labour in Ekiti State. The result confirms that out of 600 respondents, 209 of the respondents representing 34.83 percent had low level of child labour practice. Those who had moderate level of practice were 305 respondents representing 50.83 percent while 86 respondents representing 14.33 percent had high level of child labour practice. This shows that the level of practice of child labour among educated parents was moderate.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on gender.

Table 2. Gender difference in educated parents' practice of child labour

Variations	N	Mean	SD	df	tcal	P
Male	345	26.37	6.06	598	1.998*	0.040
Female	255	27.35	7.13			

*P<0.05

Table 2 reveals that the t-cal value of 1.998 was significant because the P value (0.040) < 0.05. The null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there was significant difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on gender. The mean difference was 0.98 in favour of female educated parents. This implies that female educated parents practiced child labour than their male counterparts.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on location

Table 3. Location difference in educated parents' practice of child labour

Variations	N	Mean	SD	df	tcal	P
Rural	360	27.73	6.86	598	2.153*	0.032
Urban	240	26.40	6.06			

*P<0.05

Table 3 shows that the t-cal value of 2.153 was significant because the P value (0.032) < 0.05. This implies that null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, there was significant difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based in rural and urban centres. The mean difference was 1.33 in favour of educated parents in the rural areas. The implication of this finding is that educated parents in rural areas practiced child labour than their counterparts in the urban centres.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in educated parents’ practice of child labour based on income

Table 4. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on difference in educated parents’ practice of child labour based on income

Groups	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	18.828	3	6.276		
Within Groups	25689.571	596	43.103	0.146	0.932
Total	25708.398	599			

P>0.05

The result presented in Table 4 reveals that F-cal value of 0.146 was not significant because the P value (0.932) > 0.05 level of significance. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. This denotes that there was no significant difference in educated parents’ practice of child labour based on income.

Discussion

The study revealed that the level of educated parents’ practice of child labour was moderate. This implies that despite the level of education of some parents, they still indulge in the practice of child labour. This finding is in line with Owoyomi (2018) who declared that participation of children in paid employment is high where the level of education of the parent is low. Owoyomi reiterated that the rate of participation reduces as the educational status of the parent improves. While supporting this finding, Adegun (2013) concluded that parents who maintained positive views about the value of education and who hold high academic qualifications are not likely to involve their children in child labour. Adegun’s (2013) finding has the implication that parents who hold low academic qualification are likely to involve their children in child labour. The probable reason could be the economic situation and high unemployment rate in the country. The finding could be attributed to low revenue rank of the parents caused by low level of education as secondary school certificate was the benchmark used to measure education in this study. It could also be due to ignorance or parents’ low level of understanding of what constitutes child labour as described by Adebayo and Olaogun (2019) in their opinion that some educated parents do not understand what constitutes child labour as some see it as training ground for children and do not mind the effects it can have on their psychological, emotional and intellectual growth. The study further revealed that there was significant difference in educated parents’ practice of child labour based on gender. The mean difference was in favour of female educated parents. This finding implies that female educated parents practiced child labour than their male counterparts. This could be attributed to domestic roles assigned to women who are in charge of all activities in the house from house chores to sourcing for additional income to make ends meet. All these make women susceptible to engaging in child

labour practice. This finding is in agreement with Omokhodion and Uchendu (2010) who found that more women than men approve of child labour. The authors specifically found that women with low educational status agreed that children must work to supplement family income. It is also supported by Adegun (2013) and Nweke and Owo (2014) who found a significant difference in the practice of child labour by male and female parents. The finding is also in consonance with Adebayo and Olaogun (2019) who opined that female parents in African countries seem to involve their children more in child labour due to factors like poverty, support for the family and raising money for children education.

The study also revealed that there was significant difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on location. The mean difference was in favour of educated parents in the rural areas. The implication of this finding is that educated parents in rural areas practiced child labour than their counterparts in the urban centres. Educated parents from rural areas seem to engage more in the practice because they see it as a normal way of life. This finding is in support of Hoyano and Keenan (2007) who concluded that parents in rural areas involved their children in child labour practices than those in urban areas. According to Tauson (2009) in rural area; parents desired their children to work since they deem it helpful for them as they learn work dexterities. This finding is also in tandem with Adeoluwa and Francis (2020); they revealed a significant difference in parents' attitude towards child labour practices based on their location; parents from urban areas have negative attitude towards child labour practice because they were educated, whereas parents from rural areas have positive attitude towards child labour practice because they were illiterate and poor. This finding could be attributed to the economic situation of the country that has led many into abject poverty. It could also be due to farming activities which forms the main occupation of people in rural areas where they see child labour as compulsory assistance children must render to parents. No wonder Etim and Udofia (2013) documented that poverty in Nigeria is fundamentally a rural occurrence as the majority of the insolvent inhabitants (about 70 percent) live in rural areas where they get their source of revenue from farming and involve their children in marketing of the products of the farm and vital merchandise in market places.

The study showed that there was no significant difference in educated parents' practice of child labour based on income. This finding contradicts Alexander (2012) who found that educated parents with different income levels are not likely to involve their children in child labour practices. This finding also disagrees with Adegun (2013) who declared that parents who maintained positive views about the value of education and who hold high academic qualifications are not likely to involve their children in child labour.

The fact that they do not engage their children in child labour does not absolve them from using other peoples' children for labour. Owoyomi (2018) found that a significant relationship exist between parental educational status and occurrence of child labour in Lagos metropolis. Findings of these authors can be attributed to their submissions based on the fact that highly educated people do not engage their own children in child labour whereas they employ children of the poor and people with low education to serve as domestic workers such as cleaner, house maid among others. This finding implies that educated parents practice child labour irrespective of income level whether high or low.

Conclusion

Sequel to the findings of this study, it was concluded that level of practice of child labour among educated parents in Ekiti state was moderate. It was also concluded that practice of child labour differed based on gender and location of educated parents while the study found no significant difference in parents' practice of child labour based on income.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents should desist from engaging children in child labour which has been found to be injurious and detrimental to their health. When it becomes unavoidable, children must only be involved in child work that is proportionate with their age.
2. Educated parents in rural areas should desist from using children as farm labourers and releasing them to rich people who use them as house helps.
3. Educated parents need to fight poverty by improving their sources of income through legitimate means so as to discourage the practice.
4. Government should intensify efforts to enlighten parents on negative effects of child labour on the child and society.
5. Government should introduce economic empowerment programmes that will reduce poverty which forms the main cause of child labour practice among poor and lowly educated parents.

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