

EFFECTS OF CULTURE ON THE USE OF CHILD LABOUR IN COCOA PRODUCTION ACTIVITIES IN ONDO STATE, SOUTH WEST, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the effects of culture on the use of child labour in cocoa production activities in Ondo State, South West, Nigeria. Purposive sampling procedure was used to select 240 respondents, (120 adults, 120 children) while descriptive and inferential statistics was used for analysis. 47.5% were 36-54 years with 72% male, 80.8% married while 26.7% completed secondary school. Awareness of child labour was through International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour, International Organization programs and others. The believe that children are not exempted from working on cocoa farm (63.3%), engaging children at any time is not a taboo (66.7%), working on farm is a way of exposing children to practical skills for future inheritance (73.3%) and, children are to be brought up to face challenges hence, use of children for child labour is in line with culture (77.5%).

The study concluded that the awareness level of child labour is high but the culture still prevails. The study recommend that communities should be assisted by ILO, NGOs on alternative livelihood for increase in income and involvement in education of children in order to reduce generational poverty.

Keywords: Child Labour, Culture, Farmers, Cocoa, and Development

INTRODUCTION

Child labour is a state of depriving children of their rights and their rightful position in a family and also in the society widespread in many agricultural activities (NORC, 2020). According to Ashimolowo et al (2021) Children occupy a great position in the development of a society therefore, their welfare should be handled carefully. It is believed that relationship between

families and community enhances the developmental ability of children thereby producing a self-dependent children and responsible elders in future. (Fu-Sheng, Jianhong, & Gao, 2022). Emotional development is a function of family and school and this enhances global societal development (Aghaziarati & Nejatifar, 2023).

Child labour is any work that is greater than the ability of a child. It is any form of task that does not give children joy in the midst of friends. Any child below the age range of 18 years old involving in hazardous farming activities is into child labour. This can also be any work that is bigger than the age of a child. (ILO, 2022). It deprives a child from enjoyment and this prevents a smooth developmental process (mentally, morally and socially). Children whose parents are not financially buoyant are often slow in reading skills because school attendance has been disrupted by their parent through involvement of the children in activities that affects their development (Park, Mizunoya, Cappa, Cardoso, & De Hoop, 2020). Child labour enforces children to participate in activities that are stronger than their ability (Thevenon, 2019). According to Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (2024), the cases of child labour in the study area are as follows: Idanre -32%, Ifedore - 100% while Ileoluji/Okeigbo - 85% respectively.

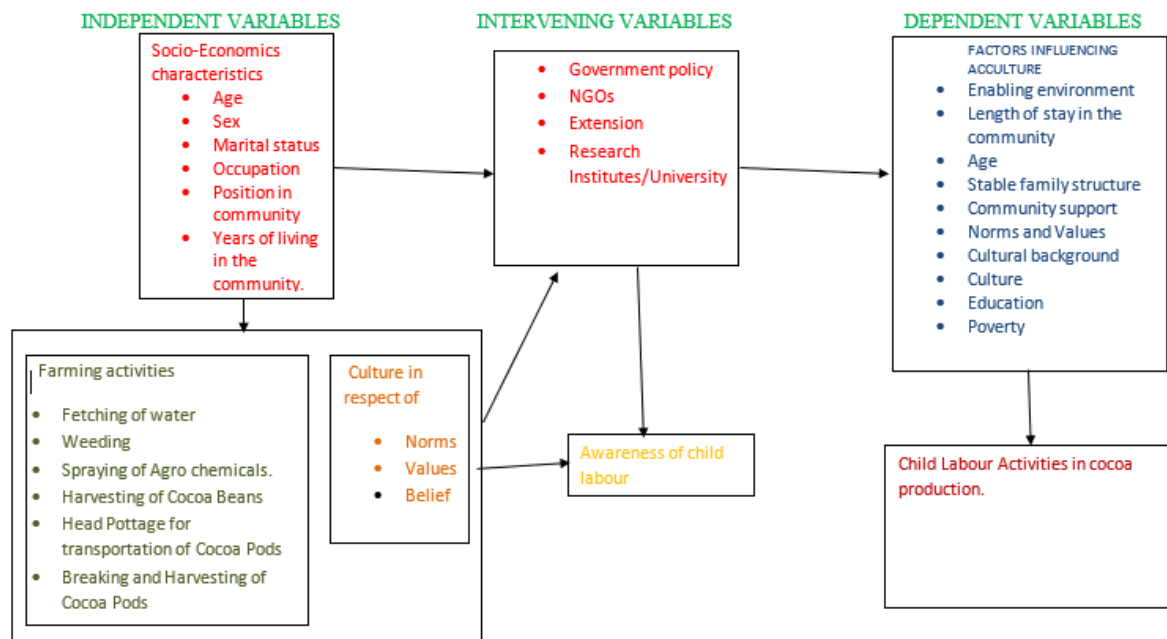


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Culture can be described as the believe of people, and their way of life. It also involves the language, arts and behavior of a society. The behavioral lifestyle of a community, way of eating, what they eat and worship in a specific community can also be termed culture. Culture of society

can be transferred from individual to individuals, from generation to generation and differs from society to society (Causadias, 2020; Novianti, Suarman, and Isalmi, 2023). The increasing level of children involvement in child labour has been a thing of concern and there has been increase in advocacy against it in order to promote the right of children in the society. (Okolocha, John-Akamelu, & Muogbo, 2020) The issue of emotional disturbance has been traced to involvement of underage in acquisition of skills beyond their ability. The culture of the people revealed that transportation of cocoa beans by children through head pottage is a way of building strong and hardworking children for the future this is in line with the study of Grinell, (2020) which says culture is concern with sustainable development for future enhancement. It is also believed that culture do not specify age of children who could work on cocoa farm this is in line with Tham-Agyekum et.al. (2023) which says children help parents with household duties like cooking and babysitting at home or on farm as a way to pass on skills from parents to children. He however concluded that some parents abuse this by involving minors on cocoa plantation for weeding, pruning plucking of pods and preparing cocoa beans for fermenting. The result of this emotional disturbance has been traced to affect children health but there is little or no consideration for the effect of culture on the involvement of children in skill acquisition. The study was conducted to show the farmers on the adverse effect of culture through child labour on children development and growth. This study will also enlighten farmers to know that children are the future hope of society hence they should be handled with ease. Given that there are many advocacies against child labour there remains a gap regarding the effect of societal culture on child labour. Thus, this study addresses the gap by investigating the effects of culture on child labour activities with focus on cocoa farmers in South-West Nigeria.

The study aimed to:

- i. Ascertain the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the selected communities
- ii. Identify the culture of the selected communities with relating to child's labour.
- iii. Examine the perceived effects of culture on child labour activities on Community Development.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Children involved in child labour faces an adulthood of unemployment and illiteracy since the act deprives them of education (Okpukpara & Odurukwe, 2003). The Labour ethnic support that such work deprives children of their childhood, potential and dignity; and is harmful for their physical and mental development shall be known as child labour (Mazhar, 2008). According to National Bureau of Statistic - Nigeria, (NBS, 2013), Ondo State ranks highest on the list of states designated as cocoa producing, contributing 24% of the country's overall output (National Bureau of Statistic

- Nigeria,) (NBS, 2013) (Fadipe, *et al.* 2022) while other states within the country, ranked in order of prominence, include Cross River, Osun, Ekiti, Oyo, Edo, Ogun, Delta, Abia and Akwa-Ibom.

METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in Ondo State, located in the South Western Nigeria. It was created in February 1976 from the former Western State. It has an estimated population of 4,671,695. It is bounded in the Northern part by Kwara and Kogi State, Western part by Osun and Ogun, Southern part by Bight of Benin of the Atlantic Ocean and Eastern part by Edo and Delta. The people are predominantly farmers cultivating food crops like Cassava, Yam & Maize and Tree crops like Cocoa. (Mkpada & Omowole, 2020) The state is predominantly Yoruba, and the state's economy is dominated by cocoa production, asphalt mining, and activities related to the state's extensive coastline. Location of Ondo State in Nigeria Coordinates is: 7°N5*05'E (Britannica, 2021)

Sampling Procedure and sample size

Multistage sampling procedure was employed for this study. The first step involves purposive sampling with selection of three (3) LGAs prominent in Cocoa production and child labour issue. The LGAs were Ifedore, Idanre and Okeigbo/Ileoluji. The second stage involve random sampling for selection of two communities each from the LGAs (Akinfiresoye *et al.* 2022). In Ifedore (Ikota & Ibule), Okeigbo/Ileoluji (Bamikemo Oja & Ologundudu) while in Idanre (Jigbokin & Oniyewu). Each community was divided into three (3) research wards of which two wards were randomly selected. From the selected wards, ten (10) households were selected and interviewed making twenty (20) households per community and forty (40) households per local government area (LGA). A total of one hundred and twenty (120) adults' respondents were interviewed for the study. Similarly, one hundred and twenty (120) children were also interviewed following the same procedure. A total sample size of two hundred and forty (240) respondents was interviewed for the study.

Method of data analysis

Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical tools. The descriptive statistics used includes frequency counts, percentage, mean statistics and charts while the inferential statistics includes chi square and Pearson Product moment correlation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

Table 1 shows the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. It was revealed that 57% of the respondents were within the age range of 37-54 years, with the mean age of 54, the shows that the farmers were predominantly youthful and productive. This suggests active participation in

farming activities. The study further revealed their gender distribution with 72% male and 28% female. This attributed to the physical demand nature of cocoa farming activity. Likewise, the data further shows educational attainment of the respondents with 26.7% completed secondary education, 17.4% had Tertiary education, 19.2% attempted secondary education. This implies that the formal education acquired by many of the respondents may be of benefit in acquiring new culture which can lead.

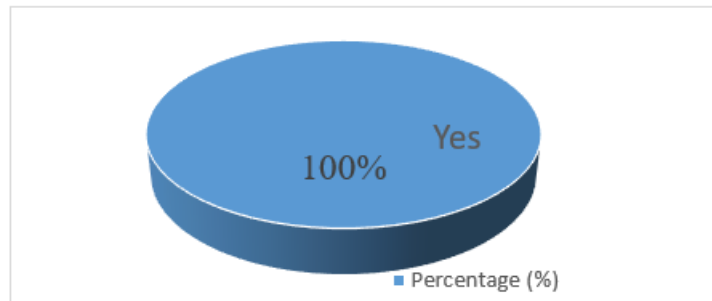
Table 1: Socio-economic Characteristics of the Respondents

	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Mean
Age (years)			
<18	5	4.2	
18 -36	20	16.7	
37 -54	57	47.5	54 years
55 -72	19	15.8	
Sex			
Male	86	72.0	
Female	34	28.0	
Level of Education			
No Formal Education	15	12.5	
Attempted Primary School	9	7.5	
Completed Primary School	20	16.7	
Attempted Secondary School	23	19.2	
Completed Secondary School	32	26.7	
Tertiary Education	21	17.4	

Source: Field survey, 2022

Awareness of Child Labour

All respondents were aware of child labour in the study area. During the FGD, the respondents reported that the awareness was from various programs organized in the communities by organizations such as ILO and developmental partners like PIND, Religious Organizations, and various groups in the communities.



Respondent's perception of culture on child labour

Table 2 shows respondents' perception of culture on child labour. The mean score of respondents that believe that the culture does not forbid children of any age from working on cocoa farm was 3.33, those that believe that there is no taboo on cultural factor against engaging children to work anytime during the day and at any age has a mean score of 3.47.

Their culture preaches hard work as a way of training of children and upbringing for future this has a mean score of 3.48, those that are of the believe that the act is a way of exposing children to practical skills and following footsteps of the parents for future inheritance has a mean score of 3.57 more also some of the respondents that says culture does not forbid female children from carrying out some activities on cocoa farms has a mean score of 3.58 finally those with the perception that children are to be brought up to face challenges and difficulties by tradition; use of children for the child labour is in line with this principle has a mean score of 3.64. This implies that the respondent's culture encourages the act. This is in line with Waziri, (2019) which says that cultural norms have great influence on child labour.

Table 2: Extent of awareness of the cultural factors as it affects child labour

Statement	Very much aware (4)	Much aware (3)	Aware (2)	Just aware (1)	Not aware (0)	Mean
Culture do not forbid children of any age from working on cocoa farm	76 (63.3)	19 (15.8)	17 (14.2)	5 (4.2)	3 (2.5)	3.33
There is no taboo on cultural factor against engaging children to work anytime during the day and at any age	80 (66.7)	25 (20.8)	10 (8.3)	1 (0.8)	4 (3.3)	3.47
Culture preaches hard work and so child labour is part of training as children upbringing for future	87 (72.5)	18 (15.0)	7 (5.8)	2 (1.7)	6 (5.0)	3.48
Child labour is a way of exposing children to practical skills and following footsteps of the parents for future inheritance	88 (73.3)	20 (16.7)	7 (5.8)	2 (1.7)	3 (2.5)	3.57
The culture does not forbid female children from carrying out some activities on cocoa farms	92 (76.7)	16 (13.3)	5 (4.2)	3 (2.5)	4 (3.3)	3.58
Children are to be brought up to face challenges and difficulties by tradition; use of children for child labour is in line with this principle	93 (77.5)	17 (14.2)	5 (4.2)	4 (3.3)	1 (0.8)	3.64

Source: Field survey, 2022 figure in parentheses represent percentage

Causes of child labour

Figure 1, reveals that 98.3% of respondents were of the opinion that use of children for the hazardous work was caused by poverty while 90% attributed the cause to low income, this variability tends to show that lack of basic human needs was what lead to use of children for the hazardous work. This agrees with (Ekpenyoung & Sibiri, 2011; Okojie & Effiong, 2014; Hassan *et al*,2020), (Okunlola, Fasina, Akinnagbe, & Odefadehan, Value Chain Analysis and Mapping of cocoa Sector in Ondo and Osun State, Nigeria, 2022) which explained that the increase in child labour is attributed to institutional collapse in modernization and globalization. It implies that poverty reduction interventions could reduce child labour.

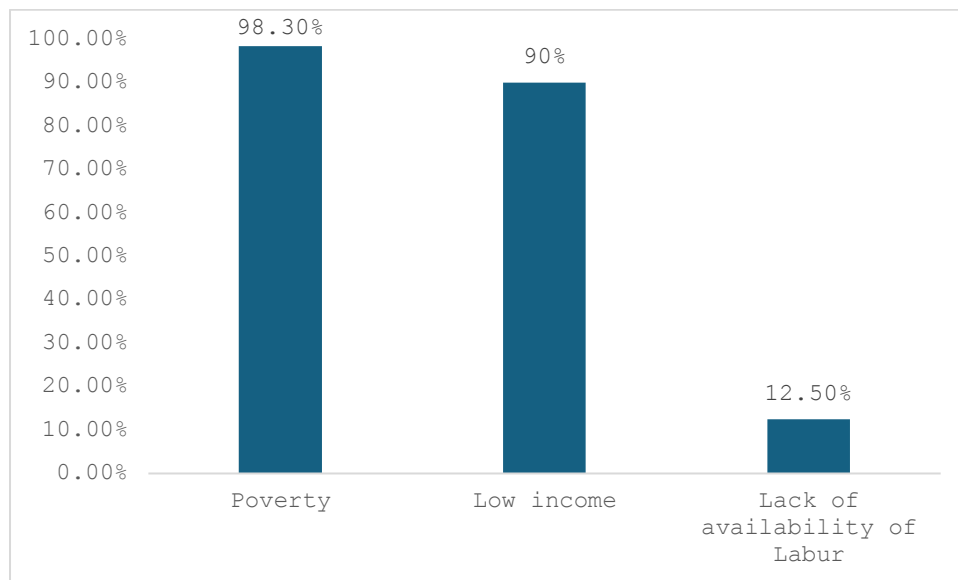


Figure 1: Causes of child labour (Multiple responses)

Source: Field survey, 2022

Perceived Causes and effects of Child labour

Table 3 shows that 98.3% of the respondents attributed the cause of child labour to poverty while 95.8% attributed this to low income. 97.5% supporting this notion that child labour affects their education, only 19.2% agreed that child labour affects their psychological well being because they are not allowed to play with their friends and relax. 90.8% of the respondents also revealed that child labour exposes them to health hazard. Climate change has caused environmental problem to the well-being of children thereby making them vulnerable individuals. Vulnerability is usually caused by child labour which exposes children to hard labour. The changes in climate further affect the growth and protection of children and this further exposes them to environmental hazard

(Proulx, Daelmans, Baltag, & Banati, 2024). This is because they use cutlass to weed and sharp objects to harvest.

Table 3: Awareness of on the causes of Child Labour and effects on Community Development

Causes of child labour	Yes	No
Poverty	118 (98.3)	2 (1.7)
Lack of availability of labour	95 (79.2)	25 (20.8)
Low income	115 (95.8)	5 (4.2)
Effects of child labour on children		
Affects their education	117 (97.5)	3 (2.5)
Affects them psychologically when not able to play with friends	23 (19.2)	97 (80.8)
Exposes them to health hazards	109 (90.8)	11 (9.2)
Affects their mental development	3 (2.5)	117 (97.5)

Source: Field survey, 2022

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The research shows that male was more involved in farm work than their female counterparts. This is because male has agility with regards to cocoa farming.

Farmers participating in cocoa farming are relatively active, matured and physically capable of performing rigorous farming activities of cocoa production with the married more active in farming than unmarried. This is because the married uses their family as labour which indicates cultivation of bigger farms.

Based on the findings of this study, the following are recommended to reduce or eradicate the effects of culture on child labour:

1. There is the need for advocacy among the farmers by ILO, Government and Civil Society Organizations to make the farmers understand the importance of children education. They are to be informed that education enhances decent wages that will help to reduce poverty from generation to generation.
2. Community leaders are to be educated and trained by relevant Government agencies, Development Partners and Civil Societies on limits of child work, ways to control and improve on child labour activities.
3. Farmers should be exposed to cosmopolitan areas through excursions, exchange visits and engagements with farmers and people living in semi urban and some urban communities so that they can understand level of involvement of Children in some of their activities.

Relevant government agencies, ILO and some development partners can assist with this.

4. The communities should be assisted by ILO, NGO's and Development Partners on alternative livelihoods they can embark on. This will increase their level of income and allow the children to go to schools.

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