

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOUR IN ANAMBRA STATE, NIGERIA

By

Onyemelukwe, S.O.* and Okewu, A.A.

Department of Geography,
Ahmadu Bello University Zaria,
Kaduna State-Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author's Email: Stanley_onyemelukwe@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This study assesses the socio-economic consequences of child labour in Anambra State, Nigeria. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 400 children aged between 04-17 years, who are involved in laborious activities in the study area. The data was obtained using a structured questionnaire and FGDs. The results indicated that child labour participation is slightly higher among the male children with 53% compared to their female counterparts with 47%, as well as higher (71%) among the older children aged between 11-17 year. The finding also revealed that quite a high percentage of the children are not attending any school as at the time of the study, with the female child labourers mostly affected (24.2%) compared to the males with 19.2%. Among those attending school (combining work with schooling), majority (40.3%) have witnessed grade/class repetition, followed by those with lowered class performance and lateness to school with 24.25 and 19.0% respectively. Regression analysis showed that child labourer's age, schooling status, frequency of job participation, condition of work, first age at start of work, health complications due to job participation and participation in social vices are significantly related to the hours of child's involvement in work and are all significant at 0.05 confidence level. Whereas child sex and type of work engaged in showed no statistical significant relationship to the hours the children spend at work. It is imperative that both government and non-governmental organisations be set up to critically assess, design, implement and monitor programmes that will help to mitigate child labour participation. As this will go a long way in ensuring that children are given every opportunity to fully develop their potentials so as to contribute their quotas as adults and leaders tomorrow.

Key words: Child, Health Complications, Labour, Social Vices

INTRODUCTION

According to UNICEF (2008) child labour is understood as encompassing monetary or non-monetary activities which are mentally or physically, morally or socially hazardous for children below 15 years. In other words, not all work carried out by children can be referred to as child labour. For instance, work can be a form of learning and self-expression as well as impetus for growth, but become dangerous when it turns into labour or becomes a demanding drudgery characterized by repetition, physical exertion, and with adverse impacts on the physical and mental welfare of the child. On the other hand, not all works can be classified as laborious, but depends

on child's age (much responsibility for his/her age), hours of exposure (above 40hrs/wk or 8hrs/d), unsafe working environment (dangerous or unhealthy) and at the expense of their schooling (UNICEF, 2006; United States Department of Labour, 2010).

Over the years, the incidence of the use of children for labour outside the homes has been on the increase in many parts of developing countries and regions across the world and Nigeria is not exempted. This use of children for labour outside the home has continued to change in form and character as many families see it as an intrinsic component for their survival (Okpukpara and Odurukwe, 2003). Over 4 million children in Nigeria are engaged in economic or labour activities, working long hours (average of 12 hours/daily) in poor and unhealthy conditions and receives token fee less than 1/3 of legislated minimum wage (Oloko, 2004). Also, Child labour in Nigeria is visibly high in those activities with a small economic return which requires considerable degree of itinerancy. As noted by International Labour Organisation (ILO) (1988), the economic reasons behind the use of children in labour is underlined by the fact that child labour invariably lowers cost on personnel and in a way also, contributes to unemployment and lower wages for the adult working population of a society.

In Anambra State like in many other States in Nigeria, this upsurge in the incidence of child labour has assumed an alarming proportion especially in the urban areas. This is largely attributed to the economic situation of the country, which has led to the involvement of the children as substantial contributors to their family's incomes by working as carriers in market places, street hawkers, workshop apprentices, domestic servants, motor park touts, and bus conductors in the urban centers (Okafor and Amayo, 2006; Folarin, 2009; Tade, 2010; Taiwo, 2010).

Blunch and Verner, (2000) argued that child labour income is a clear response to improving household living standards even if it is in a short run. On the other hand, child labour makes the household deeper below the poverty line by taking the child out of school (which is an important human capital accumulation) thereby making the child to contribute marginally in household income in long run as well as the society at large. This is because, these children may work to meet the immediate and present needs of their poverty stricken families, but they are compromising not only their future, but the collective future of the nation and will also grow up to become a burden, rather than asset, to the family, community and the nation at large. Socially, child labour has been found to have negative consequences on the child's educational development and performance which results in high prevalence of illiteracy, low school attendance and low enrolment (Hasan and Debnath, 2000).

Studies have shown that child labour participation have negatively the mental health development effects. For instance, children engaged in hazardous economic activities have been observed to suffer from oral abuse from their employers, consistent fear of job termination, low self-esteem, and a loss of imagination and future direction in life (Gulrajani, 1994; Hasan and Debnath, 2000). On the other hand, the economic consequences of child labour have been stressed by researchers such as; Brown (2001) who asserted that child participation in the labour force is negatively correlated with per capita GDP. Ranjan (2001) emphasised that reducing child labour, benefits the economy because child labourer is inefficient. Also, children are imperfect substitutes for adult workers, as children have less experience and are less capable of work than

adults. Furthermore, the availability of child labour encourages economic inefficiency by increasing the supply of low-skilled workers. Moreover, the extent of negative impact of child labour on future productivity of child labourers obviously depends on the degree in which work affected their school attendance, progress and their accumulation of working skills. Full-time jobs have the worst impact on children future productivity. Part-time jobs, especially those that are physically very demanding, also disrupt education since children are too tired to participate adequately at school activities or to study at home. Also the age of entry into the labour force is also important as the younger the child enters the labour force, the less human capital he/she will be able to accumulate necessary for their future earning capacity. Also children who entered younger into the labour force earn less on average than children who entered older (Swaminathan, 1998).

It is against this background that this study examines the socio-economic implications of child labour in Anambra State, Nigeria, with a view to unravelling the harmful effects of such activities on the health and wealth being of not only the children of today, but the future parents and leaders of tomorrow. Hence, to achieve this aim, the study assessed the socio-economic consequences of child labour and ascertained the specific possible impacts of child labour on the future workforce in the state.

THE STUDY AREA

Anambra State is located at the south-eastern geopolitical zone of Nigeria. It lies between Latitude 5°45" N - 6°45" N of the equator and Longitudes 7° 00" E – 7° 15" E of the Greenwich Meridian. The State derives its name from the Anambra River, the largest, most southerly, left bank tributary of the river Niger. The State has a total land area of 4,416 sq. km, and it is situated on a generally low elevation on the Eastern side of the river Niger, It is bounded by Delta State to the West, Kogi State to the North/Central part, Imo State to the South, Abia State to the South/East and Enugu State to the East. The State has 177 communities in 21 Local Government Areas. It comprises of three major towns namely, Awka, its capital city, the commercial town of Onitsha and the industrial city of Nnewi. (See Fig. 1.).

According to NPC (2006) report, Anambra State has a population of 4,182,032 made up of 2,007,391 males and 2,174,641 females, with a land area of 4,416 sq. km, giving an average density of 633 persons per sq. km. The state is, therefore, one of the most densely populated states in Nigeria, as well as the 9th most populous nationwide. The major socio-economic activities in the study area include agriculture, manufacturing and commerce. However, in recent times, urbanization has fairly contributed to population growth, immigration and migration, thereby resulting in the growth of many villages into towns. This phenomenon has led to the continued movement of rural dwellers into the urban areas in search of greener pasture thereby leaving only the aged men and women to farm; this is noticeable in Amesi, Akpo, and Achina towns in Aguata local government area. There is also relatively high concentration of trade/commercial activities, artisans and small scale manufacturing in most urban areas of the state.

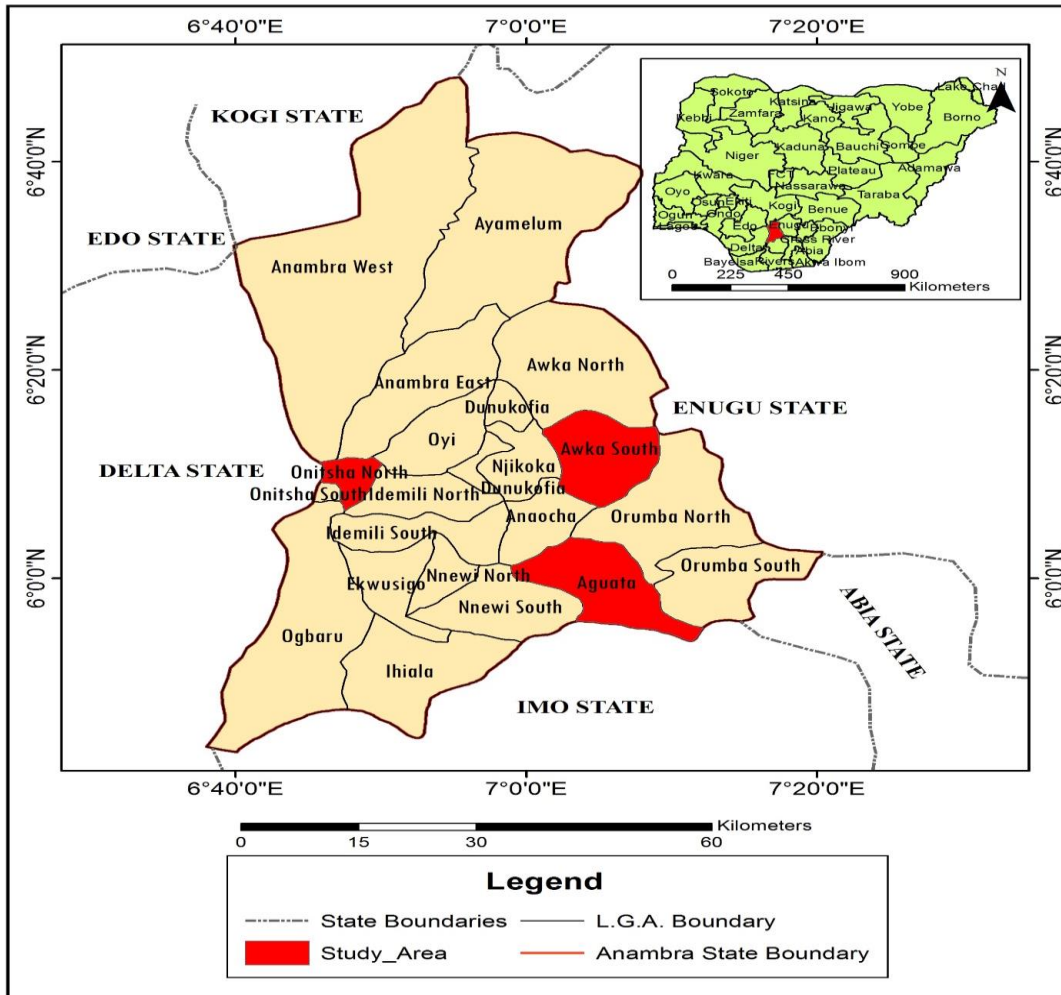


Figure 1: Anambra State Showing the study Areas
 Source: Modified from Administrative Map of Anambra State.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Primary and secondary data derived from structured questionnaire, focus Group Discussions and published/unpublished documents. The structured questionnaires was designed for the children between the ages of 4-17 years contained information such as; Child labourer’s sex, age, level of education attained, type of school, place of residence and the implications of residential area on their education, types of work engaged in, number of hours spent on work daily and daily earnings and its contribution to household income among others among others. The questionnaires were administered to the child labourers at their duty posts in the selected locations of the state were utilized in the study. A multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the sampled locations as well as the specific respondents for questionnaire administration. In the first stage, a systematic sampling technique was used to select the sampled Local Government Areas (LGAs) in the State. The selected LGAs represented the commercial, educational, administrative and residential attributes of the State. Secondly, purposive sampling technique was used to determine the actual settlement/towns from which respondents will be

sampled (See Table 1). To ensure a fair representation of the selected study areas, 1991 population was projected to 2013 using this formula;

$$P_n = P_o e^{rn}$$

Where: P_n = population in the latter period, P_o = population in the earlier period, n = time interval between the two period, r = rate of growth, e = exponential sign.

Table 1: Senatorial districts, selected LGAs, settlements/populations and the proportion of population sampled.

Senatorial Districts	Selected LGAs	Selected settlements in the LGAs.	1991 Pop Figures of selected settlements	Projected pop of the selected settlements.	Proportion of sampled pop.
Anambra North	Aguata	Achina	25,012	39,784	36
		Amaesi	10,835	17,234	15
		Igboukwu	46,943	74,667	68
		Nkpologu	10,360	16,478	15
		Umuelu	31,094	49,458	45
Anambra Central	Awka South	Amawbia	14,389	22,887	21
		Nbaukwu	14,617	23,250	21
		Okpuno	3,498	5,564	5
Anambra south	Onitsha North	Onitsha north	121,157	192,170	174
Grand total			281,504	442,032	400

Source: Modified from NPC (1991).

Finally, purposive sampling method was used to sample respondents at their duty posts within the sampled locations. Regression analysis was used to determine the basic relationship that exists between number of hours spent by children at work and their selected socio-economic variables. Whereas, cross tabulation of dependent variable of child sex, with independent variables of age, type of laborious work engaged in, educational status, social/mental and health challenges faced by the children were made.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socio-Demographic Backgrounds of Respondents

Sex of respondents

Table 2 shows the distribution of respondents by sex. A little over half of the working children (53%) are males as against the about 47% that are females, indicating a gender difference of 3.0%.

Table 2: Distribution of Working Children by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	212	53.0
Female	188	47.0
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

It may be possible to conclude that the reason for the prevalence of males over the females among child labourers may be attributed to the gender bias in the upbringing of children which is aimed at preparing the male child in small-scale economic trades as well as other business apprenticeship to boost family income as often practiced by low income households in the eastern part of Nigeria.

Age of respondents

Table 3 shows that Also, child labourers aged 11-17 years old represents the highest percentage of respondents with a total of 71% as compared to those between the ages of 4-10 years old that accounted for about 29% of the total sampled respondents.

Table 3: Distribution of Working Children by Age Group

Age	Frequency	Percentage
4-10	116	29.0
11-17	284	71.0
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

This signifies an age difference of 42% between the two age groups. This age group differences is relatively similar to the findings of Togunde (2008) in a study carried out in Abeokuta Capital of Ogun State Nigeria, where it was reported that the proportion of older children involved in child labour were higher than their younger counterparts.

Schooling status of respondents

Table 4 shows the distribution of respondents by schooling status. In all, about 57% of the respondents are attending one form of school or the other. This means that more than half of the sampled respondents are schooling and working.

Table 4: Distribution of Working Children by their Schooling Status

Schooling status	Frequency	Percentage
Schooling	226	56.5
Not Schooling	174	43.5
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

This finding is in keeping with the report by Omokhodion and Omokhodion (2004) who reported that child labourers in Ibadan area of Oyo State in Nigeria combine school and work together.

Similarly, results of surveys by the ILO (1996) in four developing countries found that two-thirds of children combined school with work. In addition, Table 4 also shows that about 44% of the respondents are not in school. By implication, this is a defeat to UNICEF's recommendation from the World Summit for Children held in Geneva Switzerland in 2001 which advocated for world's children access to basic education, hence sees education as a vital prerequisite for combating poverty, empowering women, protecting children from hazardous and exploitative labour and sexual exploitation, promoting human rights and democracy, protecting the environment and influencing population growth (UNICEF, 2001).

Family structure, type of household and size of household

Table 5 shows that about 60% of the children are from nuclear family representing about 238 out of 400 sampled respondents and 40.5% of the children are from extended family which represents 162 of the entire respondents. However, as shown in Table 5, the household type followed the expected trend of 66.5% in monogamous union as against 33.5% in polygamous union.

Table 5: Distribution of Respondent by Family Structure, Type of Household and Size of Household

Family Structure	Frequency	Percentage
Nuclear	238	59.0
Extended	162	40.0
Total	400	100.0
Type of Marital Union		
Monogamy	266	66.5
Polygamy	134	33.5
Total	400	100.0
Size of Household		
0-4	10	2.5
5-9	248	62.0
10+	142	35.5
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

The dominance of monogamous union in the study area cannot be said to be unconnected with the dominant religious belief in this part of the country (Christianity) which supports monogamy as against what is obtainable in most states especially in the northern and south-western part of the country where Islam is the dominant religion, hence encourages polygamous union. The household size on the other hand, is relatively large with the household size of 5-9 having the highest with a total of 62%, followed by 10 and above household size with about 36% and the least which is 0-4 which is slightly above 2% respectively. This agrees with the findings of Ugochukwu *et al.* (2012) and Le Roux (1996) wherein it was reported that majority of the child labourers are mostly from large families in their related study carried out in Anambra State, Nigeria and Pretoria, South Africa respectively.

State of origin

Table 6 shows the state of origin of the respondents. Majority of the respondents (42.5%) are indigenes of Anambra State, while 35.0% are from Ebonyi State and further slightly above 14% are from Enugu State.

Table 6: Distribution of Respondent by State of Origin

State of Origin	Frequency	Percentage
Anambra	170	42.5
Imo	16	4.0
Delta	16	4.0
Enugu	58	14.5
Ebonyi	140	35.0
Total	400	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

Also, it can be deduced that more than half of the children involved in one form of labourous activities in the state are non-indigenes of the state, This may be due to the fact that Anambra State is often times referred to as a strategic gateway for trade between the former eastern and western regions due to the presence of Onitsha international market, which attracts huge influx of immigrants (both young and old) from the surrounding cities/states into the city to engage themselves into one form of activities or the other.

Socio-Economic Consequences of Child Labour

Sex and schooling status of respondents

Figure 2 shows that males with approximately 34% outnumbered their female counterparts that constitute about 24% among child labourers who work and still attend school. Also, female child labourers with 24.2% outnumbered their male counterparts with 19.2% among those who are not attending any form of school as at the time of the study.

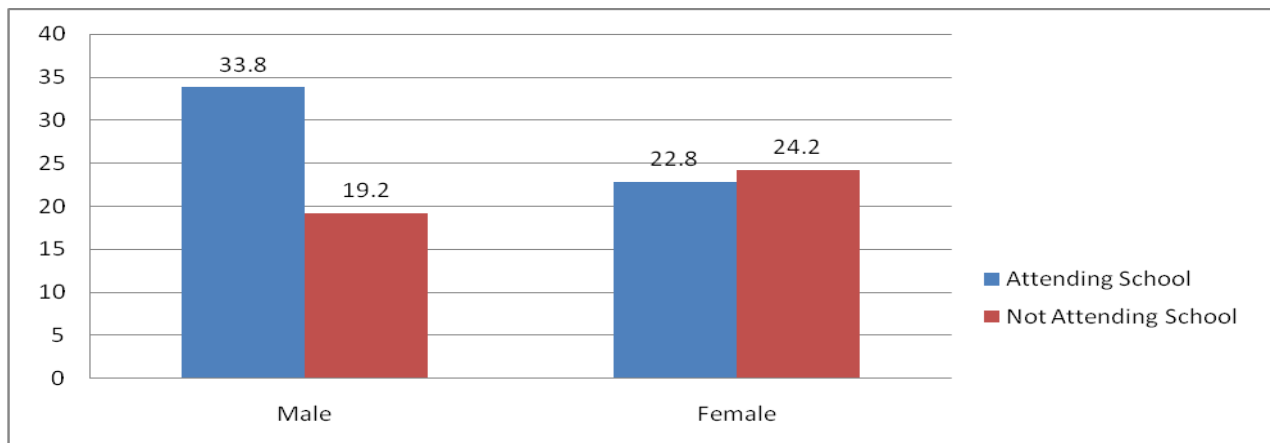


Figure 2: Distribution of Respondents by Gender and Schooling Status

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

Given this trend of gender variation in child labourer's educational status, the proportion of uneducated females will be higher in the near future in the study area compared to their male counterparts. This in turn could lead to gender imbalance on human capital formation in favour of male adults than their female counterparts; this is so as the negative impact of future productivity of child labourers obviously depends on the degree to which work affected their performance in school and the accumulation of working skills.

Sex and academic performance/attendance

Table 7 reveals that out of 400 sampled respondents, 226 are attending school and have experienced various forms of challenges in their academic performance as a result of their participation in paid jobs. Consequently, Table 7 shows that out of 226 children who combine work with school, more males that constitute a little less than 60% than females with a little above 40% have experienced negative effects in their academic performance as a result of participating in paid jobs.

Table 7: Distribution by Sex and Effects of Child Labour Participation on academic Performance of Respondents

Effects of Work on Educational Performance	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Reduced School Attendance	21	9.3	16	7.1	37	16.4
Grade Repetition	54	23.9	37	16.4	91	40.3
Lowered Class Performances	29	12.8	26	11.5	55	24.3
Increased Lateness To School	31	13.7	12	5.3	43	19.0
Total	135	59.7	91	40.3	226	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Most of the respondents (Males, 23.9% and Females, 16.4%) have experienced grade repetition in school due to participation in paid jobs, followed by those who have experienced lowered class performances with males accounting for 12.8% and females with 11.5% respectively. Also, more males with 13.7% than females with 5.3% have also experienced increased lateness to school from participating in paid jobs and lastly, males with 9.3% also outnumbered the females with 7.1% among those that have experienced reduced school attendance. Generally, the dominance of males over the females among the respondents that reported educational related challenges due to job participation may be due to the higher number of males among the respondents than their female counterparts. It may also be due to the fact that male labourers are more likely than their female counterparts to spend longer hours in paid jobs due to their masculine nature, which may in turn deprive them the opportunity to concentrate in their academic pursuits. This is supported by Galal (2003) and Yount (2004) who in their various studies noted that education outcomes are greatly affected by child labour. The researchers also noted that children who work are more likely to repeat grades, take time away from classes and homework, more tired than their peers and are unable to concentrate in school.

Relationship between Effects of Working Hours on Socio-Economic developmental aspects of Child labourers

The regression result presented in Table 8 indicates that of all the P-values variables included in the equation, X₁ (Age), X₃ (schooling status), X₅ (frequency of job participation), X₆ (condition of work), X₇ (first age at start of work), X₈ (health complications due to job participation) and X₉ (indulging in social vices) are significant and they are all significant at 0.05 confidence interval which signifies that any increase in X variables, will significantly affect the Y variable (hours spend at work) vice versa. Whereas, other X variables such as X₂ (Sex) and X₄ (type of work engaged in) are not significantly related to the Y variable (hours spend at work). However, the coefficient of child's sex and type of work engaged in both have negative relationship with the hours child labourer spends at work. This means that the lower the likelihood of child labourer being of the less employer's preferred choice of gender for a given type of job, the less the likelihood of such child working for longer hours for the employer. For instance, female child labourers who participate in street hawking may feel unsafe to hawk their wares through day till night because they are more vulnerable to sexual abuse than their male counterparts. Hence, may work for less number of hours than the males.

Finding on the relationship between the respondent's age (X₁) and the number of hours spent at work shows a significant value, which means that child labourer's age is a strong determinant of how much time such a child will spend at work. By implication, older children spend more time at work than their younger ones. The schooling status (X₃) reveals the existence of a significant relationship with Y variable. This means that the possibility of a child labourer attending any form of school depends largely on the number of hours such children spend at work. This is further buttressed in a report by ILO (2010) which noted that when children work for long hours, their ability to attend school or vocational training is limited, which in return prevents them from gaining education that could help lift them out of poverty.

Table 8: Relationship between Hours Spent at Work and the Effects on Respondent's Selected Variables

Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	Beta	T-Value	P-Value
(Constant)	2.946	.249		11.846	.000
Age X ₁	.163	.056	.146	2.922	.004**
Sex X ₂	-.069	.051	-.068	-1.345	.180
Schooling Status X ₃	.443	.067	.435	6.589	.000**
Type of Work Engaged in X ₄	-.001	.028	-.002	-.048	.962
Frequency of job participation X ₅	.072	.020	.185	3.627	.000**
Condition of work X ₆	.066	.029	.164	2.281	.023**
First age at Start of Work X ₇	-.094	.043	-.105	-2.209	.028**
Health Complications due to job Participation X ₈	-.124	.039	-.173	-3.217	.001**
Participation in Social Vices X ₉	.063	.029	.104	2.150	.032**

Number of Observations = 9; R Squared = .222; Adjusted R Squared = .202; F- statistic = 11.112; ** Significant at 0.05 probability level.

Field Survey, 2013

Frequency of job participation (X_5) and condition of work (X_6) are both statistically significant to the hours child labourers spend at work. This implies that children who participate on labourious activities frequently and on full time basis will likely spend more time at work, with the negative consequences on school attendance undoubtedly more compared to those who work less frequently and on part-time or contract basis. Analysis on the child labourer's first age at start of work (X_7) shows a statistically significant relationship to the hours child labourers spend at work, but with negative coefficient value. The implication is that child labourers who started working at early age will spend less time at work, compared to those who started work at a later age. A common explanation to this is that when a child starts work at much older age, he/she may feel more matured and obliged to work/earn income for personal and or contribution to family upkeep, hence may work longer to increase the earning.

Health Complications due to work (X_8) reveals a statistically significant relationship to the hours child labourers spend at work, but with negative coefficient, which indicates that child labourers will have less negative health outcomes when they spend less time at work compared to when they spend longer time at work. This is not surprising because children are particularly at risk as their bodies and minds are still developing as such they are more vulnerable to hazards. Therefore, children who spend longer hours working in an unhealthy environment and where safety standards are low have higher risks of sickness, injuries or even death. On the long run, if the negative health consequences of their work are not well taken care of, can last into adulthood and this to a large extent will affect their economic values to their families, state and the nation at large.

Finally, participation in social vices (X_9) indicates the existence of significant relationship with the number of hours child labourers spend at work. This could be interpreted to mean that there is higher possibility for a child labourer to participate in social vices when he/she spend longer hours at work than when it is less. For instance, when children who work in sales sector (street hawking) extends their working hours into night hours, the likelihood of such a child being recruited into participating in social vices is higher and these children if not rehabilitated in time may grow up to exhibit those attitudes that deviate from normal expectations. This submission was further buttressed by Emerson and Andre (2003) who reported that children who are used to a particular bad behaviour at a young age will not easily stop that behaviour in adulthood. If the behaviour is detrimental to the child's health, like use of dangerous drugs, smoking of marijuana etc., the children are destined to become sickly and destitute; hence useless in their economic life to the society during the adulthood.

Types of Danger Experienced due to Child Labour Participation by Sex

Result in Table 9 reveals the distribution of respondents by the type of dangers experienced by sex. The analysis reveals that more females with about 23% compared to the males with 20% have been physically assaulted owing to their participation in paid jobs. This could be that females are generally weaker than males, hence such attribute makes them prone to all manners of physical abuses than their male counterparts, the result is that such females may grow up to become reclusive and timid.

Table 9: Sex and Type of Dangers Experienced from Engaging in Paid Jobs

Types of Dangers Experienced	Sex				Total	
	Male		Female		No.	%
	No.	%	No.	%		
Armed Robbery	39	11.6	34	10.2	73	21.9
Automobile Accident	46	13.8	39	11.7	85	25.4
Attempted Kidnapping	4	1.2	4	1.2	8	2.4
Rapes/Sexual Molestation/Assault	7	2.1	19	5.7	26	7.8
Physical Assaults	67	20.1	75	22.6	142	42.5
Total	163	48.8	171	51.2	334	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2013

Moreso, about 14% of male and 12% of female respondents have been involved in automobile accident as a result of their exposure to work. Among respondents that have experienced armed robbery attacks and attempted kidnaps males accounted for an estimated 12%, 1% and females accounted for 10%, 1% respectively. Also there is higher proportion of females with 5.7% than males with 2.1% among respondents that have been raped and or sexually assaulted. This may likely be because female labourers are more vulnerable than their male counterparts hence are easily harassed sexually.

Sex and Social/Mental Consequences of Child Labour

Figure 3 shows the observed percentage distribution of respondents by sex and by the effects of their participation in laborious activities on social and mental well-beings. From the presentation in Figure 3 it shows that the most commonly type of danger experienced by child labourer is physical assaults which accounted for about 43%, with the least experienced dangers being attempted kidnap with 2%.

Furthermore, analysis of respondents by sex and social vices participation in Figure 4 shows that a total of 22% of male and female respondents have participated in drinking of alcohol, which is a confirmation that child labourer's participations in social vices is very disturbing. More threatening is the revelation that over 16% of males and 3% of females have been exposed to drug abuse. While a little less than 1% of males and females have participated in sexual escapade. Also about 0.5% of males and females each have been involved in stealing, whereas, only about 13% and a little over 20% of the male and female respondents have never participated in any form of social vices in the study area. The high rate of participation in social vices such as drug abuse and alcoholism, stealing and sexual escapade across genders is an indication that these children if immediate intervention measure is not taken by the stakeholders, the children may grow up to exhibit inappropriate behaviours as adults.

Analysis of emotional consequences of child labour participation by sex reveals that most of the working children in the study area are exposed to all manners of emotional stress that include stigmatisation from public, low self-esteem, personality disorder and alienation from friends/family/relations which constitute about 11%, 51%, 3% and 25% in that order. Sex analysis reveals that males with about 9% outnumbered the females with only 2% among those that have been stigmatized against by the public, this is true because, it is common to see male

children working as bus conductors, waste scavengers mechanics etc. whereas, children in these types of activities are often times regarded in the society as dirty and or ill-behaved, hence are easily stigmatised against. Also worthy of note is the fact that low self-esteem constitutes the highest type of emotional stress experienced by both male with 28.2% and female with 22.8% respondents.

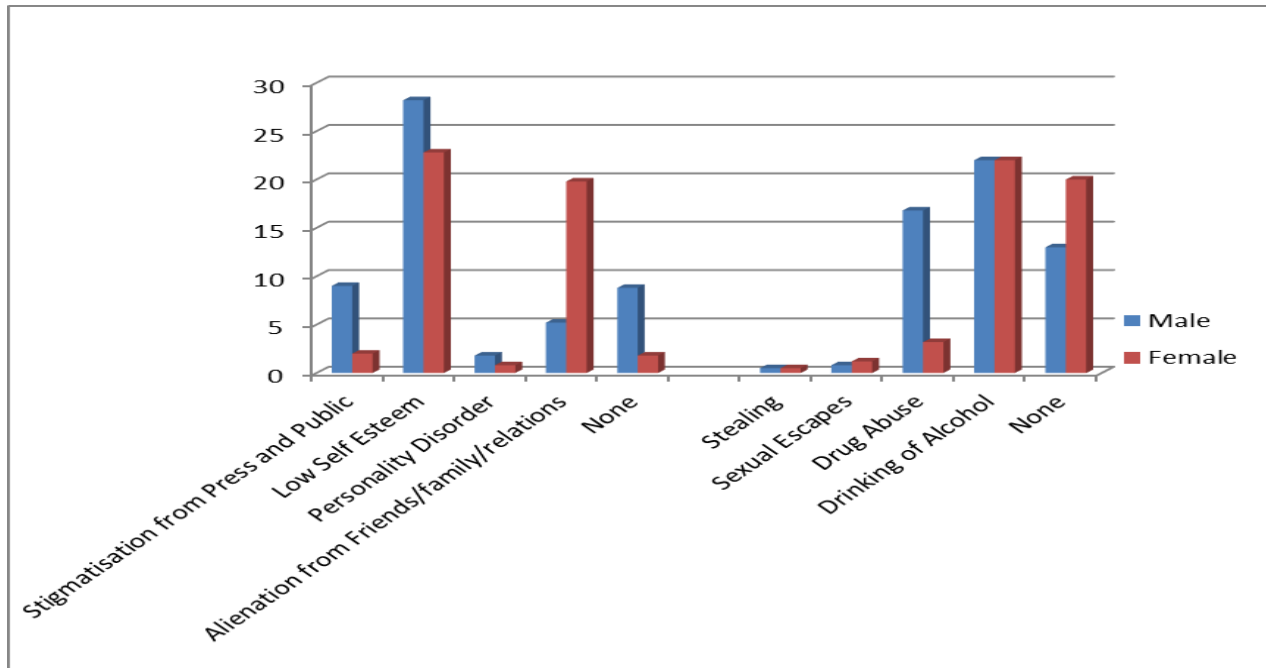


Figure 3: Gender difference in Effects of Labour on Social/mental Wellbeing of Children
Source: Field Survey, 2013

Children who suffer low self-esteem are more likely to experience restlessness, low self-actualisation and loss of future ambition. This finding is also noted by Emerson and Andre (2003) in a related study in Brazil that child labour deprives the child of a proper childhood, which in most cases, leads to many psychological imbalances which are often expressed in the form of increased aggressiveness, low self-esteem and eventually reducing the child's potential to contribute to their full potential in the society when they reach adulthood. Most of such children become problematic citizens who engage in illicit behaviour which is detrimental to upward advancement of the family and society at large.

Effects of Child Labour Participation on the Future Workforce by Sex

Figure 4 presents the negative effects of work according to sex. The effects of child labour transcend personal, family and society, the conception of these may not follow the chronology. The negative impact of child labour on child health and education can be detrimental to child development because of its far-reaching effects, and its long term effects are usually hard to detect. Figure 4 shows that a little more than 21% and 20% of both male and female respondents combining school with work have witnessed lower school attendance. This signifies that irrespective of respondent's sex, participation in work hinders effective school attendance.

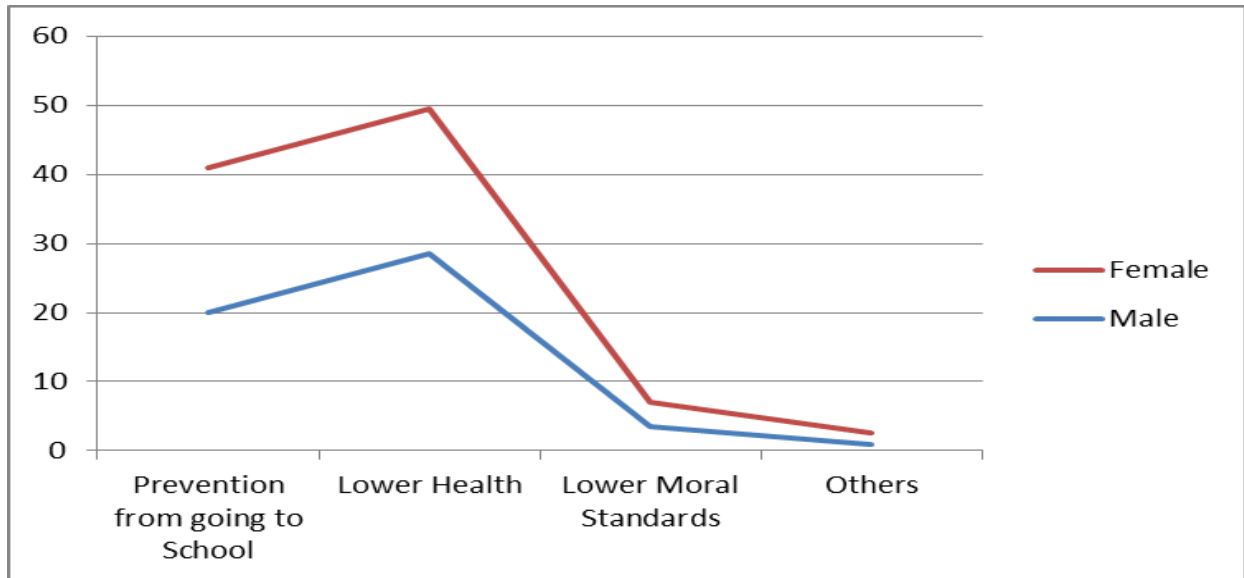


Figure 4: Gender Differentials on the Negative Effects of Work on Children

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The implication of poor school attendance means that children who are the future adults may likely remain uneducated or undereducated, thereby missing out in acquiring the basic education necessary for competent/productive future workforce. In justifying the finding, For instance Basu (1998) in his study maintained that there is a ‘child labour trap’ that the family is likely to fall into. The researcher’s contention is that an increase in child labour frequently causes a decline in the acquisition of human capital. The researcher further explained that if a child is employed all through the day, it is likely that the child will remain uneducated and have low productivity as an adult. That is if a child works more, his productivity as an adult falls because child labour diminishes adult productivity. Also, Anker (2001) argued that the kind of work that displace children from school attainment reduce human capital; consequently reduce labour productivity, economic growth and economic development on the long run. Therefore, child labourers grow up to be low-wage-earning adults; as a result, their offspring will also be compelled to work to supplement the family’s income and in this way, poverty and child labour is passed from generation to generation.

In addition, it is also obvious from Figure 4 that more males with a little above 28% than females with about 21% have witnessed negatively related health challenges from participating in economic activities. Male children are more likely start working at younger age and to participate in risky jobs than their female counterparts and these makes them more prone to various work related accidents/hazards. Since a healthy population is necessary for effective productive forces, therefore an unhealthy child of today may likely remain an unhealthy adult of tomorrow, hence may be unable to make meaningful contribution towards the betterment of himself, family and the society at adult stage. This finding is also justified by Ugal and Undyauneye (2003) who pointed out in their study on child labour in Nigeria, that at the individual level, child labour impairs the physical and mental development of children. This situation brings about an increment in the number of lay about, mentally demented, and stunted persons in society.

Finally, an analysis on the negative effects of work on the respondents also reveal that the same proportion of respondents (about 4% each for male and female) have experienced lowered moral standards from participating in laborious activities, whereas, “Others” comprising of 2% males and 1% females have experienced other negative effects such as emotional and psychological challenges from participating in economic activities. Exposing children into activities that reduces instead of improve their moral standards is not only detrimental to the child’s well-being, but also to the society at large. For instance, Emerson and Andre (2003) are of the opinion that in child labour system, the children reach mental and emotional maturity at a very early age. This is highly dangerous as such children start displaying pseudo adult behaviour such as smoking and displays of aggression. Children who are already used to such a particular behaviour at a young age will not easily stop that behaviour in adulthood. If the behaviour is detrimental to the child’s health, like use of dangerous drugs e.g. smoking of marijuana, the children are destined to becoming sickly and destitute; hence useless in their economic life to the society during the adulthood. Therefore it is worth to emphasise that an economy driven by a majority of child labourers shoots itself in the foot because it denies itself a continuum of supply of human capital necessary to drive its development (Emerson and Andre, 2003).

CONCLUSION

The study assessed the socio-economic consequences of child labour in Anambra State, the implications on the future workforce in the State. The findings showed that both male and female children who are the supposed adults, parents and leaders of tomorrow are involved in laborious activities. However, the prevalence is slightly higher among the male children than their female counterparts as well as higher among the older children aged between 11-17 years old. Mores, it found that quite a high percentage of the children are not attending any form of school as at the time of the study, with the female child labourers mostly affected (24%) compared to the males with a little less than 20%. Among those attending school (combining work with schooling), majority have witnessed grade/class repetition, lowered class performance as well as lateness to school. This means that these children will miss out in acquiring the basic human capital necessary for their survival in the society at their later age and this situation could spell doom for the children in particular and the state in general.

More worrisome is the fact that the children have witnessed various forms of challenges relating to their physical, mental and social well-being and development. Therefore there is the need to call the attention of both parents and other stakeholders on the need to know that child labour may in a short run benefit the families by assisting them in meeting some of their need, but on the long run, its effect is dreaded. This is because in most cases the child labourers may Complications their physical, mental, social well-being and or completely miss out or under-accumulate the basic human capital (education) necessary to enhance their future productivity and earning capacity due to poor health status and low school attendance as a result of their participation in various economic activities.

It is imperative that both government and non-governmental organisations be set up to critically assess, design, implement and monitor programmes that will help to mitigate child labour participation, as this will go a long way in minimising the effects on the overall development of the children as well as ensuring that children are given every opportunity to fully develop their potentials so as to contribute their quotas as adults and leaders tomorrow.

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