

العلاقة بين الطفل العامل والخلفية الأبوية والأداء الأكاديمي لدى أطفال المدارس في مستوطنات الصيد بولاية أوجون - نيجيريا

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ملخص:

هدف الدراسة: في نيجيريا، ينخرط الأطفال في مستوطنات صيد الأسماك في كثير من الأنشطة المتعلقة بالعمل، بدءاً من الأنشطة المنزلية إلى أنشطة الصيد، وينتهي بهم المطاف إلى العمل من أجل كسب لقمة العيش؛ حتى لا يتبقى لهم سوى القليل من الوقت للدراسة، أو يكاد يكون وقت الدراسة معدوماً، في معظم الأحيان. تعنى هذه الدراسة بالعلاقة بين الأطفال العاملين والخلفية الأبوية والأداء الأكاديمي لدى أطفال المدارس في مستوطنات صيد الأسماك في ولاية أوجون، نيجيريا. وقد استرشدت الدراسة بأربعة أهداف وثلاثة أسئلة بحثية وفروض مقابلة. **المنهجية:** استخدمت استبانة عامل الأسرة () وجدول المقابلة، أداتين لجميع البيانات الكمية والنوعية على التوالي. واعتمد تصميم البحث الوصفي للدراسة، فيما تم بني أسلوب أخذ العينات المتعدد المراحل، واستخدمت طريقة أخذ العينات العشوائية البسيطة لاختيار 8 مدارس إعدادية و400 مستجيب و80 مشاركاً. وقد حلت البيانات المستخرجة باستخدام عدد الترددات، والسبة المئوية البسيطة، واختبار t المستقل، وتحليل التباين أحادي الاتجاه (). **النتائج:** أظهرت نتائج الدراسة أن معظم الأطفال ينخرطون في أنشطة صيد الأسماك لعدة أسباب، والسبب الأساسي - في الغالب - هو مساعدة أسرهم الفقيرة ودعم دخلها. وبإشراك هؤلاء الأبناء في عمالة الأطفال، تتعرض شخصياتهم ومواقفهم لأضرار قبل الأوان؛ ومن ثم لا يمكن إصلاحها. **الخلاصة:** بناءً على النتائج التي توصلت إليها الدراسة رفض الفرض الأول القائل: "لا يوجد فرق كبير في الأداء الأكاديمي بين الأطفال الذين تم استغلالهم في العمالة وأولئك الذين لم يتعرضوا للاستغلال"، كما رفض الفرض الثاني الذي ينص على أنه "لا يوجد فرق كبير في

الأداء الأكاديمي بين الأطفال الذكور والإناث الذين تم استغلالهم في العمالة وإولئك الذين لا يتعرضوا للاستغلال"، كما رفض الفرض الثاني الذي ينص على أنه "لا يوجد فرق كبير في الأكاديمي بين الأطفال الذكور والإناث الذين تم استغلالهم في العمالة". بينما قبل الفرض الثالث الذي ينص على أنه "لا يوجد تأثير كبير للخلفية الأبوية على الأداء الأكاديمي للطلاب". وقدمت الدراسة توصيات بضرورة نهى أولياء الأمور عن إشراك أطفالهم في أعمال يمكن أن يكون لها تأثير سلبي على تعليمهم، ومن المأمول من صناع السياسات أن يطبقوا قانون حقوق الطفل بصرامة، وأوصت الدراسة أيضاً بضرورة منع استغلال الأطفال في العمالة بأي شكل من الأشكال.

المصطلحات الأساسية: الخلفية الأبوية، العمل، عمالة الأطفال، الأداء الأكاديمي، صيد الأسماك، مستوطنة الصيد.

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The Nexus between Child Worker and Parental Background and Academic Performance among School Children in Fishing Settlements in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

Objective: In Nigeria, children in fishing settlements engage in lots of work-related activities ranging from domestic to fishing activities, and such children end up working to earn a living with little or no time for schooling. This study examined the nexus between child worker and parental background and academic performance among school children in fishing settlements in Ogun State, Nigeria. Four objectives, three research questions and corresponding hypotheses guided this study.

Methods: Two instruments; family factor questionnaire (FFQ) and interview schedule were used to collect quantitative and qualitative data respectively. Descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted, while, simple random sampling method was used to select 8 junior secondary schools, 400 respondents and 80 participants. Data generated was analyzed using frequency count, simple percentage, independent t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). **Results:** The results of the study showed that most children got involved in fishing activities for several reasons, but mostly to help their poverty- stricken families and to complement the family income. By engaging these children as child workers, the personalities and attitudes of these children are prematurely damaged and are irreparable. **Conclusion:** Based on the findings reached, Hypothesis 1, which states that “There is no significant difference in the academic performance of children exploited as child workers and those who are not”, and Hypothesis 2, which states that “There is no significant difference in academic performance between male and female children exploited as child workers”, were rejected. However, Hypothesis 3, which states that “There is no significant influence of parental background on students’ academic performance was accepted. Recommendations were made that parents should be discouraged from engaging their children in work that could have a negative impact on child schooling, and policy makers are expected to strictly enforce Child Right Act. The conclusion revealed that exploiting children as child workers in any form should be discouraged.

Keywords: Parental Background, Work, Child Worker, Academic Performance, Fishing, Fishing Settlement.

Introduction

Several social indicators such as study habits, self-concept, school environments, teachers' qualification and teaching strategies, government and parents' social class have been identified as factors responsible for learning outcomes. Nonetheless, the issue of child worker and parental background continue to pose concern to sociologists of education because of its implications for academic performance of children among others. Child worker is an emerging form of child labour. Largely, most child workers in Nigeria are traced to domestic services. According to Oloko (2003), where work carried out by children does not involve risks and danger but contribute sometimes to the welfare of the children and not necessarily interfere with schooling and their ability to integrate their family and their work lives, then this is labeled as child worker and not labor. Whereas studies revealed that participation of school children in menial works posed negative consequences on literacy rates and school attendance and therefore, limits child's mental and physical health development among others, thus reinforcing poverty, enslavement and marginalization (ILO, 2013).

Several scholastic positions have been given on child worker and academic outcomes. According to Oloko (2003), children in these situations do not receive any formal education; instead, they are forced to serve as domestic servants, become street hawkers, or engage in other activities which altogether have a negative impact on their academic performance. In their study, Nerton & Nisbert (1961) established that child worker is a social problem and is not peculiar to developing countries alone. Unfortunately, scholars are yet to come to term with what really constitute child worker or labor.

It has been observed that in most of the fishing settlements in Nigeria, children are often sighted on canoes hunting for fish, sorting fish on landing site, casting or mending fishing gears, pulling and diving to disentangle nets, loading of fishing gear and so on, which in most cases are taken for character training and not child labor. What then is child labor? Unlike child worker, Canagarajah & Coulombe (1997) posited that child labor is a situation where children are exposed to work which is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and such interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school by skipping classes, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring

them to attempt to combine school attendance with an excessively long and heavy work load, which consequently have a negative impact on their academic performance.

ILO (2015) noted that this work does not only interfere with their schooling and harm their personal development, but it also includes activities that may pose a threat to their health and lives. A bias frequently exists against girls' education, particularly in rural and northern areas of Nigeria; empirical data, for example, revealed that only 42% of rural girls are enrolled in school compared with 72% of urban girls. In the north, girls are often withdrawn from school for early marriage, domestic and agricultural labor, or commercial activities such as trading and street vending (Togunde & Carter 2006). Child labor started with the introduction of the factory system in late 18th century in Great Britain during the period of industrialization, while child labor in Nigeria could be traced to socio-cultural practice in the family which has a direct link to too much of responsibility training as part of the socialization process that children must go through to begin functioning as efficient members of the community (Onabamiro, 1983).

However, in the context of the present study, it has been observed that children in fishing settlements of Nigeria, particularly in Ogun state, are involved in domestic service or "child worker". Fishing settlements in Nigeria belong to the rural environment; Nnachi (2009) opined that the rural environment is often faced with different developmental problems which may include: lack of electricity supply, library, good access road, pipe borne water and so on. Development problems in rural areas include poor learning facilities, lack of devoted teachers, and lack of current and adequate learning materials all of which have a negative impact on the students' academic performance. Okafor and Anayo (2006) and Tade (2010) asserted that children in the domestic servitude or child worker are poorly catered for which is a function of push and pull factors emanating from poverty and increasing entry of women into the labor market respectively.

Meanwhile, studies have also revealed that parental background or socio-economic status is an important family factor that influences academic performance (Johnson & Elder, 2000). Research shows that students from lower socio-economic background have lower and slower academic achievement when compared to students from higher socio-

economic status. Unfortunately, when teachers make judgment about students based on their socio-economic status, they are taking the first step in preventing those students from having an equal opportunity for academic achievement. Children from educated families and upper class often show better performance than students from poor backgrounds (Wilkinson, 2009). As it were, empirical studies had extensively established the correlation between child labor and academic performance in Nigeria. For instance, Ekerete and Ekanem (2014) carried out a study title: "Assessment of child labour in Oron fishing communities of Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria." The findings revealed that 50.83% of the respondents were between 21 to 40 years of age which implies that the fishing households in the study area were in their middle age. The study also revealed that the majority (80%) were males, which implies the prevalence of male headed households in the study area.

Edun (2000) reported that both working and non-working pupils enjoyed appreciably high levels of social, emotional, and moral development. The study also shows that while the female working pupils were in fact found to be superior to female non-working pupils in terms of social skills, the scholastic achievement of both working and non-working pupils was very poor, specifically in mathematics.

Similarly, Bassey and Baghebo and Otu (2012) carried out a study titled "Child Labour in Nigeria and its Economic Implication- A Case Study of Calabar Municipality." The study investigated the existence of child labour, its causes, constraints and economic implication and how to eradicate it with particular interest in Calabar municipality, Cross River State. The finding revealed that: The number of girls engaged in hawking represents 33% of the number of child hawkers surveyed as against 21% of the boys. Nonetheless, most of the available studies to the best knowledge of the researcher focused more on urban areas in developing nations including Nigeria, while living a dearth of knowledge on studies in rural communities, particularly the fishing settlements. Thus, a gap in knowledge was opened which the present study hoped to fill. It is against this background, that the present study was attempted to examine the nexus between child worker and parental background and academic performance among school children in fishing settlements in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

In Nigeria, children in fishing settlements engage in lots of work-related activities ranging from domestic to fishing activities. These may include catching, harvesting and fish farming in the open sea or rivers among others. In addition, children engage in all associated operations like, processing, marketing, and post-harvest activities. Children are exposed to tedious forms of work such as head loading in public vehicle parks, street and neighborhood trading or hawking, scavenging at refuse dumps in the cities, working as bus conductors, extensive farm work and mining works including child trafficking. Parents occasionally withdraw their children from school to work in the fishing enterprise because most parents believe that they are preparing the children for the future in terms of social responsibility and vocational training. Such children end up working to earn a living with little or no time for schooling. Similarly, rural environment is often faced with different developmental problems which may include: lack of electricity supply, library, good access road, pipe borne water and so on.

Theoretical Framework

The study is anchored on the Household Decision-making Theory by Becker Gary (1965). The theory states that the household acts to maximize utility, which is a function of the number of children, school attendance per child, the leisure time per child, the leisure of the parents, and a composite consumption of goods. In this theory of household decision-making, it is stated that goods are produced using a composite commodity purchased in the marketplace and the time of household members.

This theory further states that the time inputs to produce the composite consumable goods can be supplied by the mother or by the children. Hence, household income can be earned by selling goods produced in a household enterprise or by working as a wage laborer. Rosenzweig & Evanson (1977) opined that inputs to the production of the household enterprise goods include physical assets owned by the family, parental and child labor, noting that the husband divides his time between market work and leisure; the mother divides her time between market work, child rearing, and home production; and children divide their time between market work, education, leisure, and home production. In view of this, five levels of uncompensated

cross-elasticity in the theory of household decision-making concerning children were identified (Becker, 1965). These include:

1. An increase in the father's wage raises the implicit price of his leisure and leads to substitution toward the child's education. Likewise, an increase in the father's wage will raise household income, thereby raising the possibility of the child's education.

2. An increase in the mother's wage increases the opportunity cost of each birth, thereby leading to lowering the optimal family size. To the extent that child quality is a substitute for child quantity, the fall in the optimal family size will raise investment in education. By the same token, the rise in the mother's wage will raise the demand for all goods. Quality children may be among these, in which case, educational attainment will rise.

3. An increase in the child's wage raises the opportunity cost of time spent in school. Likewise, an increase in the child's wage raises the return to each birth to the extent that the subsequently larger family size leads families to trade off quality for quantity of children causing a decline in educational attainment.

4. The impact of an increase in child's wage also depends on whether leisure and education are complements or substitutes. If leisure and education are complements, then the rise in the cost of leisure will induce a decline in the demand for education.

5. Lastly, an increase in land holdings or other family assets should increase income, thereby increasing educational attainment.

The relevance of the theory of household decision-making to the present study is that, it asserts the fact that socio-economic status of the family, particularly in the aspect of family income, family size, the kind of job the parents do and the time consumed at work and/or time set out for leisure would likely determine the predisposition or otherwise of children to work related activities (fishing activity) or child work which is likely to affect academic performance.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to examine the nexus between child worker and parental background and academic performance among school children in fishing settlements in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study also addressed the following:

1. Investigating the difference in academic performance of children exposed to child worker and those who are not.
2. Ascertaining the difference in academic performance of male and female children exposed to child worker, and
3. Ascertaining if there is any influence of the parental background on the students' academic performance.

Research Questions

This study provided answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the difference in academic performance of children exposed to child worker and those who are not?
2. Is there any difference in academic performance of male and female children exposed to child worker?
3. Could there be any influence of parental background on the children's academic performance?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 levels of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the academic performance of children exposed to child worker and those who are not.
2. There is no significant difference in academic performance of male and female children exposed to child worker.
3. There is no significant influence of the parental background on the students' academic performance.

Operational Definition of Terms

1. Child Worker: It is the work carried out by children, which does not involve risks and danger but sometimes contributes to the welfare of the children without necessarily interfering with schooling.

2. Child Labor: A situation where children are exposed to work which is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children and such interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school by making them skip classes, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine

school attendance with an excessively long and heavy work load, and consequently impacting their academic performance negatively.

Methodology

The mixed research method was adopted which included a combination of descriptive research design and interview schedule with the purpose of generating both quantitative and qualitative data for the study. The area of study was Ogun Water Side Local Government area of Ogun State with latitude 60291N, 40241E and 6.4830N4.40E. (Oloruntoba & Adegbite, 2006). The target population comprised male and female students in public junior secondary schools in Ogun waterside local government area, Ogun State, Nigeria. Multistage sampling process was used for the study to cater for difference in samples and data collection for quantitative and qualitative analysis. Eight junior secondary schools (JSS II) were selected through random sampling method.

A sample of 400 respondents was selected using sample size calculator which is an application used to determine the appropriate sample size, for a sub-population of 657 students at 95 percent Confidence Limit and 3.03 Confidence Interval. The method of proportional allocation was used to arrive at the sample size for each of the 8 schools used for the study. A sub-sample of 80 participants were randomly selected among respondents from larger samples for interview schedule. The whole classes were involved in the selection processes. All the students were given freedom of choice to participate since the process was open. The researcher with the help of four trained research assistants administered the questionnaire to 400 participants in all the schools used for the study.

Each administration lasted for an average of 35 minutes per school. In addition, the interview was conducted on the 80 sub-sample from the larger sample used for the study. An average of 4 minutes was spent to interview each of the participants. Administration of instruments lasted for two weeks. All the questionnaires were retrieved.

Table 1.

Distribution of Respondents across Selected Schools

School	N	N(m)	N(f)	n	n(m)	n(f)
A	91	41	50	55	27	28
B	83	39	44	51	22	29
C	74	41	33	45	21	24
D	79	38	41	48	21	27
E	82	33	49	50	25	25
F	83	44	39	51	24	27
G	72	37	35	44	16	28
H	93	34	59	56	25	31
TOTAL	657	307	350	400	181	219

(N = 657, n = 400)

In table (1): n(f) means sample size of female respondents, n(m) means sample size of male respondents, n means sample size of respondents, N means sub-population of students, N(m) means number of males in the sub-population, while N(f) means number of females in the sub-population.

Two research instruments, namely Family Factors' Questionnaire (FFQ) and Interview Schedule (IS) were used to collect relevant data. The Students' Cumulative Average Score (S-CAS) in all Examinable Subjects in Junior Secondary School (JSS2) was adopted for academic performance. The content and face validity of the research instruments were ascertained by experts in Measurement and Evaluations. The reliability coefficient of the instruments was 0.76 using the Cronbach Alpha split-half statistical tool. Data generated for the study was collected and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The statistical tools used for analysis included: simple percentage, frequency count, the mean score, standard deviation, independent t-test and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using independent t-test while hypothesis 3 was tested using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). All findings were held significant at the 0.05 Alpha levels.

Fig. 1:*Map of Ogun Waterside Local Government Area.***Source: Idowu (2010).**

Results

Table 2.*Distribution of Respondents by Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	181	45.25
Female	219	54.75
Total	400	100

Evidence in table (2) shows that 181 representing 45.25 percent of 400 respondents were male, whereas 219 representing 54.75 percent were female.

Table 3.*Distribution of Respondents Exposed to Work by Gender*

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	151	54.51
Female	126	45.49
Total	400	100

Evidence in table (3) indicates that 151 male respondents representing 54.51 percent of the total sample of 400 were exposed to work, and 126 female respondents representing 45.49 percent were exposed to work.

Testing of hypotheses

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of children exposed to child worker and those who are not.

Table 4.

T-test Analysis of Difference in Academic Performance of Children Exposed to Work and Those Who Are Not

Group	Mean	sd	n	df	t-cal.	t-crit.
Children not exposed to work	70.6	2.15	123			
				398	2.08	1.96
Children exposed to work	51.8	1.45	277			
Total	122.4	3.6	400			

Significant at $p < 0.05$, $df = 398$, $t\text{-crit.} = 1.96$

Evidence in table (4) shows that the t-cal. (2.08) is greater than the t-crit. (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance. It is equally observed that the mean score (70.6) of children not exposed to work is higher than the mean score (51.8) of children exposed to work. As a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the academic performance of children exposed to work and those who are not. The children expressed their opinions on different items in the interview session in specific areas such as participation in fishing activity, reasons for participation in work, and hazards faced during fishing activity.

Views on why children participate in fishing activity

Children: “Our parents are farmers. They are into fishing. We always follow them to fish as early as age 5. It is part of our way of helping to support them. They tell us that they inherit the work from their own parents and they hope to train us so that we can take over the job in the future. You cannot even say you won’t do it because the family upkeep come from the fishing business.”

Views on their reasons for participation in fishing activity

Children: “Our parents are training us, and we are aiding them. We also learn the work. We see it as a way of life, and we make pocket money for ourselves. Our parents are poor, and we help them to sell fish, smoke fish and make more money for the family upkeep. Fishing is our cultural practice, and it is the pride of our community.”

Views of children on likely hazards associated with participation in fishing activity

Children: There are cases when some children drowned and died. On some occasions, we got attacked by dangerous animals like snakes, sharks... etc. Some girls were absent from school for days during long trawling season.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the academic performance of male and female children exposed to child worker.

Table 5.

T-test Analysis of Difference in the Academic Performance of Male and Female Children Who Are Exposed to Work

Group	Mean	sd	n	df	t-cal.	t-crit.
Male children exposed to work	58	7.31	151			
				275	3.01	1.96
Female children exposed to work	48	6.25	126			
Total	106	13.56	277			

Significant at $p < 0.05$, $df = 275$, $t\text{-crit.} = 1.96$

Evidence in table (5) indicates that the male children exposed to work obtained a higher mean score of 58 than the mean score of 48 obtained by the female children exposed to work. It is equally observed that the t-cal. (3.01) is greater than the t-crit. (1.96) at 0.05 level of significance; as a result, the null hypothesis is rejected. This means that there is a significant difference in the academic performance of male and female children exposed to work.

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant influence of parents' socio-economic status on the students' academic performance.

* To ascertain whether parental educational background has any influence on the students' academic performance, One-way ANOVA statistics was used.

* To ascertain whether parental income has any influence on the students' academic performance, One-way ANOVA statistics was used.

Table 6.

Mean and Standard Deviations on Influence of Parental Educational Background on Students' Academic Performance

Parent Education Background	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Tertiary Education	102	58.49	7.38
Secondary Education	214	58.07	7.33
Primary Education	68	59.59	6.05
No Formal Education	16	59.53	3.80
Total	400	58.49	7.04

The result in table (6) shows the differential in number of respondents according to the parents' educational background from 214, 102, 68 and 16 for secondary, tertiary, primary and no formal education respectively. The highest respondents were from parents with only secondary education, while the lowest were from parents with no formal education. The mean scores are 59.59 (the highest), 59.53, 58.49 and 58.07 (the least) for respondents whose parents have secondary education, tertiary education, primary education and no formal education respectively. The table above also indicated the mean deviation score of 7.38 (the highest), 7.33, 6.05 and 3.80 (the least) for respondents whose parents have tertiary education, secondary education, primary education and no formal education respectively.

Table 7.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Influence of Parental Educational Background on Children's Academic Performance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	136.92	3	45.64	.92	.43
Within Groups	19594.78	395	49.61		
Total	19731.69	398			

Significant at $p < 0.05$; df = 3, 395

The result in table (7) shows that at 3 degrees of freedom between groups, 395 degree of freedom within groups and 0.05 level of significance the F-stat. $0.920 > P\text{-Val.} = 0.431$. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that “there is no significant impact of the parents’ socio-economic status on the children’s academic performance” is hereby accepted.

Table 8:

Mean and Standard Deviations of Influence of Parents' income on Students' Academic Performance

Parent Income	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
High Income	133	57.83	7.89
Moderate Income	216	58.69	7.05
Low Income	51	59.25	3.88
Total	400	58.48	7.04

The result in table (8) shows that the number of respondents according to parents income from 216 the highest, 133 and 51 the lowest, for moderate income, high income and low income respectively. Moreover, the mean scores are 59.25 (the highest), 58.69 and 57.83 (the lowest) respectively for respondents from parents of low income, moderate income and high income respectively. The table above also indicates the mean deviation score with 7.89 (the highest), 7.05 and 3.88 (the lowest) for respondents whose parents are from high income, moderate income, and low income respectively.

Table 9.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) on Impact of Parents' Income on Students' Academic Performance

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	95.11	2	47.56	.96	.38
Within Groups	19666.64	397	49.54		
Total	19761.75	399			

Significant at $p < 0.05$; $df = 2, 397$

The result in table (9) shows that at 2 degrees of freedom (between groups), 397 degree of freedom (within groups) and at 0.05 level of significance the F-stat. $0.960 > 0.384$ P-Val. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that: "There is no significant influence of parents' socio-economic status on children academic performance" is hereby accepted.

Discussion

Hypothesis One

The findings from hypothesis one shows that there is a significant difference in academic performance between children exposed to child worker and those who are not. The findings are at variance with Edun's (2000) that the scholastic achievement of both working and non-working pupils was very poor, which means that participation of children in working activities and schooling does not predict academic success or failure of students. In the same vein, Patrinos and Psacharopoulous (1995) conducted a similar study using Peruvian data, which revealed that child labour was not detrimental to schooling, while the position held by Cavalieri (2002) using propensity score matching, reported that a significant negative effect occur between child labour and educational performance. The finding agrees with Oloko (1997) as posited that child labour is any work that subjects a child to economic exploitation or is hazardous or interferes with the child's education. Oloko further noted that in Nigeria, out of the total number of working children (15,027,612), 59.4 per cent (8,925,206) were found to be attending school. Having been exposed to street life, some of

them lacked appropriate social skills to relate with their peers at school and at home. Similarly, Patrinos and Psacharopoulos (1995) asserted that the factors predicting an increase in child labour also predict reduced school attendance and increased chance of grade repetition.

Hypothesis Two

The findings from hypothesis two show that there is a significant difference in academic performance between male and female children exposed to work. This finding disagrees with that of Maccoby's (1997) study, which found that males have better mathematics and visuo-spatial skills than females; such skills are like the ones an architect needs when designing a building's angle and dimension. Females, however, had better verbal attitudes than males and the verbal differences between females and males had virtually disappeared, but the mathematics and visuo-spatial differences persisted (Maccoby, 1997). In his study, Hyde (2004) asserted that there was considerable overlap in the distribution of females and males scores on mathematics and visuo-spatial tasks. Moreover, Klein (2004) argued that the difference in gender can only be attributed to natural causes. The differences in the scholastic achievements of boys and girls are generally attributed to biological causes and or to cultural differences and stereotypes.

Hypothesis Three

The findings from hypothesis three show that there is no significant influence of the parents' socio-economic status on the students' academic performance in the study area. This agrees with the findings of Lanzas & Kinston (1981); Nile (1981); and Durojaiye (1976) based on research on Africa. The study, however, did not agree with the study of Oloko (2003) that reported that students from low socio-economic background were observed to have low academic performance when compared to those from high socio-economic background. Those children from low socio-economic backgrounds are reported to be at risk of serious behavioral problems like dropping out of school, health problems, anxiety and depression (Mcloyd, 1998). Nonetheless, the finding showed a significant difference in the rates of deviant behavior among students from high and low socio-economic status families (Oni 2007; Omoegun 2007). The findings disagree with Hill et al (2004) and Rothstein (2004) assertions that the status of parents does not only affect the academic performance of students but it also makes it impossible for children from low socio-

economic backgrounds to compete well with their counterparts from high socio-economic backgrounds within the same academic environment. They had also posited further that illiterate and semi-illiterate parents with feelings of inadequacy may not be able to support their children regarding different academic problems.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study has shown that most children in the study area get involved in fishing activities for several reasons, but mostly to help their poverty-stricken families and to complement the family income. By engaging these children in child labor, their personalities and attitudes get prematurely damaged and become irreparable. Since these children represent the future of the Nigerian society, it becomes evident that the sustainable development of the large society is being compromised. Therefore, to meet the challenges of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to become one of the leading economies in the year 2020, Nigeria must deploy its interest and investment in the education of millions of children trapped in the quagmire of child labor. Furthermore, it is incumbent on the government of Nigeria to provide a conducive environment that enables the family institution to fulfill its obligations to its members, without compromising the future of the children and the entire society at large. Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that child labour and other related activities are significant in other countries in Africa, but more significant in Nigeria. Several factors have been identified as responsible for this unwholesome scenario, such as poverty, population explosion in the family, lack of economic gain, unemployment, environment, illiteracy, child's readiness and attitude toward education as well as the need for women's help in the labour market.

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