Relationship between Poverty and Prevalence of Underage Apprentice Child Labour in Nigeria

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Abstract: **The work determined the level of public awareness with respect to the dangers of subjecting underage children into apprenticeship training in the South East states of Nigeria. Questionnaire assessments and personal interviews were used to gather vital data for the investigation. Ariaria Market in Aba, Main Market, Onitsha and Ogbete Market, Enugu were the study locations for which 400 copies of the questionnaires were distributed however, 61 were returned. Chi Squared statistical tool was utilised to evaluate the data leading to vital conclusions. The survey concluded that under age children subjected to labour practices with regards to apprenticeship scheme increased the likelihood of lack of educational access, negative impact to health, safety as well as social balance of the child. Psychological as well as emotional torture are also suffered by these under age children. All overwhelming consequences, the study established was as a result of lack or poverty, unemployment in addition to underemployment. A very vital recommendation is for government agencies to realise the sustenance of compulsory education in the course of the child's early years.'**

Keywords: **Apprentice, Education, Child labour, Poverty, Socio Economic**

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of entrepreneurs through the apprentice structure of skill acquisition have yielded a profound number of businesses with immense economic benefits to society (Olulu & Udeorah, 2018). This form of skill transfer is very prominent within the Igbo ethnic group of the South Eastern region in Nigeria (Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019). This type of entrepreneurial development is significant because of the benefits of empowering children of low income parents (Fajobi *et al.,* 2017).

The program is instituted by the parents or relatives of the child with the master who defines the number of years the child will work for him and inculcate the skills required to start off the business at the expiration of the agreed term. The family of the child may not necessarily pay for the vocational learning but by consistent service to the master. The master is bound to pay an agreed sum of money to start up the same line of business for the graduating apprentice. This practice have raised the economy of society by the multiplier effect of proliferation of entrepreneurs and its attendant effect of closing the gap of unemployment (Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019).

Despite these lofty goals of economic impact on societies, young children without adequate maturity are subjected to all manners of ills because the programme is not regulated, no known standard of theoretical learning are set for the benefits of the child as well as the abuse of the programme by unreliable masters. This practice have manifested in profound emotional instability of an under aged child as well as negative impact on their health (Kasper & Parker, 2017). Muntaher *et al.* (2017) have also reiterated that children suffer diverse injuries when proper supervision is not placed on the working child.

This study sought to understand the public perception towards the ills of the practice particularly on under aged children. Renner *et al.* (2015) have attributed that public knowledge of potential dangers will result in a societal changes to prevent the risks towards the practice.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The main emphasis of this study is the consequences of under aged apprenticeship child labour. Questionnaires were circulated to the respondents in Ariaria, Onitsha and Ogbete markets in Aba, Onitsha and Enugu metropolises respectively. The importance and purpose of the research was clarified and the researcher required verbal permission from the respondents before issuing duplicates of the questionnaire. Non-disclosure of the identities of the respondents were assured.

Four hundred (400) duplicates of the questionnaire were circulated out of which 361 were returned back making a 90.25% return rate. As a result of items not answered on the questionnaire, only 200 were established usable. The chain sampling method was chosen for the survey since the participants of the population size were difficult to find. The Linkert Scale of measurement was used to design the questionnaire.

Data was collected and analysed using the chi-square statistical tool. The Chi-square (x^2) statistical tool was used to test the framed hypotheses in evaluating the effect of differing influences on underage apprenticeship child labour.

$$Expected\ Frequency, fe = \frac{Row\ Total * Column\ Total}{Grand\ Total}$$

$$Degree\ of\ Freedom = (Row - 1)(Column - 1)$$

Decision Rule

Accept H_0 or Reject H_1, if the computed value of the Chi-Square (X^2_{cal}) is greater than the Table value of the Chi-square (X^2_{tab}) and vice-versa.

Hence, accept H_0, if $X^2_{cal} > X^2_{tab}$ or Accept H_1

If $X^2_{cal} = <X^2_{tab}$

For the hypothesis testing, we shall be using 95% confidence level.

$$Level\ of\ Significance(\alpha) = 1 - \frac{Confidence\ Level}{100}$$

Therefore, $1 - \frac{95}{100} = 1 - 0.95 = 0.05$

Hence, our level of significance is 0.05

III. DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Prevalence of Under-Age Apprentice

The figures shown in Table 1 expresses the survey outcomes indicating the said prevalence in the research study area

Table 1: Prevalence of Under-Age Apprentice in the Study Area

Options	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Agree	100	50
Strongly Agree	80	40
Disagree	20	10
Total	200	100

Source: Author's field work 2018.

From the breakdown of respondent's answers to the aforesaid enquiry of the questionnaire in Table 1, it signposts that a combined 90% of the participants both agreed as well as strongly agreed to the point that there is an occurrence of the practice in the research area however a mere 10% of the entire respondents disagreed.

3.2 Relationship between Socio-Economic Factors and under age Apprenticeship   Practice

The data revealed in Table 2 shows the data of the connection between socio-economic influences as well as under age apprenticeship programme.

Table 2 Relationship between Socio-Economic Factors and under age Apprenticeship Practice

Options	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Agree	90	45
Strongly Agree	70	35
Disagree	40	20
Total	200	100

Source: Author's field work 2018.

In Table 2, 45% of the participants agreed that a noteworthy relationship exists. 35% of the participants affirmed that there is effect to the aforementioned whereas 20% of the participants disagreed. On the whole, 80% agree that there is a profound impact on the socio-economic dynamics which is caused by the practice of under-age apprentice.

3.3   Correlation   between   Poverty   and   under   age Apprenticeship Child Labour

Table 3 depicts the correlation with respect to poverty in the family and engagement of under aged children in the apprenticeship programme to guarantee the fending of the family's financial requirements.

Table 3: Correlation between Poverty and under age Apprenticeship Child Labour

Options	No. of respondent	Percentage (%)
Agree	110	55
Strongly agree	80	40
Disagree	10	5
Total	200	100

Source: Author's field work 2018.

Out of the overall respondents, 110 of them making about 55% of the total participants agree that there is adequate relationship with respect to poverty and the practice of using under age children in the apprenticeship programme. This data is illustrated by Table 4. Moreover, 80 respondents representing about 40% of the total participants strongly agree to the fact that there exist a connection with respect to financial lack amongst members of the family as well as apprentice practice for the under aged child. Generally, 190 respondents depicting considerable 95% of the total participants agree to the fact that there is indeed a correlation with respect to poverty amongst members of the family and the trend that the family will conclude that a young child is referred to serve a business master and build up some form of earnings towards family needs. Though, 10 participants disagreed totally to the fact that the motive why these teens are sent for the training programme is introduced to offer these children valued skills that will drive them into successful entrepreneurs in the coming years. This school of thought consider that entrepreneurship practice is by far better developed within the early phase developmental years of children therefore the engagement of this children in the apprenticeship curriculum.

3.4 Testing Hypotheses 1

H_0:   There is a no significant relationship between poverty and prevalence of underage apprentice child labour

H_1:   There is significant relationship between poverty and prevalence of underage apprentice child labour

The data in Table 4 highlights the estimation outline required to compute and make conclusions based on Hypothesis 1.

Table 4: Calculating Data for Hypotheses 1

Tables	Male	Female	Total
Agree	90(a)	20(b)	110
Strongly Agree	51(c)	29(d)	80
Disagree	4(e)	6(f)	10
Total	145	55	200

Calculation of expected frequency

$$Cell\ a = \frac{110 * 145}{200} = 79.75$$

$$Cell\ b = \frac{110 * 55}{200} = 30.25$$

$$Cell\ c = \frac{80 * 145}{200} = 58.00$$

$$Cell\ d = \frac{80 * 55}{200} = 22.00$$

$$Cell\ e = \frac{10 * 145}{200} = 7.25$$

$$Cell\ f = \frac{10*55}{200} = 2.75$$

The data presented in Table 5 indicates the estimations for the computation of the Chi-square required to help in the reaching conclusions with respect to Hypothesis 1.

Table 5: Calculating for the value of Chi-Square

Cells	F_o	F_e	F_o-f_e	$(f_o$-$f_e)^2$	$(f_o$-$f_e)^2/f_e$
A	90	79.75	10.25	105.06	1.32
B	20	30.25	-10.25	105.06	3.47
C	51	58	-7	49	0.85
D	29	22	7	49	2.23
E	4	7.25	-3.25	10.56	1.46
F	6	2.75	3.25	10.56	3.84
Total	13.17=X2				

Table 5 is a 2 x 3 Contingency Table and the degree of freedom (df) is equal to $(R - 1)(C - 1)$

$$= R = 2\ and\ C = 3$$

Therefore,

$$(R - 1)(C - 1) = (2 - 1)(4 - 3) = (1)(2) = 2$$

With a significant level of 0.05 to the value of the Chi-square Table at 2, we have 5.991. The computed value of Chi-square X^2_{cal} is greater than the Chi-square Table value X^2_{tab}, the null Hypotheses H_1 is rejected while the alternative Hypotheses is accepted. This categorically affirms that there is a significant relationship with respect to poverty and occurrence of child labour practices.

3.5 Testing Hypotheses 2

H_0: There is a no significant relationship between socio-economic impact and under age apprentice child labour

H_1: There is significant relationship between socio-economic impact and under age apprentice child labour

The data highlighted in Table 6 exhibits the data needed to calculate and make decisions founded on Hypothesis 2.

Table 6: Calculating Data Hypotheses 2

Tables	Male	Female	Total
Agree	60(a)	30(b)	90
Strongly Agree	55(c)	15(d)	70
Disagree	30(e)	10(1)	40
Total	145	55	200

Calculation of Expected frequencies

$$Cell\ a = \frac{90 * 145}{200} = 65.25$$

$$Cell\ b = \frac{90 * 55}{200} = 24.75$$

$$Cell\ c = \frac{70 * 145}{200} = 50.75$$

$$Cell\ d = \frac{70 * 55}{200} = 19.25$$

$$Cell\ e = \frac{40 * 145}{200} = 29$$

$$Cell\ f = \frac{40*55}{200} = 11$$

Table 7 shows the data of Chi-squared computations derived from the observed values as well as the expected values.

Table 7: Calculating for Chi-Square

Cells	F_o	F_e	F_o-f_e	$(f_o$-$f_e)^2$	$(f_o$-$f_e)^2/f_e$
A	60	65.25	-5.25	27.56	0.422
B	30	24.75	5.25	27.56	1.114
C	55	50.75	4.25	18.06	0.356
D	15	19.25	-4.25	18.06	0.938
E	30	29	1	1	0.35
F	10	11	-1	1	0.091
Total	20				2.976=X²

$X^2=2.976$

The computed value of Chi-square X^2_{cal} which is 2.976 is less than the Chi-square Table value X^2_{tab} of 5.99, therefore alternate Hypotheses H_1 is rejected while the Null hypotheses is accepted. This categorically affirms that there is a no significant relationship with respect to socio-economic impact and under age apprentice child labour.

IV. CONCLUSION

Apprenticeship have been a veritable practice in passing valuable entrepreneurial skills into young people in order to develop into future employers. This practice gives a corresponding impetus to the economy of any society as small

scale businesses are viable with potential to offer viable employment to an array of rural people. This gainful employment promotes the economic stability of families and reduces the poverty impact in the society (Ejo-Orusa & Mpi, 2019).

It is a practice that have heralded a great amount of high profile business leaders in the South Eastern region in Nigeria. It teaches discipline and promotes innovation as well as creativity, making apprentice potential solution bearers in their chosen skills. Products of the scheme are candidates ready to take the business skills required to succeed.

However, the admission of potential candidates and their maturity have been studied by this survey. Concerns about the use of under aged children for apprenticeship programme have been queried by researchers as their innocence is dealt a great blow by exposing them too early into the world of labour. Emotional stability and mental health as well as serious physical injuries could befall the child when subjected to apprenticeship practice without adequate supervision. For female children, rape episodes could result and devastate the young child in socialisation defects. Since there is no government regulation, the implementation of these programme have been abused by most masters. Defaulting on verbal agreements with parents and out rightly opting out of agreements close to agreement terms just to avoid agreed pay-outs to graduands. Despite these perceived ills, poverty have been attributed as basis for sending a child out at that early period without minding the consequence (Naeem *et al.*, 2011). Families are desperate to improve their financial fortunes and furthermore, cut costs of training of the child.

The study have found a profound correlation between poverty and under aged apprenticeship child labour. It was obvious that from the respondents that the children of elites and middle income earners were never sighted amongst apprentice. The study also noted a prevalence of the practice particularly within rural communities where poverty is predominant. The study could not establish an increased social economic advantage using under aged children in the apprenticeship programme. The study made the following recommendations:

- Government regulation in the apprenticeship programme
- Stipulate age restrictions to bar young children from participating
- Compulsory enrolment of apprentice informal and technical schools
- Create awareness on the ills of subjecting young children to child labour practices in whatever guise.

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