

CHILD LABOUR IN THE HOME ENVIRONMENT AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN MIKANG LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF PLATEAU STATE-NIGERIA.

Miba'am Walwai Benjamin

Department of Economics,
Plateau State University Bokokos, Plateau State-Nigeria
Email: mibaam@gmail.com

Abstract: Child labour has continued to be on the increase in sub-Saharan Africa. Among the factors responsible for the increase are poverty, poor parental educational background, learning environment and cultural values. The continuous increase in child labour have been established to have a negative effect on the productivity of future labour force hence hindering attempt to break the vicious circle of poverty that most African societies are facing. Mikang Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the backward LGAs educationally in Plateau State with high rate of students drop out and low admission of its holders of Senior Secondary School certificates into tertiary institutions. It is in this regard that the study employs the survey method of research to ascertain if child labour exist among Senior Secondary School Students in Mikang Local Government Area. The findings revealed that child labour exist in Mikang Local Government Area and the result shows that most secondary School Students are subjected to work at home before going to school or work at home after school. The resulting effect of the work the students perform at home has effect on their performance in school. The study recommends awareness creation among parents on the negative effects of child labour among students; the local government authority should implement poverty alleviation programmes and also provide scholarship to indigent students in the local government among other recommendations.

Keywords: Child Labour, Senior Secondary School, Students, Local Government Area.

Reference to this paper should be made as follows: Miba'am Walwai Benjamin (2017), Child Labour in the Home Environment and its Effects on the Academic Performance of Senior Secondary School Students in Mikang Local Government Area of Plateau State-Nigeria. *J. of Social Sciences and Public Policy*, Vol. 9, Number 2, Pp. 84-95.

INTRODUCTION

Child labour is a global problem that occurs in both developed and developing countries albeit more prevalent in developing countries. According to Kurfi and Aliyu (2014), the International Labour Organization-International Programme on Elimination of Child-Labour (ILO-IPEC) posits that up to 168 million children worldwide are in child labour accounting for almost 11% of the child population as a whole. The International Labour Organization (ILO) (2003) cited in Asamu (2015) in a report confirmed that Africa has the highest incidence of child labour with 40% of all its children aged 5-14 working, Asia is second with 21% followed by Latin America with 17%. Similarly, (ILO, 2006) cited in Togunde and Carter (2008) said about 49 million children in Sub-Saharan Africa are found to be active in child labour, the organization said Sub-Sahara Africa continues to be the region with the highest incidence of child labour with more than one in five children in child labour. Narrowing it down to Nigeria, ILO (1995) in Togunde and Carter (2008) Maintained that about 26% of children aged 10-14 years in Nigeria are engaged in economic activity. Child labour among Nigerian children especially those attending schools has contributed to the lowering academic performance of senior secondary school student in Nigeria (Abdallah et al, 2014). While child labour occurs in both rural and urban areas, findings reveal it is more prevalent in the rural areas. For instance, Ben-Chendo et al (2014) maintained that nearly 70 percent of child labourers are engaged in rural based economic activities. Agricultural work is the most prevalent form of child labour and one of the most hazardous (ILO, 1999 cited in Ben-Chendo et al 2014).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Mikang Local Government Area (LGA) is one of the 17 LGA in Plateau State, the LGA is agrarian with the dominant occupation being rain fed farming. It is also one of the backward educationally in the state as most parents are engaged in subsistence farming, hence children work alongside

parents to help support the family. There has been low admission intake of students from Mikang LGA into tertiary institutions across the country, students' registration to write centralized examinations like the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board's (JAMB) Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME), the West African Examination Council's (WAEC) Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSSCE) and the National Examination Council (NECO) SSCE has been very low. This has been a major source of worry to parents, researchers and policy makers in the LGA in particular and in Plateau State in general. Low level of education has in turn led to the low level of man power in the LGA, the consequence of that is occupying the lower rung in both the economic and political ladder of Plateau State in particular and Nigeria in general.

Table 1: Showing Admission of Students into Plateau State University Bokkos by Local Government for 2014/2015 Academic Session.

S/ N	LGA	DIRECT ENTRY (200 LEVEL)			JABM-UTME (100 LEVEL)			GRAND TOTAL		
		GENDER			GENDER					
		MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	GRAND TOTAL
1	BarkinLadi	17	2	19	38	21	59	55	23	78
2	Bassa	9	2	11	25	12	37	34	14	48
3	Bokkos	32	8	40	48	20	68	80	28	108
4	Jos East	5	3	8	6	2	8	11	5	16
5	Jos North	1	2	3	12	5	17	13	7	20
6	Jos South	10	5	15	36	19	55	46	24	70
7	Kanam	2	0	2	5	2	7	7	2	9
8	Kanke	7	6	13	21	14	35	28	20	48
9	Langtang North	6	3	9	45	18	63	51	21	72
10	Langtang South	2	1	3	11	4	15	13	5	18
11	Mangu	19	7	26	47	23	70	66	30	96
12	Mikang	0	1	1	9	7	16	9	8	17
13	Pankshin	12	7	19	34	21	55	46	28	74
14	Quaan Pan	7	6	13	20	8	28	27	14	41
15	Riyom	5	2	7	16	7	23	21	9	30
16	Shendam	2	3	5	11	6	17	13	9	22
17	Wase	4	0	4	6	0	6	10	0	10
	Other States	8	11	19	35	26	61	43	37	80

Source: Academic Planning Unit, Plateau State University Bokkos, 2015

From the table above, it can be seen that Mikang LGA is one of the backward in terms of student's admission. Only 17 students were admitted for the 2014/2015 academic session, a number very low compared to the likes of Bokkos, Mangu, Langtang North and BarkinLadi LGAs with 108, 96, 72 and 78 respectively as the number of student admission into the university.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The research objective include:

- a. To determine the effect of working in the home environment on the academic performance of Senior Secondary School (SSS) Students in Mikang LGA.
- b. To ascertain the area where child labour is more pervasive in Mikang LGA.
- c. To recommend on how child labour can be discouraged in Mikang LGA.

HYPOTHESES

Three hypotheses are set to be tested with the view of arriving at a conclusion, all will be in the form of the null hypothesis (H_0) and the alternative hypothesis (H_1)

Hypothesis 1

H_0 : There is no prevalence of child labour in Mikang LGA.

H_1 : There is prevalence of child labour in Mikang LGA.

Hypothesis 2

H_0 : Activities in the home environment does not affect the academic performance of SSS Students in Mikang LGA.

H_1 : Activities in the home environment does affect the academic performance of SSS students in Mikang LGA

Hypothesis 3

H_0 : Child labour is not dominant in the Agricultural sector in Mikang LGA.

H_1 : Child labour is dominant in the Agricultural sector in Mikang LGA.

SCOPE AND LIMINATION OF THE STUDY

The scope of the study are the four districts in Mikang LGA. The four districts are Tunkus, Piapung, Garkawa and Koeneom. The study is limited by some factors among which include insufficient information on Mikang LGA, inability of the researcher to engage the whole students in the LGA, time and financial constraint are also limitations to the study.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The problem of child labour is pervasive in nature, the western world look at it differently from Africa (Dada 2013), in some countries the roles of students and workers are separated while in other national context, gainful employment or unpaid home work has been viewed as an integral part of youth development and socialization (Post and Pong, undated). However, not all forms of work done by children is categorized as child labour. For instance Asamu (2015) averred that labour is a controversial concept to define especially in age of children. This is because children assist their families at home from early years. In a similar vein Khan (2014) said not all work done by children is called labour, some work can be positive when it does not affect their health and personal development, not interfere with their schooling. Child labour is not children performing small tasks around the house, nor is it children participating in work appropriate to their level of development and which allows them to acquire practical skills and learn responsibility Education International (EI) (2013).

Any work or employment situation where children engage on a more or less regular basis to earn a livelihood for themselves or their families is child labour (ILO, 2002) cited in Asamu (2015). Child labour is work which contravenes national and international standards concerning the work of children, it is work done by children whether paid or unpaid, in the formal or informal economy, for a few hours or full time, casual or regular, legal or illegal (EI, 2013). Nnabuchi (2013) observed that there has been a shift from the traditional philosophy of allowing children to work so as to learn for future sake, today, children are forced to work for their own upkeep and their family survival. Children are being forced to work in view of the rising poverty rate and falling standard of living. The home is very vital in the formation of a child's character, how children are brought up sharpen their thinking pattern in future time. It has long been recognized that the

character of children's home circumstances influence their intellectual development and school learning. As pointed out by Abdallah et al (2014), the learning environment is paramount to the educational progress of a child. When the environment is conducive enough, learning is enhanced, when otherwise, the level of absenteeism and dropout will increase. The home environment is a powerful informal learning situation in which the family, most especially parents act as educators (Mdanda, 1997), in its absence, schools are not likely to be very successful in helping students master the scholastic task they will face (Anonymous, Undated). According to Mc Coy and Cole (2011), the home is an important point of learning because of the presence of the parents. They maintained that parents have the greatest influence on the achievement of young people through supporting their learning in the home rather than the supporting activities in school. The parents or guardians of students are responsible for a conducive home development while the teachers and policy makers are responsible for the conducive school environment. Several factors have been identified to affect the learning of children, they include the family structure, parental involvement, socio economic status of parents and the level of education of parents (Abdallah et al, 2014; Mc Coy and Cole, 2011). For instance, out of these factors, parent's attitude determines a child's chances of education as parents control the initial decision of a child to attend school and often influence the nature of a child's participation in education (Chimombo et al, 2000).

According to Mc Coy and Cole (2011), families and parents are critical to children's educational attainment, they play a critical role in shaping the future of children, what they do or how they respond to the children play a great role in shaping their destiny. In dealing with both opportunity cost and the perceived net benefits of education, it has to be stressed that the attitude of parents who are principal decision making unit at the household level play major role (Chimombo et al, 2000). It has been established by ILO (undated), ILO (2011), Bitcherman et al (2004) that child labour is transmitted from parents to children, parents who worked as children are likely to make their children work. Research according to Abdallah et al (2014) has shown that high level of parental involvement in children's education positively affects their learning potentials. According to Mdanda (1997), some parents are better able to relate to their children than others.

He maintained that some are warm and supporting, others may be rejecting or even negligent. Mc Coy and Cole (2011) averred that parental attitude and behaviour especially parents involvement in home learning activities can be crucial to children's achievement and can overcome the influences of other factors. Also, poverty and the level of education of the parents contribute to the increasing number of child labourers, for instance ILO (Undated) pointed out that because of widespread and extreme poverty, families depend on children's income to help pay for basic needs, even survival. Child labour has continued to perpetuate the cycle of household poverty particularly in rural areas. It is a key barrier to accessing education and the vast majority of out-of-school children are indeed working (EI, 2013). It leads to high rate of school dropout especially in the rural areas, and the hazard involve can damage the minds and bodies of children (ILO, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design used for the study is exploratory research using primary data. Respondents are carefully selected from various secondary schools within the local government so as to have fair distribution of sample. The survey research design being a component of the exploratory research design is adopted.

Instrument and Procedure

The instrument used for the research was a well-structured questionnaire. The questionnaire was a closed ended, multiple choice that allowed respondents to choose. However, option was provided in some instance for respondents who may have different view from the options provided.

The services of research assistants who are resident in the four districts of the LGA was employed. They assisted in distributing 220 well-structured questionnaires among respondents who are randomly selected among the population of the study and at the end 209 questionnaires were retrieved. On getting responses from the questionnaire, the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyse the data gotten so as to draw conclusion in respect of the set hypothesis and research questions.

Method of Data Analysis

The study employed the use of chi-square to test the hypotheses of the study in order to arrive at a conclusion. The computation was done using cross tabulations of some of the responses gotten from the questionnaires. The analysis of the chi-square computation was done at 5% level of significance.

The cross tabulation was done using the class of students with their responses in relation to working at home, how they think working at home affects their performance in school, and the type of work that they are engaged in.

Decision rule: Pearson Chi-Square Asymp. Sig < 0.005 (there is significant relationship) Pearson Chi-Square Asymp. Sig > 0.005 (there is no significant relationship)

RESULT

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2: Chi-Square Test Result for Class and those that Work at Home
Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	43.663 ^a	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	54.419	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	34.037	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	209		

Source: Author's Compilation 2017

The result in table 2 shows the Chi-square test result for cross tabulation of class and students who work at home where the Pearson chi-square asymptotic significance is less than 0.005 meaning there is a significant relationship between the two cross tabulated variables.

Table 3: Chi-Square Test Result for Class and How Work at Home Affects Performance in School

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	9.788 ^a	2	.007
Likelihood Ratio	10.933	2	.004
Linear-by-Linear Association	7.212	1	.007
N of Valid Cases	180		

Source: Author's Compilation 2017

Table 3 above shows the chi-square test, in this case the Pearson chi-square asymptotic significance is greater than 0.005, meaning there is no significant relationship between the two cross tabulated variables.

Table 4: Chi-Square Result for Class and View if Work at Home can Lead to Poor Performance in School.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	30.273 ^a	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	38.006	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	20.855	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	209		

Source: Author's compilation 2017

The chi-square test result in table 4 shows a significant relationship between the two variables as the Pearson chi-square asymptotic significance is less than .005 at 5% level of significance.

Table 5: Chi-Square Test Result for Class and the Dominant Type of Child Labour in Mikang LGA

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	166.737 ^a	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	231.161	8	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	115.631	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	209		

Source: Author's compilation 2017

The Chi-square result in table 5 shows a significant relationship between the two variables of class and the dominant sector that child labour exist in Mikang LGA.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study reveals that most secondary school students in Mikang LGA are subjected to child labour. Students in SSS often work at home before going to school or work at home after they close from school. This therefore means that there is a prevalence of child labour among SSS students in Mikang LGA. The study also reveals that activities in the home environment affect the academic performance of students in school. The findings however reveals that even though activities at home affect students' performance in school, it does not affect them significantly. The study further confirmed that work at home can lead to poor academic performance in school. Furthermore, the study reveals that child labour exist more in the agricultural sector than other sectors and the most areas within the agricultural sector where child labour is predominant is in farming and rearing of animals.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study therefore conclude that child labour exist in Mikang LGA and majority of the SSS are subjected to working at home before going to school or going to work at home when they close from school. The work that SSS in Mikang are engaged in has a negative effect on their academic performance and it is certainly one of the reasons for high school dropout and low admission intake into tertiary institutions among Mikang students. In line with the research objectives and findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- a. Massive enlightenment should be organized by the local government council in collaboration with religious institutions in the local government to educate all the members of the communities especially parents of SSS students in the LGA on the need for sound and quality education and how child labour serves as a barrier to the realization of that.
- b. The local government authority should implement poverty alleviation policies in the local government, as poverty is prevalent in the local government which is one of the reasons why parents subject their children to hard labour at home.
- c. Scholarship should be provided to indigent students in the local government by the LGA and well-meaning individuals to encourage them as many poor students have to work hard to raise money to pay their school fee.

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