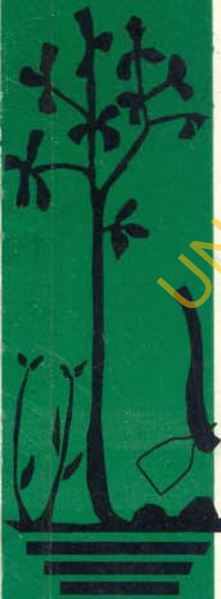


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DETERMINANTS OF CHILD LABOUR PARTICIPATION AMONG CASSAVA PROCESSING HOUSEHOLDS IN OGUN STATE, NIGERIA

ADENEGAN K.O AND O.A.ADEWUSI
*Department of Agricultural Economics
University of Ibadan*

ABSTRACT

The study examined the determinants of child labour participation among cassava processing rural households in Ogun state, Nigeria. Data were obtained using a three-stage sampling procedure. The study used Logit model to analyse determinants of child labour among cassava processing households. The variables age of household head, household size, gross income from cassava processing, primary occupation of household head and poverty status of the household were found to significantly explain child labour participation among the cassava processing households. It is recommended that a policy designed to ameliorate the poverty of these rural poor must among other things recognize provision of sound education at affordable fees, encourage birth control measures would check child labour participation among cassava processing households in the study area.

Keywords: Child labour participation, Childhood poverty, cassava processors, Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Child labour means work that is essentially exploitative and injurious to the physical, social, cognitive and moral development of the child. Working children are the objects of extreme exploitation, young ones especially, are exposed to long hours of work in a dangerous or unhealthy environment with too much responsibility for their age and at the expense of their schooling (ILO, 1995). To this end, the International Labour Office (ILO) minimum age convention (1973) states that "the minimum age for admission to employment or work to a level consistent with the fullest physical and mental development of young persons shall not be less than 18 years". Although the provision was made for developing countries, whose economies, educational and administrative facilities are insufficiently developed permit children of 12-14 years of age to carry out light work under specified conditions.

Some work does not harm children, and may in fact be beneficial for them. Therefore, child work is meant to be work in which the primary emphasis is on learning, training or socialization. As such

the work schedule is flexible, tends to be responsive to developing capacity of the child and encourages his or her participation in appropriate aspects of the decision making process. This is also the view that work can help child in terms of socialization, in building self esteem and for training. The problem is then, not child labour itself but the conditions under which it operates (Bjorne, 1991). In Nigeria, there is also a growing involvement of children in the labour force with work ranging from trading to load carriage, construction work, house maids etc. Of a total of 38, 061, 333 children aged 5 - 17 years estimated during the 2001 FOS/ILO/ SIMPOC survey in Nigeria, 15,027,612 (39.4 percent) are child worker. However, as the global movement against child labour grows, there is need for more precise as well as detailed estimates on child labour. The child labour force participation rate aforementioned indicates the intensity of child labour and the necessity to address it, in order to eliminate its adverse effects on human capital development and the future growth potential of developing countries.

One out of six children in the world today is involved in child labour, doing work that is damaging to his or her mental, physical and emotional development. Globally, about 246 million children are child labourers with 73 million working children being less than 10 years old. Sub-Saharan Africa has the largest proportion of working children with nearly one-third of children aged 14 and below (48 million children) (ILO, 2004). These children are subjected to labour because they and their families depend on it for survival. Of nearly 250 million children engaged in child labor around the world, the vast majority - 70 percent, or some 170 million - are working in agriculture. Child agricultural workers frequently work for long hours in scorching heat, haul heavy loads of produce, are exposed to toxic pesticides, and suffer high rates of injury from sharp knives and other dangerous tools. Their work is grueling and harsh, and violates their rights to health, education, and protection from work that is hazardous or exploitative (Human Right News, 2007). Child labour is on average twice as high in rural as in urban areas. Most working children in rural areas are engaged in agriculture. They represent more than two-thirds (70 per cent) of the total number of working child (ILO, 1999)

According to UNESCO (1995), about 16 million children in Africa, under the age of thirteen are working. Usually the children are employed for long hours (depending on the type of work and the location) are underfed and are poorly paid. The International Labour Office also reports that children work the longest hours and are the worst paid of all labourers (Bequele and Boyden, 1988). They endure work conditions which include unhealthy hazards and potential abuse. Employees capitalize on the docility of the children recognizing that these labourers cannot legally form unions to change their condition. Such manipulations stifles the development of youths, their working conditions do not provide the stimulation for proper physical and mental development. These children are deprived of the simple joy of childhood relegated instead to a life of

drudgery.

Another major factor which predisposes children to work especially in agriculture is poverty. Poverty is a rural phenomenon in Nigeria and the rural households are predominantly engaged in agriculture (World Bank, 1997). Agricultural child labour is thrice what can be seen in other sector, (Federal Office of Statistics, 2001). These children workers virtually come from these rural households where people just manage to work out living from subsistence agriculture. The needs of these poor rural households make them send their wards\child to work rather than go to school. The implications is that these children may be able to provide extra income for their family and so reduce their poverty level. However, this will only be in short term. When one is interested in the long run effect, or what happens to these children when they grow up, the opportunity cost of reduction in human capital developments must be considered.

Generally, child labour is disproportionately located in rural areas and in urban areas. It is necessary to focus on rural child labour because it is likely to grow substantially in the next few decades. The importance of human resource contribution as a critical factor in any development process can not be overemphasized, so there is need to know how intra household decisions affect children's participation in labour, also the relationship between poverty status of the rural households and the involvement of children in labour. Previous studies indicate that the bulk of supply of child workers is from the rural areas. It is therefore pertinent to study the causes of child labour and how the characteristics of the rural sector contribute to this phenomenon. Also, there is a luxury axiom, which states that a family will send the children to the labour market only if the family's income from non-child labour source drops. Therefore to fight poverty, especially in rural Nigeria, there is the need to track childhood poverty and the mechanism that contribute to its transmission over a life course and between generations.

Therefore, this study intends to identify the determinants of child labour participation among cassava processing households in Odeda Local Government Area of Ogun State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Child labor is work for children that harms them or exploits them in some way (physically, mentally, morally, or by blocking access to education). However, there is no universally accepted definition of child labor. For instance, international conventions adopted by the United Nations and the International Labor Organization define child as anyone below the age of 18, and child labor as some types of work performed by children below age 18. And yet ILO conventions variously define the appropriate minimum age of work as age 15 or under 14 in developing nations; while, in another convention, the definition of the worst forms of work applies to all children under age 18. Governments, adding to the confusion, do not always use 18 as the cut-off point for defining a child.

International organizations such as UNICEF, and some social scientists make distinction between child work (not objectionable) and child labor (objectionable). Other phrases used are "exploitative" or "oppressive" child labor.

A child who delivers newspapers before school might actually benefit from learning how to work, gaining responsibility, and a bit of money. Children's work can be conceptualized as a continuum, with destructive or exploitative work at one end and beneficial work - promoting or enhancing children's development without interfering with their schooling, recreation and rest - at the other. And between these two poles are vast areas of work that need not negatively affect a child's development (UNICEF, 1997).

Poverty is widely considered the top reason why children work at inappropriate jobs for their ages. Other reasons include: family expectations and traditions; abuse of the child; lack of good schools and day care; lack of other services, such as health care; public opinion that downplays the risk of early work for children; uncaring attitudes of employers; and limited choices for women. The parents of child labourers are often unemployed or underemployed, desperate for secure employment and income. Yet it is their children - more powerless and paid less - who are offered the jobs. In other words, children are employed because they are easier to exploit. For instance, Ravololomanga and Schlemmer (1994) examined the sources and consequences of Madagascar's economic crisis particularly the changes occurring in the family structures and the lives of the children. The study notes that child labour is considered a vital necessity in the growing economic crisis in Madagascar and concludes that the incidence of child labour can be accounted for by economic necessity, but that there is also a prevalent cultural ideology that support the work of children. The result of surveys carried out during the 1990s showed that Vietnam's GNP per capita grew at the rate of 0.5 percent and child labour fell by 26 percent (Edmonds, 2001).

Achoyamen (2001) observed that the increasing poverty rate in Nigeria has made families to use their children as a means of augmenting their needs. These children are engaged in domestic services, work on family farms, street hawking, bus conductions as well as in factories and restaurant. This buttressed the findings of Canagarajah (1997) that the probability of children's labour participation declined with rising levels of household welfares, although this relationship is weak. He further stated that households who earn a large share of their income from family enterprises, farming or otherwise, are likely to have a greater demand for labour and larger probability of obtaining them within the household as it is cheaper and flexible. This results in high child labour participation in rural farming and non-farming activities.

Empirical studies revealed that children contribute as high as one third of household income at times and their income source can not be treated as insignificant (Partinus and Psachropovlovs 1994). It would therefore be expected that high cost of schooling increases the probability of working. This is because if the children find out that they cannot afford schooling expenses they are forced into working in order to enable them attend school or it may just completely prevent them from going to school

and participate in household enterprise since according to Canagarajah (1997) on the average in Ghana, children earn one sixth of what adults earn.

However, as the global movement against child labour grows, there is need for more precise as well as detailed estimates on child labour. The child labour force participation rate given above indicates the intensity of child labour and the necessity to address it, in order to eliminate its adverse effects on human capital development and the future growth potential of developing countries.

METHODOLOGY

Data source and collection

Data were collected from Odeda Local Government Area (LGA), located in Southwestern Nigeria. The LGA is a rural community and it is well known for farming and cassava processing. A two-stage random sampling procedure was adopted in the data collection. At the first stage, ten villages in the LGA were randomly selected. The second stage was the random selection of ten households from each of the selected villages. One hundred households involved in cassava processing either as their primary occupation or secondary occupation were interviewed. Data collected includes household socioeconomic characteristics, participation in child labour activities, food and non-food expenditure and income from cassava processing.

Analytical method

The Logit model was used to determine the causal factors of child labour. The model postulates that the probability (P_1) that an individual household will participate in child labour in cassava processing is function of an index (Z_i).

Z_i is also the verse of the standard logistic cumulative function of π i.e.

$$P_i(y=1) = f(Z_i)$$

Z_i is also the verse of the standard logistic cumulative function of π i.e.

$$P_i(y=1) = f(z_i)$$

The probability of child labour participation is given by

$$P_i(y=1) = 1 / (1 + e^{-z_i})$$

The probability of non child labour participation is given by

$$Q_1(y=0) = 1 - P_i(y=1)$$

Since

$$1 - P_i(y=1) = 1 - \frac{1}{1 + e^{-z_i}}$$

$$1 - P_i(y=1) = \frac{1 + e^{-z_i} - 1}{1 + e^{-z_i}}$$

$$1 - P_i(y=1) = \frac{e^{-z_i}}{1 + e^{-z_i}}$$

But

$$\frac{1}{P_i(y=1)} = 1 + e^{-z_i}$$

$$\text{Thus, } \frac{P_i(y=1)}{1 - P_i(y=1)} = \frac{1}{e^{-z_i}}$$

$$\frac{P_i(y=1)}{1 - P_i(y=1)} = e^{z_i}$$

The dependent variable (y_i) is a dummy. It takes the value of 1, if the household participate in child labour and 0 if otherwise because dependent variable is binary. The maximum likelihood estimate is used to analyze the model.

The probability of child labour participation (P_i) by an household is calculated from Z_i value

$$Z_i = b_0 + b_1 x_1 + b_2 x_2 + \dots + b_n x_n$$

where b_0 = constant

X_1 = Age of household head (years)

X_2 = Gender of household head (1 = male; 0 if otherwise)

X_3 = Primary occupation of household head (1 = cassava processing; 0 if otherwise)

X_4 = Household size

X_5 = Dependency ratio (ratio of children below 18 years to household size)

X_6 = Access to credit (1 = have access; 0 if otherwise)

X_7 = Gross income from cassava processing

X_8 = Poverty status of household (1 = non-poor; 0 if poor)

b_1 - b_n = parameters.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Characteristics of households

The result shows that majority (86 percent) of the cassava processing households were male-headed. The mean and modal age of the household heads are 54.8 years and 50 years respectively while the median age was 55 years. Table 1 above shows that majority (71 percent) of the household involved in cassava processing are above fifty years of age. Thus, majority of the household heads were not their economic active years.

The mean, median and modal household size was 8. The minimum and maximum household sizes were three and seventeen

respectively. This implies that cassava processing households size were large, which might reduce the per capita expenditure of a household and consequently their welfare. Also, a larger percentage (59 percent) of the processors was engaged in cassava processing as their major source of income. This indicates majority of the households derive their livelihood from cassava.

The result further shows that a higher percentage (94 percent) of the processors earned less than N 20,000 monthly. The average monthly income was N 11,489.00 which is rather too low for good welfare given an average household size of eight. The poverty line was determined using the two-third mean per capital household expenditure. This gave a poverty line of N1775.6. Households with per capita expenditure less than N1775.6 were classified as being poor while those above it as non-poor. The result shows that majority (84 percent) of the cassava processing households were poor.

Table1

Socioeconomic characteristics of the households

Socio-economic Characteristics	Percentage
Gender	
Male	86.0
Female	24.0
Age (years)	
41-45	9.0
46-50	20.0
51 – 55	28.0
56-60	24.0
61-65	14.0
66-70	5.0
Mean age	54.8
Household size	
0-5	13.0
6-10	52.0
11-15	21.0
16-20	4.0
Mean household size	8.0
Occupation	
Cassava processing as primary occupation	59.0
Cassava processing as secondary occupation	41.0
Monthly income from cassava processing	
<N 10, 000	48.0
N 10,000–N 20,000	46.0
>N 20,000	6.0
Mean income	N 11,489.00
Poverty Status	
Poor	84.0
Non-poor	16.0

Table 2
Result of the logit model on determinants of
child labour participation

Variables	Coefficients	Standard Error
Age of household head (X_1)	0.2747***	0.065
Gender of household head (X_2)	-2.2374	2.798
Primary occupation (X_3)	2.2694*	1.384
Household size (X_4)	0.3331*	0.200
Dependency ratio (X_5)	0.7349	0.591
Access to credit (X_6)	-0.5045	1.315
Gross income (X_7)	-0.0003***	0.0001
Poverty status (X_8)	-4.3479**	2.000
Constant	2.1334***	0.2132
$\chi^2 = 25.714^*$		
Log likelihood ratio = 25.714		
Degree of freedom =14	N=100	

*** significant at 1% ** significant at 5% * significant at 10%

Table 2 presents the results of the logit model showing the determinants of child labour participation among cassava processors. The chi-square was used to test for the goodness of fit of the model. The model is therefore found to be statistically significant at 10 percent indicating that all the independent variables jointly explain the probability of participation in child labour.

The result of the logit model shows that five explanatory variables are significant, while three variables are insignificant. The significant variables include age of household head (1% level of significant), household size (10% level of significance), gross income from cassava processing (1% level of significance), primary occupation of household head (10% level of significance) and poverty status of the household (5% level of significance).

Age of household head, primary occupation, and household size have positive values. These have direct relationship with child labour participation while poverty status and gross income earnings from cassava processing have indirect relationship with child labour participation. Thus, as the household head advances in age, the probability to participate in child labour increases. The minimal age of the sampled household heads is forty-three years, and the average is fifty-five years. It can be deduced that these household heads have reached the peak of their productivity. Thus, It is expected that advancement in age would result in decline in productivity of the household heads and hence the household income stream. Engaging in child labour participation is therefore a means to boost household income. Also, increase in household size increases the probability of child labour participation in the study area. This implies that a large household may not be able to sufficiently meet its need and thus resolve to push the children out to work and support the household financially. The study also

reveals that the more families that are engaged in cassava processing as their primary occupation, the higher their probability to be involved in child labour. This indicates that cassava processing cannot yield sufficient income to fully meet the needs of the households. Thus, the need to be engaged in child labour as an alternative means of increasing the household income.

Higher gross income from cassava processing results in lower probability to participate in child labour. The higher income stream from cassava processing increases per capita expenditure and consequently reduces the poverty status of the households. This is expected to reduce the probability to engage children (who should be in school) in labour. The poverty status of the household has indirect relationship with the probability of child labour participation. Thus, the poorer a household is, the greater its probability to be engaged in child labour. Child labour in this case serves as a buffer to rural poverty.

CONCLUSION

The result of the Logit model showed that child labour is primarily a phenomenon of poverty, and poverty bears direct link with the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents in the area. This was attributed to age distribution of household head, primary occupation of household head, household size, gross income from cassava processing and poverty status of the household. Therefore any policy designed to ameliorate the poverty of these cassava processors and check their participation in child labour, must among other things recognize provision of sound education at affordable fees and livelihood diversification of the rural household heads. Also, policies that would promote birth control measures and various educative programmes to discourage large family size should be implemented in the study area. Also, increasing gross income from cassava processing will reduce incidence of poverty and consequently check child labour participation. This could be achieved through availability of cost-reducing and labour-saving technologies as well as increased access to credit facilities.

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