Pattern and Drivers of Child Labour Activities in Cashew Value Chain: Empirical Evidence from Kogi State, Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the pattern and determinants of child labour activities in cashew value chain in Kogi state, Nigeria. It specifically described the characteristics of actors in cashew value chain of farm families in the state, described the pattern and distribution of child labour within the value chain, and determined the contributory factors that influenced involvement in child labour activities within the value chain. A three staged random sampling technique was used to select 160 farm families for the study. Primary data obtained through structured questionnaire were analysed using descriptive statistics and logit regression model. Findings of the study showed that 86.8% of the household heads were males. The mean age among the respondents was 45 years with 88.1% been married and an average household size of 7 persons. The mean farm size recorded was 3 hectares. The study further revealed that 100% of the respondents got their children involved in various agricultural activities such as land preparations, (85.2%), planting (86.5%), post planting activities like weeding (82.6%), harvesting (92.3%), processing and storage (23.2%), and marketing (28.4%); and these were majorly (96.1%) performed by the male children. Estimate of the coefficients of dependency ratio (β = 1.7004), education (β = -0.2390), amount on non-food (β =-1.3884), awareness on child labour (β =-0.1743), and awareness on child rights act (β = -0.2586) significantly determined the incidence of child labour activities along cashew value chain in the state at 5% level of significance. Amongst others, the study recommends awareness creation by government and other relevant stakeholders on child labour and child labour right act across the State. The study also recommend the full adoption and domestication of the child right act in all the local government areas of the State.

Keywords: Awareness, child labour, child right act, cashew, dependency ratio, male

INTRODUCTION

The International Labour Organization (ILO, 2006) defined child labour as work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, interferes with their schooling by depriving them of opportunity to attend school; by obliging them to leave school prematurely or by requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. Child labour exists in many employment sectors such as agriculture, sports, surgical manufacturing, construction, mining, weaving, food processing; it has been one of the biggest obstacles to social development (Lana, 2014).

It is no gain saying that the effects of hazardous work on children are very damaging to their physical, psychological and emotional development. Child labour, with cognizance to the agricultural sector prevents children from acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills thereby limiting their careers, employability and future livelihood opportunities as youths and their ability to transition from school into decent work. According to Chukwendo (2014), the implication of poor education opportunities on child labour is well documented, but existence of widespread agricultural child labour also reduces the effectiveness of investment in education. Children cannot become the hope of the future unless they are properly brought up, educated and trained (Subhadarsani, 2014).

Empirical literatures exist on child labour in various sectors Nafees *et al*. (2016) examined the situation analysis of child labour in Karachi, Pakistan and reported that lack of basic education of parents, norms and culture, large family size, physical and verbal abuses by family members were the major factors identified to send their children to work. Mishra (2012) examined the child rights and situation of children in Odisha between the time periods 2010-2011 and found that migrant family and uneducated adults generally send their children to work in an early age. Mishia (2011) examined ban on child labour in India and found a strong positive correlation between parents being ex-child labours and their children being employed. Anker (2000) examined the conceptual and research frameworks for the economics of child labour in developing countries and found that, child work is frequently hard on children, however recognized fundamental for family survival.

Poverty could be associated with child labour; especially in farming households. Insufficient labour supply at peak times, encouraged some parent in the rural area with no choice than to make use of their children to perform work such as weeding, and harvesting (Norah and Bemd 2012). Most school children in rural areas sometimes skip classes to accompany their parents to the farm. This was especially the case during the peak farming season (ILO, 2007). This perhaps portends a great problem because it denies children their right to full time quality education which is the key to escaping poverty.

In the cashew value chain, children work on farms performing various farm duties such as digging irrigation trenches in nurseries, creating terraces, preparing the land for planting, fertilizing the fields, sowing, pruning, weeding, thinning, and guarding produce, transporting produce, selling produce, collecting water and food for farm workers, among others. Sequel to these activities, they face exposure to dangerous weather conditions, equipment, pesticides, and many others hazards which may negatively impede their education (ILO, 2006). Following this position, there is therefore the need to establish the patter and contributing factors to child labour activities along cashew value chain for policy implications.

METHODOLOGY

The study area was Kogi State, Nigeria. Kogi State was created on 27th August, 1991 with capital in the confluence town of Lokoja. The State is located between longitudes $5^0$18 E and $7^0$94 E; and latitudes $6^0$30' N and $8^0$42'N. Kogi State has a land area of approximately 28,044 square kilometers. It is surrounded by ten other states and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) as follows: Niger State and FCT to the North; Nasarawa State to the Northeast; Benue State to the east; Enugu State to the Southeast; Anambra State to the South; Edo, Ondo and Ekiti States to the South and southwest; and Kwara State to the North-West. The State is a leading producer of cashew in Nigeria.

A multi-stage random sampling techniques was used to select respondents in this study. In stage one, two (2) extension blocks were randomly selected from each of the agricultural Zones (A, B, C, and D). In stage two, two (2) extension cells were randomly selected from each

block making a total of 16 extension cells. In stage three, five (5) cashew producers/farmers and five (5) cashew processors were randomly selected from each cell. A total of 160 respondents were used for this study.

Primary Data were collected with the use of a well-constructed questionnaire**.** Data were analysed using descriptive and logit regression model. The logit model used is as specified below:

$$P(y = 1|x) = G(\beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \ldots\ldots\ldots \beta_k X_k) = G(\beta_0 + X\,\beta)$$

Where G is a function taking on values strictly between zero and one: $0<G(z)<1$, for all real numbers z. This ensures that the estimated response probabilities are strictly between zero and one. Y* cannot be measured directly but rather by measuring the incidence of child labour activities within the value chain as 1 or 0 (if yes = 1, 0= if No), so the value of the Y is: 1 if $Y^* > 0$ and Y = 0 if $Y^* < 0$. X is a vector of explanatory variables included in the model; P is the probability distribution function of the standard normal distribution. The choice of G ensures that the model is strictly between zero and one for all values of the parameters. Therefore, a positive coefficient of a given explanatory variable can be interpreted as being associated with a higher probability of child labour. It should also be noted that the explanatory variables were selected based on previous empirical literature and the theoretical framework guiding this study. Thus,

$$\text{Child labour} = f(X_1, X_2, X_3, X_4, X_5, X_6, X_7, X_8, X_9)$$

Explicitly, the full model would be expressed as

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + X_3 + \beta_4 R x_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + \beta_7 X_7 + \beta_8 X_8 + \beta_9 X_9 + \varepsilon$$

$X_1 = Age\ (in\ years)$; $X_2 = Dependency\ ratio$; $X_3 = Education\ (in\ years)$;
$X_4 = Farm\ size\ (hectares)$;$X_5 = Farming\ experience\ (years)$;
$X_6 = Amount\ spent\ on\ non-food\ (₦)$
$X_7 = Awareness\ on\ child\ labour\ (1 = Yes, otherwise, 0)$
$X_8 = Awareness\ on\ child\ right\ act\ (1 = Yes, otherwise, 0)$
$X_9 = Access\ to\ extension\ agents\ (1 = Yes, otherwsie, 0)$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Actors in the Cashew Value Chain

The result presented in Table 1 revealed the dominance of males with a mean age of 45years. Majority (88.1%) of the respondents were married with an average household size of seven (7) members. The mean farming experience was 15 years with an average cashew farm size of 3 hectares. High (98.7%) level of formal educational qualification was recorded among the respondents. Extension service delivery was very low among cashew nut farmers and this may have implications on adoption of innovation and child labour activities. An average of ₦ 23,468 and ₦ 9,850 was spent on food and non-food items, respectively in a month. Findings of this study on socioeconomic variables agrees with separate studies by Ogah *et al*. (2020), Sirela *et al*. (2018), Salau *et al*. (2017), and Enwelu *et al*. (2014) when they reported similar results among cashew nut farmers in Nigeria.

Pattern of Child Labour activities in the Cashew Value Chain

The pattern of distribution was assessed on the basis of child labour involvement by gender, time of involvement, age of participation in farm work, agricultural activities carried out (Table 2).

Table 2 showed that 96.1% of the respondents have their male children/wards involved in child labour. This show that majority of the respondents prefer to use their male in farming operations than the female. They usually distinguish the work done by the male from the female because they believe the male has more skills and strength to handle the farming activities compare to the female. In terms of time of involvement; 81.3% of the respondents' children/wards are involved in farming operation in the morning at an average age of 12 years 5 months. This can hinder the children from developing their intellectual abilities and schooling. The nature of activities done on cashew nut farm by the children include; land preparations, (85.2%), planting (86.5%), post planting activities like weeding (82.6%), harvesting (92.3%), processing and storage (23.2%), and marketing (28.4%).

Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of the respondents

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean
Gender			
Male	139	86.8	
Female	21	13.1	
Total	160	100	
Age			
20-40	76	47.5	45 years
41-60	66	41.3	
61-80	18	11.3	
Total	160	100	
Marital status			
Single	16	10.0	
Married	141	88.1	
Divorced	3	1.8	
Widow	-	-	
Separated	-	-	
Total	160	100	
Household Size			
1 - 8	112	70	7 persons
9 - 16	43	26.8	
17 - 24	5	3.1	
Total	160	100	
Number of years spend in acquiring formal education			
No formal Education	2	1.3	
Primary Education	61	38.1	
Secondary education	78	48.8	
Tertiary Education	19	11.9	
Total	160	100	
Farm Size			
< 2	80	50	3 hectares
2 - 4	56	35	
4 - 6	11	6.9	
> 6	13	8.1	
Total	160	100	
Farm Experience			
1 - 10	61	38.1	15 years
11 - 20	70	43.8	
21 - 30	24	15	
Above 30	5	3.1	
Total	160	100	
Amount spend on food item in a month			
< 15,000	42	26.3	23, 468.75
15,000 - 30,000	90	56.3	
30,100 - 45, 000	19	11.9	
45,100 - 60,000	9	5.6	
Total	160	100	
Amount spend on Non-food item in a month			
1,000 - 10,000	109	68.1	9,850
10,100 - 20,000	46	28.7	
20,100 - 30,000	5	3.1	
Total	160	100	

Source: Field Survey, 2021

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to pattern of involvement in child labour activities in the cashew value chain

Pattern of child labour activities, n = 155	Frequency	Percentage
A. Child labour involvement by gender		
Male	149	96.1
Female	6	3.9
Total	155	100
B. Most time of involvement		
Morning	126	81.3
Afternoon	3	1.9
Evening	22	14.2
Weekends	4	2.6
Total	155	100
C. Age of participation in farm work		
Below 10	30	19.4
10 – 15	120	77.4
15 – 20	5	3.2
Total	155	100
D. Agricultural activities carried out		
Land preparation	132	85.2
Planting	134	86.5
Post planting activities	128	82.6
Harvesting	143	92.3
Processing and storage	36	23.2
Marketing	44	28.4

Source: Field Survey, 2021 = multiple response

Determinants of Child Labour Activities in the Cashew Value Chain

Estimate of logit regression model on the contributory factors to child labour in the cashew value chain is presented in Table 3. The chi square value of 45.58 indicates that all variables in the model significantly influenced the incidence (occurrence) of child labour activities at 1% level of significance. The result further revealed that the coefficients of dependency ratio, education, amount spent on non-food, and awareness about child labour significantly influenced the severity of child labour activities in the study area. The coefficient ($\beta = 1.7004$) of dependency ratio had a

positive sign and significant at 1%. This implies that an increase in the dependency ratio will increase the likelihood of children been involved in child labour activities.

Table 3: Estimates of the logit regression model

Explanatory Variables	Coefficient	Std. Error	Z	P>(Z)
Age	0.0098	0.0331	0.30	0.768
Dependency ratio	1.7004	0.5948	2.86**	0.004
Education	-0.2390	0.0987	-2.42***	0.015
Farm size	0.9511	0.4538	2.10	0.036
Farming experience	0.5862	0.439	1.33	0.183
Amount on non-food	1.3884	0.4556	3.05***	0.002
Awareness on child labour	-0.1743	0.415	-1.48**	0.139
Awareness on child right act	-0.2586	0.4150	-0.62***	0.533
Access extension	0.0121	0.5460	0.02	
Constant	-2.3552	1.1940		
Log likelihood	-105.034			
Chi square	45.50***			
Pseudo R^2	0.1783			

Source: Computed from field survey, 2021 ***and**=Sig. @ 1% and 5% respectively.

The coefficient of education (β = -0.2390) was significant at 5% level with negatively signed. This result is in line with the *a priori* expectation. By implication, an increase in the number of years spent schooling will reduce the likelihood of children involvement in child labour activities. Expectedly, children of parents with no formal education would be more involved in child labour activities compared to children from educated parents. This finding could be associated with awareness on the negative impact of child labour. Literate parents will understand the implication and subsequent consequences of child labour. Hence, they could prefer sending their children/wards to schools as against farm work.

This findings agrees with Vu Minh (2012) and Shunsuke (2006) who reported that more educated parents can be assumed to show greater concern for the education of their children than their less educated counterparts because they recognize the future returns to education.

The coefficient (β = -1.3884) of amount spent on non-food items was negatively signed and significant at 1%. This implies that there is an increase in the amount spent on non-food items such as shelter, clothing, and other non-food basic amenities will reduce the likelihood of children involvement in child labour activities. This result could be associated with the poverty or social status of the household. Farming households with high income or higher social status will spend more on both food and non-food items. This will imply that little or no children in such households would be involved in child labour activities. This result agrees with (Alao *et al*. 2013) which in his own findings of similar work stated that the lower will be the likelihood of using child labour on the farm. Instead of using children, the household head will prefer to employ hired labourers to work on the farm.

The coefficient (β = -0.1743) of awareness on child labour negatively influenced the incidence of child labour in the area. By implication, the likelihood of children involvement in child labour activities decreases among households that aware than those that are not. Also, the coefficient (β = -0.2586) of awareness on child right inversely influenced the incidence of child labour among farming households in the study area. This finding implies that the probability of children involvement in child labour activities decreases with farming households who are aware of child right act than those who are not. The child right act provide and protect the right of a child. Parts of the right include right to: education, freedom of movement, private and family life.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the pattern and drivers of child labour activities in the cashew value chain in Kogi state, Nigeria. More male children were involved in child labour activities along the cashew value chain than their female counterparts. These children usually carry out farm related activities in the morning and below the age of fifteen (15) years; these may have implications on schooling days. The incidence of child labour activities in the cashew value chain was

significantly influenced by dependency ratio, parent education, amount spent on non-food items, awareness on child labour, and awareness on child right act. Based on findings of this study, the following policy recommendations are made:

1. Government should create awareness among farming communities of the negative impacts of child labour. This is important as a first step in securing community participation and empowerment in the prevention and elimination of child labour across the value chain. In view of this, programmes such as Farmer Field Schools and Farmers Club are an effective means of awareness rising.
2. Awareness on child right act hegatively influenced the incidence of child labour along the cashew value chain. It is expected that government, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders should intensify their efforts towards increasing the level of awareness on child right act and the implications of child labour activities.
3. Number of dependency ratio increased incidence of child labour. It therefore becomes necessary for government to implement policies to regulate child birth. Alternatively, awareness should be created in farming communities on the implications of large household size vis-a-vis high dependency ratio.
4. The Federal and State Ministries of Agriculture and Labour can create an enabling environment by mainstreaming child labour concerns in agriculture, precisely along the cashew value chain.

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