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## Implications of Child Labour on Household Resource Management

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### Abstract

*This study investigated the relevance of children in household resource management. Data were collected using interview schedule from 186 randomly selected respondents. Data were described while analysis of variance, correlation and regression analyses were used to establish differences and relationships of variables. Majority (58.1%) of the respondents spent about ₦10, 000 to operate their farms when children were involved while 45.2 percent spent the same amount when children were not involved. Children's level of involvement in productive activities as indicated by 46.2 percent was average. Among others, 60.2% of the respondents said there was increase in standard of living, 51.6% claimed timely farming operations and 59.4% reported decrease in cost of production through children involvement in farming operations. There was a significant relationship between number of wives ( $r = 0.21$ ), family size ( $r = 0.19$ ) as well as benefits derived ( $r = 0.43$ ) and level of children involvement. There was significant difference in cost of production when children were and were not involved ( $F = 8.67$ ). Children need to be encouraged and motivated so as*

*to always contribute their quota towards increasing households' productivity.*

**Key words:** Child labour, child abuse, resource management, household, productive

## **Introduction**

A resource is any entity, tangible or intangible, that contributes to the ability of an individual or family to produce valued outputs (Goldsmith, 2005). Management is the process of using resources to achieve goals. Household resource management has been described as the manipulation of the resources at the family disposal to achieve what it wants from life (Stephenson, 1997). In most African countries family members solely supply labour to household productive activities and sometimes in addition to hired labour (Soyebo, 2005). Ajayi and Torimiro (2004) affirmed that most African communities acknowledged children participation in farming as normal to promote continuity and sustainability of their farming culture. In addition, some cultures enforced and impressed child labour upon the children as one of the reasons why they are born or raised (Akinkunmi, 1997). Various researches showed that children are mostly involved in land clearing, planting, weeding, animal feeding and harvesting activities (Oluyide *et al.*, 1999; Farinde *et al.*, 1999). Recent studies have also revealed that majority of the rural children participating in farming activities started right from age four (Adedoyin *et al.*, 1998; Torimiro and Lawal, 1998). Their contributions to farm-home food security and rural household survival are strongly felt through their involvement in crop production activities. This in turn translates into improved level of food sufficiency, survival of agro-based industries, and a level of increase in foreign reserves (Farinde *et al.*, 1999). Meanwhile, Soyebo (2005) posited that while it was mostly expected of male children to assist father in farming activities, the most expected role of female children was to assist mother in processing and marketing of farm produce.

Of the family resources, labour is considered the most crucial factor of production that produces capital and entrepreneurship (Ekong, 2003). Ekong (2003) further emphasized that despite specialization of function as the society advances and becomes more complex, the family still plays the important role of providing the labour or manpower for production and distribution within agricultural, industrial and commercial firms. Children

therefore serve as important components of household labour force for food production and income generation.

It is generally accepted that work can and does influence the children's learning and their ability to cope with different situations. Also it creates opportunities for self-expression and helps children to relate learning with life. In fact, work can give satisfaction, be a source of education, training and income. However, the impact of children involvement in productive activities and household resources has not been adequately researched. Hence, this study investigates the extent to which children contribute to rural households' productive activities in Ife East LGA of Osun State, Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

Specifically, the objectives were to examine the level of involvement of children in productive activities, determine the cost of production saved through children involvement in productive activities, and identify the benefits derived through children involvement in productive activities. Significant difference between costs of production when children involved and when not involved was determined. It was also hypothesized that there is no significant relationship between household characteristics, benefits derived through children's involvement and their level of involvement in productive activities.

### **Methodology**

The study was conducted in Ife East Local Government Area of Osun State, Nigeria. Ife East LGA comprises mostly rural communities of the ancient city, Ile – Ife. The inhabitants are mainly farmers. The major source of labour in these communities is the family. Six rural communities, based on their farming activities and thirty one households were randomly selected in each community. A total of one hundred and eighty six households were selected for the study. Interview schedule was used to collect information from household heads on the various productive activities in which their children were involved. Data collected were described with mean, frequency count and percentages while correlation, regression and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses.

Level of children involvement was measured as rarely involved = 1 point, occasionally involved = 2 points, and regularly = 3 points while it was categorized as low, medium and high levels of involvement using mean  $\pm$  standard deviation. To measure benefits derived (in kind), a list of expected

benefits was given and each was scored 1 point. The total point scored by a respondent was taken as the benefits index.

### **Results and discussion**

#### **Household characteristics**

Majority (84.9%) of the respondents was males, 45.2% were between 41 – 56 years of age, 93.6% married, 65.6% were Christians and 43% had no formal education. While 60.2% were nuclear families 52.7% had family size of 6 – 10 persons (Table 1), whereas 42.3% earned up to ₦50, 000 as annual income (Table 3). Majority had one or more children in primary (79.6%), secondary (68.3%) and post-secondary school (69.9%) (Table 2)

#### **Asset possessed by the respondents**

Data in Table 4 show that 58.1% of the respondents had personal house, 45.2% had landed property, 54.8% owned personal motorcycle, 22.6% possessed car, almost 97% of the respondents had various farm implements, 12.9% had cassava grater, only 2.2% had rice mill and only 1.1% owned a tractor. These results show that majority of the respondents owned personal houses, motorcycles and farm implements.

#### **Productive activities in which children are involved**

Data in Table 5 show that few (12.9%) of the respondents involved their children in land clearing, stumping (8.1%), ridging (6.5%), thinning (26.9%), weeding (45.2%), and supplying (26.9%). Also, 38.7% involved their children in harvesting, pesticides application (26.9%), cassava processing (26.9%), oil palm processing (21.5%) and cocoa processing (21.5%). Children were also involved in livestock feeding (18.3%), hunting (16.1%), monitoring of traps (17.2%), sale of produce (30.1%), planting (49.5%) and fertilizer application (35.5%). This result revealed that children were involved in various activities, which attract high cost when respondents were to employ hired labours. This is in line with Oyekunle (1999) that children help their parents in the areas of planting, weeding, harvesting and processing.

#### **Level of children involvement in productive activities**

About 82% of the respondents involved their children in productive activities. This shows that children make substantial contributions to

household productive activities. Data in Table 6 show that 19.4% of the respondents did not involve their children in farming, 47.3% involved between 1 and 2 children, 23.6% involved between 3 and 4 children, 7.6% involved between 5 and 6 children and only one respondent (1.1%) involved between 7 and 8 children in productive activities. Their levels of involvement in productive activities show that 9.7 % was low, 46.2% was average and 25.8% was high (Table 6).

It can be deduced that the level of involvement of children in productive activities was average. This could be attributed to the fact that most children only assist their parents during weekends and sometimes after school during week days. Oyekunle (1999) confirmed that children assist their parents to drop their wares at the market before going to school in the morning and after school hours, help their children carry whatever they had back to the village. This shows that children are always engaged household activities. This finding corroborates Oloko (1997) who claimed that assisting parents with household chores after a child's return from school and resting for a while is not child labour in African context. Also, when a child does some odd jobs for neighbours and friends after school to earn needed pocket money; in as much as such jobs do not disturb his or her schooling or other aspects of his/her welfare, Oloko (1997) affirmed that such do not constitute child labour. The finding further buttresses Ajayi and Torimiro (2004) who revealed that children are trained and not abused in farming. This implies that involvement of children in productive activities is a form of training for better future.

#### Cost of production with or without children involvement

Majority (58.1%) of the respondents spent less than or exactly ₦10,000 to operate their farms when their children were involved, 11.8% spent between ₦10,001 and ₦20,000, 5.4% spent between ₦20,001 and ₦40,000 and 6.5% spent above ₦40,000 to operate their farms when their children were involved.

A little below half (45.2%) of the respondents spent less than or exactly ₦10,000 to operate their farms when children were not involved, 21.5 percent spent between ₦10,001 and ₦20,000, 18.3 percent spent between ₦20,000 and ₦40,000 and 15.1 percent spent above ₦40,000 to operate their farms without children involvement.

Thus, it could be observed that the proportion of the respondents that expended less than ₦10, 000 as cost of production was higher when children were involved (58.1%) than when children were not involved (45.2%) (Figure 1). Since household resource management is using what a family has to achieve needs (Goldsmith, 2005), involving children in productive activities serves dual purposes. It saves cost of production as well as exposes children to training essentials to living a successful life as adults. This supports the findings of Ajayi and Torimiro (2004) that children participation in farming is a sort of training and socialization

### **Benefits derived through children involvement in productive activities**

Data in Figure 2 indicate that 61.3% of the respondents agreed that children involvement resulted to increase in farm income, 39.8% said it lead to increase in farm size, 22.6% indicated that it resulted to increase in use of credit facilities, 50.5% agreed that output was increased when children were involved and 60.2% said it resulted in increased profit margin. However, 60.2% of the respondents said there was increase in standard of living when children were involved, 51.6% claimed timely farming operations and 59.4% reported that children involvement in farming operations resulted to decrease in cost of production. On the overall, children involvements have been helpful in one way or the other to the respondents. This is in consonance with Akangbe *et al.* (2006) that rural-urban migration of the children would lead to decreased farm size, increased hire labour and consequently increase in cost of production which, eventually will result into reduction in their annual income and hence low standard of living.

### **Difference in cost of production when children were and were not involved**

The result of analysis of variance show that there is significant difference in cost of production when children were and were not involved ( $F = 8.67$ ). It therefore, implies that the average cost incurred when children were not involved (₦17, 875) was significantly higher than the amount spent with children involvement (₦12, 268). Hence, children involvement in productive activities could result to reduction in cost of production and consequently increased profit margin (Table 7). The cost that was saved through children involvement could be used to procure some necessities such as uniforms, textbooks and other materials that may be needed to enhance the children's learning in school.

### **Household characteristics and level of involvement**

The result of correlation analysis in Table 8 indicated positive and significant relationships between number of wives ( $r = 0.21$ ), family size ( $r = 0.19$ ) and level of involvement. This implies that the more the number of wives, the higher the level of children involvement. Also as family size increases, the level of involvement will increase.

Results of regression analysis in Table 9 show that household characteristics such as age ( $T = -0.99$ ), number of wives ( $T = 1.54$ ), farm size  $T = 1.31$ ), as well as income ( $T = -2.14$ ) contributed significantly to the prediction of level of children involvement in productive activities. Hence, in determining the empirical level of children involvement in productive activities age, number of wives and income are significant. Increase in farm size may demand more children involvement. The more the children involved the less the cost of production due to hired labour and consequently the more the income that accrue to the household. All variables could only account for 22.6% variation in the level of children involvement in productive activities.

### **Benefits derived through children involvement and level of involvement**

The result of correlation analysis showed a significant relationship between benefits derived ( $r = 0.43$ ) and level of children involvement at 0.01 significant level (Table 8). It means that the higher the level of involvement the greater the benefits derived and vice versa. In addition, regression analysis confirmed that benefits derived through children involvement in productive activities relates significantly with level of involvement with regression coefficient  $b = 0.37$  at  $p \leq 0.05$  (Table 9). Therefore, to predict the level of children involvement in productive activities, benefits derived remains significant.

### **Conclusion and recommendations**

Based on the findings, children were actively involved in household productive activities and their level of involvement was average. The average cost of production when children were involved (₦12, 268.85) was less than when children were not involved (₦17, 875.29) in productive activities. Benefits as timely farming operations, increased output, increased income, increased profit margin and improved standard of living among others were derived through children involvement.

There was a significant difference in cost of production when children were involved and when not involved in productive activities. There were significant relationships between number of wives, family size and level of involvement. Age, income, number of wives as well as farm size of the respondents contributed significantly to the prediction of level of involvement. Also, while benefits derived was significantly related to level of involvement, it also made significant contributions to the prediction of level of children involvement in productive activities.

Involving children in productive activities such as farming activities would go a long way to making possible timely farm operations. As children involvement will save time and hence make time available for other household activities. This practice would eliminate cost of hiring labour and ultimately reduce cost of production. Reduced cost of production will eventually result into increased profit margin thereby making available more income to the households thus improving their purchasing power. Money saved through children involvement could otherwise be used for other valuable or profitable purposes. Consequently, the households' standard of living would be enhanced.

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Table 1: Distribution of respondents by demographic characteristics

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
25-40	40	21.5
41-56	84	45.2
57-72	58	31.2
72 and above	4	2.2
Sex		
Male	158	84.9
Female	28	15.1
Marital status		
Married	174	93.6
Single	10	5.4
Divorced	2	1.1
Household composition		
Nuclear	112	60.2
Extended	70	37.6
None	4	2.2
Years of formal education		
No formal education	80	43.0
Up to 6 years	52	27.9
7 – 12 years	44	23.8
13 years and above	10	5.4
Religion		
Christianity	122	65.6
Islam	62	33.3
Traditionalists	2	1.1
Family size		
1 – 5	21	22.6
6 – 10	49	52.7
11 – 15	18	19.4
16 – 20	4	4.3
20 and above	1	1.1

Table2: Distribution of respondents by number of children currently in school

Types of school	Frequency	Percentage
Primary		
None	38	20.4
1 – 3	87	46.8
4 – 6	55	29.6
7 and above	6	3.2
Secondary		
None	59	31.7
1 – 3	92	49.5
4 – 6	27	14.5
7 and above	8	4.3
Tertiary		
None	56	30.1
1 – 2	105	56.5
3 – 4	25	13.4
5 and above	-	-

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by annual income level

Income level (₦)	Frequency	Percentage
1,000 - 50,000	78	42.3
51,000 - 100,000	62	33.5
101,000 - 150,000	30	16.2
151,000 - 200,000	6	3.3
201,000 - 250,000	6	3.2
251,000 - 300,000	4	2.2

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by assets possessed

Assets	Frequency	Percentage
House	108	58.1
Land	84	45.2
Motorcycle	102	54.8
Motor car	42	22.6
Tractor	2	1.1
Implement	180	96.8
Oil press	32	17.2
Rice mill	4	2.2
Cassava grater	24	12.9

\*Multiple Responses

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by the activities in which their children were involved

*Activities	Frequency	Percentage
Land Clearing	24	12.9
Stumping	15	8.1
Ridging	12	6.5
Thinning	50	26.9
Weeding	84	45.2
Supplying	50	26.9
Harvesting	72	38.7
Pesticides application	50	26.9
Cassava Processing	50	26.9
Oil Palm Processing	40	21.5
Cocoa processing	40	21.5
Feeding of Livestock	34	18.3
Hunting	30	16.1
Monitoring of traps	32	17.2
Sale of Produce	56	30.1
Planting	92	49.5
Fertilizing	66	35.5

\*Multiple Responses

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by children involvement in productive activities

Involvement	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	152	81.7
No	34	18.3
Number involved		
None	34	18.3
1-2	78	41.9
3-4	46	24.7
5-6	24	12.9
7-8	4	2.1
Level of involvement		
Not involved	34	18.3
Low involvement	18	9.7
Average involvement	86	46.2
High involvement	48	25.8

Fig. 1: Bar chart showing respondents by cost of production when children were and were not involved.

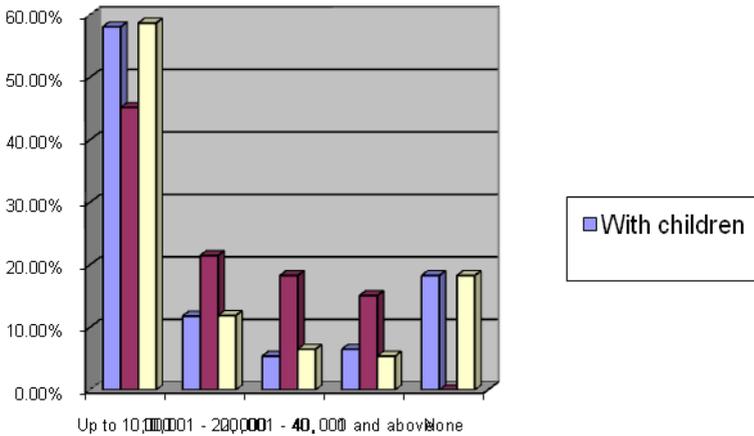
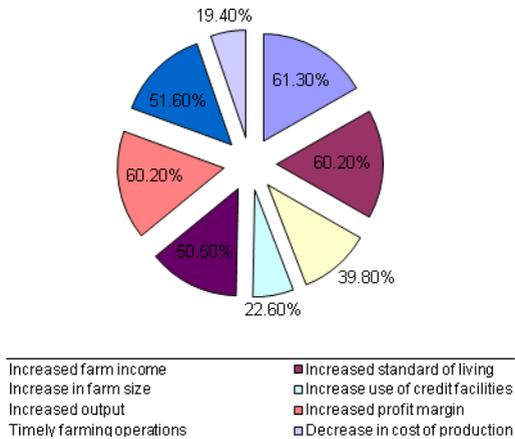


Fig. 2: Pie chart showing respondents by the benefits derived through children involvement in productive activities



\*Multiple responses

Table 7: Difference in cost of production when children were involved and when they were not

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	6.28E+10	36	1744965225.2	8.671	0.000
Within Groups	3.00E+10	149	201241770.55		
Total	9.28E+10	185			

Table 8: Correlation analysis showing relationship between benefits derived, respondents characteristics and level of children involvement

Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)	Coefficient of Determination (r <sup>2</sup> )
Age	0.02	0.004
Number of wives	0.21**	0.044
Family size	0.16**	0.026
Years of education	-0.02	0.004
Farm size	0.10	0.010
Income	-0.09	0.008
Benefits derived	-0.42**	0.176

\*\* Significant at 0.01 level

\*Significant at 0.05 level

Table 9: Regression analysis showing linear relationship between results, respondents characteristics and level of children involvement

Model	b	T-value	Sig.
Constant		2.597	0.010
Age	-0.116	-0.996	0.321
Number of wives	0.203	1.535	0.126
Family size	-0.001	-0.003	0.997
Years of education	0.009	0.106	0.916
Farm size	0.122	1.309	0.192
Income	-0.163	-2.139	0.034
Benefits derived	0.374	5.370	0.000