



**Factors Preventing the Attainment of Child-Labour Policies as Perceived by Teachers in Kwara, Nigeria. Implications for in-School Adolescents**

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**ABSTRACT**

*This study aimed at looking at the factors preventing the attainment of child-labour policies as perceived by teachers in Kwara State. Simple random sampling technique was used in selecting 70 respondents from each of the senatorial districts in Kwara State. The stratified sampling technique was used to select the respondents based on gender and religion. A researcher-designed instrument titled Child Labour Questionnaire was used for this study. The instrument has two sections. Section A dealt with the demographic data. Section B contained 20 items on the factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour. A reliability of 0.70 was obtained which was considered reliable for this study. A significant difference was found in the factors preventing the attainment of child labour policies as perceived by teachers in Kwara State based on gender and educational qualification. However, no significant difference was found on the basis of years of working experience and religion. Therefore, it was recommended that teachers and school counsellors should educate parents and adolescents on the consequences of child labour.*

## **1. Introduction**

Child labour started during the industrial revolution. Children were made to work on farms and factories. Currently, there are no adequate statistics on the number of children sent out as child labourers in Nigeria (Das, 2012). United Nations (2021) defined child labour as the involvement of children in jobs that are dangerous and harmful to their health. Children under this condition are made to work under harsh and hazardous conditions. On the other hand, International Labour Organization (2002) reported that any job that does not affect children's education, health or mental state cannot be categorized as child labour. This is because education is seen as a major tool that can enhance the social and economic development of a nation. Based on this declaration, education is made compulsory for every child in Nigeria (Morakinyo, 2012). Morakinyo reported that teachers affirmed that child labour prevents the attainment of sustainable development goals in Education. In Nigeria, many children engage in activities that are termed child labour for so many reasons, this can also be referred to as child abuse.

United Nations Convention (1999) defined a child as a person under the age of 18 years. The International Labour Organisation (2013) estimated that there are about 215 million children who are working under harsh conditions. Those children are vulnerable to diseases and they often suffer as a result of long-term emotional and physical challenges. Some of these children are even used for human trafficking, prostitution and pornographic activities. Children are forced into carrying out adults' duties. Kwara State of Nigeria Gazette (2014) clearly stated that no child should be subjected to any forced or exploitative labour and that under-aged children should not be employed to work in any capacity. Anyone that commits this offence is liable on conviction to a fine of fifty thousand naira or imprisonment for a term not exceeding five

years. Awosusi and Adebo (2012) noted that children are sexually, physically and mentally abused when they are used as labourers. It has been discovered that many children are not in school despite the fact that the Nigerian government has made primary education free and compulsory. World Bank (2010) revealed that about 168 million school-age children are used as labourers, while 32% of the workforce in Africa are children. There are places in Nigeria where children were basically kept as baby-making machines. These foster mothers are made to carry babies in their wombs for nine months after which such children are sold out to those who need them. The foster mothers are paid after the completion of their job (Nwafor, 2017).

The major causes of child labour as revealed by the International Labour Organization in Africa (3002) are linked to the high rate of poverty and the cultural belief that children must be exposed to such labour in order to build character. Also, children are made to work so as to be able to pay off the debts that their parents have acquired. Children are forced to work on farms and sometimes sent out as beggars on the streets. UNICEF (2006) noted that children work as street vendors, cobblers, mechanic apprentices and domestic servants in Nigeria. Arielle (2008) observed that the government has not been able to control the issue of street hawking in Nigeria. The U.S Department of Labour (2010) observed that Nigeria has the highest form of child labour. In Nigeria, especially in the rural areas, men marry two or more wives in order to have many children so that they can work on the farm.

Some of the intervention strategies put in place by the government to curb child labour were the adoption of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention act. A memorandum of understanding with the ILO was signed with the aim of organizing programmes to eliminate the menace of child labour in the country. In order to further enhance the programme, the government passed the child rights Acts of sections 28 and

29 into law. This law protects the child from exploitative work (UNCIEF, 2005). Also, the government introduced free and compulsory education especially at the primary school level, in order to enhance the enrolment rate of children in schools. States such as Anambra and Lagos have enacted policies that ban children from working during school hours. The government has set the minimum age limit for employment of children which is twelve years. Despite all these, the rate of child labour is still on the increase in Nigeria. A lot of policies have been established to curb the problem of child labour in Nigeria, but in most cases, they are not enforced.

The International Society, International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour, UNICEF, International Initiative to end Child Labour and Child Labour Coalition are all organizations advocating against child labour. The United Nations Convention on the right of the child was adopted and Africa Charter on the rights and welfare of the children became a major point in the 2002 Nigerian ratified convention constitution (Sibiri,2011). It is also important to note that the government adopted the three main ILO conventions on child labour of No.138 and that of No.182 correspondingly. Also, the Child Rights Act of 2003 was enacted with the aim to protect Nigerian children against abuse. The Nigerian Children's Trust Fund, the National Child Protection and Enforcement Agency, and the National Agency for the prohibition of Traffic in Persons (NATIP) were aimed at protecting children against child labour.

According to Ekpenyong and Sibiri (2010), the Nigerian government has formulated a lot of policies aimed at eliminating child labour and a lot of intervention programmes were organized for children who are victims of different forms of abuse.

Ifitikhar (2016) noted that in curbing child labour, the government must pay attention to the establishment of social protection laws. The laws help in alleviating the poverty level which is one of the major causes of child

labour. Ifitikhar further suggested that the provision of National Health and feeding programmes must go beyond the policy statements. When families live below the poverty line, they are forced to engage in child labour. Rena (2009) noted that poverty and underdevelopment drive child labour. Akarro and Mtwewe (2011) affirmed that when there is a solution to issues of poverty in a country, there is likely to be a drastic reduction in child labour. Osment (2014) also noted that family size, cultural beliefs, corruption and urban migration factors are the reasons why most of the strategies put in place are not effective.

### **1.1 Statement of the problem**

Many researchers have explained the danger that goes with child labour, yet this practice is still on the increase. Children are deprived of their childhood and this has led to emotional problems. UNICEF (2006) clearly noted that about 15 million children are employed as workers across Nigeria. The economic crunch in Nigeria has affected many people to the extent that, a lot of families in Nigeria are living below the poverty line while numerous children are out of school in order to work and assist their parents. Despite the fact that policies and legislation have been adopted by the government to improve the welfare of children, child labour is still on the increase. According to Adegun (2013), the number of children in the workforce is on the increase every day in Nigeria. Adegun noted that in the year 1995, the estimated number of children who were in child labour was about 12 million; however, by 2006, it has risen to 15 million.

It is difficult to determine the accuracy because of lack of reliable statistics on child labour. The reason is that the government does not actually gather data regarding child labour, and many child labourers are often not punished (Das, 2012). Although reliable data is not available, ILO estimated the number of child labourers in 2008 as 215 million boys and girls between the ages of five

to seventeen years worldwide, with 115 million of them working in hazardous jobs (Aqil, 2012).

### 1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to look at the factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour as perceived by teachers in Kwara State. The present study also intends to find out the influence of intervening variables.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. This design is useful because it enables information to be obtained from a representative sample of the population. The target population consisted of secondary school teachers in Kwara State. Seventy respondents were selected using simple random technique from each of the senatorial districts in Kwara State. Gender and religion were also stratified. A researcher-designed

instrument titled “Child Labour Questionnaire” was adopted for this study. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A contained the demographic data of the respondents, while Section B consisted of items on factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour. The respondents were asked to respond to the items on a Four-Point Likert Rating Scale Format of Strongly-(SA), Agree- (A), Disagree-(D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The validity of the instrument was ascertained by experts after the final correction of the items on the questionnaire. A reliability of 0.70 was obtained which was considered reliable for this study.

The data obtained for the study were analyzed using percentage and frequency count for the descriptive data, while t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were used to test the hypotheses generated for the study at 0.05 level of significance.

## 3. Results and Discussion

**Table 1.** Distribution of Respondents Based on Gender, Years in Working Experience, Educational Qualification and Religion

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	123	58.6
Female	87	41.4
	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Years of Work Experience</b>		
1-5 years	49	23.3
6-10 years	120	57.1
11 years and above	41	19.5
	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
1st Degree	128	61.0
Master’s Degree	69	32.9
P.hD.	13	6.2
	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Religion</b>		
Africa Traditional Religion	14	6.7
Christianity	132	62.9
Islam	64	30.5
	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

**Table 2.** Mean and Rank Order on the Respondents’ Expression on the factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour as perceived by teachers in Kwara State

Item No.	Some of the factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour are:	Mean	Rank
6	non-affirmation of these policies by the government	3.61	1 <sup>st</sup>
9	lack of programmes to enforce girl child education, especially at the grassroots	3.46	2 <sup>nd</sup>
15	non-establishment of social protection acts for the poor and vulnerable children	3.43	3 <sup>rd</sup>
11	social problems in Nigeria such as bribery	3.42	4 <sup>th</sup>
3	non-provision for free education at all levels	3.38	5 <sup>th</sup>
5	no strong child labour task force	3.31	6 <sup>th</sup>
1	ignorance of mothers on the side effects of child labour	3.27	7 <sup>th</sup>
14	poverty	3.25	8 <sup>th</sup>
7	lack of community mobilization	3.24	9 <sup>th</sup>
18	gender discrimination	3.20	10 <sup>th</sup>
10	non-availability of counselling programmes for parents whose children are traffickers	3.17	11 <sup>th</sup>
13	lack of right comprehensive information in the school curriculum	2.98	12 <sup>th</sup>
16	no vigorous campaign against child labour	2.69	13 <sup>th</sup>
17	lack of sensitization on the dangers of child labour	2.68	14 <sup>th</sup>
8	weak enforcement of gender equality	2.64	15 <sup>th</sup>
2	cultural beliefs on child labour	2.62	16 <sup>th</sup>
12	non-ratification and enforcement of the international laws on child labour	2.60	17 <sup>th</sup>
4	there is no enforcement of legislation against perpetrators	2.57	18 <sup>th</sup>
20	corruption among task force officers	2.50	19 <sup>th</sup>
19	lack of laws prohibiting child labour	1.92	20 <sup>th</sup>

**Table 3.** Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test of the Respondents on the Factors Preventing the Attainment of Government Policies on Child Labour Based of Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	p-value
Male	123	59.07	5.19	208	4.05*	1.96	.000
Female	87	56.43	3.71				

Significant, p<0.05 alpha level

Table 1 shows that 123 (58.6%) of the respondents were male, while 87 (41.4%) of them were female. Based on years of working experience, 49 (23.3%) of the respondents had between 1-5 years of working experience, 120 (57.1%) of them had between 6-10 years of experience while 41 (19.5%) of them had 11 years and above

working experience. Also, 128 (61.0%) of the respondents had 1st degree, 69 (32.9%) had master’s degree, while 13 (6.2%) of them had P.h.d. 14 (6.7%), 132 (62.9%), 64 (30.5%) of the respondents were practicing African Traditional Religion, Christianity and Islam respectively.

**Research Question 1:**

What are the factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour as perceived by teachers in Kwara State?

Table 2 indicates that Items 6, 9 and 15 which state that non-affirmation of these policies by the government, lack of programmes to enforce girl child education, especially at the grassroots and non-establishment of social protection act for the poor and vulnerable children are the mean factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour in this study. The items ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> with mean scores of 3.61, 3.46 and 3.43 respectively. Nineteen items have mean scores that are above the mid-cut-off point of 2.50. Item 19 with a mean score of 1.92 was the least ranked.

**Hypothesis One:** *There is no significant difference in the factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour as perceived by teachers in Kwara State based on gender.*

Table 3 indicates that the calculated t-value of 4.05 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 with the corresponding calculated p-value of .000 which is less than 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated p-value is less than the alpha level, the null hypothesis is therefore not accepted.

**Hypothesis Two:** *There is no significant difference in the factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour as perceived by teachers in Kwara State based on years of working experience.*

**Table 4.** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Respondents in the Factors Preventing the Attainment of Government Policies on Child Labour Based of Years of Working Experience

Source	SS	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	P-value
Between Group	613.423	2	306.711	15.02*	3.00	.000
Within Group	4226.406	207	20.417			
Total	4839.829	209				

Table 4 indicates that the calculated F-ratio of 15.02 is greater than the critical F-ratio of 3.00 with the corresponding calculated p-value which is less than 0.05 alpha level. Therefore, hypothesis two is not accepted. In

order to be able to establish both the magnitude and direction of the differences in this variable, a post-hoc test – Duncan Multiple Range Test (DMTR) was conducted as shown in Table 5 below

**Table 5.** DMRT comparing the mean on the Respondents in the Factors Preventing the Attainment of Government Policies on Child Labour Based on Years of Working Experience

Duncan Groupings	N	Means	Group	Years of Working Experience
A	49	60.76	1	1-5 years
B	120	57.63	2	6-10 years
C	41	55.66	3	11 years and above

Table 5 shows that group 1 with a mean score of 60.76 differs significantly from groups 2 and 3 with mean scores of 57.63 and 55.66

respectively. Hence, the significant difference indicated in ANOVA result of table 4 was a result of respondents who had between 1-5

years of working experience; therefore, the hypothesis cannot be accepted.

**Hypothesis Three:** *There is no significant difference in the factors preventing the*

*attainment of government policies on child labour as perceived by teachers in Kwara State based on educational qualification.*

**Table 6.** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of Respondents in the Factors Preventing the Attainment of Government Policies on Child Labour Based on Educational Qualification

Source	SS	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	P-value
Between Group	830.052	2	415.026	1.30	3.00	.241
Within Group	4009.777	207	319.371			
Total	4839.829	209				

Table 6 indicates that the calculated F-ratio of 1.30 is less than the critical F-ratio of 3.00 and the calculated p-value is greater than 0.05 alpha level. The hypothesis is therefore accepted.

**Hypothesis Four:** *There is no significant difference in the factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour as perceived by teachers in Kwara State based on religion.*

**Table 7.** Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) of the Respondents in the Factors Preventing the Attainment of Government Policies on Child Labour Based on Religion

Source	SS	df	Mean Squares	Cal. F-ratio	Crit. F-ratio	P-value
Between Group	1252.051	2	626.026	1.50	3.00	.213
Within Group	3587.777	207	417.332			
Total	4839.829	209				

Table 7 shows a calculated F-ratio of 1.50 less than the critical F-ratio of 3.00 and the calculated p-value of .213 is greater than 0.05 alpha level. Since the calculated p-value is greater than alpha level, the hypothesis is therefore accepted on the basis of religion.

The findings of this study revealed that the non-affirmation of the various policies has prevented the attainment of government plans on child labour. Hence, eliminating the issue of child labour in Nigeria could be difficult. This is because the rate level of poverty in the country is high. Such practices are entrenched in the cultural beliefs of Nigerians. As such, children are made to contribute to the household income. Several Nigerians are living below the poverty line

and as such, many of these children engage in street hawking in order to help their parents to foot their bills (Togunde & Arielle, 2008). In the same vein, Nseabasi and Abiodun (2010) noted that lack of enforcement of child labour regulations, corruption and lack of awareness on the psychological impact of child labour are key factors in the Child labour market.

The gender of the respondents did not influence their perceptions. This might likely be due to the fact that teachers would have witnessed a lot of school-age children who are exposed to the incidence of child labour around them. Bolu-Steve, Adegoke and Adeboye ( 2015) confirmed that a lot of adolescents have dropped out of school in

order to assist their parents to meet their financial obligations. International Labour Organization (2012) affirmed that about 168 million children between the ages of five to seventeen years are still in the labour force in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The respondents' opinions differ based on their years of experience. Teachers who have spent a lot of years in the profession are likely to have a different perception from those who have spent just few years in the profession. There is the possibility that teachers would have solved problems relating to the incidence of child labour. This might account for the differences. However, most people believe that the fight against child labour has not been achieved due to so many reasons (Dash, 2013). Ekpenyong and Sibirii (2011) clearly stated that the continued prevalence of child labour could be attributed to the poor economic problem existing in Nigeria. Okolo (1998) revealed that school-age children are victims when it comes to the issue of labour in Nigeria. Similarly, Rena (2009) also noted that child labour thrives where there is underdevelopment. As such, policies on child labour cannot be achieved under this condition.

No significant difference was found in the reasons for the non-effectiveness of government policies on child labour as perceived by teachers on the basis of educational qualification. Hindman (2014) explained that child labour had been in existence before civilization and thus later helped to rekindle the industrial revolution. Onyemachi (2010) explained that corruption, lack of awareness and non-strict rules against traffickers enhance the child labour menace in the country despite the presence of the law enforcement agents.

The respondents' religious affiliation did not influence their perception. However, it is important to note that traditional, cultural, religious and social factors further encourage the increase in child labour (Ashagrie, 1998).

### **3.1 Implication for In-school Adolescents and the school Counsellor**

International Labour Organization (ILO, 2013) estimated that there are 215 million who are between the ages five to fourteen years that are on the full time paid job. This is especially common in countries where the capability to enforce minimum age requirements for schooling and work is not strongly enforced. Many in-school adolescents are pushed into the workforce as a result of poverty rate in Nigeria. The school counsellors should constantly provide relevant information through guidance services to in-school adolescents on the negative impact of child labour and how it could be prevented. The school counsellors in collaboration with the school authority should enforce school attendance on a daily basis so that the incidence of school dropout will be minimized. The school counsellors can actually wage war against child labour through their various seminars and workshops.

### **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study examined the factors preventing the attainment of child labour policies as perceived by teachers in Kwara State. There was a significant difference in the factors preventing the attainment of government policies on child labour as perceived by teachers based on gender and educational qualification. However, no significant difference was found on the basis of years of working experience and religion. Therefore, it was recommended that the school counsellors and teachers should educate parents on the consequences of child labour. The public should also be enlightened on how they can help the government in attaining their goals on child labour. Government should enforce education at all levels by giving bursary allowance to in-school adolescents. This practice will encourage the enrollment of children in schools. The law enforcement agents should be empowered to prosecute parents whose under age children

are found working or hawking in streets during or after the school hours. School authority, teachers, counselors, and even in-school adolescents should be encouraged to report cases of child labour to appropriate authority.

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