



Influence of Child Labour on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Rivers State and Its Implications for Counselling

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the influence of child labour on academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. Four research questions and four hypotheses were used for the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design and Taro Yemen's formula was used to arrive at a usable sample size of 390 respondents from the population of 15784 secondary school students in Port Harcourt city and Obio/Akpo local government Areas of Rivers State. Researcher's structured instrument titled 'Child Labour Assessment Instrument' (CLAI) was utilized to collect data for the study. Descriptive statistics of mean was used to answer research questions while inferential statistics of z-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings of the study revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean response of secondary school students on the extent to which street hawking, domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation and street begging influence their academic performance in Rivers State. It also revealed that to a high extent, street hawking, domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation and street begging negatively influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. It was therefore recommended that counsellors and non-governmental organizations needs to engage in advocacy campaign, constant Sensitization and counselling on the dangers child labour poses on the students and the society at large. Again, Government needs to implement and ensure enforcement of established policies against child labour and also rehabilitate victims of child labour.

Keyword: Child labour, Academic Performance, Commercial Sexual Exploitation, Domestic work and Street Hawking.

INTRODUCTION

Educational institutions quantify success by academic performance. Students strive to meet standard set out by the institution in order to achieve educational goals. Academic performance is the level of performance by students in written work and examination. It is measured by the final grade obtained by a student in a course or subject. In most cases grade point Average (GPA) is used by both secondary and tertiary institutions to measure students' academic performance as it guarantee insight into the relative level of performance of students. It can also be referred to as scores or marks obtained by students on each subject after terms of study, which is used to describe the academic achievement of students – that is the extent students, teachers or institution have achieved their short or long term educational goals.

Academic performance is more short term and involves more of the statistics of what student did and how well it was done Jost (2012). It is students level of functionality on academic task scores which shows result of how well students have performed in the various assessment items set based on some educational criteria determined by educators. The trace of students' academic performance performs a number of functions. It provides avenue to evaluate student's areas of achievement and failure in order to encourage improvement and make adequate use of learning process. It also provides a framework for ranking of

students and schools by teachers, educational board and examination board. It helps teachers to offer feedback and guidance.

Heaven (2012) postulated that any expression used to represent academic student's scholastic standing is usually referred to as academic performance. In this connection, marks assigned by teachers, letter grades and grade point average have at various times been used as measure of academic performance. However, Akindehin (2013) said that "in measuring academic performance the issue to contend with includes specifying what constitutes academic and how to measure it accurately and consistently. Oke, Aladenusi & Oyinloye (2016) stated that any parameter used to indicate academic performance is at best an approximation of student true academic performance. Stating academic performance determinants, Ekaterina, Daniel, Grainne & Dan (2017) explained that academic performance determinants includes reference to the past, present and future and has its area in the subjects impression of whether the student is moving quicker or slower than anticipated, effortlessly or with trouble from minute to minute, everyday or year to year or all the more by and large whether he is improving, no better or more terrible in some regard.

Evaluation of academic outcome is mostly carried out using standardized test as it gives the most detailed information or result. Nevertheless standardized test recompense visual learners at the expense of kinesthetic or auditory learners. It does also fail to acknowledge students with learning and physical disabilities who are unable to complete test in the same manner or amount of time as other students.

In measuring aspects of students' academic performance Wolf, Frawley & Torres (2012) stated that motivation correlates highly with students' academic performance. Status and process variables correlate with the development of knowledge and scholarly execution. Status factors are segmented, for example, pay and training level of guardians while process factors allude to scholarly desire for the school for the measure of scholastic factors of the understudies. In addition, process variables are very important to the student's academic performance. Academic attainment in the school is more highly related to the type of educators of the students than any other variables as most students value what the school says than any other person in their lives.

The issue of poor academic performance of students in Rivers State Nigeria has been of much concern to government, parents, teachers and even students themselves. There are varied influence of culture and environment in attributing low academic performance, although genetic consideration play a part but environmental factors such as home, family size, financial burden, parenting style, parental attitude towards education, poverty and child labour, undoubtedly exert a powerful influence to students' academic performance.

Child labour includes all works which are destructive to a youngster's wellbeing, works that abuse kids' key rights as people, works that are hazardous or compromising that exhaust their quality, harm their bodies, keep them from going to class and increasing essential aptitudes and information for their future advancement Nwauwa (2018). Child labour involves exploitation of children in both physical, mental, economic and social level, hence it affects their health, development and schooling.

Child labour is a social problem that contravene the fundamental rights of children, it is indeed a "harsh reality" and obviously impossible to root out the prevalence, and perpetuation of child labour in Nigeria considering social economic conditions such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, population explosion, low family income, lack of practical will and structure of society itself supported by law imposes certain constraints and ensuring the persistence of privilege and unequal distribution of wealth. Radfar, Asgharzadeh, Quesda & Filip (2018) stated that child labour has become a global phenomenon which is caused by cultural beliefs, religious beliefs, poverty and social injustice. The major cause of child labour in Nigeria is poverty. Poverty made parents to engage their children for extra money to supplement the family income or provide unpaid labour. National Bureau of statistics stipulates that half of the population of children in Nigeria are engaged in child labour. In Obio/Akpor and Port Harcourt City Local Government Area of Rivers State, this social problem interferes with child schooling and child development, the worst forms include street hawking, domestic work, commercial sexual exploitation, street begging and hazardous work. Street hawking in Rivers State and Nigeria at large is a phenomenon that came on based on the need to solve societal problems like unemployment and poverty. The act is known as child street trading, Ashimolowo; Aromolaram and Ineghedion (2010), Child street hawking, mathias and Dada (2013), Juvenile street hawking, Udo and Joseph (2012) and child street vendor

Ugochukwu; Okeke; Onugbogu and Edokwe (2012). Children between the ages of 10 and 17, Swarm towards car windows while on traffic making severe efforts to sell their goods.

Unfortunately this act is carried out both during and after school period. Street hawking has kept children out of school as drop out, withdrawn by their parents or not enrolled. School age children estimated to be 10.5 million are out of school in Nigeria (UNICEF, 2019). However this seems not to be strange giving that “majority of the population are below the poverty line, hence these children are being engaged in income generating activities to contribute to the sustenance of the family.” This form of child abuse endangers the health and safety of the child, distort his/her education and influences academic performance. In Nigeria, many families send their children from rural to urban areas for domestic work. Domestic work is a widespread and a growing phenomenon in Nigeria. Children in domestic work are under aged usually below the age of 18 who are in an exploitative situation. They engage in a variety of services for relatives or non-relatives, from aiding care for kids and older wards to housekeeping, including cleaning and family unit support. They likewise perform different duties, for example, cooking, washing and ironing clothes, looking for products, etc. In Northern Nigeria, larger part of the youngsters in residential work is forced to beg on the street. Street begging involves requesting for cash from people without rendering any service in an open spot Mortimer (2015) as cited by Malamiumar Tambawal. In Nigeria, there are three categories of child beggars in urban territories, those individuals who lead their incapacitated or sick guardians or family members, those individuals who ask all alone and those individuals who go about as front for guardians. It is a social act did generally by poor kids to support their families. Different investigations have uncovered absence of appropriate direction, sluggishness and neediness as the significant foundations for the presence of begging and the impacts ranges from development of feeling of inadequacy, absence of confidence and poise, expanded attitude of destitution, etc. Apparently, this perilous demonstration is performed without thought of kid's schooling even with governmentally ordered free education in Nigeria at both essential and auxiliary level. Customarily, kids who are occupied with child work because of neediness, family brokenness, vagrancy, are placed into commercial sexual exploitation, which is a demonstration submitted through abuse of a kid's sexuality with the end goal of sexual delight, monetary profit, individual advantage or non-authentic reason. Business sexual abuse of kids incorporate the utilization of young ladies and young men as sexual exercises compensated in real money or in kind, smuggling of boys and girls if school age for sex exchange, kid sex tourism, the creation, advancement and appropriation of sex entertainment including kids and the utilization of kids in sex exhibition. It is a criminal practice that has eaten the physical and psychological integrity of children. Students also involve in prostitution when they engage in sex in return for basic needs or for favour such as higher grades at school or purchase of consumer goods as basic needs. Such act undoubtedly poses a major problem in students' academic performance as concentration in studies may likely not be achieved. To complement these factors the present research study has examined influence of child labour on academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Statement of Problem

One of the core objectives of secondary school education program is to achieve educational goals through qualitative and quantitative teaching and learning to ensure good academic performance of students. Yearly report by West Africa Secondary School Certificate Examination Council (WASSCE) on all levels of education shows continuous decline in academic performance of students which indicates that good academic performance has become a grueling task to accomplish by secondary school students in Rivers State and Nigeria as a whole. Consequent upon the observed poor academic performance and the clear objective of secondary school education, one wonders if the rate of poor academic performance by secondary school students is not a reflection of the prevalence of child labour suffered by many in the area. It is against these conditions that the study investigated influence of child labour on academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate influence of child labour on academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. In specific terms the study tends to:

- 1 Determine the extent to which street hawking influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.
- 2 Determine the extent to which domestic work influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

- 3 Determine the extent to which commercial sexual exploitation influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.
- 4 Determine the extent to which street begging influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated to be answered in the study:

- 1 To what extent does street hawking influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?
- 2 To what extent does domestic work influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?
- 3 To what extent does commercial sexual exploitation influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?
- 4 To what extent does street begging influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population of the study was 15,784 public secondary school students in Rivers State. The investigation adopted Taro Yemen’s formula to arrive at a sample size of 390 secondary school students from 10 secondary schools in Port Harcourt city and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas of Rivers State. Researcher’s structured instrument titled “Child Labour Assessment Instrument” (CLAI) with a four point rating scale was used for data collection. The instrument was validated by two experts in the field of measurement and evaluation, and a reliability coefficient of 0.85 was also obtained. The descriptive statistics of mean was used in answering the stated research questions. The response options were given numbers – “Very High Extent”, “High Extent”, “Low Extent”, and “Very Low Extent” respectively.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: *To what extent does street hawking influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?*

Table 1: Mean analysis of the extent to which street hawking influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

S/N	Influence of street hawking on academic performance	\bar{X}	Decision
1.	My low grades is as a result of not been regular in school due to street hawking done to supplement family income.	3.50	High Extent
2.	My grades have been negatively affected because I miss first less due to hawking done in the morning to support family income.	3.60	High Extent
3.	I don’t get enough rest after hawking because of that I am tired and sleepy during lessons which has led to low grades in my class tes	3.56	High Extent
4.	Often times I am unable to do my homework after hawking and this affected my grades badly.	3.51	High Extent
5.	My performance in academic is poor because I don’t get enough stud time after hawking.	3.47	High Extent
	Grand Mean	3.53	Accepted

Source: Survey Data, 2019.

Table 1 shows that the mean score of 3.50 implies low grades which is as a result of not being regular in school due to street hawking done to supplement family income. The mean score of 3.60 accepts that grades have been negatively affected because of missing first lesson due to hawking. The mean score of 3.56 also indicates that sleeping in the class because of hawking led to low grades in class test. 3.51 mean score indicates that grades were affected because of not being able to do homework after hawking while the mean score of 3.47 accepts that poor performance in academic work is as a result of insufficient study time after hawking. Finally the grand mean of 3.53 implies that street hawking, to a high extent, negatively influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Question 2: *To what extent does domestic work influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?*

Table 2: Presents mean analysis of the extent to which domestic work influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

S/N	Influence of domestic work on academic performance	\bar{X}	Decision
6	Work engagement in the morning made me to always be late to school, so my grades dropped.	3.06	High Extent
7	Missing first lesson in school due to work at home in the morning dropped my grades.	3.10	High Extent
8	Work at home keeps me busy that I hardly find time to do my work which makes my performance in school not encouraging.	3.02	High Extent
9	The aftermath of my late night sleep and early wake up is sleep class and low grades in text and examination.	3.00	High extent
10	My performance is low because I work late and do not read r books.	3.14	High Extent
Grand Mean		3.06	Accepted

Source: Survey Data, 2019.

Table 2 shows that the mean score of 3.06 implies grades dropped because of going to school late due to work engagement at home. The mean score of 3.10 indicates that grades dropped because of missing first lesson in school due to work at home in the morning. The mean score of 3.02 affirms that due to work at home there is not enough time to do homework so performance in school is not encouraging. Also mean score of 3.00 implies that low grades in text and examination is the aftermath of late night sleep, early wake up and sleeping in class. Mean score of 3.14 indicates that not reading books due to working late is the result of low performance. Thus the grand mean of 3.06 implies that to a high extent, domestic work negatively influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

Research Question 3: *To what extent does commercial sexual exploitation influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?*

Table 3. Present mean analysis of the extent to which commercial sexual exploitation influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

	Influence of commercial sexual exploitation on academic performan	\bar{X}	Decision
11	I don't bother about my studies when I am watching pornographic films with my boyfriend, so my low grades are unavoidable.	3.12	High Extent
12	My grades are poor because I hustle not to keep it in one's pant so as to provide my needs.	3.28	High Extent
13	I don't expect good grades when I don't have interest in studies anymore after been sexually molested by someone who ought to be my mentor.	3.09	High Extent
14	I cannot make good grades when I am subjected to sexual act to be able to support family income.	3.09	High Extent
15	I am depressed and cannot say no to sex out of fear and threat, so good grades cannot be achieved.	3.36	High Extent
Grand Mean		3.19	Accepted

Source: Survey Data, 2019.

Table 3 shows that the mean score of 3.12 implies low grades are inevitable due to not bothering about studies when watching pornographic films with boyfriend. Mean score of 3.28 accepts that low grades are poor because of not abstaining from trying to have sex with someone in order to provide needs. The mean score of 3.09 indicates that poor grades are because of lack of interest in studies after been sexually molested by someone who ought to be a mentor. The mean score of 3.09 implies that good grades cannot be possible because of subjection to sexual act in order to support family income. The mean score of 3.36 indicates that because of depression and inability to say no to sex out of fear and threat good grades

cannot be achieved. The grand mean of 3.19 indicates that to a high extent, commercial sexual exploitation negatively influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

Research Question 4: *To what extent does street begging influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State?*

Table 4: Presents mean analysis of the extent to which street begging influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State

S/N	Influence of street begging on academic performance	\bar{X}	Decision
16	Begging to support the family is inevitable, so my concentration class is negatively affected hence my academic performance is low.	3.24	High Extent
17	I hardly find studies interesting after a whole day begging in the street to supplement family income, hence my academic performance is compromised.	3.22	High Extent
18	My grades are low because it is difficult to have a relaxed mind and time to study after a half day job as a beggar.	3.28	High Extent
19	My low grades does not matter because my family and I must beg to earn a living.	3.00	High Extent
20	My low grades may likely not improve because I am emotionally depressed by uncertainty of my nest meal.	3.05	High Extent
Grand Mean		3.16	Accepted

Source: Survey Data, 2019

Table 4 shows that the mean score of 3.24 implies low academic performance is as a result of lack of concentration due to inevitability of begging to support family. Mean score of 3.22 accepts that academic performance is compromised because of not finding studies interesting after a whole day begging in the street to supplement family income. 3.28 mean score indicates that grades are low because it is difficult to have a relax mind and time to study after a half day job as a beggar. The mean score of 3.00 implies that low grades is because begging must be done to earn a living while mean score of 3.05 accepts that been emotionally depressed by uncertainty of nest meal low grades may likely not improve. Finally the grand mean score of 3.16 implies that to a high extent, street begging negatively influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Based on the analysis of the data it was found that there is significant difference in the mean response of secondary school students on the extent to which street hawking influences academic performance in Rivers State. This finding is in agreement with the study by Ubah and Bulus (2014) who revealed that street hawking has negative effect on students’ academic performance. Global partnership for education (2010) also states that children who manage to combine hawking and education performance often suffers. This further describe the pervasiveness of street hawking as revealed by the findings of this study on its pattern and effects particularly on adolescents who combine schooling with hawking.

It was also found that there is significant difference in the mean response of secondary school students on the extent to which domestic work influences academic performance in Rivers State. The finding from this variable is in agreement with the finding on “influence of domestic work on female students academic performance in upper basic schools” by Amah , Bello, and Adeoye (2018). the finding of the study revealed that female students are daily engaged in domestic work which interfere with their academic studies and thereby resulting in less academic performance. Also in agreement with the discoveries of this study is a study by Abou and Boign (2016) on “Does domestic work affect the academic performance of girls in primary school in Cote d’Ivoire”. The examination uncovered that the more young ladies are constrained to accomplish residential work, the more the probability to rehash class increments at the end of the day, extended periods of time of local work are impeding to young ladies education. In the act of youngster work, under age kids are occupied with difficult work so as to help family. A significant number of these young kids who should concentrate on schooling are presented to

extended periods of time of work at home in hazardous and unfortunate situations and shoulder excessive amount of obligation regarding their age, these impair their academic outcome.

The examination likewise uncovered that there is critical contrast in the mean reaction of secondary school learners on the degree to which business sexual abuse impacts scholastic execution in Rivers State. This finding further affirms the finding on "kids sexual maltreatment on scholarly execution by Omundi (2013). The finding of the examination uncovered that kid sexual maltreatment leads to mental injury on the life of the exploited people which results to absence of fixation that influences the scholastic execution of the youngster. Casualties of rape frequently feel defamed and disgraced. They may lose self-assurance and disconnect themselves from companions, family and as often as possible incapable to stay aware of their investigations.

Lastly, it was uncovered that there is noteworthy contrast in the mean reaction of secondary school scholars on the degree to which road asking impacts scholastic execution in Rivers State. This finding is in consistency with the finding on "impact of street begging on the Freetown Municipality Sierra-Leona". The findings of the study revealed that consequences of street begging among other things were school drop out as a result of low academic performance. Street begging is a serious menace which from the findings of the study takes a heavy toll on the lives of adolescents who either act as guide to beggars or even engage in the act themselves and therefore perform poorly in academics or drop out of school.

Implications for Counselling

Counselling service is aimed at helping individuals to discover themselves, their value, aptitudes, capabilities, weaknesses and be useful to themselves and their community. It therefore suggests that the values and relevance of counselling on the influence of child labour on academic performance of secondary school students cannot be disputed.

To address the issue of child labour, in view of its negative influence on the academic performance of students, as revealed in the findings of the study, using reality therapy and REBT, counselling should be directed towards helping students, parents and guardians who are deeply involved in child labour to understand the dangers it poses on the future of the children, family and society at large.

Counsellors should assist students to take responsibility of their lives for good academic performance and better future, based on the assumption that individuals have the ability to shape their own destiny according to what they choose to do or choose not to do. A student who has low self-esteem and feels frustrated, depressed as a result of labour, cannot perform well academically and therefore needs to be helped to take charge of his or her destiny by purposefully making the right choices. Also counselling should be geared towards enlightening parents and guardians on the dangers of using children for labour, hence, parents and guardians should take responsibility of their own behavior, start making positive need fulfilling choices by looking for alternative means of getting income for the family.

Moreover, Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy should be used by counsellors to desensitize the students of their irrational thinking pattern of 'I must', 'I ought to' labour, make money, take responsibility of household needs, etc. counsellors should guide students towards changing their thinking pattern to positive, productive and self-development thought to enable them achieve their life goals or academic goals. On the other hand through counselling services by counselors, guardians should also be guided towards changing their irrational thinking pattern of 'I labored when I was young so my children must Labour to provide for the family'. They should be taught to think rationally and positively towards creating a better future for their children and families at large.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that street hawking to a high extent negatively influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. Domestic work also to a high extent negatively influences academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. Also commercial sexual exploitation to a high extent, negatively influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. Finally street begging to a high extent negatively influence academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it is recommended that;

1. Counsellors and non-governmental organizations need to engage in advocacy, campaign,

constant sensitization and counselling on the dangers of child labour and need for sound education and entrepreneurial education.

2. Counsellors as helping professionals should utilize behavior modification techniques to modify maladaptive behaviors.
3. Government need to implement and ensure enforcement of established policies against child labour and rehabilitate victims of any form of child labour.
4. The culture encouraging street begging must be changed. There is need for government to improve the welfare of its citizens to discourage street begging.

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