AEXTJ
AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION JOURNAL
ISSN 2521 – 0408

Available Online at www.aextj.com
Agricultural Extension Journal 2018; 2(3):158-164

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Child Labor Involvement among Food Crop Farmers in Yewa North Local Government Area, Ogun State

Akerele, Ezekiel Olaoluwa

Department of Agricultural Economics and Farm Management, College of Agricultural Sciences, Olabisi Onabanjo University, Yewa Campus, Ayetoro, Ogun State, Nigeria

Received: 20-05-2018; Revised: 20-06-2018; Accepted: 20-07-2018

ABSTRACT

This study examined child labor involvement among food crop production in Yewa North Local Government Area, Ogun State, Nigeria. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. The primary data were collected through the use of well questionnaire. A total number of 120 respondents were selected from the study area through the use of a multistage random sampling technique. The respondents were interviewed using a well-structured questionnaire. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The summary of the finding on the socioeconomic characteristics of the food crop farmers indicates that 52.5% of the food crop farmers were between 31 and 40 years, 79.2% were male, 83.3% were married, 55.8% had no form of formal education, 43.3% had between 7 and 9 household members in their family, 67.5% were farmers, and 55.0% had been in farming for between 1 and 10 years. The regression analysis result revealed that age, gender, dependency ratio, and number of household children enrolled in school are statistically significant and positive in relation to household child's involvement in farm labor in the study area. Based on the results of the finding on the problems encountered in production of food crop, the finding indicates that all (100.0%) of the food crop farmers encountered one form of problems to the other, of which insect and pest attacks, inadequate labor, financial crises, and inadequate labor were the most prominent problems. Hence, the study concluded that the food crop farmers utilized their children on the farming activities ranging from weeding, harvesting, and molding among others. Therefore, the study recommended that there should be the provision of enlightenment by the government and other institutions related to food crop production by educating the food crop farmers to desist on the use of their children for farm works.

Key words: Child, education, food crop, labor, production

INTRODUCTION

Although restriction on child labor exists in most nations, many children do work. This vulnerable state leaves them prone to exploitation. The international labor office reports that children work the longest hours and are the worst paid of all laborers.[1] They endure work conditions which include health hazards and potential abuse.

The global phenomenon of child labor is attributed to several factors. The rapid population growth of many less developed countries, high rate of unemployment, inflation, and low wage rate have contributed to the occurrence and necessity for children to be engaged in economic activities.[2] In Nigeria, the most populous black nation with 140 million people, there exist high incidences of child labor.[3] In Nigeria context, child labor is defined as work done by children under the age of 15 that is mentally, physically, socially, and morally dangerous and harmful to them. It refers to work that interferes with schooling by depriving them the opportunity to attend school, thereby obliging them to leave school prematurely or requiring them to attempt to combine schooling with workings at times on the farm. These children are also vulnerable to being forced on farm work, and in many instances, they are being deprived of access to education.

Address for correspondence:
Akerele,
E-mail: akereleeze@gmail.com

Child labor is found predominantly in the informal sector in Nigeria. In rural areas of the country, children are found working on farms and herding animals. They are mostly employed by state-owned commercial agriculture production. According to the International Labor Organization,[4] there are approximately 186 million child laborers in the world, among which about 113.3 million children work in hazardous condition. At least 120 million of the world children between the age of 5 and 14 did full-time, paid work. Many of them worked under hazardous and unhygienic conditions and work for more than 10 h a day.

Children are the greatest gift to humanity, and childhood is an important and impressionable stage of human development as it holds the potential to the future development of any society. Children who are brought up in an environment, which is conducive to their intellectual, physical, and social health, grow up to be responsible and productive members of society. Every nation links its future with the present status of its children. By performing work when they are too young for the task, children unduly reduce their present welfare or their future income earning capabilities, either by shrinking their future external choice sets or by reducing their own future individual productive capabilities. Under extreme economic distress, children are forced to forego educational opportunities and take up jobs which are mostly exploitative that they are usually underpaid and engaged in hazardous conditions.

Parent decides to send their child for engaging in a job as a desperate measure due to poor economic conditions. It is, therefore, no wonder that the poor households predominantly send their children to work in the early ages of their life. One of the disconcerting aspects of child labor on school attendance rates and the length of a child's work day are negatively associated with his or her capacity to attend school. Child labor restricts the right of children to access and benefit from education and denies the fundamental opportunity to attend school. Child labor, thus, prejudices children's education and adversely affects their health and safety.

Child labor is work that harms, abuses, and exploits a child or deprives a child of fully participating in education.[5] It refers to working children below the national minimum employment age or children under 18 doing hazardous work. Age-appropriate task that does not present hazards and does not interfere with a child's schooling and right to leisure is not considered child labor. Such family farm and off-farm activities can help children to learn valuable skills, build self-esteem, and contribute to household income. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between economic activities that do not harm the child and child labor.

This research work is a brief discussion of why child labor in agriculture needs to be urgently reduced and then presents an outline of some FAQ-supported good agricultural practices that can address the underlying causes of child labor and concludes with recommendations for action by government, civil society, employers' associations, worker and producer organizations, and communities. Child labor can also be described as any work, for which a child is too young or which by its nature and/or the way it is carried out. There are several types of child labor which includes housework, agricultural production and processing, petty trading such as selling water, groundnuts, eggs, and so on, and construction-related works such as making bricks. The number of child laborers working in agriculture is nearly 10 times that of children involved in factory working such as garment manufacturing, carpet weaving, or soccer ball stitching.

Child labor is most concentrated in Asia and Africa, which together account for more than 90% of total child employment. Although there are more child workers in Asia than anywhere else, a higher percentage of African children participate in the labor force. Asia is led by India which has 44 million child laborers, giving it the largest child workforce in the world. In Pakistan, 10% of all workers are between the ages of 10 and 14 years.[6] Nigeria has 12 million child workers. Child labor is also common in the South America.

Child labor is most concentrated in Asia and Africa, which together account for more than 90% of total child employment. Alhough there are more child workers in Asia than anywhere else, a higher percentage of African children participate in the labor force. Asia is led by India which has 44 million child laborers, giving it the largest child workforce in the world. In Pakistan, 10% of all workers are between the ages of 10 and 14 years.[7] Nigeria has 12 million child workers. Child labor is also common in South America. For example, there are 7 million children working in Brazil.[8]

Child labor in agriculture is both a cause-and-effect of poverty. Insufficient adult labor availability, exacerbated by HIV and migration to

town for work, inadequate agriculture technology and practices, and cultural tradition mean that young children are often used for work. Lack of access to quality schools in rural areas and cultural perceptions about the relevance of education are further factors encouraging child labor. Child labor can be found in smallholder farms where children are exposed to inappropriate hazards or risks, such as through exposure to pesticide, or where they have to work long hours, tending livestocks for example. Child labor can also be found in large plantations, where children may be obliged to work.

Objectives of the study

The broad objective of the study is to examine the extent of child labor involvement among food crop farmers in Yewa North Local Government Area of Ogun State. The specific objectives are to examine the pattern of child labor involvement in the study area and estimate the determinants of household child's involvement in farm labor for food crop production.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Study area

The study area is Yewa North Local Government Area of Ogun State (formally called Egbado North Local Government Area). Ogun State is located in the southwestern part of Nigeria. It is bothered by the Republic of Benin on the West, Ondo State on the East, Osun State in the North, while Lagos State and Atlantic Ocean are to the south. It has 20 local government areas. Yewa North Local Government Area has its headquarters in the town of Ayetoro at 7° 14'00"N 3°02'00"E in the Northeast of the Area. The Local Government Area came into existence through the Local Government Edict No 9 of 1976, among the 20 local government areas in Ogun State. It has the land mass of 2,043.60 square hectares and human population of about 2,338,570.

Methods of data collection

The data collected were of two categories: They are primary and secondary sources. The primary data were obtained through the use of structured questionnaire, which was personally administered on the arable crop farmers in the study area, while the secondary data were obtained from literature, journals, statistical reports, textbook, etc.

Sampling technique

In this study, a two-stage sampling technique was used in selecting sampled respondents for the study. In the first stage, six villages were selected in the local government area, while the second stage involved the random selection of 20 food crop farmers from each village to make a total of 120 respondents.

Methods of data analysis

Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used for this study. Descriptive statistics were used to describe the socioeconomic characteristics of child labor in food crop production by the farmers in the study area, such as frequency table, mean, and percentage, while inferential statistics such as multiple regression were used to examine the determinants of household child labor involvement in food crop production.

Determinants of household child's involvement in farm labor for food crop production

The logistic models were used to estimate the determinants of household child's involvement in farm labor for food crop production. The model is expressed as follows:

$Yi = \beta_o+\beta_1X_1+\beta_2X_2+\beta_3X_3+\ldots + \beta_nX_n+Ui$

Where:

Y_i = A binary variable taking the value of 1 if households engage child labor in food crop production and 0 if otherwise.

The explanatory variables included in the model are as follows:

X_1 = Age of household head (year)

X_2 = Gender of household head (1 = female and 0 = male)

X_3 = Dependency ratio (ratio of non-working member of the household to total household size)

X_4 = Years of formal education of household head

X_5 = Size of variable crop farm cultivated (Ha)

X_6 = Amount of annual household farm income (N)

X_7 = Amount of annual household non-farm income (N)
X_8 = Number of male children living with the household
X_9 = Number of female children living with the household
X_{10} = Number of household children enrolled in school
U_i = Error term.
β_1–β_{10} are parameters to be estimated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The finding revealed that the age of the food crop farmers was studied to find the age group mostly involved in food crop production activities. The result in Table 1 revealed that 52.5% of the food crop farmers were between 31 and 40 years and 35.8% were between 41 and 50 years of age. This implies that majority (88.3%) of the food crop farmers were in their productive age, where their energies could be harnessed and utilized for productive venture in agriculture, especially vegetable production. Thus, it could be concluded that the food crop farmers in the study area were full of life and vigor and can contribute their efforts, physically, mentally, and otherwise to boost their production level in the study area.

According to Adewale *et al*. (2003), gender is no barrier to active involvement in vegetable production activities. However, Oladeji *et al*. (2003) observed that it is generally believed that males are often more energetic and could readily be available for energy demanding jobs such as food crop farming. The study revealed that 79.2% of the food crop farmers were male, while 20.8% were female. The low percentage of female farmers participating in food crop production could be attributed to the fact that females in the study area usually involved in several other activities outside farming.

The finding revealed that 83.3% of the food crop farmers were married, 9.2% were divorced, and 7.5% were single. Since majority of the food crop farmers were married, they could have more time to learn new skills as well as save enough money for food crop farmers' production. Since majority of the food crop farmers are married, this signifies that possibility of adopting innovations will be high as most of them have responsibilities to perform within their household.

Education is an important socioeconomic factor that influences a farmer's decision because of its influence on the farmer's awareness, perception, reception, and the adoption of innovation that can bring about an increase in production. Similarly, Ogunbameru (2001) noted that education will likely enhance the utilization of modern innovations, thereby sustaining a virile farming population. Table 1 shows that 55.8% of the food crop farmers had no formal education, while

Table 1: Socioeconomic characteristics of vegetable farmers

Socioeconomic characteristics	Frequency (%)	Percentage
Age (years)		
20–30	2 (1.7)	1.7
31–40	63 (52.5)	52.5
41–50	43 (35.8)	35.8
51–60	12 (10.0)	10.0
Gender		
Male	95 (7.2)	79.2
Female	25 (20.8)	20.8
Marital status		
Single	9 (7.5)	7.5
Married	100 (83.3)	83.3
Divorced	11 (9.2)	9.2
Formal education		
Primary	12 (10.0)	10.0
Secondary	25 (20.8)	20.8
OND/ND	8 (6.7)	6.7
HND/BSC	2 (1.7)	1.7
Professional courses	6 (5.0)	5.0
None	67 (55.8)	55.8
Household size		
1–3 Members	20 (16.7)	16.7
4–6 Members	48 (40.0)	40.0
7–9 Members	52 (43.3)	43.3
Major occupation		
Farming	81 (67.5)	67.5
Trading	39 (32.5)	32.5
Occupational experience (years)		
1–10	66 (55.0)	55.0
11–20	34 (28.3)	28.3
21–30	11 (9.2)	9.2
31–40	9 (7.5)	7.5
Cooperative membership		
Yes	72 (60.0)	60.0
No	48 (40.0)	40.0
Cooperative membership experience (years)		
1–5	55 (45.8)	45.8
6–10	12 (10.0)	10.0
11–15	5 (4.2)	4.2
None	48 (40.0)	40.0
Total	120 (100.0)	100.0

Computed from Field Survey, 2017

44.2% possessed one form of formal education. The implication of education in agricultural production is that education is an important socioeconomic variable and form of human capital for agricultural development. Since a high percentage of the food crop farmers was educated, their education is expected to enhance modern food crop production practices in the study area. It is expected that education will reduce the use of child labor in the study area.

Household size is defined as the number of people eating from on pot. It implies that the consumption unit is also the production unit. Family composition is an important variable in agricultural production because (a) the available work force is obtained from it and (b) size of farm - l and is sometimes related to it. Responses on this variable indicate that 43.3% had between 7 and 9 household members in their family, 40.0% had a household size of 4–6 members, while 16.7% had between 1 and 3 members. This large size is most likely a reflection of the traditional belief among people in Southwest Nigeria having a preference for large household. Moreover, large household sizes often imply that food crop farmers have more members providing support on the farm and this may limit the farmer's ability to utilized innovations introduced by the extension agents because there will be lesser income available to utilize the innovations. Furthermore, it would readily make available children for farming works ranging from weeding, burning, and clearing among others. Farming is the main occupation of majority (67.5%) of the respondents. This implied that farming is taken with a keen interest in a bid to increase food crop production level and increase standard of living.

Experience is gained with age. Considering the major occupation of the respondents which is farming, the length of time in farming can be linked with the age of the farmers. As the age increases among the farmers, their years of experience also increase. The finding showed that 55.0% of the food crop farmers had been in farming for between 1 and 20 years, while 16.2% farming experiences above 20 years, respectively. With the above farming experience of the food crop farmers, it is expected that the respondents will be able to make sound decisions as regards resource allocation and management of their food crop farms. Furthermore, with more experience, there are tendencies of the farmers in utilizing improved technologies on their farms. Furthermore, an experienced food crop could have seen the effect of the usage of child labor and hence reduce it.

The finding revealed that 60.0% of the food crop farmers belong to one form of cooperative societies to the other, while 40.0% were non-member of cooperative societies, and the study has shown that the respondents understand the contribution of previous economic empowerment policies and programs targeted at group participation for enhanced access to funds among food crop farmers in the study area. With respect to the cooperative membership experience of food crop farmers, the finding indicates that 45.8% had an experience between 1 and 5 years, 10.0% had an experience between 6 and 10 years, while 4.2% had an experience between 11 and 15 years. This implies that most of the food crop farmers were not adequately experienced in their field of work.

Pattern of child labor involvement in food crop farming

There is a need to assess the use of children as a labor force to ascertain whether the food crop farmers utilized their children on the field of production or not. Based on the finding on the involvement of the child in the food crop farming, the finding indicates that majority (90.8%) of the food crop farmers used their children on the field, while 9.2% did not used their children on the field. This implied that majority of the food crop farmers who had larger household used their children as a farm attendant. With respect to the type of child labor, the children were used, and the finding indicates that 23.3% of the food crop farmers used their children for planting purpose, 20.8% used their children for clearing of bushes, 17.5% used their children for weeding activities, while 15.0%, 13.3%, and 0.8% used their children for burning, harvesting, and mound making, respectively. This implies that the children were effectively used as a source of labor by the food crop farmers in the study area [Table 2].

Determinants of household child's involvement in farm labor

The determinants of child involvement in farm labor were analyzed using logistic regression analysis which had an adjusted R^2 value of 0.739. This implies that about 73.9% of the variation in Y is accounted for the variables (X_1-X_9) included in

the model, while the remaining 26.1% is as a result of non-inclusion of other explanatory variables in the model. The *F*-value is positive and statistically significant at the 0.01, indicating that the variables included in the model adequately explain the level of household child's involvement in farm labor in the study area.

Data in Table 3 showed the result of the logistic regression analysis which is used to examine the determinants of household child's involvement in farm labor. The estimated parameters and the relevant statistical test results were obtained from the analysis. The coefficient of variables such as years of formal education and amount of annual non-farm income was statistically significant at 1%, respectively, in negative relation to household child's involvement in farm labor in the study area. This implies that an increase in the years of formal education and amount of annual non-farm income will bring about a decrease in the household child's involvement in farm labor. Furthermore, the coefficient of age, gender, dependency ratio, and number of household children enrolled in school were statistically significant at 1%, 5%, 10%, and 1% in positive relation to household child's involvement in farm labor in the study area. This implies that advancement in the age, gender, dependency ratio, and number of household children enrolled will bring about an increase in the household child's involvement in farm labor.

Table 2: Child involvement of children on food crop farming production

Child involvement	Frequency (%)
Yes	109 (90.8)
No	11 (9.2)
Type of child labor usage	
Clearing of bush	25 (20.8)
Bush burning	18 (15.0)
Mound making	1 (0.8)
Planting	28 (23.3)
Weeding	21 (17.5)
Harvesting	16 (13.3)
None	11 (9.2)
Total	120 (100.0)

Computed from Field Survey, 2017

Problems encountered in the production of food crop

This section presents the problems encountered in food crop production in the study area. The study on the problems encountered in the production of food crop indicates that all (100.0%) of the food crop farmers encountered one form of problems to the other. Furthermore, the finding indicates that all the food crop farmers encountered the problems of insect and pest attacks, 70.8% encountered the problems of inadequate labor, 58.3% encountered the problems of financial crises, while 12.5% encountered the problems of inadequate labor. This implies that the problem of labor was least experienced among the food crop farmers in the study area due to child involvement which less their labor cost but have adverse effect on child growth and education [Table 4].

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that the food crop farmers utilized their children on the farming activities

Table 3: Logistic regression on determinants of household child's involvement in farm labor

Variables	Ordinary least square		Maximum likelihood estimate	
	Coefficient	*t* value	Coefficient	*t* value
Constant	0.407	0.944	−0.620	−1.039
Age of household head	0.191	2.173	0.374*	3.080
Gender of household head	0.372	2.574	0.508**	2.609
Dependency ratio	0.992	1.240	0.177***	1.669
Years of formal education	−0.582	−5.685	−0.974*	−5.074
Size of variable crop farm cultivated	0.912	1.033	0.204	1.180
Amount of annual household farm income	−0.199	−0.286	0.276	0.029
Amount of annual non-farm income	−1.047	−4.007	−1.385*	−3.875
Number of children living with the household head	−0.470	−1.074	−0.626	−0.103
Number of household children enrolled in school	0.270	3.742	0.383*	3.967
F value				
R^2 value	0.772			
Adjusted R^2 value	0.739			

10% Significance level***, 5% significance level**, and 1% significance level*. Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4: Problems encountered by the food crop farmers

Problems	Frequency (%)	
	Yes	No
Encountered farm problems	120 (100.0)	0 (0.0)
Types of problems		
Insect and pest attack	120 (100.0)	0 (100.0)
Financial constraints	50 (41.7)	70 (58.3)
Inadequate labor	35 (29.2)	85 (70.8)
Poor transportation	105 (87.5)	15 (12.5)
Total	120 (100.0)	120 (100.0)

Computed from Field Survey, 2017

ranging from clearing, weeding, planting, harvesting, and molding among others. Furthermore, prevailing problems such as insect and pest attacks, inadequate labor, financial constraints, and poor transportation hindered the food crop production in the study area. Furthermore, years of formal education and amount of annual non-farm income, age, gender, dependency ratio, and number of household children enrolled in school are the identified determinants of child's involvement in farm labor. It was also found that there is reduction in labor cost due to child involvement in production of food crop but at the expense of the child development and growth.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding, the following recommendations were made thus:

i. There should be provision of enlightenment by the government and other institutions related to food crop production to educate the food crop farmers on dignity of labor and to desist from the use of their children for farm works.
ii. Insect and pest attacks were identified as the major problem hindering food crop production in the study area. Hence, it is recommended that the food crop farmers should utilize pesticides and herbicides to curtail the problems of insect and pest outbreak.
iii. Financial institutions should assist the food crop farmers in provision of financial assistance as the finding indicates that financial crises are one of the problems encountered by the food crop farmers. With provision of more funds, the food crop farmers will be encouraged to manage their business enterprises effectively and increase their production level.

REFERENCES

1. Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations. Child Labour in Agriculture: Exercise and Information for the Integration of Child Labour Prevention in Junior Farmer Field and Life School. United Nations: Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations; 2010. p. 15-20.
2. Aderinto AA. Social correlates and coping measures of street children: A comparative studies of street and non-street children in South-Western Nigeria. Child Abuse Negl 2000;24:199-213.
3. ILO/IPEC. Training Resources Pack on the Elimination of Hazardous Child Labour in Agriculture. Lagos, Nigeria: International Labor Office/IPEC; 2005. p. 2-5.
4. ILO. International Program on the Elimination of Child Labour; 2002.
5. Seetharamu AS, Devi U. Education in Rural Areas: Constraints and Protects. New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House; 1985.
6. Aredo D. Labour utilization in peasant agriculture: Private and comparative farms in an Ethiopian village. Issues Afr Rural Dev 1995;2:33-42.
7. Syed KA, Mizra A, Sultan R, Rana I. Child labour: Socioeconomic consequences. Pak Gulf Econ 1991;10:36-9.
8. International Labor Office. World Labor Report 1992. Geneva: World Bank. 2004 Nigeria; Country Brief. Retrieve from the World Bank; 1992.