# Socio-Cultural Correlates of Child Labour among Public Primary School Pupils in Aba Metropolis, Nigeria

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**Abstract.** *This study undertook to investigate the socio-cultural correlates of child labour among public primary school pupils in Aba Metropolis, Nigeria. It followed a correlational survey design. The sample consisted of 885 participants drawn from 15 public primary schools in the study area. A Child Labour Identification Questionnaire (CLIQ) was designed by the researcher to identify participants engaged in child labour. A Child Labour Effect Questionnaire was used to collect data on the effects of sociocultural correlates on child labour. Achievement Test in English Language (ATEL) and in Mathematics (ATM) were used as indices of academic performance. Three research hypotheses guided the study and were tested using Pearson Product Moment Correlation, t-test, Analysis of Variance and Multiple Regression Analysis. The findings were that both parental and child characteristics were strong determinants of child labour and schooling. Poverty was also found to be a major cause of child labour. Therefore, it is recommended that laws prohibiting child labour be strictly enforced and that government provides social welfare facilities to improve the circumstances of the parents of the children involved in child labour.*

**Keywords:** Child labour, Poverty alleviation, Education for all.

## Introduction

Child labour constitutes a major obstacle to achieving universal basic education. This is captured in the sixth goal of Education For All (EFA) which calls for "improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills" as declared by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization and to which Nigeria was signatory (UNESCO, 2005). Nigeria is committed to the promotion and achievement of the above stated objective. The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme is Nigeria's strategy for the achievement of Education for All. As its major objective, the scheme is to provide free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-going age; and ensuring the acquisition of appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills, as well as ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long learning (Ukommi, 2012). To achieve the goals of UBE, all children irrespective of sociocultural, economic and locational factors must be in school. However, it is clear that societal and institutional factors, particularly child labour, might be a major challenge to the

programme. Child labour is harmful not only to the welfare of individual children, but also hinders broader national poverty alleviation and development programmes (Khanam, 2010).

There seems to be a wide variety of estimates as to the number of working children under fourteen years of age, ranging from 200 to 400 million worldwide (ILO, 2014). In 2010, the International Labour Organization (ILO) estimated that, in developing countries alone, there were at least 120 million children between the ages of 5 and 14 years working full time; while about 130 million children in this age group combined work and study (ILO, 2011). Osmet (2014) highlights that there are about 20 million Nigerian children under the age of fourteen years who are involved in child labour. Although the figure is a rough estimate, it still offers an approximate measure. The estimate suggests that child labour is evident and a problem of a large magnitude in Nigeria. The subject of child labour as a social problem has, in recent years, attracted a growing interest among sociologists, academics, professionals, researchers and the media. It has also moved from the national to the international arena. For example, the International Labour Organization Convention 138, which Nigeria ratified with other countries, makes clear the linkages between the elimination of child labour and access to quality basic education for all children (Education International, 2013). The implication of the convention on the links between child labour and education calls for the concern of the Sociologists of Education who are in a position to estimate the various facets of the linkages. This is evident in available literature on the link between child labour and education as reported by Sakurai (2006), Pascharopoulos (2013) and others.

According to the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour/ Statistical Information and Monitoring Programme on Child Labour (IPEC/SIMPOC, 2011) national survey data of Nigerian children aged 5 to 14 years, 57.5 percent only study, 16.0 percent work and are not in school, 23.4 percent combine work and study, and 3.1 percent neither work nor in school. Of children aged 10 to 14 years, 27.2 percent of those who worked attended school. These statistics show that there is a significant number of children who continue to divide their time between working and studying. A critical research concern regarding child labour in Nigeria is whether working has a negative consequence on the academic performance of children that are involved. Therefore, better understanding of the socio-cultural correlates and effect of child labour on children's academic performance is important because it reveals possible areas of societal interventions concerning the problem. The socio-cultural correlates are children's age, gender, birth

order and relationship to the head of the household, as well as parental education and occupation, family size, poverty and cultural practices.

Poverty is the main push factor of child labour in developing countries like Nigeria. Vulnerability of poor families due to their desperation for survival "pushes" their children into child labour (UNICEF, 2016). In households with large numbers of children, if income is not sufficient to meet basic needs there will be pressure to send at least some children to work in order to supplement overall household income (Sunandamina, 2014). According to Levison (1991), parental education and occupation can be critical in influencing which children are most vulnerable to exploitation. Also, there can be cultural or traditional practices whereby in certain population groups children working with parents is considered as part of the socialization process (Osmet, 2014). The child's age is an important determinant of likelihood of child employment. Children are desired as workers for their malleability and compliance; their young age is justification for low or no wages (Fetuga, 2005). Given work participation, the type of activity that children engage in may also be gender-specific. The birth order of the child can influence whether the child works for economic or cultural reasons. For example, the oldest child in the household may be expected to work and to contribute, along with parents, to the education and upkeep of younger children (Lindert, 1978). Biological relatedness is a strong predictor of the quality of care offered to children; hence, children of the household head are less likely to work than non-biological relation to the head of household (Khanam, 2004).

Studies on the interaction between child labour and academic performance produce a mixed grill of findings. There is indirect evidence that child labour limits a child's human capital development (Rosati & Rossi, 2011). The World Bank (2012), using test scores data from a nationally representative survey of junior high schools in Cambodia, reports that work has a significant and detrimental effect on learning achievement, particularly among the eight-graders. The estimated results for literacy and numeracy test-scores (including children, parental, household and school characteristics) indicate that working every day before going to school reduces literacy and numeracy test scores of Cambodian eight-graders both by about nine percentage points.

Using data from the survey conducted for Young Lives International Study in Ethiopia, Wohldehanna and Gebremedhin (2015) show that child labour has a negative impact on children's raw test scores. Hence, there is clear causal evidence that child labour has adverse effect on children's educational performance. They conclude that overall, child

labour exhibits a negative effect on children's educational achievement. The study of Guarcello, Lyons, and Rosati (2005) with a sample of 600 working children aged 12 – 14 years in grades 7 – 10 in Kenya indicates that only exclusive involvement in economic activity appears to be detrimental to academic achievement; 56 percentage are rated as either "poor" or "very poor" in terms of academic performance, compared to 37 percent of non-working children. Children involved in household chores rate higher than non-working children in terms of school performance. They conclude that not working will improve students' performance for most children in all work categories.

Addressing child labour depends on what its actual correlates and effects are. Therefore, this study has attempted to identify the determinants of child labour. Identification of these determinants could then help policy makers and researchers in designing interventions to tackle issues and constraints faced by the household where children work. Moreover, estimating the effects of child labour on learning outcome, which is a major purpose of this study, provides data for educational interventions to mitigate the impact of child work on education.

The main purpose of the study was to investigate the socio-cultural correlates and the effect of child labour on academic performance of public primary school pupils in Aba metropolis. To guide the study, the following three hypotheses were tested:

1. There would be no significant relationship between parental characteristics, mainly educational attainment, occupation, family size, and poverty status, and child labour.
2. There would be no significant relationship between child characteristics mainly age, gender, birth order, relationship to the head of household, and child labour.
3. There would be no significant relationship between cultural practices and child labour.

## Methodology

The researcher carried out a correlational study to assess the relationships among the occurring variables with the goal of identifying relationship. The design was considered appropriate for the present study because it helped the researcher to explain phenomenon of child labour in Aba metropolis in terms of its correlates, conditions or relationships that exist, opinions that are held by the respondents, practices that are going on, and consequences that are evident (Kinnear & Taylor, 1996). The study was conducted in Aba Metropolis. Aba is a

city in the South-East of Nigeria and commercial hub of Abia State. When Abia State was created in 1991, the main Aba was divided into two local government areas, namely: Aba South and Aba North. Aba is a major urban settlement and is surrounded by small villages and towns. This area was chosen because of its urban nature, which is characterized by a wide socio-cultural spectrum, and marked with growth in the number of urban child workers in recent years. Moreover, working children in urban areas like Aba are likely to be more endangered and deprived due to high rates of vehicular accidents, crimes and other metropolitan hazards than those in rural areas and, therefore, especially deserving of attention by researchers and policy-makers. The target population for this study comprised all primary school pupils (aged 8-13years) in Aba South and Aba North Local Government Areas of Abia State. However, the accessible population for the survey was the pupils of primary five in Aba North and Aba South public primary schools because they were within the age of child labour and stable cohorts that were not distracted by any external examinations. Also, public primary schools were preferred because education is free of cost compared to private ones, and even the poor can educate their children in the former.

The study adopted a multi-stage technique approach. Firstly, the schools were stratified according to local government areas. Secondly, stratified random sampling technique was used to select fifteen public primary schools from the two local governments that make up the Aba metropolis. Thirdly, four hundred and five respondents were randomly selected in Aba North and four hundred and eighty respondents were selected in Aba South. Thus, a total of eight hundred and eighty five respondents were used as sample for the study. Initially, nine hundred and thirty questionnaires were administered, and only eight hundred and eighty five questionnaires were retrieved and found usable. This put the response rate at 95%. The pupils in the primary five classes were administered Child Labour Identification Questionnaire (CLIQ) constructed by the researcher to ascertain their involvement in work activities. A dichotomous question format was adopted in which the respondents, due to their level of understanding, were allowed a choice of only two responses: "Yes" or "No". To ascertain the internal consistency, the Cronbach's alpha was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.83.

Child Labour Effect Questionnaire (CLEQ) was also developed by the researcher to examine the effect of parental characteristics, child characteristics, poverty status and cultural practices on child labour. Responses to most of the items assumed "Yes" or "No" format for easy

understanding by the respondents. To ascertain the internal consistency of the instrument, the Cronbach's alpha was used to obtain a reliability coefficient of 0.87.

Standardized Achievement Test in English Language (ATEL) which consisted of a twenty-item multiple-choice questions was used to determine the literacy performance of public primary school pupils in Aba metropolis. Also, Standardized Achievement Test in Mathematics (ATM) consisting of twenty-item multiple-choice questions was used to estimate the numeracy ability of the sample. All the items both for English and Mathematics were consistent with the primary five scheme of work covered in the first term.

A pilot study was carried out in one public primary school in Aba metropolis that was not included in the study. The content validity of the instruments was established by experts in test development and Sociology of Education. A test-retest measure of stability of the instruments was used to establish the reliability co-efficient of the instruments using forty students (twenty boys and twenty girls) within two weeks of interval. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used and r of 0.87 was established between the two tests administered to the students indicating that the tests were reliable and adequate for the study.

Both descriptive and inferential statistics covering computation of means, mean differences, percentages, standard deviations, t-test, ANOVA and multiple regression were used to analyse data collected.

## Results

**Hypothesis One:** There would be no significant relationship between parental characteristics in terms of educational attainment, occupation, family size, and poverty and child labour.

In order to analyse hypothesis one, the data collected on parental characteristics (educational attainment, occupation, family size, and poverty) were correlated with the data on child labour activities using regression analysis. The results (Table 1) revealed that poverty status (r= -0.19), father education (r= -0.195), and mother education (r= -0.119) contribute inversely and significantly to child labour activities. This implies that pupils from poor families, with parents of low education are likely to be involved more in work activities than pupils from rich families and are of educated parents.

**Table 1: Correlation between Parental Characteristics and Child Labour**

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Father education | 1.0 | .010 | -.179** | -.021 | .047 | .028 | -.195** |
| | *Sig.* | | .999 | .000 | .533 | .158 | .406 | .000 |
| 2 | Mother education | | 1.0 | .042 | .036 | .095** | -.010 | -.119** |
| | *Sig.* | | | .208 | .285 | .005 | .777 | .000 |
| 3 | Father occupation | | | 1.0 | .021 | .144** | .000 | .236** |
| | *Sig.* | | | | .534 | .000 | .991 | .000 |
| 4 | Mother occupation | | | | 1 | -.015 | -.008 | -.017 |
| | *Sig.* | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Size of family | | | | | 1.0 | -.051 | .095** |
| | *Sig.* | | | | | | .129 | .005 |
| 6 | Poverty | | | | | | 1.0 | -.190** |
| | *Sig.* | | | | | | | .000 |
| 7 | Child labour | | | | | | | 1 |

Table 1 also shows that a positive and significant relationship exists among father occupation (r= 0.236), family size (r= 0.095) and child labour.

**Table 2: Multiple Regression Analysis of Parental Characteristics on Child Labour**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted Square | R | Std. Error of the Estimate | Durbin-Watson |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .371* | .137 | .132 | | .34108 | .246 |

*a. Predictors: (Constant), father education, mother education, father occupation, mother occupation, and family size.*
*b. Dependent Variable: child labour.*

**Table 3: ANOVA Showing Coefficient of Determination**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Regression | 16.276 | 5 | 3.255 | 27.981 | .000b |
| | Residual | 102.260 | 879 | .116 | | |
| | Total | 118.536 | 884 | | | |

*a. Dependent Variable: Child labour.*
*b. Predictors: Father occupation, mother occupation, father education, mother education, family size and poverty.*

Table 3 indicates that coefficient of determination (Adjusted $R^2$) = 0.132, and gives proportion of variance to be (Adjusted $R^2 \times 100$) = 13.2%. This implies that the independent variables (parents' educational attainment, occupation, size of family and poverty) account for 13.2% of the variance in the dependent variable (child labour) in the study area. Hence, the joint effect of parental characteristics is significant to determine child labour activities $p = 0.000 < 0.05$.

**Table 4: Relative Contribution of Independent Variables to Child Labour**

| Model | | Coefficients* | | | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 2.110 | .092 | | 22.909 | .000 |
| | Father | -.055 | .011 | -.058 | -4.932 | .000 |
| | education. | -.051 | .012 | -.137 | -4.337 | .000 |
| | Mother | .054 | .009 | .203 | 6.294 | .000 |
| | education. | .052 | .008 | .197 | 6.26 | .000 |
| | Father | .071 | .029 | .077 | 2.420 | .016 |
| | occupation. | -.044 | .008 | -.183 | -5.846 | .000 |
| | Mother | | | | | |
| | occupation. | | | | | |
| | Family size. | | | | | |
| | Poverty. | | | | | |

** Significant, p. value < 0.05*

Table 4 shows the relative contribution of independent variables to child labour. Evidence from the data reveals that father education (***B*** = -0.055, t= -4.932, p= 0.00 < 0.05); mother education (B= 0.051 t= 3.337, p= 0.00 < 0.05); and poverty (***B***= -0.044, t= -5,846, p=0.00<0.05) contribute inversely and significantly to child labour. In addition, father occupation (B= 0.054; t= 6.294; p=0.00<0.05; mother occupation (B = 0.052, t = 6.290, p = 0.00 < 0.05) and size of the family (B=0.071, t= 2.420, p=0.02<0.05) contribute directly to the child labour in the study area. The results further show that size of the family (B=0.071) contributes significantly to child labour more than the other parental characteristics. This is followed by father education (B= -0.0.55), father occupation (B= -0.054), mother education (B= -0.051) and poverty (B- -0.044) respectively. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

**Hypothesis Two:** There would be no significant relationship between child characteristics and child labour.

**Table 5: Correlation between Child Characteristics and Child Labour**

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Gender | 1.0 | .032 | -.123** | .119** | .201** |
| | *Sig.* | | .346 | .000 | .000 | .000 |
| 2 | Age | | 1.0 | .065 | -.168** | .026 |
| | | | | .052 | .000 | .446 |
| 3 | Birth order | | | 1.0 | -.009 | -.270** |
| | *Sig.* | | | | .790 | .000 |
| 4 | Relationship with head of household | | | | 1.0 | .164** |
| | *Sig.* | | | | | .000 |
| 5 | Child labour | | | | | 1.0 |

The results on the relationship between child characteristics and child labour are presented in Table 5 which reveal that birth order (r= -0.27, p=0.00) contributes inversely and significantly to child labour activities. This implies that first born child is more likely to be involved in work activities than later born child. The data also reveal a direct and significant relationship between gender (r=0.201, p=0.00) and relationship to head of the household (r=0.164, p=0.00) with child labour. On the contrary, there is no significant relationship between age of the child and involvement in child labour (r=0.026, p=0.446).

**Table 6: Multiple Regression Analysis of Child Characteristics on Child Labour**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | .354* | .126 | .122 | .34320 |

*a. Predictors: Questions addressing child characteristics: Whom are you living with? What is your birth order? What is your gender? What is your age?*

**Table 7: ANOVA**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | Df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Regression | 14.884 | 4 | 3.721 | 31.592 | .000[b] |
| | Residual | 103.651 | 880 | .118 | | |
| | Total | 118.536 | 884 | | | |

*a. Dependent Variable: Child labour.*
*b. Predictors: Age, gender, birth order and relationship of child to the head of household.*

The data in Table 7 indicate that coefficient of determination (Adjusted $R^2$) = 0.122, which gives proportion of variance to be (Adjusted $R^2 \times 100$) = 12.2%. This implies that the independent variables (age, gender, birth order and relationship to head of the household) account for 12.2% of the variance in the dependent variable (child labour) in the study area. Hence, the joint effect of child characteristics is significant to determine child labour activities F = 31.592; df = 4.884; significant value p = 0.000 < 0.05 as shown in Table 7.

**Table 8: Relative Contribution of the Independent Variables on Child Labour**

| Model | | Coefficients* | | | | Sig. | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Unstandardized | | Standardized | | | |
| | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | | |
| 2 | (Constant) | 1.665 | .055 | | 30.441 | .000 | Significant |
| | Age | .030 | .015 | .064 | 1.979 | .048 | Significant |
| | Gender | .109 | .023 | .149 | 4.650 | .000 | Significant |
| | Birth Order | -.065 | .008 | - | -7.987 | .000 | Significant |
| | Relationship of child to the head of household. | .046 | .009 | .254<br>.155 | 4.798 | .000 | Significant |

*a. Dependent Variable: Child labour, b. Independent variables: Age, gender, birth order and relationship of child to the head of household.*

Table 8 demonstrates the relative contribution of independent variables (age, gender, birth order and relationship to the head of household) to dependent variable (child labour). Evidence from the data reveals that gender (B= 0.109, t= 4.650, p=0.00<0.005) and relationship to the head of household (B= 0.046 t= 4.798, P=0.00 < 0.05) contribute directly and significantly to child labour. In addition, birth order (B= 0.065 t= 7.987 p= 0.00<0.05) contributes inversely to the child labour in the study location. On the other hand, age of the child (B= 0.030, t= 1.979 p= 0.05) does not contribute significantly to child labour activities. The results further show that gender of the child (B= 0.109) is a major determinant of child labour activities in the study location. This is followed by birth order (B= -0.065), relationship to the head of household (B= -0.046) and age (B= 0.030) respectively. The null hypothesis is, therefore, rejected.

**Hypothesis Three:** There would be no significant relationship between cultural practices and child labour.

**Table 9: Multiple Regression Analysis Cultural Practices and Child Labour**

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | .341[a] | .116 | .115 | .34446 |

*a. Predictors: (Constant), cultural practices*

**Table 10: ANOVA[a] Table Showing Coefficient of Determination**

| Model | | Sum of Squares | DF | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Regression | 13.766 | 1 | 13.766 | 116.018 | .000[b] |
| | Residual | 104.770 | 883 | .119 | | |
| | Total | 118.536 | 884 | | | |

*a. Dependent Variable: Child labour*
*b. Predictors: (Constant), cultural practices*

Table 9 indicates that coefficient of determination (Adjusted $R^2$) = 0.115, which gives proportion of variance to be (Adjusted $R^2 \times 100$) = 11.5%. This implies that the independent variables (cultural practices) account for 11.5% of the variance in child labour. Hence, the joint effect of child characteristics on child labour is significant (p = 0.000 < 0.05).

**Table 11: Relative Contribution of the Independent Variables to Child Labour**

| | | Coefficients | | | | Sig. | Remark |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Unstandardized | | Standardized | | | |
| Model | | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | | |
| 1 | (Constant) | 1.321 | .050 | | 26.641 | .000 | Significant |
| | Cultural practices | -.098 | .009 | .341 | 10.771 | .000 | |

*a. Dependent Variable: Child labour*

Evidence from Table 10 reveals that cultural practices: B= 0.098, t= 10.771, p= 0.00<0.05; contribute directly and significantly to child labour. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected.

## Discussion

The testing of hypothesis one reveals that there is a significant relationship between parental characteristics (mainly educational attainment, occupation, family size and poverty) and child labour. Disaggregation of these characteristics shows that parental level of education is strongly and negatively correlated with the probability of combining work and study. This is consistent with most of the previous literature. Tzannatos (1998) reports that the father's educational attainment has a significantly negative effect on the incidence of child labour in Thailand. Fetuga (2005) observes that children of poorly educated parents are significantly involved in labour activities in Ogun State, Nigeria. A plausible reason for the finding is that more educated parents might have a better knowledge of the returns to education and be in a better position to enable their children to exploit the earning potential acquired through education. Turning to the parental occupation, the variable coefficient for father (.236) gives significant results. For example, if father occupation is trade, then it is more likely for the child to specialize in schooling (Osmet, 2014). This is because if a father is engaged in trade then positive income effect dominates to keep the children in the school. On the other hand, if the father of a child is a farmer, then it increases the probability that the child will combine "study and work". The coefficient of mother occupation is found to be insignificant in the sample. Also, the finding shows that there is a significant relationship between family size and the probability of combining work and study. This is in agreement with the view in Bhalotra and Heady (2003), which suggests a significant negative effect of household size on the probability of being in work and on the probability of combining work and study, relative to the probability of simply being in school. A possible explanation for the researcher's finding is that large family size reduces wealth per capita and makes the competition over scarce resources stiffer, which may in turn increase child labour to generate resources to sustain family members.

Poverty contributes significantly to child labour. To capture the poverty status, the study used a proxy variable for education level of the head household property index as well as proxies for parental occupation and type of accommodation inhabited by respondents. Households below the poverty line are likely to send their children to

work and study because they need additional income to support their family. It indicates that poverty is one cause of child labour. The finding of this study confirms a priori poverty theory of a positive link between poverty and involvement in child labour activities, while contradicting the findings of Coulombe (1998) and Canagarajah and Nielsen (2001), which typically have found this link to be absent. Similarly, Ray's (2010) study in Pakistan establishes a positive association between child labour and poverty.

Hypothesis two states that there would be no significant relationship between child characteristics; mainly age, gender, birth order and relationship to the head of household and child labour. The finding reveals that there is no significant relationship between age of the child and involvement in child labour. Similarly, Levison's (1991) study in Mexico finds no significant effect of age on the probability of combining work and study. On the contrary, Cartwright and Patrinos (1999) report that age increases the probability that a child will work either full time or a combination of work and school. Also, Oloko (1990) states that age sometimes constitutes an important intervening variable in the extent to which work constitutes socialization in Nigeria.

Gender has significant effect on the probability of combining study and work. Female children are more likely to combine study with work, since the odds of combining study with work for girls are higher than those for boys. This finding is not surprising, as the researcher included housework in the definition of work. It is, thus, consistent with the finding of Edmonds (2012) who also finds that if housework is included in the measurement of work, then girls are 14.1 percent points more likely than boys to combine work and study. Moreover, the established gender differential need not necessarily imply discrimination but rather reflect cultural beliefs, norms and values. However, other studies by Tanson (2009) and Ilahi (2001) that use conventional definition of work find that girls are less likely than boys to combine work and study. With reference to birth order, the finding shows there is a significant relationship between child's birth order and involvement in child labour. This implies that first child is more likely to combine work and study than later-born. The finding is in consonance with Oloko (1990) who observes that there is a societal belief in Nigeria that earlier-born children should take on more family responsibilities than later-born. Therefore, they are more likely to be chosen for work and school attendance by their parents. It can also be argued that earlier born children are able to command higher wages than their youngest siblings. The finding of this study further reveals direct and significant association between a child's relationship to the head of household and

child labour. The coefficient shows significant positive effect on the probability of combining work and study, which implies that son or daughter of the household head is also likely to study alone or combine study and work as opposed to the children of other relatives of the household head who may be denied schooling. This reflects that household head favours his or her own child with schooling or at least to combine school and work. Khanan (2004) confirms that if a child is the son or daughter of the head of the household, he or she is more likely to specialize in study and less likely to specialize in work. Most of the findings of this study align with the socio-cultural theoretical framework which postulates that parents, relatives, culture and society play vital role in forming certain levels of functioning in children, particularly child labour (Vygotsky, 1995).

The testing of hypothesis three indicates that cultural practices (beliefs system, norms and values) contribute directly and significantly to child labour. This finding is in agreement with Elijah and Okoruwa (2006) who are of the opinion that the practice of child labour in Yenegoa is mainly rooted in the cultural values. Culturally, it is probably believed that child labour is perceived as a form of socialization through which children are trained in the work and responsibilities of an adult.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

This study considers the socio-cultural correlates and the effect of child labour on the academic performance of public primary school children in Aba metropolis. From the results of this study it is concluded that both individual child's and parental characteristics are strong determinants of child labour. Also, there appears to be a poverty-child labour link in the data. Child labour thrives because of the cultural belief, norms and values that work is good for character-building of children.

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Sociologists of education should organize seminars and workshops for children, parents, guardians, community leaders and teachers on the harmful effect of child labour on the academic performance of children.
2. Provision of social welfare facilities to improve the economic circumstances of working children's parents.
3. Laws prohibiting child labour need to be strictly enforced.

4. Educate the populace on the relationship between family and quality of life.
5. Child labour issues should be introduced into the curriculum of regular school programmes.
6. There should be intensive public education to eradicate culturally induced child labour practices.

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