

**PUBLIC PERCEPTION TOWARDS CHILD LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELL BEING OF  
UNDERAGED CHILDREN IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE,  
NIGERIA.**

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**BENIN CITY**

**APRIL, 2024**

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**A PROJECT WRITTEN AND SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY  
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NIGERIA.**

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## CERTIFICATION

We, the undersigned, certify that this project work was carried out by Orukpe Faith Ese, with matriculation number SSC1909841, of the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria, for the partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Award of Bachelor of Science (B.Sc) Degree in Sociology and Anthropology.

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Date

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to God Almighty.

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I give God the utmost thanks for giving me the courage and direction I needed to complete this research work. My sincere gratitude is extended to my devoted parents, Mr. and Mrs. Orukpe, whose constant encouragement and support have been my source of strength. I owe a debt of gratitude to my beloved aunt for always having faith in my potential and serving as a constant source of motivation.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study investigates how the general public views child labour and how it affects the social welfare of young children in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State, Nigeria. Child labour still affects children's rights and social development, making it a serious problem. This study employs qualitative research method, such as questionnaires to examine community attitudes and perceptions regarding child labour practices and their impact on children's overall welfare. The community is quite concerned about child labour, as the results indicate that it negatively impacts children's physical, mental, and academic health.

Child labor practices are perpetuated in part by cultural norms, poverty, and limited educational opportunities. In order to prevent child labor and advance the social welfare of young children, the study emphasizes the critical necessity for government action as well as community-based programs. To effectively address this widespread issue, recommendations include putting comprehensive policies into place, improving access to education, and increasing public awareness.

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## CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Child labor poses grave threats to children's physical, emotional, and psychological well-being, undermining their future prospects. Child labor constitutes exploitation of children through any form of work that deprives them of their childhood, hinders school attendance, and causes harm to their mental, physical, social, and moral development (UNICEF,2013). According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), a child is any individual under the age of 18. Children (ages 5-17) engage in labor that endangers their health and development.

Adedoyin and Adeyemi (2017) found that many Nigerians perceive child labor as a cultural norm or an economic survival strategy rather than a violation of children's rights. Research suggests that there is often a gap in knowledge and understanding of the adverse effects of child labor on children's health, education, and overall development. Studies have demonstrated that child labor negatively impacts children's physical health, educational attainment, and psychosocial well-being. For example, Amodu and Olatona (2018) found that child laborers in Nigeria are more likely to experience malnutrition, injuries, and mental health problems than their non-laboring peers.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) defines the minimum age for child labor as under the age of 18. This standard has existed for many years and is outlined in various ILO conventions and recommendations, most notably Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour, adopted in 1999. The elimination of child labor is one of the four categories of

rights adopted in 1998 by the International Labor Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (Convention 2005; International Labour Office 2017).

Despite Nigeria's legal framework that prohibits child labor, including the Child Rights Act and the Labour Act, enforcement and implementation at the local level are weak, especially in rural areas like Oredo. Cultural norms and traditional practices also contribute to the persistence of child labor, with some communities perceiving children as economic assets rather than individuals deserving of protection and education.

Child labor is a significant concern in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Many children in this region engage in various forms of child labor, including street hawking, begging, domestic work, and agriculture. Edo State, located in southern Nigeria, has a history of child labor, which is often driven by poverty, a lack of access to education, and cultural influences. The state's economy, largely reliant on agriculture and informal sectors, exacerbates the problem. Studies by Omonhinmin et al. (2017) shed light on the specific challenges faced by children in Edo State, including hazardous working conditions and limited educational and social development opportunities.

These children often work long hours in dangerous environments, which can have detrimental effects on their health, education, and overall well-being. The International Labour Organization (ILO) considers poverty a major factor contributing to the prevalence of child labor in Edo state. Poverty often intertwines with child labor in various ways, including economic necessity, lack of alternatives, vulnerability to exploitation, and barriers to education.

Edo State, situated in Nigeria's southern region, faces unique challenges related to child labor. With a combination of urban and rural areas, Oredo Local Government Area stands out as

a hotspot for child labor in Edo State. Benin, the bustling capital of Edo State, lies within Oredo Local Government Area, creating a distinct socioeconomic landscape where child labor intersects with urbanization, poverty, and informal employment.

In Oredo Local Government Area of Benin city, the prevalence of child labor has significantly increased in recent years, demanding urgent attention from all stakeholders involved in child development; parents, the government, and society at large (Osahon, 2022). Culture plays a major role in shaping attitudes and behaviors towards child labor in Edo state. Traditional practices and norms often influence the allocation of responsibilities to children. In some communities, it is considered a rite of passage for children to participate in certain labor activities as a way to build character and discipline.

Despite the absence of concrete statistical data, the increasing presence of underage children engaged in various forms of labor, such as hawking, assisting as bus conductors, pushing wheelbarrows, cleaning vehicles, and beyond, within the Oredo region of Benin City is evident. This alarming trend exposes the complexities surrounding the issue of child labor.

Addressing child labor and fostering the well-being of underage individuals demands a multifaceted approach encompassing government involvement, community engagement, educational initiatives, and economic empowerment programs. By analyzing public opinions and exploring the root causes of child labor, concerned entities can develop targeted interventions aimed at safeguarding children's rights and enhancing their well-being in the Oredo Local Government Area.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

The Oredo Local Government Area of Benin City, Nigeria, faces the critical challenge of child labor, which significantly compromises the social well-being of underaged children. Despite existing legal frameworks, non-governmental organizations, and international conventions aimed at eliminating child labor, this problem persists, sparking significant concerns regarding the physical, psychological, and educational well-being of these children. The limited availability of comprehensive local data and a thorough understanding of the specific factors driving and consequences of child labor in Oredo necessitate in-depth research to identify underlying causes, assess impacts on social well-being, and propose effective mitigation and intervention strategies.

Ultimately, this research aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the issue and provide insights that can inform policies, initiatives, and interventions aimed at protecting the well-being of underage children in the Oredo Local Government Area of Benin City.

## **1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

What are the perceptions of people as regards child labour in Oredo LGA?

1. What are the socio-economic factors that contribute to child labour in Oredo Local Government Area?
2. What are the roles parents and guardians play in the overall well-being of under aged child labourers?
3. To what extent does access to education and healthcare services play a role in alleviating the negative effects of child labour on the social well-being of children in Oredo Local Government Area?

4. What are the feasible ways child labour can be alleviated in Oredo Local Government Area?

#### **1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To assess the prevalence and patterns of child labor in Oredo Local Government Area, including the types of work, age groups, and gender distribution among child laborers.
2. To examine the socio-economic factors that contribute to child labor in the area, such as family income, parental education, and household conditions.
3. To investigate the impact of child labor on the social well-being of under-aged children, including their physical and mental health, access to education, and overall quality of life.
4. To identify the legal and policy frameworks in place to address child labor in Oredo Local Government Area and assess their effectiveness in preventing and eliminating child labor.
5. To provide recommendations and policy suggestions based on the research findings to improve the social well-being of under-aged children and reduce child labor in the region.

#### **1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Child labor remains a significant and prevalent issue that profoundly impacts the socio-economic landscape of the Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State. Within this region, young minds, teeming with untapped potential, are prematurely confronted with the harsh realities of labor at an age when they should be nurturing their aspirations, pursuing an education, and savoring the carefree experiences of childhood. This study endeavors to illuminate the detrimental effects that child labor has on the social well-being of these underaged children, a shadow that, if left unchecked, threatens to diminish their prospects for a brighter future.

This study will critically examine existing policies and legal frameworks, identifying areas requiring attention and reform, and it will offer guidance to parents on how to foster a supportive environment for their children.

Insights gained from this research can inform policies, interventions, and public outreach initiatives aimed at safeguarding the rights and well-being of minors in this area. Furthermore, by tackling child labor, we aspire to create a more promising future for Oredo's children, allowing them to pursue their dreams and reach their full potential.

## **1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

This research will focus on Oredo Local Government Area in Benin City, Edo State.

Geographically, the study will be restricted to specific areas of Oredo Local Government Area, including Ring Road and Airport Road. Data will be collected from parents residing in these areas.

## **1.7 LIMITATION TO THE STUDY**

The study will be confined to the areas specified under the study's scope, subject to time and financial constraints. The geographical location and accessibility to relevant information may also influence the study's limitations.

## **1.8 DEFINATION OF KEY TERMS**

**Child:** A child is a young human in their early life stages, typically from birth up to the age of eighteen (18). They usually depend on adults for care, guidance, and protection.

**Labor:** Labor refers to the physical and mental exertions made by individuals to accomplish tasks, produce goods, or provide services in economic and productive activities.

**Underage:** Underage indicates an age that falls below the legally established age (18) for a specific activity or responsibility. It often refers to individuals who have not yet reached the age at which they are legally permitted to participate in certain activities, such as employment.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2:1 CHILD LABOR: AN OVERVIEW

Child labor is a severe and persistent issue that has had a lasting impact on Nigeria's socioeconomic environment. It has existed for decades and continues to affect many Nigerians. Despite efforts to address it, child labor remains a significant concern. Due to poverty or a need to support their families, many children engage in hazardous activities like street vending, household chores, and agricultural labor. Nigerian laws prohibit child labor, but they are not strictly enforced, and cultural norms and limited educational opportunities contribute to its prevalence. Child labor refers to the employment of children under the age of 18 in a manner that hinders or prevents them from accessing fundamental education and development. Child labor often results from financial hardships or uncertainties faced by families, potentially caused by poverty, an unforeseen illness of a caregiver, or job loss for the primary income earner. In Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State, it is concerning to observe a high number of underage children on the streets, especially during school hours. Unfortunately, the persistence of child labor in various forms, from street vending to car washing, negatively impacts the health, development, and education of many children in this area.

Children are particularly vulnerable to harmful workplace exposures (ergonomic, chemical hazards) and injuries (Fassa et al., 2000). Engaging in physical labor can lead to lifelong health issues for these children. Ergonomic factors like heavy lifting and poor posture increase the likelihood of musculoskeletal problems in later life (Forastieri, 1997; ILO, 1998; Fassa et al., 2000). Children between the ages of 5 and 17 are subjected to physical and financial pressure to perform tasks that can have detrimental effects on their education, health, and overall

well-being. Underage children who spend their days on the streets in pursuit of income face a heightened risk of developing chronic illnesses that could potentially lead to life-threatening conditions. The selected potential health outcomes include work-related and non-work-related injuries, nutritional deficiencies (anemia, wasting, and stunting), and conditions resulting from exposure to workplace toxic substances (e.g., excessive noise, dust, extreme temperatures, chemical, biological, or radiation exposure). These outcomes are commonly considered as both immediate (injuries and harmful exposures) and long-term (nutritional status) consequences of child labor (Parker, 1997). Despite Nigeria's independence in 1960, the issue of child labor remains prevalent.

To tackle child labor in Oredo Local Government Area, a multifaceted strategy is necessary, encompassing legal measures, social welfare programs, educational initiatives, and community involvement. Governmental entities, non-profit organizations, and civil society organizations all play crucial roles in advocacy, raising awareness, and providing support services to affected children and their families.

This document aims to explore the causes of child labor, its impact, various types, and the initiatives undertaken by government and non-governmental organizations to eradicate child labor. It also proposes solutions that can effectively eliminate child labor in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State.

## **2:2 HISTORY OF CHILD LABOR IN EDO STATE**

Nigerians possess a profound reverence for children, viewing them as a divine blessing. Within the feudalistic social structure, children are considered the societal safeguard against future uncertainties, especially in subsistence agriculture. This background informs the historical analysis of child labor in Nigeria.

The historical prevalence of child labor in the precolonial Nigerian political economy is evident, with a notable absence of cultural disapproval in the colonial and postcolonial capitalist political economies. The introduction of cash crop cultivation by the British colonial authorities, heavily reliant on cheap labor including child labor, exacerbated child labor. Post-independence Nigeria saw the implementation of laws and policies to address child labor. However, its prevalence in Edo State remained largely attributed to cultural factors, economic deprivation, poverty, and limited access to education.

The concept of child labor is relatively novel in Nigeria. Many Nigerians still perceive the resistance to child labor as stemming from a colonial mentality. Oloko (2003) argued that keeping children out of the workforce could prove detrimental to society, negatively impacting their socialization.

Trade is among the non-agrarian activities prevalent in rural Nigerian economies. Prior to the introduction of cowries as currency, Nigerians engaged in a barter system for goods and services, often involving children peddling items. Isamah and Okunola (2003) documented attempts in the 1920s and 1930s to eradicate child hawking practices.

Edo State, Nigeria, like many other regions globally, has a long history of child labor. Otite (1990, 16) observed, “Historically, as is the case today, a child is viewed as a blessing, an additional helping hand, and an asset in the pursuit of survival and social interdependence.” Children have engaged in a wide range of occupations, including artisanal mining, domestic work, street hawking, and agricultural labor. Pre-colonization, children were commonly employed in various roles such as domestic chores, farm work, and apprenticeships in traditional crafts. Child labor intensified with the advent of colonization and the growth of industries, particularly in sectors like agriculture, mining, and domestic service. During the pre-colonial era,

children were regularly involved in diverse forms of communal labor, such as agricultural tasks, domestic activities, and apprenticeships to acquire traditional crafts and skills. With the arrival of European colonizers, notably the British, child labor assumed new dimensions as the demand for labor increased due to the rise of industries like mining, palm oil production, and later, cocoa farming.

Child labor in Edo State has a complex history shaped by socioeconomic factors, cultural practices, and historical legacies. From pre-colonial times to the present, children have been engaged in various forms of labor, often driven by economic necessity, lack of access to education, and cultural norms.

## **2:3 TYPES OF CHILD LABOR**

### **Street Hawking**

Street hawking is prevalent in Oredo Local Government Area, involving underage children selling goods instead of attending school. This type of child labor deprives children of education, exposes them to hazards, and negatively impacts their overall well-being. Children may face unsafe working conditions, long hours, and exploitation, limiting their future prospects and perpetuating the cycle of poverty.

### **Street Begging**

In specific cases, children found begging on the streets within Oredo Local Government Area (LGA) may be considered a form of child labor. Guardians or parents frequently coerce children to solicit funds on the streets and return any earnings to the family. Poverty, limited educational opportunities, and economic hardships drive children to the streets for sustenance. Exploited by individuals or organized groups, these children may lack adequate upbringing and education.

## **Bus Conductors**

Within Oredo LGA, children are increasingly observed assuming the role of bus conductors, which is typically intended for adults. Aggressive and disrespectful behavior, atypical of children, is prevalent among these young individuals. During school hours, they roam the streets attempting to attract passengers. Consequently, many of these children drop out of school.

## **Sales Girls/Boys**

In Oredo LGA, it has become common to encounter children as young as 15 working as sales personnel in commercial establishments. Many parents send their children to relatives for support in meeting their needs. While initially, some relatives may provide schooling, they later resort to coercing the children into skipping classes for work. Ultimately, these children abandon their education altogether to engage in unpaid employment. The young individuals entrusted to the care of business owners may be exploited with little to no compensation.

## **2.4 Causes of Child Labor in Oredo Local Government Area**

Child labor remains a prevalent issue in Oredo LGA, Edo State, due to several socioeconomic factors. Research by Olukotun and Njoku (2019) highlights poverty, lack of educational access, and cultural influences as significant contributors to child labor in Nigeria. Addressing this complex challenge requires an understanding of its root causes:

### **Poverty**

Poverty remains a primary determinant of child labor. Studies indicate that impoverished families view their children as income generators (Bhat & Rather, 2009). Basu's (1998) theoretical model suggests that parents resort to child labor when faced with economic hardship.

Constrained by limited financial resources, low-income parents are unable to prioritize education for their children. Children from impoverished backgrounds are often compelled to work to supplement family income. Economic struggles perpetuate a cycle of poverty, as families rely on their children's earnings and prioritize work over education. Children are subjected to daily labor, even during school hours.

### **Dysfunctional Family**

Socio-cultural institutions, including marriage and the family unit, have faced deterioration in Nigeria. Family disintegration, separation, and conflict have become prevalent, leading to ineffective parenting. Children in such households may experience neglect, lack of affection, and support. To meet their basic needs, children from these households engage in various forms of child labor, seeking fulfillment and alleviating feelings of abandonment. Parental absence and lack of support can result in children assuming the role of primary income earners for their families.

### **Cultural Influences on Child Labor**

Various societal norms in Nigeria contribute to the incidence of child labor. Traditional beliefs regarding children's roles within the family unit and social conventions often lead to children being involved in work from a young age. Such customs and traditions can influence child labor in several ways.

First, societal expectations often demand that children assist in sustaining the family income from an early age. Secondly, traditional customs may favor the education of boys over girls, resulting in the latter being relegated to labor-intensive roles. Finally, prevailing social norms may undervalue the importance of formal education, fostering a cycle of child labor.

These customs and traditions perpetuate a cycle of poverty by limiting children's chances to escape labor exploitation. Cultural practices that support child labor may persist due to a lack of awareness about the role education plays in breaking the poverty cycle. As a result, eliminating child labor solely through legislative measures can be challenging.

Within Oredo local government, children are generally viewed as divine helpers. Families in such circumstances utilize their children as a means of income generation.

### **Family Size**

Due to the prevalence of extended family relationships and the practice of polygamy, the size of Nigerian families often exceeds manageable limits. This poses significant challenges for parents in such households, making it difficult to adequately address the nutritional, healthcare, and educational requirements of their numerous children. Larger families commonly face the struggle of meeting basic necessities, leading parents to depend on their children for financial assistance. With an increased number of individuals to support, parents may face pressure to prioritize child labor over education, perpetuating a cycle of impoverishment and diminished opportunities. Many children may be obligated to engage in domestic work, child care, sales, apprenticeships, and other occupations outside the home to sustain their families. Parents in these households often find relief when children move out, reducing the number of dependents. Moreover, some remaining children may resort to street vending, begging, or construction work to supplement the family's income.

### **Illiteracy And Ignorance**

Parental perspectives on child education significantly influence the prevalence of child labor in Oredo Local Government Area, Edo State, due to illiteracy and lack of awareness. The absence of formal education hinders parents from comprehending the importance of schooling.

In Nigeria, a substantial proportion of illiterate households opt against sending their children to school. Deprived of educational opportunities, children with limited or no access are driven by their inherent capabilities to engage in labor from an early age, seeking both sustenance and a sense of purpose.

## **2.5 EFFECT OF CHILD LABOUR ON THE CHILD**

### **Disruption Of Education**

Child labor frequently results in the withdrawal of children from primary and secondary schools. Working children frequently have little to no time for educational activities because they must spend significant time hawking, serving as bus conductors, or working as sales representatives, which leaves little to no time for regular school attendance. Families dependent on child employment may further limit their children's access to quality education due to their inability to afford school fees, textbooks, and uniforms. The absence of education and skill development restricts a child's future prospects, potentially perpetuating poverty in communities.

### **Poor health status**

Child Labour has a profound negative impact on young individuals' well-being. Prolonged working hours can lead to fatigue, inadequate nutrition, and physical strain. Exposure to hazardous conditions, such as those faced by Oredo Local Government Area's bus conductors and heavy load lifters, increase susceptibility to respiratory issues, injuries, chronic back pain, and other ailments. These adverse effects are compounded by poverty and the inadequacy of health and social protection systems.

## **Sexual Abuse**

Child labourers, particularly female labourers, run the risk of being abused by child molesters and paedophiles as a result of their exposure to particular places and populations. The boys are not excluded either, as homosexuals have the ability to harass them. Child labour frequently subjects children to different sorts of exploitation and abuse, including sexual abuse. When children are forced to work in conditions with little to no supervision or protection, they become susceptible to exploitation by adults in positions of power. This can include employers, managers, or even coworkers. The imbalance of power and lack of safeguards make it simpler for offenders to exploit these vulnerable children. Furthermore, children who work in child labour may have limited access to education or resources that can help them recognise and report abuse, continuing the cycle of exploitation. The child's mental stability may be impacted by this sexual assault, which could result in them ending their life or running away from home.

## **Engagement In Illicit Activities**

Child labourers are at high risk of getting engaged in illicit activities. In terrible situations, the lack of supervision and hunger for money might make children working vulnerable to illegal acts. Because of their vulnerability, exploitative people may take advantage of them and force them to engage in illegal activities like drug trafficking, petty theft, or underground market participation. Their vulnerability to these harmful influences may be increased by limited educational opportunities and inadequate supervision, which would feed the cycle of exploitation and adversity.

## **2:6 INTERVENTIONS AND PROGRAMS AIMED AT ERADICATING CHILD LABOUR IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

### **Skill acquisition and empowerment programs**

Many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government organisations conduct empowerment and skill-building programmes with the goal of giving marginalised children and youths alternate means of subsistence so they won't be as exposed to child labour exploitation. Skill acquisition and empowerment programmes in Edo State will aim to eliminate child labour by providing vulnerable children and their families with the skills and resources they need to pursue alternative occupations. These programmes will frequently provide vocational training, educational support, and economic opportunities to help children and their guardians break the cycle of poverty that leads to child labour. By providing realistic alternatives, such projects hope to address the core causes of child labour and create long-term solutions for the community.

### **Education programs:**

Efforts to keep children in school and out of the workforce centred on expanding access to high-quality education would most likely prioritise providing accessible, high-quality education to children, particularly those at risk of or involved in child labour. These programmes may include initiatives like as school enrollment drives, which encourage and facilitate children's enrollment in schools, particularly in areas with high rates of child labour. Examples of these initiatives include school food programmes, scholarships, and school renovations.

### **Community Sensitization and Advocacy:**

Awareness initiatives are carried out to inform locals about the risks and repercussions of child labour and to encourage them to come forward with reports of child labour and human trafficking incidents. Advocacy initiatives can also encourage legislative changes and the

enforcement of current laws to protect children from exploitation. Furthermore, community-based programmes can offer alternative alternatives for families and children at risk of child labour, such as access to school, vocational training, and financial assistance. Overall, community outreach and advocacy efforts are critical for developing a supportive environment that prioritises children's rights and well-being, eventually leading to the abolition of child labour in Edo State.

### **Child Protection Laws and Policies:**

State and federal governments are continuously working to improve laws and policies pertaining to child protection, such as those that forbid child labour and human trafficking. Even if these measures have had some success, there are still issues that need to be addressed, such as poverty, the lax application of the law, and cultural beliefs that accept or even encourage child labour. To address these issues fully and sustainably and end child labour in Edo State, ongoing efforts are required.

## **2:7 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

A theory is a body of knowledge that offers a rationale for why certain things happen. An explanation for a cause and effect relationship can be found in a theory. That is, an effect has to happen after a certain event. The theories that best explains this study are conflict theory by Karl Marx in the 19th century and symbolic interactionism by George Herbert Mead in the 1920s.

### **2.8 CONFLICT THEORY**

German philosopher, economist, and sociologist Karl Marx developed conflict theory in the middle of the 19th century. The theory was created by Marx and Friedrich Engels to provide a framework for comprehending the dynamics and structure of society. According to conflict

theory, conflict arises between various social groups because of the unequal allocation of resources, especially income and power. Due to conflicting interests, the dominant group in this conflict is able to preserve its position of power at the expense of subordinate parties. Conflict theory places a strong emphasis on how class conflict shapes social interactions and societal transformation, ultimately leading to a more just allocation of power and resources. "The Communist Manifesto" and "Das Kapital" laid the foundation for this theory. This theory can be linked to public perception towards child labour in understanding the underlying dynamics.

Conflict theory holds that society is organised on power disparities, with some groups possessing greater resources and authority than others. Conflicts may arise in the event of child labour between many social groups, including employers, public servants, local authorities, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that support children's rights. These power dynamics may have an impact on how child labour is perceived in the Oredo Local Government Area. For example, Child labour may be seen as essential for the economic interests of employers, who stand to gain from the inexpensive labour that youngsters supply. Because measures to outlaw child labour can negatively impact their profit, they might oppose such initiatives. Also, Government representatives may have competing objectives, such as advancing economic growth and upholding national and international rules that forbid child labour. This can cause conflict between upholding local businesses that use child labour and enforcing laws against it. Depending on cultural norms, financial constraints, and the advantages or disadvantages of child labour for their community's wellbeing, community leaders may hold different opinions about the practice. NGOs and advocacy groups may support the outlawing of child labour because they see it to be a violation of children's rights. Those who profit from child labour or those who view it as a necessary cultural or economic practice may oppose them.

Conflict theory helps to analyze how these different groups with competing interests navigate and negotiate their positions regarding child labour. In order to effectively combat child labour and defend children's rights, it emphasises the power battles that are involved in tackling such societal challenges. It also emphasises how important it is to recognise and rectify underlying power inequalities.

## **2.9 SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM**

Another theory that will be used in this study is symbolic interactionism. It focuses on how individuals construct meaning through social interactions and symbols. The prominent scholar is George Herbert Mead. He emphasized the role of symbols and language in shaping human interaction. Within the framework of investigating how the public views child labour in the Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria, symbolic interactionism can offer significant perspectives on how individuals comprehend and interpret child labour in relation to their social environment. There are symbols, meanings, and interactions that shape people's understanding of child labour, such as cultural beliefs, social norms, and personal experiences. Members of the Oredo community hold different views regarding child labour, some might view it as a necessary economic contribution by children or as a violation of children's rights. Symbolic interactionism helps understand how these perceptions influence attitudes, behaviours, and responses towards child labour within the community. We can better understand how to handle child labour in a local setting by examining the symbolic meanings associated with the practice and the social interactions that either support or contradict these meanings. There are individuals who don't view child labour as a violation of a child's right but rather, their contribution to the family or the economy at large.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

This section aids in describing the techniques and methods employed in carrying out this study. The following headings are used to describe this work:

Research design

Population of study

Sampling size and sampling technique

Research instrument.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

The researcher used a survey design for this study since it was thought to be suitable for the inquiry. Given that the study is focused on people and their attitudes, behaviors, opinions, and beliefs, it was judged appropriate for obtaining the data needed for the research.

#### **3.3 AREA OF STUDY**

The research was carried out in Oredo local government area of Edo state in areas such as, Ring road, Sapele road, Airport road.

#### **3.4 POPULATION OF THE STUDY**

A population is the entire collection of objects that are relevant to any given study. The population of the study will be made up of business owners, parents/guardians, and residents of Oredo local government area, specifically Ring road, Sapele road and Airport road.

The population of this research work constitute a total number of over 500,000 residents of Oredo local government area.

### **3.5 SAMPLE SIZE AND TECHNIQUE**

To provide respondents with an equal chance of selection, a simple random sampling technique was employed in this study. A subset of the population was chosen at random by the researcher, and one hundred (100) questionnaires were given out and gathered for study.

### **3.6 INSTRUMENTS AND METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION**

This study was mostly conducted using a structured quantitative questionnaire. This kind of survey was employed since it allowed participants to directly express their opinions on the topic. in order to obtain a simple, rapid, and precise response from the participants. Additionally, participant observational research was carried out; during the study, a face-to-face encounter took place.

### **3.7 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS**

simple percentage method of analyzing data was used. The data that were gathered were analyzed using percentages and frequencies.

### **3.8 VALIDITY OF THE RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The constructed questionnaire for the study will be presented to my project supervisor to confirm with content validity after which the corrections made will be incorporated into the final draft.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1 DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter's goals are to provide a thorough analysis and interpretation of the data gathered, as well as to talk about the conclusions drawn from a range of respondents during the research's actual fieldwork. The percentage approach was used to analyze the pertinent information that was obtained from the respondents.

A total of 100 questionnaires, comprising 12 selected questions, were distributed via the internet to Oredo LGA inhabitants and non-residents. The number of responses in the items were counted and the corresponding percentages calculated. Respondents to this study included local residents, students, and business owners.

#### SECTION A

#### 4.2 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE RESPONDENT

**Table4. 1 Gender of the Respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	55	55%
Female	45	45%
Total	100	100

Table one (1) Shows 55 respondents which constitute 55% of the total respondents were male, while 45 respondents which is 45% of the total respondents were female.

**Table4. 2 Age of the Respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-30	90	90%
31-50	9	9%
51-70	1	1%
71 and above	0	0
Total	100	100%

Table two (2) Shows that majority of the respondents are within age group of 18-30years and with highest frequency 90 having 90% out of the total respondents. Other categories are 9% within 31-50years , 1% within 51-70years and 0 within 71 and above

**Table4. 3 Marital status of the Respondents**

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	89	89%
Married	11	11%
Divorced	0	0
Widowed	0	0
Total	100	100%

Table three (3) Shows 11% of the total respondents are married, 89% are single, 0% are divorced while 0% out of the total respondents are widowed.

**Table4. 4 Educational level of Respondents**

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentage
No Formal Education	35	35%
Primary	0	0
Secondary	4	4%
Tertiary	61	61%
Total	100	100%

Table four (4) shows the number of the respondents according to their level of education. 35% only had formal education, 0% of the respondents had primary education level, 4% of the respondents attained secondary education level, 61% attained tertiary level.

### **4.3 Presentation Of Data And Results**

Research Question 1: Perception of Child Labour

Table 5: Responses on the perception of child labour

S/N	ITEMS	YES	NO	NOT SURE	TOTAL
1	Do you think child labour is a significant issue in Oredo LGA?	76 (76%)	7 (7%)	17 (17%)	100 (100%)
2	Do you think child labour has negative, social and health impact on the child?	96 (96%)	2 (2%)	2 (2%)	100 (100%)
3	Do you believe that child labourers are often involved in criminal activities?	48 (48%)	22 (22%)	30 (30%)	100(100%)
4	Do you think the children are happy to be on the street working?	0	93 (93%)	7 (7%)	100(100%)
5	Do you think the children will be willing to stop working and go to school if sponsored?	85 (85%)	6 (6%)	9 (9%)	100(100%)

From the above Table 5, item one(1) under Research question 1 was accepted as it shows that 76(76%) responded with a yes that child labour is a significant issue in Oredo LGA,while 7(7%) and 17(17%) respectively,responded with a no and not sure to child labour is a significant issue in Oredo LGA

From the above Table 5, item two (2) under Research question 1 was accepted as it shows that 96(96%) responded with a yes that child labour has negative, social and health impact on the child, while 2(2%) and 2(2%) responded respectively with a no and not sure that child labour has negative, social and health impact on the child

From the above Table 5, item three (3) under Research question 1 was accepted as it shows that 48(48%) responded with a yes to believing that child labourers are often involved in criminal activities, while 22(22%) and 30(30%) respectively, responded with a no and not sure to believing that child labourers are often involved in criminal activities

From the above Table 5, item 4(4) under Research question 1 was accepted as it shows that 0 respondents responded with a yes that the children are happy to be on the street working, while 93(93%) and 7(7%) respectively responded with a no and not sure the the children are happy to be on the street working

From the above Table 5, item 5(5) under Research question 1 was accepted as it shows that 85(85%) respondents responded with a yes that the children will be willing to stop working and go to school if sponsored, while 6(6%) and 9(9%) respectively responded with a no and not sure the children will be willing to stop working and go to school if sponsored

**Research Question 2: Socio Economic Factors that Contributes To Child Labour**

**Table 6:** Responses on the factors that contributes to child labour

S/N	ITEMS	YES	NO	NOT SURE	TOTAL
6	Do you think factors such as poverty and lack of education contribute to child labour in Oredo LGA?	96 (96%)	4 (4%)	0	100(100%)
7	Do you think uneducated parents/guardians are the only people responsible for sending children out to work?	24 (24%)	70 (70%)	6 (6%)	100(100%)

8	Would you say inability to pay staff pushes self-employed parents/guardians to make their children work for them?	59 (59%)	9 (9%)	32 (32%)	100(100%)
9	Do you think cultural practices play a role in the prevalence of child labour in Oredo LGA?	41 (41%)	28 (28%)	31 (31%)	100(100%)

From the above Table 6, item 6(6) under Research question 2 was accepted as it shows that 96(96%) respondents responded with a yes that the factors such as poverty and lack of education contribute to child labour in Oredo LGA, while 4(4%) and 0 respondent s respectively responded with a no and not sure factors such as poverty and lack of education contribute to child labour in Oredo LGA

From the above Table 6, item seven(7) under Research question 2 was accepted as it shows that 24(24%) respondents responded with a yes that uneducated parents/guardians are the only people responsible for sending children out to work while 70(70%) and 6(6%) responded respectively with a no and not sure that uneducated parents/guardians are the only people responsible for sending children out to work

From the above Table 6, item eight(8) under Research question 2 was accepted as it shows that 59(59%) respondents responded with a yes that inability to pay staff pushes self-employed parents/guardians to make their children work for them while 9(9%) and 32(32%) responded

respectively with a no and not sure that inability to pay staff pushes self-employed parents/guardians to make their children work for them

From the above Table 6, item nine(9) under Research question 2 was accepted as it shows that 41(41%) respondents responded with a yes that cultural practices play a role in the prevalence of child labour in Oredo LGA while 28(28%) and 31(31%) responded respectively with a no and not sure that

cultural practices play a role in the prevalence of child labour in Oredo LGA

### **Research Question 3: Healthcare And Educational Services In Alleviating Child Labour**

Table 7: Responses to healthcare and educational services in alleviating child labour

S/ N	ITEMS	YES	NO	NOT SURE	TOTAL
10	Do you think lack of finance is the reason parents/guardians are unable to send their children to school?	85 (85%)	2 (2%)	13 (13%)	100(100%)
11	: Do you think access to healthcare services can improve the social well-being of children in general?	89 (89%)	7 (7%)	4 (4%)	100(100%)
12	Do you think scholarship and financial assistance can help reduce child labour in Oredo LGA?	94 (94%)	0	7 (7%)	100(100%)

From the above Table 7 item ten (10) under Research question 3 was accepted as it shows that 85(85%) respondents responded with a yes that lack of finance is the reason parents/guardians are unable to send their children to school, while 2(2%) and 13(13%) responded respectively with a no and not sure that lack of finance is the reason parents/guardians are unable to send their children to school

From the above Table 7 item eleven (11) under Research question 3 was accepted as it shows that 89(89%) respondents responded with a yes that access to healthcare services can improve the social wellbeing of children in general while 7(7%) and 4(4%) responded respectively with a no and not sure that access to healthcare services can improve the social wellbeing of children in general

From the above Table 7 item twelve (12) under Research question 3 was accepted as it shows that 94(94%) respondents responded with a yes that scholarship and financial assistance can help reduce child labour in Oredo LGA, while 0 and 7(7%) responded respectively with a no and not sure that scholarship and financial assistance can help reduce child labour in Oredo LGA

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 SUMMARY

This research work delves into the critical issue of child labour in Oredo Local government area of Edo state, Nigeria. It draws attention to the harm that child labour does to children's physical, mental, and emotional growth as well as the consequences for their opportunities for the future.

The study places a strong emphasis on the socioeconomic variables such as poverty, dysfunctional families, cultural norms, and illiteracy that contribute to child labour. The goal of the study is to fill up the knowledge gaps about the causes and effects of child labour in Oredo, specifically focusing on the lack of thorough local data. It presents research topics to investigate how people see child labour, the socioeconomic variables that contribute to it, the responsibilities that parents and guardians play, how easy it is to obtain healthcare and education, and practical solutions for reducing child labour in the community.

This study's goals are to determine the prevalence and trends of child labour, look at the socioeconomic elements that influence it, find out how it affects children's wellbeing, establish frameworks for law and policy, and offer suggestions for interventions. The study is important because it clarifies the socioeconomic effects of child labour, promotes legislative changes, and offers advice to parents and guardians on how to provide a nurturing environment for their children. It also seeks to provide information for Oredo Local Government Area policies, programmes, and interventions that safeguard the welfare and rights of children.

The Oredo Local Government Area is included in the study's scope, and data was gathered from particular sites such Ring Road and Airport Road. The study admits its limitations, including those related to time, money, and location.

This research also offers historical background, explanations for the many forms of child labour, their consequences on children, programmes and interventions designed to end child labour, and theoretical frameworks for comprehending the problem. The study's methodology consists of a survey design, with a sample size of one hundred respondents chosen by basic random sampling. Participant observational studies and quantitative questionnaires are used in data gathering, and percentages and frequencies are used in data analysis.

Overall, this research contributes to a clearer understanding of child labour in Oredo, providing insights for policy-making, interventions, and community awareness efforts aimed at protecting children's rights and well-being.

## **5.2 CONCLUSION**

This research work was focused on public perception towards child labour in Oredo local Government Area of Edo state, Nigeria. Different people have different ways in which they perceived child labour in the society, some people see no harm in making under-aged children work while some perceived it to be an inhumane act. This research shed light on the harmful effect of child labour in Oredo Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. And the significant implications for the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of children. Poverty, dysfunctional family dynamics, cultural traditions, illiteracy, and ignorance are among the root causes contributing to the prevalence of child labour in this region. Efforts to combat this problem include skill acquisition programs, education initiatives, community sensitization, advocacy, and child protection laws and policies. However, addressing underlying issues such as

poverty, enforcement of laws, and cultural norms that perpetuate child labour requires ongoing and sustained efforts from various stakeholders.

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

This work has given a detailed insight into the different perceptions people hold towards child labour. The following recommendation will be beneficial to this study in ensuring that the numbers of children seen on the street doing menial jobs is alleviated.

1. Government should create more awareness on the negative effect of child labour as a means to alleviate child labour in Oredo LGA
2. NGOs and the government should channel funds into sponsoring the school fees of children out of school
3. Profitable jobs and business opportunities should be created by the government in order to eliminate the idea of using their children as workers
4. The government should strive to eliminate poverty starting from the grassroots level
5. Parents/guardians as well as educational sectors should inculcate in children at a young age the dangers of child labour in order to stop it from passing from generation to generation
6. Policies should be made in order to totally eliminate the increase of child labour and penalties should be attached to such policies for effective adherence
7. Increase access to quality education by investing in infrastructure, offering scholarships or subsidies to low-income families, and creating safe and conducive learning environments.

8. Strengthen enforcement procedures to guarantee that existing child labour laws are adequately enforced, such as boosting law enforcement capability and imposing penalties on employers who abuse children.
9. collaboration among government agencies, NGOs, enterprises, and community groups should be encouraged to establish comprehensive strategies to eliminate child labour, address its core causes, and provide support and protection for affected children and their families.

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**APPENDIX**  
**QUESTIONNAIRE**

PUBLIC PERCEPTION TOWARDS CHILD LABOUR AND SOCIAL WELL BEING OF  
UNDERAGED CHILDREN IN OREDO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO STATE,  
NIGERIA

The purpose of this questionnaire is to know the perspectives of people on the impact of child labour on children in Oredo local government area of Edo state, Nigeria.

**SECTION A**

Please tick the relevant boxes appropriately and accurately

Sex: Male [ ] Female [ ]

Age: 18- 30 [ ] 31- 50 [ ] 51-70 [ ] 71 and above [ ]

Marital Status: Single [ ] Married [ ] Divorced [ ] Widowed [ ]

Educational level: No formal education [ ] Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] Tertiary [ ]

Current Employment Status: Employed [ ] Unemployed [ ] Student [ ]

**SECTION B**

**PERCEPTION ON CHILD LABOUR**

Simply tick the relevant boxes

1. Do you think child labour is a significant issue in Oredo LGA? Yes( ) No( )

2. Child labour has negative social and health impact on the child? Yes( ) No( )
3. Do you think that child labourers are often involved in criminal activities? Yes( ) No( )
4. Do you think the children are happy to be on the street working? Yes( ) No( )
5. Do you think the children will be willing to stop working and go to school if sponsored? Yes( )  
No( )

### **SECTION C:**

#### **HEALTHCARE AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN ALLEVIATING CHILD LABOUR**

1. Do you think lack of finance is the reason parents/guardians are unable to send their children to school? Yes[ ] No[ ] Not sure [ ]
2. Do you think access to healthcare services can improve the social well-being of children in general? Yes[ ] No[ ] Not sure [ ]
3. Do you think making schooling more affordable or free would help reduce child labour in Oredo LGA? Yes( ) No( )
4. Do you think that improving the quality and accessibility of healthcare services can help protect children from the negative physical and mental health effects of child labour? Yes[ ] No[ ]  
Not sure [ ]

5. Do you think scholarship and financial assistance can help reduce child labour in Oredo LGA?  
Yes [ ] No [ ] Not sure [ ]

## **SECTION D**

### **SOCIO ECONOMIC FACTORS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO CHILD LABOUR**

11. Do you think factors such as poverty and lack of education contribute to child labour? Yes [ ]  
No [ ]  
Not sure [ ]

12. Do you think uneducated parents/guardians are the only people responsible for sending children out to work? Yes [ ] No [ ] Other:-----

13. Do you think inability to pay staffs push self-employed parents/guardians to make their children work for them? Yes [ ] No [ ] Maybe [ ]

14. Do you think cultural practices play a role in the prevalence of child labour in Oredo LGA?  
Yes [ ] No [ ] Not sure [ ]