

**ASSESSMENT OF CHILD LABOUR USAGE AMONG FARMING
HOUSEHOLDS IN OVIA NORTH EAST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, EDO
STATE, NIGERIA.**

BY

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**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
AND EXTENSION SERVICES
FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

NOVEMBER, 2025

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**A PROJECT WORK SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS AND EXTENSION SERVICES, FACULTY OF
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AWARD OF A BACHELOR DEGREE (B. AGRIC) (OPTION; AGRICULTURAL
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NOVEMBER, 2025

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work was carried out by INYERE Favour Chioma (Miss) with Matriculation Number (AGR2004281) of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Extension Services, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Benin City, Nigeria.

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DEDICATION

This project work is dedicated to God whose unwavering nature kept me.

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First and foremost, I give all glory, honour, and praise to Almighty God for His guidance, protection, wisdom, and sustaining grace throughout the course of this research. Without His divine help, this work would not have been possible.

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ABSTRACT

Poverty, food insecurity, and high cost of labour could increase the lead to engagement of children in agricultural activities to the detriment of their schooling. This study investigated the extent of child labour among farming households in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study described the socio-economic characteristics of farming household heads in Ovia North East Local Government Area, identified the farming and non-farming economic activities engaged in by children in Ovia North East, examined the schooling patterns of children in Ovia North East, and reasons for engaging children in farming activities.

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A multistage sampling technique was used to select 150 farming households across different wards in the area. Primary data were gathered using structured questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics, chi-square tests, and a logistic regression model.

Findings revealed that the household heads were mostly males (61.3%) with mean age (50years) household size (6+) and school age children (7). Also, high reliance on child labour largely influenced by socioeconomic characteristics such as household size, income, educational level, age, and sex of the household head were revealed. Many respondents noted that children frequently participated in tasks like weeding and harvesting. Results from the regression analysis showed that age ($3.703=B$, $p=.043$ and sex ($B=0.000$, $p=.047$) of household heads significantly affected their likelihood of engaging children in farm work. The study also identified major reasons for child labour, including rising living costs, high expenses associated with hiring adult labour, and inadequate access to farm machinery. The study recommends that government agencies and non-governmental organizations implement awareness programmes, strengthen rural

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education, enhance access to agricultural technologies, and ensure stricter enforcement of child labour regulations.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of The Study

Child labour is defined as work that is inappropriate for a child's age. It interferes with children's education and is likely to harm their health, safety and morals. Not all work carried out by children is considered child labour. Age-appropriate tasks that are not hazardous and do not interfere with a child's education can have a positive effect, as they can contribute to the inter-generational transfer of skills and families' food security (Food Agriculture Organization, 2022).

Child labour is a systemic problem with complex root causes which makes it a global challenge across sectors and cultures. It is the engagement of children in any work that is essentially exploitative and injurious. It presents a formidable challenge in many societies due to its negative impact on the natural development of the children with the agricultural sector contributing largely to the majority of child labourers; 5.4% of children in the Americas are in child labour, 19.6% of children in Africa are in child labour almost 1 in every 5 children, 7.4% of children in Asia/Pacific region are in child labour (Eliminating Child Labour in Tobacco Growing Foundation, 2025). Child labour is not only in low-income countries, infact half of affected children live in lower-middle and upper-middle income countries. An estimate of children involved in child labour around the world

revealed that children in hazardous work that endangers their health and safety were 73 million (International Labour Organization (ILO), 2017).

In Africa, agriculture accounts for 85% of all child labour, with a total of 61.4 million children. The age breakdown of children in child labour in Africa is much younger than anywhere else, with 59% of child labourers aged 5-11, 26% aged 12 to 14 and 15% aged 15 to 17. In contrast to ongoing global progress and despite targeted policies, between 2012 and 2016, child labour increased in Sub-Saharan Africa. The region has been strongly affected by situations of state fragility and crisis, which could explain, together with broader economic and demographic forces acting against government efforts the rise in child labour. Eleven countries in Africa- Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Tunisia, and Uganda- have been identified as Pathfinder countries under Alliance 8.7 (ILO, 2021). In West Africa region, an estimated 23 percent of all children are in child labour. Of those children, over 80 percent live in rural areas and work in agriculture, primarily in family subsistence and smallholder agricultural production (U.S Department of Labor, 2022).

Nigeria, being the most populous country in the continent with over 216 million people is greatly affected by child labour. It is a significant challenge in Nigeria, particularly in the agricultural sector. Rural areas are disproportionately affected, with 44.8% of children involved in child labour compared to 30% in urban areas. The prevalence is alarmingly

high among younger children, with 60.8% of child labourers aged between 5 and 11, many of whom are engaged in hazardous work (Nigeria child labour survey, 2022).

According to the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Nigeria Bureau of Statistics (NBS) on the Nigeria child labour survey 2022 report on the situation of child labour in Nigeria, findings from the report states that about 24,673,485 (39.2%) children are in child labour, 31,757,302 (50.5%) children are involved in economic activity and (22.9%) children are in hazardous labour. The report also showed the child labour status of Nigeria at a glance with about 73.1% of Nigerian children ages between 5 and 17, are involved in child labour. Child labour in agriculture includes work such as crop farming, fish farming, livestock farming and forestry. This translates to the fact that most working children are situated in rural areas that have agriculture as the main occupation (ILO, 2010). The United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF, 2020) reports that seventy percent (70%) of all child labour and 83 percent (83%) of child labour among children aged 5-11 occurs within families, primarily on family farms or even in family micro-enterprise. A global estimate of more than one in four children aged 5-11 and half of children aged 12-14 in family-based child labour are in work likely to harm their safety.

Farming households are families that derive their primary source of income and livelihood from agricultural activities. They engage in the cultivation of crops, raising livestock, or a combination of both. These households typically own or lease land and

may also participate in related activities like processing and selling agricultural products. About 82.5%, 81.4% and 55.9% of children were involved in planting, weeding and land preparation respectively as type of operation on the farm (Bifarin *et al.*, 2020). Most children spent 5 hours in a day working in cassava farms, majority (62%) worked Between 4-6 hours per day while 15% worked for 1-3 hours per day (Ejiogu and Amanze, 2013).

Children from poor households, ethnic minorities, migrants and families with HIV/AIDS or disabled members are particularly vulnerable to agricultural child labour. Other drivers include agricultural dependency, social norms and a lack of higher returns to basic schooling. Almost 60 per cent of girls and boys (aged 5–17 years) in hazardous work are found in agriculture. Situations of heightened harm and danger include forced and trafficked child labour for agriculture as well as conflict and emergency situations (Carter, 2017). Poverty is the main cause of child labour in agriculture, together with limited access to quality education, inadequate agricultural technology and access to adult labour, high hazards and risks, and traditional attitudes towards children's participation in agricultural activities (ILO, 2010). Lack of political will by leaders to equip farmers educationally and technically, ignorance of farmers on government policies against child labour were identified as factors that influence the prevalence of child farm labour use (Ofuoku *et al.*, 2014).

1.2 Problem Statement

Agriculture is one of the three most dangerous sector in terms of work-related fatalities, non-fatal accidents and occupational diseases and a large percent of children aged 5-17 are in agriculture, which makes child labour exploitative, hazardous and detrimental to the well-being and development of children (ILO, 2010). Children are fragile since the various organs of their bodies and minds are still in the development process. They are very susceptible to hazards associated with pesticides and herbicides. The consequences of children's exposure to pesticides and herbicides are alarming as the effects are lifelong diseases and deformities in children (ILO, 2011). According to Adeoye *et al.*, (2017) majority of children worked on their family farms and didn't engage in other economic activities apart from farming. Payment method for work done outside household farm was mainly piece rate.

It has been documented that most farmers make use of family labour majorly made of children and do not employ the labour of children outside their households (Ofuoku *et al.*, 2020). Although prior researches have been conducted to examine the nature and extent of child labour usage in farming activities. It is not certain that studies have been carried out with respect to assessing child labour usage among farming households in Ovia North

East Local Government Area. Hence this study seeks to provide evidence-based information by answering the following questions:

1. What are the socio economic characteristics of farming household heads in Ovia North East Local Government Area?
2. What are the farming and non-farming economic activities carried out by children in Ovia North East?
3. What are the schooling patterns of children in Ovia North East?
4. What are the reasons for engaging children in farming activities?
5. What are the problems encountered by children in farming activities?
6. What are the attitudes of household heads toward child labour usage?

1.3 Objectives of The Study

The major objective of the study is to assess child labour usage among farming households in Ovia North East Local Government Area. The study therefore seeks to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. To describe the socio-economic characteristics of farming household heads in Ovia North East Local Government Area.
2. Identify the farming and non-farming economic activities engaged in by children in Ovia North East.
3. Examine the schooling patterns of children in Ovia North East.

4. Identify the reasons for engaging children in farming activities.
5. Examine the problems encountered by children in farming activities.
6. Examine the attitudes of household heads toward child labour usage.

1.4 Hypotheses of The Study

H₀₁: The socio-economic characteristics of farming household heads have no significant influence on child labour usage.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between child labour usage in male and female headed households.

1.5 Justification for The Study

Several studies have presented divergent perspectives on child labour among farming households. Ojo *et al.*, (2018) carried out a study on child labour among farming households in Niger region and concentrated on schooling activities and gender preference of household heads. Oladimeji and Edun (2018) researched on the determinants of child labour among rural farming households in Kwara State. Ofuoku *et al.*, (2014) conducted a study to determine the relationship between the socio-economic variables among arable farming households and child labour. Edet and Etim (2013) carried out a study which focused on poverty as the main factor influencing child labour. No study has been conducted on assessing child labour usage among farming households in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State.

This study aims to fill this gap by providing findings that can inform policymakers, NGOs, and community leaders about the specific drivers of child labour in this area. Findings of this study can serve as a bedrock for formulating policies and interventions. By identifying the underlying causes and assessing the effectiveness of existing measures, stakeholders and policy makers will be better equipped to design strategies that will reduce child labour, enhance educational opportunities, and improve agricultural practices within farming households. Engaging with local communities through this research can create awareness about the consequences of child labour, encouraging resolutions to be made, which can lead to more effective and sustainable approach to combat child labour.

Ultimately, this study is not only essential for improving the understanding of child labour in Ovia North East but also plays a vital role in protecting children's rights, promoting education, and fostering sustainable community and economic development.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Concept

2.1.1 Definition of a Child

According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (2020), A child is defined as any person under 18. A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained (United Nations, 1990).

2.1.2. Definition of Labour

Labour may be defined as all human effort which may be physical or mental, skilled or unskilled used in the production process. Labour as a factor of production involves human being (Ibitoye *et al*, 2008). According to Prof. Marshall –labour is “Any exertion of mind or body undergone partly or wholly with a view to earning some good other than the pleasure derived directly from the work”.

2.1.3 Definition of Child Labour

The term child labour is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children or interferes with their schooling by: depriving them of the opportunity to

attend school; obliging them to leave school prematurely; or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work (ILO, 2022).

According to UNICEF, child labour refers to work that children are too young to perform or that – by its nature or circumstances – can be hazardous. Unlike activities that help children develop (such as contributing to light housework or taking on a job during school holidays), child labour causes harm to a child's health, safety or moral development.

Child Labour occurs overwhelmingly in agriculture - the sector accounts for 70% of child labour worldwide. Child labour is work that is inappropriate for a child's age, affects children's education, or is likely to harm their health, safety or morals, as well as their future livelihoods. Child labour concerns work for which the child is either too young, work that deprives a child of compulsory education, or work which, because of its detrimental nature or conditions, is unsuitable for and prohibited to children.

However, not all activities carried out by children are child labour. Some activities may aid their development, as they enable them to acquire precious skills and contribute to their survival and food security. These activities can be beneficial if they are not hazardous, not undertaken for long hours, and do not interfere with school, learning and children's right to leisure (FAO, 2021).

2.1.4. Definition of Livelihood

Livelihood can be defined as the activities, the assets and the access that jointly determine the living gained by an individual or household (Ellis 1998; Mphande, 2016). The livelihoods reflect shifting patterns of engagement with the rural economy, combining unpaid care and domestic work with farming, nonfarm wage employment and/or nonfarm self-employment (Sumberg *et al*, 2024). Livelihood's strategy aimed at improving the outcomes of the agricultural activities carried out by farmers who used their children's labour in their farms (Chiodi and Escudero, 2024).

2.1.5. Definition of Farming Household

A farming household is defined as a household that operates a farm and whose members participate in agricultural production activities such as crop cultivation, livestock rearing, fishing, or mixed farming whether for subsistence or for the market (FAO, 2021). In child labour literature, a farming household is described as a household where agricultural labour needs are mainly met through family labour, including children, due to limited access to hired labour or financial constraints (ILO, 2023). According to Ellis (2020), farming household is defined as a household whose livelihood depends predominantly on agriculture, where income, food security, labour, and decision-making revolve around agricultural activities.

2.2 Nature and Extent of Child Labour in Agriculture

In West and Central Africa, an estimated 30% of all children in the region are said to be in child labour and for the first time in two decades, child labour figures rose to 160 million globally [almost 1 in 10 children], representing an increase of 8.4 million children in the last six years; and with a further nine million additional children at risk of child labour as a result of COVID-19 pandemic. (ILO, 2021). The agricultural sector accounts for 71 per cent, or 108 million children in child labour. Most child labourers are in Africa, where 20% of all children are affected and where agricultural child labour predominates. Child labour in agriculture is usually found in subsistence and commercial farming and livestock herding. However, the agricultural sector also extends to fishing, forestry, and aquaculture. Most of children's agricultural work is unpaid and takes place within the family unit. (Global estimate, 2017; EU international partnership).

The international partnership for co-operation on child labour in agriculture (IPCCLA, 2022) pointed out certain facts about child labour in agriculture, which are:

70 percent of child labour occurs in agriculture, currently affecting 112 million children, an increase of 4 million since 2016.

Children between 5 and 11 years make up three-quarters of all child labour in agriculture.

72 percent of all child labour in agriculture is in small-scale family farms, but it is also found in large-scale agri-businesses.

Around half of all children in child labour, including in agriculture, work in hazardous conditions that are detrimental to their safety, health, or moral development.

In 2015, the world made an agreement to end child labour by 2025 in Target 5.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals. That timeline has now come to an end. But child labour has not; Today nearly 138 million children remain in child labour worldwide. Progress against child labour has been slower and more common among younger children.

Despite current gains, the fight against child labour will continue for decades into the future without accelerating progress (ILO, 2024). Child labour and education exclusion go hand in hand. More than a quarter of 5 to 11 years old and even a third of 12- to 14-year-olds are out of school despite compulsory school policies. (UNICEF, 2022). Children were highly involved in most of the farming activities that are hazardous. Most of the children combine schooling and farming activities (Ofuoku *et al*, 2020).

Agriculture is often an entry point into child labour and children working in agriculture are generally very young. It however, accounts for 76.6% of all child labour in the age group 5-11 years and for 75.8% in the age group 12-14 years (FAO, 2021). It remains the sector in which child labour accounts for the largest share, with over 70% of children involved in child labour globally. (Guide for municipal agriculture, 2022). According to

Bifarin *et al*, (2020) children involved in child labour were between ages of 11 and 14 years of age. The incidence of child labour in farming households are higher than those in non-farming households. The study revealed that the probability of children participating in child labour is high in Nigeria for children between the ages of 15-17 years and for children from farming households. (Badmus, 2011).

2.3 Forms of child labour

Child labour occurs in different forms which includes non-hazardous work, hazardous work and other worst forms. Non-hazardous work consists of economic activities, unpaid household chores, specific industries that children engage in less than or equal to 1 hour or 21 hours per week. (GMA, 2022). Hazardous child labour “is work that is performed by children in dangerous and unhealthy conditions”. Over 73 million children are doing work which is considered hazardous putting their health, safety, development or education at risk, much of which is done in agriculture. In consonance with ILO WFCL convention 1999, Nigeria Labour Act, has provision pertaining to hazardous child labour "No child should be engaged in work that is injurious to his health, dangerous, immoral and unsuitable. According to the list of hazardous child labour in Nigeria, children between 8-16 years were known to spend an average of 4-5 hours each day on the farms especially during the planting and harvesting season with high rate of school absenteeism. (Child labour legislation in Nigeria, 2023).

Agriculture is in the top three most hazardous sectors of work and has the highest percentage of all hazardous child labour, some 62%. It was found that children were highly involved in most of the farming activities that are considered hazardous (Ofuoku *et al*, 2019). Some of the most common risks for children working in agriculture include handling pesticides and fertilizers, carrying heavy loads, and unguarded machines (ECLT, 2023.) According to Aminu *et al* (2015), study revealed that the children were involved in all kinds of farm operations ranging from land clearing, bush burning, planting and weeding.

However, it was also shown that children spent an average of 15.6 hours on the farm per week out of which 6.33 hours were school time sacrificed for farm work. Study has also shown that child labourers living with their parent(s) were mainly involved with economic activities while those living with related and unrelated guardians were mainly involved with domestic activities (Enebe *et al*, 2021). Children working in agriculture may be exposed to a number of hazardous situations because of their young age, and made to carry heavy loads, be exposed to chemicals and sharp tools that can lead to fatalities and serious health consequences (European commission, 2022).

Other worst forms include trafficked children, forced labour, use of children in armed conflicts, prostitution, pornography and for illicit activities. (GMA, 2022).

2.4 Theoretical concept of child labour

2.4.1 Economic theories

2.4.1.1 Luxury axiom and Wealth paradox

The Poverty and Luxury Axiom was propounded by Kaushik Basu and Pham Hoang Van (1998). The luxury axiom and the wealth paradox theory. The luxury axiom asserts that poor families cannot afford to dispense with child labor if they are to meet their subsistence needs. Implying, as household income increases, child labor declines in favor of schooling and other leisure activities. According to luxury axiom, child labor is necessary to support the family not only on a regular basis but also in response to idiosyncratic and covariate shocks (Beegle *et al.*, 2009; Edmonds, 2005).

Contrary to the “luxury hypothesis”, some authors have proposed a concept described as a “wealth paradox”. Bhalotra and Heady (2003), Parsons and Goldin (1989), Rogers and Swinnerton (2004), Nkamleu (2006), and Dumas (2007), are among others, the proponents of wealth paradox theory. The wealth paradox theory asserts that child labor is higher in families that have access to land and livestock in rural areas; and small business enterprises in urban areas than in poor families lacking those assets. Moreover, child labor seems to increase during periods of economic growth in households endowed

with productive assets. They reason out why these families would choose to use child labor instead of hiring. Reasons include first, the risks of moral hazard, shirking, and theft are lower with child labor than with hired hands (Deolalikar and Vijverberg, (1987) Foster and Rosenzweig, (1994). Second, too rigid and burdensome nature of the labor market in rural areas (Basu *et al.* (2010). Third, some believe that child labor is not bad or harmful but can lead to enhanced work habits, discipline, and even human capital accumulation (Emerson and Souza, 2007; Raju, 2005). Finally, others argue child labor persists due to the institutional failure to implement the rights of children (Cunningham, 1995).

2.4.1.2. Substitution axiom theory

The substitution axiom states that adult and child labour can perform similar tasks, with adjustments made for differences in productivity or efficiency. In essence, it suggests that adults are capable of doing the same work as children. Traditionally, it was often believed that children were better suited for certain types of work phrases like “nimble fingers” reinforced this notion. However, the substitution axiom challenges that view. Research by Levison and colleagues (1998) supports this principle, showing that adults in India are just as efficient, if not more so, than children in producing hand-knotted carpets. Technically, this means child labour can be fully replaced by adult labour. Nonetheless, since adult workers are more expensive, many firms may hesitate to switch entirely to adult-only employment. (Basu and Tzannatos (2003)).

2.4.1.3 Household decision making theory

Household decision-making” refers to the process by which members of a household allocate resources (time, labour, money) among alternative uses given constraints (income, assets, time, market opportunities) and preferences.

The influence of household decisions on child labour is shaped by a range of interconnected factors that may exhibit either positive or negative relationships. In a study by Khanam (2006), a multinomial logit model was employed to simultaneously analyse the determinants of children’s participation in work, schooling, both activities, or neither. The results indicated that household choices contribute to child labour through the number of working hours assigned to children, which in turn negatively impacts their schooling. Conversely, Phoumin and Fukui (2006), using stratified and two-stage sampling covering 12,000 households and 600 units in Cambodia and applying a probit model, found a positive association between parental decisions and the number of hours children spend working. (Adulmumini, 2012)

2.4.1.4. Human capital theory

Human Capital Theory, popularized by Theodore W. Schultz (1961) and Gary S. Becker (1964), argues that education, training, and health are forms of investment in people that increase their productivity and earnings over time. Just as firms invest in machines or equipment, individuals (or societies) invest in human capital to improve future income

and welfare. According to this theory, education and skill acquisition increase productivity and lead to higher lifetime earnings.

In the context of child labour, Human Capital Theory helps explain why some households choose to send their children to work rather than school. The theoretical dynamics indicate that child labour participation tends to rise when wage inequality widens, while a reduction in the wage gap enables households to move closer to escaping the poverty cycle through greater investment in human capital. The model further suggests that in the early stages of development, poor households often resort to child labour as a survival or development strategy using children's work to accumulate physical assets at the cost of educational investment. (Contreras and Salvador (2008)).

Becker introduced the human capital investment theory, which integrates the analysis of education and health as key components of human capital formation. He explained how income levels interact with human capital development, proposing that low-income parents are more likely to send their children to work. According to the theory, wealthy parents can allocate more financial resources toward their children's education, while poor parents often rely on their children's labor to supplement household income.

Rossati and Rossi (2002) examined how child labour affects children who combine work with schooling as well as those engaged in full-time work. They observed that such circumstances often result in poor academic performance, loss of interest in education,

and ultimately, school dropout. The model assumes that child labour negatively impacts the accumulation of human capital and the current and future health of the child. Working long hours reduces study time, causes fatigue, and lowers learning efficiency all of which hinder educational progress. Since human capital is primarily built through education, the model concludes that schooling is the main channel through which children can secure future well-being. Consequently, when children attend school, the supply of child labour decreases. (Rosati and Rossi, 2003; Uche *et al*, 2017).

According to Thakurata *et al* (2018), their findings reveal that households that are financially excluded and lack education tend to favor investing in low-yield physical assets rather than in their children's human capital. As a result, they become trapped in a cycle of intergenerational poverty. These households only begin to invest in education once their income surpasses a certain threshold. Such educational investments can be supported through financial transfers or by redirecting educational subsidies away from college-educated households, without negatively affecting their own human capital investment levels.

2.4.2 Social and cultural theory

social and cultural theories emphasize that child labour is not only an economic decision but also a socially conditioned practice influenced by values, traditions, norms, and social learning within communities. Children's work decisions often reflect what is

considered normal, acceptable, or expected in their family or community rather than purely economic optimization.

2.4.2.1. Intergenerational transmission theory

The concept refers to how values, beliefs, practices, and behaviours are passed from one generation to the next (parents → children → grandchildren). For example, norms about children working on the family farm, apprenticing with parents, or taking over family business. This can lead to the persistence of child labour practices if children internalize that working early or assisting the family enterprise is “normal” or even desirable.

A recent systematic review highlighted that cultural beliefs play a key role in sustaining child labour practices, emphasizing norms such as the inheritance of family businesses, informal apprenticeship training, the perceived asset value of children, and the social value attached to education (Abdullah *et al*, 2022). Many communities regard children’s participation in work as a legitimate and valuable part of upbringing, viewing informal apprenticeships as a positive way to instill discipline and a strong work ethic from an early age (Lowe, 2017; Owusu-Amankwah, 2009). On family farms, children’s involvement is considered essential preparation for adulthood, helping them acquire fundamental skills for future livelihoods. As Johansen (2006) observes, children’s participation in farm work also provides economic benefits to their households by reducing the need to hire additional labour (Abdullah *et al*, 2024). Zeynap *et al* (2018)

revealed in their findings the significant effect of parents on their children's work values. Both mothers' and fathers' work values, and their parenting behavior were significantly associated with their children's work values. Ofuoku *et al* (2020), points out how child labour participation is fostered by the transmission of agricultural knowledge, as well as technical and social skills, across generations.

2.4.2.2. Social Norms

Social pressures and sanctions, such as stigma directed at parents, often compel families to adhere to community norms that promote child labour. According to Lopez-Calva, a direct connection exists between social stigma and the prevalence of child labour. Parents who go against these norms by choosing not to involve their children in work may face criticism or social exclusion. As a result, the fear of stigma and the desire for social approval increase the perceived benefit, or utility, of allowing children to participate in labour activities.

Findings from the reviewed studies indicate that societal norms emphasizing the economic or asset value of children significantly contribute to child labour within families. These cultural beliefs reinforce the perception that children's participation in family work is vital to household productivity and income. Consequently, parents are often motivated to involve their children in their occupations to gain economic benefits. Child labour is therefore more prevalent in households where parents' livelihoods are

highly labour-intensive. This account highlights that children are viewed as both cost-effective and substitute sources of labour within such economic settings.

However, the tension between local traditions and international child labour standards often creates challenges for effective policy implementation. Efforts to eliminate child labour may be perceived as external interference or as disregarding community values that see work as a means of teaching responsibility and survival skills. Interventions that fail to consider local beliefs and socio-economic realities often face resistance. Sustainable progress, therefore, requires culturally sensitive approaches that align global child protection goals with community-based values emphasizing education, poverty reduction, and alternative income opportunities for families as ways to reduce reliance on child labour. (Abdullah *et al*, 2022).

2.5. Socio economic characteristics of household heads

Nyong *et al* (2024) on the study of the effect of child labour on farming households' income showed that most of the children were male, aged 14 to 16 years. This aligned with Koomson and Asongo, (2016), while studying Ghana Living Standard Survey (GLSS6) stated that 84% of male were involved in Agricultural activities against 71.2% female, following the 13%, also 2% by non-farming activities – wholesale and retail trade.

This is in consonant with what ILO, 2010 reported, that agriculture employs about 60% of children within the ages of 5- 17 years globally. The findings also revealed that 41% of

the respondent parents attended tertiary institution. According to Webbink, Smith and Jong (2013), article on household and context determinant of child labour in developing countries, Parental Education as a resource can significantly affect the decision to put children to work. This perhaps explain why the very young children, ages 5 to 14 were not predominantly put to work but only those ages who have either finished school or about to finish actually supported out. Because the parents know the importance of education. Yinalabi and Francis (2022), observed that large poor households usually have more children involved in labour than children from smaller households. Which demonstrates that family size has an effect on working children population. This totally agrees with the findings of the study, as households with higher family size were observed as having more children working population, 53% of the farmers were into livestock farming in both subsistence and commercial capacity. Meaning that they derive their livelihood through Agriculture. 68.9% of the parents had other economic engagements other than farming. Some were civil servants, traders, Artisans, etc. and predominantly members of cooperative society who have access to credit facilities. The result reveals that 99% of the respondent's households were into both subsistence and commercial farming, and these farmers were engaged in all types of farming including Agro-processing/marketing. This agrees once again with Koomson and Asongu (2016), who observed that 91.2% of children are involved in all types of Agriculture.

Randhawa *et al* (2024) on the study of the socio-economic determinant of child labour revealed that the average age of parents/guardians was 42.5 years, with the family size of about nine persons. As a result, the employed family members in the house were 5.5; on average 22.5 families were living in kacha/muddy homes. Agriculture was their main source of income with 72.2 percent followed by 7.3 percent from livestock and 20.5 percent from other sources. The findings reveal that the parents of the children in the study area were mainly depending on Agriculture. Therefore, livestock, wage labor, and small business were alternative sources of their income. Results revealed that agriculture was their primary sources of income with 76 percent of the respondents engaged in Agriculture, followed by, livestock and fisheries, daily wages, etc. Majority of the parents had no formal education. Where only two percent of them studies up to college level. All these contributed significantly to child labour activities in the study area.

Another finding indicated that majority (88.6%) of respondents were married. This implies that marriage is held in high esteem in the study area, probably because farmers need helping hands from their wives and children. Majority of the respondents (94.7%) had formal education. This implies that most of the respondents were educated and this would improve their level of knowledge and adoption of improved agricultural practices towards better yield and awareness of the consequences of child labour. The study revealed that majority (60.6%) of the respondents did not have access to credit facilities. This could affect the level of their output, food security and hence leading to use of child

to source for funds. The study revealed that majority of the farmers (77.3%) started off farming from their personal savings. Loan/gift from friends and family, money lenders, commercial bank, cooperative societies and from microfinance banks all accounted for 24.9% of the total respondents. More than half (51.5%) of the respondents employed family labour. (Mufutau, 2022).

2.5 Schooling Patterns of Children in Child Labour

School and work activity status revealed that school enrolments of girls were 10.53% compared to boys of 25%. Also, 53.9% of the boys further their education beyond primary school level compare to 39.5% of the girls. Results further showed that while more boys were engaged in farming operations than the girls, more female children combined schooling with work (Adeoti *et al*, 2013).

According to the Nigeria child labour survey (2022) children 5 to 17 years old were classified into four mutually exclusive categories: children who are exclusively working, children who are exclusively in school, children who are working and in school, and children who neither work nor go to school. The survey indicated that among the 5–14 age group, 42.3 per cent are full time students who are not engaged in any form of economic activity, 35.3 per cent are in school and working simultaneously, and 11.2 per cent are working only. Among the 15–17 age group, a larger proportion of children are

working only, at 21.9 per cent of the population of that age. Furthermore, only 24.7 per cent are exclusively in school and 45.3 percent are working and in school.

Study has shown that majority (92%) of the farming households were engaged in crop farming, majority (69%) of the children aged between 4 and 17 combined both schooling and agricultural labour. For children who were completely out of school, 5% were found to be idle while 16% engaged in agricultural labour. A significant number of children were engaged in agricultural labour, and 62.3% of them had access to primary school only (Ojeme *et al*, 2020).

2.6 Perceived reasons for Engaging Children in Farming Activities

There are different determinants attributing to child labour among farming households. According to Musa *et al* (2022), the distance of school from households in km, the age of child, the gender of the child and the nature of the relationship with household heads were factors responsible for child labour. Rural urban migration, wage-rate, population and change in income were known to be determinants of child labour among farmers (Kaine *et al*, 2024). Access to farm machinery, cost of children's education, education level, household income and culture are factors that influenced child labour in household agricultural activities (Monteoli and Lerato, 2024).

Hebron *et al* revealed that children from low-income homes have the greatest rates of child labour (95.5%) while those from high income households have the lowest rates

(4.5%). The study also indicated that 52.5% of children who are male participate in child labour compared to 47.7% of children who are female. Family heads non-biological children are more likely to be involved in child labour than biological children (23.6%) (Hebron *et al*, 2025).

In Nigeria, child labour is driven by social, demographic and economic factors such as poverty and loss of employment of parents, rural-urban migration, large family size and cultural norms such as polygamy. Other drivers include maldistribution of schools, poor accessibility, and high cost of tuition (Onwuasor *et al*, 2021). Transmission of farming skills and knowledge, training children to be independent, high cost of labour, high cost of living, low income, lack of political will to empower farmers and ignorance of policies of child labour were farmers perceived reasons for engaging their children in farming activities (Mufutau *et al*, 2022).

Parental educational status, parental monthly expenditure, household size, household resource deprivation status, family socio-economic well-being and drive for economic wealth creation were found to explain child work involvement in farming households. (Nyong *et al*, 2024). Some parents and guardians keep their children in child labour in order to supplement family income and because of their poor socio-economic background (Oluwagbohunmi and Popoola, 2023). Findings also identified; illiteracy, unemployment, polygamy, and others as some of the reasons for child labour in Nigeria (Adeoti, 2021). According to Abebe and Fikre child labour is a combined product of individual,

household, and community factors. At individual level the gender of child and biological relationship to the children are significant determinants of child labour. Female child engaged more in child labour than male in rural Ethiopia. At the household level, resources such as (income, agricultural land, literacy of the head) and household size influence the child labour. Better income and literacy of the household head lower the likelihood of child to be engaged in child labour. With regard to community level factor availability of primary school reduces the likelihood of child to be engaged in child labour. Child has less likelihood to engage in child labour if there is primary education close to their residence. Therefore, the government monitoring, providing primary education and awareness creation would be appropriate in minimizing child labour in rural Ethiopia.

2.7 Problems Encountered by Children in Farming Activities

Several studies have proven certain problems encountered by children in farming activities. Children are exposed to pesticides through a fruit and vegetable intake environment and household insecticide use. Some of them experience neural damage, diabetes, obesity, and pulmonary function. Child labour can have detrimental, long-term effects on children. This includes both physical and mental damage, exploitation and death.

Most children who engage in farming activities loses access to education. This has a serious impact on their future as children who were forced into labour are often left with no choice but to continue the cycle and due to their lack of education, are unable to create a better future for themselves and their families. Risk of injuries, use of acute poisoning with pesticides, falling from a moving vehicle, snake bites, weapons, traps wildlife attacks, transmission of diseases from wildlife, trauma from permanent fear of wild animals, joint and muscle pain, hearing impairment, skin irritation are some of the problems children encounter in farming activities (GMA, 2022). According to Bifarin *et al*, (2020). The result indicated the problems encountered by children on the farm, 73.5% encountered scorpion sting, while 11.8%, 10.8% and 3.9% encountered bee sting, snake-bite and others (wrong farm implements) respectively. This portrayed that 100% of the children experienced one or two problems on the farm and this is dangerous to their health and life. This finding is in accordance with the conclusion of ILO (2010) that children were exposed to sharp tools (machetes) and dangerous machinery (tractors), risk of snakebites and injuries from other animals, exposure to extreme environmental conditions, and exposure to agrochemicals including inorganic fertilizers and pesticide.

2.8 Attitudes and Perceptions of Household Heads towards Child Labour

According to Obed (2021), parents in the rural communities stated that child labour is cultural because children are not working for economic reasons but for cultural reasons. Studies have revealed that parents thought their school aged children should work reason

being that their children were to supplement family income, gain experience and to help in family business (Omokhodion *et al*, 2010). However, some household heads were of the opinion that whether engaging children in work was an infringement of the right of the child depended on the nature, extent and purpose of the work (Obed, 2024).

Other findings have proven that both father and mother attitudes contribute greatly to child labour participation (Akrono, 2025). Child labour was strongly encouraged by the parents and house heads to reduce substantially the cost of production on the family farms (Bifarin *et al*, 2020). The study also indicated that household heads depend largely on child labour earning to supplement their income from agricultural production. (Oladimeji and Edun, 2020). Alimi and Masuku (2010) opined that house heads attitude towards child labour will affect household participation in child labour. If household head, sees nothing wrong in child labour or sees children as a group that must struggle to survive, the probability of such household participating in child labour will be higher than households whose heads have a contrary opinion. Also attitudes of household head regarding the importance of education in shapening the child will determine whether the child would be educated or sent to the labour market.

According to Mufutau *et al* (2022), majority of the farmers (57.6%) strongly agreed that child labour boosts farm productivity, as they are able to direct children to work for extended hours. Beyond the economic consideration of high costs for hired labour, farmers believe they can control their children's work schedules according to their own

preferences, without regard for the children's physical or physiological well-being. Additionally, farmers perceive that children involved in farming activities will not suffer from malnutrition. This suggests that, in the study area, farmers are generally unconcerned about the potential negative consequences of child labour.

Theoretical concept of child labour

Economic theories

Luxury axiom and Wealth paradox

The Poverty and Luxury Axiom was propounded by Kaushik Basu and Pham Hoang Van (1998). The luxury axiom and the wealth paradox theory. The luxury axiom asserts that poor families cannot afford to dispense with child labor if they are to meet their subsistence needs. Implying, as household income increases, child labor declines in favor of schooling and other leisure activities. According to luxury axiom, child labor is necessary to support the family not only on a regular basis but also in response to idiosyncratic and covariate shocks (Beegle *et al.*, 2009; Edmonds, 2005).

Contrary to the “luxury hypothesis”, some authors have proposed a concept described as a “wealth paradox”. Bhalotra and Heady (2003), Parsons and Goldin (1989), Rogers and Swinnerton (2004), Nkamleu (2006), and Dumas (2007), are among others, the proponents of wealth paradox theory. The wealth paradox theory asserts that child labor is higher in families that have access to land and livestock in rural areas; and small

business enterprises in urban areas than in poor families lacking those assets. Moreover, child labor seems to increase during periods of economic growth in households endowed with productive assets. They reason out why these families would choose to use child labor instead of hiring. Reasons include first, the risks of moral hazard, shirking, and theft are lower with child labor than with hired hands (Deolalikar and Vijverberg, (1987) Foster and Rosenzweig, (1994). Second, too rigid and burdensome nature of the labor market in rural areas (Basu *et al.* (2010). Third, some believe that child labor is not bad or harmful but can lead to enhanced work habits, discipline, and even human capital accumulation (Emerson and Souza, 2007; Raju, 2005). Finally, others argue child labor persists due to the institutional failure to implement the rights of children (Cunningham, 1995).

Substitution axiom theory

The substitution axiom states that adult and child labour can perform similar tasks, with adjustments made for differences in productivity or efficiency. In essence, it suggests that adults are capable of doing the same work as children. Traditionally, it was often believed that children were better suited for certain types of work phrases like “nimble fingers” reinforced this notion. However, the substitution axiom challenges that view. Research by Levison and colleagues (1998) supports this principle, showing that adults in India are just as efficient, if not more so, than children in producing hand-knotted carpets. Technically, this means child labour can be fully replaced by adult labour. Nonetheless,

since adult workers are more expensive, many firms may hesitate to switch entirely to adult-only employment. (Basu and Tzannatos, 2003).

Household decision making theory

Household decision-making” refers to the process by which members of a household allocate resources (time, labour, money) among alternative uses given constraints (income, assets, time, market opportunities) and preferences.

The influence of household decisions on child labour is shaped by a range of interconnected factors that may exhibit either positive or negative relationships. In a study by Khanam (2006), a multinomial logit model was employed to simultaneously analyse the determinants of children’s participation in work, schooling, both activities, or neither. The results indicated that household choices contribute to child labour through the number of working hours assigned to children, which in turn negatively impacts their schooling. Conversely, Phoumin and Fukui (2006), using stratified and two-stage sampling covering 12,000 households and 600 units in Cambodia and applying a probit model, found a positive association between parental decisions and the number of hours children spend working. (Adulmumini, 2012)

Human capital theory

Human Capital Theory, popularized by Theodore W. Schultz (1961) and Gary S. Becker (1964), argues that education, training, and health are forms of investment in people that

increase their productivity and earnings over time. Just as firms invest in machines or equipment, individuals (or societies) invest in human capital to improve future income and welfare. According to this theory, education and skill acquisition increase productivity and lead to higher lifetime earnings.

In the context of child labour, Human Capital Theory helps explain why some households choose to send their children to work rather than school. The theoretical dynamics indicate that child labour participation tends to rise when wage inequality widens, while a reduction in the wage gap enables households to move closer to escaping the poverty cycle through greater investment in human capital. The model further suggests that in the early stages of development, poor households often resort to child labour as a survival or development strategy using children's work to accumulate physical assets at the cost of educational investment. (Contreras and Salvador)

Becker introduced the human capital investment theory, which integrates the analysis of education and health as key components of human capital formation. He explained how income levels interact with human capital development, proposing that low-income parents are more likely to send their children to work. According to the theory, wealthy parents can allocate more financial resources toward their children's education, while poor parents often rely on their children's labor to supplement household income.

Rossati and Rossi examined how child labour affects children who combine work with schooling as well as those engaged in full-time work. They observed that such circumstances often result in poor academic performance, loss of interest in education, and ultimately, school dropout. The model assumes that child labour negatively impacts the accumulation of human capital and the current and future health of the child. Working long hours reduces study time, causes fatigue, and lowers learning efficiency all of which hinder educational progress. Since human capital is primarily built through education, the model concludes that schooling is the main channel through which children can secure future well-being. Consequently, when children attend school, the supply of child labour decreases. (Rosati and Rossi, 2003; Uche *et al*, 2017).

According to Thakurata *et al* (2018), their findings reveal that households that are financially excluded and lack education tend to favor investing in low-yield physical assets rather than in their children's human capital. As a result, they become trapped in a cycle of intergenerational poverty. These households only begin to invest in education once their income surpasses a certain threshold. Such educational investments can be supported through financial transfers or by redirecting educational subsidies away from college-educated households, without negatively affecting their own human capital investment levels.

Social and cultural theory

social and cultural theories emphasize that child labour is not only an economic decision but also a socially conditioned practice influenced by values, traditions, norms, and social learning within communities. Children's work decisions often reflect what is considered normal, acceptable, or expected in their family or community rather than purely economic optimization.

Intergenerational transmission theory

The concept refers to how values, beliefs, practices, and behaviours are passed from one generation to the next (parents → children → grandchildren). For example, norms about children working on the family farm, apprenticing with parents, or taking over family business. This can lead to the persistence of child labour practices if children internalize that working early or assisting the family enterprise is “normal” or even desirable.

A recent systematic review highlighted that cultural beliefs play a key role in sustaining child labour practices, emphasizing norms such as the inheritance of family businesses, informal apprenticeship training, the perceived asset value of children, and the social value attached to education (Abdullah *et al*, 2022). Many communities regard children's participation in work as a legitimate and valuable part of upbringing, viewing informal apprenticeships as a positive way to instill discipline and a strong work ethic from an early age (Lowe, 2017; Owusu-Amankwah, 2009). On family farms, children's involvement is considered essential preparation for adulthood, helping them acquire

fundamental skills for future livelihoods. As Johansen (2006) observes, children's participation in farm work also provides economic benefits to their households by reducing the need to hire additional labour (Abdullah *et al*, 2024). Zeynap *et al* (2018) revealed in their findings the significant effect of parents on their children's work values. Both mothers' and fathers' work values, and their parenting behavior were significantly associated with their children's work values. Ofuoku *et al* (2020), points out how child labour participation is fostered by the transmission of agricultural knowledge, as well as technical and social skills, across generations.

Social Norms

Social pressures and sanctions, such as stigma directed at parents, often compel families to adhere to community norms that promote child labour [38]. According to Lopez-Calva, a direct connection exists between social stigma and the prevalence of child labour. Parents who go against these norms by choosing not to involve their children in work may face criticism or social exclusion. As a result, the fear of stigma and the desire for social approval increase the perceived benefit, or utility, of allowing children to participate in labour activities.

Findings from the reviewed studies indicate that societal norms emphasizing the economic or asset value of children significantly contribute to child labour within families. These cultural beliefs reinforce the perception that children's participation in

family work is vital to household productivity and income. Consequently, parents are often motivated to involve their children in their occupations to gain economic benefits. Child labour is therefore more prevalent in households where parents' livelihoods are highly labour-intensive. This account highlights that children are viewed as both cost-effective and substitute sources of labour within such economic settings.

However, the tension between local traditions and international child labour standards often creates challenges for effective policy implementation. Efforts to eliminate child labour may be perceived as external interference or as disregarding community values that see work as a means of teaching responsibility and survival skills. Interventions that fail to consider local beliefs and socio-economic realities often face resistance. Sustainable progress, therefore, requires culturally sensitive approaches that align global child protection goals with community-based values emphasizing education, poverty reduction, and alternative income opportunities for families as ways to reduce reliance on child labour. (Abdullah *et al*, 2022).

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Area and Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State. Edo state is located between latitude 5°44'N-7°34'N and longitude 5°40'E - 6°45'E. It exhibits a Tropical savanna climate according to the Köppen-Geiger classification (Aw), characterized by distinct wet and dry seasons. The region experiences a minimum temperature of 14°C (58°F) in January, providing cooler conditions early in the year. Typically, average temperatures hover around 27°C (81°F), creating a warm atmosphere conducive to rich biodiversity. Such temperature dynamics play a significant role in shaping the ecological and agricultural landscapes of Edo. Ovia North East Local Government Area has its headquarters situated in Okada town. It has an area of 2,301sqkm and a population of 155,344 (2006 census). The L.G.A is further divided into thirteen wards with several villages. It shares boundary with Ovia South West, Owan West L.G.A, Uhunwonde L. G.A, Egor L.G.A, Oredo L.G.A and Ikpoba Okha L.G.A

In Ovia North East, farming activities primarily involve crop production, with a focus on crops like yam, cassava, maize, millet, sorghum, and cowpea. Livestock production like piggery, snailery, poultry and fishery. Other occupations include: trading, saw milling and processing.

3.2 Sampling Procedure and Data Collection

A multi-stage sampling process was used for the selection of farming households in Ovia North East Local Government Area.

Stage 1: Using the simple random sampling technique, five wards was selected from the thirteen wards based on areas with intense farming activities.

Stage 2: This stage involved the use of random sampling technique in picking out three communities each from the selected wards which is a total of fifteen communities (15).

Stage 3: This stage involved the use of snow ball sampling technique in the selection of ten farming households each from the 15 communities, totaling 150 farming households. This was done to ensure respondents had equal chance of being included in the sample and to eliminate bias.

3.3 Source of Data

Data from primary sources were used in this study. The primary data were obtained through the administration of questionnaire designed in accordance with the objective of

study. The questionnaire comprised of both close ended and open-ended question item. Close ended questions provided a choice of multiple answers, respondents were asked to select by ticking; open-ended questions enabled the respondent to answer the question using his or her own words.

3.4. Measurement of variables

Independent variables for the study are the socio economics characteristics of respondents which are:

Sex: This was measured nominally using the options of (1) female and (2) male

Age: The age of the respondents was measured in years.

Marital status: This was measured at nominal level using the options of (1) single, (2) married, (3) divorced, (4) widowed.

Educational level: This was measured ordinally with the options of (1) primary education (2) secondary education (3) Tertiary education (4) and others.

Household size: Respondents were asked to indicate their household size using numerical values.

Household Income: This was measured (₦) using numerical values

Number of school age children: Respondents was asked to indicate the number of children they have within the age of 5-17.

Dependent variable

Child labour usage: This was measured using the farming and non-farming economic activities engaged in by children.

Farming and non-farming economic activities engaged in by children: Respondents will be asked to indicate the farming activities engaged in by their children. This would be measured on a four-point likert type scale as (4) very often (3) often (2) occasionally (1) not at all. The cut off mean (≥ 2.5).

Schooling patterns of children: Respondents were asked to indicate the ages, schooling patterns and other activities of children. This was measured using mean scores.

Reasons for engaging children in farming activities: Respondents were asked to indicate the reasons for engaging children in farming activities. This was measured using a five-point likert type scale rating as (5) strongly agree (4) agree (3) neutral (2) disagree (1) strongly disagree. The cut off mean (≥ 3).

Problems encountered by their children in farming activities: Respondents were asked to indicate the problems encountered by their children during farming activities.

This was measured using a five-point likert type scale. The scale rating as (5) very often (4) often (3) neutral (2) sometimes (1) not at all. The cut off mean (≥ 3)

Attitudes of household heads towards child labour: Respondents were asked to indicate their attitudes towards child labour usage. This was measured using a five-point likert type scale. The scale rating as (5) strongly agree (4) agree (3) neutral (2) disagree (1) strongly disagree. The cut off mean (≥ 3)

3.5. Analytical Technique

The data collected from the respondents were analyzed using statistical tools such as descriptive statistics which are frequency counts, means, standard deviation, percentages. Descriptive statistics uses the data to describe the population through numerical values, graphs or tables. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used for the analysis. The activities were achieved as follows:

Objective 1: To describe the socio-economic characteristics of farming household heads in Ovia North East Local Government Area. This were achieved using statistical tools such as frequency counts, percentages, means, standard deviation and tables.

Objective 2: To identify the farming activities engaged in by children in Ovia North East.

This was achieved using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation, graphs or tables.

Objective 3: To examine the schooling patterns of children in Ovia North East. This was

achieved using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation, graphs or tables.

Objective 4: To identify the reasons for engaging children in farming activities. This was

achieved using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation, graphs or tables.

Objective 5: To examine the problems encountered by children on the farm. This was

achieved using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation, graphs or tables.

Objective 6: To examine the perceptions and attitudes of household heads towards child

labour usage. This was achieved using frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviation, graphs or tables.

3.6. Test of Hypotheses

H_{01} : The socio economics characteristics of farming household heads have no significant influence on child labour usage. This was achieved using logistic regression model of the

socio economics variables and child labour usage. The mathematical expression of the models is explicitly specified as:

$$\text{Log} \left(\frac{p}{1-p} \right) = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \beta_4 X_4 + \beta_5 X_5 + \beta_6 X_6 + U \dots\dots$$

Where:

$\log \left(\frac{p}{1-p} \right)$ is the log-odds

Y= child labour usage

β_0 = constant term

β is the coefficients

$X_1, X_2, X_3 \dots$ are the independent variables

X_1 =Sex (female=0, male=1)

X_2 =Age (number of years)

X_3 = Education (primary education, secondary education, tertiary education)

X_4 = Household size (number of person's living)

X_5 = Access to machinery

X_6 = Household income

X_7 = Farm size

X_8 = Number of school age children

U= Error term

H_{02} : There is no significant difference between child labour usage in male and female headed households. This was tested using the chi-square test.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Socio-economic characteristics of Household heads in the Study Area.

The socio-economic characteristics of household heads are represented in Table 4.1.

4.1.1 Sex Distribution of Respondents

The results show that male household heads (61.3%) outnumber female heads (38.7%).

This implies that respondents are mostly male because they will take responsibility of the overall household members as well as providing for their basic needs (Idowu *et al.*, 2013).

Oladimeji and Edun (2018) opined that male rural household heads (89.2%) outweighed

the female counterpart (10.8%). This suggested the presence of female headed households could be attributed to a number of reasons such as death of male heads, migration and divorce.

4.1.2 Age of Respondents

Age distribution of respondents is provided in Table 4.1. About 9.5% of the respondents were in the age group of 35-44; 79.7% were in the age group of 45-54 while the remaining 10.8% belonged to the age group of 55-64. The $\bar{x}$ age of the respondents was 50, indicating that farming in the study area is dominated by middle-aged adults who represent the active agricultural labour force (Omeje *et al*, 2020). This finding is consistent with earlier studies showing that farming in Nigeria is largely undertaken by individuals between 40 and 60 years of age (Obinna and Okafor, 2016). Middle-aged household heads tend to rely more on family labour, particularly children, to meet the labour demands of crop production. Hence, the age profile observed $\bar{x}$ s that household heads have children within the school age of 5-17 which could lead to high involvement of children in farming activities.

4.1.3 Marital Status of Respondents

The marital status of respondents is shown in Table 4.1. Majority of the respondents were married (61.3%) while 4.0% were single, the remaining 34.7% were either divorced or widowed. This is in agreement with the findings of Idowu *et al* (2013), the implication of

this is that more children are expected to be living in the households. This high number of married respondents will lead to increased child labour.

4.1.4 Educational level of Respondents

The level of education of household heads as shown in Table 4.1. Indicates that most of the respondents had primary education (39.2%), 25.7% had secondary education, 12.2% had tertiary education and 23.0% had non-formal education. This distribution implies that most respondents have low educational attainment, which is common in rural farming communities. Lower education is often associated with higher dependence on family labour, including children, because such households have fewer opportunities outside agriculture (Edet *et al*, 2013). Household heads with low educational levels tend to experience reduced living standards due to limited economic opportunities. Studies show that individuals with little or no education are more likely to engage in low-paying agricultural labour or informal sector work, resulting in low household income and limited savings (ILO and NBS, 2022).

Low education significantly increases the likelihood of using child labour. Because low-educated parents often experience economic insecurity, they tend to rely on children as a cost-saving strategy rather than hiring labour, which they consider expensive and unreliable (Kaine *et al.*, 2024).

4.1.5 Household Size of Respondents

The household size distribution of household heads as shown in Table 4.1 indicates that 1.3% of the respondents had a household size of less than 5. About 84.0% had a household size of 5+, 14.7% had a household size of 10+. However, this agrees with the findings of Mufutau *et al* (2022) that majority of the respondents had a household size of 6+. The implication of this is that farmers in the study area had enough household members including children to help out with farming activities. This also implies that the number of persons in a household could affect farm and non-farm labour, determine the food and nutritional requirements of household, affects poverty status and household food security (Oladimeji and Edun, 2018).

4.1.6 Number of school age children

The number of school-age children in the households, as presented in Table 4.1, shows a clear concentration in the younger age group. Specifically, 90.5% of the respondents' children were within the age range of 5-8 years, indicating that most households had young children in the early stages of primary schooling. In addition, 4.1% of the children fell within the 9-12 years age range, while 5.4% were between 13-17 years. The $\bar{x}$ age of the children was 7. This suggests that the majority of households consist of young children who are more likely to be available for household and farm-related tasks due to

their proximity to the parents at home. Overall, the dominance of younger children implies a greater likelihood of child participation in light agricultural activities, as they are often introduced to farming responsibilities at early ages in rural communities. This is in line with the findings of the National Bureau of Statistics (2022): Of children in child labour, 60.8 per cent (14,990,674) are in the 5-11 age group, 20.8 per cent (5,132,574) are in the 12-14 age group and 18.4 per cent (4,550,237) are in the 15-17 age group.

4.1.7 Source of income of Respondents

The source of income of Respondents as presented in Table 4.1, shows that 56.0% of the respondents were into crop production, 21.3% were into marketing/trading, 2.7% were into animal production and 20% had other sources of income. The distribution clearly indicates that crop farming is the primary income source. Households with limited diversification may rely more on children to reduce production costs, address food and income security.

4.1.8 Monthly income of Respondents

The monthly income distribution of household heads provided in Table 4.1 shows that majority earn ₦150,000–₦249,999 monthly (76%), 21.3% earn ₦250,000–₦349,999 while 2.7% earn N35,000+. The $\bar{x}$ monthly income was 2,237,35 Naira. This income level, though moderate, may be insufficient for hired labour, encouraging the use of children as substitutes. Lower income levels have consistently been linked to increased

child labour use in farming. This is consistent with the findings of Idowu *et al.*, (2013), which shows that the income level of the household head indicates that about 31.67% earns between ₦110,000 to ₦150,000 per annum. The meager amount might be the reason why household use children on the farm in order to augment the family income and reduce cost of labour. The less the income of the household heads, the greater the probability of the households' involvement in child labour (Oladimeji and Edun, 2018).

4.1.9 Source of labour of Respondents

The source of labour as presented in Table 4.1, shows that 44.0% of the respondents employed family labour, 6.7% used hired labour while 49.3% used both. This is an indication that 44+49.3% of the households depend on family labour which will likely include child labour. However, this may result to absenteeism from school, poor performance, ill health on the child. This is in line with the findings of Bifarin *et al.*, (2020) which showed that most household heads engaged their children to work on the family farms as a type of labour to cut down the expenditure on farm work.

Table 4.1: socio-economic characteristics of respondents

		Count	Layer N %	$\bar{X}$
Sex	Male	92	61.3	
	Female	58	38.7	
Age	< 35	0	50	50
	35 - 44	14	9.5	
	45 - 54	118	79.7	
	55 - 64	16	10.8	
	65+	0	.0	
Marital Status	Single	6	4.0	
	Married	92	61.3	
	Others	52	34.7	
Education level	Primary education	58	39.2	
	Secondary education	38	25.7	
	Tertiary education	18	12.2	
	Non-formal education	34	23.0	
Household size	< 5	2	1.3	
	5 – 9	126	84.0	
	10 - 14	22	14.7	
	15+	0	.0	

No. of school age children	5-8	134	90.5	7
	9-12	6	4.1	
	13-17	8	5.4	
Source of income	Crop	84	56.0	
	Animal	4	2.7	
	Marketing/trading	32	21.3	
	Others	30	20.0	
Monthly income	< 150000	0	.0	223735
	150000 - 249999	114	76.0	
	250000 - 349999	32	21.3	
	350000+	4	2.7	
Source of labour	Family	66	44.0	
	Hired	10	6.7	
	Both	74	49.3	

4.2 Farming activities and Non-farming activities engaged in by children

Result in Table 4.2, show that children's participation in farming activities is generally low across households. indicating that children do not frequently or intensively engage in farm labour. However, children occasionally participate in weeding ($\bar{X} = 2.11$) which has the highest $\bar{x}$ score, harvesting ($\bar{X} = 1.88$), and land preparation ($\bar{X} = 1.69$), suggesting seasonal involvement during labour-demanding periods. Hazardous participation occurs in fertilizer/pesticide application ($\bar{X} = 1.39$), which, though infrequent, exposes children to significant health risks. The very low means for livestock and aquaculture tasks (1.00–1.07) show that households rarely involve children in these activities. Overall, the findings imply that child labour in the area is present but limited, occurring mainly in crop farming, with possible implications for children's education, safety, and wellbeing.

Activities	Not at all		Occasionally		Often		Very often		$\bar{X}$	Std. Deviation
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Weeding	26	17.3	86	57.3	34	22.7	4	2.7	2.11*	.706
Land preparation	56	37.3	86	57.3	6	4.0	2	1.3	1.69	.612
Ridge making	118	78.7	30	20.0	2	1.3	0	.0	1.23	.451
Harvesting	40	26.7	94	62.7	10	6.7	6	4.0	1.88	.694
Watering	120	80.0	28	18.7	2	1.3	0	.0	1.21	.442
Thinning	132	88.0	18	12.0	0	.0	0	.0	1.12	.326
Fertilizer/pesticide application	90	60.8	58	39.2	0	.0	0	.0	1.39	.490
Milking	150	100.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	1.00	.000
Feeding animals	142	94.7	6	4.0	2	1.3	0	.0	1.07	.299
Stocking fingerling	150	100.0	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	1.00	.000
Pond cleaning	148	98.7	0	.0	2	1.3	0	.0	1.03	.230
Harvesting fish	144	96.0	4	2.7	2	1.3	0	.0	1.05	.279
Watering animals	148	98.7	2	1.3	0	.0	0	.0	1.01	.115
Transporting	148	98.7	2	1.3	0	.0	0	.0	1.01	.115
Storage of product	148	98.7	2	1.3	0	.0	0	.0	1.01	.115
Marketing of product	128	85.3	12	8.0	10	6.7	0	.0	1.21	.551
Packaging	148	98.7	2	1.3	0	.0	0	.0	1.01	.115
Processing	110	73.3	30	20.0	10	6.7	0	.0	1.33	.598

Table 4.2: Farming Activities of Children

$\bar{X} > 2.5$

Source : Field Survey, 2025

The table measures the frequency of children's involvement in various non-farming economic activities. The data reveals domestic work is the only activity that children engage in with high frequency. All other economic activities are performed infrequently or not at all by the majority of the children surveyed. Domestic Work ($\bar{x}$ = 3.55). This indicates that domestic work is a regular responsibility for the children in this study. This high level of involvement suggests it could be a major demand on their time and energy, potentially at the expense of education, play, or rest.

Handi-craft ($\bar{x}$ = 1.53) and hawking ($\bar{x}$ = 1.52) have the highest $\bar{x}$ s among the low-frequency activities, indicating they are more common than the others but still not regular.

Others includes assisting in family shop (1.31), Pushing carts (1.24), Apprenticeship (1.28), and Collecting recyclables (1.20). For these, the very low percentages suggest these are not primary or consistent occupations for these children. Trading ($\bar{x}$ = 1.10) is the least common activity, with 90.4% of children never engaged in it.

Table4.3: Non-Farming Economic Activities of Children

	Not at all		Occasionally		Often		Very often			
Activities	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	$\bar{X}$	SD
Trading	132	90.4	14	9.6	0	.0	0	.0	1.10	.295
Assisting in family shop	110	73.3	36	24.0	2	1.3	2	1.3	1.31	.567
Collecting recyclables	120	80.0	30	20.0	0	.0	0	.0	1.20	.401
Pushing carts and wheel barrows	114	76.0	36	24.0	0	.0	0	.0	1.24	.429
Handi-craft	78	52.0	64	42.7	8	5.3	0	.0	1.53	.598
Hawking	100	66.7	30	20.0	12	8.0	8	5.3	1.52	.857
Domestic work	4	2.7	6	4.0	44	29.3	96	64.0	3.55*	.701
Apprenticeship	116	77.3	28	18.7	4	2.7	2	1.3	1.28	.581

Source: Field Survey, 2025

Mean ≥ 2.5

4.3. Schooling Patterns of children

Figure 1, shows the schooling patterns of children by their age group in the study area.

For children aged 5–12, 4.0% attend only school, 1.3% do farm work only, and 13.3% combine school and farm work. For adolescents aged 13–17, 0% are in only school, 1.3% do only farm work, while 80.0% combine school with farm work.

Figure 2, shows the number of days spent on farm work per week; no farm work (5.3%), 1 day/week (18.7%), 2 days/week (30.7%), 3 days/week (27.6%), 4 days/week (9.3%), 5 days/week (8.0%).

Figure 3, shows the number of hours Spent on farm work per week. None (5%), 1 hour (5%), 2 hours (50%), 3 hours (31%), 4 hours (4%)

6 hours (1%), 8 hours (4%).

The results clearly show widespread involvement of school-aged children in farm labour, and especially, a very high rate of school–work combination among older children (13–17 years). While much of the labour is moderate (2–3 hours), a meaningful subset engages in more intensive labour that could significantly undermine education.

It suggests a high degree of overlap between schooling and farm labour. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), child labour involves work that interferes with schooling or is damaging to the child’s development. The patterns observed especially

older children combining school and work are likely to meet the threshold of harmful child labour in many cases (ILO & National Bureau of Statistics, 2022).

Moreover, some farm work among children aligns with definitions in studies of Nigerian farm labour, where work that conflicts with school time is considered child labour. Children may experience lower academic performance as well as higher school absenteeism.

Schooling Patterns of Children

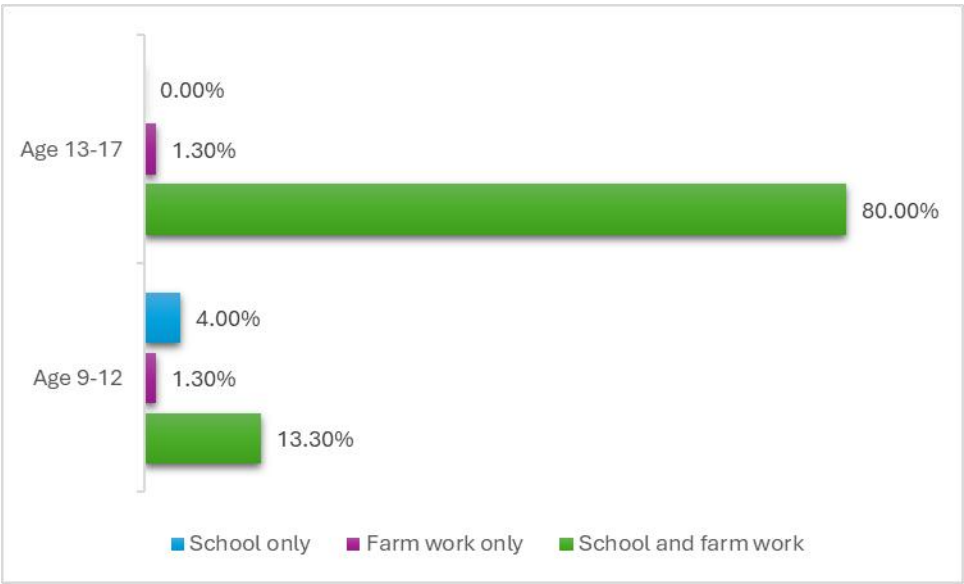


Figure 1: School pattern by the age group of the children

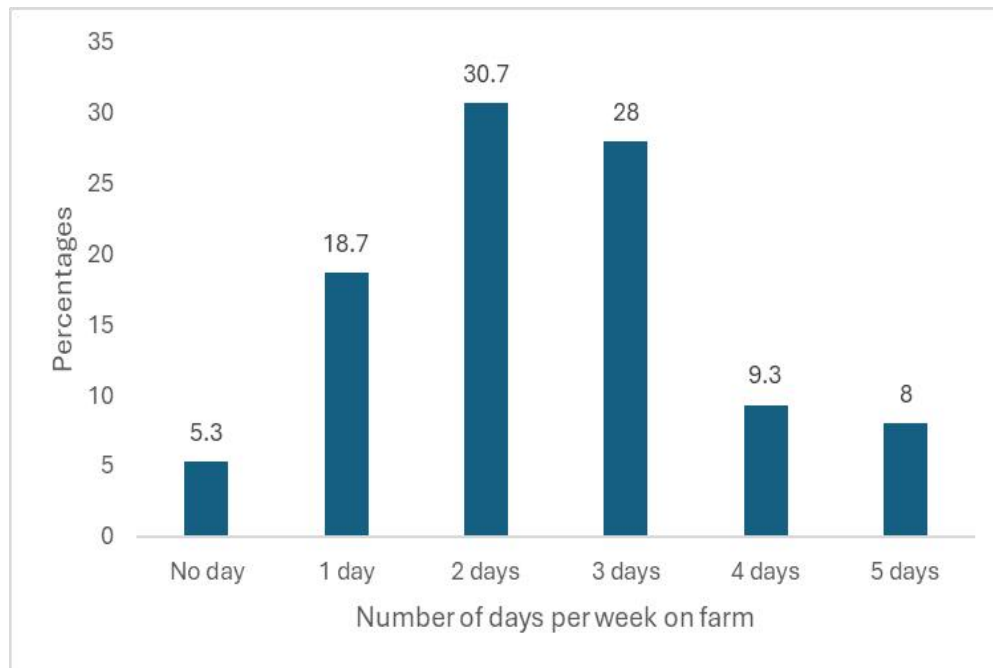


Figure 2: Number of days spent on farm work per week

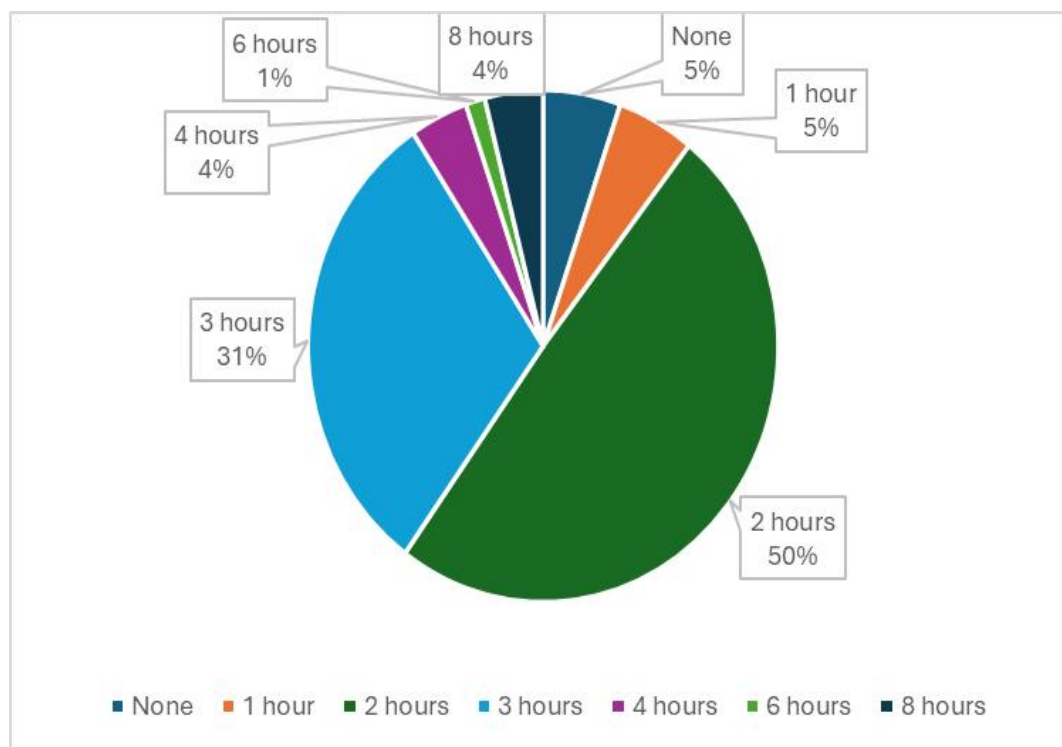


Figure 3: Number of hours spent on farm work per week

4.4 Perceived reasons for engaging children in farming activities

The result presented in Table 4.3 shows that 47.3% of the respondents strongly agreed that children are engaged in farming activities due to high cost of living, 29.3% strongly agreed that financial difficulties is a reason, 34.7% Strongly agreed children are engaged in farming activities because of the cost of hiring adult labour, 5.3% strongly agreed it's because of limited access to adult labour.

The $\bar{x}$ of these significant perceived reasons include: due to high cost of living ($\bar{x}=4.19$), high cost of hiring adult labour ($\bar{x}=4.05$), financial difficulties($\bar{x}=3.92$), lack of farm machinery ($\bar{x}=3.88$), limited access to adult labour ($\bar{x}=3.17$). The two core reasons household heads engage children in child labour are due to high cost of living and high cost of hiring adult labour. This is in consonance with the findings of Mufutau *et al* (2022) where for economic reasons, 97.0% agreed that they engaged child labour due to high cost of labour while ignorance of policies was identified as political reasons. Augmenting family income (51.0%) dominated the reasons for child labour on the farm. (Bifarin,2020).

Table 4.4: Perceived Reasons for Engaging Children in Farming Activities

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree			
Reasons	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	$\bar{X}$	Std. Deviation
Financial difficulties make it important to engage children in farm work	8	5.3	16	10.7	0	.0	82	54.7	44	29.3	3.92*	1.096
The cost of hiring adult labour is too high	8	5.3	10	6.7	0	.0	80	53.3	52	34.7	4.05*	1.048
Children need to learn how to farm from an early age	28	18.7	62	41.3	2	1.3	48	32.0	10	6.7	2.67*	1.283
Due to lack of farm machinery	16	10.7	10	6.7	2	1.3	70	46.7	52	34.7	3.88*	1.258
Working on the farm teaches children to be independent	32	21.3	64	42.7	10	6.7	40	26.7	4	2.7	2.47*	1.174
Due to high cost of living	10	6.8	6	4.1	0	.0	62	41.9	70	47.3	4.19*	1.103

The farm is close to major roads makes it easier to market farm produce encouraging more intensive labour that include children	66	44.0	62	41.3	4	2.7	14	9.3	4	2.7	1.85	1.032
There is limited access to adult labour in the area	30	20.0	20	13.3	2	1.3	90	60.0	8	5.3	3.17*	1.315
The size of the farm requires more hands including children	54	36.0	74	49.3	4	2.7	18	12.0	0	.0	1.91	.929
There are no schools nearby, so children stay at home and work on the farm	60	40.0	82	54.7	2	1.3	4	2.7	2	1.3	1.71	.747
Distance between home and school is too far making it difficult to attend regularly	70	46.7	66	44.0	2	1.3	12	8.0	0	.0	1.71	.848

Source: Field Survey, 2025

*Significant reasons (Mean ≥ 3)

4.5 Problems Encountered by Children in Farming Activities

The problems encountered by children in farming activities are presented in Table 4.4.

From the table, all the problems were not significant. They include snake bite($\bar{x}$ =1.63), cuts or injuries($\bar{x}$ =1.99), Respiration problem($\bar{x}$ =1.11), Skin disease(1.12), Aches and pains(1.76), Poor academic performance(1.55), Muscle strain($\bar{x}$ =1.12), Physical fatigue($\bar{x}$ =1.52), Stress(1.63), Animal attacks($\bar{x}$ =1.32), Falls from height($\bar{x}$ =1.13), Insect sting($\bar{x}$ 1.77), Drowning($\bar{x}$ =1.05), Electric shock(1.01), Sun burn($\bar{x}$ =1.03), Suffocations($\bar{x}$ =1.03), Dehydration($\bar{x}$ =1.12), Illness($\bar{x}$ =2.00), Scorpion sting($\bar{x}$ =1.69), Missed school($\bar{x}$ =1.75). This implies that, on average, the respondents did not perceive these issues as highly prevalent or severe.

4.5: Problems Encountered by Children in Farming Activities

	Not at all		Sometimes		Neutral		Often		Very often		$\bar{X}$	Std. Deviation
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%		
Snake bite	62	41.3	84	56.0	2	1.3	2	1.3	0	.0	1.63	.586
Cuts or injuries	16	10.7	128	85.3	0	.0	4	2.7	2	1.3	1.99	.579
Respiration problem	136	90.7	12	8.0	2	1.3	0	.0	0	.0	1.11	.350
Skin disease	136	90.7	10	6.7	4	2.7	0	.0	0	.0	1.12	.400
Aches and pains	50	33.3	90	60.0	6	4.0	4	2.7	0	.0	1.76	.652
Poor academic performance	86	57.3	52	34.7	6	4.0	6	4.0	0	.0	1.55	.756
Muscle strain	132	89.2	14	9.5	2	1.4	0	.0	0	.0	1.12	.367
Physical fatigue	88	58.7	54	36.0	0	.0	8	5.3	0	.0	1.52	.757
Stress	80	53.3	58	38.7	0	.0	12	8.0	0	.0	1.63	.848
Animal attacks	110	73.3	36	24.0	0	.0	4	2.7	0	.0	1.32	.617
Falls from height	134	89.3	14	9.3	0	.0	2	1.3	0	.0	1.13	.444
Insect sting	66	44.0	70	46.7	2	1.3	6	4.0	6	4.0	1.77	.963
Drowning	142	94.7	8	5.3	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	1.05	.225

Electric shock	148	98.7	2	1.3	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	1.01	.115
Sun burn	146	97.3	4	2.7	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	1.03	.162
Suffocations	148	98.7	0	.0	2	1.3	0	.0	0	.0	1.03	.230
Dehydration	138	92.0	8	5.3	2	1.3	2	1.3	0	.0	1.12	.462
Illness	32	21.3	102	68.0	2	1.3	12	8.0	2	1.3	2.00	.819
Scorpion sting	58	38.7	86	57.3	0	.0	6	4.0	0	.0	1.69	.675
Missed school	82	54.7	46	30.7	4	2.7	14	9.3	4	2.7	1.75	.959

Source: Field Survey

Significant problems ($\bar{X} > 3.0$)

4.6 Attitudes of household heads towards child labour

The result presented in Table 4.5 shows that 41.3% of household heads strongly agreed that access to farm machinery will reduce child labour, 49.3% strongly agreed that awareness of laws and policies against child labour is low in the area, 86.7% strongly agreed that children should work on farm during weekends or holidays, 8.0% agreed strongly that using children for farm work helps the family save money, 4.0% strongly agreed that children working on the farm is part of rural life, 78.7% also perceived that household heads should not rely on children for regular farm work, 8.0% strongly agreed that the community sees child labour as a part of life while 60.8% agreed that children working on farms are at risk of illness and injuries. The $\bar{x}$ scores include: access to farm machinery will reduce child labour ($\bar{x}=4.25$), awareness of laws and policies($\bar{x}=4.40$), children should work on farm during weekends or holidays ($\bar{x}=4.81$), using children for farm work helps the family save money($\bar{x}=3.04$), children working on the farm is part of rural life($\bar{x}=3.80$), household heads should not rely on children for regular farm work ($\bar{x}=4.55$), community sees child labour as a part of life ($\bar{x}=3.65$), children working on farms are at risk of illness and injuries ($\bar{x}=4.59$). The two most common attitudes of household heads are children should work on farms during weekends or holidays and children working on farms are at risk of illness and injuries.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that household heads in the study area generally do not support exploitative or harmful child labour. Their attitudes show a preference for children's education, safety, and well-being, while allowing only minimal, supervised participation in farming activities during non-school periods. This protective stance suggests an increasing awareness of the negative consequences of child labour and aligns with global advocacy for children's rights and safe development (ILO, 2021).

4.6: Attitudes of Household heads towards child labour

	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree			
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	$\bar{X}$	Std. Deviation
Engaging children in farming activities is the only way for family survival	28	18.9	42	28.4	0	.0	60	40.5	18	12.2	2.99	1.395
Engagement of children in farming is a way to ensure continuity of hard work	46	30.7	32	21.3	2	1.3	54	36.0	16	10.7	2.75	1.475
Access to machinery will reduce child labour	4	2.7	4	2.7	4	2.7	76	50.7	62	41.3	4.25*	.853

Machinery encourages laziness	104	69.3	32	21.3	2	1.3	4	2.7	8	5.3	1.53	1.041
Awareness of laws and policies against child labour is low in the community	0	.0	6	4.0	2	1.3	68	45.3	74	49.3	4.40*	.714
Children should work on farm during weekends or holidays	0	.0	2	1.3	4	2.7	14	9.3	130	86.7	4.81*	.536
Using children for farm work helps the family save money	34	22.7	24	16.0	6	4.0	74	49.3	12	8.0	3.04*	1.375

Children working in the farm is a part of rural life	4	2.7	6	4.0	12	8.0	122	81.3	6	4.0	3.80*	.695
Children working on the farm helps them learn valuable skills	46	30.7	60	40.0	10	6.7	30	20.0	4	2.7	2.24	1.168
Household heads Should not rely on children for regular farm work	8	5.3	4	2.7	4	2.7	16	10.7	118	78.7	4.55*	1.053
I would rather use child labour than hire extra labour	28	18.7	92	61.3	8	5.3	20	13.3	2	1.3	2.17	.932

My community sees child labour as a part of life	8	5.3	14	9.3	12	8.0	104	69.3	12	8.0	3.65*	.948
Children working on farms are at risk of illness and injuries	0	.0	0	.0	2	1.4	56	37.8	90	60.8	4.59*	.520

Source: Field Survey, 2025.

Significant attitudes ($\bar{X} > 3$).

4.7. Hypotheses testing

A binary logistic regression was conducted to examine the influence of socioeconomic characteristics of farming households on child labour usage. The overall model was statistically significant ($\chi^2 (16) = 66.956$, $p < .001$), indicating that the predictors jointly improved the prediction of child labour usage. The model explained between 36.8% (Cox & Snell R^2) and 78.5% (Nagelkerke R^2) of the variation in child labour use and correctly classified 98.6% of cases. The result shows that sex was a statistically significant predictor of child labour usage. Male-headed households were less likely ($p = .047$) to use child labour compared to female-headed households ($\text{Exp}(B) \approx 0.000$), although the extremely small odds ratio indicates a model estimation issue due to few cases. Also, age significantly predicted child labour usage. For each additional year in age, the odds of using child labour increased by a factor of 3.703, indicating that older household heads were more likely ($p = .043$) to involve children in farm work. Other socioeconomic characteristics like marital status, education level, household size, number of school-age children, source of income, monthly income, and source of labour did not significantly predict child labour usage ($p > .05$).

This is in line with the findings of Sanusi & Akinniran (2013), which revealed that age and sex of household heads are the major determinants of child labour participation in the study area.

Table 4.7a: The socio economics characteristics of farming household heads have no significant influence on child labour usage.

Predictor	B	SE	Wald χ^2	df	P-value	Exp(B)
Sex (Ref: Female)	-9.823	4.939	3.955	1	0.047	0.000
Age (years)	1.309	0.648	4.080	1	0.043	3.703
Marital Status (Ref: Single)			2.457	2	0.293	
– Married	-9.744	55425.305	0.000	1	1.000	0.000
– Others	-13.662	55425.305	0.000	1	1.000	0.000
Education Level (Ref: Primary)			2.841	3	0.417	
– Secondary	-16.237	4489.889	0.000	1	0.997	0.000
– Tertiary	-11.785	7987.228	0.000	1	0.999	0.000
– Non-formal	-10.264	6.089	2.841	1	0.092	0.000
Household size	0.734	0.463	2.516	1	0.113	2.083
No. of school-age children (Ref: 5–8)			0.000	2	1.000	
– 9–12	-23.390	12730.669	0.000	1	0.999	0.000
– 13–17	-3.330	11977.850	0.000	1	1.000	0.036
Source of income (Ref: Crop production)			0.738	3	0.864	

Predictor	B	SE	Wald χ^2	df	P-value	Exp(B)
– Animal production	-1.765	54850.231	0.000	1	1.000	0.171
– Trading/Marketing	-2.817	3.279	0.738	1	0.390	0.060
– Others	-16.858	4785.215	0.000	1	0.997	0.000
Monthly income	0.000	0.000	1.589	1	0.207	1.000
Source of labour (Ref: Family labour)			3.680	2	0.159	
– Hired labour	-0.953	9592.522	0.000	1	1.000	0.385
– Both	-11.979	6.244	3.680	1	0.055	0.000
Constant	-52.331	55425.312	0.000	1	0.999	0.000
-2 Log Likelihood (25.304), Cox & Snell R ² (0.368), Nagelkerke R ² (0.785)						
Omnibus Test: $\chi^2(16)$ 66.956 , p = 0.000 , Classification Accuracy 98.6%						

There is no significant difference between child labour usage in male and female headed household.

A chi-square test of independence was conducted to examine the association between sex of household head and child labour usage. The association between the two variables was found to be statistically significant $\chi^2(1, N = 150) = 18.010, p = 0.000$. Based on this result, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant association between sex of household head and child labour usage is rejected. This implies that male and female household heads differ in their use of child labour in the study area.

Table 4.7b: There is no significant difference between child labour usage in male and female headed households.

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2- sided)	Exact Sig. (1- sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	18.010 ^a	1	.000		
Continuity Correction ^b	15.778	1	.000		
Likelihood Ratio	18.467	1	.000		
Fisher's Exact Test				.000	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	17.890	1	.000		
N of Valid Cases	150				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 6.19.

b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

This study investigated the usage and characteristics of child labour among farming households in Ovia North East LGA, Edo State, Nigeria. The research successfully addressed its key objectives through the administration of 150 questionnaires.

The socio-economic profile of household heads reveals a predominantly male (61.3%) and married (61.3%) cohort with a $\bar{x}$ age of 50 years. Education levels were generally low, with the largest group possessing only primary education (39.2%). Households were typically large, with a notable proportion (14.7%) having 10 or more members. The $\bar{x}$ monthly income was N2,237.35, primarily derived from crop production (56.0%), and most households (89.3%) relied on a combination of family and hired labour.

Regarding child labour, the study identified that children are engaged in various farming and non-farming activities. A critical finding is the very young $\bar{x}$ age of involved children, which was 7 years. The research also identified the primary reasons for engaging child labour, which included financial difficulties, high cost of living, limited access to adult labour. Furthermore, the attitudes of household heads towards this practice were largely. The attitudes of household heads towards child labour were positive. The regression analysis showed that sex and age significantly influenced child labour.

5.2 Conclusion

This study concludes that child labour is a prevalent practice among farming households in Ovia North East LGA, driven primarily by socio-economic vulnerability. The combination of large household sizes, schooling patterns of children and insufficient $\bar{x}$ income creates a context of economic pressure where households resort to using child labour as a coping strategy. The alarmingly young $\bar{x}$ age of 7 years for involved children highlights the early integration of children into the workforce. While household heads demonstrate some awareness of the associated risks, the practice is rationalized and perpetuated by financial hardship and a lack of accessible adult labour. Therefore, child labour in this area is not merely a cultural norm but a symptom of broader systemic challenges of poverty and limited livelihood options.

5.3 Recommendations

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

1. Adult labour accessibility should be promoted especially in rural farming communities. This will help address the labour shortages that often compel households to use children for regular farm activities.
2. The local government, Ministry of Education, and community leaders should collaborate to enhance school enrolment and retention through scholarships, free learning

materials, school feeding programmes, and improved school infrastructure. Keeping children in school will reduce their involvement in farm activities during school hours.

3. Awareness programmes should be designed to educate community members, especially household heads on the negative physical, psychological, and long-term human capital effects of child labour.

4. Local government authorities should collaborate with law enforcement and child protection units to ensure effective monitoring of child labour practices.

5. Providing training and access to farm technologies such as small machines, improved tools, and extension services can reduce labour demands on farms, thereby minimizing the reliance on children to meet production needs.

6. Increased investment in adult literacy programmes and agricultural extension training will empower households with knowledge and skills to adopt improved production practices and better manage farm labour without depending on children.

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APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA.

Dear respondent, I am an undergraduate student of the above-named institution conducting research titled: **Assessment of Child Labour Usage among farming households in Ovia North East Local Government Area, Edo State**". I appeal to you to assist in this study by responding to the questions below accurately. All information given will be strictly confidential and only used for the purpose of this study.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Favour Chioma INYERE

INSTRUCTION: Please tick (✓) where applicable

SECTION A: Personal characteristics of Farming household heads

Please answer the following questions honestly by ticking, your response will be kept confidential.

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age: _____ years
3. Marital status: Single ☐ Married ☐ others ☐
4. Education level: primary ☐ secondary ☐ Tertiary education ☐ no formal education ☐
5. Household size: _____ Nos
6. Farm size: _____ ha
7. Number of school age children within 5-17 years: _____ (a) 5-8 ☐ (b) 9-12 ☐ (c) 13-17 ☐
8. What is your main source of income? (a) Crop production ☐ (b) Animal production ☐
(c) Marketing/Trading ☐ (d) Others (specify): _____
9. What type of crop or livestock do you farm? _____

10. What is your average monthly income? ₦ _____

11. What is your source of labour? (a) Family labour [] (b) Hired labour [] (c) Both []

SECTION B: Farming and Non-Farming Economic Activities of Children

12. What are the farming activities and frequency of children involvement?

Activities	Very often	Often	Occasionally	Not at all
Cropping				
Weeding				
Land preparation				
Ridge making				
Harvesting				
Watering				
Thinning				
Fertilizer/pesticide application				
Livestock and Fisheries				
Milking				
Feeding animals				
Stocking fingerlings				
Pond cleaning				
Harvesting fish				
Watering animals				
Post harvest				
Transporting				
Storage of product				
Marketing of product				
Packaging				
Processing				

13. What are the non-farming economic activities and frequency of children involvement?

Activities	Very often	Often	Occasionally	Not at all
Trading				
Assisting in family shop				
Collecting recyclables				
Pushing carts and wheel barrows				

Handi-craft				
Hawking				
Domestic work				
Apprenticeship				

Others specify _____

SECTION C: Schooling Patterns of Children

14. What are the schooling patterns of your children? indicate their age group, No. of days and hours spent per day on farm work

Pattern	5-8	9-12	13-17	Days/week	Hours/day
School and farm work					
Farm work only/no school					
School only					

SECTION D: Perceived Reasons for Engaging Children in Farming Activities

15. What are the reasons for engaging your children in farming activities?

Perceived reasons	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Financial difficulties make it important to engage children in farm work					
The cost of hiring adult labour is too high					
Children need to learn how to farm from an early age					
Due to lack of farm machinery					
Involving children in farming Increases the family's income					
Working on the farm teaches children to be					

independent					
Due to high cost of living					
The farm is close to major roads makes it easier to market farm produce encouraging more intensive labour that include children					
There is limited access to adult labour in the area					
The size of the farm requires more hands including children					
There are no schools nearby, so children stay at home and work on the farm					
Distance between home and school is too far making it difficult to attend regularly					

SECTION E: Problems Encountered by Children in Farming Activities

16. What are the problems encountered by your children in farming activities and the frequency at which they occur?

Problems	Very often	Often	Neutral	Sometimes	Not at all
Snake bite					
Cuts or injuries					
Respiration problem					
Skin disease					
Aches and pains					
Poor academic performance					
Muscle strain					
Physical fatigue					
Stress					
Animal attacks					
Falls from height					
Insect sting					
Drowning					

Electric shock					
Sun burn					
Suffocations					
Dehydration					
Illness					
Scorpion sting					
Missed school					

Others specify_____

SECTION F: Attitudes of Respondents Towards Child Labour

Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Engaging children in farming activities is the only way for family survival					
Engagement of children in farming is a way to ensure continuity of hard work					
Access to machinery will reduce child labour					
Machinery encourage laziness					
Awareness of laws and policies against child labour is low in the community					
Children should work on farm during weekends or holidays					
Using children for farm work helps the family save money					
Children working in the farm is a part of rural life					
Children working on the farm helps them learn valuable skills					
Household heads Should not rely on children for regular farm work					
I would rather use child labour					

than hire extra labour					
My community sees child labour as a part of life					
Children working on farms are at risk of illness and injuries					