

Influence of Psycho-Social Support on Child Labour in the Sugarcane Growing Projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of psycho-social support on child labour in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya. It specifically sought to: establish how mother's support, father's support and environmental support influence child labour in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya. The study adopted a cross sectional descriptive survey design because it did not involve several rounds of monitoring and was thus cost effective. The target population were the household members living around the sugarcane plantations in Awendo Sub-County. The population of households around sugarcane plantations in Awendo Sub-county stood at 23,860. Krecjie and Morgan (1970) sampling technique was used to obtain a sample size of 378. A semi- structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. Responses in the questionnaires were tabulated, coded and processed with the help of a computer Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) programme. Descriptive statistics such as mean and standard deviation were adopted. A response rate of 90.47% was attained. In conclusion, with regard to all the statements relating to psycho-social support and child labour; the highest mean of 4.26 denoting large extent was obtained for father's support; followed by mother's support; with a mean of 4.25 denoting large extent. The variable with the lowest mean was environmental support with a mean of 2.86 denoting medium extent. Overall mean was 3.79 denoting large extent. Therefore, psycho-social support influences child labour to a large extent in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya. The study recommends the creation and strengthening of an independent authority to monitor child labour in sugarcane growing projects and even provide technical advice when necessary.

Keywords: Child labour, psycho-social support, sugarcane growing projects

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

The U.S. Department of Labour (DOL) lists a large number of countries in which it believes sugarcane is produced using child labour (Kowasky, 2016). In 2013, this list included Belize, Bolivia, Burma, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Thailand and Kenya (Igar, 2015). Sub Saharan Africa has the highest proportion of child labour relative to its population. However, child labour is very common in most African countries and especially in the rural areas and is characterized by high population density, low earning opportunities, large family size, high dependency rate, patriarchal family structure and poor standard of education (Igar, 2015). In Kenya, the law under the Employment Act, 2007, and the Children Act, provides for protection of children including protection from the worst forms of child labour (Kenya Law Review, 2007). The National Action Plan for the Elimination of Child Labour (2004–2015) aimed to eliminate the worst forms of child labour by targeting vulnerable populations and addressing the root causes of child labour in Kenya.

A great number of child workers are participants in the making of sugarcane particularly in the production steps of planting, harvesting and some hauling (ILO, 2005). Together with many adults including their parents and older brothers and sisters, they make possible the daily existence and operations of the sugarcane plantations (ILO, 2005). They are part and parcel of the labour force that propels the sugarcane industry. However, an undeniable reality has been that the sugarcane workers are among the most exploited sector and the children among them are more exploited than their adult companions (Moyi, 2011). The majority of the child workers work part-time, because they go to school and they work only on Saturdays, Sundays, holidays and vacation times (Moyi, 2011). However, there is some problem in this situation since many of the schooling and part-time child workers drop out of school and become full timers (Hum, 2012). Meanwhile, full timers are fulltime workers who continuously work only during the 8-months period of the preparation, planting,

weeding, fertilizer application and cultivation. But, during the slack period of 4-5 months, they are out of jobs, they must get engaged in various activities in order to survive or maintain the lives of their families, while waiting for the harvest time. They are indeed seasonal workers and have to be temporarily employed during the slack period (Moyi, 2011).

1.1.1 Psycho-Social Support

Deficiencies in psycho-social support systems can in themselves also facilitate the perpetuation of child labour, these need to be addressed and schools made a more viable, valuable, and interesting option for children (Hum, 2012). The effect of psycho-social support on child labour carries information on school constraints and on parent altruism (CIC, 2012). Moreover, if estimated from a correctly specified model, it is a parameter of direct interest to policy formulation as it offers a quantitative estimate of the likely impact of school attendance on child labour (CIC, 2012). Childhood is a critical stage of life that must be respected and honoured for itself as well as a transition to productive and fulfilling adulthood (Moyi, 2011). Children deserve, need, and have the right to a nurturing and stimulating environment that fosters growth and development in all areas of their lives (CIC, 2012). Key among these is education, which includes not only access to school, but quality basic learning that is fundamental to developing critical life and learning skills (CIC, 2012). Education is also an enabling right that contributes to opening the space for the fulfilment of all other rights - to health, nutrition, leisure, participation in society, and assists children in becoming self-sufficient, contributing members of society (CIC, 2012).

1.1.2 Child Labour

Child labour as a concept focuses on the involvement of young people below eighteen years of age in any form of work that attracts wages (Admassie, 2002). ILO-IPEC Report (2003) estimates that there were 352 million children between the age group of 5-17 actively engaged in labour activities in the whole world. The report further indicates that 211 million children between 5-14 years were actively engaged in labour activities in the whole world in the year 2000. Furthermore, 73 million of these working children were less than 10 years old. Nearly 171 million of these children worked in sugar growing projects. Often, child labour as a concept is utilized as a tool for enhancing children's rights to participation in making decisions that affect them or as tools for enforcing their participation in self development in form of direct contributions.

In 2015, Kenya made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labour (ILO, 2015). The Government continues to expand social cash transfers to additional households as part of its National Safety Net Program for Results, and implemented and participated in several programs to combat the worst forms of child labour (Ojuodhi, 2012). However, children in Kenya are engaged in the worst forms of child labour, including in sand harvesting and commercial sexual exploitation (ILO, 2015). Kenya has yet to ratify the UN CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and its minimum age for work law and compulsory education age are not harmonized due to the lack of a specific compulsory education age (ILO, 2015). The Government has also not committed sufficient resources for enforcement efforts (ILO, 2015).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Child labour has been the focus of major discussions by institutions, politicians, scholars and there are many diverging views on how to tackle its negative effects (Igar, 2015). Over the years the International Labour Organization (ILO) has launched both conventions and activities to stop this practice; but the results have been modest in many parts of the world, especially in developing countries (Moyi, 2011). Moreover, literature indicates that the studies on child labour and psycho-social support in the sugar sector are scarce. This study therefore sought to bridge this gap. Senbet (2010) asserts that child labour in Sub Saharan Africa is economically not acceptable and it also affects the psychological and physical well being of the child and further risks depriving the child of formal education. The levels of child labour in Awendo sub-county is between 10-15% (Department of Children service, 2016). This is very high considering that the ILO puts a red flag on any child labour levels above 8% (ILO, 2005). Moreover, the latest recorded dropout rate from secondary schools in Awendo sub-county stands at 35.4% (DEO, 2016). Since sugarcane growing is the main economic activity in the sub-county, could psycho-social support be linked to child labour hence the high drop-out rates? This is the gap that the study sought to fill by evaluating if psycho-social support influences child labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo sub-county, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The study sought to establish the influence of psycho-social support on child labour in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To establish how mother's support influences child labour in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya.
- ii. To determine how father's support influence child labour in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya.
- iii. To assess how environmental support influences child labour in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Psycho-social Support and Child Labour

In a survey of case studies of child labour in India, Bhatti (2016) concludes that the relation of child labour and psycho-social support is ambiguous. The results of micro-econometric analyses of household survey data are similar in that they do not suggest a consensus. Although a meta-analysis of available econometric results would be frustrated by the use of different definitions of child labour and of psycho-social support, it is clear that the average picture is of rather smaller effects of psycho-social support than one might have expected (Bhatti, 2016). There are cases where a sizeable effect of psycho-social support is observed and a promising avenue of research would be to investigate whether it is different markets and institutions or different estimation methods that distinguish these cases from the others.

Edmonds (2001) showed that the unconditional non-parametric relation of psycho-social support and child labour over successive years of the LSMS panel for Vietnam is negative. In an analysis of the effects on psycho-social support on child labour in Brazil, Carvalho (2000) finds a fairly large negative impact of psycho-social support, larger for girls than for boys. In a review of psycho-social support effects on child labour, Behrman and Knowles (2015) conclude that these effects are often small. The study further found out that psycho-social support for both child labour and schooling are often higher for girls than for boys.

Literature reviewed with regard to psycho-social support and child labour revealed that gaps exist in the context, methods and concept. Most of the studies done under psycho-social support and child labour were either done in Asian countries; mostly India and Vietnam; or did not directly link psycho-social support to child labour.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

The study focused on the theory of subsistence poverty.

2.2.1 Theory of Subsistence Poverty

The theory of subsistence poverty by Basu (2001) provides a critical assumption that children only work when the adult wage or adult income is too low to support the household's subsistence requirements also known as the luxury axiom. This assumption generates a discontinuous labour supply curve for a region: above a critical level of the adult wage, only adults work and below that level, adults and children work. The labour demand curve is a standard smooth downward sloping curve as long as we admit some degree of substitutability between adult and child labour in production.

It is straight forward to see that, in this theory, the labour market can exhibit multiple equilibrium. If the labour demand curve intersects both sections of the labour supply curve then there is a good equilibrium in which only adults work and a bad one in which children also work. The remarkable result of this is that, in this case, a ban on child labour can swing the economy from a bad to a good equilibrium. This theory informed this study since it focused on low flow of household income from parents as the main cause of child labour since children have to work to help increase the household income. The theory further informed this study by focusing on possibility of having a brief ban on child labour so that employers hire adults in order to increase household incomes.

III. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a cross sectional descriptive survey design because it focused at one point in time. Cross sectional descriptive survey does not involve several rounds of monitoring and therefore is cost effective as well. The respondents were the household members living around the sugarcane plantations in Awendo Sub-County; who were supplied with questionnaires with the aim of getting their views regarding factors affecting child labour. The population of households around sugarcane plantations in Awendo Sub-county is 23,860. Krecjie & Morgan (1970) formulae were used to pick 378 to form the sample size. A semi- structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from the University and a research permit from NACOSTI before embarking on collection of data. The questionnaires were filled with the help of data assistants who personally administered them to the respondents. The questionnaires were collected for verification and data entry on a daily basis. Responses in the questionnaires were tabulated, coded and processed by use of a computer Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)

programme. Frequency tables, percentages and means were used to present the findings. The responses from the open-ended questions were reported by descriptive narrative. Descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation were adopted.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Demographic characteristics of the respondents focused on gender, age and level of education. The results are presented in the following sub-sections.

4.1.1 Distribution of Respondents by Gender

The study sought to determine the distribution of the respondents by gender. The results are presented in table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	169	49.4
Female	173	50.6
Total	342	100.0

From the findings, as shown in table 4.1, (173) 50.6% of the respondents were female. In summary, slightly more than half of the respondents were female. Moreover, the findings in table 4.1 reveal that (169) 49.4% of the respondents were male. This means that slightly less than half of the respondents were male. The difference between the male and female respondents is (4) 1.17%. However, the margin of difference between the male and female respondents was minimal. Therefore, the study findings cannot be biased in favour of the women respondents. In summary, there were more female respondents than male respondents.

4.1.2 Distribution of Respondents by Education

The study sought to determine the distribution of the respondents by education. The results are presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Distribution of Respondents by level of Education

Level	Frequency	Percent
UGRAD	26	7.6
PGRAD	12	3.5
OTHER	229	67.0
DIPLOMA	75	21.9
Total	342	100.0

From the findings, as shown in table 4.2, (229) 67% of the respondents had achieved other levels of education other than undergraduate, post graduate and diploma. These include levels of education such as certificate, O-levels, form one education, form two education, form three education, class eight education and any other levels of education that fall below class eight. This implies that the highest level of education of the respondents in Awendo Sub-county falls in other categories different from diploma, under-graduate and post graduate. In other words the level of education in the area can be described as low. In addition, as shown in table 4.2, (75) 21.9% of the respondents had achieved diploma qualification as the highest levels of education attained. This was the second highest percentage recorded with regard to the highest level of education attained. Therefore, a few of the respondents had achieved diploma levels of education.

From the findings, as shown in table 4.2, (12) 3.5% of the respondents had achieved post graduate qualification. This was the lowest percentage recorded. Moreover, (26) 7.6% of the respondents had achieved under graduate qualification. This was the second lowest percentage recorded. Therefore, minority of the respondents had achieved post graduate and undergraduate levels of education. In summary, majority of the respondents had achieved other levels of education which do not include undergraduate, post graduate and diploma. This was followed by a few respondents who had achieved diploma levels of education. The second lowest number of respondents had undergraduate qualifications while the lowest number of respondents had post graduate qualifications.

4.1.3 Distribution of Respondents by Age

The study sought to determine the distribution of the respondents by age. The results are presented in table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Distribution of Respondents by Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
BLW21	28	8.2
ABV50	43	12.6
41-50	51	14.9
31-40	90	26.3
21-30	130	38.0
Total	342	100.0

From the findings, as shown in table 4.3, (130) 38% of the respondents were aged twenty one to thirty years. This basically implies that majority of the respondents were aged between twenty one to thirty years and were therefore young and vibrant; having the energy and impetus to take part in the study. In other words, majority of the respondents were aged between twenty one to thirty years and therefore had an advantage of the real social experience in the area. In addition, as shown in table 4.3; (90) 26.3% of the respondents were aged between thirty one to forty years. This basically implies that a good number of the respondents were aged between thirty one to forty years; having an advantage of attaining the maturity and experience with regard to the real economic situation in the area.

From the findings, as shown in table 4.3; (51) 14.9% of the respondents were aged between forty one to fifty years while (43) 12.6% were above fifty years. However, the lowest percentage recorded were those of respondents aged below twenty one years who were (28) 8.2%. This basically implies that elderly respondents aged above forty one were more than the younger respondents aged below twenty one years. In summary, majority of the respondents were aged between twenty one to thirty years and therefore young and vibrant while minority of the respondents were aged below twenty one years.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

The study sought to establish the influence of psycho-social support on child labour in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya. The range of response for each statement was 1=Not at all; 2=Small extent; 3=Medium extent; 4=Large extent; 5=Very large extent. The results are presented in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Psycho-social Support and Child Labour

No.	Question item	Very large extent	Large extent	Medium extent	Small extent	Not at all	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Mother's support and child labour	(186)54.4%	(92)26.9%	(34)9.9%	(23)6.7%	(7)2.0%	4.2485	1.0187
2	Father's support and child labour	(189)55.3%	(93)27.2%	(30)8.8%	(20)5.8%	(10)2.9%	4.2602	1.0357
3	Environmental support and child labour	(88)25.7%	(55)16.1%	(31)9.1%	(57)16.7%	(111)32.5%	2.8596	1.6257
	Mean of mean and SD						3.7894	1.2267

When the respondents were asked if father's support has been a driving force leading to increase in number of child labourers in the sugarcane growing projects, a mean of 4.26 was obtained denoting large extent. This means that the respondents acknowledged that father's support to a large extent leads to increase in number of child labourers in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-county. The respondents were asked if mother's support influence number of children involved in labour in the sugarcane growing projects; a mean of 4.25 was obtained denoting large extent. This means that the respondents agreed that mother's support influence to a large extent the number of children involved in labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-county. The respondents were asked whether environmental support influence number of children involved in labour in the sugarcane growing projects; a mean of 2.86 was obtained denoting medium extent. This implies that the respondents agreed that environmental support influence to a medium extent the number of children involved in labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-county.

In conclusion, with regard to all the statements relating to psycho-social support and child labour; the highest mean of 4.26 denoting large extent was obtained for father's support; followed by a mean of 4.25 denoting large extent for mother's support. The variable with the lowest mean was environmental support; with a mean of 2.86 denoting medium extent. Overall mean was 3.79 denoting large extent. Therefore, psycho-social support influences child labour to a large extent in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya.

4.3 Discussions

The overall mean with regard to all the statements relating to psycho-social support and child labour was 3.79. Only one variable recorded a mean of 2.86 which was lower than that of the overall mean. The variable was environmental support. Therefore, environmental support was considered not to have any negative effect on child labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-county, Kenya.

The highest mean of 4.26 was obtained for father's support; which is higher than the overall mean. Therefore, father's support was considered to have the highest negative effect on child labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-county, Kenya. A mean of 4.25 was obtained for mother's support; which is higher than the overall mean. Therefore, mother's support was considered to have a negative effect on child labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-county, Kenya.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of psycho-social support on child labour in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya. The overall mean was 3.79 denoting large extent. In conclusion, the influence of socio-economic support on child labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County is to a large extent.

The first objective of the study sought to establish how mother's support influences child labour in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya. A mean of 4.25 denoting large extent was obtained for mother's support. In conclusion, the influence of mother's support on child labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County is to a large extent.

The study sought to evaluate how father's support influence child labour in sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya. A mean of 4.26 denoting large extent was obtained for father's support. In conclusion, the influence of father's support on child labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County is to a large extent.

The study sought to find out how environmental support influence child labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya. A mean of 2.86 denoting medium extent was obtained for environmental support. In conclusion, the influence of environmental support on child labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County is to a medium extent.

5.2 Recommendations

The research found out that the influence of psycho-social support on child labour in the sugarcane growing projects in Awendo Sub-County is to a large extent. This study recommends strengthening of psycho-social fabrics of the society to help nurture and guide children in order to prevent child labour in the sugarcane growing projects. Moreover, the study recommends enhanced support structures for children with single parents since the findings showed that both mother support and father support influence child labour in Awendo sub-county.

5.3 Limitations of the Study

It was not easy getting information from some respondents due to fear of repercussions or lack of incentives. However, the researcher clearly outlined the objectives of the study before embarking on any data collection. The specific areas considered as sugarcane growing projects were swampy and muddy and therefore not easily accessible. However, the researcher planned to interview the respondents in the dry season when the rain was scanty.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

From the study and subsequent conclusions, the researcher recommends further research to be conducted on the effect of father's support on performance of family projects in Awendo Sub-County, Kenya.

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