

AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECT OF CHILDREN OF SCHOOL AGE ENGAGEMENT IN STONE MINING AND QUARRY ACTIVITIES ON CHILD EDUCATION

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the incidence of child engagement in paid labour with special interest in mining and quarrying activities and the extent it affects child education. The survey method of research was adopted with an oral interview as a major instrument for data collection. The study confirms significant incidents of child labour in Nigeria. It further found five major implications of engaging children of school age in mining/quarrying activities which include absenteeism, poor academic performance, high rate of repetition, high dropout rate, reduced children productivity, and future earnings' capacity. The study discovered that orphanage, poverty, social norms and wrong perception, peer influence, financing of educational and personal needs, and lack of adequate enforcement by the government agencies are the major causes. Even though this study revealed that several efforts have been made at different levels yet much-needed to be done. Therefore, study recommends what should be done to eliminate the incidence of child labour and out- of- school children. The study recommends among others that the government and other stakeholders should re-double their efforts to eliminate all forms of child labor and create incentives that will support child education. The study therefore emphasizes that engaging children on paid work affect their education and future negatively.

Keywords: Child labor, mining/quarrying activities, child education.

Introduction

Nigeria and many other African countries are blessed with huge mineral deposits. According to Alison-Madueke (2009), about fifty solid minerals have been discovered in five hundred

locations in the country (Nigeria). These God-given solid minerals are extracted from the earth through mining and transformed into a better use through quarrying. Mining which includes stone mining and the quarry has contributed so much to the revenue generation and economic development of most African states including Nigeria (see Roderick, 2001; Bridge, 2008; Adeniyi et al., 2013; Akongwale et al., 2013). Despite enormous socio-economic contributions of these minerals, there has been serious concern over the negative impact of engaging children of school age in mining/quarrying activities on child education in Africa and many other developing countries, especially in Nigeria. This concern is fuelled by a high rate of increase in poor academic performance and a high dropout rate of children from schools as observed within and around communities hosting stone mining and quarry businesses in Sub Sahara Africa especially Nigeria. A recent survey conducted by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2018) indicates that the population of out of school children in Nigeria has risen from 10.5 million to 13.2 million aged between 5-14 years old being the highest in the world, the study further suggests that one in every five of the world's out-of-school children is in Nigeria. This situation is very worrisome and the implication of engaging children of school age in mining and quarrying activities who ought to be school is enormous. To address it, there is the need to: (i) have a clear understanding of the nature, causes and trends of children involvement in mining/quarrying activities, (ii) assess its effect on children education, (iii) investigate the efforts made by local and internal bodies with a view of mitigating the problem, (iv) determine the causes and proffer solution to arrest the malady.

Several efforts have been made at the national and international level, government and non-

government organizations, to eliminate child labor and reduce or eradicate the incidence of out-of-school children. However, despite all these efforts, the objective of freeing children from labor and getting them back to school is yet to be fully achieved especially in Nigeria. Given the situation, this study intends to determine how engaging children of school age in mining/quarrying activities affects child education. Drawn from the broad objective are the following specific objectives:

1. To expose the nature of the effects of child engagement in mining/quarrying activities on the education of a child.
2. To determine factors that lead to engaging children of school age in mining/quarrying activities.
3. To investigate what has been done and yet to be done to mitigate the problem.

The remaining parts of this paper are organized as follows: Section 2 presents the literature, section 3 deals with the methodology, section 4 takes care of the results and discussion of findings while section 5 is the conclusion, recommendations, and implication of findings.

Literature Review

School-age children and child labor

School-age is the age when one is legally required to attend school, especially basic education. Basic education in Nigeria is the nine years of free, compulsory, and uninterrupted education of a child from primary 1 to junior secondary 3. For this study, school-age is recognized as the age at which a child should be in school until the adult stage, from 5-20 years. Children of school age are those children that ought to be in school going through the acquisition of at least their basic education. When children of school age engaged in labor or economic activities rather than being in school, their education is affected negatively. Engaging children of school age in labor particularly in stone mining and quarrying has been an age-long activity and it is still growing especially in Africa and many third world countries. According to Bass, (2004), large numbers of children have worked in agriculture and domestic situations in Europe, America, and other human societies, throughout history, before the 1950s. Brass further posits that child labor appeared in earlier ages in agricultural societies, but has become widespread during the Industrial era. The ILO has indicated that the prevalence of children in mining is growing. The International

Labour Organization (ILO, 2013) estimated that there are Two-hundred (215) million children between the ages of five (5) to fourteen (14) who works worldwide. According to Thorsen (2012), most children are directly involved in mining work full-time, five to seven days a week, and often eight to ten hours per day. Thorsen maintains that these children do not have access to their basic rights such as access to education or health care. Even though Nigeria's educational policy body (National Policy on Education) stipulates and mandated that all children of school-going age should be in school, in reality about 20% of children of school-going age are still at home engaging themselves in menial jobs which constitute child labor (UNICEF 2018). Most of these children as this study observed engage in mining and quarrying activities within and around the communities elicited for this study.

Mining/quarrying activities and children education

Mining is the extraction of minerals and precious metals from the earth (Adu et al., 2016). Quarrying is the process of removing rock, sand, gravel, or other minerals from the ground to use them to produce materials for construction or other uses. These minerals and metals consist of manganese, tantalum, copper, tin, silver, diamonds and gold, stone, granite, etc. According to Brayan (2008) mining is generally of two categories, that is, large scale mining and small scale mining. He further explains that large scale mining and quarrying are usually undertaken by big companies with highly mechanized equipment and skilled labor force while Small scale or artisan mining/quarrying on the other hand is done by relatively small groups of people. For this study, attention should be narrowed to small scale mining and quarrying because the main object and subject (children) of this study that participates in mining and quarrying activities are only found in the small scale/artisan mining and quarrying businesses. What is small scale/artisan mining and quarrying?

Hentschel et al., (2002) broadly defined ASM as mining by individuals, groups, families, or cooperatives with minimal or no mechanization, often in the informal (illegal) sector of the mining industry. Based on the method of extraction, the equipment used, and the type of labor employed, Thorson (2012) posits that artisanal and small-scale miners operate within the informal economy and on the borderline between legality and

illegality. Artisanal mining/quarry is often a family activity where children of all ages engage in various types of work and play in the quarries and mining sites where their parents also work. According to Thorsen (2012), a third of all children in West and Central Africa are estimated to work full- or part-time, paid, or unpaid.

What are the likely causes of children of school age engagement in mining and quarrying businesses? There are many reasons why children of school age engage in mining and quarrying activities. The major reasons include but are not limited to poverty, social norm and wrong perception, financing education and personal needs, peer influence, and early orphanage.

Poverty: Poverty is on top of the reasons why children of school-going age engage in paid work. ILO (1996) posits that poverty is the greatest single force which creates the flow of children into the workplace. Studies conducted by scholars (see, Bloeman, 2009; Boas & Hatloy, 2006; Hilson, 2010; Mwami et al., 2002) attest that poverty is the most crucial reason for children of school-going age to seek employment or to work in the mines to provide for their families and educational needs. This view is further supported by Hentschel (2002) who states that the reasons for child labor in mining are mainly poverty-driven. Mwami et al., (2002) on the same reason stated that poverty has been explained as the main reason for children engaging themselves in child labor in Tanzania; Parents, children and district officials mentioned poverty of the families as the major contributing factor pushing children to work in the mines to provide for their families and educational needs.

Empirical literature confirm that families with poor background especially those with more children find it very difficult to survive on the income of only one family member hence the need to encourage all family members including the children to join hands in income generation activities; So they make their children their source of income. According to Acheampong (2000), children as young as eight years involve themselves in the gold mining business. Parents that are unemployed or incapacitated by health fall into this category. It was examined that some of these young children even work to feed their unemployed parents and spend the rest of the income to feed and clothe themselves. According to Bloeman, (2009), some parents are so

irresponsible that they expect their children to work for their upkeep. The IHRC (2009) report combines the two reasons; children drift into mining sites for lack of affordable and accessible basic education, coupled with the abject poverty faced by families in mining communities, leading parents to put children to work to supplement low household incomes. Another factor according to the report is poverty by health; children whose parents are incapacitated by illness or disability may make significant contributions to the household food security by offering to work in the mines.

Social norm and wrong perception: In Africa and many other parts of the world, there is this societal norm, belief, and perception of dignity in labor irrespective of the age of the laborer; there is dignity in labor. Even though there is dignity in labor, yet such labor does not include child labor because there is no dignity in child labor; child labor is evil, slavery, and abuse. Africa believes that idleness is evil, whether one is very old or too young, nobody should stay idle. They also believe that for one to eat, no matter the age, one must work. Child labor in Nigeria and many Africa countries is seen as a way of instilling a sense of responsibility, discipline, and also a way of life for rural and subsistence agricultural communities.

It has been a dogma almost in most African communities especially in local communities like the ones under study that early engagement of children in labor prepares them for a responsible and brighter future gives them a sense of discipline and makes hardworking in life. It is believed that when children are engaged in work, there is little or no time left for them to do unpleasant things because either that their parents are watching and working with them or that their minds will be too busy with the work such that there will be no time left for them to play or do unpleasant things, hence they believe that idle mind is a devil's workshop even at the tender age of a child. According to Basu, (1998) and Dasgupta, (1993), the decision to send a child to work is partly matters of the social norm. It means that parents who live in the cultural settings where everybody freely sends their children to paid labor will likely do the same because the society accepts that as normal and worthwhile, but it will become abnormal in another society where everybody doesn't send their children to early paid labor.

Financing education and personal needs:

Sourcing money to finance education and other personal needs are among the reasons adduced by children of school age who engaged in early labor. Some of these children initially start mining as part-time to help them pay and purchase petty things for school as well as other personal needs but later many of them end up abandoning school entirely as the attraction of money made from menial labor seems better for them than long-term schooling. However, some children do combine work and school, because earning an income while schooling may help them to continue their schooling. According to Bloeman (2009), people perceive mining activities as a means to further education or to move into economic activities with many returns and less hardship. Some children give themselves a break from school to get money when their parents are unable to provide for them. The implication is that time of such children is divided between work and school, which though helps them earn income to enable them to continue with their schooling. Thorsen (2012) expounding on the factors that push or pull working children into mines says that Rural ASM communities experience a lack of provision of public education and health facilities; a situation that also caught the glimpse of Hentschel et al (2002) who posits that children may enter mining work for lack of alternative options, including the opportunity to pursue primary and secondary schooling.

Peer influence: Youths of school age in most of the mining communities form youth taskforce and collect revenue from dealers in mining and quarry products within their communities. They influence and convinced some of their age mates on the merits of joining them to make easy money rather than attend school and wallow in abject poverty. This research confirms that quite a large number of youths that ought to be in school are engaged in the youth task force. This youth taskforce engages in collecting money from dealers in the mining and quarry products by placing tolls at the strategic or entry points in the communities. These youths that range between the ages of 10 -20 may not be comfortable working in the mines and quarry rather waits at the toll set up by themselves to collect a very huge amount of money daily without engaging in direct work in the sites. The implication is that their mates that came back from school to join them during weekends, strikes or holidays may end up abandoning school altogether when the

amount of money coming out from such activity becomes too attractive, eventually, the attraction of making money is seemingly better for them than long-term schooling which in most cases cause them to abandon school in place of money yielding venture of youth taskforce.

Orphanage: This study discovered that the loss of either or both parents at a very early age is one of the major causes of child labor. These children are placed under the control of a caregiver who may be a blood relation, an extended relation, or in most cases a non-relation. These children in most cases lack care from the caregiver including access to education, maybe the caregiver lacked the resources to support such needs or may decide not to give because the child is not his/her biological child. Such children engage in child labor to enable them to source money to take care of their needs even when they ought to be in school. According to ILO (2013), an estimated 143,000,000 children are single or double orphans, making their wellbeing and future productivity a concern for international and national policymakers and local providers.

Effects of children engaged in mining and quarrying activities on children's education

The outstanding effects of engaging children in mining and quarrying activities on children's education attract great concerns are in the area of absenteeism from school, poor attention to assignment/homework, poor academic performance, less bright future, lack of interest in education and eventual drop-out from school.

Absenteeism: Children may have difficulties in attending classes or keeping up with school work as a result of hard physical work and long working hours in mining sites. The implication is that the time of such children is divided between work and school hence absenting themselves from classes even missing exams just to engage in paid labor. The research carried out by Mensah (2012) reveals that students who registered to write the 2012 examination refused to write the Mock exams and also exempted themselves from school to engage in artisan mining activities. Heady (2003), agreeing with the observation above, pointed out that working children in Ghana spent an average of one hour per week less in school. According to Canagarajah and Coulombe (1997), Child labor interferes with education, in that, school attendance is foregone in favor of work, or learning is inefficient, either because the children school attendance is foregone in favor of work, or

learning is inefficient because the children are not allowed to spend time doing their homework. A survey conducted by the Talensi-Nabdam District Assembly of Ghana in 2007 revealed that as many as 658 children who were supposed to be in the classroom or learning various trades were working in the mines.

Saiduddin (2003) in his study of junior high students stipulates that there is a positive correlation between achievement and attendance. When children absent themselves from classes, achievement/performance levels suffer. Moore (2005) explains that the results of his research signify that enhanced rates of class attendance were connected to enhanced academic performance and that the stresses on the academic remuneration of class attendance were also efficient. Roby (2004) in his study of attendance and achievement in Ohio schools believes the positive impact of fine school attendance on academic attainment might be superior to people who have in the past believe. According to Liwanga (2013), in a sample of 63 child miners surveyed, only one in four can go to school part of the day. Gump (2005) identified a tough negative correlation between absences and final grades. Furthermore, he postulates that students who desire to succeed academically ought to attend classes and that teachers must promote attendance. Marburger (2006) said that there is a positive correlation between exam performance and attendance.

Poor academic Performance: Is poor academic performance part of the negative effect of children's engagement in paid labor on child education? When children shared going to school with paid work and devote much of their time, attention, and energy on paid labor than focusing and concentrating on lessons taught in class, academic performance will be affected negatively. Due to the much time devoted by these children in long hours of work, tiredness will catch up with them resulting to a number of them sleeping in class while teaching is going on, it also causes them not to do their take-home assignment as many of them will move straight to site as soon as school closes. A child that frequently absent him/her from school hardly attends classwork, assignment, or homework hence academic performance will be affected negatively.

The high rate of repetition and drop out: In communities where mining/quarrying takes place, there is a very great propensity clear pattern of class repetition and high dropout rates of children that engage in mining and quarrying activities. According to Gibbons et al., (2005) child labor (of which child mining/quarrying is part of) is associated with higher repetition and dropout rates. Ray (2003) also observed that an additional hour of wage work done associated with more than one year's less completed educational attainment. Psacharopoulos, (1997) paints a serious picture of a great propensity of high dropout among working children when he noted that children in wage work in Bolivia have nearly a year less completed school than non-working children while working children in Venezuela have almost two years less attainment. According to Liwanga (2013), in a sample of 63 child miners surveyed, Seventy-five percent of those children were dropouts who work more than 10 hours per day. Worst of all the effects, Feigben (2010), gave a more elaborate perspective, by showing a fierce competition that exists between child labor, school attendance, and proficiency; some children give themselves a break from school to get money when their parents are unable to provide for them. This has also resulted in most of these children becoming school dropouts because they get so much from the mining/quarrying business that they no longer consider education as an important venture in their immediate or future lives.

The brighter future of a child: Engaging children in early labor rather than responsive, formal, and functional education reduces the chances of a child having a brighter and prosperous future. Contrary to the belief that child labor assures the hardworking and prosperous future of a child, some researchers have shown contrary views to such a conclusion. For example, Feigben (2010) opines that children sent to work do not accumulate (or under-accumulate) human capital, missing the opportunity to enhance their productivity and future earnings capacity. This lowers the wage of their future families and increases the probability of their offspring being sent to early paid labor. This paper aligns with the position of Feigben and argues that education is power; the greatest avenue to empower and position a child for a greater and prosperous future is qualitative education. Education will assure a good and reliable job with good pay in a child's adult age. Child labor does not only serve as an inhibiting factor that hinders children from

acquiring the skills and education needed for a better and prosperous future, but it also creates a vicious cycle of poverty that affects national economies through losses in competitiveness, productivity, and potential income. ILO (2006) reveals that early entry into the labor force reduces lifetime earnings by 13-20 percent, increasing significantly the probability of being poor later in life

Efforts to mitigate the problem

Some significant efforts have been made at both national and international levels with a view of eliminating child labor and reducing out of school children. At the international level, the international children's rights policymakers over the years have instituted a plethora of education-related campaigns aimed at getting children out of the labor market. For instance the ILO World Day against Child Labour in 2008 under the theme: "Education: The Right Response to Child Labour" sought to underscore the adverse impact of child labor on children's education and their development in general (ILO 2008); a view which others have also noted (Heady, 2003; Guarcello et al., 2005; Okyere, 2012). There are several international conventions aimed to eliminate children's work in mining sites initiated by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; the ILO Convention No. 138 stipulating the minimum age for admission to paid employment, the ILO convention No. 182 calling for the elimination of the worst forms of child labor for all children below the age of 18 years, and the ILO Recommendation No. 190 which adds specifications to Convention No. 182 related to mining work in industrial exploitation and ASM (see, Thorson, 2012; ILO, 2006).

The ILO since 1919 holds an uncompromising doctrine on child labor that; labor carried out by children of 15 years or younger under conditions which stifle their physical, psychological and intellectual development must be eliminated. As early as 1921, the ILO passed the first Minimum Age Convention, and since then, the world has attempted to protect children's right to education and to prevent any child labor which would prejudice their school attendance (Gibbons et al, 2003 in Feigbin, 2010). The ILO and UNICEF have been at the forefront of Fight Against Child Labour. According to Geneva (ILO news) - UNICEF and the international labor organization (ILO) have announced plans to strengthen their cooperation in the global fight against child labor

with the minimum age convention, 1973 (no. 138), the ILO's main instrument on child labor (see.[https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_008049/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_008049/lang-en/index.htm)). The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (IPEC) has also ensured the development of an effective partnership between government services, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, employers' organizations, and other interested parties including universities and members of the media since its creation in 1992 with the overall goal of the progressive elimination of child labor.

However, programmes are focusing on awareness-raising campaigns and capacity-building. According to Thorson (2012), these programs come from the universal rights perspective and they are rooted in the assumption that children work in mining sites because their parents and guardians are unaware of the dangers, and that child protection legislation is not enforced because authorities are unaware of the extent of children's work vulnerability in mining sites. The Act also stipulates 18 years as the minimum age for the engagement of a person in hazardous work, therefore, children under 13 years who worked, children of all ages who worked at night (8.00 pm-6 .00 am), and children who engaged in economic activity which affect school attendance, health and the moral development of children have been taken into account by this act.

At the national level, reasonable efforts have been made by the Nigerian government to increase child access to education and eradicate out of school for children of school age. The federal government of Nigeria has implemented and continues to implement some programs in collaboration with stakeholders which intend to directly remove all children of school age from the labor market and return them to school. Prominent among these efforts is the full implementation of the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (UBE) policy. The federal government enacted the policy under the universal Basic Education act, 2004. This act requires the government to provide compulsory, formal, free, basic education for every child from primary one through junior secondary, that is, nine years of uninterrupted free, compulsory, and formal basic education for all children in the country. The act stipulates that all services in public primary and junior secondary schools are

to be free of charge and penalties are prescribed for those who do not comply (see UBE ACT, 2004). De Lange, (2007) and Okyere, (2012) explain that Universal education policy aims to use free attendance at public basic schools to disengage children from child labor and get them into schools.

The Early Childhood Education (ECE) is another policy geared towards preparing and getting all children of school age into school. As stated in National Policy on Education (NPE,2012), early childhood education was designed to smoothen the transition of a child from home to school, enables the child to feel free to interact with other people outside his immediate family members, and create the urge and foundation for Childs' formal education.

Another intervention by the government is recently introduced National Home Grown School Feeding Programme (NHGSFP). This is a government-led N70(\$0.18) per day school feeding program that aims to Increase enrolment rate, reduce cases of out of school children that may occur as a result of the inability of poor parents to feed their children, and Improve the nutritional and health status of primary school children especially primary 1-3. According to the Federal Government, over 300 million meals have been served to more than 7.5 million pupils in 46,000 Public Primary Schools in 22 states.

Another intervention is free registration for exit/certificate examinations by some state and local governments to encourage students from poor homes who were unable to pay for exit/certificate examinations fees like WAEC, NABTEB, NECO, Junior Secondary, and First School Leaving Certificate. Here the state government and corporate bodies and philanthropic individuals take responsibility to pay for the cost of those exams for the citizen of their states while the students only sit to write the examinations.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of market failure and multiple equilibria propagated by Parson and Goldin in 1989 was adopted for this study. This theory assumes that parents are being regarded as carrying about the needs and happiness of other people and give much attention to the interaction between market characteristics and child labor that point to certain market manipulations as a

solution, thereby linking interaction for adult labor with child labor. For instance, Basu (1998) assessed the case in which rigidities in the market for adult labor results in driving child labor, therefore, perceives from the angle where a market in which the adult wage is downward rigid, resulting in a rise to adult unemployment. Concerning those children with unemployed adults, the probability for children to work is high. Parsons and Goldin (1989) examined child labor and school attendance as a result of actions on the human capital market and the physical capital market. The parents can however in one way or another invest in human capital (the education of their children) and also can invest in the physical capital. The investment of human capital comprises of direct and indirect costs of schooling. Grootaert and Kanbur (1995) focused their attention mainly on the external benefit of an educated child on the general population. For this reason, an education subsidy will aid in internalizing the externality and may have some benefits of eliminating child labor. Basu and Van (1998) examined the situation in which most friendly parents withdraw their children from the labor market once the adult wage reaches a critical level. The changing consequences of capital market failure have been examined by Ranjan (2001), with similar conclusions reached by Basu (1999). Ranjan (2001) considers the situation in families with a very poor backgrounds who would wish to choose to educate their children if only and if they had access to a capital market, but such families are noted of producing poor, uneducated children who repeat the cycle for the next generation.

Methodology

Area of study and Participants

The study adopted a survey type of research method. Eheduru (1995) in Nwosu et al., (2020) define research design as the specification of method and procedure for acquiring the information needed for the research. The study covers mining and quarry sites in Nigeria that engage children of school age on paid labor, however, the study further decided to narrow concentration in Ebonyi state for two reasons. First, Ebonyi state is classified as educationally disadvantaged state, i.e., a place where there is a low rate of literacy and a high rate of out of school children in Nigeria. Secondly, Ebonyi state has vast solid mineral deposits (stone), and many mining and quarrying sites. These sites are the potential concentration of many children of

school age on child labor, and those that must have been out-of-school as a result of child labor. The study decided also to concentrate on artisan/small scale mining and quarrying and avoid large scale mining and quarrying because large scale mining and quarrying are usually undertaken by big companies with highly mechanized equipment and skilled labor force, therefore may not be suitable for data needed in this study hence they do not engage children as laborers in their organizations. Three major quarrying/mining sites at umuoghara cooperative, Enyimgba sites, and Ezzainyimagu Stone Pit were our major concentration mainly because they are the largest concentration of child laborers that engage in mining/quarrying activities in the state. Besides, other small stone pits in Ngbo, Ishiagu, Akpouah were also covered by the study. Finally, underage youths working at the tolls in mining communities (Ngbo, Ezzainyimagu, and Ikwo) were also part of the study.

Procedure

The first group of participants is the children working in mining and quarry sites. These children were located at (i). primary and secondary schools in the mining communities, (ii) quarrying sites in the communities, (iii) stone pits in the mining communities, (iv) and community youth taskforce tolls in the mining communities. The reason for choosing this group was because they are the subject and object (Child labor and out of school children) of this study. We divided this group into two- those that are in school and those at mining sites or collection tolls. For those to be covered through their school, formal letters were sent to the headteachers and Principals seeking their permission to allow for the conduct of the study using pupils/students from their schools. We asked the headteachers and principals of the respective schools for one pupil/student from each level of the whole 8 primary and 4 secondary schools selected respectively. However, for those children working at the sites and other locations, we decided to do a spot visit without giving them prior information.

The second group is primary and secondary school teachers in schools located in the mining communities elicited for the study. These teachers work in schools where most of these children attend school and may likely be conversant with issues that relate to child labor and education. First, we identified 8 government primary schools each from the 8 host communities and 4

secondary schools from the same 8 communities hosting mining and quarrying activities making it 12 schools. The four secondary were selected from the 8 communities because not all communities have government secondary school, so we decided to take from those available. These schools are located in the communities that host mining and quarrying activities where most of the children that engaged in mining and quarrying activities attend schools. The reason for the choice of government school is that children from these communities rarely attend private schools to avoid paying school fees due to the poverty level in the communities and the policy of the government on free education up to junior secondary school level. Having identified the schools, formal letters were sent to the head teachers and Principals seeking their permission to allow for the conduct of the study using the teachers and pupils/students in their schools. We also requested in the letter that a teacher is needed per school in addition to the head teacher/Principal of each school. We requested the telephone contacts of the head teachers and class teachers selected for the study. After two weeks of sending the letter of consent, we send them reminders via phone short messages. Then, one week after the reminder, we got positive responses from all the schools.

Another important participant in this study was the owners of quarry sites/stone pits and stone dealers. Our reason for sorting for their participation is because they are the owners of the sites where these children work during or after school hours, so they have first-hand information on children engaging in quarry and mining activities. To get them involved in this study, we discovered that majority of the artisan quarry site and stone pit owners were located together at Umuoghara cooperative and Ezeinyimagu respectively and they were more organized under cooperative recognized by the government, so we decided to write these two major locations. A letter of consent was sent to them, after three weeks, a positive response was received from them accepting to participate in the study. We identified 10 quarry site owners from Umuoghara, 5 pit owners from Inyimagu. We also visited five locations at Ngbo, Ikwo, Akpouah, Afikpo, Ezillo where illegal mining activities were going on and choose one participant per location. We used on the spot interaction because these locations were less formalize and not known to the government hence they may not be willing to participate if

approach formally in order not to expose themselves, so we decided to approach them as customers who want to make some inquiries. In all, we have 20 participants from this group.

This stage involves interviews with government ministries whom their mandate relates to a child's welfare; the ministries of education, mines, and women affairs. The ministry of women affairs was selected because the ministry is in charge of gender and children issues. The ministry of education was involved because the ministry must

lead and deliver inclusive, equitable, quality education, and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all citizens. The ministry of mines controls of all mine and quarry activities in the state. We selected 2 staff per ministry and formal letters were sent to the ministries seeking their consent for the conduct of the study in their ministries. We requested the telephone contacts of the selected participants. After two weeks of sending the letter of consent, we got positive responses from the ministries.

Table 1: Mining and Quarrying Locations in Ebonyi state Nigeria.

S/N	Name of Industry	Location	S/N	Name of Industry	Location
1.	Seamans Quarry Co. Ltd	Ngbo	17.	Yitel Quarry Nig. Ltd	Ishiagu
2.	Con rock Nig. Ltd	Amasiri	18.	Paul B.	Ngbo
3.	Umuoghara Quarry***	Ezza North	19.	Okposi/Umuoghara/Echiaba Pit***	Ezza North
4.	Enerco Industry	Ngbo	20.	Green Field	Ishiagu
5.	Santoka Rock	Ngbo	21.	Mac Daniels	Ngbo
6.	Crush Stone	Amasiri	22.	Stone Pile Ltd	Ngbo
7.	Marlum Construction Company	Akpuoah	23.	Book mining Nig. Ltd	Izzi
8.	Julius Berger	Akpuoah	24.	PRO ROX Nig. Ltd	Ngbo
9.	Setraco	Amasiri	25.	James Js & Co. Quarry	Ishiagu
10.	Crush Rock	Ishiagu	26.	Law Pet Global	Ngbo
11.	Airen Company	Amofia ngbo	27.	Uwanna Beach	Afikpo
12.	Ezzainyimagu Stone Pit***	Izzi	28.	Afikpo South Sand	Edda
13.	RCF Construction	Ngbo	29.	Jidech Mining Co. Ltd	Izzi
14.	SG Quarry	Ngbo	30.	Jian ziang Quarry Company	Ezillo
15.	CCC Nig. Ltd	Ngbo	31.	LOC metal Nig. Ltd	Ishiagu
16.	Ndibe Beach	Afikpo	32.	Universal Crushing Industry	Ngbo

Source: Ministry of solid minerals, Ebonyi state

Table 2: Description of interview participants

S/N	Participants Description	Description of Respondents	Number of respondents	Number of location
1.	Primary School Pupils(Primary 1-6)	1 pupil for each level, i.e., 6 x 8 schools = 48	48	8
2.	Secondary School Students (Class 1-6)	1 pupil for each level, i.e., 6 x 4 schools = 24	24	4
3.	Primary school teachers	2 teachers, i.e., 2x 8= 16	16	8
4.	Secondary School teacher	2 teachers, i.e., 2x 4= 8	8	4
5.	Site Owners/Stone dealers	Umuoghara-10, Inyimagu-5, Ngbo, Ikwo, Akpouah, Afikpo, Ezillo – 1 each	20	7
6	Children working on the Sites	Umuoghara-5, Inyimagu-3, Ngbo, Ikwo, Akpouah, Afikpo, Ezillo – 1 each	13	7
7.	Children working as taskforce	2 children, i.e., 2x5 = 10	10	5
8.	Ministry of women affair	2 staff, i.e., 2x1 = 2	2	1
9.	Ministry of Education	2 staff, i.e., 2x1 = 2	2	1
10.	Ministry of Mines	2 staff, i.e., 2x1 = 2	2	1
.	TOTAL RESPONDENTS		143	46

Source: Field survey, 2020

Data Collection

Ten different interviews were held as follows; (i) 48 primary school pupils, (ii) 24 secondary school students, (iii) 16 primary school teachers (iv) 8 secondary school teachers, (v) 10 children working as youth taskforce,(vi). 13 Children working at mining/quarry sites (vii).20 Sites Owners/Stone Dealers (viii). 2 staff of the Ministry of Education, (ix). 2 staff of the ministry of women affairs, (x). 2 staff of the ministry of mines. Our reason for interviewing these ten different groups was because; we argued that they have quality information about child labor in mining and quarry and will likely have knowledge of its effect on children's education. Each interview meeting with adults lasted between 10 - 15 minutes, and 3-5 minutes with children to ensure that opinions of respondents were gotten and were conducted face-to-face, purposeful sampling procedure was adopted in selecting these various respondents (see e.g., Creswell, 2002; Palinkas et al., 2011). The opinions of the respondents interviewed on various items with an audio device were recorded verbatim and the audio recording was analyzed through coding (Cooper & Schindler, 2006) after we made transcriptions. The interpretations were grouped

into themes based on the key research questions of this study (Robson, 2002).

Analysis and Results

The study analysis focuses on the key areas of the study; (i) expose areas in which engaging children of school age in mining/quarrying activities affect the education of a child; (ii) determine causes of children engagement in mining/quarrying activities (iii) investigate what has been done and yet to be done to mitigate the problem.

Responses on how child labor affects child education

This study found four major implications of engaging children of school age in mining/quarrying activities; (i) Absenteeism from classes; (ii) Poor academic performance; (iii) High rate of repetition (iv) high dropout rate (v) child productivity and future earnings capacity. From the interviews conducted with children and their teachers, we found that absenteeism is at the top on the effect of engaging children in mining and quarrying on child education:

I only attend School two times in a week. You know when I don't have

money, I use the time of attending class to be at quarry sites, when I made some money, then I attend school (Primary Pupil A). [...] I usually absent myself from school each time I join my friends and age mate to mount tolls at our community as youth taskforce. We make a lot of money which we shared at the end of the exercise among us. I use my portion to take care of my academic and other personal needs because my parents are poor and could not provide for me (Secondary School Student B). Presently, the rate of children absenteeism from school in this community is so alarming and has been on the increase daily. The root cause of children absenteeism in school can be traced to engaging children in paid labor in this community, as a teacher, something has to be done before it becomes too late (Secondary School Teacher A). Sometimes our school looks deserted especially during the farming season. This is because children used most of their time during this period to farm and working in the quarry sites or stone pits leaving little time for school activities (Primary School Teacher A).

From the analysis of the interview, we had with some government agencies, we found that parents/caregivers, as well as government, have to be blamed on children's absenteeism in school. To substantiate this finding, a staff of the ministry of women affairs said:

"These children need the provision of basic needs, they need to be fed, get prepared to school each day but in most of the communities especially communities hosting mining and quarry sites, children rarely attend schools regularly because their parent could not take care of them rather they will be sent to the sites to do a paid job even during school hours (Ministry Staff A). I am supposed to be in school now but I was asked yesterday by our class Aunty (teacher) to bring a notebook and other writing materials while coming to school today to enable me to participate fully in-class activities. I am here because I needed money to buy those things; I have absented myself from school because of money (Child

Labourer at Quarry Site A). Most of these children attend school but do work on this site most days in the week. Even though making money is very important to them yet working during the school period affects their school attendance (Site Owner C). I have seen some of these children working during school hours in my site thereby absenting themselves from school, even when you want to send them away, they will beg you to retain them so that they can find money to feed them rather than engage in stealing. There's nothing I can do than to allow them because some of them are orphans and hungry unless if I am ready to adopt them and be ready to take care of them (Site Owner B).

The direction of responses from the interview we had with some government agencies and stone dealers attest that child labor and absenteeism have a very strong but negative correlation:

[...] Children's absenteeism from school is very bad for the future of these children. Do you know that education is power, something needs to be done (Ministry of Education Staff B). From the reports of inspections often carried out by our school ministry, evidence abounds that many children from these quarry communities always absent themselves from school in place of engaging in quarry and mining activities just to make money (Ministry Of Education Staff A). These children go to school either a few days a week and use the other days to work to get something to sustain them in school (A Granite Dealer C).

Saiduddin (2003) in his study of junior high students maintains that there is a positive correlation between achievement and attendance. When many are absent or chronically tardy, achievement levels suffer. Moore (2005) explains that the results of his research signify that enhanced rates of class attendance were connected to enhanced academic performance and the stresses on the academic remuneration of class attendance were also efficient. Roby (2004) in his study of attendance and achievement in Ohio schools believes the positive impact of fine school attendance on academic attainment might be superior to people have in the past believe.

The study found that poor academic performance is associated with children that combine paid labor with school attendance which attested in the results of both internal and external examinations taken by those children:

Results of Basic examinations for JSS3 and SSCE, NECO that just came out were very poor but most of the children that failed were children that engaged in paid work during school hours, so tell me how you expect good performance from such students (School Principal D). Ebonyi state is among the states that perform poorly in external exams like WAEC, NECO. Some states always make the top list; I believe those states have little or no incidents of child labor, unlike our state. Engaging children in paid labor is the main reason for our children's poor academic performance (Ministry Of Education Staff G). I have repeated one class two times because my teachers said that I am not serious with my studies, that I hardly attend a school or participate in classwork or do my take-home assignment, but there is nothing I can do because nobody takes care of my needs, I need to use some of those school hours to work for money (Secondary School Students F).

Our respondents confirm high incidents of repetition among children who combine paid jobs with school attendance. We have discovered that children that engaged in mining/quarrying activities have a high incidence of repetition of classes in my school (Secondary School Head Teacher B). Some of these pupils that join schooling with paid labor remained in one class for more than one academic session (Primary School Teacher C). Do you know that I have remained in one class for two years not because I am not intelligent but because most times I missed promotion examination as a result of engaging in a paid job (Child Labourer at Umuoghara). I am 14 years old and still in Primary 4. They always fail me during the examination because I rarely attend classes; I am tired of being in school because I will not remain in primary school forever (Primary School Pupil K).

Respondents during interview attest to cases of drop out among children that combined schooling with paid labor: I left school three years ago in my primary 5; I am tired of going to school without food, so I need to hustle to feed myself(Child Labourer At Ezeinyimagu Site).

Some of these children dropped out of school simply because they lacked basic necessities needed for them to be in school (Site Owner). From our records, I discovered that most of our students that dropped out of school are those that engaged in paid labor who lacked basic necessities.(School Principal B). I choose to do work and get money than to be in school and die of hunger. Since I dropped out of school and joined my mates in collecting money as a youth task force, at least things are better for me (Child Taskforce N).

Respondents during interviews expose another dimension to the effect of child labor on child education. Contrary to the belief that child labor assures the hardworking and prosperous future of a child, this study discovered through opinions of correspondents that child labor reduces the opportunity to enhance children's productivity and future earnings capacity. To substantiate that child labor reduces the prospect of a child's future, some respondents said;

[...]To be frank with you, this perception that early child labor prepares a child for brighter future is deceit, how can you compare an educated child's future with that of illiterate(Secondary School Teacher E). Children that abandoned school to work in mining/quarry site will remain unskilled laborer while their colleagues that went to university will be professional and earn better (Ministry Of Women Affairs P).

Responses on the causes of child labour and children out-of school

The study revealed that the major causes of child labor and school abandonment are orphanage, poverty, social norms and wrong perception, peer influence, financing of educational and personal needs, lack of adequate enforcement by the government agencies but we need to investigate to extent of contribution by each factor. A teacher from one of the secondary schools suggested that poverty, peer influence as well as social belief as to the causes of children engaging in paid labor and abandonment of school:

To me...., I think that the government should do something as it relates to stomach infrastructure, free education, and enough awareness creation on the need for encouraging child education

and elimination of child labor (Secondary School Teacher G). I neither have a mother nor father; they died when I was very young, so who takes care of me, nobody. I only have to work and take care of myself (Child taskforce N). Poverty is the reason I am here because my teachers and my school mates attest that I am very brilliant. I am a co-breadwinner of my family and the job must be done. Of course, I would have loved to be in school always not sometimes, but there is no "ego" (money) to care for my education (Child laborer at Enyimgba Site). For you to be in school there should be something to sustain you, some of them have no resources. They sometimes sneak out, do this job and go back to school; it is poverty that caused it, through this means they survive (Site Owner A). In this community, child labor has been a norm not just because of poverty but as a way of life. The belief that engaging children in work are getting them ready to face the future, so they believe that it is a good training (Secondary School Principal E). Most of the children who engaged in paid work are deceived by their mates; they work because their mates convinced them to do the work (Site Owners M). We need to pity these children; most of them finance their education as well as personal needs from the money made from working here, so what do you want them to do (Site Owner D). I am here to get money to finance my educational need as well as other personal needs; I don't work every day, I work for a few days and spend the rest at school. If not for the school demand and my personal needs, I won't be here. (Child Labourer at Umuoghara Site). In fairness, all these blame on children engaging in paid labor and absenting themselves should be heaped at the doorsteps of supervisory ministries. They are not doing their job otherwise they should have apprehended the parents/caregivers of those children to serve as a deterrent to others. We have discovered that these children working for paid work during school hours perform poorly in their

classes and the examination, it is really bad (Primary School Headteacher A).

Efforts to mitigate the problem

The responses from respondents interviewed revealed that quite some efforts have been made at different levels; international, national, state levels both by government and non-governmental bodies, however, those efforts were not enough, much needed to be done. A ministry staff when asked if there's an enforcement group in place against child labor in the state, said:

[...] We have a task force in place against loitering and hawking whose duty is to apprehend under-aged children in the street or workplace. We have the power to arrest and remand such children Under the child's right act. The task force's activities will now be extended to areas where child mining/quarrying is taking place (Ministry Of Women Affairs F). Artisanal miners are the major contributor to child miners in the state because they choose to engage them for cheaper prices unlike the major miners who obey the labor laws; they do not engage underage children in their operations (Ministry Of Solid Mineral Staff L). I will blame state government for setting up cooperatives for the artisanal miners; artisan miners are behind the spate of children miners in Ebonyi because they engage them unlike the big mining and quarrying companies just to save cost operations (Ministry Of Women Affairs Staff H). Those people (artisan Miners) are working in conjunction with the state government. They put them in mining cooperatives but fail to monitor their activities as it relate to child labor but only interested in collecting the revenue from them (Primary School Teacher K). The practice of engaging children in labor can never be found in mines operated by registered companies who have mining titles, so the problem rest with the artisan miners (Ministry of solid minerals M). We find it difficult to fully regulate the activities miners because mining is in the exclusive list; only the federal government has the jurisdiction over the sector, something has to be done to amend the constitution to give

the state enough power hence they are closer to the people (Ministry of Solid Mineral K). A lot has been done in the area of child labor internationally, national, even at the state level by an enactment of child-friendly laws, sensitization, and enforcement but more needed to be done because child labor and children out of school are still with us (Ministry Of Women Affairs G).

Summary and Conclusion

This study investigated how engaging children in paid labor affects their education. Prior to researches conducted on child labor and education were reviewed. Children that engage in child labor, Primary and secondary school teachers from schools in the mining communities, staff members from ministries of education, sold minerals and women affairs, site owners, and stone dealers were all interviewed and their responses analyzed. Even though the study confirms that factors like an orphanage, social norms and wrong perception, peer influence, financing of education and personal needs, lack of adequate enforcement by the supervising government agencies are all causes of child labor and out-of-school children (see, Waybill, 2009; Dasgupta, 1993; Bloeman, 2009; Thorsen, 2012) yet the direction of responses suggests that the main cause of child labor and out-of-school children is poverty. Going by ILO (1996) position that poverty is on the top of the reasons why children of school-going age engage in paid work and the greatest single force which creates the flow of children into the workplace. Other studies also aligned with the position that poverty is the most crucial reason for children of school-going age to engage in paid labor to provide for their families and educational needs. (See, Bloeman, 2009; Boas and Hatloy, 2006; Hilson, 2010; Mwami et al., 2002).

This study identified four negative effects of child labor on child education. Empirical researches previously conducted on this subject matter revealed that absenteeism, poor academic performance, high rate of repetition and drop-out were all negative effect of combining paid labor with school attendants (Mensah, 2012; Liwanga, 2013; Gibbons et al., 2003; Marburger, 2006; Feigben, 2010). The direction of responses aligns with the position of empirical studies and affirms that the above factors are the

negative effects of child labor on child education, for example, a respondent said;

[...] Children's absenteeism from school is very bad for the future of these children. Do you know that education is power; something needs to be done on out-of-school children and its causes (Ministry of Education Staff A). I only attend School two times in a week. You know... when I don't have money, I use the time of attending class to be at quarry sites, when I made some money, I went back to school (Primary pupil A). Ebonyi state is among the states that perform poorly in external exams like WAEC, NECO, unlike states that always make the top list. Engaging children in paid labor is the main reason for our children's poor academic performance (ministry of Education staff G). Do you know that I have remained in one class for two years not because I am intelligent but because most times I missed promotion examination as a result of engaging in a paid job (Child laborer at Umuoghara).

This study discovered that early child labor does not assure the prosperous future of a child contrary to some cultural belief. Opinions of some of the respondents attest to this:

[...] To be frank with you, this perception that early child labor prepares a child for brighter future is deceit, how can you compare an educated child's future with that of illiterate (Secondary School Teacher E). Children that abandoned school to work in mining/quarry site will remain, unskilled laborer, while their colleagues that went to university will be professional (Ministry Of Women Affairs P). I have trained three graduates, even though they could have been making some money here when they were supposed to be in school but I refused because I want a better future for them (A Site Owner K). Children that went to universities will be professional like Doctor, Engineers, Teacher, even Governors, and Presidents, how can somebody reject a better future because of peanut from stone breaking that will guarantee perpetual poverty (Ministry of

Education Staff C). I want to be a medical Doctor; that is why I don't joke with my school. When I become a Doctor, I will be working in the big hospital and have enough money to take care of my poor parents and myself (Child Labourer at Umuoghara Site).

Recommendations

The study argues that despite efforts from different groups at various levels both governmental and non-governmental bodies in leading the fights against child labour and out-of-school children, the war is yet to be over. Given the negative impacts of engaging children of school age in mining/quarrying activities on the educational development of children, the study recommends as follows:

1. The government to re-double its efforts to eliminate all forms of child labor and create incentives that will support child education.
2. Government to extend the free education to cover senior secondary hence the national government does not recognize the Junior Secondary School Certificate when it comes to employment.
3. Most students complained of hunger even though the government gave free and compulsory education. The government ought to support every parent with a School feeding allowance to take care of the basic needs of children in schools.
4. Government to introduce extensive, continuous and exhaustive sensitization campaign on war against child labor and children out of school in the state with a special interest in farming, mining/quarrying communities.
5. The federal government should be serious with the enforcement of child labor laws by arresting, prosecuting, and punishing the artisanal miners or whoever employs children, no matter the reason.
6. Government to provide special grants and funds to women who work with their children at the mining/quarry sites to go into trading, to discourage them from working in mines, or encouraging their children and wards to do the same.
7. The government to give special attention to orphans and those children rendered helpless by poverty by assuming responsibility for the education and welfare of such children. The government can build a type of school like a boarding house and put them there with other social welfare schemes throughout their period of studentship.
8. The federal government to take a second look at the Constitution with a view of amending it to give the states the right to control the activities of actors in the mining sector within their states because enforcement authorities need to be closer to the people.

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