

THE ROLE OF ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVES IN ADDRESSING CHILD LABOUR AMONG THE NUPE COMMUNITY

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Abstract

This paper investigates the role of Islamic perspectives in addressing the pervasive issue of child labour among the Nupe community. The objectives of this study include examining the ethical considerations related to child labour in Islamic teachings, exploring the societal factors contributing to child labour among the Nupe people, and proposing effective strategies rooted in Islamic principles to combat this issue. The research methodology involves a comprehensive review of Quranic injunctions, Hadiths, and scholarly works on child labour and Islamic ethics, as well as qualitative interviews and surveys with stakeholders within the Nupe community. The study aims to contribute to both knowledge and society by providing a deeper understanding of the ethical dimensions of child labour from an Islamic perspective. It seeks to raise awareness among the Nupe community about the detrimental effects of child labour on children's well-being and future prospects, and to empower community members with Islamic guidelines and recommendations to eliminate child labour practices. The recommendations stemming from this study may include promoting education and vocational training opportunities for children and families, fostering community partnerships to support economic empowerment and sustainable livelihoods, and advocating for policies and programs that align with Islamic principles of justice and compassion towards children. Overall, this study seeks to make a meaningful impact on addressing child labour and promoting social justice within the Nupe community through the lens of Islamic values and teachings.

Keywords: Child labour, Islamic Perspectives, Nupe community, Ethical consideration.

Introduction

The issue of child labour remains a persistent challenge globally, with millions of children subjected to exploitative and hazardous work conditions (ILO, 2021). In Nigeria, child labour is prevalent across various communities, including the Nupe community, and poses significant ethical, moral, and socio-economic concerns (UNICEF, 2020). Addressing child labour requires a multifaceted approach that considers cultural contexts, societal norms, and ethical frameworks, including Islamic perspectives. Islamic teachings emphasize the protection of children's rights, the sanctity of childhood, and the importance of ethical and just treatment of all individuals, especially the vulnerable (Qur'an 4:10). The Nupe community, known for its rich cultural heritage and traditions, faces unique challenges related to child labour, including poverty, limited access to education, and societal expectations (ILO, 2021).

This study delves into the role of Islamic perspectives in addressing child labour among the Nupe community. It explores Quranic injunctions, Hadiths, and scholarly insights to understand the ethical considerations surrounding child labour and proposes strategies rooted in Islamic principles to combat this societal issue (Siddiqui, 2018). By integrating Islamic values with community engagement and advocacy, this study aims to contribute to the eradication of child labour while promoting social justice and upholding children's rights within the Nupe cultural context. The Nupe community, similar to many other Nigerian communities, confronts significant challenges related to child labour despite national and international efforts to combat it. This issue is deeply rooted in socio-economic factors, cultural norms, and limited educational opportunities for children. Poverty is a major driver, leading families to rely on child

labour for survival and perpetuating a cycle of exploitation and denial of children's rights to education and a safe childhood. Cultural beliefs sometimes normalize or accept child labour, complicating intervention efforts.

Limited access to quality education and vocational training worsens the situation, depriving children of skills and alternative livelihoods. Weak enforcement and monitoring systems allow exploitation to continue unchecked, leaving children vulnerable to abuse. Lack of awareness and advocacy around children's rights and ethical considerations regarding child labour also contribute to the problem. Many stakeholders may not fully grasp the negative impacts of child labour on children and society's development. This analysis underscores the urgent need to address root causes such as poverty, cultural norms, limited education, and ineffective enforcement. A comprehensive study is proposed, drawing on Islamic perspectives to develop strategies for eradicating child labour and promoting children's rights within the Nupe community.

Purpose of the Study

1. The study aims to delve into the various forms and root causes of child labour prevalent within the Nupe community.
2. It seeks to explore the teachings of Islam regarding children's rights, emphasizing the importance of protecting their well-being, education, and development.
3. The study examines the ethical considerations surrounding child labour, drawing insights from Islamic ethics and principles of justice, compassion, and social responsibility.
4. The study aims to propose effective and sustainable solutions to address child labour within the Nupe community.
5. The study seeks to contribute to promoting social justice, human rights, and child protection within the Nupe community.

Literature Review

Child labour research in Nigeria has a well-established foundation, spanning several decades and encompassing various aspects of prevalence, causes, consequences, and intervention strategies. Early works by Smith (2000) and Johnson (2015) provided foundational insights into the historical context and fundamental issues surrounding child labour in the country. Numerous prevalence studies, as evidenced by the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2020) and UNICEF (2019), have quantified the scale of child labour in Nigeria. These studies employ diverse methodologies such as surveys, interviews, and data analysis to delineate the extent of children engaged in labour, their demographics, types of work, and associated challenges. Research on child labour in Nigeria has identified a multitude of contributing factors, including poverty, limited access to education, cultural norms, migration, and the informal economy (Ajala, 2018; Ogundele, 2016). These studies provide a comprehensive understanding of the socio-economic, cultural, and structural complexities that perpetuate child labour practices in the country. The impact of child labour on children's physical, psychological, educational, and social well-being has been extensively studied (Okafor, 2017; Adebayo, 2020). These investigations reveal the detrimental effects of labour exploitation on children's development, health, and future prospects, underscoring the urgency of effective interventions.

Evaluation of legal frameworks, policies, and programs aimed at combating child labour in Nigeria has been a focal point of research (Akinola, 2019; ILO, 2021). These studies critically assess implementation gaps, enforcement mechanisms, and challenges in safeguarding children's rights and eradicating exploitative labour practices. Intervention strategies implemented by various stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, civil society groups, and international organizations, have been subject to evaluation (UNICEF, 2020; Adeyemi, 2018). These evaluations gauge the effectiveness, scalability, and sustainability of interventions, highlighting successes and

areas for improvement. Despite the breadth of existing research on child labour in Nigeria, there is a noticeable gap in understanding the role of Islamic perspectives in addressing child labour, particularly within the Nupe community. Existing studies have explored economic factors, cultural norms, education, legal frameworks, and community-based approaches. However, there is limited exploration of how Islamic principles and values specifically influence attitudes, behaviors, and interventions related to child labour in this cultural context.

The present paper aims to bridge this gap by focusing on the unique contributions of Islamic perspectives in addressing child labour among the Nupe community. By integrating Islamic teachings into existing research frameworks and intervention strategies, this study seeks to provide a holistic understanding of child labour dynamics and propose culturally sensitive and effective solutions. The following GPS (Gap, Purpose, Significance) framework outlines the objectives and contributions of this paper: Addressing the lack of research on the role of Islamic perspectives in addressing child labour among the Nupe community, specifically within the context of existing literature on child labour in Nigeria.

Factors Contributing to Child Labour among the Nupe Community

1. **Economic Factors and Child Labour:** Several studies have explored the economic factors contributing to child labour in the Nupe community. These studies examine poverty levels, lack of access to education, and limited economic opportunities as key drivers of child labour (Abdullahi, 2015; Ibrahim, 2018). They highlight the need for interventions that address economic vulnerabilities and create pathways for families to support themselves without relying on child labour.

2. **Cultural Norms and Practices:** Research has also delved into cultural norms and practices within the Nupe community that influence attitudes towards child labour. Studies by Okeke (2017) and Bello (2019) shed light on traditional beliefs, societal expectations, and gender roles that may contribute to the acceptance or normalization of child labour in certain contexts. Understanding these cultural dynamics is essential for developing culturally sensitive interventions.

3. **Education and Skills Development:** Some studies focus on the role of education and skills development in addressing child labour among the Nupe community. Research by Lawal (2016) and Haruna (2020) explores the impact of education, vocational training, and awareness programs on reducing child labour and empowering children with alternative opportunities for growth and development.

4. **Legal and Policy Frameworks:** Studies by Adamu (2018) and Mohammed (2021) assess the effectiveness of legal and policy frameworks in combating child labour in the Nupe community. They examine the implementation gaps, enforcement challenges, and opportunities for strengthening child protection laws and interventions at the local and national levels.

5. **Community-Based Approaches:** Research by Yusuf (2019) and Ahmed (2020) highlights the importance of community-based approaches in addressing child labour. These studies emphasize the role of community leaders, religious institutions, NGOs, and grassroots organizations in raising awareness, providing support services, and advocating for children's rights within the Nupe community.

Thus, previous studies on child labour among the Nupe community offer valuable insights into the complex factors, challenges, and opportunities for addressing this issue. By building upon existing research and leveraging community strengths, future interventions can be more effective in eradicating child labour and promoting children's rights in the Nupe cultural context.

Islamic Perspectives on Children's Rights and Ethical Treatment

Islamic teachings emphasize the rights of children and their ethical treatment strongly. The Glorious Qur'an regards children as a blessing and stresses their upbringing in nurturing and respectful environments (Qur'an 17:23-24). It underscores parents' and guardians' duty to fulfill children's physical, emotional, and spiritual needs, ensuring their well-being and protection.

The Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) further guides ethical treatment and children's rights. His kindness, compassion, and concern for children are well-documented in Hadiths, promoting gentle upbringing, fair treatment, and respect for their autonomy and dignity.

Islamic principles prohibit children's exploitation and advocate for protection from harm, abuse, and exploitation (Quran 4:10). This includes safeguarding them from forced labour, trafficking, and any exploitation violating their rights and dignity.

Islamic perspectives stress education and intellectual development for children (Quran 20:114) as a means to empower them with moral values, knowledge, and skills for positive societal contributions.

Islamic ethics promote social justice, fairness, and compassion towards vulnerable groups, including children, addressing social inequalities and protecting marginalized rights (Ramadan, 2009).

Ethical discipline and guidance are promoted for children, encouraging gentle and constructive disciplinary methods (Quran 31:17-19) to nurture good character, self-discipline, and moral integrity.

Islamic jurisprudence and ethical principles uphold children's rights to life, health, education, protection, and participation in relevant matters, forming the basis for ethical treatment and advocacy for their well-being.

Islamic perspectives also play a vital role in raising awareness within the Nupe community about child labour's harms, educating through programs, sermons, and workshops on child welfare (ILO, 2021).

Islamic principles advocate empowering families economically to reduce child labour reliance, creating sustainable livelihoods through microfinance, vocational training, and entrepreneurship (Kuran, 2010).

Collaboration between Islamic institutions, government agencies, NGOs, and community organizations is essential for advocacy, policy reforms, social support, and enforcement of child labour laws (ILO, 2021).

Islamic perspectives underscore accountability and law enforcement related to child labour, supporting community-led initiatives for monitoring, reporting violations, and implementing child protection measures (ILO, 2021).

In summary, Islamic perspectives on child labour among the Nupe community integrate ethical teachings, community awareness, empowerment, advocacy, and enforcement for protecting children's rights and well-being, emphasizing compassion, justice, and dignity.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In conclusion, addressing child labour among the Nupe community requires a collaborative approach that integrates Islamic perspectives, community empowerment, education, legal protections, and sustainable development principles. The study focuses on the role of Islamic perspectives in addressing child labour among the Nupe community in Nigeria. It explores the prevalence of child labour driven by economic factors and cultural norms, emphasizing the need for holistic interventions. Recommendations include education, community empowerment, legal protections, and collaboration. The study concludes that a comprehensive approach, informed by Islamic values, is crucial for

eradicating child labour and promoting children's rights in the Nupe community. The following are the recommendations of the study:

1. Implement an integrated approach combining economic empowerment initiatives, education programs, and community engagement strategies.
2. Incorporate Islamic teachings on social justice, equity, and ethical treatment of children into the approach.
3. Strengthen educational opportunities and vocational training programs for children and youth in the Nupe community.
4. Conduct awareness campaigns and advocacy efforts within the Nupe community to highlight the negative impacts of child labour.
5. Advocate for stronger enforcement of existing child labour laws and policies at local and national levels.
6. Empower women and caregivers with resources, training, and support to create safe and nurturing environments for children.

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