



Determinant of the Factors Increasing the Involvement of Children in Different Vending Activities in Tanzania: A Case of Arusha City

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the factors contributing to children's involvement in child labour in Tanzania, in the case of Arusha City. The purpose was to determine factors contributing to the increased involvement of children in different vending activities. A non-probability sampling procedure was employed, and purposive and simple random sampling techniques were used to sample a total of 73 respondents. Qualitative methods were used to gather data, including interviews and observation. 63 child labourers, 8 adults, and 2 government officials were interviewed. Thematic analysis techniques were employed in analysing the data. The major findings of the study indicate that child involvement in vending activities in Arusha City exists simply because of irresponsible parents, family conflict and parent separation, the desire to own properties, social and economic factors, and poor government control.

It is therefore recommended that Ward Community Development Officers and Social Welfare Officers raise awareness about the children's rights. The government and other stakeholders should strengthen various committees available from the district level to the village level so that they can fulfil their responsibilities of taking care of children's welfare. The community shall be provided with education on fulfilling their responsibilities to the children, and there should also be an agenda on child issues, especially in the Wards Development Committee and village meetings, in order to mobilise adequate resources and foster good collaboration among stakeholders and the community at large in fighting child labour.

Keywords: *child, vending activities, factors,*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Child labour is a predominant phenomenon in developing countries, and there is an increasing debate about this problem (Malik, 2012). Money inclination over children by a poor parent, illiteracy, and the low income status of some families create more chances of child labour in society (Hussain et al. 2018). According to ILO (2017), a person below 18 years of age is considered a child, and child labour is work done by a child who is under the slightest age required for a certain specific work.

Child labour is a complicated problem in developing countries, and forms of child labour vary according to the cultural settings of the country, family, area of residence, economic background, and level of development (Holgado et al., 2014).

According to the latest count by the International Labour Organisation (ILO), over 152 million children are involved in child labour, and more than two-thirds of them are working in agriculture (ILO, 17). The problem is still more rural than urban-based. The study by ILFS (2006) indicates that more than 2.4 million children below the age of 18 are involved in child labour in Tanzania; 591,846 are working in hazardous conditions, mostly moneymaking in agriculture, excavating, domestic service, and commercial sex. Also, value chain and ILO indications indicate that children walk around in production chains; therefore, child involvement in vending activities is perceived as a labour issue and circumstances are bad (Busquet et al., 2021).

Haider and Qureshi (2016), in their study of South Punjab, Pakistan, discovered that the main factors in child labour were family responsibilities, employer behaviour, work interest, and educational opportunities. Additionally, children in the 11–14 age group were identified as the main victims of the child labour problem. Insufferable economic pressures on parents force them to push their children into work. They also feel duty-bound to share the financial burden with their families.

From the Tanzania Mainland National Labour Survey for 2014, it was projected that 21.5 percent of children aged 5–17 were involved in child labour, around 90.8 percent worked in the agricultural sector, 92.4 percent of those child workers worked unpaid, and four percent worked paid. In terms of gender variances, more child labourers were boys (52.5 percent) than girls; 84.4 percent of children aged 5–17 accomplish household tasks, 83.3 percent of boys, and 86.2 percent of girls (NBS-ILO 2016).

However, the study has proven that vending can be done as a means of supporting a family, and thus children are observed as having the duty to support families in vending. Yet, the community and key informants have shown that some of the vending practices in which children are involved are harmful to their wellbeing. (Magavude 2023)

Considering the low economic value of child labour, parents are struggling to capitalise on its value for the fulfilment of their basic needs. Many studies also revealed that household income is a very important factor in encouraging children to engage in vending activities. Sakellariou and Lall (2000). The significant influence of child labour in Egypt was poverty, neglect, lack of adequate care, and exposure of children to various grades of violence (Khatab, K., and Raheem, M.A. 2019).

Additional reasons for child labour include the absence of an organised workforce in informal economic sectors where child labour is predominant, supporting the employment of children while enhancing adult employment while violating children's rights (Winrock International, 2008). Moreover, family breakdown is also a significant contributing factor, whereby children from broken families are forced to fend for themselves or supplement income for the part of the family unit they remain in despite being below the legal age that allows them to be employed (ILO, 2008).

While Tanzania has made great efforts to combat child labour using its several laws and regulations, policies, institutional mechanisms, social programmes, and other international instruments such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (1989) and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Children (1999), to mention a few, the number of children engaged in the worst forms of labour has been increasing day by day in the country, including Arusha City (Kadonya, Madihi, & Mtwana, 2002; Davies, 2012; USDOL, 2016).

On the other hand, several interventions by the Tanzanian government include established institutional mechanisms to coordinate government efforts to stop child labour, including the National Inter-sectorial Coordination Committee (NISCC), District Child Labour Committees, Village Child Labour Committees, and Most Vulnerable Children Committees, to coordinate and oversee the implementation of efforts to eliminate child labour nationally, at district and village levels. Still, it seems it doesn't work there, for the study intends to investigate in detail the reasons for the persistence of children's involvement in vending activities.

The factors for persistence in the involvement of children in vending activities in Arusha, Tanzania, have not been completely analysed, even by several past studies. Elimination of child labour cannot be at the stroke of a pen, for it is deeply ingrained in cultural and social attitudes and traditions intricately linked to poverty. Therefore, this study sought to investigate the factors contributing to the persistent number of child labourers in Arusha City.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employed a case study design to get a clear understanding of the phenomenon in the study area and meet the constraints of time and resources. The study was conducted in two wards of Arusha City Council, namely Levolos Ward and Kati Ward, in Arusha Region. The study area was selected due to the presence of many children around two big markets in the city, namely Kilembero and Soko Kuu/central market (Akarro and Mtwewe, 2011). Purposive and random sampling methods were used in obtaining research study participants from the study population. The study sample was made up of working children, parents or guardians, employers, and key informants (religious leaders, local government officials, leaders, and teachers). Random, purposive, and judgmental sampling techniques were used in selecting the respondents. In the first stage, working children were randomly selected. Secondly, key informants, employers, and parents/guardians were purposefully selected from each ward.

In order to ensure the determination of an accurate sample size, in this study, the sample size was obtained using a general formula developed by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

$$n = \frac{t^2 \times p(1-p)}{m^2}$$

Where 'n' is the required sample size, 't' is the confidence level at 95% (standard value of 1.96), 'p' is the estimated percentage of the population in the study area expressed as a decimal, and 'm' is the margin of error at 5% (standard value of 0.05).

Thus, assuming 'p' is 5% (the estimated percentage of the population in the study area), then:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{(1.96)^2 \times 0.05(1-0.05)}{(0.05)^2} \\ &= \frac{3.8416 \times 0.0475}{0.0025} \\ &= 72.9904 \end{aligned}$$

Therefore, based on the calculations above, this study involved a total of 73. The respondents selected were representative. The sample size from the two wards is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sample Size Distribution of Respondents from Levulosi and Kati Wards

Wards	Adult	Children
Kati ward	5	31
Levulosi ward	5	32
Total	10	63

Source: Field Data (2018)

Primary and secondary data were used in this study. For secondary data, the researcher reviewed dissertations, print media (newspapers and magazines), reports, and books with relevant literature, policy statements, legislation, and the Internet. Primary data was obtained through interview guides used for key sample categories like child labourers, adults and guardians, and government officials. Direct observation was conducted before the interview took place by the researcher.

Interview guide questions were employed in collecting information from sampled participants, mainly 63 child labourers, 2 government officials, and 8 adults carrying out vending business in the city.

Direct observation was done before the interview took place by a researcher; this was applied during the transect walk in different key market locations of Central Market, Samunge, and Kilombero markets in Arusha City. By observation, the researcher was physically able to see child labourers carrying customers's luggage and selling bags, vegetables, and fruits, as well as spices. Also, the researcher observed the conditions under which children work, children's physical appearance and health status, the types of hazards to which children are exposed, and the level of awareness among the community members about child labour.

The researcher segmented and categorised the data to facilitate the analysis. Based on a thematic and interactional analysis of the interview results, the researcher grouped the arguments into themes. One can agree with Bryman (2012), who argues that "the search for themes is an activity that can be discerned in many, if not most, approaches to qualitative data analysis." It starts by constructing "an index of central themes and subthemes" that are products of "a thorough reading and recording of transcripts and field notes" comprising the data. Then the framework is "applied to the data, which is organised initially into core themes, and the data are then displayed in terms of subthemes within the matrix and for each case" (ibid., 578–579). Developing from the argument of Bryman (2012), the researcher established indexes that guided the development of data in thematic categories based on the research questions. Then, that was used as a framework for data analysis within an established matrix that discerned each case with an established meaning based on the matrix. To give a concise meaning, the researcher also used direct quotes from the interviewees.

3.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

3.1 Factors for the Increased Number of Children in Vending Business in Arusha City

Generally, children's responses and key informants indicate that the factors that children engage in vending activities are family, irresponsible parents, conflict and parent separation, the need to support themselves, the need for basic needs, the desire to own property, and poor government control. These are key determinants of child labour in Arusha city.

Irresponsible parents

The findings show that some parents are irresponsible to their children's needs because they don't take care of them by ensuring that they get their basic needs, such as food, shelter, and protection, and by ensuring that they attend school to get an education. That situation creates the tendencies of children struggling to achieve their needs. Below is an explanation of one of the children and community development officers for whom the study was conducted.

A girl 16 years old also responded that

"I ran away from home at age nine and ended up working at this market. I begged for money for 3 years until I engaged in carrying other people's luggage. My parents did not care that I ran away."

The government officer of Levulosi Ward also pointed out that:

"The problem of irresponsible parents is an underlying cause of child labour in Arusha city, but there are also other different family problems. Irresponsible parents are a serious problem, and it seems to be getting worse with globalization. Earlier, parents looked after each other's children, but today, this is not the case."

"Also, another reason for child labour is that most Maasai families who live in rural areas have a large number of children, and some time they fail to fulfil their children's needs. This causes their children to take the action of going to the nearby market during the weekend to work by taking people's luggage and helping their parents sell ripe bananas so that they can get money for buying their school needs and food."

This study agrees with Malik et al. (2012), who found that a high dependency ratio was a factor influencing child labour in Multan, where the circumstances of the family push children into working in the market because their families are large and their parents earn a low income, which is not enough to provide children's basic needs. This action decreases their likelihood of going to school.

At the same time, when another government officer was asked about the reasons for children being sent to work, she responded by saying that:

"The common problem behind child labour here in Arusha City is the fact that many parents are careless. They do not care if their children work or not, and they do not fulfil their responsibility accordingly."

Family conflict and parent separation

The findings revealed that some parents were engaged in vending activities in the market because they avoided chores from their conflicting parents because they were not provided with basic needs like food and school facilities. The situation forced them to go for vending activities out of self-help.

The findings of this study reveal that separation between parents influences child labour; that's, way after parent separation, children are just left hanging without proper care about their welfare, which causes some of the children to go to the street to find money to buy their basic needs.

One boy, 15 years old

"I decided to do vending activities because every day my mother and father were quarrelling, and our father pushed us out of the house. Then I went to my grandmother, and I started to come to sell bags and help people in a market so that I could get money for food."

However, another 13-year-old responded that

"I was forced by my father because my mother left and got married to another man and left me with my father, and the father got married to another woman. So my father told me that I am now grown up enough to fight for my life; that's why I decided to come here in the market to sell the bags and carry people's luggage so that I could get money for buying school uniforms and exercise books."

Also, the research findings revealed that some parents are ignorant of the adult age of their children, especially the Maasai, whose dominant tribe lives around Arusha town. Some of the parents have low education to determine who is a child, as traditionally once a baby boy gets circumcisions, they are considered elder persons irrespective of their age, and this child is able to decide to go for selling luggage and carrying people's lugs in the market with our questions from their parents.

This finding agrees with Hussain and Mahmood (2017), who found that cultural beliefs played an important role in encouraging child labor. In developing countries, people have confidence in the fact that work has a positive effect on character construction and increases their skills for doing work.

Desire to own property

From the findings, it was revealed that some children engaged in vending activities (child labour) out of a desire to own properties, as one of the children said that he wanted to own a sheep like her brother. That way, he engaged in handling luggage in the market so that he could save money. This point also implies that some parents aren't really guiding their children's lives very well so that they can reach their goals, so some of them lack proper guidance on how they can grow while in school and achieve their desires.

A 15-year-old boy said that:

"I am working because I want to have my sheep like my brother, and until now I have one goat and two sheep."

Similarly, another 16-year-old boy responded that

"I am working because I want to support myself with food and other basic needs."

Social-economic factor

The findings from this research reveal that among the 63 children who were asked the question "Why did they decide to work?" 58 (92%) children indicated that their household economic conditions in rural areas were worse (that is, poverty) and forced them to join the vending business in Arusha City, while the responses from the remaining 5 (7.9%) children are indicated below:

A 14-year-old boy responded that

I started to come to the market with my elder sister because at home we were suffering from hunger, and my elder sister came to the market to sell avocados. After selling it, she bought other food stuff for cooking at home, and I sold the bags so that I could get money to buy my clothes while waiting for my sister to finish selling avocados.

However, a 17-year-old child responded that

“I came from Singida district when I was 12 years old to work as house girls here in Arusha town, but after working for a long time without being paid, I decided to come to the market to wash utensils for Mama Lishe (the food vendor), and I got paid Tzs 3000/=, and until now I live alone in a rented house and I work in order to survive.”

Additionally, according to exploitative theory, the study found that, based on the feature from the demand side, most employers prefer to hire children because children are less troublesome, have greater innocence, and do not demand higher payment.

Also, the findings agree with Hussain et al. (2017), who found that among the factors that cause child labour in the market are low family income, parent illiteracy, and poverty. This implies that those factors create more chances for child labour in society.

Moreover, the study findings are in line with Haider and Qureshi's (2016) study in South Punjab, Pakistan, which discovered that the main factors in child labour were family responsibilities, employer behaviour, work interest, and educational opportunities.

The study findings also imply that some of the elders in the study area like to employ children in vending activities because they are paid poorly and they are submissive while working because the child cannot argue with the elder when they are treated unfairly.

Poor government control

The result of the study found that, together with the presence of different committees present from the city council level to the street level, such as MTAKUWA, child involvement in vending activities never ends because some of those committees present at the ward level are not committed to performing their duty of ensuring the security of children, especially in advocacy for children's rights, because of a lack of motivation.

Below is a response from one of the members of the MTAKUWA committee when asked why children are still involved in vending activities in the market.

“Some members are not committed to their responsibilities because of poor motivation from the government, because every person is busy with their business and is not ready to leave their work and volunteer for work that has no payment.”

Also, another elder person said that the government has allowed vending activities to take place without being controlled by local government authorities.

The higher growth of the informal sector, which is not regulated, is a factor; people are freer to move from rural to urban areas without being questioned by anybody, unlike previously, when there were local government security guards patrolling in urban streets in order to control unauthorised business vendors.

The finding agrees with Winrock International (2008). Who found that the reasons for child labour include the absence of an organised workforce in informal economic sectors where child labour is predominant, supporting the employment of children to the enhancement of adult employment while violating children's rights?

The findings of this study imply that children in the study area engage in child labour because there is no control by the government or any other authority, and there is a loosening point by the government to control the informal sector by restricting children from engaging in vending activities or from being in the streets or market during the working hours. This could help control child labour in the market area. Also, study findings imply that globalisation has led some parents to neglect their responsibilities in caring for children; some parents are busy about other responsibilities and not to control them, unlike previous days when children were owned and cared for by the community and no child was allowed to go against what she or he was supposed to do, like going to school, and if any parent found someone out of school or doing something unacceptable, she or he was punished by any parent.

Conclusion

The findings elucidated in this study indicate that irresponsible parents are sources of children engaging in vending business because some of the parents do not fulfil their responsibilities to children, leaving them to work so that they can achieve their basic needs. The study shows that some children engage in vending activities because of family conflict and parent separation because no one provides them with their needs during parent quarrelling, and after separation, the child takes initiative for self-help to achieve their basic needs. Also, the study revealed that there was an uncontrolled situation that allowed vending activities to take place without being controlled by local government authorities. In addition, the study showed that the higher growth of the informal sector, which is not regulated, is a factor; people are free to move from rural to urban areas without being questioned by anybody, unlike previously, when there were local government security guards patrolling in urban streets in order to control unauthorised business vendors. Additionally, poor economic status, the desire to own property, and poor government control were the factors that influenced the children's involvement in vending businesses in the study area.

Recommendation

In order to address the problem of children's involvement in vending activities in the study area, the study has come up with some recommendations. These include:

1. Ward Community Development Officers and Social Welfare Officers should raise awareness about the children's rights. There is a need to raise awareness regarding child labour matters among children. Most of these children do not know that their rights are being violated.
2. The government and other stakeholders should strengthen various committees available from the district level to the village level so that they can fulfil their responsibilities of taking care of children's welfare.
3. The community shall be provided with education on fulfilling their responsibilities to the children.
4. There should be an agenda on child issues, especially in the Wards Development Committee and village meetings, in order to mobilise adequate resources and foster good collaboration among stakeholders and the community at large in fighting child labour.

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