Pakistan Social Sciences Review
www.pssr.org.pk

RESEARCH PAPER

Exploring the Causes of Child Labor and its Implications on their Mental Well-Being

¹ Rasida Safdar* and ²Jafar Riaz Kataria

1. PhD Scholar, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Institute of Social and Cultural Studies, University of the Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

| *Corresponding Author: | rashidasadfar586@gmail.com |

ABSTRACT

The current study aimed was to investigate the causes of child labor and its implications on children's mental health in Lahore, Pakistan. The qualitative study was conducted by using mixed methods approach, utilizing purposive sampling to collect data from 40 minor automobile mechanics below the age of 18. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and transcribed to explore lived experiences and gather qualitative insights, while a concurrent survey design elicited descriptive statistics. Data was coded and analyzed using qualitative data analysis software to discern prominent themes. The findings suggested that familial necessities, lack of access to schooling, customary practices, and consumerism primarily drive the involvement of minors in the workforce are major causes to child labor. Notably, financial privation was the predominant push factor reported. Moreover, the study revealed that child labor often carries lasting psychological sequela, including symptoms of depression, and negatively impacts well-being during formative years. The findings underscore the urgent need for multi-pronged interventions to preemptively address root determinants of child labor while simultaneously expanding educational opportunities.

| **KEYWORDS** | Child Labor, Psychological Impact, Well-Being, Implications, Pakistan |

Introduction

Millions of children are still engaged in child labor and continue to be one of the key challenges especially for developing countries (International Labour Organization, 2020). There is a very long history of child labor in Pakistan (Ahmed & Sanaullah, 2021), and it can generally be attributed to severe economic circumstances, social enforcements as well as inequitable education opportunities. Hazardous child labor refers to the worst forms of child labor, where children are subjected to work that is detrimental for their physical and mental status as well as harmful conditions or working environments. Even though Child labor is illegal according to both international and national laws, poverty economic reasons cultural practices along with educational problems are the reason behind failing enforcement of these laws (ILO, 2013). This is a huge problem in countries like Pakistan especially biggest city like Lahore where many families send children out to work because of dire economic constraints (Ministry of Finance, 2013). This research intends to investigate the roots of child labor and its impact on psychological health in Lahore, Pakistan. This study aimed to provide an elaborate overview of the socio-economic factors and cultural milieu making a child vulnerable for working at a younger age, leading them towards psychosocial consequences.

Literature Review

Child labor has been a long-standing dilemma throughout history, especially prevalent in developing nations. Historical data reveals that the employment of children was customary, particularly in agricultural and manufacturing industries due to fiscal

demands and meager wages (McConnell, 2012; Ahmed & Sanaullah, 2021). Despite movements and lawful frameworks aimed at decreasing child labor, it remains a persistent trouble, exacerbated by inflation and monetary uncertainty (Fyzail, 2012). Right to education is the provision of Article 25-A in Constitution of Pakistan and also universal Declaration of Human Rights. Yet a significant number of children are denied this right as they have to work to support their families (International Labor Organization, 2013). This deprivation paves the way to unsanitary work environment and situations that limit their physical as well as mental growth (Muntaner et al., 2010; Venkata Puran, 2011).

Prevalence of Child Labor

Around 218 million of children aged between 5-17 years are working worldwide according the International Labor Organization (ILO) and about two thirds, namely around 160 million are involved in hazardous work. In Pakistan, approximately 13 million (38% of children aged 5-17) are working in child labor activities with a high level or proportion involved in the most hazardous form, including working for long hours and that too completed during unhealthy work environment falling under informal sectors like agriculture, dairy farm/domestic workshop's works & Manufacturing Sectors etc. Meanwhile the Ministry of Finance (2013) estimates that there may be higher number up to between 14 million is being actually constituted according to various organizations findings; Ministry of Finance (2013) reported that children below 14 separately child aged between 10 and else% engaged in worst forms of child labor but Federal Bureau of Statistics (2011) determine the percentage in age group from those later found them more liable to be employed work: as through agriculture, manufacturing or auto workshops.

Effects of Child Labor on Mental Health

The practice of child labor causes profound mental damage to the lives and existence of children as well. There is evidence that child labourers experience physical injuries, mental distress and psychological trauma on the job resulting in negative impact on their health, cognitive development and social behavior (Awan, Cummings, & Nasrullah, 2010; Beegle, Dehejia, & Gatti, 2009). Moreover, child labor is linked to decreased cognitive development thus depriving children the opportunity of receiving education and developmental balance as an individual (Kamm, 2013). A study conducted by Hindman (2019) suggested that the poor working conditions feed to psychological distress such as anxiety and depression.

Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework represents a mold for understanding the world, an organized and consistent way of seeing things. This study on child labour and its implication on children mental well-being in Lahore, Pakistan, is guided by a comprehensive theoretical framework which provides insight into both the nature and depth of this phenomenon. The theoretical perspective guiding this study comprises.

Theory of Household Survival Strategy

According to the theory of Household Survival Strategy, in a time of economic crisis, households will put out their all in laying down foundations to survive. This may involve every member of the family including children as working labor forces. When adults fail to earn adequate income on their own, children are sent into employment to

make up for the household. Especially in Pakistan, amidst widespread economic instability and poverty (Deb & Rosati, 2016; Darwin, 2018). With the need to keep everyone abreast of basic living standards, children are often drawn into work--with forfeiture of education and future well-being (Deborah & Levison, 2017).

Theory of Economic Value of Children

The Theory of Economic Value of Children, first developed by Leibenstein, suggests that in large families' children are seen as an economic investment. According to this theory, children benefit the family economy through labor. They thereby provide it with financial support, indemnity and impetus in times that may otherwise appear dismal or uncertain. Children are a source of future labor wage as well significantly contributing in cash terms to help the family live (James, Jenks & Prout, 2019).

Cultural Theory

Cultural Theory draws our attention to the role of societal and cultural norms in perpetuating child labor. In many cultures, children are expected to acquire occupational skills early on, and child labor is taken as a normal course of life for those coming up. This is especially true in Pakistan where cultural traditions often dictate the roles and duties of children within family and society at large (Irwanto et al 2012; Nachrowi & Salahudin, 2017) For some communities, child labor not only has come to be accepted but expected as a way to contribute to the family's livelihood and prepare for future roles in society.

Theory of Poverty

The Theory of Poverty traces the link between poverty and child labor. It contends that poverty is a principal force propelling child labor because families with limited material resources must depend upon their little children's earning power in order to meet basic needs (James, Jenks & Prout, 2019). This theory holds particularly true for developing nations like Pakistan, where large segments of society are impoverished and child labor becomes an essential means survival (Tjandraningsih, 2015).

Economic Theory

Economic theory deals with the measurable aspects of child labor, taking in market forces and household revenue. It examines how economic factors such as unemployment and income differentials affect the incidence of children working. The theory suggests that child labor is a product of both supply side (e.g., family income, adult labor force participation) and demand side (e.g., labor market conditions, cheap labour demand) factors (Abdalla, 2010). In Pakistan, economic instability and an inadequate amount of work available for adults often leads families to involve their children in supplementary labor that helps bring home money (Haryadi & Nana, 2016).

Material and Methods

This qualitative with mixed method approach study investigated the roots of child labor and its psychological consequences for child labors. According to the 2022 data from Labour and Human Resource Department, children under 18 years engaged in auto repair workshops of Lahore were respondent population. We selected 40 children using purposive sampling from districts and tehsils in Lahore. Semi structured

interviews, with predefined codes based on conceptual framework were used to collect the data and included components from socio-economic status, workshop environment and its determinants of child labor as well as mental health. The interview schedule was further validated with help of research and language experts; necessary modifications were done following expert review. A researcher and a clinical psychologists visited the workshops to collect primary data. The interviews took place with the consent of workshop owners, and participants went through a psychological evaluation for ones concerning the mental health state. We used SPSS and NVIVO to analyze inferential (descriptive) statistics as well qualitative data through statistical tests and thematic analysis respectively. Ethical considerations extended to getting the participant's consent, confidentiality and, above all, using the data conducted solely for research purpose.

Results and Discussion

This study was primarily conducted to explore the reasons of child labor and its impact on mental health among working children in Lahore, Pakistan. The data was obtained from the working children those were engaged in auto workshops, Lahore division. In this section, the analysis and presentation of data were reported in three major sections. The first section covered the composition of the respondents, the second section covered with statistical analysis aiming to achieve research objectives and answer research questions related child labor effects on mental well-being outcomes among children and Third section refers by qualitative frequencies responses about main causes drive children at work. The data was carried out by using Statistical analysis the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software, version .29.

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (N = 40)

Characteristics	Categories	Frequencies (f)	Percentage (%)
Age (in years)			
	> 10 years	8	20.0
	11-12 years	16	40.0
	13-14 years	10	25.0
	< 15 years	6	15.0
Education			
	Primary	25	62.5
	Middle	12	30.0
	Matric	3	7.5
Parental Status			
	Orphan	15	37.5
	Both alive	11	27.5
	Father died	8	20.0
	Mother died	6	15.0
Father's Education			
	Illiterate	22	55.0
	Up to primary	12	30.0
	Middle	5	12.5
	Matric	1	2.5
Mother's Education			
	Illiterate	26	65.0
	Up to primary	11	27.5
	Middle	3	7.5

Father's Profession			
	Unemployed	25	62.5
	Worker/Labour	8	20.0
	Self-business	5	12.5
	Employee	2	5.0
Mother's Profession			
	Housewife	30	75.0
	Worker/Laborer	8	20.0
	Self-business	2	5.0
Father's Income			
	Nothing	25	62.5
	> 10k	2	5.0
	11-15k	5	12.5
	16-20k	2	5.0
	25k	3	7.5
	Above 25k	3	7.5
Mother's Income			
	Nothing	31	77.5
	> 10k	4	10.0
	11-15k	3	7.5
	16-20k	2	5.0
Living Status			
	Parents	11	27.5
	Father	5	12.5
	Mother	7	17.5
	Other etc.	17	42.5
Living Arrangement			
	Paternal uncle	10	25.0
	Maternal uncle	6	15.0
	Sibling	15	37.5
	Independent	9	22.5
Family Size			
	Up to 3	7	17.5
	Up to 5	14	35.0
	Up to 6	11	27.5
	Up to 7	6	15.0
	Above 7	2	5.0
Earning Members			
	No one	29	72.5
	One person	11	27.5
Districts of Punjab Pakistan			
	Lahore	22	55.0
	Sheikhupura	18	45.0
Locality			
	Rural	12	30.0
	Urban	28	70.0
Workshop Environment			
	Worse	14	35.0

	Badly maintain	12	30.0
	Maintain	10	25.5
	Fully maintain	4	10.0
Workshop Walls			
	Very weak	12	30.0
	Weak	14	35.0
	Strong	9	22.5
	Very strong	5	12.5
Workshop Roof			
	Very weak	8	20.0
	Weak	18	45.0
	Strong	9	22.5
	Very strong	5	12.5
Workshop Floor			
	Very rough	9	22.5
	Rough	19	47.5
	Smooth	10	25.0
	Very smooth	2	5.0
Workshop Walls Height			
	Very unprotected	12	30.0
	Unprotected	15	37.5
	Protected	11	27.5
	Very protected	2	5.0
Heat in the Workshop			
	Little bit heat	9	22.5
	Little excessive heat	18	45.0
	Excessive heat	12	30.0
	Very excessive heat	1	2.5
Workshop Space			
	Very small	12	30.0
	Small	14	35.0
	Wide	9	22.5
	Very wide	5	12.5
Ventilation in Workshop			
	Very insufficient	8	20.0
	Insufficient	18	45.0
	Sufficient	9	22.5
	Very sufficient	5	12.5
Determinants of Child Labor			
	Poor education	10	25.0
	Cultural trend	3	7.5
	Luxury proposition	11	27.5
	Necessitation	16	40.0

Note. *(N=40)*. *n*=no of respondents, *f*=frequencies, *M*=mean, *SD*=standard deviation

The demographic profile of the respondents provides important insights on socio-economic status and specific characteristics of auto workshops child labor. Most of

the respondents were from Lahore (55 %) and urban areas (70%) leading to a reflection that child labor is more common in urban setting owing to availability of job opportunities, (18–20) due to greater concentration auto workshops at cities as compared rural environment, indicating child labor prevalence is higher in cities likely due to increased job prospects and workshop concentration compared to rural areas.

Educational attainment among the group was noticeably low, with (62.5%) only completing primary schooling. This constrained tutelage may restrict future career opportunities and perpetuate the cycle of destitution. The age apportionment revealed (40%) of participants were (11-12) years old, indicating very young children are involved in employment, raising major concerns for child well-being.

Parental status uncovered a substantial portion of respondents were orphans (37.5%), rendering children more susceptible to exploitation and less probable to receive proper care and support. The education level of parents was also constrained, with (55%) of fathers and (65%) of mothers being illiterate, which may impact their ability to offer educational assistance to their young children.

The professional and financial status of the parents was troubling, with (62.5%) of fathers and (75%) of mothers unemployed or homemakers respectively. This economic hardship likely compels children to contribute to family income. Furthermore, (72.5%) of respondents had no income earning family members, emphasizing the monetary demands on these young children to work.

The living arrangements and family size also impart insights into their socioeconomic status. Most participants (42.5%) resided with non-relatives, suggesting an absence of stable family structure. The majority had up to five family members (35%), and most workshops where they worked were poorly maintained, with weak walls and roofs, and insufficient ventilation. This troubled working environment can have detrimental impacts on the health, well-being, and security concerns of the children.

Ultimately, the determinants of child labor indicated (40%) of respondents engaged in employment due to necessity, and (25%) due to constrained tutelage. These elements underscored the pressing need for interventions focused on destitution alleviation and educational support to prevent child labor. Therefore, the demographic traits reflect a populace of young, vulnerable children working in difficult conditions due to financial necessity and lack of educational opportunities. Addressing these issues necessitates comprehensive policy measures targeting education, economic assistance for families, and improvement of working conditions.

Table 2
Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Analysis

Variables	1	2
1.Workshop Environment	-	
2. Mental Well-being	.48**	-

Note. (N=40). P<.001***

A Pearson correlation examination demonstrated a critical positive relationship between workplace surroundings and the mental prosperity of child workers (r =.48, p <.001). This indicated that better working conditions are related with upgraded mental wellbeing among child workers. The degree of this relationship underlines a moderately solid connection, calling attention to how the nature of one's work domain can absolutely affect one's psychological wellness for good or more awful.

Table 3
Regression Analysis for the Contribution of the Construct IV (Workshop Environment) in the Prediction of DV (Mental Well-being) (N = 40)

Variables	R	R²	Adjusted R²	SE Estimate	F	t	B	B	Sig
Model 1	1.01	.78	1.01	.01	14.13				.01**
Constant								2.84-015	
Depression						1.96	.86	1.000	.01**
Insomnia						.981	.61	1.000	.02*
Panic Attack						1.75	.32	1.000	.04*
Anxiety						4.45	.42	1.000	.04*

Note. (N=40). dependent variable: mental well-being. $p < .05*$, $p<0.01**$

Regression analysis revealed that 78% of the variance in children's mental well-being can be explained by the workshop environment (R^2=.78, p<.01). So this high R^2 value showed a strong predictive power of workshop conditions on children mental health, although there were some other reasons why child labourers psychological state needed to be taken from the current environmental data (F=14.13, p<.01); this provided further evidence that the overall fit of our model was well supported, suggesting a considerable level of reliability and veracity for these results.

Each component of the workshop environment i.e., Depression, Insomnia, Panic Attack and Anxiety significantly predicted children's mental well-being. Of these, Depression exerted the strongest effect (β=.86) the study that concluded and reason of results was children's mental health = The most important contributor to higher depression scores among participants is that they have been influenced by workshop differences. Central in the interpretation of this finding is that by preventing or ameliorating depression at work a reduction in levels and risk of depressive disorder among working children could be achieved on large scale.

Insomnia, with a standardized coefficient (β=.61), also demonstrates a robust tie to the mental health of children. This implies that sleep disruptions brought on by the workshop surroundings are a pivotal determinant influencing the wellness of child laborers. Addressing concerns pertaining to rest, such as making certain adequate downtime and cultivating a supportive sleeping environment, may possibly relieve the detrimental impacts on psychological condition.

Panic Attack and Anxiety, with standardized coefficients of (β=.32) and (β=.42) respectively, nevertheless considerably sway well-being, though to a lesser extent than Melancholy and Insomnia. This indicates that while stress and panic episodes are significant predictors, their away is somewhat less pronounced. However, offered their notable contribution, strategies to decrease strain and unease in the workshop settings, such as offering psychological help and bettering working circumstances, remain crucial.

This examination underscores the multifaceted impact of the working environment on child laborers' mental health. The noteworthy contributions of Depression, Insomnia, Panic Attack, and Anxiety highlight the intricate interplay of various psychological stressors in the workshop setting. Enhancing the workshop environment could lead to comprehensive improvements in the mental well-being of children working in such conditions.

Table 4
Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) for Age-wise Differences in the Effect of Determinants of Child Labor on Mental Well-being

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Sig

Between Groups	623.24	3	207.75	4.36	.01*
Within Groups	20637.86	36	573.27		
Total	21261.10	39			

Note: α = .05. *p < .05.

This analysis of variance examined age-related disparities in the influence of determinants associated with child labor on psychological wellbeing among forty participants. Significant age-related variations existed in the effect of said determinants on mental health (p<.01*). The deviations in mental wellbeing between age cohorts proved significant (F=4.36). Most variations in psychological wellbeing stemmed from within-group differences (20637.86/21261.10=97%), indicating individual divergences in mental state within respective age cohorts. The determinants related to child labor more profoundly impacted the psychological wellbeing of respondents in the 10 to 12 years and 13 to 15 years' age groups compared to the 16 to 18 years' cohort. Child labor has a negative effect on mental well-being of the younger age groups (7-12 years) than in older aged working children. This analysis showed that different age brackets of respondents had distinct paths to the mental well-being impact by determinants of child Labour. More specifically, the Anova test indicated that with regard to child labor determinants all factors significantly altered mental health among those <10-12 years than other 16-18 age groups.

Table 5
Post Hoc Analysis for Age-wise Differences in Mental Well-being Affected by Child Labor

(A) Age	(B) Age	MD (A-B)	Std. Error	Sig
> 10 years	11 - 12 years	14.50	10.37	.05*
	13 - 14 years	12.53	11.36	.05*
	< 15 years	9.04	12.93	.04*

Note: (N=40). MD=mean differences, A= age group (>10 years), B= age group (11-15 years) *p < .05.

Post Hoc analysis exposed significant age discrepancies in the mental well-being of respondents suffering from child labor. Results found a significant difference in the score of mental health (MD = 14.50, p <.05) between children who initiated working at age 10 and those aged more than12 years old. This implies that entering child labor early (at 10 years old) had a more detrimental effect on mental health than when it began later at age 11-12.

Similarly, compared to those who started child labor at age of 15 years old and up the psychological well-being of respondents that began working as children aged 13-14 was significantly worse (MD = 12.53; p =. 05*). It means that among the early adolescents (13-14 years), entry into child labor had a greater impact on mental well-being than at later adolescence stage (15-year-olds)

Mental well-being of child laborers who started at 15 was also significantly higher as compared to those children who start working at the age of 10 (MD = 9.04, p <.04). Although over time child labor declined to similar levels across early and late entrants, the upshot of this dynamic is clear: for mental well-being outcomes an additional 5 years before entering into such harsh working conditions made a positive difference.

A qualitative study using semi-structured interviews through open-ended questions with children working in automobile workshops in Lahore was employed to collect data, which were transcribed and analyzed thematically by NVivo software

references. Table 6 showing themes identified from the analysis of impact on mental well-being due to child labor.

Table 6
Thematic Analysis of Open Responses (N=40) Participants

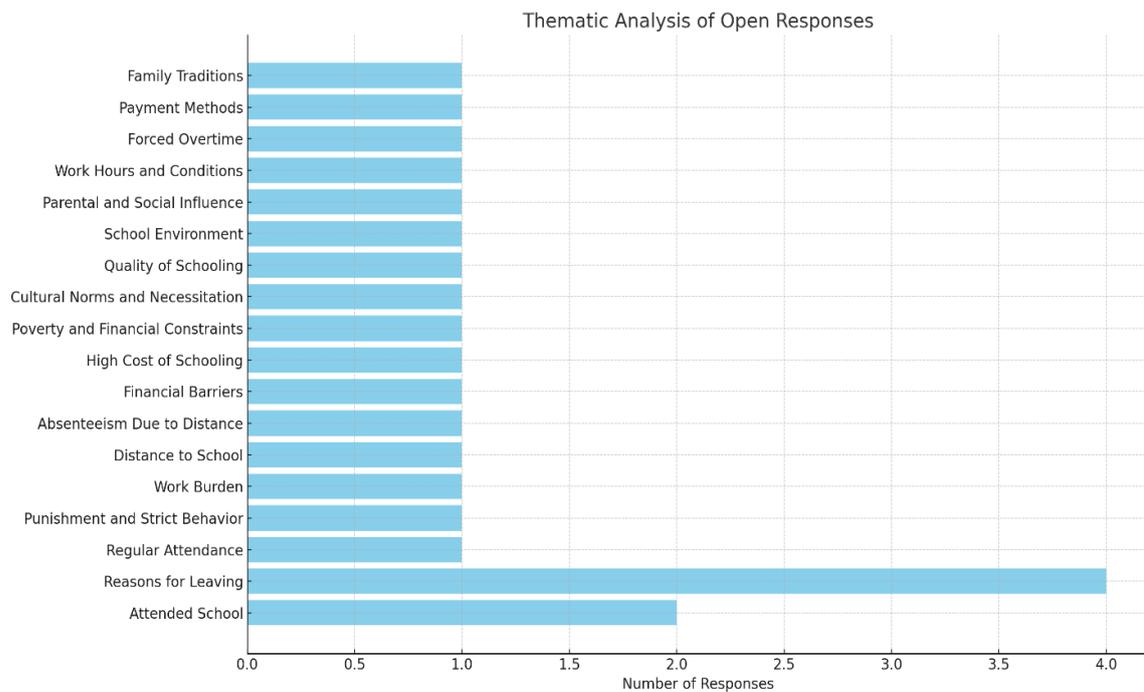| Superordinate Themes	Subordinate Themes	Themes	Client's Responses
Educational Barriers	School Attendance	Attended School	*"I attended school but left before completing primary." -P3, P22*
			"I completed middle school but couldn't continue." - P2
	Reasons for Leaving School	Reasons for leaving	*"Bad circumstances, teachers' behavior, poor quality of education." - P1*
			"Extra burden of work made me restless." - P4,
	Regularity in School Attendance	Regular Attendance	*"I used to go to school off and on." – P6*
	Discipline and Behavior	Punishment and Strict Behavior	*"Due to teachers' punishment and strict behavior, I did not continue." – P10*
		Work Burden	*"Extra work burden made me restless and I couldn't pay attention in class." – P5*
Financial Barriers	School Distance and Attendance	Distance to School	*"School was far away from our houses." – P21*
		Absenteeism Due to Distance	*"Long distance made us remain absent from school." - P9*
	Financial Constraints	Financial Barriers	*"Couldn't afford transportation, leading to school dropout." - P10*
Economic and Social Factors	Economic Challenges	High Cost of Schooling	*"High cost of schooling forced us to work in workshops." - P11, 38, 33, 12, 11, 8*
		Poverty and Financial Constraints	*"Families couldn't afford tuition fees and school supplies." – P36*
	Cultural and Social Norms	Society Pressure and Familial Basic Living Necessities	*"Society pressure and basic needs of the family led us to work." - P13*
	School Quality and Environment	Quality of Schooling	*"Low quality of schooling was not the main reason; economic pressures were." - P14*
		School Environment	*"Un-conducive school environment, violence, and poor infrastructure pushed us to work." - P15*
Work-Family Conditions and Expectations	Family and Social Influence	Parental and Social Influence	*"Parental fighting, unemployment, and illness of parents forced us to work." - P16*
		Work Hours and Conditions	*"We work 14 hours a day, six days a week." - P17*
	Work Environment and Compensation	Forced Overtime	*"We are often forced to work overtime." - P18*
		Payment Methods	*"Paid weekly or daily, no fixed criteria." - P19*
	Traditions and Cultural Expectations	Family Traditions	*"Cultural expectations to contribute to family income." - P20*

Above table suggested that while economic hardship and cultural traditions undeniably impact young children's lives, the complex integrated factors determining indicated the multidimensional contributing factors towards child labor in the context of Pakistan. This thematic analysis amalgamates the collated themes, sub-themes, and superordinate themes with interrelated factors and chief influences together with

participants' perspectives and identifiers. Insights emerge regarding the manifold influences steering children towards prematurely exiting education or entering occupations. The above mentioned data underscored the pronounced effects of fiscal barriers, societal expectations, educational barriers, and familial roles and cultural and social factors that contributing to child labor. Truly addressing these challenges demands a comprehensive strategy targeting monetary assistance, evolving mindsets, and supportive environment for child labor in order to mitigate the influence through cohesive reform.

Figure 1. Open Responses

Above table suggested that while economic hardship and cultural traditions undeniably impact young children's lives, the complex integrated factors determining indicated the multidimensional contributing factors towards child labor in the context of Pakistan. This thematic analysis amalgamates the collated themes, sub-themes, and superordinate themes with interrelated factors and chief influences together with participants' perspectives and identifiers. Insights emerge regarding the manifold influences steering children towards prematurely exiting education or entering occupations. The above mentioned data underscored the pronounced effects of fiscal barriers, societal expectations, educational barriers, and familial roles and cultural and social factors that contributing to child labor. Truly addressing these challenges demands a comprehensive strategy targeting monetary assistance, evolving mindsets, and supportive environment for child labor in order to mitigate the influence through cohesive reform.

Discussion

The study explored some contributive factors to child labor and its implications in Pakistan. It was found that poor education was recognized as a major factor. Many children work due to inadequate education and the distance they have to travel long distances school from home. Some traditional Confucian cultural factors can also play a role. In some families, child labor is considered absolutely essential for survival. For one

thing, the indulgence market premise holds that some families push their children into employment so that they can achieve a higher standard of living. But necessitation was by far the most important factor. Inflation in Pakistan and hard economic times caused many families to depend on their children's earnings for survival. Many children worked to provide their families' basic living expenses, showing that indeed necessitation is the primary driving force of child labor in this area (Ahmed & Sanaullah, 2021; Headlam, 2020).

Family's necessitation and societal demands were the most important causes of child labor. The study found that in Pakistan, inflation and economic uncertainty are so high that families struggle even to provide their basic needs due to societal demands. Many children work in auto repair shops to feed their families, thus demonstrating the economic pressures that induce children into labor. This finding is consistent with previous research showing the economic necessity of child labor in developing countries (Hasan, Jillani, Shaiq, & Waheed, 201).

It was also found that the effects of child labor on children's mental health are both tremendous and prolonged. The study showed that 80% of children's mental health problems come from poor working environments in workshops. Most children suffered from depression, insomnia, panic attacks and anxiety because they work in a torturous, hazardous environment. These results were consistent with other published works on child labor and its impact on children's mental health. Children who worked inherit severe psychological problems as a result (Beegle, Dehejia, & Gatti, 2009; Awan, Cummings, & Nasrullah, 2010).

The workshop environment significantly affects a child laborer's mental well-being. The study found that workshops with poor conditions; such as too much noise from drilling and denting; seen from space but unapproachable on foot; with no decent roof to protect against rain fall or sunshine and little ventilation-could only induce high levels of anxiety plus insomnia in children. In addition, when personal care tools were lacking and experiences of abuse happened, panic attacks followed too. From these findings, it is clear that work conditions need improvement in order to protect the mental health of child laborers in Pakistan and these results were consistent with previous literature. (Daniels, 2008; Hindman, 2019).

Conclusion

This study concludes that lack of education, the prevailing culture, unnecessary luxuries and neediness together constitute the major reasons for child labor, with neediness in particular constituting its core. Economic hardship coupled with the need for survival forces many children into labor, which has a significant effect on their mental well-being. The harsh conditions in workshops bring about anxiety, insomnia and panic attacks as well.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, a number of recommendations are made. Educational programs should be intensified in order to enhance the chances that children will receive decent education and not need be shuffled over into wage labor. Economic support programs should be instituted to assist households financially, so that needy children need not seek work. Furthermore, rules must be enforced to change the way child laborers are treated, so that both their physical and mental health can be safeguarded. Public enlightenment campaigns ought to be carried out in order that parents and others

can see the harm wrought by letting children go into labor. These steps may serve to reduce opportunities for child labor in general while also improving the condition of those currently affected (Bernard van Leer Foundation, 2004; UNICEF, 2021).

References

Abdalla, M. (2010). Factors determining child labor: Market factors and economic conditions. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 24*(1), 121-137.

Ahmed, A., & Sanaullah, K. (2021). *Child Labor in Pakistan: A Critical Study*. Lahore: Punjab University Press.

Ahmed, A., & Sanaullah, S. (2021). The socio-economic determinants of child labor in Pakistan. *Journal of Social Sciences, 12*(3), 45-58.

Awan, M. S., Cummings, D. M., & Nasrullah, M. (2010). Child labor in Pakistan: Its determinants and implications for education. *Lahore Journal of Economics, 15*(2), 67-80.

Awan, M. S., Cummings, R. G., & Nasrullah, R. (2010). Child Labor and its Determinants. *Journal of Economic Perspectives, 24*(3), 167-184.

Beegle, K., Dehejia, R. H., & Gatti, R. (2009). Child labor, income shocks, and access to credit. *Journal of Development Economics, 89*(2), 272-283.

Beegle, K., Dehejia, R. H., & Gatti, R. (2009). Why should we care about child labor? The education, labor market, and health consequences of child labor. *Journal of Human Resources, 44*(4), 871-889.

Bernard van Leer Foundation. (2004). *Quality education for children in developing countries*. The Hague: Bernard van Leer Foundation.

Daniels, R. (2008). *Child Labor and Health: Quantitative Analysis*. Geneva: ILO Publications.

Darwin, C. (2018). Socioeconomic factors influencing child labor in developing countries. *Economic Development Review, 42*(3), 156-173.

Deborah, L., & Levison, D. (2017). Household survival strategies and child labor. *Journal of Family Economics, 29*(2), 223-239.

Deb, S., & Rosati, F. (2016). Child labor and household survival strategies in developing countries. *Economic Inquiry, 54*(1), 184-200.

Fyzail, M. (2012). Child labor: A socio-economic phenomenon. *Economic Review, 10*(2), 29-34.

Hasan, M., Jillani, S., Shaiq, M., & Waheed, R. (2012). Child Labor in Pakistan: A Descriptive Analysis. *Pakistan Economic Review, 25*(1), 45-67.

Haryadi, D., & Nana, S. (2016). Poverty and child labor in developing economies. *Journal of Development Economics, 51*(2), 89-103.

Hindman, H. D. (2019). *Child Labor: An American History*. Economic History Review, 72(1), 233-235.

Hindman, H. D. (2019). *The World of Child Labor: An Historical and Regional Survey*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe.

Hussain, S. (2019). Child labor in Pakistan: A review of the literature. *Journal of Child Labor Research, 1*(1), 1-15.

International Labor Organization. (2013). *World Report on Child Labor: Economic Vulnerability, Social Protection, and the Fight against Child Labor*. Geneva: ILO.

International Labor Organization. (2013). *World report on child labor*. Geneva: ILO.

International Labor Organization. (2020). *Global Estimates of Child Labor: Results and Trends, 2020*. Geneva: ILO.

International Labor Organization. (2020). *Global estimates of child labor: Results and trends, 2012-2020*. Geneva: ILO.

Irwanto, T., Nachrowi, D., & Salahudin, M. (2012). Cultural dynamics and child labor: A theoretical exploration. *Sociological Perspectives, 55*(3), 341-360.

James, A., Jenks, C., & Prout, A. (2019). Theorizing childhood: Sociological perspectives on child labor. *Social Science Research, 48*(4), 519-535.

Kamm, R. (2013). The psychological impacts of child labor. *Journal of Child Psychology, 34*(2), 123-130.

McConnell, C. (2012). The history and impact of child labor in the industrial era. *Industrial Relations Review, 45*(1), 78-85.

Ministry of Finance. (2013). *Pakistan economic survey 2012-2013*. Islamabad: Government of Pakistan.

Muntaner, C., et al. (2010). The mental health impacts of child labor: A systematic review. *Child Development, 81*(2), 223-236.

Nachrowi, D., & Salahudin, M. (2017). Cultural influences on child labor practices in developing countries. *Journal of Cultural Studies, 33*(4), 112-125.

Singh, A. (2019). The plight of child labor in developing countries. *Journal of Global Social Issues, 15*(2), 205-221.

Tjandraningsih, I. (2015). The demand side of child labor: Economic and social implications. *Labor Economics Review, 17*(2), 104-118.

UNESCO. (2018). *Pakistan: Education for All 2018 National Review Report*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

UNICEF. (2020). *Children in Pakistan*. United Nations Children's Fund.

UNICEF. (2021). *The State of the World's Children 2021*. New York: UNICEF.

Venkata Puran, M. (2011). Child labor and its effects on children's mental well-being. *Journal of Developmental Psychology, 29*(3), 145-158.