

## Children Societal and Emotional Experiences Employed to Earn for Family at Early Stage of Their Lives

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this research study was to discover the social and emotional experiences of those children who are working at different places in Karachi at every early stage of their lives. The phenomenological research design was adopted to solve this query because this is the design that helps in getting the true picture of the experiences of people. The steps proposed by De Chesnay were used to analyze the collected qualitative data. The study reveals that children spend a miserable life, want escape but no way for them, feeling frustrated and helpless in presence of their employer or senior. The school environment or the attitude of the teachers is also one of the reasons which are keeping the children away from education.*

**Keywords:** *Societal & Emotional Experiences of Children; Employed to Earn & Early Stage of Lives.*

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### **Introduction**

Child labor is a felony in which children are coerced to work at a young age. It's the equivalent of asking youngsters to take on new challenges such as working and defending others on top of their own. Operating conditions and their social and emotional experiences at the workplace restrict or limit or affect the young children's mental and physical capacity or growth (Fors, 2012). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO, 2013), a child must be fifteen years old or older to be considered suitable for work at a regular place, whereas to perform a dangerous job requires an age of eighteen. Under no circumstances children under the age of eighteen are forced to labor. What is the reason for this? Because child labor takes away a kid's right to a normal upbringing, a proper education, and physical and mental health (Wahba, 2000), It is illegal in some countries and is eradicated.

According to a UNICEF (2020) report on child labor, economic hardship affects millions of families worldwide, and in some cases, it comes at the expense of a child's safety. At the start of 2020, around 160 million children were involved in child labor, but COVID-19 has put an additional 9 million children at risk. According to a press release from UNICEF, the COVID-19 issue has put millions of children at risk of being

forced into child labor; perhaps it is the first time in the last 20 years that child labor has increased (Huebler, 2008). Because of the effects of the pandemic COVID-19, in south Asia, particularly in Pakistan, already employed youngsters may face worse labour conditions, including lower pay and longer hours. Agriculture and the garment industry have been recognised as two areas where child labour may increase, although there is a dearth of disaggregated data elsewhere (CSDRC, 2020).

## Objectives

The general objective of this research study was to highlight the societal and emotional experiences of children performing all kinds of jobs at an early stage of their lives.

While the specific goals were to:

- Investigate the reasons behind the embracing of the particular work.
- Explore the attitude of their bosses/employers which hurt them.
- Find out the ways they use to manage their emotions.

## Literature Review

As people have become more aware of and concerned about child labor, there has been an explosion of writing on the subject in recent years. Early child labor literature is reviewed by Kakoli and Sayeed (2013). Bhat (2011) examined the literature on child labor, concentrating on concepts, theories, and policy disagreements. Cigno, Rosati, and Tzannatos (2002) and Tesfay (2003) examined the contemporary theoretical literature on child labor (2003). An overview of the empirical literature on child labor is provided by Levison and Murray-Close (2005), Cigno Rosati and Guarcello (2002), Aqil (2012), Das (2012), and Betcherman, Fares, Luinstra, and Prouty (2004). For a more modern review of the literature on child labor, researchers and policymakers have been striving to identify the root causes and make recommendations for appropriate responses. According to (Edmonds, 2007) popular belief, extreme poverty in the developing world is the primary cause of child labor. It pushes individuals to have large families and send their children to work and support their families (Ortiz, Moreira, and Engilbersdottir, 2012). Another viewpoint is that poverty is not a sufficient reason for child labor, a dualistic economy characteristic of developing nations in formal and informal sectors, among other variables, has been attributed to the supply of child labor in the literature. Because child labor is commonly a by-product of extreme poverty, policymakers should consider premium economic development and income growth. Many studies have already been conducted on the inextricable link between poverty and child labor. Becker (2008) developed unitary models of parental decision-making, in which parents are purely motivated by altruistic motivations. Those who believe that poverty is the fundamental cause of child labor and that children are a family's only means of survival. In this regard, Basu (2005) has written that if child labor and adult labor are substitutes (substitution axiom) and if child leisure is a luxury commodity for impoverished homes (luxury axiom), then unfavorable adult labor markets are the primary cause of child labor.

Some researchers investigated the factors contributing to child labor, such as poor educational standards and capital market failure. All three authors emphasize the importance of capital-market inefficiencies in inefficient child labor: Rodgers and Standing (2001), Baland and Robinson (2000), and Jafarey and Lahiri (2005). Borrowing against the child's future income to finance the child's education is the most excellent option if the present discounted value of return from schooling is greater than the current kid wage. To be more specific, it is in the child's best interests to contribute whatever is required to the family's income by borrowing against future earnings, allowing the child to attend school rather than work. The explanation of child labor in terms of credit market imperfections, on the other hand, is based on the assumption that returning to school is sufficient, which necessitates that schooling quality is likewise satisfactory. Nonetheless, a few major empirical studies<sup>13</sup> have demonstrated the current primary education system in developing nations as being of poor quality.

Other scholars focused on fertility decisions and their implications for child labor prevalence. Because the number of children in a household determines the possible supply of child employees, children from larger households are more likely to work. Baker (2008) implies that parents with a large number of children are less likely to invest in schooling in the quality-quantity trade-off. To spread out their financial risk, parents may choose to have big families. Lyon and Valdivia (2010) look at empirical evidence from emerging countries to look at fertility decisions and their consequences for young people's investments. According to his findings, having a larger home reduces children's school participation while increasing their likelihood of working. According to Kousar et al. (2005), family size has a significant detrimental impact on child schooling. Zarif, Aziz, and Mirza (2013) used data from the Peru Living Standards Survey (PLSS) to show that household size has an impact on children's school participation and increases the possibility of a child being sent to work. They argue that the age structure of siblings, as well as their activities, play a role in determining the relationship between family size and child labor.

Cultural and societal norms influence decisions like fertility and child activity. Rodgers and Standing (2001) have published numerous articles on the subject of social influence and child labor. According to social historians, the major push behind the abolition of child labor in today's rich world was the emergence of domestic ideology, which transformed children from valuable wage employees to emotionally desirable objects (Akarro and Mtwewe, 2011). Basu (2005) explored the policy implications of social norms in affecting parental decisions about child labor. They claim that child labor is considered natural in some societies and that there is nothing to have complained about it.

A subset of child labor literature examines intra-household preference heterogeneity and how it influences household consumption, fertility, schooling, and child labor decisions. According to Basu (2005), the husband and wife may have different preferences, and the household may make various decisions depending on their power balance. He used the collective family model to show how as a family's income sources diversify, it becomes less likely to send its children to work. Grimsrud (2001) looked into the relationship between a child's career and the power balance between father and mother in the home.

It is self-evident that a child's employment has an impact on his bodily and moral well-being, as well as his social development. The consequences are far-reaching. Working diminishes schooling and has a detrimental impact on the accumulation of human capital and, as a result, his future earning ability as an adult. As an adult, though, it affects his children's attitudes toward education. Basu (2005), Das (2012), Rena (2009), and Edmonds (2007) all believe that a child who obtains more education as a child will grow up to have stronger human capital and, as a result, earn more money in the labor market. By definition, a person who works more as a child and obtains less education as an adult will grow up to be a poor adult. The poverty that pushes children to work tends to be handed on through the generations.

The widespread media and public concern over child labor in the age of globalization have resulted in consensus on the necessity to eradicate the scourge of child labor from society. However, there are major disagreements over the best way to achieve that goal, as well as whether legislative actions can truly eliminate the problem. Legislative prohibitions on child labor have had minimal impact in the past, according to Ahmed (2012) and Mahmood, et al. (2005). According to Weiner (1991), compulsory schooling is more successful than just forbidding child labor since a child's presence in school is easier to monitor than a child's absence from work. Sawada and Lokshin (2000) have also proposed that compulsory education should be implemented as a means of preventing child labor.

Globalization has the potential to have a significant impact on several social and economic aspects of developing countries. Without a doubt, child labor is one of the most important topics on the table. For years, policymakers, NGOs, and academics have debated the complex relationship between child labor and globalization. Opponents of globalization argue that more openness will push impoverished countries to use more child labor to remain cost-effective and competitive.

## Research Methodology

The research methodology for this study was a qualitative phenomenological research design. The goal of phenomenology is to describe people's lived experiences in a way that captures the underlying meaning of those events (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Husserl (1931) wrote about phenomenology and suggested that a new method of looking at things is required to grasp the essence of an experience. This new perspective acknowledges that consciousness is deeply tangled with perception and experience and suspends previous assumptions (Sokolowski, 2000). I wanted to understand the substance of the children's social and emotional experiences and the ordinary meaning they create during their assigned tasks. The findings of this study may shed insight on current approaches of parents who send their children to work at an early stage of their lives and for those who treat them that children feel stress and remain emotionally disturbed. Context is a subject of qualitative study as well (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Marshall and Rossman (2006) stated that in qualitative research, the researcher looks at the environment holistically to uncover linkages among systems and trace the historical context to understand how children feel when poorly treated. This holistic approach considers non-obvious contextual factors such as more enormous cultural, socioeconomic, and political challenges and how these influence the participants' experiences (Creswell, 2007). Participants, in my opinion, cannot be seen in isolation from the more excellent system and the context in which they operate. Individuals' personal experiences were focused during data collection, and these elements were considered in a systematic way when the data was processed and organized into themes.

The population of this research study was the boys and girls under age 10 to 15 years performing different types of jobs in informal settings i.e. tea stalls/hotels, mechanic workshops/service stations, housekeeping, and babysitters in Karachi the capital city of Sindh. This city is also named "*the mother of the poor*" because poor people all over from Pakistan move to this city in search of a job so to feed their children/families. It is observed that most of the people initially move alone and then their families, and then here the whole family starts working, most girls are found working to support the mothers so the work could be finished well in time. Finding children performing jobs and then gaining their trust was a challenging task, therefore, snowball sampling procedure data were collected from sixteen boys and girls (two from each profession). A semi-structured data collection tool was used to get the required data because it supports researchers to explore experiences, thoughts feelings, and beliefs about a particular topic and to delve deeply into personal and sensitive issues by using few predetermined questions while the questions are developed depending on the response of the participants but words are carefully selected so to avoid any kind of emotional disturbance. There are nine dominating regional languages in Pakistan, most of the families migrating to Karachi in search of jobs communicate within the families in their mother language but they understand and use 'Urdu' which is the official language of Pakistan. Keeping in view the objectives of the study, some initial questions for semi-structured interviews were designed in English but were asked in Urdu.

## Research Questions

The following questions were used to achieve the research objectives:

- Why do you work?
- How does your employer treat you?
- How do you feel and react when your employer/senior treats you harshly?

## Data Analysis and Conclusion

As the data was collected through semi-structured interviews, therefore four steps developed by De Chesnay (2014) were used for data analysis i.e. bracketing, analyzing, intuiting, and describing.

Bracketing activities were reflective and included keeping a diary about researcher perceptions and feelings, recording field notes, and seeking critiques from a methodological expert in descriptive phenomenology (Vagle, 2014). Or it refers to the process of detecting and suspending prior notions and attitudes regarding the subject under investigation. Intuiting, the second step in descriptive phenomenology occurs when researchers remain open to the meanings the process of identifying and suspending preconceived ideas and attitudes about the subject of study. According to Duke (1999), it is a process in which a researcher is required to acknowledge any prior information, theories, or assumptions concerning the phenomenon being studied. This is bracketed or separated for the researcher to remain impartial about the phenomenon. The aversion to child labour and the majority's preconceived notion is that most poor parents force their children or children themselves to work in order to support the family and mitigate financial crises, implying that poverty is one of the major causes of child labour. However, other critics/scholars/laymen believe that parents' lack of awareness about the importance of education or family trends, traditions, or beliefs are also factors but live in huts they mostly beg and fulfill their needs but it is found that some parents also involve their child in working rather than begging. Such people are found working at brick kilns. The whole family works together there and they are found performing this work from generations (Kakoli & Sayeed, 2013). Due to present prevailing circumstances, some parents have also established this belief that there will not be able to get good jobs, therefore, getting an education is a wastage of money and time. Therefore they send the children to work from a very early age (Ahmed, 2012).

After bracketing out, intuition takes over, and the researcher remains focused on the phenomenon's associated means as determined by the preceding study. A shared knowledge of a phenomenon on whatever is being investigated is achieved through this method. To make this process go as smoothly as possible, the researcher should offer the data variance until everyone is on the same page. As a result, this procedure necessitates the researcher's immersion in the study and phenomenon under investigation. Intuition is the second phase, where the researchers are willing to listen to what those who have witnessed the event have to say about it (Polit and Beck, 2012).

The researchers will stay open using acknowledging information of the phenomena provided by the individuals with spina bifida. The literal meaning of intuition is the ability to understand something instinctively, without the need for conscious reasoning. In this phase, the researchers sorted the information collected through semi-structured interviews and the sorting of qualitative data was done based on instinctive understanding without any conscious efforts. The answers to three questions were arranged in a logical sequence.

Following bracketing out, intuition takes over, and the researcher stays focused on the phenomenon's related meaning as determined by the previous study. This strategy achieves a shared understanding of a phenomenon on whatever is being researched. The researcher should offer data variance until everyone is on the same page to make this process move as smoothly as possible. As a result, the researcher must immerse himself or herself in the study and phenomenon under inquiry. The second phase is intuition. This is the point at which researchers are willing to listen to what witnesses have to say about an event (Polit and Beck, 2012). Qualitative data is frequently subjective, rich, and contains in-depth information that is typically presented in the form of words. Reading a large number of transcripts for similarities and differences, then discovering themes and constructing categories, is the process of analysing qualitative data. In this phase, the researchers coded the responses to the questions and subquestions raised from the unclear responses of the respondents. The responses to the first question were coded as; poverty, difficult to understand, no benefit, and school environment, and second questions responses were coded as, harsh, show hatred feelings, and insured while the responses of the third question were coded as helplessness, escape away, and remained silent.

The description is the most important step in any phenomenological research approach. The researcher's comprehension and definition of the phenomena takes place at the descriptive stage. This serves as the final

step in the communication process, providing distinctions and critical descriptions in both written and spoken form. The goal of qualitative description is to present a full and plain explanation of events and experiences, as well as to deliver a report or data in as unbiased and raw a manner as possible, while recording all details of the incident under investigation. The detail of response in the present research study are as under:

Most of the respondents said that they are working to support their parents as it is difficult for them to meet all their needs because of their low income. While the other disclosed that they were enrolled by parents in schools but the study was hard for them, they were not able to cope with the study that the reason they started working. Some also argued that their parents have the perception they after getting an education it will be difficult for them to get a good job because in our country jobs are for the rich and those who have an approach to the higher authority, one said,

*“My father always gives us an example of his younger brother who worked hard, got an education, we spent money on him but now he is unable to get a job as per his qualification. Therefore we should waste our money and time on getting an education. Instead of spending years on getting an education, if you learn a skill then in few years you will be in a position to earn more money than an educated person, that’s why I have started working”.*

Another respondent revealed that my parents enrolled me in a school,

*“The first day when I entered in the school, I was not feeling good in the new environment, therefore, I asked my parents that I want to go back with you but they did not care for my appeal and handed over me to a teacher who pulled me by holding my arm, snubbed and asked to sit down, I wept for the whole day but there was no one who was having a caring attitude for me. From that hated feeling for school developed in me and I decided not to go to school again”.*

The detail of the responses to the second question was like that, most of the participants said their employer or senior is also called ‘Ustaad’ always speak to them in a harsh tone, snub them sometimes abuse them, and also give physical punishment on a vert minor mistake. Others responded that they feel very insure in their presence but when they are not present at the spot they feel good and perform their duties more effectively.

In response to the third question which was about their feelings when they have been treated badly and the unethical attitude of their senior or employer, one of the participants responded that

*“I am very young and weak at this stage of life, cannot fight with her when she treats me badly I wish to kill her but one day I will take revenge of all these happening as she and her family are taking advantage of our poverty or helplessness because my father is sick can’t earn money I have to work for my family, sometimes have beg to get medicine of my father”.*

There was a female participant who was working as a maid and was staying with the family and was treated as a servant for twenty-four, she spoke,

*“My parents are poor, living in a far off village, they don’t have money and this family gave some amount to my parents and had brought me here. When I saw their children eating I also wish to eat but they give me that food which is left by their children when their children play if mistakenly I am found there they treat me harshly and ask to go and work. I am not comfortable here, but do not know the way back to my home”.*

While most of the respondents said that they remain silent when they are treated badly because there is no way, we need money and our parents have taught us to respect them.

## Conclusion

It is concluded that when poor parents send their children to go and work and the persons who take them and ask them to work, both parents and employer or seniors stand responsible. If parents have no source of income then they should not fulfill their needs by sacrificing the youth of their children, when they are at the age to enjoy and play they make them work. Teachers need to change their attitude because their attitude is one of the reasons behind the high dropout ratio in primary or elementary schools.

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