A Closer Look at the Social Wellbeing of Child Laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

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Abstract

Child labor remains a critical issue worldwide, particularly in auto workshops, especially in developing countries like Pakistan and its neighboring regions. This study aims to explore the complex factors driving children into the workforce. It focuses on the age distribution of child laborers and its correlation with their educational attainment and social well-being, examining the harsh working conditions they endure, including limited breaks, a lack of weekly holidays, and the consequent impacts on their physical and mental health. The research further investigates the social environment and behaviors of child laborers, assessing how smoking habits, savings, friendships, and leisure activities influence their emotional well-being and social integration. Additionally, it evaluates the relationship between workshop owners' behavior toward these children, incidences of punishment, the provision of safety measures, and the overall effect on their access to medical facilities. Employing a quantitative methodology, the study includes a sample of 200 child laborers selected through purposive sampling, utilizing structured interviews with closed-ended questions to accommodate potential literacy challenges. Data analyzed using SPSS reveals significant insights, such as 56% illiteracy, 77.5% lack of weekly holidays, and 73.5% working continuously without breaks, highlighting the emotional and physical toll of these conditions, underscored by high smoking rates and minimal social interactions. The application

of Marxist theory provides a critical lens for understanding the exploitation and systemic inequalities faced by these children, emphasizing how capitalist structures commodify them as cheap labor under exploitative conditions. Statistical tests, including chi-square analysis, support the hypothesis that working conditions significantly impact social well-being, with a Pearson chi-square value of 679.193 and a p-value of .000. Overall, the findings underscore the urgent need for interventions and comprehensive policy changes to improve the well-being of child laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, addressing the fundamental causes of their exploitation.

Key Words: Child Labor, Auto-workshops, Pir Wadhai, Mandi Moor, Social Wellbeing, Labor Laws, Exploitation, Marxist Theory

1. Introduction

Child labor has been a persistent societal issue, influencing communities across different historical contexts, from the industrial revolution to modern times. In many cases, poverty drives families to prioritize immediate financial needs, leading to the unfortunate necessity of sending their children to work at young ages (Gul et al., 2023). While the Industrial Revolution notably contributed to the rise of child labor, where children as young as five toiled in factories, this problem has continued to remain pervasive in contemporary society (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2023).

Defining child labor, however, remains complex. Various cultures perceive and categorize it differently based on their social and economic frameworks. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the International Labour Organization (ILO) define a child as anyone under the age of 18 (ILO, 1973). The debate over what constitutes "work" as opposed to "labor" adds another layer of complexity, with opinions varying on whether harmful activities undertaken for financial gain qualify as child labor, while some harmless tasks that provide benefits may not (Schultz, 2023). This nuanced understanding is critical in establishing definitions that align with the realities faced by children in countries like Pakistan. While comprehensive data is challenging to obtain, estimates indicate that around 217.7 million children worldwide are engaged in child labor, with developing nations experiencing the highest prevalence (Beegle et al., 2023). Even in developed countries, such as the United States, child labor persists, particularly among marginalized immigrant populations (Hindman, 2022).

In Pakistan, the situation is dire. Many children forego education and spend their childhood working to support their families (Siddique & Patrions, 2021). These young workers, often referred to as "Chhotas," can be found in diverse sectors, including workshops and roadside eateries, and are often seen assisting their parents on farms due to the country's agricultural reliance (Khan, 2021). The labor dynamics highlight significant disparities in gender roles; girls are generally confined to domestic work, while boys are predominantly involved in urban labor (Karim, 2023).

Within the manufacturing industry, children face exploitation and hazardous work conditions. They are engaged in producing items such as sports equipment and surgical instruments, compromising both their safety and their educational prospects (Awan & Khan, 2021). Similarly,

the construction sector employs child laborers in physically demanding tasks such as building, road construction, and brick kiln operations, exposing them to significant safety hazards (Ali, 2022). The service sector, too, contributes to child labor, where children work long hours in hotels, restaurants, and other establishments, often receiving minimal financial compensation and lacking opportunities for personal growth (Ali & Khan, 2021). Poverty stands out as a driving force behind child labor in Pakistan, where approximately 12% of the population lives below the poverty line. In financially strained households, children are viewed as essential contributors to the family's income, pushing them to forgo their education and well-being. This cycle of poverty perpetuates itself, as early engagement in labor roles severely limits their future prospects and earning capabilities (Khan, 2019).

Measuring the scope of child labor poses considerable challenges, particularly in Pakistan, where systematic data collection is lacking. Most existing research relies on isolated case studies or small-scale surveys that fail to provide a complete national overview (Zaidi, 2022). Notably, a comprehensive national survey conducted in 1996 revealed that over 3.3 million children aged 5 to 14 were already part of the labor force, highlighting the extensive nature of child labor across various sectors (ILO, 2018). Following this, district-level surveys conducted by the ILO emphasized localized insights into child labor in specific areas, including Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor. These surveys focused on the nature and magnitude of child labor while identifying hazardous workplaces. Alarming findings indicated significant child labor involvement in industries such as glass manufacturing and surgical instrument production in various cities, including estimated populations of thousands of child laborers engaged in hazardous conditions (ILO, 2020).

Child labor remains a pressing issue globally, particularly in auto-workshops where children are frequently employed, and this phenomenon is notably prevalent in Pakistan, especially in areas like Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, making it crucial to understand the factors contributing to this issue for effective intervention strategies (Arya & Thakur, 2019). The primary objective of this study is to investigate the causes of child labor within auto-workshops in the Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor region of District Rawalpindi, Pakistan, with the aim of comprehending the intricate factors driving children into the workforce. This research seeks to scrutinize both the causative factors and the subsequent repercussions of children's involvement in workshop labor, shedding light on the underlying reasons behind their employment in such settings (Khan & Hameed, 2018). Specifically, the study will examine the age distribution of child laborers and analyze how age correlates with their educational attainment and social wellbeing, assess the working conditions of these laborers—including their work schedules, access to breaks, and availability of weekly holidays—and investigate the impact of these conditions on their physical and mental health. Additionally, it will explore the social environment and behaviors of child laborers, such as smoking habits, savings, friendships, and leisure activities, to determine how these factors influence their emotional wellbeing and overall social integration, while also evaluating the relationship between the behavior of workshop owners towards child laborers, including

incidences of punishment and the provision of safety measures, and its effect on the children's treatment, access to medical facilities, and social wellbeing.

2. Literature Review

Child labor in Pakistan is a multifaceted issue driven by a complex interplay of economic, social, and cultural factors that significantly impact the social wellbeing of child laborers, particularly in regions like Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, Rawalpindi. Research has highlighted significant differences in the causes of child labor between urban and rural areas, with poverty remaining a dominant driver across the country. Low family income, especially in large families, compels children to contribute to household finances (Awan, 2019). Additionally, studies by Gul et al. (2023) suggest that children from families with low parental education and limited access to assets are more likely to be pushed into work, thereby undermining their potential for social mobility and wellbeing.

Gender disparity plays a significant role in this issue, with girls often facing greater neglect and pressure to work, particularly in rural areas (Ali, 2020). For instance, Ali and Hamid's (2020) study on female child labor in Multan reveals that even well-off families may employ girls for domestic chores, reinforcing the cycle of inequality. Socio-cultural norms, as highlighted by Hou (2019), sometimes prioritize boys' education over girls', leading to higher rates of female child labor in these communities. This situation exacerbates the social wellbeing of girls, who are often denied fundamental rights to education and personal development. The ownership of family businesses further complicates the situation. While Ali and Khan (2018) suggest that owning a business might increase work opportunities for boys, Hou (2018) points out that children in such families may be deliberately taken out of school to contribute to the family enterprise. This dynamic underscores the need for nuanced approaches to addressing child labor within family-run establishments. Comparatively, studies by Haile and Astakie (2021) in Ethiopia and Indonesia reveal regional variations, suggesting that agricultural work in rural areas often involves children alongside their parents, while urban areas may see children engaged in market jobs or services, further stressing the importance of context-sensitive solutions.

In Pakistan, existing policies may be inadequate to tackle child labor effectively. Research by Ali (2020) emphasizes the need for region-specific programs that consider the urban-rural divide. Furthermore, Wahaba's (2020) findings on Egypt highlight the significance of addressing regional disparities in income and market wages. Innovative solutions like micro-financing schemes for women, as proposed by Wahaba (2019), could empower families economically and potentially reduce reliance on child labor. Promoting access to education through reforms that reduce costs (Rasheda, 2020) can also present a more attractive alternative to work for children, fostering their social wellbeing and development. The paradox of child labor and human capital development complicates the landscape further. In developing countries, firms often rely on cheap, unskilled labor, which hinders technological advancements and exacerbates poverty cycles. Unskilled parents, struggling financially, may view child labor as essential for household survival, perpetuating a lack of human capital as children prioritize work over education

(Bellettini, 2022). However, Fan (2022) presents a contrasting perspective that suggests child labor can contribute to human capital development when children engage in work that enhances their skills, potentially increasing their future earning potential. Nonetheless, Fan acknowledges the importance of balancing work and education to ensure children do not fall behind academically.

To effectively address the social wellbeing of child laborers, coordinated solutions are essential. Dessy and Pallage (2023) emphasize the need for collaborative efforts among governments, firms, and families. Governments can play a crucial role by promoting technological advancement, providing financial support to industries for technological upgrades that create a demand for skilled labor (Dessy & Pallage, 2023). Improving education systems through investment in infrastructure and accessibility can incentivize parents to keep their children in school, ultimately enhancing their social wellbeing (Dessy & Pallage, 2023). Additionally, developing adult skill programs can equip parents with the necessary skills to increase their employability, thereby reducing the economic pressure to send children into the workforce (Dessy & Pallage, 2023). Child labor has a wide range of negative consequences that significantly impact the social wellbeing of children in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, Rawalpindi, affecting their education, health, and future prospects. Various studies underscore these detrimental effects (Beegle, 2023). One prominent issue associated with child labor is its significant threat to education. For example, Beegle et al. (2023) found a negative association between child labor and school enrollment in Vietnam. In areas like Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, working children frequently lack the time and energy to attend school, which hinders their long-term educational attainment and diminishes their future earning potential. This perpetuates a cycle of poverty in which unskilled labor commands lower wages, further entrenching these children and their families in hardship.

In terms of health, while Gul et al. (2023) identified no direct link between child labor and health consequences in Vietnam, the nature of work undertaken by children in these regions can indeed pose health risks. Those working in hazardous environments or for long hours are particularly vulnerable to physical injuries, fatigue, and exposure to toxic substances, all of which detract from their overall wellbeing. The impact of globalization on child labor presents a complex issue with conflicting perspectives. Dagdemir and Acaroglu (2019) suggest a positive correlation between foreign direct investment (FDI) and child labor, while Cigno et al. (2019) argue that globalization can enhance economies, leading to higher wages for unskilled labor and potentially reducing the need for child labor. Dinopoulus and Zhao (2020) provide a nuanced perspective, contending that although FDI may reduce child labor in modern industrial sectors, it could conversely increase it in agrarian sectors where skills hold less significance. They recognize that while globalization can lead to a decrease in child labor through the imposition of stricter labor laws, factors such as poverty continue to play a critical role in perpetuating the issue.

Eradicating child labor necessitates effective policies that specifically address the unique challenges faced by children in regions like Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor. Fasih (2017) highlights

limitations in existing legislation, specifically the Children Employment Act of 1991 in Pakistan, which primarily impacts boys in formal sectors while neglecting the girls engaged in household work. Sugawara (2021) emphasizes the urgent need to eliminate the worst forms of child labor, such as child trafficking and prostitution, proposing a combined approach of education and work to equip children with vital skills while still contributing to household income. Krueger and Tjornhom (2022) caution against a one-size-fits-all approach to policymaking, advocating for considerations of economic inequalities and local stakeholder involvement in developing effective policies. Brown (2022) underscores the necessity of financial assistance, flexible work schedules, and educational opportunities for working children, while also acknowledging the resource limitations faced by developing countries in implementing such effective strategies.

While extensive research has examined various aspects of child labor globally, significant gaps remain in understanding the specific conditions and social wellbeing of child laborers in localized regions such as Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. Much of the existing literature tends to focus on broad, national-level data, often overlooking the nuanced, region-specific factors that contribute to the persistence of child labor in these areas. Furthermore, while studies have addressed the educational deficits, health risks, and the socio-economic drivers of child labor, there is a lack of comprehensive research that specifically investigates the interplay between the harsh working conditions, the behavioral dynamics in workplaces, and the social isolation experienced by these children. The limited focus on the psychological impacts of these factors and the absence of in-depth analysis of their long-term implications for the children's social and emotional development underscore the need for more targeted, context-specific studies that can inform effective policy interventions tailored to these vulnerable populations

3. Methodology, Study limitations and Theoretical Underpinnings

The current study utilized a quantitative methodology to examine the social wellbeing of child laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, Rawalpindi, Pakistan. This approach was chosen as it allows for the collection of data from a large number of participants, enhancing objectivity, validity, and generalizability of the findings. The selected study area is significant due to its central location in Pakistan, serving as a hub for many transportation centers and housing numerous auto workshops where a substantial number of children are employed. This geographic concentration facilitates access to child laborers, making the region an ideal site for the research.

Purposive sampling was employed to gather data directly relevant to the research questions. This technique involves selecting participants according to specific criteria that align with the study's objectives (Thompson, 2020). The targeted population comprised children aged 7 to 15 working in the auto workshops of Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor. By utilizing purposive sampling, the study ensured the inclusion of participants who were directly involved in child labor, allowing for focused data collection that addressed the central issues of the research.

The determination of a sample size of 200 participants for this study was based on several logical considerations that align with the research objectives and the specific context of child laborers in

Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, Rawalpindi. First, the sample size was established to balance the need for statistical power with practical constraints, such as time and available resources. A sample size of 200 is often considered adequate in quantitative research to allow for meaningful statistical analysis, ensuring that the findings can be generalized to the broader population of child laborers in the region. Furthermore, the choice of 200 participants allows for the application of various statistical tests, enhancing the reliability and validity of the results. This sample size provides sufficient data points to detect significant differences or correlations, which is crucial for understanding the social wellbeing of child laborers. In addition, it accommodates potential dropouts or incomplete responses, ensuring that the study maintains its integrity and robustness. The decision also took into account the accessibility of the target population. Given the concentration of child laborers in auto workshops within the selected regions, recruiting 200 participants was deemed feasible. This accessibility facilitated efficient data collection while ensuring that the sample remained representative of the population under study.

Lastly, the structured interview schedules with closed-ended questions were designed to address potential literacy challenges among respondents. This approach not only streamlined the data collection process but also minimized the risk of misinterpretation or confusion, allowing participants to engage meaningfully with the questions. By ensuring that the sample size was manageable and aligned with the study's goals, the researchers aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the social wellbeing of child laborers in the targeted areas. The data collection techniques were closely aligned with the research objectives and the characteristics of the targeted population. By again employing purposive sampling, the study focused specifically on children engaged in work at the workshops within the specified age range (Patton, 2022). This targeted approach facilitated the collection of relevant data that directly informed the research on the social wellbeing of child laborers.

For data analysis, statistical software (SPSS version 22) was utilized, allowing for both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The analysis employed techniques such as chi-square and correlation tests for hypothesis testing, which enabled a rigorous examination of the collected data and facilitated the drawing of reliable conclusions regarding the social wellbeing of the participants. Throughout the research process, ethical considerations were paramount. The researcher ensured participant anonymity to foster unbiased responses and maintain confidentiality. Additionally, ethical dilemmas that arose during data collection, particularly concerning the sensitive nature of child labor and potential issues like sexual harassment, were approached with care. Measures were implemented to ensure the wellbeing and comfort of participants, reflecting a commitment to ethical standards in conducting research within vulnerable populations. This comprehensive methodological framework aims to yield insights that meaningfully contribute to our understanding of the social wellbeing of child laborers in the specified regions of Rawalpindi.

3.1. Limitations of the study

The study on child labor in auto-workshops in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, while offering valuable insights, has several limitations. Its reliance on a quantitative methodology and structured interviews with closed-ended questions may restrict the depth of responses and overlook the nuanced experiences of child laborers. The purposive sampling of 200 participants may introduce bias, limiting the generalizability of the findings to the broader population and other regions. Additionally, challenges related to data accuracy may arise due to respondents' hesitance to disclose sensitive information, potentially affecting the validity of the results. The study also fails to account for the long-term effects of child labor on individuals, such as future employment opportunities and mental health, and its application of Marxist theory may constrain the interpretation by focusing primarily on economic factors. These limitations underscore the need for further research that incorporates qualitative methods, broader sampling, and a comprehensive exploration of the long-term impacts of child labor to enhance understanding and inform effective interventions.

3.2. Theoretical Underpinning

Marxist theory offers a critical lens through which to examine the exploitation, alienation, and systemic inequalities faced by child laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, Rawalpindi. Rooted in Karl Marx's critique of capitalist societies, this framework highlights the power imbalances between the working class and those who own the means of production. In the case of child labor, these children are utilized as cheap labor sources, enduring long hours under harsh conditions often devoid of basic protections. This exploitation manifests not only as an economic issue but also as part of broader power dynamics where marginalized populations are commodified to sustain profit-driven systems. Central to Marxist thought is the concept of alienation, which describes the estrangement of workers from the products of their labor and their potential. For the child laborers in this study, the data revealing high rates of illiteracy and lack of educational opportunity underscores their alienation from societal norms and aspirations. Deprived of the chance to develop skills and engage in meaningful endeavor, these children are not only separated from the fruits of their labor but also from pathways that could offer them a fulfilling future. Their social environment, marked by risky behaviors such as smoking and a lack of social connections, reinforces their alienation and highlights the detrimental effects of their circumstances.

Moreover, the systemic inequality critiqued by Marxist theory is evident in the pervasive conditions endured by these child laborers. Findings that illustrate economic pressures, with over three-quarters of respondents citing poverty as their primary motivation for work, reflect structural inequalities that prioritize profits over individuals' welfare. The inadequate treatment from workshop owners, characterized by punishment and neglect for safety and health, reveals how deeply entrenched systems of exploitation operate. To combat these issues, Marxist theory advocates for substantial structural change to address the root causes of child labor, urging for comprehensive policies that promote education, provide social services, and enforce labor protections. Such reforms are necessary to create an equitable environment where children can

thrive rather than be forced into labor, thus breaking the cycle of exploitation and fostering social wellbeing.

4. Hypothesis Testing and Major Findings

Hypothesis Testing

Null Hypothesis (H0): The working conditions and treatment of child laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor do not significantly impact their social wellbeing, indicating that factors such as continuous working hours, lack of breaks, and negative interactions with employers have no effect on their health and emotional outcomes.

Research Hypothesis (H1): The working conditions and treatment of child laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor significantly impact their social wellbeing, with factors such as continuous working hours, lack of breaks, and negative interactions with employers contributing to adverse health and emotional outcomes.

Table 1. Chi-Square Test of Child Labor and Social Wellbeing

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	679.193[a]	16	.000
Likelihood Ratio	530.794	16	.000
N of Valid Cases	200		

a. 12 cells (0.00) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

The above chi-square test conducted for the hypotheses regarding the working conditions and treatment of child laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor provides significant insights into the relationship between these factors and the social wellbeing of the children involved. The null hypothesis posits that the working conditions, including aspects such as continuous working hours, lack of breaks, and negative interactions with employers, do not significantly impact the social wellbeing of child laborers. Conversely, the research hypothesis suggests that these working conditions indeed have a significant effect on their health and emotional outcomes. The results of the chi-square test yield a Pearson chi-square value of 679.193 with 16 degrees of freedom, which is extraordinarily high. The corresponding asymptotic significance (p-value) is reported at .000, indicating a very low probability that such a result could occur if the null hypothesis were true. Typically, in hypothesis testing, a p-value less than 0.05 is taken as significant, and in this case, the p-value of .000 far surpasses that threshold, providing strong evidence against the null hypothesis.

The likelihood ratio reported in the analysis is also significant, with a value of 530.794 and a p-value of .000, further reinforcing the findings of the Pearson chi-square. These results suggest that there is a clear association between the working conditions of child laborers and their social

wellbeing. The degree of correlation indicated by these statistical outcomes implies that the components of working conditions, such as extensive work hours, minimal breaks, and poor treatment from employers, are indeed contributing factors to the adverse health and emotional states of these children. Fundamentally, the analysis supports the research hypothesis, affirming the position that the working environment significantly impacts the social wellbeing of child laborers in the examined regions. This statistical evidence highlights the urgency for interventions aimed at improving working conditions for these vulnerable populations, emphasizing the necessity of addressing factors contributing to their negative health and emotional outcomes. By rejecting the null hypothesis, the findings underscore the critical need for policy changes and support systems to enhance the wellbeing of child laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor.

4.1. Major Findings

The data presented in the below table No: 2, provides a comprehensive overview of the characteristics and experiences of child laborers in the studied region. The age distribution of the respondents reveals that a majority, 37.5%, fall within the 13 to 15 age range, while 34% are aged between 7 to 9, and 28.5% are between 10 to 12 years old. This indicates that older children make up a significant portion of the child labor population. When examining educational background, it is notable that 56% of the respondents are illiterate, highlighting a concerning lack of basic education among these children. Only 27% have attained primary education, while a mere 17% have reached the secondary level. The data indicates that more than half of the respondents, 56%, have never attended school, which raises significant concerns regarding their future prospects and overall social wellbeing. Regarding their working conditions, a striking 73.5% of the respondents work continuously without breaks, suggesting a demanding and potentially hazardous workload. Furthermore, 77.5% reported having no weekly holidays, indicating a lack of rest and recovery time. This relentless schedule could adversely affect both their physical and mental health.

Table No: 2,   Major Findings

Statements		Responses		
Age of Respondent	a:7 to 9= 34%,	b: 10 to 12 = 28.5%,	c: 13 to 15= 37.5%	
Respondent ever attended the School			A:Yes 44%	b: No 56%
Education of Respondent		a: Illiterate 56%,	b:Primary 27%	c: Secondary 17%

Respondent's working schedule	a: Continuous 73.5%, b: With break 4%		c: No specific time 22.5%
Respondent's weekly holidays	a: No 77.5%,	b: Yes 22.5%	
Number of smokers and non-smokers	a: smokers 44% b: Nonsmokers 14%		c: sometimes 42%,
Any kind of savings respondent has		No 92.5%	Yes 7.5%
Respondent's friends		Yes 15.5%	No 84.5%
Respondents motivations for Pursuing Education:		Yes 45%	No 55%
Any refreshment activity Respondent perform		Yes 33%	No 77%
How Respondent spend his spare time	a: cleaning of workshop 51%	b: Gossip with Colleagues 38% c: Playing games 11%	
Behavior of owner towards respondent	a: Cordial 15.6% b: Horrible 41.5%	c: Polite 19.7% d: Harsh 23.2%	
Punishment given to Respondent	a: Yes 73.4%	b: 26.6%	
Any medical facility respondent is having in workshop	a: Yes 3.9%	b: 96.1%	
Facilities which the respondent is having in workshop	a: Working Gloves 22% b: Masks/Scarfs 41%	c: Safety Helmet 12,5% d: Working shoes 7% e: Protecting Glasses 1.5% f: Not any 1.5%	

The table also sheds light on the social environment of these child laborers. The responses indicate that 44% of the children are smokers, and 42% label themselves as occasional smokers, which raises concerns about the health implications of such behaviors. Meanwhile, a staggering 92.5% reported having no savings, reflecting the financial precarity in which these children find themselves. Additionally, only 15.5% reported having friends, with the vast majority feeling isolated, which could impact their emotional wellbeing. Motivations for pursuing education appear divided; 45% expressed a desire to continue their education, while 55% did not. This ambivalence may stem from their challenging circumstances and the necessity of prioritizing work over schooling. When it comes to leisure activities, a significant 77% indicated that they do not engage in any refreshment activities, and 51% spend their spare time cleaning the workshop, rather than engaging in play or other recreational pursuits.

The behavioral dynamics at the workplace reveal concerning patterns; 41.5% of the respondents described their owners as having a horrible attitude, while only 15.6% reported a cordial relationship. Additionally, 73.4% of the respondents indicated that they had faced punishment in the workplace, which raises questions about their treatment and environment. Access to medical facilities is alarmingly low, with 96.1% of respondents reporting that no such facilities are available at their workplaces. In terms of safety measures, only a small percentage of participants have access to protective gear: 22% have working gloves, 41% possess masks or scarfs, and even

fewer have safety helmets (12.5%) or protective glasses (1.5%). Overall, these figures paint a grim picture of the working conditions and social wellbeing of child laborers in the area, underscoring the urgent need for intervention and support.

5. Discussion

The results of the study on child laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor provide a striking contrast between the hypothesized effects of working conditions on social wellbeing and the reality revealed by the data. The data shows that the working conditions these children face are indeed harsh, with a significant portion of the population enduring continuous work without breaks, lack of education, and poor treatment from employers. These findings align closely with the research hypothesis, which posits that such conditions would have detrimental effects on the social wellbeing of the child laborers. The statistical analysis, particularly the chi-square test, provides robust evidence that the null hypothesis—which suggests that these conditions do not significantly impact social wellbeing—can be rejected. The chi-square results indicate a very low probability (p-value of .000) that the null hypothesis could be true, thereby affirming the research hypothesis. This outcome suggests that the extensive work hours, minimal breaks, and negative interactions with employers are indeed contributing to the adverse health and emotional outcomes observed among these child laborers. This finding is consistent with existing literature, which has long documented the negative consequences of child labor on children's wellbeing. For instance, research by Beegle et al. (2023) underscores the detrimental impact of child labor on educational attainment, a conclusion supported by the data showing that 56% of the respondents are illiterate, and more than half have never attended school. This lack of education not only limits their current social wellbeing but also significantly hampers their future prospects.

Moreover, the poor working conditions reflected in the data, such as the high percentage of children working without breaks and lacking weekly holidays, correlate strongly with existing research on the physical and psychological toll of child labor. Studies by Gul et al. (2023) have highlighted similar concerns in other regions, noting that child laborers are often subjected to grueling work schedules that leave little room for rest or personal development. The data from Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor reflect this trend, with 77.5% of respondents reporting no weekly holidays, a statistic that aligns with findings from Ali (2020) regarding the relentless demands placed on child laborers. The social environment and treatment of child laborers also emerge as significant factors in their overall wellbeing. The data reveal that a substantial number of respondents have experienced punishment at work, and the majority describe their employers' behavior as harsh or horrible. This negative treatment likely exacerbates the already challenging conditions these children face, contributing to emotional and psychological distress. Ali and Hamid's (2020) study on female child labor in Multan provides a parallel, highlighting the severe emotional toll of harsh treatment on young laborers. The correlation between the poor treatment of child laborers and their diminished social wellbeing is well-documented in the literature, with Hou (2019) emphasizing the long-term psychological impacts of such environments.

The results also highlight the lack of basic necessities and protective measures for child laborers, further affirming the research hypothesis. The absence of medical facilities for 96.1% of the respondents and the limited access to protective gear underscore the physical risks these children face daily. This lack of safety measures is consistent with findings by Beegle (2023), who noted that child labor often occurs in hazardous conditions, leading to significant health risks. The data from this study reinforce these concerns, showing that child laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor are exposed to environments that not only compromise their immediate health but also their long-term wellbeing. The motivations behind education and leisure activities also paint a bleak picture of the social wellbeing of these children. The fact that only 45% of respondents express a desire to pursue education suggests that the harsh realities of their daily lives may have diminished their hope for a better future through schooling. This ambivalence is reflective of the findings by Awan (2019), who notes that economic pressures often force children to prioritize work over education, leading to a cycle of poverty and limited social mobility. The lack of leisure activities, reported by 77% of respondents, further underscores the deprivation of a normal childhood, which is essential for healthy social and emotional development. Haile and Astakie (2021) have similarly documented the lack of recreational opportunities for child laborers, noting the long-term negative effects on their mental health and social skills.

In contrast, the literature also suggests that not all forms of child labor have uniformly negative outcomes. Fan (2022) argues that certain types of child labor, particularly those that involve skill development, can potentially contribute to human capital development. However, the data from Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor suggest that this is not the case for the majority of child laborers in these regions. The overwhelming focus on menial and hazardous work, combined with the lack of educational opportunities, indicates that these children are unlikely to benefit from any potential skill development that could arise from their labor. The discussion of globalization and its impact on child labor presents another layer of complexity. While some research, such as that by Dagdemir and Acaroglu (2019), suggests a correlation between globalization and an increase in child labor due to economic pressures, others, like Cigno et al. (2019), argue that globalization can lead to improved economic conditions that reduce the need for child labor. However, the specific context of Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor seems to support the former view, where economic hardships drive families to rely on child labor, despite the global economic trends. In conclusion, the data from Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor provide strong evidence that the working conditions and treatment of child laborers significantly impact their social wellbeing, supporting the research hypothesis. This conclusion is consistent with a broad body of literature that documents the negative effects of child labor on education, health, and emotional development. The chi-square test results further reinforce this conclusion, indicating a strong association between the harsh working conditions and the adverse outcomes observed among these children. The findings underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions and policy changes to improve the conditions of child laborers, addressing both the immediate and long-term impacts on their wellbeing.

6. Conclusion and Policy Suggestion

The study's findings provide a sobering look into the harsh realities faced by child laborers in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor, revealing a situation where their social wellbeing is severely compromised by the conditions under which they work. The data clearly demonstrate that these children are subjected to grueling work schedules, with many working continuously without breaks and lacking any form of weekly respite. This relentless pace, coupled with minimal access to education and the frequent experience of harsh treatment by employers, paints a bleak picture of their daily lives. The high rates of illiteracy and the significant number of children who have never attended school suggest that their future prospects are being severely undermined, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and limited opportunities. The statistical analysis further reinforces the gravity of the situation, providing strong evidence that the working conditions and treatment these children endure are significantly detrimental to their health, emotional stability, and overall social wellbeing. The rejection of the null hypothesis in favor of the research hypothesis highlights the urgent need for intervention. The lack of basic necessities, such as medical facilities and protective gear, underscores the physical dangers these children face, while their limited social interactions and absence of leisure activities point to a broader deprivation of a normal childhood. This study not only underscores the immediate and severe impacts of child labor in these regions but also calls attention to the broader systemic issues that perpetuate this exploitation. The findings suggest that without significant policy changes and targeted interventions, these children are likely to remain trapped in a cycle of hardship that limits their potential and threatens their future wellbeing. It is clear that comprehensive efforts are needed to address the root causes of child labor, improve working conditions, and provide these children with the education and support necessary to break free from this cycle. The urgency of these actions cannot be overstated, as the wellbeing of these children and the future of the communities they belong to depend on it.

6.1. Policy Suggestions

The issue of child labor in auto-workshops in Pir Wadhai and Mandi Moor requires a multifaceted approach anchored in targeted policy interventions. One critical strategy is to enhance educational access for child laborers by implementing programs that offer free and accessible education, including evening classes and vocational training. These initiatives would enable children to acquire essential skills and knowledge while easing their transition out of labor. Moreover, it is vital to strengthen labor laws by enforcing stricter regulations that prohibit the employment of children in hazardous conditions, particularly within auto-workshops. Effective monitoring and enforcement of these laws are necessary to safeguard these vulnerable populations.

Additionally, establishing a system for regular health and safety inspections in auto-workshops will ensure compliance with established regulations, thereby creating a safe working environment for all employees, including children. Addressing the root causes of child labor also necessitates developing social support programs aimed at alleviating poverty. Financial assistance, food

security initiatives, and job training for parents can significantly reduce the economic pressures that lead families to rely on their children's income.

To foster a cultural shift, launching awareness campaigns in local communities is essential. These campaigns would educate parents and children about the importance of education and the detrimental effects of child labor, ultimately encouraging a greater value for academic achievement over immediate economic contributions. Furthermore, providing access to mental health services and counseling can help address the emotional and psychological strains faced by child laborers, promoting their overall wellbeing and healing.

Collaboration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) specializing in child welfare and labor rights is crucial for implementing supportive programs aimed at the rehabilitation and reintegration of child laborers into society. Creating incentive programs for workshop owners who comply with child labor laws and provide safe working conditions can further encourage ethical business practices; tax breaks or subsidies could serve as effective motivators.

Engaging community leaders and stakeholders in the development and implementation of these policies is also important. This ensures that solutions are culturally relevant and have the local community's support, increasing the likelihood of success. Finally, establishing a robust monitoring and evaluation framework is key to assessing the effectiveness of implemented policies and programs. Such measures will allow for ongoing adjustments and improvements

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