

Chapter 8

Child Labor: A Child Development Perspective

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Introduction

Child labor is identified as a global issue that impacts child developmental paths to health and well-being into adulthood (Otis, Pusztor, & McFadden, 2001; Woolf, 2002). Childhood is a time to explore and learn various developmental tasks and other aspects of life that are necessary for the progression toward adulthood. In this new century, the global incidence of child labor is 13.7 % for children aged 5 through 14 years (ILC, 2006). This statistic is true for developing and developed countries and across diverse socioeconomic groups (Basu & Zarghamee, 2009; Hurst, 2007). The International Labour Organization (ILO) has estimated that there are 250 million child laborers (5–14 years old) worldwide, with more than 120 million working full time. Working children aged 5–14 years old are mostly concentrated in Asia and Africa, with 61 % full-time working children in Asia and 37 % in Africa with the highest incidence in sub-Saharan Africa. However, legally employed child workers are not uncommon in developed countries (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2000; Pollack & Landrigan, 1990; Wihstutz, 2007). For instance, it is estimated that 5.5 million youth were employed in the United States from 1997 to 2001.

In the research on child labor, there has been a recognition of the importance of child labor on child development and its effects on familial and national economics. Children may provide 25 % or more of a family's total income and many traditional and contemporary cultures include child labor as an integral part of the child's socialization and achievement of status in the local community (Psacharopoulos, 1997). In some cases, governments may regard child labor as a key factor in keeping

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their economy competitively viable through the provision of cheap labor for commercial interests (Robson, 2004). Reorganizing the understanding of economic contributions of child laborers has been influential in uniformly treating all child economic activities and it has allowed for more empirical evidence to be used to support and advocate for the rights of the child.

The definition of childhood varies across different socioeconomic and societal beliefs. Recently, research has begun to differentiate among a critical set of meaning labels when it comes to children and work, including differentiating between “child labor” and “working children,” “unconditional” and “unresolved” worst forms of child labor. Also, efforts have been made to seek diverse and reliable evidence of the effects of child labor on children’s successful transition into adulthood (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; Hungerland, Liebel, Milne, & Wihstutz, 2007; Woodhead, 2004). A number of studies have reached a more inclusive view on gains and losses of child labor while arguing that not all child labor is by definition harmful to children (McKechnie & Hobbs, 1996; Robson, 2004). Furthermore, researchers have argued that cultural and social circumstances ought to be taken into account in determining well-being of the child laborer and specific claims about outcomes of child labor have to be made with careful investigation (Baland & Robinson, 2000; Entwisle et al., 2000; Woodhead, 2004). The invisible nature of child labor and unreported child laborers as migrant and seasonal farm workers, domestic workers, or workers in sweatshops and on the streets suggest great challenges to defining and quantifying physical, economic, and psychosocial outcomes of child labor (Hurst, 2007; Ide & Parker, 2005; Levison & Murray-Close, 2005).

Definitions

Differentiating “child labor” from “child work” could avoid some debates over theoretical explanations of child labor. “Child work” or “economically active children” includes all children under the age of 18 working more than 1 h per week in paid or unpaid work, on a casual or regular basis, legal or illegal; “child labor” implies any economic activity undertaken by children under the minimum age for admission to employment, as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) *Minimum Age Convention*, 1973 (No. 138). However, the concept of “child labor” encompasses “children in hazardous work,” a category defined as “children working in any activity or occupation that, by its nature or type, has or leads to adverse effects on the child’s safety, health and moral development as described in ILO *Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention* 182”. The ILO report stated that of the 166 million child laborers under the age of 15, 74 million were engaged in hazardous work. Worst forms are practices such as child slavery, forced labor, debt bondage, trafficking, serfdom, prostitution, pornography, and various forms of work that is hazardous to a child’s health, safety, and moral being. Woodhead (2004) made two distinct categories of the worst forms identified by *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child Article 32* and *ILO Convention 182* as a scientific issue.

First, the “unconditional” worst forms, such as all forms of bondage, trafficking, child soldiers, and use of children in prostitution and illicit activities, violate basic human rights and they are subjects of international and regional child protection law. Secondly, the “unresolved” worst forms are conditioned by the probability that harm will result and are not necessarily human rights issues (Woodhead, 2004).

General Effects of Child Labor

Despite challenges to quantify the number of children working around the world and developmental outcomes of child labor, significant efforts have been made to examine the link between child labor and the long-term well-being of working children in many countries. Research has recognized both benefits and risks of child labor as well as the heterogeneous nature of the outcomes of child labor. Woodhead (2004) acknowledged that child labor provides children and their families with both economic and psychosocial rewards. The International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour (2002) and other researchers from the working children movement also hold a view that there is a positive link between child labor and certain psychosocial gains, which reiterates the need to weigh risks against benefits. Those benefits include preparing working children with the skills and attitudes needed in the future as responsible adults and workers, within their cultural and societal setting; for example, a sense of responsibility, independence, accomplishment, discipline, and teamwork are a few of the learned behaviors thought to be garnered (Hungerland et al., 2007; Pollack & Landrigan, 1990). The 2002 I.E. report argues that light work, when carefully monitored, can be an essential part of children’s socialization and development process, where they learn to take responsibility and gain pride in their own accomplishments (IPEC, 2002).

The majority of child labor studies have paid more attention to child labor that put children’s well-being at risk. For example, economists examining the economic loss of child labor have suggested that child labor is neither economical nor efficient in creating or increasing social capital and earning ability of children and families. Furthermore, child labor has a negative impact on adult earnings for working children even when controlling for schooling (Baland & Robinson, 2000; Emerson & Souza, 2007). Consistent with the concerns for the long-term social capital loss of child labor, efforts have been made to examine the relationship between child labor and school attendance, which leads to low human capital among working children whereby they are limited in their ability to connect and socialize with children as a part of the growth and development process (Jensen & Nielsen, 1997; Post, 2001). Although cautions have taken on simplified generalizations, more studies have contributed to establish a global policy that aims to end child labor based on risk outcomes of child labor. These studies have provided evidence from across regions and countries confirming that child labor, especially its “unresolved” worst forms, can impede a child’s education or harm the child’s health, safety, physical, mental, spiritual, moral, and social development. Most of

the available empirical evidence suggests that inappropriate manual labor exposes children to injury and to poisoning from chemicals such as solvents, pesticides, metals, caustic agents used on the job, fumes and dust, and other toxic, work-related by-products (Ambadekar, Wahab, Zodpey, & Khandai, 1999; Woolf, 2002). In addition to the negative effects on immediate and long-term physical development and health, children at work are also vulnerable to anemia, fatigue, early initiation of tobacco smoking, and other mental health and behavioral health problems (Woodhead, 2004; Woolf, 2002).

Differing from predominant child labor literature, this chapter will focus on child development perspectives rather than on the causes of child labor. Special attention will be given to the distribution of child labor and the physical, behavioral, and social developmental effects of the worst forms of child labor, especially the “unresolved” worst forms, on children and adolescents.

The Distribution of Child Labor

To articulate health effects of child labor, it is essential to specify the circumstances in which child labor may negatively affect children’s development and to identify the distribution and different types of child labor carried out by children in the world (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005). The ILO’s SIMPOC estimates that a total of 8.4 million children are involved in child trafficking, forced or bonded labor, as soldiers, prostitutes, pornography, or participated in other illicit activities.

Although formal “unconditional” worst forms of child labor and children working in sweatshop, run-down factories, and construction projects have received great international attention, the informal sector of child labor has the highest incident rate with “parents as the number one employer of children” (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005). ILO defined the informal sector as either self-employed workers and their unpaid family members or workers in very small business, apprentices, contract labor, home workers, and paid domestic workers. Child farm workers and domestic child workers are examples of the most prominent hidden child labor in the informal sector globally (Baron, 2005; Zenaida & Camacho, 1996).

Farm Work

Farm work is the dominant form of child labor (O’Donnell, Rosati, & van Doorslaer, 2005). It is estimated that over 65–70 % of working children are engaged in family-based work, mainly farm work (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; O’Donnell et al., 2005). These children’s school schedule is worked around the planting and harvesting time which puts them at high risk for chemical contamination and increases the likelihood that they will be illiterate and will not complete school beyond the primary level. These children are most likely to sustain pesticide exposure, musculoskeletal

trauma, and other injuries that are common health consequences of farm work (McKnight & Spiller, 2005; Pugh, Pienkowski, & Gorczyca, 2000). According to the ILO 2006 report, children in hazardous forms of child labor count for approximately 53 % of all working children in 2000 and farm work was identified as being one of the most hazardous forms of child labor, with one in eight child workers suffering illness or injury (Cooper et al., 2005).

Domestic Work

Using the ILO's SIMPOC data, Edmonds and Pavcnik (2005) suggest that almost 65 % of children aged 5–14 report participation in domestic work within the household (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005). The authors also found that three subgroups had the highest participation rates of domestic work: older children aged 10–14, girls, and children in rural areas. As domestic workers, girls are more likely to work longer hours than boys because of the nature of domestic work performed by girls such as laundry, cooking, cleaning, and providing care to children at various ages.

Children also perform domestic work outside of their own household as care providers (for children and relatives) and more girls than boys provide kinship care. Robson (2004) documented that rural children in Zimbabwe were withdrawn from school and brought to the city to do unpaid domestic work, including care for ailing relatives. The author argues that child caregiving in Zimbabwe is a largely hidden and unappreciated aspect of national economies which is growing as an outcome of conservative macroeconomic policies and the advancement of the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Camacho (1999) interviewed 50 child migrants who worked as waged domestic workers in Metro Manila, Philippines. They reported that domestic work was imperative for them and contributed to their family economic benefit and stability.

Another group that is often mentioned in child labor literature is the “street child.” It is important to clarify that “street child” is not a type of child labor, although there are an estimated 100 million street children who are among the working children worldwide (Judson, 1994). Rather, it is a living condition that some working children have in terms of their relationship with their family or lack of care and protection from responsible adults. Homelessness leads to many health risks of street children ranging from violence to drug use which ultimately leads to their involvement in various unsafe work environments (Baron, 2005).

The Developmental Effects

Research has recognized that the health consequences of child labor are heterogeneous as a result of the diverse forms of child labor, circumstances, the child's age and health, and other key variables and characteristics of children. Although available evidence cannot establish a clear-cut conclusion about developmental effects of child

labor, an extended body of research indicates that child labor actually or potentially has caused multiple physical illnesses and psychosocial problems among children (Ambadekar et al., 1999; Woodhead, 2004; Woolf, 2002). The World Health Organization (1984) indicated that child labor involving exposure to chemicals has a negative effect on the growth and development of children. These negative effects include increased muscular and skeletal disorders, higher incidence of respiratory and gastrointestinal diseases, poorer nutritional status, lower hemoglobin levels, more frequent headaches, fatigue, vision problems, lower average height and weight than children in a control group, and behavioral problems (McKnight & Spiller, 2005; WHO, 1984; Woodhead, 2004). In many cases, these illnesses are left untreated or improperly treated for years. Ultimately, the children are left to face a lifetime of physical and mental problems that impede their ability to strive to their potential.

Physical Development

A number of empirical studies have examined physical development effects of labor on participants working at a young age. A cross-sectional study in Jordan suggests that the length of time that children have been working and low monthly income have a detrimental effect on growth (BMI for age) of working boys, independent of the effects of low household per capita income and small maternal stature (Hawamdeh & Spencer, 2003). Ambadekar et al. (1999) also observed deleterious effects of child labor on the growth of children measured by BMI as a part of their research in India. Using longitudinal data from the Vietnam Living Standards Survey 1992–1998, O'Donnell et al. (2005) found mixed results: while there was no evidence that work impedes the growth of the child, individuals working during this childhood period were significantly more likely to report illness up to 5 years later even after controlling for a range of individual-, household-, and community-level variables as well as for unobservable variables of past work and current illness. Another aspect of child development stifled by child labor is genital development. A cross-sectional study in India showed that genital development was significantly delayed in male child laborers (Ambadekar et al., 1999). Furthermore, emerging research on farm work shows that working children and adolescents are experiencing injuries and illnesses including musculoskeletal disorders, fractures, acute and chronic toxic exposures, significant disease and disability, sprains, strains, lacerations to the head, eye injuries, rashes, and coughing (Fassa, Facchini, Dall'Agnol, & Christiani, 2005; Ide & Parker, 2005; Mull & Kirkhorn, 2005). Currently, empirical evidence suggests that inappropriate manual labor exposes children to injury and to poisoning from chemicals such as solvents, pesticides, metals, and caustic agents used on the job, to fumes and dust, and other toxic work-related by-products that lead to numerous incidents of accidents and injuries (Ambadekar et al., 1999; Woolf, 2002). Baron (2005) reports that 68 % of 584 injured children in Mexico were injured while working; the most frequent types of work-related injuries were extremely traumatic and severe. In addition to the negative effects on immediate and long-term physical development and

health, children at work are also vulnerable to numerous physical ailments such as anemia, fatigue, early initiation of tobacco smoking, and other mental health and behavioral health problems (Woodhead, 2004; Woolf, 2002).

In recent years, special attention has been given to chronic effects of toxic environmental exposures for child laborers (Landrigan & Garg, 2002; Mull & Kirkhorn, 2005). For example, McKnight and Spiller (2005) called attention to the green tobacco sickness (GTS), a nicotine poisoning associated with tobacco farming; this is now listed in the North American Guidelines for Children's Agricultural Tasks list. From a scientific perspective, Bearer (1995) provides the scientific foundational knowledge for the awareness of vulnerability of children to toxic environmental exposures. From a child development perspective, Bearer (1995) explains that the reason children are more vulnerable to toxic environmental exposures than adults is because children are different from adults in the ways they are exposed to environmental contamination and the ways they react to environmental health hazards. These differences can be attributed to the growth and maturation children's organs are undergoing and the corresponding greater vulnerability and organ health risk they experience. These organ differences also provide a knowledge foundation for understanding the differences between children and adults. Lead accumulates twice as fast in children's bones than in adult bones and the occupational limit for exposure to lead for children is six times lower than for adults (Barry, 1975; Bearer, 1995). According to Bearer (1995), such effects of a hazardous work environment on working children include poor growth, diminished intelligence quotient (IQ), precocious puberty, and diminished lung capacity. Hurst also (2007) suggests that this occupational health hazard can have more devastating and long-lasting consequences for children than adults.

Cognitive Development

Research shows that child labor has affected working children's school attainment and performance, neurobehavioral performance, motor intelligence, and memory. Several studies have documented a negative correlation between working and grade advancement, years of completed education, and test scores. Based on household surveys in Bolivia and Venezuela, Latin America, Psacharopoulos (1997) discovered that child labor reduced the child's educational attainment by about 2 years of schooling compared to the control group of nonworking children.

Child labor is also closely associated with grade repetition (Beegle, Dehejia, & Gatti, 2006). Orazem and Gunnarsson (2004) found that third and fourth graders in Latin America who attend school but never worked in the market or engaged in domestic work perform 28 % better on mathematics tests and 19 % better on language tests than children who attend school and work. Heady (2003) examined a dataset from the Ghana Living Standards Survey (GLSS) and suggested that work outside the household has a substantial effect on learning achievement in the key areas of reading and mathematics.

Several studies have paid more attention to other aspects of cognitive developmental effects of child labor. For example, Woodhead (2004) found that when work situations are marked by extreme deprivation, lack of stimulation, or mundane and repetitive activities, children's general development and spatial, motor, and verbal intelligence are likely to be seriously impaired. Consistent with Woodhead's findings, studies on hazardous child labor have begun to explore the cognitive developmental effects of child labor.

After having reviewed available empirical studies on hazardous child labor among children aged 6–15 in Ecuador and Manila, Philippines, Ide and Parker (2005) linked hazardous child labor to IQ decline and lifetime earning loss. The authors argued that child lead exposure is associated with decreases in IQ and a subsequent percent decrease in lifetime earnings, as the result of the IQ decline. Saddik, Williamson, Nuwayhid, and Black (2005) interviewed 300 male children aged 10–17 in Lebanon using a standardized questionnaire and found that solvent-exposed working children performed significantly worse than the nonexposed working children and school children on the motor dexterity and memory test.

Social Development

Child labor research has recently begun to explore outcomes related to social development. Robson (2004) found that child caregivers lost touch with their friends and withdrew from peer activities because their experiences meant they did not have much in common with their peer group or because they have moved away to care for ailing relatives or paid care work. Woodhead's (2004) work support the findings that children are more likely at risk when they are not psychologically supported by personal social networks. They may be deprived of core experiences that are considered to be a necessary part of normal childhood within the community, schooling, for example. Increasingly, a large and growing number of children globally migrate in order to find work, especially female domestic workers (Camacho, 1999; Robson, 2004). It is critical to emphasize the importance of age-appropriate personal social networks for social development of working children, especially migrant child workers, and homeless street children. Working children may face new situations, new sets of relationships, new daily patterns, and social stimulation. Meanwhile, they may be disoriented by the sudden loss of familiar settings, cultural routines, and social practices, as Woodhead (2004) observed. Personal social networks of migrant working children are commonly disrupted when they are separated from parents, siblings, other family members, and peer groups, in many cases, without a regular contact channel. Woodhead (2004) points out that although child labor can be both an asset and a hazard to children's well-being, the disrupted social networks greatly threaten working children's psychological adjustment and social integration. This argument is supported by the child development framework developed by Cochran and Brassard (1979).

Table 8.1 Woodhead psychosocial effects of child labor

Major psychosocial hazards	Major negative psychosocial effects
Breakdown of social networks	Delayed development, narrow range
Disruptions to familiar surroundings	of cognitive, technical and communication
Monotonous or inappropriate activities	skills maladaptive for future prospects
Neglect, emotional, physical or sexual abuse	Insecurity, inhibition, low social confidence, conflictual relationships
Isolation from peers, bullying, stigmatization	Social exclusion or rejection, deviant or antisocial behavior
Working conditions/workload, accidents and toxins	Feelings of worthlessness, fear of failure, self-denigration, negative social compari- sons, shame, stigma
Insecurity, exploitation, powerlessness	Learned helplessness, external locus
Unreasonable parental expectations, collusion with employers	of control, hopelessness, apathy, fatalism, feelings of confusion, betrayal, abandonment
Incompatibility of work vs. school demands	Stress, trauma, fear, anxiety, depression, anger, distress, despair, disturbed sleep and eating, substance abuse, self-harm
Acute poverty, political/social upheaval	

From Woodhead (2004). Psychosocial impacts of child work: A framework for research, monitoring and intervention. *International Journal of Children's Rights*, 12, 321–377

Behavioral and Emotional Development

Recently, research has emphasized not only the physical threats of child labor (O'Donnell et al., 2005) but also its behavioral and emotional consequences for children (Safron, Schulenberg, & Bachman, 2001; Woodhead, 2004). From a child development perspective, working children can be exposed to hazards in many settings. Robson (2004) indicated that child caregivers may be at extreme emotional risk. These children may mature fairly quickly and may also suffer extreme loss and bereavement without appropriate intervention as a consequence of their current situation. Woodhead (2004) systematically outlined major psychosocial hazards and major negative psychosocial effects of child labor, as shown in Table 8.1.

Woodhead (2004) argues that family-based work, either farm work or domestic work, can strengthen personal identity. It is a primary source of emotional security, socialization, learning, and sense of loyalty. At the individual level, psychosocial effects of child labor vary with age, type of work, number of work hours, health status, and social and psychological resources. Most children have the sociocultural, psychological, and health resources to cope with new roles and routines without serious development risk. For others, initiation into work means a dramatic upheaval in the psychosocial systems that support their general development and well-being. In spite of children's resilience and cultural values, working children may be at risk especially when they face extreme or unstable patterns of change and/or multiple stressful adversities. They may be at risk for emotional, physical, and sexual abuse from parents, teachers, and police, as well as from employers. The nature of the informal sector isolates working children from public scrutiny and posits them as

a special risk for exploitation and abuse. In their hazardous child labor study in Lebanon, Saddik et al. (2005) found evidence to support the argument that hazardous work environments also contributed to harmful behavioral and emotional consequences. They found that solvent-exposed working children aged 10–17 were more angry and confused than nonworking children in comparison peer groups. Pollack and Landrigan (1990) stated that child labor can encourage antisocial and risk-taking behavior.

American child labor research has shown a special interest in the link between child labor and problem behavior, mainly substance use. Three national representative longitudinal studies are noticed in this article. Safron et al. (2001) drew data from the “Monitoring the Future” project to examine the relationship between adolescent part-time intensity and substance use. The study supports the argument that work intensity is associated with drug use and physical health behaviors. Bachman, Safron, Sy, and Schulenberg (2003) looked at interrelations among American adolescents’ educational engagement, desired and actual school-year employment, substance use, and other problem behaviors as a part of a longitudinal study. The findings suggest that employment preferences are correlated with educational disengagement and problem behaviors and that those who prefer to work long hours tend to be more likely than their average counterpart to use cigarettes, alcohol, and marijuana. Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth (NLSY) of the USA, Paternoster, Bushway, Brame, and Apel (2001) also found a positive relationship between intensive adolescent work and antisocial behavior, but this relationship disappeared after controlling for observed and unobserved heterogeneity.

In short, researchers have presented the argument that child labor has actual or potential benefits and/or risks to a child’s health, survival, and development. From a child development perspective, physical, social, behavioral, and emotional risks may impact children’s health and well-being in the short, medium, or long term. The extent of the developmental effect depends on their characteristics and experiences such as age, gender, health status, social resource, and type of child labor as well as environmental characteristics and protection such as economic conditions, available child welfare policy, and particular chemical exposure protection within their societal context.

Research Gaps

Research on child labor and its developmental effects has made progress over the past two decades as national and international attention has been given to this issue across the globe. The goal to eliminate all of the worst forms of child labor by 2016 and the emerging working children movement are few examples about this progress (Hungerland et al., 2007). In order to actualize all children’s development potential and eliminate all of the worst forms of child labor, research has to emerge in terms of giving children a voice and an outlet to be heard around the world by conducting more scientifically rigorous studies that fulfill current research gaps.

Table 8.2 Empirical studies of developmental effects of child labor

References	Location	Data	Effect
Ambadekar et al. (1999)	India	Cross-sectional	Negative in growth
Bagley (1999)	Canada & Philippines	Cross-sectional	
Baron (2005)	Mexico	Cross-sectional	Negative in injuries
Camacho (1999)	Manila	Cross-sectional	
Castro, Gormly, and Ritualo (2005)	Phillippines	Cross-sectional	Negative in injury incident
Chapman, Newenhouse, Meyer, Karsh, Taveira, and Miquelon (2003)	USA	Cross-sectional	Negative in injury incident
Cortez, Barbieri, Saraiva Mda, Bettiol, da Silva, and Cardoso (2007)	Brazil	Cross-sectional	
Entwisle et al. (2000)	USA	Cross-sectional	Positive on later high school work
Fassa et al. (2005)	Brazil	Cross-sectional	
Hawamdeh and Spencer (2003)	Jordan	Cross-sectional	Negative on growth
Heady (2003)	Ghana	Cross-sectional	Negative on learning achievement
Mull and Kirkhorn (2005)	Ghana	Cross-sectional	Negative in injuries
Robson (2004)	Zimbabwe	Cross-sectional	Mixed in social development
Saddik et al. (2005)	USA?	Cross-sectional	Negative on neuro-behavioral performance, memory, & motor
Safron et al. (2001)	USA	Cross-sectional	Negative on substance use
Uddin, Hamiduzzaman, and Gunter (2009)	Bandladesh	Cross-sectional	
Emerson and Souza (2007)	Brazil	Longitudinal	
Bachman, Safron, Sy, and Schulenberg (2003)	USA	Longitudinal	Negative on problem behavior
O'Donnell et al. (2005)	Vietnam	Longitudinal	Illness up to 5 years later
Patemoster, Bushway, Brame, and Apel (2001)	USA	Longitudinal	

Table 8.2 shows 20 empirical studies that contribute to the current knowledge on developmental effects of child labor. It highlights three research gaps: (1) Research is over-concentrated in developing countries. Only 32.5 % of studies were conducted in developed countries and the majority of studies (67.5 %) were in developing countries. Child labor is not solely a poverty issue or phenomenon that only happens in developing countries. Little has been revealed about health and well-being of child migrant farm workers in the United States as well as their counterparts in other parts of the world. Furthermore, usually hidden within studies is the number of children who are caring for a physically ill parent/relative or those who

are actually caring for siblings because of parents that suffer from alcohol and/or substance abuse or mental illness. (2) Research is dominated by Western concepts and frameworks of child development (Nsamenang, 2010). Few studies challenged universal child rights and universal features of child development, needs, and well-being. (3) Evidence is overwhelmingly drawn by cross-sectional studies with a lack of longitudinal data to establish the relationship between child labor and child development from a global perspective. The majority of studies (80 %) draw conclusions from cross-sectional data. Among the four longitudinal studies listed, only two were conducted in the United States. These three points provide a new platform for research and policy development that takes a more inclusive perspective for understanding and changing the issues that cause children to participate in various forms of child labor. Ultimately, this approach would move the dialogue from a developing country problem to a more global issue that would benefit us all by increasing children's opportunity to be children and develop into active and engaging adults.

Conclusion

Available evidence has recognized the multifold contributions of working children and the diverse contexts of child labor as well as multiple developmental effects of child labor. This conclusion has important implications for a wide range of appropriate interventions and policy. These include sociocultural approaches to child development, reopening public conversations about child labor across disciplinary boundaries, and advocacy for child-centered, culturally sensitive child labor policy.

Rogoff (1990) proposed an inclusive child development theory almost 20 years ago. For child labor studies, diverse conditions of child labor indicate that the goal of child development includes but goes beyond skills in academic activities such as formal operational reasoning and scientific, mathematical, and literate practices. Rogoff (1990) also states that each skill is an asset for the community of a child and constitutes local goals of development. A scientifically sound child labor study shall value any goals and skills valued by the community of the child. In accordance with Rogoff's work, Woodhead (2004) states that working children's multiple potential intelligences are shaped by the contexts of their development, the opportunities that are available to them, and the skills valued by their community considered appropriate in relation to their age, gender, ethnicity, and social status. The sociocultural approach of child development fits within and across various social science disciplines. These perspectives are needed to garner a better understanding about child labor that can ultimately change the outcome for millions of children globally who are working daily to scarcely survive.

The hope for the end of child labor does not eliminate the severity of child labor. Unfortunately, international human rights protection organizations, especially the child-rights abuse protection community, face extreme challenges to end child labor. Since 2004, research shows that 13.9 % of children are involved in child labor

and 8.1 % in hazardous work, while at the same time, several nations have not ratified Convention No. 138 and the Convention No. 182, respectively. Among them, the United States has not ratified either the United Nation Convention on the Rights of the Child 1990 (UNCRC) or Convention No. 138. In the first 18 months of his presidency, President Obama's administration has begun to play a role in looking at the UNCRC and Convention No. 138 as part of a growing effort to begin multidisciplinary discussion on this issue.

A call for social workers and other human services practitioners and researchers to reengage in child labor elimination nationally and internationally has been articulated since 1999, but child labor stays outside of the scope of child welfare and child protection (Otis et al., 2001). Within the United States, social work fails to recognize the issue of child labor and to protect child laborers from economic exploitation and child-rights violations. A change in the structure of child welfare and child protection services is the first step to take child labor into consideration in the development and implementation of child welfare policy and child protection services that could be used beyond the United States from a sociocultural appropriations perspective.

Cultural appropriation stresses the reorganization of cultural factors associated with child labor as important determinates of child labor (Weston, 2005), without simplifying all cultural practices and traditions. It not only involves identifying the harmful developmental effects of child labor but also the engagement of various stakeholders who encourage the necessity of child labor for the family and the child's survival, development, and dignity. Therefore, studies that reflect a culturally appropriate perspective may provide more insight into this phenomenon that highlights the similarities within and across ethnic, tribal, and racial community groups through various societal structures. From this stance, as a global community, we will likely help to create a unified global voice to address this issue while creating better outcomes for children. Ultimately, they are our future; we can assist in building a strong future by ensuring that they have an equal opportunity to develop and thrive.

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