



Original Article

## Effects of Child Labour on School Attendance in Muheza District, Tanzania

Asha Kitambazi<sup>1\*</sup> & Dr. Reginald Lyamuya, PhD<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Jordan University College, P. O. Box 1878, Morogoro, Tanzania.

\* Author for Correspondence ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7884-9579>; Email: [ashakitambazi8@gmail.com](mailto:ashakitambazi8@gmail.com)

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The research study investigates the effects of child labour on school attendance in Muheza district, Tanga region in Tanzania. The specific objectives guiding the study were: to explore people's awareness of child labour, to identify the causes of child labour, and to find out the effects of child labour on school progress. The study employed a mixed approach whereby both qualitative and quantitative data were used. The sample size of this study is 112 respondents. The sample size of this study is 112 respondents through questionnaires and interviews. Interviews and questionnaires were used to collect the data and the data were analysed qualitatively through content analysis and quantitatively analysed with the help of the computer using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 16 and instrument reliability test by using the Spearman-Brown Prophecy technique. The study findings show that poor learning concentration due to stress and fatigue, low-grade performance and missing tests and examinations are among the major effects on children with irregular school attendance. The findings also revealed that dropping out from school and truancy are other effects on students, especially those who engage in child labour. It is also said that some victims engage in crimes in the streets and the girls get early pregnancies due to unplanned engagement in early sexual practices. Apart from that, it was also reported that they are affected in their health and get depressed. The findings on the causes of child labour revealed that poverty of the family and family members was said to be the major cause of children engaging in child labour. Other causes mentioned by the respondents include domestic violence, poor implementation of laws, lack of legal responsibility of parents and school-based violence. Other causes revealed included the death of the parents, illiterate parents, lack of parental care for the children as well as poor school facilities that do not attract the children to stay at school and instead decide to engage in child labour. The respondents declined the fact that traditional practices are among the causes of children engaging in child labour. In light of the presented findings, it was recommended that the parents should be highly engaged in the students learning process. The government should also have statistics that can help to plan for interventions to help those children who are involved in child labour.

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## INTRODUCTION

The researcher of this work tries to assume that early child development sets the foundation for lifelong learning, behaviour, and healthy people. The experiences children have in early childhood shape the brain and the child's capacity to learn, get along with others, and respond to daily stresses and challenges (McCain & Shanker, 2007). The researcher is aware that children are among the vulnerable groups which need special care and protection in order to nurture and develop their potential, both physically and mentally. The actualisation of a child's potentiality and capability depends much on the learning process. It is widely accepted that the learning process is instrumental in shaping one's personality and the way he/she deals with situations in life (Sharma, 2016). The learning process involves specific principles. These principles of learning include readiness, exercise, effect, primacy, recency, intensity, freedom, observation of participation, repetition, relevance, transference, and feedback principle (IeduNote, 2022).

The adults and community at large are obliged by virtue of their age and reasoning to make sure that the rights of the children are well protected and preserved, even before the government intervenes. It is estimated that about 800 million children live in

fragile and conflict-affected areas where child rights are often denied and childhood is stolen by abuse, exploitation, and slavery (World Vision, 2022). Every adult within the community ought to be responsible for the protection of the children in its fullness to make them free from violence, poverty, and exploitation.

It seems that there are various factors in which the communities in different places, whether knowingly or unknowingly involved directly or indirectly in the violation of children's rights. Violation of children's rights is a critical global problem in both developed and developing countries. Children face ongoing violations of their rights worldwide, including poverty, violence against children in all its forms as well as discrimination against girls, children born outside of wedlock, children with disabilities and migrants, asylum seeking, stateless, and refugee children (Chavez, 2017).

However, violation of children's rights has kept changing and advancing because outside and through mass media, it seems that students, especially secondary students attend schools and all their rights are observed, but in reality, they are facing violence. Some African traditions still encourage female genital mutilation, and some communities lack access to clean water; hence children become the main people to fetch water

before going to school. Some children are recruited as mercenaries or night-gang robbers so as to get money to sustain their school fees or basic school requirements. Some girls are situationally forced to engage in sexual acts in order to get money for transport or buying food at school, and some children lack access to health care. These factors cause them not to attend school properly.

It is obviously observed that all countries in Africa and in a total of 196 countries in world committed themselves to the protection of the rights of all children. Adults have the duty and responsibility of making sure that children access human rights. Adults themselves have to make sure that there is a general way of acceptance of children's rights to provision and protection. UNCRC is the underlying philosophy of many policies and protocols in education, family support, child protection and early childhood (Jewell, 2015).

This means that not only that the Children's rights depend on the adults, but also the government depends much on the nature of its people in order to establish and implement the conventions and laws. There is always a link between law and morality, law and human rights, and sometimes morality and human rights. It seems that in some societies, people observe laws or human rights simply under the fear of punishments from the government because there is a relationship between crime and punishment towards the influence of the behaviour of people in any society (Gertz & Gould, 1995). They are not doing justice for the sake of justice, morality for the sake of morality nor good for the sake of good. The government or UN agencies become watchdogs to the people. We can here affirm that the success of the implementation of children's rights in any country is supposed to be a task of everyone, while the government, UN agencies, and non-governmental organisations become the stakeholders.

There are many challenges which are facing the implementation of children's rights such as the right

to health, education, family life, play and recreation, an adequate standard of living, and to be protected from abuse and harm. They are mainly caused by third parties (adults). The third-party (adults) faces the following; lack of awareness, strong traditions and beliefs, lack of morality, destitution (absolute poverty), political instability (wars, refugees, and dictatorial governments), natural calamities (flood, hunger, diseases such as HIV/AIDS), and so forth. Even if the laws or conventions are attempted to be implemented by the governments, UN agencies, and non-governmental organisations, still the efforts will end up in vain. They will fail due to the fact that the basis of the reception of those rights is the adults who are already impaired. As a result, the children are facing the problems of female genital mutilation, lack of access to clean water, child soldiers, lack of access to education, child labour and forced marriage, and lack of access to health care, killing and maiming of children, recruitment, attacks on schools or hospitals, rape, or other grave sexual violence, abduction of children and denial of humanitarian access for children such as denial of food and shelter.

Early childhood development sets the foundation for a child's learning and wellbeing throughout life. It is very important to consider this early phase of human development because it affects people in their adulthood and society as a whole; hence the development of the country is weakened when children are not taken care of from their early childhood (Kouame, 2019). In many countries, this has been the contrary. The number of 15 to 17-year-old youth labourers has significantly increased within the last four years (from 52 to 62 million worldwide). The latest global estimates indicate that the number of children who involved themselves in child labour has increased to 160 million worldwide; 63 million are girls, and 97 million are boys (UNICEF/ILO Joint Publication, 2021). However, one of the basic children's rights is the right to education, but due to the involvement of the child in labour, this becomes one of the obstacles to

universal education as well as achieving Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Society and children themselves participate in child labour which results in irregular school attendance.

### Statement of the Problem

Child labour has been among the social challenges facing children worldwide, specifically in developing countries including Tanzania. Despite apparent progress on reforming the education system in Tanzania, the issue of child labour and how it affects attendance at the secondary school level remains uncertain. In a similar manner, Child labour in the Muheza district seems to be highly practised, but its magnitude has not yet been determined. It appears that child labour happens when parents cannot meet children's basic needs such as food, clothing, personal effects and learning materials; hence students are likely to engage in child labour instead of going to school.

In Muheza rural areas, the problem is more highly experienced than in urban areas because geographically, Muheza district is considered to be one of the most potential areas for agricultural activities in the Tanga region. Agricultural activities create demand for labour in preparing farms, digging, planting, harvesting, and selling crops. Due to the high demand for labour, children become the only simple alternative to the challenge. Children become employed or engage themselves in orange, cassava, tea, and sisal plantations. They also involve in various activities such as digging, weeding, harvesting, domestic activities and carrying cargo for long hours per day without considering their basic human rights, such as the right to schooling.

However, the empirical observation shows not only children participate in agricultural activities but also in other activities such as motorcycle transport activities (bodaboda), street vendors (machinga), fishing, motor garage mechanics, music entertainers (Dj), day workers in building houses (saidia fundi)

and brick making, carpentry and part-time domestic work (Dili).

Therefore, if the children engage in child labour at school-going age, it means that they have no time to attend school and automatically, their schooling is disturbed and interfered with due to the irregularities encountered. Hence, this study investigates the extent to which child labour impacts school attendance, eventually affecting students' academic performance in secondary schools and in the long run, produces many effects on the students, community, and country as well.

The researcher is moved to do research in Muheza secondary schools and not on primary or university level because when the students are at primary level, the parents or guardians are tided by the laws of the government to make sure that pupils are attending school. When students join secondary schools, students themselves feel that they have grown up and parents have no direct command over them. Students who are at the secondary level, in their adolescence, are able to formulate the reasons for not going to school. They pretend as if they are sick or they have the freedom to decide which is the best way of life for themselves instead of schooling. This research aims at finding a way out in solving the challenges associated with this stage. The researcher believes that if this stage of schooling is stabilised for most students, students will acquire the appropriate knowledge and help them to build a character of intellectualisation, which it will help them when joining college or university level.

Therefore, if the children engage in child labour at school-going age, it means that they have no optimum time to attend school and automatically, their schooling progress is disturbed and interfered with due to irregularities encountered. The aim of this study is to investigate the extent to which child labour affects school attendance and in the long run, produces many effects on the students, community, and country as well.

## THE TERMS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY

### Understanding of a Child

A definition of a child differs in different forms, biologically, legally, and socially. In the biological sciences, a child is usually defined as a person between birth and puberty or between the developmental period of infancy and puberty. Legally the term child may refer to anyone below the age of majority or some other age limit. Cambridge English dictionary defines a child as a boy or girl from the time of birth until he or she is an adult. The Oxford English dictionary defines a child as a young human being below the age of puberty or below the age of the legal majority (Revise Sociology, 2015).

Childhood is defined in different preconceived manners by different discourses. Thus, the categories defined by age such as infant, child, adolescent and so on, are not, to some extent, arbitrary divisions that are subject to the evolution in clinical, societal, ideological and political discourses (Plastow, 2015). Each society differs in defining a child depending on the environment of its own social construction of childhood, that is, to look at how children are seen and treated in other times and places than their own. For instance, child labour, child soldiers, and forced marriage. This means that there are so many societies which think that a child's age should be below 16-18 years (Revise Sociology, 2015).

For example, in the Masai tribe, the recruitment of males into the military or security purposes of the society is generally between fourteen and twenty years of age. At the age of about 30, they retire from Moran to junior elders (Encyclopaedia of Britannica, 2022). Whether or not both junior and senior military divisions existed within an age-set system, systems in each of the four groups divided their fighting men into two groups with separate functions, privileges, and uniforms. As military men, however, both groups were often required to

assist one another in the interests of society. In times of war or raiding, for example, the junior Moran of the Masai were required to act as suppliers and carriers for their seniors, who did the fighting. The seniors, on the other hand, were responsible for the proper military training of their juniors (Morton, 1979). This seems to be a violation of children's rights due to the fact that all children have the same rights and all the rights are connected, they are all equally important and they cannot be taken away from children (UNICEF, 2019).

When a child is categorised in a certain age group, it then follows their underlined rights and laws which protect them. The rights of a child can include family guidance as children development, life survival and development, contact with parents across countries, protection from violence, access to education, protection from harmful work, protection from harmful drugs, prevention of sale and trafficking, and protection from exploitation (UNCRC, 2014).

The laws protecting children under their described age also differ from country to country. In Tanzania, for instance, primary education is compulsory for children aged 7 to 14. Secondary education is divided into an ordinary secondary school and an advanced secondary school level. The ordinary secondary school level is intended for the 14-17 age group. In contrast, the advanced secondary school level is intended for the 18-20 age group (Nuffic, 2015). In 2016, the parliament made it illegal for anyone to marry primary and secondary school girls under any circumstance, the offender would be charged with 30 years jail terms (Tordoir, 2020).

This work is going to consider a child to the legal status of the country of Tanzania, that is any human being below the age of eighteen years, including all who are beyond the age of eighteen years but are protected by the law of Tanzania due to the fact that they are in schools (ordinary secondary school and an advanced secondary school). These students have an age which is beyond eighteen years, but



described under the law of Tanzania; they have their rights as students of secondary school; the society is not allowed to involve them in other social, political, and economic activities that are against their academic progress.

## **Labour**

Labour always indicates some kind of “mental” or “physical” exertion undertaken with a motive to earn money. Any effort or exertion undertaken for the sake of pleasure or social service is not considered labour. The work done by machines or animals is not “labour”. Prof. Marshall defined labour as the economic work of man, whether with hand or head. Thomas also defines labour as all human efforts of body or mind undertaken in expectation of a reward. Labour can be divided into two groups, physical labour and mental labour. Physical labour is that which the labourer has to undergo a great deal of physical exertion, such as cobbler, tailor, weaver, iron-smiths, land cultivation etc. Mental labour involves a lot of intellect of an individual such as doctors, accountants, teachers, etc.

Some scholars define labour as the amount of physical, mental, and social effort used to produce goods and services in an economy (Pacheco, Page & Webber, 2011). Labour can be categorised in many different ways. Mental labour can be considered in the line in which a person potentially performs on some tasks and how well his/her mental effort actually performs on that task (Kool & Botvinick, 2018). It is skilled labour when one can perform the task with a well-trained mental effort. In skilled labour, we consider much on the intensity of mental activity, which is always rational (Kool & Botvinick, 2018). People use skilled labour to increase payoffs or profit. It is considered unskilled when the mental effort is associated with negative utility (Kool & Botvinick, 2018). In this study, the most basic consideration is unskilled labour, which does not require training. Though it is usually manual labour, such as farm workers, it can

also be service work, such as custodial staff. It can also be semi-skilled labour, which may require some education or training. An example is manufacturing jobs. In return for their labour, workers receive a wage to buy the goods and services they do not produce themselves. Those without desired skills or abilities often get low wages. Many countries have a minimum wage to make sure their workers earn enough to cover the costs of living only (Amadeo, 2021).

Labour is connected to the development of the country. It is sometimes considered a market similar to that of goods, called the labour market. If the country has a good number of people who are professionals and experts in different areas, it has a higher opportunity of advancing in so many economic fields. Africa faces the problem of professionals and experts; hence it is difficult to make investments (UN & CAFRAD, 1998). People, in general, have their rights before and after employment such as wages being adequate, working hours being appropriate and having safety, health, and fundamental rights at work. Since labour is a business and people make a profit through fellow men, using them as the means to an end, the laws and policies of each country need to be sensitive in making sure that no one violates human rights. Special attention should be given to informal micro and small enterprises operating on the lower tiers of supply chains, where child labour and other human rights risks are often most pronounced, and fallout from the crisis has been particularly devastating (ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Children are not supposed to be employed as labour since they not only have their rights, but they are vulnerable people who can be used as the means to an end.

## **Child Labour**

We explained that a child is a young human being below the age of puberty or below the age of the legal majority. We added that in Tanzania, children who are in both primary and secondary school (ordinary secondary school and advanced secondary

school) are privileged by the law to bear the children's rights, even if their age is beyond 18 years. However, we described that labour means any kind of "mental" or "physical" exertion undertaken with a motive to earn money, for instance, the cultivation of cash crops. Hence, child labour does not mean all work done by children ought to be classified as child labour.

The participation of children or adolescents above the minimum age (below 18 years) for admission to employment in work that does not affect their health and personal development or interfere with their schooling is generally regarded as being something positive, for instance, fetching water home, cooking food, collection of firewood, housing keeping and other chores (Stuart, 2022). It is not something negative when the child is involved in activities such as assisting in a family business or earning pocket money outside school hours and during school holidays. Activities engaged in by children both stimulate and influence the pattern of the connection made between the nerve cells. This process influences the development of fine and growth motor skills, language, socialisation, personal awareness, emotional wellbeing, creativity, problem-solving and learning ability. The most role of activity done by children plays an important role in helping children to be active, make choices and practice to mastery. It helps children to have a wide variety of experiences with the content.

The term "child labour" is often defined as work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential, and their dignity and that is harmful to physical and mental development. It refers to work that: 1. is mentally, physically, socially, or morally dangerous and harmful to children; and/or; 2. Interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, obliging them to leave school prematurely, or requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work. Whether or not particular forms of "work" can be called "child labour" depends on the child's age, the type and hours of work performed,

the conditions under which it is performed, and the objectives pursued by individual countries. The answer varies from country to country, as well as among sectors within countries (ILO & IPEC, 2012). The worst forms of child labour that ILO mentions include children being enslaved, separated from their families, exposed to serious hazards and illnesses and/or left to feed themselves on the streets of large cities, especially often at a very early age. While child labour takes many different forms, a priority is made by the UN to try to eradicate the worst forms of child labour as defined by (Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182).

The seriously considered forms of child labour by the UN are as follows, slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom, and forced or compulsory labour. Secondly, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict. Thirdly, the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, to produce pornography or for pornographic performances. Fourthly, the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties. Fifthly, work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety, or morals of children (Article 3 of ILO Convention No. 182).

### **School**

A school is an educational institution designed to provide learning spaces and learning environments for the teaching of students (or pupils) under the direction of teachers. According to Fullan (2007) school is a community of active people where teachers in a classroom environment convey formal education to learners. A school therefore facilitates an easy and systematic transformation of knowledge. Schools, whether government or private schools are stakeholders in one way or another. Through schools, teachers are professionally trained to assist students or pupils acquire the target

knowledge. Schooling should be differentiated from any other training because training can be done in an informal way.

Most countries have systems of formal education, which is commonly compulsory. In these systems, students progress through a series of schools. The names for these schools vary by country but generally include primary school for young children and secondary school for teenagers who have completed primary education. Any school, whether primary or secondary, has an organised body structure. It does not depend on a single person. School leadership refers to the process of involving the application of management principles in designing, developing, and effecting resources towards the achievement of educational goals (Okumbe, 2001). In schools, there are curriculums and methods which are used.

### **School Attendance**

School attendance is the daily or regular learner participation in school activities (Gottfried, 2010). Through regular school attendance, learners get to access consistent educational support for their academic attainment (Oghuvbu, 2010). When a student attends school regularly, he/she obtains the foundation of his/her ability to receive education and the benefits that such education provides. The curriculums are planned to help the student grow academically stage by stage. School absenteeism,

for whatever reason, leads to a student's retardation. Epstein & Sheldon (2002) assert that regular school attendance is a commitment to classroom time and activities right from enrolment to finalisation of a full academic program. School attendance is an important factor that influences the academic performance of pupils. Irregular attendance is absence without permission, and there are many ways of determining such a situation, like checking the attendance class records (Martin, 1935). In general, irregular school attendance is a long series of short absences without reason or permission from the school authority.

### **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

The study aimed to investigate people's awareness of child labour and the causes of child labour among secondary school students and assess the effects of child labour on students' school progress in secondary school attendance. Data were collected from the students, teachers and Ward Education Officers using both questionnaires and interviews. The details of the findings are presented in the subsection below:

#### **Causes of Child Labour among Secondary School Students**

This objective was achieved through the question that was asked, which among the following are the most causes of child labour in your area?



**Table 1: Major Causes of Child Labour**

Major causes of child labour	Agree		Disagree		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Poverty	76	95	4	5	80	100
Domestic Violence	52	65	28	35	80	100
Poor implementation of laws	45	56.25	35	43.75	80	100
Lack of legal responsibility of parents	64	80.0	16	20.0	80	100
School violence	41	50.25	39	49.75	80	100
Death of parents	66	82.5	14	17.5	80	100
Illiterate of parents	42	52.5	38	47.5	80	100
Lack of parental care	63	78.75	17	21.25	80	100
Lack of school facilities	48	60.0	32	40.0	80	100
Traditional practice	26	32.5	54	67.5	80	100

**Source:** Field Data (2022)

Results in *Table 1* indicate that there are various causes of child labour that were rated by the respondents. Poverty was highly ranked by 76(95%). Only 5(5%) saw that poverty is not contributing to child labour. Results indicate further that; the death of parents is the most contributing factor to child labour after poverty. The respondents ranked it higher with 66(82.5%) who agreed that it is among the causes of child labour. However, there are 14(17.5%) respondents did not agree that the death of the parents can lead children to engage in child labour.

Moreover, the findings have indicated that the lack of legal responsibility of parents was ranked higher. About 64(80.0%) endorsed it, while 16(20.0%) did not recognise it as being among the causes. Other contributing factors were such as domestic violence endorsed by 52(65%), lack of school facilities with 48(60.0%) respondents, poor implementation of laws with 45(56.25%) respondents, illiterate parents with 42(52.5%) respondents and school-based violence with 41(50.25%) respondents. The last item had astonishing results, as indicated in *Table 1*. The respondents denied the fact that traditional practices are among the causes of child labour; about 54 (67.5%) respondents disagreed with such a statement. On the other side, about 26(32.5%) respondents agreed with the statement that traditional practices are among the causes of child labour. When they were asked about other causes of

child labour in their area, the respondents mentioned family conflict to be the major cause of child labour apart from what was mentioned in the questionnaire. Other causes given include family migration, separation of families, the desire to become rich and socialisation with peers. Basically, the teachers indicated that, from their experience, they indicated that insufficiency of basic needs was among the key causes of children engaging in child labour. Other causes of child labour are family separation and lack of parental care, and thus easily engage in child labour when they are not subjected to family care.

When they were interviewed on the same, Ward Educational Officer (WEO) had varied responses. One of the WEOs said that; “economic hardship is among the causes of child labour in most of the areas”. This phrase indicates that, and then the economic hardships among the members of the family create economic chaos. Economic chaos occurs when the head of the family can no longer cater for the family’s basic needs. When all those occur, the children opt not to go to school and instead fight to get employed to sustain their requirements.

Another claim on the causes of child labour was given by WEO. One of the WEO interviewed had the following to say; “death of the parents and those who are alive are not educated”. This indicates that, when the parents die, they leave the children

without support and hence easily trapped by the world, thus making it easy to engage in child labour. WEO indicated other reasons for students to engage in child labour as long walking distance.

The findings of this study correlate with what was found by Roy et al. (2017), who studied child labour in Bangladesh and came up with the findings that revealed that family lifestyle is among the major causes of child labour. On the same note, studies done by ILO (2018) in Afghanistan revealed that prolonged conflicts in the family had caused children to engage in child labour. The study indicated that community perception and weak enforcement are among the causes of children to engage child labour. A study done by Webbink & de Jong (2011) proposed various levels of the causes of child labour. They discussed the resources related to family income, education of the parents, number of family members, and culture (values and norms) are among the factors that have contributed to child labour, especially in developing countries like Tanzania.

On the other hand, the findings of the study that shows that schools have contributed to child labour are attributed to the study done by Mazhar (2008), who suggested school-based causes, having education systems with no attractive infrastructures which are ineffective in attracting and holding the children.

Abdallah (2014), who studied the causes of child labour in Dodoma City in Tanzania revealed that the main cause of child labour was poverty. Other causes were the death of the parents, poor understanding of children's rights and poor implementation of child laws. Akarro & Mtwewe (2011) who studied child labour in the Njombe region in Tanzania revealed that poverty was the major cause of child labour. Apart from poverty, there were other school-related factors that contributed to child labour. His findings indicate that when parents cannot afford school-related costs cannot send their children to school. This is also true

with communities in the study area that do not care about the student's costs, which creates children miss management at home, and hence the children engage in various activities to earn something for a living.

The root causes of child labour are based on the economic factor (Thevenon & Edmonds, 2019). According to them, child employment decreases with economic development, but there is a large number of countries with both comparatively low levels of GDP per capita and child employment. This suggests that even though child labour is a facet of poverty, factors beyond the level of economic development influence child employment. Technological advancement linked to the industrialisation of agriculture (mechanisation of agriculture, spread of tractors and irrigation pumps) also helps reduce child labour. Changes in the industrial composition of employment and in the higher skills required for production outside agriculture also contribute to reducing child labour (Thevenon & Edmonds, 2019).

Some children migrate without their families to work which enables them to earn an income at least equal to the subsistence level. In this case, migration is driven both by the poor opportunities for children to work in their locality and by the expectation of finding work and better wages more easily elsewhere (Thevenon & Edmonds, 2019).

In general, child labour is attributed to prolonged conflict, poverty, poor economic conditions, and a lack of alternatives. Furthermore, unaccompanied minors and cases of domestic violence are other underlying causes of trafficking in persons, which eventually result in child labour. Focusing on the above-mentioned generic causes, other critical contributing factors such as the lack of legal responsibility of parents, community perception and weak law enforcement are often overlooked as reasons that facilitate child labour (ILO, 2018).

Family migration is one of the major determinants of child labour, seasonal migrants often migrate with their parents and they are particularly vulnerable to child labour. Seasonal work sites at destination-often in agriculture but also in, for instance, brick kilns are often far away from school and other services, and school admission on a seasonal basis may be problematic, so children come along with their parents and work. Typically, floods and droughts and lack of work in rural areas of, for instance, India and Cambodia force entire families to migrate for several months every year in search of work. Broad estimates put the number of children involved in seasonal migration in India alone at 4 to 6 million (Van de Glid, 2010).

Poor households also tend to have more children, and with large families, there is a greater likelihood that children will work and have lower school attendance and completion. ILO (2006) observes that while poverty is almost always a context for the early entry of children into regular work and into child labour, poverty can also be a function of a) access to labour markets and income-raising activities, b) family members of working age not having appropriate skills to match market needs in the area where they live; c) family members low educational levels; d) unemployment in the area where the family lives; e) conflict, illness or natural disaster having taken away the breadwinner of the family leaving a dependent household with no-one to depend on. Apart from the incidence of parental poverty, others think the causes of child labour go beyond that.

Many children live in areas that do not have adequate school facilities, so they are compelled to work. Low quality of education, difficulties in access and also the uncertainty of finding an adequate job after graduation, parents have developed a coping strategy by which they send some of their children to school and the others help them in fishing, farming, or other economic activities (Odonkor, 2008). Where education is mandatory, available, and understood as important,

the proportion of child labour is lower. Poverty may not be the main cause but certainly, an important cause that influences a lot of child labour. Why would a child prefer to get an education or go to school when staying at work can make him eat on that day? Or even worse, they do not even have the opportunity to choose between attending school or work (UNICEF, 2008).

The fact is that the opportunity or the proportion of work for kids is the one that makes child labour occur. It exists because it is treated as acceptable culturally or politically. In many countries, there exists a strong tradition of tolerance for child labour, which is the reason why ILO calls for zero tolerance for child labour (Alliance, 2022). The result is child labour expansion among some poor ethnic groups. In a similar form, discriminatory attitudes toward women and girls can enforce their parent's will to send their daughters to serve in homes or do other forms of work. The results of four African countries surveyed by ILO on child labour indicate that working children were considered essential contributors to the household economies in all four of the surveyed countries, either in the form of work for wages or in the form of help in household enterprises (FAO, 2021).

In the African continent, the question of child labour is a serious problem because of poverty and wars which is going on in some places like Congo, Nigeria, and Sudan. UNICEF provides six other grave violations against children in times of war. These include killing and maiming of children, recruitment, or use of children in armed forces and armed groups, attacks on schools or hospitals, rape or other grave sexual violence; abduction of children and denial of humanitarian access for children (UNICEF, 2022)

### **Effects of Child Labour on Students' School Progress**

This research objective aimed to examine the effects of child labour on students' school progress. Data

collected for this objective aimed at answering the question stated, what are the effects of child labour on regular school attendance? Responses to this research question were provided by both students

and teachers who responded to the questionnaires. Data were also collected from WEOs who responded to interview questions.

**Table 2: Effects of Students' Irregular School Attendance**

Effects of Students' Irregular School Attendance	Yes		No		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Poor learning concentration due to stress and fatigue	67	83.75	13	16.25	80	100
Low-grade performance	64	80	16	20	80	100
Missing tests and examination	61	76.25	19	23.75	80	100
Dropout from school	50	62.5	30	37.5	80	100
Truancy	58	72.5	22	27.5	80	100
Involving in crimes	45	56.25	35	43.75	80	100
Promote bad behaviours	61	76.25	19	23.75	80	100
Early pregnancies	58	72.5	22	27.5	80	100
Psychological problems	57	71.25	23	28.75	80	100
Health problems	58	72.5	22	27.5	80	100
Bring negative attitudes toward others	48	60	32	40	80	100

Source: Field Data (2022)

The findings in *Table 2* indicate that students with irregular school attendance are caused by various factors, including child labour, which has various effects on students learning progress. The foremost is poor learning concentration due to stress and fatigue with 67(83.75%) responses who said yes. Only 13(16.25%). This implies that when children engage in child labour, they cannot have time to concentrate on their studies either at school or at home due to tiredness or fatigue. Lack of concentration at school also causes them to get low grades in their academic performance. About 64(80%) of respondents endorsed this phrase as among the major factors contributing to the impact of students' irregular school attendance.

The findings from *Table 2* stipulate further that the low-grade performance of students has been attributed to their tendency to miss class tests and exams. As a result, due to the discouragement in academic performance, students find themselves in hard times and thus opt for school dropout. About 50(62.5%) endorsed this claim that school dropout is among the impact that is attributed to students'

irregular school attendance. However, there are about 30 (37.5%) think that dropping out of school is not so rampant and is in no way caused by students' irregular attendance at school.

Dropping out of school also has its cause, as it cannot come automatically. Truancy is not only among the effect of students' irregular attendance; rather, it also contributes to students' dropout from school. About 58(72.5%) responded yes meaning that they endorse it, and only 22(27.5) did not endorse it. There is no doubt that secondary schools that are affected by truancy eventually lead to school dropout of students are also affected by child labour.

Results have also shown that when these children drop from school remain in the street and thus become liable to engage in various unlawful practices. The respondents endorsed the fact that they engage in crimes 45(56.25%), promote bad behaviours 61(76.25%), and engage in early pregnancies 58(72.5%). Because of the low management of the parents of these children, they

are also the victims of early pregnancies, psychological problems, and health problems and brings negative attitudes to other.

The respondents explained other effects of students' school attendance as follows, family restlessness and chaos because the parents or guardians feel as if they have been betrayed by their children; increase in family dependants, high rate of migration from rural to urban (going for domestic jobs), and due to lack of knowledge, they are usually easily used as the means by the politicians, especially during the election.

While discussing the effects of child labour in schools in Ethiopia, Desta (2013) noted that all the children who were affected came from poor family backgrounds, orphanages, and migrants. This is also true with Tanzanian communities, where children coming from poor families or with poor family background ties are the most affected. Children coming from well-off families cannot in any way engage in child labour.

Research in developing countries has found that the majority of children and young labourers regularly attend school (Heady, 2000). Child labour and gender bias study in Morocco states that poverty status, household size, and the provincial average of time taken to travel to school in minutes lessen the probability of female school attendance (Veneziani, 2009). If female child labour lives in a household headed by a female, the pupils should have a higher likelihood of school attendance. Besides being a quite common result, this occurrence can be employed to devise a policy initiative of disbursing to the female head a monetary or in-kind transfer devoted to pupils' education which can be most cost-effective in closing the gender gap as required by the second Millennium Development Goal. The probability of a male going to school is limited by the significant role of some regional location dummies and living with an aged household head. The variables which are significant in both single-gender models generate high probabilistic effects

for females compared to males. Besides the econometric problem, it undermines the confidence attached to the implementation of cash/in-kind transfers devoted to curbing child labour and promoting school attendance.

However, child labour causes irregular school attendance. This affects the absentees themselves, fellow students and on another side the teachers, school, parents, and society at larger (Malcolm et al., 2003). For the students themselves who attend irregularly, Malcolm provides the following effects; students will miss the tests, will not understand the examination questions, will not know where their classmates ended up in terms of work, where they have gone down a set, and in one case, suffered worsened relationships with their peers. The impact on the other students, according to Malcolm is a disruption in class when absentees return, resentment among good attainers, good attainers disappointed and puzzled, and poor attainers may become role models.

Malcolm provides the impacts of child labour to teachers and schools, which are: attention diverted from the whole class, loss of free time, frustration at having to re-train poor attenders, difficulty in keeping accurate records, more frequent adjustment to forward plans, impaired ability to build teacher-pupil relationships and demoralisation, the ability to meet attendance and attainment targets, damage to a school's reputation; and difficulty in maintaining standards of discipline. Child labour also has an impact on parents and society because children hang around the streets, often intimidating other people. The groups of truanting children also are associated with public disorder and crime. When students are not at school, they generally cause havoc.

When families migrate across borders without legal documents, they are referred to as migrants in an irregular situation. Upon arrival at the destination, their children are often excluded from basic social services, such as education and health care, thus increasing the risk of child labour (Van de Glid,



2010). In those situations, immigration policy is at odds with the United Nations Convention on the rights of the child, which spells out that children's rights are not conditional on the legal status of their parents.

A recent UNICEF study of 18 sub-Saharan African countries has cast light on the relative importance of child labour as a constraint to children's school participation (UNICEF, 2005). It shows that overall, 60 per cent of children are attending school, while 38 per cent are engaged in child labour. There is a significant overlap between the two halves of the children that work also attending school (Elijah & Okoruwa, 2006). According to these researchers, the relationship between child labour and education is a compound equation that is neither simple nor predictable. There are many factors that influence whether or not a child attends school, and the work they do is only one of them. Several factors have been attributed to the effect of child education in Nigeria, especially the rate of dropout. Such factors include poverty and economic issues, early marriage and teenage pregnancy, inadequate school infrastructure, and cultural and religious biases. The socio-economic status of the parent(s) largely affects the child's education. This is because even when tuition is free, uniforms, books, sandals, and transport fare have to be provided so as to show parents complete guidance and responsibility (Waldron, 2022). With the high level of poverty and unemployment, the traditional discrimination as to which of the sexes benefits from education becomes a determining variable that can be employed negatively.

The effect of excessive engagement in labour makes children miss lesson periods. These lesson periods taught in a week are interwoven with the early lessons and are always prerequisites for the lessons in later weeks. This is confirmed by the findings of Wahba (2006), who described that with market day activities by children, their performance seems to be endangered. This was seen as child labour activities decreased child performance by 3%, whereas an

increase in performance was due to an increase in school attendance by 10.49%.

There is a significant effect of child labour on regular school attendance. The significant effect of child labour may be because these children, who combine work with schooling, seem to suffer from fatigue and stress, which may cause irregular school attendance, especially for those who hawk before going to school and those that work at night. Even if they attend school, they seem not to be actively participating in school activities (Oni, 2018).

When compared between rural and urban areas, most children in rural areas combine schooling and work (Adonteng-Kissi, 2018). The study of Adonteng-Kissi shows that many children who attend school also work on the farm as a part of the socialisation process; however, this study indicates that most children who engaged in child labour in urban areas are not in school the child workers that participate in working for long hours, on average 11-15 hours per day under conditions, are deprived of meaningful educational opportunities that could open for their better future. Hence, the majority of the child labourers in this study were found to be either illiterate or school dropouts (Gebremedhin, 2013).

Child labour may lead to poor performance, failure, and high dropout rates among child labourers (Omwenga, 2015). Another finding by Heady (2000) showed that work assigned to child labourers not only leaves children too tired to learn but also robs them of their interest in learning. Further, Heady notes that children who are already contributing economically to their family income may be less interested in academic achievement, resulting in a lack of motivation that affects both their learning and their prospects.

Also, work interferes with schooling because it requires too much of children's time, balancing the demands of work and education. It places physical and psycho-social strain on children and often leads

to poor academic performance and dropout (Heady, 2000). Work may demand extensive physical energy so that the child lacks the energy required for school attendance or effective study. As a result of fatigue and a lack of leisure activities to support physical, social, and emotional development, the child will experience very little mental stimulation and will end up neglecting his or her studies (Diaz *et al.*, 2019).

## CONCLUSION

The study's purpose was to analyse the effects of child labour on school attendance. Specifically, the study aimed to achieve the following specific research objectives. Firstly, to explore people's awareness of child labour. Secondly, identifying the causes of child labour among secondary school students. Thirdly, to find out the effects of child labour on students' school progress.

In defining terms of child and child labour, we came to an understanding that a child is categorised in a certain age group; it follows their underlined rights and laws which protect them. The rights of a child can include family guidance as children development, life survival and development, contact with parents across countries, protection from violence, access to education, protection from harmful work, protection from harmful drugs, prevention of sale and trafficking, and protection from exploitation (UNCRC, 2014); and child labour are all attributes of the prolonged conflict, poverty, poor economic conditions, and lack of alternatives to a child. Furthermore, unaccompanied minors and cases of domestic violence are other underlying causes of trafficking in persons, which eventually result in child labour.

However, despite the many causes of child labour as stated by many researchers in our study, after conducting the research, the results showed the following causes of child labour: poverty of the family and family members, domestic violence, poor implementation of laws, lack of legal

responsibility of parents, school-based violence, death of the parents, illiterate parents, lack of parental care for the children as well as the poor school facilities that do not attract the children to stay at school and instead decide to engage in child labour.

The target of our study was to show the effects of child labour, not in the society, country or in the economic field, but rather on school attendance. The researcher discovered that child labour affects students' school attendance because of physical and psycho-social strain on children and often leads to poor academic performance and dropout. Work may demand extensive physical energy so that the child lacks the energy required for school attendance or effective study. As a result of fatigue and a lack of leisure activities to support physical, social, and emotional development, the child will experience very little mental stimulation and will end up neglecting his or her studies.

The problem is a bit tricky because not only that students are permanently missing classes at school (truancy), but sometimes they only dodge some classes, especially during break sessions. However, when the student misses some classes at school, he or she is supported by their parents or family members to continue with work instead of going to school because they know for sure he/she will generate income for the family. Seldomly, those who pass the national exams while they are notorious for engaging in child labour become a good example to trigger such behaviour to other students to continue. That is why the researcher recommends that there should be a holistic approach to tackling this challenge. There should be a multi-ministerial campaign to ensure that the parents, teachers, and local community leaders work together by understanding the effects of child labour on school attendance and the way to overcome it.

The parents, teachers and local community need to understand that it is impossible to eradicate poverty and compete with other developed countries if our

society has the majority of young men who are half-educated or mediocre. The problem of creating a competitive generation is by providing them with knowledge. Intellectual competence can be achieved if the students are well and completely prepared and attending school.

### Recommendations

In light of the presented research, the researcher recommends that the parents should be highly engaged in students learning process. The government should also have statistics that can help to plan for interventions to help those children who are saved from child labour. The government should also engage social workers in solving this problem in areas where there are victims. This is because if this problem is not addressed using a holistic approach, the problem can still exist. There should be a multi-ministerial campaign to ensure that the parents, teachers, and local community leaders work together to ensure that this challenge is well addressed.

This study was conducted largely in rural areas where in most cases, children are from poor families, where most of them are involved in agricultural activities to meet their basic requirements.

Since this study involved only public day secondary schools, hence further studies are suggested to be conducted in urban areas where there are government boarding secondary schools and private schools. In urban areas, people's standard of living is different compared to rural areas. In urban areas their different economic activities such as industrial activities, marketing, entertainment activities such as night clubs and music bands, bar working and prostitution. Further studies can also be done specifically to understand how the children engaged in child labour are affected psychologically, healthily and their adulthood behaviours. Also, further studies can be conducted on the other factors which affect school attendance rather than child

labour. Studies can also be done by using the descriptive research design to establish cases among the population being studied as opposed to this study that used a case study research design.

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