

**THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOR IN AUTO
WORKSHOPS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON CHILDREN'S
WELL-BEING AND DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN'S
TWIN CITIES**



By

Samana Batool

Registration No: 00000400982

Department of Development Studies

School of Social Sciences and Humanities (S3H)

National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST)

Islamabad, Pakistan

2024

**THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOR IN AUTO
WORKSHOPS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON CHILDREN'S
WELL-BEING AND DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN'S
TWIN CITIES**



By

Samana Batool

Registration No: 00000400982

A thesis submitted to the National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad,

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Science in

Development Studies

Supervisor: Dr. Muhammad Ammad Khan

School of Social Sciences and Humanities (S3H)

National University of Sciences & Technology (NUST)

Islamabad, Pakistan

2024

THESIS ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE

Certified that final copy of MS Thesis written by Ms Samana Batool (Registration No. 00000400982), of School of Social Sciences and Humanities (S3H), Department of Development Studies has been vetted by undersigned, found complete in all respects as per NUST Statutes/ Regulations/ Masters Policy, is free of plagiarism, errors, and mistakes and is accepted as partial fulfillment for award of Masters degree. It is further certified that necessary amendments as pointed out by GEC members and foreign/ local evaluators of the scholar have also been incorporated in the said thesis.

Signature:



Name of Supervisor: Dr. Muhammad Ammad Khan

Signature (HOD):

Date: _____

Head
Department of Development Studies
School of Social Sciences & Humanities (S3H)
National University of Sciences and Technology
Islamabad

Signature (Dean/ Principal)



Date: _____

National University of Sciences & Technology
MASTER THESIS WORK

We hereby recommend that the dissertation prepared under our supervision by: (Student Name & Regn No.) Samana Batool (400982)

Titled: THE CONSEQUENCES OF CHILD LABOR IN AUTO WORKSHOPS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY ON CHILDREN'S WELL-BEING AND DEVELOPMENT IN PAKISTAN'S TWIN CITIES

be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of MS. Development Studies degree and awarded grade A (Initial). Or

Examination Committee Members

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------|
| 1. Name: <u>DR. Tawqeer Hussain Shah</u> | Signature: <u>[Signature]</u> |
| 2. Name: <u>Sheeba Tawiq</u> | Signature: <u>[Signature]</u> |
| 3. Name: <u>DR. Rabia Yasid</u> | Signature: <u>[Signature]</u> |

Supervisor's name: Dr. Muhammad Arif Khan

Signature: [Signature]

Date: _____

[Signature]

 Head of Department

Head
 Department of Development Studies
 School of Social Sciences & Humanities (SSH)
 National University of Sciences and Technology
 Islamabad

_____ Date

COUNTERSIGNED

Date: _____

[Signature]


 Dean/Principal

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This is to certify that the research work presented in this thesis, entitled “**The Consequences of Child Labor in Auto Workshops: An Empirical Study on Children’s Well-Being and Development in Pakistan’s Twin Cities**” was conducted by Ms. **Samana Batool** under the supervision of **Dr. Muhammad Ammad Khan**.

No part of this thesis has been submitted anywhere else for any other degree. This thesis is submitted to the Department of **Development Studies S3H** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the Field of **Development Studies, Department of S3H** National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad.

Student Name: **Samana Batool**

Signature: 

Examination Committee:

External Examiner Name: **Shaheer Elahi**
Associate Professor Program Coordinator
(Designation & Office Address) BS-Public Health

Signature: 

Shaheer@hsa.edu.pk

Supervisor Name: **Dr. Muhammad Ammad Khan**

Signature: 

Name of Dean/HOD: ^{Dr.} ~~Syed~~ **Tauqeer Hussain Shah**

Signature: 

Head
Department of Development Studies
School of Social Sciences & Humanities (S3H)
National University of Sciences and Technology
Islamabad

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I Samana Batool hereby state that my MS thesis titled "**The Consequences of Child Labor in Auto Workshops: An Empirical Study on Children's Well-Being and Development in Pakistan's Twin Cities**" is my own work and has not been submitted previously by me for taking any degree from National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad or anywhere else in the country/ world.

At any time if my statement is found to be incorrect even after I graduate, the university has the right to withdraw my MS degree.

Name of Student: **Samana Batool**

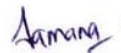
Date: Samana

PLAGIARISM UNDERTAKING

I solemnly declare that the research work presented in the thesis titled "**The Consequences of Child Labor in Auto Workshops: An Empirical Study on Children's Well-Being and Development in Pakistan's Twin Cities**" is solely my research work with no significant contribution from any other person. Small contribution/help wherever taken has been duly acknowledged and that complete thesis has been written by me.

I understand the zero tolerance policy of the HEC and the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad towards plagiarism. Therefore, I as an author of the above titled thesis declare that no portion of my thesis has been plagiarized and any material used as reference is properly referred/cited.

I undertake that if I am found guilty of any formal plagiarism in the above titled thesis even after award of MS degree, the University reserves the rights to withdraw/revoke my MS degree and that HEC and NUST, Islamabad has the right to publish my name on the HEC/University website on which names of students are placed who submitted plagiarized thesis.



Student Signature:

Name: **Samana Batool**

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all the hardworking children who, despite the challenges they face, continue to persevere and strive for a better future. Your resilience in the face of adversity is a testament to your strength and courage. You are the future of Pakistan, and this work is for you—to tell the world of the difficult circumstances you endure, yet still rise above.

To all the beautiful children I had the privilege of meeting, I will never forget your smiles. This work belongs to you, and it will forever stand as a tribute to your unwavering spirit. You inspire hope, and this is my small way of honoring your journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis would not have been possible without the persistent support and guidance of my supervisor, my official discussant, and NUST institute for providing me with this platform to share my work in this prestigious institute. First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Muhammad Ammad Khan, whose insightful advice, encouragement, and direction were instrumental in shaping the course of this research. Their expertise and commitment were invaluable throughout this journey. Sir, thank you for being my constant support, and thank you for believing in me.

I am equally thankful to my official discussant Dr. Shaheer Ellahi, whose assistance and mentorship provided the foundational support necessary to complete this work. Their guidance helped me navigate challenges and maintain focus, for which I am profoundly grateful.

I also extend my heartfelt appreciation to my institution for offering me the platform to apply and develop my skills. The opportunity to engage in meaningful research and share my expertise was a privilege that greatly enriched my academic experience.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents and my siblings, especially my father, whose love and unwavering belief in me have always been my greatest source of strength. I owe a deep debt of gratitude to my father, whose unwavering support made this journey possible. Despite the challenges and dangers, we faced in collecting data from difficult areas, he stood by me every step of the way. His hard work and dedication have been the foundation of my success, and I credit him for helping me pursue and fulfill my dreams.

Lastly, to my friends and family, especially my sister Syeda Farwa Rizvi and my friend Sundas Shafeeq, their constant encouragement and understanding have made all the difference in this endeavor. This thesis reflects their support as much as it is of my efforts.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	IX
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	XI
LIST OF TABLES	XIII
LIST OF FIGURES	XIV
LIST OF SYMBOLS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND ACRONYMS	XV
ABSTRACT	XVI
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Problem Statement	4
1.3 Significance of the Study.....	7
1.3.1 Conceptual significance	7
1.3.2 Geographical Significance:	8
1.4 Research Aim	8
1.5 Research Objectives	9
1.6 Research Questions	9
1.7 Conceptual Framework	9
1.8 Research Strengths and Limitations	11
1.9 Linkage with SDGs.....	11
1.10 Organization of the Thesis.....	13
CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW / THEORETICAL BACKGROUND 15	
2.1 What is Child Labor?	15
2.2 Nexus Between Child Abuse and Child Labor.....	16
2.3 Types of Abuse:	18
2.4 Consequences of Child abuse on the well-being of the child:	19
2.5 Socio-economic Factors and Child Abuse:	20
2.6 Theoretical Framework.....	22
2.6.1 Social Learning Theory.....	22
SUMMARY OF RESEARCH WORK.....	23
CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	27
3.1 Study Area	27
3.2 Methodological Approach	29
3.3 The procedure of Data Collection:	31
3.3.1 Sampling Technique and Size	31
3.3.2 Sample Size	33
3.3 Data Collection Technique.....	33
3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews.....	33

3.4.2 Participation Observation.....	35
3.4.3 Tools and Techniques.....	36
3.5 Data Analysis Technique.....	36
3.5.1 Translation and Transcribing	37
3.5.2 Coding and Identifying themes:	38
3.5.3 Reviewing Themes:.....	39
3.5.4 Defining and Naming Themes and Report Generation:.....	40
3.6 Ethical Considerations.....	40
3.6.1 Confidentiality.....	41
3.6.2 Informed consent:.....	41
3.6.3 Quality Evaluation.....	42
3.6.4 Fieldwork experience:	42
3.6.5 Information of the Respondents	44
CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION	46
4.1 Results:	46
4.2 Major Findings	48
4.3 Thematic Analysis	53
4.3.1 Social-Cultural Obstacles.....	54
4.3.2 Systematic Economic Pressure and Inequalities:	58
4.3.3 Physical Abuse:.....	61
4.3.4 Emotional Abuse and Neglect:.....	62
4.3.5 Verbal Abuse:.....	63
4.3.6 Labor Exploitation:	64
4.3.7 Impact on well-being.....	65
4.3.8 Adaptive Coping Strategies:	68
4.3.9 Lack of Awareness and Protection:.....	69
4.4 Discussions	70
4.4.1 Prevalence of the abuse:.....	70
4.4.2 Consequences of the abuse:.....	71
4.4.3 Cycle of Abuse:.....	72
4.4.4 Negligence of Law-abiding Agencies:.....	73
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS.....	74
5.1 Policy and Recommendation	76
REFERENCES	80
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW PERFORMANCE.....	98
A.1 Ethical Approval Form	98
A.2 Interview Questions.....	99
A.2.1 Demographics.....	99
A.2.2 Objective 1:	99
A.2.3 Objective 2:	100
A.2.4 Objective 3:	101

LIST OF TABLES

	Page No.
Table 3.1: Biodata of Respondent.....	44
Table 4.1: Key Findings; Outlining Themes, Sub-themes, and Major Findings.....	27

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page No.
Figure 1: Designed based on Research Questions and the aim of the study	10
Figure 2: UN SDG 16.2.....	12
Figure 3: Map of Twin Cities	29
Figure 4: Ratio of the Highest level of Study among Child Labor in Auto shops ..	47
Figure 5: Occupation of Child Labor in Auto Shops Analyzed	48
Figure 6: Ethical Approval	98

LIST OF SYMBOLS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND ACRONYMS

ILO	International Labor Organization
NGO	Non-governmental Organizations
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
PIED	Pakistan institute of development economics
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
NCHR	National Commission for Human Rights
CSA	Child Sexual Abuse
CPS	Child Protection Service
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child

ABSTRACT

Child abuse among working children is a critical yet underexplored issue in Pakistan, particularly in the context of those employed in high-risk environments such as automobile workshops. This study addresses the intersection of child labor and abuse, focusing specifically on children aged 8 to 14 working in auto shops in Pakistan's urban areas, like Islamabad and Rawalpindi. The study explores the occurrence and response of physical, verbal, and psychological abuse faced by young workers, despite legislative frameworks. It highlights the long-term consequences for their cognitive and emotional well-being. Despite extensive research on child labor, there is a significant gap in understanding how these children cope with and respond to abuse, highlighting the need for further research on these issues. To address these gaps, this study employs a qualitative, empirical research methodology, focusing on the lived experiences of the children themselves. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with child laborers in various automobile workshops, providing a rich, detailed account of their daily lives and the challenges they face. The sampling techniques used include purposive, snowball, and convenience sampling, ensuring a diverse and representative sample of working children. This approach allows for an in-depth exploration of the nuances of how these children experience and cope with abuse. The data were then analyzed using thematic analysis, a method well-suited to identifying patterns and themes within qualitative data. The study shows child laborers in worse conditions at auto workshops. For its part, children describe being exposed to all sorts of violence: getting physically assaulted via beatings; and hearing verbal insults alongside psychological threats. The study also points out the irony of legal oversight in places such as sector G-10 and Islamabad where proximity to judicial

institutions does not correspond with greater protection for working children. This paradox highlights the imperative of ensuring better implementation of extant child protection laws. This indicates that existing legal tools are deficient in both coverage and enforcement. Such would provide urgency for stronger regulatory intimate to obviate child labor and shield children from exploitation. In conclusion, this study contributes to the broader discourse on child labor by showing the critical issue of child abuse among working children and its profound impact on their development. The findings underscore the necessity of a comprehensive approach to child labor interventions, one that not only seeks to eliminate the practice but also addresses the deep psychological scars left by abuse. Ensuring the well-being and development of Pakistan's children requires informed, multifaceted efforts that consider both the immediate and long-term effects of child labor and abuse.

Keywords: Child labor, Child abuse, Automobile workshops, Urban areas, Child development.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Child labor continues to be a major issue on the globe today. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), child labor is defined as "the exploitation of children through any kind of work that prevents them from attending regular school or is harmful to their mental, physical, social, or moral development" (ILO, 2024). Despite global initiatives leading to decreased child labor rates, it remains a significant issue as of 2023, particularly in the world's poorest countries (ILO, 2024). According to the ILO's recent global statistics, 160 million children have been engaged in child labor internationally by the beginning of 2020, representing about one-tenth of all children worldwide. However, 79 million children - approximately half of all child laborers - engage in terrible conditions that jeopardize their safety, health, and moral development (ILO, 2021). There are 218 million child laborers between the ages of 5 and 17 worldwide, including 152 million children working in risky situations (Fouad et al., 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated this crisis, reversed decades of progress, and placed millions of additional children at risk of entering the labor force. This regression is largely attributed to the economic shocks brought on by the pandemic, school closures, and the subsequent increase in poverty rates (Habib et al., 2024). Child labor prevents children from experiencing childhood, education, and developmental opportunities, which hinders social progress and accelerates poverty (Bonyan Organization, 2022). The issue of child labor is particularly pronounced in South Asia, a region that accounts for a significant portion of the world's child laborers. Almost 122 million children work as adolescents in Asia- pacific alone (ILO, 2024), and 28 million of them are engaged in the worst kinds of

child labor (VanDerHeyden, 2022). In this region, countries such as India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Nepal have high rates of child labor, often linked to economic vulnerability and socio-cultural practices that normalize abuse (Iqbal, 2023). For instance, ILO and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) report that in Bangladesh alone, around five million children work, primarily in the informal economy, where they are at significant risk of abuse, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse work with toxic chemicals and dangerous machines (Ahad et al., 2021). In Pakistan, according to UNICEF, over 3.3 million children are affected by child labor (UNICEF, 2022).

Pakistan faces a significant educational crisis, with approximately 25.3 million children between the ages of 5 and 16 out of school (Haider, 2024). This alarming statistic highlights the country's position as having one of the highest rates of out-of-school youth globally, exacerbated by economic vulnerabilities and socio-cultural practices that often prioritize child labor over education (Raza, 2024). According to (Hussain et al., 2017), poverty, large family size, inadequate access to education, and parental illiteracy are the primary factors contributing to child labor in urban areas of Pakistan. There are on-going trends of hiring children as workers, particularly in urban centers where children work in auto shops, factories, and as domestic workers. An estimated millions of children are involved in child labor across various sectors, with many engaged in hazardous conditions that compromise their health and education (ILO, 2023). According to an (ILO) assessment, children under the age of 14 and adolescents between the ages of 15 and 17 are employed in almost 2 million informal workshops in Pakistan. Most of these young workers are from low-income rural families that rely largely on their employers to provide

for their most basic needs. Children are more likely to be abused and exploited in the workforce due to poverty, restricted access to education, and a lack of adult employment prospects (Dawn, 2023; ILO, 2023). The normalization of child work in many communities fosters the cycle, with children considered as household income generators rather than persons requiring education and safety.

Child labor exposes children to dangerous conditions, resulting in injuries, illnesses, malnutrition, stunted growth, and higher rates of mental and behavioral disorders, such as depression (Sajwan, 2023). According to the WHO report, 6.4% of individuals aged 15 years and above have mental health disorders in Indonesia (Jayawardana et al., 2022). Research has demonstrated the detrimental consequences of child labor on health outcomes (Lowthian et al., 2021). According to Ibrahim et al. (2018), children who labor regularly are subjected to hazardous conditions that can lead to long-term health issues such as pneumonia, skin conditions, gastroenteritis, and work-related accidents. The combination of child labor and automobile industries poses significant health risks to working children due to exposure to physical, chemical, and ergonomic hazards. Children in these settings frequently face dangerous working conditions, leading to severe injuries and long-term health issues. Physical hazards, including exposure to machinery, increase the risk of cuts, burns, and crushing injuries. Children often endure electric shocks, deep cuts, and severe burns, resulting in high injury rates (Hamran Tariq, 2024). Moreover, the psychological impact of working in such hazardous environments cannot be overlooked, as children may experience stress and anxiety related to their unsafe working conditions (Maria Postolache, 2022).

Protection of children from any kind of abuse or maltreatment is a primary responsibility of any contemporary society. Despite the formation of laws, regulations, and institutions aimed at protecting children's rights, the problem persists. International agencies worked hard to eradicate the curse of forced labor by enacting and executing legislation that regulates or eliminates it in society. It is a worldwide problem and prohibiting child labor is a challenging undertaking for developing nations like Pakistan (Zafar et al., 2016). As a member of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Pakistan has undertaken to provide special protection for children. As a result, the state is obligated to safeguard children. Despite being a member of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and related protocols and conventions, Pakistan ranks fifth among the nations where children continue to endure abuse, lawlessness, and violation of fundamental rights (Pulla et al., 2018). Pakistan's main issue is the absence of efficient legal, health, social welfare, and educational institutions. While policies for child protection and reaching SDG procedures have been drafted, the state has not fully implemented them (Pac et al., 2020).

1.2 Problem Statement

Child labor remains a global concern, with millions of children forced to work in deplorable conditions and frequently subjected to various sorts of inhumanity. In Pakistan, the situation with child laborers is terrible; kids are often forced into work due to great poverty, and they endure dangerous working conditions, abuse, and exploitation. According to Nadir (2024), there appears to be a continuous circle of violence directed at these children, and their pain goes unnoticed until it gets too severe to be taken seriously.

The fact that reports of child laborers suffering maltreatment are posted on social media and in Pakistani news channels daily highlights how pervasive this problem is.

Rafiq Qabool, an 11-year-old who was killed by beatings at the hands of his employer in Karachi, serves as an example of the risks that children working as domestic helpers encounter. In a similar vein, the fatal outcomes of these abusive dynamics are highlighted by the death of seven-year-old Zohra Shah in Rawalpindi at the hands of her employers (Bhatti, 2023). On a national and international scale, numerous studies (Jayawardana et al., 2022; Ali et al., 2012; Khan et al., 2007) have been carried out on child abuse and neglect among working children. The existing literature reveals several critical loopholes that underscore the necessity of further research, particularly focusing on children's perceptions regarding their experiences and coping mechanisms. Rawalpindi and Islamabad, two of Pakistan's most developed cities, rank second and third, respectively, in terms of the highest reported cases of child abuse among the country's ten districts (Dawn, 2022). The twin cities attract thousands of both skilled and unskilled laborers who migrate from areas like Swat, North Waziristan, and Peshawar in search of better job prospects (Baig, 2021). Many of these children, coming from various ethnic backgrounds, find work in factories, domestic settings in urban areas where exploitation is rampant, and auto repair shops, where they face not only abuse but also significant health hazards (Ibrahim et al., 2019). A growing trend in Pakistan sees children being employed as apprentices¹, locally known as "shagirds," in informal auto workshops. While these children are supposedly

¹ Apprentices: Someone who has agreed to work for a skilled person for a particular period and often for low payment, to learn that person's skills.
https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/apprentice#google_vignette

engaged to learn a trade, they are often subjected to exploitation by their employers. It is estimated that around 109,000 children, aged between 9 and 14, are working in informal auto workshops across the country (ILO, 2023). The combination of child labor and the automobile sector exposes these young workers to numerous health dangers, including physical, chemical, and ergonomic hazards (Fouad et al., 2022).

For Instance, numerous studies predominantly utilize quantitative methods, relying on descriptive statistics while often overlooking the qualitative dimensions of children's lived experiences. (Kamal et al. 2016) conducted a study in Malaysia that identified various types of abuse, including emotional, physical, and sexual; however, its descriptive analysis falls short of exploring how these children perceive their circumstances and manage the trauma they face. The lack of comprehensive data from varied locations and qualitative insights limits our understanding of the psychological repercussions of abuse and children's coping methods. Research from Bangladesh and Pakistan (WHO, 2021; Ahad et al., 2023) has revealed significant rates of violence against child laborers, but there hasn't been a thorough examination of the sociocultural context or the traits of those who commit these crimes. This shows that previous research may not fully capture the complexities of childhood.

By concentrating on how children view their experiences with abuse, this study aims to close the gap in the literature and address these research gaps. This study uses qualitative methods to investigate how children working in auto factories in Islamabad and Rawalpindi perceive the environment, cope with the challenges that they experience, and analyze the impact on their development. This approach not only contributes valuable insights to the existing body of literature but also underscores the significance of incorporating children's

perspectives in shaping policies and interventions aimed at safeguarding vulnerable populations from abuse. To address the underlying causes of abuse and provide victims and their families with the necessary support, a comprehensive approach is required. This research examines the type and intensity of abuse, looks at the causes that lead to child abuse among working children and makes pertinent policy recommendations in line with the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.2 of the UN.

1.3 Significance of the Study

1.3.1 Conceptual significance

This study on child abuse in automobile workshops within the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi holds substantial conceptual significance, particularly in advancing the understanding of how such environments impact the well-being and development of child workers. While existing research on child labor has broadly examined its prevalence and adverse effects, there remains a conceptual gap in understanding the specific experiences of children in highly informal and hazardous settings like automobile workshops. By exploring the unique dynamics of abuse within these environments, this study contributes to the theoretical framework surrounding child labor, abuse, and development, particularly through the lens of social learning theory. It enhances our comprehension of how repeated exposure to abusive practices in such workshops can hinder children's psychological, emotional, and social development, potentially perpetuating cycles of violence and maladaptive behaviors into adulthood (Petersen et al., 2014).

1.3.2 Geographical Significance:

The geographical significance of this study lies in its focus on the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, regions that serve as critical urban centers in Pakistan with unique socio-economic dynamics (Mannan, 2021). These cities, while geographically adjacent, present a mix of urban and peri-urban settings where child labor in informal sectors, such as automobile workshops, is particularly prevalent (Kemal, 2009). By concentrating on these specific locations, the study provides localized insights into how the intersection of urbanization, poverty, and informal labor markets contributes to the exploitation and abuse of child workers.

Understanding the patterns of child abuse within these workshops in Islamabad and Rawalpindi is essential because these cities are representative of broader trends observed in other urban centers across Pakistan. The findings from this study can thus serve as a valuable reference for understanding similar issues in other parts of the country and comparable regions globally. Additionally, by shedding light on the specific challenges faced by child workers in these geographically distinct areas, the study highlights the need for region-specific strategies and interventions that consider the unique socio-economic and cultural contexts of these cities. This geographical focus not only enhances the study's relevance to local stakeholders but also contributes to the global discourse on child labor and abuse in urban settings.

1.4 Research Aim

This research aims to investigate the prevalence and severity of child abuse among working children in automobile workshops in Islamabad.

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To investigate the prevalence and types of child abuse experienced by working children in automobile shops in Islamabad.
2. To examine the correlation between child labor and the socio-economic factors, and its potential impact on well-being.
3. To analyze the children's perception of the abuse being inflicted upon them and how they cope with it.

1.6 Research Questions

1. What is the long-term impact of child abuse on the mental, physical, and social well-being of survivors?
2. What psychological, or emotional challenges/abuse do children face at work?
3. How do the affected children perceive the abuse and how do they cope with it?

1.7 Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is crucial in studies examining child abuse among working children for several reasons. First, it provides a theoretical foundation that grounds the research in relevant theories and models, guiding the formulation of research questions, data collection, and analysis. This framework is particularly important for understanding the multifaceted nature of child abuse, which is influenced by various individual, family, community, and societal factors. By organizing these elements and their interrelationships, the conceptual framework facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

This research identifies several key factors contributing to child abuse among working children, as outlined in the chart below. Child labor significantly heightens the risk of abuse, with socio-economic challenges, such as poverty, lack of education, and vulnerabilities, playing a critical role in driving children into labor. Additionally, the absence of effective law enforcement and regulatory oversight exacerbates the issue. These factors collectively contribute to the exploitation of children, which has a detrimental impact on their well-being and development.

Social learning theory serves as the foundation of this study, suggesting that children exposed to abusive environments are likely to imitate and internalize the behaviors they observe. The findings indicate that prolonged exposure to abuse perpetuates a vicious cycle of exploitation, adversely affecting the children's psychological and emotional development. This framework emphasizes the interconnectedness of socio-economic pressures, abuse, and the long-term consequences on child development, creating a cycle that is difficult to break without intervention. All of these, have a clear relationship, as the study demonstrates:

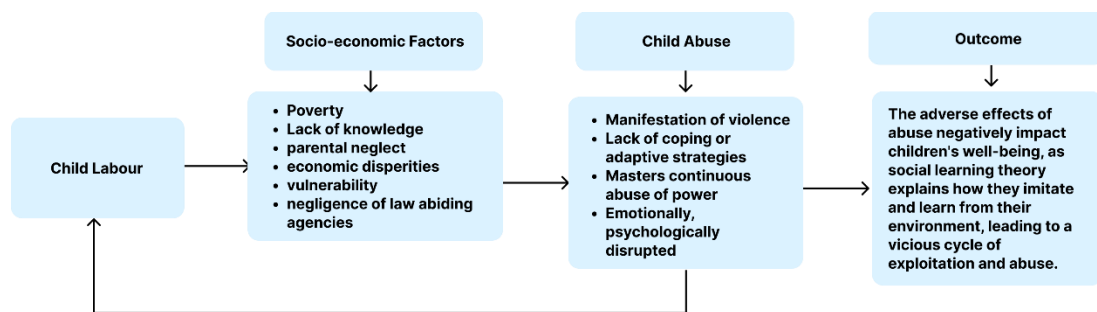


Figure 1: Designed based on Research Questions, the aim of the study, analysis, results, and Social Learning theory (Li et al., 2021).

1.8 Research Strengths and Limitations

The findings of this study help the policymakers and child protection agencies in introducing interventions and policies that will reduce sexually harassing behavior among children and protect their rights. As data meant to be collected for this study is sensitive, some respondents will hesitate to participate in the study. Also, this study targeted the children working in automobiles, it was exceedingly difficult to collect data from the children that's why snowball sampling techniques were used to further investigate the cause and intensity. Due to the sensitive nature of the study, some respondents might not have been forthcoming. Due to cost and time constraints, the study area was limited to a specific area of twin cities.

1.9 Linkage with SDGs

The fundamental right of every child to be free from abuse is enshrined in various international conventions, notably, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which emphasizes the necessity for children to grow up in an environment that is safe, nurturing, and free from violence. Child abuse can take many forms, including physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, and its consequences can be devastating, leading to long-term physical and psychological harm (World Health Organisation, 2022). Research indicates that children who experience abuse are at a higher risk for developing mental health disorders, behavioral issues, and physical health problems later in life. The inclusion of Target 16.2 in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscores the global commitment to ending all forms of violence against children, including abuse, neglect, and exploitation. This target, a crucial component of

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16, which promotes peace, justice, and strong institutions, aims to ensure that every child is afforded the fundamental right to live free from fear and harm. To effectively meet the objectives of SDG 16.2, a comprehensive and multifaceted strategy is required—one that addresses the root causes of child abuse while simultaneously providing support to victims and their families. This study aims to offer valuable insights to policymakers about the challenges faced by children working in the automobile industry and the negative impact of these conditions on their well-being. This knowledge is crucial for our country to effectively tackle child labor and abuse. By understanding the vulnerabilities and difficulties these children face, policymakers can formulate targeted interventions and strategies to create safer and more supportive environments. These efforts align with the objectives of SDG 16.2, which calls for an end to all forms of violence against children.

Through this research, we seek to contribute to building a healthier and more secure future for our younger generations by addressing the root causes of child labor and ensuring that every child is allowed to thrive in a protective environment.



Figure 2: UN SDG 16.2. Source: (Raja Rajeswari, 2022)

1.10 Organization of the Thesis

The study's first chapter provides background information on the subject matter, followed by the problem statement, research questions, and objectives concerning the difficulties working children encounter at work, the frequency of abuse, and the contributing variables and effects of abuse on their wellbeing. Along with statistics on the incidence of abuse in Pakistan, the chapter highlights the need for more research on this topic and explains the value of the study. The researcher's purpose was to present the current situation in the twin cities, where the prevalence of abuse is highest.

In the second chapter, a concise review of the literature is presented, starting with an exploration of child labor the various forms of abuse faced by working children at national and international levels, and the associated factors. The literature review will offer a comprehensive overview of Pakistan and other developing nations, highlighting the challenges and adversities experienced by children. It encompasses an examination of scholarly works on child abuse and provides insights into various theoretical perspectives.

The third chapter comprehensively analyzed the entire research process, encompassing a detailed discussion of the various techniques used to identify and collect data from respondents. All methods and strategies were utilized to gather information from diverse units, elucidating the significance of each unit for the investigation. Furthermore, the researcher provided a clear and detailed explanation of the entire research process, delving into the decisions and choices made during the fieldwork in the twin cities.

In Chapter 4, we conducted data analysis and discussions based on information gathered during fieldwork. We shared all respondents' experiences, opinions, and real-

world insights regarding the obstacles that working children face. The final chapter of the study provides a comprehensive discussion and summary of the research, along with recommendations derived from key findings on addressing the obstacles faced by child laborers and supporting these children. The study's concluding section includes properly cited sources in APA format.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW / THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1 What is Child Labor?

The primary challenge in addressing child labor lies in establishing a uniform legal age for children, as this varies across countries. Numerous global agencies focus on child rights, with each regulatory system defining the legal age of adulthood and childhood differently (Rehman, 2023). In Pakistan, for instance, child labor is defined as work performed by children under the age of 14, as outlined in Article 11 of the 1973 Constitution (Gilani, 2022). Reports indicate that a significant proportion of children aged 10-14 are involved in child labor across various industries worldwide. In Pakistan, 22.3 percent of children in this age range in Punjab are engaged in labor, primarily in sectors such as agriculture, forestry, fishing, and manufacturing (Gupta, 2022).

Pakistan's automotive sector has grown significantly, with 23 million motorcycles and 4 million vehicles recorded in 2019-20. Due to stringent regulations, many vehicles are serviced at informal workshops, where children, some younger than ten, are employed for repairs. These children, predominantly boys who have either dropped out of school or never attended, work under poor conditions, are underpaid and often face harsh punishments. Most live near informal workshop clusters with their families (ILO, 2023).

Child labor is associated with the violation of children's fundamental rights. It is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to eliminate effectively. While economic stability is important, it alone is not enough to end child labor. Countries must

prioritize enacting and implementing strong labor regulations to protect children from exploitation and ensure their well-being (Radfar et al., 2018).

2.2 Nexus Between Child Abuse and Child Labor

Approximately three million incidents of child abuse are reported to Child Protective Services (CPS). The victims of child abuse often experience social negligence and are prone to abuse, with the perpetrators usually being their caretakers. These children have frequently been through physical, sexual, and psychological abuse (Khan, 2020). Ignoring the reality of the situation will only exacerbate this problem. Allowing the abuse to go unpunished and failing to make significant efforts to reduce the child's risk of adequate physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being constitutes societal negligence. Child abuse is defined as physical, emotional, and sexual harm that impairs the intellectual development of young individuals. Child abuse causes both short and long-term harm and, in extreme circumstances, can lead to death (Thi et al., 2021).

Children engaged in labor are more prone to abuse compared to their peers not involved in work. Various studies have highlighted the heightened vulnerability of child laborers to different forms of violence and exploitation. For instance, a study conducted in urban and suburban areas of lower Sindh, Pakistan, reported alarming rates of emotional, physical, and sexual violence among child laborers. The findings indicated that physical violence was more prevalent among boys than girls. In contrast, sexual violence was notably high among children working in agriculture, suggesting that the nature of their work and the environments in which they operate contribute to their risk of abuse (WHO, 2021).

Moreover, a systematic review of the literature on child labor and health in low- and middle-income countries revealed a strong association between child labor and various forms of abuse, including physical and emotional maltreatment. The review noted that child labor is linked to higher prevalence rates of mental and behavioral disorders, underscoring the psychological toll that such exploitation can have on children (Ibrahim et al., 2019). Similarly, a study from Turkey found that 62.5% of child laborers reported experiencing some form of abuse at their workplaces, with significant proportions suffering from physical, emotional, and sexual abuse (Naeem et al., 2011).

The relationship between child labor and abuse is further compounded by socioeconomic factors. Poverty is a critical driver of child labor, compelling families to rely on their children's earnings for survival. This economic necessity often places children in precarious working conditions, where they lack protection and are more susceptible to exploitation. The International Labour Organization (ILO) emphasizes that child labor is fundamentally a reflection of poverty and weak social institutions, which creates an environment ripe for abuse (ILO, 2021).

In conclusion, the evidence clearly indicates that children engaged in labor are at a significantly higher risk of abuse, both physically and psychologically. Addressing this issue requires comprehensive strategies that not only aim to eliminate child labor but also provide protective measures and support systems for vulnerable children. Effective interventions must consider the socio-economic contexts that drive child labor and work towards creating safer environments for all children.

2.3 Types of Abuse:

Child abuse is a serious and widespread problem that involves various forms of mistreatment, such as neglect, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, and verbal abuse. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), child abuse encompasses "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development, or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust, or power (World Health Organisation, 2022). Neglect is the inability to meet a child's fundamental needs, such as food, clothes, shelter, education, and medical care, which can cause actual or potential harm to the child's well-being and development. According to (Emorhievwunu & Emorhievwunu, 2024), this is the most common kind of child maltreatment. Physical abuse refers to purposeful acts of physical aggression, such as shaking, biting, beating, or burning, that can result in physical damage and long-term repercussions (Norman et al., 2012). Rib fractures are the most prevalent finding related to physical abuse (Paine et al., 2019). Psychological abuse, also known as emotional abuse, refers to activities that might affect a child's mental well-being and development, such as verbal abuse, humiliation, rejection, and domestic violence. These types of abuse may lead to the development of psychiatric illnesses in children (Dye, 2019). According to the study conducted by (Khan et al., 2023), Sexual abuse is defined as the involvement of minors in sexual acts for which they do not completely understand, cannot provide informed permission, or break social taboos. Sexual abuse can take many different forms, including genital-to-genital contact, oral-genital contact, genital fondling, exposure to sexually explicit materials, and penetration.

The effects of child abuse can be severe and long-lasting, impacting a child's physical, emotional, and social well-being. Those who experience abuse are at a higher risk of developing mental health problems, substance abuse issues, and engaging in risky behaviors later in life (Downey & Crummy, 2021).

Society needs to be able to recognize the signs of child abuse, provide support and resources for families, and create and implement policies and interventions to prevent and address this crucial issue.

2.4 Consequences of Child abuse on the well-being of the child:

Children subjected to mental and physical abuse may endure various detrimental effects, such as delays in growth, emotional disorders, and long-term health concerns (Monica Lawson, 2020). Child abuse, particularly when it pertains to mood disorders, may have catastrophic effects on a person's physical and mental health. According to research done by (Lippard & Nemeroff, 2020), it demonstrated that those who were abused or neglected as children are more likely to encounter mood disorders including depression and bipolar disorder in their adult years. The risk of afterward-life physical health issues including diabetes, heart disease, and autoimmune illnesses might also be increased by childhood stress. These health issues might make it more challenging for people to manage their symptoms of mental illness, which can further complicate the treatment of emotional disorders (NIMH, 2021). The impact of childhood sexual abuse on a person's mental, physical, and social growth, as well as their economic well-being, is long-lasting. It raises the possibility of experiencing physical and mental health issues including anxiety, depression, drug misuse, and suicide, which can impact educational, professional, and

financial prospects. For instance, a study conducted by (Henkhaus, 2022) stated that sexual abuse also makes it difficult to form and sustain relationships, which can restrict social and professional networks and limit options for career growth and employment prospects.

Child abuse and child labor are complicated, common problems that affect people from all backgrounds and social classes. Both concerns have significant effects on children's well-being and their growth potential. Abuse of children can occur emotionally, physically, sexually, or via neglect, among other ways (Downey & Crummy, 2021). Children working in dangerous or exploitative conditions can have negative effects on their physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It is crucial to understand that child abuse and child labor frequently go hand in hand and are caused by structural problems including social inequality, poverty, and a lack of access to education (Aye Myat Thi et al., 2023). Therefore, to bring about long-lasting change, policy implementation must also address these underlying issues. Ultimately, all facets of society must work together to avoid child abuse and child labor, including the government, NGOs, the commercial sector, and local communities to tackle its long-lasting effects. Research conducted by (Hogarth et al., 2019) demonstrated that a child with abusive childhood experiences is more prone to drug addiction, indulging in serious crimes, and other mental and physical disorders. We can build a society where all children may flourish and realize their potential by cooperating and putting evidence-based policies and programs into action.

2.5 Socio-economic Factors and Child Abuse:

Child abuse among working children is correlated with several socioeconomic conditions. These elements include starvation, illiteracy, and terrible conditions at work.

Since families in poverty may be compelled to send their children to labor to meet the family's basic requirements, poverty is a substantial risk factor for child maltreatment. This may lead to children working in risky, exploitative situations where they're exposed to neglect and abuse (Emine Öncü, 2013).

Lack of education is another risk factor for child abuse since uneducated parents might not realize how important it is to give their children a secure and caring environment. They might not be able to speak out for the welfare of their children because they are unaware of the welfare of their children's rights or the risks of child labor (Khosravan et al., 2018). Child abuse among working children can also be caused by unfavorable working conditions, such as excessive hours, inadequate provision of safety equipment, and being exposed to toxic products. Physical and mental stress brought on by these factors might raise the possibility of abuse and neglect. In addition, societal and cultural standards could contribute to abuse among working adolescents. Children working at a young age may be accepted in certain communities, and there may not be enough assistance or resources to safeguard them from exploitation and abuse (Emine Öncü, 2013).

These underlying socioeconomic problems must be addressed to address abuse among working children. This entails providing parents and carers access to education and training, encouraging safe workplaces, and strengthening laws and regulations related to child safety. Additionally, initiatives should be taken to spread knowledge about the significance of upholding children's rights and making sure they are protected and secure.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework is essential as it connects the study to existing theories and establishes a connection between the research design and analysis. This study investigates child abuse among working children in auto shops located in twin cities. The concept of abuse and its consequences on children's well-being was well-explained in Albert Bandura's social learning theory. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory forms the basis of this study on child abuse among children employed in auto factories. According to this theory, children learn behaviors from observing and imitating others in their environments (Fisher & Skowron, 2017). The framework of this research offers a foundation for comprehending how abusive behaviors can become prevalent in workshop environments, impacting both victims of abuse and those who perpetrate it.

2.6.1 Social Learning Theory.

According to the social learning theory, children acquire behaviors from observation and imitation of their peers and caregivers. This hypothesis, when applied to child abuse, contends that children who observe or experience abuse may learn to respond to conflict by behaving aggressively or violently. This modeling can create a cycle of violence in which victims of abuse become perpetrators later in life, repeating the cycle throughout generations (Currie & Tekin, 2012). There are significant and varied effects of abuse or neglect on a child's well-being. A study by (Ma, 2016) shows that children who are abused are more likely to face depression, anxiety, and trauma-related stress disorders. In addition, these children frequently exhibit aggressive and antisocial conduct as well as other behavioral issues that may persist into adulthood. The long-term consequences may include

a higher risk of criminal activity, difficulties building healthy relationships, and difficulties in the learning environment.

This theory also states that a child's behavior and development are greatly influenced by their environment. These results are influenced by socioeconomic conditions, family dynamics, and acts of violence in the community. Children who see domestic violence may grow to accept it as usual, which could escalate their hostility. Feelings of insecurity can be made worse by community violence, which feeds the vicious cycle of aggressiveness (Svexler, 1977). Poverty and a lack of resources can make families more stressed, which raises the risk of child abuse. Abuse and child labor severely impede long-term development by reducing social skills, emotional stability, and cognitive growth. Adversity in social situations, greater isolation, and problems forming relationships with peers can all result from these conditions (International Labor Rights Forum, 2011). A study by (Lauren Dear, 2013) shows that children exposed to abusive behaviors may internalize these actions as acceptable responses to conflict, perpetuating a cycle of abuse.

To sum up, the Social Learning Theory provides a framework for comprehending how abuse and violence harm children's development. A cycle of abuse could be continued if children raised in these settings learn that using violence to resolve conflicts is acceptable. Provide children with strong role models and encourage non-violent actions to interrupt this cycle and support healthy growth.

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH WORK

The issue of child abuse among children working in auto repair shops, especially in urban areas like Pakistan's twin cities, exposes a significant research gap that demands

further investigation. Although the literature on child labor and its associated risks is growing, there is a clear lack of studies focusing on the specific conditions in auto shops and the unique vulnerabilities of children employed in this sector. Child abuse in this context is a prevalent and widely reported social problem in Pakistan, given its profound effects on the social, psychological, and physical development of both children and society (Ul-haq et al., 2020). Several studies have been conducted in Pakistan to examine child labor and the prevalence of abuse. For instance, Mehnaz (2018) explores the complex nature of child abuse, arguing that it goes beyond physical violence to include other forms, with sexual abuse being the most severe. This type of abuse not only causes physical harm but also leaves lasting emotional and psychological damage, impeding children's overall development. Similarly, a study by Merzougui Hanane et al. (2024) analyzed the socio-economic factors driving child labor and the barriers to education, while also evaluating the practical effects of child labor laws in Pakistan. The research found that poverty, the high cost of education, and limited access to teachers are key obstacles preventing children from receiving an education. A study by Gilani et al. (2022) conducted in Pakistan emphasizes that child labor is a criminal offense, negatively impacting children's social, intellectual, psychological, and moral growth. The study advocates for strengthening democracy and empowering the parliament to enforce stricter regulations against child labor and improve access to education. It also points out that a major barrier to addressing child labor is the fractured relationship between government institutions and businesses that exploit child labor. Similarly, research by Raza et al. (2022) found that child labor is a widespread issue in developing countries struggling with poor socioeconomic conditions.

The study also highlights that employing child under the age of 14 is explicitly prohibited by Article 11(3) of the Pakistani Constitution.

Due to rising inflation and limited opportunities in rural areas of Pakistan, child labor is alarmingly prevalent in Islamabad and other urban centers, where young individuals work in hotels, auto workshops, and similar establishments. For instance, a study by Khan et al. (2022) noted that the specific conditions and outcomes of child abuse in auto repair shops are still under-researched. These workshops, marked by dangerous working environments, extended hours, and minimal regulatory enforcement, can heighten the risk of abuse and exploitation. Many of the children employed in these settings come from impoverished families and often lack parental support, making them even more susceptible to mistreatment. Similarly, research by Petersen et al. (2014) revealed that the long-term effects of such abuse on children's mental and physical health are severe. Studies show that abused children are more likely to develop psychological disorders, struggle with substance abuse, and face challenges in achieving educational success. The convergence of child labor and abuse in auto workshops not only threatens the children's immediate safety but also diminishes their prospects, thereby reinforcing cycles of poverty and disadvantage.

In summary, although awareness of the dangers linked to child labor is growing, the specific dynamics of child abuse among children working in auto repair shops in Pakistan's twin cities remain largely unexplored in the literature. Further research is crucial to uncover the unique challenges these children face, the types of abuse they endure, and the long-term effects on their development and well-being. This study not only examined the abuse itself but also explored how these working children perceive and cope with it, to understand its impact on their overall development. Such findings are vital for shaping policy

interventions and protective measures to safeguard vulnerable children in these environments.

CHAPTER 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter delineates the comprehensive approach and methodologies employed for the research project. Subsections include research design, target population, study location, sample size, sampling technique, data collection methods, and method justification. These elements contributed to the researcher's ability to evaluate the findings and reach conclusions.

3.1 Study Area

Islamabad and Rawalpindi, also known as the "twin cities," are two nearby but separate urban areas in Pakistan's northern region. Islamabad, the capital, is located on the edge of the Pothohar Plateau at roughly 33.6844° North latitude and 73.0479° East longitude. The city is known for its contemporary infrastructure, well-planned layout, and abundance of open spaces, which reflect its purposeful growth since its inception in the 1960s (DEpedia, 2024). Rawalpindi, on the other hand, is a far older city with centuries of history that is just south of Islamabad. It functions as a major commercial hub, with a denser and more urbanized character than its surrounding capital. According to the most recent census data, Islamabad has a population of about 1.2 million, while Rawalpindi's population exceeds 2 million, making it one of the most populous cities in Pakistan (Asif, 2023). The researcher selected the urban centers of the twin cities as the study area due to the lack of prior research on child labor in densely populated regions. These urban areas are home to a high concentration of auto shops, making them the largest hubs for child laborers in this sector. The study focused on these specific areas using convenience sampling, as they are not only accessible but also represent the most significant sites where

children are employed in auto repair workshops. Despite the prevalence of child labor in such environments, limited research has been conducted on this issue, further justifying the choice of location for the study.

Within Islamabad and Rawalpindi, the researcher selected Sectors G-10 and G-9 in Islamabad and the Sultan Kha Koo area in Rawalpindi, purposively for several reasons. These locations were chosen due to the high concentration of auto repair shops where child labor is prevalent. Islamabad's G-9 and G-10 sectors are among the older ones, with a variety of commercial and residential buildings, including many vehicle repair shops. Similarly, Sultan Kha Koo in Rawalpindi is well-known for its high concentration of auto workshops and other businesses, making it a perfect place to see the working circumstances of children in this industry. These locations are emblematic of the larger issue of child labor in urban surroundings, particularly in the informal sector. The selection of these specific locations was also influenced by their accessibility and the identified prevalence of child labor in these workshops, as reported by previous studies (e.g., Kulsoom, 2009; Hafeez & Hussain, 2019). By focusing on these areas, the study aims to gain a detailed and accurate understanding of the conditions and challenges faced by child laborers in the automobile repair industry in the Twin Cities.

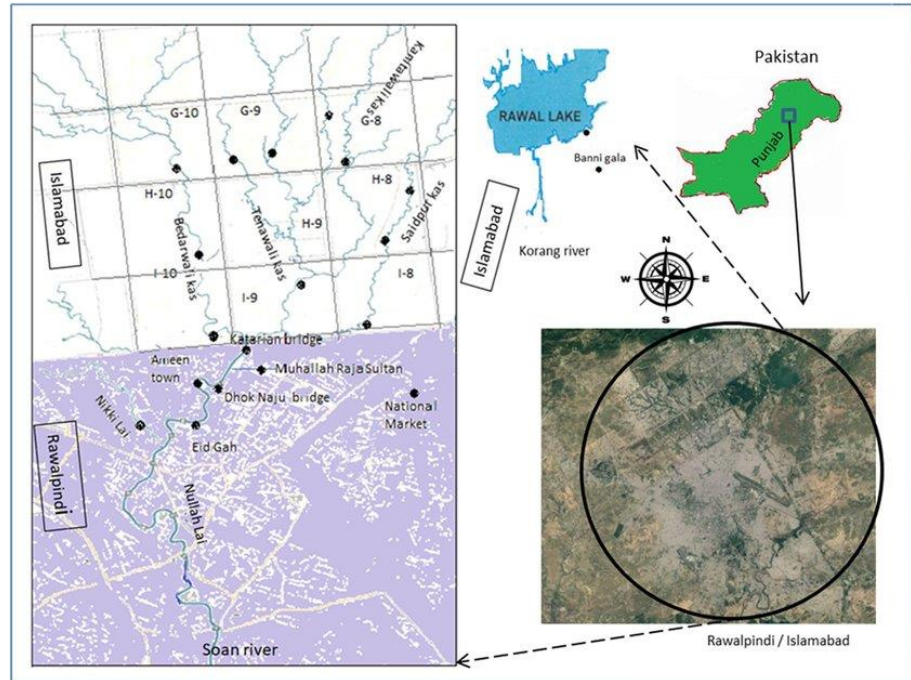


Figure 3: Map of Twin Cities

Source: (Naqvi et al., 2020)

3.2 Methodological Approach

The present research investigates child abuse among child laborers in automobile workshops in the twin cities and the consequence on their well-being requires qualitative research – a phenomenological approach to the study, qualitative methodology allows for a thorough examination of the various social, economic, and cultural elements that impact on abuse and the consequences of child abuse on their well-being. Furthermore, the use of in-depth semi-structured interviews and observational methods as data collection techniques will enable a deep understanding of the intensity and prevalence of child abuse in these settings. This approach allows for exploring this complexity by analyzing the

relationships between different variables, thereby enabling the assessment of the effectiveness of interventions to prevent and combat child abuse.

Qualitative design is necessary to gain sensitive and comprehensive insights into this taboo subject. For instance, the research conducted on child abuse among child laborers by (Mahmod et al., 2016) used qualitative and phenomenological approaches which highlighted the severe negative impacts on their well-being. Another study conducted in Pakistan employed a qualitative approach to understand the contextual factors that contribute to these abuses (WHO, 2021).

The phenomenological approach was chosen for this study due to its effectiveness in capturing the lived experiences of children working in automobile workshops in Islamabad and Rawalpindi, particularly regarding the abuse they face and its impact on their well-being and development. This approach is especially pertinent to this study because it allows for an in-depth exploration of the subjective realities of child laborers, revealing the nuances of their experiences that might otherwise remain hidden in more quantitative or less immersive research methods. By focusing on the lived experiences of these children, phenomenology allows the study to uncover the essence of what it means to endure abuse in these specific work environments. It allows for a rich and detailed understanding of how children perceive and internalize their experiences, how they cope with abuse, and how it influences their overall development. The contextual sensitivity of phenomenology also ensures that the unique socioeconomic and cultural factors influencing these children's experiences are fully considered, providing a comprehensive view of the problem. Furthermore, the phenomenological approach aligns with the ethical considerations of this research as it emphasizes empathy and respect for participants' perspectives. This approach

facilitates data collection through methods such as in-depth interviews and participant observation, which are well suited to capturing the complex and deeply personal nature of children's experiences.

Overall, this carefully considered research approach promises to yield valuable insights that are crucial to addressing the issue of child abuse in automotive workshops.

3.3 The procedure of Data Collection:

3.3.1 Sampling Technique and Size

Purposive, convenient, and snowball sampling methods were used to gather data for this study. The four main regions of Islamabad and Rawalpindi—G-9, G-10, Sultan Kha Khoo Road Rawalpindi, and Saddar Rawalpindi—were chosen by the researcher using convenience sampling, with an emphasis on areas where it was practical to have access to auto workshops. Practical limitations including the sensitive nature of the subject and the requirement for easily accessible data gathering venues led to the selection of this non-probability sampling approach. Given the sensitive nature of the research, which involved interviewing children about potentially traumatic experiences, convenience sampling allowed for easier access to participants. It also helped the researcher identify about 20 auto shops in these regions, ensuring that the study could be carried out efficiently while providing useful insights (Edgar & Manz, 2017).

Convention No. 138 establishes criteria for eradicating child labor by specifying a minimum employment age. According to this convention, countries must set a minimum working age, typically fourteen years old for developing nations. In particular, the researcher chose children who met this age threshold for her purposive selection strategy,

ensuring the sample is relevant to the ILO guidelines. Because purposive sampling allows researchers to deliberately select respondents who meet specific requirements important to the study's goals, these participants were not chosen at random for the study. Only the most relevant ones were examined to ensure the impacts, thereby enhancing the relevance and precision of the data collected.

After selecting the age group to increase the sample size, the researcher used Snowball, a sampling technique to collect data from children who worked in automobile workplaces in twin cities. Snowball sampling, or chain sampling, involves current participants recruiting potential participants they know. It's effective for hard-to-reach populations, like those involved in sensitive activities or with stigmatized identities (Simkus, 2023). Within this research's framework, snowball sampling facilitates participant recruitment via suggestions, whereby initial respondents suggest additional participants from their social networks (Sadler et al., 2010). This method is beneficial for researching sensitive topics like child abuse since it establishes trust and rapport through preexisting connections, making it easier to identify subjects who might otherwise be challenging to approach.

Numerous comprehensive research has successfully employed distinctive sampling techniques to collect informative qualitative data on the abuse experiences of working children—a notoriously challenging population to reach. For instance, two prominent examples of purposive and snowball sampling methods are found in Latif et al. (2016) and (ILO, 2008).

Following the sampling method, children working at an auto shop were contacted. They were informed in advance of the study's information requirements. Respondents who

met the sample criteria were chosen based on their availability and willingness, thereby validating the sample size. Transparency was preserved and the respondents' privacy was protected at every stage of the process.

3.3.2 Sample Size

Since the goal of qualitative research is to gain in-depth, comprehensive insights rather than generalize findings to a larger population, sample sizes are frequently smaller than in quantitative studies. (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022). The sample size for this study, which investigated child abuse among auto shop workers in twin cities, was 25. Based on the saturation principle, this sample size was selected; that is, data collection was stopped when observations and interviews revealed recurring patterns and no new themes emerged. The research's target age range was 8 to 14 years, which is the age range in which child labor occurs. This allowed for a close examination of the difficulties and abuses faced by young employees in this population segment experience.

3.3 Data Collection Technique

The data collection for this research utilized two primary techniques: semi-structured interviews and participant observation.

3.4.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Following international guidelines for child labor, in-person, semi-structured interviews with children ages 8 to 14 were carried out. Open-ended questions were used to promote open communication and enable in-depth discussion about the participants' experiences. Probing and follow-up questions were made possible by the interview format's

flexibility, which produced a rich set of qualitative data. A crucial component of semi-structured interviews is open-ended questions, which allow participants to express their ideas, opinions, and experiences in great depth. Although the questions in semi-structured interviews follow a predetermined set of themes, its open-ended format encourages thoughtful and in-depth answers by providing flexibility in delving deeper into the subjects.

Semi-structured interviews are used in research on child abuse among working children to examine the effects of the abuse on the children's well-being. For instance, the study by (Herrenkohl et al. (2021) investigated the abuse and neglect among survivors of childhood adversity using a semi-structured interview guide. The researchers aimed to understand the many types of abuse experiences and their long-term effects on well-being, emphasizing the necessity of resilience in overcoming such problems.

An additional pertinent study carried out in Pakistan investigated the experiences of working children who were subjected to different types of abuse. The children provided extensive narratives that not only identified the kinds of abuse they experienced but also the psychological and social fallout from these events. The researchers collected these narratives from the children using a semi-structured interview approach (WHO, 2021).

To investigate the prevalence of the abuse and its consequences on their well-being the researcher conducted face-to-face interviews with the participants and a semi-structured questionnaire was prepared. The designed questionnaire was made according to the age of the children. Throughout the interviews, the researcher used age-appropriate language. To make the environment comfortable for the children and to gather information without triggering them. The timeline of each interview was 20-25 minutes. To conduct

the efficient study, every child was approached in a private and secure environment to ensure that they comprehended what was being asked and gave accurate responses.

3.4.2 Participation Observation

Researchers often employ participant observation in studies of child abuse and child labor to gain a comprehensive understanding of the contexts and dynamics surrounding these issues. This qualitative method allows researchers to immerse themselves in the environments where children live and work, enabling them to observe behaviors, interactions, and the social norms that influence children's experiences directly. For instance, a study conducted by (Roelen et al., 2023) emphasizes that participant observation is crucial for uncovering the range of activities children engage in, as well as the socio-cultural factors that shape their work experiences and perceptions of abuse.

An illustration of this can be perceived in the macro-ethnographic study conducted in India by (Bharat et al., 2024) which examined the lived experiences of children engaged in labor by combining participant observation with interviews. Because the data was collected in the children's natural settings, the researchers were able to get a more complex picture of how socio-cultural discourses affect the lives and development of the children. This approach not only improves the quality of the data gathered but also builds participant-researcher trust—a crucial component when dealing with delicate subjects like child abuse and labor. Researchers can gain a better understanding of children's circumstances and the long-term effects these experiences have on their development by seeing them in their natural environments.

For this purpose of study, the researcher examines the behavior, gestures, hand movements, and tone of voice, of the children to identify potential indicators of abuse.

Since the topic of this study was sensitive in nature, participant observation was a crucial aspect for capturing behaviors, language the environment in which they were working their face expression while giving the interviews to understand the phenomena effectively.

3.4.3 Tools and Techniques

The tools and techniques required for this study were a voice recorder and a hand-written pad. The researcher asked the respondent, before recording the interview to ensure confidentiality and that interviews were conducted under the protocol of Ethical rules. To gain a deeper understanding of the effects of abuse, the researcher was also able to closely analyze the children's work environment, interactions, and non-verbal behaviors through participant observation, which also involved direct observation of the children in their natural setting. The researcher observed the environmental factors and wrote down the participants' behavior carefully on the notepad.

3.5 Data Analysis Technique

To analyze the data effectively researcher opted for Braun and Clarke's 2006 thematic analysis. In qualitative research, Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis is an essential tool. Six stages are involved in the process, which ensures adaptability across different frameworks by starting with data familiarization and ending with theme identification and naming (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis involves systematically identifying, examining, and recording then decoding the patterns within the data set. This analysis technique is used for exploring crucial phenomena and allows the researcher to get in-depth information from the qualitative data source (Dawadi, 2020).

For this current study related to child abuse, the thematic analysis approach is

particularly significant. It allows researchers to capture the diverse experiences and perspectives of survivors. Through the examination of child abuse narratives, scholars can discern recurrent themes including trauma, resilience, stigma, and support networks, all of which can provide valuable insights for policy and practice (Dawadi, 2020).

To examine child abuse among working children several studies opted for thematic analysis for their studies, for instance, (Edmonds, 2007), utilized a thematic analysis approach to understand how parental attitudes toward education and work influence children's participation in labor markets. Furthermore, World Bank research underlines the importance of holistic initiatives to tackle both child labor and its fundamental causes. The thematic analysis in this study focuses on significant issues such as the economic need for child labor and limited access to education, both of which are critical for comprehending the broader implications of abuse of children in labor circumstances (Dammert et al., 2018).

These studies highlight the necessity of employing thematic analysis to identify child laborers' different experiences, particularly their exposure to abuse and exploitation. Researchers can better inform policy suggestions to eradicate child labor and protect vulnerable children by finding repeating themes.

3.5.1 Translation and Transcribing

After obtaining data from the participant, the researcher then translates the data into English and then transcribes it. The process of writing down spoken or recorded content is known as transcription (Point & Baruch, 2023). The term transcription refers to several tasks, such as transcribing lectures and interviews verbatim, summarizing information, and

transferring data between different formats. To enable analysis and guarantee the accurate depiction of participants' responses the interviews are frequently recorded and transcribed in the context of qualitative research.

Interpreting interview data is an important phase in qualitative research that needs to be done carefully. The researcher comes across participants who cannot understand English in this study on abuse among working children. Maintaining the integrity of the participants' voices during the English translation of the interviews is crucial for ensuring the authenticity and depth of the data. Using the participants' native tongue for important words and phrases, the researcher could translate the voice recordings themselves. This method enables the researcher to become immersed in the data, gaining a better understanding of the cultural nuances and emotional importance of the participants' responses. For this study researcher carefully incorporated the verbatims that reflect the intensity of the abuse and its consequences on their well-being. For instance, during the interview, the participants commonly used the word “*Ustad ka hum py haq hai marne ka*” Translation: “*Our master has all the right to beat us*” which indicated the normalization of the abuse. So Verbatims, codes were carefully examined throughout the study.

3.5.2 Coding and Identifying themes:

The transcribed data was then coded and decoded by the researcher to generate, themes and subthemes for writing the report. Manual coding is a qualitative data analysis technique in which researchers categorize and label segments of text or other data formats to find patterns, themes, and insights (Medelyan, 2019). This approach entails going through raw data and assigning codes—words or phrases that represent reoccurring

concepts or themes—without the use of specialist tools. Although manual coding might be time-consuming, it allows for close interaction with the data and helps scholars gain a sophisticated understanding of the subject (Saldana, 2016). Researchers typically follow several steps in manual coding, including an initial pass to identify general themes, followed by more detailed line-by-line coding to refine and organize these themes. This approach can be either deductive, using pre-defined codes based on existing theories or frameworks, or inductive, where codes emerge organically from the data itself. The flexibility of manual coding makes it suitable for various qualitative research methodologies (Medelyan, 2019).

The present research utilized an inductive thematic method, which means that rather than having predetermined themes, the themes simply emerged from the data itself. To ensure that the analysis was closely tied to the data acquired, the researcher developed themes based on the experiences and responses of the participants. Following the research, many children expressed views such as, "What is the point of studying?" because their guardians constantly told them, "To work instead; studying will not lead to anything." This indicates the educational shortcomings that these children experience. Furthermore, it emphasizes the parents' perspective, which formed these narratives, and explains why these themes Socio-cultural Obstacles, and sub-theme Educational Deprivations developed during the study.

3.5.3 Reviewing Themes:

In this phase, the researcher refines the preliminary themes, evaluating their relevance and coherence. During this process, some themes may be divided into smaller

sub-themes, combined with others, or even discarded if they do not contribute meaningfully to the overall analysis. The researcher carefully examines whether these themes accurately reflect the coded data and align with the entire dataset, ensuring a strong connection between the data and the identified themes.

3.5.4 Defining and Naming Themes and Report Generation:

This includes narrowing the scope and content of the themes and establishing specific definitions and names that convey their meaning. The goal is to ensure that each theme is well-defined and understandable in the context of the study's findings. The final step in the thematic analysis process is to create the report. The researcher selects particularly appealing samples from the dataset to highlight the themes and performs a final, in-depth study of these examples. The research questions and relevant literature are then connected to this analysis, offering a thorough comprehension of the results. Logical, clear manner, highlighting how the themes advance knowledge of the subject and help to address the research question

By employing this approach to thematic analysis, the researcher can gain a rich and nuanced understanding of child abuse among working children, while also honoring the cultural and linguistic diversity of the participants.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Every participant received information regarding the significance and goal of the study. Also, they were told that their participation in the study was voluntary and that they could leave at any time without incurring any fees. Furthermore, all participants received

assurances that the data would be coded to protect their confidentiality and identities. It was also explained to participants that their consent was required before any research could utilize their data again

3.6.1 Confidentiality

The subject of child abuse research is extremely delicate. As a result, permission from the guardians and ethical approval from the committee members were acquired before any interviews were conducted. Strict precautions were made to preserve privacy and secure the names and private data of the participants. All information was unidentified and securely recorded, with only authorized research staff having limited access. Pseudonyms were used in place of participant names in all reports and publications.

3.6.2 Informed consent:

Informed consent is crucial. Participants were thoroughly informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences. They were provided with consent forms to ensure their understanding and agreement to participate. The research further emphasized that participation is entirely optional, and that withdrawal is not penalized. Participants will also receive guarantees regarding their confidentiality and privacy. They have the right to avoid any inquiry or topic that causes them discomfort. These measures aim to uphold ethical standards, ensuring that the research is conducted with respect and care for all participants.

3.6.3 Quality Evaluation

The proposed study on child abuse among working children had several strengths but can be improved to meet high qualitative research standards. To ensure validity, the study used semi-structured interviews and a thematic analysis for in-depth information. To avoid researcher bias, techniques such as supervision by experts were employed, allowing them to review and confirm the accuracy of the findings. Thematic analysis was used as a data collection method, which strengthened reliability by providing multiple perspectives. This approach refined the themes as more data was collected, capturing cultural and personal factors influencing children's well-being. Direct quotes from interviews were used to connect findings to real-life experiences, validating interpretations. Although qualitative research isn't aimed at exact replication, detailed documentation will support the study's credibility and reliability, helping others understand the research process and build on these findings. By ensuring clarity, consistency, and transparency, this study was conducted in such a way that the data accurately captured participants' views and highlighted the consequences in detail.

3.6.4 Fieldwork experience:

Research on child labor in urban auto shops involved navigating many challenges. Given that child labor is illegal and considered a serious violation of rights, entering such environments was inherently risky. The research process included many obstacles such as security concerns, obtaining necessary permissions, and addressing the topic's highly sensitive nature. Children working in these conditions were often fearful and hesitant to speak openly, which complicated efforts to gather comprehensive data. Gathering data

from children on a sensitive subject such as abuse and its effects on well-being was particularly challenging. It required careful consideration of how to ask questions without causing discomfort. Despite the diverse ethnic backgrounds of the children, with some from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and others from Punjab, the interviews were conducted smoothly in Urdu. The children were proficient in Urdu and had no trouble understanding or responding to the language.

The researcher ensured that the language used was appropriate for their age, avoiding any words or phrases that might trigger distress. Instead of directly confronting sensitive issues, the researcher used indirect yet relevant questions. For instance, I would ask, “How does your master behave when you make a mistake?” This often led to responses like, “He scolds or hits us,” which opened the conversation for follow-up questions, such as, “How do you feel when that happens?” This approach helped in gathering meaningful insights while maintaining a compassionate and non-threatening environment. Using a sensitive and age-appropriate method allowed the children to express themselves comfortably, resulting in a richer quality of data.

During my journey to the field, I encountered lots of strange individuals. Entering the auto shops as a researcher presented an immense obstacle. I had been subjected to objectification and harassment, so I returned with my father for support. Because of the threats I received, I had to utilize convenience sampling. I was required to come back and make changes following every field visit. Initially, I was not permitted to conduct interviews in G-10, and it was only with my father's approval that I was able to do so. For each interview, I needed to find a secure spot. Engaging with the children and exploring the consequences of their experiences was a difficult commitment.

Additionally, the research required significant time and effort, including frequent travel between Rawalpindi and Islamabad. The stigma and taboo surrounding child labor further compounded these difficulties, making the research not only ethically complex but also logistically demanding. The combination of these factors made the study particularly challenging, requiring careful navigation of both the practical and ethical dimensions of the research.

3.6.5 Information of the Respondents

Table 3.1: Biodata of Respondent

Source: Authors Own Construct

Name of Respondents (Pseudonyms)	Type of Work	Description
R2 - R5, R10, R17, R18, R20-23	Electric Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living with Master in twin cities • Primary school or never attended • Gilgit, KPK, Punjab - Bahawalpur
R1, R11, R12, R24	Denting Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • R12 living with parents, remaining living with Masters in twin cities • All educated till primary school • Punjab
R6, R7, R9, R15, R16, R19	Mechanic Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority living with masters in twin cities • Never attended school • KPK
R8, R25	Engine Oil Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living with Masters in Rawalpindi • Secondary Schooling • KPK

R13, R14	Car Seat Work - Poshish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Living with Parents • Never attended school • Rawalpindi
----------	-------------------------	--

The study employed a qualitative approach to investigate child labor in auto shops, focusing on abuse prevalence and its impact on well-being. The sample comprised 25 children aged 8-14 working in auto shops, with the sample size determined by reaching saturation point. Data collection involved semi-structured interviews, while thematic analysis (Braun and Clark, 2006) was utilized for data analysis, chosen to maintain confidentiality due to the sensitive nature of the topic. Participants were primarily from Punjab (Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur), with some from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and one from Gilgit. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms (R1, R2...R25) were assigned to each participant. Living arrangements varied, with many children residing with their employers ("masters") and others with their parents. Educational backgrounds were limited, with many participants never having attended school and a few having completed up to 4th grade at most. The children were engaged in various sectors within auto shops, including mechanic work, electrical work, denting, engine services, and poshish (car-seat) work. This diverse range of tasks provides insight into the different aspects of child labor within the automotive industry. The study's methodology and participant demographics offer a foundation for understanding the complexities of child labor in this specific context to enhance the academic rigor of the research.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter of the study will include a thorough analysis of the data collected through interviews under three main objectives which are further categorized into various themes created by the author. The discussion highlights the issues regarding the rights of children with a focus on automobile labor and the abuse it entails. The impact it has on children's well-being ultimately affects the child's development. This section focuses on the gap in responding to the issues that working children face while at work how it correlates with child abuse among them and how socio-economic factors become the push factor that indulges the children to work in such hideous conditions which was highlighted in the research problem statement, chapter 1, and its relation with the social learning theory, mentioned in chapter 2.

4.1 Results:

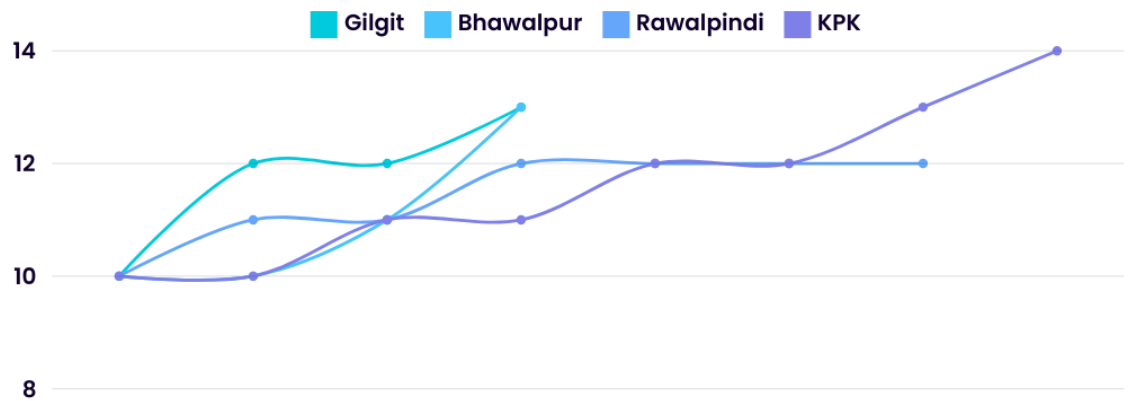


Figure 4: Line Graph on Children Ages Varied by Geographical Location

Source: Authors Own Construct

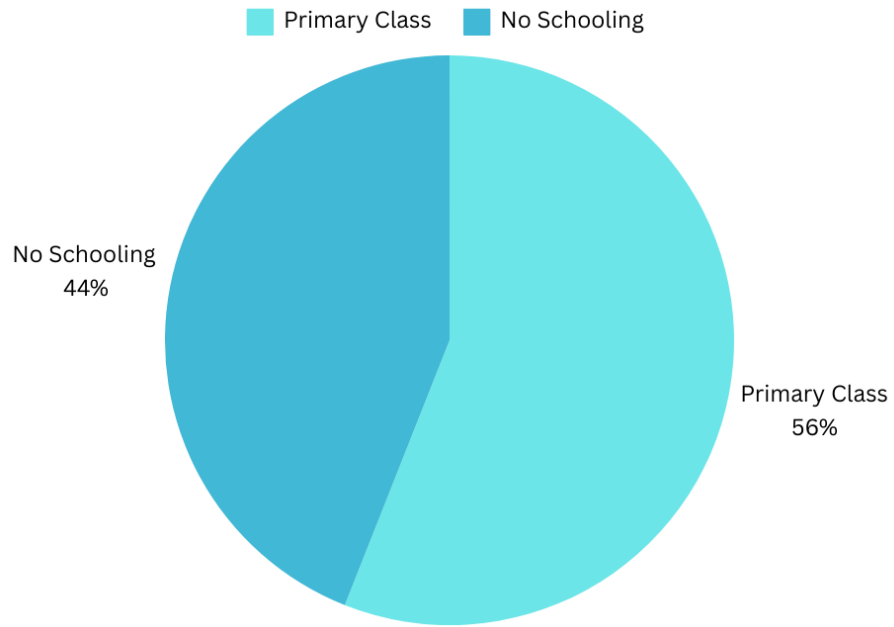


Figure 4: Ratio of the Highest level of Study among Child Labor in Auto shops.

Source: Authors Own Construct

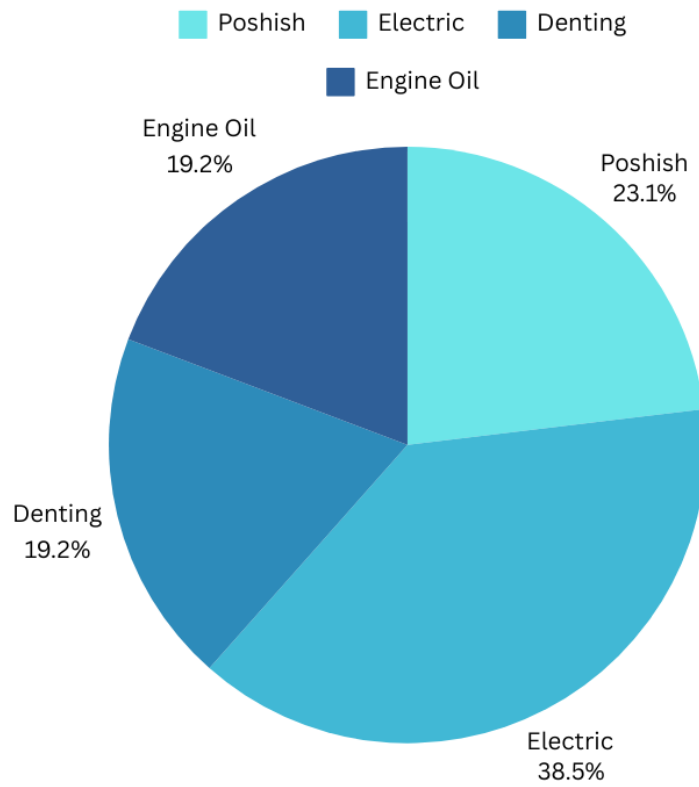


Figure 5: Occupation of Child Labor in Auto Shops Analyzed

Source: Authors Own Construct

4.2 Major Findings

The key findings are structured based on the results, presented against each theme and sub-theme identified out of analysis of the collected data and respondents' perceptions.

The following table shows the major findings from the research.

Table 4.1: Key Findings; Outlining Themes, Sub-themes, and Major Findings

Source: Authors Own Construct

No.	Themes	Sub-themes	Major findings
1	Social cultural Obstacles	1.1: Educational Deprivation	Findings from the study indicate that children employed in auto shops either never attended school or only received an elementary education, which restricts their options and contributes to the cycle of exploitation and poverty brought on by long workdays.

<p>1.2: Development Vulnerability</p>	<p>The discussion reflects the developmental vulnerabilities that prevent children from growing to their full potential when they labor in hazardous environments. These children work long hours in hazardous conditions, compromising their physical and mental development.</p>
<p>1.3: Social Isolation</p>	<p>The child's extended work hours result in limited opportunities for social engagement with peers.</p> <p>This highlights the inadequate parental involvement or support in the child's situation.</p>

		1.4:Parental Neglect	
2	Systematic Economic Pressure and Inequalities	2.1: Poverty	Auto shops are plagued by poverty, with child workers suffering from poor working conditions, inadequate protection, and long hours, leading to neglect of their developmental needs.
		2.2: Geographic disparities and economic inequalities	The study reveals that rural children face a significant burden due to poverty and limited access to essential services. Many are forced to relocate to urban areas, often into the unregulated informal labor sector, further exacerbating their vulnerability due to a lack of local support networks.

<p>3 Physical Abuse</p>	<p>Findings indicate that vulnerable children are subjected to physical violence in their work environment, causing fear and suffering. The ustad (master mechanic) is a key figure in this mistreatment, using physical punishment to instill fear and maintain control.</p>
<p>4 Emotional Abuse and Neglect</p>	<p>The study reveals that children in auto shops suffer from emotional abuse, neglect, and long hours without overtime compensation, leading to physical exhaustion and economic exploitation. The workshop environment lacks emotional and moral support, leaving children feeling isolated and undervalued.</p>

5	Verbal Abuse	An analysis of the study reveals that this harmful behavior instills fear and misery in the individuals, emphasizing the oppressive and punitive environment in which they work.
6	Labor Exploitation	6.1: Cyclic Nature of Exploitation Findings show children face exploitation, including long hours, inadequate pay, and unsafe conditions. Despite challenging labor, they receive low wages, highlighting economic exploitation. This affects their motivation, self-esteem, and physical well-being, hindering their educational and personal growth.
7	Impact on well-being	7.1: Psychological physical impact and Explicit labor practices significantly impact children's development, causing physical, psychological, and

	<p>lack of safety measures</p> <p>social aspects</p>	<p>social issues such as lack of access to peers and educational opportunities.</p>
8	Adaptive and Coping strategies	<p>The study found that abuse had a serious negative effect on children's wellness. Some children opt to endure, neglect, or ignore the abuse, while others decide to participate in it and comply.</p>
9	Law-abiding agencies	<p>The Findings reveal that the children working in auto shops lack knowledge about legal protections and resources, making them defenseless against abusive practices.</p>

4.3 Thematic Analysis

The rest of the chapter discusses these major findings and themes in detail:

4.3.1 Social-Cultural Obstacles

Cultural norms strongly influence children's ability to receive education, particularly those from families with limited resources. Parents forced their children to work and assigned them the burden of earning, limiting their educational opportunities and forcing them into child labor. Many families normalize child labor as a way that must be undergone to survive financially, viewing it as a workable solution to financial difficulties. This mentality ignores the abuse of children's rights because they're unaware of the long-term impact of the abuse on their child's development. The rampant spread of child abuse among working children and the low number of reports make it essential to examine the obstacles caused by society and the status of children at the grassroots level.

4.3.1.1 Educational Deprivation

Data analysis reveals that most respondents have an elementary education or have never attended school. Their extensive workdays—12 to 15 hours a day on average—preclude them from going back to school. Their lack of education restricts their prospects for the future and keeps them trapped in a cycle of exploitation and poverty.

Most of the respondents reveal that "*We work all day long and don't have time for studying we worked day or night to earn money.*" (R11 interviewed April 2024). This statement underscores a significant challenge faced by working children in getting an education. These children were engaged in constant labor to meet their daily needs, they often lacked the time and energy required for educational pursuits. The lack of time for schooling hinders personal development and limits future economic advancement opportunities.

The discussion here illustrates how the children's early life experiences combined with their restricted educational chances influence, how they view the importance of education. As children, they have low expectations for schooling, some respondents revealed that " *What's the use of studying? In this country, even educated people cannot find jobs. Our parents have said, 'We're poor people; our only goal should be to earn money'* (R5 and R6. Interviewed April 2024).

Children, being minors, see little value in education, often expressing sentiments such as "*We work and get money for two meals a day, and that is enough for this.*" (R1, R2, and R4 interviewed May 2024).

Many working children with only primary education or no schooling at all expressed similar sentiments: 'There's no benefit in studying, so we choose to work to earn a living instead.' This perspective reflects a pragmatic approach to their circumstances. For these children, the immediate need for financial support outweighs the long-term benefits of education. The reality of limited job opportunities and the urgent necessity to contribute to their family's income often drive them to prioritize work over schooling. This highlights a critical issue in societies where economic pressures and educational systems fail to provide viable pathways for advancement, perpetuating a cycle where education is undervalued, and immediate economic needs dominate.

Educational negligence was addressed many times by all the respondents justifying the social-cultural mindset of society that hinders a child's right to get an education.

4.3.1.2 Development Vulnerability

This theme represents the development vulnerabilities of children working in dangerous circumstances, which limit their growth. These children work long hours in dangerous surroundings, harming their physical and mental development.

The findings indicate that trainees in automotive workshops experience challenging conditions characterized by frequent mistreatment and neglect. In the context of *Ustaad*² (*Master*) and *Shagrid* relationship (apprenticeships), master mechanics are seen as guardians who have a profound impact on the trainees' lives. However, these figures frequently misuse their authority, leading to an environment that is both extremely abusive and exploitative, impacting their mental well-being and personal growth. The apprentices risk emulating their mentors' behavior, perpetuating a cycle of abuse and exploitation. The power dynamics and learned helplessness ingrained in these individuals prevent them from speaking out.

One respondent mentioned that *"they feel distressed when they are constantly scolded, and they find that when they are punished, their work suffers. The fear of punishment often leads to more mistakes"* (R15 interviewed May 2024)

Research on child development consistently highlights the importance of a supportive and nurturing environment for healthy cognitive, emotional, and social growth. In contrast, the hostile and abusive conditions in these workshops stifle the children's

² Ustaad: This Arabic word means a 'male teacher' or 'maestro' or 'hotshot' Definition of USTAD | New Word Suggestion | Collins English Dictionary (collinsdictionary.com)

potential and contribute to a range of developmental vulnerabilities (Luby et al., 2021). The children's entire world revolves around the auto shop, limiting their exposure to positive role models and alternative ways of thinking and behaving. This environment not only hampers their academic performance but also shapes their future aspirations and social interactions. The internalization of abusive behavior as a norm significantly affects their interpersonal relationships and self-perception.

4.3.1.3 Social Isolation

The environment and people a child interacts with have a significant impact on their growth. Children in auto shops have limited exposure to only their mentors and customers, causing social isolation. The "*ustaad*" figure's negative behavior prevents positive social development. This confinement and lack of exposure to positive role models contribute to their isolation, hindering their social growth and emotional well-being. Many respondents indicated that their friends are either their co-workers or that they don't have friends at all. One respondent expressed, "*We workday and night, leaving no time to play or go outside. I love cricket, but I feel burdened by the need to earn, so I only work. After a hectic day, I return home late at night.*" (R18 and R17 interviewed April 2024)

Engaging in social networking with peers of similar ages, participating in outdoor activities, and interacting with others have a significant impact on a child's well-being (Larivière-Bastien et al., 2022). The findings underscore the social deprivation experienced by all children. Instead of having the opportunity to play and gain diverse life experiences, they were compelled to workday and night merely to survive.

4.3.1.4 Parental Neglect:

The analysis of the results reveals that economic pressure and cultural norms lead parents to send their children to auto shops to work and earn money.

Some respondents expressed that “*their parents are unaware of their work conditions and relationship with their supervisor*” (R6, R7 interviewed April 2024). One respondent even mentioned, “*When my supervisor mistreats me, I don't tell my parents; it's routine for me.*” (R3 interviewed April 2024).

Parental neglect and child abuse are significant issues affecting the well-being and development of children working in auto shops. The analysis illustrated that the ignorance and negligence of the parents make the children vulnerable expose them to exploitation and continuous abuse and push them to work in an abusive environment that will ultimately have a negative effect on their mental and physical well-being.

4.3.2 Systematic Economic Pressure and Inequalities:

The prevalence of child labor and the high rate of abuse among children highlight systemic issues and aggravate the inequality created by systemic failures. In Pakistan, institutional and economic inequality is an important variable in the prevalence of child labor abuse and neglect. Due to these inequalities, children with low incomes are often obliged to work in hazardous conditions to support their families, often at the expense of their overall development, education, and health. As children have limited access to social assistance, healthcare, and education, children are trapped in cycles of poverty and labor. All these economic factors are the product of systemic inequality (Rebouças et al., 2021).

Furthermore, Lack of effective child protection laws and implications pushes children to abuse and exploitation in the workplace.

4.3.2.1 Poverty:

Poverty drives child labor and abuse in Pakistan, especially in sectors like auto workshops. Economic desperation forces families to send their children to work, sacrificing their education and well-being as necessities. Upon analyzing the findings, it is evident that all these children come from low-income families and are compelled by their parents to work. In these circumstances, children employed in automotive shops are often exposed to harsh and abusive conditions, where they primarily interact with authority figures who exploit and mistreat them.

One respondent mentioned, *“Due to the financial crisis, my family sent me here from Gilgit to earn. Whatever I earned, I sent all the money to them”* (R3 interviewed April 2024). Another respondent underscored the challenges inherent in providing for a large family amid the state poverty. Saying, *“I have a large family to look after. My father also works in a factory, but due to inflation and a large number of people, his income simply isn't adequate.”* (R15 interviewed May 2024). Many of the participants also highlighted the inflation and economic inequalities in the country, *“Mhengai itne hai k aik aam admi ka haal bura hai hum tou hai he gareeb phele guzaar leyte thy zindagi ab majboori hai yeh kaam karna”* (R14, R15, R18 interviewed in April & May 2024).

Translation: "The rising cost of living has made things extremely difficult for ordinary people. While we were able to manage before, our financial struggles have now left us with no choice but to take on this work out of necessity".

The impact of poverty is starkly evident in auto shops, where poor working conditions and inadequate protections for child workers are widespread. These children frequently endure long hours, insufficient safety measures, and exposure to hazardous materials, all of which have detrimental effects on their physical and mental well-being. Furthermore, the abusive behavior of the supervisors and other authority figures exacerbates these challenges, leading to an environment where the developmental needs of the children are often neglected.

4.3.2.2 Geographic disparities and economic inequalities:

As mentioned in the table the ethnicity of the children, most of the youngsters employed in these workshops are from Islamabad and Rawalpindi. However, a few come from other cities like Gilgit, Bahawalpur, Peshawar etc. Economic hardship and challenging home environments often drive them to work in demanding conditions, highlighting the socioeconomic struggles faced by these young laborers. In response to geographical shifting one of the participants said, *“Due to the poor living conditions in my hometown, I decided to move to the city for work. Here in the city, there are large auto shops and many job opportunities, providing a better chance to earn compared to my hometown”* (R1 interviewed April 2024). Another respondent mentioned, *“My family sent me here to work, and I came from Gilgit. In my hometown, there aren't enough work opportunities”* (R2).

The findings reveal that children residing in rural areas bear a disproportionate burden, given that their families are more susceptible to severe poverty and lack of access to essential services. Consequently, many of these children are compelled to relocate to

urban areas where they are compelled to join the informal labor sector, which is frequently unregulated and exploitative. These geographic disparities intensify their vulnerability because they work far from their home and they rely upon their masters, who exploit them in the name of training and skills.

4.3.3 Physical Abuse:

Physical abuse is a serious and widespread problem that profoundly affects children working in auto shops, significantly impacting their health, development, and overall well-being. The results of this study show that children in these settings are often victims of physical violence at the hands of authority figures, especially the *ustaad* (master mechanic), who maintains control through intimidation and punishment. Children employed in automotive workshops endure extended periods of work in unsafe conditions, and any perceived errors or defiance frequently lead to physical consequences. This mistreatment encompasses physical reprimands such as hitting, slapping, and other forms of corporal punishment that cause both physical anguish and psychological distress. The acceptance of this behavior by the *ustaad* fosters an environment where violence is considered a legitimate means of control and discipline, perpetuating a cycle of mistreatment. One of the respondents reported, *"Yes, my instructor often hits me in front of everyone"* (R2 interviewed April 2024). Another respondent said, *"Wo mery ustaad hein unka haq hai mujhe marne ka, wo kehty hein kaam seekhne k liye thori maar khane zaroori hoti hai"* (R12 interviewed May 2024). Translation: *"He is my master, and he has the right to beat me. He says that enduring some hardship is essential for learning a trade.* Another participant shares his experience: *"One day, my master was so angry that he broke a plate over my head."*(R11 interviewed in May 2024).

The research shows that these vulnerable children are experiencing physical violence in their work environment, enduring a daily existence filled with fear and suffering. The physical mistreatment carried out by individuals in positions of authority, particularly the ustaad (master mechanic), involves hitting, slapping, and other forms of physical punishment intended to instill fear and maintain control. This ongoing exposure to violence not only causes immediate physical harm but also leaves lasting psychological wounds.

4.3.4 Emotional Abuse and Neglect:

Analysis of the results shows that children working in auto shops experience significant emotional abuse and neglect, exacerbated by various factors. They endure long working hours without any overtime compensation, leading to physical exhaustion and reinforcing their economic exploitation. The environment in these workshops lacks emotional and moral support, leaving the children feeling isolated and undervalued. They receive no encouragement or validation necessary for their emotional development and self-esteem. Instead, they are often controlled and intimidated through threats of job loss and wage withholding, creating a constant state of fear and insecurity. One of the respondents said, *"My masters often threaten to kick me out if I don't work"* (R19 interviewed in May 2024). Another respondent reported, *"My masters often threaten to kick me out if I don't work"* (R16 interviewed in May 2024). Most of the participants reported that *"their employer threatened to withhold their pay if they did not complete the work on time"* (R16,17,18 interviewed in May 2024).

These threats are used to control and intimidate individuals, making their emotional distress worse. The absence of moral support and positive reinforcement hampers their

emotional development and self-esteem, causing them to feel stuck in a cycle of abuse and exploitation.

4.3.5 Verbal Abuse:

A notable aspect highlighted by all the respondents is that they have been subjected to verbal abuse in the workplace. Some respondents initially hesitated to share their experiences, but later, they opened up about their encounters. One of the respondents shared, *"My supervisor often reprimands me in front of customers. I felt embarrassed and didn't know how to deal with the situation afterward."* (R2 interviews in April 2024). They reflected on the experience: *"Everyone has their dignity, and no one wants to be disrespected in front of others"* (R2 interviewed in April 2024). During the discussion, one of the participants recounted their personal experiences and mentioned, *"Nobody enjoys being overlooked, and its impact on our mental well-being is undeniable. We are often compelled to tolerate it as it is an integral part of our livelihood. If we express our concerns, we might risk being removed from the work".*" (R16 interviewed in May 2024).

An analysis of the study reveals that this harmful behavior instills fear and misery in the individuals, emphasizing the oppressive and punitive environment in which they work. The consistent exposure to such mistreatment has profound emotional effects, leading to feelings of helplessness and enduring stress. Verbal abuse further perpetuates the power imbalance between children and their employers. Threatening language, including mentions of job loss or wage reduction, instills a sense of constant fear and compliance in the children. This fear-based control method hinders their ability to voice concerns or seek assistance, effectively trapping them in a cycle of ongoing exploitation and abuse.

4.3.6 Labor Exploitation:

The children being interviewed have been subjected to exploitation by their employers. The average pay in the country is 30,000rs, but these children receive only 200, 300, or 500rs per day depending on the nature of their work. According to the table, most children working in auto shops are involved in electrical work, while a few do auto dent work or oil changing/engine services and Poshish work. There are also minors, aged 8-10, who are employed as trainers. All this work is framed as a way for the children to learn and develop skills. One of the participants mentioned, *"I only get paid 200rs per day at work, and I worked for 15 hours in a day without receiving any overtime pay from my employer."* (R4 interviewed in April 2024). An 8-year-old boy arrived at an auto shop and stated, *"I'm not here for money, I'm here to learn."* (R19 interviewed in May 2024) Despite his initial shyness, he later shared his experiences, shedding light on the prevalent labor exploitation within auto shops, particularly affecting children who are easily taken advantage of due to their young age. One individual even expressed a desire to open an auto shop in the future, intending to hire children as *"Shagird"* because of their obedient demeanor, highlighting a troubling issue of exploitation in the industry.

The research findings indicate that these children experience various forms of exploitation, including prolonged working hours, inadequate pay, and unsafe working conditions. Despite their extended hours and challenging work, these children receive low wages that do not reflect the difficulty of their labor. The unfair compensation highlights the economic exploitation they face, as their earnings are insufficient to improve their living standards or support their families significantly. This financial exploitation further

diminishes their motivation and self-esteem. These exploitative practices not only jeopardize their physical well-being but also impede their educational and personal growth.

4.3.6.1 Cyclical Nature of Exploitation:

Several survey participants expressed a growing inclination towards establishing their auto repair shops and hiring children as assistants in the future. Most of the respondents even explicitly stated, *"I aspire to have my auto shop and fully intend to employ children as my workers."* (R18, R20, R21, and R22 interviewed in May 2024). When asked about the reasoning behind this decision, the respondent elaborated that they never questioned their mentors and worked diligently throughout the day as children. In contrast, younger workers tended to challenge their supervisors and showed less respect. This response underscores the normalization of mistreatment and exploitation among these individuals, indicating a significant shift in their mindset. They view children as more easily influenced due to their vulnerability and lack of power, perpetuating a cycle of exploitation. The inclination to replicate the abusive practices they endured highlights the cyclical nature of this exploitation, as these individuals now aspire to subject other children to similar conditions.

4.3.7 Impact on well-being

The exploitative labor practices have significant impacts on children's development. Physically, the demanding work and hazardous conditions hinder their growth and overall health. Psychologically, the ongoing stress and absence of positive reinforcement harm their self-esteem and mental well-being. Socially, the lack of access to peers and educational opportunities restricts their social skills and prospects.

4.3.7.1 Psychological aspects:

The study findings revealed that nearly all the children working in auto-mobile workshops experienced significant psychological distress. They faced various forms of abuse at work—verbal, physical, and emotional—resulting in serious harm to their mental well-being. These are the narratives shared by some respondents:

"After being scolded by my ustaad, I feel extremely distressed and experience nightmares at night. I feel frustrated and at times, angry, but I am unable to take any action due to my job" (R3 interviewed in April 2024). While recounting his experience, one respondent's hands trembled, and terror was evident in his expression. Another participant shared, *"I'm enduring the pain; my ustaad beats and scolds me. I'm not taking any action right now, but I'm persevering for the time being. I don't know what the future holds."* (R7 and R8 interviewed in April 2024). Each child shared their ordeal, and it was clear that all of them were undergoing hardship. Not a single child expressed satisfaction with their master's behavior.

The study's analysis reveals that children who work in auto shops endure significant psychological distress due to ongoing exposure to verbal and physical abuse. This distress leads to chronic stress, fear, and emotional distress which are perpetuated by the intimidating environment created by their employers. Prolonged stress can result in long-term mental health issues, including frustration, low self-esteem, and a diminished sense of self-worth. The absence of emotional support and encouragement exacerbates these challenges, leaving the children feeling isolated and hopeless. Furthermore, the

normalization of abusive behavior leads to a warped perception of violence and exploitation, contributing to a cycle of psychological trauma that extends into adulthood.

4.3.7.2 Physical impact and lack of safety measures:

In the auto shop, every child was engaged in work that could have harmful effects on their health. Most children were involved in denting, while the rest were doing electrical work, and engine oil services, and a few were working on car upholstery. They were all putting in long 15-hour days, which led to fatigue and many injuries, especially while performing welding work. Their hands and clothes were covered in chemicals from handling engine oil and car polish. Engine oil contains hazardous chemicals such as hydrocarbons and polyalphaolefins, which can cause severe pneumonia and have the potential to harm the liver, kidneys, and lungs. Even the youngest child was seen holding a car seat and attempting to fix it. Many of them reported experiencing *electric shocks and getting their hands burned, yet they continued with the work*" (R2, R3, R4, R7, R18 interviewed in April & May 2024).

Children often had to do difficult tasks without proper safety measures, leading to many injuries and exposure to harmful substances. Lack of access to healthcare made the physical toll worse, as injuries and illnesses often went untreated. The absence of medical facilities and safety precautions at their workplaces shows a lack of concern for their well-being, exposing them to risks without protection. This highlights the unsafe working conditions these children endure, including exposure to physical risks like cuts, burns, and harmful chemicals in auto shops. The absence of safety measures and proper training exacerbates these risks, leading to frequent injuries and long-term health issues. The lack

of medical care and support compounds the physical toll of their labor, highlighting the negligence of their employers.

4.3.8 Adaptive Coping Strategies:

The study reveals that abuse significantly impacts children's well-being. Many cope with it by enduring it, not thinking about it, or forgetting it. Some are so engaged in their work that they overlook mistreatment. Some have become used to it and continue working in the same environment. Most children bear the abuse, expressing a sense of surrender and acquiescence.

Many respondents report *focusing on work as a temporary escape from emotional pain and stress, often overlooking abusive behavior" (R5, R6, R20 interviewed in April and May 2024)*. However, this approach reinforces the cycle of exploitation and prevents seeking help. Some children have become desensitized to abuse, indicating a normalization of the situation. This defense mechanism protects them from immediate emotional pain but has long-term negative effects on their psychological health, including emotional numbness, difficulty in forming healthy relationships, and a distorted understanding of acceptable behavior.

The lack of resources and support systems for children who have experienced abuse further exacerbates the situation. These children have limited access to psychological or emotional assistance, leading to a cycle of helplessness and vulnerability. The normalization of abuse and the development of coping mechanisms have broader implications for the children's future, as they may struggle to recognize or confront abusive situations in their personal and professional lives. The coping mechanisms reported by

these children highlight the severe impact of abuse on their psychological well-being, and addressing this issue requires stricter enforcement of child labor laws, improved working conditions, and comprehensive support services, including psychological counseling and educational opportunities.

4.3.9 Lack of Awareness and Protection:

Children are often unaware of their rights and lack protection in their workplaces, making them more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. They lack knowledge about legal protections and resources, making them defenseless against abusive practices. Lack of education and exposure to child labor laws further compound this ignorance, leading to children accepting abusive behaviors as normal. The power imbalance between children and employers further entrenches the situation, as children have no means to challenge authority figures who control their work and livelihood.

As these children are minors and belong to poor families, it is easy to exploit them. Many respondents said "*We don't know about our rights, and we don't know if there are laws against such things, as they belong to informal labor, subjecting them to long working hours, inadequate pay, and unsafe working conditions (R10, R15 and R17 interviewed in April and May 2024).*" The absence of workplace inspections, legal enforcement, and child protection agencies in these settings means that there are no external checks on the employers' behavior, allowing abuses to continue unchecked.

Even if the children recognize that they are being mistreated, they often do not know how to seek help. There is a significant gap in the provision of accessible and child-friendly reporting mechanisms. The fear of retaliation, including job loss or further abuse, also

discourages them from speaking out. Few respondents said, "*We know that abuse is wrong; we often wanted to tell someone or peer groups, but we felt fear in our hearts that our ustaad were going to throw us out of our jobs; we are poor people; how are we going to survive?*" (R13 and R18 interviewed in May 2024)

The interesting thing that is found out during the interviews is the social and cultural factors, are the major barriers to seeking help where children are taught to respect and obey authority figures unquestioningly, further inhibiting their ability to challenge their abusive circumstances.

The lack of awareness and protection among children working in auto shops makes them highly vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. In addition, the stigma surrounding seeking help for abuse may prevent these children from speaking out about their experiences. Organizations and communities must work together to provide support and resources for these vulnerable children to break the cycle of abuse.

4.4 Discussions

4.4.1 Prevalence of the abuse:

The results of this thesis match existing literature on child labor and abuse, highlighting an overlooked segment of child workers - those employed in auto workshops in Pakistan's twin cities. Previous research shows that the harsh working environment that children endure in industries such as hotels, brickmaking, and tea stalls, conducted by (Ali et al., 2017, Sidra & Nawaz Manj, 2021 & Mubasher et al., 2018). A lack of cultural acceptance, education, and financial hardship cause these terms. These studies highlight

how prevalent it is for children to experience physical, emotional, and sexual abuse in addition to being exposed to dangerous surroundings. Similarly, the current study reveals that children working in auto shops are regularly subjected to abusive treatment, with all participants experiencing verbal, emotional, or physical abuse. For instance, the result originated from the theme 4.3.7.2 indicated that these children were working with no safety precautions in place, the children usually labor long hours—14 to 15 hours a day—and are thus susceptible to abuse. The power imbalance between the children and their employers is particularly concerning, as the children's dependence on their "masters" leads to the misuse of authority, perpetuating a cycle of abuse and neglect.

4.4.2 Consequences of the abuse:

This study's examination of the coping strategies and perspectives of these children makes a significant addition by providing a more complex picture of how abuse affects their physical and mental health. This result originated by theme lack of adaptive and coping strategies and impact on well-being, despite the harsh treatment, many children appeared to normalize the abuse as part of their work environment, comparable to (Khan et al., 2020), results showing working children perceive mistreatment as an integral feature of their "training." The normalization of child abuse exacerbates the difficulties in addressing it. Furthermore, the study highlights how these children's surroundings shape their overall well-being. Their physical, emotional, and psychological development is negatively impacted by spending so much time in hazardous, hostile environments. As Wallerich et al. (2023) suggest, the environment in which a child spends significant time has profound effects on their growth, and in this case, the lack of any protective framework contributes to long-term harm.

4.4.3 Cycle of Abuse:

The study's analysis reveals an alarming pattern: despite their hardships, many of these children want to set up their auto shops later. This desire to perpetuate the cycle of child labor reflects a grim adaptation to their environment. According to social learning theory, these children are internalizing and replicating the behaviors, language, and attitudes of their masters (Nabavi & Bijandi, 2012). They normalize the abusive practices they experience, effectively becoming conditioned to accept and perpetuate the very exploitation they endure.

The widespread normalization of abuse and exploitation is deeply troubling. It highlights a vicious cycle in which the trauma and suffering experienced by these children are not only tolerated but also transmitted to future generations (Srivastava, 2011), perpetuating the practice of child labor within the industry. This ongoing cycle of mistreatment emphasizes the urgent need for targeted interventions and reforms to disrupt this pattern and safeguard vulnerable children from continued harm.

The implications of this cycle are significant for child development and the future of Pakistan. The constant exposure to abuse impacts children's physical, emotional, and psychological development, stunting their growth and well-being. Such environments hinder their ability to develop healthy coping mechanisms and interpersonal skills, which are crucial for their overall development and future success.

4.4.4 Negligence of Law-abiding Agencies:

The analysis also highlights a concerning trend in G-10, where the high court's presence sharply contrasts with the normalization of child labor and abuse. This situation shows how deeply rooted these exploitative practices have become, to the point that they are ignored or not adequately addressed even in the presence of legal institutions. Despite existing legal frameworks designed to protect children's rights, many families feel compelled to involve their children in labor due to economic pressures and social acceptance. This normalization not only perpetuates the cycle of exploitation but also leads to severe health consequences for child laborers, including physical injuries and mental health issues. Furthermore, public attitudes toward child labor often minimize its severity, allowing abusive practices to continue unchecked. Research by (Abdullah et al., 2022), indicates that even when laws are enacted against child labor, enforcement remains weak due to societal perceptions that overlook the gravity of these abuses. Consequently, the disconnect between legal protections and societal norms creates an environment where exploitative practices thrive, demonstrating the urgent need for comprehensive interventions that address both legal enforcement and cultural attitudes to effectively combat child labor and protect vulnerable children (ILO, 2019).

Millions of children in Pakistan are subjected to abuse, posing a significant threat to the nation's future. The perpetuation of abusive norms through social learning can lead to perpetuating harmful practices, affecting societal and economic structures. Addressing the root causes of child abuse, implementing protective measures, and promoting positive environments for all children are crucial for a more equitable future. Environmental factors play a significant role in children's experiences and internalization of abuse.

CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

To conclude, child labor remains a pervasive issue that fundamentally undermines the rights of children, particularly within the socio-economic context of Pakistan. Despite the country's commitment to international conventions aiming at the eradication of child labor, these practices persist, especially among children aged 8 to 14, who continue to work under precarious conditions. This study's findings underscore the prevalence of child labor in urban centers like Islamabad and Rawalpindi, with a particular focus on areas such as G-10, where a high concentration of automobile workshops is juxtaposed with significant legal oversight, considering the proximity with the High Court. The persistence of child labor in such locales highlights critical gaps in the enforcement of existing laws and accountability mechanisms.

Children employed in these auto-repair workshops experience long working hours at minimal wages and are often subjected to various forms of abuse—physical, verbal, and mental. The absence of health and safety measures exacerbates their vulnerability, forcing them to navigate high-risk work environments and lack any protection. The socio-economic factors driving these children into labor are multifaceted, with many families compelled by poverty to place their children in exploitative working conditions for financial gains. Often originating from remote areas in search of economic opportunities, these children frequently live with their employers, further entrenching their exploitation. This study highlights the issues children face at work, their coping mechanisms, and the consequences on their well-being. Minors work up to 15 hours in exploitative conditions, suffering physical and emotional abuse at the hands of their masters. Those in positions of authority, masquerading as mentors, perpetuate this cycle of violence and intimidation,

threatening to terminate their employment if they speak up. Such an environment damages their well-being and hinders their growth. These children are susceptible to exploitation because of their unstable living conditions—they are frequently abandoned by their relatives and dependent on their employers. While they may learn some technical skills via their labor, the lack of formal training and control in these informal auto shops perpetuates the cycle of exploitation. This not only stunts their development but also limits their prospects for advancement, prolonging their cycle of poverty and disadvantage. Effective interventions are required to break the pattern and give those children opportunities for significant skill development and personal well-being. The absence of accountability in the informal sector allows this abuse to continue unchecked.

The social learning theory highlights that children are likely to emulate the behaviors and attitudes of those around them. It provides a critical lens through which to understand the long-term impact of such abusive environments on cognitive and emotional development. The normalization of negative behaviors in these settings poses significant risks to the future social contributions of these children, as the harmful practices they experience may become ingrained, hindering their potential to develop positive social behaviors.

The future of Pakistan is inherently tied to the well-being and development of its children. With millions currently engaged in laborious activities that contravene their basic rights, the situation demands urgent and comprehensive intervention. This study highlights the paradox of a society where law enforcement agencies, despite their active presence, fail to effectively curtail child labor. The government and relevant stakeholders must address this issue with gravity, implementing robust policies that prioritize the protection and

development of children. Safeguarding their rights is not merely a legal obligation but a moral imperative, as the cultivation of positive behaviors and skills during childhood, will ultimately shape the trajectory of Pakistan's future generations.

This research emphasizes the stark reality that millions of children, subjected to the rigors of labor, are being deprived of their childhood and future potential. If these young lives are compromised by exploitation and abuse, the nation's progress remains stunted. Ensuring the protection and development of these children is not just an act of justice but a crucial investment in the social and economic fabric of Pakistan. The time to act is now, for the fate of the nation lies in the hands of its youngest citizens.

5.1 Policy and Recommendation

1. Provision of social safety nets: In Pakistan safety net programs, for instance, Bait ul Mal, the Zakat, and Ushr programs exist but to combat child labor, there is a need for more comprehensive programs.

- Social safety nets should be inclusive and considerate of children's needs. This involves facilitating parents' access to benefits and cash transfers with both conditions and unconditional programs that provide the children with quality education and give them health services investments.
- For instance, unconditional cash transfers have shown significant success in countries like Kenya and Ethiopia, where they have reduced child labor while promoting economic inclusion (FAO, 2020).

- Assist Local NGOs in locating and providing comprehensive welfare services to these families specifically for families in high-risk areas (Urban slum areas in the cities)

The Constitution of Pakistan Article 11 especially prohibits child labor and Pakistan's Employment Act 1991 also forbids child labor, the Government of Pakistan should **strengthen the legal enforcement agencies** to ratify and implement the ILO Conventions Nos. 138 and 182 on child work also to increase penalties for child labor offenses and address the ongoing underfunding of labor standards enforcement organizations.

2. Economic Inclusion: Policies should be Economically inclusive, such as microfinance programs and vocational training, which can help families become more self-sufficient, decreasing the need for child labor. By increasing adult career options and income levels, families are less likely to rely on their children's earnings. This can help stop the cycle of poverty, which frequently perpetuates child labor.

3. Enhancing food security via cash assistance programs and agricultural policy: reduces the possibility that families will depend on the income of their children to survive. Children are more likely to attend school when their families can meet their necessities without engaging in child labor.

The Benazir Income Support Programm (BISP) helps underprivileged families by providing unconditional cash transfers, allowing them to cover their basic requirements

without relying on their children's earnings. Furthermore, the Child Support Program provides conditional financial transfers to encourage school attendance, resulting in higher enrollment rates.

Improving agricultural output with supportive policies helps stabilize family finances, lowering reliance on child labor for survival. Emergency monetary support initiatives, such as the PM Ramzan Package, provide short-term relief during emergencies, preventing families from turning to child labor. Thus, these cash assistance programs create an atmosphere where children may concentrate on learning and growth rather than labor, greatly increasing school attendance and promoting long-term economic stability.

4. Effective Collaboration Between International NGOs and Local NGOs to Combat Child Labor: Collaboration between international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) like local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) for instance Sahil organization is crucial for effectively addressing child labor in Pakistan. In Pakistan, the Ministry of Human Rights, Overseas Pakistan's and human Development, Ministry of education, law, and Justice, Provincial labor Department, National Commission on the right of the Children, and Child Protection and Welfare bureaus- these ministries collaborate with the international organizations to combat the child labor but due to systematic inequalities and socio-economic factors, the issue persists.

For this study, effective Collaboration and a comprehensive approach are required to influence and implement government policies regarding child labor laws and education access. Conduct research projects that highlight the impact of child labor, informing

policymakers for legislative change. Engage local stakeholders to identify specific issues related to child labor and implement tailored solutions.

By implementing these policies and recommendations, Pakistan can take significant strides toward eliminating child labor and ensuring that every child can grow up in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment. These measures address the immediate issue of child labor and contribute to the country's long-term socio-economic development.

This study underscores the critical need for further research on child labor in Pakistan, focusing on several key areas to drive meaningful change. Long-term impact studies should track the effects of child labor on individuals from childhood to adulthood, providing insights into its lasting physical and psychological consequences. Comparative research across regions and sectors can reveal unique challenges, enabling the development of targeted interventions. Additionally, exploring the role of cultural norms and social dynamics will inform culturally sensitive approaches to addressing child labor. Evaluating the effectiveness of educational and vocational programs is crucial for shaping future policies, while research on gender-specific challenges will help address the unique issues faced by girls in labor. Furthermore, assessing the implementation and impact of existing laws will identify enforcement gaps, and testing community-based interventions in high-risk areas can refine strategies for prevention and rehabilitation. By addressing these areas, future research can contribute to the eradication of child labor and the protection of children's rights in Pakistan.

REFERENCES

- Abdullah, A., Huynh, I., Emery, C. R., & Jordan, L. P. (2022). Social Norms and Family Child Labor: A Systematic Literature Review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(7), 4082. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph19074082>
- Ahad, Md. A., Parry, Y. K., & Willis, E. (2021). The prevalence and impact of maltreatment of child laborers in the context of four South Asian countries: A scoping review. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 117, 105052. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105052>
- Ali, M. A., Ali, M. V., & Abbas, F. (2017). Hidden hazardous child labor as a complex human rights phenomenon: A case study of child labor in Pakistan's brick-making industry. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 3(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311886.2017.1369486>
- Ali, M., Rafi, S., & Aslam, M. (2012). Tiny Hands on Hefty Work: Determinants of Child Labor on Automobile Workshops in Sargodha. (Pakistan). *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(3). https://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_3_February_2012/33.pdf
- Asghar, I. (2022, June 14). *Child labour on the rise in garrison city*. The Express Tribune; The Express Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2361417/child-labour-on-the-rise-in-garrison-city>
- Asif, M. (2023, December 20). *The changing face of Islamabad — 30 years of urban expansion*. DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1796974>

- Aye Myat Thi, Zimmerman, C., & Ranganathan, N. (2023). Hazardous Child Labour, Psychosocial Functioning, and School Dropouts among Children in Bangladesh: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys (MICS). *Children (Basel)*, *10*(6), 1021–1021. <https://doi.org/10.3390/children10061021>
- Ayertey Odonkor, A. (2020, October 2). *Understanding the complexities of child labor in South Asia*. News.cgtn.com. <https://news.cgtn.com/news/2020-10-02/Understanding-the-complexities-of-child-labor-in-South-Asia-Ug6mSR9QDS/index.html>
- Baig, Z. (2021, February 25). *Child labour runs rampant on capital streets*. The Express Tribune; The Express Tribune. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2286123/child-labour-runs-rampant-on-capital-streets>
- Bharat, P., Nidhi Dhimaan, Raddi, S. A., Bist, L., Kaur, K., Tiwari, J., & Kaur, D. (2024). Socio-Cultural Discourses of Children Engaged in Child Labor in India: A Macro-Ethnographic Study. *Indian Journal of Community Medicine/Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, *49*(2), 392–397. https://doi.org/10.4103/ijcm.ijcm_982_22
- Bonyan Organization. (2022, March 1). *Effects Of Child Labor On Society | Bonyan*. Bonyan Organization. <https://bonyan.ngo/child-protection/child-labor/>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, *3*(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>

- Currie, J., & Tekin, E. (2012). Understanding the cycle: childhood maltreatment and future crime. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 47(2), 509–549.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3817819/>
- Dammert, A. C., de Hoop, J., Mvukiyehe, E., & Rosati, F. C. (2018). Effects of public policy on child labor: Current knowledge, gaps, and implications for program design. *World Development*, 110, 104–123.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2018.05.001>
- Damyantov, M. (2023, February 8). *Thematic Analysis: A Step-by-Step Guide*. Dovetail.
<https://dovetail.com/research/thematic-analysis/>
- Dawadi, S. (2020). Thematic Analysis approach: a Step by Step Guide for ELT Research Practitioners. *Journal of NELTA*, 25(1-2), 62–71.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED612353.pdf>
- Dawn. (2022, May 14). *Pindi, Islamabad among districts with highest number of child abuse cases*. DAWN.COM; DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1689519>
- Degli Esposti, M., Pinto Pereira, S. M., Humphreys, D. K., Sale, R. D., & Bowes, L. (2020). Child maltreatment and the risk of antisocial behaviour: A population-based cohort study spanning 50 years. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 99(1), 104281.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104281>
- Delve. (2020). *How to do thematic analysis*. Delve.
<https://delvetool.com/blog/thematicanalysis>
- DEpedia. (2024). *Geography of Islamabad*. DBpedia.
https://dbpedia.org/page/Geography_of_Islamabad

- Downey, C., & Crummy, A. (2021). The impact of childhood trauma on children's wellbeing and adult behavior. *European Journal of Trauma & Dissociation*, 6(1), 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejtd.2021.100237>
- Dye, H. L. (2019). Is Emotional Abuse as Harmful as Physical and/or Sexual Abuse? *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s40653-019-00292-y>
- Edgar, T. W., & Manz, D. O. (2017). *Convenience Sampling - an Overview* / *ScienceDirect Topics*. Sciencedirect. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/topics/computer-science/convenience-sampling>
- Emorhievwunu, P. E., & Emorhievwunu, F. I. (2024, January 5). *Effect of Child Neglect on Psycho-Social Wellbeing and Academic Life of Children in Secondary School: Perception of Teachers in Ethiopie East Local Government Area, Delta State, Nigeria*. [Www.intechopen.com](http://www.intechopen.com); IntechOpen. <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/1162977>
- Edmonds, E. (2007). NBER WORKING PAPER SERIES CHILD LABOR. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w12926/w12926.pdf
- FAO. (2020). Social protection and child labour, Eliminating child labour in agriculture with social protection. In *FAO* (pp. 1–16). <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a8dfb367-f0b3-44d1-bc63-0977a01a357e/content>
- Fisher, P. A., & Skowron, E. A. (2017). Social-learning parenting intervention research in the era of translational neuroscience. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 15(1), 168–173. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2017.02.017>

- Fouad, A. M., Amer, S. A. A. M., Abdellatif, Y. O., & Elotla, S. F. (2022). Work-related injuries among 5 – 17 years-old working children in Egypt: findings from a national child labor survey. *BMC Public Health*, 22(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-022-13689-6>
- Gilani, S. R. S., Zahoor, S., & Iqbal, M. A. (2022). Child Labor in Pakistan: Causes, Consequences and Prevention. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 6(2), 197–208. <https://ojs.pssr.org.pk/journal/article/view/127>
- Granich, S., Jabeen, T., Omer, S., & Arshad, M. (2021). Addressing the issue of child sexual abuse in Pakistan: A conceptual analysis. *International Social Work*, 66(3), 002087282110319. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00208728211031955>
- Gupta, P. (2022, January 30). *Child Labour Essay - Infinity Learn*. Infinity Learn by Sri Chaitanya; Infinity Learn. <https://infinitylearn.com/surge/english/essays/child-labour-essay/>
- Habib, R. R., El Khayat, M., Ghanawi, J., Katrib, R. S., Hneiny, L., & Halwani, D. A. (2024). Child labor and associated risk factors in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic: a scoping review. *Frontiers in Public Health*, 11, 1240988. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpubh.2023.1240988>
- Hafeez, A., & Hussain, S. (2019). AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF CHILD LABOR: EVIDENCE FROM PAKISTAN. *Pakistan Economic Review*, 2, 48–64. <https://eco.qau.edu.pk/per/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Download-article-4-21-2019.pdf>
- Haider, S. (2024, September 8). *Pakistan's out-of-school children crisis: A call for urgent reform*. DAWN.COM; DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1857323>

- Hamran Tariq. (2024, June). *Aware Pakistan*. Aware Pakistan.
<https://awarepakistan.com/blog/107448/the-child-labor-crisis-in-lahores-automobile-industry/>
- Henkhaus, L. E. (2022). The lasting consequences of childhood sexual abuse on human capital and economic well-being. *Health Economics*, 31(9), 1954–1972.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/hec.4557>
- Hennink, M., & Kaiser, B. N. (2022). Sample Sizes for Saturation in Qualitative Research: a Systematic Review of Empirical Tests. *Social Science & Medicine*, 292(1), 1–10.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114523>
- Herrenkohl, T. I., Fedina, L., Hong, S. H., Lee, J. O., & Saba, S. (2021). Associations between prospective and retrospective measures of child abuse and self-reported adult health at midlife. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 120, 105203.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105203>
- Hogarth, L., Martin, L., & Seedat, S. (2019). Relationship between childhood abuse and substance misuse problems is mediated by substance use coping motives, in school attending South African adolescents. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, 194, 69–74.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2018.10.009>
- Hussain, M., Saud, A., Khattak, M., & Ur Rehman. (2017). *Socio-Economic Determinants of Working Children: Evidence from Capital Territory of Islamabad, Pakistan*.
https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/54471/ssoar-par-2017-2-hussain_et_al-Socio-Economic_Determinants_of_Working_Children.pdf?sequence=1

- Ibrahim, A., Abdalla, S. M., Jafer, M., Abdelgadir, J., & de Vries, N. (2018). Child labor and health: a systematic literature review of the impacts of child labor on child's health in low- and middle-income countries. *Journal of Public Health*, 41(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/pubmed/fdy018>
- Ibrahim, A., Abdalla, S. M., Jafer, M., Abdelgadir, J., & Nanne de Vries. (2019). *Validate User*. Academic.oup.com. <https://academic.oup.com/jpubhealth/article/41/1/18/4835667?login=false>
- ILO. (2008, October 15). *Sampling for household-based surveys of child labour*. International Labour Organization. <https://www.ilo.org/publications/sampling-household-based-surveys-child-labour>
- ILO. (2019). *Ending child labour by 2025: A review of policies and programmes*. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_norm/@ipec/documents/publication/wcms_653987.pdf
- ILO. (2021, June 10). *Child labour rises to 160 million – first increase in two decades / International Labour Organization*. [Www.ilo.org. https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/child-labour-rises-160-million-first-increase-two-decades](https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/child-labour-rises-160-million-first-increase-two-decades)
- ILO. (2023a). Child labour and forced labour in Pakistan 20. In *International Labour Organization* (pp. 1–4). ILO. [file:///C:/Users/Dell/Downloads/wcms_888809%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/Dell/Downloads/wcms_888809%20(1).pdf)
- ILO. (2023b). *Rapid assessment of child labour in automobile repair workshops in Pakistan*.

https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@asia/@ro-bangkok/@ilo-islamabad/documents/publication/wcms_887599.pdf

ILO. (2024, January 28). *Child Labour in Asia and the Pacific*. International Labour Organization. <https://www.ilo.org/regions-and-countries/asia-and-pacific/child-labour-asia-and-pacific>

International Labor Rights Forum. (2011, September 26). *Developmental Effects of Child Labor* | *International Labor Rights Forum*. Laborrights.org. <https://laborrights.org/blog/201109/developmental-effects-child-labor>

International Labour Organization. (2024a, January 28). *Child Labour* | *International Labour Organization*. [Www.ilo.org. https://www.ilo.org/topics/child-labour](https://www.ilo.org/topics/child-labour)

International Labour Organization. (2024b, January 28). *What Is Child Labour* | *International Labour Organization*. [Www.ilo.org. https://www.ilo.org/international-programme-elimination-child-labour-ipecc/what-child-labour](https://www.ilo.org/international-programme-elimination-child-labour-ipecc/what-child-labour)

Iqbal, A. (2023, June 13). *Agriculture traps millions in child labour across S. Asia: UN*. DAWN.COM; DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1759463>

Jalili Moayad, S., Mohaqeqi Kamal, S. H., Sajjadi, H., Vameghi, M., Ghaedamini Harouni, G., & Makki Alamdari, S. (2021). Child labor in Tehran, Iran: Abuses experienced in work environments. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, *117*, 105054. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2021.105054>

Jayawardana, D., Baryshnikova, N. V., & Cheng, T. C. (2022a). The long shadow of child labour on adolescent mental health: a quantile approach. *Empirical Economics*, *64*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00181-022-02241-5>

- Jayawardana, D., Baryshnikova, N. V., & Cheng, T. C. (2022b). The long shadow of child labour on adolescent mental health: a quantile approach. *Empirical Economics*, 64. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00181-022-02241-5>
- Kamal , N., Che Mohd Salleh, M., Ali Muhammad, A., & Mohd, A. (2016). A Study on Child Labour as a Form of Child Abuse in Malaysia. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 6(7), 525–530. <https://doi.org/10.7763/ijssh.2016.v6.704>
- Kemal, M. (2009). *Urbanization and Labor Market Informality in Developing Countries*. https://mpa.ub.uni-muenchen.de/18247/1/mpa_paper_18247.pdf
- Khan, H., Hameed, A., & Afridi, A. K. (2007). Study on child labour in automobile workshops of Peshawar, Pakistan. *Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal*, 13(6), 1497–1502. <https://doi.org/10.26719/2007.13.6.1497>
- Khan, S., Mehmood, S., & Haider, S. (2020). Child Abuse in Automobile Workshops in Islamabad, Pakistan. *Pakistan Journal of Criminology*, 12, 61–74. <https://www.pjcriminology.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/5-Sarfraz-Khan.pdf>
- Khosravan, S., Sajjadi, M., Moshari, J., & Barzegar Shoorab Sofla, F. (2018). The Effect of Education on the Attitude and Child Abuse Behaviors of Mothers with 3-6 Year Old Children: A Randomized Controlled Trial Study. *International Journal of Community Based Nursing and Midwifery*, 6(3), 227–238. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30035139/>
- Kulsoom, R. (2009). *Munich Personal RePEc Archive Child labor at District Level: A Case Study of Rawalpindi*. https://mpa.ub.uni-muenchen.de/17333/1/MPRA_paper_17333.pdf

- Larivière-Bastien, D., Aubuchon, O., Blondin, A., Dupont, D., Libenstein, J., Séguin, F., Tremblay, A., Zarglayoun, H., Herba, C. M., & Beauchamp, M. H. (2022). Children's perspectives on friendships and socialization during the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative approach. *Child: Care, Health and Development*, 48(6). <https://doi.org/10.1111/cch.12998>
- Latif, A., Ali, S., Awan, A., & Kataria, J. (2016a). Socio-economic and political determinants of child labor at brick kilns: A case study of district Jhang. *South Asian Studies a Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, 31(1), 161–174. https://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/csas/PDF/11%20Jafar%20Riaz_v31_no1_jan-jun2016.pdf
- Latif, A., Ali, S., Awan, A., & Kataria, J. (2016b). Socio-economic and political determinants of child labor at brick kilns: A case study of district Jhang. *South Asian Studies a Research Journal of South Asian Studies*, 31(1), 161–174. https://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/csas/PDF/11%20Jafar%20Riaz_v31_no1_jan-jun2016.pdf
- LAUEN DAER, J. (2013). Childhood Exposure to Maltreatment: Do Social and Financial Resources Attenuate Caregiver Child Abuse Potential? In *core.ac.uk* (pp. 1–94). <https://core.ac.uk/reader/215286140>
- Li, M., & Hua, Y. (2022). Integrating Social Presence With Social Learning to Promote Purchase Intention: Based on Social Cognitive Theory. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.810181>
- Lippard, E., & Nemeroff, C. (2020). The Devastating Clinical Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect: Increased Disease Vulnerability and Poor Treatment Response

- in Mood Disorders. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 177(1), 20–36.
<https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.2019.19010020>
- Lowthian, E., Anthony, R., Evans, A., Daniel, R., Long, S., Bandyopadhyay, A., John, A., Bellis, M. A., & Paranjothy, S. (2021). Adverse childhood experiences and child mental health: an electronic birth cohort study. *BMC Medicine*, 19(1).
<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12916-021-02045-x>
- Luby, J. L., Rogers, C., & McLaughlin, K. A. (2021). Environmental Conditions to Promote Healthy Childhood Brain/Behavioral Development: Informing Early Preventive Interventions for Delivery in Routine Care. *Biological Psychiatry Global Open Science*, 2(3). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bpsgos.2021.10.003>
- Ma, J. (2016). Behavior Problems Among Adolescents Exposed to Family and Community Violence in Chile. *Family Relations*, 65(3), 502–516.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/fare.12199>
- Mahmod, N., Che Mohd Salleh, M., Ali Muhammad, A., & Mohd, A. (2016). A Study on Child Labour as a Form of Child Abuse in Malaysia. *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 6(7), 525–530. <https://doi.org/10.7763/ijssh.2016.v6.704>
- Mannan, A. (2021). Urban Growth Patterns and Forest Carbon Dynamics in the Metropolitan Twin Cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, Pakistan. *Sustainability*, 13(22), 1–14. <https://ideas.repec.org/a/gam/jsusta/v13y2021i22p12842-d683535.html>
- Maria Postolache, A. (2022, October 10). HACE. HACE.
<https://www.thisishace.com/blog/child-labour-and-mental-health#:~:text=Perhaps%20more%20surprising%20is%20the>

- Md Abdul Ahad, Parry, Y., Willis, E., Ullah, S., & Matthew Ankers Matthew. (2023). Maltreatment of child labourers in Bangladesh: Prevalence and characteristics of perpetrators. *Heliyon*, 9(9), e19031–e19031. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2023.e19031>
- Medelyan, A. (2019). *Coding Qualitative Data: How to Code Qualitative Research*. Thematic. <https://getthematic.com/insights/coding-qualitative-data/>
- Mehnaz, A. (2018). Child Abuse in Pakistan-Current Perspective. *National Journal of Health Sciences*, 3(4), 114–117. <https://ojs.njhsciences.com/index.php/njhs/article/view/67>
- Merzougui Hanane, Gong Xianghe, & Ali, D. (2024). Child Labor Laws and Educational Rights for Children in Pakistan a Contextual Analysis. *Research Square (Research Square)*. <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-4733099/v1>
- Mubasher, R., Khattak, Muhammad, J., & Khan. (2018). "Determinants of Child Labor: A Case Study of Children Working at Automobiles Workshop at Tehkal Payan of Peshawar City. <https://file-thesis.pide.org.pk/pdf/mphil-development-studies-2013-mubasher-rehnman-khattak--determinants-of-child-labor-a-case-study-of-children-working-at-automobiles-workshop-at-tehkal-payan.pdf>
- Muhammad Ammad Khan, Kamal, E., Nasir, R., Samana Batool, & Faisal, I. (2023). Child Sexual Abuse in Pakistan: A Phenomenological Study on Parental Understanding and Prevention Strategies for Child Protection. *Journal of Child Sexual Abuse*, 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10538712.2023.2293115>
- Nabavi, R. T., & Bijandi, M. S. (2012, January). *Bandura's Social Learning Theory & Social Cognitive Learning Theory*. ResearchGate.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267750204_Bandura%27s_Social_Learning_Theory_Social_Cognitive_Learning_Theory

Nadir, S. (2024). *THE LITTLE LABOURERS*. Thenews.com.pk.

<https://www.thenews.com.pk/magazine/you/1209306-the-little-labourers>

Naeem, Z., Shaukat, F., & Ahmed, Z. (2011). Child labor in relation to poverty. *International Journal of Health Sciences*, 5(2 Suppl 1), 48–49.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3533357/>

Naqvi, S. S., Javed, S., Naseem, S., Sadiq, A., Khan, N., & Sattar, S. (2020). *G3 and G9 Rotavirus genotypes in waste water circulation from two major metropolitan cities of Pakistan*. Research Gate; Scientific gate .

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/341642395_G3_and_G9_Rotavirus_genotypes_in_waste_water_circulation_from_two_major_metropolitan_cities_of_Pakistan/citation/download

NIMH. (2021). *Chronic Illness and Mental Health: Recognizing and Treating Depression*.

National Institute of Mental Health.

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/publications/chronic-illness-mental-health>

Norman, R. E., Byambaa, M., De, R., Butchart, A., Scott, J., & Vos, T. (2012). The Long-Term Health Consequences of Child Physical Abuse, Emotional Abuse, and Neglect: a Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis. *PLoS Medicine*, 9(11), e1001349. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pmed.1001349>

Öncü, E., Kurt, A. Ö., Esenay, F. I., & Özer, F. (2013). Abuse of working children and influencing factors, Turkey. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 37(5), 283–291. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2012.11.006>

- Pac, A., Child, P., Zafar, N., Naeem, M., Zehra, A., & Khalid, M. (2020). *Ten Years Data of Child Abuse and Neglect Cases Managed at the First Hospital Based Child Protection Unit in Pakistan*. <https://www.apjpcch.com/pdfs/2043bVf144554.pdf>
- Paine, C. W., Fakeye, O., Christian, C. W., & Wood, J. N. (2019). Prevalence of Abuse Among Young Children With Rib Fractures. *Pediatric Emergency Care*, *35*(2), 96–103. <https://doi.org/10.1097/pec.0000000000000911>
- Petersen, A. C., Joseph, J., & Feit, M. (2014). *Consequences of Child Abuse and Neglect*. Nih.gov; National Academies Press (US). <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK195987/>
- PIED. (2022). *22.8m children between 5-16 years of age not attending school in Pakistan - PIDE - Pakistan Institute of Development Economics - -*. <https://Pide.org.pk/>. <https://pide.org.pk/research/22-8m-children-between-5-16-years-of-age-not-attending-school-in-pakistan/>
- Point, S., & Baruch, Y. (2023). (Re)thinking transcription strategies: Current challenges and future research directions. *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, *39*(2), 101272. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scaman.2023.101272>
- Pulla, V. R., Tarar, M. G., & Ali, Mrs. A. (2018). Child Protection System and Challenges in Pakistan. *Space and Culture, India*, *5*(3), 54. <https://doi.org/10.20896/saci.v5i3.302>
- Radfar, A., Filip, I., Asgharzadeh, S. A. A., & Quesada, F. (2018). Challenges and Perspectives of Child Labor. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, *27*(1), 17–20. https://doi.org/10.4103/ipj.ipj_105_14

- Raman, G. (2015). Complexity of Law Subjects to Accounting Students: An Action Research. *Research Gate*, 3(4), 01-11. <https://doi.org/07102015>
- Raza, S., Gilani, S., Zahoor, S., & Iqbal, M. (2022). Child Labor in Pakistan: Causes, Consequences and Prevention. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 6(2). [https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2022\(6-II\)18](https://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2022(6-II)18)
- Rebouças, P., Falcão, I. R., & Barreto, M. L. (2021). Social inequalities and their impact on children's health: a current and global perspective. *Jornal de Pediatria*, 98(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpmed.2021.11.004>
- Rehman, M. A. (2023, December 19). *Pakistan's Socioeconomic Problems and Child Labour*. Research Society of International Law | RSIL. <https://rsilpak.org/2023/how-pakistans-socioeconomic-problems-are-leading-to-child-labour/>
- Roelen, K., Barnett, I., Johnson, V., Lewin, T., Thorsen, D., & Ton, G. (2023, April 28). *Understanding Children's Harmful Work: The Methodological Landscape*. Bristoluniversitypressdigital.com; Bristol University Press. <https://bristoluniversitypressdigital.com/edcollchap-oo/book/9781529226072/ch003.xml>
- S VEXLER. (1977). *SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY AND CHILD ABUSE INTERVENTIONS* | Office of Justice Programs. [Www.ojp.gov](http://www.ojp.gov). <https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/social-learning-theory-and-child-abuse-interventions>
- Sadler, G. R., Lee, H.-C., Lim, R. S.-H., & Fullerton, J. (2010). Research Article: Recruitment of hard-to-reach Population Subgroups via Adaptations of the


- Snowball Sampling Strategy. *Nursing & Health Sciences*, 12(3), 369–374.
<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1442-2018.2010.00541.x>
- Sajwan, A. (2023, January 30). *The Impact of Child Labour on Mental Health*. Hibiscus Foundation. <https://hibiscusfoundation.org/the-impact-of-child-labour-on-mental-health/>
- Saldana, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Sage Publications Inc. - References - Scientific Research Publishing. Scirp.org.
<https://scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=3154174>
- Sidra, S., & Nawaz Manj, Y. (2021). A Study On Child Labor As A Form Of Child Abuse In District Sargodha. *Pakistan Journal of Applied Social Sciences*, 12(2), 133–146.
<https://doi.org/10.46568/pjass.v12i2.566>
- Sokar, S., Greenbaum, C. W., & Haj-Yahia, M. M. (2022). Exposure to Parental Violence During Childhood and Later Psychological Distress Among Arab Adults in Israel: The Role of Gender and Sense of Coherence. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, 38(1-2), 088626052210827. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08862605221082741>
- Srivastava, K. (2011). Child labour issues and challenges. *Industrial Psychiatry Journal*, 20(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.4103/0972-6748.98406>
- Sutton, J. (2021). *What Is Bandura's Social Learning Theory? 3 Examples*. PositivePsychology.com. <https://positivepsychology.com/social-learning-theory-bandura/>
- Syed Irfan Raza. (2024, May 9). *PM vows to get 26m out-of-school children enrolled*. DAWN.COM; DAWN.COM. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1832339>

- The news. (2024, February 29). *Over 4,000 children suffered abuse in Pakistan in 2023: report.* Thenews.com.pk; The News International. <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/1162859-over-4000-children-suffered-abuse-in-pakistan-in-2023-report>
- Ul-Haq, J., Nazeer, N., & Khanum, S. (2021). Trade Liberalization and Child Labour: Empirical Evidence from Manufacturing Sector of Pakistan. *Competitive Social Science Research Journal*, 2(4), 88–98. <https://cssrjournal.com/index.php/cssrjournal/article/view/98>
- UNICEF. (2022). *Child Protection*. Unicef.org. <https://www.unicef.org/pakistan/child-protection-0>
- US Department of Labor. (2021). *MINIMAL ADVANCEMENT -EFFORTS MADE BUT CONTINUED PRACTICE THAT DELAYED ADVANCEMENT 1 2021 FINDINGS ON THE WORST FORMS OF CHILD LABOR.* https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ILAB/child_labor_reports/tda2021/Pakistan.pdf
- VanDerHeyden, M. (2022, September 15). *28 Million People in Forced Labour in 2021: CGF Response to Latest ILO Statistics on Modern Slavery.* The Consumer Goods Forum. <https://www.theconsumergoodsforum.com/blog/2022/09/15/28-million-people-in-forced-labour-in-2021-cgf-response-to-latest-ilo-statistics-on-modern-slavery/>
- Viola, T. W., Salum, G. A., Kluwe-Schiavon, B., Sanvicente-Vieira, B., Levandowski, M. L., & Grassi-Oliveira, R. (2016). The influence of geographical and economic factors in estimates of childhood abuse and neglect using the Childhood Trauma

- Questionnaire: A worldwide meta-regression analysis. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 51, 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2015.11.019>
- Wallerich, L., Amandine Fillol, Rivadeneyra, A., Stéphanie Vandentorren, Wittwer, J., & Cambon, L. (2023). Environment and child well-being: A scoping review of reviews to guide policies. *Health Promotion Perspectives*, 13(3), 168–182. <https://doi.org/10.34172/hpp.2023.20>
- WHO. (2021). *Violence and abuse among working children in urban and suburban areas of lower Sindh, Pakistan*. World Health Organization - Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean. <https://www.emro.who.int/emhj-volume-27-2021/volume-27-issue-5/violence-and-abuse-among-working-children-in-urban-and-suburban-areas-of-lower-sindh-pakistan.html>
- World Health Organisation. (2022, September 19). *Child maltreatment*. World Health Organization. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/child-maltreatment>
- World Health Organization. (2022, November 29). *Violence against children*. Who.int; World Health Organization: WHO. <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/violence-against-children>
- Zafar, Z., Sarwar, I., & Haider, S. I. (2016). *GPR - Global Political Review*. www.gprjournal.com. <https://www.gprjournal.com/article/Socio-Economic-and-Political-Causes-of-Child-Labor-The-Case-of-Pakistan>

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE/INTERVIEW PERFORMANCE

A.1 Ethical Approval Form

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES & HUMANITIES (S3H)**
NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY (NUST)
Ethical approval Letter Ref: 0839/Ethic/07/S3H/17/DDS

Ethics Clearance Certificate

S/H

Project Title: Investigating the Effects of Child Abuse and Neglect on the Well-being of Working Children in Automobile workshops in Islamabad: A Qualitative Study

Investigators: Samana Batool

Co-Investigator(s): -----

Contact Details of Investigators: 0333-5374062

Discipline: Dept of Development Studies

Project Location: NUST, H-12 Campus, Islamabad

Project Duration: 2-3 Months

It meets the requirements and ethical guidelines set out by School of Social Sciences and Humanities (S3H) Ethics Committee. There is no need to take separate informed human participation consent. This project is **Approved** subject to the following conditions:

It is the Investigator's responsibility to ensure that all researchers associated with this project are aware of the conditions of approval and which documents have been approved.


The investigator is required to notify the Research Ethics Committee, via amendment or progress report, of:

- Any significant change to the project and the reason for that change, including an indication of ethical implications (if any);
- Serious adverse effects on participants and the action taken to address those effects;
- Any other unforeseen events or unexpected developments that merit notification;
- The inability of the investigator to continue in that role, or any other change in research personnel involved in the project;
- A delay of more than 6 months in the commencement of the project; and,
- Termination or closure of the project.

Additionally, the Principal Researcher is required to submit

- A Progress Report on the anniversary of approval and on completion of the project.

The Ethics Committee may conduct an audit at any time.


Dr. Ume Laila
Chair of School Ethics Committee
Associate Professor
School of Social Sciences and Humanities (S3H)
National University of Sciences and Technology
Pakistan
Date: May 10, 2024

Sector H-12, Islamabad, Pakistan. Tele: +92-51-90853503, +92-51-90853501, E-mail: s3h@nust.edu.pk

Figure 6: Ethical Approval. Source: Nust Ethical Approval Committee

A.2 Interview Questions

A.2.1 Demographics

1. Respondent Name?
2. Age?
3. Occupation?
4. Education?
5. Enrolled in school or not?
6. Where do you live?
7. Your ethnicity?

A.2.2 Objective 1:

To investigate the prevalence and types of child abuse experienced by working children in automobile shops in Islamabad.

1. How long have you been working in the automobile shop?
2. How many hours do you work in a day?
3. Do you feel safe and secure in your workplace?
4. Have you ever been getting a day off from your work?
5. How much do you get paid monthly?
6. How many days do you work in a week?
7. Do you get any breaks or food at your workplace?
8. How is your relationship with your masters?
9. What is your role at work?

10. Do you do extra work? If yes, then do you get paid?
11. Do you get extra money if you work longer than work hours?
12. Do you get holidays/leave if you get sick or on any other occasions?
13. Do you get any safety measures from the workplace?
14. Have you ever been injured at work? If yes, then how does your master treat you?
15. How have your interactions been with others in the auto shop? Is there anything you'd like to share about your experiences?
16. Have you ever felt like someone spoke to you in a way that made you uncomfortable or upset? If so, could you describe the situation?
17. In your time here, have you noticed any patterns or recurring instances where communication might not have been as positive as it could be?
18. In your time here, have you noticed any patterns or recurring instances of behavior that you found inappropriate or sexually uncomfortable?
19. Have you ever experienced any situation that made you feel physically threatened or uncomfortable while at the auto shop? If you have experienced any physical discomfort, can you describe how intense it was, and did it happen?

A.2.3 Objective 2:

To examine the relationship between child abuse and various consequences, including physical-mental health, and well-being.

1. Have you ever experienced physical health problems from abuse? If yes, please describe.
2. Have you ever experienced mental health problems from abuse? If yes, please describe.
3. How has the abuse affected your overall well-being?
4. To what extent do you feel your work experiences have influenced your current well-being
5. How do you think your experiences have influenced your ability to form and maintain healthy relationships?

A.2.4 Objective 3:

To analyze the children's perception of the abuse being inflicted upon them and how they cope with it.

1. How do you feel when your master speaks loudly with you or is angry?
2. Does it bother your daily work and behavior? If yes then how do you react after this?
3. Do you ever feel that your master's reaction is unfair?
4. Does it bother you when your master is being rude or arrogant?
5. Have you ever complained about your working environment with your parents or your guardian? If yes then what was their response and advice to you?
6. Do you feel safe after working in that environment? If not, then how do you manage your daily routine?