



## **Examen del efecto del trabajo infantil en el acceso de niños en edad escolar a la educación en Turquía**

### **Examining the effect of child labor on school-aged children's access to education in Turkey**

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#### **Resumen**

El objetivo principal de esta investigación cualitativa es analizar la situación del trabajo infantil en Turquía y, como resultado, el acceso de estos niños a la educación básica en derechos humanos. Esta investigación se llevó a cabo con la técnica de análisis histórico/documental, uno de los métodos de investigación cualitativa. Para ello, se analizaron las estadísticas preparadas por el Instituto de Estadística de Turquía y el Ministerio de Educación Nacional. Se ha concluido que el trabajo infantil es común en Turquía como en el mundo. Las principales causas del trabajo infantil son la pobreza, la migración, la mano de obra barata y la necesidad de trabajadores domésticos. Se concluyó que la mayoría de los niños trabajadores estaban sin educación y tenían que trabajar sin educación para contribuir al presupuesto familiar. El bajo nivel de escolaridad en los sistemas educativos y la insuficiente capacidad educativa se encuentran entre los factores que provocan el trabajo infantil. Además, la educación es vista como una pérdida de tiempo costosa y no rentable.

**Palabras clave:** niñez, trabajo, educación escolar, trabajo infantil, familia.

#### **Abstract**

The main objective of this qualitative research is to analyze the situation of child labor in Turkey and, as a result, the access of these children to basic human rights education. This research was conducted with the historical/document analysis technique, one of the qualitative research methods. To this end, the statistics prepared by the Turkish Statistical Institute and the Ministry of National Education were analyzed. It was concluded that child labor is widespread in Turkey, as in the whole world. The main causes of child labor are poverty, migration, cheap labor and the need for domestic workers. It was concluded that the majority of child workers are out of education and have to work

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without education to contribute to the family budget. One of the reasons for their lack of education is the traditional point of view. The low level of schooling in education systems and insufficient capacity in education are among the factors that cause child labor, that is way education is seen as a costly and unprofitable waste of time.

**Keywords:** childhood, work, school education, child labor, family.

### Introduction

In many developed countries in which unemployment and poverty are relatively low have a high coverage of all citizens in terms of their social security system. In those countries, workforce is paid well, and children are protected as individuals. It means that these countries care about children's education and welfare physically and emotionally. Child labor is generally regarded as a violation of basic human rights. Invisible unpaid child labor, which was previously employed in domestic and outside jobs, has turned into child labor with low wages and harsh conditions (Parin & Çakar, 2022). Therefore, not employing children in jobs that hinder their development and preventing the abuse of child labor constitute the basis of the fight against child labour, as well as being a humanitarian obligation (Beşoluk & Parlak, 2022). As a result, children are kept away from working to protect their health, safety. By doing so, they can benefit from their educational rights.

On the other hand, in developing countries in which poverty and migration rates are high, industrialization is low, working class receive lower salaries and their social security rights are neglected. In those countries, children are considered as cheap labor force. They are forced to work to provide income especially in poor families (Günöz, 2007). As a result of it, their rights are violated and they are abused as well. When it happens, they remain uneducated because they are at work places instead of being at schools. Therefore, the problem of child labor becomes a vital issue to be dealt with.

According to the International Labor Organization (ILO Child labour refers to the exploitation of children through any form of work that deprives children of their childhood, interferes with their ability to attend regular school, and is mentally, physically, socially and morally harmful (International Labour Organization. 2011). It is the situation of making child under the age of 15 years old work (ILO, 1937).

It is a social problem. According to figures presented in the 2015 Child Workers report prepared by ILO, there are approximately 168,000,000 child workers registered worldwide and

48,000,000 of them work in heavy and dangerous jobs. If this form of employment goes on this issue not end (Gün, 2017). In most cases, it stems from poverty, unemployment, migration, and economic inequality (Çobaner, 2016; Erbay, 2013; DISK, 2017). According to the ILO, poverty seems to be the driving force that pushes children into work. However, the child labor itself produces poverty. There are also other factors which cause child labor. For example, these are lack of access to adequate education, migration, adult unemployment, low family income, traditional family perspectives, lack of legislation and enforcement as well as a demand among employers for cheap labor.

Sadly, there is no clear statistics to confirm the proportion of children who are unable to attend school just because of being in the labor market. However, these children work in precarious situations based on their role in an informal economy. Moreover, the income they receive is much lower than their adult peers although they do the same job. The impetus for children taking these low paying jobs and missing out on attending school, is that their families' need the income that their children earn (Lordoğlu & Aslan, 2018).

The problem with this scenario though is that education is universally accepted as a basic human right and these children cannot benefit from their basic right. Importantly, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), it is affirmed that education is the right of every individual without discrimination. Furthermore, the right to education is included in many international documents as a precondition for other human rights. However, these children cannot access to education. Child labor as a sociological phenomenon is not a current problem or issue. Because it is possible to encounter it in many stages of human history. The appointment of a person to work life at a young age affects not only the mental and physical health of his age, but also his later life (Benek & Baydemir, 2021).

Although some of them can be illustrated through statistics, a significant portion are difficult to accurately represent through means of data collection. If any country can be considered to have difficulties in collecting data regarding the obstacles and inequalities for access to education, the difficulties in Turkey should be considered as quite significant. For example, although it is a law in Turkey that K-12 education is compulsory, there is no clear reason why approximately 1,000,000 children throughout Turkey do not benefit from formal education which addresses a big problem regarding educational policy. It is considered that school-aged children do not receive formal education due to poverty. They are forced to contribute to family income as well

as some other reasons such as ceremonial and/or religious reasons. Therefore, the main purpose of this qualitative research was to analyze child-labor situation in Turkey and as a result of their right of access to basic human education.

## **Methods**

### **Design**

This research was conducted with a qualitative research method. In this regard, in order to understand and resolve the situation in Turkey regarding access to education better, this method was implemented. The data published by the Turkish Statistical Institute (TUIK) were used. Here, past events and facts, or the relationship between a situation and the past were important sources of information and the data. Also, historical knowledge could be valuable to explain past circumstances and events as well as better understand a current situation.

### **Data Collection**

The data were collected from statistical reports. In these kinds of studies, it is important that the analysis be based on accurate and reliable sources, credible information from past institutions, individuals, groups and/or events. In short, historical research was a process of analyzing and interpreting the past through a critical lens in order to better determine the truth about past events and to better understand current events through the information produced (Mayring, 2012).

Next, the purpose of qualitative research was to look at the topic of interest in a holistic and detailed manner, to examine it in its complexity and to understand it in context. More importantly, through use of qualitative studies, the researcher can be sensitive to the current situation and process for investigation. Through quantitative studies one can conceptualize reality by better understanding the contacts between parameters (Punch, 2017). In recent years, the use of qualitative researches became more widespread because they allowed researchers to reveal social reality better, and for this reason, qualitative research method was implemented in this research.

### **Analysis of data**

In this current study, an examination was conducted through document analysis to investigate child labor in Turkey and its effect on school-aged children's access to education. Document analysis was also an extremely useful research methodology. Through document analysis, a research problem could be selected, better understood, and put into historical perspective (Karasar, 2016).

In document analysis, the documents closest to the case, which reflect it most closely and might even be integrated into the physical records of the event, are important. Written and printed documents that were created later.

To carry out the document analysis for this study, the data utilized were obtained by accessing original data sources. This was important because as Balçı (2018) pointed out primary data sources could be essential in document analysis research. This was a critical fact because in such data. There was no intermediary between the source and the researcher. The Turkey Statistics Institute (TSI) maintained a wealth of data. As a result, TUIK child labor research documents were prepared in 2006, 2012, and 2019 which form the basis of the statistical data analyzed in this current research.

In doing so, document analysis was carried out by the researchers to access child labor statistics that were not obtainable through classical method tests and/or behavioral observations. Important to note that through this data collection method, researcher subjectivity might reveal itself not only in the collection of documents but also in their selection for analysis (Mayring, 2012). This phenomenon, which Duvager (1973) called “documentary observation” was defined by Rummel (1968) as the “document method”. The most important feature of document scanning was to choose a way in which the researcher minimizes the deviation between what the document wanted to tell and what the researcher understands. In this context, during the document scanning as well as the analysis of the selected data for this current research, the TUIK data regarding the 2006, 2012, and 2019 child labor statistics in Turkey were analyzed.

To carry out the document analysis procedure in the most accurate and efficient manner possible the technique of content analysis was utilized to review and select the data. Content analysis was a way to scan the content of texts, books, and documents for the purpose of better understanding and explaining hidden concepts, principles, and features within these items. For example, Karasar (2016) pointed out in-depth use of content analysis could provide valuable perspectives related to the philosophy, language, and expression used in the documents scanned. In this context, an in-depth content analysis of the child labor survey data produced by the TUIK for the years 2006, 2012, and 2019 was carried out.

## Results

**Table 1**  
*Basic Indicators of Child Labor (per 1000 people)*

	October 1994	October 1999	2006 (Oct.- Nov. - December)
Non-institutional civilian population	59,736	65,422	72,957
Population between 0-5 years old	8,469	7,930	8,479
Population between the ages of 6-17	14,968	15,821	16,264
Employment (age 6 and above)	20,984	22,124	22,963
Employment (6 -17 years old)	2,269	1,630	958
Employment rate (6 -17 years)	15.2	10.3	5.9
City	611	478	457
Moorland	1.659	1.151	501
Male	1.372	955	632
Female	898	675	325
Agriculture	1.510	990	392
Non-agriculture	759	640	566
Paid or casual	648	617	513
Self-account or employer	52	28	26
Unpaid family worker	1.570	985	420

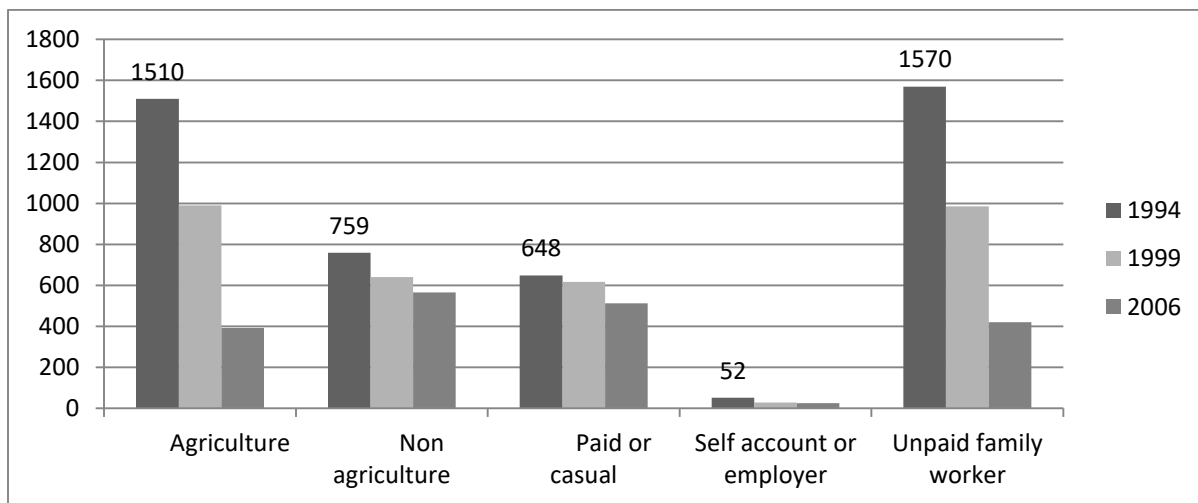
Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2006.

The Child Labor Survey, which was carried out along with the Household Labor Force Survey in 2006, focuses on children aged between 6-17 and a total of 28,978 children were interviewed by Turkey Statistical Agency. As presented in Table 1, children in this group make up 22.3% of the non-institutional civilian population (2006), which is approximately 16,264,000. 60.9% of children in this age group live in urban areas and 39.1% live in rural areas. While 84.7% of these children attend school, 15.3% do not attend school and 58.8% of children who do not attend school are girls.

The number of children in this group is 958,000. Considering this data, it can be understood that there are 143,700 children who did not benefit from education. Approximately 5.9% of

16,264,000 children in this group are employed in an economic job. In other words, 958,000 children are working. 47.7% of children in this group who are employed in Turkey overall are in urban areas, while 52.4% live in rural areas. 66% of the employed children are boys and 34% are girls. While 31.5% of working children attend school, 68.5% cannot continue their education. Furthermore, 2.2% of children in this group attending school also work in an economic job, while 26.3% of children who work, do not attend school.

**Chart 1: Children Working by Sector**



Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2006

As chart represents, 40.9% or 329,000 children are working in agricultural areas, 59.1% or approximately 566,000 in the non-agricultural sector. Moreover, 53% of them work in paid or casual work while 2.7% are self-employed or the employer, 43.8% work for free as a family worker. Also, 5.9% of children in this group work in economic jobs, 43.1% work in domestic jobs, and 51% do not work. Out of 7,400,000 children stated that they help their families with household work and 61.2% or approximately 4,289,000 are girls. While, 42.8% of children attending school help with the housework, 44.4% of children who do not attend school help with housework.

**Table 2**  
*Basic Child Labor Indicators (6-17 years), 2006-2012*

Indicators	2006		2012	
	( per 1000 people )	%	per 1000 people )	%
6-17 age group population	15,025	-	15,247	-
Employment (6-17 years old)	890	100.0	893	100.0
Age group				
6-14	285	32.0	292	32.7
15-17	605	68.0	601	67.3
Gender				
Male	601	67.5	614	68.8
Female	289	32.5	279	31.2
Residential area				
City	490	55.1	400	44.8
Field	400	44.9	493	55.2
Sector				
Agriculture	326	36.6	399	44.7
Industry	275	30.9	217	24.3
Service	289	32.5	277	31.0
The situation at work				
Paid or casual	505	56.7	470	52.6
Self-account	24	2.7	10	1.1
Unpaid family worker	362	40.7	413	46.2
Employment rate (6-17 years old)	-	5.9	-	5.9
6-14	-	2.5	-	2.6
15-17	-	16.6	-	15.6

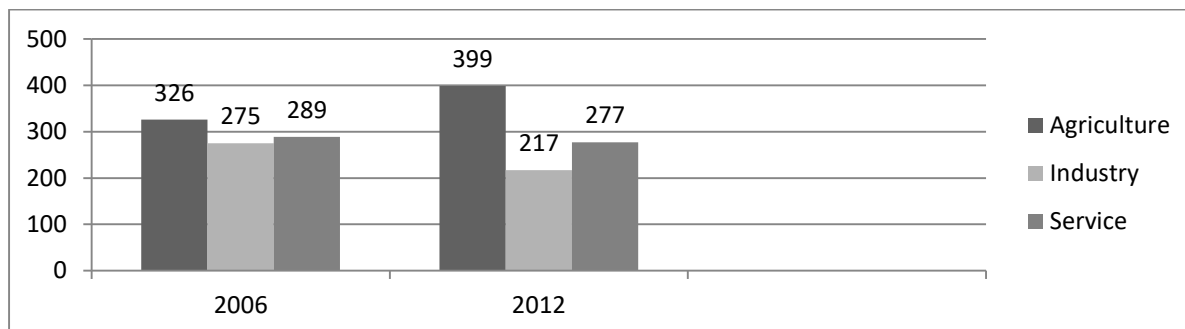
Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2012.



Table 2 displays the distribution of children working in Turkey. While 91.5% of children attend school, 8.5% do not attend school. Furthermore, by age groups, 97.2% of children who are in the 6-14 age group, and 74.7% of children in the 15-17 age group attend school. The employment rate of children who are in the 6-17 age group involved in economic activity is 5.9%. The employment rate for this age group remained at the same level compared to the results from 2006, while the number of working children increased by 3000. The employment rate of children is 2.6% in the 6-14 age group and 15.6% in the 15-17 age group.

The distribution by gender results as 68.8% male and 31.2% female. While 49.8% of working children do attend school, 50.2% do not attend school. In terms of age groups, 81.8% of working children in the 6-14 age group and 34.3% of working children in the 15-17 age group attend school. While, 3.2% of children in the 6-17 age group who attend school, work in economic earning jobs, 50.2% in housework, and 46.6% are not engaged in any work. Among children who do not attend school in this age group, 34.5% of them work in economic earning jobs, 38.8% in housework, and 26.7% are not engaged in any work.

**Chart 2.** Children working in economic activities by sector, 2006-2012



Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2012

Chart 2 also presents that approximately 44.7% or 399,000 working children are employed in agriculture, 24.3% or 217,000 employed in industry, and 31% or 277,000 employed in the service sector. When the sector-based results are compared with the results from 2006, it was recognized that the share of children employed in the agricultural sector increased by 8.1 points, while the share of those employed in the industrial sector decreased by 6.6 points, and the share in the service sector decreased by 1.5 points. Also, 52.6% or approximately 470,000 working children are paid or casual employees, while 46.2% or 413,000 are unpaid family workers.

**Table 3***Basic indicators of children working in economic activity (5-17 years old)*

	Total (per 1000 people)	%	Male (per 1000 people)	%	Female (per 1000 people)	%
5-17 age group population	16,457		8,449	-	8,008	-
Working in economic activity	720	100.0	508	100.0	212	100.0
Age group						
5-11	32	4.4	24	4.7	8	3.8
12-14	114	15.9	77	15.2	37	17.4
15-17	574	79.7	407	80.0	167	78.8
Education status						
Continuing	473	65.7	333	65.6	140	66.1
Discontinued	247	34.3	175	34.4	72	33.9
Sector						
Agriculture	221	30.8	143	28.2	78	36.8
Industry	171	23.7	141	27.8	29	13.7
Service	328	45.5	223	43.9	105	49.4
The status at work						
Paid or casual	455	63.3	319	62.9	136	64.2
Self-account	4	0.5	3	0.5	1	0.5
Unpaid family worker	261	36.2	186	36.6	75	35.3

Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2019.

Considering the statistics presented in the survey conducted in 2019, 79.7% of working children are in the 15-17 age group, 15.9% are in the 12-14 age group, and 4.4% in the 5-11 age group. When analyzed by gender, it was recognized that 70.6% of working children are boys and 29.4% are girls. While 30.8% of working children are employed in agriculture, 23.7% in industry, and 45.5% in the service sector. When examined by age group, it was observed that children working in the 5-14 age group increases in the service sector to 64.1%, while children in the 15-17

age group working in the service sector increases to 51.0%. Additionally, according to their job status, 63.3% of working children work as wage or casual employees, 36.2% work as unpaid family workers, and 0.5% work for themselves.

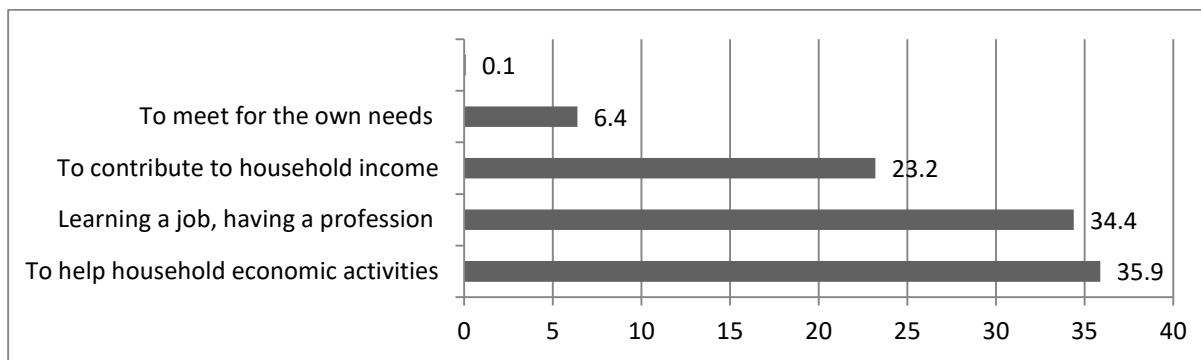
**Table 4**  
*Children working in economic activities according to school attendance level (5-17 years)*

Age group	Total	Total		Male			Female		
		Continuing education	Not attending education	Total	Continuing education	Not attending education	Total	Continuing education	Not attending education
(per 1000 people)									
Total	720	473	247	508	333	175	212	140	72
5-14	146	105	41	101	80	21	45	25	20
15-17	574	368	206	407	253	154	167	115	52
%									
Total	100.0	65.7	34.3	100.0	65.6	34.4	100.0	66.1	33.9
5-14	100.0	72.0	28.0	100.0	79.4	20.6	100.0	56	44
15-17	100.0	64.1	35.9	100.0	62.2	37.8	100.0	68.8	31.2

Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2019.

Table 4 indicates 65.7% of working children attend school, the rate was 65.6% for boys and 66.1% for girls. According to age groups, 72.0% of working children in the 5-14 age group and 64.1% in the 15-17 age group also attend school, while 34.3% of working children do not attend school.

**Chart 3:** Reasons for working children in economic activities (%), 5-17 years old



Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2019.

Chart 3 indicates the reasons for children working and these are “helping the economic activity of the household” is 35.9%, while "learning the job, having a profession" is 34.4%, and “contributing to the household income” is 23.2%. Finally, 6.4% of children are working to “meet their own needs”.

**Table 5**  
*Children working according to economic activity, 5-17 years old*

Economic activity				
Age group	Total	Agriculture	Industry	Service
(per 1000 people)				
Total	720	220	171	328
5-14	146	94	17	35
15-17	574	128	153	292
%				
Total	100.0	30.8	23.7	45.5
5-14	100.0	64.1	11.7	24.2
15-17	100.0	22.3	26.8	51.0

Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2019.

Table 5 displays 30.8% of working children are employed in agriculture, 23.7% in industry, and 45.5% in the service sector. When examined by age group, it was observed that children in the

5-14 age group working in the agricultural sector increased to 64.1%, while children in the 15-17 age group working in the service sector increased to 51.0%.

**Table 6**

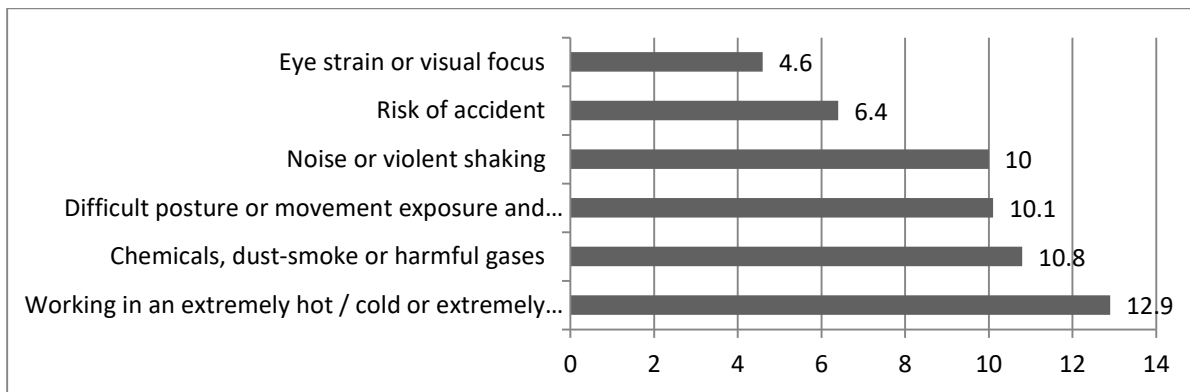
*Children working by age group, gender, and workplace situation, 5-17 years old*

Workplace situation					
Age group	Total	Field / garden	Regular workplace	Unstable workplace/	Chores
(per 1000 people)					
Total	720	219	475	22	4
5-14	146	94	50	3	-
15-17	574	125	425	19	4
%					
Total	100.0	30.4	66.0	3.0	0.5
5-14	100.0	64.1	33.9	2.1	-
15-17	100.0	21.8	74.2	3.2	0.7

Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2019.

As seen in Table 6, it is illustrated that 66.0% of the working children work in regular workplaces, 30.4% in field and/or garden, 3.0% in mobile unstable workplaces or markets, and 0.5% at home.

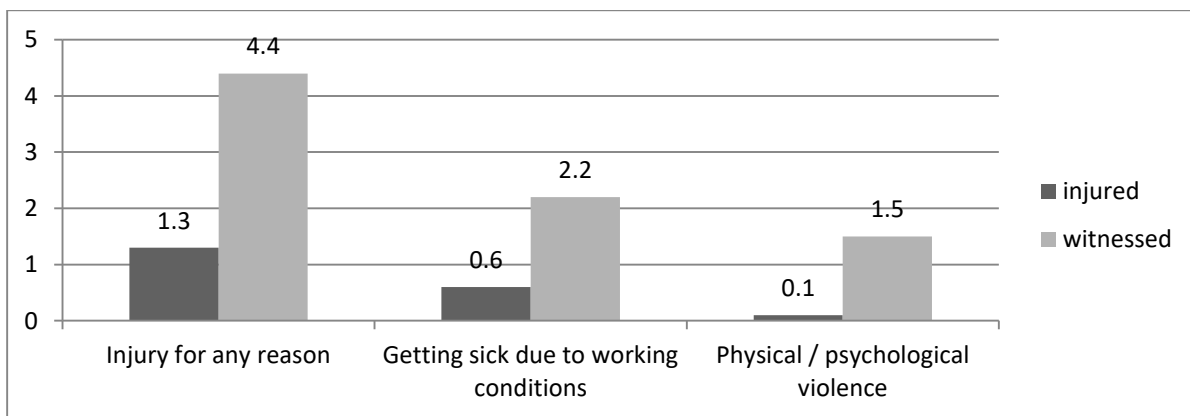
**Chart 4:** Factors that negatively affect physical health in working environments (%), 5-17 years



Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2019.

As presented in Chart 4, when the factors that negatively affect physical health within the working environment were examined, 12.9% children work in an extremely hot/cold or extremely humid/dry environment. Moreover, 10.8% of children in the working environment are exposed to chemicals, dust, smoke and/or harmful gases. 10.1% of working children are subjected to difficult posture or movement or carrying heavy loads, while 10.0% are exposed to noise or violent shaking. Also, it was observed that 6.4% of working children face the risk of accidents in the workplace, while 4.6% are at risk of eye strain or visual focus problems in the workplace.

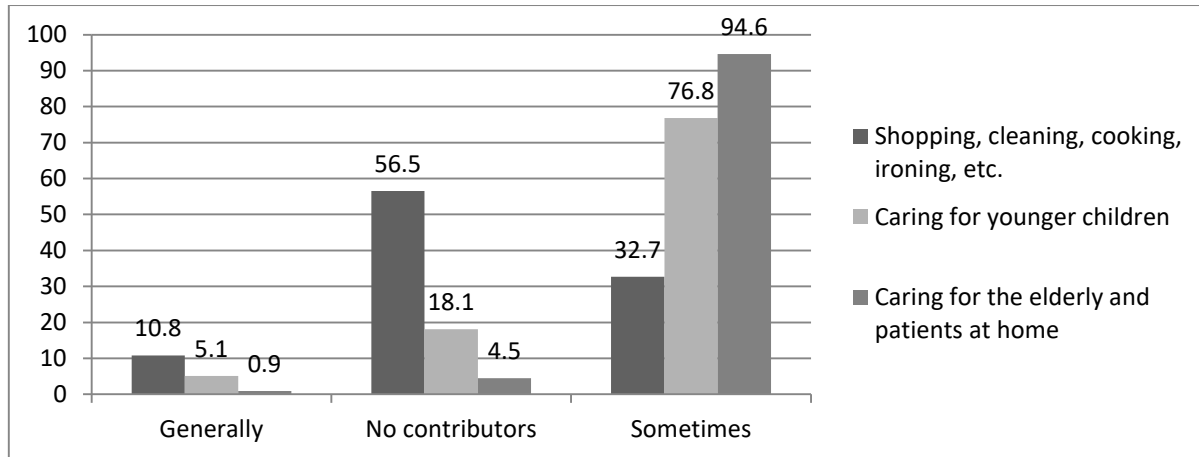
**Chart 5:** Unfavorable factors (%) that affect/may affect working environments, 5-17 years



Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2019.

As Chart 5 shows, while 1.3% of working children are exposed to injury at work, 4.4% witness injury at work. The rate of those who experienced discomfort due to poor working conditions is 0.6%, and the rate of those who witnessed poor working conditions is 2.2%. 0.1% of working children are exposed to physical, verbal violence and/or ill-treatment at the workplace, and the rate of those who witnessed this situation is 1.5%.

**Chart 6:** Children helping housework (%) 5-17 years old



Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2019.

As can be seen in Chart 6, children helping their families with household chores are used to shop, clean, cook, iron, and so forth for their households. This refers to children who support younger children in the household or the household in general or caring for an elderly, disabled and/or sick relative. In this framework, while the proportion of children in the 5-17 age group helping their families with housework is 45.5%, this rate is 40.0% for boys and 51.3% for girls. 43.5% of the children who help their families with household chores do tasks such as shopping, laundry and/or dish washing, ironing, cooking, and cleaning. While, 23.2% help care of younger children in the household, 5.4% help the family in the care of an elderly, disabled and/or sick relative.

**Table 7***Children, based on weekly time spent on housework 5-17 years old*

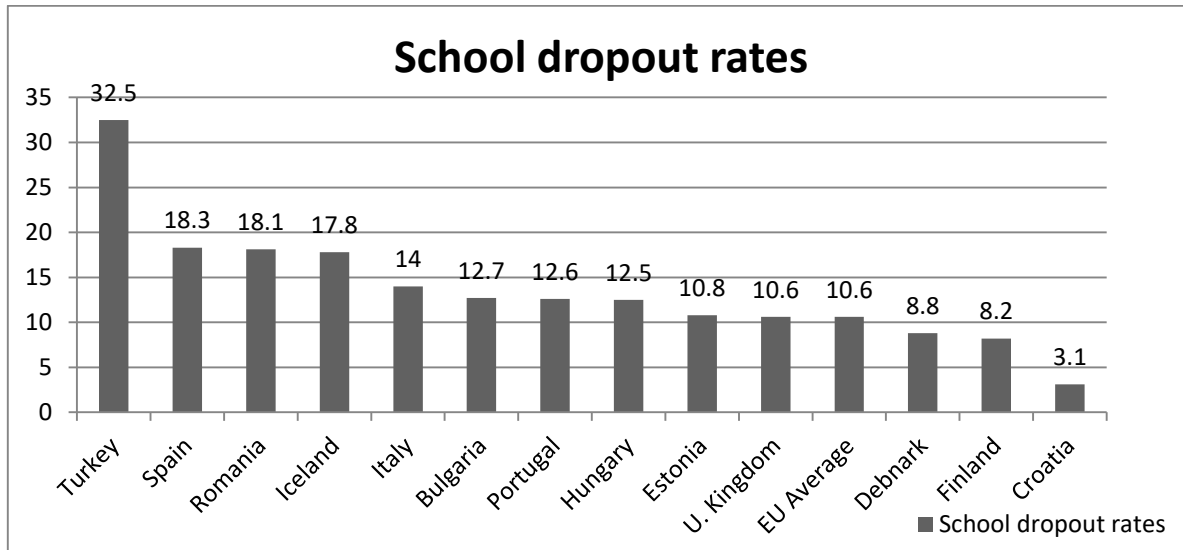
Weekly time	Total	Male	Female
(per 1000 people)			
Total	7,488	3,379	4,109
0-2 hours	3,009	1,617	1,393
3-7 hours	2,768	1,211	1,557
8-14 hours	1,083	386	698
15-20 hours	401	119	283
21+ hours	227	47	180
%			
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
0-2 hours	40.2	47.9	33.9
3-7 hours	37.0	35.8	37.9
8-14 hours	14.5	11.4	17.0
15-20 hours	5.4	3.5	6.9

Source: Turkey Statistical Agency, Child Labor Survey, 2019.

Table 7 presents children who help their families with household chores spend on average 5.8 hours a week completing these chores. 40.2% of children spend two hours or less on weekly housework, 37.0% for 3-7 hours, 14.5% for 8-14 hours, and 5.4% for 15-20 hours. Also, it was recognized that 3.0% of them spend 21 hours or more on household chores. Next, when examined based on gender, females seem to spend more time on housework in general. 16.3% of boys and 28.3% of girls contributed to housework 8 hours a week or more.

**Chart 7:** School dropout rates by selected EU countries

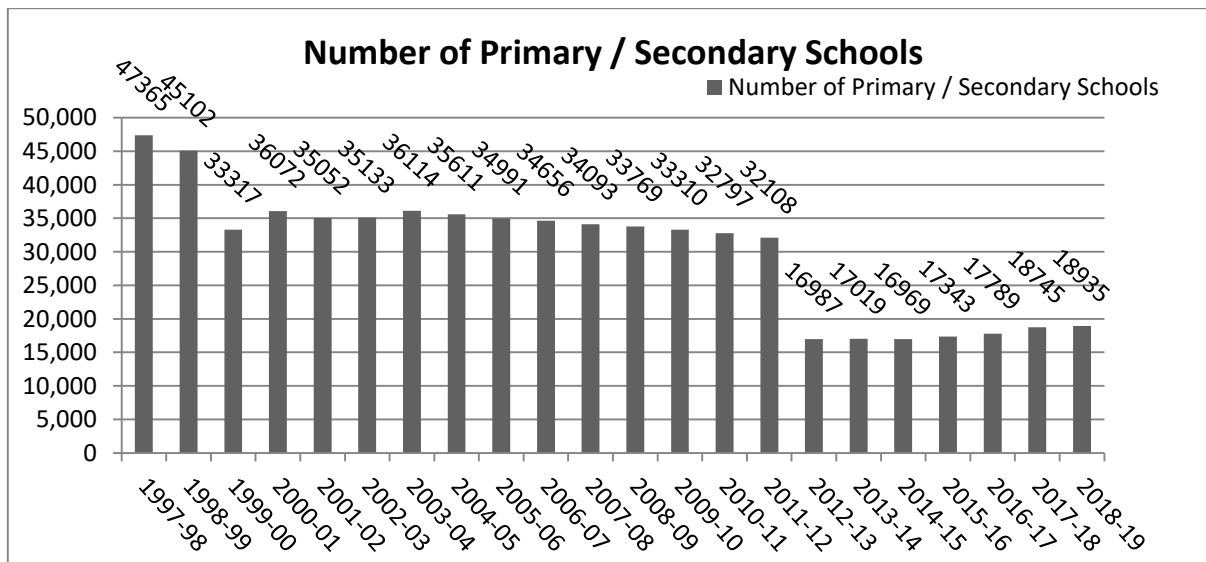




Source: Eurostat early school dropout rates, 2017.

As presented in Chart 7, when the school dropout rates from select EU countries were examined, it was seen that the EU country with the lowest reported dropout rate is Croatia at 3.1%, and the country with the highest rate is Turkey at 32.5%. When the population statistics and average national income of Turkey were considered, it appears that assisting their family with financial support is one of the driving forces for school-aged children to leave school.

**Chart 8:** Primary/secondary school numbers by years



Source: National Education Statistics, Turkey, 1997-2019.

Chart 8 demonstrates the number of public schools in total decreased, especially with the 2012-13 school year. Then, from its lowest point in 2012-13, the number of schools increased by 7% until 2018-19. The main purpose of this qualitative research was to analyze child-labor situation in Turkey and as a result of their access to basic human right education. To this end, some results were obtained. According to these results, the school-age population in Turkey for the 6-17 age group is approximately 16,264,000 (TÜİK, 2006).

Among the children from the 6-17 age group in 2006, there are 60.9% living in urban areas and 39.1% in rural areas. While, 84.7% of the 6-17 age group attend school, 15.3% do not attend school. As can be seen in the 2006 data, 40.9% or approximately 392,000 of the employed children work in the agriculture sector. 61.2% of approximately 7,400,000 children who stated that they helped their families with housework are girls at 4,289,000. While 42.8% of children who reported attending school also help with housework, and 44.4% of children who do not attend school help with housework.

When the sector-based results from 2012 were compared with the results from 2006, it was recognized that the share of employment among children in the agricultural sector increased by 8.1 points, while the share of employment in the industrial sector decreased by 6.6 points. Finally, the share of employment among children in the service sector decreased by 1.5 points. When considering the reasons why children enter the workforce, first, “helping the economic activity of the household” was stated by 35.9% of children, while “learning jobs, having a profession” was at 34.4%, and “contributing to household income” from 23.2% of children. Finally, 6.4% of the children stated to "meet their own needs" was their motivation for working.

A review of the data from 2019 Child Labor Survey reveals that the number of working children in the 5-17 age group is approximately 720,000 (TÜİK, 2020). Importantly, among this group the percent of children from the ages of 15-17 who are working in 2019 is 80% or approximately 574,000 children. Accordingly, the total of children in Turkey who were part of the 15-17 age group in 2019 is approximately 3,649,000, which reveals that 16 out of every 100 children aged 15-17 in Turkey were involved in child labor. As seen in the 2019 data, 65.7% of working children in Turkey continued their education. While, 79.7% of working children are in the 15-17 age group, 15.9% are in the 12-14 age group, and 4.4% in the 5-11 age group. Furthermore, 70.6% of working children are boys and 29.4% are girls.

It is important to point out that children may tire more quickly, their resistance to illness may be lower, and their muscle strength weaker. Therefore, children forced into the workplace environment are more prone to illness due to occupational hazards and work-related accidents. The statistics regarding occupational accidents are insufficient in most developing countries. However, statistics in some developed countries do show that the proportion of child workers involved in occupational accidents is quite high (Karataş, 1993).

In Turkey, compulsory K-12 education within public schools is free of charge and a constitutional right of all Turkish citizens. Unfortunately, not all children in Turkey are allowed to access to formal education due to low-income levels among families, children being forced to work, the State not allocating sufficient resources, and the necessary investments of time not being made. Although K-12 education in Turkey is compulsory, in 2019, 10.23% of primary school-aged children did not benefit from their right to education. Also, it is shown that in 2019, 43.37% of the secondary school-aged children did not attend secondary school (TÜİK, 2020).

It also appears that children's right to education in Turkey is differentiated by whether they live in urban or rural areas. As a result, the education level of the adult population living in urban areas or rural areas should be considered when evaluating the rate of schooling among children. From this point of view, it can be stated that serious problems in school attendance among school-aged children in Turkey, especially among girls, continues to exist.

### **Discussion**

The main purpose of this qualitative research was to analyze child-labor situation in Turkey. In this regard, a number of results were obtained. According to one of the results, their access to higher education is accepted as an important indicator. The Republic of Turkey which is one of the member countries of the United Nations (UN), approved Convention on the Rights of the Child in which a human being below 18 is considered as a child. In that convention it is considered as a principle that every child has a right to access education as a basic human right. Due to the social and economic problems that exist in today's world, children are often forced to work in many areas as well as in Turkey.

According to the International Labor Organization's report released in 2017, approximately 152,000,000 children work in many areas worldwide. Among them, approximately 88,000,000 were boys and 64,000,000 were girls (ILO, 2017). They lack adequate education and health care

and also it is necessary to highlight those 73,000,000 children work in dangerous jobs. Child labor can lead to physical and mental abuse of children and they are may lose the opportunity to attend to formal education. The issue of child labor is a complex problem that should be evaluated not only because it is illegal but also the employment of children is often based on exploitation. Unfortunately, children are forced to work for a variety of social, political, cultural, and economic reasons (Altıntaş, 2005).

For the other hand, certain traditional and cultural beliefs along with a variety of social attitudes and behaviors may also be among the fundamental reasons of child labor. For example, when a family owns a business, the children may be expected to follow in the footsteps of their parents. In this case, it is traditionally considered that the child will begin to work and “learn the business” at an early age. Furthermore, child labor may be so pervasive because working children do not even realize the illegal working status they involved. In Turkey, as well as in most parts of the world, poverty is among one of the essential reasons of child labor. Because of poverty, in many households, parents make their children work to contribute family budget (Erbay, 2008). At times, the children work at the same jobs as their parents, for example, in the agriculture sector.

As a result, the solution to child power problem depends on increasing household incomes. This may help overcome poverty problem in a society. Providing a better life to its citizens as well as improving the welfare of a whole nation can ultimately help to eliminate poverty in a society, and as a result, improve the chances of success for its children. The two are likely to go hand in hand, eliminate the issue of poverty and the concept of child labor is likely to disappear (Boybek, 2009). By exploiting the variations in child labor intensities across different crop categories, we find that reductions in the returns to adult labor-intensive crops lead to a strong negative income effect that reduces schooling, whereas reductions in the returns to child labor increase schooling due to a countervailing price effect (Baia & Wang, 2020).

Unemployment is also a principal actor. It is important to understand why children are forced to work. For example, unemployment may cause adults to accept jobs with low pay and poor social protection, which can result in difficulty for them to provide for their families. A high unemployment rate can create a vicious cycle, where lack of employment opportunities leads the unemployed workforce to accept lower wages due to a shortage of jobs. As a result, in many cases, the unemployment of adults in low-income families compels the children to work in the informal sector. They are expected to earn money for their family to survive. If adults are unable to meet the

needs of the family due to low earnings, then children will ultimately work to provide extra income for the family.

Furthermore, in many families with traditional points of views, parents may see their child entering the workforce positive at a young age especially boys because they think by working the child may mature quicker (Karaman & Özçalık, 2007). Another traditional point of view is that girls need education less than boys. As a result, they believe that girls can leave school at an earlier age. In some regions of Turkey where this opinion is prevalent. It is believed that there is no point in girls going to school for some reasons such as cultural values and religious preferences. In these regions, it is believed that early marriage of girls may be the determining factor that precludes girls from receiving a proper education. Unfortunately, this way of look failed because it is more useful to employ them to help adults.

Ultimately, one of the most important factors for preventing child labor is to provide qualified schools and effective education. Low performing schools as well as insufficient capacity within an education system are among the factors that can lead to child labor. When education is provided in over-crowded schools, families and children may see education as a waste of time and waste of money. For this reason, they see being employed in the workforce is a better alternative. In Turkey, it is alleged that education system fails to provide children with proper education to prepare them as qualified members of the adult-workforce (Günöz, 2007).

In families who are impoverished and lack economic independence have negative views towards education. They prefer their children to work and contribute to the family income. In these cases, the salary that children can earn and contribute to family's well-being is more important than attending school (İlgazi, 1996). Studies have shown that child who are working in homes are separated from their parents and siblings where they deprived from the familial love, care and bonding. They also have the less opportunities to socialize also threatening to their emotional and mental health. Feelings of disorientation also amplified among these children. They remained as marginalized throughout out their life as the consequences of being involved in this modern slavery of domestic labor as a result they never become self-reliant and skillful for their future (Ashiq & Dar, 2021).

In addition to migration and distorted urbanization due to dense population in some metropolitan areas, the result may be an unjust distribution of income which brings cheap labor. Often, children are viewed as an easy source of cheap labor. Migration, which is one of the leading

factors that causes child labor. It results in both boys and girls being pushed into the workforce and migrants in rural and urban settings which play an active role in labor market (Öztürk, 2007).

All in all, it can be understood from the review conducted in this current study that there is a direct relationship between child labor and lack of access to education. If a child is not at school, he or she is likely at work. In many cases, children who are working are unable to attend school. They are often unable to achieve sufficient academic education. In Turkey, the number of years for compulsory education was increased to 8 years in 1997, which led to a reduction in child labor.

A review of the statistics from TURKSTAT, revealed that the percentage of children working in Turkey within the 6-17 age group decreased from 15.2% in 1994 to 10.3% in 1999. As a result, compulsory education is seen as a great contributor to this decline. More importantly, the fact that compulsory education in Turkey was increased to 12 years in 2012 has also led to a further reduction in child labor. The hope is that the continued focus on compulsory education in Turkey will lead not only to educational success among children but also a further decline in child labor and the abuses that accompany it. However, there has been some move away from the 12 years of compulsory education in Turkey, through a loophole so to speak, by enrolling in open secondary schools and high schools. It is not known at this point whether children continuing their education in these types of schools, which are not adequately regulated, will ultimately have a deleterious effect on children's education.

Although children are seen as the "future of the society", serious problems continue in many areas of children's lives such as education, health, security and shelter. Due to the social and economic problems and wars existing in today's world, children often have to work in many areas. Elimination of the causes of child labor is a problem for the rulers of countries to solve. Citizens should be informed about child labor. Managers must also take the necessary measures to prevent child labor.

### **Conclusion**

This research has several limitations regarding the transferability of the results to the population. Firstly, the sample of participants was volunteers. For this reason, they are not necessarily representatives of others within other institutions. Therefore, the results obtained here are limited to this study group and while inferring the results to the population, more caution should be exercised. Secondly, the researchers were the main instruments of data analysis. The analyses

and comments are the products of the researcher's interpretation of it. A different researcher may reach different features of importance within the same data sets. Finally, although the researchers purposed to provide equal representation, it was impossible to provide a fully equal presentation of experience.

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