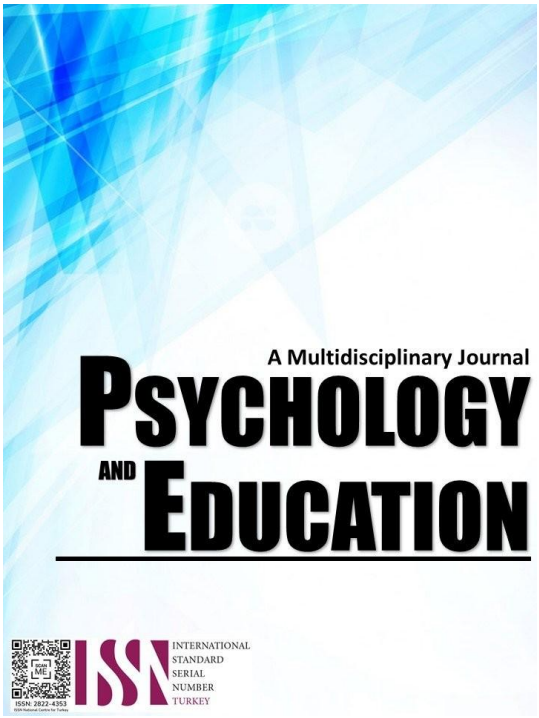
PREDICTIVE ANALYSIS ON CHILD LABOR: BUILDING STRONG NATION THROUGH EDUCATION



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Research Article

Predictive Analysis on Child Labor: Building Strong Nation through Education

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Abstract

The issue of child labor is worldwide and poses an unprecedented threat to children's social and mental development, reduces their ability to enjoy childhood, and limits educational opportunities. With no remedy at hand, governments turned towards containment and mitigation strategies to mitigate the number of cases of child labor. This study aims to evaluate the national-level initiatives implemented by the Philippine government through a trend analysis of child labor cases from 2006 to 2018. This study adopted a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, utilizing open-source data from the Philippine Statistics Authority and government agencies. Quantitative analysis involved trend and moving average techniques to assess child labor statistics from 2006 to 2018, while qualitative analysis examined 24 national initiatives through content analysis and system synthesis to evaluate government responses. The trend analysis of child labor cases generates only downtrends, indicating that the governments' initiatives significantly affect child labor cases. Upon analyzing the relevance of initiatives to the number of cases, the Convention on the Rights of a Child, strengthening initiatives, and workshops cover the majority of interventions released to combat child labor. These initiatives led to a downtrend in child labor cases.

Keywords: *child labor, initiatives, trend analysis, strong nation, predictive analysis*

Introduction

Work performed by children that exploits them or negatively impacts them is known as child labor. It prevents them from accessing school or harms them physically, emotionally, morally, or both. While there has been some global success in the fight against child labor, challenges remain (Hanano, 2020). In recent years, numerous governments have effectively mitigated the number of child laborers through regular cash assistance to families without employing their children. Furthermore, by increasing their monetary allowances, governments maintain their international obligations to protect children from labor and ensure their right to education and a standard of living appropriate for them (Becker, 2021).

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and other governments, which pledge to step up efforts to eradicate child labor in the nation, continue to focus on eradicating and preventing child labor. To end child labor, collaborative efforts are required from the barangay-level government, national government agencies, and stakeholders (De Leon, 2023). United Nation (2022) stated that government social protection programs are crucial for eradicating and preventing child labor and fighting poverty and vulnerability. Social protection is both a human right and an effective instrument for policymakers to discourage families from turning to child labor during difficult circumstances.

The U.S. Department of Labor. (2018) indicates that it takes a strong will to stop these repulsive abuses. Governments must enact laws that safeguard against worker exploitation and turn those laws into effective enforcement procedures. It involves making sufficient investments in their labor inspectorates and improving how those who engage in child labor and forced labor are prosecuted. Additionally, it supports the argument of the article UNICEF for Every Child (2022), which claims that policies, rules, and programs targeted at ending child labor are crucial for systems for protecting children. In order to promote the creation and implementation of such policies, UNICEF collaborates closely with national and local governments.

Child labor remains a profound and persistent issue globally, and particularly in the Philippines, despite the proliferation of international conventions, domestic legislation, and targeted interventions by both governmental and non-governmental organizations. As highlighted by Gutierrez (2017), efforts to combat child labor in the Philippines have included sector-specific campaigns, particularly in gold mining, alongside the establishment of local help desks, registries, and modules designed to heighten awareness among vulnerable populations, notably recipients of conditional cash transfers. Yet, entrenched socioeconomic drivers such as poverty, systemic vulnerability, governance gaps, cultural beliefs, and limited educational access continue to fuel its prevalence.

This study anchors its theoretical lens in Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, proposing that child labor stems from families' attempts to satisfy basic safety and survival requirements, while simultaneously leveraging the educational equity principles of the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) framework to underscore the role of mandatory schooling in disrupting this cycle of labor and deprivation. Unlike prior research, which has tended to focus on macro-level assessments, this work employs a time-series analysis of government programs in the Philippine context to evaluate localized effectiveness. Integrating psychological theory, education policy, and collaborative governance, the study provides a multidimensional framework for evaluating and strengthening national strategies.

As Abdalla et al. (2018) note, child labor has long been a global concern; however, the study presents a novel perspective through its identification of actionable routes toward measurable intervention, identifying the most effective approaches, and providing actionable insights for policymakers, educators, and civil society. Thus, the outcomes establish a basis for future researchers to explore the

intersections of child labor, disaster preparedness, and mitigation, expanding the discourse toward more resilient and inclusive development agendas.

Methodology

Research Design

The researchers employed a mixed-methods design that combines qualitative and quantitative research designs. George (2022) states that the mixed method design is a composition of quantitative and qualitative data elements that would help to answer research questions for the same topic. This study is based on a mixed-methods sequential explanatory design, which entails gathering and analyzing data in two quantitative and qualitative phases within a single study (Cohen et al., 2020). The quantitative data were first collected, followed by the qualitative data. This approach will help to evaluate the effect of initiatives and programs enacted by the government to eliminate child labor in the country. Considering this study is a mixed-method design, it utilized trend analysis, moving average, content analysis, and system synthesis.

This study employed a rigorous sequential explanatory mixed-methods design to evaluate the efficacy of Philippine government interventions targeting child labor between 2006 and 2018. In the quantitative phase, validated datasets from the Philippine Statistics Authority and the World Bank were analyzed using advanced statistical techniques, specifically trend analysis and moving averages. Trend analysis, a forecasting method grounded in historical data (Core Signal, 2022), facilitated the identification of underlying patterns and directional shifts in child labor incidence over time. Complementarily, the moving average technique enabled a smoothing of temporal fluctuations to reveal long-term tendencies in child labor dynamics (Kumar, 2021). These tools collectively provided longitudinal insights into the trajectory and magnitude of the issue, contributing to an empirical understanding of the systemic factors and temporal inflection points linked to government action. By tracing statistical indicators across nearly a decade, this phase established a foundational quantitative baseline for evaluating policy effectiveness. The findings also informed subsequent qualitative inquiry, ensuring a data-driven platform for policy critique and contextual interpretation.

In parallel, this study integrated a rigorous qualitative phase that employed content analysis and system synthesis to dissect the institutional mechanisms and ideological constructs driving program implementation in combating child labor in the Philippines. Data were sourced from institutional repositories, including the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), and the Department of Education (DepEd), providing rich textual material for critical thematic interpretation. Content analysis enabled the identification and mapping of linguistic patterns, core themes, and embedded policy narratives within government documentation (Bhasin, 2020; Luo, 2022), while system synthesis a step in the systems approach that describes one or more system solutions based on the context of a given problem (Adcock, Jackson, Singer & Hybertson, 2022). The adoption of this integrative methodological framework was not merely additive but fundamentally strategic. The quantitative phase illuminated the magnitude and temporal dimensions of the child labor issue, whereas the qualitative phase unpacked its sociopolitical mechanisms and programmatic responses. This fusion of empirical modeling and thematic exploration yielded a multidimensional policy evaluation that is both evidence-rich and context-sensitive, generating insights with tangible applicability for institutional stakeholders, advocates, and policy architects committed to eradicating child labor.

Respondents

This study utilized the open-source statistics on Child Labor provided by the Philippine Statistics Authority. The government's primary statistical agency is the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). It is responsible for the conduct and content of all national censuses and surveys, collecting sectoral statistics, consolidating selected administrative recording systems, and compiling national accounts.

On the other hand, the list of initiatives is gathered from the Department of Labor and Employment, the Department of Social Welfare Development, and the Department of Education website to manage child labor issues in the country. Children have a right to protection against physical and psychological abuse and from being harmed. Governments must ensure that children are well-cared for and protect them from abuse, aggression, and neglect by their guardians, whether their parents or other adults (Protection-rights, n.d.). The governments have already started implementing several programs to mitigate the cases of child laborers in the country.

Instrument

This study utilized open data sources. Furthermore, Jordan (2021) stated that researchers use open data sources as their secondary data to answer new research questions through easily accessible secondary data. Using existing data for the study is becoming more prevalent for secondary data analysis (Johnston, 2014). University of Southern California (2022) further states that there are other ways to investigate research issues aside from interviews and surveys.

The material used by the researcher for answering the research questions in the quantitative phase was the 'Percent Share of Working Children, Not Currently in School' from 2006 to 2018, which is from the Philippine Statistics Authority. In the qualitative phase, the materials used are initiatives and programs in the Philippines from 2006 to 2018. That includes 12 from the Department of Social Welfare Development, 10 from the Department of Labor and Employment, and two from the Department of Education.

Results and Discussion

Trend analysis on data of child labor from 2006 to 2018

Figure 1 presents a longitudinal comparison of male and female participation spanning the years 2006 to 2018, revealing the progression of gender disparities within child labor incidence. These metrics offer a strategic basis for identifying disparities, shaping inclusive policy responses, and guiding strategic interventions that advance equitable child welfare outcomes across gender lines.

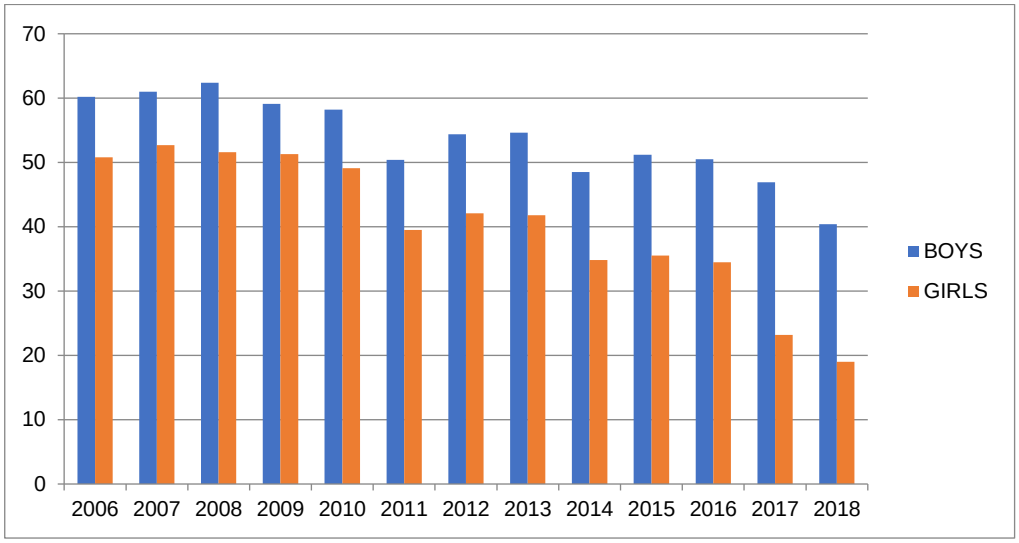

Figure 1. *Percentage of Child Labor Cases of Male and Female*

Figure 1 reveals that male child labor cases in 2008, which had an average of 62.4%, were considered the year with the highest cases of child labor. It also shows that 2018 had the lowest average of cases of male child labor due to an average of 40.4%. It also reveals that the highest percentage of child labor cases for girls in Figure 1 appears in 2007, with an average of 52.7%. Correspondingly, 2018 has the lowest percentage of female child labor cases, with an average of 19%.

Figure 1 shows that from 2006 to 2018, more males than females were involved in child labor cases. European Commission (n.d.) explained that girls are more likely to be involved in domestic work, which is frequently underreported. Girls are particularly vulnerable to abuse since domestic work, even in third-party houses, is typically hidden from the public and outside the purview of labor inspectorates.

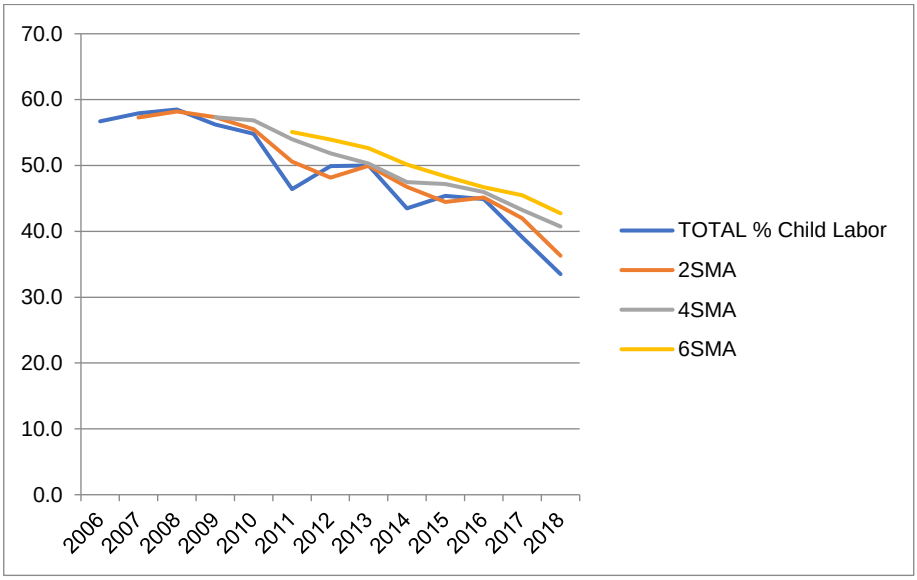

Figure 2. *Moving Average of total percentage of Child Labor*

Figure 2 shows the moving average of child labor cases in the Philippines. The trend began to move in the year 2007. The data fell below the three Moving Averages in six moves (highlighted in black) but did not break through to three M.A. When the number of child labor cases drops below the M.A., the effort to combat child labor successfully prevents a rise in cases that would have exceeded

the expected numbers. When the number of child labor cases exceeds the M.A., the present course of action and responses have resulted in a rise in cases significantly higher than anticipated (Devcic, 2021).

Insights on initiatives and responses to child labor

The researcher identified over 24 national initiatives released by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and Department of Education (DepEd) from the year 2006 to 2018. After analyzing its contents, the researcher identified twelve major themes in Table 1.

Table 1. *Themes of Initiatives and Responses to Child Labor Cases*

Major Themes	*Core Ideas*
Parenting Intervention	Parent support interventions
	Secure gainful and sustainable employment of parents,
	Employment opportunities to parent,
	Parents education
Workshops	Action plan of DSWD
	PantawidPamilyang Pilipino Program,
	Family Development Sessions
	Campaign through storybook
	Child labor module,
	Cash transfer program,
	Protective Services,
	Parent Effectiveness Seminars,
	Supplementary feeding programs,
	SPES program
Convention on the Rights of the Child	Rights of children are upheld and protected
	Children's right,
	Working child protection
	Hours of work
	Children's health and safety
	Right action
	Human Rights
	Employment of Children
	Children shall have access to formal and non-formal education
	Child Protection
Collaborative Governance	Convergence of different programs and services
	Inter-agency efforts and interventions,
	Filipinos must unite with the national government and other concerned agencies
	Work as a collective unit
	Convergence,
	Encourages the public and stakeholders to take action,
	Coordination and collaboration with other government
	Interactive
Strengthening Initiatives	Pursue stronger initiatives
	Comprehensive and sustainable response from different organization,
	Strengthening efforts
	Pursue all appropriate measures
	Intensifying programs,
	Intensifying the conduct of Family Development Sessions (FDS),
	Devise Plans and programs
Criminal Liability	Permanent and temporary closure of extablishment
	Employment of a child in hazardous work shall suffer the penalty of a fine
	Penalties
	Closure of Business, Firm or Establishment
	Corporal punishment being inflictedon pupils/students
Profiling	Identification of child labores
	Profiling
	Needs assessment

Working Child Permit	Inspection Surveillance Recording of cases Validity of working child permit, Issuance of working child permit, Release of working child PERMIT Loss of working child permit Working child permit records

Parenting Intervention. Parenting interventions are crucial in encouraging and maintaining children's and adolescents' health, well-being, and educational results, as well as minimizing and controlling problems when they arise. Meeting a child's fundamental requirements, taking care of their emotional needs, and directing their education and socializing are just a few of the many responsibilities of parenting (Chainey, Doyle, Havighurst & Higgins, 2022). To decrease the incidence of child labor in the country, Sec. Soliman said:

The DSWD is strengthening its partnership with DOLE by providing employment opportunities to parent-beneficiaries of PantawidPamilya to ensure they will not force their children to work (DSWD, 2016).

Moreover, Ms. Editha G. Jayme, SWO I of Q.C. Social Services and Development Department, Dra. Amelita Cruz-Manalang, Medical Specialist of DSWD-NCR, and the center's staff as resource persons conducted a Parent Effectiveness Seminar (PEV) on June 15-17, 2016. The activity provided the following:

Participants with a venue for personal assessment in terms of their parenting knowledge and skills and bring to their awareness the impact of these on their children; PES promoted self-development in the areas of parenting to young, adolescent, and adult children in order to guide their children well; created a way to renew their commitments as a parent through integrating gained knowledge and skills in the continuous performance of their role as a parent and enhanced their capacities of the parents on parenting ensuring children of the new generation to be more equipped to face challenges and any case when death occurs as inevitable less feeling of guilt haunts them (DSWD INA Healing Center, 2016).

Parenting interventions represent a strategically vital component in national efforts to eliminate child labor, particularly within culturally family-centric societies like the Philippines. By empowering parents through targeted programs such as the Parent Effectiveness Seminar (PEV) and employment-linked support via Pantawid Pamilya, these initiatives directly address the root familial, emotional, and economic drivers that compel children into labor. Enhancing parenting capacity promotes constructive parent-child relationships, reinforces school attendance, and reduces household dependence on child work as a coping mechanism. As such, parenting interventions are not merely supplementary; they are foundational to the design of sustainable, rights-based approaches to child labor prevention.

Bartolome et al. (2017) asserted that Filipino culture strongly emphasizes family as the hub of one's social life, making parenting crucial. Parenting workshops emphasize fostering parent-child communication, teaching parents to speak to their children without aggression, and allowing kids to express their feelings. Researchers looking for strategies to increase parental engagement have also found this framework of tremendous use in designing home-school cooperation programs for educators worldwide.

Workshops. In order to prevent, protect, and remove children from heavy, hazardous, and dangerous jobs, action plans and seminars must address the following issues: (1) Raising awareness and capacity of authorities at all levels, employers and employees, and organizations unions, mass media agencies, communities, working or at-risk children, and their families; (2) Direct support for the child labor group and children's families; and (3) Improving the village's environmental sanitation to reduce the spread of disease (Hoang & Nguyen, 2021). As part of its continued fight against child labor,

The DSWD, together with other members of NCLC, launched a storybook aimed at raising awareness among children about the dangers of child labor, which deprives children of their childhood, potential, and dignity, and harms their physical and mental development (DSWD, 2017).

ABS-CBN news reported that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) also launched its:

The first comprehensive project on child labor is the Strategic Help Desks for Information, Education, Livelihood, and Other Developmental Interventions. The project aims to strengthen the department's efforts against child labor locally by setting up help desks and a local registry on child labor for easier convergence of support services. The DSWD is also set to integrate a new module on child labor in the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program to raise awareness of child labor on the family's role in stopping or preventing child labor (Gutierez, 2017).

Workshops and community-based action plans constitute an essential mechanism for child labor reduction by catalyzing awareness, institutional capacity-building, and direct family support across multiple stakeholder levels. This result asserts how interventions led by agencies such as the DSWD, DOLE, and the National Child Labor Committee have strategically utilized educational storybooks,

localized help desks, and targeted modules under Pantawid Pamilya to sensitize children, empower families, and facilitate the convergence of supportive services. By addressing not only awareness but also economic livelihoods and public health infrastructure, these workshops operate as integrative platforms that diminish risk factors and foster protective environments. Their relevance to child labor prevention is explicit: they transform passive knowledge into actionable frameworks, mobilizing communities and institutions toward sustained, rights-based eradication of child labor.

The workshop aims to enhance understanding of livelihood skills training programs that combat child labor, providing insight into the significant stakeholders involved in eliminating child labor (ILO, 2014). To stop child labor in the nation, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) have worked together and launched several initiatives intending to eradicate child labor nationwide (DOLE, 2017).

Convention on the Rights of the Child. A global convention known as the CRC strives to safeguard children's rights. Any person under the age of 18 is referred to as a child. It encourages States Parties to take all necessary steps to guarantee the protection of children's rights, which include the right to a name and nationality, the freedom of expression and thought, access to healthcare and education, and freedom from exploitation, torture, and abuse (Congressional Research Service, 2015). The State shall defend:

Children's right to assistance, including proper care and nutrition, and special protection from all forms of neglect, abuse, cruelty, exploitation, and other conditions prejudicial to their development. (DepEd Child Protection Policy. 2012)

GMA news online indicated that children need more significant assistance in having their rights upheld for a bright future.

With community involvement, anyone can do their part in protecting the rights of Filipino children. Project PEARLS, a non-profit organization, helps the poorest of the poor children in the Philippines by giving them peace, education, aspiration, respect, love, and smiles (GMA News Online & GMA News, 2017).

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) serves as a foundational international framework that directly informs and strengthens child labor reduction strategies by mandating the protection of children's rights to education, health, freedom from exploitation, and overall developmental well-being. In the Philippine context, the CRC is operationalized through policy instruments such as the DepEd Child Protection Policy, and reinforced by civil society initiatives like Project PEARLS, which collectively aim to safeguard vulnerable children from conditions that perpetuate child labor. By establishing legal obligations for states and mobilizing community engagement, the CRC anchors the moral and institutional imperative to dismantle child labor and promote holistic child development. Its emphasis on interdependent rights positions child labor not only as a legal violation but as a multidimensional deprivation requiring coordinated, rights-based interventions.

A significant pact by nations pledging to uphold children's rights is the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention defines children, all of their rights, and government obligations. Children cannot have their rights taken away since they are all interconnected, equally significant, and interdependent (UNICEF, n.d.).

Collaborative Governance. Collaborative governance is the cooperation of several public, private, and civic organizations working together as stakeholders based on deliberate consensus and collective decision-making to achieve common goals that could not be achieved independently (Bianchi et al., 2021). It features a convergence of different programs and services by:

The members of the NCLC include various national government agencies, such as the DSWD, Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), and Department of Education (DepEd), as well as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civil society organizations (CSOs) (DSWD, 2017).

ABS-CBN news reported that:

Various government and non-government agencies launched three significant projects to combat child labor in the Philippines. These initiatives include programs against child laborers in the gold mining industry, setting up help desks, a local registry on child labor, and a new child labor module to raise awareness of conditional cash transfer beneficiaries. The project aims to strengthen the department's efforts against child labor locally by setting up help desks and a local registry on child labor for easier convergence of support services (Gutierez, 2017).

Collaborative governance is a pivotal instrument in the systematic reduction of child labor, particularly in contexts where fragmented efforts fall short of addressing multidimensional vulnerabilities. In the Philippines, the convergence of public institutions such as the DSWD, DOLE, and DepEd, alongside non-governmental organizations and civil society actors, exemplifies the power of inter-sectoral coordination in combating child exploitation. Strategic initiatives ranging from localized help desks and child labor registries to targeted modules within social welfare programs reflect the deliberate collective decision-making that defines collaborative governance. By strengthening shared accountability and streamlined service delivery, this governance model enables a cohesive framework wherein policy, advocacy, and direct intervention align toward the common goal of eliminating child labor. The emphasis on barangay-level engagement and unified action ensures that anti-child labor efforts penetrate even the most vulnerable communities, reinforcing collaborative governance as a structural imperative for sustainable, rights-based child protection.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and other governments, which pledge to step up efforts to eradicate child labor in

the nation, continue to focus on eradicating and preventing child labor. To end child labor, collaborative efforts are required from the barangay-level government, national government agencies, and stakeholders (De Leon, 2023).

Strengthening Initiatives. Strengthening government initiatives and programs is crucial for achieving national goals and enhancing the quality of life for citizens. Good governance refers to political and institutional actions and outcomes necessary to accomplish development objectives (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, n.d.). The official website of DSWD stated that:

In support of the government's effort to end child labor in the country and in compliance with Republic Act No. 9231 or the Anti-Child Labor Law, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) continues to intensify its campaign to eliminate this social ill through various initiatives.

The Department started nationwide implementing the Strategic Help Desks for Information, Education, Livelihood, and Other Developmental Interventions (SHIELD) against child labor in July this year to strengthen its programs and services in addressing child labor-related concerns at the local level.

Patty Pasion, a Rappler multimedia reporter who covered politics, labor, and development issues of vulnerable sectors, mentioned that:

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) estimates that around 2.1 million Filipino children are exposed to hazardous labor, including mining. Their campaign #1MBatangMalaya (1 million free kids) aims to intensify the fight against child labor and build on the progress made since 2012 (Passion, 2017).

Strengthening government-led initiatives plays a decisive role in the systematic reduction of child labor, particularly when anchored in the principles of good governance and rights-based development. In the Philippine context, programs such as the Strategic Help Desks for Information, Education, Livelihood, and Other Developmental Interventions (SHIELD) exemplify localized, service-convergent responses to child labor-related concerns. In compliance with Republic Act No. 9231, these intensified campaigns led by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) are aligned with broader efforts, including the #1MBatangMalaya campaign, to liberate children from hazardous labor conditions. Moreover, evidence shows that strengthening social protection mechanisms such as direct cash transfers and increased financial support for low-income families profoundly reduces reliance on child labor and fulfills international obligations to ensure children's access to education and a dignified standard of living. These initiatives not only reflect national commitment but also serve as strategic levers for long-term child labor prevention and inclusive human development.

In recent years, numerous governments have effectively mitigated the number of child laborers through regular cash assistance to families without employing their children. Furthermore, by increasing their monetary allowances, governments maintain their international obligations to protect children from labor and ensure their right to education and a standard of living appropriate for them (Becker, 2021).

Criminal Liability. Criminal accountability is the legal term for when someone can be charged with violating the law. Criminal culpability involves both prospective and actual blame, implying that a defendant may face charges and a punishment regardless of whether they are shown to have committed a crime. The underlying idea regarding criminal responsibility is that the claimed offense has both mental and physical aspects (Lessem, Newstat & Tooson, 2021). Department Order No.149 s. 2016 stipulated that:

Any person who violates the employer of the subcontractor who employs, or the one who facilitates the employment of a child in hazardous work shall suffer the penalty of a fine (DOLE, 2016).

Criminal liability serves as a powerful legal deterrent in the national strategy to eliminate child labor, anchoring the protection of children in enforceable statutory consequences. In the Philippines, measures such as Department Order No. 149 s. Provisions under Presidential Decree No. 603, effective as of 2016, impose fines and imprisonment on individuals and entities that facilitate or engage in hazardous labor involving minors. These legal instruments signal the state's zero tolerance for exploitation and reinforce the institutional accountability of employers, subcontractors, and perpetrators of abuse. By codifying criminal responsibility into child labor law, the government not only upholds the child's right to protection and development but also strengthens the regulatory framework required to safeguard vulnerable populations, ensuring that punitive measures are both preventative and corrective in reducing child labor at scale.

Any individual who engages in any other acts of child abuse, cruelty, or exploitation or who is accountable for any other circumstances that are detrimental to a child's development, including those covered by Article 59 of Presidential Decree No. 603 as modified but not by the Revised Penal Code as amended shall get the minimum punishment of a prison mayor (Perlas-Bernabe, 2020).

Profiling. Profiling working children is a strategic entry point in the nation's effort to eliminate child labor, enabling precise identification and targeted intervention for vulnerable populations. Through initiatives led by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), profiling functions not merely as a data-gathering exercise but as a proactive mechanism for service delivery. This project aims to help recognize children who are engaged in labor work. After accomplishing the Profiling Tool:

The GIP beneficiary shall initially identify the specific type of assistance that the child laborer and his/her family needs using the Needs Assessment Tool and determine the appropriate services/assistance that the child laborer and his/her family may avail of taking into account the services already availed by the family (Department of Labor and Employment, 2018).

A news release by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) pointed out the need for a nationwide profile of child laborers so that the government could provide them with appropriate services. Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III said that:

Given the insufficient data on child laborers, it is necessary first to conduct nationwide profiling of the target child laborers and their families, which will serve as a basis for the provision of appropriate services and interventions necessary to remove the children from child labor (GMA News Online & GMA News, 2018).

Through utilizing structured tools such as the Profiling and Needs Assessment Instruments, government agencies can determine the specific forms of assistance required by child laborers and their families, whether educational, economic, or psychosocial, ensuring that interventions are customized, timely, and effective. As highlighted by DOLE leadership, the absence of comprehensive data hampers service provision; thus, nationwide profiling is essential in developing evidence-based policies and scalable support systems. In this way, profiling serves as both the diagnostic and operational backbone of child labor reduction efforts, translating identification into meaningful withdrawal, rehabilitation, and prevention strategies. Profiling working children is one of the projects implemented by DOLE. According to DOLE Undersecretary for Employment and Policy Support Dominador Say, told CNN Philippines through text, "Profiling refers to the process of identifying children who should be withdrawn from child labor" (Peralta, 2018).

Child Labor Permit. On the other hand, the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) in the Philippines issues a child labor permit. This legal document permits a child to work under specific jobs, restrictions, and guidelines (Wikiprocedure, 2023). The official site of DOLE state that:

In any case, the employer, parent, or guardian should secure a working child permit from DOLE before engaging the child's services. In Department Circular No. 2, a Working Child Permit is required if the child will be engaged in public entertainment or information, whether local or overseas, regardless of the child's role in a project. Under D.O. 65-04, the Working Child Permit application shall be filed by the employer, parent, or legal guardian at the DOLE Field Offices (F.O.s) having jurisdiction over the workplace of the child at least three days prior to the shooting, taping, and event (DOLE, 2017).

In addition, the Philippine Star reported that MANILA, Philippines — Children in the entertainment and information industries can no longer work beyond four hours based on the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE)'s new guidelines for their protection. As this developed:

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has intensified its campaign against child labor in line with National Children's Month celebration this November. Under the new DOLE guidelines on the issuance of work permit for children, a child below 15 years of age is allowed to work for up to four hours on any given day and not more than 20 hours a week (Philstar Global, 2017).

The implementation of Child Labor Permits by the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) serves as a crucial regulatory mechanism in mitigating exploitative labor practices among minors in the Philippines. By clearly delineating the conditions under which children may legally work particularly in public entertainment and information sectors these permits establish safeguards around permissible job types, duration, and working environments. With restrictions such as a maximum of four working hours per day for children under 15, the system prioritizes developmental protection and minimizes health risks associated with prolonged labor exposure. Furthermore, the permit provides institutional accountability by requiring employer and guardian compliance through formal documentation and advance registration. When paired with profiling efforts and targeted social campaigns by agencies such as the DSWD, Child Labor Permits represent a strategic governance tool that transforms passive regulation into active protection ensuring that exceptions to labor prohibitions uphold, rather than undermine, the broader goal of child labor eradication.

In a study conducted by ILO (2017), profiling child laborers is crucial in establishing effective policies for combating child labor in the country. The issued working child permit may help protect minors from excessive working hours by indicating the limitation of hours that a child works (Young Worker Project, 2022).

The relevance of initiatives and responses to the trend of data

The first downtrend in cases of child labor started in 2011, which may have occurred due to the implementation of DepEd Memorandum No. 297 s. 2006, Department Advisory No. 01 s. 2008, Department Circular No. 3 s. 2009 and Department Circular No. 2 s. 2010. The primary interventions implemented in the previous initiatives are the Convention on the Rights of a Child, criminal liability, and profiling.

The second and third downtrends in cases occurred in 2013 and 2014, respectively. These years saw the introduction of initiatives that were consistent in their approach to the Convention on the Rights of the Child and strengthening initiatives. After implementing the approaches mentioned earlier to child labor cases, it generated a downtrend.

In the fourth downtrend in cases in 2016, the primary interventions implemented are under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, strengthening initiatives, parenting interventions, workshops, collaborative governance, and criminal liability. Such actions managed to reduce the number of cases of child labor.

In the fifth downtrend in cases in 2017, most interventions pertain to Convention on the Rights of the Child, collaborative governance,

strengthening initiatives, working child permits, workshops, criminal liability, and parenting interventions. These approaches helped abate the number of cases within this downtrend period.

In 2018, during the sixth downtrend in cases, the primary interventions implemented were under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, Including Profiling, workshops, criminal liability, working child permits, and parenting interventions. Despite a series of decreases in the cases of child labor, the government never stops trying to mitigate the number of cases, which causes a downtrend in this period.

In line with this, from 2011 to 2013, it shows a sudden rise in child labor cases that may have occurred because no initiatives were implemented in these years. Also, in 2015, we observed that the number of cases increased, despite the initiatives implemented in 2014. International Labour Organization. (2017) indicates that programs and legislation cannot end child labor independently, but solid regulations and programs can also.

Based on the downtrends of Child Labor cases, the government's focus on releasing Conventions on the Rights of the Child and strengthening initiatives and workshops contributes significantly to decreasing child labor cases in the country. Children everywhere have rights, as outlined by the Convention on the Rights of the Child, including health, housing, education, play, privacy, growth, and protection from danger and injury. The article End Violence against Children (2021) states that these rights must be acknowledged and upheld for children to reach their full potential. Efforts to create more vital child protection systems, such as laws, regulations, and programs that strive to end child labor, are essential for lowering the rate of child labor (UNICEF, 2021).

Conclusions

Child labor remains a pervasive global concern, demanding both sustained vigilance and responsive national planning. In the Philippine context, empirical trend analysis from 2006 to 2018 reveals a consistent decline in child labor cases, underscoring the effectiveness of 24 government-led initiatives implemented by DOLE, DSWD, and DepEd, thematically categorized into parenting interventions, workshops, rights-based advocacy, collaborative governance, institutional strengthening, criminal liability enforcement, profiling, and regulated work permits. Among these, initiatives anchored in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, capacity-building workshops, and programmatic reinforcements accounted for the most impactful reforms. Despite these gains, recent data from the Philippine Statistics Authority (2023) show that 935,000 children remain engaged in labor, prompting renewed government efforts to intensify profiling, enforce legal mandates, and promote multi-platform advocacy.

To ensure sustainable progress, this study recommends the following: First, national agencies should institutionalize periodic data collection through the Philippine Statistics Authority, with accelerated update cycles and disaggregated metrics that enable real-time monitoring of vulnerable child populations. Second, effective interventions, such as parenting programs, community workshops, and Convention-aligned child rights initiatives, must be scaled and systematically re-implemented, with increased budgetary allocations and inter-agency collaboration to optimize outreach and impact. Third, programmatic expansion should include enhanced livelihood support for families profiled as at-risk, alongside targeted educational assistance for children withdrawn from labor. Finally, legislation must evolve to ensure stricter enforcement of child protection laws at the barangay level, complemented by localized awareness campaigns and the integration of child labor modules within social welfare platforms. These recommendations collectively underscore the need for policy innovation, strong service convergence, and continuous evaluation, ensuring that anti-child labor efforts are not only sustained but also transformative.

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