



**Community Engagement and Cultural Factors as Determinants of Child Labor
Exploitation: The Case of Digeluna Tijo District of East Arsi Zone**

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Exploitation: The Case of Digeluna Tijo District of East Arsi Zone**

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Declaration

This is to declare that the thesis entitled “Community Engagement and Cultural Factors as Determinants of Child Labor Exploitation: The Case of Digeluna Tijo District” has been carried out under the supervision of my research advisor, Dr. Dame Abera. This thesis is the result of my own original work and has not been previously submitted to the award of any academic degree at any other university or institution.

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Abstract

Child labor exploitation remains a significant problem in rural communities where poverty and cultural beliefs shape children's roles. This study examined how community engagement and cultural factors influence child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo District, East Arsi Zone, Ethiopia.

A mixed-methods sequential explanatory design was used. Quantitative data were collected from 357 households selected through simple random sampling, while qualitative data were obtained from key informant interviews and focus group discussions using purposive sampling. Data were gathered through questionnaires, interviews and focus group discussion. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and multiple regressions in SPSS, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically.

The results showed moderate levels of community engagement, cultural influence, and child labor exploitation. Both community engagement ($r = .513$) and cultural factors ($r = .629$) had significant positive relationships with child labor exploitation, with cultural factors having a stronger effect. Regression analysis indicated that these variables explained about 61.8% of the variation in child labor, with cultural norms as the strongest predictor. Qualitative findings revealed that traditions, gender roles, and acceptance of child work, combined with poverty, contribute to the persistence of child labor.

In conclusion, child labor exploitation in the study area is strongly influenced by cultural norms, and community engagement alone is not sufficient to reduce it. Addressing the problem requires culturally sensitive interventions alongside improvements in economic conditions.

Keywords: *Child labor exploitation, community engagement, cultural factors*

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

CSA = Central Statistical Agency (Ethiopia)

FGD = Focus Group Discussion

ILO = International Labour Organization

IT = Information Technology

NCLS= National Child Labor Survey

SPSS = Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

UN = United Nations

UNICEF = United Nations Children's Fund

UNODC = United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Child Labor Exploitation is one of the global problems. Child labor is considered to be services provided by children at their young age in various spheres of activity. Children become child laborers owing to their poor socio-economic situation that makes it impossible for them to receive proper education. According to the data gathered by such international organizations as UNICEF and World Bank, there is a considerable number of children who work as labor forces in various countries across the world. Nevertheless, their numbers have decreased recently. There are, however, still plenty of them and they should be controlled (Bhalotia & Kakkar, 2021)

Empirical evidence shows that child labor is both cause and effect of multi-dimensional poverty that creates vicious circle that prevents sustainable development. Poor development of physical, cognitive and psychosocial skills has resulted in inability to create a skilled workforce (UNICEF, 2021). Nonetheless, despite mentioned facts, there exist a number of trends and cycles that are prevailing; huge disparities among many countries; discrimination of those who are the most vulnerable or disadvantaged, usually carried out by majority 'mainstream' groups; and lack of knowledge or information about exploitation in some dominant sectors/groups within community such as landlords who may also run farms and employ children!

For example, concerning Ethiopia, studies say that child labor exploitation exists largely in rural areas and agriculture industry. It has been revealed by the 2015 National Child Labor

Survey (NCLS) study of the country that around 89% of children who work are occupied in agricultural sector, putting in much time working as well as studying (CSA & ILO, 2018).

In semi-rural societies, there are no social security programs, which can be seen in the case of Oromia region where about 84% of the land is occupied with agricultural fields with lots of children under 18 years participating actively in supporting their families (UNICEF Oromia Situation Analysis, 2019). Therefore, cultural setting may comprise beliefs, attitudes and values that determine roles of children in their families and society, regarding their work. It can be quite hard sometimes to understand whether child labor is really exploitation or simply helping children with their parents.

Specifically speaking about Digeluna Tijo district in East Arsi Zone of Oromia, one can point out that exploitation of child labor is provoked by certain socio-cultural specifics of local community. Namely, child labor is supported by the norms established by social environment in combination with cultural and economic factors. While lots of studies have been conducted on participation of the community and social norms in child labor exploitation issue, there has not been a considerable amount of local evidence obtained before now (Abdullah et al., 2022). Participation of the community in taking decisions on behalf of parents regarding their children, as well as female participation aimed at decreasing gender disparity in education were considered separately while cultural norms underlay practices of child labor, making the problem multidimensional.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The problem addressed in this study relates to Child labor exploitation, with particular emphasis on how community engagement and cultural factors contribute to its occurrence. While

conducting regular fieldworks within kebeles, I noticed that very young children engaged in herding activities, harvesting, water collection, gathering firewood's and performing various difficult jobs inside the houses in addition to attending schools. The facts mentioned represent worldwide trends according to which 61. % of child labor exploitation takes place in agriculture (ILO & UNICEF, 2025). As far as Digeluna Tijo is concerned, its socio-economic system suggests agricultural and pastoral nature of economy while 39.5% of land is suitable for cultivation (Wikipedia contributors, 2024). It means that the above-mentioned factors create labor demand in households, including children, as a cheap source of labor power. Also, local traditions and practices of learning by doing add to normalization of child labor and blending labor and household duties as means of exploitation. Also, the problem is characterized by worldwide prevalence as of 2020 there are about 160 million children involved in worldwide labor market including 79 million children exploited in hazardous conditions. Sub-Saharan Africa is the most affected area because of poor social protection systems, poverty, and population density (ILO & UNICEF, 2021). It means that the sources used prove that the problem is not rare, but rather global. Concerning Digeluna Tijo, the victims of child labour include children suffering from numerous physical, academic, and psychological threats associated with injuries, exposure to toxic substances, tiredness, absenteeism, poor performance, grade repetitions, dropping out, anxiety, poor self-perception, and bad social interactions resulting from overload with house and labor responsibilities. The effects mentioned above identified at national level, where working children often experience reduced school participation and poorer learning outcomes (UNICEF, 2020).

The following factors affect the problem of child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo, high dependence on agriculture and domestic work engagement, cultural practices, and unawareness

of community. It is aggravated by the fact that these children begin to work first and then attend classes while opportunities for education in rural areas of Oromia are absent especially for girls (CSA & ILO 2018). Consequences related to human capital and productivity loss will be observed. Thus, it is essential to develop an empirical strategy in response to the issue and involve locals in productive activities.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The overall objective of this study is to analyze the impact of community engagement and cultural factors on child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo district.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

1. Estimate levels of community engagement and cultural factors related to the problem of child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo district.
2. Determine whether community engagement is related to child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo district.
3. To analyze how cultural factors shape community attitudes toward child labour, particularly whether it is perceived as acceptable or harmful.
4. To determine the extent to which community engagement and cultural factors predict child labour exploitation using statistical analysis.
5. To explore the opinions of community members about whether current efforts to address child labor are effective or not

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the levels of community engagement and cultural factors related to the problem of child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo district?
2. What is the relationship between community engagement and child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo district?
3. What are the levels of community engagement, cultural factors, and child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo District?
4. To what extent do community engagement and cultural factors predict the occurrence and level of child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo District?
5. What are the opinions of the community about the efficiency of strategies developed to overcome the problem in Digeluna Tijo district?

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study is carried out in Digeluna Tijo District of the East Arsi Zone, Oromia Region, Ethiopia, with the aim of understanding how community engagement and cultural factors influence child labor exploitation. The research primarily focuses on members of the local community, including households, community leaders, and other stakeholders who are closely connected to children's daily lives. Conceptually, the study is limited to examining community engagement and cultural factors as the main independent variables, while child labor exploitation is treated as the dependent variable. Attention is given to children involved in agricultural and domestic activities, as these are the most common forms of work in the study area.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study is important because it contributes to a deeper understanding of child labor exploitation within a specific rural Ethiopian context, particularly in Digeluna Tijo District. By examining the combined influence of community engagement and cultural factors, the research goes beyond traditional economic explanations and highlights the social and cultural dimensions of child labor. This provides a more comprehensive perspective that can help scholars and researchers better understand how local beliefs, traditions, and community practices shape children's involvement in labor activities.

The findings of this study are also expected to be valuable for policy makers, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community leaders. By identifying the key factors that sustain child labor, the study offers evidence that can support the design of culturally sensitive and community-based interventions. It emphasizes that addressing child labor requires not only economic solutions but also changes in social norms and collective community action. Furthermore, the study serves as a reference for future research by providing empirical data and methodological approaches that can be applied or expanded in similar settings.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, it is geographically limited to Digeluna Tijo District, meaning the results reflect the specific social, cultural, and economic conditions of this area and may not be easily generalized to other regions.

Second, the study relies on self-reported data collected through questionnaires and interviews, which may be influenced by social desirability bias. Participants may provide

responses they consider acceptable rather than fully expressing their true views, especially on sensitive issues such as child labor. In addition, the cross-sectional design captures information at a single point in time, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships or observe changes over time.

Finally, although the study focuses on key factors such as community engagement and cultural norms, other important influences such as economic shocks, policy enforcement, and access to education may not have been fully explored. These limitations should be taken into account when interpreting the results and drawing conclusions.

1.8. Operational Definitions of Terms and Constructs

Community engagement refers to the degree to which community members, local leaders, and other stakeholders are aware of, participate in, and respond to issues related to child labor and child protection. In this study, it is measured using Likert-scale responses assessing awareness, participation in meetings, reporting practices, and collaboration with local authorities. This aligns with the view that community involvement plays a key role in addressing social problems (Putnam, 2000).

Cultural factors refer to the shared beliefs, norms, values, and traditions that influence attitudes and behaviors toward child labor. These include perceptions about children's work, gender roles, and the acceptability of child labor. In this study, they are measured through agreement with statements on cultural acceptance and practices. This reflects the view that cultural norms shape social behavior (UNICEF, 2021).

Child labor exploitation refers to children's involvement in work that harms their physical, psychological, or educational well-being, including hazardous tasks, long hours, or

work that interferes with schooling. It is measured through respondents' perceptions of the nature, intensity, and effects of such work. This is consistent with international standards emphasizing harmful work (ILO, 2017).

Level of Variables the level of community engagement, cultural factors, and child labor exploitation refers to the degree of each construct, measured by mean scores from Likert-scale responses (strongly disagree to strongly agree). These levels indicate the extent to which each variable is present in the community.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

This chapter examines the body of research on child labor exploitation, including how community engagement and cultural factors are related to it. It begins with a conceptual review, followed by a brief overview of the empirical evidence on child labor, community engagement, and cultural factors. The theoretical foundations that guide the study are also presented in this chapter. Finally, the conceptual framework that serves as the direction of this study is developed based on the reviewed literature.

2.1. Definitions and Conceptualizations of Child Labor

Understanding what constitutes child labour is crucial for analyzing its magnitude causes and consequences. Researchers and international agencies underline that definitions matters as they determine who is counted which type of jobs are hazardous and what policy measures are prioritized. Child labour is generally defined as work that robs children of their childhood dignity health, safety or education but this broad idea become more precise when operationalized by institutions such as the International Labor Organization (ILO) and UNICEF. These institutions distinguish between children's work whether it is light age-appropriate jobs that do not affect negatively their schooling and child labour, which includes work performed by children below the minimum national as well as global legal age participating in risky conditions or excessive working hours that delayed education and development (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; Basu & Tzannatos, 2003). This distinction is crucial because many children around the globe participate in household or family based activities that may not hurt or abusive yet become exploitive when they compromise schooling or expose children to risks.

The definition also states depending on minimum age thresholds the number of hours worked per week and the type of the tasks . Unstable weekly hour limit or expanding the hazardous work list can significantly change national or global prevalence estimates (Edmonds 2009, ILO 2020a). Such variations shows that child labour is not merely a technical definition but a socially constructed category influenced by cultural norms and values economic pressure and legal boundaries . A shared understanding of what comparison and planning ethical programs that genuinely protect children's rights and wellbeing (UNICEF 2021, ILO 2017).

Globally ILO reports the main sources of convention and harmonized sources of statistical standards . ILO convention NO.138 states that the general minimum age for employment not less than with the end of compulsory schooling and typically not less than 15 (or 14 in specified context) with great care permitted light works from 13 subject to strict conditions. ILO convention no. 182 states the worst form forms of child labour including slavery like jobs children trafficking, sexual exploitation illicit activities, and all riskful works are prohibited for any children under 18. Practically child labor is considered as a part of children's work that is that is either too young too intensive or too risky UNICEF's monitoring approach aligns with ILO's age hazard hour schema for SDG 8.7 indicators (ILO 1973/2019, ILO 1999/2020 ILO 2017 ILO&UNICEF 2021,UNICEF 2021).

Children's work is fair and understood globally and positive impact on the economic activities if and only if when childrens under 18 do not face to abusive works socially acceptable age appropriate and non-hazardous when they donot interfere with schooling or healthy children development (ILO 2017, UNICEF 2021) .

Broad category of definition for light work undertaken by older children is considered when performed under carefully defined limits provided it does not reason to their physical or psychological wellbeing or delayed educational participation (ILO 2020a ILO & UNICEF, 2021). By contrast , risky work encompasses tasks , environments , tools , night work, long hours that constitute significant risks , and these activities are strictly prohibited for all individuals below the age of 18 due to their potential to cause long term harm (ILO , 2017; ILO,2020b).

Child labor in its worst forms like slavery-like works, child trafficking , sexual commerce, sexual abuse , unwilling labour , involvement in illegal activities , and any work considered as hazardous , shows the most severe violations of children's rights (ILO,2020a; UNICEF, 2021).

The latest indicator of child labor consists of three interconnected indicators, namely the child age in connection with the minimum age for attending school or working, the number of hours engaged in economically productive activities and domestic duties, and the exposure to perilous situations that affect the individual's wellbeing due to physical or environmental dangers (ILO, 2017; ILO & UNICEF, 2021). The problem is known as child labor abuse when children exceed any or all of the mentioned criteria as a result of engaging in hazardous practices and overworking beyond the average hours per week, and preventing the individual from receiving an education (ILO, 2020a; UNICEF, 2021). This strategy helps compare data on child labor among nations by considering the difference in the state of child labor as well as linking child labor with education (ILO, 2017; ILO & UNICEF, 2021).

The great majority of cases involving child labor are practiced in the hidden or informal sector of a given economy, e.g., home-based enterprises, unremunerated labor inside the family or household unit, and domestic servants (Myers, 2001; ILO, 2020b).

These unseen activities are often difficult to discover because of the place where the abuse occur that is in private household compounds are unpaid and are rooted within family urges making the children vulnerable to being overlooked in national level surveys (Edmonds & Pavcnik 2005 ILO,2017). Household tasks may over cross into child labour when the number of working hours pass the limits established boundaries, when tasks are naturally hazardous, such as carrying heavy and harmful loads or prolonged exposure to toxic smokes or when they neglect school attendance and learning outcomes (ILO 2020, UNICEF 2021). Seasonal agricultural activities, nomadic labor patterns, and migratory child work including temporary child hiring or fostered into domestic work often create obstacles in labor demands that single-round surveys fail to capture, resulting in systemic underestimation of child labor in rural and nomadic populations (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; ILO, 2020b).

To get accurate measurement requires the integration of time-framed tools , emergency audits , repeated survey rounds to capture the uneven nature of children`s labour participation across seasonal and different economic phases ( Myers, 2001; ILO,2017). Ethiopia`s framework broadly reflects ILO standards while specifying national thresholds (FDRE,2019 ; ILO, 2020a).

The FDRE Labour Proclamation No. 1156/2019 sets 15 as the minimum employment age , restricts young workers` working hours and night work, and bans hazardous tasks for all children under 18 (FDRE, 2019). The Ministry of Labour in Ethiopia has detailed lists of hazardous tasks for teens and children under 18, including exposure to agrochemicals, dangerous machinery, heavy lifting, and night work, applicable across sectors (MoLSA, 2014/2015;ILO, 2020a). National child labour surveys co-implemented with ILO employ the international statistical definition, consistently red flagging agriculture and domestic service as priority

domains and clarifying that unpaid family work can be child labour under hazard or hours criteria (CSA & ILO, 2015;ILO,2017).

Conceptual debates: Harm, Culture, and Capability Most legal definitions focus on children's age, risks, and working hours but researchers emphasize the extent of beneficial participation to outright exploitation (Nieuwenhuys, 1996; Bourdillon et al., 2010). Rights-based and harm reduction approaches aim to eliminate hazardous and worst forms, protect education and well-being (ILO, 2020a; UNICEF, 2021). Cultural and socialization approaches acknowledge that appropriate age tasks can facilitate skill acquisition and social capital, cautioning that a blanket ban contradicts norms and shifts the task into more risky and clandestine locations (Boyden, 2013; Bourdillon et al., 2010). Capability approaches question whether work expands or reduces opportunities, health, and learning (Nieuwenhuys, 1996; Bourdillon et al., 2010). Economic theories link child labor to poverty and credit constraints but emphasize obligatory responses to income and schooling shocks and labor demands (Basu & Van, 1998; Edmonds, 2009) While identifying when work turns into labor that undermines schooling emerges as a practical definition shift (ILO, 2017; UNICEF, 2021). Indicators include work intensity, school attendance, and study time to demarcate work from labor (ILO & UNICEF, 2021; UNESCO, 2022). Methodologist theorists recommend combining weekly hour cutoffs, hazard assessments, and school progress to minimize misclassification (ILO, 2017; Edmonds, 2009). Definitions must address gender-related invisibility, e.g., girls' extra burdens and vulnerability as migrants in agriculture and domestic service facing potential isolation, coercion, and low earnings (Boyden, 2013; UNICEF, 2020). Among rural areas of Ethiopia, prevalent risky activities include handling pesticides, heavy lifting, using sharp tools, long working hours, and night work repeatedly identified as hazardous activities (CACA & ILO,

2015; MoLSA, 2014/2015). Including gender and migration aspects in defining indicators is, therefore, crucial for precise prevalence assessments and targeted action plans (ILO, 2020a; ILO, 2021). To facilitate logical consistency in the Digeluna Tijo context, child labor refers to economic activity or household task performed by an individual under 18 years old that (a) violates minimum age regulations (b) involves hazardous work or environment (c) exceeds age-specific weekly thresholds so that schooling and healthy development is compromised and/or (d) constitutes one of the worst forms as per ILO Convention no 182. (ILO, 2017; 2020a)

2.2. Theoretical Perspectives on Child Labor:

Prevalence, Challenges, and Coping Strategies Child labor is a multi-faceted issue that reflects relationships between economic difficulties, cultural norms, family dynamics and structural inequalities (ILO, 2021; UNICEF, 2020). Multiple theories explain child labor prevalence, challenges children encounter and coping strategies to mitigate hardships (ILO, 2021; UNICEF, 2020). The subcategories below outline four main perspectives: economic theory, social learning theory, human capital theory, and resilience theory (ILO; UNICEF, 2020).

2.2.1. Economic Theory

Economic theory remains central to explaining the widespread nature of child labor, particularly in low-income contexts (ILO, 2021; World Bank, 2020). According to this view, child labor results from the use of children's labor in families to compensate for inadequate income and unreliable livelihood (ILO, 2021; World Bank, 2020). Recent analysis conducted by ILO and World Bank indicated that child labor increases once family income goes below a particular threshold making economic necessity to engage children in work as a source of revenue for meeting food, shelter and medical bills (ILO, 2021; World Bank, 2020). Structural variables such as inflation, unemployment, low wages, lack of social protection and economic

shocks can make child labor inevitable for poverty alleviation purposes (Dmmert et al., 2018;Devries et.al 2021). As a consequence, child labor traps whole families into an endless poverty cycle. Once children are involved in labor activities, they reduce educational attainment levels and fail to gain knowledge and skills leading to low earnings in the future (Dmmert et al., 2018;Devries et.al 2021). Thus, child labor cannot be separated from economic inequality and requires comprehensive economic measures such as poverty reduction initiatives, cash transfer programs and job creation (World Bank, 2020; ILO,2021).

2.2.2. Social Learning Theory

Social learning theories provide a socio-cultural rationale for control over child labor in communities (Grusec & Hastings, 2015; Maccoby, 2016). Modern studies state that children adopt role models including family members and peers through observation. In cases when parents involve their children in farm work, domestic labor or informal economic activities, young individuals accept that labor as part of their socialization process (Blunch & Verner, 2019; Bourdillon, 2021). Thus, according to the discussed theory, challenging factors such as fatigue, isolation, limited schooling, and hazardous labor become normalized in a particular community (Blunch & Verner, 2019; Bourdillon, 2021). Moreover, social learning contributes to the formation of coping mechanisms and adaptive attitudes as children observe adults and imitate their actions to reduce hardships in life (Grusec & Hastings, 2015; Maccoby, 2016). Consequently, a specific type of coping includes silence, submission, maturing prematurely, avoiding authority etc. (Grusec & hastings, 2015; Maccoby, 2016). Therefore, social learning theory highlights that socio-cultural norms and values significantly shape child labor and coping behaviors within communities (Blunch & Verner, 2019; Bourdillon, 2021).

2.2.3. Human Capital Theory

Human capital theory draws attention to the detrimental effect of child labor on developmental processes and economic well-being in the long run (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). Education and skill acquisition are considered as two of the most important investments that increase individual and state development potential (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). Nevertheless, these developmental processes are greatly hindered by child labor resulting in poor schooling, reduced learning and delayed acquisition of skills (UNESCO, 2022; ILO, 2021). Contemporary literature demonstrates that working children have much lower chances to attend primary and secondary schools and graduate from them (UNESCO, 2022; ILO, 2021). Limited educational attainment makes the workforce less skilled and reduces opportunities for decent work in the future. In this way, child labor results in poverty persistence at the household and societal level (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). This theory indicates that child labor elimination contributes to economic growth and higher labor productivity (OECD, 2020; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020). Thus, human capital theory highlights that education should be considered a key measure to break intergenerational cycles of poverty (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018; UNESCO, 2022).

2.2.4. Resilience Theory

Resilience theory focuses on adaptation and coping strategies employed by children amid difficult circumstances such as child labor abuse (Masten, 2018; Ungar, 2021). Although children face hardships, they find innovative ways of coping including developing creative strategies to endure emotional, psychological, and social stress (Luthar et al., 2020; Ungar, 2021). Available literature on child labor indicates that some children cope by building support among their peers,

seeking help from adults, negotiation of working conditions, or balancing work and education (Masten, 2018; Ungar, 2021). Resilience theory does not provide an answer to child labor but explains children's reactions, and ways of dealing with adverse conditions and coping mechanisms used by child laborers (Luthar et al., 2020; Ungar, 2021). At the same time, it can help to implement more effective intervention measures aimed at strengthening protective factors including parental support and psychosocial services (Luthar et al., 2020; Masten, 2018). Resilience theory supplements other theoretical perspectives that consider child labor issues within a social context since it takes into account lived experiences of children and stresses the significance of addressing child labor issues by enhancing well-being and empowering individuals (Ungar, 2021; ILO, 2021)

The theory that could perhaps work as the theoretical framework of this study is Social Learning Theory. It is because the study is more directed to comprehend cultural local factors and community involvement toward the issue of child labor. It also illustrates that children observe the behaviors of role models, norms, and values within their surroundings, and then mimic them. Social Learning Theory emphasizes that children perceive various norms related to child labor in their surroundings including their communities. Children learn how to develop coping and survival strategies in the face of certain problems observed within their communities as well. As the research aims to examine cultural factors influencing the practice and community involvement in it, social learning theory can be applied as it allows analyzing this socio-cultural issue.

2.3. Factors that Expose Children to Child Labor

2.3.1. Household poverty and livelihood insecurity

Poverty is a direct result of low or no income generating activities carried out by the households and it is the major cause of child labour (ILO & UNICEF, 2021; Dammert et al, 2018). According to studies, when household income becomes insufficient to provide for the necessities of the family, work done by the children is regarded as a survival strategy and income compensating mechanism (ILO & UNICEF, 2021; Dammert et al, 2018). Evidence shows that low income, no income, or volatile income sources, low access to credit and insurance, and food insecurity significantly increase the probability of child labor especially among rural children instead of sending them to school (Edmonds, 2009; world bank, 2020) Ethiopia, national surveys revealed that poorer households are the major contributors to child labor and mostly involve their children in family farming activities where the contribution of the children is needed during agricultural peak periods (CSA & ILO,2015;ILO,2021).

2.3.2. Adult labor markets wages and underemployment

Low demand for adult laborers, low real wages and seasonally underemployed adult laborers create economic conditions where the cost of children remaining at school becomes higher for families (Blunch & Verner, 2019; ILO, 2021). Due to the unavailability of proper employment, families try to employ the children in farm work and other minor economic activities (Dammert et al., 2018; World Bank, 2020). Studies on the impact of child labor in agrarian countries illustrate that children participate in labor activities because there are limited job opportunities available for adults, and where agricultural returns are dependent on family labor (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; ILO, 2020).

2.3.3. Education costs, access, and quality

Poor access to schooling, direct and indirect costs of schooling (fees, transport etc.), and perceived low return of investment on education push children to join in labor work (UNESCO, 2022; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). Distance to school, overcrowded classes, shortage of teachers, and lack of language proficiency make the situation worse (UNICEF, 2020; Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020). Studies from Ethiopia indicated that even though primary schooling became widely available, children in some areas face schooling barriers and costs associated with schooling force some children to join work, especially when agricultural activities take place (CSA & ILO, 2015; UNESCO, 2022).

2.3.4. Cultural norms, social learning, and intergenerational transmission

Within numerous societies, the participation of children in work activities is considered socially acceptable because they assist in household activities and acquire skills (Bourdillon, 2021; ILO, 2017). Based on social learning theory, children adopt cultural norms according to which early work is a demonstration of responsibility and maturity, especially for boys performing fieldwork and girls doing domestic chores (Grusec & Hastings, 2015; Maccoby, 2016). In places where such norms are adopted by the society and not strictly controlled, long hours, hazardous jobs, and interrupted schooling becomes normal without reports being made (ILO & UNICEF, 2021; Blunch & Verner, 2019)

2.3.5. Household composition, gender dynamics, and caregiving gaps

Larger family sizes, high dependency ratio within the family where too many dependents reside within, and illnesses among caregivers contribute to increased pressures to involve children in labor activities (UNICEF, 2020; Devries et.al., 2021) Gender norms also dictate girls

to join in unknown and unpaid domestic labor, involving long hours of cooking, collecting firewood and caring for siblings, whereas boys get involved in field activities (ILO, 2021; Bouridllon, 2021). In Ethiopia, evidence indicated that the involvement of girls in unpaid chores and domestic work may cross the threshold required for child labor (CSA & ILO, 2015; ILO, 2020)

2.3.6. Agricultural seasonality, value chains, and demand shocks

In rural societies, the dependence on seasonal activities determines when harvesting occurs and children are required to engage in demanding farm tasks where they face risks from agrochemicals and tools (ILO,2020; Edmonds & paycnik, 2005). Rising commodity prices, high costs of input and price volatility also increase labor demands making children work long hours (Blunch & Verner, 2019; ILO,2021). In the case of the highland zone of Oromia, such activities correspond poorly with school calendar worsening school absence and dropout rates during peak agricultural periods (CSA & ILO, 2015; ILO,2020)

2.3.7. Migration, displacement, and hidden intermediaries

Internal migrations and displacements increase vulnerability of children and make it harder for them to find labor. Such children do not have local social networks, receive incorrect information regarding labor work and join work under hidden mediators who employ them using vague terms and conditions (ILO, 2021; UNICEF, 2020). Such child labors face increased pressure, do not receive payment and work in conditions of long hours that cannot be accessed and checked (Dammert et.al, 2018; ILO,2020). In the case of Ethiopia, child labor due to migration for agricultural activities in different regions and domestic labor in urban houses has

been reported, with girls facing more danger of becoming isolated and abused (CSA & ILO,2015; ILO,2021).

2.3.8. Weak enforcement, regulatory gaps, and informality

Similarly, the presence of legal provisions prohibiting hazardous labor by adopting the standards provided in ILO conventions no 138 and 182, determines how effective the laws are in addressing the problem (ILO, 2017; ILO, 2020). As informal agriculture and informal economic activities dominate, child labor predominantly takes place outside regular labor inspection and monitoring (ILO & UNICEF,2021; Dammert et al, 2018). The legislation of Ethiopia prohibits hazardous work under the age of 18 and sets the minimum age limit as 15, but low implementation capacity causes difficulties in enforcing the laws in local settings (FDRE, (FDRE, 2019; MoLSA, 2014/2015).

2.3.9. Drought, inflation, epidemics, Shocks and conflict

Inflation, natural disasters, war and displacement, and health emergencies increase vulnerability of households and push them to engage their children in work for the purpose of survival (World Bank, 2020; ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Closures or interruptions of schooling during emergency period such as epidemics may cause rapid learning loss and higher dropout rates after which it becomes difficult for children to resume schooling and they become engaged in labor work (UNESCO, 2022; UNICEF, 2020). In Ethiopia's drought-prone regions, where prices and inflation vary greatly, rural households resort to rotation of child labor activities (ILO, 2021; CSA & ILO, 2015).

2.3.10. Education work trade-offs and perceived returns

Parents' perception about poor return to schooling as a result of poor job prospects, school quality or language barrier causes reallocation of their children's time toward work (Hanushek & Woessmann, 2020; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018). When curriculum feels misaligned with agricultural livelihoods or secondary transition rates are low, children are preferred as cheap labor than being enrolled in secondary school (UNESCO, 2022; ILO, 2021). Such perceptions affect children's engagement in labor and worsen the issue together with direct and indirect schooling costs (UNICEF, 2020; World Bank, 2020).

2.3.11. Service shortages: social protection, childcare, and youth services

Social protection programs related to cash transfers, school feeding, scholarships, fees exemptions, and childcare do not exist. Therefore, involvement of children in the labor process can be seen as an additional income source for families (ILO & UNICEF, 2021; Dammert et al., 2018). Social protection measures aimed to decrease risk factors associated with children from poor families are also introduced in the country. These measures contribute to the problem under discussion (World Bank, 2020; ILO, 2021). Absence or presence of these measures leads to increase in risk of involvement of children in labor and exploitation processes (ILO & UNICEF, 2021; UNICEF, 2020).

2.3.12. Vulnerabilities and Risks

Vulnerable children are characterized as disabled children, orphans, and kids who have been separated from their families. These children are more prone to labor exploitation because of discrimination against them, absence of care, and opportunities for learning (Devries et al., 2021; UNICEF, 2020). Combining personal vulnerability such as age, gender, disability, and

migration, among others, may lead to children exploitation as they participate in dangerous kinds of labor activities (ILO, 2021; Bourdillon, 2021).

2.3.13. Lack of Information

Lack of information in relation to labor risks, expenses, benefits, legal issues, and others makes inappropriate decisions regarding earning money possible (Blunch & Verner, 2019; ILO, 2017). Misunderstanding about labor contracts and conditions of employment make children vulnerable and lead to their exploitation (ILO, 2020; Dammert et al., 2018).

2.4 Prevalence and Trends Child Labor Exploitation

According to the findings presented by empirical research, child labor occurs both in agricultural sector and household sphere. The latter one is especially characteristic of rural areas of various states, especially developing countries. According to Global Estimates, around 160 million children suffer from child labor worldwide (ILO, 2021). Around 70% of them work in agriculture sector and perform hazardous occupations. Referring to Ethiopia, child labor mainly consists of agricultural activities and household work (CSA & ILO, 2015). Therefore, one may conclude that local labor and seasonality influence labor productivity. Data collection will probably be difficult.

2.4.1. Economic Determinants and Household Poverty

According to empirical literature studies of child labor, connection between family income and labor of children was found. From microeconomic perspective, family income shocks due to crop losses, prices fluctuation lead to using more child labor (Dammert et al., 2018; World Bank, 2020). Based on the data analyzed, one may state that the poorest Ethiopian families use more child labor in agricultural sector. Unpaid household labor of school-aged

children also exists (CSA & ILO, 2015). The facts mentioned are consistent with researches devoted to economics of development that state that child labor occurs due to poverty trap caused by inability to insure or pay something. Other poorer structural determinants include inflation, unemployment rate, and salaries (Dammert et al., 2018).

2.4.2. Education Access, Attendance, and Learning Outcomes

Research has shown that in general, child labour, and especially intense or hazardous child labour, is one of the key factors responsible for non-enrolment and high dropout rates. The available cross-national studies show children who work long hours or engage in all forms of economic activities are less likely to be regular school attenders, more likely to be absentees and likely to perform poorly and lag behind their age-appropriate grade or class (ILO/UNICEF, 2011; UNESCO, 2014). In Ethiopia, results from national surveys indicate that children's involvement in agricultural work as well as household chores have led to shortage of time for study and leisure most importantly. Thus, children became victims of school absenteeism which leads to high grade repetition and dropout rate particularly in pastoral and semi-pastoral regions where language other than mother tongue is used as a medium of instruction (CSA & ILO-STATISTICS AND SURVEYS SECTOR). Studies conducted across countries showed that the problem has profound effects. Strong linkages exist between educational deficits accumulated during childhood because of child labour with lifelong lower earnings, low productivity during adulthood and high prevalence of poverty thus perpetuating intergenerational cycle of poverty (Hanushek & Woessmann; Patrinos & Psacharopoulos).

2.4.3. Health, Safety, and Psychosocial Outcomes

Empirical studies document serious health and safety risks faced by child workers, especially in agriculture and domestic sectors. Sectoral hazard audits report injuries caused by sharp tools, heavy lifting, exposure to agrochemicals, and ergonomic strains (ILO, 2020; ILO, 2021). Psychosocial research further indicates that children involved in exploitative labor are vulnerable to stress, anxiety, depression, and violence, especially in hidden or informal workplaces such as domestic service (Devries et al., 2021; UNICEF, 2020). In Ethiopia hazardous work lists explicitly prohibit children from engaging in pesticide application, night work, and operating heavy machinery reflecting the documented risks in rural labour markets (MoLSA n.d.; FDRE, 2012). These health and psychosocial outcomes not only diminish children's immediate well-being but also have lasting impacts on their development and prospects.

2.4.4. Gender, Unpaid Care Work, and Hidden Domestic Labor

Research has consistently documented many gender differences concerning child labor, largely due to girls' unpaid domestic and care work being overlooked. It has been reported that girls carry disproportionate housework burdens (such as cooking, fetching water, collecting fuel, and caring for siblings) during which their work often falls into the category of child labor when either hours are long or tasks are hazardous (ILO, 2021; Bourdillon, 2021). For instance, in Ethiopia survey data showed that many girls' domestic duties caused them to be absent from school were inappropriately not captured under the official labor statistics. Cultural norms that rationalize girls' domestic chores perpetuate the systematic invisibility of their labor hence they do not meet any protective services nor benefit from any targeted programs (Blunch & Verner,

2019). To design policies and mechanisms that incorporate all segments of society it is important to acknowledge the different aspects of gender relevant children's work activities.

2.4.5. Migration, Seasonality, and Intermediated Recruitment

Empirical evidence shows that migrant children are particularly vulnerable to exploitative labour because most of them are trafficked by informal brokers/recruiters for seasonal labour in agriculture and domestic work (ILO, 2021; Dammert et al., 2018). For instance, in Ethiopia, the internal migration of children from poor regions to urban areas or areas where cash crops are grown exposes them, especially girls, to the worst forms of child labour since they are mobilized by weak and unsecured support networks. Seasonal peaks co-occur with school terms particularly during planting and weeding/harvesting periods and lead to increased dropout rates through absenteeism eventually fuelling poverty traps (Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; ILO, 2020). The situation calls for immediate specific interventions at peak seasons as well as effective recruitment regulation.

2.4.6. Policy Instruments and What Works

Empirical evaluations point out a number of policy tools that are effective in reducing child labor and increasing enrollment in school. Cash transfer programs, especially those with conditionalities tied to school attendance have been shown to relax household liquidity constraints and shift household priorities towards education (Dammert et al., 2018; World Bank, 2020). Social protection measures, including school feeding programs and targeted social safety net have protected vulnerable households during shocks such as COVID-19 reducing reliance on child labor (ILO & UNICEF, 2021). In Ethiopia, there are legal frameworks aligned with the ILO conventions 138 and 182 establishing the foundation for child labor regulation; however,

enforcement related challenges including limited capacity of inspections and ambiguous definition of hazards among others remain issues (FDRE, 2019; MoLSA, 2014/2015). Therefore, complementing these policies with local community engagement as well as capacity building remains critical for the impact.

2.4.7. Measurement Challenges and Data Gaps

Accurate measurement of child labor continues to be a daunting task as it is affected by the differences in methodologies, social desirability biases, and the fact that some forms of child labor such as domestic work are hidden. The ILO and UNICEF state that prevalence estimates are sensitive to operational definitions; concerning age group, number of hours worked, and exposure to hazard. Hence there is a need for developing harmonized tools for measurement (ILO, 2020; ILO & UNICEF, 2021). Moreover, single round survey such as those done in Ethiopia underestimate seasonal highs, while overlooking subgroups (migrant children), disaggregated data(girls in domestic work)and certain types of disabilities(girls with disabilities) (CSA & ILO ,2015). Therefore, there is an urgent call sustainable need for enhanced/disaggregation of data collection methods/statistics right information-based approach to out interventions.

This chapter reviews the literature on child labor exploitation by presenting its key definitions, theories, and empirical findings. It highlights the importance of distinguishing between acceptable children's work and harmful child labor based on age, working conditions, and impact on schooling. The chapter also explains that child labor is influenced by both economic and cultural factors, supported by theories such as economic, social learning, and human capital perspectives. In addition, it identifies major causes like poverty, limited education,

cultural norms, and weak policy enforcement. Overall, the chapter shows that child labor is a complex issue that requires comprehensive and context-sensitive solutions

Chapter Three

Research Methods and Procedures

3.1. Description of the Study Site

In this research, the selected study area was Digeluna Tijo District located in the Arsi Zone of the Oromia Region. It was revealed by research that the predominant economy in the studied area is agrarian economy. The community is mostly engaged in farming practices that are commercial or subsistence-oriented (Digeluna Tijo, 2007 Census profile). As for the geography of Digeluna Tijo, it can be described with respect to the highland and midland geographical areas with maximum elevation reaching 3,560 meters above sea level.

There are some natural resources in the area that are extremely important for agricultural practice and everyday routine of local citizens. They include three rivers: Katar, Ashebeka, and Gusha. These are some sources for the analysis of agricultural seasons, planting practices, harvesting practices, and water-related labor (Wiki compilation; Digeluna Tijo, 2007 Census profile).

As for the social structure in the area, it is characterized by existence of formal and informal social institutions, which are essential from the standpoint of studying the exploitation of child labor in the community. Among them are the following ones: kebele administration, traditional (elderly) leadership, church leadership, farm union, and others (Digeluna Tijo, 2007 Census profile; map and locality). Besides, the area contains some towns such as Sagure and Tijo, which can be viewed as informal educational and social centers for local people (Digeluna Tijo, 2007 Census profile).

Geographic and social features of the area are important for the current study for the reason that they have a direct impact on certain features such as seasons of agricultural practices, migration pattern of local people, labor practices, etc. These are the factors that are important when speaking of child labor exploitation. For this reason, the study site chosen here is appropriate for achieving goals of the current research.

3.2. Research Approach

In order to achieve the dual purpose of this study, namely, to investigate the relationships between community participation and the rate of child labor exploitation, and to find out the significance of these phenomena in a culture-specific society, it was found necessary to implement mixed-method research approach (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010). Such an approach was chosen due to the fact that the mixed-method approach provides the possibility to combine the strengths of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, which allows us to obtain an all-rounded and holistic view of the issue being investigated.

This particular methodology appeared to be the best fit for this study due to several reasons. First of all, it is necessary to acknowledge the fact that the issue to be studied implies numerous aspects, some of which must be quantified and measured (relationships and associations among them), whereas other features require a deeper understanding of their roots and causes. Thus, Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) note that in this situation, researchers are able to triangulate different data and receive additional insight on the studied phenomenon. Also, Fetters et al. (2013) recommend incorporating qualitative and quantitative data into several aspects of the study process.

For instance, in the first phase of the study, the results received from survey can become the basis for the qualitative analysis of the issue by selecting the right interviewees (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Besides, during the interpretation of data, qualitative and quantitative data must be integrated for comparing the results and receiving additional information from them (the same source). This process will give additional opportunity to identify why certain relations and associations among variables appear. Thus, according to the recommendations of Fetters et al. (2013), it is advisable to use joint displays of the obtained information in the process of synthesis.

Such an approach ensures that the results will reflect the relationships that exist between such variables as community participation and the exploitation of child labor and its associated factors (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The target population for the quantitative phase includes households located in selected kebeles and consisting of an adult caregiver or household head, as well as exposed children serving as respondents because they are able to provide information about community participation and children's education and work activities (Groves et al., 2009; Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2014). In relation to qualitative analysis, the key informants may include representatives of kebele leaders, child protection officers, teachers, health extension workers, church leaders, and elders, as well as community members such as mothers, fathers, and youth (Patton's purposive logic in mixed methods literature; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2010; Fetters et al., 2013).

3.4. Research designs

This study involved the use of descriptive and correlational methodologies. Chronological sequence plays a role of research design. The rationale behind implementing the quantitative phase first is connected with the fact that it helps in obtaining objective data needed

to detect relationships and patterns among variables under consideration and to gain knowledge about the problem in question. Next, qualitative phase should be carried out to learn deeper insights, understandings, perceptions, and cultural peculiarities of the issue. It was decided to follow the research design described for a couple of important reasons.

First, such a design helps us to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the problem. It allows us to identify quantitative relationships and correlations among variables and then analyze them qualitatively. This process correlates with the conceptual framework and research questions of the paper, because it is quite convenient and reasonable to first define the relationships and patterns and then proceed with the analysis. According to the recommendations provided by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), this research design allows us to ensure increased validity and depth of mixed methods research. Furthermore, the recommendations provided by Fetters et al. (2013) state that the described sequential order will ensure that the results of the first phase will be taken into account for the second phase. According to Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010), such step-by-step implementation of a mixed methods study allows researchers to validate their associations and relationships and receive richer data.

3.5. Source of Data

In the current study, secondary and primary data were used to answer the research questions. Primary data were collected through household surveys with the use of structured questionnaires and were designed to obtain quantitative data on child labor practices and sociocultural factors that have influence on child labor exploitation. Moreover, semi-structured interviews with key informants such as elders, kebele administration representatives, church leaders, farm unions, parents, teachers, etc., were carried out in order to identify their perceptions, cultural beliefs and norms, and other related information. The focus group

discussions were conducted with youth and women to get their perceptions of child labor practices. Besides, participant observations helped to analyze the issue based on direct observations of agricultural practices and child labor.

As for the secondary sources of information, demographic and sociocultural data from the 2007 census profile were used. In addition to this, local government reports and community records were also analyzed, which was useful for contextualizing the primary results. Relevant literature, policy documents, and development reports concerning child labor practices and community participation were reviewed to support the analysis. Finally, geographical and environmental data in the form of maps, satellite imagery, GIS, etc., helped examine physical features such as water sources, land uses, and settlement patterns. Such an approach allowed consideration of migration and agricultural seasons in this context.

3.6. Target Population

The table below represents the planned proportions of sampling of the chosen six kebeles from the Digeluna Tijo district. Thus, the number of people living in Kebele 01 is 700, which accounts for 20.7% of total population of the area, which equals to 3,380 persons. In its turn, the number of persons living in Kebele 02 is 650 (19.2%), Kebele 03 – 600 (17.7%), Kebele 04 – 580 (17.2%), Kebele 05 – 420 (12.4%), Kebele 06 – 430 (12.7%). Thus, for each kebele, samples were distributed proportionally in relation to the population.

3.6. Sample size

In general, the sample size is the number of respondents which the researcher selects from a certain population as a sample. This number can be calculated through using the following formula introduced by Yamane (1967):

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

where n = sample size, N = population size, e² = sampling error limit

N = total households in Digeluna Tijo district (3380)

$$e = 0.05$$

1 = Designates the probability of the event occurring

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

$$= 3380 / 1 + 3380 (0.05)^2$$

$$= 357$$

3.7. Sampling Techniques

Six selected kebeles were considered as strata for the sake of ensuring geographic and social representation of the district (Lohr, 2022; Cochran, 1977). The kebeles were selected using stratified sampling in accordance with the knowledge about the high incidence of child labor exploitation in the community. In this regard, simple random sampling was employed for selecting households within each kebele. The study was conducted in Digeluna Tijo district, located in East Arsi Zone, and aimed to achieve a full understanding of the problem using a mixed-method approach that combined both quantitative and qualitative research methods.

The sample size was 357 respondents, calculated using Yamane's formula to ensure accuracy and representativeness (Yamane, 1967), where $n = N / (1 + Ne^2) = 3380 / 1 + 3380 (0.05)^2 = 357$. At the first stage, kebeles were stratified, and households were randomly selected within each kebele. The adequacy of the sample obtained was then assessed, as final estimates were based on values representing the whole population under study.

In relation to the qualitative phase of the study, purposive sampling was used to select key informants and participants for focus group discussions. The sample was diverse, including service providers, community leaders, parents and children with attention to gender variation in order to obtain rich and in-depth data. The approximate number of key informant interviews and FGDs, each consisting of 6–8 participants, was about 12. This number was determined based on the understanding that most themes emerge within the first few interviews, and one or two groups per stratum are sufficient to achieve thematic saturation (Hennink et al., 2019; Guest et al., 2017).

3.8. Methods of Data Collection

The quantitative household survey consisted of three structured scales: Community Engagement Questionnaire (CEQ), Cultural Beliefs and Practices Scale (CBPS), and Child Labor Exploitation Module (CLEM).

The Community Engagement Questionnaire (CEQ) assessed the level of community involvement in addressing child labor issues. It included items covering meetings and committee participation, collective action, trust and mutual support, as well as help-seeking and reporting behaviors. The scale consisted of multiple Likert-type items measured using response categories ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5).

The Cultural Beliefs and Practices Scale (CBPS) measured prevailing cultural norms and values related to child labor. Items focused on perceptions of children's work versus schooling, gender role expectations, disciplinary practices, and attitudes toward migrant child labor. Similar to the CEQ, the CBPS employed Likert-scale response categories from strongly disagree to strongly agree.

The Child Labor Exploitation Module (CLEM) assessed the extent and nature of child labor practices. It included items related to working hours, types of tasks, exposure to hazards, remuneration, supervision, and disruption to schooling. Responses were also measured using a Likert-scale format.

These items were adapted from the Central Statistical Agency (CSA), Ethiopian researchers, and the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, International Labor Organization (ILO) Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) surveys on child labor and UNICEF child protection KAP survey tools, with contextual modifications to suit the local community setting and translated to Afan-Oromo.

The psychometric of the items that internal consistency reliability of each scale was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α). A reliability coefficient of $\alpha \geq .70$ was considered acceptable, following standard psychometric criteria, indicating adequate internal consistency of the scales.

3.9. Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to test the feasibility and appropriateness of the research design, instruments, and procedures prior to the main study. The pilot was carried out in Digeluna Tijo District, ensuring consistency with the main research context in terms of socio-economic and cultural characteristics.

The primary purpose of the pilot study was to evaluate the clarity and relevance of the research questions, assess the suitability of the study design, and examine the reliability and validity of the data collection instruments. The pilot also aimed to ensure that the measurement

tools were culturally appropriate and understandable to participants, given the strong influence of local norms on child labor practices.

A sample of 30 participants was selected using stratified sampling to ensure diversity in terms of age, gender, education level, and community roles, including parents, teachers, and local leaders. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and open-ended questions, allowing both quantitative and qualitative insights.

The analysis of pilot data involved descriptive statistics, reliability testing, and thematic analysis. Cronbach's alpha results indicated acceptable internal consistency for all key variables, including community engagement ($\alpha = .809$), cultural factors ($\alpha = .840$), and child labor exploitation ($\alpha = .707$). These results confirm that the instruments were reliable and suitable for the main study.

Qualitative findings from the pilot highlighted that child labor is often perceived as a normal part of upbringing and a means of supporting family livelihoods. Cultural expectations, gender roles, and economic pressures were identified as key factors influencing children's involvement in labor. Quantitative results further indicated moderate levels of community engagement alongside strong cultural norms, with preliminary evidence suggesting that limited community involvement and stronger traditional values are associated with higher levels of child labor.

The pilot study also helped identify practical challenges, including literacy barriers and the need for clearer wording in some questionnaire items. As a result, minor modifications were made to improve question clarity and administration procedures, including the use of interviewer-assisted data collection where necessary.

Overall, the pilot study confirmed the feasibility of the research design and provided important insights for refining the instruments and procedures. These adjustments improved the validity and reliability of the main study and ensured that the research tools were well adapted to the local context.

3.10. Procedures of Data Collection

The researcher and the three data collectors personally administered each data collection instrument. The survey questionnaires were distributed directly to respondents. The researcher and two data collectors conduct the survey together. At first, the researcher conducts orientation sessions for the two data collectors in which the purpose of the study, informed consent and agreement, confidentiality and data security, child safeguarding, non-biased questioning and probing, distress management are explained (Groves et al., 2009; UNICEF, 2021 ethics procedure). Permissions are secured from district and kebele administrations and community leaders before beginning fieldwork and appointments are scheduled in a way that minimizes disruption to respondents' livelihoods and schooling (Groves et al., 2009; Dillman et al., 2014). During quantitative data collection, data collectors interview household members conveniently to respondents at appropriate times and in private setting with average time frame of 20-30 min. Standardized field protocols are followed to minimize interviewer effects and social attractiveness bias (Groves et al., 2009; Dillman et al., 2014). After completion of quantitative data collection, key informant interviews are arranged by introducing participants to each other officially and focus group discussions are conducted in neutral accessible venues; separate focus groups may be conducted by gender or role if necessary (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018; Hennink et al., 2019). With participants' permission and supplemented with fieldnotes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Groves et al., 2009), which is important because of expected difficulties such as

scheduling during peak agricultural period, discussing sensitive topic such as child labor exploitation, and disclosures of harms. For overcoming them, flexibility of timing, privacy provision, nonjudgmental language, etc. are important. The researcher and data collectors clarify the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, right to skip question/withdraw, and data security measures to participants in accessible language.

The researcher and data collectors clarify the purpose of the study, voluntary participation, right to skip question/withdraw, and data security measures to participants in accessible language. Written consent is obtained or witnessed oral consent for literacy was an issue and participants receive the information sheets with contacts for clarifying any doubts (Belmont Report, 1979; UNICEF, 2021 ethics procedure).

3.10. Data Analysis

Mixed manual and electronic tools were used for data processing in this study. Obtained data were edited, coded, categorized, and tabulated during this stage of data analysis. Data cleaning up and data reduction are two steps in the process of data processing. Thus, initially received data were subjected to editing for the detection of abnormalities, errors, omissions and other inconsistencies, and to make sure that all the questions were correctly answered. After that, assigning numerical or other symbols was implemented to categorize answers into a certain number of categories or classes. Then such procedures of classifying or grouping a large number of raw data into categories or classes in accordance with their similarities were performed. The raw data were classified depending on their similar characteristics, which allowed to divide entered data into different classes. Thus, finally obtained data were summarized and presented in tables.

The data obtained were further analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative data from primary sources were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, as well as inferential statistics such as correlation and regression analyses, were used to examine relationships among variables. In addition, qualitative data collected through interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed using thematic analysis. This involved coding, categorizing, and identifying recurring themes and patterns in participants' responses to provide deeper insights into community perceptions, cultural practices, and experiences related to child labor exploitation.

Inferential statistics enable us to determine relationships between two or more variables and how various independent variables affect the variance in a dependent variable. This study involves such inferential statistical techniques:

Pearson Correlation analysis: - Relationship between (Community Engagement, Cultural Factors) and Child labor exploitation was examined by using Pearson's correlation coefficient.

Multiple Regression Analysis: - Factors (Community Engagement, Cultural Factors) and Child labor exploitation was examined by applying multiple regression analysis.

Regression functions: - In this study, the dependent and independent variables served as the basis of equations of multiple regressions. Regression equations are widely used in order to improve the researcher's ability to describe, comprehend, predict and control the studied variables.

$$Y = \beta_1 + \beta_2 X_1 + \beta_3 X_2$$

Where Y is dependent variable- Child labor exploitation

Community Engagement =X1, Cultural Factors=X2,

β_1 is the intercept term- it gives the mean or average effect on Y of all the variables excluded from the equation, although its mechanical interpretation is the average value of Y when the stated independent variables are set equal to zero. β_1 , β_2 and β_3 are the coefficients of their respective independent variables; it measures the change in the mean value of Y per unit change in their respective independent variables.

3.11. Ethical Considerations

The official support letter for this research study was obtained from Addis Ababa University and District Women and Social Affairs Office. Before involving any individual in the study, all participants were clearly informed about the purpose of the research. Oral informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to their participation. Moreover, they were assured that all information collected during the research would be used strictly for academic purposes and that confidentiality would be maintained throughout the study.

Chapter Four

Results

4.1. Return Rate of the Respondents

A total of 357 questionnaires were distributed to respondents in the district. Surprisingly, the entire questionnaire administered was returned, thus a response rate of 100%. This complete return show a high level of participation and interest obtained from the respondents, thereby increasing data obtained would be enough for this study in term of reliability and validity.

4. 2. Demographic characteristics of the respondent

The demographic characteristics of the respondents indicate a relatively balanced gender distribution, with females accounting for 53.8% (n = 192) and males 46.2% (n = 165), demonstrating fair representation of both sexes. The age structure shows that most respondents fall within economically active groups, particularly those aged 30–49 years (46.5%) and 19–29 years (33.3%). Younger respondents aged 7–18 years constitute 9.8%, while older age groups (50 years and above) account for only 10.4%, indicating limited representation of elderly individuals. In terms of residence, the findings reveal a highly stable community, with 65.8% of respondents having lived in the area for over 10 years and 31.9% for 6–10 years, while only a negligible proportion are recent residents.

Educational attainment among respondents is generally low, with 39.2% reporting no formal education. Primary (24.9%) and secondary (25.5%) education levels are the most common, whereas only a small proportion has attained college/TVET (6.2%) or university education (4.2%). Regarding caregiving roles, parents represent the majority of respondents (50.4%), followed by guardians (28.0%), with smaller contributions from older siblings (11.2%)

and relatives (10.4%), indicating shared family responsibilities. Occupationally, the community is predominantly agrarian, as 65.0% of respondents are farmers, while others engage in daily labor (13.4%), trading (12.3%), and homemaking (9.2%).

The marital status distribution shows that most respondents are married (76.2%), with smaller proportions being widowed (15.4%), divorced or separated (4.8%), and single (3.6%), reflecting a strong family-oriented structure. Income levels are concentrated in the low (41.7%) and middle (39.5%) categories, with fewer households in the high-income group (18.8%). Household size is generally large, with 68.3% of respondents reporting five or more children, compared to 28.9% with three to four children and only 2.8% with one to two children. Overall, the findings depict a stable, rural community characterized by long-term residence, agricultural livelihoods, low educational attainment, moderate income levels, and large family sizes.

The demographic profile showed that the community was predominately middle-aged, long-term residents. Many of the residents were involved in farming as well as having large families. Most people are married individuals with a big portion of them having low levels of education with incomes at low and middle income earnings. From the look of things this is a stable community characterized by agrarian and family business activities.

Table 1 Table 1: Demographic profile of the respondents (*N*=357)

Variable	Category	N	%
Sex of the Respondent	Female	192	53.8
	Male	165	46.2
	Total	357	100.0

Age of the respondents	7-18 years	35	9.8
	19-29 years	119	33.3
	30-49 years	166	46.5
	50-60 years	21	5.9
	above 60 years	16	4.5
	Total	357	100.0
Duration of Residence in the Community	Less than 1 year	1	.3
	1–5 years	7	2.0
	6–10 years	114	31.9
	More than 10 years	235	65.8
	Total	357	100.0
Educational Status	No formal education	140	39.2
	Primary (1–8)	89	24.9
	Secondary (9–12)	91	25.5
	College/TVET	22	6.2
	University	15	4.2
	Total	357	100.0
Relationship to Children in the Household	Parent	180	50.4
	Guardian	100	28.0
	Older sibling	40	11.2
	Relative caregiver	37	10.4
	Total	357	100.0
Occupation	of Farmer	232	65.0

Respondent	Trader	44	12.3
	Daily laborer	48	13.4
	Homemake	33	9.2
	Total	357	100.0
Marital Status	Single	13	3.6
	Married	272	76.2
	Widowed	55	15.4
	Divorced/Separated	17	4.8
Household Income Level	Low income	149	41.7
	Middle income	141	39.5
	High income	67	18.8
	Total	357	100.0
Number of Children in Household	1–2	10	2.8
	3–4	103	28.9
	5 or more	244	68.3
	Total	357	100.0

The demographic data indicates the stable nature of the community as far as residents are concerned and likely social networking that could be used in community-based intervention programs. A gender distribution indicates decision making at various levels in the community. Most of the young to middle aged adults mean a high physically active work force and low

dependency ratio; however, fewer children have competitive influence in child labor markets. High family size with low education status highlights economic depletion coupled with lower human capital encouraging dependence on child labor for their survival Agrarian economy along with intra-community income disparity call for alternate livelihood schemes and economic security. From the demographic profile it is evident that there should be community specific approach focusing on education, economic upliftment/sustainability, and social integration which lead to effective control of problems like child labor. In addition, insights obtained from Key Informant Interviews (KII) and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) support these findings by showing strong community relationships and shared responsibilities among members. Participants explained that long-term residence helps build trust and cooperation, while challenges such as low education, large family sizes, and limited income continue to affect daily decisions and livelihoods. These insights highlight the importance of developing community-based interventions that match the real needs and experiences of the people.

4.2. Level of community Engagement

Table 2Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Level of Community Engagement

Level of community Engagement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I am aware of child labor issues in my community.	357	2.96	1.001
Community meetings about children's wellbeing are regularly held.	357	3.00	.993
Community leaders frequently discuss child protection issues.	357	2.98	1.008
Community members actively report cases of child labor exploitation.	357	3.02	1.029

I have personally participated in activities to prevent or report child labor.	357	3.01	1.004
The community takes effective actions when a child is involved in exploitative labor.	357	2.99	1.028
Poverty is a major barrier to community action against child labor.	357	2.99	1.003
Cultural norms discourage community involvement in child protection.	357	2.97	1.002
Lack of awareness prevents community members from acting against child labor.	357	3.00	1.024
The community collaborates with local authorities to address child labor issues.	357	2.98	.993
Valid N (listwise)	357		

Source: Own Survey (2026) and from SPSS output

The information on community engagement in relation to child labor in the community indicates that there is reasonable but not very high level of knowledge and involvement among members of the community. The mean scores of items on the scale such as awareness regarding child labor, occurrence of community meetings to discuss children's wellbeing, and discussions by leaders concerning child protection etc. are around 3.0 indicating that people are informed and somewhat actively involved in dealing with these issues. Majority of the residents state that they have been engaging in activities to prevent or expose incidences of child labor thus implying that there is consensus that indeed some action is taken when a child is found engaged in exploitative labor. However, poverty and cultural norms were noted as key barriers inhibiting enhanced participation at a community level whereby these two items also had an average score slightly

cautious of 3.0. In general, there remains prevailing trend pertaining to challenges characterized by economic difficulties persisting over prolonged period and mind sets people hold culturally which reflect steadily impact responses made at community member level towards safeguarding rights of children.

4.3 Qualitative Data Analysis

4.3.1 Qualitative findings from Households' Perceptions on Community Engagement

Theme 1: Collective Action and Support Systems

Community members have realized that they need to come together through meetings, volunteer activities and local level gatherings to take up the issues concerning children and families. These forums help in sharing concerns and proposing solutions. Nonetheless, such collaboration is weak, participation in these initiatives has been decreasing overtime and despite growing awareness/education child labor persists.

“Coming together is as a community is very important, we have some meetings whereby everyone is given the chance to put their worries across. These meetings present us with an opportunity to engage as a team discussing and working together but the level of cooperation is not as strong as needed to fully address the problem.
(FGD participant 1)

“People are aware of the problem but turning that awareness into continuous action is still difficult.” (KII 1 Local Leader)

This suggests that while the community demonstrates a foundational level of awareness and willingness to engage, there is a gap between intention and sustained practice. The moderate

level observed in the quantitative findings is therefore explained by participation fatigue, lack of accountability, and limited follow-up mechanisms. Without sustained collective effort, community engagement remains in limited rather than transformative.

Theme 2: Use of Local Networks and Resources

Local level structures such as religious institutions, community centers, and elders exist but are not fully mobilized and effectively utilized. Their support to address community issues like child labor is inconsistent as they have very limited influence. However, if these resources can be strengthened and better organized, they could have greater impact.

“Religious leaders and community elders are important in the society, but their influence is not as strong as it could be... Child labor is still present, though slowly decreasing. Stronger and more organized use of these local resources is needed.”
(FGD participant 2)

These insights highlight the structural barriers to effective engagement. Even where social capital exists, it is underutilized due to limited institutional support. This finding reinforces the quantitative evidence that community engagement alone has a moderate influence and cannot significantly reduce child labor without addressing underlying systemic challenges.

4.3.2. Household Perspectives on Family Roles

Theme 1: Family Responsibility and Livelihood Challenges

Parents and families ensure children are cared for and have shelter, but this is not enough. In many places, families do not have enough money to pay for their children’s education so instead of going to school, children engaged in work.

“Parents want the best for their children, but when there is not enough income, children must help.” (FGD participant 3)

Theme 2: Limited Awareness and Advocacy

Families are joining community meetings for the advocacy of children’s rights, unfortunately this trend is very low, and weak coordination does not allow gaining full benefits from this kind of advocacy.

“At our community meetings, I see some families speak openly about the challenges they face.... However, not everyone participates actively and sometimes our efforts are not strong enough. (KII 2 Faith Leader)

These findings demonstrate that households operate within economic constraints that limit their ability to protect children fully. The normalization of child labor at the household level is not necessarily due to lack of care but rather due to survival needs. This explains why community engagement remains moderate and why child labor persists despite awareness efforts, as reflected in the quantitative findings.

4.4. Level of Cultural factors

Table 3Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Cultural factors

Cultural factors	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
It is culturally acceptable for children to work in my community.	357	2.98	1.007
People believe that child work helps children prepare for adulthood.	357	3.01	1.018

Cultural norms encourage children to support their family income.	357	3.00	.990
Farming is considered normal work for children in this community.	357	2.99	1.025
Boys are expected to do different types of work than girls.	357	3.00	.993
Traditional beliefs support migrant children working as laborers.	357	3.01	1.015
Cultural beliefs are changing regarding child labor.	357	2.97	1.009
Cultural values promote protecting children from exploitation.	357	2.99	.984
Cultural practices increase the risk of child labor.	357	2.97	.991
Cultural values help safeguard children from child labor exploitation.	357	3.46	1.135
Valid N (listwise)	357		

Source: Own Survey (2026) and from SPSS output

The mean cultural factor scores reflect a more nuanced cultural view revealed by the data. With the exception of most items (e.g., it is acceptable for children to work, children should work to prepare for adult life), which approximate a scale point midpoint of 3.0, indicating moderate cultural confirmation of child labor behaviors or practices at the community level, items are above a scale point midpoint of 3.00 indicating agreement with their underlying

cultural belief or expectation. In particular, it is evident that work on farms among culturally majority group members is not discouraged and falls into this category with a score around 3.05 along with gender-based expectations about appropriate types of work for boys and girls (.295). Cultural beliefs and expectations in support of late-equivalent youth working as hired workers or in other circumstances for migrant families also remain generally endorsed. However, whereas most people continue to support these beliefs (i.e., do not change; .291), that number increasingly represents less than half over time.

4.4.1 Qualitative findings on Cultural Factors Influencing Child Labor Exploitation

Cultural norms were identified as one of the most influential drivers of child labor, strongly supporting the quantitative findings (Mean $\approx$ 3.04; strong correlation with child labor exploitation).

Theme 1: Cultural Acceptance of Child Work

Child involvement in work is widely perceived as a normal and necessary part of upbringing, linked to skill development and responsibility.

“Children working is not seen as a problem; it is how they learn to survive and become responsible adults.” (KII 3 local leader)

Theme 2: Respect and Obedience

Respect for elders and obedience are cultural norms which not only ensure discipline but also render the child into easy target of labor exploitation since she /he is expected to keep up the parent’s orders without questioning.

“Children are intended to follow their parents’ orders without asking question....it makes them disciplined and guarantees they don’t bring dishonor to the family.”

(KII 4 teacher)

Theme 2: Traditional Practices and Cultural Transmission

Ceremonies, rituals and storytelling are used to pass on values like that of responsibility and hard work. But at the same time these practices only succeed in normalizing child labour, making it a part of culture which is not frowned upon.

“In our community, from a young age, children are taught that working is a sign of good behavior and responsibility, so they grow up believing it is the right thing to do.” (FGD participant 4)

Theme 3: Early Involvement in farming Work

Children are introduced to farming activities and domestic chores from a very young age as part of skill development and socialization within the family. While this early involvement is viewed positively as a way of transferring knowledge and ensuring continuity of family livelihoods, it often interferes with children’s access to formal education and limits their time for learning and rest.

“From a young age, children are expected to help in farming and household work because it is part of their responsibility in the family.” (FGD participant 5)

Theme 4: Limited Leisure

Children have very less time to be free and enjoy themselves as they are expected to fulfill their responsibilities as workers for their families that affect both their social and emotional development.

“Some children are always busy helping their families, and they don’t get the chance to enjoy their childhood like others.” (FGD participant 6)

Theme 5: Gender-Specific Roles

The division of labor reinforces gender inequality from an early age, as boys and girls experience different types of workload, risks, and opportunities. While girls are often confined to the domestic sphere, boys are exposed to outdoor and economic activities, which may provide them with broader skills but also subject them to physical strain. Both forms of labor, however, interfere with schooling and reduce the time available for learning and development.

“Girls spend most of their time doing household work like cooking, cleaning, and caring for younger children, while boys are expected to take part in farming and other physically demanding activities.” (KII 4 women and child affair expert)

Theme 6: Age-Based Hierarchies

The findings indicate that responsibilities in the household increase with age, where older children are expected to take on more demanding roles such as caregiving, farming, and household management. While this is perceived as a natural progression toward responsibility and maturity, it often limits older children’s opportunities for education, play, and personal development.

“Older children are expected to take more responsibility, especially in caring for younger siblings and helping with household work, which limits their time for school and play.” (FGD participant 7)

Theme 7: Cultural Endorsement of Child Labor Exploitation

The study shows that child labor Exploitation is culturally justified as a means of teaching responsibility, independence, and practical skills. Within this context, children’s involvement in work is not perceived as harmful but rather as an essential part of their upbringing. This cultural endorsement makes it difficult to distinguish between acceptable work and labor exploitation.

“Working helps children gain independence and learn skills; it prepares them for future responsibilities.” (KII 5 teacher)

Theme 8: Cultural Tolerance of Child Labor Exploitation

The findings further reveal that child labor is widely tolerated within the community because it is closely linked to family survival and cultural expectations. As a result, harmful practices are often overlooked or normalized, making them difficult to challenge.

“Often, child labor is seen as part and section of a family’s contribution in their survival thus making it hard to challenge such harmful practices. (KII 5 women and child affair expert)

4.4.2. Level of child labor Exploitation

Table 4: Descriptive Statistics child labor Exploitation

Child labor Exploitation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
There are children engaged in harmful or excessive work in my community.	357	2.98	1.000
Child labor is most common in farming and livestock activities.	357	2.99	.987
Children aged 7–12 are the most involved in child labor.	357	3.01	1.021
Poverty is the main cause of child labor in this community.	357	2.97	1.029
Children start working to support their families.	357	3.00	1.021
Children feel happy with their work responsibilities.	357	3.01	1.040
Heavy work and long hours are common among working children.	357	3.02	.986
Children face physical injuries while working.	357	2.99	1.003
Many children miss school due to their work commitments.	357	3.00	1.007
Community efforts to reduce child labor are effective.	357	2.99	.990

Source: Own Survey (2026) and from SPSS output

The fact that children are involved in work that is clearly hazardous or inappropriate for their age, as implied by the mean score of nearly 3.0 on child labor exploitation in the community, exposes this reality. Child labor is a widespread phenomenon within farming and livestock production, highlighted by the high proportion involving this type of work. The

children between 7 to 12 years old are most exposed to different types of vulnerabilities which reflect this age group's situation. Most children begin working to provide for themselves and helping their families contributed highly in obedience with providing for their family through work and these two were among many causes mentioned earlier which include poverty

Remarkably, however, children often indicated that they like doing their assigned chores hence manners in the emotional response to their work exist. The engagement into functional works poses risks like overburdening with housework, exposure to harm (injury) through play, conflicts between siblings etc.

4.4.3. Qualitative findings on Household Views of Child Labor Exploitation

Theme 1: Informal Economic Activities

Children are involved in street selling and small-scale trading under risk environment which has raised questions on their safety and rights.

“I often see children selling items in the market after school...it raises the question whether children should be involved in such duties.” (FGD participant 4)

Theme 2: Child Labor in Cattle Herding

The qualitative findings indicate that economic hardship compels low-income families to depend on children's labor as a survival strategy. Some families send or “rent out” their children to herd cattle for wealthier households in exchange for food, money, or other forms of support.

“Because of poverty, some families send their children to herd cattle for others so they can earn something or reduce the burden at home.” (KII 5 women and child affair expert)

Theme 3: Poor Enforcing Measures

Outlawing child labor and forced labor laws are insufficiently applied, and enforcing measures of the government do not meet any demands in the matter.

"There are no concrete measures taken to prevent children from working in dangerous conditions; hence, they are unprotected". (KII 5 teacher)

4.4.4. Opinions of Children

Children participating in the focus group discussions expressed that they are regularly involved in activities such as cattle herding, farming, and other agricultural tasks, which require considerable time and physical effort. They noted that these responsibilities often interfere with their schooling and reduce their opportunities to rest, play, and interact with peers.

"I had to work since I was young because my family needed me to take care of cattle." (FGD child participant 1)

"Since I was a kid, I helped my parents in farming activities." (FGD child participant2)

"I participated in farming because there was no one else to do the work." (FGD child participant3)

The qualitative findings from focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs) reveal that child labor in the study area is shaped by a complex interplay of economic, cultural, and social factors. Community engagement exists but remains limited in depth and effectiveness due to weak participation and resource constraints. At the household

level, families play a dual role by both protecting and involving children in labor activities, largely driven by socio-cultural pressure and survival needs.

4.5. Grand mean of study variables

Table 5: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Study Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Community Engagement	357	2.9894	.81654
Cultural Factors	357	3.0392	.74595
Child Labor Exploitation	357	2.9975	.75410
Valid N (listwise)	357		

Source: Own

Survey (2026) and from SPSS output

The study variables indicated that community engagement had a mean of about 2.99 with a standard deviation of 0.82, which meant community was moderately involved in the related activities. Cultural factors had a mean of approximately 3.04 and a standard deviation of around 0.75; therefore, cultural norms and beliefs were moderate to somewhat influential in child labor. Child labor exploitation was close to 3.00 with a standard deviation of 0.75, and this implied that moderate numbers or perception about the occurrence were prevailing within the community at large concerning exploitation issues among children. In general, community involvement along with cultural influences and child labor exploitation highlighted by the present findings demonstrate that these issues are still prevalent thus existing challenges regarding ensuring child labor free situation.

4.6. Relationship between Community Engagement, Cultural Factors and Child Labor Exploitation (N=357)

Table 6: Pearson Correlation Coefficients among Study Variables

		Community Engagement	Cultural Factors	Child Labor Exploitation
Community Engagement	Pearson	1	.068	.513
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.199	.000
	N	357	357	357
Cultural Factors	Pearson	.068	1	.629
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.199		.000
	N	357	357	357
Child Labor Exploitation	Pearson	.513	.629	1
	Correlation			
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
	N	357	357	357

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: Own Survey (2026) and from SPSS output

The community's association with the positional variable shows a statistically significant positive effect on child labor exploitation, given the p-value of 0.000 for the correlation coefficient $r = 0.513$ ($t = 11.82$). The positive medium strength correlation implies that higher levels of community engagement are associated with higher prevalence rates of child labor exploitation. Perhaps this tends to show that community involvement more often than not targeted at making societal life better may under specific situations marginally promote or be correlated with high incidence areas of child labor due perhaps to social, economic or even cultural habits etc which requires further probing/analysis etc. On contrast, the correlation between the community and cultural factors is weak and non-significant since the p-value of 0.199 for $r = 0.068$ does not establish statistical evidence to support rejecting the null hypothesis. Therefore there is no concrete evidence from this sample data that cultural factors and hence cultural norms contribute to creating fertile grounds for perpetuating or exacerbating child labor among members of these cultures as they consider it normative behavior. Cultural variables along several facets exhibit a perfect strong positive linear relation/significance towards the rate one develops affinity toward nests-the rate potential delivers so many industries into vicious/unproductive competition-meager capital seeks investment abroad-early negotiations uninteresting intrinsic importance"

4.7.2. Regression

Table 7: Regression Model Summary

Model Summary ^b				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.786 ^a	.618	.615	.46764
a. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Factors, Community Engagement				
b. Dependent Variable: Child Labor Exploitation				

Source: Own Survey (2026) and from SPSS output

The summary of model includes various important statistics which can be used for the purpose of performance evaluation and explanatory power of regression model which predicts child labor exploitation with predictors' cultural factors and community engagement. Firstly, the correlation coefficient (R) 0.786 shows that there is strong and positive relationship between predictors and dependent variables. it means that changes in cultural factors and community engagement are related to considerable changes in child labor exploitation.

The model explains more than half the variance in child labor exploitation, as indicated by the R Square value of 0.618. To be specific, approximately 61.8% of the variance can be explained by the two predictors included in the model. The lower value of this index has thus shown a high level of explanatory power achieved because more than half of the variability in the dependent variable is accounted for by the model. Since it adjusts for number of predictors in

the model, Adjusted R Square slightly drops to 0.615 reaffirming that even after considering number of predictors, most of variance is being explained by the model.

The average distance is measured by Standard Error of the Estimate that fall the observed values from regression line. A better model fit to the data is indicted by smaller standard error and in current situation, 0.46764 shows that it is fairly close to actual observed values of child labor exploitation. On an aggregate basis, we can say that model show strong association between predictors and outcome variable along with good fit and significant explanatory power.

Table 8: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Results

ANOVA^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	125.033	2	62.517	285.875	.000 ^b
	Residual	77.415	354	.219		
	Total	202.448	356			

a. Dependent Variable: Child Labor Exploitation

b. Predictors: (Constant), Cultural Factors, Community Engagement

Source: Own Survey (2026) and from SPSS output

The ANOVA table was applied to analyze if there is an overall significance of the regression model in predicting child labor exploitation using the cultural factors and community engagement. The value for regression sum of squares is 125.033 indicates the variation of the dependent variable that was explained by the predictors, while the residual sum of squares which

is 77.415 represents the variation that was not explained by the model and total this gives us 202.448.

The model was statistically highly significant, $F(2, 354) = 285.875$, $p = .000$, indicating that the group of predictors (cultural factors and community engagement) did have a significant effect on child labor exploitation and we could virtually be certain that this observation was not random noise but that the variables in fact did explain part of the variance in child labor exploitation. A more general conclusion implied by these ANOVA results is that the data provide evidence that the model as a whole fit the data significantly better than would be expected by chance.

Table 9: Regression Coefficients Estimates

Coefficients^a						
		Unstandardized		Standardize		
		Coefficients		d	Coefficients	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.140	.134		-1.048	.296
	Community	.437	.030	.473	14.350	.000
	Engagement					
	Cultural Factors	.603	.033	.596	18.104	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Child Labor Exploitation

Source: Own Survey (2026) and from SPSS output

The results of this study show that both community engagement and cultural factors have a significant positive influence on child labor exploitation. More specifically, with an increase of one unit in community engagement, the prediction kept constant against the control variable for which no assumption was made will reveal an approximate increase of 0.437 units, child labor exploitation being controlled. Similarly, with the next unit in cultural factors I response between an increases about of 0.603 units in child labor exploitation controlling community engagement. The standardized coefficients showed that this slightly higher impact could be attributed to cultural factors since it had a greater standardized beta value at 0.596 than community engagement's 0.473 values. The impact is significant as can be observed from their t-values of 14.350 and 18.104 whose p-value is represented by a figure "0.000" making it reliable and due to chance unlikely. A different reading will show that however it has a coefficient significance level of "-0.140" If it happens simultaneously that both the predictors happen to be zero then the approximation of reality related to child labor won't differ significantly from zero.

Chapter Five

Discussion

This chapter presents a discussion of the major findings of the study in relation to research questions and existing literature. The central focus was to examine the role of community engagement and cultural factors in influencing child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo District. The discussion integrates both quantitative and qualitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding.

5.1. Level of Community Engagement, Cultural Factors, and Child Labor Exploitation

The findings of this study showed that the levels of community engagement, cultural factors, and child labor exploitation were moderate, with mean scores of approximately 2.99, 3.04, and 3.00, respectively. This suggests that members of the community are aware of child labor issues, this awareness has not yet translated into consistent and effective actions to address the problem.

The moderate level of community engagement suggests that although community members participate in meetings and awareness activities, their involvement remains limited in depth and effectiveness.

Similarly, the moderate influence of cultural factors indicates that child labor is culturally accepted to some extent, particularly in agricultural and domestic contexts. Practices such as early involvement in farming, gender-based division of labor, and the belief that work builds responsibility contribute to the normalization of child labor. These findings align with Social Learning Theory, which explains how children internalize behaviors observed in their environment.

The moderate level of child labor exploitation, particularly among children aged 7–12, reflects the persistence of the problem. Children’s involvement in farming, livestock activities, and domestic work interferes with education and exposes them to physical and psychological risks. These results are consistent with prior studies indicating that child labor is common in rural agricultural communities and is largely driven by cultural norms and poverty.

5.2. Relationship among Community Engagement, Cultural Factors, and Child Labor Exploitation

The findings of this study revealed meaningful relationships among the key variables. Community engagement showed a moderate positive relationship with child labor exploitation ($r = 0.513$), while cultural factors demonstrated a stronger positive association ($r = 0.629$). The positive relationship between community engagement and child labor exploitation suggests that community involvement on its own may not be enough to reduce the problem. This finding points to an important concern: without addressing underlying cultural beliefs, increased participation may unintentionally sustain harmful behaviors.

In contrast, the stronger relationship between cultural factors and child labor exploitation highlights the central role of cultural beliefs and values in shaping practices related to child labor. The qualitative findings further support this result, indicating that child labor is often viewed as a way of teaching responsibility, developing skills, and supporting family livelihoods. Such perceptions blur the line between acceptable forms of children work and exploitative labor.

These findings are consistent with existing literature, which emphasizes the powerful influence of cultural norms on attitudes toward child labor. In many cases, these norms

contribute to the normalization of practices that negatively affect children's education and overall well-being.

5.3. Contribution of Community Engagement and Cultural Factors to Child Labor

Exploitation

The regression analysis indicated that community engagement and cultural factors together explained 61.8% of the variance in child labor exploitation ($R^2 = 0.618$), demonstrating strong explanatory power. Among the predictors, cultural factors ($\beta = 0.596$) had a stronger influence compared to community engagement ($\beta = 0.473$). This suggests that although community engagement plays an important role, cultural norms are the most significant determinant of child labor exploitation.

From the presented analysis of regression, one can see the strong dependence of child labor on both community engagement and cultural norms, which are more powerful concerning their impact on cultural norms than on other aspects. Therefore, the results confirm the theoretical propositions of Kadi (2022) and Johnson & Okwu (2023). The latter stated that some cultural aspects prevent the implementation of any program aimed at fighting against child labor. The weak yet rather significant connection between community engagement and cultural norms (correlation coefficient ~ 0.07) demonstrates that the introduction of changes will be difficult if proper attention is not paid to beliefs.

To conclude, it can be seen that with quantitative data analysis, one acquires deeper knowledge about the importance of the involvement of cultural aspects within the framework of community engagement. However, it should be admitted that roughly half of the variance is

covered, which means that there are other moderating variables (e.g., economic status) to pay attention too.

To successfully implement the programs, it will be crucial to develop culturally sensitive strategies regarding both engagement with communities and changing normative aspects (according to international guidelines, such as ILO, 2022). The future research has to focus on interventions combining several aspects: legal, economic and normative.

5.4. Qualitative Data Analysis

Qualitative findings enriched the quantitative results by providing deeper insights into community perceptions and practices.

The qualitative findings identified several key themes that help explain the persistence of child labor exploitation in the study area. Firstly, child labor is culturally normalized, as many community members view children's work as a natural part of upbringing and socialization. Secondly, the effectiveness of community engagement was found to be limited due to weak coordination, insufficient resources, and lack of consistent follow-up, which reduces their ability to address child labor effectively. In addition, clear gender-based roles were observed, where girls are primarily assigned domestic responsibilities while boys are expected to participate in agricultural activities, reinforcing unequal burdens and limiting educational opportunities. Finally, economic necessity plays crucial role, with families often relying on children's labor to cope with financial hardships and sustain household livelihoods

These findings confirm that child labor is not only an economic issue but also a deeply embedded socio-cultural phenomenon. Community structures exist but are underutilized, and cultural beliefs continue to justify child labor exploitation practices.

Chapter Six

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Summary

The main objective of this study was to examine the role of community engagement and cultural factors in influencing child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo District.

A mixed-methods approach was employed, involving 357 respondents selected through Simple random sampling, along with key informant interviews and focus group discussions. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression, while qualitative data were analyzed thematically. The questionnaire itself had questions regarding the constructs of community engagement, socio-cultural aspects, and child labor exploitation. The instrument had an excellent internal consistency reliability about Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.993$ for community engagement construct. $\alpha = 0.994$ for cultural factor construct. and $\alpha = 0.995$ for child labor construct). At an early-stage analysis, descriptive statistics are used to summarize responses obtained in each item of measures/ whereas at latter stages correlation and regression tests are run to see the significant relationships among variables.

Firstly, the results demonstrated that community engagement is medium since the community at large is aware but cannot translate this knowledge to practice in child labor diminution due to prevailing barriers especially cultural norms and poverty.

Results of the Pearson correlation analysis indicate that inferred by approximate reference on semi-strong correlation coefficient ($r \approx 0.63$) cultural and child labor exploitation factors while between community engagement and culturally related norms was weak negative non-significant correlation coefficient.

The results indicate that cultural practices have a greater impact on the prevalence of child labor exploitation, more so than community engagement by itself. Therefore, successful interventions must work to change cultural values and minimize economic contradictions with these same cultures. Overall poverty should be reduced and normative beliefs changed to make sure every child is protected under culturally acceptable conditions.

In summary, community awareness as such is not enough to eradicate or even substantially reduce child labor. It is deeply embedded in cultural determinants and fostered by economic constraints. Culturally appropriate and economically beneficial intervention measures will go a long way in effectively reducing the incidence of child labor exploitation in the district.

6.2. Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, several important conclusions can be drawn.

First, while community engagement exists within the study area, it is not strong enough on its own to effectively reduce child labor. Its impact is limited because it is often shaped and constrained by deeper cultural beliefs and ongoing economic challenges such as poverty.

Second, cultural factors emerge as the most influential determinant of child labor, as they tend to normalize children's involvement in work and present it as a necessary part of socialization and responsibility within the family and community.

Third, existing interventions appear to have only limited success, mainly because they do not fully address the underlying cultural beliefs and structural issues that sustain child labor. Overall, these conclusions suggest that any meaningful effort to reduce child labor must take a more comprehensive approach that considers both social norms and economic realities. Furthermore, the findings show that although community engagement and cultural factors are

both important, their influence is not equal; cultural norms have a more dominant and lasting effect on shaping behavior.

Finally, the persistence of child labor is closely linked to economic necessity, particularly among low-income households where children's contributions are seen as essential for family survival.

6.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study presented in chapter five, conclusions were made and implications drawn on the role of community culture on child labor exploitation, to form practical recommendations that provide culturally sensitive strategies to combat child labor practice in Digeluna Tijo District.

1. Strengthening community-based interventions is essential, as sustainable change requires active and continuous engagement from community members. This can be achieved by encouraging consistent involvement and establishing functional structures.
2. Addressing cultural factors that contribute to the normalization of child labor is equally important, since cultural beliefs were found to play a dominant role in sustaining child labor practices. Engaging cultural and religious leaders can help challenge these norms, while promoting positive values that emphasize child protection and the importance of education.
3. Enhancing awareness and education programs should also be prioritized, particularly through culturally sensitive campaigns that communicate the long-term benefits of education and the risks associated with child labor exploitation.

4. Providing economic support to families is critical, as poverty remains a major driver of child labor exploitation. Developing income-generating opportunities and strengthening social protection programs can reduce families' dependence on children's labor for survival.

5. Improving policy implementation and monitoring mechanisms is necessary to ensure that existing laws are effectively enforced. Establishing community-level reporting systems and ensuring proper follow-up can strengthen accountability and enhance the overall effectiveness of interventions. Together, these recommendations highlight the need for a coordinated approach that addresses both cultural and economic factors in order to achieve meaningful and lasting change.

6.4 Limitations of the Study and Future Research

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings.

First, it is geographically limited to Digeluna Tijo District, meaning the results reflect the specific social, cultural, and economic conditions of this area and may not be easily generalized to other regions.

Second, the study relies on self-reported data collected through questionnaires and interviews, which may be influenced by social desirability bias. Participants may provide responses they consider acceptable rather than fully expressing their true views, especially on sensitive issues such as child labor exploitation.

In addition, the cross-sectional design captures information at a single point in time, limiting the ability to establish causal relationships or observe changes over time.

Finally, although the study focuses on key factors such as community engagement and cultural norms, other important influences such as economic shocks, policy enforcement, and access to education may not have been fully explored.

Future research should:

- Explore longitudinal changes in cultural norms and child labor
- Examine additional factors such as policy enforcement and school accessibility
- Use advanced methods such as structural equation modeling
- Conduct comparative studies across different regions

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Annexes

Appendix I:

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking the time to take part in this questionnaire/interview. This study is being carried out as part of a Master's Thesis at the School of Psychology, Addis Ababa University. The purpose of the research is to understand how community engagement and cultural factors influence child labor exploitation in Digeluna Tijo District.

Your participation is completely voluntary, and all information you provide will be used only for academic purposes. Your honest responses are highly valuable and sincerely appreciated.

Thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

General Instructions

1. Please do not write your name anywhere on the questionnaire.
2. If anything is unclear while completing the form, feel free to ask the researcher or facilitator for clarification.
3. For multiple-choice questions, please encircle your answers. For open-ended questions, write your responses briefly.

Part one: Demographic Information Questionnaire

(Please put a “√” in the box next to the question that best describes you)

1. Sex of the Respondent:

Female ☐ Male ☐

2. Age of the Respondent (in years):

10-18 years ☐ 19-29 years ☐ 30-39 years ☐ 40-49 years ☐ 50-59 years ☐ 60
and above

3. Duration of Residence in the Community:

Less than 1 year ☐ 1–5 years ☐ 6–10 years ☐ More than 10 years ☐

4. Educational Status:

No formal education ☐ Primary (1–8) ☐ Secondary (9–12) ☐ College/TVET ☐
University ☐

5. Relationship to Children in the Household:

Parent ☐ Guardian ☐ Older sibling ☐ Relative caregiver ☐

6. Occupation of Respondent:

Farmer ☐ Trader ☐ Daily laborer ☐ Homemaker ☐

7. Marital Status:

Single ☐ Married ☐ Widowed ☐ Divorced/Separated ☐

8. Household Income Level:

Low income ☐ Middle income ☐ High income ☐

9. Number of Children in Household:

1–2 ☐ 3–4 ☐ 5 or more ☐

Part Two: Likert Scale Questionnaires

Kindly use the key: 1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, and 5-Strongly Agree to rate the following statements.

Community Engagement	1	2	3	4	5
I am aware of child labor issues in my community.					
Community meetings about children's wellbeing are regularly held.					
Community leaders frequently discuss child protection issues.					
Community members actively report cases of child labor exploitation.					
I have personally participated in activities to prevent or report child labor.					
The community takes effective actions when a child is involved in exploitative labor.					
Poverty is a major barrier to community action against child labor.					
Cultural norms discourage community involvement in child protection.					
Lack of awareness prevents community members from acting against child labor.					
The community collaborates with local authorities to address child labor issues.					
Cultural Factors	1	2	3	4	5
It is culturally acceptable for children to work in my community.					

People believe that child work helps children prepare for adulthood.					
Cultural norms encourage children to support their family income.					
Farming is considered normal work for children in this community.					
Boys are expected to do different types of work than girls.					
Traditional beliefs support migrant children working as laborers.					
Cultural beliefs are changing regarding child labor.					
Cultural values promote protecting children from exploitation.					
Cultural practices increase the risk of child labor.					
Cultural values help safeguard children from child labor exploitation.					
Child Labor Exploitation	1	2	3	4	5
There are children engaged in harmful or excessive work in my community.					
Child labor is most common in farming and livestock activities.					
Children aged 7–12 are the most involved in child labor.					
Poverty is the main cause of child labor in this community.					
Children start working to support their families.					
Children feel happy with their work responsibilities.					
Heavy work and long hours are common among working children.					
Children face physical injuries while working.					
Many children miss school due to their work commitments.					
Community efforts to reduce child labor are effective.					

Part three: Open-ended questions

Participant Instructions

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this discussion. The questions I will ask are designed to understand your views and experiences regarding community involvement, cultural practices, and child labor in your community.

Please feel free to share your honest opinions and experiences. There are no right or wrong answers your insights are very valuable. If you don't feel comfortable answering any question, you can choose to skip it.

Your responses will be kept confidential and used only for research purposes. If you need any clarification at any point, please let me know.

Open-ended questions for households

1. Community Engagement

- a. How does the community typically come together to address issues affecting children and families?
- b. Can you describe any community programs or initiatives that support children's well-being?
- c. In your opinion, what are the strengths and challenges of community involvement in child-related matters?
- d. How do community leaders or elders influence decisions related to children and their activities?
- e. What role do parents and other family members play in community efforts to improve children's lives?

2. Cultural Factors

- a. What cultural beliefs or traditions influence how children are raised and cared for in this community?
- b. Are there specific customs related to education, work, or leisure that affect children's daily lives?
- c. How do cultural attitudes towards age and gender impact the participation of children in various activities?

- d. In what ways do cultural norms support or hinder efforts to prevent child labor and exploitation?
- e. Have cultural practices changed over time regarding children's roles and responsibilities? If so, how?

3. Child Labor Exploitation

- a. What are common types of work that children in this community are involved in?
- b. Can you describe any situations where children might be exploited or forced into labor?
- c. What are the community's perceptions of child work—when it is acceptable and when it is harmful?
- d. How do families or employers justify child labor in this community?
- e. What measures, if any, are in place to protect children from exploitation and forced labor?

Open-ended questions for children

1. Are you currently doing any type of work?
2. For how long have you been working?
3. What kinds of activities do you usually do?
4. How do you feel about your work?
5. What challenges do you face while working?
6. Do you want to say anything about child labor in your community?

Appendix 2

Kabajamaa Hirmaataa,

Yeroo keessan fudhattanii gaaffii fi -deebii kana keessatti hirmaachuuf galatoomaa. Qorannoon kun akka kutaa hojii qorannoo digirii olaanaa (master's Thesis) keessatti Mana Barumsaa Saayikoloojii Yunivarsiitii Finfinnee keessatti gaggeeffamaa jira. Kaayyoon qorannichaa akkaataa hirmaannaa hawaasaa fi wantoonni aadaa hojii ijoollee irratti miidhaa geessisan (child labor exploitation) aanaa Digeluna Tijo keessatti akkamitti dhiibbaa geessisan hubachuudha.

Hirmaannaan keessan guutumaan guutuutti fedhii keessan irratti hundaa'e dha; odeeffannoon isin kennitan hundi hojii barnootaa qofaaf kan ooludha. Deebiin keessan kan dhugaa fi iftoomina qabu baay'ee gatii guddaa qaba; kanaaf galanni keessan guddaadha.

Dursee yeroo keessan waan naaf kennitanii fi fi tumsa keessaniif baay'ee galatoomaa.

Qajeelfama Waliigalaa

1. Maqaa keessan gaaffii-deebii kana irratti bakka/iddoo kamittuu hin barreessinaa.
2. Yeroo foormii kana guutaa jirtan wanti ifa hin taane yoo jiraate, qorataa ykn namna hojii kana gaggeessu irraa ibsa gaafachuu ni dandeessu.
3. Gaaffii filannoo baay'ee qabu (multiple choice) keessatti deebii keessan itti marsaa (encircle). Gaaffii banamaa ta'eef immoo (open-ended) deebii gabaabaa ta'een barreessaa.

Kutaa Tokko: Odeeffannoo Demogiraafii Gaaffii (Demographic Information Questionnaire)

(Maaloo sanduqaa gaaffii isin ibsu cinaa jiru keessatti mallattoo “√” kaa’aa.)

1. Saala Deebisaa (Sex of the Respondent):

Dubartii ☐ Dhiira ☐

2. Umurii Deebisaa (waggaa kana keessatti):

Waggaa 10–18 ☐ waggaa 19–29 ☐ waggaa 30–39 ☐ waggaa 40–49 ☐
waggaa 50–59 ☐ waggaa 60 fi isaa ol ☐

3. Yeroo Hawaasa keessa kana keessa jiraattan (Duration of Residence in the Community):

Waggaa 1 gadi ☐ Waggaa 1–5 ☐ Waggaa 6–10 ☐ Waggaa 10 ol ☐

4. Sadarkaa Barnootaa (Educational Status):

Barnoota idileen alaa ☐ Barnoota Sadarkaa jalqabaa (1–8) ☐ Barnoota Sadarkaa
lammaffaa (9–12) ☐ Kolleejjii/TVET ☐ Yunivarsiitii ☐

5. Walitti dhufeenya mana keessatti waliin ijoollee waliin qabdan (Relationship to Children in the Household):

Maatii (Abbaa/Haadha) ☐ Eegduu ☐ Obboleessa/Obboleetti Hangafa ☐ Fira eegduu
☐

6. Hojii Deebisaa (Occupation of Respondent):

Qonnaan bulaa ☐ Daldalaa ☐ Hojjetaa guyyaa ☐ Haadha mana ☐

7. Haala gaa'elaa (Marital Status):

Hin fuune/hin heerumne ☐ Fuudhe/heerumte ☐ Haadha mana/Abbaa warra irraa du'an
(Widowed) ☐ Kan wal Hiikan/gargarbahan ☐

8. Sadarkaa galii mana keessaa (Household Income Level):

Galii gadi aanaa ☐ Galii giddu galeessaa ☐ Galii ol'aanaa ☐

9. Lakkoofsa ijoollee mana keessa jiranii (Number of Children in Household):

1-2 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 5 fi isaa ol ☐

Kutaa Lama: Gaaffilee Safartuu Liikertii (Likert Scale Questionnaires)

Maaloo furtuu ykn lakkoofsa 1-5 jiran fayyadamuun ibsa armaan gadii irratti jiran kanaan yaada keessan madaalaa:

1 -guutumatti Walii hin galu (Strongly Disagree)

2 -Walii hin galu (Disagree)

3 -Hin murteessine / giddu galeessa (Neutral)

4 - Waliin gala (Agree)

5 - Walii guutumaan gala (Strongly Agree)

Hirmaannaa Hawaasaa	1	2	3	4	5
Ani rakkoo hojii daa'immanii hawaasa koo keessatti jiru ni beeka.					
Walgahiileen hawaasaa waa'ee nageenyaa fi hawaasummaa ijoollee irratti yeroo yerootti ni gaggeeffamu.					
Hoggantoonni hawaasaa dhimma eegumsa ijoollee yeroo baay'ee irratti mari'atu.					
Hawaasni dhimma hojii daa'imman irratti miidhaa mul'atu yeroo yerootti gabaasa ni godha.					
Ani dhuunfaatti hojii daa'immanii miidhaa qaban ittisuu ykn gabaasuu taasisaman keessatti hirmaadheera.					
Hawaasni yeroo daa'imni hojii miidhaa qabu keessatti hirmaate tarkaanfii bu'a qabeessa ta'e ni fudhata.					
Hiyyummaan tarkaanfii hawaasni hojii daa'immanii irrattii miidhaa Fidan ittisuuf fudhatu keessatti gufuu guddaa dha.					
Aadaan hawaasaa hirmaannaa hawaasni eegumsa ijoolleef gochuu qabu keessatti akka hin hirmaannef dhiibbaa guddaa qaba/ hamilee hawaasaa hir'isa					
Beekumsa gahaan dhabuun hawaasni hojii miidhaa daa'immanii irra gahan ittisuu tarkaanfii fudhachuu irratti dhiibbaa guddaa qaba					
Hawaasni mootummaa naannoo waliin ta'uun rakkoo hojii daa'immanii furuuf ni hojjetan.					
Dhiibbaa Aadaa(Cultural Factors)	1	2	3	4	5

Hawaasa koo keessatti daa'imman hojii humnaa olii hojjachuun aadaa keessatti akka fudhatama qabutti ilaalama.					
Namoonni hojiin daa'imman jireenya isaanii keessatti yeroo ga'umsaa (ga'uuman) akka of qopheessan isaan gargaara jechuun amanu.					
Aadaan hawaasaa ijoolleen galii maatii isaanii deeggaruuf akka hirmaatan ni jajjabeessa.					
Hawaasa kana keessatti qonni akka hojii idilee ijoollee ta'eetti ilaalama.					
Dhiironni hojii garaa garaa kan dubartootaa irraa adda ta'e akka hojjetan irraa eegama.					
Amantaan aadaa barammaan imaltoonnin ijoollee (bakka biraa dhufan) akka hojjetootaatti humnaatti hojjechuu ni deeggara.					
Amantaan aadaa hojii daa'immanii ilaalchisee jijjiiramaa jira.					
Gatiin aadaa ijoollee miidhaa irraa eeguu ni jajjabeessa.					
Gochoonni aadaa balaa hojii daa'immanii ni dabalu.					
Gatiin aadaa ijoollee hojii miidhaa daa'immanii irraa eeguu ni gargaara.					
Hojii Miidhaa Daa'immanii qabu(Child Labor Exploitation	1	2	3	4	5
Hawaasa koo keessatti ijoolleen hojii miidhaa geessisu ykn humna isaanii ol ta'e hojjechaa jiran ni jiru.					
Hojiin daa'immanii baay'inaan hojii qonnaa fi horsiisa beelladaa keessatti ni mul'ata.					
Ijoolleen umuriin isaanii waggaa 7–12 ta'an hojii daa'immanii keessatti caalaatti hirmaatu.					
Hiyyummaan hawaasa kana keessatti sababaa guddaa hojii daa'immanii ti.					

Ijoolleen maatii isaanii deeggaruuf hojjechuu jalqabu.					
Ijoolleen itti gaafatamummaa hojii isaanii irratti gammachuu itti dhagahama.					
Hojii ulfaataa fi sa'aatii dheeraa hojjechuun ijoollee hojjataan heddu biratti beekamaa dha.					
Ijoolleen yeroo hojii hojjetan miidhaa qaamaa isaan ni mudata.					
Ijoolleen hedduun hojii isaan irraa eegamuuf jecha mana barumsaa irraa hafu.					
Tarkaanfiin hawaasni hojii miidha daa'immanii irra qaqabu hir'isuuf fudhatu bu'a qabeessa dha.					

Kutaa Sadii: Gaaffilee Banaa (Open-ended Questions)

Qajeelfama Hirmaataa (Participant Instructions)

Yeroo keessan fudhattanii marii kana keessatti hirmaachuu keessaniif galatoomaa.

Gaaffileen ani isin gaafadhu kun yaada keessanii fi muuxannoo keessan hirmaannaa hawaasaa, gocha aadaa fi hojii miidhaa daa'imman irraan gahan kan hawaasa keessan keessatti akkam akka ta'e hubachuuf qophaa'anidha.

Maaloo yaada fi muuxannoo keessan dhugaa ta'e bilisaan qoodaa. Deebiileen sirrii ykn dogoggoraa hin jiru; yaadni keessan baay'ee barbaachisaa dha. Yoo gaaffii kamiyyuu deebisuuf hin mijanne, darbuu ni dandeessu.

Deebiin keessan iccitiidhaan ni eegama; hojii qorannoo qofaaf ni oola. Yoo bakka kamittiyyuu ibsi isin barbaachise, maaloo na gaafachuu hin dagatinaa.

Gaaffilee Banaa Maatif (Open-ended Questions for Households)

1.Hirmaannaa Hawaasaa (Community Engagement)

a.Hawaasni yeroo baay'ee rakkoolee ijoollee fi maatii irratti dhiibbaa geessisan furuuf akkamitti walitti dhufa?

b.Sagantaalee ykn hojiiwwan hawaasaa fayyaa fi nageenya ijoollee deeggaran kam fa'a ibsu dandeessu?

c.Yaada keessanitti, ciminaa fi rakkinootni hirmaannaa hawaasaa dhimma ijoollee waliin walqabatan keessatti maal faa dha?

d.Hoggantoonni hawaasaa ykn jaarsoliin (elder) murteewwan ijoollee fi hojiilee isaanii waliin walqabatan irratti akkamitti dhiibbaa geessu?

e.Maatiin (warri) fi miseensonni maatii biroo jireenya ijoollee fooyyessuuf hojii hawaasaa keessatti gahee akkamii qabu?

2.Dhiibbaa Aadaa (Cultural Factors)

a.Amantaan ykn duudhaan aadaa kam fa'i akkaataa ijoolleen itti guddatan fi itti kunuunfamaniif dhiibbaa geessa?

b.Aadaan addaa barnoota, hojii ykn bohaartii waliin walqabatu kan jireenya guyyaa guyyaa ijoollee irratti dhiibbaa geessisan jiraa? Maal faa?

c.Ilaalchi aadaa umurii fi saalaa irratti qabu akkaataa Kamiin ijoolleen hojiiwwan garaa garaa keessatti akka hirmaatan akkamitti dhiibbaa geessa?

d.Aadaan hawaasaa carraa hojii humnaa miidhaa daa'immanii geessisu ittisuu fi ittisuuf taasifamu akkamitti deeggaruu ykn gufachiisuu danda'a?

e. Gaheen ijoollee fi itti gaafatamummaan isaanii ilaalchisee gochoonni aadaa yeroo darbe irraa ammaatti jijjiiramanii jiru? Yoo eeyyee, akkamitti?

3. Hojii Miidhaa Daa'immanii Qabu (Child Labor Exploitation)

a. Hojiiwwan ijoolleen hawaasa kana keessatti baay'inaan irratti hirmaatan maal faa dha?

b. Iddoo ykn haala ijoolleen itti miidhaman ykn dirqamaan hojii irratti bobba'an ibsu dandeessu?

c. Hawaasni hojii ijoollee ilaalchisee kan fudhatama qabu fi kan miidhaa geessisu akka ta'ee akkamitti ilaala?

d.Maatiin ykn warri hojii kennan hojii daa'immanii hawaasa kana keessatti akkamitti eeeyyamu ?

Ibsa gootu?

e.Tarkaanfiileen miidhaa ijoollee fi hojii dirqamaanhojjachiisuu irratti fudhataman, yoo jiraatan, maal faa dha?

Gaaffilee Banaa Ijoolleef (Open-ended Questions for Children)

1.Amma yeroo kana hojii kamiyyuu ni hojjattaa?_____

2.Yeroo Hagamiif (meeqaf) hojii kana hojjachaa jirta?_____

3.Hojiilee akkamii yeroo baay'ee hojjatta?:_____

4.Hojii kee irratti maaltu dhagahama?:_____

5.Yeroo hojii hojjattu rakkinoota akkamiitu mudatu?

6. Waa'ee hojii hawaasa keessan keessatti daa'immanii (child labor) irraan midhaa geessisu
wanti ati dabaluu barbaaddu

jiraa?: _____

Appendix 3

4.7. Contribution of Community Engagement, Cultural Factors on Child Labor Exploitation (N=357)

4.7.1. Regression Assumptions

1. Normality test

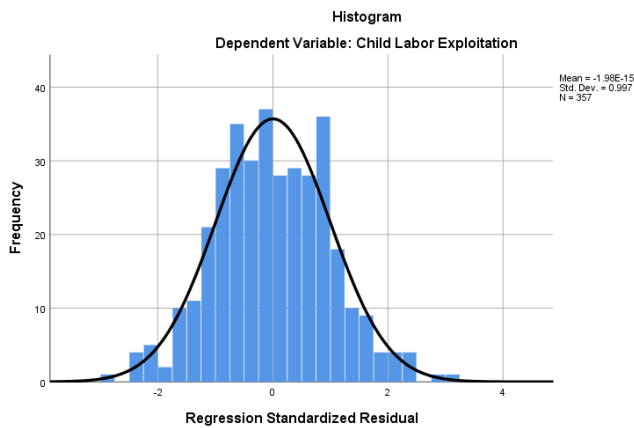


Figure 1: **Normality test**

Normal distribution of data which is a prerequisite for many statistical procedures including regression analysis was considered. Normality of the variable was also studied. Visual methods such as Descriptive Statistics and Histograms were used check normality of the data. An example implies that we can use histograms developed for key variables viz Community Engagement, Cultural Factors and Child Labor Exploitation to make inferences about the normality of the data. They are all bell-shaped and symmetrical with a distribution that is approximately normal.

Although a visual check through histograms can provide an initial indication of whether the data are normally distributed, this is usually verified by formal statistical testing. In this case, however, both histograms indicate that the data are normally distributed.

The data were subjected to regression analysis in view of the apparent fit of residuals to normal distribution which is a prerequisite for making valid inferences about relationships of variables using regression analysis. The bell shape of histograms (Figure 2 below) provided a visual assumption that residuals are normally distributed and statistically trustable results of regression can be expected.

To summarize, the histograms presented a bell-shaped distribution for the variables which support the use of regression analysis in this research. It aids in comprehending the predictive relationships between community engagement and cultural factors and child labor exploitation and guarantees that all statistics related assumptions are fulfilled

2. Multicollinearity test

Table 7: Collinearity Statistics for Model Variables

Coefficients		Collinearity Statistics	
Model		Tolerance	VIF
1	Community Engagement	.995	1.005
	Cultural Factors	.995	1.005
a. Dependent Variable: Child Labor Exploitation			

Source: Own Survey (2026) and from SPSS output

The coefficients table reveals the collinearity statistics of the regression model to analyze a relationship between community engagement, cultural factors and child labor exploitation. Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) as collinearity statistics are used to detect

multicollinearity which means that the independent variables are so highly correlated that it could undermine the results of the regression analysis.

Tolerance values range from 0 to 1. Values close to 1 are desirable because they indicate low correlation among predictors and, hence, low risk of multicollinearity. In our example, both community engagement and cultural factors have a Tolerance of .995 (which is almost 1), indicating that each predictor has very minimal overlap or redundancy with the other; each variable brings different/unique information to the model without being highly correlated.

The Variance inflation factors (VIF) tells you how much larger the variance of an estimated regression coefficient is compared to if that variable was completely un-correlated with the others. VIFs below 10 are generally considered okay, meaning multicollinearity isn't a significant problem. Both variables here have VIFs around 1.005 which is extremely low, so yes, there's very little multicollinearity present and it's quite unlikely to adversely affect your estimate.

To summarize, the collinearity statistics show that community engagement and cultural are fairly distinct from one another in this model. Both have a low VIF and high tolerance, meaning that they can be included together with confidence in a regression analysis without any serious risk of multicollinearity undermining the stability or interpretability of coefficient estimates. This best ensures that the independent impact of each predictor on child labor is faithfully represented, thereby permitting inference concerning the impacts to be made.

3. Autocorrelation test

Table 8: Durbin–Watson Test for Autocorrelation

Durbin-Watson

2.034

Source: Own Survey (2026) and from SPSS output

This means that as the value is very close to 2, then it can be concluded that residual errors are free from correlation meanwhile fulfilling one of the main conditions for running regression analysis i.e. error terms in the model should not be correlated with each other. Such lack of correlation between errors indicates their purely random distribution which results in a correct estimation and acceptable validity of the model's outcomes. In general, Durbin-Watson value provides a substantial reasoning for stating that determined model is correctly specified and there exists no problem linked to residuals' correlation.

4. Linearity test

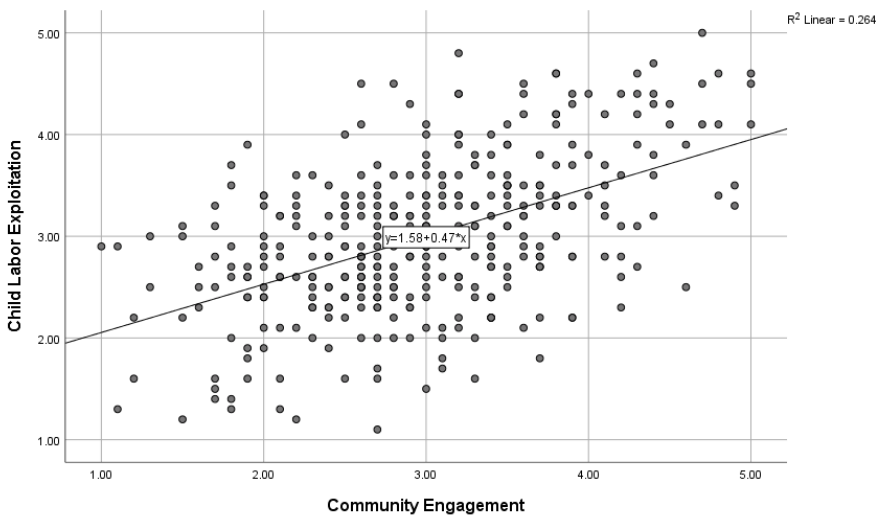


Figure 2: linearity test between community engagement and child labor exploitation

A scatter plot is used to illustrate the relationship of Community Engagement and Child Labor Exploitation. With a regression line sloping upwards, it is evident the two variables are positively linearly related implying that as community engagement increases, child labor exploitation also increases.

The regression equation shown on the graph is:

$$y = 1.58 + 0.47x$$

This means that, *ceteris paribus*, an increase of one unit in community engagement results in an increase of approximately 0.47 units in child labor exploitation. With regard to the value of 1.58 as the intercept, it is the child labor exploitation predicted level when community engagement is zero.

The coefficient of determination is:

$$R^2 = 0.264$$

This means that around 26.4% of the chances of child labor exploitation is defined by community engagement and rest 73.6% are defined by other omitted variables in the model implying that relationship is moderate and not very strong.

To sum up, the graph shows that community engagement is somehow linked to child labor victimization since most of the data points systematically spread along and around the trend line letting us know that other factors may influence the situation too.

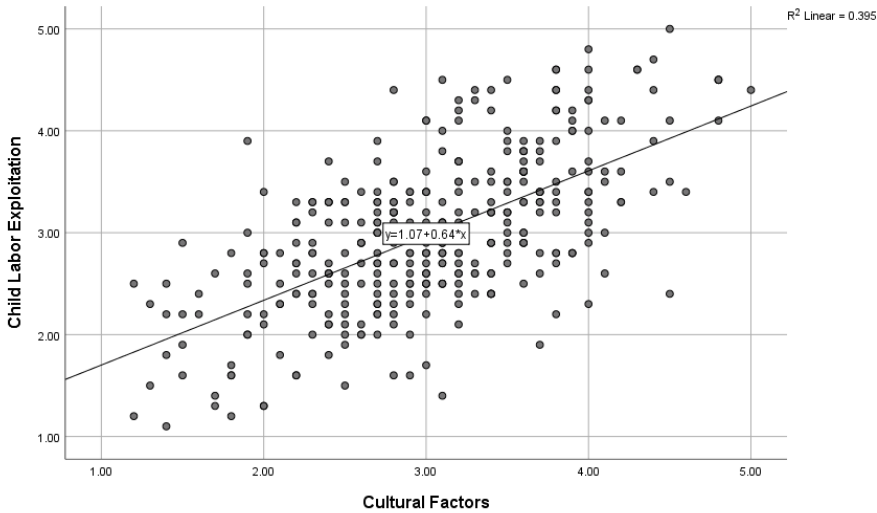


Figure 3: linearity test between cultural factors and child labor exploitation

6. Heteroscedastic test

Table 9: Residuals Statistics of the Regression Model

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Predicted Value	1.5440	4.8059	2.9975	.59264	357
Residual	-1.35188	1.45478	.00000	.46632	357
Std. Predicted Value	-2.453	3.052	.000	1.000	357
Std. Residual	-2.891	3.111	.000	.997	357

a. Dependent Variable: Child Labor Exploitation

The residuals statistics tell us something about that, as one of the assumption of simplest regression analysis is that variants of residuals should all be equal under all predicted values. The residual here goes between around **-1.352 to 1.455** with zero average and approximately 0.466 standard deviation while the standardized residual goes between around -2.891 to 3.111 with zero

average and almost 1 standard deviation which is quite acceptable so to say. Since they all fall within that range there's actually nothing particularly interesting thus attention grabbing hinting at increasing or vice versa decreasing variability along the predicted values changing so it could still be safely assumed not worrying one's head over heteroscedasticity due to sufficiently met approximation of equal variance assumption.

The conclusion is also supported by the scatter plot showing residuals to be randomly scattered around zero at all levels on x axis. No specific pattern or trend (funnel shape, systematic increase/decrease) is observed indicating heteroscedasticity. Residuals seem evenly distributed which supports our assumption of homoscedasticity, that is variance of residuals are constant for different predicted values of child labor exploitation in this case and hence inferences drawn from regression model can be said to be reliable.

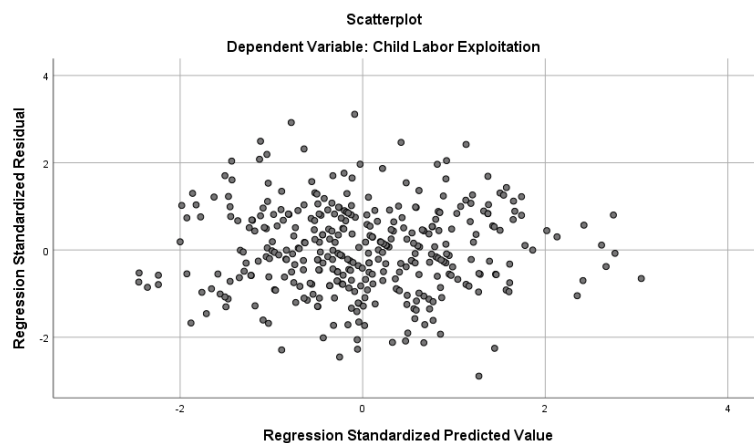


Figure 4: Hetroscadisity test

Table 1

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of Study Variables

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
Community Engagement	.809	10
Cultural Factors	.8404	10
Child Labor Exploitation	.707	10

Source: SPSS Output (2025)

Overall reliability

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.931	42

Community Engagement

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.809	10

Cultural factors

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.8404	10

Child labor exploitation

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.707	10