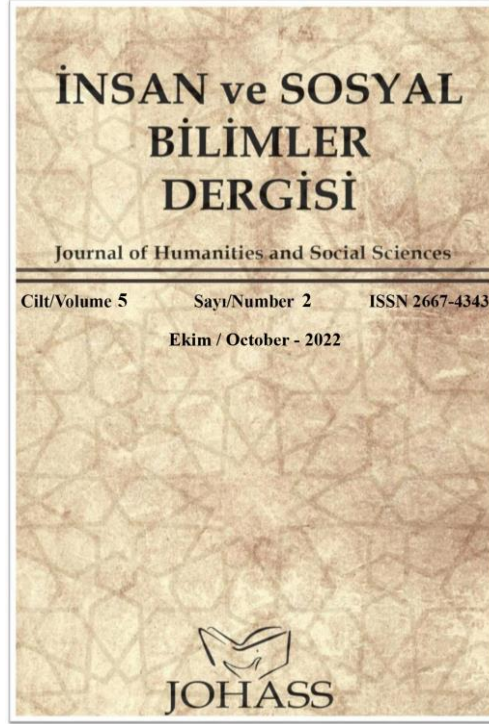


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Perspective on Child Labor Situation in terms of Occupational Health and Safety: The Case of Turkey

Kaan Koçali

Istanbul Gelişim University, Istanbul Gelişim
Vocational School, Occupational Health and
Safety Department

kkocali@gelisim.edu.tr

Orcid ID: 0000-0002-1329-6176

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Perspective on Child Labor Situation in terms of Occupational Health and Safety: The Case of Turkey

Kaan Koçali¹

Istanbul Gelişim University, Istanbul Gelişim Vocational School, Occupational Health and Safety Department

Abstract

Child labor is a common social problem today. Short and long term policies are being developed for the solution. While the short-term goal is to improve the current situation and make it more suitable in terms of occupational health and safety (OHS), the long-term goal is to completely eliminate this problem. Within this scope; statistical calculations on child labor were made using the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) for the year 2020. A general framework about the current situation of Turkey has been formed by preparing a risk analysis tables under seven headings. It has been determined that child labor takes many forms depending on the type of work done, age and gender, whether they work independently or with their families. It has been observed that the number of working boys is higher than the number of working girls and the reason why boys are exposed to more work accidents is due to the fact that they work more in the industry. In the study, it was considered that only child workers registered in the Social Security Institution (SSI) were examined. It should be aimed to create safer workplace environments in terms of OHS by making legal arrangements in order to protect these children and that children working informally are not a social problem for Turkey. For these purposes, the results of the research were evaluated, and the things to be done about ensuring child labor and OHS in Turkey and solution suggestions were presented.

Keywords: Child, child worker, child labor, work safety, occupational health and safety.

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¹ Corresponding author:

Assistant Professor

kkocali@gelisim.edu.tr

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Introduction

Child labor is a problem that is not only a national but also a worldwide issue that is still relevant today. Children have always been involved in the labor force throughout history. While contributing to family work in jobs that are relatively easy and suitable for their age before the industrial revolution, this situation has taken on a different character with the change of working understanding, place and methods with the industrial revolution. Work done in factories with mass production has resulted in the employment of not just men, but also women and children. Employers requested increased women's and children's labor during this time. This situation has brought with it the exploitation of children who are in a vulnerable situation in the labor market (Edmonds, 2008).

Turkey and other countries around the world are undergoing significant economic and social transformations. The economic change and crisis that has been going on since the 1970s continues to spread, accompanied by growth that does not create jobs. As a result, while unemployment rises, labor wages fall, and poverty deepens and spreads. Poverty and cheap labor increase child labor participation in the economic circulation process. As a result of the convergence of production relations to the early periods of industrialization, similar changes occur on the labor side (Griffin, 2014).

The historical development of occupational health and safety, as in our country and around the world, has occurred in parallel with the development of business life. The Industrialization Movement, which gained traction in the early years of the Republic, resulted in some safety and health issues. To address these issues, many legal regulations on occupational health and safety standards have begun to be established. Child labor is a social issue that necessitates a multifaceted solution. Policies, methods, and practices for combating child labor should be developed in collaboration with various institutions such as education, social security, and health services. In order to find a solution, both short-term and long-term goals must be considered. The situation of child labor in terms of worker health and safety is examined in this study. Throughout the study, the conceptual framework, legal regulations, and general situation of child labor are mentioned first, followed by an evaluation of the situation of child labor in Turkey in terms of occupational health and safety through studies. The new liberal economic policies that followed, without a doubt, necessitated the implementation of appropriate education policies. Both the education sector as an element of the market mechanism and the training of the human element in education processes in a way that will respond to the needs of this functioning forces the economy-employment policies and education policies to take a guided form by intertwining. In this context, the gradual implementation of compulsory 12-year education and vocational and technical education practices in our country may have a negative impact on the child labor force being drawn into the market mechanism (Jafarey & Lahiri, 2002; Dehejia & Gatti, 2005; Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; Koçali, 2021a).

On the other hand, some child groups appear to have become more disadvantaged because of the mutual interaction of social and cultural norms with changes in education and the economy. In general, children who face discrimination based on economic and gender differences are more involved in the labor force. In a nutshell, poverty, social transformation, forced migration, changes in the education system, social and cultural norms, and so on. As a result of these factors, both the number of working children and their working conditions are increasing. This numerical increase, combined with the deterioration of working conditions, makes it unavoidable to question and debate the occupational health and safety of children who must work (Güzel, 2016).

It should not be forgotten that the majority of occupational accidents are preventable, and we can prevent them by instilling a culture of occupational health and safety in every

aspect of our society and lives (Koçali, 2018; Koçali, 2021b). First and foremost, safe working environments must be provided, existing occupational health and safety conditions must be improved, and comprehensive and applied occupational safety training must be provided to employees at all levels (Koçali, 2021c).

Work and Children

Although the concept of "child labor" is widely used, there is no globally accepted definition of the concept. The fact that child labor is a very complex phenomenon does not make it possible to make a single definition covering all aspects. The definition of child labor is based on an economic or scientific analysis as well as a social, cultural or political discipline. For this reason, child labor is seen as a social structure that differs according to history, economic structure, education system, customs, actors, current situation and purpose. In this respect, child labor, which refers to the inclusion of children in the labor market at a young age, is among the most important social problems (Chaubey, et al., 2007).

When approached from this social and historical perspective, it can be argued that definitions of "child" and "child labor," which are isolated from social and cultural contexts and do not take into account geographical distribution between rural and urban areas or gender differences, should be questioned (Kuschnerreit, 2001). As a result, discussing concepts with economic dimensions such as child workers, child labor, and child labor in relation to a definition of childhood embedded in social and cultural contexts will be more inclusive and explanatory (Efe & Uluoğlu, 2015).

It can be seen that the definition of child labor varies depending on the socioeconomic and cultural differences of each country. When it comes to the status of being considered a child prior to the concept of child labor, Article 1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "...any person up to the age of eighteen is considered a child, except in the case of coming of age at an earlier age." (Sungur and Kurumal, 2017). The United Nations International Children's Fund defines (UNICEF, 2019) child labor as "*work that exceeds the minimum working hours and is harmful to the child, depending on the age of the child and the type of work*" (ÇSGB, 2017a). According to ILO Convention No. 138, which is one of the main conventions on child labor, the minimum age for employment is 15 (ILO, 2015). Accordingly, the ILO defines those "who work under the age of 15 to contribute to the household budget or earn a living as working children or child workers, while those aged 15-24 are called young workers" (Avşar and Öğütoğulları, 2012). The ILO concept of child labor is often defined as "work that deprives children of their childhood, potential and dignity and harms their physical and mental development" (ILO, 2021).

UNICEF has made a definition of child labor similar to that of the ILO. In this sense, according to UNICEF, child labor is activities that limit children's access to education and harm the child's physical, mental and social development (UNICEF, 2020a). Essentially, UNICEF has expanded the ILO's definition of child labor by emphasizing the importance of domestic labor for children in addition to economic work. In this case, child workers can be listed as follows to UNICEF (UNICEF, 2020b):

- Children between the ages of 5 and 11 engaged in any economic activity or housework for 28 hours or more per week;
- Children between the ages of 12 and 14 who engage in any economic activity other than light work of less than 14 hours per week or housework for 28 hours or more per week;
- They are children between the ages of 15 and 17 who work in any dangerous job (Chaubey, et al., 2007).

In Article 2 of the Urgent Action Convention on the Prohibition and Elimination of the Worst Forms of Child Labor No. 182, the ILO (International Labor Organization) stated that

the concept of child can be applied to anyone under the age of 18 (ILO, 1999; ILO, 2002; Avşar & Öğütoğulları, 2012). Child labor is defined as the employment of children in jobs that prevent them from developing mentally and physically, or that prevent them from finishing their childhood (ÇSGB, 2017a). The International Labor Organization makes a more detailed distinction in a report prepared to reduce the number of child workers (ILO, 2016; ILO, 2017). The ILO includes three definitions in this report: working children, child workers, and children working in dangerous jobs. The concept of child labor or working child, according to the report, is broad, flexible, and statistical. There are short-long-term, paid-unpaid, legal-illegal, with or without market relations, occasional or irregular work within the scope of this concept, but domestic work is excluded. In this context, the term "working child" refers to children who work at least one hour per day for seven days out of the week. In this context, one could argue that the ILO concept of working child ignores common and gender-based household chores (ILO-UNICEF, 2019; ILO, 2020a; ILO, 2020b). However, in Turkey and other countries where the traditional childhood approach is dominant and poverty is prevalent, the working child group that should be highlighted is the children who work in the home and as unpaid family workers.

The European Union's "Council Directive on the Protection of Young People at Work" (EU Directives, 1994) has divided individuals under the age of 18 into three groups as "young person", "child" and "adolescent". According to Article 3 of the Directive, "young person" is used to define people under the age of 18, "child" is used to define people under the age of 15 or at the age of compulsory education according to national legislation, and "adolescent" is used to define people between the ages of 15-18, who are not subject to compulsory education according to national legislation (Yayla, 2017).

There is no clear statement about the child phenomenon in Turkey's legal regulations. In legal regulations, the term "small" is used instead of "child" (Gören, 1984). According to the Turkish Civil Code, anyone under the age of 18 is considered a child. Studies focusing on the relationship between the concept of child and working life often distinguish between "child labor" and "working child". Besides referring to the child as the subject of an employment contract with a wage worker, the concept of child labor is considered in relation to wage labor and thus excludes children who are not involved in this relationship. In this case, there is a need for a much more comprehensive concept when it comes to working or doing any work for unpaid children. In this framework, "child labor" has been proposed as a more inclusive concept that includes child workers but excludes paid labor, and is defined as "children working in jobs that hinder the child's education and adversely affect their physical, emotional, mental, moral and social development". "Child worker" is defined as "working children" (Günöz, 2007). Although such a set of concepts is used, phrases such as "female worker (girl)" and "male worker (boy)" are not preferred when the concept of "child worker" refers to child labor. In this context, it is clear that the concept of "child labor," which is an economic concept, indicates a more technical and acceptable quality, whereas the concept of "working child" indicates a harder and more unacceptable feature, at least in developed societies. It could be argued that the use of such a concept is avoided in this context by rejecting a type of society in which children are not workers and children are workers. However, in today's neoliberal societies, official and unofficial reports reveal that the majority of children working formally and informally are employed in conditions that are comparable to adult workers in the true sense of the word.

When viewed from the perspective of the framework developed thus far, the concepts of childhood, child worker, working child, young worker, are concepts with historical and social contexts, so a childhood concept that is compressed to biological age ranges is blind to differences, whereas among children, regional and social gender, particularly gender, is blind to differences. It is important to emphasize that there are discriminations based on cultural

differences (Yıldız, 2007). Furthermore, while different regulations categorize children in different age groups in the context of their various working and business relationships, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child which is one of the fundamental elements about children at the international level, states that all persons up to the age of 18 are included in the definition of child. As a result, the distinction between children and young workers, as in the definitions of child workers, young workers, apprentices, and similar definitions, serves no other purpose than to distract and legitimize the employment of children, particularly children in economic relations.

General Status of Child Labor in Turkey

It needs to be noted that all types of legal studies in the field of occupational health and safety will benefit our country and society. However, it should be noted that the goal is to ensure that the required regulations do not remain only on paper and that the implementations are adopted by the employee-employer-state (Koçali, 2021b)

In Turkey, laws regulating working life can be found in both the Labor Law and the Code of Obligations. Considering the historical process, despite the fact that our transition from an agricultural country to an industrialized one has resulted in new regulations, the agricultural sector is primarily where children are employed (Koçali, 2021d). One of the reasons that children who are still employed in agricultural work gain weight is because Turkey is a developing country. Seasonal agricultural workers are included in agricultural labor with their children, according to the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) Children with Statistics 2012 Report (TURKSTAT, 2013), and this rate accounts for 44 percent of total child labor.

Article 50 of the Turkish Constitution is undoubtedly the most important regulation on the subject in Turkish national legislation. According to this, *“no one can be employed in jobs that do not match their age, gender, or strength”* and children, women, and people with physical and mental disabilities must be protected in the workplace. Employees' rest rights are also covered in the aforementioned article.

In the regulations made in our legislation regarding the *“age of employment and the prohibition of employing children”* it is stated in Article 71 of the Labor Law that children under the age of 15 cannot be employed, but by adding the statement. Children who have completed the age of fourteen and have completed the compulsory primary education age; they can be employed in light jobs that will not prevent their physical, mental, social, and moral development and the attenuation of their physical, mental, social, and moral development and the attendance of those who continue their education to school, provided that a written contract is signed and a separate permission is obtained for each activity. In the continuation of the same article, the regulation made in the employment period of children attending school was changed to *“pre-school children and those attending school.”* According to Article 38, *“the working hours of preschool children and children attending school during the education period can be at most two hours a day and ten hours a week, out of the education hours...”*

“Before the employment of children and young workers between the ages of 14 and 18 (including 18), they are examined by the workplace doctor, Social Security Institution (SSI), health center, government or municipal physicians, and it is reported that their body structures are durable according to the nature and conditions of the job,” according to Article 87 of the Labor Law. It is stated that the health examination must be repeated every six months until they reach the age of 18, to determine whether there is any inconvenience in

continuing to work, and that the reports must be kept at the workplace and shown at the request of authorized officers.

Article 85 of the same law states that “*young workers and children who have not completed the age of 16 and workers who have not received vocational training related to their work*” cannot be employed in heavy and dangerous jobs. According to the law, which jobs will be considered as heavy and dangerous jobs, and what kinds of heavy and dangerous jobs can be employed by women and young workers who have completed the age of 16 but have not completed the age of 18, should be determined by a regulation prepared by the Ministry of Labor and Social Security (ÇSGB), taking the opinion of the Ministry of Health. These articles of the Labor Law were repealed by the Occupational Health and Safety Law No. 6331 dated 2012 and new regulations were introduced instead. In Article 3 of Law No. 6331, a young employee is defined as “*an employee who has completed the age of fifteen but has not completed the age of eighteen*”. When compared with the 87th article of the Labor Law, it is seen that the law numbered 6331 narrows the group of young workers to those aged 16-18. When this change is approached from an optimistic point of view, it can be interpreted as the exclusion of children between the ages of 14 and 15 from working relationships. However, the real situation shows that children aged 14-15 and younger are also taking part in working life more and more, just like those in the 16-18 age group.

In Turkey, we see working children in almost every industry. Children working in industry, commerce, and services in cities are working intensively in agriculture in rural areas as a result of the migration to big cities. However, the large number of children working on city streets attracts attention (ÇSGB, 2015; Coşkun & Yolcu, 2016). For the majority of the working hours, one of the jobs here has more than 40 jobs. The agricultural sector is one of the worst in the country for seasonal migrant and agricultural labor in the workplace and in the environment, where occupational diseases and accidents are most prevalent. Statistics show that the products derived from the evaluation of children in the study of a very large group in the field of education (ÇSGB, 2017b). In Turkey, the number of unregistered working children is a structure that can be realized through the widespread use of unregistered employment. The montages created for the care of indifferent children are updated on a daily basis (Gülçubuk, 2012). Working on the street, heavy and dangerous jobs in small and medium-sized enterprises, and mobile and temporary agricultural work for wages, excluding family work, are among the worst forms of child labor in our country (Gerşil, 2017). It is possible to argue that data on child labor do not accurately reflect reality in all of its dimensions. One of the factors influencing this is the existence of the informal sector. It is claimed that the number of children working in various capacities in the informal sector, which is not included in official statistics, is much higher. The reasons for this are that children are suitable for unskilled labor and are employed for long hours at low wages in informal employment, where their employment is legally prohibited or limited (Baştaymaz, 1990; Çoban, 2015; Kömürcü & Avşar, 2016).

When focusing on the causes of child labor, many studies conducted both in the world and in Turkey show poverty as the main cause of child labor (Admassie, 2002; Yıldız, 2007; Karaman & Özçalık, 2007; Yılmaz, 2008; Gürses, 2009; Kahraman & Sallan Gül, 2015; Öngel, 2017). The view that poverty increases child labor is also accepted by some economists around the world. In their study, they argue that certain economic events or policies in low-income and poor countries may have ambiguous effects on child labour. It is stated that these countries, which need more workers due to globalization, ignore the employment of child workers as well as adults in order to meet the labor demand (Basu, 1998; Edmonds & Pavcnik, 2005; Blunch & Verner, 2001; Nkamleu, 2006; Abdullahi, et al., 2016).

Method

Many developing countries, including Turkey, are said to be incapable of eliminating child labor at the outset. Most of the time, the child's need for income makes it impossible to prevent the problem. As a result, policies are being developed to prevent the worst forms of child labor and to improve working conditions for children. Although this method has a risk of encouraging child labor there are some who believe that regulations and policies are needed to improve the current situation.

Working conditions and jobs for children can vary widely. Some of them may be light, while others may be very heavy. Similarly, while some working environments are beneficial to one's health, others are not (Duyar, 2013). Child labor, which means cheap labor for employers (Baştaymaz, 1990) beginning to work at a young age brings with it disadvantages such as more health problems, getting sick more frequently, and a lower quality of life compared to those who begin working later in adulthood. Child laborers started in agriculture and progressed to the industrial sectors in subsequent years. They work in industry in Turkey, particularly in small-scale industrial enterprises that are subjected to harsh conditions. Children working in these types of workplaces are more difficult to detect than children working on the street because they are generally small and self-contained. Children are vulnerable to workplace and working conditions risks because the working conditions of small-sized enterprises are generally below standards (ÇSGB, 2017c; Erbaş, et al., 2020) In terms of occupational health and safety in workplaces, there are negative tables, the majority of which are small-scale workshops. There is no workplace doctor in this type of workplace, and no health and safety information is provided. Inadequate ventilation, noise, and a dusty environment endanger children's health (ÇSGB, 2015). Working children bear burdens and responsibilities that are both physically and psychologically unsuitable for them. Fear of being scolded or angered by one's boss or bosses has a negative impact, particularly in the business world (Fidan, 2004).

Depending on the nature and conditions of the job, children in the process of physical and mental development who work in places that are not appropriate for their physical and psychological age and development have a negative impact on their future health, safety, and psychological status (Kolk & Tulder, 2002). Long working hours are among the most heinous forms of child labor. Meal breaks are usually only a few minutes long. Working children spend this time of their lives commuting between work and home, with little time for activities that fulfill the requirements of being a child (TISK, 1997). Various studies on child labor in Turkey have attempted to identify the problem's social, economic, and cultural dimensions. In this context, the numerical data of child labor, its sectoral distribution, family situations, reasons for working, working styles, work accidents, and workplace conditions, as well as the abuse they are subjected to, were investigated (Yıldız, 2007). To mention some of them; The findings obtained in Fişek's study (Fişek, 2017) examining the occupational accidents that child workers are exposed to in SMEs are remarkable. According to the research, 34 percent of children between the ages of 13-18 working in industrial sites suffer an accident. On the other hand, it has been observed that the probability and frequency of exposure to occupational accidents in children is much higher than that of adults.

Studies in the national literature focus on street children; those who focus on children employed in seasonal agricultural work and their labor; those in the context of informal employment and income tax; those who approach in terms of legal legislation and children's rights; those who approach as a result of the inequality of income distribution in Turkey; child labor as a problem is diversified as those within the scope of solution proposals and strategies to combat it, and those that are dealt with in the context of refugee child workers (Karataş, et

al., 2016; Gülçubuk, 2012; Gümrükçüoğlu, 2014; Karaman & Özçalık, 2007; Küçükkalay, et al., 2000; Avşar & Ögütöğulları, 2012; Erbay, 2013; Efe & Uluoğlu, 2015; Güzel, 2016).

On children working in the furniture industry, child workers are engaged in jobs that are prohibited under heavy and dangerous work regulations. On the other hand, it has been determined that the required periodic examinations for job compliance were not performed prior to employment. Because these children are not covered by the social security system, a significant number of them do not seek treatment in a hospital after an occupational accident. Many agricultural activities are hazardous to one's health. Children working in this line of work, in particular, require special protection in terms of occupational health and safety. In this regard, concluded in their study on the worst forms of child labor that children who work seasonally in the cotton harvest are severely harmed by the harsh working conditions. This situation has a negative impact on both their physical and psychological development. On the other hand, the study draws attention to the fact that children do not enroll in school or are deprived of the necessary education to improve their future situation because they must leave to work (Gülçubuk, 2012). According to the statistics, 3.4 percent of child workers have been injured or disabled, 2.4 percent have experienced discomfort due to workplace conditions, 33.8 percent have been over-tired, and 1.2 percent have been exposed to violence or ill-treatment. Although these are the rates reflected in official records (TURKSTAT, 2013) the fact that children refrain from mentioning work accidents and injuries also contributes to these low rates. Children, on the other hand, do not have enough information about the health risks associated with work. There is a link between the accidents to which child workers are subjected and the actual work, working hours, and access to information about protection. As children's daily working hours increase, so does the rate of occupational accidents. Although this situation is more common in child workers who do the main job (as opposed to those who fetch), their lack of experience also increases the risk (Akya & Atak, 2004). Special protection and control of children in the workplace is also a difficult issue in Turkey. The fact that the number of work-related fatalities in our country (TURKSTAT, 2017) is higher than in EU countries raises legitimate concerns in this regard.

Model and Data Collection Tools

Child employment as an important issue in Turkey as it is for every developing country; population, education is a subject closely related to the concepts of economic development and social development. Data on child labor injuries and deaths are generally available from national statistical centers in countries and from existing public health data systems. However, limited information can be obtained about anatomical injuries, medical care, and treatment in public health data systems, while little information can be provided about the conditions surrounding injuries and deaths (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008; Gürbüz & Şahin, 2014).

In Turkey, although there is a lot of research on the causes and consequences of child labor, there is almost no research directly on child labor deaths in the literature. Child labor injuries and deaths, which directly deprive children of their right to life, are generally discussed in studies involving adults in the literature, but are not examined under a separate heading. In addition, most of the data used in many studies have been obtained from official sources and cover a limited sample (Marlenga, et al., 2017; Weichelt, et al., 2019).

Due to the inadequacy of official data and studies on child labor deaths in Turkey, clear information about the characteristics and causes of child labor deaths is not available. For this reason, there is a need for research to determine why and how work accidents that cause child worker deaths occur in order to reduce child labor and child worker deaths. Answers were sought about what child labor means in Turkey, how many child labor in Turkey, working with child workers and the risks they may experience at work.

It is possible to see the dimensions of child labor from statistical data. Child labor surveys were conducted by the Turkish Statistical Institute with the technical support of the ILO/IPEC (End Child Labor Programme) in order to establish a database on children working in Turkey, to reveal the sectors, working conditions and socioeconomic status of working children. Within the scope of the research, the data of the Turkish Statistical Institute (TURKSTAT) and the Social Security Institution (SSI) for the year 2020 were used. The population of the study is all 5–17 year olds registered in Turkey. By examining on an annual basis; The numbers of boy, girl and total child workers are shown one by one. In order to draw a general risk table under seven headings, the number of child workers, their educational status, reasons for working, in which sectors they work, worker status, workplace environment and workplace risks were examined one by one. Results are presented in tables as both number and percentage (in parentheses) calculations.

Findings

Number of Child Labors

The Turkish Statistical Institute's Child Labor Force Survey and Household Labor Force Survey, both administered to children aged 5-17 at the end of 2019 (TURKSTAT, 2020) were examined together as part of the scope of the study. In terms of scope and method, this study differs from previous Child Labor Researches. These differences are due to changes made in the Household Labor Force Survey structure in 2014, as well as the inclusion of the 5-17 age group, on which the International Labor Organization bases its child labor surveys. In Turkey, the number of children aged 5-17 is estimated to be 16 million 457 thousand, accounting for 20.3 percent of the non-institutional population. The number of children in the 5-11 age group is estimated to be 9 million 12 thousand, the number of children in the 12-14 age group is 3 million 796 thousand and the number of children in the 15-17 age group is 3 million 649 thousand (TURKSTAT, 2021).

Table 1. *Non-Institutional Population and Children Engaged in Economic Activities (x1000)*

Gender	Age, group and gender	Non-institutional population	Children engaged in economic activity	Employment rate (%)
Boy	5-11	4,626	24	0.5
	12-14	1,948	77	4.0
	15-17	1,876	407	21.7
Girl	5-11	4,386	8	0.2
	12-14	1,848	37	2.0
	15-17	1,773	167	9.4
Total	5-11	9,012	32	0.4
	12-14	3,796	114	3.0
	15-17	3,649	574	15.7

Table 1 shows the number of child workers at 5-11, 12-14 and 15-17 age groups. 24 thousand (0.5%) of 4 million 626 thousand boys aged 5-11, 8 thousand (0.2%) of 4 million 386 thousand girls; 77 thousand (4.0%) of 1 million 948 thousand boys aged 12-14, 37 thousand (2.0%) of 1 million 848 thousand girls; 407 thousand (21.7%) of 1 million 876 thousand boys and 167 thousand (9.4%) of 1 million 773 thousand girls are actively working. When the number of child workers in the total workforce is examined; 32 thousand (0.4%) of 9 million 12 thousand children aged 5-11, 114 thousand (3.0%) of 3 million 796 thousand

children aged 12-14 and 574 thousand (15.7%) of 3 million 649 thousand children aged 15-17 were calculated.

Education Status of Child Labors

Table 2 shows the status of working of children aged 5-14 and 15-17. 80 thousand (1.4%) of 5 million 785 thousand boys and 25 thousand (0.5%) of 5 million 464 thousand girls are working aged 5-14 who attending school. Also 253 thousand (16.3%) boys aged 15-17, 115 thousand (7.8%) girls are not working aged 15-17 who attending school.

When the status of working of child workers attending school in the total workforce is examined; 105 thousand (0.9%) of 11 million 114 thousand children aged 5-14 and 368 thousand (12.2%) of 2 million 647 thousand children aged 15-17 were calculated. 21 thousand (2.7%) of 789 thousand boys and 20 thousand (2.6%) of 770 thousand girls are working aged 5-14 who attending school. Also 154 thousand (47.2%) boys aged 15-17, 52 thousand (16.9%) girls are not working aged 15-17 who attending school. When the status of working of child workers not attending school in the total workforce is examined; 41 thousand (2.6%) of 1 million 559 thousand children aged 5-14 and 206 thousand (32.4%) of 634 thousand children aged 15-17 were calculated.

Table 2. Status of Working of Children (x1000)

Gender	Age group	Attending school (%)			Under the age of school	Not attending school (%)		
		Not working	Working	Total		Not working	Working	Total
Boy	5-14	5,705 (98.6)	80 (1.4)	5,785 (100.0)	595 (75.4)	173 (21.9)	21 (2.7)	789 (100.0)
	15-17	1,297 (98.7)	253 (16.3)	1,550 (100.0)	-	172 (52.8)	154 (47.2)	326 (100.0)
	Total	7,002 (95.5)	333 (4.5)	7,335 (100.0)	595 (53.4)	344 (30.9)	175 (15.7)	1,114 (100.0)
Girl	5-14	5,439 (99.5)	25 (0.5)	5,464 (100.0)	564 (73.3)	186 (24.2)	20 (2.6)	770 (100.0)
	15-17	1,350 (92.2)	115 (7.8)	1,465 (100.0)	-	257 (83.1)	52 (16.9)	309 (100.0)
	Total	6,789 (98.0)	140 (2.0)	6,929 (100.0)	564 (52.3)	443 (41.0)	72 (6.6)	1,079 (100.0)
Total	5-14	11,144 (99.1)	105 (0.9)	11,249 (100.0)	1,159 (74.4)	359 (23.0)	41 (2.6)	1,559 (100.0)
	15-17	2,647 (87.8)	368 (12.2)	3,015 (100.0)	-	429 (67.6)	206 (32.4)	634 (100.0)
	Total	13,791 (96.7)	473 (3.3)	14,264 (100.0)	1,159 (52.9)	787 (35.9)	247 (11.2)	2,193 (100.0)

It was observed that 473 thousand (3.3%) of 14 million 264 thousand (100%) attending school children were working but 13 million 791 thousand (96.7%) were not working. 247 thousand (11.2%) of 2 million 193 thousand (100%) not-attending school children were working but 787 thousand (35.9%) were not working and 1 million 159 thousand (52.9%) were under the age of school.

Working Reasons of Child Labors

Table 3 shows the reasons of working of children aged 5-14 and 15-17. According to the table, 9 thousand (8.91%) working boys in the 5-14 age group work to contribute to the household, 73 thousand (72.28%) to help the household's economic activity, 14 thousand (13.86%) to learn a job or have a profession, 4 thousand (3.96%) to meet their own needs, and 1 thousand (0.99%) for other reasons. 120 thousand (29.48%) working boys aged 5-17 work to contribute to the household, 110 thousand (27.03%) to assist the household's economic activities, 144 thousand (35.38%) to learn a job or have a profession, and 33 thousand (8.11%) to meet their own needs.

8 thousand (17.78%) working girls in the 5-14 age group work to contribute to the household, 35 thousand (77.78%) to help the household's economic activity, 1 thousand (2.22%) to learn a job or have a profession, and 1 thousand (2.22%) to meet their own needs. 30 thousand (17.96%) working boys in the 5-17 age group work to contribute to the household, 40 thousand (23.95%) to help the household's economic activity, 89 thousand (53.29%) to learn a job or have a profession, and 8 thousand (4.79%) to meet their own needs.

Table 3. Reasons of Working of Children (x1000)

Gender	Age group	To contribute household income (%)	To help in household's economic activity (%)	To learn a profession and building skills for job (%)	To support him/herself (%)	Other (%)	Total (%)
Boy	5-14	9 (8.91)	73 (72.28)	14 (13.86)	4 (3.96)	1 (0.99)	101 (100)
	15-17	120 (29.48)	110 (27.03)	144 (35.38)	33 (8.11)	-	407 (100)
	Total	128 (25.20)	184 (26.22)	158 (31.10)	38 (7.48)	1 (0.20)	508 (100)
Girl	5-14	8 (17.78)	35 (77.78)	1 (2.22)	1 (2.22)	-	45 (100)
	15-17	30 (17.96)	40 (23.95)	89 (53.29)	8 (4.79)	-	167 (100)
	Total	39 (18.40)	75 (35.38)	90 (42.45)	9 (4.25)	-	212 (100)
Total	5-14	17 (11.64)	108 (73.97)	15 (10.27)	5 (3.42)	1 (0.68)	146 (100)
	15-17	150 (26.13)	150 (26.13)	232 (40.42)	41 (7.14)	-	574 (100)
	Total	167 (23.19)	259 (35.97)	247 (34.31)	46 (6.39)	1 (0.14)	720 (100)

Among the reasons for working children, "helping the household's economic activity" ranks first with 35.9 percent (259 thousand) , followed by "learning a job, having a profession" with 34.31 percent (247 thousand) and "contributing to household income" with 23.19 percent (167 thousand) and 6.39 percent (46 thousand) work to support themselves.

Economic Activities of Child Labors

Table 4 shows the information about the branch of economic activities in which working children aged 5-14 and 15-17. According to the table, 58 thousand (57.2%) working boys between the ages of 5-14 work in agriculture, 15 thousand (15.1%) in industry, and 28 thousand (27.7%) in the service sector. 85 thousand (21.0%) working boys between the ages of 15-17 work in agriculture, 126 thousand (31.0%) in industry, and 195 thousand (48.0%) in the service sector.

36 thousand (79.6%) working girls between the ages of 5-14 work in agriculture, 2 thousand (4.0%) in industry, and 7 thousand (16.4%) in the service sector. 42 thousand (25.4%) working girls between the ages of 15-17 work in agriculture, 27 thousand (16.4%) in industry, and 97 thousand (58.3%) in the service sector.

It was observed that 328 thousand (45.5%) in the service sector, 321 thousand (30.8%) in agriculture and 171 thousand (23.7%) in industry of 720 thousand (100%) working children.

Table 4. Branch of Economic Activity of Children (x1000)

Gender	Age group	Services (%)	Agriculture (%)	Industry (%)	Total (%)
Boy	5-14	28 (27.7)	58 (57.2)	15 (15.1)	101 (100.0)
	15-17	195 (48.0)	85 (21.0)	126 (31.0)	407 (100.0)
	Total	223 (43.9)	143 (28.2)	141 (27.8)	508 (100.0)
Girl	5-14	7 (16.4)	36 (79.6)	2 (4.0)	45 (100.0)
	15-17	97 (58.3)	42 (25.4)	27 (16.4)	167 (100.0)
	Total	105 (49.4)	78 (36.8)	29 (13.7)	212 (100.0)
Total	5-14	35 (24.2)	94 (64.1)	17 (11.7)	146 (100.0)
	15-17	292 (51.0)	128 (22.3)	153 (26.8)	574 (100.0)
	Total	328 (45.5)	221 (30.8)	171 (23.7)	720 (100.0)

Workplace Locations of Child Labors

Table 5 shows the information about the workplace locations of children aged 5-14 and 15-17. According to the table, 58 thousand (57.2%) working boys between the ages of 5-14 work in the field/garden, 40 thousand (39.8%) in regular workplaces, and 3 thousand (3.0%) in mobile, irregular or market places.

On the other hand, 83 thousand (20.4%) working boys between the ages of 15-17 work in the field/garden, 305 thousand (75.0%) in the regular workplace, and 18 thousand (4.5%) in the mobile, irregular, or market place. 36 thousand (79.6%) working girls between the ages of 5-14 work in the field/garden, while 9 thousand (20.3%) work in a regular workplace. 42 thousand (25.4%) working girls between the ages of 15-17 work in the field/garden, 121 thousand (72.3%) in the regular workplace, and 4 thousand (2.2%) at home.

Table 5. Type of Work Place of Children (x1000)

Gender	Age group	Field/ garden (%)	Regular/ fixed place (%)	Mobile, irregular or market place (%)	At home (%)	Total (%)
Boy	5-14	58 (57.2)	40 (39.8)	3 (3.0)	-	101 (100.0)
	15-17	83 (20.4)	305 (75.0)	18 (4.5)	-	407 (100.0)
	Total	141 (27.7)	346 (68.0)	21 (22.0)	-	508 (100.0)
Girl	5-14	36 (79.6)	9 (20.3)	-	-	45 (100.0)
	15-17	42 (25.4)	121 (72.3)	-	4 (2.2)	167 (100.0)
	Total	78 (36.8)	130 (61.3)	-	4 (1.7)	212 (100.0)
Total	5-14	94 (64.1)	50 (33.9)	3 (2.1)	-	146 (100.0)
	15-17	125 (21.8)	426 (74.2)	19 (3.2)	4 (0.7)	574 (100.0)
	Total	219 (30.4)	475 (66.0)	22 (3.0)	4 (0.5)	720 (100.0)

It was observed that 219 thousand (30.4%) in the field/garden, 475 thousand (66.0%) in regular workplaces, 22 thousand (3.0%) in mobile, irregular or market places and 4 thousand (0.5%) at home of 720 thousand (100%) working children.

Employment Status of Child Labors

Table 6 provides information on the employment status of children aged 5-14 and 15-17. According to the table, 25 thousand (24.5%) working boys in the 5-14 age group are paid or daily wage workers, 2 thousand (1.5%) are self-employed, and 75 thousand (74.0%) are unpaid family workers. On the other hand, 295 thousand (72.4%) working boys between the ages of 15 and 17 are paid or casual workers, 1 thousand (0.3%) are self-employed, and 111 thousand (27.3%) are unpaid family workers. 10 thousand (22.2%) working girls between the ages of 5-14 work for a paid or casual wage, while 35 thousand (77.8%) are unpaid family workers. 126 thousand (75.5%) working girls between the ages of 15-17 are paid or casual workers, 1 thousand (0.6%) are self-employed, and 40 thousand (23.9%) are unpaid family workers.

Table 6. Status in Employment of Children (x1000)

Gender	Age group	Regular or casual employee (%)	Self employed (%)	Unpaid family worker (%)	Total (%)
Boy	5-14	25 (24.5)	2 (1.5)	75 (74.0)	101 (100.0)
	15-17	295 (72.4)	1 (0.3)	111 (27.3)	407 (100.0)

	Total	319 (62.9)	3 (0.5)	186 (36.6)	508 (100.0)
	5-14	10 (22.2)	-	35 (77.8)	45 (100.0)
Girl	15-17	126 (75.5)	1 (0.6)	40 (23.9)	167 (100.0)
	Total	136 (64.2)	1 (0.5)	75 (35.3)	212 (100.0)
	5-14	35 (23.8)	2 (2.0)	110 (75.2)	146 (100.0)
Total	15-17	421 (73.3)	2 (0.4)	151 (26.3)	574 (100.0)
	Total	455 (63.3)	4 (0.5)	261 (36.2)	720 (100.0)

According to their employment status, 455 thousand (63.3%) works for regular or casual employee, 261 thousand (36.2%) as unpaid family workers, and 4 thousand (0.5%) are self-employed.

Workplace Conditions of Child Labors

Table 7 shows information about the risks that working children face in terms of occupational health and safety and the workplace environment. When the factors that negatively affect physical health in the workplace are examined, 93 (12.9%) children work in an extremely hot/cold or extremely humid/non-humid environment, and 78 (10.8%) children are exposed to chemicals, dust, smoke, or harmful gases. Working children were subjected to difficult postures or movements, as well as carrying heavy loads, in 10.1 percent, while 10.0 percent were subjected to noise or severe shaking. It has been determined that 46 (6.4%) children face the risk of an accident in the workplace, and 33 (4.6%) children face the risk of eyestrain or visual focus. While 9 (1.3%) working children were injured or disabled at work, 32 (4.4%) were children witnesses to an injury or disability at work. While 4 (0.6%) of those who experienced any discomfort as a result of workplace working conditions, 16 (2.2%) of those who witnessed this situation. While only 1 (0.1%) working children are subjected to physical, verbal, or ill-treatment at work, 11 (1.5%) children have witnessed such behavior.

According to statistics, men are more likely than women to be involved in non-fatal work accidents, and men account for the great majority of fatal work accidents (Hoskins, 2015; Rommel, et al., 2016). So far, studies focusing explicitly on gender variations in work accidents among children have been rare, and findings on gender trends have been mixed. Turner et al. (2015) found no gender differences in micro accidents in a more recent investigation. Only a few research have looked at the risk factors for child work accidents using multivariate analysis. These studies demonstrate that gender is not a risk factor in and of itself, but that work-related characteristics are the most important predictors of risk. Those studies, however, are based on perceived (or expected) work dangers rather than the actual hazards that cause the accidents. Even while sharp objects and material that burns have been identified as among the most common causes of accidents, studies on the real risks, or causes, of child work accidents are limited (Frone, 1998; Zierold & Anderson, 2006; Hobbs, et al., 2006; Rasmussen, et al., 2011). The results of this study support previous studies and Table 7 show the details about boy and girls children workers work accidents.

Table 7. Workplace Conditions of Children (x1000)

Unfavorable factors that affect/could affect		Boy (%)	Girl (%)	Total (%)
Any injuries	Exposed	8 (1.6)	1 (0.5)	9 (1.3)
	Witnessed	20 (3.9)	12 (5.7)	32 (4.4)
Any discomfort arising from the working conditions in the workplace	Exposed	4 (0.8)	-	4 (0.6)
	Witnessed	10 (2.0)	6 (2.8)	16 (2.2)
Exposure to physical, verbal violence or unpleasant behavior	Exposed	1 (0.2)	-	1 (0.1)
	Witnessed	7 (1.4)	4 (1.9)	11 (1.5)
Exposure at work that affect physical health	Eye strain and visual concentration	30 (5.9)	2 (0.9)	33 (4.6)
	Chemicals, dust, fumes, smoke or gases	62 (12.2)	16 (7.5)	78 (10.8)
	Noise or strong vibrations	65 (12.8)	7 (3.3)	72 (10.0)
	Working in an extremely hot/cold or in an excessive humidity/no humidity environment	80 (15.7)	13 (6.1)	93 (12.9)
	Difficult work postures or work movements and handling heavy loads	56 (11.0)	17 (8.0)	73 (10.1)
	Risk of accident	43 (8.5)	2 (0.9)	46 (6.4)

Result and Discussion

The main purpose of this research is to present the current situation of child workers, who play an active role in the business world, by drawing a general framework within the scope of occupational health and safety, and to present the risk picture of the current situation in Turkey under seven different headings.

Child labor is a complex social problem that affects the entire world. To begin with, there are various legal definitions of what the concept is and who it applies to (Kines, et al., 2011). The methods of struggle evolve independently of one another, and the desired results cannot be realized in practice. The situation in Turkey is similar to this. There are many regulations on child labor in our legislation, but these regulations are not in sync with one another.

From a social and historical perspective, the definitions of "child" and "child labor", which do not take into account the geographical distribution or gender differences between rural and urban areas and are isolated from social and cultural contexts, need to be questioned (Kuschnereit, 2001). There is no clear expression regarding the child phenomenon in Turkey's legal regulations. The term "little" is used instead of "child" in legal regulations (Turkish Civil Code, 1926). It is possible to see children working in almost every sector in Turkey. Children working in industry, commerce and service sectors in the cities work intensively in agriculture in rural areas (Gülçubuk, 2012). Working conditions and jobs for children can vary greatly (Duyar, 2013). Child labor means cheap labor for employers who start working at a young age (Baştaymaz, 1990) and brings disadvantages such as more health problems, more frequent

illness and lower quality. Various studies on child labor in Turkey have tried to identify the social, economic and cultural dimensions of the problem. In this context, the numerical data of child labor, its sectoral distribution, family situations, working reasons, working styles, work accidents and workplace conditions and risk situations they are exposed to were examined.

The data available on the scope of child labor in Turkey is insufficient. Statistics have become out of date. On the other hand, the fact that our country's unregistered sector has the highest rate of child labor is the most significant impediment to fully understanding the situation. In terms of worker health and safety, the situation of child workers, who are involved in various aspects of working life, also paints a bleak picture. Children who work in the most heinous forms of child labor in the agricultural sector are denied all forms of control and protection in small-scale workshops that operate haphazardly in urban areas.

To solve this problem, a multidimensional approach is required. To begin, it is critical not to leave any gaps in the legal dimension and to make the necessary arrangements in the contradictory articles. Controls should be tightened and sanctions should be imposed in the informal sector, where child labor is common. Child labor is not a problem that can be solved solely through legal means. In this regard, it is necessary to be determined in order to eliminate the dynamics that contribute to the emergence of the problem and to raise social awareness.

It has been observed that there are many causes of child worker accidents in Turkey. Among the main causes of child worker accidents, the following issues were identified: the inadequacy of the family's economic situation, the characteristics of the region where they live, the lack of supervision of the state, especially in small and medium-sized enterprises, the fact that many families see the work of the child as normal and the lack of sufficient information about the harms of child labor, and the families and employers while employing children. failure to take precautions against possible hazards, most families employing their children in prohibited jobs and the child does not supervise the workplace, children do not have sufficient knowledge, skills and experience about the work they do, and they do not have the knowledge and power to protect themselves in case of work accidents. It has been observed that the right to life of children is not adequately protected by both the family and the state. Similarly, it has been understood that neither the family nor the business owners have taken adequate precautions for the safety of working children in the workplace, and that the state has not implemented strict controls and sanctions.

As a result of the research, a general framework about child labor in Turkey was drawn with the numerical data obtained. An up-to-date awareness on this issue has been created by clearly demonstrating the situation of child workers in working life. In particular, risk tables were created and the situation of child workers was revealed with the examinations made under each subject. Although a multidimensional approach is needed to solve the problem of child labor, there is no gap in the legal dimension and the necessary arrangements are made in contradictory articles, it seems that the most important solution is to tighten the controls and impose sanctions in the informal sector where child labor is common.

Child labor is not a problem that can only be resolved through legal means. In this regard, it is necessary to determine the dynamics that contribute to the emergence of the problem and to increase social awareness. In this context, the rights of children who need to work should be legally defined by ensuring coordination between the ministries of work, health and education, and all other segments, especially children, should be trained on this issue. Children should be taught that they do not have to do every job assigned to them and that they have the right to refuse any job assigned to them. Until the economic and social conditions that force children to work improve, they and their families should be informed

about the accidents, diseases and risks they encounter, and practical studies should be carried out (Einarsdottir, et al, 2015; Einarsdottir & Snorraddottir, 2020a)

Employing occupational health and safety specialist personnel will only be beneficial within the scope of the Occupational Health and Safety Law if it is combined with a course that will be included in the school curriculum, educate students on occupational health and safety during the school process, raise awareness, and create sensitivity. When viewed through the lens of the educational process, it is clear that this issue is more critical for the children of families who work in seasonal agriculture. Until the economic and social conditions that force these children to work improve, they and their families must be educated about the accidents, diseases, and risks that they face, and practical studies must be conducted (Neuman, 2006; Rasmussen, 2011).

In comparison to the European Union, the most significant shortcoming in Turkish legislation is that children who are forced to work are not considered subjects of rights, and there is no special legal regulation that places them at the center. In this context, the rights of children who must work should be legally defined by ensuring coordination between the ministries of labor, health, and education, and all other segments, particularly children, should be educated on the subject. Children should be taught that they do not have to do every job that is assigned to them and that they have the right to refuse any job that is assigned to them. However, children in Turkey, the European Union, and other parts of the world should, first and foremost, be provided with economic and social conditions in which they will not be forced to work and will have the opportunity to play and develop themselves in all aspects (Nielsen, et al, 2016; Bravo, et al, 2020; Einarsdottir & Snorraddottir, 2020b).

Based on the results of this study, this study covers a limited time. For this reason, there is a need for studies conducted over a wider period of time in order to obtain a historical summary of child labor accidents in Turkey. Child labor accidents were analyzed only through media reports in this study. Comparative qualitative research should be conducted on whether child worker accidents increase as a result of improving the income level, education and social conditions of child workers living in provinces where child worker mortality rates are high. Many parameters affecting the causes of child labor accidents should be evaluated together and research should be conducted on the factors that lead children to work life. In places where child labor is intense, children and their families should be given comprehensive training on children's right to life and education, and research should be conducted on how education changes child labor in the long run.

Suggestions for practitioners based on the results show child labor is not uniform, but takes many forms, depending on the type of work children do, the age and gender of the child, whether they work independently or with their families. Because of this complex nature of child labor, there is no single strategy that can be used to eliminate it. Tackling child labor requires long-term coordinated action involving government and many stakeholders. The link between child labor and education, although clearly defined, is not implemented at the policy level by governments. Existing policies that provide space to create parallel education systems and deprive currently employed or potential child workers from education should be changed and more inclusive education policies should be implemented. Projects with comprehensive social protection approaches that encourage schooling should be produced. One of the most serious factors in the failure to reduce child labor is legal loopholes. Gaps in the labor law must be filled and the sanctions must be convincing. Urgent measures should be taken especially for children working in the agricultural sector, and policies should be developed so that these children do not break away from education and social life. Workplaces should be inspected more frequently in order to prevent child labor and the amount of fines to be applied should be increased when evidence of child labor is found. Neither child labor policies nor sophisticated OHS policies in the Turkish tradition adequately

safeguard children from workplace injuries. All stakeholders must take greater responsibility for preventing child work accidents. Employers must limit preventable job hazards for both girls and boys, and offer appropriate safety gear and training for unavoidable hazards. In addition, parents must educate the young about the dangers that come with working as a child, as well as how to deal with them. The establishment of an uniform measurement of the prevalence of child work accidents, as well as whether the gender pattern of the accidents has changed over time, should be the subject of future research.

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