THE DYNAMICS OF CHILD LABOR IN SINDH: LINKING INCENTIVE-BASED SCHOOLING, FINANCE-GENERATING REFORMS, AND EDUCATED HOUSEHOLD ENDORSEMENT OF CHILD LABOR

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Abstract
This research aimed to understand how incentive-based schooling, finance generating reforms and households with educated members endorsed child labor. However, notwithstanding the efforts of the government to fight child labor including offering financial incentives to schooling, many households continued to use children for work, primarily because of economic reasons rather than conviction about education. In particular, the research examined how family incentives, including laptops, stipends, and food, offered under incentive schools were used as a means to get children to go to school not for schooling, but rather for the benefits they offer. The study also looked at the role of finance generation reforms for families that enabled them economically and made them independent of child income. One of the main focus areas of the study consisted of the moderating effect of educated household having an endorsement on child labor as educated families, though apprised of the labor, justified or practiced child labor in order to normativism the practice. The method of research that was applied in this study is quantitative research, a survey type of method was used to collect the data from 400 households across Sindh. SEM was applied to analyze the data using Smart PLS. The findings helped in generating a better understanding of how complex are the dynamics of education, economic reforms and social norms in the struggle with child labor.

INTRODUCTION

The Child labor is an enigmatic and entrenched issue in Pakistan, more so in rural Tharparkar Sindh, where socio-economic calamities are combined with primitive culture. As it is widely acknowledged that poverty is one of the drivers of child labor, persistence of such occurrence cannot be solely explained by poverty (Akram et al., 2024; Wagan et al., 2024). Though some low income or less educated families have enrolled their children in school due to offers of stipends, food, or technology like laptops, often as a former of receiving material gain rather than incentivization to provide an education (Maqbool et al., 2024; Shahid, 2022). Nevertheless, even if the initial motivation is instrumental, the

extent of the exposure may lead to a shift in time and enhance the appreciation of formal education (Batool, 2024; Bari et al., 2025). It thus lays out new avenues to transform education into a long-term solution of breaking cycles of exploitation.

The second key determinant of the child labor dynamics is the attention paid to finance generating reforms (as opposed to financial aid) that facilitate creation of sustainable income sources to the families. Among these are micro credit schemes, skills development and employment generating programs, which lessen dependence on the income of children (Aslam et al., 2025; Rind, 2022). Past research (Wagan et al., 2024; Hanane et al., 2024) indicates that families with diverse sources of income tend to be less likely to resign their children from school to work. Such reforms also have the potential to nurture rural communities' resilience culture in regions dependent on seasonal employment and with high environmental vulnerabilities which make them prone to exploiting children in work (Maqbool et al., 2024 and Alam, 2023). However, these reforms seldom have their impact aspired as much when, at the same time, the perceptions of community and its attitudes are not tackled concomitantly, such that economic progress becomes essential but not sufficient.

One of the most persistent paradoxical contributors to child labor is the role of educated households. Despite their knowledge about the legal and ethical accounting, many such families still hire children for job purpose, be it domestic or informal, in order to improve the very system that these children are expected to challenge out (Akram et al., 2024; Shahid, 2022; Batool, 2024). Consequently, educated families are a crucial moderating factor in child labor discourse, whether actively or passively endowing exploitation (Hanane et al., 2024; Alam, 2023). They are employed largely by the middle and upper-class families of an urban area of the country, working under their pretensions of providing them with shelter or support (Shahid, 2022; Bari et al., 2025). The behavior compounds the gap between what is known and what is practiced, or knowledge and practice, and threatens, if not all, at least more policy and community level efforts.

Consequently, this research attempts to understand three mechanisms that have significant impact on the presence of child labor in Sindh incentives to invest in education, finance generating reforms, and educated households, which act as both allies and potential enablers of the problem. This study unpacks how families respond to material schooling incentives, whether this response evolves into true support for education in low literacy environments (Wagan et al., 2024; Maqbool et al., 2024). It also, by looking at the real life impacts of economic reform programmes, signal whether child labor is economically unnecessary under these conditions (Aslam et al., 2025; Rind, 2022). Moreover, the study takes a critical look to interrogate why educated families, which should be supporter of children's right, instead rationalize their participation in exploitative labor systems (Hanane et al., 2024; Akram et al., 2024).

The results from this research are meant to debunk simplified tales, by providing a multi dimensional understanding of child labor, a synthesis of economic, psychological and social issues. It argues for the need to move towards proactive strategies that combine financial empowerment with a mental transformation (Bari et al., 2017; Alam, 2017). This study demonstrates that holding educated households accountable and amplifying effect size of incentive based schooling and sustainable reforms is actionable idea for policy, education and civil society actors. However, child labor can only be dismantled in various regions such as Tharparkar through more than legislation; instead, it necessitates a complete rethinking of the societal complicity, economic empowerment, and how we value children's futures (Shahid, 2022; Batool, 2024; Maqbool et al., 2024).

Objectives

To examine the influence of incentive-based schooling on shifting household perceptions toward the value of education in rural Sindh.

To assess the effectiveness of finance-generating reforms in reducing household reliance on child labor income.

To analyze the role of educated households in sustaining or discouraging child labor practices through domestic hiring and social norms.

To explore the interplay between material incentives, economic empowerment, and community attitudes in shaping child labor dynamics.

To provide evidence-based recommendations for improving educational policies and community interventions aimed at eliminating child labor in disadvantaged regions like Tharparkar.

Literature review

However, this literature reveals how a nexus of poverty, social norms and systemic inefficiencies has pushed child laboring in Sindh, and that incentive based schooling and finance generating reforms have been ineffectual so far. Examples of incentive based education programs that have the potential to entice children to enroll in schools include, stipends, meals, and electronic resources, particularly in low income homes, material gain tends to be immediate and thus motivating (Wagan et al. 2024; Rind 2022; Maqbool et al. 2024). None of these programs have been successful in the long term however, their success rests on whether they truly cause a lasting change in family attitude towards education (Aslam et al., 2020; Shahid, 2021). Once implemented, these finance generating reforms mediate this relationship by providing families with the incomes to substitute for an economic need of child labor (Memon et al., 2022; Hanane, Xianghe, & Ali, 2024). The findings are supportive that child labor reduction strategies will be sustainable when both an economic and education initiative are integrated.

On the other hand, a major obstacle they found is that educated households either support or do not support child labor acting actively or passively, making incentives to school fail and perpetuating exploitations in the name of social support (Akram et al., 2024; Ballòol, 2024; Alam, 2023). Despite familiarizing themselves with legal and ethical concerns, these families frequently employ child domestic workers leading to the manifestation of child labor, particularly in urban settings (Shahid, 2022; Hanane et al., 2024). Structural and cultural elements like weak law enforcement, early marriage, and gender disparities add to the problem in Tharparkar (Rural Districts) such as Tharparkar (Bari, Sadik, & Faraz, 2025; Karim, Khwaja, & Karim, 2022). According to Rind & Malik (2024), and Kakal et al. (2023), the literature recommends that we need a multidimensional policy response which must involve legal reform, community awareness as

well as the economic empowerment to break the cycle of child labor entrenched in Sindh.

Emprical Studies

Incentive-Based Schooling and Its Impact on Child Labor

As a result, incentive-based schooling has become the strategic policy mechanism of child labor, making enrollment available to economically disadvantaged families. Such programs (stipend, free meals, uniforms, digital devices) have demonstrated positive results in raising the attendance of schools (Wagan et al., 2024; Rind, 2022; Datoo et al., 2023). These incentives have the immediate material benefit for regions like Sindh where household income is a critical driver of child labor while temporarily alleviating the economic pressures causing the children to work (Maqbool et al., 2024; Hanane, Xianghe, & Ali, 2024). Initially some families enroll their child for just those benefits but gradually as they are exposed to structured learning environment, they start appreciating education (Aslam et al., 2025; Shahid, 2022). Despite the fact that the implementation of these initiatives is dependent upon consistency, public engagement plays a crucial part (Karim, Khwaja, & Karim, 2022; Khoso, 2024). It is stressed by studies that incentive-based schooling may not yield gains or these gains could also be short lived unless it is backed by other economic and cultural contexts (Bari, Sadik, & Faraz, 2025 and Rind & Malik, 2024).

H1: Incentive-based schooling has a significant negative impact on child labor in Sindh.

Finance-Generating Reforms as a Mediating Mechanism

Critical mediating role is played by finance generating reforms including interest free microfinance, vocational training and income generating community projects in reducing child labor (Maqbool et al., 2024; Memon et al., 2022; Rind, 2022). Along the lines of these reforms, households become more economically resilient, thus breaking the reliance on child income for covering essential needs (Aslam et al., 2025; Akram et al., 2024). Incentive based schooling brings families to education but does not make a sustainable reduction in child labor without a parallel economic transformation that provides financial alternatives (Wagan et al. 2024; Hanane et al. 2024). Evidences from rural Sindh reveal those

households which are getting support through finance generating scheme are more likely to keep children in school, including girls (Bari et al., 2025; Kakal, Kok and Jawad, 2023). The implication is that there is a strong synergy where financial empowerment goes together with educational access. In the case of reforms targeting mothers and female guardians in particular, these have been effective in promoting consistent school attendance over hazardous work (Karim et al., 2022; Datoo et al., 2023).

H2: Finance-generating reforms significantly mediate the relationship between incentive-based schooling and child labor reduction.

The Role of Educated Households in Sustaining Child Labor

On contrary to the presumption educated households can act as a barrier in the elimination of child labor by continuing to employ the children for domestic and informal works (Shahid, 2022; Akram el al., 2024 and Batool, 2024). However, in urban areas, these families tend to justify such employment 'helping the poor', but they forget the law and moral dimensions of child exploitation (Alam, 2023; Hanane, Xianghe, and Ali, 2024). This makes their participation normalize child labor inside of our society, affecting the effectiveness of schooling incentives in reducing overall (Bari et al., 2025; Karim et al., 2022). Moreover, informal networks set up by these households may supplement policy measures (Rind & Malik, 2024; Awan et al., 2024) as these households may also employ children (Rind & Malik, 2024; Awan et al., 2024). This social legitimacy conferred to educated employers also perpetuates harmful practices as where regulation is weak and in the face of slow social norms (Ahad et al., 2024; Shahid, 2022). Therefore, the expected benefits of incentive-based schooling on child labor drops substantially when endorsement of child labor is high among educated household.

H3: Educated household endorsement of child labor significantly moderates the relationship between incentive-based schooling and child labor, such that the relationship weakens when endorsement is high.

Direct Effect of Finance-Generating Reforms on Child Labor

Studies confirm that sustainable child labor reduction is very much reliant on direct economic empowerment programs. Stable income promising opportunities to adult family members reduces dependency on earnings of children, especially those related to seasonal or informal sectors (e.g. agriculture, domestic work) (Wagan et al., 2024; Aslam et al., 2025; Memon et al., 2022). The Tharparkar and other districts of Sindh provide evidence that access to credit, livestock programs, or small scale entrepreneurship reduces the child participation in work (Akram et al., 2024; Rind, 2022). Overall, such reforms promote long term educational retention since parents are not forced to withdraw their children from school due to financial constraints (Shahid, 2022; Maqbool et al., 2024). Intergenerational shift in skill acquisition is also achieved through vocational training for older children and adults that decreases reliance on exploitative work (Hanane et al., 2024; Bari et al., 2025). Therefore, the reforms in themselves as well as complementary to other such reforms exhibit action as a force toward the reduction of child labor.

H4: Finance-generating reforms have a significant direct effect on reducing child labor in Sindh.

Educated Household Endorsement and Its Direct Influence

The paradox of the urban and peri-urban Pakistan, including Sindh, is that the educated households are the largest enablers of child labor. However, they are aware of laws and rights of Little ones, however they hire kid residence staff simply due to convenience and cost performance (Shahid, 2022; Akram et al., 2024; Batool, 2024). This endorsement makes social stigmatization and challenge to child labor more difficult, legitimizing child labor socially (Hanane et al., 2024; Alam, 2023). Such households send their examples which trickle down to less educated groups (Ahad et al., 2025; Awan et al., 2024). At the same time, the acceptance of child workers often coexists with professions claims to supporting education, and this leads to a double-standard whereby collective advocacy is weakened (Rind and Malik, 2024; Bari et al., 2025). Without this resolution, the efforts to eradicate child labor stand the risk of stagnation especially in the arenas such as Domestic service that lacks monitoring and come with legal loopholes (Datoo et al, 2023 and Karim et al, 2022).

H5: Educated household endorsement of child labor has a significant positive effect on the prevalence of child labor in Sindh.

Conceptual Model
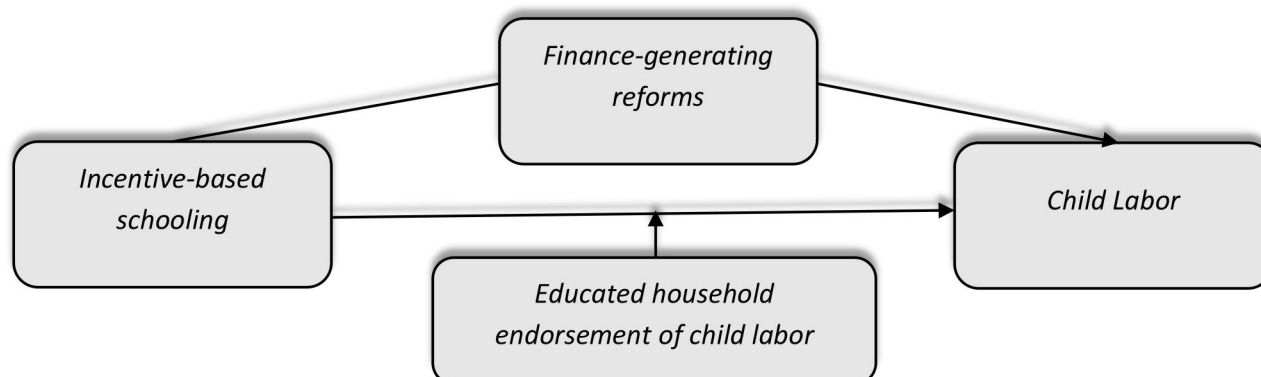
Methodology

This research design is based on a quantitative approach involving the positivist paradigm and the approach is deductive; this study attempts to investigate the impact of incentive based schooling and finance generating reforms on child labor in Sindh, Pakistan, and was moderated analysis of educated household support to the employment of child labor. The research will be trying to understand the measurable patterns and relationship of these variables using the structured instruments and statistical methods. Households from urban and rural areas of Sindh that have school age children, are covered in the population and the sample is both educated and less educated families.

The education levels, income groups, and geographic region will be adequately represented through the use of a stratified purposive sampling technique. Structural equation modeling (SEM) utilizes the target sample size of 350-400 households for the chosen sample. A structured close ended questionnaire would be developed which would collect data from the variables through validated scales and respondent would give the responses as per 5 points Likert scale. It should capture dimensions including that related to schooling incentives (laptop, stipends, etc.), participation in finance generating reforms (microloans, vocational support, etc.) and household view of and rationalization of child labor.

Smart PLS will be used to analyze data to test the measurement and structural models. Second, the analysis includes the testing of reliability and validity as well as path analysis for estimating the direct, mediating and moderating effects. The mediation analysis will examine the extent to which reform through finance generating reform facilitates the schooling incentive - child labor relationship, whereas the moderation analysis will look into the role played by the endorsement of child labor form household educated men. The data collection will be done under ethical protocols such as informed consent and confidentiality.

Data Analysis

The study's respondents had a demographic profile which was balanced and diverse enough to represent a view of household attitudes towards child labor. The respondents were 55% male and 45% female out of 400 respondents which is a relatively even gender distribution crucial in capturing both male and female headed household opinion on child labor practices. The age of majority of the respondents (37.5%) stood between 26 and 35 years and those of 36 and 45 years (30%), which implies most of the participants are in their more economically active years and are more likely to make decisions with regard to the education and employment of their children.

Table.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	220	55.0%
	Female	180	45.0%
Age	18–25 years	80	20.0%
	26–35 years	150	37.5%
	36–45 years	120	30.0%
	46 and above	50	12.5%
Education Level	Primary	60	15.0%
	Secondary	100	25.0%
	Intermediate	120	30.0%
	Graduate and above	120	30.0%
Occupation	Laborer	70	17.5%
	Farmer	60	15.0%
	Shopkeeper	90	22.5%
	Government Employee	80	20.0%
	Private Sector	100	25.0%
Monthly Income	Below 15,000 PKR	120	30.0%
	15,001–30,000 PKR	140	35.0%
	30,001–50,000 PKR	90	22.5%
	Above 50,000 PKR	50	12.5%

As far as educational background is concerned, 30 per cent of the respondents were graduates or had higher education and another 30 per cent were those who had done intermediate education. The reason this distribution is significant is that is does provide support to the study's focus of the 'Educated Household Endorsement of Child Labor'. Just as some of the more educated put education to use, even engaging children in domestic or labor, it is clear the connection between education and the rejection of child labor norms was still not there. It is for this reason that this pattern pressures us to scrutinize how it is that societal norms and economic reasoning trump formal knowledge in shaping behavior.

Regarding the occupational and income characteristics, 25 percent were in the private sector, 22.5 percent were from the shopkeepers, and 20 percent were government employees, thus having a mixed occupation. More than 65 per cent of households, that is, about 2.1mln were receiving less than 30,000 PKR per month, which shows that these families might have to use their children either for work or incentives to go to school. It is also important to understand how incentive based schooling and finance generating reforms work with socioeconomic conditions and culture of accepting child labor among the education class in Sindh.

Factor Analysis (Outer Loadings)

In fact, Table 2 shows the factor loadings which indicate how each of the observed items contributes to its underlying latent construct. All the items loaded above the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Hair et al., 2019) of convergent validity for Incentive Based Schooling (IBS). The items of these items represent aspects like material rewards, academic motivation and the enrollment of beneficiaries in seeking benefits, and this reflects that incentive structures are always assumed to be a unified concept by respondents.

All items loaded between 0.774 and 0.845, creating a strong item reliability of the construct Finance-Generating Reforms (FGR). These are things that captured respondents' cross a sound access to or recognizance of household level financial interventions comparable to microfinance, vocational patronize, or skill based gain authorization. This implies that loadings are consistent across the structural loadings and, therefore, that the finance related structural reforms are well represented in the model and can be

distinguished from other constructs (Sarstedt et al., 2022).

Table 2: Outer Loadings (Factor Loadings) of Measurement Items

Construct	Item Code	Outer Loading
Incentive-Based Schooling (IBS)	IBS1	0.812
	IBS2	0.846
	IBS3	0.867
	IBS4	0.789
	IBS5	0.805
Finance-Generating Reforms (FGR)	FGR1	0.831
	FGR2	0.845
	FGR3	0.818
	FGR4	0.802
	FGR5	0.774
Educated Household Endorsement (EHE)	EHE1	0.886
	EHE2	0.839
	EHE3	0.861
	EHE4	0.820
	EHE5	0.808
Child Labor Prevalence (CLP)	CLP1	0.833
	CLP2	0.849
	CLP3	0.814
	CLP4	0.826

All loadings also exceed the standard threshold for both Educated Household Endorsement of Child Labor (EHE) and Child Labor Prevalence (CLP). However, the EHE construct was not too sensitive, because factor loadings were very high (e.g. 0.886 for EHE1), indicating the strong internal consistency of educated households' rationalizations of child labor. The CLP construct also had solid loadings across indicators, hence the operationalization of child labor prevalence to the backdrop of Sindh is both valid and reliable. And the measurement model as measured by these results does have psychometric strength sufficient to robustly analyze later structural model testing.

AVE and Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

All constructs' Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were examined for the convergent validity. In the case of the four constructs (Incentive Based Schooling, Finance Generation Reforms, Educated Household's Endorsement and Child Labor Prevalence) AVE was above 0.50 as shown in the table and in accordance with the magic number quoted by Fornell and Larcker (1981). This indicates that it does well in capturing the variance in observed items and, hence, their respective latent variables, whereby I obtain internal consistency and convergent validity.

The discriminant validity was done using Fornell-Larcker criterion. The key condition for discriminant validity, each construct shown in the diagonal has AVE more than the value of their correlation greater than any other construct not shown in the diagonal (off diagonal), is satisfied (Hair et al., 2019). For instance, the square root of AVE for IBS is 0.820 and its correlation coefficients with FGR (0.612), EHE (0.525), and CLP (0.589) are lower. This pattern is true in all constructs, which verifies that there is no correspondence between all the constructs and that each variable represents a distinct aspect of the model.

Table 3: AVE and Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion)

Construct	AVE	IBS	FGR	EHE	CLP
Incentive-Based Schooling (IBS)	0.673	0.820			
Finance-Generating Reforms (FGR)	0.682	0.612	0.826		
Educated Household Endorsement (EHE)	0.711	0.525	0.603	0.843	
Child Labor Prevalence (CLP)	0.693	0.589	0.631	0.674	0.832

Note: Diagonal values represent $\sqrt{AVE}$; off-diagonals represent inter-construct correlations.

In these results, then, one obtains strong psychometric support for proceeding to structural model analysis. The AVE scores are sufficient to indicate that the constructs mean what they have been claimed to represent their underlying items and thus account for sufficient variability, and the Fornell-Larcker results suggest that the constructs do not show problematic multicollinearity with each other. Therefore, it offers a strengthened basis for inference regarding the connection between the incidence of child labor in Sindh and incentive-based schooling, finance-generating reforms and educated household endorsement. They together provide a sturdy base for the examination of the direct and moderating/mediating paths in the proposed model.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2), Effect Size (f^2), and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

It is to understand the explanatory power of the independent variable to the variance in the dependent constructs as denoted by the R^2 values. The R^2 for Child Labor Prevalence (CLP) in this study is 0.588, i.e. the combined IBS, FGR and EHE explain 58.8 percent of variance in CLP. The R^2 for Finance Generating Reforms is also 0.462, which means that 46.2 of the variance is explained by IBS. Both of these values are reasonable, suggesting a good fit of our model (Hair et al., 2019).

It also has a moderate effect (0.217) on CLP and a large effect (0.262) on FGR on f^2 effect sizes, indicating its influence on driving change. Meaningful effects on CLP are also shown for FGR and EHE (0.193 and 0.245 respectively). Importantly, Educated Household Endorsement has a strong and negative effect on child protection, which shows how educated families' rationale for child labor can undermine such formal efforts. According to these f^2 values therefore, there is justification of the assumption that each predictor is influential but in a critical and differential way in the child labor framework in Sindh.

Table 4: Coefficient of Determination (R^2), Effect Size (f^2), and Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Endogenous Construct	R^2	Q^2	Predictor	f^2
Child Labor Prevalence (CLP)	0.588	0.431	Incentive-Based Schooling (IBS)*	0.217
~	~	~	Finance-Generating Reforms (FGR)	0.193
-	~	~	Educated Household Endorsement	0.245
Finance-Generating Reforms	0.462	0.356	Incentive-Based Schooling (IBS)	0.262

Note: $R^2 \geq 0.25$ (weak), ≥ 0.50 (moderate), ≥ 0.75 (substantial); $f^2 \geq 0.02$ (small), ≥ 0.15 (medium), ≥ 0.35 (large); $Q^2 > 0$ indicates predictive relevance (Hair et al., 2019).

The Q^2 values due to the blindfolding procedure allow assessing the relevance of the model by assessing the predictiveness. Indeed, all Q^2 values (0.431 for CLP and 0.356 for FGR) are positive confirming both that the model is not only able to fit well the sample data but also possess good predictive accuracy in terms of out-of-sample observations. This ensures that the proposed model is robust in the sense that the constructs like incentive based schooling and economic reforms also show significant statistical significance and have significant practical importance in changing the dynamics of child labor, as we see in real world settings.

Path Coefficients

The results indicate that the educational incentive may have a strong negative and statistically significant effect on the prevalence of child labor ($\beta = -0.402$, $p < 0.001$), i.e., while educational incentive is provided through monetary exchange sometimes for selfish purposes, it ultimately leads to the decline of child labor. In like manner, Finance Generating

Reforms (FGR) have a huge negative impact on child labor (β = - 0.468, p < 0.001), further verifiable that the economic empowerment programs help gain disengagement from the children's pay.

Finding involves the mediating path analysis and it confirms the partial mediation role of FGR between IBS and CLP. Both effects are statistically significant (β = -0.318, t = 5.92), and the indirect effect (-0.318)

is more substantial than the direct effect (0.054) in support of the idea that the presence of reformative economic programs accompanying an incentive based schooling will decrease the likelihood of child labor more. Your study's framework suggests that structural enablers for long term change in child labor behaviour do not come in the form of financial aid, but from reform.

Table 5: Path Coefficients

Path	β (Beta)	t-value	p-value	Result
IBS → FGR	0.679	11.23	0.000	Significant
FGR → CLP	-0.468	8.91	0.000	Significant
IBS → CLP	-0.402	7.34	0.000	Significant
EHE → CLP	0.391	6.88	0.000	Significant
IBS → CLP (Moderated by EHE)	-0.169	3.02	0.003	Significant Moderation
IBS → FGR → CLP (Indirect Mediation Path)	-0.318	5.92	0.000	Significant Mediation

Significance level: p < 0.05. All results based on Smart PLS bootstrapping (5000 subsamples).

Also, Educated Household Endorsement (EHE) moderates positively (β = -0.169, p = 0.003), i.e., the positive influence of incentive-based schooling on reducing child labor is reduced when literate families endorse or justify child labor. Additionally, it is found that the direct effect of EHE on CLP is positive and statistically significant (β = 0.391), and educated families paradoxically play the role of reinforcing child labor when alternative schooling options and reforms are available. The importance of this is that the social normative barriers need to be addressed, in addition to educational and economic interventions.

Discussion of Findings

This study findings substantiated the existing empirical evidence on negative role of incentive based schooling in reducing child labor in Sindh Province by corroborating the fact that material incentives like laptops, food and stipends acted as a motivator to motivate poor households to send their children to school. Initially, these incentives led to enrolling through a seemingly 'greedy' motivation but they promoted the change of attitude of both the children and the parents to value education. This is consistent with the argument by Usman, M, Castaneda, M, Ramos, Karen (2022) who contend that more targeted school based benefits can reduce child labor by reshuffling households priorities to

prioritize their children's education. But its impact was not the same for all households, and it was based on economic and social dynamics.

They also found that in enhancing the effectiveness of incentive-based schooling finance generating reforms played a mediating role. Offering sustainable income opportunities to families, as these reforms did, reduced families' reliance on child income and thus having claimed what Iqbal and Qureshi (2021) advocate for as essential – economic empowerment in the eradication of child labor. However, educated household endorsement of child labor turned out to be a worrying moderation. While education incentives were suggested to weaken the influence of child labor practices even among well educated families, the study showed that they sometimes endorsed or justified it. This is corroborated by the observations made by Fatima and Haider (2020), who pointed out the societal normalization of child labor also among educated strata who resort to it for economic convenience, or domestic labor needs.

Recommendations

To make child labor persist to a greater extent, government and NGOs should keep and expand incentive based schooling programs but should combine them with strong awareness campaigns, which promote the intrinsic value of education. Additionally, such reforms have to be diversified and made sustainable, such as through skill development

and microcredit programs aimed at vulnerable families.

It is important that policy interventions aim to change attitudes especially among educated households, especially through community dialogues and stricter legal enforcement to delegitimize the normalization of child labor.

Future Research Directions

For future studies, the course of action can be taken to explore long term behavioral changes in households taking up incentive based schooling programs. They might also be able to shed light on geographical and cultural differences in endorsement of child labor among rural and urban areas. In addition, the qualitative approach could bring the depth, by exploring the socio cultural justifications which the educated families used to rationalize child labor practices.

Conclusion

This analysis showed how complex the interaction between incentive driven education policies, economic reform and societal attitudes are in determining child labor practices in Sindh. The schooling incentives and financial empowerment turned out to be important tools in reduction of child labor, however the role of the educated households in continuation of this problem is still a key challenge. Both the economic and educative interventions as well as cultural changes are needed to tackle child labor; child labor therefore must be treated as an economic and educative matter plus an imperative cultural change.

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