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# Voices of Working Children: Systematic Literature Review on Debates and Controversies regarding Working Children's Rights in the Global South

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## **Abstract**

*Objective:* This systematic literature review aims to develop a better understanding of how children, families, and communities rationalize or conceptualize children's work in the Global South. Also, to identify and discuss the tensions and controversies linked to children's work and what are the policy insights that improve working children's lives in Global South.

*Method:* This is a systematic literature review that synthesized 29 studies relating to working children's perspectives and views in Global South. Web of Science and Scopus were used as the 2 main databases for the search of relevant qualitative research publications. EndNote program was then used to remove any duplicates publications from the search results. Thereafter, a manual screening was conducted for the remaining articles using the criteria formulated earlier and conducted a backward citation tracking of published articles that were included in the systematic literature. The process was recorded using Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA), and the final count of 29 studies was included for synthesis. The analysis and data extraction were carried out in three stages: 1) Line-by-line coding, 2) Generation of descriptive themes, 3) Generation of interpretive/analytical themes to synthesize findings and categorize studies according to their scope.

*Results:* The published articles included in the studies focused on the perspectives of working children in the Global South. Seven main themes were generated: Importance of work; Empowerment; Agency; Interdependency; Education; Controversies and Tensions in Policies regarding child work; Policy recommendations.

*Discussion and conclusions:* This systematic literature review concludes that children's participation in work is integrated as part of their childhood. There are several reasons as to why children and young people were engaged in economic activities. A single reading of international policies and legislation on child labor is not applicable in every country, especially in the Global South. There is a need to respect working children's living rights and modify the international policies and legislation accordingly to each local context to maximize the effect of providing each child the childhood they deserve.





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## **Chapter One**

### **1. Introduction**

This chapter gives a summary of the systematic literature review. It presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, and the organization of structure presented in this systematic literature review.

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) has been the most comprehensive international binding document concerning children's rights. The UNCRC differentiates by claiming protection, provision, and participation rights besides the basic needs, rights to ensure 'good' development are also emphasized (Liebel, 2012). According to White (2002), the underlying notion of a child's rights is a social group that shares mutual interests and a universal set of entitlements. However, although some countries had adopted both the World Summit global plan of action for children and UNCRC, this did not fully elevate the problems of children's rights that were present. Children are still exploited through work, their voices are still unheard, and neoliberal economic policies are affecting the lives of children in several countries in the Global South<sup>1</sup>.

Many families living in the Global South are still facing problems like poverty. In Arora's (2016) article, she stated that many of the population in the Global South are living with under USD \$2 per day. This has shown that poverty is the main issue to be dealt with in many countries around Global South. This can also be supported by Beazley (2015), who stated that children and young people are seen entering the workforce at a very young age due to poverty. At the same time, even though many countries in the Global South have attained significant growth in ensuring basic education free and accessible for all in the past few years, yet many young children are uneducated and many of those who went to school did not manage to complete primary education (Majgaard & Mingat, 2012). This can be due to the fact that numerous school-aged children are still participating in child labor. On one hand, the primary reason for children and young people who are still participating in child labor is due to families' financial hardship. This can be supported by Jonah and Abebe (2017), in their article about tensions and controversies on child labor in Ghana, where they have stated that many children in Ghana are involved in gold mining which is the main source of the state income. Many parents are also introducing mining work to their children at home who are of school-age while others joined voluntarily. On the other hand, some children and young people are participating in work to fund their additional education expenses. Although education is free, children are still required to pay for education expenses like getting school uniforms, books, stationery (Okyere, 2012). Moreover, work provides children and young people a sense of accomplishment and recognition within the household when they are helping and contributing financially to the

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Global South" refers broadly to the regions of Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Oceania. It is one of a family of terms, including "Third World" and "Periphery," that denote regions outside Europe and North America, mostly (though not all) low-income and often politically or culturally marginalized. (Dados et al. 2012:1)

family. This opens the doors for them in having a say in decision-making within the community and family (Imoh & Okyere, 2020).

This raises questions about how applicable is the UNCRC for the Global South? What is considered a good childhood in different cultural contexts? These discourses are especially apparent when it comes to children living in the Global South. Throughout the years of the implementation of UNCRC, making primary education compulsory and available for all, and preventing children from participating in work that might affect their studies has been an ongoing discussion among researchers. This means that children in the Global South will only be able to participate in work that does not hinder them from getting an education. However, many children living in the Global South are actively participating in full-time work from a very young age and had forgone education to help and support their parents financially due to poverty. Some children are even working in order to be able to afford the extra expenses that add to their family's expenditure when attending school. For example, getting stationery, school uniforms, books, and many more. Moreover, participation in work is a form of socialization and is integrated as part of their childhood. Therefore, in what position and how are we able to determine what is considered as the notion of a good childhood and the UNCRC is the right document for children's well-being around the world?

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Discourses on universal children's rights are not exactly a new phenomenon in the social sciences. The perspectives on the notion of a good childhood differ from culture to culture. It is cultural relativism and not universal. This means that the notion of a good childhood is reliant on how one's beliefs and practices ought to be perceived depending on the individual's way of life, instead of being decided against the standards of another.

One of the main problems that led me to my research topic is that the UNCRC documents replicate the notion of a good childhood that is very similar to the notion of childhood viewed by the westerners. An energetic period of life, an autonomous and dynamic individual who is situated within the nuclear family is what the global model of childhood views childhood as. Nevertheless, education is also an important primary component in contemporary childhood. These can be supported by UNICEF (2005:Para 1), "Childhood is the time for children to be in school and at play, to grow strong and confident with the love and encouragement of their family and an extended community of caring adults. It is a precious time in which children should live free from fear, safe from violence, and protected from abuse and exploitation." As argued by Bourdillon (2011:106) "...globalized ideals of childhood and globalized notions of childhood activities are not as straightforward as they seem." Thus, the notion of a good childhood depicted in the document that was rectified in some countries might not fit with the local realities and perspectives. For instance, in contemporary work, children's work has been discussed heavily in childhood studies. 2 of the UNCRC articles have strongly pointed out the importance of education as part of the notion of a good childhood, and children's participation in work brings a heavy negative impact on children's lives. However, children in the Global South are seen upon as the stakeholders for a sustainable society in the future, therefore, it is important that they are preparing and equipping themselves with skills and knowledge for the future through formal education. Hence, children should not be participating in any sort of economic activity (Aufseeser, Bourdillon, Carothers & Lecoufle, 2018).

Children's participation in work has been an ongoing debate among policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. According to Mulugeta & Eriksen (2020:1), they stated that "One perspective views childhood as a period of learning, where vulnerability and dependence are features. Work is considered the affair of adults, while children's focus is schooling." This comes in line with 2 of the UNCRC articles that have strongly pointed out the importance of education as part of the notion of a good childhood and children's participation in work brings a heavy negative impact on children's lives. Hence, school is opposed to working, since it exposes children to potentially harmful and exploitative situations (Abebe and Bessel, 2011). However, due to several reasons, for example, cultural obligation, socialization, part of childhood, poverty, etc, children and young people were observed to be participating in economic activities at a very young age.

Also, UNCRC is interpreted differently in different cultures and contexts. Therefore, we need to look into how the universal children's rights and their connection to education and work are shaped into children's everyday lives. This leads me to my second question that arises for my research topic which is how UNCRC documents are translated into the local realities and cultural perspectives. According to Abebe and Tefera (2013), although in recent years, many researchers have been researching how UNCRC documents are interpreted into the local realities, there is limited knowledge on how the community members who have a stake in childhood comprehend and decipher the problems of working children's rights and the significance of work and education for childhood (Abebe and Tefera, 2013).

The UNCRC is a universal legal document and countries who had ratified it are bound by it. However, the rights can be interpreted and shaped in ways that are not intended in the UNCRC by different families, communities, and nations. Children's rights are contextual, and it varies from place to place. This is what we called "living rights" i.e. the ways children make sense of their rights as they navigate and give meaning to their existence in the society in which they are actively participating in. Daalen, Hanson, and Nieuwenhuys (2016) stated that living rights are how children make use of the notions of rights, shape what these rights are, and become in the social world. Living rights are created via the manner of living and interacting in a familiar context. Therefore, this concept challenges the idea that children's rights are not just those that are defined by the UNCRC (Hanson & Nieuwenhuys, 2013). Living rights are also a useful conceptual tool when thinking about working children's rights in reality. It does not view children as passive but also not as competent and active. Ignoring how the political economy, the structure, and the adult that enable them to be active.

Living rights have a bottom-up approach whereby children engage with, interpret, and give meaning to their rights. As stated by Hanson and Nieuwenhuys (2013) "Children's rights cannot be limited to codifications in international or state law, nor to interpretation produced by developmental agencies. It must include the ways in which children practice their rights."

Therefore, the rationale of this systematic literature review is to look at the growing tension and controversies regarding the prioritization of children's education over work in the Global South. On one hand, communities, families, and children see work as a necessity and integral to their daily and generational reproduction. On the other hand, the international children's rights convention, global treaties on education, and national policies on schooling are increasingly pressurizing children to spend their childhood in formal educational institutions.

Henceforth, there is a need to systematize previous research studies on the interplay between children's work, education, and rights to elucidate these tensions and the connections among them.

### **1.3 Research objectives**

The main objective for this systematic literature review is to have a better insight and explore the tensions and controversies about children's work in the Global South. The study will be addressing the following objectives:

1. To systematize the literature on how children, families, and communities rationalize or conceptualize children's work (and/or its linkage with children's education in the Global South)
2. To identify and discuss the tensions and controversies linked to children's work (and/or education in the Global South)
3. To identify and engage with policy insights that improve working children's lives and rights in the Global South

### **1.4 Research questions**

To have a better understanding of my research objectives, I had come out with the following five research questions to help me in gathering the information for my data analysis. They are as follows:

1. Why are children involved in work in the Global South?
2. How is the work of children linked to their everyday lives including intergenerational and familial relationships?
3. What is the connection between children's participation in work and education in the Global South?
4. What are the controversies and tensions linked to children's rights regarding children's participation in work in the Global South?
5. What are the policy recommendations of the literature on children's work regarding working children's rights in the Global South?

With the above research questions, I had started with my research on articles for the systematic literature review on different databases to provide an overview of the different research done that were relevant to my thesis topic and provide empirical qualitative research evidence for the analysis.

### **1.5 Significance of the systematic literature review**

This systematic literature review is significant for several reasons. Firstly, it is aimed to provide a better insight on the discourses of how the internationally rectified UNCRC might come in conflict with the locals' living rights connected to labor, education in the Global South. Through the readings on the previous research, it allows us to find out what are the ongoing issues (e.g. how universal ideas of rights have affected or translated into children's education



and children's work) in the Global South and how they might come into conflict with the premises of the UNCRC.

Indeed, international children's rights are important as it sets a standard of living each child should have. At the same time, we should also value living rights too. Children's view on rights is very different from what the global laws see. For example, international laws want children to start compulsory schooling instead of them working on the streets or factories. However, many children in the Global South would like to have the right to work safely on the streets (Kovats-Bernat, 2006). From this, we can see how international children's rights and living rights differ. What we think is best for the children may not be the best from their point of view. Hence, it is important and there is a need that we include children's views and what they want that work best in their local context, instead of enforcing rights that we think are best for them.

Secondly, it looks at how different cultures work brings about their unique practices, culture, and their perspective of what a good childhood should be. At the same time, how they are adapting UNCRC into their daily lives. We have to agree that different countries have different cultures and perceptions of life. Hence, it is not surprising that what the UNCRC defined as a good childhood might be incompatible with the local rights and cultural traditions in the Global South (Liebel, Hanson, Saadi & Vandenhole, 2012) This is especially apparent when it comes to children's rights to education and child's work. In Daalen, Hanson, and Nieuwenhuys's (2016) article, they discussed about positioning living rights in Global South. They mentioned that the idea of living rights is not something that captures the idea of how the law is fixed, and everyone should agree with it. However, it is continually changing or living, and it should not be limited. Therefore, living rights is an expansive idea that makes the disconnection between the legal documents and how those documents play out in their everyday life.

Thirdly, in the field of social studies of childhood, recognizing and acknowledging that children and young people are social actors equipped with an agency is one of the key factors (Abebe, 2019). However, according to Prout (2005:65), "the agency of children as actors is often glossed over, taken to be an essential, virtually unmediated characteristic of humans." This systematic literature review identifies and discusses the multiple ways children exercise their agency during their participation in work. In addition, it examines how working children's agency comes by and how their agency has an effect on their families and communities.

Fourthly, ILO Convention 182 and UNCRC Article 28 holds the notion of "work or school", children who are involved in economic activities should not interfere with their ability to make use of schooling. Schooling has been a top priority and deemed as necessary in the contemporary childhood. Although UNCRC Article 28a has emphasized the need to ensure compulsory education free for all children, however, there are numerous additional costs. This systematic literature review demonstrates how children's involvement in work is a form of informal education whereby children acquire skills that are beneficial for their future. Additionally, it also reveals how children's participation in work has enabled them to continue schooling, for example, paying for the additional expenses incurred as a means to reduce the additional financial burdens their families are facing.

Last but not least, through this research study, we will get to look deeper into whether the universal children's rights by the UNCRC are visible in all countries around the globe. The widely ratified UNCRC has been the framework of what a good childhood should be, and it should be applied to all the countries that ratified it. This means that universal children's rights determine what are appropriate and what are not for children and young people all around the world at the age of 18 and below. This can be supported by Liebel, et. al, (2012:21), where they stated that "...the children's rights formulated in the CRC claim universal validity." Moreover, UNCRC has always been seen as the 'western' interpretation of what a good childhood is by many in the majority world. There are many debates between researchers on whether the universalization of children's rights is just an instrument of imperialism - used to impose western ideology on developing nations (Whitworth, 2010). In addition, it shows us the recommendations that were suggested by different authors in the published articles on what and how international policies and legislations should change to ensure that they are engaged to better support and help working children and their families in the Global South.

## **1.6 Organization of the thesis**

This systematic literature review consists of five chapters. *Chapter One* - Introduction, discusses the background study, statement of the problem, my research objectives and questions, and the significances of the systematic literature review. *Chapter Two* - methodology, addresses the process of searching to documenting the analysis of the articles found for the systematic literature review. It documents the 5 steps that were adopted to ensure a non-bias identification, evaluation, and synthesis of all the relevant studies included in my systematic literature review. The synthesis of the results is presented in Chapters Three and Four. In *Chapter Three*, the focus is on the key research findings and discussions on how children, families, and communities rationalize or conceptualize children's work in the Global South (and/or children's education in the Global South). In *Chapter Four*, the focus is on the key research findings and discussions on the tensions and controversies linked to children's work, and the policy insights that improve working children's lives in the Global South. Finally, in *Chapter Five*, the concluding remarks of the systematic literature review will be provided.

## Chapter Two

### 2. Methodology

The main goals of a systematic literature review are to gather, check, reanalyze data, and to present a comprehensive analysis of the full range of literature from all studies tending to specific research questions. The systematic review also aims to assess the effectiveness of the interventions conducted in my systematic review – the interventions applied for assisting working children in the Global South. This chapter focuses on the process of searching to document the analysis of the articles found for the systematic literature review. Qualitative research approaches are well suited to capture the lived experience of participants and to allow their voices to be heard. These approaches can uncover how participants make sense of their lives, their subjective or lived experiences, and the world around them (O'Day & Killeen, 2002). This systematic literature review was conducted using the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) flow chart to allow the reading to have a better comprehension of the selection of the articles for the review. While Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist was used as an appraisal tool for the selection of the articles to address the research questions for my systematic literature review from multiple studies.

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#### 2.1 Search strategy

A three steps search strategy was adopted for my search of articles for the systematic literature review, and they are: Step 1: Identifying appropriate Databases, Step 2: Scoping Search, and Step 3: Search Terms. This will better enhance the search for the relevant articles to achieve better search results to address my research study.

##### **Step 1: Identifying Databases**

I first begin by exploring different optimal academic research databases that are available for my systematic literature review. (Refer to **Appendix A**) According to Davis (2021: para 1), academic research databases are databases that "... contain scholarly journals, exclusively." The databases I had identified are – ERIC, Science Direct, JSTOR, SCOPUS, Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and Web of Science. These six databases are the top five scholarly databases that cover multidisciplinary. However, as stated by Bramer et al., (2017), searching through all the different databases can be tedious and time-intensive. Moreover, the composition of search strategies is different for each database. Therefore, in my systematic literature review, I had chosen these two academic research databases that are most relevant to social sciences – "Web of Science" and "SCOPUS" to focus on searching for the articles that are relevant to my research topic. Web of Science and Scopus are databases that cover millions of records ranging from journals to books that provide deep coverage in social sciences. It also provides a common search language, navigation environment, and data structure that allows me to search broadly across disparate resources.

With modern technology abilities, the internet can be considered as a powerful tool, anyone can create a website on any subject whether they are an authority or not on the internet. No one is policing the world wide web. This makes it hard to find credible information which is important when I am doing research. Also, search engines can provide me millions of results for each search and only give me a few options to narrow it down. Therefore, it is more complicated to scan the results and find the exact information I am looking for. Academic research databases allow me to find information that is not freely available on the web. It searches for thousands of articles and books. Academic research database also covers a range of topics and every different database focuses on specific topics such as literature, education, or controversial issues.

It is important for me as a researcher to choose a database that is based on my research topic written by credible authors and experts in that particular field. The right database provides more control over the results with powerful search tools. Furthermore, an academic research database allows me to refine the results by limiting them to a date range, publication type, and full text. The Web of Science and SCOPUS provides me the powerful search tools to find relevant results and credible content. At the same time, it reduces the time of searching for credible and relevant articles to better support my research.

### **Step 2: Scoping search**

The search strategy also involved a scoping search. A good systematic review requires a strong search strategy. I started by performing a scoping search on the 2 databases that I had identified to use for my systematic literature review to determine if there are sufficient articles out there for me to justify or perform a systematic review on my research topic – Voices of Working Children: Systematic Literature Review on Debates and Controversies regarding Working Children’s Rights in the Global South.

According to National Institute for Health Research (n.d.),

*"Scoping searches are fairly brief searches of existing literature designed to help you gain an overview of the range of depth of research that exists for a particular research idea. It can cover published work and discover on-going studies."*

Scoping search has enabled me to achieve several objectives. First, scoping search allowed me to determine if my research topic was too narrow or too broad with the list of articles available on the different databases. Scoping search has also enabled me to refine my research questions since the range of depth of my initial research was too broad. For example, instead of focusing on controversies of children’s rights in the Global South regarding children’s education and work which was my initial plan, scoping search has helped me in narrowing it down to only focusing on controversies of children’s rights concerning children’s work in Global South. Secondly, scoping search has also assisted in me refining the time period of articles published from 1979 to 2020 to focus on articles that were published between 2001 to 2020.

Last but not least, scoping search has helped me in developing a list of relevant keywords and subject headings that were needed for the primary search of the articles for my systematic literature review. To sum up, scoping search provided me with a list of keywords that I can use to search for articles relevant to the systematic review.

**Step 3: Search Terms**

After identifying relevant databases and combining them with the scoping search, the main primary search starts by combing keyword searching with controlled vocabulary and subject heading searching. Search terms play an important role during the search for literature for a systematic literature review. With the right search terms, it can help me in narrowing down and focusing on the relevant articles for the review. Therefore, the search terms are carefully chosen and combined to fully maximize the chances of getting all the relevant articles.

Following this, a list of references from the papers included in the review was screened and backward citation tracking was utilized. According to Hirt, Nordhausen, Appenzeller-Herzon & Eqald (2020, p. 3), "Citation tracking is an umbrella term for multiple methods which directly or indirectly collect related references from so called "seed references"." By implementing backward citation tracking (references used in each research study) it opens up the opportunity for me to have a better understanding of the ideas and or theories that have influenced the author/s when doing the research.

Table 1 shows the search terms that I used for my systematic literature review. The search was carried out between September 2020 to November 2020. Other studies were added until December 2020 through manual screening of articles from the reference list used by the authors of the final selected articles.

Manual screening of articles from a backward citation is carried out to ensure that all the additional articles picked out are relevant and useful for the use of my systematic literature review.

<b>Table 1 Search Terms (with *truncation notation)</b>		
<b>Population</b>	<b>Context</b>	<b>Outcome</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children/adolescent</li> <li>• Youth</li> <li>• Young people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child rights</li> <li>• Children’s education</li> <li>• Children’s work</li> <li>• Child Labor</li> <li>• Right to work</li> <li>• Participation Rights</li> <li>• Cultural participation rights</li> <li>• Labor</li> <li>• Education childhood</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lived experience*</li> <li>• Perspective*</li> <li>• View*</li> <li>• Perception*</li> <li>• Controversy*</li> <li>• Criticism*</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Africa, Asia, Latin America</li> <li>• UNCRC/African Charter</li> <li>• Universalism</li> <li>• Cultural relativism</li> </ul>	
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**2.2 Inclusion and exclusion criteria**

“Establishing inclusion and exclusion criteria for study participants is a standard, required practice when designing high-quality research protocols.” (Patino et al., 2018: para 2). Therefore, for me to develop high-quality systematic literature research, I had come out with a list of inclusion and exclusion criteria based on my research questions.

Inclusion criteria are the components that were present in the article to be qualified for inclusion in my systematic literature review. Conversely, exclusion criteria consist of components that disqualify it from inclusion (Virginia Commonwealth University, 2021).

The inclusion and exclusion criteria for my systematic literature review are shown in Table 2. All the articles have their focus on working children and young people in the Global South, their lived experiences, and perspectives about The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) requirements about child labor and how it has affected their daily lives.

Research studies that are related to the development of children’s rights, digital age, and education are excluded. This is to ensure that the articles found are on par with my research questions. The time period for the research study is also set to be between 2001 to 2020 for several reasons:

- a. Older research studies that were conducted over two decades ago may not be as relevant for the current child labor situation. By limiting the research study to the recent 20 years, it will allow for more updated research that is relevant to the current situation of working children and young people who are living in the Global South.
- b. Child participatory research methods were only becoming popular for researchers as a research method to gather children and young people’s views and perspectives over the last two decades. Therefore, limiting the time period within the last two decades will allow me to search for qualitative research that was conducted using child participatory methods. This will enable a better-quality analysis for my systematic literature review.
- c. A systematic literature review is a time-consuming task especially more when the results gathered are too wide. Being a single researcher and writing my master thesis, a limited time frame will help me in narrowing the results yielded.

<b>Table 2 Inclusion/Exclusion Criteria</b>		
	<b>Inclusion Criteria</b>	<b>Exclusion Criteria</b>
<b>Population</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include children and young people aged 3 to 18 years old</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other age groups</li> </ul>
<b>Context and Outcome</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children experiences and perspectives on UNCRC children’s rights to child labor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other experiences</li> <li>• Digital age</li> </ul>
<b>Subject Area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Sciences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All Others</li> </ul>
<b>Publication stage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All others</li> </ul>
<b>Place of study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Global South</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All others</li> </ul>
<b>Time period</b>	2001 - 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before 2001 and after 2020</li> </ul>
<b>Language</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• English</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other languages</li> </ul>
<b>Study design</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative research studies and mixed methods research carried with children and young people and published. <i>*for mixed-method studies, only the qualitative data are included in the analysis*</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other study designs</li> </ul>

The study design is also set to qualitative research studies and mixed methods research studies with only the qualitative data used for the systematic literature review analysis. The particular reason for this circumstance is due to the matter that qualitative research is used to analyze the subject’s meaning or issues, events, or practices through the collection of data in a variety of methods, such as participant observations, interviews, or group discussions (Flick, 2014). This allows the researcher to provide thick descriptions of participants’ lived experiences for analysis and figuring out how meanings and actions are shaped through and in their own culture (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) instead of numbers and statistics. This means that qualitative research helps to present the complexities of human experiences in a manner that is understood by the evidence-based community (Thorne, 2016).

Also, in the process of qualitative evidence synthesis, findings from qualitative research are reviewed and rigorously integrated (Sandelowski and Barroso, 2007).

### **2.3 Search outcome**

The initial search outcome yielded 1833 articles relevant to my research topic from both databases (SCOPUS and Web of Science). Thereafter, I removed the duplicates of the search results found on both databases using the EndNote program. EndNote is a bibliography management software that allows researchers to build a collection of references for their research by storing search results from databases. At the same time, it has a function that allows researchers to combine the search results from different databases together and remove the duplicates in them. With this function available, it has aided me in reducing the amount of time needed in removing all the duplicated

articles manually. The search outcome now yielded 1132 articles after duplicates were removed.

After the duplicates were removed, 1063 articles were subsequently removed during the screening through the title and abstract of each article using the predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria that I had formulated earlier. Also, articles that were either unavailable in full-text or abstract papers were removed. This leaves me with sixty-four articles that were shortlisted for full-text assessment. After a meticulous assessment of the sixty-four full-text articles, forty-two articles were excluded.

Twenty-two articles are now included in the systematic literature review synthesis and backward citation tracking was conducted. Through this process, seven more articles were added to the studies. A total of twenty-nine articles are now finalized as the final sample for further data analysis. In order to achieve the highest quality to evidence synthesis, I had adopted the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) flow chart to document the different processes of a systematic review.

### **Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA)**

PRISMA requires systematic review reports to include a minimum set of items that must be evidence-based. It uses a checklist with twenty-seven criteria that must be included in the systematic review and a four-phase flow chart which provides a visual depiction and transparency of the different phases of a systematic review that helps the researcher to have a standardized condition when choosing, identifying, including, and reporting the articles during the search strategy.

The purpose of me using PRISMA flow chart is to enable myself to improve my reporting and ensure that the review is complete, transparent, and comprehensive by addressing the flow of information through the different phases of systematic literature review and ascertaining the number of articles identified, screened, found eligible, and finally included. Having that said, it also allows a better understanding among the readers with transparent reporting from the researcher of why the articles were specifically selected and included for the systematic literature review. Figure 1. shows the PRISMA flow chart to document the search process.





## PRISMA 2009 Flow Diagram

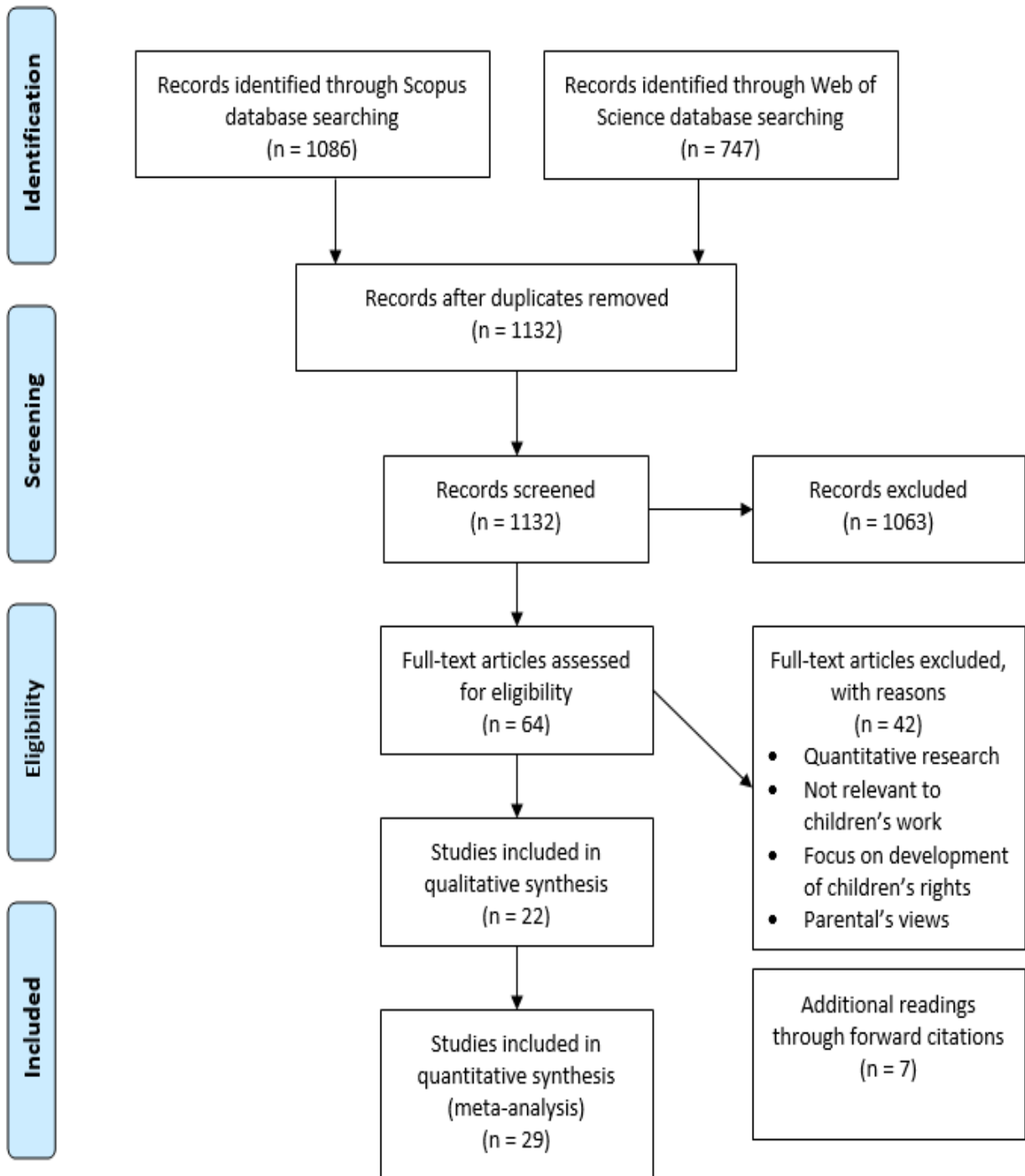


Figure 1. PRISMA flowchart

## 2.4 Critical Appraisal

Critical appraisal is the assessment of methodological quality and that is the quality with which the research study was undertaken. According to Morrison (2017:Para 1),

*"Critical appraisal helps to reduce the burden and allow you to focus on articles that are relevant to the research question, and that can reliably support or refute its claim with high-quality evidence, or identify high-level research relevant to your practice."*

Each of the final twenty-nine full-text articles was appraised independently using the Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) checklist (refer to **Appendix B**). CASP is a tool that was used for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of any qualitative study. In addition, it provides ten questions focusing on different aspects of a qualitative study. Using the questions posed, I can weigh the appropriateness of the research methods and evaluate whether the findings are well presented and meaningful. Considering the above pointers, Critical Appraisal Skills Programme was used as an appraisal tool for the selection of the articles to address the research questions for my systematic literature review from multiple studies. Each article was appraised and given a score using the CASP checklist (refer to **Appendix C**)

## 2.5 Data extraction and analysis

The analyses of the different streams of research were carried out to synthesize findings and categorize studies according to their scope. First and foremost, the primary concepts from each study were identified, with the original terms used by the author/s. From there on, the key ideas were then keyed into a spreadsheet to empower correlation across studies and interpretations of findings. This process enables me to as according to Dixon-Woods et al. (2005) integrate the key concepts of the primary study and maintain their differences while highlighting the complexities. **Appendix D** illustrates the summary of the key terms used in each full-text article.

An excel spreadsheet was then created to document the information pertaining to the following domains: bibliographic details, research focus, methodology, data analysis methods, research sample, and study context (refer to Table 3).

The purpose of the synthesized findings was to gather the experiences and perspectives of children and young people who participated in any form of work or labor in each article and how the tensions and controversies were linked to UNCRC children's rights, work, and education. The main targeted findings include direct quotations of working children and young people and the researcher/s interpretations of children's experiences for each article.

Table 3: Studies included in the analysis

Authors	Year	Title	Focus	Methodology	Method	Analysis	Sample	Context	CASP Score
Marisa O. Ensor Amanda J. Reinke	2014	African Children's Right to Participate in their Own Protection	The situation of South Sudan as illustrative of the dilemmas of upholding the right of conflict-affected children in Africa to participate in their own protection	Qualitative research	Ethnographic and participatory research methods	Thematic analysis	Unknown	Children and young people in South Sudan	14
Roy Maconachie Gavin Hilson	2016	Re-thinking the Child Labor 'Problem' in Rural sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Sierra Leone's Half Shovels	Children's participation in the rural economy that helps to generate the much-needed household income and monies needed to attend school.	Qualitative research	Semi-structured interviews, follow-up interviews	Qualitative analysis	July 2011: 40 child minders under the age of 15 and where possible, their parents.  Follow-up interviews in 2013 with 20 child miners	Children and young people who had been working in mining communities in Sierra Leone	18

Afua Twum-Danso Imoh Samuel Okyere	2020	Towards a more holistic understanding of child participation: Foregrounding the experiences of children in Ghana and Nigeria	Exploring children's own understanding of what meaningful participation means to them within the context of their everyday lives.	Qualitative research	Focus group discussions, semi-structured interviews, child participatory workshops, essays, and drawings.	Qualitative analysis	60 children aged between 8 and 17 from 3 states of the Niger Delta  180 pupils from schools in Esit-Eket  57 children aged between 14 – 17 (30 girls and 27 boys)	Children working with NGO workers in relation to child participation in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria.  Children working in artisanal gold mining site in Kenyasi – Ghana	16
Samuel Okyere	2012	Are working children's rights and child labour abolition complementary or opposing realms?	Child labor preventive efforts must recognize and address complications.	Qualitative research	Unstructured and semi-structured interviews, and observations.	Qualitative analysis	57 children (30 girls and 27 boys) aged 14 – 17.	Children working at the artisanal gold mining site in Ghana.	13
Virginia Morrow Uma Vennam	2010	Combining Work and School: The Dynamics of Girls' Involvement in Agricultural Work in Andhra Pradesh, India	Children's involvement in agricultural work, particularly cottonseed production.	Qualitative research	Group discussions, drawings, activity-based methods, and interviews	Thematic analysis	2 girls aged 12	Children working in family fields while attending local government schools.	16

Catherine E. Bolten	2018	Productive work and subjected labor: Children's pursuits and child rights in northern Sierra Leone	Children forming their own values that conflict with those held by elders and with rights doctrine.	Qualitative research	Classroom observations, participant observations, interviews,		2004-5: children in 2 primary school and secondary school  2010 and 2012: F65 children and youth	Children and youth who are working and schooling at the same time in Sierra Leone, school teachers, and parents.	16
Tatek Abebe	2007	Changing Livelihoods, Changing Childhoods: Patterns of Children's Work in Rural Southern Ethiopia	The dynamics of children's work among the Gedeo ethnic community in southern Ethiopia	Qualitative research	Observation, conversations, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, task-oriented child-focused activities	Thematic analysis		Children and young people working in Gedeo	17
Osei-Tutu Jonah  Tatek Abebe	2019	Tensions and controversies regarding child labor in small-scale gold mining in Ghana	Controversies around young people's involvement in small-scale mining and governments' efforts to curtail it in Amansie West District, Ghana	Qualitative research	Observation, in-depth interviews, focus groups discussions, essay writing, and recall chart	Thematic analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 13 young workers aged between 14 – 17</li> <li>- 3 teachers</li> <li>- 4 parents</li> <li>- 9 stakeholders</li> </ul>	Children and young people living in Amansie West Districts, in 3 different schools in three different communities.	18

Geraldine Andre Marie Godin	2014	Child labour, agency and family dynamics: The case of mining in Katanga (DRC)	Social agency of children involved in activities which are categorized as one of the worst forms of child labor by international legislation of children's rights	Qualitative research	Interviews, observations, informal discussions, cross-generational interviews, group discussions,	Qualitative analysis	21 Congolese households	Local families who opted for artisanal mining activities	16
Emebet Mulugeta Sissel H. Eriksen	2020	Aspirations and Setbacks of Working Children in Addis Ababa: Can They Realise Their Futures?	Look at the life situations and aspirations of working children in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Qualitative research	Interviews	Thematic Analysis	45 children (38 boys and 7 girls) aged between 8 – 16 years	Children working in Addis Ababa	19
Harriot Beazley	2015	Multiple identities, multiple realities: Children who migrate independently for work in Southeast Asia	Children's multiple complex motives to migrate seeking work	Qualitative research	Informal interviews, participatory observations, participatory action research, focus group discussions	Qualitative analysis	4 case studies	Children who migrated to the streets in Indonesia	14

R D F Bromley P K Mackie	2009	Child experiences as street traders in Peru: contributing to a reappraisal for working children	Presenting evidence of child street traders' experiences, identifying the principal negatives and positives of their trading work on the street, and drawing on a geographical appreciation of their work, to contribute to a reappraisal of work for children and its policy implications.	Mixed research methods: Quantitative and Qualitative research	Interviews, observational surveys, interview surveys, follow-up interviews	Quantitative analysis	32 child traders below 12 years old  68 child traders aged 12 – 17 years old	Child street traders who operate in the centre of Cusco	17
Jean Grugel Frederico Poley Martins Ferreira	2012	Street working children, children's agency and the challenge of children's rights: Evidence from Minas Gerais, Brazil	Discuss the challenges of making rights-based policies for street working children and showing the complexities of the lives of children working on the street.	Qualitative research	Surveys, questionnaire	Quantitative analysis	Over 3000 children working in the streets aged 18 and below.	Street working children under 18 years old in Minas Gerais	16

Kate Swanson	2007	'Bad Mothers' and 'Delinquent Children': Unravelling anti-begging rhetoric in the Ecuadorian Andes	Examine the rhetoric that circulates surrounding the lives of young indigenous women and children who beg on the streets and the rhetoric being produced and reproduced by urban planners, social workers, religious leaders, and the media.	Qualitative research	Interviews, participant observations, field notes, survey,	Empirical analysis	37 young women and children aged between 7 to 24 (20 females and 17 males)  Members who were connected to issues surrounding indigenous beggars (e.g. indigenous leaders, teachers, politicians, etc)  42 children in 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grades	Indigenous young women and children who begged in the city in Ecuador.	18
Kate Orkin	2010	In the child's best interests? Legislation on children's work in Ethiopia	Understanding the definitions of harmful work based on the local understanding of harmful work for children	Qualitative research	Surveying data for the qualitative case study. Ranking activities, semi-structured interviews, home observations	Thematic analysis	24 children (aged between 12 and 13)	Children doing paid work in Leki	16



Douglas Tendai Phiri	2016	Rural children's role in buffering household poverty through ganyu (piecework) in Zambia	Exploring how children use a traditional labour practice to ameliorate poverty.	Qualitative research	Semi-structured interviews, Focus group discussions, Observations	Qualitative analysis	1 <sup>st</sup> data collection: 24 participants (12 boys and 12 girls, 9 – 15 years old) 2 <sup>nd</sup> data collection: 18 participants (9 boys and 9 girls, 10 – 16 years old)	Children working across distinct annual work seasons in 3 villages in Chikomeni chiefdom, Lundazi district.	19
Rosemary C.B. Okoli Viviene E. Cree	2012	Children's Work: Experiences of Street-Vending Children and Young People in Enugu, Nigeria	Argues that the approach that children should be protected from work that is hazardous and harmful fails to address the complex reality of children's lives in developing countries	Qualitative research	Participants observations, semi-structured interviews	Thematic analysis	24 children and young vendors aged between 6 to 17 years old	Children and young people involved in itinerant street vending in Enugu, Nigeria.	17

Tatek Abebe	2008	Earning a living on the margins: Begging, street work and the socio-spatial experiences of children in Addis Ababa	Explores children's perspectives of begging, and how they negotiate their socio-spatial lives on the streets in Addis Ababa.	Qualitative research	Repeated interviews, in-depth group interviews, focus group discussions, questionnaire	Thematic analysis	28 children for repeated interviews 14 children for in-depth group interviews 24 – 36 children for group discussions 60 children for questionnaire	Children and young people begging on the streets in Addis Ababa.	18
Tufeiru Fuseini Marguerite Daniel	2018	Exploring the stressors and resources of Muslim child beggars in Dagbon of Northern Ghana in the context of child rights and existing realities	Explores the stressors and resources of Muslim child beggars in Dagbon in Northern Ghana and the consequences of their involvement in begging	Qualitative research	Draw and tell, storytelling	Thematic analysis	8 children aged between 10 – 14 years old.	Child beggars in Dagbon in Northern Ghana	17

Virginia Morrow Kerrily Pells	2012	Integrating Children's Human Rights and Child Poverty Debates: Examples from Young Lives in Ethiopia and India	Explores how discourses of children's rights play out in local contexts and how a narrowly legal perspective fails to engage with children's experiences of poverty	Qualitative research	1 to 1 interviews, groups discussions, creative activities	Qualitative analysis	Sub-study from Case studies from Young Lives from 2002 – 2017 Sub-Study 1: India – 42 young people aged 15-16 (conducted in 2011)  Sub-study 2: Ethiopia – 26 children aged between 9 and 16 (conducted in 2010)	Children and young people in Ethiopia, Peru, India, and Vietnam	15
Sharon Bessell	2011	Influencing international child labour policy: The potential and limits of children-centered research	Explores the tension between research that recognizes and reports children's agency and the structural constraints that militate against children's views, experiences, and priorities being translated into policy	Qualitative research	Open-ended discussions	Qualitative analysis	3 Case studies from 1994, 1995 and 1999 - 121 children aged between 10 and 16. (22 in 1994, 84 in 1995, 15 in 1999)	Working children in Jakarta, Indonesia	16

Mónica Pinilla-Roncancio Raquel Silva	2018	Children in Angola: Poverty, Deprivation and Child Labour	To measure the levels of deprivation and multidimensional poverty of children in Angola and the perceptions of poverty and child labor that urban households have in Angola	Mixed methods research	Semi-structured interviews, survey	Qualitative analysis	14 children aged 8 – 16 years old  7 adults  an integrated survey from IBEP 2008 - 2009	Street sellers living in Lubango	17
Natascha Klocker	2011	Negotiating Change: working with children and their employers to transform child domestic work in Iringa, Tanzania (Natascha Klocker) **	Exploring and incorporating both child domestic workers' and employers' perspectives.	Qualitative research	Interviews, focus group discussions,	Quantitative analysis	30 current and 34 former domestic workers  57 employers of domestic workers  29 local leaders	Children and employers of domestic workers, and local leaders in Kiswahili.	18

Natascha Klocker	2012	Conducting sensitive research in the present and past tense: Recounting the stories of current and former child domestic workers	Explores the issues facing child domestic workers and to determine contextually appropriate pathways for improving their circumstances	Mixed methods research: Action-oriented research and literature review	Peer-interviewing	Quantitative analysis	30 current and 34 former child domestic workers	Child domestic workers in Iringa, Tanzania	17
Rosemary D.F Bromley Peter K. Mackie	2008	Identifying the role of children in informal trade: Evidence for urban policy	Exploring the role of children in informal trade	Mixed methods research: Qualitative research and Quantitative research	Informal discussions, key informant interviews, observational surveys,	Qualitative analysis	Interview survey: 100 child traders  Detailed interviews: 30 child traders among those participated in the interview survey	Children and young people working in informal trading in Cusco, Peru.	16
Joel Jennings Stuart Aitken Silvia López Estrada Adriana Fernandez	2006	Learning and earning: relational scales of children's work	Explores the reasons dissonance of children's work between the global efforts to eradicate abusive forms of child labor and local settings where children's work plays an	Qualitative research	Surveys, open-ended interviews, focus groups, mental mapping	Theoretical analysis	1200 children (9 – 14 years old)	Children who are worked in Tijuana supermarkets in 2004	13

			important role in social reproduction, socialization, and skill acquisition.						
Ruth Evans	2006	Negotiating Social Identities: The influence of Gender, Age and Ethnicity on young people's 'street careers' in Tanzania	Explores the diverse ways that children and young people negotiate their social identities and construct their life course trajectories on the street	Qualitative research	Tape-recorded, semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, focus groups, participant observation	Thematic analysis	2000: 16 young people (9 boys and 7 girls aged 11 to 20 yrs old)  2002: 39 children and young people	Street children in Tanzania	18
Tatek Abebe	2009	Interdependent rights and agency: The role of children in collective livelihood strategies in rural Ethiopia	Examines the value of the language of children's rights and the social significance of this language to working children.	Qualitative research	Life histories, focus group discussions, photo essays, story writing	Thematic analysis	Unknown	Children in Gedeo	16

Tatek Abebe  Anne Trine Kjørholt	2009	Social actors and victims of exploitation: Working children in the cash economy of Ethiopia's South	Explores the role of children in household livelihoods among the Gedeo ethnic community in Ethiopia in the context of theoretical debates over children's agency and social competence.	Qualitative research	Observations, semi-participant observation, story writing, in-depth interviews	Thematic analysis	40 children aged between 10 to 18 years old.	Children and young people taking part in paid and unpaid work Qamong the Gedeo ethnic community in Southern Ethiopia	17
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When analyzing qualitative studies, we have to determine which data or findings to include (Thomas and Harden, 2008). Therefore, to have a better overview of working children's experiences and perspectives, the synthesized findings were read twice. Subsequently, the main targeted findings of both direct quotations from working children and young people, and researcher/s' interpretations were combined, and a thematic analysis of the synthesized findings was conducted using Thomas and Harden (2008) 3 stages of thematic analysis – 1) Line by line coding, 2) Generation of descriptive themes, 3) Generation of interpretive/analytical themes. According to Thomas and Harden (2008), the 3 stages of thematic analysis are developed to address questions about people's standpoints and experiences.

There are several types of analysis for a systematic literature review. For example, narrative review, meta-summary, scoping review, thematic analysis, and more. I had chosen to conduct a thematic analysis because it "allows clear identification of prominent themes and organized and structured ways of dealing with the literature under these themes. It is flexible, allowing considerable latitude to reviewers and a means of integrating qualitative evidence." (Dixon-Woods et al., 2005:47). Additionally, as stated by Sandelowski (2004), qualitative research is conducted to gather a better understanding of the participation's views. Therefore, using thematic analysis will support me in finding out participants' perspectives, knowledge, experiences, and/or values. Furthermore, thematic analysis opens up the opportunity for flexibility when it comes to interpreting the data gathered. This can be supported by Braun & Clarke, (2006:81),

*"Thematic analysis can be an essentialist or realist method, which reports experiences, meanings and the reality of participants, or it can be a constructionist method, which examines the ways in which events, realities, meanings, experiences and so on are the effects of a range of discourses operating within society. It can also be a 'contextualist' method, sitting between the two poles of essentialism and constructionism, and characterized by theories, such as critical realism which acknowledge the ways individuals make meaning of their experience, and, in turn, the ways the broader social context impinges on those meanings, while retaining focus on the material and other limits of 'reality'.*

In addition, thematic analysis helps to extend the primary study beyond the original data set (Thomas & Harden, 2008). Hence, it allows me to not just describe what the other studies have presented but there is an element of interpretive analysis which is presented in the three stages of Thomas and Harden thematic analysis. Moreover, data in primary qualitative research is often analyzed using thematic analysis (Thomas & Harden, 2008).

### **Stage 1: Line by line coding**

In this stage, both the researcher/s' interpretations of children's work and children's perspectives and experiences towards child labor were coded using NVivo which is a software that organizes, analyzes, and finds insights from unstructured or qualitative



data. Each line of text was coded independently according to its meaning and content (e.g. "Participant's annotation" OR "Researcher/s' interpretations").

This stage is an important stage as by utilizing line by line coding, according to Britten et al. as cited in Thomas & Harden (2008, p. 5) "The use of line-by-line coding enabled me to undertake what has been described as one of the key tasks in the analysis of qualitative research: the translation of concepts from one study to another."

### **Stage 2: Generation of descriptive themes**

Line by line coding generated 131 lines of text that were coded under "Participant's annotation" and 309 lines of text that were coded under "Researcher/s' interpretations". With the given line of text coded, different themes were generated by creating a grouping of codes to capture the significances of the preliminary codes. Figures 2 and 3 show the different descriptive themes that were generated during this process.

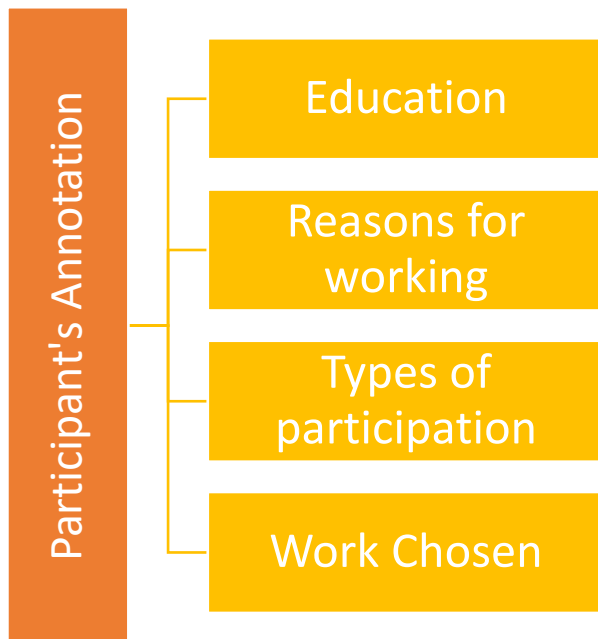


Figure 2. Participant's Annotation

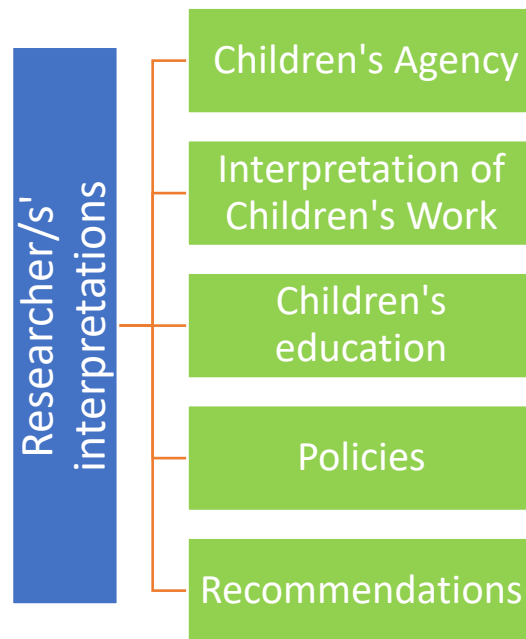


Figure 3. Researcher/s' interpretation

### **Stage 3: Generation of interpretive/analytical themes**

In this stage, the descriptive themes that were generated in stage two were re-deciphered inductively. During the process for the generation of analytical themes, I looked through all the codes that were generated in stage 2 and the articles multiple times to get myself familiarized with the data collated. Across the data generated under "participants annotation" and "Researcher/s' Interpretation", I saw a similarity in how the descriptive themes are intertwined with each other. I then proceeded to brainstorm the analytical themes that fit into the data collated by listing the main ideas of the codes

on paper. This process has helped me in generating seven different analytical themes to address my research questions. These seven analytical themes will enable me to communicate reliable evidence about my systematic literature review in an accessible and clear manner.

The seven analytical themes generated are as follow:

1. Children see their participation in work as an important part of their lives and cultural obligation.
2. Children value their ability to contribute to their household livelihood.
3. Children develop agency while participating in work.
4. Interdependency was strong within families in the Global South.
5. Children’s participation in work as the means to access education opportunities.
6. Controversies and Tensions in policies regarding child work
7. Policies recommendations

With the finalized twenty-nine articles reviewed, twenty-five used qualitative research methods while four used mixed methods research (Refer to table 3). All studies were undertaken in the Global South. Figure 4 shows the breakdown of the countries where the research was conducted by all the published articles.

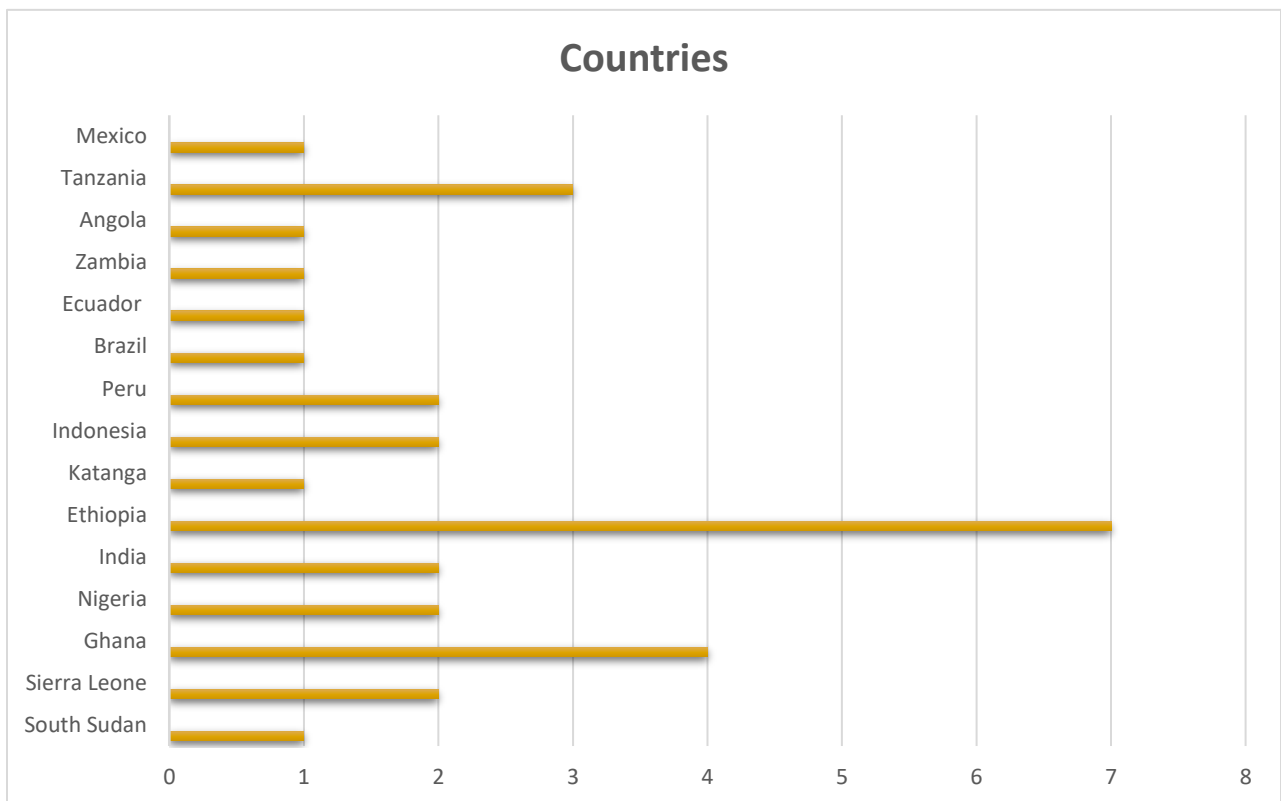


Figure 4. Countries where research was conducted

## 2.6 Strengths and limitations

This systematic literature review brings out the annotations of children in the research by capturing working children's and young people's subjective experiences and perceptions of their involvement in economic activities in the Global South. It also allows the possibility of identifying the problems working children and young people are facing. This systematic literature review is also presented to the readers in a synthesized and meaningful way that is easy for the readers to read.

There are some limitations to this systematic literature review, including the possible omission of qualitative studies as a result of unclear titles and abstracts, and the inclusion of only English language research. Also, Global South consists of four different continents - Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Oceania. However, the results have shown that the majority of the research was conducted in Africa - 69%, while 17% were conducted in Latin America, 14% in Asia, and none in Oceania (Refer to figure 5). Working children and young people's voices in Oceania were left out.

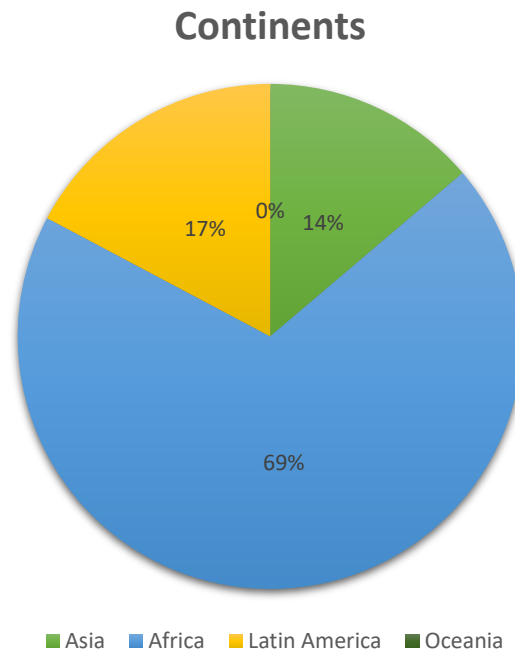


Figure 5. Research conducted in different continents

In addition, the majority of the research was conducted with current children and young people who were participating in economic activities during the time of research. Perspectives and voices of working children and young people in the past tense were left out.



## **Chapter Three**

### **3. Key research findings and Discussions Part I**

This chapter will focus on presenting a comprehensive analysis of the full range of the literature review from all the finalized twenty-nine studies tending to the following research questions:

1. Why are children involved in work in the Global South?
2. How is the work of children linked to their everyday lives including intergenerational and familial relationships?
3. What is the connection between children's participation in work and education in the Global South?

In this literature review, key research findings and discussions will be analyzed based on five different analytical themes that were generated during the data extractions. The analytical themes that were generated during the data extractions were based on texts that I had identified and coded with the possible different thematic elements it holds during the line-by-line coding process. The codes were then put together and synthesized to locate the core themes.

Each analytical theme will be reported in the following sections. Firstly, I present the key research findings from the review. In this section, I will be reporting the empirical data collected and reported in all twenty-nine published articles. Then the discussions section brings out some salient features of the articles in relation to the themes identified. In this section, I will also be discussing the key research findings presented.

The full analysis of the literature review will be presented in two different chapters. In this chapter, I will be focusing on key research findings and discussions on understanding why children and young people were involved in work and how it was intertwined with their everyday lives in the Global South. Therefore, I will be discussing the first five analytical themes as follows:

1. Children see their participation in work as an important part of their lives and cultural obligation.
2. Children value their ability to contribute to their household livelihood.
3. Children develop agency while participating in work.
4. Interdependency was strong within families in the Global South.
5. Children's participation at work as the means to access education opportunities.

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## **Key Research Findings**

### **3.1 Importance of work**

This section discusses three themes that are linked to the importance of work for children and young people in the Global South. The first theme establishes the connection of how

children and young people's participation in economic activities are interwoven in local cultural practices. The second theme relates to how children and young people acquire skills from their participation in economic activities. Lastly, the third theme will discuss how children and young people's participation in work are viewed as a form of socialization that enables a smooth transition to adulthood. Here education is understood as learning that happens both within and outside schooling. It includes socialization which according to Hastings and Grady (2008), is the process through which an individual's values, skills, purposes, attitudes, and behaviors change in order to conform to what is regarded as acceptable and appropriate for their present and future roles in the society to which they belong.

### **3.1.1 Local Cultural Practice**

Most studies have shown that children's participation in economic activities is intertwined with local cultural notions. In general, most working children mentioned that their participation in economic activities is linked to the social/familial responsibility that was integrated into their society (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Klocker, 2011; Morrow et al., 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; Fuseini et al., 2018; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019). According to their local context of "being a good child", children and young people were supposed to contribute, listen, respect, and obey their elders. In addition, the contribution of labor and helping out in familial chores are essential cultural norms in several settings. Christina, a 12-year-old girl told that:

*"Everybody has something to do! Male or female.. Good children should help their parents do whatever they tell dem (them), even if na (only) to carry gravel." (Okoli et al., 2012:66)*

Children described that they do not see their participation in economic activities as unusual (Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Mulugeta et al., 2020) and see it as something positive and part of growing up in the local context (Maconachie et al., 2016; Imoh et al., 2020). For some children, they considered their participation in economic activities as a stage where they become more independent and assume an adult role in the community (Evans, 2006; Bolten, 2012; Ensor et al., 2014; Moconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016; Imoh et al., 2020). Adults believed that children's participation in economic activities instills resilience and discipline in children as they transit to adulthood (Abebe, 2009).

In a few cases, some individuals perceive childhood as a time of life when children should contribute to the household as a necessary part of their upbringing (Abebe, 2007; Abebe et al., 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; André et al., 2014; Phiri, 2016; Jonah et al., 2019). Children and young people were not seen as dependents who requires protection from their families (Abebe, 2009; Beazley, 2015; Moconachie et al., 2016; Imoh et al., 2020). Instead, they were seen as capable beings who were responsible for taking care of their lives from a young age (Mulugeta et al., 2020). In general, children have displayed a positive attitude towards their participation in economic activities and even benefited from it (Evans, 2006; Abebe, 2008; Morrow et al., 2010; Grugel et al., 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019). While some children perform various jobs throughout the day

without considering it as work, but rather as part of their everyday lives and tied into their play activities (Abebe, 2007), others see their participation in economic activities similar to doing domestic chores at home (Okoli et al., 2012). However, although some children understood their need for participation at work, they did not view work as enjoyable (Morrow et al., 2010). For example, Ramya, a 12-years-old girl who participated in farm work complained that:

*"It is very hard... we walk every day, I feel pain in the legs too... we have to do the same work everyday, even if it is hot. At that time I cover my head with a towel, sometimes I get a fever, but mostly it is only hands and legs that ache. I feel tired of the long day, and do not feel like doing anything after reaching home. Not even studying." (Morrow et al., 2010:307-308)*

A particular research study has shown that children were encouraged to participate in work as a customary practice for socio-religious function (Abebe, 2008). For example, it is believed that through begging, society instills a sense of humility and discipline in children and young people. Likewise, in a few cases, children's participation in work is recognized as the ability to retain traditional cultural skills (Abebe, 2007, Phiri, 2016).

In addition, children and young people were seen to have matured through their involvement in economic activities which is considered as 'good training' for their transition to adulthood (Bolten, 2012; Jonah et al., 2019). The type of work distributed is influenced by gender and age (Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; Jonah et al., 2019). For example, more strenuous work such as agricultural work is assigned to older children, and simpler work such as engaging in the selling of farm produce in daily or weekly markets is assigned to younger children.

Also, working children felt that it is their responsibility to work or give back to their parents as much as possible. They do not see themselves as a 'child' but instead as an 'adult' who are able to provide and support themselves (Orkin, 2010; Jonah et al., 2019; Imoh et al., 2020). For example, a 16-year-old participant described this as:

*"Looking at my age, it is not all the things I need that I expect my parents to provide. So when I go (to work), the little money I get I use it to buy some of the things I need." (Jonah et al., 2019:367)*

On the contrary, a research study has revealed that the increasing knowledge about children's rights and the abolishment of child labor around the world, has created tensions and discord between the appropriate relationship between work and children for parents and guardians (Jennings et al., 2006). Overall, it is documented in several studies that work is seen as a way of instilling certain cultural values and skills in children and young people.

### **3.1.2 Acquiring skills**

A related theme that emerged from the systematic literature review is the connection between work and children's acquisition of skills for everyday survival and the future. Studies revealed that there was a connection between working children who were participating in economic activities and acquiring valued and valuable skills. For example, trading skills (Bromley et al., 2008; Abebe et al., 2009), agriculture knowledge (Abebe, 2009), social skills such as

interactions with customers (Jennings et al., 2006). Skills acquisition can be acquired by accompanying their parents to work as a form of informal apprenticeship from a young age (Bromley et al., 2008; Abebe, 2008; Abebe, 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Okoli et al., 2012;). Children and young people follow their parent/s (mostly mothers) to their workplace. While playing, they observe and help out their parents when needed.

Working children have acquired valuable skills through hands-on participation in economic activities (Jennings et al., 2006; Bromley et al., 2009; Okrin, 2010; Morrow et al., 2012; André et al., 2014; Beazley, 2015). For example, children who participated in economic activities like street vendors acquired skills such as sourcing for the ability of goods, handling different customers, money management, and more. Some also learned skills of numerical such as mathematics through handling money.

In addition, working children and young people have gained a substantial of valuable skills when they participate in household livelihood activities (Abebe, 2007; Phiri, 2016). For instance, in Phiri's (2016) research study on rural children's role in buffering household poverty through Ganyu in Zambia, children and young people acquired skills for cultivating, nurturing, and harvesting new crops through ganyu on other people's fields which were critical for both the present and future lives.

### **3.1.3 Socialization**

Studies have discovered that children's participation in economic activities was not only seen as a necessity but at the same time, it was also considered as a form of socialization process for children and young people (Abebe, 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Klocker 2011). A child's socialization was seen as a continuous process in which children and young people pick up necessary and cultural skills to become active members of the society (Abebe, 2007; Bromley et al., 2009; Abebe et al., 2009). In some societies, integrating children into the working environment helps children to become empowered to endure the challenges of life as they transit to adulthood (Mocnachie et al., 2016; Fuseini et al, 2018; Imoh et al., 2020). These studies documented that by permitting children to engage in economic activities, children and young people's social experiences and interactions were strengthened by providing exposures and practices which will aid in increasing their capabilities within the constrain of culture, livelihoods, and generational imperatives (Abebe, 2009). Therefore, the empowerment and skills that children gained are critical elements of childhood socialization which enables them in overcoming similar challenges when they step into the workforce.

Moreover, some described that in comparison to formal education, the skills acquired during the socialization process were more valuable, as they prepared children and young people for their future (Bromley et al., 2009). Children see work as an important process for them as they transit into adulthood (Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016). It is also documented that the type of socialization children was exposed to is crucial. Although most socialization that children went through was to prepare them for their future, yet some young children were socialized at a very young age to participate in industries (e.g. sex industry) that were harmful to their development (Beazley, 2015).

In some cases, throughout the socialization process, children and young people were not working alone but alongside their family members (André et al., 2014;) where children and



young people imitate, copy, and/or in some ways as apprentices to take on adult roles (Moconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016). What the above discussion demonstrates was that work is a form of socialization; children were socialized through work.

### **3.1.4 Discussions**

Child labor could be a tremendously challenged marvel in childhood studies within the contemporary world. Beneath the scholarly world and policy circles, the epistemological perspectives about children and childhood are reflected in child labor. The tensions on how to view child labor were reflected in the above points that were analyzed regarding the value and significance of work for children's lives. This section put together some of the common themes discussed above.

To begin with, the key findings of the articles has shown that childhood for children and young people in the Global South is a phase of life whereby they were encouraged to contribute to their household through their participation in work (Abebe, 2007; Abebe et al., 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; André et al., 2014; Phiri, 2016; Jonah et al., 2019). Children's contribution at work was perceived as an integrated part of childhood in many majority worlds (Abebe, 2007; Abebe et al., 2009; Okyere, 2012; Moconachie et al., 2016; Bolten, 2018; Mulugeta et al., 2020). Although in some cases in the key research findings, children have viewed their participation in work as tiresome (Morrow et al., 2010), yet more than one-quarter of the published articles have reported children viewing their participation in economic activities as something positive and/or as part of their everyday lives (Evans, 2006; Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2008; Morrow et al., 2010; Grugel et al., 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019). Therefore, the hegemonic model of childhood whereby children are autonomous and active human beings who are placed within the nuclear family, and childhood is seen as the playful segment of their lives can be problematic as it holds very little to no relevance in the Global South (Abebe et al., 2009; Bessell, 2011; Klocker, 2012; Morrow et al., 2012; Moconachie et al., 2016; Mulugeta et al., 2020). Moreover, over one-third of the results in the key research findings have shown that most children and young people's participation in economic activities were strongly interconnected with social and familial responsibilities. As stated by Klocker (2012:902), "The imposition of Minority World standards (of non-work) onto Majority World childhoods has been described as a form of cultural imperialism." Henceforth, by acknowledging the significance of children's responsibilities, it enables universal legislations and policies to shift its attention to focus on 'the uniqueness of the local, dutiful and cultural child who views his or her life as being closely tied together with the lives of families and communities' (Abebe, 2009:89).

The key findings of the research in the systematic literature review have also highlighted that working children's participation in economic activities was a common ground in the Global South and childhood was seen to be concurrent with the adult world where children and young people gradually participate in what seems to be labeled as 'adult work' in the minority world as their competences develop (Bromley et al., 2009; Orkin, 2010; Jonah et al., 2019; Imoh et al., 2020). However, as stated by Abebe and Kjørholt (2009:180), "Their participation in the labour force is part of a system of reciprocal exchanges, beginning in the early stages of childhood, and continuing through adolescents. Children are expected to help their parents and work for them, while they also have expectations of being rewarded with food, clothing,

schooling, land, wedding expenses and inheritance.” Therefore, when universal legislations, for example, UNCRC and ILO define childhood in a singular form instead of ‘childhoods’ in plural form, it fails to recognize the conceptual understanding that children and childhood are socially constructed in different ways that are not in par with the hegemonic model of childhood in different cultural context (Morrow et al., 2012; Beazley, 2015). Hence, it is necessary and important for us to understand and acknowledge that childhood is not an isolated phenomenon, but it is deeply connected with different aspects of society (Abebe, 2009).

The key research findings further highlighted how certain cultural practices have encouraged the practice of child labor as a way to cultivate a child’s character and skills (Bolten, 2012; Jonah et al., 2019). It was believed that through this cultural practice, it allows children and young people to be seen as an active member in the society (Jennings et al., 2006; Bromley et al., 2009; Okrin, 2010; Morrow et al., 2012; André et al., 2014; Beazley, 2015). For instance, there is a practice whereby children follow their parents to work to acquire the important skills and values from a young age (Bromley et al., 2008; Abebe, 2008; Abebe, 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Okoli et al., 2012). They believe that these skills and values are only attainable through children’s participation in child labor. Moreover, these are the skills and values that parents in the majority world perceived as beneficial for both children and society as they mature into adulthood (Bromley et al., 2008; Abebe et al., 2009). As stated by Ensor and Reinke (2014:87), “Protective approaches that make the young dependent on adult support may increase children’s vulnerability when adult protection is no longer available.”

Furthermore, results from the research in the systematic literature review have further accentuated that children’s participation in economic activities also consists of the existing collective rights of children. For example, their rights to socialization (Abebe, 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Klocker 2011) and rights to learn skills that are useful for a successful transition to adulthood (Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016; Fuseini et al, 2018; Imoh et al., 2020). In many parts of the Global South, children and young people’s participation in work was seen as part of an important process of socialization and a milestone for them to transit from childhood into adulthood (Evans, 2006; Bolten, 2012; Ensor et al., 2014; Moconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016; Imoh et al., 2020).

To end with, universal children’s rights could disrupt local cultural practices of what is seen best for children and young people. As reported in Jennings et al., (2006) research, they highlighted the vulnerable position of parents in relation to universal children’s rights which rallies for advocating the best interest of the child.

## **Key Research Findings**

### **3.2 Children’s contribution to their household livelihood**

This section discusses two themes that are linked to the empowerment of children. According to Page and Czuba (1999), empowerment is defined as a process by which people gain power over their own lives and make decisions based on issues they define as important for themselves, their communities, and their society. The first theme demonstrates how children and young people gained a sense of empowerment through

their participation in economic activities, while at the same time, redefining their position in the home. The second theme demonstrates how their participation in economic activities has bestowed them the power to take charge of the money they earn.

### **3.2.1 Empowerment within the household**

Working children reported that they gained a sense of empowerment when they were helping to supplement additional income for their families. (Evans, 2006; Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2008; Abebe, 2009; Bessell, 2011; Bolten, 2012; André et al., 2013; Ensor et al., 2014; Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016; Fuseini et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019; Imoh et al., 2020). Participation in work and the ability to contribute income increased their sense of self and belonging to the family. They described that contributing to their household livelihood had increased their chances of gaining immediate and long-term means of their families' well-being which shapes how they were viewed and seen by their families (Abebe, 2009).

Working children talked about the reason behind them participating in economic activities were mainly due to financial difficulties their families were facing. However, being able to alleviate the financial difficulties their family was going through by working gave them a sense of pride and satisfaction, and it has thus increased their value of importance within the family as they felt that they were able to make a difference in their family's household situation (Robson, 2003; Ansell, 2005; Abebe, 2008; André et al., 2014; Imoh et al., 2020; Mulugeta et al., 2020).

Working children had also reported that they were able to redefine and strengthen their position within the family (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2008; Phiri, 2016; Fuseini et al., 2018; Imoh et al., 2020), and more respect was given by their family members (Jonah et al., 2019; Imoh et al., 2020) with their contributions to their household livelihood. For example, Pauline, a 16-year-old girl shared how her position within her family was strengthened.

*"People's behaviour towards me has changed a lot since I started coming here on vacations. Now my parents want to discuss everything with me, even important matters which they did not want me to know about at first. Sometimes when something happens and I am not at home, they will wait for me to come so we can all sit down and talk about it. I think it is all because I now earn my own money to use for school when all the others have dropped out (of school). Everybody says good things about me; even some people in our area who are older than me now call me "sister" as if I am, rather, older than them. I think it is very funny how my situation has changed because of all this". (Imoh et al., 2020:5)*

Children who migrated from villages to the city to work has also reported that they have greater control over their life decisions in terms of marriage, for example, delaying their marriage or having a greater say on the choice of their husband (Bessell, 2010) because of their contributions towards their family. Other working children reported that they

had acquired decision-making power at home (André et al., 2014; Maconachie et al., 2016; Imoh et al., 2020).

In addition, children had also reported that not only were they able to strengthen their position within the family they were also able to 'solidify their position as participants in the society.' (André et al., 2014; Jonah et al., 2019:368). For example, a young miner shared the following during the in-depth interview:

*"I take care of myself and sometimes send them (parents) money for my younger siblings, they respect me as giving them a helping hand. ...I try to appear neat in school. And sometimes when I buy food, I share it with my friends who don't have money, so they give me respect." (Jonah et al., 2019:365)*

Meanwhile, some working children reported that participating in economic activities had allowed them to attain social equality among their peers (Phiri, 2016).

In some cases, participating in economic activities was not just as simple as gaining a sense of empowerment and strengthening their position within their families. Working children said that empowerment is a prerequisite for them to enter adulthood as older adolescents (Ensor et al., 2014; Bolten, 2018). They mentioned that older adolescents who are transiting to adulthood should be able to demonstrate that they are able to perform various acts and take on 'aged-based responsibilities and social roles which are valued and necessary for survival.' (Ensor et al., 2014:82).

Street-working children have also reported their perspectives on street life. They mentioned that working on the street had increased their sense of independence (Grugel et al., 2012) which allowed them to develop an independent sense of self. In other words, they were no longer subjected to adult control in the household (Evans, 2006; Beazley, 2018). Recognition of their trading skills has also led to a positive outlook towards their participation in economic activities as their self-esteem increases (Bromley et al., 2009).

Conversely, working children reported that it was through their participation in economic activities that had allowed them to earn their rights, for example, the right to a voice within the household or community, and those who failed to do so will not be guaranteed a voice (Abebe, 2009; Imoh et al., 2020).

### **3.2.2 Economic empowerment**

Another aspect of the synthesis is the empowerment of children in economic terms. Working children and young people conveyed that participation in economic activities had allowed them to gain a considerable amount of economic empowerment where they have the ability and power to make and act on economic decisions (Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2008; Bromley et al., 2009; Bessell, 2010; Grugel et al., 2012; Morrow et al., 2012; Beazley, 2015; Phiri, 2016; Bolten, 2018; Fuseini et al., 2018; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Mulugeta et al., 2020).

Although in most research studies, financial management is usually something that is restricted to adults, it is a common practice in rural parts of Africa (Abebe, 2007). In some cases, children conveyed that they were able to take full charge of how the money earned was spent within the household (Abebe, 2007; Phiri, 2016; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018).

Working children had also conveyed that they were able to decide on how they were able to use the extra money earned as a means to fund activities and purchases that their families could not afford (Abebe, 2008; Bromley et al., 2009; Bessell, 2010; Bessell, 2011; Grugel et al., 2012; Beazley, 2015; Phiri, 2016; Fuseini et al., 2018). For example, Desta, a 13-year-old boy narrated:

*'When I have made up two birr before lunch, I am very happy because I have enough to take back home, and I have got the whole afternoon to get additional money that I can spend in whatever way it pleases me.'* (Abebe, 2008:276)

Also, working children have reported having stronger desires to gain economic empowerment as they grow older (Bessell, 2011; Bromley et al., 2009)

In addition, working children conveyed that economic empowerment has instilled positive feelings in them (Grugel et al., 2012; Mulugeta et al., 2020). They noted that 'buying things made a lot of children feel good, even if they were only spending the money on food or on school expenses.' (Grugel et al., 2012:836).

In some cases, working children saved up part of the income earned for future use (Jonah et al., 2019) or investment in a business (Mulugeta et al., 2020). For example, Nesru, a 16-year-old boy narrated:

***"Researcher: How much do you have in your bank now?"***

*Nesru: 8,000 Birr.*

***Researcher: Do you think you have enough money for the work you are planning to do?***

*Nesru: Yes. I do not want to spend all my money, since I am going to start a new business. I may even go bankrupt. So I do not want to spend much money at the beginning."*

*(Mulugeta et al., 2020:180)*

On the contrary, children working in the artisanal mine have demonstrated that economic empowerment in children could be threatening towards the interdependency between families and communities (André et al., 2014). This is because children who were working in the mine received a significant amount of salary which resulted in the individualization of children. Over time, children who worked in the artisanal mine created a sub-culture where they go after luxury and flashiness goods while demanding an affirmation of autonomy and financial independence. As a result, new spaces of

socialization were offered to children and young people who worked in the mine. This new type of socialization could gradually separate children and young people from their families and communities. This also means that children who are working in artisanal mines are separating themselves from the exchanges of service within the community which is an important aspect of interdependency.

### **3.2.3 Discussions**

The term 'child labor' often comes with a lot of negative perspectives that deemed the activities that children and young people participate in as detrimental to their physical, mental, and health development which may hinder their development. However, the systematic literature review has demonstrated how children and young people who were participating at work hold a different perspective. Participating in work does not only allows children to supplement their household income but at the same time, it has provided them a sense of empowerment and/or redefine and strengthen their position around the house. In other words, some working children were given the power to make decisions for the household.

Over half of the results in the findings have reported that children gained a sense of empowerment when they were helping in supplementing an additional income for their families. Empowerment in regard to gaining respect from their family members, strengthening their position within the family and/or community, and economic empowerment.

The key findings of the research in the systematic literature review have strongly confirmed that working children and young people had gained some form of respect from their family members. This has further increased their value of importance within the household (Robson, 2003; Ansell, 2005; Abebe, 2008; André et al., 2014; Imoh et al., 2020; Mulugeta et al., 2020). Therefore, redefining and strengthening their position within the family (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2008; Phiri, 2016; Fuseini et al., 2018; Imoh et al., 2020).

The systematic literature review has also demonstrated the connection between working children's enhanced status within the household and/or community and their power in decision making (Bessell, 2010; André et al., 2014; Maconachie et al., 2016; Imoh et al., 2020.) When working children's status is enhanced, it provided them the opportunities to participate in decision-making for themselves, their families, and the society (Okyere, 2012; Imoh et al., 2020). The power in decision-making comes in two different forms – firstly, power to gain greater control over their life decisions (Bessell, 2010) and secondly, economic empowerment (Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2008; Bromley et al., 2009; Bessell, 2010; Grugel et al., 2012; Morrow et al., 2012; Beazley, 2015; Phiri, 2016; Bolten, 2018; Fuseini et al., 2018; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Mulugeta et al., 2020). However, with more and more countries trying their best to have their national laws in line with the UNCRC, working children and their meaningful roles in the society were hindered by it rather than being empowered (Abebe, 2009). This means to say that ILO conventions and campaigns that are against child labor may strip working children's rights from gaining empowerment within their household and/or community. This

highlights the need for policies and structures to take into consideration a range of local cultural resources that could be mobilized in order to empower working children. In order to do so, the solution is not to treat children's rights as a universal measuring scale, but to consider how family collectives in the minority world provide a space for children to exercise their rights in their local context (Abebe, 2009).

Moreover, key research findings have also shown that empowerment does not only redefine children and young people's position within the family and community, but at the same time it acts as a platform for them to attain social equality among their peers (Phiri, 2016), gaining independence (Grugel et al., 2012), earning rights to a voice within the household (Abebe, 2009; Imoh et al., 2009), and a requirement for entering adulthood (Ensor et al., 2014; Bolten, 2018). This highlights that there is a continuing need to conceptualize children's work not only as an economic process, but instead as a phenomenon embedded in the unique realities of the individuals, their families, and societies (Jennings et al., 2006). As argued by Abebe (2009), the best way to ensure children's rights are promoted is not simply advancing current liberal ideology as 'right,' but instead exploring how rights and relationships have the potential to inform efforts to deliver entitlements to vulnerable children.

In addition, findings from the systematic literature review have shown that in general, working children enjoy the economic empowerment that they have gained, the freedom to use the money they earned as they please, and they value the ability for decision-making within the household (Grugel et al., 2012; Mulugeta et al., 2020). However, in some cases, economic empowerment can be undesirable. Children's economic empowerment has allowed them to create their very own sub-culture that could be threatening to the interdependency between families and communities (André et al., 2014).

## **Key Research Findings**

### **3.3 Agency**

This section discusses two themes about children's agency. The first theme shows how children and young people's participation in economic activities were manifested into children's 'thick agency'. According to Abebe (2019:6) "Thick agency refers to having the latitude to act within a broad range of choices and options. Thick agency can be the opportunity of girls and boys to choose the circumstances that affect their present and future lives." This means that children and young people who are participating at work have the capacity to decide what they feel is best for the current situation they are facing and the future. In the subsequent theme, I will be analyzing how children's resilience has enabled them to cope and obtain a possible better livelihood for themselves and/or their families.

#### **3.3.1 Thick Agency**

The majority of the research studies showed that working children who had decided to participate in economic activities were to ensure their families' well-being (Abebe, 2008; Orkin,

2010; Morrow et al., 2012; Bolten, 2018; Mulugeta et al., 2020). Denbel, a 15-year-old boy narrated:

*"My mother always says that she doesn't have the capacity to fulfil all our needs ... when my family couldn't provide me with necessities, I decided to work ... and earn money to get what I need. When I get 150 birr [about £5.40], then I give 50–60 to my mother and I buy shoes and other necessities for myself with the remaining money."* (Morrow et al., 2012:914)

Working children recognized the need to engage in economic activities as a means to help support their families and to elevate the hardship they were going through by assessing the current socio-economic situation that their families were undergoing. On the contrary, children who migrated to work independently reported that financial difficulties at home were not the only reason why they decided to move away from home to engage in economic activities. They reported violence, abuse, neglect as the reasons why they were motivated to move away from their families (Klocker, 2011; Beazley, 2015).

Working children had also reported that their decision to engage in economic activities was to earn an income for their personal usage and/or interest, for example, getting candies, shoes, paying for examination fees, uniforms, stationery, etc. They mentioned that with their families' current financial situation, they have almost nothing more to spare for any other expenses other than ensuring their daily well-being met (Abebe, 2008; Grugel et al., 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; André et al., 2014; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018). Working children recognized both the importance of supporting their families' well-being and ensuring their freedom, autonomy, and independence were met (Abebe, 2008).

For some working children, their decision to take part in economic activities was because the thought of hanging around at home with nothing to do is not alluring. Home can be a place where it is deemed as 'boring'. (Grugel et al., 2012; Klocker, 2012).

In some cases, working children see their participation in economic activities as an opportunity to create a space for play, at the same time taking on responsibility and ownership while at work (Jennings et al., 2006). For example, getting to work on time, ensuring the tasks given are fulfilled.

Children who were working on the streets reported that they enjoy the ability to be socializing with their friends while working. Street working children viewed working on the street as both an opportunity to earn an income and gaining the freedom to go and do whatever they would like to (Evans, 2006; Grugel et al., 2012; Beazley, 2015). While other working children viewed working on the street as a better and more exciting alternative (Klocker, 2011; Okoli et al., 2012; Beazley, 2015).

In addition, some children stated their reasons for participating in economic activities on the street instead of being in school was that attending school is expensive and yields no benefits. This was especially when they hold a belief that education improves neither their present nor future lives. Children witnessed the reality of how their friends and family members who graduated from school had a difficult time looking for a permanent job. For example, Kuntet,



a 12-year-old boy said:

*"One of my friends said to me: 'you should go back to school, you know!' I answered: Why should I? There is already a president and ministers, and even university graduates cannot find work. I would rather quit school and get a job, any job. I can get some money, spend it as I like and play all day. School is just wasting our money, it's not cheap...If I go to school the teacher asks for money, for this and that, to buy books and things. The teacher is fierce and likes to extort money to go up a class. You can become clever without going to school." (Beazley, 2015:299)*

According to working children, they regarded the quality of education provided as low which comes with additional expenses (e.g., getting books, uniforms, transport). Moreover, having the 'pressure to perform well in school' adds and encourages them to 'leave home and seek work' (Beazley, 2015:181). Therefore, children and young people were seeking to work in the street which has a better prospect from their point of view.

Children engaging in work in the mines reported that the conflicts created by working for others in the family or neighborhood may put them in delicate positions. Therefore, they preferred to have complete control over their work by working at the mine so as to avoid any social tensions that may arise (André et al., 2014). However, children who were engaging in economic activities in the agriculture sector stated otherwise. They reported that they preferred working for families as it is relatively less tiring compared to commercial farms. Working for families also enables better flexibility in their work (Orkin, 2010).

### **3.3.2 Resilience**

Work improves children's resilience to deal with adversities. Working children reported that they seized every opportunity to support their parents in times of crisis to help in ensuring their families' well-being (Mulugeta et al., 2020). For example, Zeberga, a 12-year-old boy recounted:

*"Sometimes I work after school. If my mother does not have anything at home, I ask her to give me one Birr, and I take a bus to Merkato. I borrow money from Abyssinia shop, and work. ... Then I will be back home with six or seven Birr, sometimes more." (Mulugeta et al., 2020:182)*

Working children have demonstrated the ability to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of different jobs available for them (Swanson, 2007; Abebe, 2009; Beazley, 2015). For example, Silvia's a 16-year-old Calhuaseña explained that she preferred working on the street in Calhuasí although she was offered a job as a live-in domestic helper with a monthly salary of US\$30 per month. Her reason for rejecting the offer as a domestic helper was that she has the ability to earn more money by working on the street (US\$20/week) than working as a live-in domestic helper. Silvia uses the money she earned to help pay for her part-time high school. She also mentioned that by working as a live-in domestic helper, the long working hours will hinder her ability to attend school.

Working children were also reported to be modifying their livelihood strategy accordingly with their current circumstances to achieve a livable livelihood was seen as a common practice among working children (Abebe et al., 2009; Beazley, 2015; Maconachie et al., 2016; Bolten, 2018). They stated that their economic activity was not only related to household and local economies but also central to the macro-economic development of the country. 13-year-old Digafe accounted:

*"I buy and sell seasonal fruits like papaya, mangoes, avocado, bananas and pineapples during different periods of the year. Now it is the season for mangoes. I buy 20 mangoes for 1 birr and retail each at 10 cents [2 birr in total]. In a good day I can make 2–3 birr in profit. But nowadays, there is not enough money because most people want to retail instead of wholesale, so there is a lot of competition. I am now considering buying cane sugar from the lowland peasant associations and retailing it here. It is much more profitable than fruit [which also quickly becomes perishable, due to the hot and humid nature of the area], and has high demand during drier seasons."* (Abebe et al., 2009:185)

Working children's ability to draw on the use of the resources available was also documented. For example, personal resources – time and ability to work (Mulugeta et al., 2020), and social resources – families/relatives (Swanson, 2007; Mulugeta et al., 2020), sharing of food and material possessions (Fuseini et al., 2018).

Likewise, street children were also able to manage their identities and design their life paths by developing a unique social network with their peers (Evans, 2006; Abebe, 2008; Okoli et al., 2012; Fuseini et al., 2018). They demonstrated their ability to function efficiently as a street trader by exercising spatial mobility (Abebe, 2008; Bromley et al., 2008; Bromley et al., 2009; Beazley 2015). Children moved around different prime street locations where there is a higher potential of tourist traffic with lower police raids to maximize the potential of their sales. For some children who were engaging in economic activities on the street, vending on the street was just a stepping stone for their future careers (Okoli et al., 2012).

### **3.3.3 Discussions**

Closer scrutiny of the literature regarding children's work reflects how they are social actors, with agency. Many published studies in this literature review documented how child work is a manifestation of agency. This reflects the paradigm shift in the perspective of children and childhood within the social sciences, children and young people are now viewed as social actors, with the focus shifting from converging on what children and young people might become in the future to what they are now.

In my systematic literature research, almost 90% of the studies included were observed to be discussing the different ways of how working children used their agencies to navigate through work. Results have documented that children were able to both claim and exercise different types of agencies, thick agency as being the most prominent. Twenty published studies in the literature review have shown that working children possess thick agencies, thick agencies from ensuring families' well-being (Abebe, 2008; Orkin, 2010; Morrow et al., 2012; Bolten, 2018; Mulugeta et al., 2020), personal well-being (Abebe, 2008;

Grugel et al., 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; André et al., 2014; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018), to adapting and changing livelihood strategy (Abebe et al., 2009; Beazley, 2015; Maconachie et al., 2016; Bolten, 2018).

The key research findings of the articles have also shown that working children and young people have demonstrated the capabilities to be actively involved in shaping their own lives regardless of what kind of work they were participating in (Bromley et al., 2008; Abebe, 2009;). Although parental pressure could be present, most working children participated in work at their own choice. In other words, children and young people have a voice and they possess agencies of their own by navigating through the circumstances and responsibilities they have while shaping their own lives. However, working children's voices were continuously ignored and limited in research studies, viewing them as vulnerable and incompetent (Bromley et al., 2009; Bessell, 2011; Ensor et al., 2012; Klocker, 2012; Okyere, 2012; Fuseini et al., 2018).

On the contrary, it was also reported in the key research findings that cases of children's participation in economic activities are a form of self-protection against abuse, neglect, and/or violence they faced at home (Klocker, 2011; Beazley, 2015). Living in a family whereby financial difficulties are present might result in improper care of children and young people by their parents. This means that children and young people might not only be subjected to the lack of basic needs but also various forms of parenting behavior (e.g., abuse, violence, neglect) at home. As Ensor and Reinke (2012:69) mentioned, that "protection is generally understood as referring to those strategies that aim at reducing the risk and extent of harm to civilians – both adults and children – and facilitating the (re)establishment of more secure conditions." Therefore, the findings contradict with UNCRC protection rights where children and young people were supposed to be protected from harm (Bolten, 2012).

Key research findings have also revealed that working children in this review have demonstrated resilience as they coped with problems and endeavor to plan their futures. Their agency has helped them in coming out with strategies that improved their current circumstances. In other words, children played an active role in changing the nature of household livelihoods (Abebe et al., 2009; Beazley, 2015; Maconachie et al., 2016; Bolten, 2018). However, resilience by children and young people was constrained by many external factors such as poverty, responsibilities at home, and/or effectively managing their time between work and school could be limiting children's options (Abebe, 2009; Mulugeta et al., 2020). As a result, resilience in working children might not be sustainable for a long period of time 'unless economic, structural and social values and practices are considered and addressed.' (Mulugeta et al., 2020:183). This highlights the need for future policies or structures to include working children's economic, structural and social values into consideration to maximize in supporting working children in navigating their lives among the external constraints.

Conversely, Bessell (2011) stated that policies concerning child labor have also revealed tensions between children's rights and labor regulations. The findings in the meta-synthesis have supported this claim (Abebe, 2008; Bromley et al., 2008; Bromley et al., 2009; Beazley 2015). The resilience demonstrated by working children and young people,

especially street working children have shown that they were resistant to official intervention, for example, working on streets where trading is forbidden (Bromley et al., 2008). In other words, legislations and policies that had set a goal in combating child labor around the world, listing the participation of economic activities for children under 15 as illegal while advocating for compulsory education increase working children's vulnerability. (Klocker, 2011). This means that in order to improve their families' quality of life, working children and young people were willing to take the risk of getting exploited by working illegally. (Bromley et al., 2008; Klocker, 2011; Ensor et al., 2014). Therefore, to tackle this tension, children's agency should be understood in terms of their socioeconomic background that influence not only their coping strategies but also the importance and significance of their work (Abebe et al., 2009).

As mentioned by Ensor and Reinke (2014), working children are not passive recipients of ideas, policies, and interventions generated by others. But instead, key research findings have demonstrated that they have the 'power to participate, influence and control events in their daily lives, the lives of those around them and the societies in which they live' (Abebe, 2009:75). Thus, children should be included in the shaping and implementation of children's rights (Morrow et al., 2012; Ensor et al., 2014).

Likewise, key research findings of the articles have reported on children's ability to draw on the available resources as a form of resilience. This form of resilience is tied to the notion of reciprocity and redistribution of wealth (Swanson, 2007). Working children and young people face different stressors which have long-term consequences on them. It was through the sharing of the resources available with one another that has helped in mitigating the effects of the stressors they faced (Fuseini et al., 2018).

## **Key Research Findings**

### **3.4 Interdependency**

This section demonstrates how children and young people's participation in economic activities are intertwined with the interdependency within the family. The first theme establishes the connection of how children's participation in economic activities is seen as a form of interdependency. Without their contributions, the household would not be viable. The second theme discusses interdependency on another level whereby children are tasked with domestic chores to ensure that social reproduction within the household is not disrupted.

#### **3.4.1 Supplementing household income**

In general, working children and young people have stated their main reason for participating in economic activities was to supplement an additional income for their household (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2007; Swanson, 2007; Bromley et al., 2008; Abebe, 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Bromley et al, 2009; Bessell, 2010; Klocker, 2011; Bolten, 2012; Klocker 2012; Morrow et al., 2012; André et al., 2014; Ensor et al., 2014; Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016; Fuseini et al., 2018; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018;

Imoh et al., 2020; Mulugeta et al., 2020). They stated poverty as the main factor for the need for an additional income within the household.

Family members were depending on each other's contributions to meet the basic needs and keep the family going. Working children and young people understood that without their financial contributions, their household would not be viable (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2009; Klocker, 2011; Morrow et al., 2012; Ensor et al., 2014; Maconachie et al., 2016; Fuseini et al., 2018; Mulugeta et al., 2020). For example, a boy commented how his participation in work has contributed to the sustainability of his household:

*"I cannot imagine a life without working. Work means everything to me. Unless, I work, we cannot run our house. .... We need to buy food to run our home ... and I have to work to raise money to buy all these." (Morrow et al., 2012:912).*

In some cases, children have reported to be participating in economic activities as a form of helping out their extended family who were in chronic poverty (Evans, 2006; Mulugeta, 2020). For example, Upendo disclosed:

*"I used to feel bad but there was no alternative. [...] Life was tough at home, I saw my relatives suffering and though, I'll go and find a life in town, then I can help my relatives." (Evans, 2006:118)*

Children and young people do not see themselves as victims when they were tasked with the responsibility of supplementing additional income for the household (Bessell, 2011).

### **3.4.2 Fulfilling mutual needs across generations**

Supplementing household income is not the only interdependency that was observed. A few working children and young people mentioned that fulfilling mutual needs, for example, caring for the sick and elderly (Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2008; Abebe et al., 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; Morrow et al., 2012) within and across the different generations is another form of interdependency to help reduce the disruption in social reproduction (Abebe, 2007).

Tasked with the responsibility in participating in multiple domestic activities such as taking care of younger siblings (Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; Maconachie et al., 2016), cooking (Abebe, 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016), household chores (Abebe, 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; Orkin, 2010; Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016) were also reported by children and young people. Petty, a 15-year-old girl explained the different ways she helped at home:

*"I help cooking, fetching water, collecting firewood, cleaning plates, bathing children, going to the hammer mill (to grind maize into maize meal), sweeping the house, dusting the chairs, watering the gardens, harvesting groundnuts, cultivating at the fields, cutting grass and bringing it home." (Phiri, 2016:696)*

### 3.4.3 Discussions

Interdependency is one of the many livelihood strategies developed by many families in the Global South to help in enhancing their livelihood. There is a common expectation that children should contribute to the domestic economy throughout the whole of the majority world. In the systematic literature review, over 68% of the published articles were pointing towards how working children and young people's involvement in economic activities were connected to supplementing an additional income for their families due to poverty (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2007; Swanson, 2007; Bromley et al., 2008; Abebe, 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Bromley et al., 2009; Bessell, 2010; Klocker, 2011; Bolten, 2012; Klocker 2012; Morrow et al., 2012; André et al., 2014; Ensor et al., 2014; Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016; Fuseini et al., 2018; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Imoh et al., 2020; Mulugeta et al., 2020). Like many places in the majority world, a study in Ethiopia showed how children were valued as part of the family collectives, and not as autonomous individuals occupying independent positions in society. They were likely to perceive their needs as interdependent with those of other family members rather than taking priority over them. (Abebe et al., 2009). Likewise, interdependency is not only happening within the immediate family households but findings in the systematic literature review have shown that it was across extended families too (Evans, 2006; Mulugeta, 2020).

Moreover, it was reported by working children and young people about the importance of their financial contributions to keep their families going. This demonstrated that family members were counting on each other in ensuring and supporting the household by providing income to keep the household sustainable. In other words, many families who are living in poverty in the Global South are not able to maintain a sustainable household without everyone's contributions. Hence, prohibiting work might decrease both working children and their household a chance of survival (Klocker, 2012; Okyere, 2012). Furthermore, this highlighted that in their efforts to change their household economic contexts, children and young people were engaged in economic activities to earn a living, and their efforts demonstrated that they were contributing 'beings' (Abebe et al., 2009).

Working children and young people play an essential role in intergenerational negotiation of care, production, and reciprocity (Abebe et al., 2009). Key research findings have shown that children's financial contribution to the family was not the only form of interdependency. Children and young people have been reported to be caring for the sick and elderly (Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2008; Abebe et al., 2009, Morrow et al., 2010; Morrow et al., 2012) and participating in multiple domestic activities. Two of the common domestic activities were tasking the responsibility to take care of their younger siblings. (Abebe, 2007; Abebe; 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Morrow et at., 2010; Maconachie et al., 2016) and doing household chores (Abebe, 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; Orkin, 2010; Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016). This asserted that children's competency and their dependency and vulnerability were not conflicting and incompatible attributes. 'Instead, they are closely interdependent and fluid characteristics' (Abebe et al., 2009:191).

## Key Research Findings

### 3.5 Education

This section discusses three themes that are associated with children's work and education. The first theme discusses children's involvement in work as the only means to continue schooling. The second theme demonstrates the controversial views of education in the local context. It discusses how education is viewed differently in comparison to the contemporary view in modern childhood. By education, I mean how children do not just attend school but also important skills that they need for their daily and future lives.

#### 3.5.1 Work as an enabler to access education

Schooling has been a top priority and deemed as necessary in the contemporary childhood. Children and young people are strongly encouraged to be in school in comparison to working. However, studies have reported that children and young people were participating in economic activities to remain in school as they need to pay for the additional expenses incurred in school. For example, getting schoolbooks, uniforms, stationeries, examination fees, or even transportation (Jennings et al., 2006; Bromley et al., 2009; Orkin, 2010; Morrow et al., 2012; Phiri, 2016; Bolten, 2018; Fuseini et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019; Mulugeta et al., 2020). Children and young people described that work is the only means that allow them to continue schooling, without the extra income from them participating in economic activities, schooling would not be possible (Okoli et al., 2012).

Likewise, in some cases, working children and young people have stated that their participation in economic activities was a means to reduce the additional financial burdens their families were already facing back home (Morrow et al., 2012; Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016; Jonah et al., 2019; Mulugeta et al., 2020). Maryam Sesay, a 13-year-old girl voiced out the following:

*"I was in class 5, but I had to drop out because my father was not well and he couldn't pay the school fees. I knew that other children in my class were making money here (at the mining site) and helping to pay for their education. So I came here to do the same. I started selling cassava and soup to the miners and I could earn about 2000 Leones per day. But now I am working as an "overkicker" (someone who washes old tailings) and am earning 8000 Leones daily. I hope it wont be long before I am back in school." (Maconachie et al., 2016:143)*

In some cases, children and young people were willing to risk their health and safety by participating in mining work which is what is categorized as the worst form of labor by ILO just to afford an education (Bolten, 2012; Okyere, 2012; Maconachie et al., 2016). James, a 14-year-old boy who worked in artisanal mining commented:

*"I will not be doing this work if I did not want to go to school. My father and I used to work on people's farm at first but one day he decided it will be good if I attended school instead. He cannot afford to give me school money so I come here to earn some money which I save for school." (Okyere, 2012:85)*

Working children and young people have also reported that it was because they participated in economic activities that they are now given the opportunity to attend vocational training school (Evans, 2006; Abebe et al., 2009; Bolten, 2012; Klocker, 2012; Ensor et al., 2014). For example, in Klocker (2012), girls working as domestic helpers stated that her employer sent her to a vocational school to learn sewing. While street children have stated education opportunities from street children centres (Evans, 2006).

On the contrary, although children and young people were opened to the opportunity for vocational training, however, in some cases, they felt that their needs were not met in the vocational training and they are not in tune with the realities of the local households (Evans, 2006; Ensor et al., 2014; Maconachie et al., 2016). Working and earning income also enables young people to send their siblings to school so that they have access to education that they may not have the opportunity to.

In general, working children and young people have disclosed that they have received decent schooling. For example, approximately 86% of the participants had completed compulsory primary education in Klocker (2011) research study in Iringa Tanzania; In Ghana, 50 out of 57 of the participants who participated in Okyere (2012) research study were either in school, had been to school in some point, or had already completed compulsory education; In Peru, 68% of the participants in Bromley and Mackie (2009) research study attend all five half-day session of school each week, amounting to over 25 hours of education a week; and over 90% of 10-year-olds which amounts to one-third of the population of urban street workers in Minas Gerais went to school full time while over 80% of the 12-year-olds said they attended school in Grugel and Ferreira (2012) research study. Children and young people have also been reported to be combining both work and schooling at the same time (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2008; Bromley et al., 2008; Morrow et al., 2010; Orkin, 2010; Okoli et al., 2011; Phiri, 2016; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019).

### **3.5.2 Informal Education**

Children and young people have stated that their participation in economic activities, for example, trading, has allowed them to acquire valuable skills such as computations, managing a budget, time management, and negotiation skills (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe et al., 2009; Bromley et al., 2009; Okrin, 2010; Morrow et al., 2012; André et al., 2014; Beazley, 2015).

A study has revealed that children and young people who were involved in economic activities view their work as a form of "learning", "business", and "skills" rather than as labor (Bolten, 2018). They stated that they 'did not see themselves violating their rights to an education. On the contrary, this was the education they chose.' (Bolten, 2018:205).



In some cases, children and young people were participating in economic activities in exchange for religious education (Abebe, 2007).

### **3.5.3 Tensions between education and work in the local context**

A study has reported that parents were hesitant to send their children to school due to the low employment opportunities available, causing additional stress on the parents and frustrations and disaffection among children and young people (Ensor et al., 2014). They stated that there is no standard framework for educational and training programs that were developed across the country. Moreover, educational and training programs are using different curricula, durations, and a variety of certification methods.

Likewise, in Sierra Leone, for instance, school is a place where the emphasis is focusing on cultivating relationships of proper respect instead of transmitting skills and knowledge that benefits children and young people in the future. Hence, children and young people do not see the value and benefits of education (Bolten, 2018).

In addition, it was reported that there was a connection between parents' educational background and poverty rate and children attending school. Children and young people with parents that have no formal education have a higher probability of participating in economic activities instead of being in school (Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018).

Working children and young people have also reported that they never got a chance to attend school because of the failure of their parents in registering their birth (Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018). Therefore, there were unable to enroll in school.

### **3.5.4 Discussions**

The global perspective on children's education and work rests on the assumption that school is the best pathway for a child's future, and that work is an obstacle to it that should be avoided in childhood. Participation in economic activities is generally considered the responsibility of adults, not children, who are viewed as future adults in the contemporary childhood. Key research findings in the systematic review have stated otherwise, it highlighted the fact that work makes school possible for children and young people (Jennings et al., 2006; Bromley et al., 2009; Orkin, 2010; Morrow et al., 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; Phiri, 2016; Bolten, 2018; Fuseini et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019; Mulugeta et al., 2020). This includes children and young people's willingness to participate in work that is considered as hazardous and the worst form of labor to afford an education (Bolten, 2012; Okyere, 2012; Maconachie et al., 2016). This highlights that child labor is a gateway/solution for children and young people to access education instead of a problem for them (Okyere, 2012).

Findings in the systematic literature review also reported that it is because of work that has allowed them to access vocational training sent by their employers (Evans, 2006; Abebe et al., 2009; Bolten, 2012; Klocker, 2012; Ensor et al., 2014). However, programmes that were established for working children and young people with the goal of enriching them do not always satisfy their needs (Ensor et al., 2014).

Moreover, the literature review demonstrated the relationship between children's involvement in work and education as 'two aspects of their multifaceted lives.' (Bromley et al., 2008:122). The prohibition of work might fail to recognize the actual circumstances that influence a child's participation in the workforce (Okyere, 2012). Key research findings have shown that the majority of the children and young people were combining both work and education at the same time (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2008; Bromley et al., 2008; Morrow et al., 2010; Orkin, 2010; Okoli et al., 2011; Phiri, 2016; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019). In other words, school isn't always a simple replacement for work but a complement (Grugel et al., 2012).

Key research findings have also revealed that children and young people's involvement in participation have opened up opportunities for informal education (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2007; Abebe et al., 2009; Bromley et al., 2009; Okrin, 2010; Morrow et al., 2012; André et al., 2014; Beazley, 2015; Bolten, 2018). They viewed their participation in economic activities as a form of the learning process as they pick up different transferable skills. They viewed and preferred this form of 'education' gained through work to formal schooling (Bolten, 2018).

Last but not least, findings from the systematic literature review have shown that the perspective of education is dependent on the local culture. In some cases, education may be seen as a waste of time due to the high unemployment rates in graduates (Ensor et al., 2014) while others could be intertwined to the ability to gain necessary skills that are beneficial for children and young people when they step into the workforce (Bolten, 2018).

### **3.6. Summary**

This chapter has presented in-depth discussions on working children and young people's perspectives towards their participation in economic activities in regard to their cultural practices, empowerment, and agency.

Firstly, key research findings and discussions pertaining to the importance of work have shown that children and young people understood and value the importance of their participation in economic activities. Their perspectives of what childhood is and was supposed to be are antithetical to the hegemonic model of childhood. Children and young people's participation in economic activities are intertwined with cultural practices. Therefore, I contend that the view of a hegemonic model of childhood conflicts with the reality of what childhood is in the Global South (Abebe, 2009), where child work is not only essential but a familial responsibility and an important part of the socialization process (Klocker, 2011). As stated by Abebe and Kjørholt (2009:191), "Children are not merely about-to-become adults who are undergoing socialization in order to shoulder their responsibilities in the future, but producers, entrepreneurs, carers, decision-makers and consumers."

Secondly, the second analytical theme – empowerment has highlighted the importance of children's participation in work and how it has opened up opportunities for them to both take charge of their family's well-being and have greater control over decisions that

have an impact on their personal lives. In other words, children and young people's participation in economic activities has provided them a voice in both their families and community.

Thirdly, working children and young people have the capacity and competence to actively construct and shape their own lives. Although working children and young people may be constrained by many factors, their resilience has enabled them to cope with different challenges they faced. Key research findings have demonstrated that work is a manifestation of agency and that children's agency is not universal, but instead, it varies according to time and place.

Fourthly, interdependency in the family is vital to ensure the sustainability of their household and to minimize the social disruption within the household. In the minds of children and young people, the family structure is an integral part of them, and the family's sustenance is a collective responsibility (Fuseini et al., 2018).

Lastly, results have shown that there is a correlation between work and school. In general, children's involvement in economic activities is to afford an education. The majority of working children and young people were combining work and schooling. This means to say education and work are just two multi-layered aspects of working children and young people's life. Moreover, working children and young people experience informal education when they acquire values, skills, and knowledge through their participation in economic activities.



## **Chapter Four**

### **4. Key research findings and Discussions Part II**

This chapter builds on the previous chapter, presenting the key research findings and discussions on the last two analytical themes from the finalized twenty-nine studies to attend to the following research questions:

#### Research questions:

1. What are the controversies and tensions linked to children's rights regarding children's participation in work in the Global South?
2. What are the policy recommendations of the literature on children's work regarding working children's rights in the Global South?

#### Analytical themes:

1. Controversies and Tensions in policies regarding child work
2. Policies recommendations

Similar to the previous chapter, each analytical theme will be reported in the following sections. Firstly, I present the key research findings from the review to report the empirical data collected and reported in all the twenty-nine published articles. Then the discussions section brings out some salient features of the articles in relation to the themes identified.

In this chapter, there will be two themes. The first theme's focus will be on presenting and analyzing the controversies and tensions in policies that were presented in the published articles. This will allow us to have an overview of different authors' perspectives on universal legislation and policies with regard to children's work in the Global South. The second theme will focus on the recommendations suggested by the authors regarding the policies, the practice of children's work in the Global South.

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## **Key Research Findings**

### **4.1. Controversies and Tensions in Policies regarding child work**

This section discusses the controversies and tensions in policies in two sub-themes. The first theme will focus on the authors' perspectives about UNCRC and how the universal view of children's rights might not fit into the local realities. The second theme will discuss the impact of ILO Convention 182 and 138 have brought forth for working children and young people in the Global South.

#### **4.1.1. United Nation of Children's Rights Convention (UNCRC)**

Several authors have mentioned that a narrow and rigid notion of viewing children's rights is at odds with actual local realities (Morrow et al., 2012; Phiri, 2016; Maconachie et al., 2016; Jonah et al., 2019). It overlooks the vital collective responsibilities of working children (Abebe, 2009; Klocker, 2011; Phiri, 2016; Bolten, 2018; Jonah et al., 2019), as well as their meaningful roles and contributions to their families and society (Abebe, 2009; Phiri, 2016; Bolten, 2018). In addition, viewing children's rights in a rigid way also neglects the emphasis of states' roles in ensuring the well-being of children, raising the expectations, and downplaying the impact it has on families living in poverty (Abebe, 2009; Phiri, 2016). Children who live in poverty get their rights and entitlements from families and communities. As a result, a focus on what the states do to children serves to restrict rather than expand the options available to working children (Klocker, 2011). Despite the fact that most publications have shown that working children and young people participated in economic activities was primarily for their family's well-being (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2007; Swanson, 2007; Bromley et al., 2008; Abebe, 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Bromley et al., 2009; Bessell, 2010; Klocker, 2011; Bolten, 2012; Klocker 2012; Morrow et al., 2012; André et al., 2014; Ensor et al., 2014; Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016; Fuseini et al., 2018; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Imoh et al., 2020; Mulugeta et al., 2020). However, there is not one children's rights document that emphasizes children and young people's social and familial responsibilities (Fuseini et al., 2018).

Likewise, several published articles in the systematic literature review have argued that although there has been an increasing acknowledgment of the importance of children's voices and perspectives, working children's and young people's voice remains limited. (Bromley et al., 2009; Bessell, 2011; Klocker, 2011; Fuseini et al., 2018). When it comes to deciding issues that concern them, children and young people were not consulted. This contrasts the focus that UNCRC makes regarding the right of children to be listened to in matters that affect their lives including work. The discourses formed around working children were crafted and reflected adult perspectives who have the power to influence rather than on working children's perspectives (Bessell, 2011; Fuseini et al., 2018). In addition, the discourses failed to represent children as both vulnerable and competent (Abebe, 2009; Bessell, 2011; Klocker, 2011).

UNCRC Article 32 "emphasizes the right of children to be prevented from 'performing any work that is likely to interfere with their education',..." (Abebe, 2009:86). It was reported by authors that arguments that were put forward by advocates of work-school incompatibility are problematic (Jonah et al., 2019). The assumption is that children who are not working will have high school attendance rates (Abebe, 2009). Therefore, removing children and young people from participating in economic activities is believed to ensure their attendance at school (Phiri, 2016). As Morrow et al., (2010:311) stated, 'child labor is conceptualized as problematic by policy-makers because it is perceived as conflicting with the over-riding aim of 'being a child', in other words, to become educated.' Studies also critique that child work is often not seen as 'participation' in the social and economic life of society.

From the systematic literature, it is noticeable that several authors have argued that although UNCRC Article 28 has ensured that compulsory education to be free, however, schooling remains far from free. Ironically, the reason that children's involvement in economic activities was to pay for the cost of academic activities incurred. There are numerous additional costs that children and young people have to pay when attending school, for example, getting school uniforms, books, paying for examination fees and stationaries (Jennings et al., 2006; Bromley et al., 2009; Orkin, 2010; Morrow et al., 2012; Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016; Bolten, 2018; Fuseini et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019; Mulugeta et al., 2020).

On one hand, authors have reported that there is a missing link in effectively enforcing children's rights (Okrin, 2010; Phiri, 2016). On the other hand, it is not easy for universal rights to be practiced and translated into the local context (Phiri, 2016). Therefore, universal children's rights run the risk of hurting rather than helping working children and young people if they are interpreted and quoted in isolation of each other (Morrow et al., 2012).

As stated by Bolten (2018), children's rights are not passively granted with a top-down approach but become praxis in their own sense of well-being if they come to resonate with doctrines that reflect that sense of well-being. However, policies do not 'see' children and young people in their own rights. As a result, not taking working children and young people's agency seriously can lead to unintentional consequences (Phiri, 2016).

#### **4.1.2. International Labor Organization (ILO)**

'Abolitionism is a perspective that is grounded in the view that the solution for child labor is legislation.' (Jonah et al., 2019:371). Several authors from the systematic literature review have pointed out that ILO Convention 182 were based on global construction of childhood as idyllic and work free informed by experiences of children in the economically developed world (Abebe, 2009; Bessell, 2011; Klocker, 2011; Morrow et al., 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; Maconachie et al., 2016) and it holds minimal relevance to how children live in the Global South (Klocker, 2011; Klocker, 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; Maconachie et al., 2016; Jonah et al., 2019). They viewed children and young people's participation in economic activities as benign, harmful, and exploitative (Bessell, 2011) while attending school regardless of circumstances was the best option for children (Maconachie et al., 2016). Neither the positive impacts of children and young people's participation in economic activities, well-being nor the structural reasons why they were participating in economic activities were adequately appreciated (Jonah et al., 2019).

It was stated that policies and structures that were aimed at removing children and young people from the workforce increase the probability of pushing them into partaking in informal work that is far more 'hidden' and exploitative (Klocker, 2011; Jonah et al., 2019).

As reported by several authors, the enforcement of ILO Convention 138 – the minimum-age regulations were considered to be acting in the children's best interest are governed

by power structures, which can be problematic and more likely to harm children instead (Bessell, 2011; Klocker, 2011; Ensor et al., 2014; Jonah et al., 2019). It was reported that children and young people were not supported by existing policies and structures as they navigate their lives through various factors, for example, work, family responsibilities, and school (Mulugeta et al., 2020). At the same time, ILO Convention 182 notion of “work or school” does not fit into the realities of many countries in the Global South (Maconachie et al., 2016).

Even though ILO acknowledges that not all work performed by children is negative. Instead, it continues to describe the criteria for what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable work in simplistic terms (Bessell, 2011). The concept of child labor and child work is confusing within international debates. Those who advocate for the elimination of child labor uses the term ‘child labor’ and see children and young people’s participation in economic activities as something harmful while those advocating for children’s rights to work use the term ‘child work’ which could overlook the challenges that working children and young people face (Bessell, 2011; Bromley et al. 2018).

#### **4.1.3. Discussions**

A closer look into the analysis of the published articles in the systematic literature review, it has reflected authors’ perspectives on universal rights and policies on how it has created tension and controversies within the local context in the Global South. This reflects an understanding of how universal rights and policies that aims at ensuring survival, development, protection, and participation rights might not be the solution for working children and young people in the Global South.

The majority of the authors in the systematic literature review were observed to be voicing out how the implementation of universal rights and policies could be harmful to the existence of working children in local contexts. Results have documented that a single reading of the universal rights is not in line with the local realities (Morrow et al., 2012; Phiri, 2016; Maconachie et al., 2016; Jonah et al., 2019). As stated by Klocker (2012:902), “The imposition of Minority World standards (of non-work) onto Majority World childhoods has been described as a form of cultural imperialism.” Additionally, a single reading of rights demonstrates a poor contextual understanding of the subtle familial economic balance of the household and how it functions in the Global South (Jonah et al., 2019). It was mentioned by several authors that work is both essential to survival and a culturally accepted form of socialization (Abebe, 2009; Klocker, 2012; Phiri, 2016). Henceforth, policies and legislation that aimed at removing children and young people from their participation in economic activities may not match the wishes of working children (Klocker, 2011).

Key research findings have also reported that the construction of the hegemonic model of childhood was based on Western cultures and have minimal relevance to working children in Global South (Bessell, 2011; Klocker, 2012; Morrow et al., 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; Maconachie et al., 2016; Jonah et al., 2019). In the hegemonic model of childhood, children are autonomous and active human beings who are placed within the nuclear family, and childhood is seen as the playful segment of their lives. In addition, schooling



is considered a vital element in modern childhood where learning takes place. However, the capabilities of individual families were appraised according to their socio-economic conditions. Education and learning also unfold in complex ways through work. Notwithstanding the expectations, that were placed on children and by their family members and communities, for example, supplementing family income, these expectations were in the total opposite realm with the hegemonic model of childhood (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Klocker, 2011; Morrow et al., 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; Fuseini et al., 2018; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019). Moreover, it was mentioned by Bolten (2018:201) that “a child’s universal rights may run counter to their best interest within their cultural milieu.” Many working children take part in economic activities because of the expectation to fulfill relevant roles, duties, and responsibilities.

Linking back to the findings in the systematic literature review in the previous chapter, results have shown how children and young people’s involvement in work were embedded with collective rights and practices. Children’s contribution through work and supplementing household income were perceived as an integrated part of childhood in many parts of the Global South (Abebe, 2007; Okyere, 2012; Maconachie et al., 2016; Bolten, 2018; Mulugeta et al., 2020). As stated by Phiri (2016:698), ‘Children’s role and position within the rural socio-economy are undermined by normative global discourses of child welfare grounded in strong ‘work-free’ childhoods.’ In other words, the expectations of children and young people’s contribution to the household economy reveal the interconnectedness of family members in the Global South while the global construction of childhood does not recognize the disconnection between local realities and perspectives grounded in international and national laws (Jonah & Abebe, 2019). This leads to the conclusion that ‘if rights do not have meaning in the social, economic and cultural contexts in which people are living, they have little meaning anywhere.’ (Morrow et al., 2012:915).

Several important findings of the research have also shown that the rights perspective believes that education fulfills both protection of children and the protection of young people. The global perspective on children’s education and work rests on the assumption that school is the best pathway for a child’s future, and that work is an obstacle to it that should be avoided in childhood. They believed that education can reduce poverty and inequality (Klocker, 2011; Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016). Furthermore, protection rights were viewed as children who are free from violence, abuse, neglect, maltreatment, and exploitation by child-centered agencies. (Klocker, 2011). Yet, children and young people in the Global South need of protection is far from stated. A severe lack of goods and services hurts every individual, poverty robs everyone of nutrition, access to water, sanitation, health care, shelter, education, participation, and protection, while children are deprived of nourishment, water, and sanitation facilities. This is the protection children and young people in Global South should be protected from as they are especially damaging to children. It prevents them from pursuing their full potential, enjoying their rights, and participating equally in society (Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018).

Moreover, children and young people from the Global South do not see gaining knowledge and skills through formal schooling only. Results from the previous chapter have highlighted that children and young people have acquired valuable skills through their participation in work (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2007; Bromley et al., 2008; Abebe, 2008; Abebe et al., 2009; Abebe et al., 2009; Okrin, 2010; Morrow et al., 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; André et al., 2014; Beazley, 2015; Phiri, 2016). This type of informal education in comparison to formal education is seen as more valuable, as they prepare children and young people for their future (Bromley et al., 2009).

Findings in the systematic literature review have also disclosed that abolition of child labor by ILO was not seen as beneficial to children in the Global South (Bessell, 2011; Klocker, 2011; Maconachie et al., 2016; Jonah et al., 2019). It was advocated that work and school were incompatible and eliminating child labor is the solution in ensuring children in school (Phiri, 2016; Mulugeta et al., 2020). However, the free provision of education that was believed to eliminate children's need for disposable income (Maconachie et al., 2016; Phiri, 2016) does not apply to children and young people in many parts of the Global South. It 'precludes any possibility of 'work and schooling' being a necessary strategy for not only the survival of a child but also for furthering his/her education.' (Bolten, 2012; Okyere, 2012; Okoli et al., 2012; Maconachie et al., 2016:139; Jonah et al., 2019). On the contrary, abolition could lead to working children and young people withdrawing from school (Jonah et al., 2019).

Looking back to the results gathered in the previous chapter, many working children and young people were also observed to be simultaneously participating in economic activities while schooling (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2007; Abebe, 2008; Bromley et al., 2008; Morrow et al., 2010; Orkin, 2010; Okoli et al., 2011; Phiri, 2016; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019). Therefore, this further asserted Maconachie et al., (2016) argument that ILO Convention 182 notion of "work or school" does not fit into the realities of millions of children in many countries in the Global South. The prohibition of work fails to recognize the actual circumstances that influence a child's participation in the workforce and why work is pertinent for collective existence (Okyere, 2012).

In some cases, it was reported by authors that the terms 'child labor' and 'child work' are confusing within the international debates (Bessell, 2011; Bromley et al., 2018). It was argued by Maconachie and Hilson (2016) that the notion of 'child labor' was strongly influenced by the idea that children and young people in developing countries were robbed of their childhood. However, findings in the systematic literature review have demonstrated that being involved in economic activities from a young age is part of what childhood is for children and young people (Abebe, 2007; Abebe et al., 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; André et al., 2014; Phiri, 2016; Jonah et al., 2019). Therefore, it was because of such perspectives on children's participation in work and notions of work-free childhoods, 'children's work contributions have largely been unacknowledged and viewed as lost childhoods' (Phiri, 2016:686).

Furthermore, the term 'child labor' was usually referred to work that has a negative impact on children and young people's well-being and development (Bromley et al. 2018). Therefore,

children and young people should be removed from their participation in such work. Yet, Jonah and Abebe (2019:25) specified that “Local attempts seeking to abolish some forms of children’s work categorized as harmful are based on the desire to appease international organizations that champion those perspectives. They are not necessarily based on prevailing socioeconomic situations and are unlikely to serve working children as claimed.”

To conclude, children and young people in Global South do not always have a childhood that fits the supposed ‘western’ definition of an ideal childhood, which excludes work (Okoli et al., 2012; Morrow et al., 2012). Defining childhood as a phase of learning, play, and work free has very little to no relevance for most in the majority world. In the Global South, there is a common perception that childhood is continuous with the adult world, with children gradually moving into the activities as their competencies improve (Bromely et al., 2009). In addition to that, there is a continuous need for international and national policies and legislation to incorporate working children and young people’s perspectives on issues that concern them.

## **Key Research Findings**

### **4.2. Policy recommendations**

This section discusses the recommendations that different authors had suggested regarding policies of children’s work. I have identified and categorized them accordingly into three sub-themes. The first theme will focus on showing the recommendations from authors in the published articles in regard to promoting the best interest of children. According to Weihrauch (2021: Para1), “The principle of “the best interest of the child” is implemented in Article 3 (1) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which provides that “in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, court of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration.” The second theme will discuss what were the recommendations that international and national policies could do to enhance working children and young people in terms of education. Lastly, instead of eliminating child labor, what are other steps that ILO could do to better support working children and young people.

#### **4.2.1. The best interest of children**

In general, most authors have suggested that in the best interest of children, working children and young people’s perspectives should be taken into consideration regarding issues that concern them (Abebe, 2008; Abebe, 2009; Klocker, 2011; Grugel et al., 2012; Morrow et al., 2012; Okyere, 2012; Beazley, 2015; Fuseini et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019).

Additionally, attention towards working children and young people’s participatory and protection rights should be balanced out (Klocker, 2011; Ensor et al., 2014; Bolten, 2018). It was reported by authors that this could be done by taking their local values and realities into consideration (Abebe, 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; Phiri, 2016; Abebe et al., 2019; Imoh et al., 2020). Furthermore, there is a need for research to be carried out in a longer period to explore the relationship between working children and the outcome of their long-term careers (Evans, 2006).

In addition, it was suggested that a stronger legal framework is needed to regulate and monitor working children, to ensure that they are registered as workers, to establish a contract system overseen by leaders in the community, and to enforce minimum wages (Klocker, 2011). Gurgel and Ferreira (2012) have also suggested that it is also necessary and vital to take into consideration how international and national policies and legislation have impacted the well-being of children of school age who were employed as child workers, as well as the trajectory of their lives.

In some cases, it was mentioned that working conditions that take into account the health and well-being that have detrimental effects on working children and young people should be addressed (Okyere, 2012; Jonah et al., 2019). This could be addressed on one hand in short-term policies by providing health care as well as a program that is designed to mitigate exploitation in children and young people. On the other hand, making life-sustaining resources accessible to them and their families is vital in the long term (Okoli et al., 2012; Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019).

Additionally, researchers looking into implementing strategies to enhance working children and young people's well-being and working conditions would benefit by including both current and past child workers' perspectives in their research process to gain a more nuanced understanding of their lives (Klocker, 2012).

#### **4.2.2. Education**

Klocker (2011), suggested that educating and/or training for working children and young people is essential for improving their prospects while improving their understanding of their rights is crucial to ensuring their protection.

Moreover, social structures should offer support for disadvantaged and impoverished households. For example, government and stakeholders should ensure that children and young people from disadvantaged and impoverished households receive basic school supplies (Jonah et al., 2019).

In order to attain long-term success, the focus of prevention and rehabilitation programmes should be redefined to accommodate the changing needs, skills, and social experiences of working children and young people (Abebe, 2008).

It was also reported by several authors that to address the needs of working children, government agencies and NGOs ought to be aware of the differences between groups and adopt measures that address these differences (Bromley et al., 2009; Maconachie et al., 2016; Mulugeta et al., 2020). For example, allowing children to operate for limited hours in designated spaces (Bromley et al., 2009; Okoli et al., 2012) which would still allow children time to attend school (Okoli et al., 2012).

### **4.2.3. Engaging with ILO's policy**

Several authors have recommended that in order to eliminate and prohibit children and young people from participating in economic activities, firstly, we should acknowledge the complex range of children's economic, social, and cultural activities. This is to allow a better understanding of working children and young people's livelihood (Jennings et al., 2006; Abebe, 2009; Morrow et al., 2012). Other than understanding the complexity of working children and young people's social, economic, and cultural activities, it is equally important to take into consideration how their intergenerational ties would be disrupted (Morrow et al., 2012). Secondly, to successfully eliminate and prohibit child labor, strategies implemented need to be tested and found to be effective (Jennings et al., 2006).

Bessell (2011) suggested that international and national policies and legislation should phase out the terms 'child labor' and 'child work' which views children's participation in economic activities as intolerable in order to focus on the continuum of children and young people's involvement in the economy as positive or beneficial. Children and young people need to be recognized for their work at all levels, from local to global, as well as work in its own right and deserving of appropriate rewards and recognition (Abebe, 2007). According to this viewpoint, a more nuanced approach would allow us to better focus on the nuances of work children and young people were involved in, the types and environments of work that could be considered unacceptable, and the gray areas (Bessell, 2011). Another suggestion on this issue is that a regulatory regime should be drafted by the individual national government which relies on communities to define what constitutes as harmful work. By drawing on the community's understandings, prohibitions and regulations would ensure that restrictions were appropriate, focused, and ethical (Orkin, 2010).

While some authors have suggested that working children should be provided with options that are accessible, viable, and sustainable for them. For example, regulating vending hours that provides the ability to both attend school and assist their parents with work and domestic chores (Okoli et al., 2012; Okyere, 2012), other suggested starting campaigns to educate potential customers and employers about child labor (Bromley et al., 2008).

### **4.2.4. Discussions of policy ideas**

In the systematic literature review, nearly all of the published articles have given their recommendations and strategies to improve international and national policies and legislation to better support working children and young people in Global South. One-third of the published articles have stated that the inclusion of working children's voices and perspectives is vital when coming out with policies and legislation that are developed to further support their best interest (Abebe, 2008; Abebe, 2009; Klocker, 2011; Grugel et al., 2012; Morrow et al., 2012; Okyere, 2012; Beazley, 2015; Fuseini et al., 2018; Jonah et al., 2019). This is necessary to challenge the strong western normative notions of good childhood that foreground an ideology of work-free childhood (Phiri, 2016). As stated by Morrow and Pells (2012), it may be possible to avoid damaging effects if the

application of rights is sensitive to local values and local resources, both of which may influence priority for intervention.

Also, “any effort to universalize the ‘global child worker’ runs great risks of ignoring the social and geographical context of children’s work.” (Jennings et al., 2016:238). Several authors in the literature review have suggested that including working children and young people’s socio-cultural and political-economic context are necessary (Abebe, 2009; Morrow et al., 2010; Phiri, 2016; Abebe et al., 2019; Imoh et al., 2020). This will enable us to take a closer look at how working children and young people perceive and use unconventional modes of earning income, including types of work now categorized as the worst forms of work by international policymakers (Maconachie et al., 2016). As mentioned by Ensor and Reinke (2014), considering the socioeconomic, cultural, and physical environment in which children live and work is the best way to tackle the complex and multifaceted issue of child labor.

It has been recognized the circumstances that working children and young people were facing is an intricate phenomenon that does not only revolves around income but also their deprivation in the basic dimension of development. For example, nutrition, basic health care services, water, and/or sanitation facilities (Pinilla-Roncancio et al., 2018). Findings in the systematic literature review have also reported that it is vital that policymakers acknowledge the reality that many working children and young people confront two extreme situations. Firstly, the high level of livelihood risks from a lack of resources. Secondly, a high level of work hazard from the obligations they take on as a result. In the present situation, policymakers and those who deal with child labor place a higher priority on eradicating the latter. However, policymakers must address both situations equally (Okyere, 2012). Therefore, policies and legislation should also take into account of working children and young people’s lack of resources that have detrimental effects on them (Okyere, 2012; Jonah et al., 2019).

Moreover, while Klocker (2011) has recommended a stronger legal framework to regulate and monitor working children and young people, Grugel and Ferreira (2012) have reinforced the importance of how international and national policies have impacted the well-being of working children and young people. When these are considered, it will allow the exploration of how interdependence rights can be utilized to meet the entitlements needs of working children and young people (Abebe, 2009).

Likewise, finding ways to provide opportunities for education and training is not straightforward (Jonah et al., 2019). Key research findings have revealed that working children and young people should be provided with education/training that improves both their prospects and the understandings of their rights (Klocker, 2011). At the same time, preventive and rehabilitation programs should accommodate the changing needs, skills, and social experiences of working children and young people (Abebe, 2008). In addition, social structures should support working children in receiving basic school supplies (Jonah et al., 2019). By reducing work demands, these efforts would lessen the burden on children and their households, allowing children to focus on school (Jonah et al., 2019).

The findings in the systematic literature review further highlighted that government agencies and NGOs should adopt measures that address the needs of different groups of working children (Bromley et al., 2009; Maonachie et al., 2016; Mulugeta et al., 2020). Once a more supportive rather than repressive attitude is adopted then the way is open for an emphasis on protective policies (Bromley et al., 2009).

Furthermore, a sustained effort to eliminate child labor requires more than simply legislation: it requires a vision of society and growth (Jennings et al., 2006). The attempt to prevent children from working is nothing more than a manifestation of the belief that children are passive recipients of adult nurturing (Abebe, 2009). Key research findings have further asserted that working children and young people's complex range of economic, social, and cultural activities should be acknowledged before any implementation of elimination of child labor (Jennings et al., 2016; Abebe, 2009; Morrow et al., 2012). Moreover, strategies that aimed to successfully eliminate and prohibit child labor should be tested effective before any implementation (Jennings et al., 2016).

To end with, children and young people need to be recognized for their work at all levels, from local to global, as worthwhile work in its own right and deserving of appropriate rewards and recognition (Abebe, 2007). Therefore, as suggested by Bessell (2011), the terms 'child labor' and 'child work' should be discontinued in order to recognize how working children also benefited from their work. In addition, Orkin (2010), has suggested that local communities should be defining what constitutes as harmful work instead when drafting a regulatory regime. This will allow us to better focus on the nuances of work children and young people are involved in, the types and environments of work that can be considered unacceptable, and the gray areas (Bessell, 2011).

### **4.3. Summary**

This chapter has provided an overview of the tensions and controversies of policies in the Global South that authors have identified and also the recommendations suggested by them that would further facilitate better implementation of international and national policies and legislation for working children.

Authors have reflected an understanding of how universal rights and policies that aims at ensuring survival, development, protection, and participation rights might not be the solution for children and young people in the Global South. Setting up international and national policies or legislation to prevent children from work is easy (Jonah et al., 2019). However, a full comprehension of children and young people's work requires an engagement with working children and contextualizing their practices within the social milieu of their everyday lives (Phiri, 2016).

To have the best interest of all children in the world, children's rights must not be derived from an individualistic reading. This top-down approach is either not relevant or not workable in many parts of the Global South.

Additionally, UNCRC Article 28 emphasizes the importance that every child should have the right to an education and compulsory education should be free and accessible for

children. As far as I can see, this article is incongruous as for many working children, one of the reasons for them to participate in work is to pay for their academic expenses. Many working children and young people were struggling to make their day-to-day life sustainable and in addition, they would have to pay for the supplementary cost for education. In light of this fact, this factor makes it tougher for families to send their children to school as ensuring a sustainable household is prioritized. To counter this problem, international organizations and local governments should ensure that there is sufficient capacity to fully implement the provisions of these child rights documents (Fuseini et al., 2018).

To summarize everything that has been stated so far, "there is always a risk that human rights and indeed children's rights can be used to impose agenda and values that are inappropriate and ineffective in responding to cultural needs of children." (Tobin, 2011:62) Without understanding the social and cultural norms, working children's rights can be more damaging than beneficial to the children and young people in the Global South. Therefore, a narrow view of rights as an embedded solution does not reflect local realities. Rights are so much more than legal rules (Morrow et al., 2012; Phiri, 2016; Maconachie et al., 2016; Jonah et al., 2019). The social and cultural norms are not universal but instead dynamic and vary from culture to culture (Morrow et al., 2012).



## **Chapter Five**

### **5. Concluding remarks**

In this chapter, I will present the conclusion of my systematic literature review. It demonstrates how my key research findings and discussions have met the objectives of my research and my research questions.

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#### **5.1. Conclusion**

This systematic literature review explored and synthesized twenty-nine published articles that focus on using qualitative research regarding the experiences of working children and young people in the Global South. The purpose of this research was to have a better insight and explore the tensions and controversies about children's work in the Global South. Based on the key research findings and discussions, it can be concluded that the results have addressed the initial objectives of my systematic literature review research:

1. To systematize the literature on how children, families, and communities rationalize or conceptualize children's work (and/or its linkage with children's education in the Global South)
2. To identify and discuss the tensions and controversies linked to children's work (and/or education in the Global South)
3. To identify and engage with policy insights that improve working children's lives and rights in the Global South

##### **5.1.1. Children's work in Global South**

The systematic literature review discusses how children and young people's perspectives towards their participation in economic activities do not fit into the hegemonic model of childhood.

Overall, the systematic literature review has demonstrated that children and young people's involvement in economic activities were integrated as part of their childhood. On one hand, children are viewed as innocent and naïve who are easily manipulated due to their lack of experience in the world. Childhood should be a fun and lovely journey where they are showered with utter care and love, given access to the basic living necessity, and the ability to make their own decisions. On the other hand, this is not seen across the world. In countries, especially in the Global South, children are struggling to have their basic needs met, they have the obligation and responsibilities to help with their family income, they are denied of education and healthcare, and for some children, they are abused and neglected by their family members or by the communities.

Moreover, in the contemporary world, the emphasis is on children getting to school and acquiring and gaining academic knowledge for their future. However, in many parts of

the Global South, there are several reasons why they were participating in economic activities. Interdependency is one of the various reasons. This review has shown how children and young people's involvement in economic activities were vital to ensure their family's daily needs were met. Parents and/or guardians are depending on children and young people to ensure minimal social disruption within the household. For example, taking care of young siblings while parents are at work.

In addition, work has made schooling possible for children and young people in the Global South to pay for the additional incurred cost of schooling. Findings from the literature review have also proven that working children and young people acquire lifelong skills that could not be attained in the context of formal schooling. For example, trading skills, agricultural knowledge, social skills. These skills are valuable as they transit to adulthood.

Also, children and young people in the Global South were not automatically given the power and control over their lives. The systematic literature review further accentuates the importance of how children and young people's involvement in economic activities have enabled them to gain a sense of empowerment. This means that contributions that children and young people provided for their household have given them a greater voice within the household, the power to make decisions for their families, and have greater control over their life decisions.

Besides that, while children and young people navigated through the different challenges they faced, findings have highlighted how working children and young people were allowed to exercise their agency according to time and place to construct and shape their own lives.

### **5.1.2. Tension and controversies of policies**

The concept of a work-free childhood has long underpinned global efforts to end child labor and has shaped international policy discourse. This systematic literature review has demonstrated that child labor is not something that can be dealt with easily by setting the minimum required age for work. Regulating child labor can be problematic. Hence, it is important to understand that to regulate something, we would have to gather sufficient information about what we are going to regulate.

Furthermore, ILO Convention 182 pledges to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. This means removing all children from participating in work that is deemed harmful to their development. But given the social, cultural, and political context in which it is located, the systematic literature review questions whether the approach is in working children and young people's best interests? Many working children and young people were forced to work illegally in the informal sector instead when ILO Convention 182 came into practice. This also meant that children and young people were put into a situation with a higher possibility of being exploited when working in the informal sector.

Children's rights that were set up by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child comes with the intention of ensuring all children around the world get their basic human rights, providing children the liberty to take up opportunities that may assist them in achieving their maximum capacity, at the same time, empowering them. Putting

a huge focus on the bigotry that determines poverty and social segregation of children, and the world and within the local biases. However, this 'universal' legislation is not applicable throughout the whole world. There have been a lot of discourses on how this legislation has been conflicting with working children's lives, rights, and realities in the Global South. For example, viewing childhood as a "fixed notion" is theoretically incorrect since childhood differs by time and place.

Also, international legislations and policies have very little connection when it comes to working children and young people's everyday lives in Global South. In countries around the world, children form their own identity and rights as an individual who is very closely connected to the community to which the individual belongs. Therefore, implementing the international legislations and policies based on a 'western' culture could put a toll on the current entitlements that they already hold within their community.

At the same time, imposing the global norms of childhood on the local context may cause a clashing scale with the local culture. Some countries in the Global South might be having a difficult time keeping up with the changes in the implementation of children's rights. For instance, according to the universal children's rights Article 28, primary education should be made compulsory and available free to all. However, education is far from free with the additional expenses that children and young people have to bear when attending school. This adds additional financial burdens to children and their families. Moreover, lower-income families would prefer their child to be working to help to cover some living expenses at home.

Indeed, international legislations and policies are important as it sets a standard of living each child should have. At the same time, we should also value local perspectives and views of what rights are. Children's view on rights is very different from what the global laws see. For example, international laws want children to start their compulsory school instead of them working on the streets or factories. However, many children in the Global South would like to have the right to work.

### **5.1.3. Policy recommendations**

Working children and young people's voices are still largely unheard. There is a continuous need for international and national policies and legislation to look into the inclusion of working children's voices when developing any legislation that concerns them in order to better improve working children's lives in the Global South. As known, children's rights serve as a platform as human rights for children with the intention of providing protection and care to children. Therefore, working children and young people who are at risk need their rights implemented in event that international and national policies and legislation are to shield them from hardship and to guarantee that they develop to their maximum capacity.

The systematic literature review further highlighted that to have the best interest of all children, it is important that children's rights are not derived from individualistic readings that come from either ILO and/or UNCRC. This top-down approach is either not relevant or not workable in the Global South. As stated by Abebe (2009:87) "Key to understanding the livelihoods of working children is the recognition of both the immediate and broader

socio-cultural and politico-economic contexts in which their lives unfold and in which rights, duties, and obligations are closely interrelated to those of the collectives to which they belong.” Key findings in the systematic literature review have suggested that to ensure the best interest in children’s rights, we should take into consideration of the different collective responsibilities that were present in the community where most families and communities are dependent on one another for survival.

Children's rights are important, and they matter as it provides and ensures that children grow up in a healthy development which is important for their future well-being. At the same time, the implementation of children's rights, children are given a chance for their voices to be heard, protecting them from abuse, violence, or exploitation while giving children the right to survival. However, children's rights are not seen as feasible for all children around the globe, especially children in the Global South. Therefore, we must respect working children's living rights and modify the international policies and legislation accordingly to each local context to maximize the effect of providing each child the childhood they deserve.

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## **Appendix A – List of academic research databases**

### Scopus

- Coverage – 71+ million scholarly papers
- References – 1.4 billion
- Discipline – Multidisciplinary
- Access options – Limited free preview, full access by institutional subscription only

### Web of Science

- Coverage – 100+ million scholarly papers
- References – 1.4 billion
- Discipline – Multidisciplinary
- Access options – institutional subscription only

### ERIC

- Coverage – 1.3+ million scholarly papers
- References – Not available
- Discipline – Education Science
- Access options – FREE

### ScienceDirect

- Coverage – 16+ million scholarly papers
- References – Not available
- Discipline – Multidisciplinary
- Access options – FREE

### JSTOR

- Coverage – 12+ million scholarly papers
- References – Not available
- Discipline – Multidisciplinary
- Access options – FREE

### Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ)

- Coverage – 4.3+ million scholarly papers
- References – Not available
- Discipline – Multidisciplinary
- Access options – FREE



## Appendix B – Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) Checklist



**CASP Checklist:** 10 questions to help you make sense of a **Qualitative** research

**How to use this appraisal tool:** Three broad issues need to be considered when appraising a qualitative study:

- ▶ Are the results of the study valid? (Section A)
- ▶ What are the results? (Section B)
- ▶ Will the results help locally? (Section C)

The 10 questions on the following pages are designed to help you think about these issues systematically. The first two questions are screening questions and can be answered quickly. If the answer to both is “yes”, it is worth proceeding with the remaining questions. There is some degree of overlap between the questions, you are asked to record a “yes”, “no” or “can’t tell” to most of the questions. A number of italicised prompts are given after each question. These are designed to remind you why the question is important. Record your reasons for your answers in the spaces provided.

**About:** These checklists were designed to be used as educational pedagogic tools, as part of a workshop setting, therefore we do not suggest a scoring system. The core CASP checklists (randomised controlled trial & systematic review) were based on JAMA 'Users' guides to the medical literature 1994 (adapted from Guyatt GH, Sackett DL, and Cook DJ), and piloted with health care practitioners.

For each new checklist, a group of experts were assembled to develop and pilot the checklist and the workshop format with which it would be used. Over the years overall adjustments have been made to the format, but a recent survey of checklist users reiterated that the basic format continues to be useful and appropriate.

**Referencing:** we recommend using the Harvard style citation, i.e.: *Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (2018). CASP (insert name of checklist i.e. Qualitative) Checklist. [online] Available at: URL. Accessed: Date Accessed.*

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Paper for appraisal and reference: .....

**Section A: Are the results valid?**

1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't Tell	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

HINT: Consider

- what was the goal of the research
- why it was thought important
- its relevance

Comments:

2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't Tell	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

HINT: Consider

- If the research seeks to interpret or illuminate the actions and/or subjective experiences of research participants
- Is qualitative research the right methodology for addressing the research goal

Comments:

**Is it worth continuing?**

3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't Tell	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

HINT: Consider

- if the researcher has justified the research design (e.g. have they discussed how they decided which method to use)

Comments:

4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't Tell	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

HINT: Consider

- If the researcher has explained how the participants were selected
- If they explained why the participants they selected were the most appropriate to provide access to the type of knowledge sought by the study
  - If there are any discussions around recruitment (e.g. why some people chose not to take part)

Comments:

5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't Tell	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

HINT: Consider

- If the setting for the data collection was justified
- If it is clear how data were collected (e.g. focus group, semi-structured interview etc.)
- If the researcher has justified the methods chosen
  - If the researcher has made the methods explicit (e.g. for interview method, is there an indication of how interviews are conducted, or did they use a topic guide)
  - If methods were modified during the study. If so, has the researcher explained how and why
  - If the form of data is clear (e.g. tape recordings, video material, notes etc.)
    - If the researcher has discussed saturation of data

Comments:

6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't Tell	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

HINT: Consider

- If the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during (a) formulation of the research questions (b) data collection, including sample recruitment and choice of location
- How the researcher responded to events during the study and whether they considered the implications of any changes in the research design

Comments:

Section B: What are the results?

7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't Tell	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

HINT: Consider

- If there are sufficient details of how the research was explained to participants for the reader to assess whether ethical standards were maintained
- If the researcher has discussed issues raised by the study (e.g. issues around informed consent or confidentiality or how they have handled the effects of the study on the participants during and after the study)
- If approval has been sought from the ethics committee

Comments:



8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't Tell	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

HINT: Consider

- If there is an in-depth description of the analysis process
- If thematic analysis is used. If so, is it clear how the categories/themes were derived from the data
- Whether the researcher explains how the data presented were selected from the original sample to demonstrate the analysis process
- If sufficient data are presented to support the findings
  - To what extent contradictory data are taken into account
- Whether the researcher critically examined their own role, potential bias and influence during analysis and selection of data for presentation

Comments:

9. Is there a clear statement of findings?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Can't Tell	<input type="checkbox"/>
No	<input type="checkbox"/>

HINT: Consider whether

- If the findings are explicit
- If there is adequate discussion of the evidence both for and against the researcher's arguments
- If the researcher has discussed the credibility of their findings (e.g. triangulation, respondent validation, more than one analyst)
- If the findings are discussed in relation to the original research question

Comments:

Section C: Will the results help locally?

10. How valuable is the research?

HINT: Consider

- If the researcher discusses the contribution the study makes to existing knowledge or understanding (e.g. do they consider the findings in relation to current practice or policy, or relevant research-based literature
- If they identify new areas where research is necessary
- If the researchers have discussed whether or how the findings can be transferred to other populations or considered other ways the research may be used

Comments:

**Appendix C – Critical Appraisal Skills Programme scoring for articles**

<b>Article's Title:</b>	<b>Qn 1</b>	<b>Qn 2</b>	<b>Qn 3</b>	<b>Qn 4</b>	<b>Qn 5</b>	<b>Qn 6</b>	<b>Qn 7</b>	<b>Qn 8</b>	<b>Qn 9</b>	<b>Qn 10</b>	<b>Score</b>
African Children's Right to Participate in their own Protection (Marisa O. Ensor & Amanda J. Reinke)	✓	✓	✓	-	?	?	?	?	✓	✓	14
Re-thinking the Child labor "Problem" in Rural sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Sierra Leone's Half Shovels (Roy Moconachie & Gavin Hilson)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	?	✓	✓	18
Towards a more holistic understanding of child participation: Foregrounding the experiences of children in Ghana and Nigeria (Afua Twum-Danso Imoh & Samuel Okyere)	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	?	?	✓	✓	?	16
Are working children's rights and child labour abolition complementary or opposing realms? (Samuel Okyere)	✓	✓	?	?	✓	?	-	?	✓	?	13
Combining Work and School: The Dynamics of Girls' Involvement in Agricultural Work in Andhra Pradesh, India (Virginia Morrow & Uma Vennam)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	?	?	?	16
Productive work and subjected labor: Children's pursuits and child rights in northern Sierra Leone (Catherine E. Bolten)	✓	✓	?	?	✓	?	?	✓	✓	✓	16
Changing Livelihoods, Changing Childhoods: Patterns of Children's Work in Rural Southern Ethiopia (Tatek Abebe)	✓	✓	✓	?	✓	?	?	✓	✓	✓	17

Tensions and controversies regarding child labor in small-scale gold mining in Ghana (Osei-Tutu Jonah Tatek Abebe)	√	√	√	√	√	√	?	?	√	√	18
Child labour, agency and family dynamics: The case of mining in Katanga (DRC) (Geraldine Andre & Marie Godin)	√	√	?	?	√	?	?	√	√	√	16
Aspirations and Setbacks of Working Children in Addis Ababa: Can They Realise Their Futures? (Emebet Mulugeta & Sissel H. Eriksen)	√	√	√	√	√	?	√	√	√	√	19
Multiple identities, multiple realities: Children who migrate independently for work in Southeast Asia (Harriot Beazley)	√	?	?	?	?	?	?	√	√	√	14
Child experiences as street traders in Peru: contributing to a reappraisal for working children (R D F Bromley & P K Mackie)	√	?	√	√	√	?	?	√	√	√	17
Street working children, children's agency and the challenge of children's rights: Evidence from Minas Gerais, Brazil (Jean Grugel & Frederico Poley Martins Ferreira)	√	?	√	?	√	√	√	?	√	?	16
'Bad Mothers' and 'Delinquent Children': Unravelling anti-begging rhetoric in the Ecuadorian Andes (Kate Swanson)	√	√	√	√	√	?	?	√	√	√	18
In the child's best interests? Legislation on children's work in Ethiopia (Kate Orkin)	√	√	?	√	√	?	?	?	√	√	16
Rural children's role in buffering household poverty through ganyu (piecework) in Zambia (Douglas Tendai Phiri)	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	?	19

Children's Work: Experiences of Street-Vending Children and Young People in Enugu, Nigeria (Rosemary C.B. Okoli & Vivienne E. Cree)	√	√	√	?	√	?	?	√	√	√	17
Earning a living on the margins: Begging, street work and the socio-spatial experiences of children in Addis Ababa (Tatek Abebe) **	√	√	√	?	√	?	?	√	√	√	17
Exploring the stressors and resources of Muslim child beggars in Dagbon of Northern Ghana in the context of child rights and existing realities (Tufeiru Fuseini & Marguerite Daniel)	√	√	√	?	√	√	√	?	√	?	17
Integrating Children's Human Rights and Child Poverty Debates: Examples from Young Lives in Ethiopia and India (Virginia Morrow & Kिररily Pells)	√	√	√	?	?	?	?	√	√	√	15
Influencing international child labour policy: The potential and limits of children-centered research (Sharon Bessell)	√	√	√	?	√	?	?	√	√	?	16
Children in Angola: Poverty, Deprivation and Child Labour (Monica Pinilla-Roncancio & Raquel Silva)	√	√	√	?	√	?	?	√	√	√	17
Negotiating Change: working with children and their employers to transform child domestic work in Iringa, Tanzania (Natascha Klocker) **	√	√	√	?	√	√	?	√	√	√	18
Conducting sensitive research in the present and past tense: Recounting the stories of current and former child (Natascha Klocker)**	√	√	?	?	√	√	?	√	√	√	17

Identifying the role of children in informal trade: Evidence for urban policy (Bromley & Mackie) **	√	√	?	√	√	?	-	√	√	√	16
Learning and earning: relational scales of children's work (Jennings et al.) **	√	?	?	?	?	?	?	√	√	?	13
Negotiating Social Identities: The Influence of Gender, Age and ethnicity on young people's 'street careers' in Tanzania (Ruth Evans) **	√	√	√	?	√	√	√	√	√	?	18
Interdependent rights and agency: The role of children in collective livelihood strategies in rural Ethiopia (Tatek Abebe) **	√	√	√	?	?	?	?	√	√	√	16
Social actors and victims of exploitation: Working children in the cash economy of Ethiopia's South (Tatek Abebe & Anne Trine Kjørholt) **	√	√	√	?	√	?	?	√	√	√	17

Legend - Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) Qualitative Studies checklist:

√ (yes) = 2

? (Can't tell) = 1

- (No) = 0

\*\* added reading list through backward citation tracking

Qn1: Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?

Qn2: Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?

Qn3: Was the research design appropriate to the aims of the research?

Qn4: Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?

Qn5: Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?

Qn6: Has the relationship between the researcher and participants been adequately considered?

Qn7: Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?

Qn8: Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?

Qn9: Is there a clear statement of findings?

Qn10: How valuable is the research?

## **Appendix D – Summary of key terms used in each full-text article**

<b>Title:</b>	<b>Key Terms:</b>
African Children’s Right to Participate in their own Protection (Marisa O. Ensor & Amanda J. Reinke)	Protection rights, participation rights, legal pluralism, South Sudan Child Act, ACRWC, child soldiers, violence against children, child labor
Re-thinking the Child labor “Problem” in Rural sub-Saharan Africa: The Case of Sierra Leone’s Half Shovels (Roy Moconachie & Gavin Hilson)	“Crisis of youth”, child labor, artisanal and small-scale mining, livelihoods, poverty, Sierra Leone
Towards a more holistic understanding of child participation: Foregrounding the experiences of children in Ghana and Nigeria (Afua Twum-Danso Imoh & Samuel Okyere)	Child participation, The Convention on the Rights of the Child, Children’s rights, Children’s duties, Child work, Nigeria, Ghana
Are working children's rights and child labour abolition complementary or opposing realms? (Samuel Okyere)	Africa, child labor, child miners, childhood, children, rights
Combining Work and School: The Dynamics of Girls' Involvement in Agricultural Work in Andhra Pradesh, India (Virginia Morrow & Uma Vennam)	Child labor, children’s work, India
Productive work and subjected labor: Children's pursuits and child rights in northern Sierra Leone (Catherine E. Bolten)	Children’s work, child labor, Northern Sierra Leone, child rights
Changing Livelihoods, Changing Childhoods: Patterns of Children's Work in Rural Southern Ethiopia (Tatek Abebe)	Child work, trade, livelihoods, development, Gedeo, Ethiopia, HIV/AIDS

Tensions and controversies regarding child labor in small-scale gold mining in Ghana (Osei-Tutu Jonah & Tatek Abebe)	Child labor, education, small-scale mining, abolition, work-free childhood, poverty, Ghana
Child labour, agency and family dynamics: The case of mining in Katanga (DRC) (Geraldine Andre & Marie Godin)	Children's agency, child work in artisanal mining, interdependencies, intergenerational relationships, social differentiation of childhood
Aspirations and Setbacks of Working Children in Addis Ababa: Can They Realise Their Futures? (Emebet Mulugeta & Sissel H. Eriksen)	Children, poverty, working children, aspiration
Multiple identities, multiple realities: Children who migrate independently for work in Southeast Asia (Harriot Beazley)	Independent child migration, unaccompanied mobility, child work, Southeast Asia, participation, child rights
Child experiences as street traders in Peru: contributing to a reappraisal for working children (R D F Bromley & P K Mackie)	Child work, street children, informal trade, Peru
Street working children, children's agency and the challenge of children's rights: Evidence from Minas Gerais, Brazil (Jean Grugel & Frederico Poley Martins Ferreira)	Brazil, children, street work
'Bad Mothers' and 'Delinquent Children': Unravelling anti-begging rhetoric in the Ecuadorian Andes (Kate Swanson)	Beggars, indigenous, children, informal sector, Ecuador
In the child's best interests? Legislation on children's work in Ethiopia (Kate Orkin)	Children's work, child labor, hazardous work, Convention on the Rights of the Child, Minimum Age Convention, International Labour Organization.



Rural children's role in buffering household poverty through ganyu (piecework) in Zambia (Douglas Tendai Phiri)	Child-poverty, household poverty, ganyu, child work, monetization of labour, Zambia
Children's Work: Experiences of Street-Vending Children and Young People in Enugu, Nigeria (Rosemary C.B. Okoli & Vivienne E. Cree)	Child labour, street vending, children's rights, Nigeria, research with children, developing countries
Earning a living on the margins: Begging, street work and the socio-spatial experiences of children in Addis Ababa (Tatek Abebe) **	Begging, children's work, household livelihoods, streets, Addis Ababa
Exploring the stressors and resources of Muslim child beggars in Dagbon of Northern Ghana in the context of child rights and existing realities (Tufeiru Fuseini & Marguerite Daniel)	Stressors, resources, children, begging, northern Ghana, child rights
Integrating Children's Human Rights and Child Poverty Debates: Examples from Young Lives in Ethiopia and India (Virginia Morrow & Kirrily Pells)	Child poverty, children's human rights, children's work, Ethiopia, India, orphanhood
Influencing international child labour policy: The potential and limits of children-centered research (Sharon Bessell)	Child labor, children's work, research with children, children's rights, International policy, Indonesia
Children in Angola: Poverty, Deprivation and Child Labour (Monica Pinilla-Roncancio & Raquel Silva)	Children, poverty, Angola, Mix-methods
Negotiating Change: working with children and their employers to transform child domestic work in Iringa, Tanzania (Natascha Klocker) **	Child domestic work, social constructionism, action, participation, regulation
Conducting sensitive research in the present and past tense: Recounting the stories of current and former child domestic workers (Natascha Klocker) **	Children's work, child labor, domestic work, research methods, memory, performance
Identifying the role of children in informal trade: Evidence for urban policy (Rosemary D.F Bromley & Peter K. Mackie) **	Child's work, policy, agency, rights,

Learning and earning: relational scales of children's work (Joel Jennings et al.) **	Children, scale, Tijuana, work, agency, resilience
Negotiating Social Identities: The influence of Gender, Age and Ethnicity of young people's street careers' in Tanzania (Ruth Evans) **	Street children in Tanzania, street careers, life course trajectories, social identities, gender norms
Interdependent rights and agency: The role of children in collective livelihood strategies in rural Ethiopia (Tatek Abebe) **	Agency, children's work, rights, Ethiopia
Social actors and victims of exploitation: Working children in the cash economy of Ethiopia's South (Tatek Abebe & Anne Trine Kjørholt) **	Agency, children's work, development, Ethiopia, livelihoods, socio-spatial mobility

