

Intercultural intervention and support systems for learners engaged in child labor

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Abstract

This study determined the intercultural interventions and support systems of schools and community partners for learners engaged in child labor in Capalonga District. This study made use of quantitative method utilizing descriptive-correlational research design and sourced its data from selected 60 child laborers from Capalong District. The pertinent data were also gathered using survey-questionnaire and subjected to statistical treatment using frequency count, percentage, ranking, weighted mean, and Somer's Delta. Findings revealed that majority of child laborers are between the ages of 14–16, males, Grade 10, reside in rural barangays, engaged in farming, come from families with 3–5 children, and their families earn ₱5,000 and below monthly. The intercultural interventions and support systems provided by the schools were perceived to be highly received especially in terms of conducting remedial activities for the youth laborers to catch-up and make-up with missed lessons. On the other hand, community-based support services from local government units (LGUs) and partner agencies are present but are only moderately experienced by the respondents. The interventions are available, yet they are not consistently accessed or fully maximized by working students and their families. The study concludes that the most significant support perceived by child laborers comes from the direct educational intervention by teachers. The relatively weaker reception of legal protection services from the local government units (LGUs). The child laborers face interconnected academic, legal, and psychosocial challenges, particularly insufficient academic support, limited access to legal protection, and high levels of anxiety about their future, all of which hinder their learning continuity and well-being. To address these, the L.E.G.A.L.S. (Lakas-Edukasyon-Gabay-Alalay-Legal-Suporta): A School-Community Plan for Learners Engaged in Child Labor in Capalonga District, was proposed that would help in resolving problems with regards to intercultural interventions and support systems of schools and community partners for learners engaged in child labor.

Keywords: Intercultural intervention, support systems, child labor, intervention, community partner

1. Introduction

Youth labor remains a persistent global issue, particularly in developing countries where economic instability and limited access to education compel young individuals to engage in work at an early age. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2021), approximately 160 million children and adolescents worldwide are engaged in various forms of labor, many of whom juggle both employment and educational responsibilities. This situation not only hinders academic achievement but also affects psychosocial development and social integration. As youth laborers navigate educational environments, they encounter multifaceted challenges that require comprehensive support systems sensitive to their unique intercultural and socioeconomic contexts.

Intercultural intervention which refers to structured educational and social programs designed to bridge cultural gaps, foster inclusivity, and support learners from diverse backgrounds are needed. In the context of youth labor, intercultural interventions are crucial because many working learners come from culturally marginalized or economically disadvantaged groups. Such interventions address issues of cultural identity, social stigma, and integration within school communities (Deardorff, 2015). By applying an intercultural framework, educators and policymakers can create adaptive learning environments that value diversity while promoting equity in educational access and achievement.

On the other hand, support systems refer to institutional, community-based, or interpersonal structures that provide academic, emotional, and social assistance to learners. For working students, effective support systems might include flexible learning schedules, counseling services, mentorship programs, and peer networks that recognize and respond to their labor experiences. Studies have shown that support systems

emphasizing empathy, cultural understanding, and mentorship significantly improve retention rates and academic performance among disadvantaged youth (Khumalo, 2023.). Furthermore, school-based interventions that integrate intercultural awareness training help reduce marginalization and enhance self-efficacy among learners engaged in labor (Eden et al., 2024).

In the Philippines, child labor has been one of the socio-economic issues that stems from different factors. The number of working children continues to rise, with an estimated 1.48 million children aged 5 to 17 working in 2022, according to the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA). In a survey conducted by U.S. Department of Labor (2021), it was reported that children in the Philippines are subjected to the worst forms of child labor, including in commercial sexual exploitation, sometimes as a result of human trafficking, and in armed conflict. Children also perform dangerous tasks in agriculture and gold mining. The survey further indicated that 2.1 million children ages 5 to 17 engage in child labor, of whom approximately 2 million engage in hazardous work.

While the Philippine labor laws allow for the employment of minors in certain conditions, there are strict regulations to ensure their safety, well-being, and continued access to education. For instance, Article 139 of the Labor Code of the Philippines prohibits the employment of children below 15 years of age, unless they are directly under the sole responsibility of their parents or guardians, and the work does not involve hazardous undertakings. Similarly, Section 12 of R.A. 7610 further provides that children between 15 to 18 years old are prohibited from undertaking hazardous work, which includes being exposed to harmful chemicals, dangerous machinery, and the like.

In the Capalonga District, a population of learners are involved in child labor. Based on the records of the Office of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development (MSWD) of Capalonga, Camarines Norte, there is a total number of 91 youth laborers (defined pursuant to applicable labor and social welfare regulations as individuals aged 15 to 17 engaged in labor activities) as of January 2026. Since the municipality is highly dependent on agriculture, the primary means of livelihood is farming, particularly farm labor. Thus, the incidences of child labor in the municipality are mostly found and associated with the agriculture sector in this locale.

Evidently, the impacts of child labor prevalence in the said municipality can be overwhelming and upsetting for the students who are child laborers. The dire consequences of child labor may range from both physical and mental health damages and decline. Moreover, depending on the nature of labor or employment, child laborers can be also made prone to various physical risks such as accidents, and physical injuries. In addition, their work may hamper and affect their academic well-being and educational development. If continuously unaddressed, the learners' involvement in child labor may lead to serious educational problems such as chronic absenteeism, tardiness, poor academic performance, poor learning outcomes and declining learning interest and motivation. Thus, this study seeks to determine the intercultural interventions and support systems available to learners engaged in child labor in the Capalonga District of Camarines Norte. It aims to provide empirical evidence and practical recommendations to enhance education access, retention, and learning equity in among economically constrained learners.

1.1. Objective of the Study

This study aimed to determine the intercultural interventions and support systems of schools and community partners for learners engaged in child labor in Capalonga District. Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions. It specifically aimed at describing the profile of the learners engaged in child labor in terms of their age, sex, grade level, geographic location, nature of work, number of siblings, and income of the family, as well as their academic performance. Moreover, it aims to identify the intercultural interventions and support systems provided by the schools and community partners towards learners engaged in child labor, and the challenges encountered by the respondents regarding the intercultural interventions and support systems to the learners engaged in child labor. These became the bases for crafting an intervention to address the challenges of the child laborer-respondents as to the intercultural interventions and support systems provided by the schools and community.

2. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative method using descriptive-correlational research design to determine the intercultural interventions and support systems of schools and community partners for learners engaged in child labor in Capalonga District. Specifically, the descriptive method was applied in the description and analysis of the concepts and variables of the study as to the profile of learners engaged in child labor, the intercultural interventions and support systems for the learners engaged in child labor, their academic performance as to the intercultural interventions and support systems provided by schools and community, and the challenges encountered by the respondents. Moreover,

correlational design was utilized to establish the relationship between the profile of the respondents and the intercultural interventions provided by the school and community to learners engaged in child labor.

2.1. Population, Sample Size, and Sampling Technique

The respondents in this study were taken from the six public secondary schools with identified child laborers. The sample learners were selected through purposive sampling method. The respondents of this study were 60 identified child laborers who belong to the six public secondary schools in Capalonga District. They were identified through the pre-survey conducted by the researcher in the schools and the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), Local Government Unit (LGU) in Capalonga.

2.2. Data Gathering Procedures

The data were collected using a researcher-made survey-questionnaire. To ensure the validity and reliability of the instrument, it was subjected to content validation by experts and a dry run to establish its reliability. Further, a dry-run was conducted to individuals outside of the main study. The results were subjected to Cronbach Alpha reliability test and it yielded .903 which means that the questionnaire is highly reliable.

Moreover, ethical guidelines and standards were observed in the study. Informed consent forms were sent to the parents of the students and child laborers who were involved in this research. The parents were also given assurance that the rights and welfare of their children will be protected by the provisions of the Data Privacy Act before, during and after the research implementation. The researcher also asked permissions from the Schools District Office through the Schools Division Superintendent and to the principals of the identified schools to conduct data gathering. The risks and benefits of participation in the study were explained to the learners and assuring them about confidentiality of data and their identities as respondents. They were given the rights to refuse participation without explanation, right to answer sensitive questions, right to be informed of the outcomes of the survey and study and right to ask questions to the researcher.

2.3. Statistical Treatment of Data

Data management and analysis were conducted using Microsoft Excel and IBM SPSS Statistics Version 21. To address the first two research questions regarding the level of leadership effectiveness and the challenges encountered by teachers, descriptive statistics were employed. Specifically, the weighted mean was utilized to quantify respondent perceptions across the seven PPST domains, allowing for the identification of prevailing strengths in leadership practices as well as the specific constraints hindering instructional delivery.

For the statistical treatment of the data, SPSS software version 21 was used, for the reliability in the statistical analysis of the data. To describe the profile and the academic performance of the respondents, frequency and percentage were used. As to the intercultural interventions and support systems provided by the schools and community partners towards learners engaged in child labor, weighted mean was used. Moreover, Somer's Delta (d) was applied to examine the relationship between the profile of the child laborers and the intercultural interventions provided by the schools and community. The formula for Somer's d is:

$$d = \frac{C - D}{n^2} - \sum_{i=1}^k \left(\frac{n_i^2}{n^2} \right)$$

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Profile of the Respondents Engaged in Child Labor

Majority of the respondents are between the age bracket of 14–16 (73.33%), and there is only one respondent in the age bracket of 20–23 (1.67%). This distribution suggests that child labor is most prevalent among mid to late adolescents, an age range that overlaps with critical stages of secondary education. The representation of a respondent who is in the age bracket of 20–23, could be associated with college level education, suggesting that the learner may have discontinued formal education due to economic or financial reasons. This underscores the possibility that early

engagement in labor may constrain educational trajectories, limiting opportunities for progression to college and reinforcing cycles of socioeconomic disadvantage. Desiderio (2023) affirmed this, revealing in his study that majority of the youth and minors who were identified as youth laborers belonged to age 15–17-year-old.

Moreover, a significant gender disparity is evident, with males comprising 93.33% of the respondents and females only 6.67%. This suggest that male are more often expected to contribute economically to their households, possibly due to prevailing cultural norms and gender roles. It raises concerns about the additional burden placed on boys in terms of balancing work and education, and it also points to a need for gender-sensitive interventions that address the specific challenges faced by male and female child laborers. This was further corroborated by Desiderio (2023) who found that out of the total population of the study, 62.8 percent were working boys and only 37.2 percent were working girls. Likewise, Mapa (2021) noted that working youth was also higher among boys than girls.

Table 1. Profile of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
11-13	5	8.33
14-16	44	73.33
17-19	10	16.67
20-23	1	1.67
23-above	0	0
Sex		
Male	56	93.33
Female	4	6.67
Grade Level		
Grade 7	2	3.33
Grade 8	18	30.00
Grade 9	7	11.67
Grade 10	21	35.00
Grade 11	4	6.67
Grade 12	8	13.33
Geographic Location		
Reside in Urban Barangays	11	18.33
Reside in Rural Barangays	37	61.67
Reside in Coastal Barangays	12	20.00
Nature of Work		
Mining	1	1.67
Farming	34	56.67
Animal Raising	4	6.67
House Helper	2	3.33
Vendor	7	11.67
Store Keeper	1	1.67
Others (fishing, helper in store, copra worker)	11	18.33
Number of Siblings		
Only child in the family	2	3.33
Two children in the family	11	18.33
3-5 children	24	40.00
6-10 children	18	30.00
10-above children	5	8.33
Income of the Family		
5,000 and below	54	90
6,000-10,000	6	10

n=60

As to the grade levels, most of the respondents were enrolled in Grade 10 (35%) and Grade 8 (30%), with smaller proportions in other grade levels. This concentration in lower and middle high school levels might reflect either late school entry or grade repetition, potentially as a result of work-related absences or other academic difficulties. The presence of students in upper levels (Grades 10) indicates perseverance despite challenges, but also underscores the importance of sustained support to ensure they complete secondary education. This suggests that child laborers may be tasked with helping in early education levels, which may reflect the schools' reliance on older students for non-academic tasks. While this may develop a sense of responsibility, it also potentially distracts from their own learning. These findings were corroborated by Gideon (2020) who determined the negative impacts of youth labor on the academic performance of the secondary education learners. It was emphasized in this study that strenuous activities working minors and learners caused their low and unsatisfactory academic performance.

Further, most respondents reside in rural barangays (61.67%), with the rest split between coastal (20%) and urban barangays (18.33%). This indicates that the geographic distribution highlights the rural poverty that often underpins child labor. In rural and coastal areas, access to alternative income and educational support may be limited, reinforcing the need for community-based interventions and localized policy attention. Yeung (2020) refutes this who found that the extent of prevalence of youth labor was dictated by the market conditions. It concluded that areas with higher economic activities and market demands were more likely to serve as hosts to cases of more youth labor and exploitation.

As to the nature of their work, more than half (56.67%) of the respondents are engaged in farming. Only one is working as a storekeeper and one is engaged in mining. This means that farming being the predominant occupation confirms the agricultural dependency of the region's economy and the role children play in supplementing family labor. These physically demanding jobs not only limit study time but also pose health and safety risks to the children involved. This implies the necessity of enforcing labor laws and creating alternative livelihood programs for families. The findings were corroborated by Mapa (2021) who noted that agriculture industry was recorded as the highest population rate of working minors and youth in 2020.

Moreover, a large portion of respondents (40%) come from families with 3–5 children. Only 3.33% are with only child in the family. The data suggest that child labor is more common in large families, likely due to economic strain and the need for every member to contribute financially. This underscores the importance of family planning education and economic empowerment programs targeting low-income households with many dependents. These were supported by Sunil (2020) which noted the data of International Labor Organization (ILO) showing that the strike of the pandemic resulted to massive loss of jobs and livelihood among parents and families that led to the increased rate of children and youth who entered the youth and child labor. The worst scenario was that other children and minors were forced to do difficult and hazardous jobs and were exposed to more exploitative situations.

Furthermore, an overwhelming majority (90%) of families earn ₱5,000 and below monthly, indicating a high incidence of poverty. Only 10% earn between ₱6,000–₱10,000. The finding suggests that economic hardship is a primary driver of child labor, forcing children into the workforce to supplement household income. This implies that youth labor and child labor stem from poverty. This is affirmed by Reid (2023) who justified that families who have scarcity of resources and financial capacities are more likely to have children who eventually engage in youth labor or child labor practices.

3.2. Intercultural Interventions and Support Systems Provided by the Schools and Community Partners

The overall weighted mean for the received intercultural interventions and support systems provided by the schools is 3.38, interpreted. This indicates that, in general, the respondents moderately received and experienced the school-based interventions intended to support them as working learners, however these interventions were not consistently or extensively implemented across all indicators. The findings show that teachers always conduct remedial activities for the child laborers for them to make up with missed lessons due to absences because of work as evident in the highest weighted mean of 4.00 interpreted as "highly received." This suggests that teachers are highly responsive at the classroom level in addressing the academic needs of working students. The immediate and visible impact of missed lessons on students' performance, prompts teachers to provide remedial sessions, make-up activities, or flexible deadlines. A child laborer who misses classes due to employment obligations are given by the teachers alternative tasks, additional tutorials after class, or simplified modules to ensure that learning competencies are still achieved. This teacher initiative is often easier to implement because it relies on individual professional discretion and direct interaction with students.

The results imply that the most significant support perceived by child laborers comes from the direct educational intervention by teachers, specifically through remedial activities. It further implies that interventions are critical as they

provide an academic safety net for these vulnerable students, helping to mitigate the adverse effects of irregular school attendance caused by their work obligations. Mehra (2021) corroborated this revealing a positive outcome of the intervention for youths at risk of involvement in youth labor. The intervention was perceived as a potential investment to benefit poor youth including youth laborers.

On the other hand, the orientation about the conditions for the issuance of working youth permit was rated the lowest with a weighted mean of 2.82, interpreted as Received. The lower rating indicates that orientation and formal institutional support related to legal or administrative aspects of child labor are less consistently provided. This is due to limited coordination between schools and external agencies such as local government units or labor offices. Schools focus more on academic remediation than on legal awareness, resulting in students working without full understanding of their rights, legal protections, or permit requirements. In some cases, orientations are conducted only once a year or not at all, leaving many working students uninformed.

The findings imply that while classroom-based support mechanisms are strong, institutional and systemic interventions are comparatively weaker. Schools demonstrate a high level of teacher initiative in supporting academic recovery, but there is a need to strengthen structured programs such as policy orientation, advocacy participation, and data-driven intervention planning. Enhancing these areas will ensure a more holistic, consistent, and rights-based approach to supporting working students, aligning academic assistance with legal protection and socio-emotional support. This was refuted by Baclig (2022) who stressed that the campaign against youth labor and child labor has seen significant progress. He further emphasized that the Philippine government and its relevant departments have been pursuing comprehensive partnerships towards reducing youth labor, forced labor, slavery and human trafficking against Filipino children and youth.

Table 2. Received Intercultural Interventions and Support Systems Provided by the Schools

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	The school head and teachers get data about my personal profile as a student worker as basis for interventions.	3.43	HR
2.	I was oriented about the conditions for the issuance of working youth permit.	2.82	R
3.	I was given the chance to participate in advocacy activities on anti-youth labor campaign.	2.97	R
4.	Our school has advising and counseling program specifically for child laborers.	3.67	HR
5.	My teacher conducts remedial activities for me to catch-up and make-up with missed lesson due to absences because of work.	4.00	HR
Overall Weighted Mean		3.38	R
<i>Rating Scale:</i>			
		<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>	
4.20-5.00	-	<i>Very Highly Received (VHR)</i>	
3.40-4.19	-	<i>Highly Received (HR)</i>	
2.60-3.39	-	<i>Received (R)</i>	
1.80-2.59	-	<i>Poorly Received (PR)</i>	
1.00-1.79	-	<i>Not at all Received (NAR)</i>	

As to the intercultural interventions and support systems provided by the community partners to learners engaged in child labor, the overall weighted mean is 2.75, interpreted as "Received." This indicates that, community-based support services from local government units (LGUs) and partner agencies are present but are only moderately experienced by the respondents. The interventions are available, yet they are not consistently accessed or fully maximized by working students and their families.

Among the indicators, the highest weighted mean is 2.88 showing that the parents received livelihood assistance from the LGU. This suggests that livelihood programs for families of working students are relatively more accessible or visible compared to other forms of assistance. This is because LGUs commonly prioritize poverty alleviation and family welfare programs such as livelihood and skills training, microfinance support, or small-scale enterprise assistance. This

suggests that problems on youth labor are attempted to be resolved by governments through policies that work on providing high paying jobs for parents (Marshall, 2022).

Moreover, the lowest weighted mean is on receiving legal services and protection from exploitation from LGU which got a weighted mean of 2.63, also interpreted as “Received.” This indicates that legal protection mechanisms and services addressing child labor exploitation are less directly experienced by the respondents. A possible reason is that legal support services are often reactive rather than proactive; they are typically accessed only when formal complaints are filed or when cases are reported. Many working students are not aware of reporting mechanisms, may fear retaliation from employers, or normalize exploitative conditions due to economic necessity.

In addition, the result indicates a relatively weaker reception of legal protection services from the local government units (LGUs). This implies that in a setting where learners are involved in labor, often precarious and prone to exploitation, this concerns the lack of strong legal support. It underscores a gap in safeguarding children's rights at the community level. The findings further imply that while community partners are able to provide economic support to families, protective and rights-based services for working children remain underutilized or less visible.

Table 3. Received Intercultural Interventions and Support Systems the Community Partners

Indicators		Weighted Mean	Interpretation
1.	I receive legal services and protection from exploitation from LGU.	2.63	R
2.	My parents received livelihood assistance from the LGU.	2.88	R
3.	The LGU provides legal support and services whenever we have problems like not receiving proper compensation.	2.83	R
4.	The LGU provides supplementary support to child laborers such food, medicine and clothes.	2.67	R
5.	The LGU provides medical and health support to child laborers whenever they get sick and injured.	2.72	R
Overall Weighted Mean		2.75	R
<i>Rating Scale:</i>		<i>Descriptive Interpretation</i>	
4.20-5.00	-	<i>Very Highly Received (VHR)</i>	
3.40-4.19	-	<i>Highly Received (HR)</i>	
2.60-3.39	-	<i>Received (R)</i>	
1.80-2.59	-	<i>Poorly Received (PR)</i>	
1.00-1.79	-	<i>Not at all Received (NAR)</i>	

Lucenio (2021) affirmed the results, who noted that the past crisis has pushed back to zero the efforts of the government to reduce youth labor incidences. Filipino youth laborers indeed belong to the estimated 160 million youth worldwide who have been victimized by youth labor and exploitation. It is also frustrating to know that the actual number of these young workers is unknown due to the past crisis, hence, the needs of these youth remain insufficiently addressed. Moreover, Roche (2021) found that the informal community-based actors such as families, neighbors and friends have limited initial responses towards cases of youth labor and maltreatment. However, formal youth protection actors and implementers were found to sufficiently and effectively respond to incidences and problems of youth laborers and maltreated children and minors.

3.3 Relationship between the Profile of the Respondents and the Intercultural Interventions Provided by the School and Community Partners

The significant relationship between the profile of the respondents in terms of age, sex, location, nature of work, grade level, number of siblings and household income of the family and the intercultural intervention and support provided by the school and community partners that may exists were tested using the Somers' Delta Correlation Coefficient (d). The profile along grade levels and intercultural interventions obtained significant relationship with $d=.282$ and $p<.05$, while the rest of the profile have no significant relationship to the intercultural interventions being provided by the school and partner communities.

When treating the grade level as the dependent variable, the Somers' d value is 0.282, slightly higher than when treating interventions as dependent (0.264). The p-value (Approx. Sig.) is 0.014, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). This confirms that the observed association is not due to random chance. This indicates that learners' perceptions of the school's intercultural efforts to offer remedial activities for catching up on missed lessons, often due to work-related absences, vary according to their grade levels and appear to be the most frequently implemented intervention for them.

Table 4. Test for Significant Relationship between the Profile and the Intercultural Interventions

Intercultural Intervention	Profile of the Respondents						
	Age	Sex	Location	Nature of Work	Grade Level	Number of Siblings	Household Income
Test Statistics	.153	.246	.402	.486	.282*	.161	-.085
<i>p-value</i>	.067	.426	.171	.775	.014	.153	.074

*Correlation is Significant @ 0.05 level.

The findings imply that grade level is the most relevant profile variable influencing how learners perceive and benefit from intercultural interventions. This underscores the need for grade-level differentiated programming that accounts for students' academic standing and life responsibilities such as their work. Moreover, this could be attributed to the varying needs and vulnerabilities of the child laborers. Child laborers at different grade levels have different academic pressures and personal responsibilities, for instance senior high school students may face greater demands due to graduation, work immersion, and college/career preparation. They may also be more likely to alter work and school, making them more sensitive to programs that help remediate missed learning opportunities, a noted function of intercultural interventions.

Abdullah (2021) who suggested a link between the nature of social norms in the community and the extent and scenarios of child and youth labor in the locale. One of these norms could be the notion that in a poor country, a child who is already in the secondary may be depended by their parents to help raise and earn for the family. The study highlighted the potential value of developing normative change intervention programs aimed at re-orienting and minimizing negative interpretations of prevailing social norms and values that contribute to the prevention of child and youth labor in communities.

3.4. Academic Performance of the Child Laborer-Respondents

This study determined the academic performance of the child laborers in Capalonga District. The majority of respondents achieved a "fairly satisfactory" rating with a General Weighted Average (GWA) of 75-79, with a total frequency of 31. This indicates that while the majority of child laborers are meeting the minimum academic requirements, their general performance remains at the lower end of the satisfactory range. This suggests that although these learners are managing to stay academically afloat despite the demands of labor, they may be struggling with mastery and deeper academic engagement. These challenges can be attributed to common barriers faced by working students, such as fatigue, inconsistent attendance, and limited study time outside school hours.

Further, the prevalence of "fairly satisfactory" performance likely stems from scenarios where child laborers balance limited school attendance with demanding work schedules, such as assisting in family farms or informal vending after classes, enabling moderate grades through persistent but inconsistent effort amid fatigue and reduced study time.

On the other hand, the least were recorded for both "very satisfactory" with a GWA of 85, and "did not meet expectations" with a GWA of 74, both with a frequency of 2. This relatively small percentage indicates that most child laborers still manage to avoid outright academic failure. However, the presence of failing grades, particularly the lowest recorded GWA of 74, underscores the vulnerability of certain learners who may be at greater risk of academic disengagement or dropout. Notably, only 3 learners achieved an "outstanding" rating, while 2 learners performed at a Very Satisfactory level, suggesting that a minority of child laborers are able to excel academically despite their disadvantaged circumstances. This points to individual resilience and the possible presence of support systems, be it from family, school, or the community, that help mitigate the impact of child labor on learning outcomes.

Moreover, the "outstanding" results are rare because high-achieving GWAs demand extensive preparation and extracurricular involvement that child laborers cannot afford due to long work hours, often 4-6 hours daily in low-wage jobs like street selling or domestic help, leaving minimal opportunity for advanced learning. Similarly, "did not meet

expectations” rating occurs in extreme cases of overburdened child laborers, such as those in full-time factory work or scavenging, where chronic absenteeism and exhaustion prevent even basic competency.

Table 5. Academic Performance of Child Laborers

GWA	Interpretation	Frequency	Percentage
90	Outstanding	3	5
85	Very Satisfactory	2	3.33
84	Satisfactory	4	6.67
83	Satisfactory	2	3.33
82	Satisfactory	2	3.33
81	Satisfactory	3	5
80	Satisfactory	11	18.33
79	Fairly Satisfactory	7	11.67
78	Fairly Satisfactory	7	11.67
77	Fairly Satisfactory	6	10
76	Fairly Satisfactory	8	13.33
75	Fairly Satisfactory	3	5
74	Did Not Meet Expectations	2	3.33
Total		60	100

Overall, the concentration of grades in the “fairly satisfactory” range, contrasted with the minimal presence in both the highest and lowest categories, implies a pressing need for academic intervention, differentiated instruction, and responsive support systems to elevate the learning outcomes of child laborers beyond mere compliance toward meaningful achievement. Gideon (2020) affirms the negative impacts of youth labor on the academic performance of the secondary education students. Strenuous activities of working minors and students caused their low and unsatisfactory academic performance. The inability of the governments to provide jobs for the parents typically lead to the decision of the parents to push their children into youth labor.

3.5. Challenges Encountered by the Respondents Regarding the Intercultural Intervention and Support Systems to the Learners Engaged in Child Labor

School-Related Challenges. Most of the respondents receive insufficient academic support to help them cope with missed lessons due to absences, with a frequency of 27 (rank 1). This highlights a critical gap in the academic support mechanisms of the school for working students. Although some remedial efforts may exist, they are not systematically implemented or consistently accessible to all learners. A student who regularly misses classes due to work obligations does not receive structured catch-up sessions, guided modules, or scheduled consultations with teachers, resulting in cumulative learning gaps and academic stress. This indicates a need for formalized and institutionalized support programs that ensure continuity of learning for students with irregular attendance.

Table 6. School-Related Challenges Encountered by Respondents Regarding the Intercultural and Support Systems

Indicators	Frequency	Rank
1. Teachers demonstrate limited understanding of my situation as a working student.	20	3
2. My work responsibilities make it difficult for me to participate in school-related activities.	16	4
3. I receive insufficient academic support to help me cope with missed lessons due to absences.	27	1
4. The school offers limited programs or initiatives specifically designed for working students.	9	5
5. I sometimes feel ignored or treated differently by my classmates or teachers because I am a working student.	23	2

In contrast, the lowest frequency of 9 (rank 5) is on the limited programs or initiatives offered by schools specifically designed for working students. This suggests that, relative to other concerns, students perceive the presence of at least some school initiatives intended for working learners. Schools may have already introduced flexible learning options, bridging programs, or guidance services, which may explain the lower frequency of this concern. The presence of modular learning, flexible deadlines, or school counseling services partially address the needs of working students, even if these initiatives are not yet fully comprehensive.

The results were supported by Asio (2020) which attested that the teacher-respondents were sufficiently cognizant about the student protection policies against exploitation and youth labor. It was also found that the responsiveness of the selected schools towards the implementation of the said policies were limited. It was further affirmed by Dalmacio (2022) that the respondents who were involved in youth labor activities suffered more from lack of access to education services.

Academic and Learning Challenges. Majority of the respondents find it difficult to understand lessons because of the language used in instruction which ranked first with a frequency of 22. This highlights language as the most salient barrier to learning. This can be attribute to the diverse linguistic or cultural backgrounds where the language used in instruction (e.g., English or formal Filipino) is not the primary medium of communication. Thus, resulting to difficulty in comprehending materials especially if written in English. A child laborer who speaks a local dialect at home and in the workplace struggle to comprehend technical or academic vocabulary used during lectures, resulting in gaps in understanding and lower academic performance. This challenge increases when teachers use fast-paced explanations, unfamiliar terminologies, or culturally distant examples.

Table 7. Academic and Learning Challenges Encountered by Respondents Regarding the Intercultural and Support Systems

	Indicators	Frequency	Rank
1.	I find it difficult to understand lessons because of the language used in instruction.	22	1
2.	The reading materials and learning resources provided are not well-suited to my circumstances as a working student.	11	5
3.	My work schedule prevents me from regularly attending tutorials or additional classes.	14	4
4.	I lack access to adequate learning tools or materials that could support my academic performance.	21	2
5.	I experience difficulty balancing my time among work, academic responsibilities, and rest.	19	3

In contrast, only few respondents believe that the reading materials and learning resources provided are not well-suited to their circumstances as a working student which got the lowest frequency of 11 (rank 5). This suggests that although resource suitability is still a concern, it is the least frequently reported challenge among the items. One reason is that schools and teachers are already providing adaptable or flexible learning materials such as modules, recorded lectures, or simplified handouts. A working student who cannot attend synchronous classes may still access printed modules or digital copies of lessons, making resources relatively accessible compared to other barriers such as language or time constraints.

These findings imply that linguistic inclusivity and communication strategies must be prioritized in instructional delivery. Teachers may need to adopt multilingual explanations, contextualized examples, and scaffolded language support to ensure comprehension among culturally diverse and working learners. Furthermore, while learning resources appear relatively adequate, there is still a need to continuously contextualize materials to align with the realities of working learners, including flexible formats and culturally responsive content. Overall, the results emphasize the importance of designing inclusive, accessible, and linguistically responsive educational support systems that address both academic and socio-cultural barriers to learning. Gideon (2020) corroborated this, revealing the negative impacts of youth labor on the academic performance of the secondary education students. It was proven in his study that strenuous activities working minors and students caused their low and unsatisfactory academic performance including poor reading comprehension.

Community and Institutional Support. Another challenge encountered by the respondents is related to community and institutional support. As presented in Table 8, the rank 1 challenge among the respondents with a

frequency of 21 is receiving insufficient family livelihood support or financial assistance. This finding underscores that economic hardship remains the most pressing community-level challenge affecting child laborers. Many families rely on limited or irregular income sources, and available government or community assistance programs which are not enough to meet daily needs. A learner forced to work long hours after school because family income is insufficient to cover basic expenses such as food, transportation, and school supplies. In such cases, even when assistance programs exist, they may be irregular, limited in coverage, or difficult to access, thereby sustaining the need for child labor.

In contrast, the least challenge with a frequency of 14 (rank 5) is sometimes experiencing exploitation or social discrimination within the community. Although this is the least reported challenge, it remains a significant concern. The relatively lower frequency indicates that not all students directly encounter overt exploitation or discrimination, or that such experiences are underreported due to fear, normalization, or lack of awareness of what constitutes exploitation. Some learners accept long working hours or low wages as normal conditions and may not perceive them as exploitative, while others may hesitate to report discriminatory treatment from employers or community members due to fear of losing their source of income.

Table 8. Community and Institutional Support Challenges Encountered by Respondents Regarding the Intercultural and Support Systems

	Indicators	Frequency	Rank
1.	Support from the barangay, church, or community-based organizations is limited.	20	2
2.	Government or barangay programs intended to support working students are not consistently sustained.	19	3
3.	My family receives insufficient livelihood support or financial assistance.	21	1
4.	I do not always feel safe or adequately supported outside the school environment.	17	4
5.	Working students like me sometimes experience exploitation or social discrimination within the community.	14	5

The findings imply that economic vulnerability is the driving force of the challenges experienced by child laborers at the community level, while issues of protection and social inclusion remain present but less visible. This calls for stronger and more sustained livelihood and social protection programs from LGUs, community organizations, and institutional partners. Schools and community stakeholders should collaborate to establish integrated support systems, such as scholarship and subsidy programs, family livelihood projects, and child protection monitoring mechanisms. Additionally, there is a need to strengthen awareness campaigns on child rights, labor protection, and anti-discrimination policies to ensure that working learners are not only economically supported but also socially protected and empowered within their communities.

The data reflect the intertwined realities of poverty, education, and child labor in the locale. While child laborers are determined to pursue their education despite significant hardships, their dual roles as learners and workers create conflicts in time, energy, and focus. The most cited challenge is physical exhaustion and difficulty balancing academic requirements with work responsibilities. Thus, families who have scarcity of resources and financial capacities are more likely to have children who eventually engage in youth labor or child labor practices. Unfortunately, laws and services to protect these working minors are also usually limited, unimplemented or totally absent (Reid, 2023).

Personal and Psychosocial. Beyond academic and institutional barriers, child laborers also face substantial internal and emotional strains that affect their well-being and capacity to succeed in school. Majority of the respondents often experience anxiety or concern regarding their future which got the highest frequency of 46 (rank 1). This result demonstrates that uncertainty and psychological stress are the most pressing personal challenges among the respondents. Child laborers constantly negotiate competing demands between earning income and completing their education, which may create fear about long-term stability and success. A child laborer who struggles to balance work shifts and academic requirements may worry about failing subjects, delaying graduation, or not being able to secure better employment in the future. This persistent uncertainty may heighten anxiety levels and reduce motivation or concentration in school.

In contrast, only few with a frequency of 9 (rank 5) experienced bullying or discrimination because of my status as a working student. While this is the least reported challenge, it still represents a meaningful issue that affects a subset

of child laborers. The relatively lower frequency suggests that overt forms of bullying or discrimination are less common or are not always openly acknowledged by respondents. Some respondents do not interpret subtle exclusion or differential treatment as discrimination, or they may choose not to report such experiences due to social pressure or fear of stigma.

Table 9. Personal and Psychosocial Challenges Encountered by Respondents Regarding Intercultural and Support Systems

	Indicators	Frequency	Rank
1.	I often feel physically exhausted or sleepy during classes due to my work responsibilities.	17	2
2.	I am frequently absent from class because I need to work.	14	3
3.	I often experience anxiety or concern regarding my future.	46	1
4.	I feel embarrassed or ashamed because I work while pursuing my education.	10	4
5.	I have experienced bullying or discrimination because of my status as a working student.	9	5

The findings imply that psychosocial support is critical but often overlooked component of support systems for working students. While academic and economic interventions are essential, prioritizing mental health and emotional well-being is equally important. There is a need for guidance offices, counseling programs, and peer support groups to strengthen their services to provide safe spaces for child laborers, where they can express their anxieties and receive appropriate support. The results highlight the need for a holistic support framework that addresses not only academic and economic needs but also the psychological and emotional resilience of child laborers. This is corroborated by Boutin (2022) who revealed the negative impact of child labor and youth labor against the physical and mental health of children and youth. It was found that the impacts of child and youth labor are purely negative and detrimental against the youth's educational, physical and mental well-being.

3.6. Intervention to Address the Challenges of the Child Laborers as to the Intercultural Interventions and Support Systems

To address challenges encountered by child laborers as to intercultural intervention and support systems, an intervention is needed. The plan called Project L.E.G.A.L.S. (Lakas-Edukasyon-Gabay-Alalay-Legal-Suporta): A School-Community Plan for Learners Engaged in Child Labor in Capalonga District will respond to these challenges. The plan focuses on the findings which were found weak in this study. The plan consists of following the parts: key result area/s, objectives/targets, strategies/approaches, time frame, persons involved, resources and expected outcome. Key Result Area/s refer to the aspects of the interventions which are rated low by the respondents in this study. Objectives/Targets refer to the goals of each of the strategies intended for each of the key result areas. Strategies/Approaches present the different actions and activities to be taken to address the key result areas. Time Frame is the period set for the accomplishment of the actions and activities to be taken. Persons Involved refer to the individuals who are the main subject of the actions and activities to be taken. Resources are the funds and organizations that may be tapped or used to support the accomplishment of the plan. The expected outcome serves as the evaluation indicator of the plan.

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that the most significant support perceived by child laborers comes from the direct educational intervention by teachers. However, the relatively weaker reception of legal protection services from the local government units (LGUs) implies that in Capalonga district, a setting where learners are involved in labor, lack strong legal support and underscores a gap in safeguarding children's rights at the community level. Moreover, the academic performance of the respondents generally shows a pressing need for academic intervention and responsive support systems to elevate the learning outcomes of child laborers beyond mere compliance toward meaningful achievement. In addition, the child laborers face interconnected academic, legal, and psychosocial challenges,

particularly insufficient academic support, limited access to legal protection, and high levels of anxiety about their future, all of which hinder their learning continuity and well-being.

To address the challenges, school heads, teachers and guidance office may collaboratively implement a targeted student support and intervention program that addresses the distinct socioeconomic and demographic characteristics of the child laborers in Capalonga District. The School's Child Protection Committee (CPC), in coordination with the Barangay Council for the Protection of Children (BCPC) may collaborate and conduct community-based advocacy campaigns on the rights and protection of working learners, aiming to raise awareness and encourage reporting of violations. Further, school heads in coordination with LGUs, may consider formalizing support systems through regular orientations on labor rights, strengthening partnerships with labor and social welfare agencies, and developing comprehensive guidance programs tailored to working learners. Furthermore, school heads and teachers may implement targeted academic enhancement programs such as after-school tutorials, flexible learning schedules, and individualized learning plans, to support working students in overcoming barriers like fatigue, irregular attendance, and limited study time. In addition, school heads, in coordination with LGUs, DOLE, DSWD, and the Barangay Council, may create a functional school-based legal help and referral system. Regular legal literacy campaigns may be conducted to inform learners and parents of their rights, reporting procedures, and available protection services to prevent exploitation and unsafe labor practices. Guidance offices may intensify counseling services, peer support programs, and mental wellness activities to address learners' anxiety, stress, and emotional burden. Schools may partner with mental health professionals and community organizations to provide sustained psychosocial interventions for working students. Future researchers may evaluate these interventions and may explore additional factors to improve the educational conditions of child laborers.

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