



The Effectiveness, or Ineffectiveness, of the Icelandic Legislation on Child Work

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at

NES2008, 11th -13th of August 2008



The legislation

ILO no. 138

– the protection perspective –

- ILO minimum age convention, 1973 (No. 138).
 - Children (up to 15) may not be in employment.
 - Exception: 13-14 years old may perform a light work.
 - Youths (15-17) may not be in unsafe employment.
 - Same provision in most national and international legislations.
 - EU-regulation on child and youth work.
 - UNCRC, article 32.
 - In accordance with dominant western discourse on childhood.
 - Children are placed outside the workplace of adults.
 - Children are **in need of protection**.
 - **The right not to work.**



The legislation

UNCRC, article 12

– the participation perspective –

- UNCRC, article 12
 - Children have the right to express their own views in all matters affecting them.
 - The core article of **the participation articles of the UNCRC.**
 - Freedom of expression; of thought, conscience and religion; of association.
 - Similar political rights as adults holds.
 - Similar economic rights as adults holds?
 - **The right to work.**
 - The right to employment.
 - Rights in work.



Research methods

- The research is part of a doctoral project on paid work of 13-17 years old Icelanders.
- Extensive questionnaire based on a survey conducted by the Nordic Administrations of Occupational Safety and Health in 1998.
- Random sample of 2000 13-17 years old Icelanders from the National Register of Persons.
 - Year 1990-1994.
- Response rate 48,4%.



Research findings

School attendance and employment

- 98% of respondents were in school at the time of the survey.
- 90% had experience of paid work.
- 84% had paid job during the summer of 2007.
- 49% had paid job during the school year 2007-2008.
 - 29% in regular employment.
 - 20% worked now and then.
 - 40% had jobs in the retail-sector (supermarkets, shops ...)



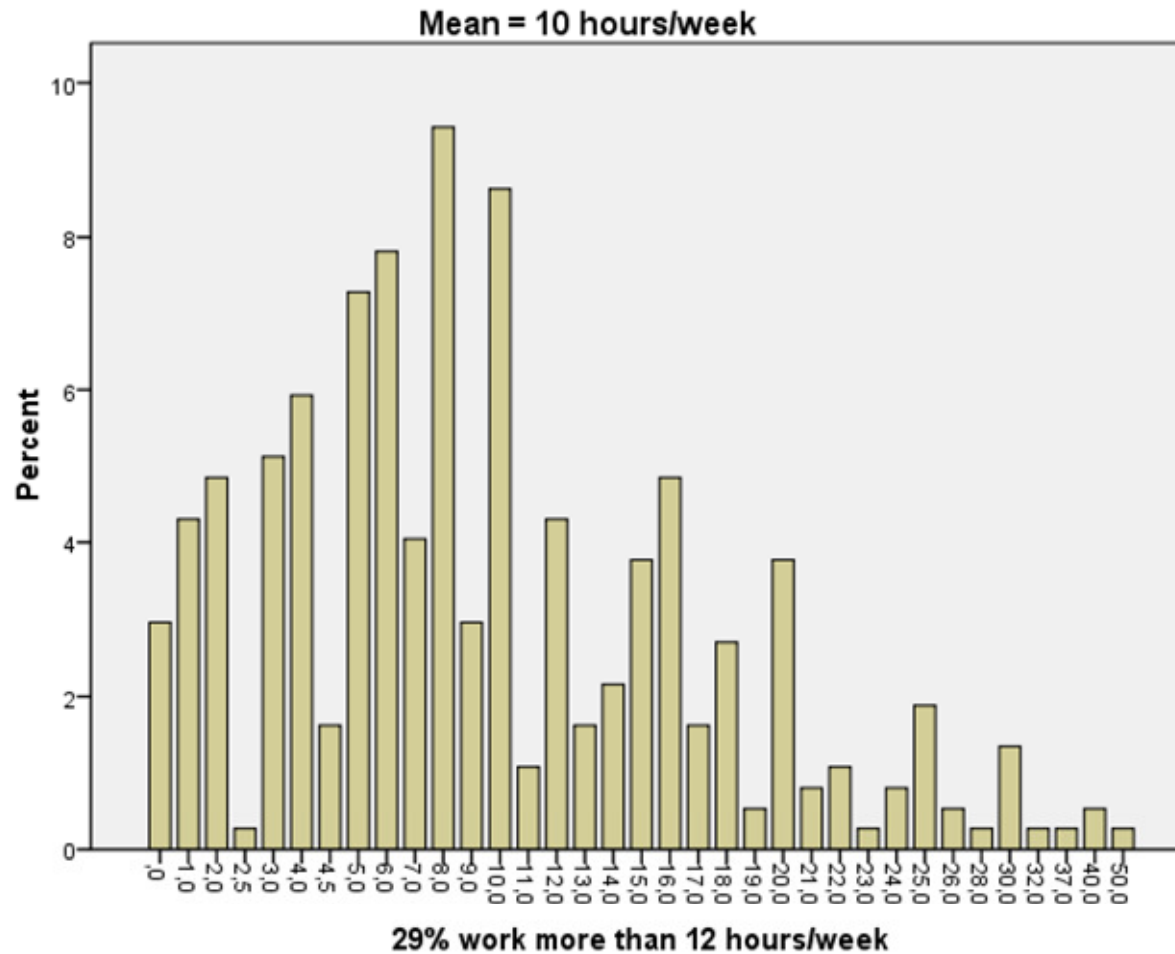
Work during the school year

- 57% have been working for 6 months or more.
- 57% have regular working-hours.
- 44% go to work two or three days during the week.
 - 10% four days or more often during the week.
 - 27% less frequently than once in the week.
- 82% work on weekends.
 - 56% both during the working-week and on weekends.
 - 26% exclusively on Weekends.



Work during the school year

How long is your work week?





Other chores

How long is your work week?

- 73% attend music lessons and/or organized sport training:
 - On average 8,3 hours/week
- 88% have some housework to perform:
 - On average 4,3 hours/week
- 87% do some homework:
 - On average 4,5 hour/week
- School to attend, ca. 35 hour/week.



Work during the school year
Work in the evening and at night
- outside permitted hours -

	Work between 20 – 22 Year '92, '93, '94	Work between 22 – 24 All years ('90-'94)
Always or often	22%	9%
Sometimes or rarely	28%	18%
Never	50,3%	72%

8% of all years work between 00-04.
5% of all years work between 00-06.



Work during the school year

Do you work alone or with someone else?

	Percent	Cumulative percent
Usually, I work alone	16 %	
Usually, I work with other teenagers	18 %	34 %
Usually, I work with adults	19 %	
Usually, I work both with adults and teenagers	47%	66%

Work during the school year

In relation to physical/mental condition and enducation.

Condition	Regular/irregular/ no work	Regular/ Irregular or no work	12 hours or less per week/more that 12 hours
Headache	No	No	No
stomachache	No	No	No
dizziness	No	No	No
Ache in muscles/ joints	*	**	**
Backache	***	***	***
Fibrositis	***	***	*
Ache in neck or shoulders	***	***	*+
Lack of appetite	No	No	No
<i>Difficulty sleeping</i>	No	No	**
<i>Worries or sadness</i>	No	No	**
depression	No	no	No
<i>Stess or anxiety</i>	No	no	**
<i>Tiredness after adequate night´s sleep</i>	*+	**	No
<i>Education/ Grades</i>	*	No	***

* p >0,1, **p>0,05, ***p>0,01



Injuries at work

Have you ever had an accident at work?

	Percent	Cumulative percent
No, never	79 %	79%
Yes, once	12 %	
Yes, two to three times	6%	
Yes, more than tree times	3%	21%



Injuries at work How long did you stay at home?

	Percent	Cumulative percent
Not at all	65 %	
1 day or a part of a day	20 %	85 %
2-4 days	5 %	
5-7 days	5 %	10 %
8 days – 4 weeks	1 %	1 %
More than 4 weeks	5 %	5 %



Injuries at work

Was the injuries that bad that you had to see a doctor or go to the emergency room?

	Percent
Yes	24 %
No	76 %



Injuries at work What happened?

	Percent
Foot injuries	25 %
Back injuries	10 %
A burn	10 %
Head injuries	5%
Other injuries	50%



The view of the children

- 55% don't work during the school year because they don't have the time.
- The vast majority, 86%, work during the school year because they want to earn some money.
 - In accordance with other research findings.
- 84% had some knowledge of the legislation on child and youth work.
- Only a small fraction (less than 10%) of the respondents think that the regulations on child and youth work are not strict enough. The vast majority thinks either that the regulations are reasonable or too strict.



Conclusions

- The research findings indicates:
 - A commonality of a breach of the legislation.
 - A commonality of a long work week among 13- 17 years old Icelandic pupils.
 - Injuries at work are not uncommon.
 - A strong relationship between working during the school year and some physical conditions.
 - Weaker relationship with some mental conditions as well as with school-grades.
- How do we react to the finding?
 - The protection perspective and the participation perspective evoke different reactions.



Grantors

The research has received funding from:

The Research Fund of The University of Iceland

The Memorial Fund of Eðvarð Sigurðsson

VR, trade union

The Charity Fund of Baugur Group

The municipality of Kópavogur

The municipality of Akureyri



Research findings

Do you work during the school year?

Yes, I have a regular job	32 %
Yes, I work now and then	23 %
No, I do not work during the school year	45 %



Research findings

Rights in work

- From the age of 14 minimal wage secured in wage contracts between the unions and the employers.
- Mánaðarlaun? Average payment per month IKR 35000,-
- 80% got a pay slip
 - 5% didn't know if they got one or not.
- 25% had work contract in writing
 - 56% did not have work contract in writing
 - 19% didn't know if they had one or not.