

SHOULD 13-YEAR-OLDS BE ALLOWED TO WORK LEGALLY?

Yulduz Sultonova

Bachelor Student at Uzbekistan State World Languages University

yulduzsultonova613@gmail.com

Supervisor: **Jabborova Dildora Zokirjanovna** (PhD)

Senior Teacher, Department of English Language Theoretical Aspects

Uzbekistan State World Languages University

dilyacity89@gmail.com

Abstract. Have you ever wondered whether allowing 13-year-olds to work legally is a good opportunity or a risk for their future? In many countries, this topic has become an important social issue. Some people believe that part-time jobs can help teenagers become more responsible, independent, and prepared for adult life. Others argue that children at this age should focus only on education and personal development.

In this paper, I examine both the positive and negative educational and social effects of allowing 13-year-olds to work legally. The discussion focuses on how work can improve time management, confidence, and communication skills, while also creating possible problems such as stress, tiredness, and lower academic performance.

The paper also considers public opinion and possible solutions, including limited working hours, parental supervision, and safe working conditions. Overall, the aim of this study is to find a balanced approach between gaining early work experience and protecting children's education and well-being.

Keywords: Youth Employment, Child Labour, Education, Social Development, Teenagers, Part-Time Work

Introduction

The question of whether 13-year-olds should be allowed to work legally has become an important topic in many countries. Some people believe that teenagers should be given the opportunity to work part-time because it can help them become more responsible, independent, and prepared for adult life. Others argue that children at the age of 13 are still too young to work because their main focus should be education, personal development, and enjoying childhood.

In today's world, many young teenagers are interested in earning money, helping their families, or gaining experience at an early age. Social media also influences young people, as they often see teenagers becoming successful through online jobs, business ideas, or content creation. However, legal work for 13-year-olds raises many concerns related to school performance, mental health, safety, and child rights.

This article discusses the possible educational and social effects of allowing 13-year-olds to work legally and whether such work can be beneficial if it is carefully controlled.

Educational Effects

One of the main positive effects of allowing 13-year-olds to work legally is the development of responsibility. Teenagers who have part-time jobs may learn how to manage their time, complete tasks on schedule, and understand the value of money. These are important life skills that can help them in the future.

For example, a teenager who works a few hours per week in a safe environment may learn punctuality, discipline, and communication. They may also become more motivated to study because they understand the importance of career preparation.

However, there are also negative educational effects. If teenagers work too many hours, they may become tired and lose concentration in class. They may have less time for homework, reading, and exam preparation. As a result, their academic performance could decrease.

At the age of 13, students are still building their academic foundations. Therefore, education should remain the first priority. Any legal work should be limited to a few hours and should never interfere with school attendance or learning.

Social Effects

Allowing 13-year-olds to work legally may also create several social benefits.

Teenagers can improve their communication skills by interacting with customers, co-workers, or supervisors. They can learn teamwork, problem-solving, and confidence. These experiences may help them become more mature and socially active.

Part-time jobs may also help young people understand the real world. They can learn about effort, respect, and responsibility. For some teenagers, earning their own money can increase self-esteem and independence.

On the other hand, there are possible social risks. Some children may face stress, pressure, or unfair treatment in the workplace. They may also lose time for hobbies, sports, friendships, and family activities. Childhood is an important stage for emotional and social development, and too much responsibility at a young age can create unnecessary pressure.

Another serious issue is exploitation. Without strong laws and supervision, some employers may use children for cheap labour or unsafe jobs. This is why child protection laws are extremely important.

Public Opinion and Survey Results

Many people have mixed opinions about this issue. In a survey related to this topic, around 65% of people did not support legal part-time jobs for 13-year-olds, while 35% supported the idea under certain conditions.

This result shows that many adults believe children of this age should focus on school rather than work. Parents often worry about safety, stress, and negative effects on education.

However, some people support light and supervised work because it can teach useful life skills.

This suggests that society may accept limited work opportunities for teenagers only when clear rules are in place.

Possible Solutions

If 13-year-olds are allowed to work legally, several rules should be followed:

- Work must be light, safe, and age-appropriate.
- Working hours should be limited.
- School attendance must remain compulsory.
- Parents should give permission and supervision.
- Employers must follow child labour laws.
- Work should not harm physical or mental health.

Examples of suitable jobs may include helping in family businesses, tutoring younger children, babysitting for short periods, online creative work, or community volunteering with small rewards.

Conclusion

In conclusion, allowing 13-year-olds to work legally has both positive and negative educational and social effects. Part-time work can help teenagers learn responsibility, confidence, time management, and communication skills. However, it can also create stress, reduce study time, and expose children to exploitation if there are no proper protections.

In my opinion, 13-year-olds should only be allowed to do light and supervised part-time work with strict legal rules. Education must always remain the main priority. If a balance between school and work is maintained, limited work experience can be beneficial for young teenagers.

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