

The determinants of child labor in China: intergenerational dynamics and bargaining power within the household¹

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Abstract

This paper examines the determinants and gender differentials of child labor and schooling for Chinese children ages 6-17 years in the paradigm of intergenerational transfer and intrahousehold bargaining using household data from the China Health and Nutrition Survey. There are 3% more girls working than boys, though boys begin working at a slightly younger age. OLS and probit regressions show that mother's education reduces the total hours worked and probability of working for both girls and boys. Gender and birth order are not significant determinants of child labor and schooling outcomes. Intergenerational households reveal gender inequalities where grandfather cohabitation reduces the grandson's probability of working, and grandmother cohabitation increases the granddaughter's probability of attending school. Mother's bargaining power is only significant for sons, but not daughters. This research has implications for not only child labor rights, but also gender equality of child labor and schooling opportunity in households across China.