

## **AWARENESS RAISING EFFORTS IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS TO PREVENT CHILD LABOR: A CASE STUDY IN LAI CHAU**

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**Abstract.** Child labor refers to children's participation in labor contrary to the law and labor activities that hinder or have a negative impact on the development of physical, mental, personality, and overall development of children. Preventing and minimizing child labor requires the active participation and close coordination of all sectors of society, including schools. Within schools, some schools have implemented basic activities targeting the target group of students to prevent child labor. The content of this study focuses on clarifying the current situation of support activities to raise awareness in preventing child labor in some secondary schools in Lai Chau province. This study aims to clarify the achieved results and remaining problems in implementing support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention in the following aspects: implementation content, organizational methods, and form of organization. On that basis, this study proposes basic solutions to further improve the effectiveness of awareness-raising support activities in preventing child labor at the surveyed schools.

**Keywords:** Child labor, social work, prevention, awareness raising.

### **1. Introduction**

Child labor is a violation of children's rights according to international human rights law and the laws of many countries, including Vietnam [1]. Therefore, preventing and eliminating child labor is an urgent issue that has been mentioned in important conventions and recommendations of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and international documents on human rights adopted by the United Nations. The Vietnamese Government has made strong commitments to the international community in addressing the issue of protecting children's rights in general and preventing child labor in particular. However, the world in general and Vietnam in particular are still facing the problem of child labor.

As of June 2021, the latest global estimates from the ILO and UNICEF indicate that 160 million children were involved in child labor at the beginning of 2020, accounting for nearly one-tenth of the total number of children worldwide [2]. In Vietnam, there have been many different studies addressing the situation of child labor, typically in the National Survey on Child Labor reports of the General Statistics Office and the Ministry

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of Labor, War Invalids and Social Affairs [3] and the report on the Survey and Assessment of Sustainable Development Goals on Vietnam's Children and Women (MICS) conducted by the General Statistics Office with technical support from UNICEF [4]. In particular, the MICS report specifically emphasized that 6.3% of children aged 5-11 years old and 3.2% of children aged 12-14 years old both go to school and participate in economic activities above the threshold of time; 2.3% of children have to work in dangerous jobs while going to school [4]. The reality of child labor has caused many serious consequences for children themselves, such as Children not going to school, losing the opportunity to study and have good jobs in the future; and children with disabilities; facing psychological and spiritual damage; children are easily enticed and fall into violence, social evils and crime; children are at risk of becoming victims of human trafficking, sexual abuse and exploitation, and disease transmission [5].

Faced with the current situation of child labor and the consequences of child labor, there is an urgent need to have appropriate child labor prevention and mitigation strategies and programs. Minimizing and eventually eliminating child labor requires the active participation and close coordination of all levels, all sectors, and all social sectors, including schools and from the perspective of implementation of school social work. Social work activities to prevent child labor in schools are built and implemented based on the content of child labor prevention activities in general and activities to prevent difficult problems of social work in schools in particular. These contents have also been stipulated in specific documents, including important legal documents such as Children's Law No. 102/2016/QH13; Decision No. 782/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister approving the Program to prevent and reduce child labor against the law for the period 2021 - 2025, orientation to 2030 and Circular No. 33/2018 of the Ministry of Education and Training on guidelines for implementing school social work. Article 48 of section 1, chapter IV of the National Assembly's 2016 Children's Law clearly stipulates measures at the preventive level in child protection, with special emphasis on propaganda and dissemination activities for communities, families, and children about the dangers and consequences of factors and behaviors that harm children; educate and advise children on knowledge and self-protection skills [6]. Decision No. 782/QD-TTg of the Prime Minister approving the Program to prevent and reduce illegal child labor for the period 2021 - 2025, with an orientation to 2030 mentions the goals and child labor prevention tasks, which need to focus on the following activities: providing information and knowledge to raise awareness about child labor and child labor prevention; strengthening child labor prevention skills; support children in accessing appropriate education and vocational training; strengthening resource mobilization in child labor prevention [7]. In addition, Circular 33/2018/TT-BGDDT on guidelines for social work in schools also mentions important issues related to child labor prevention in schools, in which it is necessary to focus on activities to enhance knowledge and skills to prevent child labor for students and strengthen the connection to resources, especially resources from family and community in solving difficult problems in school, including the issue of child labor prevention [8].

Support activities to raise awareness in preventing child labor are one of the important contents contributing to improving the competence to prevent child labor for students. This activity aims to help students be equipped with basic knowledge, thereby helping them change attitudes and behaviors, enhance social functions, and prevent and

minimize the risks of young labor, and prevent the recurrence of child labor. The basic contents and purposes of this activity include: disseminating basic knowledge about international and Vietnamese law regulations on child labor prevention; helping students better understand the concept of child labor, signs of child labor, the status of child labor, causes and consequences of child labor; mentioning the responsibilities of students, families, schools and communities to join hands to prevent and reduce child labor. These important contents will be organized and implemented by schools through flexible, diverse methods and forms that attract the attention of students [9].

Lai Chau is one of five mountainous provinces with the rate of child labor between the ages of 5 and 17 accounting for over 10% (while this figure for the whole country is 5.4% in 2018) [3]. Child labor includes both child labor outside of school and children participating in child labor while being in school. In that context, Secondary Schools in the province have been implementing programs and activities to prevent child labor, including support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention for students. This study focuses on clarifying the current status of support activities to raise awareness in preventing child labor in some Secondary Schools in Lai Chau province. On that basis, the article proposes a basic solution to further improve the effectiveness of awareness-raising support activities in preventing child labor at the surveyed schools.

## **2. Content**

### **2.1. Methods**

The study was conducted on two groups of subjects, including 384 secondary school students and 80 social work staff and teachers at three secondary schools in Lai Chau province. These teachers and students were approved and recommended by the Board of Directors of schools and voluntarily agreed to participate in the study process.

Researching support activities to raise awareness in preventing child labor at schools, conducting research and surveys at three school locations: Quyet Thang secondary school - Quyet Thang ward, Lai Chau City, Tung Qua Lin secondary school - Tung Qua Lin commune, Phong Tho district and Can Ho secondary school - Can Ho commune, Muong Te district, Lai Chau province.

The study was conducted based on the main methods, including a questionnaire survey method and an in-depth interview method with target groups of students and teachers. In the questionnaire survey method, for questions that do not have a choice of response levels, we calculate the percentage for each response, with questions that have response levels. We assign 5 levels, including very infrequent: level 1 (1 point), infrequent: level 2 (2 points), average: level 3 (3 points), regular: level 4 (4 points), very often: level 5 (5 points). Using the in-depth interview method, we conducted in-depth interviews with groups of students and groups of officials, teachers, and concurrent social workers at the surveyed schools with questions of implementation, expansion, or depth for each specific object. Through these methods, the study helps clarify the current situation in terms of content, methods, and forms implementing activities to support raising awareness of child labor prevention for study groups in schools. In addition, the data processing method using SPSS software version 25.0 helps the study show the results of descriptive statistical analysis and ANOVA test (with a significance level of 0.05) to clearly show the difference. There is a statistically significant difference in the level of

implementation of awareness-raising support activities in preventing child labor and the level of student satisfaction with support activities between schools.

## 2.2. Results

### 2.2.1. Prevalence of support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention at secondary schools in Lai Chau province

The study conducted a survey and analysis of the current situation of the implementation level of topics, methods, forms, and implementers and evaluated the implementation results of activities to support awareness raising in preventing child labor at three secondary schools in Lai Chau province.

The results of the survey on the level of implementation of content topics of awareness-raising support activities in child labor prevention showed that topics related to child labor prevention are implemented by schools at an average level with AS=2,98 (Table 1):

**Table 1. The content of activities supports raising awareness for students in preventing child labor**

No.	Content	Implementation level (%)					Total	Medium score
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Popularize the concept, causes, current situation, and consequences of child labor.	11,5	14,8	37,2	28,1	8,3	384	3,07
2	Popularization of child labor identification indicators.	9,4	20,8	45,3	20,3	4,2	384	2,89
3	Dissemination of some regulations to prevent child labor.	15,4	19,0	37,8	21,1	6,8	384	2,85
4	Disseminate information about the responsibilities of individuals, families, and communities in preventing child labor and some ways to prevent child labor.	8,9	15,6	37,8	30,2	7,6	384	3,12
5	<b>Average score</b>	<b>2,98</b>						

Regarding the topics of support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention, the school focuses more on the responsibilities of individuals, families, and communities in preventing child labor and some ways to prevent child labor (MS=3,12) with 37,8% of students answering often and very often, popularizing the concept, causes, and current situation, consequences of child labor (MS=3,07) with 36,4% of students choosing the option often and very often meanwhile content related to child labor identification indicators and some child labor prevention regulations, according to students

participating in the survey, are of less concern to schools with MS respectively is 2,89 (30,2% of students answered very infrequently and not often) and 2,85 (with 34,4% of students choosing very infrequent and not often) respectively.

A quote from an in-depth interview with school administrators shows: “*The school has organized a number of activities to raise awareness for students on topics such as drowning prevention, injury prevention, prevention of child trafficking. However, with the issue of child labor prevention, these awareness-raising activities have been organized, but the documents are limited and have not been focused on implementation by schools. Some of the main contents the school has implemented are related to topics such as the current situation of child labor, the consequences of child labor, and ways to help students themselves prevent child labor*”.

(In-depth interview. Teacher, N.T.X, 40 years old, male,  
Tung Qua Lin Secondary School)

Research results from surveying methods of organizing support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention are shown in Table 2:

**Table 2. Methods of organizing support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention**

No.	Content	Implementation level (%)					Total	Medium score
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Forums, contests, games	5,2	15,6	41,1	33,9	4,2	384	3,16
2	Research, solve, and role-play situations	4,9	24,7	33,6	31,3	5,5	384	3,08
3	Discussion groups	4,9	25,0	44,5	21,1	4,4	384	2,95
4	Painting, painting, theater	3,6	29,9	42,4	19,5	4,4	384	2,91
5	<b>Average score</b>	<b>3,03</b>						

According to Table 2, among the methods organized by school leaders to prevent child labor, forums, contests and games are the most organized by schools to raise awareness of child labor prevention with MS=3,16 and 38,1% of students chose the answer options of often and very often. Next is the method of research, role-playing, and solving situations to propagate child labor prevention with an average score of 3,08 and 36,8% of students answered often and very often. The method of group discussion and group work has 25,5% of students answering often and very often with MS=2,95. The methods of painting, making pictures, and theater in propagandizing to raise awareness of child labor prevention were rated by students as having the lowest level of implementation (MS= 2,91) with 23,9% of students choosing options often and very often.

A teacher shared: “*Propaganda and child labor prevention activities are organized by the school through a number of basic methods such as forums, contests, games, situations, role-playing...Students have participated in a number of different methods to create excitement, attraction, and attraction for children during their activities*”.

(In-depth interview, teacher, T.T.N, female, 45 years old,  
Quyet Thang Secondary School)

In-depth interviews with students showed: “*With the form of discussion and group activities, we are almost able to participate in large groups, which are classroom groups with specific activity topics, but we rarely participate periodically into small groups. In addition, we rarely participate in other forms of prevention such as drawing pictures and creating propaganda stories to prevent child labor.*”

*(In-depth interview, student, L.N.C, male, grade 8, Ha Nhi ethnic group, Can Ho Secondary School)*

Regarding the form of organizing support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention, school-wide communication activities are carried out at the most frequent level with MS=3,48 with 46,4% of students choosing the option often and very often. Next is the form of propaganda during class activities, integrated into subjects with MS=3,28 and 40,4% of students answered often and very often. However, the form of individual and small group communication is more limited with MS=2,89 and 25,9% of students choose the option often and very often, while this is also one of the options. Some forms of direct awareness raising are relatively effective for each individual or small group who is a child laborer or at risk of being a child laborer (Table 3):

**Table 1. Forms of organizing support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention**

No.	Content	Implementation level (%)					Total	Medium score
		1	2	3	4	5		
1	Personal and small-group communication	5,7	28,4	43,0	17,4	5,5	384	2,89
2	Communication is integrated into classroom activities and subjects	0,0	19,8	39,8	33,3	7,0	384	3,28
3	School-wide communication	0,0	10,9	42,7	33,6	12,8	384	3,48
4	<b>Average score</b>	<b>3,21</b>						

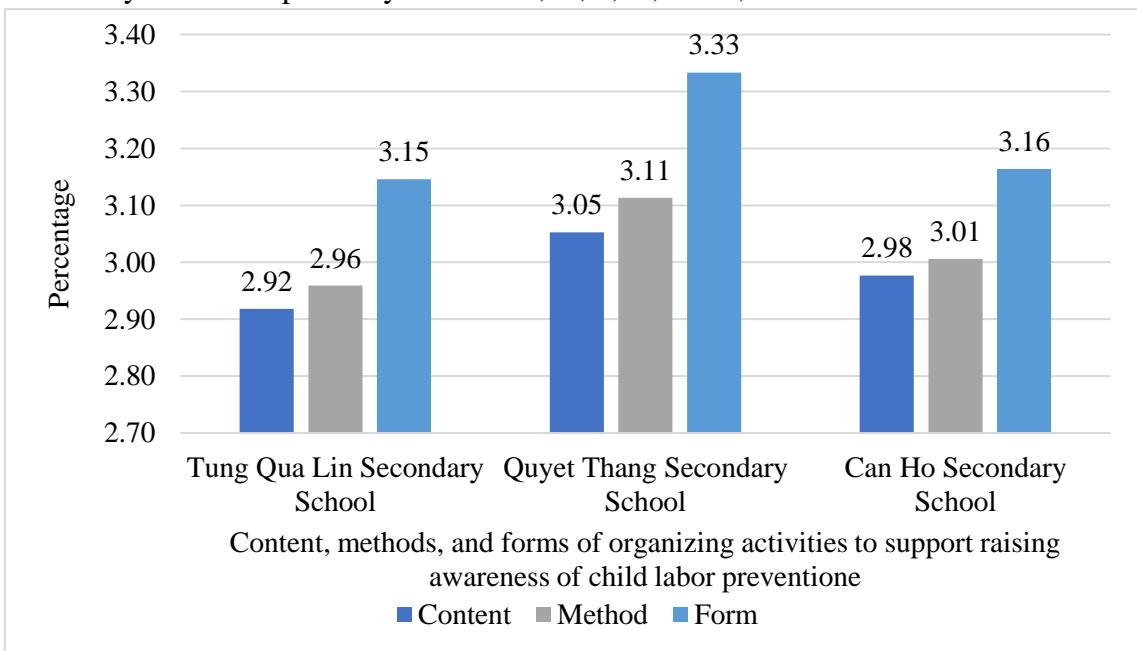
*According to a teacher: “The school organizes support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention mainly through flag activities, classroom activities, and integration in a number of subjects such as civic education, experiential education and career guidance for students and local education. As for personal communication, it is less popular because when they discover their children have problems, teachers often support them in their studies, provide psychological support for them, and contact the students' families. but have not really focused on supporting children to raise awareness and change their behavior in the face of difficult problems they are facing.”*

*(In-depth interview. Teacher, L.T.A, female, 36 years old, Can Ho Secondary School)*

The results of the level of implementation of topics, methods, and forms of awareness-raising support activities among schools are presented in Figure 1.

The results of Figure 1 showed that the content of awareness-raising support activities is implemented by schools at an average level. The level of implementation at

Tung Qua Lin Secondary School, Truong Can Ho Secondary School, and Quyet Thang Secondary School respectively has MS=2,92; 2,98, and 3,05.



***Figure 1. Content, methods, and forms of organizing activities to support raising awareness of child labor prevention among schools***

The method of organizing awareness-raising support activities at Tung Qua Lin Secondary School, Can Ho Secondary School and Quyet Thang Secondary School respectively has MS=2,96; 3,01 and 3,11. The form of organization of support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention is carried out at Tung Qua Lin Secondary School, Can Ho Secondary School and Quyet Thang Secondary School respectively has MS=3,15; 3,16 and 3,33.

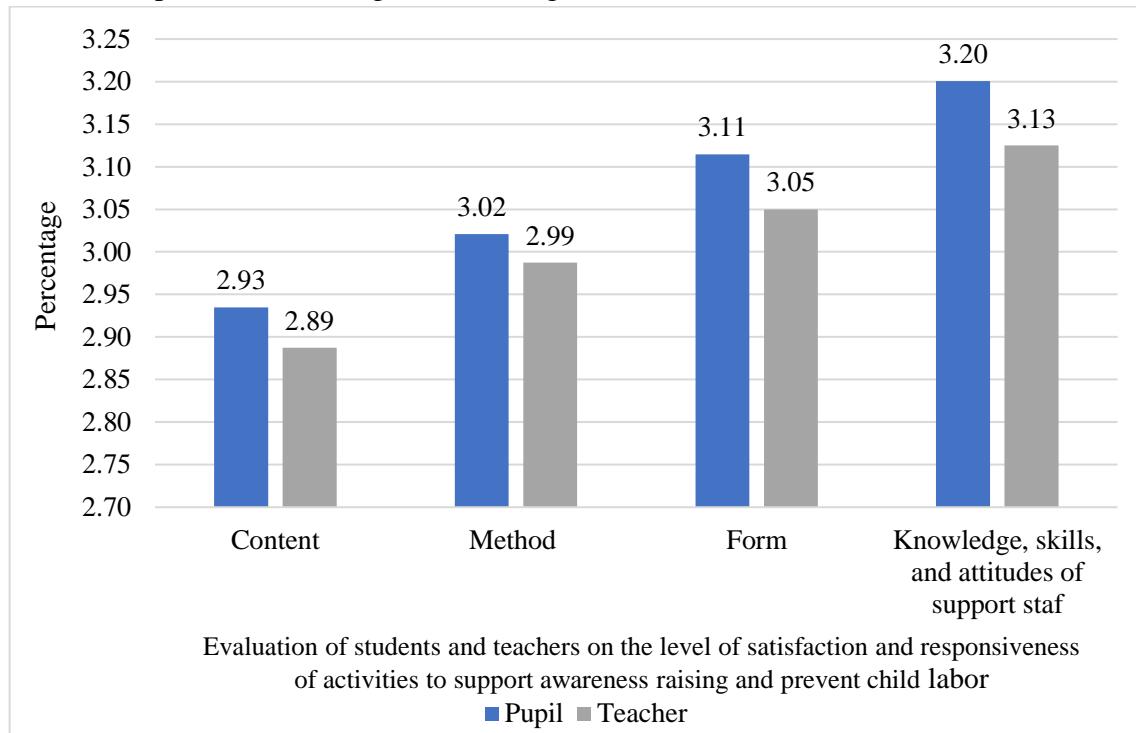
Performing a One-Way ANOVA test showed that the level of implementation of awareness-raising topics ( $\text{sig}=0,278>0,05$ ) and implementation method ( $\text{sig}=0,106>0,05$ ) have no significant statistical difference. between schools; however, the level of implementation of awareness-raising measures to prevent child labor has a statistically significant difference between schools ( $\text{sig}=0,023<0,05$ ). The results showed that there is a statistically significant difference between Quyet Thang Secondary School (MS=3,37) and Tung Qua Lin Secondary School (MS=3,19) with  $p = 0,034<0,05$  (Table 4):

***Table 2. Testing the average difference in student's evaluation of the organization of activities to support raising awareness of child labor prevention between schools***

Difference	Group	Post Hoc Test			Test ANOVA	
		Comparison group	Distinctive	Sig. (2-tailed)	F	p
Form of organization of activities	Tung Qua Lin Secondary School	TQL Secondary School	0,188	0,034	3,816	0,023
	Quyet Thang Secondary School					

Surveying the staff implementing support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention, research results have shown that the team of homeroom teachers who also work as social work support officers, school psychologists, and subject teachers have the highest participation in awareness-raising support activities with a rate of 91,1%. Next is the team of officials working in the Youth Union, in charge of clubs with a participation rate of 82,3%, and finally the experts invited to share specific content topics related to child labor prevention with a rate of 57,2%.

Regarding the effectiveness of support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention, the study has shown that students' assessments of their level of satisfaction with support activities to raise awareness are quite similar to teachers' assessment of the extent to which the school's support activities meet the needs of raising awareness of child labor prevention among students (Figure 2):



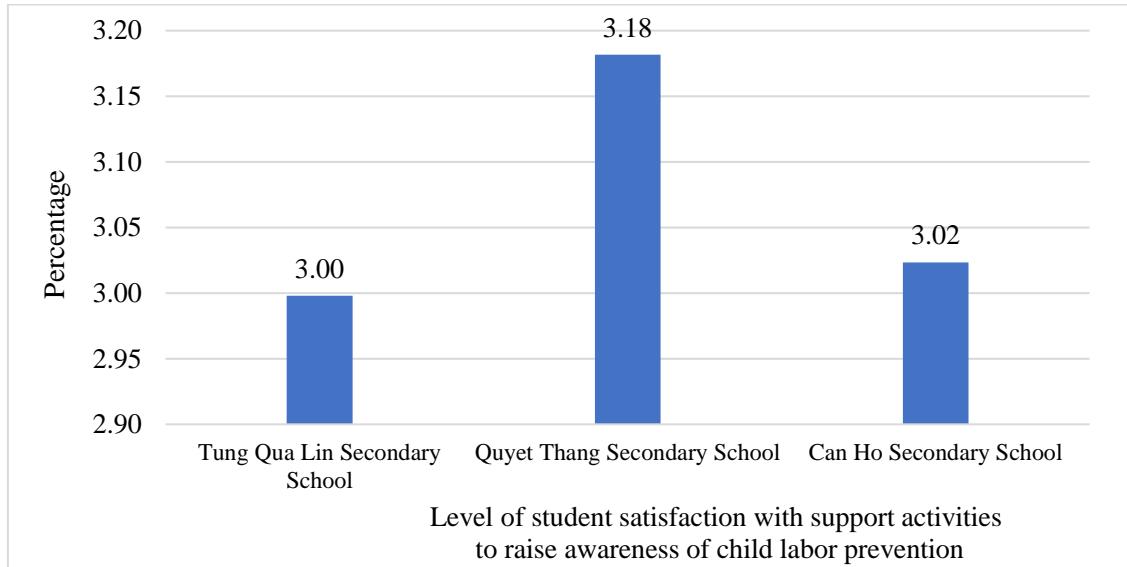
**Figure 2. Level of student satisfaction and teacher assessment on the level of meeting the needs of support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention**

The results of Figure 2 showed that the level of satisfaction of children with the school's support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention is at an average level. Students are most satisfied with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of support staff and part-time staff with an average score of 3,20, followed by satisfaction with the form of organization and activities ( $MS=3,20$ ), next is the level of satisfaction with the form of organizing activities ( $MS=3,11$ ), method of organizing activities ( $MS=3,02$ ), and finally the level of satisfaction with content that supports raising awareness of child labor prevention ( $MS=2,93$ ).

Teachers and support staff also have quite similar assessments of the level of meeting students' needs with the school's support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention compared to assessments from the student side. According to the assessment

of teachers and support staff, the level of meeting the needs of raising awareness of child labor prevention for students is also at the average level, in which the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of staff are at an average level. The support set has the highest average score of 3,13, followed by the form of organization of activities (MS=3,05), method of organizing activities (MS=2,99), and other factors like supporting content (MS=2,89).

The level of satisfaction of students with support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention among schools is also mentioned in the article in Figure 3:



**Figure 3. Evaluation of student satisfaction with support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention among schools**

The results of Figure 3 show that students at Quyet Thang secondary school have the highest level of satisfaction with MS=3,18; students of Can Ho secondary school and Tung Qua Lin secondary school have lower levels of satisfaction with awareness raising support activities with MS=3,02 and MS=3,00.

One-Way ANOVA test results showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of student satisfaction with support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention between schools (Table 5):

**Table 3. Level of student satisfaction with support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention among schools**

Difference	Group	Post Hoc Test			Test ANOVA	
		Comparison group	Distinctive	Sig. (2-tailed)	F	P
<b>Operational satisfaction level</b>	Tung Qua Lin Secondary School	TQL Secondary School	0,184	0,042	3,448	0,033
	Quyet Thang Secondary School					

The results of Table 5 showed that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of student satisfaction with support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention between Quyet Thang Secondary School and Tung Qua Lin Secondary School with a difference coefficient of 0,184 and a sig coefficient of 0,042 <0,05.

### 2.3. Discussion

The above article has focused on researching and pointing out practical issues about the current situation of support activities to raise awareness in preventing child labor at some secondary schools in Lai Chau province. As a result of surveying the current situation of social work activities in preventing child labor in the area, the study showed the significant efforts of the school board of directors, staff, teachers, and educators concurrently working on social work activities in child labor prevention with the implementation of activities to support prevention awareness raising. Activities have been conducted and implemented with different contents, methods, and ways of organization. Besides the achieved results, certain limitations still exist. Schools have implemented basic propaganda content with an AS=2,98, however, the level of implementation of the programs is still very limited, especially the content related to some regulations on child labor and child labor prevention (MS=2,85), child labor identification (MS=2,89); concept, current situation, causes, and consequences of child labor (MS=3,07). These media contents are conveyed by the school with many different methods and forms, however, there are still limitations in some methods such as drawing, painting, and theater (MS=2,91); group discussion, group club activities (MS=2,95); Research, solve, and role-play situations (MS=3,08) and limit personal and small group communication with MS=2,89. One-Way ANOVA test results show that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of student satisfaction with support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention among the surveyed schools (sig =0,033<0,05). Students at Quyet Thang secondary school have the highest level of satisfaction with support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention with an average score = 3,18, students at Can Ho Secondary School and Tung Qua Lin secondary school have a lower level of satisfaction with awareness raising support activities with MS=3,02 and MS=3,00.

With the achieved results and remaining limitations in implementing support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention at secondary schools in Lai Chau province, the article suggests a number of necessary solutions to help improve the effectiveness of activities, thereby helping to strengthen the prevention competence of target students.

Firstly, schools need to carry out more frequent support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention for students with topics such as identifying child labor, learning about the current situation and causes, and consequences of child labor; and disseminating legal regulations on child labor prevention thereby helping students have a more comprehensive and accurate view, helping them improve their ability to identify and prevent the risk of child labor.

Secondly, schools need to organize support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention in a diverse, flexible, and effective way with many different methods. It is necessary to further strengthen methods to support awareness raising through art such as painting, drawing, theater and promoting group discussion methods and group club activities, especially with target groups of students who are at risk of being child laborers

and have been or are being child laborers so that they can live in a group atmosphere and interact and help each other.

Thirdly, within schools, support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention should not only be limited to students but also target groups of staff and homeroom teacher who also does social work. They are the ones who will directly conduct prevention, intervention, and support activities for students, so it is necessary to further raise the awareness of teachers and staff on this issue so that the support activities would achieve the best results.

Fourthly, in order for child labor prevention activities in schools to be effective, in addition to support activities to raise awareness, schools need to further promote other activities such as support activities to increase awareness of child labor prevention skills, career orientation support activities for students, resource connection activities in child labor prevention... Synchronous implementation of these activities will help improve capacity to prevent child labor for students in a more comprehensive way.

Fifthly, preventing, minimizing and eventually eliminating child labor requires the active participation and close coordination of all levels, all sectors, and all social sectors. Therefore, it is necessary to combine support for raising awareness of child labor prevention in schools, families and the community; and strengthen the coordination of families, schools and communities in preventing child labor so that this activity is more synchronized and sustainable.

These are also suggestive research directions that need to be focused on further research and investigation in the future to show the effectiveness of activities to support awareness raising in child labor prevention.

### **3. Conclusion**

The above study has focused on researching and pointing out practical issues about the current situation of support activities to raise awareness in preventing child labor at some secondary schools in Lai Chau province. As a result of surveying the current situation of social work activities in preventing child labor in the area, the study showed the significant efforts of the school board of directors, staff, teachers, and educators concurrently working on social work activities in child labor prevention with the implementation of activities to support prevention awareness raising. With the achieved results and remaining limitations in implementing support activities to raise awareness of child labor prevention at secondary schools in Lai Chau province, the study suggests a number of necessary solutions to help improve the effectiveness of activities, thereby helping to strengthen the prevention capacity of target students.

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