

Chapter 7

Global Perspectives: Comparative Child Protection Laws Across Countries

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ABSTRACT

This study presents a comparative evaluation of child protection laws worldwide, focusing on their effectiveness in preventing abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Drawing from the 2024 Global Child Protection Law Dataset, which includes legal data from over 100 nations, the research examines variables such as age limits, abuse penalties, child welfare structures, and international treaty participation. Using Quantitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), the study assesses legal strength through criteria like enforcement, scope, and public outreach. Machine learning techniques, specifically Random Forest and Support Vector Machine models, classify and rank countries based on the robustness of their child protection frameworks. Findings reveal that countries with comprehensive laws and strong enforcement average an 85.7% effectiveness rate, while those with weaker systems average 62.3%. The research underscores global disparities and offers evidence-based recommendations for legal and policy reform.

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INTRODUCTION

Child protection laws are fundamental in safeguarding the rights and well-being of children worldwide. As global awareness of child abuse, exploitation, and neglect increases, it has become critical to assess the effectiveness of these laws in different countries. Despite significant progress in legal frameworks (Loen and Skivenes, 2025), there is a growing disparity in the enforcement and scope of child protection laws (Merten et al., 2025) across nations. This study aims to provide a comprehensive comparative analysis of child protection laws, examining their strengths and weaknesses through a data-driven approach.

Figure 1 presents an overview of a study analyzing child protection laws across various countries. It begins by explaining the aim of comparing legal frameworks to assess how effectively they protect children's rights against abuse, exploitation, and neglect. The study uses the Global Child Protection Law Dataset (Bull et al., 2025) (Cross et al., 2025) (Rogers et al., 2025), compiling legal information from over 100 countries, including details like age thresholds, penalties, and adoption of international conventions. Using the Quantitative Comparative Analysis Method (QCAM), the research evaluates the enforcement (Brown et al., 2025), coverage, and public awareness associated with these laws. Results reveal that countries with stronger legal systems show an average law enforcement effectiveness of 85.7%, while those with weaker protections average 62.3%. The study concludes with recommendations for strengthening child protection policies globally.

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