

An analysis of Physical Violence on Academic Achievements in Secondary Schools of District Muzaffargarh, Punjab, Pakistan

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Abstract

A number of times physical violence among students has been recorded in schools. Forceful aggression among students has a negative impact on their emotional and psychological wellbeing. This article investigates the effect of physical violence on students' Academic achievements in District Muzaffargarh which is the most vulnerable district in Punjab, Pakistan. The factors of physical violence were general opinion of the students which were taken from the 10th class students of boys and girls. The impact of physical violence on students was very high. It is also found that student's inter-relation among their fellows is very hurtful. Students'

collaboration level is very less among themselves. Physical violence also effects on students' learning. Secondary school educators are involved to hit, kick and push the students in the school. Physical violence, including slapping, hitting and kicking has also been observed among school personnel and pupils. The article investigates the characteristics of physical violence and its consequences on pupils. The report paves the way for policymakers to change school policies in light of the nature of physical violence and its consequences. The design of the study was Quantitative. 160 secondary school students were selected through Random sampling technique for the collection of data. The data was collected through questionnaire. The questionnaire was personally distributed among the students. The study's members settled that physical violence among students is a danger to school safety. Physical violence on secondary school students is predominant. As per the findings of this research, instances of physical violence such as peer conflicts, group confrontations, kicking, beating, and slapping have been noted among children within school premises. The report suggests that school policies on education need to be explicit when addressing instances of physical violence among students. The report emphasizes the need for clarity in school education policies regarding physical violence among pupils, and underscores the importance of educating school personnel about the nature of such violence among students.

Keywords: Physical Violence, Safety School, Secondary School Students, personal attitude, peer-aggression, students' inter-relation

Introduction:

Physical violence is characterized as the intentional, repetitive, or single-instance infliction of severe pain and/or bodily harm by another individual, carrying the risk of physical injury and consequences that may or may not be apparent (WHO, 2006; Bili et al., 2012). Instances of physical violence, including gang fights and even shootings,

are documented not only in underdeveloped nations but also in developed countries like the United States, Australia, and Canada (Yu, 2014). Disparities both at the school and national levels play a role in determining the prevalence of physical violence within educational institutions. In cross-national research examining physical violence among children in schools (Baker et al., 2005), variations in emotional regulation, parental differences, and household stress are notably apparent. The global concern of physical violence among children in educational settings is underscored. Mestry (2012) asserts a connection between the concept of schooling and physical violence, emphasizing the influence of school history (p. 13). Leach and Salvi (2014) argue that numerous public schools lack clear policies addressing physical violence, leading to incidents of bodily harm and even cases of homicide. For instance, research conducted on school violence in Zambia revealed the absence of a well-defined policy against physical violence in Zambian schools, despite the registration of 1352 murder cases since 1974 (p. 56). In contrast, South Asian nations have enacted numerous laws aimed at safeguarding school children from severe physical attacks. Conversely, in some other countries, various rules and legislations stipulate that parents and teachers possess the right to employ aggressive disciplinary measures, provided such measures are deemed "reasonable" or "appropriate" and are deemed to be in the "best interest of the schoolchildren" (UNICEF, 2001, p. 8).

Episodes of physical violence among students in schools have been demonstrated to be more severe in communities marked by high levels of violence. Poverty and wealth disparity are identified as contributors to violent crimes, and assault may also be associated with economic inequality (Hsieh & Pugh, 2006). Individuals who have encountered both physical and psychological violence may display aggressive behavior in their daily lives (Clark, Bloom, Hill, & Silverman, 2009). Burton (2008) suggested that exposure to physical violence has detrimental effects on cognitive and social development. Physical aggression has been linked to the destruction of school property, violent physical encounters, and incidents involving weapons such as stabbing (Rintoul, 1999). In a significant doctoral study conducted in Brazil, it was found that a majority of school children had experienced physical conflicts prior to the survey within school settings. According to the National Survey on Kids' Health, the prevalence of physical fights among school children aged 13 to 15 is notably high in Brazil, with the Federal District showing a dominant number of students reporting involvement in corporal altercations compared to previous surveys (Stelko, 2013). Following the endorsement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which incorporate targets explicitly directed at eradicating, lessening, and forestalling violence universally, tackling violence in childhood has emerged as a crucial developmental hurdle for numerous countries and a primary area of emphasis in international development. Although the influence of childhood violence on the health and well-being of children has been

established in every nation where studied, there is comparatively less evidence regarding its impact on academic outcomes.

In the wake of the implementation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which encompass goals explicitly designed to eradicate, decrease, and forestall violence on a global scale, confronting childhood violence has emerged as a significant developmental obstacle for numerous countries and a primary area of emphasis in international development. Although the influence of childhood violence on the health and well-being of children has been evidenced in every nation studied, there is comparatively less data on the repercussions of violence on academic outcomes. In recognizing that the attainment of educational goals is impeded when children live in fear (UNESCO, 2017; UN Secretary General, 2016), several studies (Gilbert et al., 2009; Fry, 2016; Fang et al., 2015) underscore the significance of investigating the impact of various forms of violence on education globally. This research conducts a worldwide systematic review and meta-analyses to explore the influence of childhood violence on educational outcomes, aiming to bridge existing gaps in understanding and shed light on crucial areas for future research. As the inaugural study in this domain, it forms part of a broader research initiative contributing to the achievement of SDG education Target 4.a, which advocates for safe, non-violent, and inclusive learning environments for all. Over the past decade, numerous reviews and meta-analyses have delved into the prevalence and consequences of childhood violence on a global scale (Barth, Bermetz, Heim, Trelle, & Tonia, 2013; Hillis, Mercy, Amobi, & Kress, 2016; Pereda, Guilera, Forns, & Gómez-Benito, 2009; Stol). While systematic reviews and meta-analyses have been conducted for specific nations with sufficient empirical literature (Ji, Finkelhor, & Dunne, 2013; Fang et al., 2015), there is a notable gap in research focusing specifically on educational outcomes. Existing studies often examine characteristics like enrollment, attendance, and learning outcomes assessed through test scores (Cuesta, Glewwe, & Krause, 2016; Glewwe et al., 2011; Mitchell, Wylie, & Carr, 2008; Snilstveit et al., 2015). Measuring learning and other educational outcomes, such as enrollment, is deemed crucial as enrollment doesn't guarantee attendance, and attendance doesn't assure that students will acquire knowledge (Rose & Alcott, 2015).

Dominant forms of Physical violence in School

Adolescents' aggressive conduct has been documented in school. Aggressive conduct among kids might escalate to violent behavior. Various forms can characterize these violent acts (Myles & Simpson, 1998). A study by John (2013) delved into the factors influencing peer group fighting, establishing a correlation between school discipline and such conflicts. It was found that lax school discipline tends to foster instances of peer fighting among students (p.29). Additionally, teenage gang violence may be influenced by factors like drug misuse and poor overall health (Gilman, Hill, & Hawkins, 2014). While disputes among peers and intergroup conflicts within school settings can potentially lead to bodily harm, such occurrences are infrequent. Researchers suggest that

the incidence of physical injuries at school has not shown a significant increase over the years (Napolitano, 2010).

Procedure of the study

This research employed a correlational and survey methodology. Secondary school students of 10th grade took part in the study. The research was descriptive in nature. The approach of Random sampling was utilized in the selection of students. District Muzaffargarh has four tehsils and from each tehsil four secondary Schools were selected for this study. In this way, total selected schools were 16. From each school, ten students were selected and total students' sample was 160 for this study.

District	Tehsil	GGHS	GBHS	Boys	Girls	Total
Muzaffar Garh	Muzaffargarh	2	2	20	20	40
	Ali Pur	2	2	20	20	40
	Jatoi	2	2	20	20	40
	Kot Addu	2	2	20	20	40
Total		8	8	80	80	160

So, Secondary school students were selected, to know their opinions of physical violence in schools. The research design of the study was Quantitative. Because participants respond in diverse ways, quantitative research provide a new perspective on comprehending a social phenomenon (Folkestad, 2008, p.1). Quantitative research involves the collection and interpretation of numerical data, enabling the identification of patterns, calculation of averages, prediction-making, assessment of causal relationships, and generalization of results to broader populations. In the analysis of the collected data, the Braun and Clarke (2006) model was employed. Jugder (2016) affirmed the suitability of the Braun and Clarke (2006) approach for conducting theme analysis on the gathered qualitative data. For close ended questionnaire, Five Likert scale was used to know the opinion of the participants. For 16 items, Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often, always were such options which used to judge the views of the students of 10th grade in secondary schools.

Demographic Variables

Table I

	Categories	Frequency	Percent
Name of Tehsils	Kot Addu	40	25.0
	Jatoi	40	25.0
	Ali Pur	40	25.0
	Muzaffargarh	40	25.0

	Total	160	100.0
Gender	Boys	80	50
	Girls	80	50
	Total	160	100.0
Percentage of Marks	33%-50%	44	27.5
	51%-60%	51	31.9
	61%-70%	26	16.3
	71%-80%	23	14.4
	81%-90%	16	10.0
	Total	160	100.0

Table 1 shows that 25.0 percent participants were living in Tehsil Ali Pur, 25.0 percent were living in Kot Addu, 25.0 percent were living in Jatoi while 25.0 percent were living in Tehsil Muzaffargarh. From gender point of view in District Muzaffargarh, 50.0 percent were Boys students while 50 percent were girls' students. Percentage of marks depicts that the percentage of 33%-50% were 27.5, the percentage of 51%-60% were 31.9. Similarly, the percentage of 61%-70% were 16.3 while the percentage of 71%-80% were 14.4 and the percentage of 81%-90% were 10.0.

Tabel 2
General Opinion

Statements	N	Mean	Std
My performance effect due to punishment	160	2.73	1.335
I remain absent due to teachers' strict behavior	160	2.47	1.483
I get good grades due to fear of stick	160	3.40	1.347
I work hard to get good marks due to scold	160	2.97	1.403

Table 2 displays that according to General opinion, Students' punishment Mean is 2.73 and Standard Deviation is 1.335 while students' absenteeism Mean score is 2.47 and Standard Deviation is 1.483. On the other hand, Students' get good grades due to fear of stick Mean score is 3.40 and Standard Deviation is 1.347 while scolding on students mean score is 2.97 and Standard Deviation is 1.403.

Table 3**Impact on personal attitude**

Table 3 shows that teachers' criticism on students Mean score is 3.04 and Standard

Statements	N	Mean	Std
I become sensitive due to teachers' criticism	160	3.04	1.436
My self-esteem damage in insecure environment	160	2.81	1.484
I become discourage due to teachers' rude behavior	160	3.58	1.399
I become nervous due to teachers' mistrust	160	3.03	1.274

Deviation is 1.436 while damage of self-esteem mean is 2.81 and Standard Deviation is 1.484. Teachers' rude behavior on students mean score is 3.58 and Standard Deviation is 1.399 and teachers' mistrust on students mean score is 3.03 and Standard Deviation is 1.274.

Table 4

Effect on Students' Inter-relation

Statements	N	Mean	Std
I act by pushing, hitting and kicking with fellows	160	2.47	1.432
I use unethical words for their fellows	160	2.31	1.555
I spread rumors against their fellows	160	2.18	1.525
My academic performance affects due to peer aggression	160	2.06	1.413

Table 4 depicts that according to effect on students' inter-relation mean score is 2.47 and Standard Deviation is 1.432, second item that students use unethical words for their fellows mean score is 2.31 and Standard Deviation is 1.555, third statement is that students spread false rumors against their fellows mean score is 2.18 and Standard Deviation is 1.525 and fourth one is that students academic performance affects due to peer aggression mean score is 2.06 and Standard Deviation is 1.413. it shows that students' act by pushing, hitting and kicking with their fellows is very high in school.

Table 5

Statements	N	Mean	Std
My grades are less due to violence in school	160	2.48	1.458

My confidence damage due to low learning	160	2.39	1.445
I miss lesson to escape violence	160	2.38	1.545
My cognitive ability affects due to school-based violence	160	2.39	1.445

Effect on Learning

Table 5 shows that students' grades are less due to violence in school mean score is 2.48 and Standard Deviation is 1.458 while students' confidence is damage due to learning mean score is 2.39 and Standard Deviation is 1.445. Students miss their lesson to escape violence mean is 2.38 and Standard Deviation is 1.545. Students' cognitive ability is affected due to school-based violence is 2.39 and Standard Deviation is 1.445.

Results and Analysis.

A notable observation derived from the data is the global prevalence of physical violence among students, highlighting it as a significant concern. According to the participants, physical aggression might take the shape of yelling and even kicking among the pupils. Many participants stated that instructors' criticism and harsh behavior can lead to physical violence among pupils. Participants reported their experiences with students who are away from school due to physical violence. Participants shared that sometimes students get good grades due to fear of stick. Teachers' strict behavior could damage the self-esteem of the students and they might suffer the emotional violence.

Teacher' criticism on students' personal attitude has become long loss of the students. Criticism not only damage the students' self-esteem but harm the confidence of the students. Rude behavior with students is also the cause of absenteeism and drop out ratio from the school. Similarly, students' performance is affected due to physical and emotional violence in school as well as among the families.

Physical violence also effected on students' inter-relation. In school climate, during students' interaction, they become hyper and they start kicking, hitting and pushing with each other. During their discussion, students use unethical words like name calling, yelling, screaming and scolding with one another. Participants reported that students spread false, incorrect and untrue news for their fellows to decrease the value and worth of their fellows. Furthermore, students' academic performance is affected due to peer aggression.

Another factor which may cause of physical violence on students in public schools of Muzaffargarh is Effect on learning. Many students reported that their grades are less due to corporal punishment in school. Some students also miss their lessons and classes

to escape the violence in school. Moreover, Students' cognitive ability is affected due to physical violence.

Evaluative Examination of Physical Violence in Secondary Schools

Further investigation delves into risk factors associated with physical fighting, including male gender, bullying victimization, absenteeism, and depressive symptoms, establishing a connection in the context of this Pakistani study. While the current study aligns with prior research indicating a correlation with male gender, as evidenced by studies such as those conducted by Hussin, Aziz, Hasim, and Sahril (2014), it's worth noting conflicting findings in the literature. For instance, contrary perspectives have been presented, such as research by Yang, Zhang, and Bovet (2017), suggesting increased participation of females in physical fights and violence. In contrast, another study (Acquah, Lloyd, Davis, and Wilson, 2014) reports no discernible gender relationship in this regard.

Bullying victimization emerges as a significant factor with implications for various aspects, including poor psychological health, absenteeism, and hunger, aligning with the findings of Wilson, Celedonia, and Kamala (2013). Consistent with earlier research (Celedonia, Wilson, Gammal, & Hagra, 2013), the present study establishes a connection between physical fights and bullying victims, as well as truancy.

Conclusion

As per the survey findings, manifestations of physical aggression among school students encompass actions such as slapping, shoving, kicking, punching, and inflicting wounds. The primary contributors to physical violence among students are identified as parental neglect, poverty, and psychiatric illness. Additionally, it is observed that physical violence adversely impacts students' academic performance, leading to lower achievements. Efforts to mitigate physical violence among students can be facilitated through the implementation of moral lessons and the establishment of a positive school environment.

Recommendations

It is highly advisable for schools to prioritize creating a safe and child-friendly environment. The inclusion of right-based curricula and moral values in the syllabus is strongly recommended. Schools should actively promote non-violent values and behaviors, incorporating them into the educational framework. The implementation of non-violent teaching and learning strategies is essential for fostering a positive school atmosphere. Moreover, school management and teachers should have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in cultivating a conducive learning environment.

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