



UNDERSTANDING THE ROOTS OF EMOTIONAL VIOLENCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS: A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION

Zahid Mushtaq Qureshi¹

PhD Scholar, Department of Teacher Education, Faculty of Education, IIUI

Zahidmushtaq121@gmail.com

Irfan Ahmed²

MS Scholar, Department of Teacher Education, International Islamic University Islamabad, IIUI

Dr. Muhammad Nasir Khan³

Department of Teacher Education, Faculty of Education, IIUI

Abstract

This research explores the prevalence, Causes, and consequences of emotional violence among secondary school students at Tehsil Taxila Rawalpindi, shedding light on a critical yet often overlooked aspect of adolescent well-being. Emotional violence, encompassing verbal abuse, intimidation, and manipulation, can have profound and lasting effects on the psychological and social development of students. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study collects data, interviews, and questionnaires to provide a thorough understanding of the dynamics of emotional violence in secondary schools. The study investigates the factors contributing to the perpetration and victimization of emotional violence, including individual characteristics, familial influences, and socio-cultural factors. Through the analysis of collected data, patterns, and trends in emotional violence are identified, allowing for a nuanced understanding of its dynamics. Additionally, the research assesses the impact of emotional violence on academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being of students. The thesis also delves into existing prevention and intervention strategies, evaluating their effectiveness and proposing evidence-based recommendations for mitigating emotional violence in secondary schools. By enhancing awareness and understanding of emotional violence, this research seeks to contribute to developing targeted interventions that foster a safe and supportive school environment conducive to positive social interactions and emotional well-being for all secondary school students. Ultimately, the findings aim to inform educators, policymakers, and stakeholders in the education system to create a more empathetic and inclusive educational environment.

Keywords: Emotional violence, School students, Emotional well-being, Secondary School,

INTRODUCTION

Emotional Violence is a social issue that has drawn much attention in the US, Europe, and beyond school violence. It is crucial to address violence in school environments, and a lot of study has been done to look at its origins and potential solutions. Emotional violence is a broad problem with many facets that require addressing. According to the Center for Prevention of School Violence, school violence is any conduct that goes against the instructional objective or respectful school climate or compromises the school's goal of being free from drugs, weapons, disturbances, disorder, and hostility toward people or property.

School violence, according to Miller's School Violence and Primary Prevention (New York: Springer, 2008), encompasses a variety of behaviors, including but not limited to child and teacher victimization, child and/or teacher perpetration, physical and emotional violence, cyber victimization, cyber threats, bullying, fights, classroom disorder, cult-related behavior and activities, other boundary violations, and the handling of weapons in a school setting. About 828,000 nonfatal victimizations of students aged twelve to eighteen occurred at school in 2010, according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Center for Education Statistics. Thirty-three school-associated deaths occurred for youth aged five to eighteen between July 1, 2009, and June 30, 2010.



The frequency of school shooting-related fatalities has risen in recent years, and public school safety and security measures have also grown. There are numerous risk variables that affect the likelihood that young people may act violently in schools. Youth who use drugs, are delinquent, or are involved in gangs may be more likely to act aggressively. Negative consequences like as alcohol and drug usage, delinquency, depression, anxiety, traumatic stress, physical harm, or death may follow exposure to school violence. The association between exposure to school violence and negative consequences may be mediated by treatment and prevention initiatives.

Adolescents go through a key stage in life where they are figuring out who they are, building friendships, and developing emotionally. Because of this, they are especially sensitive to emotional harm. Several factors can lead to emotional violence during this time, including pressure from peers, problems at home, the overall school environment, exposure to social media, and cultural expectations. While previous research using numbers and statistics has helped us understand how common emotional violence is, we still need in-depth, personal accounts to fully grasp the everyday experiences of young people and the deeper social issues that contribute to this form of abuse.

This study explores the root causes of emotional violence among secondary school students by focusing on their real-life experiences and personal viewpoints. By listening directly to those who have been affected, the research hopes to uncover deeper insights into why this kind of harm happens. Gaining a better understanding of these causes is important for creating meaningful strategies that schools can use to prevent emotional violence and support students more effectively.

Statement of the Problem

Emotional violence among school adolescents is an international concern. Causes of emotional violence vary in different countries of the world. Students with emotional violence affect school discipline prominently. Identification of emotional violence is essential to develop remedies to overcome the emotional violent activities among the school adolescents. In developing countries like Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, etc., emotional violence is rapidly promoted among school adolescents. Therefore, this is the need of the day to explore the causes of emotional violence among school adolescents in Pakistan. It is essential to develop strategies to overcome emotional violence in the light of effects of emotional violence on school discipline as well. Developed countries like the United States of America, the United Kingdom, and Australia have worked on emotional violence among school adolescents but in Pakistan, this study required attention. Emotional violence has been reported prominently at the age of 14 years adolescents in South Asian countries (WHO, 2022). Forty-six percent of school adolescents are victims of emotional violence (UNICEF, 2020). Therefore, the researcher decided to work on “Causes of Emotional Violence among Students at the Secondary Level”.

Significance of the Study

Various studies concluded that emotional violence is an escalating problem among school adolescents. The findings of the study will be concerned with the form and characteristics of emotionally violent activities among school adolescents that will be beneficial for the school principal in reforming their school discipline rules to reduce the existing situation of emotional violence among school adolescents. The findings of the study will be beneficial for teachers in understanding the background of emotional violence activities among the students so that they can adopt the strategies in the classroom to overcome such violent activities.



Therefore findings will be important for the school management in understand the forms of effects on school discipline and to revise their policy.

Literature Review

Emotional violence in schools is a serious problem that can have long lasting effects on students' mental health, self-esteem, and academic performance. (Pietro Ferrara, 2019) Emotional violence can take many forms, including bullying, teasing, ostracism, and harassment. Research has shown that emotional violence can be just as harmful as physical violence, and can lead to a range of negative outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation. A research conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics found that approximately 20% of students in the United States reported being bullied during the 2016- 2017 school year. Of those who reported being bullied, about 13% reported being the victim of emotional bullying, such as name-calling, spreading rumors, or being excluded from social activities. (Statistics, 2021)

Nature: Emotional violence involves non-physical behavior that belittles another person and can include insults, put down, verbal threats or other tactics that make the victim feel threatened, inferior, ashamed or degraded. (Srivastav, 2021)

Meaning: Emotional violence involves controlling another person by using emotions to criticize, embarrass, shame, blame, or otherwise manipulate them.(Sherri Gordon,2022)

When someone subjects or exposes another person to behavior that could cause psychological trauma, such as anxiety, chronic depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder, it is referred to as psychological violence, also known as emotional violence (Clark & Lewis, 2021).

Characteristics: A students may be the victim of emotional violence if they are insulted or called names repeatedly, if they are threatened with violence but it is not carried out, if they are allowed to witness emotional violence of others, or if they are allowed to use drugs and alcohol. 9 Indifference to a child's needs, humiliating a child for failing at a task, demeaning a child, and neglecting a child are other examples of emotional violence. All types of families can experience emotional violence, but those facing financial hardships, single-parent households, divorce-related households, and families with drug violence problems are statistically more likely to undergo emotional violence.

The American Psychological Association (APA) has found in recent research that emotions can have serious negative effects on an adolescent's growth and well-being. According to the American Psychological Association, students who experience emotional violence and neglect may experience more serious mental health problems than those who experience physical or emotional violence. Children who are subjected to ongoing emotional violence may experience suicidal thoughts, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Adolescent emotional maltreatment is closely linked to substance violence, depression, anxiety disorders, and attachment issues. The effects on students can be far more severe when emotional violence co-exists with physical or emotional violence.

Emotional neglect and lack in the home are among the biggest causes of emotional aggression in adolescence. Teenagers from Pakistani single-parent households reported greater levels of emotional deprivation, which was closely linked to bullying victimization, according to a study by Amin and Ijaz (2024). Due to their increased susceptibility as a result of this deprivation, these teenagers are frequently the easy targets of emotional abuse in educational environments.

Furthermore, research from the United States found that emotional abuse inside families (e.g., frequent insults or put-downs) is the most reported kind of childhood hardship, affecting 61%



of teens (O'Reilly, 2024). These results demonstrate how emotional aggression frequently starts in the home before being repeated or made worse in educational settings.

The school environment plays a vital role in influential adolescents' emotional violence. Research conducted in Turkey by Ceylan and Çelik (2023) demonstrated that nearly all participants had experienced some form of school violence, including emotional violence such as exclusion, ridicule, and verbal insults. The authors emphasized the need for targeted violence-prevention programs and training for both families and school staff to mitigate these trends.

Peer interactions, particularly relational aggression (e.g., gossip, social exclusion, and public shaming), are one of the most common causes of emotional violence in schools. Peer bullying was found to be significantly linked to decreased emotional intelligence and empathy levels in adolescents attending Pakistani public schools, according to research by Tariq and Javed (2023). Students who experienced emotional abuse from their peers showed internalizing characteristics such as anxiety or withdrawal, low self-esteem, and a lack of interpersonal trust.

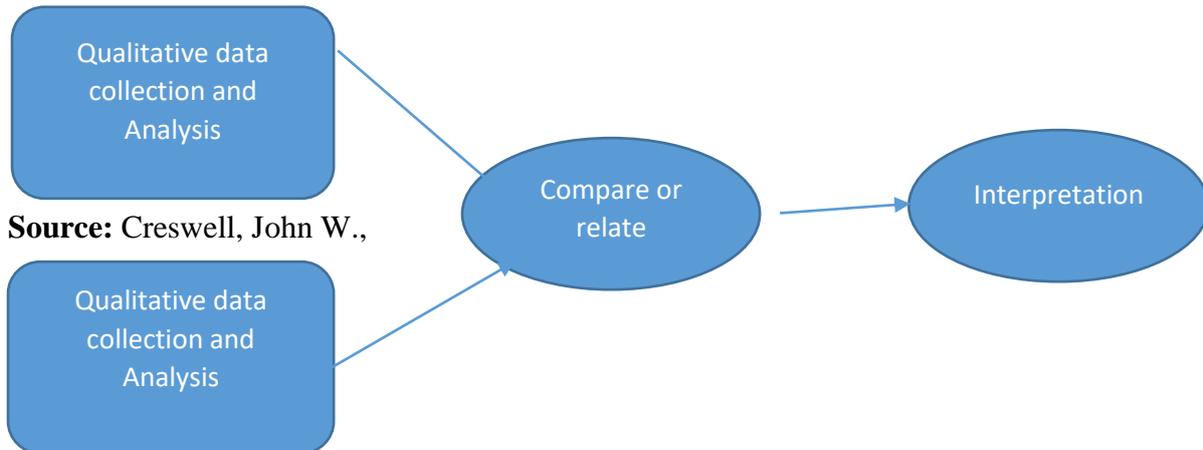
In a Pakistani context, Tariq and Javed (2023) found that bullying behavior significantly reduced emotional intelligence among Grade 9 students. The more students were exposed to emotional bullying by peers, the lower their emotional regulation, empathy, and self-awareness—factors which themselves perpetuate a cycle of emotional aggression.

Unlikely physical and emotional violence, it can be very challenging to prove the emotional violence of a student. Even though a student who experiences emotional violence may not have obvious bruises or broken bones, the effects can still be quite severe. In situations where a student is being yelled at or humiliated, law enforcement and child protective services might not be able or willing to step in without concrete proof of violence. Nonetheless, law enforcement can intervene and parents or other caregivers may face criminal charges in cases where there are blatant indications of neglect or where a student has been threatened with harm. Child protective services organizations have the authority to step in, teach parents about the effects of emotional violence, and assist in modifying emotionally violent behavior and habits by involving them in educational programming or counseling. Emotional violence should be treated very seriously since it frequently serves as a sign of more serious violence. (Michael E., 2023)

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A research design is a plan that specifies the respondents to be used, the data collection methods and the data analysis procedures to be used, transcending the research approach and underlying philosophical assumptions (Nieuwenhuis, 2007). Schindler and Cooper, as cited in Shabalala (2016), state that a research design assists the researcher in deciding on the research methodology that is most suitable for a particular investigation. Different authors have advanced several descriptions of a research design (Shabalala, 2016).

The research was conducted through mixed-method approaches. A mixed-method triangulation research design enhances the validity and credibility of your findings and mitigates the presence of any research biases in your work. The triangulation mixed-method design is used because it allows researchers to collect and analyze data from multiple sources and perspectives, leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. By combining different research methods, researchers can address the limitations of each method and overcome biases that might arise from using a single method.



Source: Creswell, John W.,

Educational Research: Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and Qualitative Research, 4th Edition, © 2012.

Population and Sample

The Population of the study are Public sector schools at Tehsil Taxila, Rawalpindi. There are 13 secondary schools for boys. Nineteen is the teaching staff that taught to 9th class. The population has been selected through the sis.punjab.gov.pk portal. The research was conducted through interviews of 10 Teachers/Principals and 10 students. After consulting with the supervisor and reviewing relevant literature, the interview protocol was created. Oral consent was obtained from the chosen head teachers and observing teachers before the interviews. The researcher developed a checklist, Questionnaire, and interview questions for emotional violence and validated it by two experts. Check checklist was provided to the school discipline committee for the identification of students who are involved in emotional violence. After the identification of the concerned students interviews were conducted from them.

Instruments

The four steps involved in instrument development are concept identification, item construction, validity testing, and reliability testing. The researcher used two research instrument interviews, and checklists to collect data from the sample of the study. After consulting with the supervisor and reviewing pertinent literature, the interview protocol was created. Researchers have taken interviews with 10 students and 10 teachers.

Data Analysis

The first question asked about the most prevalent form of emotional violence among secondary school students. Teacher's answers are followed about the prevalent form of emotional violence among secondary school students.

"The most common emotional violence among secondary school students are verbal bullying social exclusion and cyberbullying".

"Calling with pet names, abusive language".

"Hooting, quarreling, disruptive talk".

"Emotional violence in Secondary School can manifest through bullying, explosion, or cyberbullying it's essential".

"Constantly arguing and opposing others and especially to teacher".

"Bullying and cyberbullying, fighting, punching, kicking".



“The most important form of emotional violence among secondary school students is to torture mentally by using low standard type of communication”.

“Use of abusive language with fellows, name calling each other’s, highlighting their personal weaknesses”.

Most of teachers indicate that caused of emotional violence is various including social dynamics lack of empathy, home environment, in security, media influence. Some other teacher answers are following.

“Family issues, poverty, financial problem, physical and mental health”.

“Gap between parents and students, lack of interest of parents due to financial situations, away from religious education”.

“Excessive numbers of students, and high enrollments, lack of proper communication between teachers and parents”.

“Use of games involving violence and crimes by students, students delve into such virtual games and are effected highly, domestic background”.

Teachers told that many causes of school related that increased the emotional violence among school students, some crucial answers of teachers are following.

“Adolescence, lack of patience, mood swings”.

“School-related causes in Secondary Schools may include bullying culture, inadequate supervision, discrimination and Prejudice, lack of counseling support, academic pressure”.

“Teacher unfair tendency in favor of some students”.

“Behavior of students due to overcrowding student strength, students from different societies”.

“Lack of participation in co-curricular activities, a gap of trust among teachers and students, grading systems causes emotional violence among students”.

Many of teachers highlighted the parental causes of emotional violence among secondary school students. Some teachers answer are below.

“Some students are emotionally disturbed due to troubled domestic backgrounds”.

“General negative Trend of parents about government teachers, paying less attention to concern of teachers by parents”.

“Lack of education of parents, the financial condition of family, lack of parental interest”.

“The behavior of parents affects the mental and Physical health of their children, parents abuse or fight at home children display in school in the same way”.

“The parental factors contributing to emotional violence in Secondary School may include, modeling behavior, lack of emotional support, inconsistent discipline, family stresses, permissive parenting”.

“Students often model their behavior based on what they observe at home if parents display an aggressive or emotionally violent behavior children May imitate that Parent”.

Finding

1. In a thematic analysis of interview most prevalent form of emotional violence among students are verbal bullying , cyberbullying, calling with pet names, using low standard type of communication, name calling each other’s, highlighting their personal weaknesses.
2. In a thematic analysis of the interview, school causes of emotional violence are inclusive atmosphere of school, lack of control, no proper check and balance, inadequate supervision, discrimination and Prejudice, lack of counselling support,



academic pressure, overcrowding student strength, lack of participation in co-curricular activities.

3. In a thematic analysis of interviews parental causes of emotional violence are aggressive behavior of the parents, lack of interactions, and lack of emotional support.
4. In a thematic analysis of interviews, there are several psychological effects on student's mental health like, rough and hard behavior, anxiety, hateful behavior, crying, isolation, depression, and low self-esteem.
5. In a thematic analysis of interviews emotional violence among students have significant effects on school discipline it disrupts the learning environment.

Conclusion

The main aim of the study was to Causes of emotional violence among secondary school students. Based on the findings and analysis of the data, the following conclusions were drawn.

1. The analysis highlights the profound impact of emotional violence on the overall well-being and development of secondary school students.
2. Emotional violence, often subtle and insidious, manifests through various forms such as verbal abuse, bullying, and exclusion.
3. The findings emphasize the immediate need for comprehensive interventions and preventive measures within the educational system.
4. Emotional violence negatively affects students' mental health, academic performance, and interpersonal relationships.
5. School administrators, educators, and parents must collaborate to create a safe and supportive environment that fosters emotional intelligence, empathy, and positive communication.

Recommendation

Based on findings and conclusions, this study puts forward the following recommendation.

1. Schools should establish and enforce comprehensive anti-bullying programs to address emotional violence, promoting a culture of respect and inclusivity.
2. Educational institutions should allocate resources for counseling services, ensuring students have access to professional support for emotional well-being.
3. Develop and implement awareness campaigns within schools to educate students, educators, and parents about the detrimental effects of emotional violence and the importance of fostering positive communication.
4. Foster collaboration among school administrators, educators, and parents to collectively create a safe and supportive environment for students.
5. Establish mechanisms for regular monitoring and reporting of incidents related to emotional violence, enabling timely intervention and data-driven decision-making.
6. Implement peer support programs to encourage students to support each other emotionally, creating a sense of community within the school.
7. Engage external stakeholders such as mental health professionals, community organizations, and local authorities to provide additional resources and expertise in addressing emotional violence.
8. Actively involve students in the development and implementation of initiatives, ensuring their perspectives are considered and empowering them to take ownership of creating a positive school environment.
9. Provide ongoing training for educators to enhance their awareness of emotional violence and equip them with effective strategies for prevention and intervention.



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