



RESEARCH PAPER

Impact of Child Abuse on the Academic Performance and Personality Development of Young Adult Students of Karachi Pakistan

Safia Niazi¹ Saima Iqbal*² Rabia Aslam³

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University, Lyari, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University, Lyari, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan
3. Lecturer, Department of Education, Benazir Bhutto Shaheed University, Lyari, Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan

DOI

[http://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2022\(6-I\)08](http://doi.org/10.35484/pssr.2022(6-I)08)

PAPER INFO

ABSTRACT

Received:
September 29, 2021
Accepted:
January 15, 2022
Online:
January 22, 2022

Keywords:
Academic
Performance,
Child Abuse,
Personality
Development,
Young Adults

***Corresponding
Author**

Saima.mehmood@
bbsul.edu.pk

Child abuse effects academically and mentally both, It increased fear, guilt and self-blame. The research design of this study based on descriptive and phenomenological approach to investigate the performance of abused child at school. Qualitative method is used to take in depth knowledge. Purposive sampling and semi structured interview was used to collect data. The study concluded that there was a considerable influence of child abuse on student's academic performance. Although the students suffered from various types of child abuse (Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Emotional abuse and Neglect) many were unaware that they were being abused by anyone due to unawareness. Child abuse was found to significantly influence on personal development because it increased stress among the abused learner. Child abuse affects pupils' behavior negatively as abused students behaved differently and negatively from the non-abused ones. Child abuse affects learning disorders negatively with abused children having learning disorders and performing worse than the non-abused ones. Maximum those child become victim of abuse who are neglect by family or parents

Introduction

"Every day almost 12 children abused in all over Pakistan. Children are the most vulnerable target to complete. Most of them belong to the age group of 6-15 years. The data showed that more than 80% of the abusers were known to the children. A total of 1,896 cases of child abuse have taken place in the first six months

of 2021. Of these, 1,084 cases were of sexual abuse against children, 523 cases were of abduction, 238 cases were of missing children, and 51 cases were of child marriages. The United States had one of the worst records among industrialized nations – losing on average between four and seven children every day to child abuse and neglecting. Child abuse can have many repercussions in a child's life, including impeding their growth and development. Unfortunately, the impact of child abuse can last a lifetime. One of the most critical consequences of chronic abuse is how it impacts a child's performance in school and interferes with the foundation a child needs to be successful throughout his or her school career Fergusson (2008). Children who have been abused and neglected tend to score lower than the general population on measures of cognitive capacity, language development, and academic achievement. Horwood (2008) on a study in New York found a strong relationship between child abuse and poor academic performance during classroom functioning. It also destroys personality attributes of a young adult's growth.

Positive home environment can enrich child school experiences on the other hand negative environments can have a detrimental impact on both students' academic performance and their behavior in classroom. The centers for disease control and prevention (CDC) is a national public health agency of USA classifies the types of abuse as: Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Emotional abuse, Neglecting abuse. Apebende, Umoren and Ukpepi (2010), discovered that pupils who were not physically abused performed higher in primary science than those who were abused. Humes and Jhones (2011) also found, that early physical abuse affected behavior of children and their academic performance. Lanes and Lamb (2007) observed that negative health outcomes related to child maltreatment such as neglect, hunger, and all forms of abuse (i.e., sexual, physical, and emotional) are strong indicators of poor academic performance. Positive home environment can enrich child school experiences on the other hand negative environments can have a detrimental impact on both students' academic performance and their behavior in classroom. Ramez, et al. (2011) noted that one of the most potentially damaging of these environmental factors is child abuse. Futa, Hansen and Garbin (2003) define child abuse and neglect as any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation; or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm. While child abuse may take many forms (e.g., sibling abuse, medical neglect, educational neglect), it is typically categorized into four domains: physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological or emotional abuse and neglecting abuse.

Abused children do not learn effectively hence they perform poorly in school. Children that have been victimized by one or more form(s) of abuse exhibit some behaviors different from others in school with attendant effects on their academic performance. Rehman and Luca (2001) revealed that Child abuse generally delays students' progress academically, because there is always lack of trust in people because they have been disappointed and abused by those that ought to be source of joy, trust, defense, and security to them, they believe nowhere is safe and nobody is

to be trusted. This leads to changes in behavior such as emotional pain, physical pain, withdrawal from opposite sex, poor social relationship, anxiety, mental stress, depression, difficulty in socializing, sadness, hooliganism, thuggery, rebellious, malnourishment, anger, scars on body parts, addictions, sexual difficulties and unhealthy appearance. They feel distracted and withdrawn from other students, teachers and then from their studies.

Barnes and Putnam et al (2011) narrated "some recent literature suggest that some factor can compensate for the negative effect that abuser have on children academic success so that they can positively adjust their negative situation". According to Brayden and Sherrod (1995) suggested, "mistreated children cannot perform their selves in a good way because they get difficulty to make relation which can be the cause of communication gap with peers and teacher due to which they can get lower grades and also can have problem in adopting social norms". Creswell (2002) stated that "They also found that both neglected and physical abusive children fell in to the same grade for childhood abuse and neglect and lack of academic work and lack of attention by working in the association between language decision as a proof of grade retention the school perform poorly but neglected children face the worst of them" center of disease control and prevention witnessed." Ill-treated children are not interested in school which becomes the reason of higher absenteeism and lower grades unsatisfactory test scores and more excited to drop out of school. Cuevas and Turner (2010) got to have knowledge about child abuse mostly becomes the reason of low motivation" Finkelhor and Ormrod (2007) found "maltreated children's can be suffered from short terms memory problem". According to Goodman, Brown and Gordon (2003) "child abuse become the result of poor school performance and disability to perform unwell in test". Hall and Anderson (2000) resulted that, "effects of child abuse can be harmful body emotionally and behaviorally it can be affected in brain development the psychological impact is most often seen as a risky behavior that can educationally affect a child who is abused". Hill, Kaplan and French (2010) revealed "Abuse of children usually delays the development of students as they always lack confidence because they face frustration and this situation make them a source of joyful defenses and security They should believe that somewhere is not safe and nobody should be trusted. This leads to a change in behavior such as emotional pain to withdraw from sexual pain as opposed to sexual dysfunction poor social relationships difficulty mental stress deprivation disorders sexual signs on causes of anger body malnutrition appear modestly and the garments cause poor educational performance due to these features. As a concussion, the child becomes a problem"

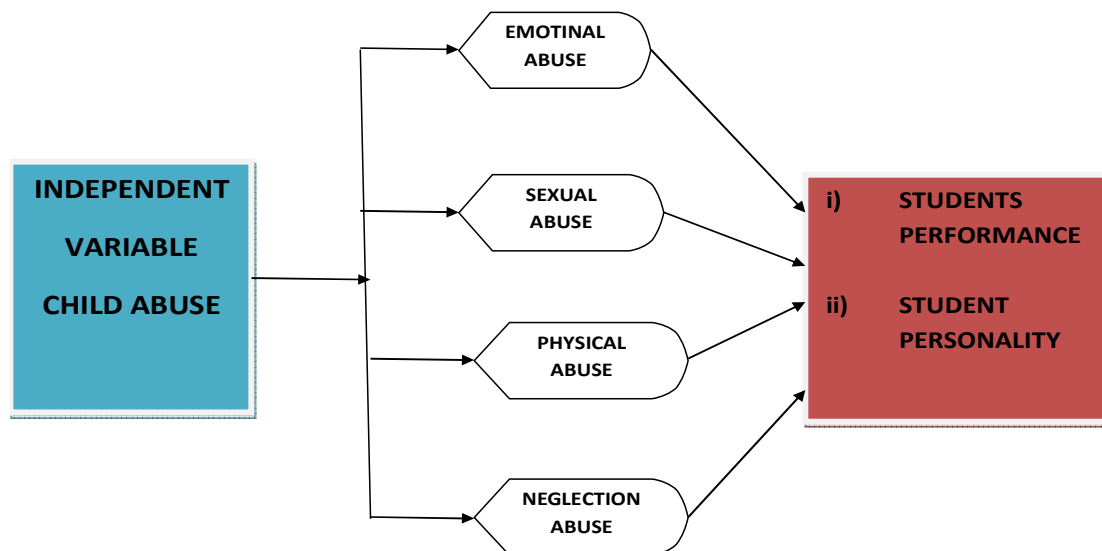
United States department of education "experienced abuse child cannot perform good as compare to their classmates they feel themselves distressed from classmates and teacher" According to Dodge and Eckenrode (1995) "Abused children are found to be more aggressive, then children who have been abused have to face oppositional behaviors such as fighting crime." Finn (1999) stated "Primary grade children may fail to participate in class activities due to lack of attention or variety of learning difficulties." Kolko and Perry (2012) defined that " These behaviors and

difficulties may reveal that school problems are related to classmates who have successfully fought with peers, and opposition to opposition with neglected teachers depends more on schooling than on other groups of children. Augustine experienced that "Abusive children do not learn effectively so they perform poorly in the classroom, children who have been subjected to one or more types of abuse exhibit different behaviors. Traumatic experiences of child abuse and neglect have serious effects on the developing brain." Corrie, De Brito, & Wading, (2010) St Fischer & van der Kolk, (2000).

In the book don't tell mummy by Toni Maguire mentioned about a real story of abuse:

"She was abused by her step father her father warned her not to tell her mother or anyone else because they would blame her and won't love her anymore when she finally built up the courage to tell her mother she was told never to speak of this matter again."

Conceptual Framework



Material and Methods

The research design of this study is descriptive and phenomenological. It explores the performance of abused child at school. Qualitative method is used to take in depth knowledge about the problem. Data has been collected through personal visit. Lyari Town has been selected as a population. Through purposive sampling five students were selected as sample of population. All participants had been sexually abused prior to the age of teen by a family member or relatives.

Semi structured interview was used to collect data. The aim of interviews is to see the situation through the eyes of the contributor. Interview guidelines, rules

and questions were developed based on research questions and observation. A demographic questionnaire was also developed in order to obtain demographic data which was used as a point of comparison and correlation between participant's responses.

Results and Discussion

Table 1
Demographics of Participants

Demographics	Participant 1	Participant 2	Participant 3	Participant 4	Participant 5
Age	17	19	15	16	14
Marital status	Unmarried	Married	Unmarried	Unmarried	Unmarried
Sex	Female	Female	Female	Female	Male
Children	-	-	-	-	-
Education level	9th	10th	8th	9th	7th
Therapy	No	No	Guidance	Counseling	Counseling

Table 2
Types of Physical Abuse

Participant	No. of Abuser	Age time of abuse		Relationship	Abuse duration	Nature of abuse
		Abuser	Victim			
Participant 1	1	14	11	Cousin	3 years	Ignorance by parents, Fondling/pinching /groping receiving, French kissing, rape getting by abuser
Participant 2	1	13&15	10	Brothers	5 years	Ignorance by parents and family members, Fondling/pinching /groping getting, French kissing, rape receiving by abuser
Participant 3	2	18	11	Cousin	4 years	Ignorance by parents, Fondling/pinching /groping receiving, French kissing, rape receiving by abuser
Participant 4	1	25	12	Uncle	3 years	Ignorance by parents and family members, Fondling/pinching /groping receiving, French kissing, rape receiving by abuser vaginal intercourse receiving by abuser
Participant 5	1	19	08	Qari Sahib	2 years	Ignorance by parents, pinching/groping receiving, French kissing by abuser

All of the participants disclosed their sexual abuse to someone else. Four out of five participants disclosed their abuse one did not disclose her abuse until she was an adult in front of family. Two participants disclosed the abuse three years after it began, one participant disclosed 2 years after it began, one participant disclosed 4 years after it began, one participant disclosed 5 years after it began. Two participants disclosed to their parents/caregivers and three participants disclosed to aunty, other family members, or teacher. Only two participants received supportive responses from adults although one participant had experienced support from her teacher when she disclosed. None of the abusers were held accountable or faced legal consequences. Authorities were not involved in any of the cases.

Table 3
Summary

Participant	Abuser	Time of Disclose		Relationship with discloser	Abuse duration	Nature of abuse and legal action
		Age of abuser	Victim			
Participant 1	Cousin	17	14	Parents	3 years	Ignorance by parents, Fondling/pinching/groping receiving, French kissing, vaginal intercourse receiving by abuser legal or illegal action: no action taken against abuser
Participant 2	Brothers	18&20	15	Parents	5 years	Ignorance by parents and family members, Fondling/pinching/groping receiving, French kissing, vaginal intercourse receiving by abuser legal or illegal action: no action taken against abuser
Participant 3	Cousin	22	15	Aunty	4 years	Ignorance by parents, Fondling/pinching/groping receiving, French kissing, vaginal intercourse receiving by abuser legal or illegal action: no action taken against abuser
Participant 4	Uncle	28	15	Teacher and Mother	3 years	Ignorance by parents and family members, Fondling/pinching/groping receiving, French kissing, vaginal intercourse receiving by abuser

						legal or illegal action: no action taken against abuser
Participant 5	Qari Sahib	19	08	Mother	2 years	Ignorance by parents, pinching/groping receiving, French kissing by abuser
						legal or illegal action: no action taken against abuser

All participants in the study were sexually abused by a family members or qari prior to the age of 18. There were a total of 5 abusers. Four participants were abused by one abuser each; one participant was abused by two abusers. 06 of the 05 abusers were related to the participants: two were her brothers, one was uncles, two were qari and one was a cousin. Due to recall bias and the ages of the participants when they were abused, for some participants it was difficult to ascertain at exactly what ages, how long, and how many times they were abused. Based on their best estimates, the participants' ages at the onset of the abuse ranged from 2 to 5 years old with the average age of onset being 3.3 years old. The abusers' ages ranged from 08 to 16 years old with the average age of the abuser being 13 years old. The duration and frequency of the abuse ranged from one time to several times over three years. The different types of abuse experienced by the participants included ignore by parents (N=5) ignore by family members (N=5) kissing (N=2), being fondled/pinched/groped, (N=4), rape.

Findings

All participants shared how the act of being abused negatively affected their self-esteem and sense of self: "My attitude and my way of being me totally changed".

(Participant 1). Four participants specifically discussed how their feelings of self-worth and self-value were not only negatively impacted by the experience of abuse, but also by the act of disclosing the abuse: What affected me the worst was the embarrassment I felt through the whole thing. I remember feeling my dignity being taken away from me as the abuse was happening. I also felt controlled and devalued. And then after wards when I disclosed I felt humiliation having to tell others that I had been treated that way because I felt that that would make them feel like they had the right to treat me the same.

(Participant 2) expressed profound feelings of shame, embarrassment, and fear of being stigmatized. These feelings often kept participants from disclosing the abuse or led them to delay disclosing: "And I had fear or shame with her disclose because I felt embarrassed".

(Participant 3). Discussed how her relationship with her husband at the time changed as a result of her disclosure of sexual abuse and loss of virginity: "What changed with husband is the fact that he knew I wasn't a virgin before marriage. So I

guess after a while I don't [hold the same value] and that (unintelligible) changed". Her abuser had come to her home and asked for her forgiveness, stating that God had forgiven him. The participant confronted him and her parents told her to forgive him. The reactions, and sometimes lack of response, from the people the participants disclosed to have a significant impact on their feelings of self-value.

Three of the participants discussed their loss of physical power and control during the abusive time. One participant described feeling threatened: "I want to say no but it was unsaid. I felt frightened, scared and ashamed" (participant 2). One participant described being physically forced; one described being restrained during the abuse. "I do remember that I felt very sleepy and then I kind of remember him touching me and then I felt a lot of pain (Participant3). By not having the physical power or capacity to resist the abuse, the participants identified these factors as being profoundly disempowering. Physical powerlessness was not the only type of powerlessness. Some women spoke of feeling emotionally powerless after the abuse occurred. Two participants spoke about feeling powerless to disclose the abuse out of fear for the safety of others, either to protect the abusers from being harmed or to protect loved ones from being harmed by the abuser: "He said he would kill me if I told anyone"

In some cases this was achieved by not communicating or informing the survivor of what was going to happen after her disclosure: "Nobody talked to me. My mother never asked me or talked to me about it. I never knew anything about it other than the fact that they took me to the doctor" (Participant2) was essentially left out of the process of deciding what would happen to her and who would be involved. For four participants, their power to expose the abuser and their experiences was taken away by their disclosers by making light of their experiences and not giving it importance or value. For one participant, this occurred by her mother's off-handed comment regarding abuse just as she was summoning the courage to disclose her abuse:

"I felt it was time for me to let it out. My mom said something like 'Don't let anybody tell you that you were abused.' Like saying don't let a therapist put the idea in your head that you have been abused. And that made me feel like have to keep this to myself.' After that, I decided I don't want to bring it to her. Tell her. I felt shut down. (Participant1)"

Every participant expressed feelings of anger. Two participants expressed anger towards the abuser for betraying the family's trust and love and for taking advantage of their vulnerability. For one participant, these feelings of anger toward the abuser led to her disclosure: "The anger of seeing him again and that my family was going to help him out, again" (Participant2). Although her family was unaware at the time of the sexual abuse, the abuser was fully aware that he had abused her. It was this anger that prompted her disclosure and confrontation of him at that time. Four participants expressed feeling angry at the people to whom they disclosed their abuse, either for their reaction or their lack of response. When talking about disclosing to her parents, one participant said: "I was angry that they doubted me. It

worried me, in some way, their attitude. My parent's attitudes, that, they didn't even want to get revenge. Not even try to find him" (participant4). Although her abuser confessed to abusing her, her parents' initial reaction of doubt left a lasting impression on her. Another participant discussed the anger she felt at her grandmother's lack of response to her disclosure: "I felt she was weak. I felt she's not going to do anything. She's not doing anything! She doesn't care! She can't do anything! She doesn't care! How weak! Two participants recalled feelings of anger and frustration in childhood. The failure of a family member to protect or take care of the survivor in childhood, particularly because of the absence of their fathers and the preoccupation and neglect of their mothers, made them feel more vulnerable and like targets for abuse: "And I, even now, would remember his face, the pain and I would ask myself 'Why? Because I didn't have a father attention this guy abused me?! Because my mother wasn't taking care of me he took advantage of me?" (Participant 5). All participants are students at secondary level in different schools, but all of them no more interested in education. Because fear of abuse at any place and any time with them, that's why they could not give proper time to their study and different subjects. Due to less attention their academic performance decreases at dangerous level. On other hand after disclose all classmates far away from me and could not discuss about study and tasks given by different teachers. Friend circle also damage badly now I am alone.

Discussion

This research study contributes to the body of knowledge regarding the experiences of abuse and disclosure impact on student academic performance and personality. According to WHO Global status report on violence prevention 2014, nearly a quarter of adults (22.6%) worldwide suffered from physical abuse as a child with no significant differences between boys and girls.

Results of the study revealed that common forms of physical abuse among participants are biting then spanking/pinching, hitting and slapping. On the other hands, Daral found that the most common forms of physical abuse faced by the adolescent girls in his study was slapping or hitting. Previous researches indicate that child maltreatment can affect the academic achievement. Experience of physical abuse can negatively affect brain development and cause alteration in brain maturation and leads to impair in cognitive, language and academic abilities. Worse maltreatment effect on absenteeism from schools than on grades especially after the first report. Comparing with the current results, majority of the participants reported that physical abuse affects student's achievement such as concentrated at the class, learning in school, solving homework, and school absenteeism. When comparing the GPA between physically abused participants with non-abused participants, physically abused participants have lower GPA which shows evidence of adverse effect of physical abuse on academic achievement and their performance. This is in the same line with the results of Ifeyinwa and Ncheta who assessed the effect of physical abuse and neglect among pupils and revealed that there is a significant influence of physical abuse on pupils' academic achievement and performance

attributed to culturally accept the abuse as a method of child rearing discipline in addition to lack of knowledge and awareness about the proper way of modifying the children behavior rather than using physical abuse. Child maltreatment usually occurs due to interaction of several risk factors either from child, parents or/and environment.

Conclusions

The study concluded that there was a considerable influence of child abuse on student's academic performance. Although the students suffered from various types of child abuse (Physical abuse, Sexual abuse, Emotional abuse and Neglect) many were unaware that they were being abused by anyone due to un-awareness. Child abuse was found to significantly influence on personal development because it increased stress among the abused learner. Child abuse affects pupils' behavior negatively as abused students behaved differently and negatively from the non-abused ones. Child abuse affects learning disorders negatively with abused children having learning disorders and performing worse than the non-abused ones. Maximum those child become victim of abuse who are neglect by family or parents. Gap between child and parents in shape of care, attention, love and communication become major reasons of abuse in our society. During initial and teenage child needs extra attention by parents and family members if they not fulfill their needs he/she chose other ways. (Beitchma, 1992), only a limited amount of studies have been conducted in Pakistan. Similarly, the topic of disclosure of abuse and its impact on performance, in general, has only been addressed more recently in 2018, and the cultural impact on disclosure has only just begun to be explored (Fontes & Plummer, 2010).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that the information on child rights in social studies is insufficient to teach about child abuse hence the Ministry of Education & curriculum design should ensure that child abuse is sufficiently taught. The school management, Mosque, media and non-governmental organizations should also be more vigilant in creating awareness about child abuse, not only among students but also among all school stakeholders and the community. The school management should strengthen their channels of reporting about child abuse as well as the way they handled different cases of child abuse. This would make it easier for the abused children to report abuse cases as well as cope better if abused and improve the quality of their lives. Peer counseling among students should be encouraged as learner can reveal secrets among their peers and parents hence making it easier to take action. School is a social community that's why school arrange different seminars, role play and workshops for parents and guardians regarding "stop abuse; strong your child" in this way parents child communication become strong and abuse cases decrease as soon.

The study was not exhaustive. As such, further investigation should be carried out to find out other factors which could be contributing to the poor performance among the learners, confidence among the learner, role of parents in recovery of victim, reasons behind abuse in early age, impact of abuse awareness among young adult students in Pakistan.

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