



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Emotional Abuse in Public Schools of the Punjab: An Analysis**

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**ABSTRACT**

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The main objectives of this study were to identify the perception of teachers regarding emotional abuse and differences in their perception with reference to demographics (gender, age, academic qualification, professional qualification, and work experiences), and to explore students' experiences of emotional abuse in their classrooms. The findings show that teachers negatively associated to emotional abuse of students. There are minor mean scores differences based on age, gender, academic qualification, and professional qualification demography of teachers. On contrary to the teachers who claim that they are fully aware with emotional abuse and they do not violate this during their teaching learning process however the students reveal that they experience massive amount of emotional abuse in their classroom by the teachers. The study recommends that a training module and socio-ecological resilience model for teachers may decrease the negative attitude to emotionally abuse students

**Introduction**

There is a scarcity of empirical evidence that support the existence of emotional abuse in classroom. In fact, the researchers have not focused on teachers as possible source of problems in this dimension. It may be due to the fact that emotional abuse is often hard to confirm, hence child defensive services may not be capable to interfere with solid evidences of hurt or mental torture to the child (Prevent Child Abuse America, 2016). Students emotionally abused identified teacher behaviors like excessive screaming at students to the extent that make them cried, making humiliating comments

and labeling students as stupid and dumb, intimidating students, and assigning extra homework as punishment, that would be considered emotional abuse (Shumba, 2002). Studies have shown that childhood emotional abuse may create among children several problems such as anxiety disorder, re-victimization, depression, personality shattering (Yehuda, Spertus, et al., 2001) and physical complaints, gastrointestinal distress, recurrent headaches (Felitti, 1991). Childhood abuse may appear in adulthood in the form of several complexities including emotional upsetting, mental imbalances (Briere, Evans, Runtz, & Wall, 1988). When there adverse ailing impacts were examined statistically it was shown that symptom of anxiety, depression, interpersonal sensitivity, and dissociation was stronger and more effective among women (Hart, Binggeli, & Brassard, 1997). It is believed that nonclinical samples would be more useful in analyzing the impact of psychological impacts upon the child, independent of other types of childhood abuse. This study is focusing such impact relating to adulthood trauma. It is also examined such symptom upon adult woman. Further it is also estimated if such traumatic effects are lifetime or short lived. Previous studies have shown that emotional abuse leave as an analyst of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with great severity (Yehuda, Halligan, & Grossman, 2001). Emotional abuse may also be referred to the atmosphere whether it is conducive to the physical, mental and psychological development of the children. There has not been any provision of clear and non-ambiguous definition of emotional abuse. There may be such actions as are not suitable to the health of the child. This health may be physical, spiritual, mental or moral. These acts should be well in control of parents or persons in relationship to them including movement restrictions, undervaluing, denigrating, belittling, scapegoating, discriminating and ridiculing.

Universally child abuse has been a problem. In 29 studies with 46 independent samples with a total 7082279 participants; it was estimated that emotional abuse was causing children with negative impacts found in 36.3% or 363 per 1000 children with same %age among boys and girls. When parents punish the child for breaking rules with the aim of disciplining the child, the adverse effects are never reported due to saving the honor of the family. There have been such cases when children are used in order to raise funds; it has also been taken as a crime and not allowed by the authorities (Finkelhor, Turner, Shattuck, & Hamby, 2013). However, definition of normal and adequate to society also needs redefining. In western society showing love and affection to small children is though attractive and usual but in Chinese culture respect is thought unwanted as it supports selfishness. African allows threatening children with bogymen

which is not allowed in other cultures. Emotional abuse is globally common both at home and schools. In Yemen, school children were found suffering emotional abuse. 72.6% were boys and 26.1 % were girls. Emotional abuse is most likely for children between the age of 16-17 or living in joint family or has divorced parents (Ba-Saddik & Hattab, 2012). One more study in India showed that 47.9% boys and 52.1 % girls were found emotionally abused in schools. Although emotional abuse remain secreted but appear in the form of child's insight of relationship, self-awareness, flexibility, growth and mental strength, depression, parental abuse of drugs (Rees, 2010). Affection is the main point of emotional abuse. Parental behavior if it is inappropriate may have damaging effects upon the personality of child which may lead to severe complexities. Parental positive interaction is necessary for good upbringing of the child.

### **Literature Review**

In recent years, teachers are work loaded by their districts and policy makers to complete more forms and papers mandated by educational authorities. It resulted in a rise in teacher stress. Such stress can make teachers to exhibit behavioral patterns that have the probability for being abusive, such as irritability, frustration, prone to anger quickly, and impulsively yelling and screaming.

### **Family Factors and Family Functioning**

The literature provides clear proof that bodily violence is the reflection of the family traits (Tremblay & Willms, 2003). The learner having aggressive biological parents is more likely to be aggressive as compared with those who do not aggressive parents (Baldry & Farrington, 2000). It has also been resulted in a study that 53% of the families with convicted parents also found that they had also criminal traits or inclination. It has also been found that if first child was aggressive, second child is also likely to be aggressive. In order to identify the impact of genes and environment twin studies were carried out. In a US study it was found that no genetic trace was involved during adolescent period. But genetic impacts were felt in the antisocial behavior in adulthood (Lyons et al., 1995). Anti- social element was actually due to family environment after leaving family sibling find similarity due to family genetic similarity. The Child Welfare Information Gateway describes that isolation, emotional instability, fear, mistrust; relationship difficulties can leave lifelong imprints as an outcome of emotional abuse on the personalities of the students (CWIG, 2013).

### **Antisocial Parent Attitudes**

The parents who themselves had antisocial element in their young age do encourage such element if found in their own children they give such permission to their children (Farrington, 2005). As a result, descriptive behavior and poor relationship develop among children with their families (Konopka, 2015).

### **Parental Supervision**

If during adulthood a child has less antisocial behavior that is due to great parental control on him when he was a child (Dishion & McMahon, 1998; Dishion, Patterson, Stoolmiller, & Skinner 1991, Muzaffar & Javaid, 2018). Relatives, educational institution, and behavioral ancestors to early youth attachment with harmful peers had great effect on their developmental psychology (Stouthamer-Loeber et al., 1993). Whereas if such parental control is less in the time of childhood, child is more prone to antisocial behavior later in adulthood, whereas less parental authoritative control is sound for a person in adulthood (Reid & Patterson, 1989).

### **Peers**

Peers in their company may influence each other in harmful actions (Keenan, Loeber, Zhang, Stouthamer-Loeber, & Van Kammen, 1995). Antisocial, aggressive children always make friends with other antisocial and aggressive and oppositional nature children (R. E. Tremblay, Masse, Vitaro, & Dobkin, 1995). But such friendship and closeness may be possible only at the occasion where such oppositional or antisocial behavior is apparent (Bartusch, Lynam, Moffitt, & Silva, 1997); (Fergusson, Horwood, & Lynskey, 1996). Anyhow, the problem does not lie that this closeness is due to solely finding antisocial element, but real cause is his getting ignored, rejected and satirized by other peers (Blumstein, Farrington, & Moitra, 1985). Peers tend to reject these peers not only because of being shy but also if they have antisocial behavior with uncivilized aggression (Hawkins & Blumstein, 1996) Rejected children in their aggression have great complexity and show conduct problem and poor social skills (Parker & Asher, 1987) Such rejection later on appear as negative behavior later on (Bierman, Smoot, & Aumiller, 1993). The outcome would ultimately be that such aggressive elements would get together to work in alliance to bully others. Longitudinal studies show that rate of violence among individuals increase when they become part of a gang and do aggressive activities collectively and drop such activities as they quit the gang (Thornberry, Krohn, Lizotte, & Chard-Wierschem, 1993). It is found that most of the

aggressive youth have social network with likely unusual peers (Cairns, Cairns, Neckerman, Gest, & Garipey, 1988). Even glamorously aggressive peers may find such companions as do not have such history of formal problems (Moffitt, 1993). Amongst girls the time of first period creates a disruption, anxiety which may lead them to drinking. Such signs would be stronger among girls if they are among adult peer group and the result is confined to co-educational educational institutions (Caspi & Moffitt, 1991; Japel, Tremblay, McDuff, & Wilms, 2002).

### **Neighborhood**

If neighborhood is aggressive the children would also get an impact of that aggression as recipient of aggression (Attar, Guerra, & Tolan, 1994). It is found that children with behavior problem tend to cluster round the neighborhood and these behavioral imbalances may be seen affecting in the adjacent areas (Wilson, 1997). Children who live in disadvantaged neighborhood may get more problematic behavior as compared with those children who survive in a relatively less disadvantaged atmosphere. Young children are more prone to fall a prey to aggressive atmosphere in the neighborhood. Such differences with neighborhood become more pronounced and prominent when they were in aggression at the age of 5 and 6 (Brooks-Gunn, Duncan, Klebanov, & Sealander, 1993). Parents who are worried about their children direction were themselves harsh and restrictive to their children. Parental supervision also becomes greatly difficult in disadvantaged neighborhood.

### **Conventional Methods of Teaching**

Conventional method of teaching is purely teacher-centered, and students are dealt as marginalized and have least active role. The teachers in such environment behaves like autocrats and use their powers up to the maximum level as they desired without any hard and fast rules. In such situation staff members of school abused the students mentally and physically with frequent beating, slapping, punching and slamming against walls (Gilmore, 2019). Teacher's negative attitude affects student's mental health and developed observable symptoms. There can be muscular pain, body ache, and stomach disturbance which disrupt student's ability to focus on his/her studies. Further it is explained that any kind of punishment from teacher's side increases negativity and stress (Marroquin, 2018). According to the needs of 21st century, teachers must cope up with the advancement in teaching methodology and technology to develop healthy and balanced personalities in the society.

## **Discriminatory Behavior**

Education is basic right. As schooling is a “protected area” It is against the law to treat any individual in a different way in some public, private or business schools, universities and colleges on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, origin, sex and age. Unfair treatment is seen a lot. But every unjust ACT is not banned. For example, a college will not accept admission application from students who are above the age of 50 year. A teacher thinks and treats non-English speaking in an unfriendly manner because he thinks he will not be a good learner. An Asian student is not accorded that much conducive welcome in Europe because of his race. Even college teacher and principal ignore it as a routine matter. A college in Europe accepts more application of white people and less of colored people.

## **Techniques to cope Emotional Problems**

Worksite stress management (SMIS) is a point where clinical health psychology gets joined. Empirical and methodological findings have appeared in this context. They two have revealed that these two important loopholes in empirical examination of SMI. First research to date does not find individual strain does not have anything to do with workplace. No study has bothered to examine psychological mechanism in this regard. We found out that in collaboration with Frank W Bond & David Bunce, Department of Psychology, Goldsmiths College, University of London, United Kingdom. Psychological acceptance is positive symbol for any child to get merged in society. Psychological acceptance is readiness to skill pleasing and non-pleasing mental incidents going on in surrounding, such as thought, emotions and impressions with no demanding, avoid, changing and controlling them (Hayes, Nelson, & Jarrett, 1987).

Many CBT's holds that people having emotional disorders do not have distress problem which are attenuate through there unpleasant thoughts. ACT may be used for a diverse reason. It helps out people to do effort in unwanted work setting, accept non desirable thoughts (Hayes et al., 1987; Zettle & Rains, 1989). Further examination of these hypothesis showed that by measurement of participants' thought may vary with acceptance. Which means that thought and acceptance both are variables. IPP intervention related problems are expected to change participants' attitude and it will change their job environment technique and process in reply to stress or which means it will suggest variations. This changed attitude is calculated through work modification a scale developed for the research. How ACT and IPP influence in their mediating variables. Following (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984), it is observed that feelings gave

emphasis to ACT and problem focused IPP intervention will guide to post intervention improvement in psychological health and work linked variables.

### **Hypotheses**

Hypotheses are as follows:

- H<sub>1</sub>: There is no mean scores differences in teachers' perception about emotional abuse on the bases of demographics (gender, age, academic qualification, professional qualification, and work experiences).
- H<sub>2</sub>: There is mean scores differences among the perception of students regarding emotional abuse in classroom.

### **Material and Methods**

The research design approach for the completion of the study was quantitative. The main purpose for collecting multiple types of quantitative evidences like surveys was to know consistent and authentic results of the study. It involves the purposeful collection of quantitative research and its objectivesto reach the reliable results (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).Multistage sampling technique was adopted to collect quantitative data from students and teachers for the purpose of need assessment to develop a training module. The total no of sample taken from all Government Higher Secondary Schools of District Faisalabad was 500 including 218 male and 282 females. Two hundred and twenty-two respondents were taken from urban and 278 were taken from rural areas. All teachers from primary sections were taken as sample of the study. There were 93 male and 175 female teachers. The male teachers belong to urban area were 59 and 35 belong to rural area while the female teachers belong to urban area were 96 and 78 belong to rural area.

### **Development of Research Instruments**

The researcher adopted the self-developed questionnaire in order to collect the quantitative data from teachers and students. The tools for teachers were developed on five-point Likert Scale. In surveys, the most commonly used question types are rating scale questions. This is where respondents are asked to indicate their personal levels on things such as agreement, satisfaction or frequency. Rating scale questions are best used when you want to measure your respondents' attitude toward something.

## **Validation of Research Instruments**

Research tools were validated through expert opinion which was selected from Government College University Faisalabad, University of Education Faisalabad and University of Education Okara Campus. Experts were selected on the bases of vast experience of professional context in field of Education. In the light of expert opinion some items of instrument were modified, and others were deleted.

**Table 1**  
**Reliability of Emotional Abuse Item-Wise Total Statistics for Teacher's Tool**

<b>Statements</b>	<b><math>\alpha</math></b>
Teachers call their students by different names.	.716
Teachers usually punish students in front of their classmates.	.713
Sometimes teachers have to use harsh words for students.	.716
Teachers who suffer from emotional instability are more likely to abuse their students.	.719
Conventional methods are better to handle the problems of emotionally troubled students.	.743
Degrading behavior of teachers toward criminal minded students is justified.	.733
Sometimes teachers are found humiliating their students for personal motives.	.730
Teachers blame their students for poor academic performance.	.720
Teachers got angry when their students don't complete the task.	.717
Students usually make a big scene of small problems.	.741
Teachers discriminate their students on the basis of skin, color, gender, religion, tribe, caste and health problems.	.712
Teachers prefer to their students on the basis of personal assessment.	.726
Mentally appropriate environment is not providing to the students by teachers.	.737
Teachers do not provide supportive environment to handle and resolve emotional problems of students.	.744
Teachers did not use modern techniques to cope with emotional problems of students.	.746

Questionnaire for teachers and students were comprised fifteen and nine statements respectively. After experts' opinions questionnaires were finalized with content and face validity. The reliability of the instruments for students and teachers was ensured through statistical analysis



Cronbach's Alpha which was .741 (cumulative). Table explains the reliability of questionnaire (item wise) used to collect data from teachers.

**Table 2**

<b>Reliability of Emotional Abuse Total-Item Statistics for Students' Tool</b>	
<b>Statements</b>	<b>A</b>
Are you called by different bad names?	.772
Do you get punishment in front of your classmates?	.767
Are you encouraged at good academic results?	.808
Do you not get proper attention in class?	.846
Does harsh behavior of teachers hurt you?	.762
Does teacher shout at you?	.766
Does teacher insult you?	.764
Does teacher curse you?	.806
Does teacher differentiate you on the basis of religion caste and color?	.757

Table 2 shows the Cronbach alpha values of each item of questionnaire used of gather data from the students. All the items are found reliable with greater than .7 values. The value of overall reliability coefficient is reliable at the value of .805 meets the satisfactory conditions.

## Results and Discussion

Data were analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics to deduce the results. The mean scores on the variable 'emotional abuse' set the cut-off value. The values of emotional abuse range from 15, lowest, to 75, highest.

**Table 3**  
**Comparison of Demographic Variables Gender, Area and Designation regarding Emotional Abuse**

<b>Demographic variable</b>	<b>Categories</b>	<b>n</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Df</b>
Gender	Male	93	50.16	8.118	266
	Female	175	51.43	8.265	
Area	Urban	164	50.49	7.798	266
	Rural	104	51.79	8.828	

To examine the mean differences based on demographical variables (gender, area, & designations), researchers applied descriptive statistics (Table 3). It is demonstrated that there is slight mean difference on the demographics of age and area. The mean scores of females (M = 51.43) and

teachers (Urban) (M = 51.79) are slightly greater than that of males (M = 50.16) and teachers belong to rural areas (M = 50.49). It can be understood that there is no major mean score differences between male and female, and rural and urban teachers' perceptions reading emotional abuse.

**Table 4**  
**Demographic Variables wise Comparison of Teachers' Opinions on Emotional Abuse**

Demographic variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Academic Qualification	Between Groups	705.781	5	141.156	2.133	.062
	Within Groups	17340.204	262	66.184		
	Total	18045.985	267			
Professional Qualification	Between Groups	532.985	5	06.597	1.595	.162
	Within Groups	17513.000	262	66.844		
	Total	18045.985	267			
Experience	Between Groups	981.013	3	327.004	5.059*	.002
	Within Groups	17064.972	264	64.640		
	Total	18045.985	267			
Age	Between Groups	307.151	3	102.384	1.524	.209
	Within Groups	17738.834	264	67.193		
	Total	18045.985	267			

\* $p < .05$

One-way ANOVA is applied to analyze the mean score differences based on academic qualification, professional qualification, experiences, and age. Table 4 exhibits that there are insignificant mean differences among the variables (academic qualification, and professional qualification, & age). These mean scores of teachers with greater academic qualification ( $p > .05$ ), professional qualification ( $p > .05$ ), experiences ( $p < .05$ ), and age ( $p > .05$ ) are higher than that of junior teachers. Table 4 shows that there are insignificant difference between the levels of three groups as academic qualification, and professional qualification and age. However the mean difference is significant for emotional abuse between their levels of work experience.

**Table 5**  
**Post Hoc Test Describing Mean difference of Emotional Child Abuse among Teachers**

Dependent Variable	Work Experience (I)	Work Experience (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.
Emotional Abuse	1-10 Years	11-20 Years	.099	1.252	1.00
		21-30 Years	-3.910*	1.209	.007
		More than 30 Years	7.834	4.690	.341

	1-10 Years	-.099	1.252	1.00
11-20 Years	21-30 Years	-4.009*	1.458	.032*
	More than 30 Years	7.736	4.760	.366
	1-10 Years	3.910*	1.209	.007
21-30 Years	11-20 Years	4.009*	1.458	.032*
	More than 30 Years	11.745	4.749	.067
	1-10 Years	-7.834	4.690	.341
More than 30 Years	11-20 Years	-7.736	4.760	.366
	21-30 Years	-11.745	4.749	.067

\* $p < .05$

The Post Hoc Test is applied on the variable of 'job experience' to examine mean differences of teachers' perceptions about emotional abuse (Table 5). Post hoc test testifies that there is significant mean difference between job experience from 1 to 10 years, 21 to 30 years, and 11 to 20 years of teachers and head teachers' views on existence of emotional abuse at primary level. The greater mean difference score is found at the above 30 years of experience teachers and head teachers ( $MD = \pm 11.745$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

**Table 6**  
**Mann-Whitney Test for Equality of Means Abusive Scores for Both Genders**

Demographic variable	Categories	N	Mean Rank	Mann-Whitney U	Z-value	P-value
Gender	Male	282	256.90	28933.000	-1.139	.255
	Female	218	242.22			
	Total	500				
Area	Urban	222	235.72	27576.00	-2.066	0.039
	Rural	278	262.30			
	Total	500				

\* $p < .05$

From above table, it can be observed that mean of emotional abuse is not significantly different for both genders. There exists a statistically significant difference between the mean score of emotional abuse for two locations (urban & rural). It is said that emotional abuse occurs more frequently according to teachers' response. The results of analysis show that the perception of emotional abuse in male teachers (Mean rank = 256.90) is significantly higher than that of female teachers (Mean rank = 242.22), with  $z = -1.139$ ,  $p = .255 > .05$ . It is based on a one-tailed test Mann-Whitney test of unequal variance.

**Table 7**  
**Students Perception about Emotional Abuse in Classroom**

Statements	Mean	SD
Are you called by different bad names?	.71	.453

Do you get punishment in front of your classmates?	.75	.433
Are you encouraged at good academic results?	.59	.493
Do you not get proper attention in class?	.53	.500
Does harsh behavior of teachers hurt you?	.74	.441
Does teacher shout at you?	.68	.468
Does teacher insult you?	.68	.465
Does teacher curse you?	.63	.483
Does teacher differentiate you on the basis of religion caste and color?	.62	.485
Accumulative Average	.66	.469

Table 7 demonstrates the perception of students about emotional abuse in classroom. The mean scores of students are higher than that of average scores in total mean scores. It can be said that the presence of emotional abuse is reported by primary schools' students. The mean score was greater than 0.5 exhibits existence of high levels of emotional abuse.

## **Discussion**

The present aimed to explore emotional abuse of school going children by the teachers. The major objectives of this study were to identify mean scores differences of emotional abuses with reference to teachers' demographics (gender, age, academic qualification, professional qualification, and work experiences), and to explore teachers and students' perception about emotional abuse. The results revealed that teachers negatively associated to emotional abuse of students. There are minor mean scores differences based on age, gender, academic qualification, and professional qualification demography of teachers. Despite of all these demographics teachers have almost similar perception about emotional abuse. However the teachers with more job experiences have higher mean scores in comparison to junior teachers. Teachers claim that they are fully aware with emotional abuse and they do not violate this during their teaching learning process. On the other hand, the perceptions of students are totally different to their teachers. Students reveal massive amount of expectance that they are emotionally abused in their classroom by the teachers (Ba-Saddik&Hattab, 2012; Brendgen et al., 2007; Fromuth, Davis, Kelly, & Wakefield, 2015; James et al., 2008; Ungar, 2013). With reference to the findings of this study, the amount of evidences that emotional abuse by teachers existed is limited (Gilmore, 2019; Marroquin, 2018; Meintjes et al., 2010). The consequences of emotional abuse are examined in few studies. However, some studies provided descriptive features that emotional abuse by the teachers negatively influence students (Prevent Child Abuse

America, 2016; Shumba, 2002; Yehuda, Spertus, et al., 2001). Students get influence in many aspects as well-being, social support, self-efficacy, confidence, social interaction, and negative psychological functioning (Felitti, 1991; Finkelhor, Turner, Shattuck, & Hamby, 2013). The present study has several limitations such as sampling, research instruments, monitoring emotional abuse, and potential changes in teaching-learning process. Future researchers may benefit body of knowledge to comprehensive emotional abuse reporting with wide range of sampling, behaviors observation, and other research instruments. While emotional development is directly related to social development. The state of being emotionally abused mediated psychological problems (Caspi & Moffitt, 1991; Japel, Tremblay, McDuff, & Wilms, 2002). Only social relationships (teachers, peers, family, and others) support students to display positive behavior, and outcomes.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Using self-reported technique, the current study identified emotional abuse of students by the teachers. There is negative association between emotional abuse and students' well-being. Based on findings, it is concluded that the teachers are confident that they do not employ emotional abuse while teaching. However results also present students' perception that they are highly discouraged in their classrooms. Students admitted that they face emotional abuse in teaching-learning process. It can be understood that teachers claim self-satisfaction about their behavior towards students. Yet students are not as much satisfied as teachers displayed. It is recommended that a training module and socio-ecological resilience model must be adopted for teachers as this can last teacher's positive behavior to respect students' emotions. Meanwhile law regarding emotional abuse must be enforced as physical abuse in schools.

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