

## **A Critical Review of Physical Violence among Secondary School Students in Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

Physical violence among students has been mostly observed in school students. Physical violence experiences among students affect badly on the emotional and psychological health of students. Physical violent activities including slapping have also been found among the school educators and students. The paper explores the nature of physical violence and its effects on school schools. The paper provides a pathway to policy makers to revise the school policy in the lights of in nature of physical violence and its effects. Unstructured interview was used as a tool of research. School educators and students were included in the sample of study. Purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of respondents. The data were collected personally by the researcher. The participants of study agreed that physical violence among students is threat for the school safety. The study concluded that physical violence among the secondary school students exist in the form of peer fighting and intergroup fighting. Slapping has been observed commonly among the students during recess timing of schools. The study recommends that school education policy should be clear about the physical violence among the students. School educators should be trained concerning the nature of physical violence among students.

**Keywords:** *Physical, Violence, Safety, School, Secondary School Students*

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## **Introduction**

Physical violence is defined as deliberate, repeated or one-time rough infliction of pain and/or body injuries by another person that contains potential risk of physical harm and results of which may or may not be visible (WHO, 2006; Bilić et al., 2012). Physical violence is reported in the form of gang fighting and even shooting not only in less developing nations while in other hand in advance nations comprising United States, Australia and Canada (Yu, 2014). School and national level differences affect the level of physical violence acts in schools. Differences related to regulation of emotions, parental inequalities and home stress are particularly salient in the cross-national literature on physical violence among students inside school (Baker et al. 2005).

## **Schooling and Physical Violence**

Physical violence among students at schools is in experiences of teachers is a worldwide. Mestry (2012) stated that the concept of schooling and physical violence is associated with history of school (p.13). Leach & Salvi (2014) reported that schools in many countries have no clear policy on physical violence instead of body injuries and even murder cases. For example, study on school violence in Zambia reported that Zambian schools have no clear policy on physical violence instead of 1352 cases of murder were reported from 1974 (p.56). For example, South Asian nations have many laws to defend school pupils against severe corporeal attack, whereas in some different nations, several rules and legislation explain that parents and teachers have the right to use ferocious types of sentence if that sentence is “rational” or “adequate”; as well as it is supposed to be in the “greatest awareness of the school childrens” (UNICEF, 2001, p.8). Ribeiro (2014) indicated that psychological and corporeal violence is linked with the nature of society. Physical violence incidents among students in school have been found more severe in violent societies. Poverty and income inequality are responsible for the violent crimes. Assault may also be associated with poverty and income inequality (Hsieh & Pugh, 2006). Individuals with physical and psychological violence may be violent in their daily life activities (Clark, Bloom, Hill & Silverman, 2009). Burton (2008) suggested that experience of physical violence has negative impacts on the cognitive and social development. Physical violence has been linked with the devastation of school possessions, violent corporeal interaction as well as stabbing with arms (Rintoul, 1999). One of the most important doctoral study conducted in Brazil, the study revealed that most of the school students have been involved in corporeal battles in preceding the survey at schools. According to National Survey on Students’ Health, the ratio of school children’s between the ages of 13 to 15 are very high in Brazil whereas the Federal District presented a dominant number of students were informed corporal with fight compare to the earlier survey (Stelko, 2013).

### **Prevalent forms of Physical violence in School**

Aggressive behavior has been observed among adolescents at school. Aggressive behavior may lead to violent activities among the youth. These violent activities may be in different forms (Myles & Simpson, 1998). John (2013) conducted a study on factors of peer group fighting and concluded that school discipline and peer fighting have a correlation. Week school discipline clearly promotes peer fighting among students (p.29). Drug abuse and poor general health may also cause to the violent activities in the form of gangs in youth (Gilman, Hill & Hawkins, 2014). Peer fights and intergroup fights among students at school can result body injuries but is rare. Researchers have speculated that rates of body injuries at school have not increased over the year (Napolitano, 2010).

### **Research methodology**

The nature of this study was correlational and survey types. Participants for the study were secondary school educators and students. Purposive sampling technique was used in the selection of educators. Senior school educators were selected concerning their perceptions about the physical violence among the students. For the collected of data, five public sector rural areas schools were selected from five districts of Punjab, Pakistan. From each school, two senior educators were selected while two 10th class students were selected from each selected school. Qualitative research design was used in the study. Qualitative interviews give a new vision in understanding a social phenomenon because the participants response on a different way (Folkestad, 2008, p.1). Braun & Clarke (2006) model was used in the analysis of collected data. Jugder (2016) concluded that Braun and Clarke model (2006) was appropriate for the thematic analysis of collected qualitative data.

Table 1 *Forms of Physical Violence*

Forms	N	Mean	SD
Slapping	20	3.14	1.87
Pushing	20	3.75	1.56
Kicking	20	3.24	1.64
Punching	20	4.12	1.73
Biting	20	3.44	1.44
Injury	20	3.15	1.32

Table 1 depicts regarding the forms of physical violence. The mean score and standard deviation (M= 3.14, S.D= 1.87) about Slapping. The M= 3.75, S.D= 1.56 about Pushing. The M= 3.24, S.D= 1.64 about Kicking. The mean score and standard deviation (M= 4.12, S.D= 1.73) about Punching. The M= 3.44, S.D= 1.44 about Biting. And the M=

3.15, S.D= 1.32 about Punching. Hence, it is depicts that highest mean score is 4.14 about the statement that punching.

Table 2 *Causes of Physical Violence*

Causes	N	Mean	SD
Belonging to physical broken families	20	3.15	1.27
Belonging to psychological broken families	20	3.67	1.72
Poverty	20	3.23	1.54
Neglect	20	3.01	1.81
Psychological Sickness	20	3.31	1.52

Table 2 shows about the causes of physical violence. The M= 3.15, S.D= 1.27 about belonging to physical broken families. The M= 3.67, S.D= 1.72 about belonging to psychological broken families. The M= 3.23, S.D= 1.54 about Poverty. The M= 3.01, S.D= 1.81 about Neglect. The M= 3.31, S.D= 1.52 about Psychological Sickness. Hence, it is depicts that highest mean score is 3.67 about the statement that belonging to psychological broken families.

Table 3 *Remedies of Physical Violence*

Remedies	N	Mean	SD
Counselling & Guidance	20	3.43	1.46
Parental Training	20	3.71	1.63
Classroom management skills	20	3.05	1.86
Moral teachings	20	3.94	1.92
Favorable School climate	20	3.75	1.80

Table 3 presents about the remedies of physical violence. The M= 3.43, S.D= 1.46 about counselling & guidance. The M= 3.71, S.D= 1.63 about Parental Training. The mean M= 3.05, S.D= 1.86 about Classroom management skills. The M= 3.94, S.D= 1.92 about Moral teachings. The M= 3.75, S.D= 1.80 about Favorable School climate. Hence, it is depicts that highest mean score is 3.94 about the statement that Moral teachings.

## Findings and Discussion

One theme that emerged from the data that addressed the problem of this study was that physical violence among students is international concern. It is evidence from the participants that incidents of physical violence could be in the form of shouting and sometimes slapping among the students. Many participants revealed that parental illiteracy can be the cause of physical violence among the students. Participants shared their experiences that physical violence could be because of crowed classes in schools.

Further research studies risk factors for physical fighting for example male gender, bullying victimization, absence, and depressing symptoms were found to have relationship in this study conducted in Pakistan. While the trend for male gender was found in this study as described in other reserches (Hussin, Aziz, Hasim & Sahril, 2014), it has been stated that more females are engaging in physical fights and violence (Yang, Zhang & Bovet, 2017) and no relationship by gender have been found in another research (Acquah, Lloyd, Davis & Wilson, 2014). Bullying victimization has been related with poor psychological health, absence, and hunger (Wilson, Celedonia & Kamala, 2013). This study found a relationship between physical fights and bullying victimization and truancy, as in other studies (Celedonia, Wilson, Gammal & Hagra, 2013).

### **Conclusion**

The study concludes that physical violence among the school students in the forms of slapping, pushing, kicking, punching and to some extent in injury form. Parental neglect, poverty and psychological sickness are the major causes of physical violence among the students. Intensity of physical violence among the students can be decreased through moral teachings and provision of favorable school climate.

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