

# Causes of Violence Among Students and its Impact on their Academic Performance at Higher Secondary Schools

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**Abstract:- This study aims to examine the causes of student violence in higher secondary schools and its impact on academic performance. Survey method was used where the sample consisted of 300 students (155 male and 145 female) from Hazara Division of Pakistan and was selected through simple random stratified sampling. A 27-item questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale was used to collect the data. The structural relationships among the variables were measured using the PLS-SEM approach. The results revealed that psychological factors such as depression, anxiety, impulsivity, and a history of trauma or abuse, as well as social factors such as family, peers, and community, played a significant role in the incidence of violence among students. Environmental factors, including the design and layout of school buildings, low-income families, lack of access to basic needs, and exposure to media, were also found to be contributing factors. These causes of violence negatively impacted the academic performance of students. To prevent and control violence, it is necessary to spread and revive social work services at the societal level and within schools. These findings can inform interventions aimed at reducing violence among students and improving their academic performance.**

**Keywords:- Peace, Violence, Academic Performance.**

## I. INTRODUCTION

Violence is a pattern of behavior in which the chosen individual is the target of anger by one or others (Rabo, 2022). School violence can be defined as the use of physical force to injure, abuse, damage, or destroy a student (Obilor & Ikpa, 2021). The World Health Organization defined

violence in the school as the intended use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or a group or public, which also results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, or deficiency in the school environment (Krug et al., 2002). Violence among students has been a serious problem universally. The impacts of violence among students are significant and can affect students' academic performance.

Some factors contribute to violence among students, comprising psychological, social, and environmental factors. According to Bandura's social learning theory, violence can be learned through reflection and mocking of aggressive behaviors in the environment (Lyons & Berge, 2012). Therefore, psychological factors such as low self-esteem, anger, and hindrance can also contribute to violence among students (Voisin & Hong, 2012). Moreover, social factors such as peer pressure, bullying, and lack of parental guidance can also raise the risk of violent behavior among students (Solimannejad et al., 2022). In addition, environmental factors likewise media, low-income family background, school setup, or the community can increase the likelihood of violent behavior among students (Krug et al., 2002).

Violence among students can have an adverse impact on academic performance. Students involved in violence are more likely to have poor academic performance, absenteeism, and dropout rates (Ansari & Pianta, 2019). Moreover, the fear of violence can also affect the academic performance of students, leading to anxiety, stress, and poor concentration in class as expounded by researchers (Al-Zoubi & Younes, 2015).

➤ *Psychological Violence and Academic Performance*

Several psychological factors have been identified as latent causes of violence among students, containing depression, anxiety, impulsivity, and a history of shock or abuse. Depression has been linked to increased violent behavior especially when it is not treated accurately. In a study of high school students, those who reported indicators of depression were more likely to be involved in fights and other forms of physical aggression (Krug et al., 2002). Similarly, anxiety has also been connected to aggression, mostly when it is attended by a lack of emotional parameter skills (Dvir et al., 2014). Another psychological factor is impulsivity that has been linked to violence among students. Students who are victim of impulsiveness may act out in ways that are damaging to others short of fully considering the consequences of their actions. A study of middle school students shows that with high level of impulsivity students were more likely to be involved in corporal activities (Crapanzano et al., 2010). Finally, a history of distress or abuse can also contribute to violence among students. Students who have experienced trauma or abuse may be more likely to engage in violent behaviors as a way of deal with their feelings of anger, fear, or helplessness (Dutton & Rubinstein, 2013). The impact of these psychological factors on students' education can be substantial. Violence and aggression can lead to disciplinary actions, including interruptions and expulsions, which can interfere students' learning and lead to academic hitches (Gregory et al., 2010). In addition, students who are experiencing psychological distress may not be properly able to focus on their studies and face difficulty in completing assignments or participating in class (Larcombe et al., 2013). In this scenario, psychological factors can contribute to violence among students and exhibit a significant impact on their academic performance. It's very important that school authorities must be aware of these factors and provide students with the necessary support to address underlying psychological issues that may affect their behavior. This study hypothesizes a negative correlation between psychological violence and students' academic performance.

- *H1: The Presence of Psychological Violence Among Students has a Negative Impact on their Academic Performance.*

➤ *Social Violence and Academic Performance*

Social factors can influence student violence and significantly affect their academic performance. These factors include the social environment in which students are situated, including family member, peers and friends, and the community. Family dynamics play a major role in shaping student behavior, with those from households characterized by high levels of conflict, abuse, neglect, and dysfunction being more prone to engaging in violent acts (Fagan, 2020). In addition, Lower familial socioeconomic status and parental education have been linked to increased risk of violence and aggression among students. (Goyal et al., 2010). Another hand, Peer relationships play a crucial role in determining student behavior, as they can either promote peace or contribute to violence. Students who associate with peers involved in violent behavior are more

prone to engaging in similar actions (Pornari & Wood, 2010). Furthermore, students who suffer bullying and social exclusion from their peers may be persuaded to resort to violent behavior as a means of retaliation or asserting their dominance (Killen et al., 2013). Last but not the least, community aspects like neighborhood safety, resource accessibility, and disclosure to violence can significantly influence students' behavior and their susceptibility to violence. Students residing in areas with raised levels of crime and violence are more disposed to engaging in violent behavior themselves. (Gibson et al., 2009). Moreover, insufficient access to essential community resources, including quality schools, mental health services, and co-curricular activities, can foster feelings of anxiety, depression, and hopelessness among students. These circumstances, in turn, heighten the risk of engaging in violent behavior (Opara et al., 2020). The influence of social factors on students' education can be profound. Students who tolerate violence and aggression in their homes, schools, and communities often experience trauma, depression, and anxiety, which can interrupt their learning process and hinder their academic success. (Terrasi & De Galarce, 2017). Moreover, students who experience a sense of uncertainty or perceive pressures in their surroundings may encounter difficulties in concentrating on their studies and may frequently miss school. This can result in academic challenges and falling behind their peers. (Allensworth et al., 2018). In conclusion, social factors play a major role in student violence and employ a substantial influence on their educational journey. Addressing these factors and creating a protected and nurturing environment within schools and communities becomes crucial to fostering positive behavior and academic achievement. Hence, the researchers hypothesize in this paper that there is a negative correlation between social violence and students' academic performance.

- *H2: The Existence of Social Violence Among Students has a Negative Effect on their Academic Performance.*

➤ *Environmental Violence and Academic Performance*

Environmental factors incorporate physical and geographical circumstances that include the design and layout of school buildings, access to weapons, and exposure to media violence. Specifically, the design and layout of school buildings characterize a significant environmental factor that can contribute to student violence. Defectively designed and poorly maintained services, such as dimly lit hallways and broken windows, can cultivate an environment conducive to aggression and violence (Lamoreaux & Sulkowski, 2020). Conversely, well-lit and properly sustained facilities can found a safer and more positive learning environment, thereby diminishing the risk of violence (Mahadevia & Lathia, 2019). Access to weapons is an additional environmental factor that can contribute to student violence (Berkowitz, 2012). Furthermore, The existence of weapons within the community can substitute feelings of insecurity and fear, subsequently amplifying the risk of violence (Garbarino et al., 2002). Exposure to media violence represents a significant environmental factor that can contribute to student violence. The exposure to violent media, including video games, movies, and television shows,

has been associated with heightened levels of aggression and violent behavior among children and adolescents (Ukoha, 2013). Additionally, exposure to violent media can desensitize children and adolescents to violence, leading to a greater acceptance of violent behavior (Brockmyer, 2015). The influence of these environmental factors on students' learning can be substantial. Students attending schools with insufficient design and maintenance may experience feelings of insecurity and distraction, ultimately leading to a negative impact on their academic performance (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). Moreover, violence and the presence of weapons can foster a culture of fear and intimidation, disrupting the learning environment and contributing to increased absenteeism among students. (Basch, 2011). Drawing from previous research, it is hypothesized that there exists a negative correlation between environmental violence and students' academic performance.

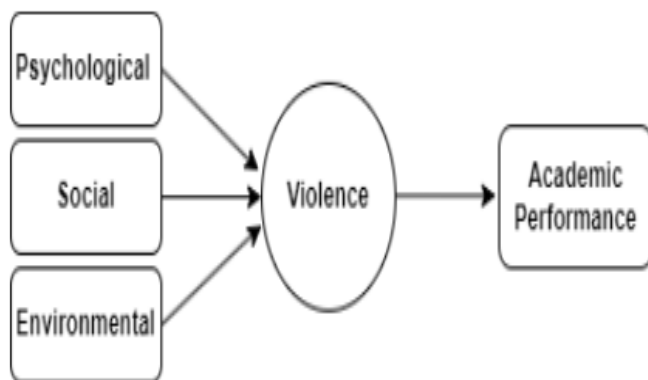


Fig 1 SEQ Figure \\* ARABIC 1: Research Model

## II. THE PRESENT STUDY

The objective of this study is to examine the factors contributing to violence among students in higher secondary schools and their subsequent impact on academic performance. The study aims to investigate three primary dimensions of violence: psychological, social, and environmental factors. Psychological factors include characteristics such as aggression, anger, and hostility, which can lead to violent behavior. Social factors include peer pressure, oppression, and clashes with peers, which can contribute to a violent environment. Environmental factors include school culture, physical environment, and community violence, which can also impact the prevalence of violence. The study hypothesizes that these factors will relate to influence the likelihood of violent behavior among students, as well as its impact on their academic performance. Specifically, students who experience high levels of violence may have lower academic achievement, attendance, and engagement in school activities. The study also aims to examine potential interventions to prevent violence among students and promote a positive school environment.

In conclusion, psychological, social, and environmental factors can contribute to violence among students and have a significant impact on their education. The causes of violence among students are multifaceted and include psychological, social, and environmental factors,

especially at the higher secondary school level. However, the role of above mentioned three factors in the occurrence of violence has not properly been explored among the students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and there is scarcity of research on the causes of violence in higher secondary schools in the mentioned area. Under this scenario, this study aimed to explore, “Causes of Violence among students and its impact on their academic performance at Higher Secondary Schools”. The main objective of this research is an investigation of the causes of violence among higher secondary school students and its impact on their academic performance. In this regard, the following hypotheses were tested:

- The presence of psychological violence among students has a negative impact on their academic performance.
- The existence of social violence among students has a negative effect on their academic performance.
- The occurrence of environmental violence among students has a negative impact on their academic performance.
- The combination of psychological, social, and environmental violence among students has a cumulative negative effect on their academic performance.

## III. RESEARCH METHODS

The primary aim of this quantitative study was to explore the root causes of violence and its potential effects on students' academic performance. Even with some prior research on this topic, there is a substantial gap in the literature about the underlying causes of violence and its impact on academic achievement. To address this gap, the present study used a questionnaire to collect data and gain insight about the causes of violence and students' academic performance.

### ➤ Instrument Development

In this study, violence was examined as the independent variable, while academic performance was the dependent variable. To gather the necessary data, a questionnaire was designed having two parts. The first part consisted of collecting demographic information such as age, gender, year of study, and socioeconomic status of the respondents. Additionally, this section included instructions, as well as statements ensuring anonymity and privacy. In the second part, the respondents were required to rate items related to causes of violence including three factors: psychological, social, and environmental were assessed using a six-item scale for each construct. The scale used five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The reliability of the measures was evaluated using a threshold value of 0.88. Additionally, table 3 provides information on the discriminant validity of the variables.

### ➤ Measures:

The present study examined the causes of violence, including psychological factors, social factors, environmental factors, and the impact of violence on

academic performance. The assessment statements for these factors were adapted from the "Youth Violence Risk Assessment" (YVRA) developed by Borum, Bartel, and Forth (2006). Participants were requested to rate their agreement with these statements using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The inner consistency of the scales was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, yielding satisfactory results for all factors: psychological factors ( $\alpha = 0.763$ ), social factors ( $\alpha = 0.822$ ), environmental factors ( $\alpha = 0.813$ ), and the impact of violence on academic performance ( $\alpha = 0.881$ ). The alpha coefficients for each factor fell between 0.7 and 0.9, suggesting that the scale items were measuring a consistent underlying construct. Collectively, result indicate that the scale employed in this study is a reliable and valid instrument for assessing the determinants of violence among students

➤ *Table 1: Demographic Information of Participants*

In this study, the researchers investigated the causes of violence among students and its impact on their academic performance in Pakistani schools. The participants in the study comprised 52% males and 48% females. In terms of age, 33% of the participants were 15 years old, 50% were 17 years old, and only 16% were 20 years old. Most of the participants were enrolled in the first year of their program, while all of them were studying in the second year. Additionally, only 7% of the students belonged to the upper socioeconomic status, 59% belonged to the middle socioeconomic status, and the majority (33%) belonged to the lower socioeconomic status families. The collected data was sufficient to apply Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3.3.3 statistical software. Further details regarding the demographic profile of the participants can be found in **Table 1**.

Table 1 Demographic Information

Personal attributions	Categories	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	155	52
	Female	145	48
	Total	300	100.0
Age	15 Years	100	33.33
	17 Years	150	50
	20 Years	50	16.67
	Total	300	100.0
Year of study	1 <sup>st</sup> year	200	66.67
	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	100	33.33
	Total	300	100.0
Socioeconomic status	Upper Level	21	7
	Middle Level	179	59.67
	Lower Level	100	33.33
	Total	300	100.0

➤ *Models Measurement*

The researchers used SmartPLS 3.0 statistical software to carry out confirmatory factor analysis to measure the models measurement. According to Sarstedt et al. (2021), covariance-based structural modeling (CV-SEM) is more sensitive the variance-based structural equation(VBSEM). Reliability and validity of the scale were measured at very initial stage by the researchers, further details of reliability and validity results presented in **Table.2**.

In the reliability index, different indicator like, factor loading, Cronbach's alpha, Rho A, and composite reliability were measured by the researchers. There are specific criteria for mentioned indicators, and it is concluded that some indicators were with a threshold value 0.07, while factor loading was above 0.05 and accepted according to Chen et al. (2022). Average variance extracted (AVE) technique was used to measure the convergent validity and found the threshold value of AVE is above 0.05. Therefore, the scales were reliable and suitable to collect data.

Table 2 Reliability and Validity

Scales	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha	Rho A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
<b>Psychosocial Violence</b>		<b>0.763</b>	0.792	0.837	0.509
PSY1	0.659				
PSY2	0.819				
PSY3	0.583				
PSY4	0.775				
PSY5	0.707				
<b>Social Violence</b>		<b>0.822</b>	0.834	0.870	0.528
Socio1	0.788				
Socio2	0.712				
Socio3	0.661				
Socio4	0.742				
Socio5	0.775				

Socio6	0.672				
<b>Environmental Violence</b>		<b>0.813</b>	0.824	0.866	0.519
Env1	0.583				
Env2	0.748				
Env3	0.756				
Env4	0.779				
Env5	0.730				
Env6	0.672				
<b>Impact of Violence on academic performance</b>		<b>0.881</b>	0.890	0.906	0.520
IVAP1	0.654				
IVAP2	0.769				
IVAP3	0.754				
IVAP4	0.705				
IVAP5	0.769				
IVAP6	0.683				
IVAP7	0.834				
IVAP8	0.780				

➤ *Table 3: Discriminant Validity*

To measure the discriminant validity, measurement standard given by Fornell and Larcker (1981) and given standard were denied and suggest new approach namely heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) to check the discriminant validity of instrument and threshold value should not more than 0.09 (Henseler et al., 2014)). To measure the instrument validity the researchers used HTMT approach to ensure the discriminant validity of the instrument. HTMT value for all construct were below threshold value. So, it is concluded that scales met the necessary requirements for discriminant validity. The detail is given in **Table 3**.

Table 3 Discriminant Validity

Constructs	PSY	SOCIO	ENV	IVAP
Psychosocial Violence	0.714			
Social Violence	0.668	0.726		
Environmental Violence	0.667	0.755	0.721	
Impact of Violence on academic performance	0.674	0.775	0.777	0.721

➤ *Table 4: R-Square*

R2 value used to measure the model explanatory power, where it ranges from 0 to 1. R2 with higher value indicate greater explanatory power, and R2 with low value indicates lower explanatory power. In R2 value 0.75 is high explanatory power, 0.50 moderate, and 0.25 has been considered as weak. So, the dimension academic performance has high explanatory power.

Table 4 R-Square

Constructs	R-square	R-square adjusted
Academic performance	0.700	0.697

➤ *Table 5: Direct Relation*

The detail is given below.

• *Structure Equation Model*

For testing of study hypotheses bootstrapping mechanism of smartPLS 3.0 were used and results are presented in table 5, which shows the direct relations, coefficients, means, ST, t-value and P-values. It is

concluded that psychological factor is negatively related to academic performance (b=0.159, p < 0.05), it support the researchers' hypothesis 1. Additionally, Social factor of violence greatly Impact on Academic Performance (b=0.381, p < 0.05), that support the second hypothesis. Furthermore, Environmental factor of violence has negatively Impact on Academic Performance (b=0.383, p < 0.05), that supports the last hypothesis.

Table 5 Direct Relation

Direct Relations	Coefficients	Mean	SD	T Statistics	P Values	Decisions
Psychological factor -> Impact on Academic Performance	0.159	0.161	0.039	4.064	0.000	Accepted
Social factor -> Impact on Academic Performance	0.381	0.382	0.078	4.883	0.000	Accepted
Environmental factor -> Impact on Academic Performance	0.383	0.382	0.082	4.674	0.000	Accepted

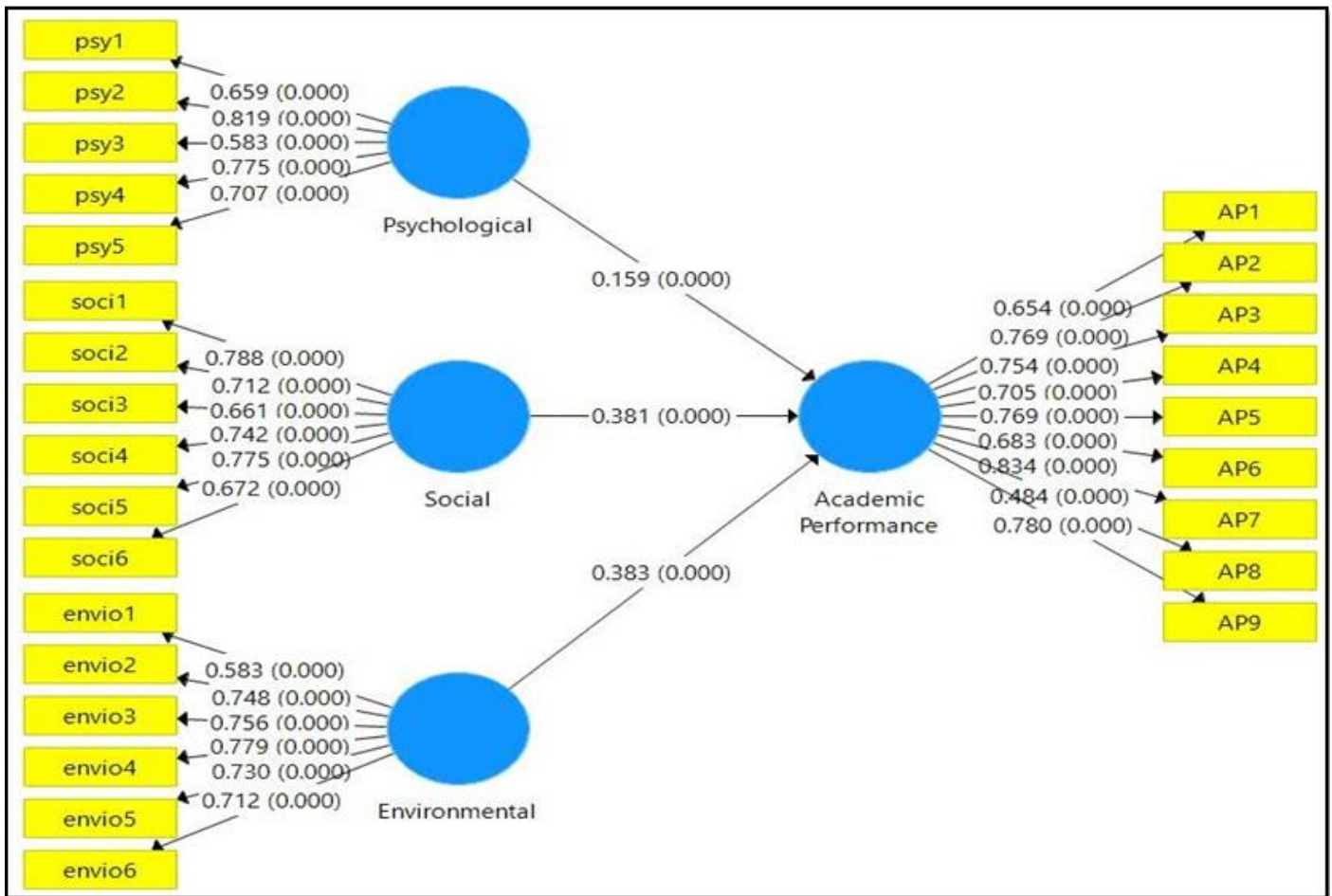


Fig 2 SD Standard Deviation

**IV. DISCUSSION**

This study provides a valued addition to the existing literature on educational psychology, as it investigates causes of violence and its impact on students’ performance. The research framework combines previous studies and emphasizes the connection between violence and students’ performance.

The authors highlight that although previous studies on the causes of violence and its impact on students’ performance have mostly been conducted in developed countries, but not sufficiently in developing countries specifically in Pakistan, The findings indicated a negative relationship between psychological violence and student performance, which supporting first hypothesis. The relationship between psychological violence and its impact on students’ academic performance has been extensively studied in the literature, Findings from this study compliment Bauman and Yoon (2014) who stated that students who experience psychological violence from teachers or peers are more likely to report feeling separated from school, to have lower grades, and to be less interested and involved in their studies. Alike study conducted by Garbarino et al. (2002) found that students who practice psychological violence from parents or caregivers are also more likely to have lower academic achievement and educational goals. Besides, the references provided highlight the relationship between psychological violence and

students' academic performance. Finkelhor et al. (2012) found that experience to violence, abuse, and misconduct can have a substantial impact on children and youth, including negative effects on academic performance. Mokhtari et al. (2017) found that expressive abuse was negatively related to the academic performance of female high school students in Tehran. Rumberger (2011) noted that falling out of high school is a significant problem, and that, factors such as poor academic performance, disengagement from school, and negative school experiences are often cited as reasons for dropping out. Schwartz et al. (2008) found that children who experience family environment that is negative or abusive are more likely to have problems with bullying and victimization at school, which can negatively impact their academic performance. Ybarra and Mitchell (2004) found that youth who engage in online harassment are more likely to have negative caregiver-child relationships and personal characteristics that can negatively impact their academic performance.

The second objective of this study was to examine the direct relationship between social violence and its impact on students’ academic performance. The results demonstrated a significant negative impact of social violence on students’ academic performance, thereby approving second hypothesis. Moreover, the findings presented a negative and significant association between social violence on students’ academic performance, consistent with prior research that

has identified that students who experience social violence are more likely to have lower academic achievement, disconnection from school, and presence problems (Bradshaw et al., 2007). This can be recognized to the physical and emotional impact that social violence imposes upon students, leading to feelings of anxiety, depression, and trauma. Consequently, students may encounter difficulties with concentration and learning (Bradshaw et al., 2007).

Social violence can also have long-term effects on students' educational and career goals. Students who experience social violence may be more likely to drop out of school or to have lower ambitions for higher education or career success (Hernández-Tomé et al., 2020). Furthermore, the impact of social violence can continue into adulthood, which can have promote negative impacts on a person's mental health, educational accomplishment, and economic well-being (O'Driscoll et al., 2016).

The last objective of this study was to investigate the impact of environmental violence on students' academic performance. The results revealed that the impact of environmental factors on students' education can be substantial. Students who attend schools with poor design and maintenance may feel unsafe and unfocussed, which can negatively impact their academic performance (Darling-Hammond & Cook-Harvey, 2018). Additionally, exposure to violent media can desensitize children and adolescents to violence and make them more accepting of violent behavior (Brockmyer, 2015). Similar study conducted by Lamoreaux and Sulkowski (2020) and stated that environmental factors refer to physical and physical conditions, such as the design and arrangement of school buildings, access to weapons, and exposure to media violence, one important environmental factor that can contribute to violence among students is the design and layout of school buildings. Poorly designed and maintained facilities, such as dark hallways and broken windows, can create an environment that fosters aggression and violence and badly impact on students' academic performance.

## V. CONCLUSION

In this study the researchers developed a synthesized research model by illustrating the previous literatures understandings regarding theoretical approaches. The results approved the negative association between violence and student's mental health. Therefore, it was concluded that factors such as psychological violence, social violence, and environmental violence can all contribute to a higher likelihood of violent behavior among students. Additionally, the findings indicate that such behavior can have serious consequences for the academic performance and overall well-being of students.

### ➤ *Practical Implication*

The present research results have several practical implications for higher education institutions, teachers, and students. Firstly, violent behavior among students, it is essential to provide adequate mental health support to

students. This can be done by offering counseling services, creating a safe space for students to talk about their feelings, and promoting mental health awareness campaigns. Secondly, building positive relationships between students, teachers, and parents can also help prevent violence in schools. Encouraging open communication and mutual respect can help create a supportive learning environment where students feel safe and valued. Finally, addressing the issue of violence among students requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach. By implementing these practical implications, schools and communities can help prevent violent behavior and promote a safe and supportive learning environment for all students.

### ➤ *Ethical Considerations:*

Ethical considerations were taken into account throughout the research study. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and their anonymity and confidentiality was maintained throughout the research study. The research study also adhered to the ethical guidelines set by the institutional review board.

### ➤ *Limitations with Future Research Directions*

This study has various limitations that must be addressed when interpreting the findings. First, the study's sample was constrained to higher secondary schools' student from Pakistan, which may introduce cultural bias and limit the findings' generalizability. To validate the results, future studies may include participants from different countries with different cultural backgrounds.

Second, the researchers only included elementary school students in the sample, which limits the data' generalizability to other educational level, such as graduate, and post graduate level of the students. Therefore, stakeholders may exercise caution when generalizing the findings to other educational levels.

Finally, the researchers only examined the causes of violence and it impact on students' academic performance. Other possible variables, such as the participants' family history or the impact of the school environment may be investigated in future studies.

### ➤ *Data Accessibility and Availability Statement*

The study includes the authors' original work, that could be found in the article or additional material. If more information is needed, interested parties can contact the corresponding authors.

### ➤ *Statement on Ethics*

Huazhong University of Science & Technology's Ethics Committee examined and approved this work. Prior to participating in the study, all participants gave written informed consent.

### ➤ *Contribution of the Author(S)*

Each of the authors mentioned has contributed significantly, directly, and intellectually to the work and have provided their approval for its publication.

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