

Perception of University Male Students on Domestic Violence in Pakistan: A Thematic Analysis

Salma Nazir

Lecturer,
Department of Education, FUUAST,
Karachi, Pakistan
Salma.nazir2k24@gmail.com

Muhammad Hashim

Lecturer,
Department of English, FUUAST, Karachi,
Pakistan.
hashim.shigri@gmail.com

Muhammad Saleem Awan

B.S English,
Department of English, FUUAST, Karachi,
Pakistan.
saleemawan7786@gmail.com

Received: 29-Jun-2023

Revised: 29-Jul-2023

Accepted: 10-Aug-2023

Abstract

Introduction: Domestic violence can be experienced by both genders but commonly women experience it more than men because traditionally women have been viewed as men's property. This research study has tried to explore the understanding, experiences, beliefs and perceptions of domestic violence.

Research Aim: This study aims to investigate in knowing the personal consciousness of university students against domestic violence, contribute to the prevention of domestic violence and offer recommendations for educational programs and intervention of policies in Pakistan.

Methodology: This exploratory research is based on a qualitative approach, where in-depth interviews have been conducted with male university students to determine their perception of domestic violence in Pakistan. The purposive sampling technique was used with a sample size of 15 male respondents who ranged from 20 to 30 years, were interviewed from Public Sector University

Karachi, Pakistan.

Results: *There has been observed negative influence of social, religious, tradition, mental illness and economic reasons on authoritative behaviour of men. There has been a crucial role of media, men engaging in awareness campaigns, female empowerment and male education in eliminating domestic violence.*

Conclusion: *The outcome revealed optimistic and adverse aspects of male university students on domestic violence, this study showed the optimistic aspects through which domestic violence could be reduced in Pakistan.*

Keywords: *Domestic violence, Violence against women, University students, Pakistan.*

Introduction

Domestic violence involves acts and behaviours. According to Macionis, (2012), this includes a pattern of assaultive behaviours that could be physical, sexual, verbal or psychological. This violence often relates to women where women are the victims and men are perpetrators. The understanding of men towards power, strength and forceful attitude weakens the bond between male and female (Ahmad, Thomas, & Hamid, 2020). Since men are considered to be the breadwinner of the family, the man is ultimately believed to have control and power over his wife which leads to domestic violence. Furthermore, the family support, social acceptance and patriarchal beliefs of Pakistani culture support the idea of domestic violence (Imran, Sultana, & Ahmed, 2023).

In our culture, masculinity has been embedded from the roots where masculinity demands to have control over the wife to adopt and avoid certain behaviours in a family system (Johnson & Ferraro, 2000). According to Kelly & Johnson, (2008) to have control over each other in a family system, a couple will adopt certain things which is fine to some extent but most of the time it leads to coercion. Whereas, Wilson et al. (1995) describe this type of coercion as intimate terrorism among couples which is done by a male partner in the majority of the cases in any relationship. This coercive behaviour is due to the domination where males are motivated to be dominant over their wives culturally (Hafeez, Iqbal, & Imran, 2021). The patriarchal view strongly influenced men's cognitive thinking and behaviour to beat their wives, yet this was considered in the rights of men (Hussain, et al., 2022).

In the context of Pakistan, according to the survey Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey of 2017-2018 around 28% of females between the ages of 15 and 49 have experienced

domestic violence during their lifetime (Kirmani, 2021). According to the reports (Ahmed, 2022), Pakistan was ranked as the second-worst country for gender inequality and has surpassed Afghanistan. According to the analysis of WEF gender inequality was examined in 146 nations in terms of 4 categories which include political, leadership, education, health and economics, where Pakistan was ranked at 135th (Ahmad, Bibi, & Imran, 2023; Parveen et al., 2022). Lack of education in married females can be due to the patriarchal concept where the male is considered dominant and the female is considered submissive. In a study conducted by Akhtar et al. (2022), Pakistan being a developing country lacks a lot of resources but the major lacking of Pakistan is poor quality of education. In another survey conducted by NIPS, (2019) about 40% of married women and men justified beating of wives in certain circumstances. Women living in Pakistan face almost all kinds of abuses and discrimination on a routine basis which is why domestic violence has become a culture in society of Pakistan (Tunio et al., 2019).

There are numerous ways through which domestic violence in Pakistan could be eliminated which include the role of social media, providing education through spreading awareness, providing economic opportunities to the female and implementing religious values in our society. According to a study by Rani (2023), high school teaching should be based on the skills and cognitive and emotional development of an individual (Imran, et al., 2022).

Research Gap

Previous studies have shown a bulk of evidence of the perception of women on domestic violence, but the research based on the perception of men on domestic violence is limited. To fill this research gap, this study examines the beliefs and perceptions of male university students on domestic violence in Pakistan.

Research Aim

The study was carried out to provide insight into the perception of university male students against domestic violence, to contribute to the prevention of domestic violence and to offer recommendations for educational programs and intervention of policies in Pakistan.

Research Objectives

- To investigate the perception of domestic violence among university male students.
- To understand the beliefs and attitudes of the university male students towards domestic violence.
- To explore the factors influencing their perception towards domestic violence.

Methodology

Data Collection

To examine the perceptions of men and their responses to domestic violence in the context of Pakistan, qualitative analysis was conducted where N=12 males were considered. The respondents that participated in the research belonged to Public Sector University Karachi, Pakistan. The male students whether married or unmarried were interviewed voluntarily.

Data Sampling

This research has been carried out on both married and unmarried men; these were selected with the help of purposive sampling techniques (Creswell & Poth, 2016), for conducting the interviews. The data was collected from the respondents with the help of semi-structured in-depth interviews.

Technique Used for Conducting the Interviews

The interviews were conducted at the given time and venue which was selected by the interviewee according to their comfort. The in-depth interviews with one male respondent continued approximately for one hour. The interviewee was given the right to discontinue the interview or not to answer such questions to which they do not like to respond.

Ethical Consideration

Before initiating the research, all potential ethical considerations were made. Verbal and written consent were taken voluntarily from the male respondents for which if they agreed they had to sign the given ethical form. Furthermore, the pen names were used in this study for narrative purposes.

Data Analysis

Since there are different forms of data analysis for examination of qualitative research the most common and familiar is in the form of thematic analysis. Thus, in this study the data was analyzed through NVIVO 12.0 Mac version software for conducting the code, categories and then themes for the analysis. Data reliability was checked through the member check process.

Results and Discussion

Demographic Details

The demographic details of the respondents are shown in Table 1, which indicates that the majority of the respondents were unmarried age between 20 to 26 and were completing their

Bachelor's degree, on the other hand, the participants that were married were between the 27 to 30 of age group and were completing their Master's degree.

Table 1. Demographic data of the respondents

University	Names	Age	Education	Marital Status
Public Sector University of Karachi	Noman	28	Masters	Married
	Saqib	23	Bachelors	Unmarried
	Rizwan	26	Masters	Unmarried
	Abbas	26	Bachelors	Married
	Farhan	28	Masters	Unmarried
	Jaffar	22	Bachelors	Unmarried
	Umar	23	Bachelors	Unmarried
	Fahad	22	Bachelors	Unmarried
	Ali	30	Masters	Married
	Shakeel	30	Masters	Married
	Zeeshan	29	Masters	Married
	Rahim	24	Bachelors	Unmarried

00Optimistic Aspects of Domestic Violence

Some respondents viewed that a male does not have the right to beat his wife in any case and believed that domestic violence is not an issue of women but it is a societal problem that affects all. These respondents were committed to breaking the cycle of domestic violence and promoting healthy relationships between husband and wife.

Role of Media

Media plays an important role in promoting awareness against domestic violence because it has the power in reaching to the majority of the people and this can act as an effective platform for educating the public more regarding domestic violence issues through newspapers, articles and TV programs media can create awareness regarding prevalence and consequences of domestic violence. Scull et al. (2022), also identified that there is a prominent role of media which can motivate a victim to stand against domestic violence abuse of any kind. According to the study of Rani (2023), social media is greatly influencing the behaviour of an individual. As expressed by one of the students;

“Raising public awareness regarding domestic violence and self-awareness is key in determining what should and what shouldn't be acceptable and for this purpose media can empower the victims of domestic violence to seek help.... Media has become a powerful tool in connecting domestic violence survivors to support networks.” (Abbas)

Furthermore, there should be a collaboration between the media and the individual to fight

against domestic violence. Concerning this a student expressed his view by saying;

“The individual can collaborate with the media by sharing their own stories which could be useful for the journalist.... In addition, the media should need to ensure accurate and researched information regarding domestic violence to avoid spreading misinformation.”
(Ali)

It has been evident from the above statement that there is a significant role of media in spreading awareness which can help in promoting change in the society regarding domestic violence.

Men’s Role in Raising Awareness Regarding Abuse

In Pakistani society, men can play a crucial role in promoting awareness regarding domestic violence by acknowledging that it’s not just an issue with women but it’s a societal problem. Men can become advocates for this change by being involved with an organization participating in awareness campaigns and by supporting such policies that address issues related to domestic violence. By providing a safe environment to the victims of domestic abuse men can empower the women to take action. According to Pease (2008), men’s involvement in raising awareness campaigns regarding abuse can help in eliminating domestic violence against women. This idea was articulated by a student;

“I believe that mostly domestic violence is associated with men, in that case, men could also become a part of becoming a solution. This can happen by actively engaging in conversation with a partner and peer.... Once there was a friend of mine, who was experiencing some marital abuse from her husband, I identified certain unnatural behaviours in her attitude. She then openly defined her problem I helped her in raising voice regarding the abusive behaviour of her husband which I have learned from different awareness campaigns. She did so and after that, all the abusive behaviour in her life came to an end.” (Umar)

Moreover, men can bring change by challenging the stereotypes by being role models through their actions. The overview of a student is stated as;

“Men can be a reason for change by using their voice in raising the awareness regarding abuse by educating their communities and by using all the resources available in achieving a future where domestic violence can no longer be tolerated.” (Fahad)

From the above interviews, it was found out that men can actively participate in raising awareness which can contribute to a future where the domestic violence issues will be addressed

more effectively.

Identification of Abuse

Women need to educate themselves in identifying the signs, behaviours and red flags of abuse. Because domestic violence will lead to worsening mental health, physical health, and a decrease in quality of life. Maxwell et al. (2020), stated that red flags in any relationship must be identified to get help. The identification of such abuses could help in proper support which is often life-changing. As this was stated by a student;

“Early identification of the abuse is very important because this will help survivors to receive support before the situation gets out of hand. Intervening in earlier stage could help in preventing more severe forms of domestic abuses that could protect the physical and emotional health of the victim.” (Rizwan)

The identification of abuse will not only benefit the victim but will also benefit the related community and society. Community or society can also help in enhancing the identification of abuse. A student expressed his views as;

“I would say that community can play a prominent role in the identification of abuse by conducting of educational programs and by providing training to the community members... by working together we can create a network of support that could help in effectively identifying and addressing domestic violence, which could help in the change of societal attitude.” (Shakeel)

Based on the above responses, it was evident that identification of abuse could result in a positive impact on the victim, community and society as a whole.

Female Empowerment and Male Education

Female empowerment is a key factor in the elimination of domestic violence because when women have access to education and social support, they can gain the confidence to stand against the abuse. Empowered women recognize their rights more properly which could help in breaking the cycle of violence. Whereas male education is far more important which will help men recognize the consequences of their actions and can promote healthier ways of resolving the conflicts. As a part of this research, a student expressed his view;

“Promotion of female empowerment by creating opportunities for women to get education, economic opportunities and by supporting such policies and programs that could uplift the

thinking of women. Moreover, for male education, it is important to add such courses and awareness campaigns that could promote in ending of this violent cycle and encourage respect for women.” (Noman)

The empowerment will help the females in sharing their experiences more openly and the male education will help the male in promoting healthy masculinity. This statement was expressed by a student in a way;

“I believe that combining the effect of female empowerment and male education will create a long-term and lasting change. With time, we could be able to observe a significant reduction in domestic violence as gender norms will shift to gender equality and respect. This will help in promoting healthy relationships and increased safety for women.” (Rahim)

Above above-stated interview-based responses emphasized the significant crucial role of female empowerment and male education in eliminating domestic violence and offered insight into how the combination of these two will help in the betterment of the relationship and society.

Adverse Aspects of Domestic Violence

In this research 8 out of 12 responses were against domestic violence while the remaining 4 were in favour of it and justified the reason for abuse and thought that the purpose of this abuse was to correct the punishments and to teach the wife a lesson in not to repeat certain mistakes. Furthermore, these respondents considered wives as their property and believed that it was the right of a husband to beat their wives.

Justification of Abuse in Certain Scenarios

Justification of abuse in our society is common which is in no way acceptable. However, the attempts to justify the abuses have shown adverse effects on the relationships and individuals. This perpetuates the cycle of fear in the victim which will lead to more serious psychological and physical harm. It was found that circumstances where women repeatedly argue with men on the matters of household and disobey their husbands in any case trigger men to beat the women. As was stated by a student;

“I believed that in certain circumstances where there is an argument between husband and wife it is common that sometimes men lose their temper, which is not right but for certain reasons it is acceptable.” (Zeeshan)

Another respondent also supported the idea of domestic violence by saying;

“Since men have been considered to be the breadwinner for their family, they should have

control over his wife and family, he is allowed to beat his wife on immoral activities and matters of honour. The culture and traditions have allowed men to act authoritatively when women do something wrong to correct her, the men are allowed to punish her.” (Saqib)

According to the respondent, it was observed that there has been the wrong influence of multiple reasons for the authoritative behaviour of men which includes social, religious, tradition, mental illness and economic reasons.

Patriarchal View

In the patriarchal view, men believe that they have the right to control the activities and various aspects of women in the relationship physically. Psychological or emotional dominance. This promotes gender inequality which leads to the belief that domestic violence is a means of maintaining order and asserting authority within a household. This statement was supported by a response from a student which has been expressed as;

“Beating women is not acceptable at all, but sometimes it has become necessary to teach her lesson so that she would not go against the will of her husband... if a man loses his temper he should not beat on the face of her wife, this is completely unethical” (Farhan)

Domestic violence has been considered a normal and natural part of human life and is considered a part of society. This idea was expressed by a respondent as;

“Violence is a part of our society in which we are living and I believe that this will remain like this forever. Since then, society has allowed us to be dominant which is accepted by all in our society. And violence is always linked to women so, if women behave properly then this violence will not happen.” (Jaffar)

In Pakistan, domestic violence is a serious issue. Numerous research has been conducted to examine the beliefs of women on domestic violence but there have been very few studies conducted on the perception of men. This study aimed to examine the perception of men perception of university male students on domestic violence in Pakistan.

The findings of this study revealed that the majority of the students condemned domestic violence and held men responsible for domestic violence in a household. The findings of our study corroborate with the studies of Haj-Yahia and Shen (2017) and Obeid et al. (2010), which also observed that the majority of the students disapproved of the concept of domestic violence and placed the husband responsible for the violence. The respondent believed that there are a variety of ways that could help in lessening the cases of domestic violence in Pakistan. According to the

results, there is a significant role of media in spreading awareness which can help in promoting change in the society regarding domestic violence. The study carried out by Muralidharan et al. (2018), suggests that mass media can play an important role in addressing the violence against women more properly. It was found that men who actively participate in raising awareness can contribute to a future where domestic violence issues will be addressed more effectively. Furthermore, female empowerment and male education could play a significant role in eliminating domestic violence from the country. These findings were in line with the study conducted by Casey and Smith (2010), which stated that men engaging in anti-violence work will effectively eliminate domestic violence and Noreen and Khalid (2012) which state that the role of male education and female empowerment will contribute in reducing the domestic violence from the country.

The study further revealed that few students approved of the concept of domestic violence to some extent and also placed the responsibility of violence on women in a household. These respondents believed that the masculinity of men demands to be authoritative, these respondents justify the abuse which reflects the dominant patriarchal view that reinforces the inferiority of women in our society. There could be a variety of reasons influencing the behaviour of men, resulting in men justifying the reason for the abuse. The findings of this study revealed that there have been wrong influences of multiple for the authoritative behaviour of men which includes social, religious, traditional, mental illness and economic reasons. The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Gifford and Nilsson (2014), which state that childhood experiences, education, society, sense of control, age, gender, economic reasons and family influence the behaviour of an individual.

Therefore, it has been evident that patriarchal views in our society greatly influence the student perception of domestic violence, it is important to consider changes in our society which include access to education for women and men and economic opportunities for women to reduce domestic violence.

Conclusion

The inclination of men towards dominance and power in a relationship will weaken the bond between the spouse. In Pakistan, men are considered dominant because they are the breadwinner of the family and they believe that women are dependent on women in all aspects. Some men use different justifications as a reason for their abuse of women. These adverse views of men are influenced by multi-dimensional factors that have been discussed in this study. Thus,

this study showed the optimistic aspects through which domestic violence could be reduced in Pakistan.

Reference

- Ahmed, A. (2022). Pakistan is second worst country for women, says WEF. *Dawn*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1699528/pakistan-is-second-worst-country-for-women-says-wef>
- Akhtar, D. N., Tanweer, S., Khashkheli, F. A., & Khashkheli, N. A. (2022). Challenges In Implementation Of Educational Policies In Pakistan. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363270539_Challenges_In_Implementation_Of_Educational_Policies_In_Pakistan
- Ahmad, N., Bibi, N., & Imran, M. (2023). Effects of teacher's motivation on students' academic performance at public secondary schools in Karachi Pakistan. *AITU Scientific Research Journal*, 1(2), 20-32.
- Ahmad, N., Thomas, M., & Hamid, S. (2020). Teachers Perception Regarding the Effect of Instructional Leadership Practices of Primary School Head teachers on Teacher Effectiveness. *Journal of Research and reflections in Education*, 14(2), 231-248.
- Casey, E., & Smith, T. (2010). "How can I not?": Men's pathways to involvement in anti-violence against women work. *Violence against Women*, 16(8), 953–973.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage publications.
- Gifford, R., & Nilsson, A. (2014). Personal and social factors that influence pro-environmental concern and behaviour: A review. *International Journal of Psychology*, 49(3), 141–157.
- Haj-Yahia, M. M., & Shen, A. C.-T. (2017). Beliefs about wife beating among social work students in Taiwan. *International Journal of Offender Therapy and Comparative Criminology*, 61(9), 1038–1062.
- Hussain, A., Jat, Z. G., Hassan, M., Hafeez, A., Iqbal, S., & Imran, M. (2022). Curriculum Reforms In School Education Sector In Sindh; What Has Changed?. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(9), 2675-2687.
- Hafeez, A., Iqbal, S., & Imran, M. (2021). Impact of Devolution of Power on School Education Performance in Sindh after 18th Constitutional Amendment; *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*, Vol. 2, No. IV, 273-285. [http://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2021\(2-IV\)24](http://doi.org/10.47205/jdss.2021(2-IV)24)
- Imran, M., Kazmi, H. H., Rauf, M. B., Hafeez, A., Iqbal, S., & Solangi, S. U. R. (2022). Internationalization Education Leadership of Public Universities of Karachi. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 6(11), 1175-1188.
- Imran, M., Sultana, Z., & Ahmed, S. (2023). The Influence Of Student-Teacher Interactions on Secondary School Students' academic Performance. *Benazir Research Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2(1).
- Johnson, M. P., & Ferraro, K. J. (2000). Research on domestic violence in the 1990s: Making distinctions. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(4), 948–963.
- Kelly, J. B., & Johnson, M. P. (2008). Differentiation among types of intimate partner violence: Research update and implications for interventions. *Family Court Review*, 46(3), 476–499.
- Kirmani, N. (2021). *The past few months have been harrowing for Pakistani women*. *Aljazeera*.
- Macionis, J. J. (2012). *Sociology: Fourteenth Edition*. In *Pearson* (p. 670).

- https://books.google.com.pk/books/about/Sociology.html?id=HgZ6xgEACAAJ&redir_esc=y
- Maxwell, D., Robinson, S. R., Williams, J. R., & Keaton, C. (2020). "A short story of a lonely guy": A qualitative thematic analysis of involuntary celibacy using Reddit. *Sexuality & Culture*, 24(6), 1852–1874.
- Muralidharan, S., La Ferle, C., & Pookulangara, S. (2018). Studying the impact of religious symbols on domestic violence prevention in India: applying the theory of reasoned action to bystanders' reporting intentions. *International Journal of Advertising*, 37(4), 609–632.
- NIPS. (2019). Pakistan Demographic and Health Survey 2017-18. In *National Institute of Population Studies (NIPS)*. <https://dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FR354/FR354.pdf>
- Noreen, G., & Khalid, H. (2012). Gender empowerment through women's higher education: Opportunities and possibilities. *Journal of Research and Reflections in Education*, 6(1), 50–60.
- Obeid, N., Chang, D. F., & Ginges, J. (2010). Beliefs about wife beating: An exploratory study with Lebanese students. *Violence against Women*, 16(6), 691–712.
- Parveen, K., Hashmi, S. S., & Jan, M. (2022). Impacts of Intimate Partner Violence on Academic Performance of Married Female Students. *International Journal of Middle Eastern Research*, 1(1), 25–32.
- Pease, B. (2008). *Engaging men in men's violence prevention: Exploring the tensions, dilemmas and possibilities*.
- Rani, H. (2023). Shaping High School Critical Thinking Policies, Cognitive Standards, and Skill Development. *Spry Contemporary Educational Practices*. <https://www.sprypublishers.com/admin/uploads/article/64f875968ca4f.pdf>
- Scull, T. M., Dodson, C. V., Geller, J. G., Reeder, L. C., & Stump, K. N. (2022). A media literacy education approach to high school sexual health education: immediate effects of media aware on adolescents' media, sexual health, and communication outcomes. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 51(4), 708–723.
- Tunio, S., Shoukat, G., & Khan, M. A. (2019). Sociological analysis of suicide among female: a study of Nangarparkar, district Tharparker, Sindh. *Liberal Arts and Social Sciences International Journal (LASSIJ)*, 3(2), 106–114.
- Wilson, M., Johnson, H., & Daly, M. (1995). Lethal and nonlethal violence against wives. *Canadian Journal of Criminology*, 37(3), 331–361.