

The Effect of Training about Child Abuse Awareness through Activity-based Method on Awareness and Self-efficacy of Pre-service Teachers at a Women University

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**The Effect of Training about Child Abuse Awareness through Activity-based Method on Awareness and Self-efficacy of Pre-service Teachers at a Women University**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigated the effect of training about child abuse awareness on awareness and self-efficacy of pre-service teachers about child abuse at a women university in Lahore. The study designed was based on quasi-experimental, non-equivalent control group. All female pre-service teachers, enrolled as Bachelors of Elementary Education students in city Lahore were considered as population. The sample was selected through convenient sampling technique. Pre-service teachers (students of Bachelors of Elementary Education) from the Education Department of Lahore College for Women University were selected as a sample. The participants comprised of two groups i.e. experimental and control group. A pretest was given to the participants of both groups before providing the training. Pretest was based on child-abuse recognition test and self-efficacy test of pre-service teachers. For the training, activity-based method was used for experimental group and lecture method was used for the control group. A module was developed for providing child abuse awareness training for three months. At the end post-tests were given to both the groups and their results were compared with their with pretest results. The scores of experimental were also compared with those of control group in pretest and post-test. The study mainly found that there was a significant difference between the post-

tests of experimental group and control group scores regarding Child-abuse awareness and self-efficacy about dealing with issues related to child-abuse awareness training. It was also found that alternative hypothesis was accepted because there was a significant difference in pretest and posttest of each group after providing training. It was strongly recommended that especially pre-service teachers and generally all the teachers should be provided such trainings.

**Key words:** Child-abuse awareness, Child-abuse Recognition, Self-efficacy, Quasi-experimental research design

### **Introduction**

Children are the most sensitive creature of the universe. They have equal safety rights as adults. We can develop a healthy and happy environment by protecting children from child abuse. Any act that troubles a child under the age of 18 is known as child abuse. Child abuse has many behavioural effects on children who faced this issue. In a research, it was found that victims of child abuse become defiant and rebellious (Raghavan & Kingston, 2006).

Many children who are suffering from abuse, get addicted to drugs. According to a report in Census (2010), almost 74 million children were living in the US. According to a survey, 5 children die each day due to child abuse (National child abuse Statistics, 2011). Many people were classified as child abusers, including parents, surveillance, guardians, friends, and neighbours (Hoper, 2013). A research claims that in the United States, only 1 million cases have been reported annually about child abuse (Tietjen, Aurora, Recober, Herial, & Utley, 2010).

Child mistreatment has been a major issue since the beginning of 1800s and it exists now too. It is necessary to give information about child-abuse factors and stop it (Sadler, 2012). It was reported that nearly 6.1% child abusers are unfamiliar for children (US Department of health & human Services, 2011). People with child-abuse faced mental shock and emotional disturbance (Thurston, 2006). Victims of child mistreatment have more long-term and short-term mental consequences than those who do not get abused at all (Sachs-Ericsson, blazer, Plant & Arnow, 2005).

Child abuse can be stopped by recognizing and reporting about it (O'Connor, 2013). A research said that all those children who faced child-abuse at any level had lack of behavioral and emotional development when they grew up such as loneliness, aggressive behavior and low self-esteem (Sousa et al., 2011). Moylan et al. (2010) described that in 2010 that a temporary consequence of child abuse was low self-esteem which led a child to alcohol and drug addiction.

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An abused child has a positive association with poorer grades and their cognitive development (Polonko, 2006). Boys and girls have faced similar stress signs like fear, loneliness and sleep disorder (Frinkelhor, 1990). Boys who have faced physical or sexual abuse are getting involved in violent crimes as an adult rather than those who do not face such situations (Felson & Jo Lane, 2009). Many abused children suffer from depression, lack of confidence and many long time effects.

There are extreme long-lasting and short range effects of child- abuse on abused children. In several cases, temporary or immediate effects of child mistreatment are external injuries, behavioral problems, disconnect from people and brain injuries (Daniolos & Buckingham, 2013). The major long- term effect results as a death or illness. In some physical child abuse cases, children are beaten, poisoned, and burned, which leads them to death (Thurston, 2006). In several cases, some of the most common long term effects are aggression, psychological disorder, drug addiction and repressed memories (Raghavan & Kingston, 2006).

Child-abuse learning is connected with an increase in reorganization of behaviour for child abuse. It examines the web training of early childhood education to the college students. Students more confidently recognize the indicators of child-abuse after watching tutorial videos. Their self-efficacy level is increased to identify the factors of abuse along with child abuse education (Farrell & Walsh, 2010). Child Abuse is more difficult to understand because it has many factors but overall child abuse is the abuse which harms a child physically, sexually, or emotionally.

In the United States, child abuse is a considerable issue. It was reported in 2007 that almost 735,000 cases of child maltreatment out of 5.8 million child abuse cases referred to the child protective services. According to Levi & Portwood (2011), 1586 children died from abuse in 2007.

Self-Efficacy plays an important role in developing confidence and actions. The people who have more knowledge about child-abuse indicators, have higher levels of self-efficacy. Lee, Dunne, Chou, & Fraser (2012) said in a research that they can easily recognize child abuse and have a complete knowledge to report about it. It is the most important thing for individuals to identify and report abuse for its prevention (Farrell & Walsh, 2010).

According to social cognitive theory, self-efficacy is considered as someone's ability to tackle different situations or problems. Bandura categorized self-efficacy in two major groups. General self-efficacy is known as someone's capability to solve different problems or situations in life but specific self-efficacy is considered as someone's

capability to solve some specific situation or problem (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy can be increased or improved when knowledge enhances (Van Der Roist, kleinar & kleinar, 2011).

Child-abuse is mainly of four types as follows:

- Sexual abuse
- Physical abuse
- Emotional/ psychological abuse
- Child neglect/ child labour

### **Sexual abuse**

Sexual Abuse is a sensitive and difficult issue to discuss. Child sexual abuse is any act for sexual satisfaction with child by an adult. According to Walker, Hernandez & Davey (2012), any sexual crime by an individual under the age of 15 years included touching, fondling, rape, pornography with children is known as child sexual abuse.

Child sexual abuse is a major issue in schools of the United States. School teachers, staff and adult students are involved in child sexual abuse. According to researches, there were approximately 10.14% children who became victims of sexual abuse (Perez-Fuentes, Olfson, Villegas, Morcillo & Wang, 2013).

### **Physical abuse**

Any violent act that hurts a child physically from their parents or caretakers is called physical abuse. In the United States, 17.6% cases of physical child abuse were reported (U.S department of Human and Health Services, 2011). People generally use physical aggression on their children in the United States. According to Smith, & O'Leary (2007), it can be a simple injury or a dangerous injury. It was reported that almost 85% - 94% families physically punished their children and 5% - 10% children have severe injuries.

According to U.S Department of Health and Sciences (2011), Children have bone fractures, burn, beating marks and internal injuries. According to another research, children who faced physical abuse have worse academic performance than normal children (Jones and Wright, 2011). A study found that victims of child physical abuse were more drug addicts than normal children (Taylor & Balkarin, 2011). It was statistically stated that almost 24% children became the victim of physical abuse in 2012 and their ages were between 2-3 years.

### **Emotional/Psychological Abuse**

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Emotional Abuse is a serious issue everywhere, especially in schools (Theoklitou, Kabitsi & Kabitsis, 2012). In Census (2012), it was reported that almost 53,326 cases were reported of emotional abuse in 2009. Some major of emotional abuse found in schools such as bullying, hitting, yelling, and embracement from peers and teachers. According to a research, emotional abuse happened in all types of schools and in all grades (McEachern, Aluede & Kenny, 2008).

According to Sturge-Apple, Skibo & Davies (2012) children have more insecurity towards their parents when they are abused by their parents. It was found that 83% parents were the abusers in emotional abuse.

The basic indicators of emotional abuse are as follows:

- Comparison
- Humiliation

### **Comparison**

It happens when parents, friends, and caretakers compare a child with their siblings on the basis of their physical appearance and intellectual characteristics affecting the child's social, intellectual, and emotional development of a child.

### **Humiliation**

It refers to the child when their family members, friends, and parents degrade their child's self-esteem in the presence of others such as shouting, using abusive language, and treating harshly in front of others.

### **Child Neglect/Child Labor**

Child Neglect or child labour is the most common issue in the United States with 548,408 cases of child neglect was reported in 2009 (Kiran, 2011). Child Neglect can be minor neglect to severe neglect and many cases were not reported annually (DePanfilis, 2006). Most infants cannot get proper cleanliness, food and proper medical care.

Mostly children brought up by some maids because their parents have no time for their children (DePanfilis, 2006) are neglected. According to Legano, McHugh, & Palusci (2009), Children who faced neglect in their childhood have no self-confidence and no proper dressing according to weather or have unfit clothes.

In India, girls faced neglect more than boys. It was considered that neglecting a girl is the failure to provide all basic needs such as education, medical facilities, food and emotional development. It is called as gender discrimination. It was reported that 75% girls were

neglected by their family and 48.4% girls wished that they were boys instead of girls.

### **Better education needed for teachers**

In a research, it was found that there was no proper guidance or education provided to teachers for identifying child-abuse symptoms (Goldman & Grimbeek, 2009). Reporting is the most important thing to do in child abuse cases. There was no education provided to pre-service teachers about child abuse reporting. Pre-service teachers usually don't have enough awareness about child-abuse and have no efficacy to take action on child abuse cases (Mathews, 2011). Researchers suggest that there are many reason to provide complete knowledge about child protection to pre service teachers. The first and main reason is described as abused children have many behavioral problems in classroom, so teachers should know how to deal with it. The second reason is professional duty of teachers and educators to identify the suspect and report it.

### **Child Abuse Prevention**

Child Abuse prevention is necessary in the future to save children's future. According to National Child Abuse (2011), Child abuse prevention helps in saving children from death each day from child abuse in the United States. One of the best preventions is identifying and reporting child abuse for children's safety (Farrell & Walsh, 2010; Bae, Solomon, Gelles & White, 2009). The child safety program is also very important for children. In these programmers' children should be taught to say No if someone abuses them or takes advantage of them. It also helps children to save themselves from abusers (Kraizer, Witte & Fryer, 1989).

### **Reporting Child Abuse**

Child abuse reporting system is different in every state of USA. Tufford, Mishna & Black (2010) found that Professional Educators, Medical professors and other professionally responsible persons have a right to report child-abuse in the State of Florida. According to a research almost 27.1% increase in child abuse reporting was found, and investigators also helped abused children when necessary (Bryant & Baldwin, 2010). Overall it was concluded in these researches that reporting child abuse saved children from their abusers. Educating teachers and parents is the first step in the prevention of child abuse through different techniques (Barth, 2009).

### **Self-efficacy and Child Abuse**

Educating individuals about indicators, and effects of child abuse can enhance their self-efficacy in identifying child-abuse cases and taking action (Letarte, Normandeau & Allard, 2010). Many researchers examined child-abuse types and relationship between

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abuser and victims of child abuse (Cardwell, Shaver, & Minzerberg, 2011). This research also assessed the self-efficacy of pre service teachers in a sample from this society. Teachers have general self-efficacy because they can handle different types of problems. Farrell and Walsh have also studied child abuse awareness training rather than web based training. They studied teachers and evaluated their self-efficacy before and after providing training (Farrell & Walsh, 2010).

Many researchers conducted almost similar study to Farrell & Walsh; their sample was nurses and social workers who deal with abuse cases and evaluated their self-efficacy after giving education about child-abuse. In a research conducted by Carpenter, Patsios, Szilassy, and Hackett in 2011, it was evaluated that their self-efficacy increased after administering the post-test.

### **Activity based Learning:**

As the name indicates activity based learning is one of the techniques or methods which come under the broader umbrella of child centered teaching and learning methods. Kenly asserted, “activity-based learning technique is diverse from conventional technique of instructing. Learners take active part in it. Activity-based learning is such education in which learner is dynamically involved in doing or in considering something prepared” (2007, p.57). Çelik explained this method as, “It was seen that activit- based learning activities improve students’ academic achievements and attitudes towards activities” (2018).

### **Objectives**

- To investigate the effect of intervention training module on pre-service teachers’ recognition of child abuse cases
- To investigate the effect of child abuse awareness training module on self-efficacy of pre-service teachers about child abuse cases

### **Null hypothesis**

**H<sub>01</sub>:** Pre-test and post-test of Experimental group about child abuse recognition after child abuse awareness training are not significantly different.

**H<sub>02</sub>:** Pre-test and post-test of control group about child abuse recognition after child abuse awareness training are not significantly different.

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference between the Experimental and control group about Self-efficacy after child abuse awareness training.

### **Research design**

As mentioned earlier, this study was quasi-experimental so non-equivalent control group design was used for this. Participants were divided in two groups. One was experimental while the second was a control group. This study was spanned over three months. Tests were taken from participants of both the groups. A module was developed by the researcher for child abuse awareness training of pre-service teachers. Child abuse awareness training was provided to participants of experimental group and control group through the module after taking a pretest. This experimental design was used to compare the effects of child abuse experimental training between the participants of experimental and control group.

### **Population**

It is important for pre-service teachers to recognize child abuse so that they can help in prevention of child abuse. Pre-service teachers of universities of Lahore city were considered as population.

### **Sample of the study**

A technique in which individuals from the population have no equal chance to be selected as a sample is known as non-probability sampling technique (Daniel, 2012). In this study, non-probability convenient sampling technique was used. Two intact sections of Bachelors in Elementary Education class (each class consists of 48 students) were taken as sample; one class section (A) was considered as experiment or treatment group and another was considered as controlled or non-treatment group.

### **Instrument**

A self-constructed semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect data which was developed on 5 points Likert scale. This instrument was developed in the light of existing literature review.

### **Reliability and Validity**

A pilot study was conducted. The research instrument's reliability was found to be 0.745 by using Cronbach's alpha reliability test. It showed good result and this instrument was used successfully. The validity of the instrument was confirmed through expert validation from two experts of the field.

### **Data Collection and Procedure**

Firstly, participants were divided into two groups. One was treatment group and the second was a control group. Pretests were given to both groups by giving them child abuse recognition questionnaire and self-efficacy questionnaire. Then the researchers

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analyzed their responses. After taking a pretest, the training session of one and a half months about child abuse awareness started during which knowledge and awareness about child abuse and ways and strategies to deal with such issues were taught to both class sections. They were taught these concepts through same content and same teacher in both sections. The only difference between both classes (sections) was that the control group was taught through traditional method whereas the experimental group was taught by using activity based method for teaching child abuse awareness training module. In the experimental group, the module was presented to participants through presentations. Then activities and role play were conducted to evaluate their understanding about child abuse recognition. Some videos relating to types of child abuse were displayed to participants and groups of 6-7 participants were formed. After grouping, each type of child abuse was given to each group and asked them to make a case about that type of abuse. Role play was also conducted because participants could learn better by doing it practically. On the other side, the researcher used lecture or traditional method to control group about child abuse. After completing content of child abuse recognition, module was provided to both groups and they were asked to prepare for post-test. Post-test was taken from both groups at the same time by giving self-efficacy test and child-abuse recognition test to pre-service teachers. The researcher provided training for 3 months to complete this experiment.

### Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics by using SPSS software were used to analyse the data. Inferential analysis was used to find results of the study. Inferential statistics were used for pre-test and post-test's scores collected from both groups for comparison. Independent sample t-test was used because both groups were not depending on each other. It was also used for comparing the scores of pre-test and post-test of each group.

### Statistical analysis

**Table 1: Descriptive results for pretest and posttest of experimental group**

<b>Groups</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>
Pre-test	48	3.6785	0.23499
Post-test	48	4.5243	0.10756

This table shows the mean and standard deviation of pre-test and post-test of experimental group about child abuse recognition. The Mean and SD of pre-test was 3.67 and 0.234 respectively, while Mean and SD of post-test was 4.52 and .107

respectively. Child abuse knowledge and self-efficacy has been improved after providing child abuse awareness training module to the experimental group.

**Table 1a**

	Paired differences					T	df	sig.
	Mean	S.D	Std.error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pretest and posttest of experimental group	-.85	.24	.034	-.91	-.77	-24.42	47	.000

In table 4.17a, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare self-efficacy of pre service teachers about child abuse. There was a significant difference in the scores of pretest (M=3.68, SD=. 23) and posttest (M= 4.52, SD=.11) conditions;  $t(47) = -24.42$ ,  $p = 0.000$ .

**Table 2: Descriptive results for pre-test and post-test of control group**

Groups	N	Mean	SD
Pre-test	48	3.63	0.18
Post-test	48	4.04	0.18

This table shows the mean and standard deviation of pre-test and post-test of control group about child abuse recognition. The Mean and S.D of pre-test were 3. 6328 and .18356 respectively, while Mean and SD of post-test were 4.0454 and .18334 respectively. It shows that child abuse Knowledge and self-efficacy have been improved after providing child abuse awareness training to the control group through lecture method.

**Table 2a**

	Paired differences					T	df	sig.
	Mean	S.D	Std.error mean	95% confidence interval of the difference				
				Lower	Upper			

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Pretest and posttest of control group	-	.24032	.03469	-	-.34283	-11.90	47	.000
	.41262			.48240				

In table 4.18a, a paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare self-efficacy of pre service teachers about child abuse. There was a significant difference in the scores of pretest (M=3.63, SD=. 18) and posttest (M= 4.05, SD=.18) conditions;  $t(47) = -11.90$ ,  $p = 0.000$

**Table 3: Self Efficacy of pre-service teachers about child abuse**

Groups	N	Mean	S.D
Experimental Group	48	46.06	1.90
Control Group	48	42.00	2.38

This table shows the overall mean and S.D of self-efficacy of pre-service teachers about child abuse. The overall mean was 46.06 and S.D was 1.90 respectively in the experimental group while the overall mean was 42.00 and S.D was 2.38 in control group.

**Table 3a**

		F	Sig	T	Df	2 tailed sig
Self-efficacy	Equal variance assumed	1.301	.257	9.232	94	.000
	Equal variance not assumed			9.232	89.4	.000

The above table shows the difference between both groups in self efficacy of pre-service teachers about child abuse by using independent samples t-test. Equal variance assumed variable's result was used for both groups because the significance value for the Levene's test was  $0.257 > 0.05$ . Alternative hypothesis were accepted because both groups have significant difference with condition  $t(94) = 9.232$ , where  $P = .000 < .05$

**Results**

- The experimental group was significantly different in scores of pre-test and post-test about child abuse recognition with condition  $t(66.57) = -19.799$ , where  $P = .000 < .05$

- The experimental group was significantly different in scores of pre-test and post-test about self-efficacy of pre-service teachers with condition  $t(72.85) = -17.006$ , where  $P = .000 < .05$
- Control group was significantly different in scores of pre-test and post-test about child abuse recognition with condition  $t(66.57) = -19.799$ , where  $P = .000 < .05$
- Control group was significantly different in scores of pre-test and post-test about self-efficacy of pre-service teachers with condition  $t(86.92) = -10.406$ , where  $P = .000 < .05$ .
- A significant difference has been found between experimental group and control group after child-abuse training about self-efficacy. Self-efficacy has improved in pre-service teachers after child abuse awareness training.

### **Discussion**

In 2010, Farrell and Walsh conducted an experimental study on child abuse awareness training impact on self-efficacy of students. Pre-test was conducted to check their self-efficacy before training and after training post test was conducted. It was found that students' self-efficacy level about child-abuse enhanced. According to Lee in 2008, child abuse awareness training enhanced the level of self-efficacy.

This research investigated the effect of child abuse awareness training on self-efficacy of pre-service teachers about child abuse. It claimed that teachers played an important role in student's life so it was necessary for teachers to identify and recognize child abuse.

### **Conclusion**

The research was designed to investigate child abuse training's effect on self-efficacy of pre-service teachers. It is concluded from this research that child abuse education is necessary for pre-service teachers. It helps them in recognizing and reporting. It is also concluded that self-efficacy of pre-service teachers increased after providing them child abuse training. There was a significant difference between scores of pre-test and post-test of both the groups. The researcher also concluded that participants can learn better through activity-based method instead of lecture method. It helps them to take more interest in learning and participating. This study will help pre-service teachers prevent children from abuse. They have confidence in their selves to take action against child abuse by reporting about it.

### **Recommendations**

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- 1) Workshops should be conducted about child abuse recognition for teachers.
- 2) Seminars should be conducted for parents to recognize child abuse.
- 3) There is a need to give awareness to children about how to prevent them from abuse.
- 4) Parents should develop a strong relation with their children.
- 5) There should be a strong communication between parents and teachers of a child.
- 6) Self-efficacy is the most important thing so it should be realized by teachers because they deal with every type of student.
- 7) Training related to report on child abuse should be conducted for teachers at all levels.

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