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<b>Article:</b>	<b>Influencing role of Demographic factors in Emotional and Behavioral Problems among School Children of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Pakistan</b>
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### **ABSTRACT**

The current study's objective is to investigate the impact of demographic factors on secondary school students' emotional and behavioral issues. To investigate the hypothesis of this study, the current study used a cross-sectional and correlational research design. 600 high school students aged 13 to 18 were used to gather the data. The government and private secondary high schools in the Peshawar KPK district provided the information. The Problem with School Children Scale (PWSCS) was administered in Urdu to gather data. The data were analyzed using multiple regressions and an independent t-test. The findings indicated that demographic factors like socioeconomic status and family structure are significantly positively correlated with emotional problems among secondary high school students, while gender, physical health, and type of school are significantly negatively correlated with emotional problems. The study also found that gender, sickness, and type of school were significantly negative predictors of behavioral problems among secondary high school students, while socioeconomic position and family structure were positively related to behavioral problems. The study also showed that pupils at private schools experience a higher level of emotional and behavioral issues than students in public schools.

**Keywords:** Demographic Factors, Emotional Problems, Behavioral Problems, School Students.

**Introduction:**

A behavioral disorder is a condition where a person's ideas and feelings fluctuate, leading to problematic behaviors. Children with emotional and behavioral issues frequently struggle in school, perform poorly, have high absentee rates, have low self-esteem, are socially incompetent, feel lonely, and lack a sense of wellbeing later in life.

Every socially and technologically advanced civilization depends on its children's growth and unique development. Kindergartners and juveniles have achieved a special status in the world during the past few decades. Extreme care and attention to children's rights and wellbeing have created new avenues for considering their development. To acclimatize the teenager to the rules and concepts, parents typically employ harsh punishment, which has been referred to as a common and effective method of child management. Kindergarten students were made to work in dangerous conditions for lengthy periods while being paid meager wages that were insufficient to cover their legal obligations. The community's worries for the young children's physical and mental wellbeing were largely inconsistent. Additionally, there was no pediatric medical facility available.

Childhood is the most critical and defining stage of natural existence, and healthy adolescence is crucial for the growth and development of future generations. The years of adolescence and kindergarten, along with developmental changes, are governed by social, emotional, physical, and biological building blocks that also frame it anxiously, making the teenager more susceptible to developing behavioral and emotional disorders.

The rights of children were acknowledged on a global scale. To protect children's rights, numerous state-run and non-profit groups have begun their work. The leading causes of increased public awareness of children and adolescents were the Western economy, the industrial revolution, and advances in medical research. Children and adolescents have become crucial components of society thanks to advancements in modern technology, improved communication, ongoing research development, and increased community awareness. Even in the past 20 to 30 years, child and adolescent psychopathology has attracted significant attention due to increased interest and new information. The vast and significant issue of children's and teenagers' mental health concerns has recently received attention from researchers. Numerous investigations on emotional and behavioral issues have been conducted. Research at private and public schools in Karachi found that emotional and behavioral issues were more prevalent than in other nations in select Pakistani institutions, which is alarming.

### **The theoretical background of emotional and behavioral problems among school children**

The biophysical paradigm holds that biological and physical reasons first cause problems and that problem behavior can be linked to physical sickness, particularly a central nervous system malfunction. Supporters of this theory argue that conduct results from an underlying physical issue because of a clear correlation between bodily disorder and problematic behavior. The origin of behavioral and emotional issues is constitutive, indicating that neither the learner's physical makeup nor environment can be blamed for these issues.

According to the developmental perspective, some students who exhibit behavioral and emotional issues do not have a mature neural system for their age. Delays in learner development have been suggested as a risk factor for behavioral and emotional issues by developmental theorists<sup>13</sup>. Delays in several developmental processes, such as brain

organization and sensory integration, can be seen. According to stage theorists, a learner must complete earlier stages of growth before confronting the problems of a later development phase. The poorer developmental skills of those students who exhibit poor social skills or academic difficulties need to be improved.

According to the psychodynamic theory, all behavioral issues are brought on by inner forces, supported by psychoanalysis, intra-psychic theories, and humanistic psychology. These models suggest that inner life and uncertainty disruptions are the root causes of emotional problems. Other determining variables for behavior problems include conflicts in the unconscious mind and unpleasant prior experiences. It's essential to help people with behavioral issues understand their past experiences. The teacher counselor must establish a rapport with the student to talk about and learn from their past experiences.

Sociologists sought to concentrate on how individuals interact within groups to understand how society affects a learner or child. Their emphasis is on other ideas created, not on individual psychological and learning variations. The interaction between students who break the rules and those who follow them, sometimes known as the "enforcers," and their relationship with one another is how sociologists explain behavioral problems. Therefore, a breakdown in or violation of the social standards' establishment is the root cause of behavioral issues.

Researchers have developed numerous psychosocial elements that are risk factors for children developing behavior problems. Numerous more aspects directly impact how children behave, as well as many factors that contribute to children's mental health issues. There are various psychosocial elements that studies have identified as being risk factors for behavioral problems. Research findings essentially validate these factors.

### **Literature Review**

Numerous experts have noted a strong connection between parent and family characteristics and children's emotional and behavioral issues. Parental education was linked to more emotional and behavioral issues in Saudi male children. In another research study, Verhulst (2012) studied the relationship between children's demographic traits, familial risk factors, and the development of behavioral and emotional issues.

It was determined that emotional and behavioral issues were greatly influenced by unemployment, divorce, and separation. However, parental occupation and age were not considered significant risk factors for these issues.

According to Connell and Goodman's (2012) analyses, externalizing behavior problems were more closely linked to the father's mental health than the mother's, whereas internalizing problems were more closely linked to both parents' mental health issues.

Numerous types of research revealed a link between socioeconomic status and emotional and behavioral issues. Other research by Angold and Costello (2009) that looked at how poverty affected children's behavior discovered a strong link between poverty and psychopathology in white kids. In a separate study, Wadsworth (2015) also discovered a link between socioeconomic level and depressive behavior, physical symptoms, and cognitive difficulties. According to the research findings, children living in low-income households are more likely to experience emotional and behavioral issues.

The association between children's internalizing and externalizing behavioral issues and perceived parental behaviors. According to research, children who regarded their parents

as rejecting them had more psychological issues. Numerous studies have discovered a beneficial relationship between controlling parents and kids with behavioral and emotional issues.

In a research by Syed, Hussein, and Haidry (2008) of students in Karachi schools, the teachers identified emotional problems in 18.3% of the students and behavioral problems in 35.8%. Rutter rating measures were used in yet another study on emotional and behavioral issues among schoolchildren in Pakistan. Another study utilizing the Rutter behavioral scale on 957 schoolchildren in India found that 45.6% had behavioral issues, of which 36.5% had severe behavioral issues.

According to Children of Hope (2013), students with emotional issues are those whose emotions do not adequately direct their behavior, those whose emotional reactions are too intense, and those whose emotional reactions are too subdued. The learners who experience incorrect emotions hold a mistaken view; for example, they worry about things that will not happen, and when other children, pets, etc., are in pain, they laugh and engage in risky activities. When their peers and elders mistreat or abuse them, they show resentment, but not enough actually to do anything about it. In typical behavior, there is a match between feeling and circumstance. However, there should be a mismatch between an emotion's response to a situation and the behavior in question. When a person experiences the aforementioned emotional issues, they frequently act in ways that are improper for the circumstance, such as being either too weak or too intense.

### **Objectives**

The primary purposes of the study include:

- To confirm the demographic variables affecting emotional and behavioral issues in high school students from public and private schools.
- To identify the emotional and behavioral issues high school students in public and private schools are having.

### **Hypotheses**

H1: Demographic factors will have a significant impact on the occurrence of emotional and behavioral problems among government and private high school children of KP.

H2: There will be a significant difference in emotional and behavioral problems in KP's government and private high schools.

### **Methods**

#### **Objectives**

The cross-sectional and correlational research designs were the foundation for the current investigation. The study aimed to investigate how demographic factors may affect emotional and behavioral issues among Peshawar schoolchildren. The study also sought to confirm whether behavioral and emotional issues differed between public and private schools.

#### **Sample**

There were 600 participants in the study, including 280 public and 320 private secondary school pupils. The survey was conducted among students aged 13 to 18 at six government secondary high schools and eight private secondary high schools in the Peshawar district. Peshawar's four towns were divided into four clusters, of which one and three were randomly chosen.

## **Data Instruments**

### **Demographic Sheet**

The questionnaire-related study variables for children's age, gender, class, and school, as well as their health, socioeconomic position, and family structure, make up the demographic data.

### **The Problem with School children Scales (PWSCS-Urdu)**

The measure (Urdu version) finalized in Phase I of the study was employed to evaluate participants' emotional and behavioral aspects. The original measure was created in 2012 by the Canadian Paediatric Association to detect psychiatric issues in school-aged children. It has 30 items, each with a three-point response scale (1-3) ranging from 1 (No Concern), 2 (Minor Concern), and 3. (Major concern). A total score between 0 and 90 is possible, with higher numbers indicating more problematic behavior. For young people in high school, the questionnaire's reliability is 0.93. There are no copyright restrictions on the questionnaire. The instrument was translated and utilized.

### **Procedure**

Children from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa district Peshawar's public and private schools were included in the study. Through the Private Schools Regulatory Authority (PSRA) and District Education Office Peshawar, thorough information about public and private schools were gathered to create a random sample of the district of Peshawar.

Following approval from officials at government and private schools, the data collection process was initiated. The goal of the research is explained to them. They were assured that the information from the collected data would be kept private and used solely for research purposes for both students and schools.

### **Data analysis**

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 21 program. All computed variables' means and standard deviations demonstrated the concurrent validity of the instrument. T-test was used to evaluate whether there were any notable differences between students from public and private schools. The study's goals were considered while multiple regression analysis was conducted.

### **Ethical considerations**

The participant decided to leave the study at any point after receiving assurances that the information collected would only be utilized for research purposes. The study's confidentiality and anonymity were guaranteed. Not to cause physical, emotional, or psychological harm to the participant. The results are reported accurately. After completing the questionnaire, the researcher was required under the ethical standards to offer to counsel to the individual if necessary. The participants received immediate counseling and will be provided with therapeutic recommendations.

### **Results**

According to **Table I** analysis results, socioeconomic status, family structure, and school type are significant predictors of emotional problems among secondary school students. In contrast, gender, mental illness, status, and school type are significant predictors of emotional problems among secondary school students. These demographic variables account for 4% ( $R=.052$ ) of variance in predicting emotional problems among secondary school students.

**Table I Multiple Regression analysis**

Variables	$\Delta R$	B	P
Model 1	0.87		
Socioeconomic status		.093	.000
Gender		-.141	.001
Mental illness		-.089	.000
Family status		.090	.000
Type of School		-.113	.002
R	.254		
R <sup>2</sup>	.052		
F	2.67		

**Note:** Dependent variables; emotional and behavioral problems

**Table II** analysis showed that socioeconomic status and family are significant predictors of behavioral problems among secondary school students, while gender, mental illness, status, and school type are significant predictors of emotional problems. These demographic variables account for 5% ( $R=.063$ ) of the variance in behavioral problem prediction among secondary school students.

**Table II Multiple Regression analysis**

Variables	$\Delta R$	B	P
Model 1	0.79		
Socioeconomic status		.086	.000
Gender		-.141	.002
Mental illness		-.064	.000
Family status		.089	.001
School		-.163	.001
R	.376		
R <sup>2</sup>	.063		
F	2.34		

**Note:** Dependent variables; emotional and behavioral problems

The standard deviation mean and t-values for emotional and behavioral issues among students in government and private secondary high schools are shown in Table III. The results show that there are no statistically significant variations in the mean levels of emotional difficulties between government and private secondary school students ( $t(198) = .245$ ,  $p > .294$ ).  $T(198) = 2.50$   $p > .000$  revealed substantial mean behavioral differences between secondary school students in government and private schools. Overall analysis reveals that students at private schools experience more emotional and behavioral issues than students in public secondary schools.

**Table III results of Independent t-test**

Variables	Public (N = 280)		Private (N = 300)		t(198)	P	95% CI	
	M	SD	M	SD			LL	UL
Emotional Problems	7.08	4.49	7.19	3.98	.245	.294	-.725	.932
Behavioral problems	5.46	3.53	6.61	5.47	2.50	.000	.248	2.04

Note: M= mean, SD= standard deviation, t= T-test, df= degree of freedom, \*p<.05, N= 406

Table IV shows the results of the Multiple Regression analysis

### Discussion

Because adolescence is a time of stress and upheaval, secondary high school children are more susceptible to emotional and behavioral issues. The current study aimed to determine how demographic factors affected the emotional and behavioral issues that secondary high school students experienced.

The findings of the current study's analysis showed that among secondary high school students, demographic variables such as socioeconomic status and family system significantly positively predict emotional and behavioral problems. In contrast, demographic variables such as gender, mental illness, status, and school type significantly negatively predict these issues.

Literature suggests that emotional and behavioral issues in secondary high school students cause low socioeconomic status, a dysfunctional family system, low self-esteem, social incompetence, feelings of loneliness, and a lack of wellbeing later in life. It has also been found that there is no correlation between gender and poor school performance, poor school performance, or high dropout rates.

Numerous studies have shown that various parental and family-related factors are connected to children's and adolescents' emotional and behavioral issues. In Saudi male adolescents, parental education level was linked to a higher risk of emotional and behavioral issues developing. In a different study, Harland, Reijneveld, Brugman, Verloove-Vanhorick, and Verhulst (2002) looked at the relationship between family characteristics and the likelihood that children will experience emotional and behavioral issues. According to research, children who had recently experienced parental unemployment, divorce, or separation were at a high risk of developing emotional and behavioral issues. Numerous studies have demonstrated a high correlation between family, behavioral, and emotional issues, socioeconomic position, and those issues.

According to research by Larsson and Frisk (1999), parents with lower socioeconomic levels tend to report their kids' emotional and behavioral issues more frequently. Costello, Keeler, and Angold (2011) examined the effect of poverty on the prevalence of mental health issues in children in a different study. 379 White children and 541 Black youngsters made up the sample. The overall results imply that emotional and behavioral issues in white children



are strongly associated with poverty. Other risk factors for child psychopathology were parental disapproval, a lack of parental support, and strict discipline.

It has also been shown in a different longitudinal study (Wadsworth & Achenbach, 2005) that early and prompt detection of emotional difficulties in school-age children and adolescents may help avoid the long-term detrimental effects linked to untreated or undetected mental health problems. Numerous empirical types of research that looked into the relationship between gender and other emotional and behavioral issues failed to find any connection.

The results also showed that there were no statistically significant mean differences in emotional difficulties between government and private secondary high school pupils ( $t(198) = .245$ ;  $p > .294$ ). The results showed a significant mean difference in behavioral issues between government and private secondary high school students,  $t(198) = 2.50$   $p > .000$ . Overall, data reveals that students in private schools experience more emotional and behavioral issues than students in public secondary schools<sup>8</sup>. The findings show that private school students had much greater mental health issues, including emotional and behavioral issues, but government school students fared significantly better because of their degree of adjustment and coping mechanisms.

### **Conclusion**

According to the results of the current study, there is a correlation between behavioral and emotional issues among secondary school pupils and their demographic makeup. Children today confront many behavioral and emotional issues due to centuries of ignorance combined with the demands of contemporary culture. Similar to how it did with psychology, other academic fields were interested in children and their welfare. As people's understanding of children has grown, so have the fields of applied child research, such as developmental psychopathology and school psychology. The attention on kids with diverse mental health issues has changed due to new trends and psychological developments.

With time, the notion of mental disease gave way to that mental health, quality of life, and child welfare. This study offers a rare chance to investigate the phenomenology of the many kinds, patterns, and frequencies of emotional and behavioral issues. This study have also given insight into how cultural context affects how emotional and behavioral issues are experienced, expressed, and manifested. Additionally, the kind, severity, and distribution of emotional and behavioral issues in children and adolescents should be identified early on. This will aid in determining the need for intervention and the establishment of mental health services in schools. This study has shown how a child's academic performance and emotional and behavioral issues connect. These results are anticipated to assist in creating the child's functional profile, ultimately assisting in creating tailored intervention strategies.

### **Limitations and Recommendations**

The study's shortcomings and recommendations have been given for future research projects. Due to a lack of reliable data, both in public and private schools countrywide, very little research has been done on this phenomenon. This completed work revealed the value of a federal investigation of public and private education in educational delivery, personality development, self-confidence building, and communication skills.

The scale had various limitations, including that it could only be used for a specific age group and was only acceptable for the current cultural context, even if it was sufficiently dependable to be utilized in the current study. The number of items on the scale was insufficient

to address all behavioral and emotional issues. Due to the study's location in Peshawar, the sample was constrained to a specific region. The existence of individual variances must therefore be taken into consideration.

**Implications**

The results of this study will help people comprehend the concerns and problems that students in secondary public and private schools face. The current study's findings have emphasized emotional and behavioral issues in this stage of children, which is vital for effective planning and reducing the problems of secondary school pupils. The results of the current study will also assist the government and private sector authorities in setting up mental health workshops to treat emotional and behavioral disorders, communication challenges, and pressures. Participating in such activities will boost their confidence. For dealing with and assisting their children or students in managing their mental health issues, training sessions and the participation of teachers and parents in such healthy activities as connecting with social group exercises or developing healthy hobbies, techniques for stress and aggression management need to be encouraged.

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