ORIGINAL ARTICLE

A STUDY OF SELF-ESTEEM, ACADEMIC SELF-CONCEPT, AND LOCUS OF CONTROL AMONG BEHAVIORAL PROBLEM AND NON-BEHAVIORAL PROBLEM CHILDREN

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ABSTRACT

OBJECTIVE: The aim of current study was to identify and compare the children with behavioral problems and without behavioral problems on self-esteem, academic self-concept, and locus of control.

METHOD: For this study, a cross sectional research design was used, for data collection purposive sampling technique was applied. Out of 300 children a sample of 34 children with behavioral problems (that lies above 67th percentile) and a matched comparative group of 34 children (fall below 33 percentile children) were selected. The age range of sample was 11-13 years and from Wah Cantt data was collected. A booklet consisted of consent form, demographic sheet, children behavioral problem checklist; self-esteem scale, academic self-concept, and locus of control scales were administered.

RESULTS: Correlational analysis indicated that there was significant relationship between all the study variables. Children with behavioral problems exhibited lower level of self-esteem (M=39.92; SD=16.4) than non-behavioral problem children (M=47.57; SD=9.52). On academic self-concept, children with behavioral problems exhibited lower mean scores (M=32.9; SD=26.3) as compared to children having non-behavioral problems (M=44.6; SD=15.8). Furthermore, results also highlighted that non-problematic children exhibit less external locus of control (M=8.35; SD=2.51) as compared to problematic children (M=10.70; SD=3.36).

CONCLUSION: This study highlighted that SE, ASC and LOC are related process children behavioral problems. Therefore, in order to handle such children, teachers and school counselor should develop such intervention strategies that promote their self-esteem, academic self-concept and internal locus of control.

Keywords: Self-esteem, Locus of control, Behavioral problems, Academic self-esteem.

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INTRODUCTION

The problems of childhood and adolescence block or distort positive development in spheres of personality of life and cause hardships for parents and teachers, and the whole society at large. Therefore, a society must give top priority to having a scientific understanding of these so that effective measures could be taken for their effective prevention and intervention. [1-3] One of the prominent problems of childhood is behavioral disorders, which are characterized as persistent patterns of socially labelled atypical behaviors that adversely effects child educational development over a long period of time. [4]

Studies on behavioral disorders suggested that children exhibit such abnormal behaviors in two ways. i.e., first by acting negatively to the outer world (like aggressive, impulsive, rebelliousness and temper tantrums) called "externalizing behavioral problems" and second is by doing activities that specifically disturb the internal psychological environment (like depressed, anxious and withdrawn) called "internalizing behavioral problems". [5-8] These researches also highlighted that if the behavioral problems are identified early in life, various social and emotional issues related with cognitive ability[9], intellectual ability[10-12], social competence[13,14] and interpersonal relationships[15] can be sorted out effectively. Moreover, experts also claimed that development or promotion of positive self-perceptions (self-esteem and self-concept) are very crucial because of their direct effect on children abnormal, awry and disordered behavior. [16] Therefore, efforts are being made these days particularly in the more advanced countries to build character, impart moral values, increas-

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er positive self-perception (self-esteem and self-concept), inculcate civic sense, and make children aware of the hazards of vices like drugs.

Self-esteem, defined as an individual's overall sense of self-worth and value, serves as a foundational element in the study of child psychology. [17] According to Harter's (2012) Competence Motivation Theory, self-esteem is intricately linked to perceived competence in various domains, including academic achievement. In the context of behavioral problems, children may encounter additional challenges in establishing and maintaining a positive self-concept due to the social and academic implications associated with their behavior. [18]

Academic self-concept, on the other hand, encompasses a child's perception of their academic abilities and performance. Social Cognitive Theory, proposed by Bandura, posits that children's self-concept is shaped by their interpretations of their own achievements and failures [19]. For children facing behavioral problems, the impact of their behavior on academic self-concept may be particularly pronounced, as their actions could contribute to a negative perception of their overall academic competence. [19]

Locus of control, as conceptualized by Rotter, refers to an individual's belief in the extent to which they can control events affecting them. In the academic context, children with an internal locus of control may attribute their academic success or failure to their own efforts and abilities, while those with an external locus of control may attribute it to external factors, such as luck or fate. Understanding the locus of control in behavioral problem children is crucial, as it can provide insights into the factors influencing their academic outcomes. [20]

Empirical evidences confirmed the notion that behavioral problems (internal and external) have significant effect on the children self-esteem, academic self-concept and locus of control. [21,22] Moreover, [a] model for evaluating the connection of adolescents' self-concept and their behavioral problems (both internalizing and externalizing) among the Swedish adolescents (N=277) by using the Youth Self Report (YSR) and Structural Analysis of Social Behavior (SASB) questionnaires. The path analysis findings confirmed the model in desire direction. i.e. Adolescents with positive self- concept exhibit less or no behavioral problems as compared to the adolescents with negative self-concept behavioral problems. Moreover, findings also highlighted that girls exhibited more internalized behavioral problems whereas, boys (15 to 16) exhibited more externalized behavioral problems then younger and older adolescents. [23]

In Pakistan, however, there no such effort has been made and even lack of basic research in this area especially with reference to academic self-concept and self-esteem together among behavioral problem children. [24-26] Therefore, the current study aimed to investigate the connection of self-esteem, academic self-concept and locus of control among behavioral problems and non-behavioral problem children in Pakistan. This research issue has been addressed because of an interesting finding by earlier studies that learning disable children had lower self-concept in scholastic competence as compared with children without any learning difficulties. [27]

However, in most other domains (including social competence and global self-worth) no significant differences were found out. As regards the studies on locus of control, there have not been many studies except one in which the association between LOC and SE of adolescents. [28] Recently, Bukhari (2006) found out a positive relationship between depression and external LOC and feelings of loneliness of 40 adult patients comparing them with a normal sample of equal numbers. [29] This would expand the interest of researchers to examining the relation between LOC and various aspects of personality and behavior like aggression, delinquency, depression, narcissism etc. The present study is an important effort towards setting priorities of in the field of scientific research as it tries to focus the issue from important psychological angles having far reaching educational implications.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study aimed to identify the children with behavior problems and to explore their self-esteem, Academic self-concept and locus of control. Furthermore, children with behavior problems were compared with those having no such problems on the constructs of self-esteem, academic self-concept and locus of control. For present study, with the permission of school principals the researcher selected a sample of 300 students (every 2nd student from the register of each section) 6th and 7th grade both boys and girls with the age range of 11-13 years was selected from different government and private schools of Wah Cantt.

Out of 300 children, 34 children were identified as having behavior problems according to child report measures of Child Problem Checklist (CPCL), who fell above the 67th percentile. A comparative matched group of 34 non-problematic children (17 boys and 17 girls) was identified from the children who fell below 33rd percentile on the same scale. After identification of behavioral problem and non-behavioral problem a set of Academic Self -concept Scale[26], Rotter`s Internal-External Locus of Control Scale (1966)[27] and Self- esteem[28] were administered to the students one by one in small group forms and these scales were completed by each student. The students were told that the research was an academic activity and they were expected to complete the scales accurately. The real nature of the scales was not revealed to avoid the possible effect of social desirability. The participants were asked

to read each statement and to indicate the response by selecting the appropriate response category, which they considered in their opinion appropriate and applicable about their own self. At the end, all the participants were thanked for their participation. After data collection, SPSS-21 was used for data analysis (descriptive, reliability, correlation matrix and t-test) to compare the children having behavior problems with the children having no such problems on the constructs of self-esteem, academic self-concepts and locus of control.

RESULTS

Alpha reliability coefficient was computed for self-esteem, academic self-concept scale, and child problem checklist (CPCL). KR-20 reliability coefficient was computed for Rotter's Internal-External Locus of Control Scale, as the items of the scale were dichotomous. The reliability analysis confirmed that all scales are appropriate for assessment of children of the study.

Table 2 shows that there is a negative correlation between self-esteem and academic self-concepts and locus of control with child behavioral problem scale, which is statistically significant ($p<.05$). It indicates that children with non-behavioral problem have higher self-esteem have more internal locus of control, and high academic self-concept whereas, children with behavioral problems have lower self-esteem, lower academic self-concept and have more external locus of control.

Table 1: Alpha Reliability Coefficient of Self-Esteem Scale, academic self-concept & Rotter`s I-E Locus of Control Scale (N = 68)

Scale	No. of Items	Alpha Coefficient
Self-Esteem Scale	29	.77
Academic self-concept scale	40	.90
Rotter`s I-E (LOC)	23	.62
Child report of CPCL	37	.91

*p<.05

Table 3 indicates the mean, S.D, and t-value of problematic and non-problematic group of children on self-esteem scale, academic self-concept and locus of control. Results show the statistically significant mean differences among the behavioral problem and non-behavioral problem children on the construct of self-esteem, which means that problematic children have lower self-esteem as compared to non-problematic group of children.

As far as the domains of self-esteem are concerned, comparison of mean scores shows that children with behavioral problems score lower on self-acceptance, self-competence, social and physical self-acceptance, and academic self-competence as compared to children with non-behavioral problematic Whereas, these differences on the domains of self-esteem are statistically significant only for academic self-competence ($p<.001$).

Results also indicate that there is statistically significant ($p<.000$) mean differences between two groups on academic self -concept, which means that problematic children have lower academic self-concept as compared to non-problematic group of children. It means that children with Behavioral problems shows more negative attitude and feelings with regards to their abilities &and academic potential as compared to non-problematic children. In addition, The mean difference is statistically significant mean scores ($t= 3.54$, $df = 66$, $p<. 01$) of problematic children is higher as compared to mean score of non-problematic group of children, indicating that problematic children have external locus of control as compared to non-problematic children.

Table 2: Correlation Coefficient analysis of self-esteem, academic self- concept and locus of control of child behavioral problem scale (N = 68)

Variables	CBCL
Self-Esteem	-.23*
Academic self-concept	-.50*
Locus of control	-.86*

Table 3: Mean, S.D, and t-value of problematic (n=34) and non-problematic group of children on self-esteem scale (its dimensions), academic self-concept and locus of control (n=34)

Groups	Problematic Children		Non-Problematic Children		T	P	Cohens d
	M	S.D	M	S.D			
Self-Esteem	39.92	16.4	47.57	9.52	2.5	.01	.58
Self-Acceptance	13.95	6.97	16.20	4.75	-1.68	.09	.38
Self-Competence	9.72	4.98	11.20	3.56	-1.52	.13	.34
Social and Physical Self-Acceptance	8.67	4.43	10.02	3.68	-1.48	.14	.33
Academic Self-Competence	7.57	3.09	10.15	3.18	-3.66	.000	.82
Academic Self-concept Scale	32.9	26.3	44.6	15.8	5.3	.000	.53
External Locus of Control	10.70	3.36	8.35	2.51	3.54	.00	.79

df = 66, p<.01, p<.001

DISCUSSION

The current study sought to delineate distinctions in self-esteem, academic self-concept, and locus of control between children with and without behavioral problems. Utilizing four scales, the research demonstrated high reliability within the sample, affirming previous findings that underscore the interconnectedness of these psychological constructs with child behavioral problems.

Our findings align with existing research, emphasizing notable distinctions between children with behavioral problems and their non-problematic counterparts across overall self-esteem, academic self-concept, and external locus of control. [30-35] The significant difference in self-esteem suggested that children with behavioral problems exhibited low self-esteem as compared to non-behavioral problem children. In the context of children with behavioral problems, low self-esteem could be a result of the challenges they face in forming positive social connections, achieving academic success, or navigating social interactions. Behavioral difficulties may lead to social exclusion, criticism, or stigmatization, further contributing to a negative self-perception. [35] These results are consistent with previous findings. [36-40.] Similarly, significant differences on academic self-concept are also noteworthy, suggesting that non-problematic children tend to exhibit greater interest in studies and demonstrate superior academic performance. This inclination may be attributed to a perceived higher level of competence and positive reinforcement from significant others. This observation is consistent with previous studies indicating that children with learning difficulties or behavioral problems tend to have lower self-concepts in academics [41-43], but not necessarily in domains such as physical appearance, athletic ability, and social acceptance. [44-45]

The study's results also underscore that children with behavior problems tend to have a more external locus of control while the non-problematic group of children leans towards an internal locus of control. An external locus of control is associated with behavior problems, suggesting that children facing behavioral challenges are more likely to attribute outcomes to external circumstances, holding others responsible for the results of their actions. On the other hand, the non-problematic group of children tends to attribute outcomes to their own control, viewing themselves as responsible for the results of their activities. This inclination towards internal locus of control may explain their more responsible behavior in striving to achieve set targets, whether self-imposed or desired by significant others. [46-49] Consistency with prior research reinforces the idea that these children are more likely to attribute the consequences of their actions to circumstances beyond their personal control. This externalization of responsibility may reflect a coping mechanism or a consequence of the challenges they face, such as academic difficulties or social conflicts. [50-51]

These findings can be illuminated through the lens of relevant theoretical literature, such as Bandura's Social Learning Theory. According to Bandura, children learn from their environment through observation and modeling. [49.] In the context of behavioral problems, negative behaviors are often acquired through exposure to unfavorable social environments. The reciprocal interactions with parents, teachers, and peers play a crucial role in influencing the behavior of these children. [46] When children with behavioral problems encounter academic challenges, it triggers a cascade of negative feedback from their social environment, aligning with the principles of operant conditioning. [46-50] Parents, teachers, and peers, acting as significant social agents, contribute significantly to shaping the behavior and self-perception of these children. Negative feedback, typically in the form of criticism or reprimand, contributes to the development of a negative self-image. Bandura's concept of self-efficacy becomes relevant in this context, as repeated experiences of failure or disapproval can erode a child's belief in their ability to succeed in academic and social domains. [47-52] Furthermore, Erikson's psychosocial theory emphasizes the importance of social interactions in the development of a child's sense of identity. Children with behavioral problems may encounter difficulties in forming positive social bonds, which, according to Erikson, are crucial for the development of a healthy self-identity. Negative feedback from peers and the lack of positive reinforcement in social interactions may contribute to the formation of a negative self-image, exacerbating their behavioral challenges. [49-55] In the broader context of self-esteem, Harter's Competence Motivation Theory underscores the significance of perceived competence in various domains, including academic and social realms. Children facing behavioral problems may perceive themselves as less competent due to the negative feedback they receive, leading to a decline in self-esteem. This aligns with Cooley's concept of the "looking glass self," suggesting that individuals form their self-concept based on how they believe others perceive them. [16, 55] In the end results indicate the statistical non-significant mean differences among both groups on several sub domains of self-esteem specifically, children facing behavioral challenges exhibited lower self-acceptance, self-competence, social and physical self-acceptance, and notably, lower academic self-competence. This finding is also consistent with the previous findings. [57]

Every psychological study is new setup toward understanding and solution of the problems. As nothing is perfect in this world and for a scientific research at least it is impossible. In the same manner there are some limitations of the study which might influence the generalizability and authencity of the results. Due to time constrains and lack of resources, data was small and collected from schools of only two cities, i.e., Wah Cantt. This might affect the generalizability of the findings. So that, in future large sample

should be taken from more cities. Future research may be carried out on a large sample of students from the schools of different cities of Pakistan. The instruments of study i.e., self-esteem, academic self-concept locus of control and child behavioral problem, were self-report measures and may have vulnerability to high social desirability. Measures other than self-reports may be used to assess self-esteem and other constructs studied in the present research. Furthermore, the present research felt that children problem checklist could be somewhat lengthy, difficult to fill out, at time as boring for children and not check out the teachers and parents view about the children behavioral problems. Researchers working in future must take the teachers and parents' views about the children behavioral problems.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that children with behavioral issues often experience lower self-esteem, academic self-concept, and an external locus of control compared to their non-problematic peers. Externalizing problems may precede academic and criminal challenges, increasing the risk of delinquency. However, the predictive nature of internalizing behavioral problems for negative outcomes in children lacks consistent support. Children with behavioral problems lean towards an external locus of control, while the non-problematic group exhibits an internal locus.

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Authors Contribution:

Following authors have made substantial contributions to the manuscript as under

Authors	Conceived & designed the analysis	Collected the data	Contributed data or analysis tools	Performed the analysis	Wrote the paper	Other contribution
Arzeen S	✓	×	✓	×	✓	×
Arzeen N	✓	✓	×	✓	✓	×
Shah M	✓	×	×	✓	×	×

Authors agree to be accountable for all aspects of the work in ensuring that questions related to the accuracy or integrity of any part of the work are appropriately investigated and resolved.

Ethical Approval:

This Manuscript was approved by the Ethical Commttee of Department of Human Studies University of Peshawar. Dated: 06 11 2016