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The Relationship Between Parental Pressure For High Marks, Students' Dropout And Suicide Intention In Secondary Schools Of Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

This study has investigated the influence of Parental Pressure of high marks (PPHM) on students' dropout (S.D.) and their suicide intention (S.I.) in secondary schools of Mardan district. The aim was to question whether this influence is direct or indirect, through the mediation of examination phobia (EPH) in English Subject. The moderation of parents' education (PED) and Socio-Economic Status (SES) also found out. This research is a survey study with a non-experimental design. A questionnaire comprising of 49 items was confirmed for the model fitness by application of different statistics. The data collected from 384 respondents were analyzed, with the help of SPSS and AMOS. This study has revealed a high correlation between PPHM, EPH, SD, and S.I., suggesting that suicide intention and students' dropout are helped out by the Parental Pressure for high marks exists. Therefore, proposed that, if the parents' expectation of high marks decreased, the level of examination phobia in English Subjects would be reduced, in turn, cause to decrease in students' dropout and suicide intention. The parents' education and socioeconomic status proved as moderators for the relationship of PEHM to S.I. and S.D. This study offers a significant contribution to the related literature in a developing country like Pakistan. This study's findings would suggest that the parents should limit their Pressure for high marks to control the examination phobia, students' dropout, and their suicide intention; the ultimate goal of this study.

Keywords: Examination Phobia in English Subject, Parental Pressure, Secondary Schools, Students' School-Dropout, Students' Suicide-Intention

INTRODUCTION

In Pakistani culture over the last few decades, suicide has been a grave issue because of a troubling rise in teenagers' suicide rate (Dickson, 2019). This research analyses the suicide intention, and students drop out of their schools aimed at its adequate solution. In the related literature, the suicide rate in Pakistan noted as 2.86 per total of 100,000 people. Unfortunately, an increase reported concerning age, especially among the school going children (e.g., Khan & Hyder, 2006). Therefore, suicide was considered one of the highest causes of death in Pakistan, where boys outnumber the girls. The suicide rate is as high as one person every hour (Rehman & Haque, 2019) created a qualm among the nation.

On the other hand, school dropout was a threatening problem, decreasing the gross enrolment rate to 42% only at the secondary level. At primary level, it remained 72% only (e.g., I-SAPS, 2015). According to the facts and figures, the 10 million boys' enrolled at the primary level decreased to only 1.9 million at the higher secondary level. Similarly, the number declined to only 1.4 million, from 1.8 million for girls (Chaudhry, 2016). That is why Pakistan placed at the second number in the global ranking for out-of-school children, and 113th out of 124 countries for human capital index (Ali, 2017).

Different research studies conducted globally, finding the potential risk of increasing suicidal intention and drop out among students (e.g., Lee et al., 2010). The visible actors highlighted as aggression and impulsivity, anxiety, depression, anger, and helplessness. However, the empirical investigation for the relationship between Parental Pressure for high marks, examination phobia in English Subject, and suicidal intention and students' drop out is too few and far between. This study has investigated the influence of Parental Pressure for high marks on students' dropout and their suicide intention with the mediation of exam phobia in English subject in the secondary schools of Mardan district, Pakistan.

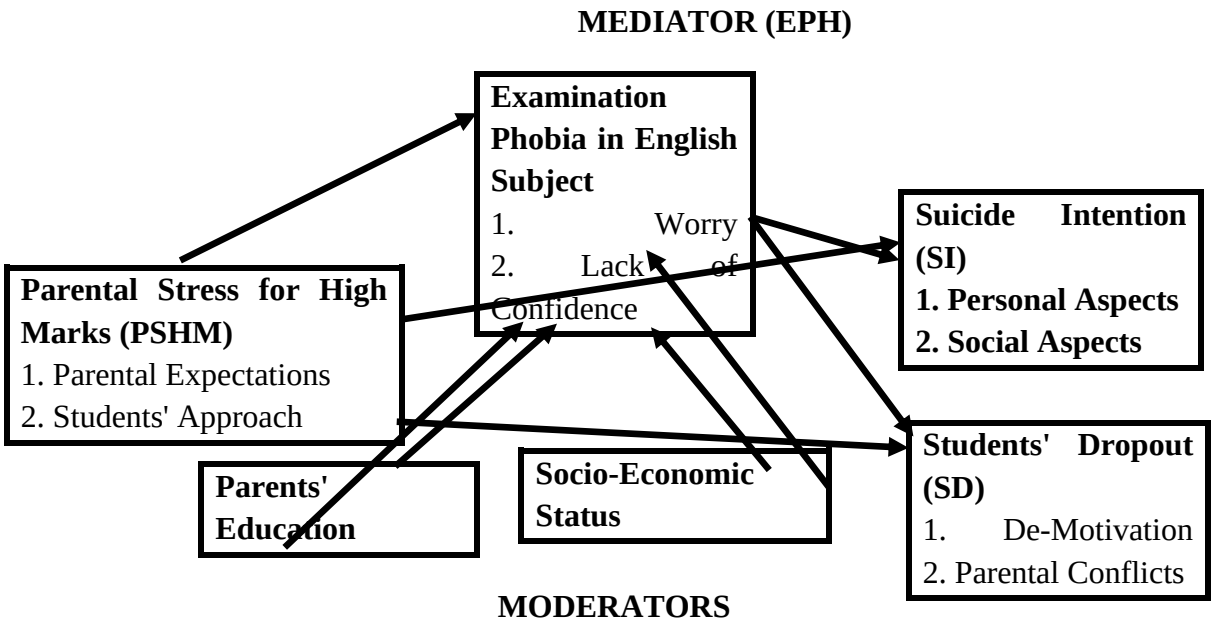

Fig 1: Conceptual Framework

LITERATURE REVIEW

Different authors were in the view that, parents must have high expectations of their children for high academic achievement (i.e., Ma et al., 2018). When parental expectations change into Parental Pressure, due to their illiteracy, affect academic achievement negatively. For example, different researchers have found that stress is changeable into distress and must be cared out. Anything that causes strain was called a stressor (e.g., Hazari, 2013); therefore, parental expectations are likely stressors. The Parental Pressure aimed at achieving high marks, acceptable by them and society. This stressor affects students' efficiency, and their results become critical (e.g., Khatoon & Parveen, 2009) ends in dropout and suicide intention.

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative approach with a survey instrument used in this research aimed to find out the causal relationship between the variables, i.e. "Parental pressure for high Marks", "Exam Phobia in English subject", "Students' Dropout", and "Students' Suicide Intention". A closed-ended questionnaire with five Likert scales ranged from strongly-disagree to strongly-agree used to collect data from government secondary school students in Mardan district. The questionnaire was translated into the national language (Urdu) for better comprehension of the students. Furthermore, the questionnaire was validated through different measurement indices as given below in table 1. Face validity confirmed through two experts in the field, both for Urdu and English language.

A pilot study carried out to check reliability. The instrument was distributed among the students as per procedure and research ethics and recollected by self. The Pearson r and AMOS output used in this research find the results as interpreted and discussed below.

Population

A total of 84089 students (32654 girls and 51425 boys; see Appendix- B) from 167 government secondary schools (80 girls; 87 boys: see Appendix- C) were the target population of this study (source; Annual School Senses, 20017-18).

Sample size and sampling technique

According to Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table, a total of 384 students from the government secondary schools were selected randomly as the sample for this study.

Instrument

To assess the relationship between variables (i.e., PPHM, EPH, SD, and S.I., as shown in Figure 1) a Likert type scale developed with five choices was used (See Appendix-A). Face validity found out through experts in the field, and different measurement indices were adopted to confirm validity and reliability, as shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Validity and Reliability Measurement Indices for Variables (N=384)

Construct	CR	AVE	Cronbach Alpha
Students' Dropout (SD)	0.92	0.805	0.90
Students' Suicide Intention (SI)	0.90	0.845	0.92
Examination Phobia in English subject (EPH)	0.87	0.740	0.91
Parental Pressure for high Marks (PPHM)	0.85	0.775	0.92

RESULTS

Relationship between Parental Pressure for high marks and students' suicide intention

Figure 2 (the estimated model-1) affirming the fitness according to the threshold values of individual measurement indices such as RMSEA, CFI, GFI, and Chi-Square, and confirms the fitness.

Table 2: Model fitness measurements (N=384)

Absolute Fit			**Increment Fit**			**Parsimonious Fit**		
Fitness Index	Critical Value	**Test Value**	Fitness Index	Critical Value	**Test Value**	Fitness Index	Critical Value	**Test Value**

RMSEA	<0.10	**0.065**	**CFI**	>0.95	**0.93**	**Chi-sq/df**	<5	**2.95**

Source: Hair et al. (2009) as cited in Ali (2017)

The results extracted through SEM, given as RMSEA= 0.065, CFI= 0.93, and chi-sq/df= 2.95 show the model's fitness, which makes possible further analysis. It is also evident from Table 3 that; the P-Value is significant at 0.05 for the effect of Parental Pressure for high marks (PPHM) on suicide intention (S.I.) among the students of secondary schools in the Mardan district of Khyber Pukhtunkhwa.

Table 3: The Direct Effect of Parental Pressure for High Marks on Suicide Intention (N=384)

PPHM	------->	**S.I.**	**Beta Estimates**	**C.R.**	**p**	**Result**
			0.890	.935	0.00	Significant

For further illustration of the correlation between the variables, the Pearson r correlation carried out.

Table 4: Correlation between Parental Pressure for High Marks (PPHM) and Suicide Intention (S.I.) (N=384)

	Students' Suicide Intention (S.I.)		
PPHM	PA	SCA	
PE	0.710**	0.771**	**Overall SI**
SA	0.765**	0.878**	
Overall PPHM			**0.835**

Note: [p**<0.01, p*<0.05 (sig: 2-tailed)], PE= Parents Expectations, SA= Students' Approach, PPHM= Parental Pressure for High Marks, SI= Students' Suicide Intention, PA= Personal Aspects, SCA= Social Aspects.

As Table 4 above is showing the values for correlation of both the dimensions P.A., SCA of S.I. and P.E., S.A. of PPHM has strong (at more than 0.5), significant (at 0.01), and positive correlation, as do the overall variables [ρ=0.835, p<0.01] therefore, a high and significant correlation was found between the variables.

Table 5: The Direct Effect of Parental Pressure for High Marks on Students' Dropout (N=384)

PPHM	------>	**SD**	**Beta Estimates**	**CR**	**p**	**Result**
			0.71	.943	0.00	Significant

For further illustration of the correlation between the variables, Pearson r correlation carried out.

Table 6: Correlation between Parental Pressure for High Marks (PPHM) and Students' Dropout (S.D.) (N=384)

	SD		
PPHM	PC	DM	
PE	0.606**	0.891**	**Overall SD**
SA	0.853**	0.753**	
	Overall PPHM		**0.891**

Note: [p**<0.01, p*<0.05 (sig: 2-tailed)], PE= Parents' Expectations. SA= Students' Approach; PPHM= Parental Pressure for High Marks, SD= Students' Dropout, PC= Personal Conflicts, DM= De-motivation.

Table 6 above is showing values for the correlation of the dimensions (P.C., D.M.) of S.D. and both the dimensions (P.E., S.A.) of PPHM as vital (at more than 0.5), significant (at 0.01), and positive, as do the overall variables [ρ=0.835, $p<0.01$] therefore a high and significant correlation exists between the variables.

Relationship between Parental Pressure for High Marks and Examination Phobia in English subject

To find the relationship as mentioned above the SEM technique used. The table below is showing the results.

Table 7: Relationship between Parental Pressure for High Marks and Examination Phobia in English subject (N=384)

PPHM	**------ >**	**EPH**	**Beta Estimates**	**C.R.**	**p**	**Result**
			0.052	0.921	0.00	Significant

Table 8: Correlation between Parental Pressure for High Marks (PPHM) and Examination Phobia in English subject (EPH) (N=384)

	EPH		
PPHM	LC	WOR	
PE	0.65**	0.71**	**Overall EPH**
SA	0.67**	0.73**	
	Overall PPHM		**0.82**

Note: [p**<0.01, p*<0.05 (sig: 2-tailed)], PE= Parents Expectations, SA= Students Approach, PPHM= Parental Pressure for High Marks, LC= Lack of Confidence, WOR= Worry

The analysis has shown that, the relationship [ρ=0.82, p<0.01] between PPHM and EPH is strong, positive, and significant and all the dimensions have high correlations [>0.50, p<0.01].

Relationship between Examination Phobia in English subject and Suicide Intention

Table 9 below shows a positive, high, and significant relationship between the variables.

Table 9: Examination Phobia in English subject and Suicide Intention (N=384)

			Beta Estimates	CR	p	Result
EPH	------>	**SI**	0.880	.852	0.00	Significant

Table 10: Correlation between Examination Phobia in English subject (EPH) Suicide Intention (N=384)

	SI		
EPH	SCA	PA	
WOR	0.87**	0.75**	**Overall SI**
LC	0.79**	0.81**	
Overall EPH			**0.92**

Note: [p**<0.01, p*<0.05 (sig: 2-tailed)], EPH= Examination Phobia, LC= Lack of Confidence, WOR= Worry, SI= Suicide Intention, PA= Personal Aspects, SCA= Social Aspects.

Relationship between Examination Phobia in English subject and Students' Dropout

Table 11 below shows a positive, high, and significant relationship between the variables.

Table 11: Examination Phobia in English subject and Students Dropout (N=384)

			Beta Estimates	CR	p	Result
EPH	------>	**SD**	0.796	.938	0.00	Significant

Table 12: Correlation between Examination Phobia in English subject (EPH) and Students' Dropout (N=384)

	SD		
EPH	DM	PC	
WOR	0.69**	0.88**	**Overall SD**
LC	0.89**	0.68**	

Overall EPH	**0.810**

Note: [p**<0.01, p*<0.05 (sig: 2-tailed)], EPH= Examination Phobia in English subject, LC= Lack of Confidence, WOR= Worry, SD= Students' Dropout, PC= Parents' Conflicts, DM= De-motivation.

The analysis has shown that, the relationship [ρ=0.81, p<0.01] between EPH and S.D. is strong, positive, and significant and all the dimensions have high correlations [>0.50, p<0.01].

Relationship between Parental Pressure for high marks, examination phobia in English subject, Suicide intention, and students' dropout

Table 13: Multiple Regression Weights (N=384)

		Beta Estimates	S.E	C.R	P	Results
**PPHM ----------> **	**EPH**	18.254	0.225	.932	0.00	Significant
**PPHM ----------> **	**SI**	-0.121	0,143	-1,03	**0.562**	**Insignificant**
**EPH ----------> **	**SI**	0.834	0.321	.843	0.00	Significant
**EPH ----------> **	**SD**	0.989	2.534	.898	0.00	Significant
**PPHM ----------> **	**SD**	-0.213	0.091	-0.153	**0.632**	**Insignificant**

Note: All the achieved levels are by the required fitness indices.

The demographic variables (Parents' Education "P.E." and Socio-Economic Status" SES")

Table 15: Moderation test for Parents' Education for the relationship between Parental Pressure for High Marks and Suicide Intention (N=384)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
PPHM ---> SI	.887	.217	8.344	0.00**	Significant
SI ---> P. Ed	.734	.099	2.588	.298	**Insignificant**
SI ---> PPHM x Parent' Education	-.133	.070	-.880	.709	**Insignificant**

[**Note:** p** < 0.01, p* < 0.05]

Table 16: Moderation test for Parents' Education for the relationship between Parental Pressure for High Marks and Students' Dropout (N=384)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
PPHM ---> SD	.921	.342	7.532	0.00**	Significant

SD ---> P.Ed	.821	.040	2.342	.421	**Insignificant**
SD---> PPHM x Parent' Education	-.144	.099	-.769	.821	**Insignificant**

[**Note:** p** < 0.01, p* < 0.05]

The analysis showed that the "parents' education" changes the relationship between "Parental Pressure for high marks" and "students' dropout" from a high, positive and significant to a weak, negative, and insignificant. Therefore, it concluded that the "parents' education" is a moderator for the stated relationship.

Table 17: Moderation test for Socio-Economic Status of parents, for the relationship between Parental Pressure for High Marks and Suicide Intention (N=384)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
PPHM ---> SI	.880	.464	8.432	0.00**	Significant
SI ---> SES	.871	.032	2.302	.341	**Insignificant**
SI---> PPHM x SES	-.041	.082	-.592	.541	**Insignificant**

[**Note:** p** < 0.01, p* < 0.05]

Fig 10: Showing Moderation for Parents' Education for the relationship between S.D. and PPHM

Table 18: Moderation test for Socio-Economic Status of parents, for the relationship between Parental Pressure for High Marks and Students' Dropout (N=384)

	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P	Result
PPHM ---> SD	.910	.593	4.657	0.00**	Significant
SD ---> SES	.860	.132	3.430	.544	**Insignificant**
SD---> PPHM x SES	-.077	.232	-.664	.564	**Insignificant**

[**Note:** p** < 0.01, p* < 0.05]

Fig 11: Showing Moderation for Parents' Socioeconomic Status for the relationship between S.D. and PPHM

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to determine the relationship between the Parental Pressure for high marks, exam phobia in English subject, students' suicide intention, and school dropout in the secondary schools of Mardan district in Pakistan. A conceptual framework developed for the relationship between the variables as suggested by the researchers such as; school dropout (Mughal et al., 2019), suicide intention (e.g., Khan & Hyder, 2006), exam phobia (Javed, 2011) and Parental Pressure for high marks (e.g., Khatoon & Parveen, 2009) in the Pakistani context.

This study has found a high correlation between the Parental Pressure for high marks and students suicide intention of the school-going children as evident from Table 4. The students have anger against the "Parental Pressure for high marks", but they cannot express, resulting in students'

suicide intention. These findings were inconsistent with different research studies (e.g., Daniel et al., 2009; McGirr et al., 2008).

Furthermore, this study has found a high correlation between Parental Pressure for high marks and students' dropout. Therefore, school dropout was considered one of the factors and challenging situations for low literacy rates. The researchers (e.g., Freuchen et al., 2012; Loh et al., 2012) have found that these challenging situations create disciplinary problems; which results in school dropout. Similarly, students' dropout is due to the external stressor (e.g., Bowers & Sprott, 2012; Elder et al., 2015) such as "Parental Pressure for high marks". The findings of this study were inconsistent with those stated above research studies.

Furthermore, an indirect relationship was found between the "Parental Pressure for high marks", "students' dropout" and "suicide intention" through the mediation of "examination phobia in English subject". The researchers (e.g., Sousa et al., 2017) reviewed 29 papers and associated the social and mental factors to suicidal intention. The findings of this study were inconsistent with those stated above research studies. It proved that the "Parental Pressure for high marks" creates an exam phobia in English subject (e.g., Ahmed, 2015; Dupere et al., 2015; Harkness et al., 2006; Horesh et al., 1999; Lee et al., 2009; McGirr et al., 2008). This stated exam phobia in English subject results in suicide intention and school dropout.

This study has also revealed parents' education is a moderator for the relationship between the variables shown in Figures 7 and 8. The parents with the educational background may positively expect their children, but not stressing their children to achieve high marks with a do or die situation as found by (Khatoon & Parveen, 2009). Supporting this study, different researchers (e.g., Ahsan, Iqbal & Farooq 2015; Kainuwa & Yusuf, 2013) have linked parents' education to students' education. The findings of this study were inconsistent with those stated above research studies.

It revealed that parents' socioeconomic status is a moderator for the relationship between the variables shown in Figures 9 and 10. Parents' healthy socioeconomic status can decrease the chance of suicide intention and students' dropout in the Pakistani context. The researchers supported the result (e.g., Carneiro & Heckman, 2003; Kainuwa & Yusuf, 2013; Murray, 2009; Zhang et al., 2013) who believed that the children with high socioeconomic status have less chance to be a dropout and commit suicide. The findings of this study were inconsistent with those stated above research studies.

CONCLUSION

The parents in the context are demanding their children to achieve high marks in secondary school examination, regardless of their ability and motivation. The students worry about the expected failure in their assigned targets. They assume the possibility of stopping the educational budget in case of failure. The parents' stated attitude is creating a psychological problem for the students, such as "examination phobia in English subject". The examination phobia in English subject leads to collapse, and thus drop out and suicide intention. This study has revealed a high correlation

between Parental Pressure for high marks, examination phobia in English subject, students' dropout, and suicide intention. This study found that the students whose parents are educated and have an excellent socioeconomic status are less suffering from examination phobia in English subject and school dropout and suicide intention.

This research suggests that the stated above problems should highlight in parents-teachers' council (PTC) meetings, and the parents should be made aware of the negative aspects of their stress over their children for high marks. In this way, the situation will be under control, and the students may be motivated to avoid their school-dropout and suicide intention. This study suggests that the parents might have high expectations, but should not stress their children for high marks with do or die situation. The students may be motivated for high achievement through a positive approach, and the rate of suicide intention and dropout will decrease to zero.

Alongside the empirical contribution, this study makes the theoretical contribution of showing an indirect relationship between Parental Pressure for high marks, examination phobia in English subject, suicide intention and students' dropout in the Pakistani context.

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