

TEACHER PREPARATION FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND PEACE EDUCATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF PUNJAB, PAKISTAN: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Violence in school is a major issue in secondary schools, especially in situations where teachers are given minimal hands-on training in how to prevent and intervene in students' aggression. This was a convergent mixed-methods study that explored the teacher training and school violence prevention strategies among secondary school teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. A questionnaire with 15 items was used to gather quantitative data from 280 teachers from urban and rural secondary schools on training adequacy, intervention strategies, self-efficacy, perceived training needs, and disciplinary practices. Semi structured interviews were used to gather qualitative data from 15 senior teachers. Descriptive statistics, selected correlations and multiple linear regression were used to analyze survey data, and thematic analysis was used to analyze interview data. Findings showed that training adequacy was low to moderate and the use of intervention strategies was relatively high, particularly in the areas of building positive relationships and consistently implementing classroom rules. Of the independent factors, only self-efficacy was found to be a significant predictor of use of the intervention strategy ($B = 0.229$, $\beta = .351$, $p < .001$), while the other factors (training adequacy, training gaps, location, gender, teaching experience) were not significant. The results of the interviews indicated that there was still heavy use of parental involvement, individual counseling, informal experience and in some instances, traditional disciplinary practices. The findings were integrated and indicate that current teacher preparation is not sufficiently practical and that confidence and applied classroom skills of teachers play a significant role in violence prevention. The study suggests that pre-service and in-service teacher education should be revised to incorporate conflict resolution, positive behavior support, restorative practices and early warning recognition and referral systems at school.

Keywords: Teacher training, school violence, secondary education, mixed methods, self-efficacy, Pakistan

Introduction

School violence is a worldwide concern that affects the education system, impacting students' safety, psychological health, school attendance, participation in school, and academic performance (UNESCO, 2019). Violence in school can be manifested through physical, bullying, verbal, intimidation, humiliation or psychological and relational violence. Teachers, who spend time with students every day, are uniquely placed to be aware of early warning signs, defuse conflict, model non-violent communication, and foster classroom environments that make it less likely that students will be aggressive (Johnson et al., 2011; Wang & Degol, 2016).

Violence prevention can be challenging in the development of educational systems due to a variety of factors, including overcrowded classrooms, a lack of counselling support, poor referral processes and inadequate teacher training. Especially in Pakistan, the issue is of great significance as large number of adolescents attend school and at this age, their experiences of peer relationships, identity development, emotional regulation and discipline would have a significant influence on their future behaviours. While there is growing policy talk of safe schools and child-friendly classrooms, many teachers still feel inadequately prepared to deal with violent and aggressive student behaviours.

Teacher training plays a key role in this issue as school violence prevention goes beyond discipline. Teachers should be aware of signs of risk, employ positive behaviour support, engage parents in positive communication, know how to handle conflict, avoid harmful punitive practices, and make referrals to appropriate support systems for serious cases. Evidence-based classroom management and whole-school safety strategies are more effective when teachers receive practical training and professional development (Cornell et al., 2018; Simonsen et al., 2008). But, the teacher education in South Asian contexts is criticized for giving more importance to theory than to practical response in the classroom.

The present study fills this gap by exploring teachers' perceptions of training adequacy, their existing approaches to violence prevention, and the influence of self-efficacy on teachers' approach to violence prevention. The study will use a survey and

teacher interviews to produce measurable patterns and contextually explain them. The results will be used for teacher education reform, professional development planning and school-level violence prevention in Punjab, Pakistan.

Research Objectives and Hypotheses

The primary objective of the study was to examine the relationship between teacher training and the strategies secondary school teachers use to prevent or reduce school violence in Punjab, Pakistan. The specific objectives were to assess perceived training adequacy, identify commonly used intervention strategies, examine the relationship among training adequacy, self-efficacy, perceived training gaps, and intervention strategy use, and explore teachers' perceived training needs through qualitative interviews.

Based on the literature and available measures, three hypotheses were tested. H1: Training adequacy is positively associated with intervention strategy use. H2: Teacher self-efficacy is positively associated with intervention strategy use. H3: Perceived training gaps are negatively associated with intervention strategy use. Teacher location, gender, and teaching experience were included as control variables in the regression model rather than as separate hypotheses because the available summary data did not include location-specific training adequacy means.

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

Ecological systems theory, which understands that human development and behaviour is influenced by the interactions between the individual, family, school, community and broader social systems, guides this study (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). From this point of view, school violence isn't just a consequence of the actions of individual students, it's also shaped by classroom atmosphere, teacher reactions, school norms, family engagement, community environments and policy frameworks. Teachers are key players in this ecology as they are the ones who make school expectations a reality in the classroom.

Self-efficacy theory is also used as a support in the study. Bandura (1977) suggested that people's perceptions of their own competence affect their efforts to perform a task, their persistence at it and their actions when faced with a difficult task. When it comes to school violence, teachers who are

confident in their ability to handle conflict are more likely to employ proactive strategies, while teachers who are less confident may be hesitant to intervene, relying too heavily on parents or administrators, or relying on punitive disciplinary practices.

Teacher Training and Violence Prevention

School violence prevention research has identified teacher preparation in the areas of classroom management, threat assessment, conflict resolution, positive behavior support, and restorative response as key areas of concern. Research on threat assessment indicates that trained school staff can determine if a threat is serious or not more accurately when they employ some structured procedures as opposed to relying on informal judgment alone (Cornell et al., 2018). Evidence-based research on classroom management also highlights the need to educate and assist teachers in strategies that will reduce the likelihood of disruptive behavior from occurring (Simonsen et al., 2008).

Positive behavioral interventions and supports and associated whole-school approaches focus on proactive teaching of expected behaviours, consistent rule enforcement, positive reinforcement of positive behaviours and data-driven intervention. These approaches are applicable to violence prevention as they change the teacher's role from reactive punishment to planned prevention. Meanwhile, teachers' attitudes are important. A disrespectful or embarrassing response from the teacher can cause an increase in aggression among students, while a respectful relationship and clear expectations can help build trust and decrease aggression.

School Violence Prevention in the Pakistani Context

There are several structural challenges in the secondary education system in Pakistan such as large classes, inadequate support services for students, inconsistent teacher professional development and inconsistent application of child protection and school safety guidelines. In these situations, teachers might be required to deal with difficult student conduct, with limited training, mentoring or institutional support. The original manuscript also mentions that the teacher in Punjab can use any of the three methods of discipline based on his

experience and resources: parental involvement, individual counseling and traditional discipline.

Local studies have addressed the topics of corporal punishment, classroom management and school safety, but have less empirical evidence that teacher training is linked to the strategies teachers employ to decrease violence. The practical relationship between training adequacy, teacher self-efficacy, perceived training gaps and intervention strategy use is therefore the focus of this study.

Research Method

Research Design

The design used was convergent parallel mixed methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative survey data and qualitative interview data were gathered simultaneously, analyzed individually and combined in the interpretation. This design was suitable for the quantitative strand which was used to identify statistical patterns in teacher perceptions and practices, and the qualitative strand which was used to explain teacher experiences, strategies and training needs.

Sample Size Justification

The sample size of the quantitative approach was determined by Cochran's (1977) formula for cross-sectional survey which is $n = (Z^2 \times p \times q) / e^2$. The minimum number of respondents required for the sample was approximately 267 respondents at a 95% confidence level ($Z = 1.96$) with maximum variability ($p = .50$) and 6% margin of error ($e = .06$). The target sample was 297 participants after taking into account a 10% estimated non-response rate. A total of 280 valid responses were received, yielding a response rate of 94.3% which is higher than the minimum sample needed to detect moderate regression effects with 6 predictors.

Participants and Sampling

The target population was secondary school teachers of 9th and 10th grade of Punjab, Pakistan. Multistage stratified sampling technique was employed. Five districts of Punjab were selected namely Lahore, Faisalabad, Multan, Rawalpindi and Bahawalpur. In these districts, schools were divided into urban and rural schools and teachers from selected schools were invited to participate. The final sample included 280 teachers, of whom 117 (41.8%) were from urban schools and 163 (58.2%) were from rural schools. In addition, 15 senior

teachers, three from each selected district, were purposively selected for semi-structured interviews.

Research Instruments

The survey instrument consisted of demographic items and a 15-item questionnaire on teacher training and violence prevention. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The survey included subscales for training adequacy, intervention strategies, training gaps, and disciplinary approaches, along with a single self-efficacy item. The formal training item was treated as a three-category ordinal item with response options of no training, somewhat trained, and formal training.

Training Adequacy included three items assessing whether teacher training covered early signs of violence, conflict resolution, and positive behavior management. Intervention Strategies included five items assessing positive reinforcement, parental involvement, individual counseling, consistent classroom rules, and positive relationships. There were three training Gaps, one of which was reverse coded to indicate greater perceived training gaps. There were two items under Disciplinary Approaches that dealt with teacher harshness and corporal punishment. A qualitative interview guide was developed to elicit information from teachers regarding their experience with school violence, their training on school violence, their strategies for dealing with school violence, and their needs for future school violence training.

Validity and Reliability

Experts' review of two academics in educational psychology and research methodology was used to determine content validity. A pilot test of the questionnaire was conducted with 30 teachers who were not part of the sample, resulting in some minor changes in the wording of the questionnaire. The internal consistency was acceptable for the Training Adequacy ($\alpha = .755$) and Intervention Strategies ($\alpha = .776$). Reliability was adequate but not high for Training Gaps ($\alpha = .614$) and Disciplinary Approaches ($\alpha = .631$) and suitable for exploratory interpretation. Future studies should include more items, or inter-item correlation and Spearman-Brown reliability, in Disciplinary Approaches since it only had two items.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection period was from September to December 2024. The study obtained permission from the school principals and the participating teachers were informed of the purpose of the study. Written informed consent was provided and participants were told that the participation was voluntary and that their answers would be kept confidential. On-site questionnaires were filled out and collected. Qualitative interviews were held in Urdu with a duration of about 25-40 minutes, in the private schools. The interviews were recorded with consent, verbatim transcribed and analysed.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, selected Pearson correlations, and multiple linear regression analysis were used to analyze quantitative data. The regression model was used with Intervention Strategies as the dependent variable. Training Adequacy, Self-Efficacy, Training Gaps, location, gender and teaching experience were used as predictors. For better interpretation, confidence intervals for the regression coefficients were added. Thematic analysis of qualitative interview data was carried out, based on the method proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021). The research team compared codes, and reached consensus through discussion when disagreements arose. The qualitative results were combined with the quantitative results using a joint display.

Ethical Considerations

The study was with adults, and the topic was school violence and may have been a sensitive issue in the discipline. So the confidentiality and anonymity were paramount. Participants should not be identified by the name of the teacher, school or district. The study was approved by the institutional review board (Approval No. EOI 423). All participants gave written informed consent. Throughout, confidentiality and anonymity were respected.

Results

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the 280 teachers who participated. The sample included 154 male teachers (55.0%) and 126 female teachers (45.0%). The majority of the respondents were in the age group 36-45 and over half of them were working in rural schools. About one-third indicated that they had been formally trained in school violence prevention; one-third indicated that

they had not been trained; and the other teachers indicated that they had been partially or informally trained.

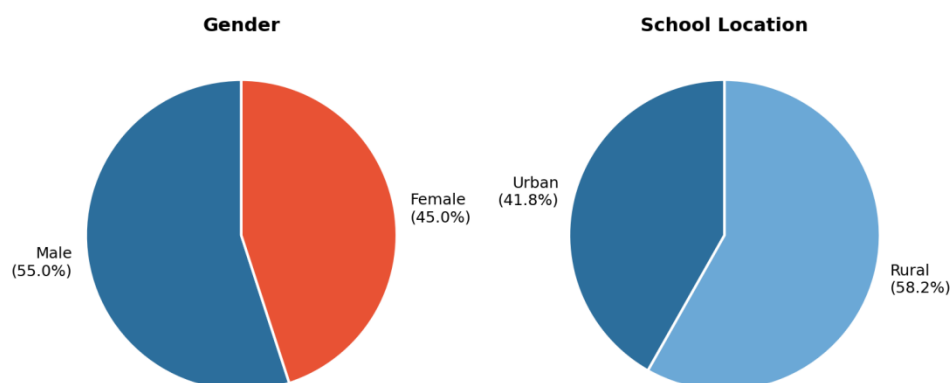
Table 1: *Demographic Characteristics of Participating Teachers*

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	154	55.0
	Female	126	45.0
Age group	25-35 years	84	30.0
	36-45 years	98	35.0
	46-55 years	70	25.0
	55+ years	28	10.0
Teaching experience	1-5 years	56	20.0
	6-10 years	84	30.0
	11-15 years	78	27.9
	16+ years	62	22.1
Location	Urban	117	41.8
	Rural	163	58.2
Qualification	BA/BSc	42	15.0
	MA/MSc	140	50.0
	MPhil	84	30.0
	PhD	14	5.0

Note. N = 280.

Demographic profile of participating secondary school teachers (N = 280). Left: gender distribution. Right: school location distribution.

Figure 4. Demographic Profile of Participating Teachers (N = 280)



Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items

Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations of the items. Building positive relationships with students and implementing classroom rules consistently had the highest mean scores, indicating that teachers were likely to endorse both relational

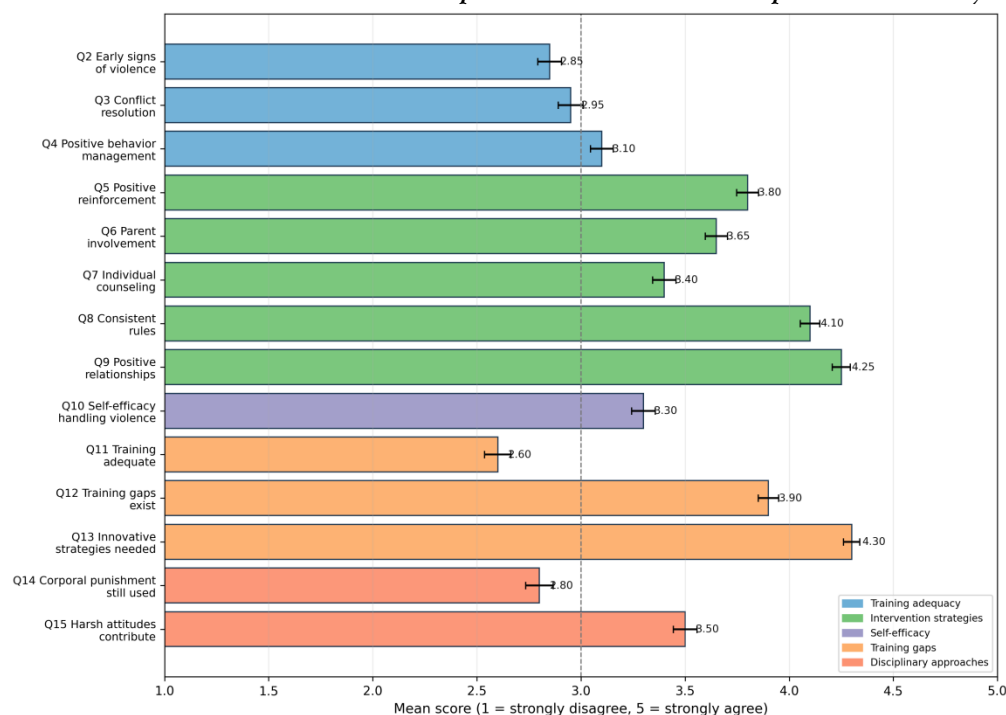
and rule-based prevention strategies. The statement that least rated as being addressed in training, "school violence is addressed in training in an adequate manner," suggested that there is a lack of satisfaction with the current training.

Table 2: *Descriptive Statistics for Survey Items*

Item	Construct	Statement	M	SD
Q2	Training adequacy	Early signs of violence	2.85	0.95
Q3	Training adequacy	Conflict resolution	2.95	1.00
Q4	Training adequacy	Positive behavior management	3.10	0.92
Q5	Intervention strategies	Positive reinforcement	3.80	0.88
Q6	Intervention strategies	Parent involvement	3.65	0.90
Q7	Intervention strategies	Individual counseling	3.40	0.95
Q8	Intervention strategies	Consistent rules	4.10	0.78
Q9	Intervention strategies	Positive relationships	4.25	0.72
Q10	Self-efficacy	Self-efficacy handling violence	3.30	0.95
Q11	Training gaps	Training adequate	2.60	1.05
Q12	Training gaps	Training gaps exist	3.90	0.82
Q13	Training gaps	Innovative strategies needed	4.30	0.65
Q14	Disciplinary approaches	Corporal punishment still used	2.80	1.10
Q15	Disciplinary approaches	Harsh attitudes contribute	3.50	0.95

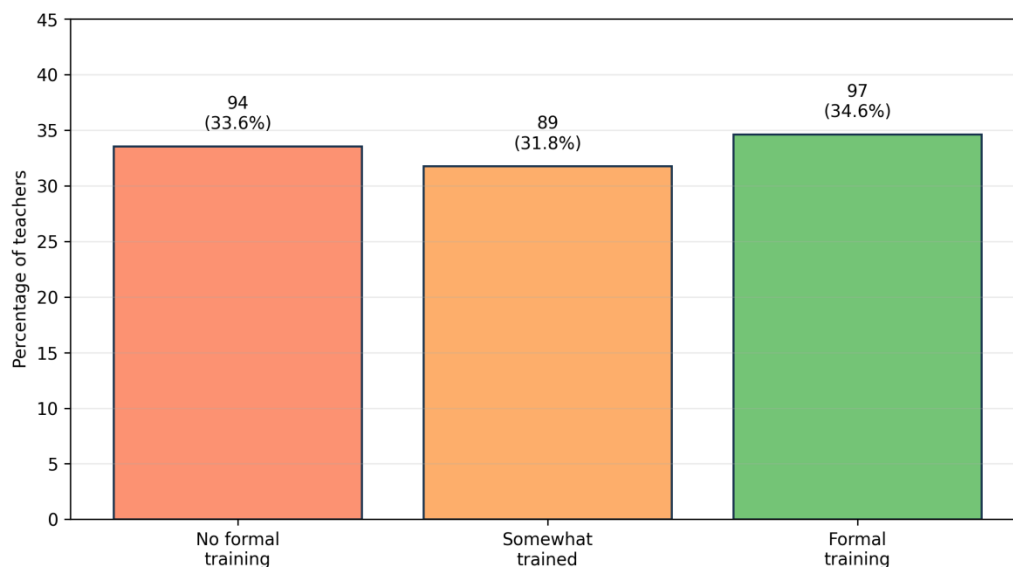
Note. Items were rated from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Figure 1: Mean scores of teacher responses on school violence prevention survey items.



Note. The dashed vertical line marks the scale midpoint. Error bars represent standard errors. Items are color-coded by construct.

Figure 2 Formal training receipt on school violence prevention among participating teachers.



Note. Percentages are based on N = 280. The three response categories were no formal training, partial or somewhat training, and formal training.

Reliability and Correlation Results

Table 3 reports reliability coefficients for the main subscales. Table 4 reports selected correlations

directly relevant to the study hypotheses. Self-efficacy had a significant positive relationship with intervention strategy use ($r = .348, p < .01$). Training adequacy showed a small positive relationship with intervention strategy use that did not reach conventional significance ($r = .112, p = .062$).

Training gaps were not meaningfully related to intervention strategy use ($r = .006$, $p = .921$).

Table 3: *Reliability Coefficients for Subscales*

Subscale	Items	No. of items	Cronbach's α
Training Adequacy	Q2, Q3, Q4	3	.755
Intervention Strategies	Q5, Q6, Q7, Q8, Q9	5	.776
Training Gaps	Q11R, Q12, Q13	3	.614
Disciplinary Approaches	Q14, Q15	2	.631

Note. Q11R indicates that Q11 was reverse-coded so that higher values indicate greater perceived training gaps.

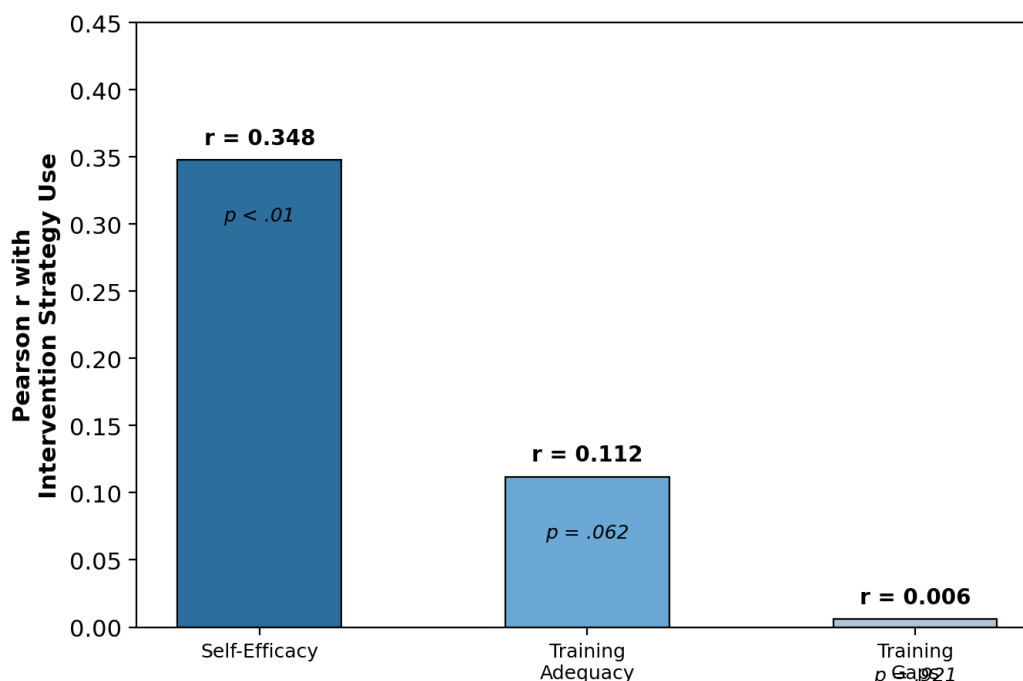
Table 4: *Selected Correlations Among Study Variables*

Variable pair	r	p	Interpretation
Training Adequacy - Intervention Strategies	.112	.062	Small positive, not statistically significant
Self-Efficacy - Intervention Strategies	.348	< .01	Moderate positive and statistically significant
Training Gaps - Intervention Strategies	.006	.921	Negligible and not statistically significant
Disciplinary Approaches - Intervention Strategies	.025	Not reported	Negligible relationship

Note. Only hypothesis-relevant and interpretable correlations are reported because the original correlation matrix did not contain all pairwise p values.

Pearson correlations between key predictor variables and intervention strategy use. Error bars are not applicable for single r values; significance levels are indicated.

Figure 5. Correlates of Intervention Strategy Use



Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression was used to predict Intervention Strategies based on Training Adequacy, Self-Efficacy, Training Gaps, location, gender and teaching experience. The overall model was statistically significant, $F(6, 273) = 7.00$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .133$, adjusted $R^2 = .114$. As seen in Table 5, the only individual predictor that was significant

was Self-Efficacy, which suggests that teachers with higher self-efficacy in dealing with violent situations were more likely to use proactive intervention strategies. When other variables were controlled for, Training Adequacy, Training Gaps, location, gender and experience were not significant independent predictors.

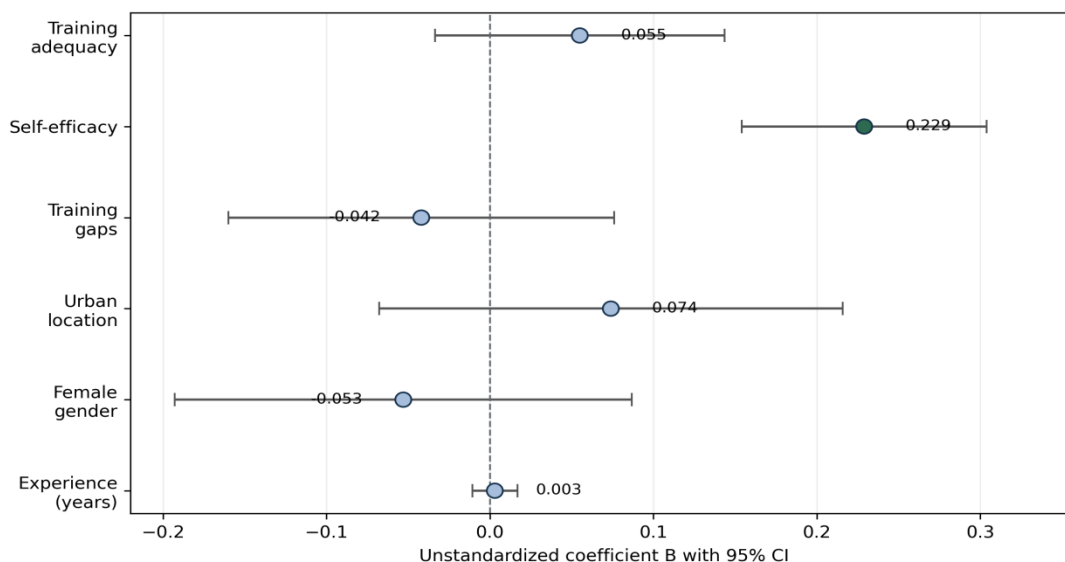
Table 5: *Multiple Linear Regression Predicting Intervention Strategy Use*

Predictor	B	SE B	95% CI for B	β	t	p
Constant	3.028	0.281	[2.475, 3.581]	~	10.776	< .001
Training Adequacy	0.055	0.045	[-0.034, 0.144]	.071	1.234	.218
Self-Efficacy	0.229	0.038	[0.154, 0.304]	.351	6.087	< .001
Training Gaps	-0.042	0.060	[-0.160, 0.076]	-.041	-0.709	.479
Location (Urban)	0.074	0.072	[-0.068, 0.216]	.059	1.023	.307
Gender (Female)	-0.053	0.071	[-0.193, 0.087]	-.042	-0.742	.459
Experience (years)	0.003	0.007	[-0.011, 0.017]	.026	0.449	.653

Note. $R^2 = .133$; adjusted $R^2 = .114$. Confidence intervals were calculated from the reported standard errors using the t approximation for $df = 273$.

Location and gender were dummy coded, with rural and male teachers as reference groups.

Figure 3 Regression coefficients predicting intervention strategy use.



Note. The plot displays unstandardized coefficients with 95% confidence intervals. Self-efficacy was the only significant predictor.

Qualitative Findings

The teacher interviews were analysed thematically and yielded four themes to explain and elaborate on the survey results. The themes indicate that teachers employed a range of practical approaches, with many of these being picked up informally.

Theme 1: Reliance on Traditional Disciplinary Approaches

Some of the interviewees recognised that physical discipline – such as using a stick – is still sometimes done informally despite the law and professional disapproval. One rural teacher commented, “Sometimes you just have to, when a student is really violent and persistent, we know that's not allowed, but sometimes there's no other way” (Teacher 7, rural, 12 years' experience). This is in line with the moderate item score on the use of corporal punishment.

Theme 2: Parental Involvement as a Primary Strategy

Parental involvement was reported as being a first-line response to violent behaviour, and this was a common practice among teachers. One urban teacher said, “I call the parents right away. Usually the parents don't know and when they do, the child's behavior improves” (Teacher 3, urban, 8 years' experience). This theme was in line with the

relatively high endorsement of parent involvement in the survey.

Theme 3: Individual Counseling and Positive Reinforcement

Individual counselling and positive reinforcement were also reported as used by teachers. One senior teacher said: “I speak to the student individually, attempt to appreciate his issues, and reward good behaviour” (Teacher 11, rural, 20 years' experience). But it was noted that these strategies were largely acquired from experiences in the workplace, and not from pre-service teacher education.

Theme 4: Perceived Inadequacy of Teacher Training

One of the dominant themes was the lack of perceived adequate teacher preparation. One teacher commented, “We were not trained at all in B.Ed. or M.Ed. on how to deal with violent students, it is all on the job training” (Teacher 5, urban, 6 years' experience). Another rural teacher commented, “The training programmes are theoretical and don't prepare you for the real classroom challenges” (Teacher 14, rural, 15 years). These statements corroborate the quantitative results indicating low to moderate training adequacy, and high perceived training gaps.

Mixed-Methods Integration

The quantitative and qualitative results are combined in Table 6. The integration reveals a convergence between the statistical results and the themes of the interviews: self-efficacy and informal experience seemed to be more influential than

formal experience, and teachers used several intervention strategies. The qualitative data accounted for the lack of a direct relationship between training adequacy and the use of

intervention strategies: teachers felt that training was theoretical, lacking, and not related to actual classroom violence.

Table 6: *Bjoint Display of Quantitative and Qualitative Findings*

Quantitative result	Qualitative theme	Type of integration	Interpretive conclusion
Self-efficacy significantly predicted intervention strategy use.	Teachers described confidence built through experience.	Convergence	Practical confidence appears central to violence-prevention practice.
Training adequacy was low-to-moderate and not a significant independent predictor.	Teachers reported that B.Ed./M.Ed. and in-service programmes were theoretical.	Expansion	Current training may not be practical enough to shape classroom strategy use.
Parent involvement and positive relationships received high item scores.	Teachers described calling parents and counseling students individually.	Convergence	Teachers are using relational and family-linked strategies, often without formal preparation.
Corporal punishment remained moderately endorsed.	Teachers acknowledged that banned punitive methods may still be used informally.	Convergence with concern	Training must include alternatives to punishment, legal awareness, and restorative practices.

Note. The joint display supports the mixed-methods conclusion that teacher training reform should focus on applied skills, confidence building, and non-violent classroom management.

Discussion

This mixed-methods study examined the relationship between teacher training and school violence prevention strategies among secondary school teachers in Punjab, Pakistan. The findings show that teachers reported relatively frequent use of positive relationships, consistent classroom rules, parental involvement, and individual counseling. They also reported low to moderate training adequacy and significant training gaps, however. Teacher self-efficacy (not formal training adequacy) was the best predictor of intervention strategy use. This central role of self-efficacy is in line with Bandura's (1977) theory which states that confidence has an impact on action, persistence and choice of behaviour in difficult situations. Teachers who felt they could manage violent situations were more likely to take proactive measures in preventing violence. This means that prevention training should not just be about information, but about

developing confidence to prevent violence through role play, case discussion, mentoring, guided practice, and feedback.

The lack of a significant effect of training adequacy is also important. Does not imply that teacher training is not important. The qualitative results, however, indicate that the training teachers had received might have been too conceptual or limited to impact classroom practices. The teachers' responses that they acquired knowledge of violence-management skills primarily through experience suggest that there is a disconnect between teacher training and classroom needs.

The results also bring up concerns with regard to disciplinary measures. Positive relationships and consistent rules were strongly supported but interviewees recognised that there is the potential for informal punitive practices. It has serious consequences for teacher education. Corporal punishment, humiliation and negative attitudes of teachers, as disciplinary practices, must be addressed directly in training programs as part of the school violence that may trigger student aggression and erode trust.

The findings are integrated and are used to inform a practical reform agenda. Teacher training in Punjab should involve teacher training modules on conflict resolution, positive behaviour support, restorative practices, child protection, early identification of risk for violence, parent engagement, and school referral procedure. Training should be repeated, practice-based and tied to school-level systems of support, and not one-off, theoretical training.

Limitations

A few caveats should be noted. Firstly, a cross-sectional design does not allow causal conclusions to be drawn. The study can illustrate relationships between self-efficacy, training adequacy, and intervention strategies, but cannot establish a cause-and-effect relationship between self-efficacy and strategy use. Second, self-report data were used and may be subject to social desirability, particularly for more sensitive items like corporal punishment. Third, the sample comprised of teachers from 5 districts and urban and rural areas, but it may not represent all secondary teachers of Punjab or Pakistan. Fourth, the original data were clustered at the district and school level, and the data provided for summary results were not suitable for cluster-robust or multilevel analysis. In future studies, school-level clustering should be taken into account. Fifth, two subscales had marginal reliability, which indicates that they need to be expanded in future research.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The study concludes that the teacher training programme in Punjab is not yet well prepared in order to prevent and manage school violence. Several constructive practices, such as positive relationships, consistent rules, parental involvement and individual counseling are being used, but they seem to be more experientially based and depend on personal experience and self-efficacy than systematic training. Self-efficacy was the most significant predictor of use of intervention strategy, highlighting the need to build teacher confidence as an essential teacher preparation objective. Based on the findings, four recommendations are proposed. First, pre-service and in-service teacher education should include compulsory modules on school violence prevention, conflict resolution, positive behavior support, restorative discipline,

child protection, and early identification of risk. Second, professional development should use experiential methods such as role-play, case-based learning, simulated classroom scenarios, and supervised practice to strengthen teacher self-efficacy. Third, schools should establish support systems such as mentoring, referral pathways, parent-teacher coordination, and access to counseling or psychological support. Fourth, teacher training reforms should be monitored through follow-up evaluation to determine whether teachers' knowledge, confidence, and classroom practices actually improve after training.

Funding

No external funding was reported for this study.

Conflict of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

Data Availability Statement

The dataset and interview transcripts are not publicly available because they may contain sensitive information about school practices and teacher experiences. An anonymized dataset may be made available by the author on reasonable request, subject to institutional permission and ethical approval.

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