

Effects Of Displacement On Academic Motivation, Self Efficacy, And Prevalence Of PTSD In Undergraduate Students Of Selected Public Sector Universities In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

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Abstract

The current research study investigated the long term effects of the internal displacement that occurred in Swat and Malakand districts in the year 2009. It was hypothesized that displaced students will score low on the academic motivation scale, general self Efficacy scale and will report symptoms of PTSD as compared to undisplaced students.

The sample consisted of N=400 undergraduate students of three selected public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. There were n=100 displaced students from university of Swat, n=100 displaced students from university of Malakand and n= 200 undisplaced students from university of Peshawar. For assessment three scales were used e.g. Academic motivation scale, General Self Efficacy Scale and impact of Event- scale- revised.

Statistical analysis reveals decreased academic motivation of the students of university of Swat and university of Malakand. However, displaced male students showed high academic motivation as compared to displaced female students. Results also confirmed the prevalence of PTSD among displaced students. These findings suggest that self Efficacy is positively correlated with academic motivation while PTSD is negatively correlated with academic motivation.

Keywords: Displacement, Academic motivation, self-Efficacy scale, PTSD, Universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Introduction

Nowadays it is believed that internal displacement is one of the most overwhelming challenges to humanity. It is becoming progressively more obvious that the most critical humanitarian dilemma and an intolerant matter faced by the entire community is considered to be internal displacement (Kunder, 1999). A survey report by International Committee of the Red Cross (2009) shows that globally, of conflict affected people in almost eight countries, fifty six percent were found to be displaced. Furthermore, in some countries the percentage of internally displaced persons is higher i.e. eighty percent in Afghanistan and ninety percent in Liberia (ICRC, 2009). The reasons of displacement in different parts of the world are multifaceted and complex.

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Unfortunately, akin to many other countries of the world, Pakistan also has become the victim of terrorism, armed conflicts and generalized violence. After the 9/11 event in 2001, Pakistan decided to take part in the “War Against Terror” and consequently, Pak Army started war against militants. (Aslam, 2012). As a result of terrorism and insurgency operations, conflicts arose between armed forces and militants in the form of military operations. Those military actions were taken to control the sectarian violence, terrorism and militancy issues in the country that unfortunately become one of the main causes of large scale internal displacement in Pakistan. .

Literature review

Review of the literature showed that young students who have been directly exposed to trauma and reported symptoms of PTSD, showed deterioration in their academic performances when left untreated. Furthermore, they refused to continue their education. For this reason the psychological and social needs of war affected and displaced children have been the key concern for both the psychologists and educationalist. Their main aim is to recognize and remove the ill-effects and undesirable consequences of traumas like war, terrorism and displacement. Additionally, to bring such children back to normal life and make them productive citizens is also the objective of such researchers. As this study has been done on the school and college students, it gives a clue toward the relationship of PTSD and students’ academic interests and performances.

From the above mentioned literature, it can be concluded that internal displacement due to any reason affects those who have been displaced, in a number of ways. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, internal displacement occurred as a result of terrorists’ activities in Northern areas. That internal displacement left long lasting adverse impacts on the displaced people of those regions in general and on students in particular. The reasons for these were severe damages to the infrastructure of education system of the province. Different studies have been done on school children in this regard, but no researches have been found on under-graduate students of the province. So the current study will be conducted to know about the psychological effects of displacement due to terrorism on the latter group of students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In Pakistan, particularly in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa the “War Against Terror” in the Malakand Division have affected people in every aspect of life i.e. economical, social, physical and psychological. The militancy issues and terrorist attacks were considered to be on the climax from 2007 to 2009 because they killed many local leaders, nominated agents of district government, civil society members and large number of security recruits especially in Swat and Malakand districts. Therefore, the people of the province became amotivated, hopeless, uncertain regarding their future, discouraged and fearful as there left no choice for them except to leave their homeland and save their lives.

Consequently, there were large numbers of people displaced as a result of these military conflicts and terrorist activities in north-western regions of the country since 2004. These displacements reached to their peak by the end of year 2008 when there were registered more or less four million internally displaced people out of which about 2.3 million were from Malakand district (IDMC Pakistan, 2013).

In addition to these damages, educational set up has also been disturbed adversely to greater extent. In a report of the Department of Education, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, it was stated that in this province students have been affected particularly to larger degree after being displaced due to military operations in their areas. This was because of destruction of the school buildings there i.e. sixty five percent schools in Swat District and thirty five percent in Buner, Upper and Lower Dir, Shangla and Malakand district (Ali, 2009). After gaining power in majority areas of Swat, militants restricted women to their homes. Also they were not allowed to go outside to the market or even for medical treatment without their agnatic relative and without being veiled as well (HRCP, 2010). In addition to such confinements, females’ admittance to

education was restricted by ruination of more than seventy percent girls' schools through blasting and burning. Consequently, the growth rate of females' education got adversely affected to considerable level in Swat (EDSR, 2008).

Generally it has been found that displaced children due to any kind of trauma or disaster are usually affected in three main aspects i.e. physically, psychologically and educationally. Students are the core of education system and any kind of harm to education system directly affects the students' attitudes and motivation toward their studies. Resultantly, not only the mental health of students but their academic motivation and self efficacy have also been shaken considerably, which may be due to the fact that motivation play a key role in learning and it is basically the academic motivation that is working behind academic performances and achievements. Hence after facing the war situation and pathetic circumstances during and after migration, it seemed difficult for the students to sustain their self confidence and motivation regarding the studies.

Methodology

Sample

The sample comprised of N=400 under-graduate students of three selected public sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including an equal number of boys and girls with an age range of 18-23 years. Sample has been taken from University of Swat; n=100, University of Malakand; n=100 and University of Peshawar; n=200. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample for this study.

Inclusion Criteria

Internally displaced, under-graduate students of University of Swat and University of Malakand have been included in the sample. For comparison purpose, undisplaced under-graduate students of University of Peshawar have been included in the sample. The age range of all the selected students was 18-23.

Exclusion Criteria

Students below the age of 16 years and above the age of 23 years, those who were doing jobs along with their studies, physically handicapped or suffering from any psychological disorder prior to displacement have been excluded from the sample. Moreover, those students who have been exposed to trauma other than terrorism were also not included in the sample.

Procedure

In order to collect the required information from the participants, permission was taken from the administrations of the University of Swat, University of Malakand and University of Peshawar. Afterward, consent was taken from students regarding their participation in the study. Using the technique of purposive sampling, participants were chosen for the study and demographic information was collected to make sure that the sample is according to the requirement of the research. After establishing the rapport, participants were given the related instructions regarding the questionnaires i.e. Academic Motivation Scale, General Self Efficacy Scale and Impact of Event Scale-Revised. Each participant was instructed to fill all of the questionnaires precisely and entirely which were then collected, after making sure that all of those have been marked properly and entirely.

RESULTS

The data was analyzed with the help of SPSS 17.0. t-test was applied to measure the significance of differences between the means of displaced and undisplaced girls and boys.

Moreover, coefficient of correlation was used for measuring the nature and extent of relationship among variables like self efficacy, academic motivation and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

DISCUSSION

The current research was aimed to investigate about the extent up to which student population of Malakand and Swat districts have been affected after the conflict induced displacement occurred there in 2009. In this regard, some assumptions were made to investigate about the relationships and impact of different variables on the displaced youth of above mentioned regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. As a matter of fact, students serve as the nucleus of an education system and these are the education and health care systems that have been disrupted the most as a result of armed conflicts in Malakand and Swat districts. Therefore, there is a great need to investigate about the academic status of those adolescents who have been displaced.

In this regard it was assumed that displaced students would have lower academic motivation as compared to undisplaced students. Analysis of the data shows that there are significant mean differences in the scores of displaced undergraduate students of University of Malakand and University of Swat and of the undisplaced undergraduate students of University of Peshawar, on the measures of Academic Motivation Scale. These findings prove the first hypothesis i.e. those students, who had been displaced, will score low on Academic Motivation Scale.

These findings showed that it was not only the trauma of displacement that affected them but the miserable conditions they faced after the displacement has made a deep impact on them. The obstacles children found in their path of education were death of parents, over responsibilities of taking care of their family members, earning for their family, frequently changing of schools, financial instabilities, quality of education, discrimination and adjustment problems in new schools. The miserable circumstances that has been faced by adolescents of Malakand and Swat districts during the armed conflicts in 2009, had negatively affected their educational outcomes. That was not only the trauma of military operations or the consequent migration that left its impact on the youth but the pathetic conditions during and after displacement. Rosenfeld, Caye, Ayalon and Lahad (2005) stated that children has a great chance of developing serious educational problems after facing any kind of natural disaster, terrorist attacks, wars, military operations or some technical mishaps.

Second hypothesis was about exploring the relationship of gender differences and academic motivation. It was assumed that male students will score high on the Academic Motivation Scale as compared to female students. Analysis of the data shows that the results are significant and in line with previous studies.

Hakan and Munire (2014) conducted a study on 750 undergraduate students of different academic departments of Yildiz Technical University, Istanbul, Turkey. Academic Motivation Scale has been used to measure different aspects of academic motivation e.g. intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, amotivation and their relationship with gender and grade differences. Results showed that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation of the students were above the medium level while amotivation was found to be low. Moreover, boys were found to be more motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically and scored low on amotivation sub scale as compared to girls. Also, significant differences were found between the scores of girls and boys with references to academic grades. Smith, Sinclair and Chapman (2002) presented an explanation of boys showing higher academic motivation in their study. According to the findings of their research boys attribute their success more with internal stable causes like efforts, hard work, future goal orientation, abilities and interest etc. While girls attribute their success mostly to external causes like luck. Furthermore, the reason for boys showing more academic motivation can be attributed to the concern about their image in the class. It was

found in a study that boys are more concerned with their positive image in the class and in front of others that make them motivate toward their academics (Ryan, Hicks & Midgley, 1997). In a study by Patrick, Ryan and Pintrich (1999) and Amezcua & Pichardo, (2000), there were found gender differences while studying the components of academic motivation i.e. intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation and academic self concept. It was found that boys showed higher extrinsic motivation as compared to girls. This difference can be attributed to a fact that usually boys are comparatively more job oriented.

Third hypothesis stated that Students, who score high on the Self Efficacy Scale, will score high on the Academic Motivation Scale. The correlation coefficient of self efficacy and academic motivation of students indicates a strong positive correlation between self efficacy and academic motivation. These results are in consistence with other studies. Schunk (2011) investigated academic motivation in terms of individual judgment of ones performances. Moreover, other related constructs of self efficacy were also examined e.g. perceived control, outcome expectations, perceived value of outcomes, attributions, and self-concept. Results showed that self efficacy is the best predictor of academic motivation. Yusuf (2011) conducted a research examining the relationship of self efficacy achievement motivation with academic success and self regulated strategies of students. Results show a significant impact of self efficacy on the attainment of learning goals. Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara and Pastorelli (2008) also found a strong multifaceted impact of self efficacy on the academic motivation.

According to the fourth hypothesis i.e. students, who had been displaced, will score high on the Impact of Event Scale Revised. The results are significant in accordance with other studies in this regard. Same results were found in a study in which the impact of violent and non violent experiences of war on adjustment of refugee children of Bosnia has been investigated. Seven hundred and ninety one children with age range of six to sixteen years were selected. These children were assessed on Impact of Event Scale for PTSD reaction index, Children's Depression Inventory, Child Behavior Checklist and War Experience Questionnaire. Results showed forty one percent of the selected children reported clinically significant symptoms of PTSD (Allwood, Bell-Dolan & Hussain, 2002). Robert, Ocaka, Browne, Oyok and Sondorp (2008) explored the occurrence rate of PTSD and depression in two million displaced people who have been migrated in Uganda and found similar results. During the war between Bosnia and Herzegovina data was collected from children with their ages ranging from 9 to 14 years. There were selected two thousand nine hundred and seventy six children from the war affected community who filled self report measures of grief, depression, anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Also these children gave description of their exposure to war related violence. Upon analysis of the data it was found that children showed high levels of grief reactions and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Conclusion

The findings of the study confirmed that students of University of Swat and University of Malakand who had been displaced showed significant decrease in their levels of academic motivation as compared to undisplaced students of University of Peshawar. Analysis of the components of academic motivation showed that intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation has also been adversely affected while amotivation was found to be increased among displaced students. This has been confirmed by scoring low on subscales of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and high on the amotivation subscale by the displaced students and vice versa. Hence, it is concluded that internal displacement has affected the academic motivation of displaced youth to considerable level. The results pointed out the adversity and deep impact of the disaster on students' educational set up and their motivation for studies. Moreover, male students reported higher academic motivation as compared to female students. These findings can be attributed to the strict restraints on girls' education and severe destruction of their

schools. In addition, inhumane punishments by the militants to those who refused to follow their restrictions, added to the fear among females there. The terror further decreased their motivation for studies.

Unfortunately, the terror of war and terrorism not only affected the motivation level of students but also has caused Post Traumatic Stress Disorder among the affected young children. Findings of the current research have confirmed the prevalence of PTSD symptoms among the displaced children. Displaced students reported high levels of avoidance, intrusion and hyper arousal symptoms as compared to undisplaced students that confirmed that even after long gap, the stress of trauma was still present there. The finding also points out toward the severity and deep impact of war and internal displacement on the affected children.

Self efficacy was found to be positively correlated with that of academic motivation. Results have proved that students' high self efficacy has a positive impact on their academic motivation while having low self efficacy decreases academic motivation. Therefore, it has been concluded that relationship of self confidence and motivation for achieving academic goals is very strong. Any kinds of changes whether decrease or increase in the level of self efficacy has a direct impact on the level of academic motivation. On the contrary, PTSD was found to be negatively correlated with academic motivation. Those displaced students who reported symptoms of PTSD, showed decrease in their levels of academic motivation but according to the results, there was found a weak negative correlation between the two variables. The reason for that can be attributed to the fact of long duration passed after being displaced. In other words the symptoms of PTSD might get diminished to some degree or the intensity of distress might be lowered down as time has passed after the trauma.

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