

## Original Article

# The Impact of Safety and Well-being Initiatives on Academic Performance: A Quantitative Analysis of Educational Institutes in Pakistan

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## Abstract

This research study was conducted to examine the impact of safety and well-being initiatives and programs on the academic performance of educational institutions in Pakistan. The study adopted a quantitative approach and a survey research design. The total participants in this study consisted of 100 teachers from secondary schools. Moreover, the data were analyzed using SPSS-v27 and descriptive statistics were applied to analyze the survey tool. The findings of the study are that health and safety help students achieve good academic achievements. However, a health and safety education program is important to improve students' academic achievements at the secondary school level. The findings of the current study would provide awareness for employees of schools, that is, school heads or teachers, regarding the safety and well-being of students and their impact on their academic performance. Numerous studies have been conducted globally, but in the Pakistani context, minimal research studies have been conducted.

**Keywords:** academic performance, safe communities, safety initiatives, well-being

## INTRODUCTION

Generally, issues related to health have remained part of the well-being of humans, while safety and health in schools has remained an area of concern. Health is not only physical well-being, but also the general state of mental and emotional well-being. On the contrary, safety comprises only physical protection (Jonathan & Mbogo, 2016). Various research studies have found that health hazards in schools are of many types, it may be in form of injuries, accidents, heat strokes, burning, shooting or even suicides (Jonathan & Mbogo, 2016). In contrast, the performance of students is considered as directly proportional to their health and safety because ensuring well-being of the students gives a positive impact on their performance (García-Herrero et al., 2013). It is reported in a study that more the safer the environment of schools, higher the performance of students. If

students feel hazardous in schools, they might be unable to study well and there are chances of low academic performance (Ashraf & Ismat, 2016).

On the other hand, safety and health in educational institutions remain the most crucial issues, which highly affects the children and also remains a hindrance to growth and progress of students (Jonathan & Mbogo, 2016). Moreover, one of the reports shows that when students feel unsafe, it directly impacts their mental health. Thus, the physical health and safety are important for students' mental health (Mariscal et al., 2012). Other than physical unsafety, many students often feel unsafe because of bullying and violence among students (Sekiwu et al., 2015). Alternative research found that in educational institutions, safety and security are not individual responsibilities, but it is the responsibility of the community. Student's safety

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and health is a matter of concern for teachers, students, management, teachers, community, and the stake authorities as well. To achieve safety and health, there must be a checklist of preventive measures that should be considered seriously (Kutsyuruba et al., 2015). Engaging the community in health and safety in educational institutions needs various strategies and different roles. However, it has also been discovered that there is a need to educate students about health and safety because a safe and healthy environment gives students a positive feeling, thereby having a good and positive impact on students' studies.

The performance of the education sector in Pakistan has not remained up to the mark ever since the country came into being. On the other hand, studies have shown that safety and health are vital to enhance the performance. While, many studies have been conducted related to the policies of health and safety in different fields of life, health and safety in education is less attended and its implementation and level of standards need to be strengthened. There are also empirical studies related to the safety and health of schools, which were analyzed based on the previous records of school's health standards and physical environment of school. Furthermore, there are studies that were conducted to check the roles of different members of schools in ensuring the health and safety policies. Thus the hypotheses derived are as follows:

### Hypotheses

- $H_1$ : School heads and teachers are aware about these programs.
- $H_2$ : School leaders at secondary schools are familiar with safety wellbeing of educational programs.

### Problem Statement

Safety and health-related problems are genuine in every field of human life. Particularly, in education, these have remained a matter of discussion for decades (Saldaria et al., 2012). Moreover, studies have also found that people are at their wits' end and have a chance of getting ill in their fieldwork. On the other hand, it is also proven in previous studies that educational institutions have a low level of knowledge in preventing health hazards. Moreover, due to the lack of school buildings and other available resources, the performance of students has decreased, while the ratio of out-of-school children has increased (Kohier, 1994). However,

due to a lack of resources available in schools, safety and health issues are increasing, which affects the overall performance of schools, which directly affects the literacy rate of any state.

In a study by Abbas (2014) on the situation analysis of the education system of Balochistan, it was found that the academic performance of learners was decreasing in secondary schools due to a lack of safety and well-being of students in the school premises. Some studies reveal Malala Yousuf Zai as a victim of a lack of safety and security at school (Louis et al., 1990). The studies indicate that safety and well-being preventive measures though in place, fail to provide real safety and security to the students (Carrico, 2016). In contrast, few reports explore that developed countries give special focus on ensuring standards of safety and well-being in all departments in their institutions. Keeping in view the different findings of studies related to safety and well-being of students, there is a need to research to fill the gap. It has been discovered that strong links have been established between health and safety of students in schools with other organizations and agencies that are involved in ensuring the standards of health and safety in schools. Thus, this study aims to explore the effects of safety and health on school performance.

### Conceptual framework

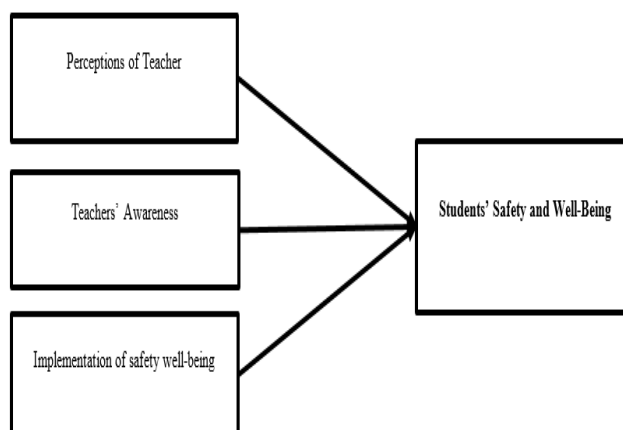
Child-friendly school is another name for school health and safety that coordinates with other health programs. These are concrete and successful schools. Such schools make it possible for various agencies in education, health, and other fields to work together to integrate several school health components, which have the potential to enhance the health and educational outcomes of all students in grades K–12. These parts can be carried out during the school days and out-of-school days. Planned behavior theory has mostly been utilized by researchers in social or behavioral sciences (Lajunen & Räsänen, 2004), particularly for school health and safety. A variety of health- and risk-related behaviors, including those that contribute to adolescents' unintentional injury support this theory.

Moreover, an anticipation-value approach, where health actions are the outcomes of a complicated decision-making process, is considered in the theory of planned behavior. In research on adolescent health and safety, anticipation value theory considers that young children's expectations about the outcomes of

a particular behavior influence their decisions. Attitude is a strong predictor of adolescent behaviors, according to the theory of planned behavior (Conner & Sparks, 2005). There is, however, a dearth of evidence regarding the influence adolescent attitudes have towards workplace safety and on their decision-making. As a result, little is currently known about the theory's applicability to examining OSH-related behavioral beliefs and attitudes in this

population.

School, safety, and well-being is a significant model for school-going students. The given model consists of three constructs, that is, perceptions of teachers regarding safety and well-being, teachers' awareness and implantation of safety, and health education program at secondary schools.



**Fig. 1.** Safety well-being education Program Model

**Source:** Lajunen and Rasanen (2004)

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Safety and security of students are very important in or outside the school, but as far as the school premises are concerned, safety and security should be the top priority (Van Jaarsveld & Minnaar, 2012), because a safe environment helps students to grow whether mentally or physically, while security ensures them to study free from fear of the world. The concern for safety and health has always existed. Theoretical insights into employee health and safety have always been very close to education researchers. Surveys emphasize the significance of legislation. The social aspect is present in technical workplace health and safety questions. This includes, for instance, production's power dynamics: that direct what to do and when. After all, a machine cannot move at its speed; someone should design the machinery, work, and the organization of the work.

### Safety and security of students on school premises

Boyer (1995) defined school as a place where children are taught formally; it is a place where children or young learn in formal settings. Moreover, schools are also the places where children are furnished with informal education.

Informal education refers to the set of behaviors, or skills that will help the child to survive in society. In addition, schools are very perplexing places where various skills, and expertise of learners are to be polished by a school community, i.e. teachers, and other teaching and non-teaching staff (Louis et al., 1990). It is therefore, the safety and security of students is on top priority in every context, and more prioritized in some context. Safety of students in the school premises includes students' rights violations, school buildings, the quality of services provided in schools, and many more. Meanwhile, security refers to the physical protection of students inside the premises of a school or educational institute (Burke & Grosvenor, 2008). On the contrary, studies show that effective learning cannot take place in an unsafe or insecure environment of schools. Safety provides students with resources to maintain their health in schools, which will help them to study in a safe environment, while a secure environment would help them to learn in a better way. Safety involves the resources which help students to maintain their internal health. The resources include sanitation, purified water, hygiene of washrooms, etc (Ali & Fatima, 2016). Such resources would help students to be mentally fit and alert to take part in active learning.



Clean and potable water is one of the most beneficial natural blessings that maintain human health, but this facility is not available in less developed countries that are striving in the economic zones (White et al., 2015). The availability of water in schools is very significant. Purified water increases learners' chances to participate more. Water is considered as energy for learners which help them to learn proficiently (Xaba, 2014). Moreover, the hygiene of the resources in schools is another important component for students' safe survival in schools. It helps them to endure in school with good health. Hygiene of wash stations is mandatory to decrease the spread of diseases. Thus, there must be proper hygiene in schools (Jaarsveld & Minnaar, 2012).

Security is another significant aspect of the schools, which entitles a haven for the students. Security involves no single damage to students' external bodies (Xaba, 2014). School security aims to decline violations from the institutional environment. There have been many violating events in educational institutions in the past decades. The case of Malala YusufZai has remained very famous all over the World. Army Public School Peshawar, Pakistan is also another example given in the literature. These events affected other children's interest in joining schools (Mathe, 2008). Additionally, these events also affected the parents psychologically to allow their children to go to such insecure places. Thus, the security of the learners is very important in their flow of study on the premises of the schools.

### **Health and safety resources at school**

The purified water for drinking, sanitation, and hygiene plays an important role in maintaining students' health in schools. Studies show that less than fifty percent of schools have access to potable water, while more than fifty percent of schools come under the need of necessity for water (DeVos et al., 2018). Problems like damaged pipelines, boreholes, and lack of hand pumps are very common (Hann et al., 2023). While hygiene remains another crucial component for maintaining students' health, there are also numerous studies conducted on the hygiene of schools and its impact on students' health. These studies show that non-allocation of resources for washing hands has an aversive effect on students' health. Studies show that 81% of schools do not have any facility for hand washing (Hull, 2011) and toilet places are not in a useable condition

(Schulte et al., 2005). When students are unsafe in schools, they become unconscious about decision-making and their parents are anxious about their children (Carrico, 2016). Carrico (2016) shares that higher education institutions are affected by various man-made violation activities, like shooting, use of drugs and alcohol. While non-violent activities like the use of alcohol in school premises, drugs associated deaths or injuries are leaving a negative impact on the reputation of the institutional safety and environment.

### **Importance of children's health and safety at school**

The children's health plays an important role in their performance at school as well as in their social and personal lives. Literature also suggests that children's health should be a top priority on school premises (Hardus et al., 2003). As soon as a child enters school, he or she begins a remarkable learning journey marked by successes, failures, new and rekindled friendships, and divergent interests. The school is the actual world of the children where they learn, unlearn, and relearn. On the other hand, to maintain the safety of schools, many national organizations evaluate "best practices" and "model research-supported programs" (Lai et al., 2016).

The school is likely to have the greatest impact on a child's life, after the family. In addition, how well a child adjusts to school and reaps the benefits of it is greatly influenced by the relationship between the family and the school (Ramey & Ramey, 1999). The relationship between the family and the school begins before the child enters the classroom and is reflected in the manner in which the family is involved to prepare the child for school. Compensatory strategies will likely be required for children, who have had preparation before entering the school; a situation that affects an increasing number of children in American society (Alexander & Entwistle, 1988).

In contemporary psychology, safety is a difficult, but significant issue. Both objective (natural and industrial disasters, global terrorism) and subjective (social neuroticism, and an increase in the prevalence of psychosomatic disorders and fears) factors have contributed to the present-day threat to people's safety. Children are particularly affected by this. Terrorist attacks, school fires, water park roof collapse, have demonstrated the high likelihood of such threatening events occurring again

(Chung, 2000).

**Awareness of safety and health programs at school**

Safety and health programs are initiated to overcome the issues related to it, but literature has shown the opposite to it. One of the studies showed lack of policy implementation related to safety and health (Hien et al., 2020).

**Effects of health and safety on students' academic progress**

History shows numerous pieces of evidence associated with safety and health issues of organizations, particularly schools. Literature also shows that due to the poor attitude of managing people at school, students face different issues related to their health. Okun et al. (2016) found in his study that these all problems occur due to poor safety and health policies at schools. In this regard, researchers have also been worried about analyzing the insights of different people working in educational organizations in managerial positions. One of the studies showed that the production of any organization depends on the quality of its people's health and safety (España-Romero et al., 2010). In this regard, another study showed that a low level of safety and health policies will produce low-quality production in an organization. To assure the quality of production, there must be a safe and

**Table 1**  
Reliability of Research Questionnaire

Variables	Source	Cronbach alpha
Perception of teachers	Aslam et al. (2024)	0.86
Teachers' awareness	Aslam et al. (2024)	0.92
Implementation of safety-wellbeing	Aslam et al. (2024)	0.84

The reliability of the research questionnaire adopted in this study is strong as Table 1 shows the three constructs having their Cronbach values of more than 0.5. The very first construct “perceptions of teachers” has the Cronbach value of 0.86, which is significantly strong as validated in the study of Aslam et al. (2024). The Cronbach Alpha value of the second construct, that is, “teachers’ awareness” is 0.92, and third construct implementation of “safety well-being”

healthy environment for the people (Astor et al., 2010).

**METHODOLOGY**

The current study has adopted the quantitative research method and focused on a survey research design based on the philosophical stance of positivists. The participants were the teachers of secondary schools in Karachi, Sindh Pakistan. Teachers of secondary school level were purposively selected because they were aware of safety and health and wellbeing programs in schools. The sample was selected by utilizing the Morgan table of sample size (Creswell, 2012). The total participants in this study were 100 school teachers. A survey questionnaire was adopted from the study of (Alsam et al., 2024 ) and randomly distributed to the participants of the study. Moreover, data were analyzed by using SPSS 27 and descriptive statistics was applied.

Reliability is characterized as the degree to which results are steady over the long haul and give a precise image of the general populace being scrutinized. Assuming the consequences of a review can be recreated utilizing an identical strategy, the examination instrument is thought of as trustworthy. Validity assesses whether the examination precisely gauges what it was intended to quantify or regardless of whether the exploration discoveries are exact (Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

is 0.84. This indicates that the instrument’s items are strong to be adopted.

**RESULTS AND FINDINGS**

This section describes research findings, interpretation of data, and discussion. The data were analyzed using SPSS 27.0. Both descriptive inferential statistics were used. The table of mean specifications was used to further describe the data. Table 1 given below shows the total mean of specification in which 3.50 to 5.00 are

considered as high. In addition, 2.50 to 3.49 is considered as moderate while these values are

considered as low or very low (Hassam et al., 2015).

**Table 1**

Table of Mean of Specification

TABLE OF MEAN SPECIFICATION	
Mean Range	Interpretation
1.00-1.49	Very Low
1.50-2.49	Low
2.50-3.49	Moderate
3.50-5.00	High

The data analyzed shows that a mean of 4.21 with a standard deviation of .660 of total participants responded safe and healthy students are more motivated to achieve academic success, while a mean of 4.17 with a standard deviation of .774 of total respondents indicated that safe and healthy students are more interested in their studies. In addition, a mean of 4.24 with a standard deviation of .652 replied that healthy students perform better in class. Nevertheless,

a mean of 4.24 with a standard deviation of .652 of total respondents replied that students who are safe from accidents perform better in classrooms. However, after analysis of data of research questions of the first hypothesis, it clear that the first hypothesis is accepted because there is a great impact of school, health, and safety educational programs on students' academic achievements.

**Table 2**

Perceptions of teachers about school health and safety

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Safe and healthy students are more motivated to achieve their academic success.	4.21	.660
Safe and healthy students are more interested in their studies.	4.17	.774
A healthy student performs better in class.	4.24	.652
Students who are safe from accidents perform better in any class task.	4.24	.652

The data analyzed showed that teachers at secondary schools are aware of school, safety, and health educational programs. In addition, results also disclosed that school, health, and safety education programs have a significant impact on learners' educational achievements.

Moreover, results also showed that school heads and teachers are aware of these programs, but there is also more need for awareness regarding these kinds of programs. Hence, the second hypothesis is also accepted.

**Table 3**

Teachers' awareness regarding School safety and health

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
I know about the School Health and Safety Education Program.	4.32	.584
Various lectures are given in our school regarding School Health and Safety Education Program.	4.30	.555
Our school has a regular Department of School Health and Safety Education program.	4.35	.485

Table 3 shows that teachers at secondary schools are aware of the implementation of safety well-being education programs. In addition, results also disclosed that school, safety, and well-being education programs have a significant influence on learners' educational

achievements. In addition, analyzed data also showed that school heads and teachers are familiar with such programs.

However, Table 4 shows the highest mean of 4.65 with the lowest standard deviation of .523, which clearly shows that school leaders at

secondary schools are familiar with the safety and well-being educational program. This

reflects that the third hypothesis is also accepted.

**Table 4**  
Implementation of safety wellbeing educational program

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation
Principal awareness of the school health and safety education program is a prerequisite for the implementation of the program.	4.52	.583
Awareness sessions about the School Health and Safety Education Program are critical to the implementation of the program.	4.65	.523
Trained persons must be hired for the school health and safety education program.	4.32	.533
Our school uses signboards to promote awareness of the School Health and Safety Education Program.	4.51	.581
Our school has School Health and Safety Education Program resources available to assist in the implementation of this program in the school.	3.96	.612
Books related to. It was observed from the behavior of the respondents that they are really aware about it. the School Health and Safety Education Program are available in our school library.	4.12	.580
Our school has Physical Training (P.T.) periods.	4.23	.523

**Discussion**

The present study was conducted to analyze the perceptions of secondary school teachers about health and safety educational programs. The study assumed that teachers were aware of school, health, and safety education programs and the results corroborated with the hypothesis. Therefore, the first hypothesis was accepted. In contrast, the study Ali et al. (2018) believe that secondary school teachers are well-aware of the programs and initiatives related to the safety and well-being of the study inside the school premises. In addition, this study also aimed to know the situation of health and safety education programs at secondary schools and the findings revealed that numerous school conduct and manage these programs in their daily routine. Hence this hypothesis is accepted. Ahmad et al. (2023) disclosed that public schools conduct various activities related to the safety, hygiene, and well-being of the learners. Few of them include celebration of National and International Cleanliness Day, health and safety programs, awareness through charts or sign boards. Khatoon and Fatima (2020) believe that public schools have successfully managed to slot physical activity periods to refresh the minds of the students and develop them physically and mentally.

**CONCLUSION**

The study was conducted to collect data on the effects of secondary school health and safety education program on students’ educational achievement. Health plays an important role in the lives of students and adults for social and educational achievements. In addition, any organization should develop and implement robust health and safety policy and programs

to maintain the performance of their students. School health and safety educational programs are crucial to the overall school performance, particularly for the learners to support them to play their due role and help them to perform in their classrooms. Regular awareness programs organized by the schools will bring like-minded students closer. More specifically teachers can also implement strategies to make their students alert and healthy.

**Recommendations**

Studies showed that teachers at the secondary school level are aware of safety and well-being, but the school management should arrange awareness sessions for students by arranging safety, health, and well-being programs like weekly cleanliness day, physical training periods, competitions, and sports day events. Teachers should also be given special training regarding safety and well-being of students. Numerous steps should be taken for ensuring effective implementation of such practices on regular basis.

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