

Health Status, Violence, and Abuse of Neglected Children in the Punjab, Pakistan

Nasir Abbas

PhD Scholar, Department of Sociology, International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan
[mahnasirabbas565@gmail.com](mailto:mahrnasirabbas565@gmail.com)

Syed Ali Abid Naqvi

PhD Scholar, Department of Media & Communication Studies, International Islamic University
Islamabad, Pakistan
aliabidnaqvi@gmail.com

Sadaf Mahmood

Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, The Women University, Multan
drsadaf.mahmood@wum.edu.pk

Abstract

This paper has been designed to analyze the violence against neglected children and their health status in the Punjab, Pakistan. As violence against children has been fermenting but there is little literature available to explain the impacts of this new phenomenon on the lateral life of neglected children in Pakistan. Hence, neglected and destitute children aged between 05-18 years staying under the protective control of Child Protection & Welfare Bureau in four different institutions including Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi, rescued before 30 days were the part of study. A proportionate random sampling technique was opted to draw a representative sample from the target population. A well-structured interview schedule was used for data collection. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Test (CFA) and Structural Equation Modeling Test (SEM) were employed to analysis the data. The correlation statistical test exhibited that there was significant correlation between physical, sexual, emotional, spiritual and psychological violence and social well-being, physical and psychological health. The study recommended that interventions for sensitization of children to report violence must be initiated and especial recreational activities for rehabilitation must be introduced at Child Protection Institution.

Keywords: *Physical Violence, Psychological Violence, Emotional Violence, Verbal Abuse, Financial Abuse, Health Status*

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1. Introduction

In the past decades, it has been observed that children are facing violence worldwide generally and in Pakistan particularly (Somani *et al.*, 2021). Further, it is also evident that violence against children affects their health (Zajac *et al.*, 2020). Furthermore, it is reported that children facing violence lag behind in their lives (N. Naseer, Shoaib, & Naseer, 2022; Segeren, Fassaert, de Wit, Grimbergen, & Popma, 2020). Moreover, violence negatively affects their physical, psychological, socio-economic and spiritual health (Abouhatab *et al.*, 2021; Shoaib, Anwar, & Rasool, 2022). In addition to this, a large number of cases in terms of violence against children are being reported on social media in developing countries and specifically in Pakistan (Granich, Jabeen, Omer, & Arshad, 2021; Shoaib, Mehmood, & Butt, 2022). Similarly, it has also been reported that children

facing violence left their homes, involved in begging, street crimes as well as other negative habits (Shoaib, Tariq, Shahzadi, & Ali, 2022; Zhu, Xiao, Chen, Wu, & Zhu, 2020). Likewise, these neglected children involved in smoking, drug addiction, delinquency and pick pocketing in Pakistan (A. Ali & Shaffie, 2021; Shoaib, Usmani, & Ali, 2022). Alike, the phenomena of child neglecting is worsening day by day in the world (Abdullah, Usmani, & Shoaib, 2023b; Navne & Jakobsen, 2020). Besides, this trend is on increase especially in urban areas (Abdullah, Usmani, & Shoaib, 2023a; Swedo et al., 2020). In addition to this, there is no specific and target oriented policy in the country to curb violence against neglected children in the society (Shoaib, Mustafa, & Hussain, 2023; Zafar, Naeem, & Zehra, 2020). By the same token, there is no sufficient institutional infrastructure for social and economic support of deprived children (Bearup & Seng, 2020; Shoaib, Usmani, & Abdullah, 2023). On the other hand, a very few researches have been conducted on the issue of neglected children (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Shoaib, 2016; Mathews, Pacella, Dunne, Simunovic, & Marston, 2020). Additionally, there is a little theoretical data available for comprehensive insight of the phenomena of psychological, physical and economic violence against the neglected children.

Similarly, there is only few institution (Child Protection & Welfare Bureau in Punjab) working at Govt level to protect these destitute children from developing negative habits and to promote their health (Barth et al., 2020; Black, Saini, Fallon, Deljavan, & Theoduloz, 2020; A. Naseer, Shoaib, Ali, & Bilal, 2021). So, to conduct a study on topic of violence against neglected children and its effects on their psychological, physical health and social well-being is very important and it will provide the data and literature for future policy making. Physical violence against children is most common type of violence committed against children, particularly against destitute and neglected children throughout the world (Cookson, Fuentes, Saxena, & Jha, 2020; Shoaib, Mustafa, & Hussain, 2022). Furthermore, violence against children is common phenomena in developing countries like Pakistan (Rahim, Bourgaize, Khan, Matthew, & Barron, 2021; Shoaib & Shah, 2012).

Moreover, children become the victims of physical violence at home and illiteracy aggravates the situation (Ahmadi, Mehrmohammadi, Montazeri, & Vella, 2020). Alike, joint family system is common especially in rural areas of Pakistan and parents are unable to look after their children properly (G. Bates, 2020; A. Naseer, Shoaib, Ali, & Ahmad, 2021). Moreover, the researches have mentioned that mostly the perpetrators of violence against children are close family members or family friends (N. Ali, Shoaib, & Syed, 2021; Champion & Trane, 2020). Likewise, in most of the cases of family violence against children go unreported because the families consider it highly personal and confidential or parents don't give the due weightage to complaints of physical violence perpetrated by family members (Ahmad, Shoaib, & Abdullah, 2021; Bentrup, 2020). Additionally, victims of physical violence even abounded the home to escape the situation and started living in bus stands, roads and streets of big cities (Cohen, 2020; Shoaib, Anwar, & Mustafa, 2022). Opposite to it, as lateral repercussion they involved in sever criminal activities and become dangerous for family and society (Bentley & Matthewson, 2020; Shoaib, Rasool, Anwar, & Ali, 2023).

By the same token, in families with large size, mostly young children have to work for economic support their families (Shoaib, Fatima, & Jamil, 2021; Simatupang, 2021; Usher et al., 2021). Besides, week family economic conditions compel the children for work where they become the violence of their employers especially when the employer knows that the child is in need or orphan (Capistrant et al., 2020; Mariam, Anwar, Shoaib, & Rasool, 2021). Further, children also becomes victims of physical violence in school or educational institutions and the situation is worse in for

away areas form administrative setup of that particular institution (Shoaib, Khan, & Abid, 2011; Somani et al., 2021).

1.1. Study Context

The recent decade, violence has been observed against children at large level (Shoaib, 2021; Shoaib & Ullah, 2021a, 2021b). Furthermore, children have to face physical, psychological, and verbal abuse from parents, siblings, teachers, caregivers and as well as from peer groups (Anwar, Shoaib, & Zahra, 2021; Champion & Trane, 2020; Shoaib, Abdullah, & Ali, 2021; Shoaib, Ahmad, Ali, & Abdullah, 2021; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, Rasool, et al., 2021). Similarly, it has also been observed that there is lack of studies on the subject underhand. Likewise, it is also important to mention here that violence against children and their health are very important topics to study in current era (Al-Modallal, Mudallal, Abujilban, Hamaideh, & Mrayan, 2020; Atauallahjan, Vallianatos, & Mumtaz, 2021; Bakker & Smit, 2020; Bartlett, 2020; L. Bates & Hester, 2020; Ben-David, 2021; Shoaib, Ali, Anwar, & Shaukat, 2021). Thus, the current study is based on the objective to examine the effects of violence on the health status of neglected children in the Punjab.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

2. To analyze the socio-economic status of destitute and neglected children
3. To assess the violence against destitute and neglected children
4. To examine health status of destitute and neglected children
5. To evaluate the effects of violence on health status of neglected children
6. To suggest the policy measures to minimize the violence against destitute and neglected children and improve their health status in the Punjab

2. Literature Review

It has been observed that children were facing domestic violence in a number of countries and in Pakistan particularly (Kausar, Mumta, & Shoaib, 2023; Shoaib, 2024; Shoaib, Abdullah, Naqvi, & Ditta, 2024). Several studies showed that children face physical and psychological violence that affect their physical and mental health (Shoaib, Khan, & Ashraf, 2011; Shoaib, Khan, & Khan, 2011; Shoaib, Munir, Masood, Ali, & Sher, 2012). As the study findings of Arancibia, Motta, and Clausing (2020) highlighted that children facing physical violence faced stress and anxiety. Similarly, study finding of Bakker and Smit (2020) reported that children were facing behavioral problem that result on their health in a negative way in Germany. Further, the results of Brewerton, Ralston, Dean, Hand, and Hand (2020) concluded that children were facing eating disorder and imbalance diet that effect their health adversely. Furthermore, the result of Collins, Sinclair, and Zufelt (2020) pointed out the importance of health behavior among children going to school and college that was adversely effected by multiple factors. However, the finding of Dhakal Adhikari and Turton (2020) asserted the trafficking of children in Nepal and health risk behavior. Likewise, the conclusion of Ertaş, Ghasemi, and Kuhzady (2021) revealed the impacts of tourism activities and its effect on children health. In addition, the report of Flynn (2020) focused on the issues of children disability and their health protection matters.

In the same way, the argument of Langer and Neuner (2021) analyzed child abuse and victimization that adversely affect the health of these children. By the same token, the study report by Laurenzi *et al.* (2021) asserted that care giver were providing mantel comfort to children and facilitating them. Similar to previous study, the study result of highlighted that Kurtenbach, Zdun, Howell, Zaman, and Rauf (2021) described that violence against children in global perspectives. Additionally, M'jid (2020) elucidated that under SDGs 16.2 of UNO, all types of violence against children from the world abolished by 2030. Similarly, Forber-Pratt *et al.* (2021) reported that care giver in school providing assistance to improve deteriorating the health of children. In the same

way, Dawson (2020) asserted that to get psychological therapy is right of every child. Moreover, de Azeredo *et al.* (2020) described that the children face multiple victimization developed behavioral problem in later life. In addition, De Simone and Heward-Belle (2020) declared that domestic violence caused mental stress in children. By the same token, DeDios-Stern, Durkin, and Soble (2021) proclaimed that neglect and insult negatively affect the children health. Likewise, Zelviene *et al.* (2020) suggested that psycho-social functioning problem varied in different classes of adolescents and higher psycho-social problem is closely linked with higher severity of abuse. Alike, Shin, Jiskrova, Yoon, and Kobulsky (2020) found that alcohol related problem in adulthood directly associated with abuse in childhood and the adults who become the victim of abuse in childhood and use of alcohol to overcome the negative feelings of the trauma. Similarly, the results of study of Terock *et al.* (2020) declared that there was strong association between childhood emotional neglect and reduction in function of memory in adulthood. Furthermore, Doove *et al.* (2021) explained that children facing stress in early age face problem in social relations and seek more support from caregivers. Moreover, Duffield (2020) reported that neglected and homeless children are treated badly. In addition to this, Durrant and Ensom (2020) concluded that physical violence destroy the mental and psychological health of children. Further, Ertan, El-Hage, Thierrée, Javelot, and Hingray (2020) explained that domestic violence negatively affects the children. Auxiliary to this, Alrimawi, Watson, Hall, Atout, and Al-Yateem (2021) concluded that education and awareness is imperative to avoid the physical injuries to the children at home. In addition to this, Alşen Güney and Bağ (2020) asserted that sexually abuse children needed multiple supportive injunctions. In the same way, Antle *et al.* (2020) declared that transfer of violence against intimate partner from one generation to another spoiled the attitude towards relationship of young children. Similarly, Miller-Graff, Scheid, Guzmán, and Grein (2020) were concluded that positive family support and interventions from caregivers have strong relation with speedy recovery and resettlement of a child who was victim of maltreatment. In the same way, the research of Segeren *et al.* (2020) showed that there was strong association between relationship between Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Self - Sufficiency Problems (SSPs) in life domains of young adults having criminal behavior. Moreover, Moore, Astor, and Benbenishty (2020) described that upbeat school environment act as protective shelter for poor homeless children. Alongside this, Zajac *et al.* (2020) illustrated that there was direct relationship between sleep trajectories and bad behavioral growth among maltreated children and when home environment was controlled the effects were inversely proportional. Further, Wymbs *et al.* (2020) demonstrated that there was multiple reaction activation in fearful vs. calm situation in brain for children. The results also indicated that social support increased the ability to deal with adversity and threat and was helpful in faster recovery and reliance from trauma.

2.1. Conceptual Framework

On the bases of literature review figure shows the conceptual framework.

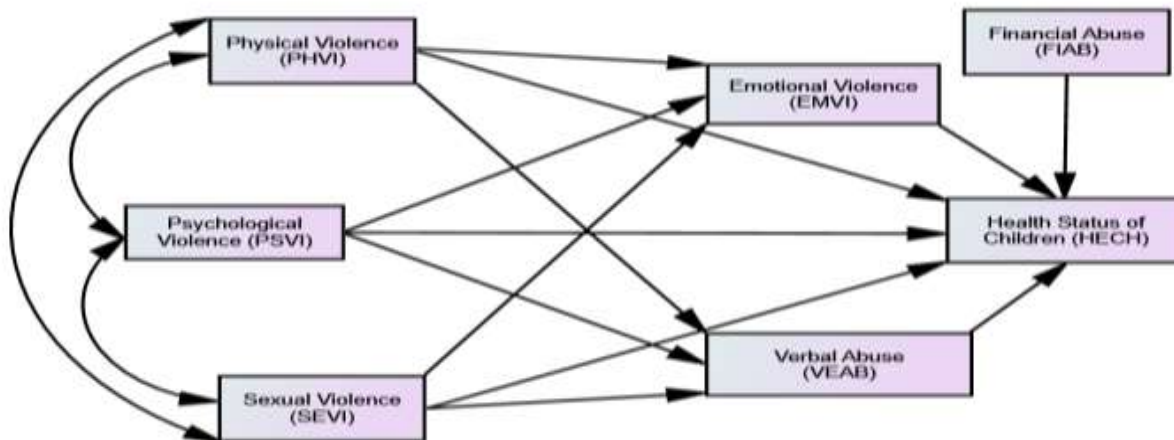


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

2.2. Hypothesis

Violence has direct effects on health status of neglected children.

3. Material and Methods

This section of the study elaborates the procedures employed to conduct the research. The universe of the present study was violence effected destitute and neglected children in the Punjab province. Further, population of this study was consisted on the neglected and destitute children in protective custody of Child Protection Institutions (CPI) in the Province of the Punjab. Furthermore, the targeted population of the study was consisted on the randomly selected four Child Protection Institutions (CPI) including Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi. Moreover, the mentioned standards for the constituent of the study were used.

1. Destitute and neglected children
2. Aged between 05 to 18 years
3. Staying under the control of Child Protection & Welfare Bureau
4. In the centers of Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi
5. Rescued before 30 days

In addition to this, the sampling frame was consisted on the complete list of rescued children, collected from the data record of Child Protection & Welfare Bureau centers in Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, and Rawalpindi and an illustrative sample of (230) respondents was taken from total of (541) respondents through proportionate random sampling technique. Further, to calculate sample size, the sample size determination formula by (Yamane, 1967) was used.

$$n = N/1 + N(e)^2$$

Furthermore, as a technique of data collection, survey method was opted and interview schedule was used to collect data from the neglected and destitute children and data was collected, coded and entered into MS Excel, Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Statistica 7 and Amos Graphics software were used for uni-variate, bi-varitate s and multivariate analysis

4. Results and Discussion

This part of the study illustrates the socio-demographic characteristics, occupation of parents and family type along with residential area of the respondents.

Table 1

Socio-Demographic Characteristics

Age (years)	Father' Occupation
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Category	Category	<i>f</i>	(%)	Category	<i>f</i>	(%)
5-6		6	2.6	Govt. job	8	3.5
7-8		2	11.	Private	2	9.1
		6	3	employee	1	
9-10		7	32.	laborer	7	32.
		5	6		4	2
11-12		6	27.	Businessm	1	5.7
		3	4	an	3	
13-14		4	18.	Daily	7	30.
		2	3	wager	1	9
15-16		1	5.7	Unemploy	9	3.9
		3		ed		
17-18		5	2.2	Old /	3	14.
				Retired	4	7
Total		2	100	Total	2	100
		30	.0		30	.0
Personal Educational Qualification			Father' Educational Qualification			
0-2		1	71.	0-4	1	68.
		65	7		58	7
3-5		5	23	5-9	4	18.
		3			2	3
6-8		1	4.3	10-14	2	9.1
		0			1	
9-11		2	1	15 &	9	3.9
				above		
Total		2	100	Total	2	100
		30	.0		30	.0
Family's Monthly Income			Mother' Educational Qualification			
15000-30000		1	53.	0-4	1	80.
		24	9		85	4
30001-45000		6	29.	5-9	2	9.6
		8	6		2	
45001-60000		1	7.8	10-14	1	6.5
		8			5	
60001 & above		2	8.7	15 &	8	3.4
		0		above		
Total		2	100	Total	2	100
		30	.0		30	.0
Family Size			Parent's Marital Status			

1-2	5	2.2	Separated	4	1.7
3-4	7	3	Divorced	1	5.7
5-6	3	17	Widow	3	16.
7 & above	1	77.	Married	1	76.
Total	2	100	Total	2	100
	30	.0		30	.0

Table 1 described the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents. The data showed that 32.6 percent of the respondents belong to the 09-10 years age group and 27.4 percent of them had 11-12 year age. Furthermore, data pointed out that 18.3 percent of them were aged between 13-14 years and 11.3 percent of them were aged between 07-08 years. Similarly, data also revealed that 05.7 percent of the respondent belonged to the age group 15-16 years and 02.6 percent of them were belong to 05-06 years of age group. Moreover, only smaller proportion 02.2 percent of the respondents had attained the age of 17-18 years.

The table 1 also elaborates the personal educational qualification of the respondents. The data show that majority 71.7 percent of the respondents completed only 0-2 years of education. Further, 23 percent of the respondents completed 3-5 years and 04.3 percent of the respondents completed 6-8 years of education. Moreover, only a small number 01 percent of the respondents completed 9-11 years of education. Table 1 also highlights the family monthly income of the respondents. The data indicated that more than half 53.9 percent of the respondent's monthly family income was Rs.15000-30,000. Henceforth, 29.6 percent of the respondent's monthly family income was 30,001-45,000 and 07.9 percent of the respondent's monthly family income was 45,001-60,000. Moreover, only 08.7 percent of the respondents monthly family income was 60,001 & above.

Table 1 also presents the respondents family size. The data discovered that family size of majority 77.8 percent of the respondents was 07 & above. Likewise, 17 percent of the respondent's family size was 5-6 and 03 percent of the respondent's family size was 3-4. Furthermore, a small number 02.2 percent of the respondent's family size was 1-2. Table 1 illustrates the father's occupation of the respondents. The data showed that 32.2 percent of father of the respondents were laborer and 30.9 percent of fathers of the respondents were daily wager. Furthermore, data pointed out that 14.7 percent of them were old or retired and 9.1 percent of them were private employees. Similarly, data also revealed that 05.7 percent of the fathers of the respondent were doing business and 03.9 percent of them were unemployed. Moreover, only smaller proportion 03.5 percent of them were Govt employee.

The table 1 also elaborates the father's educational qualification of the respondents. The data show that majority 68.7 percent of the fathers of the respondents completed only 0-4 years of education. Further, 18.3 percent of them completed 5-9 years and 09.1 percent of them completed 10-14 years of education. Moreover, only a small number 03.9 percent of them completed 15 & above years of education. The table 1 also elaborates the mother's educational qualification of the respondents. The data demonstrates that majority 80.4 percent of the mothers of the respondents completed only 0-4 years of education. Further, 09.6 percent of them completed 5-9 years and 06.5 percent of them completed 10-14 years of education. Moreover, only a small number 03.4 percent of them completed 15 & above years of education. Table 1 also explains the marital status of respondent's

parents. The data elucidate that majority 76.1 percent of the parents of the respondents marital status was married. Likewise, 16.5 percent of them were widow and 05.7 percent of them were divorced. Furthermore, a small number 01.7 percent of them were separated.

Table 2: Parents Occupation and Family Type Along With Residential Area

Mother' Occupation			Family Type		
Category	f	(%)	Category	f	(%)
Govt job	5	2.2	Nuclear	70	30.5
Private job	3	1.3	Extended	76	33
Businesswoman	2	.9	Joint	84	36.5
Work in another house	31	13.5	Total	230	100.0
Daily Wager	6	2.6	Residential Area		
Housewife	159	69.1	Urban	92	40
Any other	24	10.4	Rural	138	60
Total	230	100.0	Total	230	100.0

Table 2 elaborates mother’s occupation and family type along with residential area of the respondents. The data showed that majority 69.1 percent of mothers of the respondents were housewives and 13.5 percent of them worked in another houses. Furthermore, data pointed out that 10.4 percent of them were attached to any other types of work and 02.6 percent of them were daily wagers. Similarly, data also revealed that 02.2 percent of the mothers of the respondent were government employee and 01.3 percent of them were attached to private jobs. Moreover, only smaller proportion 00.9 percent of them were businesswomen.

Table 2 also presents the respondents family type. The data discovered that 36.5 percent of the respondents were living in combine family system. Likewise, 33 percent of them were belongs to extended family. Furthermore, 30.5 percent of the respondents were belongs to nuclear family system. Table 2 also presents the respondents residential area. The data revealed that majority 60 percent of the respondents were resided in rural area. Further, 40 percent of the respondents were belongs to urban areas.

Table 3: Regression Weights, Covariance, and Variances

Variables		Standardized Regression Weights	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P
SEVI	-->	MVE	.187	.157	3.124	.002

HVI	P	-->	EAB	V	.201	4	.18	59	.0	3.	143	.002	.
SVI	P	-->	EAB	V	.339	7	.33	60	.0	5.	646	**	*
SVI	P	-->	MVI	E	.406	2	.38	55	.0	6.	919	**	*
HVI	P	-->	MVI	E	.154	3	.13	54	.0	2.	453	014	.
EVI	S	-->	EAB	V	.174	4	.15	54	.0	2.	845	004	.
EAB	V	-->	ECH	H	.082	5	.24	98	.1	1.	237	016	.
HVI	P	-->	ECH	H	-.193		-	86	.1	-	2.839	005	.
AB	FI	-->	ECH	H	-.301		-	72	.1	-	4.962	**	*
MVI	E	-->	ECH	H	-.148		-	08	.2	-	2.262	024	.
Covariance													
HVI	P	-->	SVI	P		52	5.0	127	1.	4.	481	**	*
EVI	S	-->	SVI	P		3	.85	108	1.	.7	70	041	.
EVI	S	-->	HVI	P		77	6.4	278	1.	5.	068	**	*
Variances													
EVI	S					719	18.	749	1.	1	0.700	**	*
HVI	P					742	17.	658	1.	1	0.700	**	*
SVI	P					967	14.	399	1.	1	0.700	**	*
2	e					498	16.	542	1.	1	0.700	**	*
1	e					87	9.3	77	.8	1	0.700	**	*
3	e					990	10.	027	1.	1	0.700	**	*
4	e					2.221	11	0.488	1	1	0.700	**	*
Chi-square = 51.832, df = 8, P-Value = .000, AGFI = .821, GFI = .940, CFI = .805, RMSEA = .06													

Hypothesis 1: Sexual violence, psychological violence and physical violence has direct effects on emotional violence against children.

The study finding asserts that hypothesis 1 is accepted. Therefore, sexual violence, psychological violence and physical violence has direct effects on emotional violence against children whereas emotional violence has direct effects on health status of children. Further, the study findings are similar to the study findings of (Durrant & Ensom, 2020).

Hypothesis 2: Sexual violence, psychological violence and physical violence has direct effects on verbal abuse against children.

The study finding asserts that hypothesis 2 is accepted. Therefore, Sexual violence, psychological violence and physical violence has direct effects on verbal abuse against children whereas verbal abuse against children has direct effects on their health status. Furthermore, the study findings are similar to the study findings of (Thulin, Kjellgren, & Nilsson, 2020).

Hypothesis 3: Verbal abuse and physical violence has direct effects on health status of children.

The study finding asserts that hypothesis 3 is accepted. Therefore, Verbal abuse and physical violence has direct effects on health status of children. Moreover, the study findings are similar to the study findings of (Langer & Neuner, 2021).

Hypothesis 4: Financial abuse and emotional violence has direct effects on health status of children.

The study finding asserts that hypothesis 4 is accepted. Therefore, Financial abuse and emotional violence has direct effects on health status of children. Likewise, the study findings are similar to the study findings of (DeDios-Stern *et al.*, 2021).

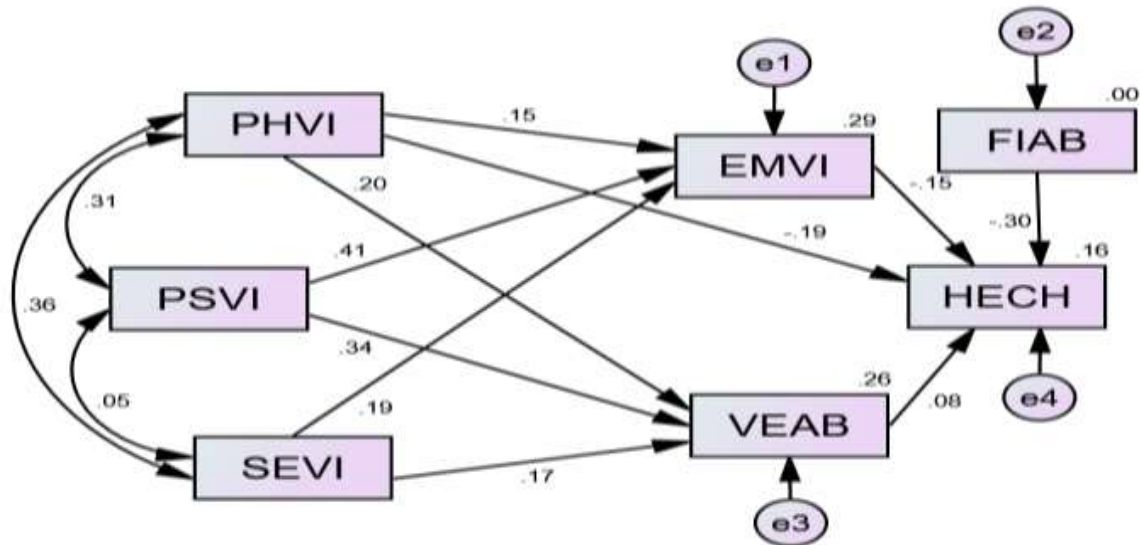


Figure 4.1 Models Fit Diagram

PHVI: Physical violence, SEVI: Sexual violence, PSVI: Psychological violence, EMVI: Emotional violence, FIAB: Financial abuse, VEAB: Verbal abuse, HECH: Health status of children

5. Conclusion

The broad scope of the research was to investigate the violence and health status of destitute and neglected children rescued and resided in child protection & welfare bureau in Punjab. Further, the analysis of data in chapter 4 depicted that the specific objectives outlined for this study was achieved. Furthermore, the first objective was to analyze the socio-economic status of neglected

children. The data revealed that children were mostly from rural area with low family monthly income and with lower level of personal as well as parental education and belong to large family and joint family system. Additionally, the second objective was to assess the violence against neglected children. It was asserted that children faced physical, psychological, cultural, emotional and verbal abuse from their caregivers at home or their residential places. Moreover, the third objective was to examine the health status of neglected children. The key findings of the research illustrated that children faced issues regarding physical, emotional health along with issues related to their well-being. Likewise, the fourth objective of the study was to evaluate the effects of violence on health status of neglected children. The empirical evidence elucidated that physical, psychological, cultural, emotional violence and verbal abuse had significant correlation.

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