

## Abstract

Cognitive information processing and selective attentional biases are often documented by using modified Emotional Stroop paradigm which plays an important role in the etiology and maintenance of child abuse (Larsen, Mercer & Balota, 2006). The present study was designed to explore the interplay of emotional behavioral problems, emotional intelligence and Stroop interference in abused children. The current dissertation was organized as follows: Study I dealt with translation and Validation of Buss and Perry Questionnaire (Buss & Perry, 1992) and Child Abuse Screening Tool (ISPCAN, 2013), validation of the Child Abuse Scale-Revised (Malik & Saeed, 2013), and modification of the emotional Stroop task and Study II encompassed the main study. The main study used quasi experimental design followed by mixed factorial model with groups as between subject and Stroop conditions within subject factor. Purposive sampling technique was employed to draw the sample of 100 (50 boys and 50 girls) abused children with age of 9 to 14 years from Child Protection and Welfare Bureau and SAHIL. The 100 non-abused children (control) were drawn from three public schools of Lahore i.e Central Model High School, Muslim Model High School and Govt. Girls High School Ravi Road. The Modified Emotional Stroop Task (EST), Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire, Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach & Rescorla, 2000) and Bar On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i: yv; Bar On & Parker, 2000) were used as main measures of the study to determine the difference between cognitive interference, emotional behavioral problems and emotional intelligence between abused and non-abused group of children. It was hypothesized that the Stroop interference for sexual trauma related words will be more in sexually abused children than physically

abused children and control group. Similarly, it was also hypothesized that emotional intelligence will mediate between level of child abuse and performance on Stroop task in children. These variables are significantly correlated with each other therefore, hierarchical Regression was conducted to see the EQ as a mediator between child abuse and performance on Stroop Task. The results revealed significant mediation and thus supported the hypotheses of the study. Furthermore, it was hypothesized abused children will show more emotional behavioral problems and high aggression and low score on emotional intelligence than non abused children. The results of *factorial analyses of variance* indicated the differences in the Stroop bias scores among abused children with delayed responses on emotional violent and sexual words. The results of *MANOVA* indicated gender and group differences on the four conditions of Stroop task, the girls showed more reaction time on emotional violent, emotional nonviolent and neutral words whereas, boys showed latencies on sexual words. Similarly, the physically abused boys were more aggressive than sexually abused boys and physically abused girls were more aggressive than sexually abused girls. It was evident from the results that sexually abused children have more behavioral problems than the physically abused but their emotional intelligence is better than the physically abused children. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the overall findings with special consideration to cultural perspective, the limitations of the research using this paradigm, the implications of the findings, and suggestions for future research.