

# EMPOWERED CHOICES: A CURRICULUM FOR UNDERSTANDING BOUNDARIES AND CONSENT

*Umm-e-Rumman Syed<sup>1</sup> and Arooj Nasreen<sup>2</sup>*

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<sup>1</sup> Lecturer, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad.

<sup>2</sup> M. Phil Scholar, National University of Modern Languages (NUML), Islamabad.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study aids in the discourse of developing and piloting a consent education curriculum for learners of ages 5 to 18 years. The study incorporates Social Learning, Empowerment, and Informed Consent theories. Additionally, it employs a mixed-method convergent parallel design that amalgamates the pre and post intervention surveys, interviews and FDGs with the classroom observations, and action-based feedback. The study has been implemented across diverse educational institutions all over Pakistan, we have representation from all the provinces. There are gaps in the tangible understanding of the sensitive topics within the educational sphere in the country. The post-implementation phase of the study revealed there was a significant change in the understanding and outlook of the students regarding bodily autonomy, boundary-setting, digital consent, and taboo discussions. Thus, the study reveals that a sex-education or consent/ boundary curriculum can efficiently foster the negligence that is present among students and masses about the consent and boundary-setting within the conservative socio-cultural contexts. It aids in the evidence for the viability and impact of school-based consent education, offering a scalable model for integration into national curricula and teacher training programs. Furthermore, the study aligns with the Sustainable Development Goals 4 and 5 dealing with 'Quality Education' and 'Gender Equality', respectively, contributing overall to a framework for preventive education that supports child safety, gender equity, and the cultivation of respectful school environments in Pakistan.

## **PREFACE**

This final report presents the findings of the comprehensive research project, Empowered Choices: A Curriculum for Understanding Boundaries and Consent in Pakistan. The study successfully designed, implemented, and evaluated a culturally responsive educational framework to meet the critical need for structured consent education in the national context. It equips students, educators, and parents with practical knowledge and tools to foster respect, safety, and healthy communication concerning personal boundaries.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Research for Social Transformation and Advancement (RASTA) Competitive Grants Program for its indispensable funding and support throughout this endeavor. RASTA's commitment to facilitating rigorous, evidence-based, and policy-relevant research was fundamental to the successful completion and tangible outcomes of this project.

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TTM	Transtheoretical Model
KPK	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
SNL	Single National Curriculum
LSBE	Life Skill's Based Education
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

## INTRODUCTION

*Empowered Choices: A Curriculum for Understanding Boundaries and Consent*, is the study that developed in response to the immediate need to fill an educational landscape gap in Pakistan. There is an apparent lack of structured and appropriate education for children, adolescents, and teenagers, on consent, personal boundaries, and body autonomy. There are legal bodies, child protection services and advocacy movements to reduce harassment, abuse, and sexual misconduct. But despite it all, there is lack of preventive education in the institutional curricula. Thus, many children and teenagers are unable to cope with the tools, language, and lack the confidence to identify and call out on violations. They cannot navigate and set their boundaries and when they are desecrated, they are unable to seek support or to raise their voice against the assault. Therefore, this study is very integral as it not only presents consent and boundary education as a theoretical construct but it introduces a comprehensive and grounded curriculum that was implemented in the pilot phase in educational institutions. Consent education is a foundational life skill; this is the motto of the project as well. It outlines the perceptions of the individuals regarding autonomy, respect, and a safety net across different relationships. The curriculum marks a difference as it does not put consent as synonymous to a harm prevention reactive concept, rather it positions it as an ongoing practice of communication, mutual respect, and informed choices.

In the study, the researchers designed, implemented and evaluated tiered consent education framework that focuses on 5- to 18-year-olds. The framework not only included a curriculum to cater for the needs of the students, but also a parallel capacity-building guides for educators and parents. The curriculum majorly focuses on the personal/physical boundaries, body autonomy, positive consent, emotional literacy, respectful relationships, sextortion, confidence in seeing help in case of abuse, harassment and how to recognize it, bullying including cyber bullying and digital literacy. The content of the curriculum, the worksheet resource pack, the activities were tailored thoughtfully, keeping in mind the cognitive levels of the students across all three tiers, i.e., 5-9,10-13, and 14-18.

The study was conducted in the educational institutions in all the provinces of Pakistan, in the cities of Karachi and Larkana from Sindh, Quetta from Baluchistan, Swat, Nowshera, and Manki Sharif from KPK, and Lahore, Murree, Bahawalpur, with a major focus on Rawalpindi from Punjab and the federal capital, Islamabad. This aided in the inclusion of a diversity of social, cultural and institutional experiences. With the variety of different resources, student demographics, and institutional levels (schools, colleges, boarding institutions, and universities), this proved to be a solid pilot-testing for the responsive nature of the curriculum. The teachers were trained for the implementation of the curriculum, they were provided with the necessary tool-kit, including the hard-copy of the curriculum, worksheet resource packs, teachers guide, parent guides and pamphlets for awareness as well. The training enhanced the educators' ability to handle the sensitive topics discussed in the curriculum. They were more open to facilitate a psychologically and emotionally safe space in their classrooms for students to open up and come forward with their own experiences. Additionally, they provided the researchers with consistent feedback that was incorporated in the curriculum design.

The study employs a mixed-method research design, as it amalgamates both quantitative and qualitative paradigms. Surveys were administered prior to and post implementation measuring

changes in self-reported behavior, attitudes and understanding of the terminologies associated with the curriculum. Additionally, the data was drawn from focus group discussions, interviews and classroom observations. Thus, the interconnectedness of the approach enabled the researchers to move beyond the surface-level results and delivered the deeper insights into the understanding of the learners' ability to adopt the teachings and then show a positive change against it.

The study is directly aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals of 'Quality Education' and 'Gender Equality'. Therefore, consent education is positioned at a reputable place of serving holistic education and long-term positive transformation. The findings also suggest that individuals who are empowered with the correct vocabulary, confidence and ethical grounds make informed choices. These choices ultimately lead to the reduction in the violation of boundaries, and consent. As a result, Empowered Choices provides Pakistan's educational system with a scalable, evidence-based model for incorporating consent education, which has implications for policy, curriculum development, and future research.

### **1.1. Research Problem**

There is an absence of an organized, age-appropriate consent education inclusion in the curricula of Pakistani educational institutions. The society at large is afflicted with cultural taboos and insufficient training that is transitioned into the educational institutions. Thus, the children, adolescents, and teenagers lack the cognition to recognize the violations or assert boundaries. The study deals with this gap by designing and implementing *Empowered Choices: A Curriculum for Understanding Boundaries and Consent* that is aligned with the national educational policies.

### **1.2. Research Objectives**

Following are the objectives of the study that guide the development, implementation and evaluation of the consent education curriculum in institutions across Pakistan;

- To develop, design, create and approve a culturally responsive consent education curriculum.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the curriculum and the associated tool kit by analyzing the change in the students' knowledge, attitudes and behaviors.
- To estimate the viability and the contextual needs of sustainable implementation of the curriculum by investigating the educator, institutional, communal and learner responses.

### **1.3. Relevance to Public Policy**

The study provides pragmatic support for incorporation of the structured educational curriculum into the national education and child protection policies. There is a significant gap that the research addresses in Pakistan's educational forum. It offers a validated, responsive curriculum that contributes to the interdisciplinary discussions. Furthermore, the study establishes that consent education trains, arms, and equips students with the skills that enhances their ability to identify, communicate and then report violations. It strengthens the capacity of institutions by training educationalists to inculcate sensitive subjects appropriately and promote safe school environment. This is ground-breaking evidence-based research in Pakistan that pioneered empirical models to study and observe sexual education incompatibility in education sector. Thus, the study aligns directly with the national priorities and SDGs 4 and 5, highlighting the importance of preventive

education for social progress. Hence, the research establishes a firm foundation for policy discussions, curriculum reforms, and the future rollout of the consent education programs. It highlights the importance of preventive education as a crucial component of Pakistan's educational and social progress strategy.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Analyzing the literature review of the study revealed that consent education has gained significance as being an integral part of youth development, violence prevention, and autonomy-based education. To have a lasting protective and prosocial outcomes, researchers and scholars have agreed that teaching children and adolescents about body ownership, personal boundaries and dutiful communication is mandatory (Kirby, 2002). Additionally, it is not only confined or limited to sexuality education, it moves beyond that and is viewed as a wider learning experience that impacts individuals and makes them understand the true meaning of agency, power and mutual respect that is not coerced.

According to (Muehlenhard et al., 2016), a curriculum that is based on power, body autonomy, boundaries, and consent can improve the ability of children to identify unsafe patterns, express discomfort, and reach out to the trusted adults such as teacher, parents or caregivers to aid you in overcoming it all. This recognition ability is integral for them to survive in environment where abuse is often accepted, ignored and shunned. Thus, consent education is a proactive public health measure instead of a simply a response to any violence perpetrated.

### **2.1. Global Evidence on Consent Education**

Globally, the Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) deals with the consent education. CSE is a curriculum that imparts the knowledge and skills that students need to make healthy and safe relationships (UNESCO, 2018). And consent, its definition and full context is a key learning goal connected with the sexuality education. In addition to the UNESCO framework of CSE, other studies have put emphasis on the pedagogy of dismantling power imbalances in education supported by feminist and gender equality theories as well. There are educational programs in Sweden and Canada that feature gender-transformative themes, challenging rigid gender roles, and encouraging equitable relationships that contribute to reduction in gender-based violence among younger generation (Kantor et al., 2020). These programs situate in digital consent literacy with safe and responsible use of social media and digital communication. Leading with the examples from Sweden and Canada, reports from UK and Australia validate that adolescents struggle to apply the consent ethics in online environments. Consequently, it increases the cases of cyberbullying, coerced sharing of images and online grooming (Powell & Henry, 2017). Thus, the education programs are moving towards effective initiatives that teach digital boundaries, privacy controls and digital ethical considerations.

According to (Setty, 2025) extensive evaluations of consent and relationship educational programs implemented in schools across North America, Europe, and Australia indicate that there has been significant decrease in cases of sexual harassment and coercive behaviors among young people. This proliferates into positive behavior marked by empathy and better communication skills. Therefore, education on consent can effectively transform peer norms and foster social responsibility. With examples from different continents, it is thus proved that pedagogically, the effectiveness of the participatory and empirical learning methods in terms of sexual education is high. In the same vein, (Bandura, 1977), has given us the social learning theory, that puts emphasis on individuals, who learn social behaviors through observation and reinforcement rather than didactic patterns of teaching.

Additionally, role-playing, scenario-based analysis and peer discussions prove more beneficial in promoting the adoption of consent related norms.

All the practical applications and implications make one think that we are going in the right direction. However, the scholars point out that most of the global education models are situated in the Western sociocultural context with little to no representation of South Asian contexts.

## **2.2. Consent Education in South Asia and Pakistan**

Consent education in South Asia remains segregated and politically entangled due to cultural taboos that surround the topics of sexuality, gender roles and body autonomy and ownership. Although, for the past decade many agencies have started initiatives that indirectly approach these topics to inculcate life skills and sexual education through different programs. In Indian and Bangladesh, many cases have been reported of education models, that emphasize on personal safety and respect in relationships as a life skill (Santhya et al., 2010). Although the implementation factor is very less but the awareness has started.

Due to the lack of clear education regarding consent, misinformation and victim-blaming has become part of the region (Jejeebhoy & Sathar, 2024). The youth of these countries struggle to make sense of their feelings as they are never sensitized to question the difference between active consent and coercive consent, especially in family and educational spaces. Questioning authority is uncommon in South-Asian states. According to, (Biswas et al., 2025), consent in states like Pakistan and India is influenced by cultural traditions, religious values and patriarchal dominance. Even speaking about these topics is seen as something akin to sin. Awareness, talks, and seminars can do only so much, if there is lack of implementation and action.

Pakistan has one of the most limited frameworks for consent education. The official Single National Curriculum all in all omits the explicit discussions about body autonomy and consent. Due to the differential dynamics of gender roles, it emphasis that student development be marked with vague moral conceptions instead of something that will aid them in actual character development and provide protection (Rafique & Khawaja, 2020). SNC advocates for the religious principles but steers clear of the topics that diverge them towards gender equality or sexual health. These topics are confused with the proliferation of Western ideals and associated with them. Subsequently, the empirical data shows the effects of this omission as well. According to, Sahil's Cruel Numbers Report 2024, an average of 12 children experience sexual abuse daily in Pakistan. Most of these cases involve acquaintances, family members, or authority figures (Sahil, 2024). Similarly, (Aurat Foundation, 2019) reports the lack of accountability is due to victims not coming forward due to stigma, marginalization and fear of rejection. There is lack of confidence and awareness about the rights and this transitions into the silence. (UNICEF, 2022), the lack of reporting is most often due to abuse that is not recognized. Children, are manipulated into thinking nothing wrong is happening with them, in reality they may be going through worse form of sexual abuse. They lack words to describe and tell the account of what happened with them, because they were never sensitized to the exact terminologies. These outcomes indicate that vulnerability is not just a result of exposure to risks but also of educational neglect. Without clear guidance on consent and boundaries, children have to navigate complex social situations without support or protection.

There are organizations like Aahung, Rozan, and Kashf Foundation that are raising voice regarding the child safety programs that include, Life Skills-Based Education (LSBE) (Aahung, 2020). These interventions are important as they prove beneficial in changing the attitudes but they are limited and mostly based on the funding of donors, restrictive reach and lack of planning. Additionally, even with laws like Anti-Rape Acts and child protection policies, implementation is feeble (GOP, 2021). There are insufficient frameworks that address these issues and involve the operations needed to reiterate the damage.

Here is another key factor that is important in the spread of awareness and implementation of consent education; teachers and parents. Global studies have highlighted that teachers can inculcate positive changes in the students, be it any topic. Thus, teacher training is important which is lacking in Pakistan obviously, they are not provided with necessary tools, psychological support and gender-sensitive communication. Parental involvement is also integral. Parents taking initiative to talk to their children about boundaries and consent can prove pivotal in their understanding of these sensitive concepts (Othman et al., 2020). However, in Pakistan, especially in conservative areas, it is still seen as a cultural taboo to talk about such things even with your parents.

### **2.3. Research Gap**

The literature of the study justifies the position of consent education but also mention the significant gaps in educational sector of Pakistan. These gaps can be filled with culturally relevant, age-appropriate curriculum based on consent and boundaries. The absence of it in the national preventive education policy is a huge loss for us. This study tackles the gaps and fills them by developing, evaluating and implementing a consent education curriculum based on consent, boundaries, and body autonomy for ages 5 to 18. It is piloted in various regions of Pakistan generating evidence on its effectiveness, involving educators, parents, and students to ensure its validity and sustainability. The research aims to provide a model that can be repeated and recommend evidence-based policies to include consent education in the formal school system.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1. Research Design

Mixed-method design is used in the study to analyze a consent education curriculum in Pakistan that is culturally responsive. The reasoning behind is the appropriation of consent being, both a measurable idea and socially rooted practice. Changes in the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors is assessed through quantitative methods, whereas, qualitative data focuses on the meanings and cultural dialogue around consent, a convergent parallel design best suits the study, i.e., to collect, analyze, and observe qualitative and quantitative data side by side. This is beneficial in cross verification to enhance validity and the soundness of the statistical data. The quantitative part uses a quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design without a control group. This design works well when randomization is limited by ethical or logistical issues in school settings. It allows for assessment of change while minimizing disruption. The qualitative part includes focus groups, interviews, and classroom observations.

### 3.2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework of the study is based on conceptual amalgamation of Social Learning Theory, Empowerment Theory, and Informed Consent Theory. The conceptions were subjected under the lens of Behavior Change Model. This amalgamation is an added depth for the study, as it strengthens the connection between curriculum development, its implementation and then observance. Thus, the framework joins social interaction, critical reflection, and empowered agency.

**Social Learning Theory:** Albert (Bandura, 1977) developed Social Learning Theory, suggesting that behavior, attitudes and norms are learned through imitation and observation. Leading on, these observations are adopted and reinforced in social settings. Schools or educational institutions are perfect examples of these social spaces. Students not only learn via formal lessons but they observe their peers, teachers and the even the management of the institution. They judge and categorize them by how they are going to respond to any behavioral change in student. In this way, the theory shapes the curriculum's teaching design, highlighting interactive and participatory learning methods. The methods include; role-playing, guided discussions, and scenario-based analysis. According to, (Jouriles et al., 2018), considerable research has been presented on these methods that are effective in changing standards about consent, reduction in victim-blaming, and increased bystander intervention to stop the abuse. Pakistan has faced this calamity of hiding the apparent truths that are necessary to be talked about. Here, the discussions about body autonomy are avoided like a plague. SLT helps us understand that organized classroom activities on topics of consent and boundaries can challenge these harmful so-called social conventions. The curriculum, on which the present study is based on creates the chances for students to observe and then practice setting respectful boundaries.

**Empowerment Theory:** Zimmerman (2000) developed the Empowerment theory, that was introduced by Julian Rappaport., establishing that empowerment is a multi-tiered process essentially involving individuals gaining control over the decisions that impact their lives. In the education institutions, or any space that is marked by learning, empowerment is not only a tool to pass information. It goes beyond that into fostering or proliferating personal agency, self-confidence and critical awareness of things effecting ones' life. Particularly, in the space occupied by consent

education, the empowerment theory sees students as being active participants and not only passive recipients of protection. Students, be of any age, have rights, they are expressive and they must learn to identify coercion and seek help when necessary. Even empowerment-focused programs have come up with the results that in places with lack of gender equality and power balance, it works well because there is a dire need of this behavioral change. Hence, the relevant concepts gathered from empowerment theory justify the curriculum's focus on self-advocacy and understanding the need of empowered individuals who are aware of the power dynamics, their rights and are not afraid to question, if anybody tries to coerce them into doing something they are not comfortable with. In addition to students, it also places educators in close proximity as well, because they are the co-empowered individuals who can challenge stigma and push for the systemic inclusion of consent education.

**Informed Consent Theory:** Beauchamp & Childress (2019), applied the Informed Consent Theory of Alan Wertheimer in ethic studies. It focuses on the importance of consent as being voluntary and not force, informed and not misunderstood, and revocable and not rigid. Although, this started from biomedical ethics, but has since then transitioned into the other fields of education. It is most integral part of child protection and rights-based teaching (UNESCO, 2018). Consent in this study is seen as a skill that can be learned rather than just a thing to be used in legal or sexual context. For children, consent means to have age-appropriate conversations about their body autonomy and safe touch. For teenagers, it expands into the affirmative consent in relationships, peer groups and setting boundaries in real and reel life. The theory provides a clear distinction between compliance and true consent, i.e., compliance can often be gained through coercion and threat, but true consent is often vocal, apparent and is gained without force.

### **3.3. Behavior Change Models**

The study includes the Transtheoretical Model, for analysis. The TTM, posits that the change is a continuous process. It moves from pre-contemplation to maintenance and provides a lens for observing student and educator readiness to engage and be part of consent related terminologies. The study started from pre-implementation feedback surveys, gaining insight from teachers. After that the implementation phase was conducted with continuous observance, side-by-side feedback, evaluation, reevaluation and consistent changes in the curriculum to cater the needs of the students and educators. In the end, the post-implementation phase gave the clear picture of where we stand with the consent and boundary education in Pakistan. The study moves beyond only assessment of the participants but explores whether positive change was seen in them or not.

### **3.4. Evaluation Methodology**

Freire (1970) gave the Freirean action research model, it puts students and educators as collaborators of knowledge. They move in a continuous cycle of planning, action, observance, and reflection. Thus, this confirmed that in Pakistan, the curriculum remains responsive, in addition to enabling collaborative problem-solving and reiteration. Evaluation feedback was added into the study in different phases to assess the effectiveness of the changes in participant understanding, attitudes, and perceptions related to consent. Consequently, inductive reasoning was integrated to analyze the ongoing change in the curriculum from surveys and focus groups and deductively, the

established frameworks were tested within the local context. This design balances responsiveness with accountability, aligning with RASTA's emphasis on adaptive yet rigorous research.

### **3.5. Study Setting**

The research has been conducted all over Pakistan in urban, semi-urban and rural areas. The curriculum was piloted in the education institutions of following cities;

- Punjab (Rawalpindi, Lahore, Bahawalpur, Kahuta, Murree)
- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (Nowshera, Swat, Manki Sharif)
- Sindh (Karachi, Larkana)
- Baluchistan (Quetta)
- Federal Capital-Islamabad

The educational institutions also included a diverse blend of public, private, government and semi-government schools and colleges, additionally, cadet colleges/ boarding institutions, universities, and orphanages were also included. This allowed more in-depth analysis of the cultural, socioeconomic and pedagogical differences in different regions and types of institutes. Moreover, the institutions were a mix of mixed-gender and single-gender, to allow for an insight into the gendered influences in terms of consent as well. the diversity in the geographical and institutional spaces allows for more relevance of the curriculum as it is not only tailored for a single context but can be adopted to cater for a boarder landscape of Pakistani education.

### **3.6. Study Population and Sampling Strategy**

The population sample included students from the ages of 5-18, segregated into three-tiered age groups. The sample also comprised of teachers, administrators, and psychologists. The purposive stratified sampling strategy ensured the proper representation across diverse school types and location.

Following is the segregation of three tiers;

- Tier one (Ages 5-9)- Students from junior and primary schools involved in learning the foundational concepts of personal space, stranger-danger, and safe touch.
- Tier Two (Ages 10-13)- Students from middle and secondary schools involved in learning the concepts of Body autonomy, peer-pressure, and digital literacy.
- Tier Three (Ages 14-18)- Students from high school, colleges, and universities, learned about affirmative consent, bystander intervention, personal boundaries, and accessing support.

For student facilitation, worksheets, discussions, scenario-based dialogue, activities included in the resource pack were use. Additionally, the educators also received pre-implementation training in both curriculum understanding and dealing with sensitive issues. The flexible framework aimed for 15-30 schools across the provinces, and around 30-50 educators were involved in the study.

### **3.7. Ethical Considerations**

Due to the sensitivity of the study dealing with concepts that are often hard to swallow in Pakistani society, adhering to ethical standards is mandatory. Hence, the highest ethical standards were

maintained, guided by the principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, justice, and respect for persons. Approval to partake in the study was obtained from all the adult participants and for minors the parental consent was obtained for this purpose, parental guidelines and pamphlets were designed, so they can have access to information all the time. Additionally, the division of students into different tiers was a deliberate attempt to employ age-appropriate activities and worksheets to different age groups. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants have been maintained in handling of the data as well as reporting. Moreover, as the study is of delicate nature, a psychologist has been a part of the research team to adhere to psychological safety. Educators were informed about trauma approaches during their training as well. The research team was present and active all the time to adhere to any need to ensure that the research process is upheld by the principles of respect and safety.

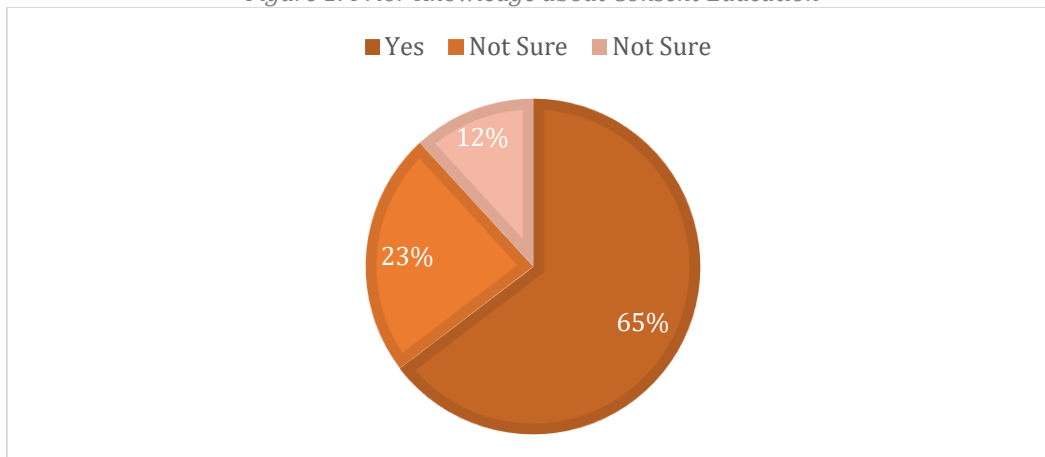
## ANALYSIS

The findings section of this study implements a detailed three-dimensional assessment of the Empowered Choices curriculum implementation through its research design which combines pre-implementation baseline data with post-intervention teacher feedback. The analysis employs a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach, in which quantitative survey data from the interim phase are systematically integrated with qualitative feedback from post-implementation teacher responses and field observation notes. The integration process establishes two separate reporting methods which describe specific outcomes while investigating the factors that produced those outcomes through the relationship between curriculum design and pedagogical delivery and the educational system of Pakistan. The study presents findings which follow the theoretical framework of Social Learning Theory, Empowerment Theory, and Informed Consent Theory while fulfilling research objectives about knowledge transfer and attitude transformation and institutional feasibility.

### 4.1. Pre-Implementation Scenario

The interim survey established critical baseline metrics that contextualize the implementation challenges and successes. Educators exhibited prior knowledge about consent education through their 64.7% reporting, yet this statistic shows that teachers possess significant knowledge gaps. The remaining 35.3% represents a substantial population of educators operating without conceptual frameworks for teaching boundaries. National curriculum analyses demonstrate that Pakistan's Single National Curriculum systematically excludes consent topics, which closely matches this finding. The awareness gap showed non-random patterns because education institutions established systematic patterns; private school educators from urban areas showed better awareness than their semi-urban and boarding school counterparts, which indicates that previous experience with NGO-led programs or progressive institutional policies influences initial preparedness.

Figure 1: Prior Knowledge about Consent Education

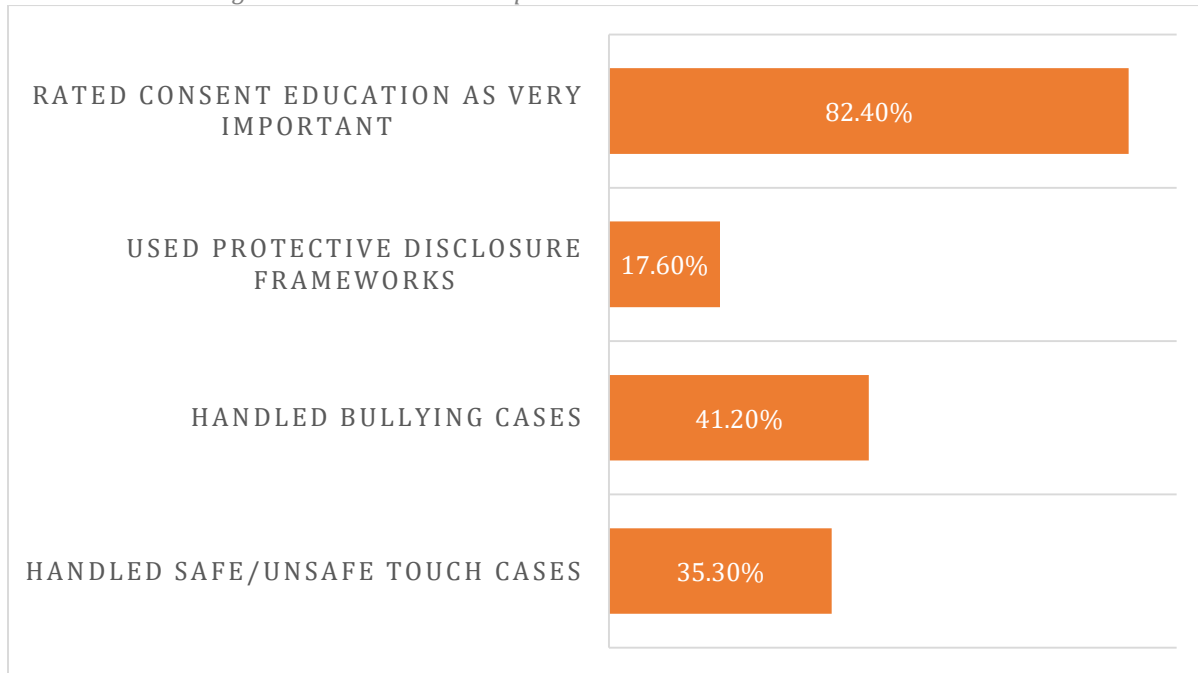


Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

A striking 82.4% of educators rated consent education as "very important" for school-aged children which created what we term the 'relevance-implementation paradox'. The majority of participants who recognized systemic needs 17.6% developed protective disclosure frameworks which they used

to guide student engagement while 41.2% and 35.3% of participants handled bullying and safe/unsafe touch situations respectively. The data indicates that educators demonstrate awareness of boundary violations but they do not possess organized teaching materials which would help them teach preventive methods. The data indicates that educators handle situations after they occur instead of developing essential skills which they need to succeed.

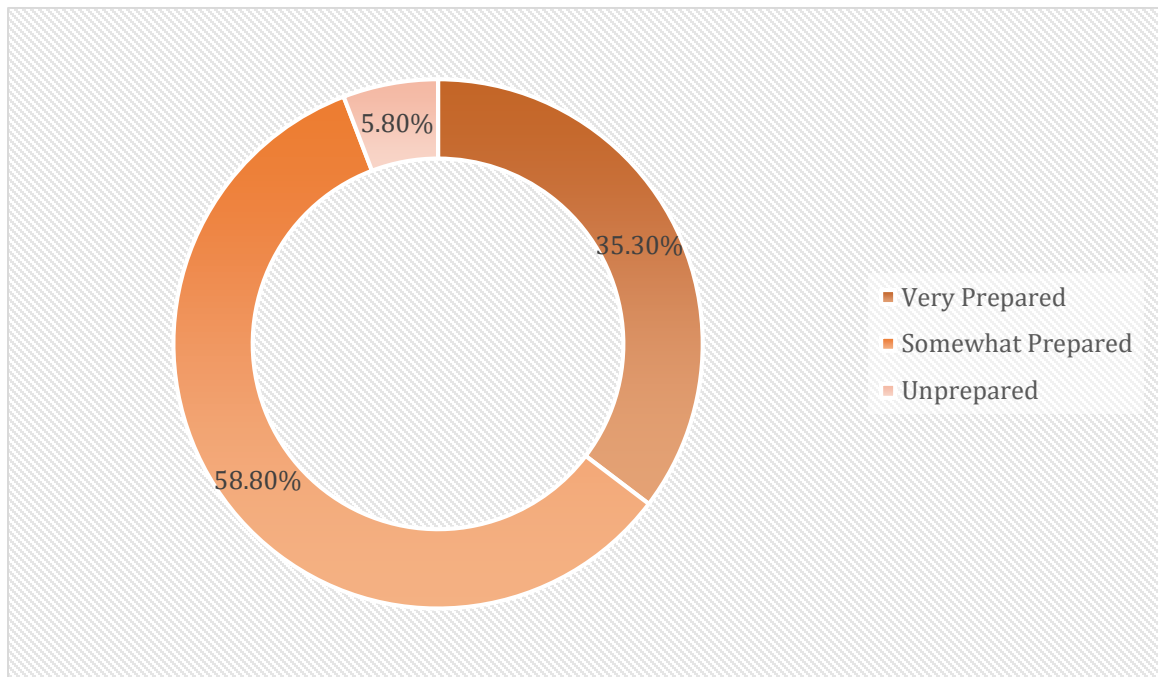
*Figure 2: The Relevance-Implementation Paradox in Consent Education*



*Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.*

The preparedness metrics show that educational institutions do not address their clinical needs. Only 35.3% of educators felt "very prepared" to handle student disclosures of harassment or abuse, while 58.8% felt "somewhat prepared" and 5.9% "unprepared." The finding directly affects curriculum implementation safety, because the project requires its training component to prevent student re-traumatization and inadequate handling of disclosures during consent topic introduction. The data shows that teacher training needs to teach more than content delivery through psychological first aid and disclosure protocols and referral pathways, which the Empowered Choices facilitator guides contain as essential elements.

*Figure 3: Educator Preparedness for Handling Student Disclosures*



*Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.*

#### **4.1.1. Mapping the Socio-Cultural Terrain**

Field visits conducted Focus Group Discussions which uncovered specific contextual obstacles. The cadet colleges created educational challenges which needed educators to find solutions through their teaching methods. The institutional framework established strict hierarchical structures which enforced discipline but these two factors together created obstacles that prevented staff from engaging in open dialogue about their authority to challenge established rules. The curriculum implementation process became successful after senior administrators approved it because all levels of the organization followed their direction. The day schools provided teachers with operational freedom to adjust their teaching methods but this required each instructor to personally accept the new approach.

The educators of the study used a timeless perspective to predict upcoming parental protests, which they based on their research instead of their present work. The study found that 47.1% of participants viewed "anticipatory anxiety" as a cultural taboo while 35.3% of respondents identified it as parental resistance. The research established that 0% of participants experienced personal discomfort, which indicates that people consider themselves part of the community. The institutional support systems create an opportunity to decrease community resistance which people see as opposition from their social environment.

Teachers across various educational environments reported that the current educational programs failed to provide them with examples that matched their students' cultural background. They explained that they either changed Western materials to create examples or they decided to use no specific examples at all. The research results led to the creation of school transportation and family

gathering and digital communication patterns, which used Pakistani cultural elements to create authentic school environments for local students.

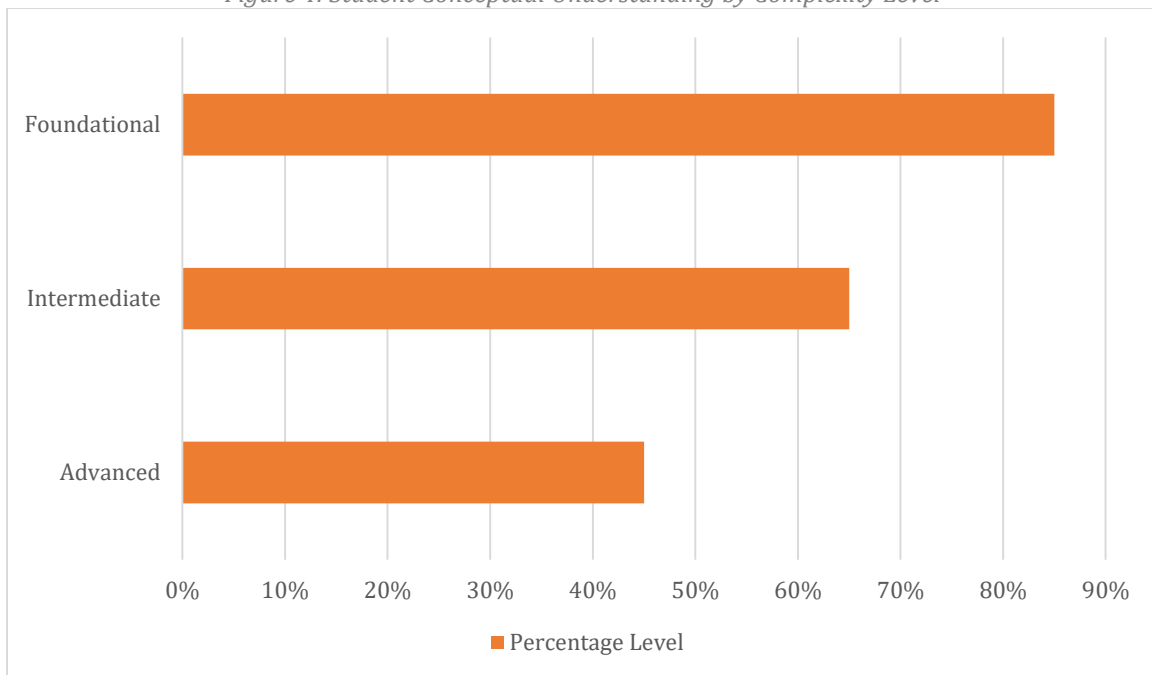
## 4.2. Post-Implementation Outcomes

### 4.2.1. Student Engagement Across the Participation Spectrum

The distribution of teacher ratings about how students joined class activities shows two distinct peaks. Half of classroom sessions received high engagement scores between 4 and 5 but 25 percent of sessions experienced difficulties with student participation. The analysis of institutional type shows that single-gender classrooms especially all-girls classrooms achieved better participation results than mixed-gender and all-boys classrooms which showed more participation pattern diversity. The research shows that gender dynamics influence how people feel about discussing bodily autonomy which justifies using separate focus group discussions as a research method.

The comprehension data show a developmental progression that demonstrates how concepts are learned by students. Teachers reported that 85% of students reached "All understood clearly" or "Most Understood" levels for foundational concepts (personal space, safe/unsafe touch). The percentage dropped to 60-70% for intermediate concepts (digital boundaries, peer pressure) and to 40-50% for advanced concepts (affirmative consent, bystander intervention). The curriculum demonstrates its three-tiered system through this gradient which shows areas that need extra support and reinforcement.

Figure 4: Student Conceptual Understanding by Complexity Level



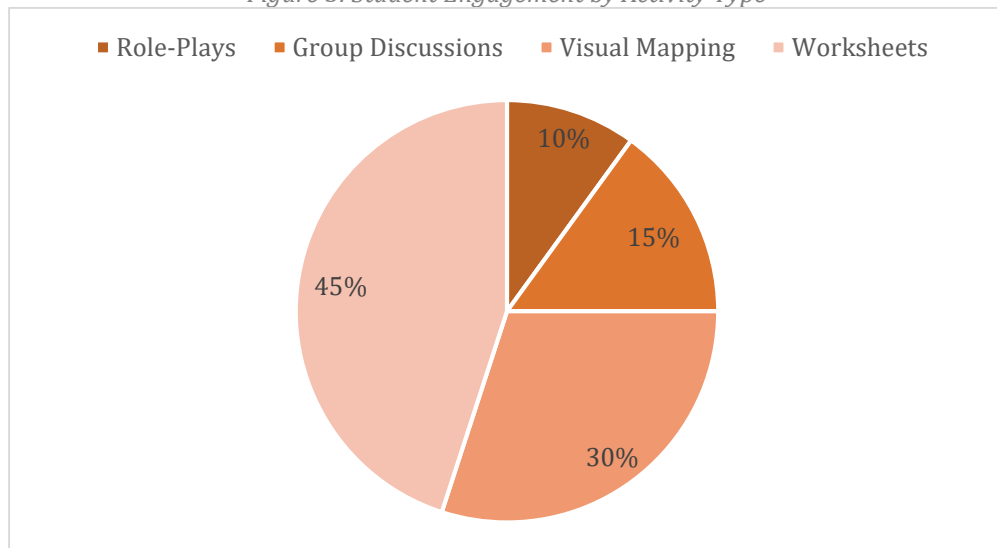
Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

### 4.2.2. Pedagogical Breakthroughs and Tensions

Analysis of teacher responses regarding "Which activity did students enjoy most?" reveals a pedagogical preference hierarchy:

1. **Worksheet Completion** (mentioned in 45% of responses): Particularly those involving digital dilemmas and peer pressure situations. Teachers noted these allowed "safe experimentation" with boundary-setting language.
2. **Visual Mapping Exercises** (30%): Where students diagrammed their personal boundaries or created "circles of trust." These concrete outputs provided assessment artifacts and facilitated one-on-one teacher-student check-ins.
3. **Group Discussions on Real Experiences** (15%): Though these required skilled facilitation to avoid confidentiality breaches or re-traumatization.
4. **Scenario-Based Role-Plays** (10%): Seen as necessary but less engaging structural components.

*Figure 5: Student Engagement by Activity Type*



*Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.*

The teachers presented an unexpected finding which showed that students became more involved with learning because the topic required special permission to study. One teacher's reflection captures this dynamic: "They were taught to hide and not discuss things like these, but to learn about them from their teacher in a fun and interactive way proved to be very beneficial." Students show cultural resistance because they need to learn about consent education through methods that successfully engage their interest.

The essential discovery from all implementations showed that students learned to use specific terms for establishing personal boundaries. Students used the expressions "I'm not comfortable with that," "That's my personal space," and "I don't consent to that sharing" in both classroom settings and their interactions on the playground according to teacher reports. The linguistic changes that occurred represent a specific behavioral demonstration which shows users understand the concept according to Social Learning Theory which states people learn through observing others and receiving reinforcement.

### 4.3. Conceptual Understanding: Differential Acquisition and Internalization

#### 4.3.1. High-Acquisition Concepts

- **Bodily autonomy** was readily grasped across ages and extended to digital contexts.
- **Safe vs. unsafe touch** was clearly understood, though nuance was needed for “uncomfortable but not unsafe” situations.

#### 4.3.2. Moderate-Acquisition Concepts

- **Digital** boundaries were best understood for familiar platforms, requiring curriculum updates to stay relevant.
- **Peer pressure** was often recognized, but students lacked practical resistance strategies beyond simple refusal.

#### 4.3.2. Low-Acquisition Concepts

- **Affirmative and ongoing consent** was challenging, especially around withdrawal, specificity, and nonverbal cues.
- **Bystander intervention** was understood in theory but hindered by fear and uncertainty in practice.
- **Power dynamics with authority** figures posed a tension between cultural deference and personal rights.

### 4.4. Theoretical Analysis

The Empowered Choices curriculum implementation generated extensive data which researchers applied to their core theoretical frameworks of the project to demonstrate both practical effectiveness of these theories and their required modifications for Pakistan's intricate educational system. The educational system used Social Learning Theory together with Empowerment Theory and Informed Consent Theory to create an interactive learning environment which allowed educators to test and improve their theoretical concepts through Freirean action research. The study analyzes how each theoretical perspective creates specific manifestations and tensions which produce new insights through its expanded analysis.

The study examines how these frameworks interact with the actual experiences of Pakistani classrooms and their teachers and students. The study successfully used Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory as its main teaching method which taught younger students' boundary-setting through modeling and role-playing and peer observation. The application uncovered an essential conflict because the positive classroom models created a clash with established social practices which required people to respect authority through silent behavior. Teachers needed to practice new teaching methods because students had internalized previous behaviors which needed to be addressed through specific classroom strategies that depended on single-gender or mixed-gender classroom setups for their effectiveness.

The project implemented Empowerment Theory through its operational framework which creates multiple pathways for individuals to develop their personal empowerment. The students first developed self-efficacy through their boundary-setting work and later developed the ability to understand how social structures and power dynamics restrict their independence through their work. The educators achieved empowerment through their development from uncertain teaching assistants into strong student advocates who began to transform educational practices in their institutions which created a foundation for holistic student support across the entire institution.

The theoretical transplant of Informed Consent Theory from biomedical ethics into an educational framework required careful developmental and cultural adaptation. The development of knowledge proved to be an easy task while the process of achieving comprehensive understanding about consent which exists as an option to revoke at any time in collectivist societies became a challenging task. The curriculum addressed this by moving beyond abstract principles, using scenario-based practice to normalize changing one's mind, and by framing agency as a skill for navigating relational constraints rather than an idealized state of absolute autonomy.

The entire project used Freirean action research methods because it needed to reject the top-down banking education system. The system created an educational process which allowed students and teachers to work together through multiple rounds of dialogue and practical work and subsequent evaluation. The educational approach maintained cultural relevance through its use of local knowledge which included its Islamic-based teaching methods that used Haya and Amanah principles and educational methods which showed respect for others while responding to their needs. The project shows that consent education achieves theoretical integrity which empowers people through its participatory methods that create social learning environments in educational systems designed for specific cultural groups.

#### **4.5. Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis**

This section presents a comparative analysis of the pre- and post-testing phases conducted during the Empowered Choices study. The pre-implementation phase established a detailed baseline of educators' knowledge attitudes and institutional readiness before the intervention which captured their conceptual understandings and comfort levels and anticipated challenges. The post-testing phase assessed student engagement and conceptual mastery and observed behavioral outcomes after the delivery of the curriculum. The two phases establish a strong empirical system which assesses how the curriculum affects students by showing how well it improves awareness and the ongoing difficulties which lead to recommendations for permanent implementation.

Data analysis employed a sequential mixed-methods approach:

- **Descriptive Statistics:** Frequency distributions, central tendency measures
- **Content Analysis:** Thematic coding of open-ended responses using NVivo principles
- **Cross-tabulation Analysis:** Examining relationships between variables using SPSS software
- **Grounded Theory Development:** Inductive theme identification

#### 4.5.1. Pre-testing Analysis

##### 4.5.1.1. Sampling Strategy and Participant Characteristics

*Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of the Educators for Pre-testing*

Demographic Characteristics	Demographic Characteristics	Percentage
Geographic Distribution	Rawalpindi/Kahuta	44
	Nowshera/Mardan	22
	Abbottabad	6
	Lahore	6
	Islamabad	6
	Muree	17
Institutional Representation	Private School Networks	50
	Cadet Colleges	22
	Government/Public Institutions	17
	Other Private Schools	11
Professional Roles	School Administrators	33
	High School Teachers (Grades 9-14)	39
	Middle School Teachers (Grades 2-8)	28
Experience Distribution	Less than 1 year	17
	1-3 years	17
	4-7 years	11
	8-12 years	33
	More than 12 years	22
Grade Level Exposure	Grades 2-4 (Ages 5-9)	33
	Grades 5-8 (Ages 10-13)	39
	Grades 9-14 (Ages 14-18)	83

*Source: Authors' compilations.*

*Figure 6: Demographics*



Source: Authors' compilations.

#### 4.5.1.2. Prior Exposure to Consent Education

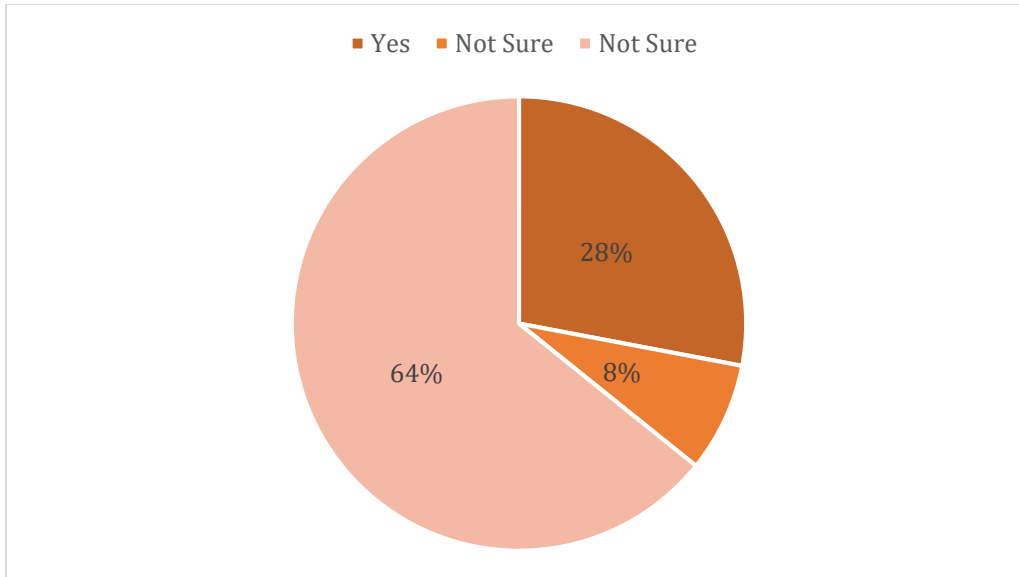
Yes: 61% educators

No: 22% educators

Not Sure: 17% educators

The study found that 61% of participants already knew about the topic which indicates that institutions currently provide more training on consent education. The study found that 39% of participants had limited contact with the material which created a situation where they needed basic training to fill their knowledge gaps. The study found that educators with more than 8 years of experience showed better knowledge of symptoms at 83% than educators who had less than 3 years of experience showed at 50% which indicates that professionals either acquire more practical knowledge through their work or that their educational programs have changed throughout their careers.

Figure 7: Educators' Prior Exposure to Consent Education



Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

#### 4.5.1.3. Conceptual Definitions of Consent: A Thematic Analysis

Table 2: Major Themes in Consent Definitions

Themes	Frequency	Example	Theoretical Implication
Permission-Based	(50%)	"Asking for permission," "allowance/agreement"	Transactional framing, authority-oriented
Rights and Boundaries	(39%)	"Rights of self and others," "personal boundaries"	The rights-based method establishes individual rights as the fundamental principle for its operations
Safety and Protection	(28%)	"Safe and respectful relationships," "prevention of harassment"	The approach uses protective language to establish methods which decrease potential dangers.
Voluntary Agreement	(22%)	"Voluntary, informed agreement," "clear and voluntary permission"	The system enables users to control their own actions while creating a platform for exchanging information.
Respect and Relationship	(17%)	"Respect for others," "fostering relationships"	Relational ethics, interpersonal dynamics

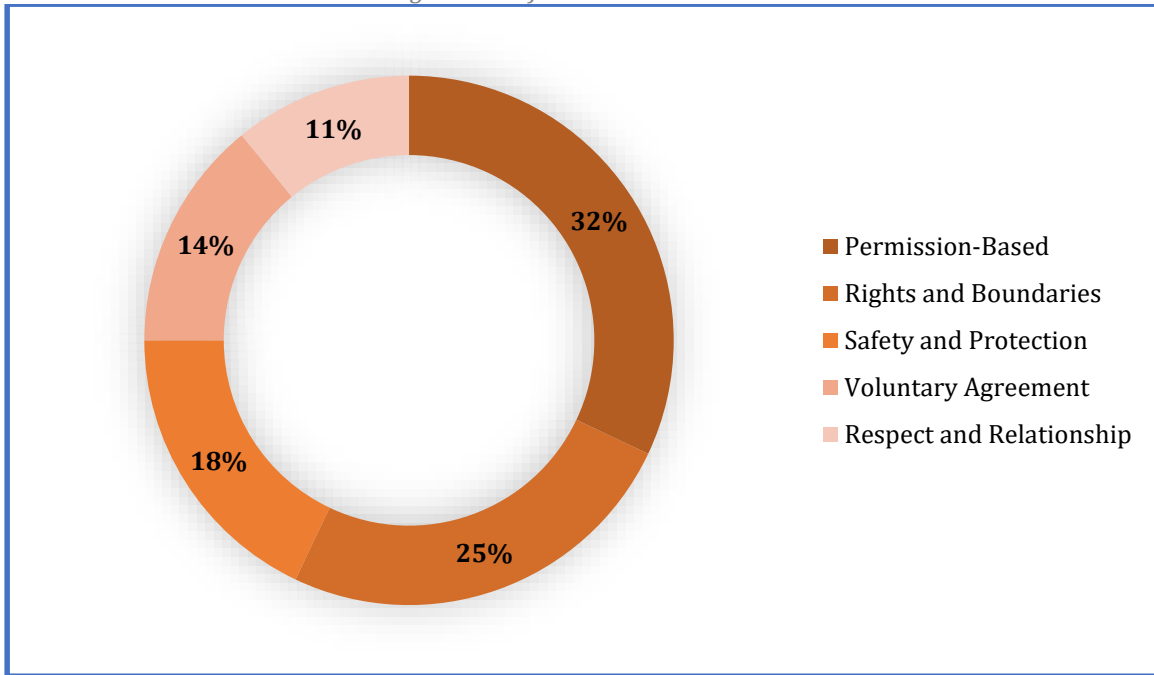
Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

The definitions reveal three primary conceptual frameworks coexisting:

- **Legalistic Framework:** Emphasizing permission, rights, and boundaries.
- **Relational Framework:** Focusing on respect, relationships, and communication.
- **Protective Framework:** Prioritizing safety, harm prevention, and reporting.

Educators developed advanced definitions which contained multiple dimensions according to their training. The administrator described consent as "free, informed, and voluntary agreement to take part in an activity, with the option to say no or withdraw at any time," which showed his understanding that consent functions as a continuous process that people can cancel at any time, a concept which people from eastern societies often find difficult to comprehend.

Figure 8: Major Themes in Consent



Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

#### 4.5.1.4. Existing Topic Coverage with Students

Table 3: Topics Previously Discussed

Topic	Percentage
Respecting Boundaries	50%
Safe vs. Unsafe Touch	44%
Bullying or Harassment	39%
Digital Safety and Privacy	28%
Trusted Adults and Reporting	7%
None (Haven't taught)	11%

Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

The data shows that current coverage protects different levels of security needs. The most common coverage protected Physical Safety Fundamentals which include touch boundaries. The coverage provided moderate protection for Behavioral Issues which included bullying. Digital Safety emerged as a new problem that needed attention. The evaluation found that Reporting Mechanisms received the lowest level of coverage. The research found that only 7% of participants reported discussing reporting mechanisms, which indicates that students can identify violations but need to learn about response pathways that colleges need to implement.

#### 4.5.1.5. Perceived Importance of Consent Education

Rating Distribution (Scale 1-5):

5 (Extremely Important): 78% educators

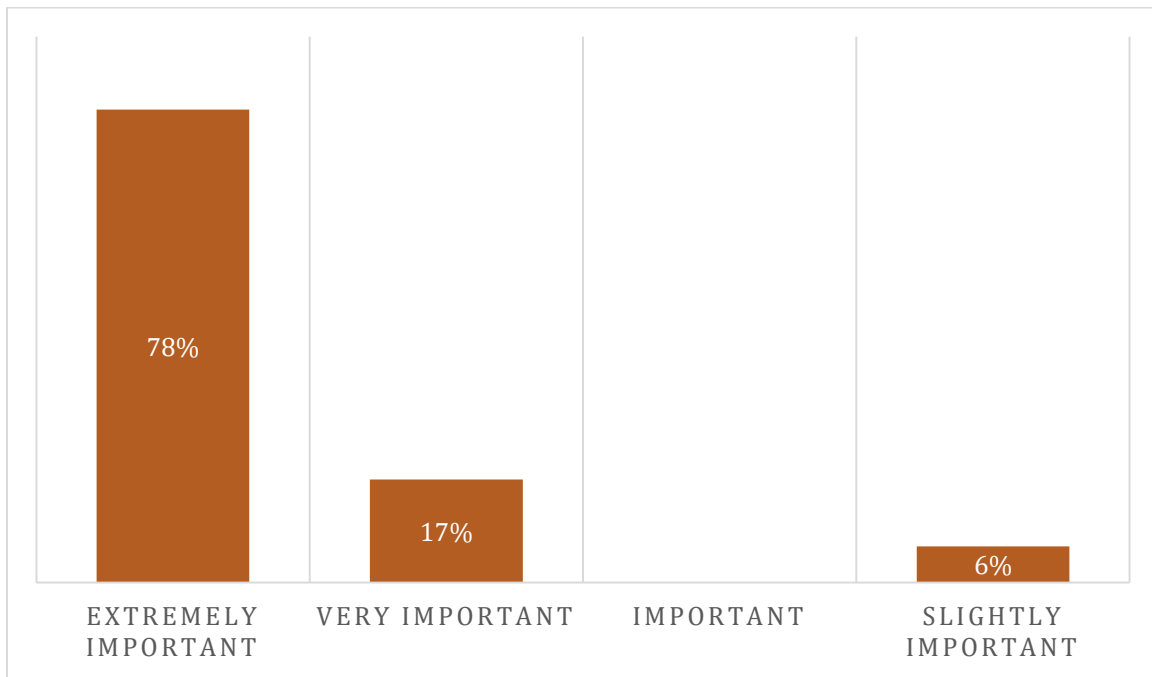
4 (Very Important): 17% educators

2 (Somewhat Important):6% educators

Mean Rating: 4.72 (SD: 0.67)

The exceptionally high mean rating (4.72/5) represents a remarkable consensus on curriculum relevance, especially given conservative educational contexts. The study found a perception gap which people considered important yet required better implementation. The importance ratings demonstrated no significant connection with experience level or gender or institution type which showed the need to be recognized across different groups.

Figure 9: Perceived Importance of Consent Education



Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

#### 4.5.1.6. Comfort Levels with Specific Topics

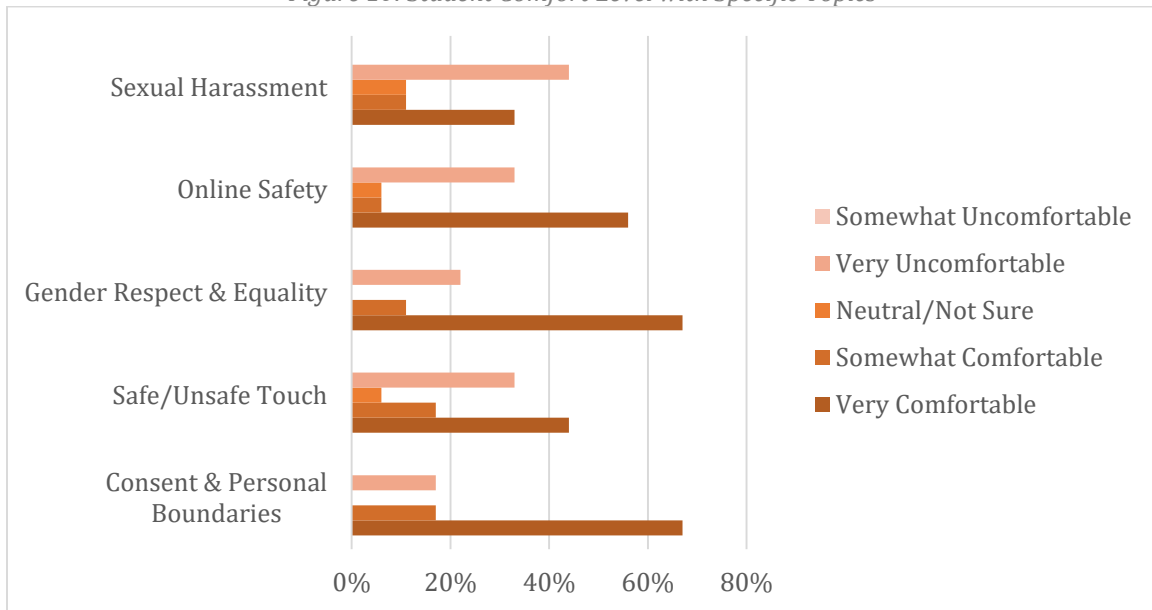
Table 4: Comfort Teaching Specific Topics

Topic	Very Comfortable	Somewhat Comfortable	Neutral/Not Sure	Very Uncomfortable	Somewhat Uncomfortable
Consent & Personal Boundaries	67%	17%	0%	17%	0%
Safe/Unsafe Touch	44%	17%	6%	33%	0%
Gender Respect & Equality	67%	11%	0%	22%	0%
Online Safety	56%	6%	6%	33%	0%
Sexual Harassment	33%	11%	11%	44%	0%
Reporting Abuse	39%	11%	11%	39%	0%

Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

Comfort levels follow a predictable pattern. The highest comfort level occurred during abstract concepts which included consent principles and gender equality. The preventive topics online safety and safe touch showed a moderate level of comfort. The response mechanisms which included reporting abuse and sexual harassment reached the lowest level of comfort. Several female educators specifically noted comfort challenges with opposite-gender students. The educators showed cultural dimensions of teacher-student interactions in conservative contexts.

Figure 10: Student Comfort Level with Specific Topics



Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

#### 4.5.1.7. Anticipated Implementation Challenges

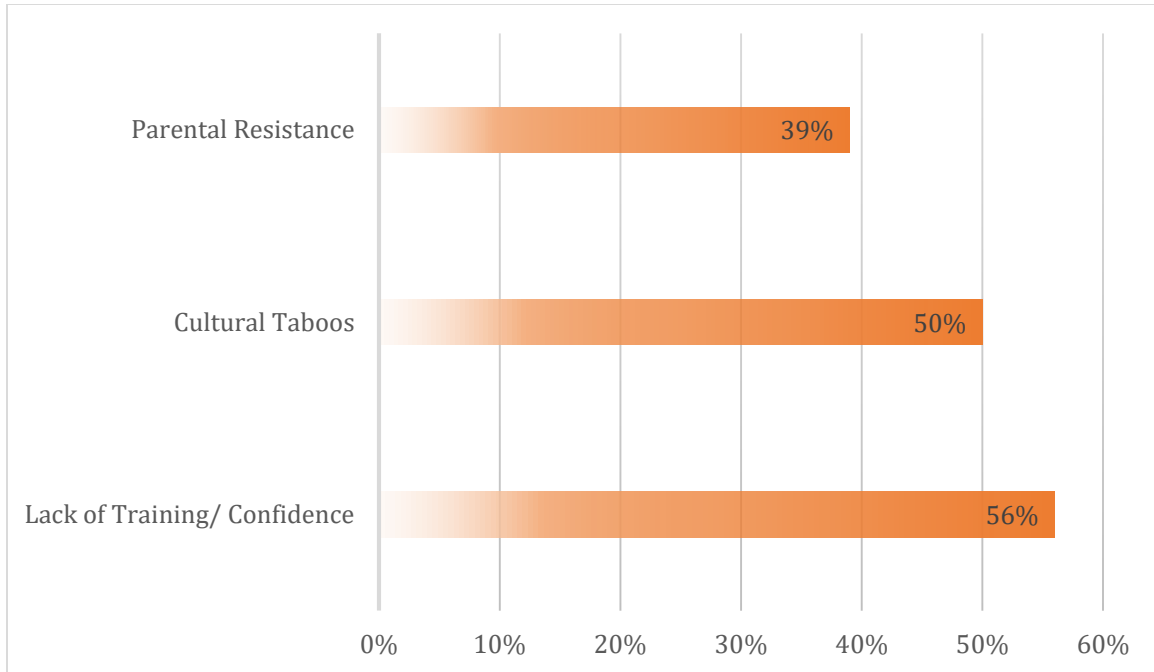
Table 5: Anticipated Challenges

Challenge	Percentage
Lack of Training/Confidence	56%
Cultural Taboos/Sensitivities	50%
Parental Resistance	39%
Personal Discomfort	6%
No Challenges Anticipated	6%

Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

There are three different levels which present challenges. The Individual Level showed 56% of teachers who faced confidence gaps. The Cultural Level showed 50% of people who followed social taboos. The Community Level showed 39% of parents who opposed the program. Less experienced educators (<3 years) disproportionately cited confidence gaps (83%) compared to veterans (>12 years: 25%), suggesting targeted support needs for newer teachers.

Figure 11: Top Anticipated Challenges Faced by Educators



Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

#### 4.5.1.8. Institutional Support Systems

The survey showed important deficiencies in how teachers were trained and how they thought they could handle student disclosure situations. Only 33% of educators reported having received formal training on how to respond to student disclosures of harassment or abuse while 39% stated they had no training and 28% were unsure. When asked to evaluate their personal capabilities to manage those situations which required cross-gender interaction 50% of respondents rated themselves as "very prepared" while 39% rated themselves "somewhat prepared." The discrepancy between training receipt and perceived preparedness shows an alarming tendency of people to distrust their abilities while depending on informal methods of training which lack formal organization. The studied training programs showed unequal access patterns because administrators achieved 67% access to training programs while classroom teachers only achieved 25% access thus showing how different organizational positions affected professionals' development possibilities. The existing training framework needs to become more equitable because current methods fail to deliver proper training which enables teachers to protect students according to safety and effective learning standards.

#### 4.5.1.9. Perceived Curriculum Benefits

The Empowered Choices curriculum will help students according to all educators who participated in the study. The educators provided their feedback which indicated four major benefits that they detected in the study. The educators specified Safety and Protection as their first finding because the curriculum enables students to "protect and safe themselves" and "recognize unhealthy situations." The staff members showed Rights and Empowerment as their main point because Rights and Empowerment enable students to "understand their rights" and establish "a sense of ownership." The theme of Behavioral Change appeared when educators expected schools to achieve "decreased

bullying" and students to acquire "respect and empathy." Some people recognized Academic Enhancement because they saw potential for "increased engagement" and "deeper understanding" in the classroom. The administrators used their institutional language to describe the curriculum as the "backbone of every education institution" while classroom teachers used their classroom experience to explain how it helped them "refine students' behavioral issues." The curriculum gains total support because it shows relevant value and transformative potential for all educator roles.

#### 4.5.1.10. Support Needs and Resource Requests

*Table 6: Requested Support Types (Qualitative Coding)*

Support Type	Frequency	Specific Requests
Training/Workshops	67%	"Formal training," "training on sensitive topics"
Teaching Materials	50%	"Age-appropriate lesson plans," "ready-made materials"
Administrative Support	44%	"Support from parents and administrators," "clear school policies"
Parent/Community Programs	28%	"Parent awareness programs," "community support"
Time Allocation	11%	"Liberal time frame," "extra time"

*Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.*

The support needs identified by educators followed a clear, logical progression which matched the necessary stages for successful and sustained curriculum implementation. Teachers needed their capacity to be developed through formal training and workshops which would help them gain confidence and develop their teaching abilities. The foundation of this project would start the implementation phase which required complete educational resources and age-appropriate teaching materials. Educators recognized that implementing programs successfully needed administrators to provide complete support while schools created structured programs for community and parent education. The requests for dedicated time in the school schedule and formal integration of consent education principles into school policies showed that these elements needed to be established for long-term sustainability. The hierarchy presents a clear path which starts with developing individual teacher skills and ends with schools adopting the curriculum as part of their cultural and educational practices.

#### 4.5.1.11. Willingness for Continued Engagement

A strong majority of educators (61%) explicitly agreed to participate in follow-up engagement, while a significant additional portion (33%) expressed conditional openness, selecting "Maybe/Contact Later." The majority of participants (94%) showed willingness to continue their involvement because they displayed various levels of interest in future work. The overwhelming willingness of participants to join the program demonstrates their initial commitment to the curriculum objectives, which will help establish enduring relationships necessary for long-term research and program development.

### 4.5.2. Post-testing Analysis

#### 4.5.2.1. Sample Characteristics

The sample comprised educators representing:

- Geographic Diversity: Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Quetta, Swat, Larkana, Murree
- Institutional Variety: Cadet colleges, private schools, semi-government schools, universities

The sample comprised grade level coverage:

- Tier I (Ages 5–9, Grades 2–4): 21% educators
- Tier II (Ages 10–13, Grades 5–8): 32% educators
- Tier III (Ages 14–18, Grades 9–14): 47% educators

#### *4.5.2.2. Educator Perceptions of Consent: A Lexical Analysis*

When asked to describe "consent" in one word, educators' responses created a linguistic map which showed their fundamental conceptual understanding. The most frequent term was "Permission," which 47% of respondents selected as their answer, showing that people understood consent through a framework that emphasized social hierarchy and power dynamics, which cultural traditions teach. The notable terms "Respect" and "Agreement" each received 11% of the total answers, which together, created a new way to understand the relationship between two people. Less frequent but significant were words such as "Safety," "Awareness," "Rights," "Protection," and "Ongoing and mutual," each appearing in 5% of responses.

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#### *4.5.2.3. Perceived Relevance and Need*

The overwhelming majority of educators (89%) affirmed that consent education is necessary in schools, with only 5% expressing uncertainty and another 5% dismissing the need. The quantitative data showed strong agreement which educational professionals confirmed through their testimonies about actual teaching scenarios that demonstrated the pressing requirement for these teaching methods. The common examples that people mentioned included higher grade students who experienced bullying and "ragging" and students who faced online peer harassment and unwanted touching and teasing incidents and who showed they did not know their own personal boundaries. The female students who university respondents identified as being particularly vulnerable to online harassment needed special protection according to their observations. The depth of understanding among some educators was notable—one from a cadet college insightfully remarked, "Consent shows respect and allows someone to express their boundaries... Silence does not imply a 'yes.'" The speaker demonstrates a complex understanding of consent through his statement which shows that educational institutions should develop basic consent knowledge in their students through organized educational methods.

#### 4.5.2.4. Student Engagement Metrics

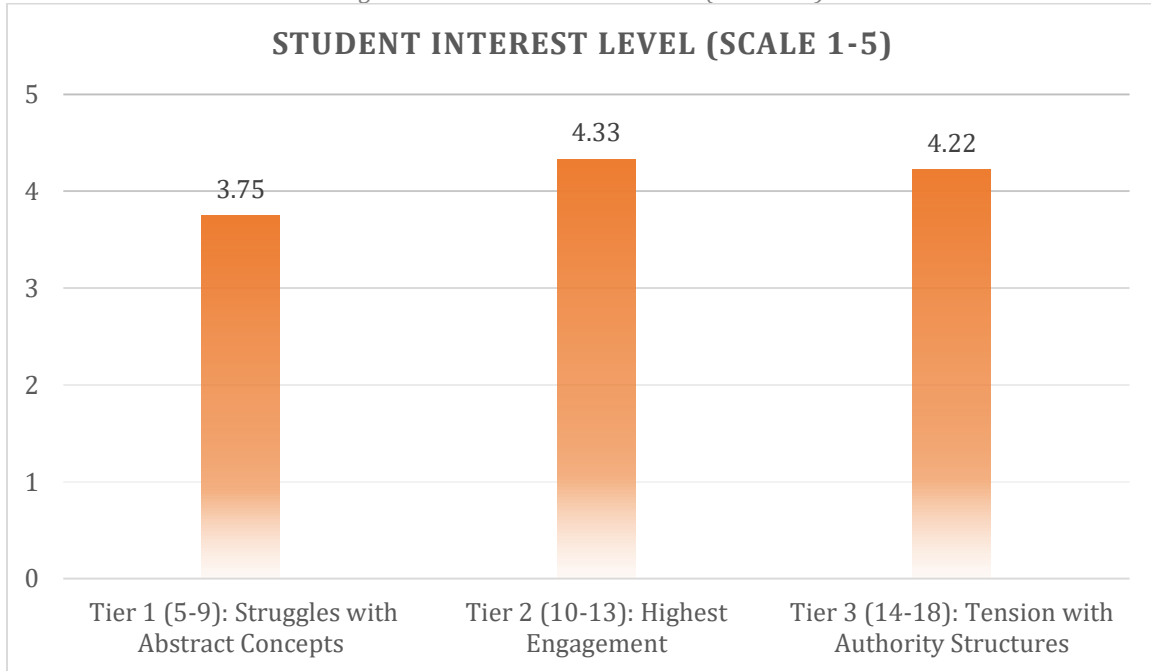
Table 7: Student Engagement across Tiers (Scale 1-5)

Tier Level	Interest Level	Participation	Confidence	Understanding
Tier I	3.75	3.5	3.5	3.5
Tier II	4.33	4.17	4.17	4.33
Tier III	4.22	4.11	4.22	4.11
Overall	4.16	4.05	4.05	4.11

Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

The study results show that students who belong to Tier II and are aged between 10 and 13 years demonstrated their highest level of engagement during the study. The results demonstrate that the "middle childhood" stage serves as the best developmental period for teaching consent. The study found that Tier I engagement remained active at a lower level which showed positive results whereas young children needed special modifications to understand the material.

Figure 12: Student Interest Level (Scale 1-5)



Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

#### 4.5.2.5. Learning Outcomes: Conceptual Mastery and Struggle

The educators established two separate categories which contain different levels of student understanding. The most understood concepts, in order of frequency, were: Personal Space (mentioned by the majority), Saying "No" confidently, Asking for permission, and Respecting feelings. The least understood concepts included: Respecting a "No" from others, Sextortion, navigating Consent with elders or authority figures, and the nuanced aspects of Online harassment.

The data established a developmental pattern which researchers used to track changes in behavior. Younger students tended to struggle more with abstract ideas such as "respecting feelings," whereas

older students found complex, scenario-based topics, like sextortion and the subtleties of digital consent, more challenging to grasp. The pattern demonstrates that curriculum development succeeded in creating basic educational materials which matched the developmental requirements of younger students. Enhanced instructional scaffolding which includes detailed examples together with guided discussions and practical exercises needs to be developed for students who require assistance with advanced socially complex topics.

#### 4.5.2.6. Attitudinal Change Assessment

The curriculum assessment produced both numerical results and performance assessment results which showed student growth. The study found that 89 percent of teachers observed their students showing some positive changes in behavior and attitude which included 47 percent who reported seeing distinct positive improvements. The educators provided detailed accounts of how students changed their behavior.

The participants who participated in the study showed that students developed stronger skills to establish boundaries while different students showed that they started to doubt their established rules about personal space and peer interactions. The main pattern of the study showed that female students who felt empowered to defend their rights achieved their goals.

The study found that educators discovered their students continued to talk about consent and boundary issues after school which showed that classroom material created important student discussions. The educator from Rawalpindi described how students changed their classroom behavior: "Students were taught to hide and not discuss things like these, but to learn about them from their teacher in a fun and interactive way proved to be very beneficial." This reflection shows how the curriculum's teaching methods made it possible for students to study a subject which schools considered forbidden yet students should learn about in a secure environment.

#### 4.5.2.7. Implementation Challenges: A Tiered Analysis

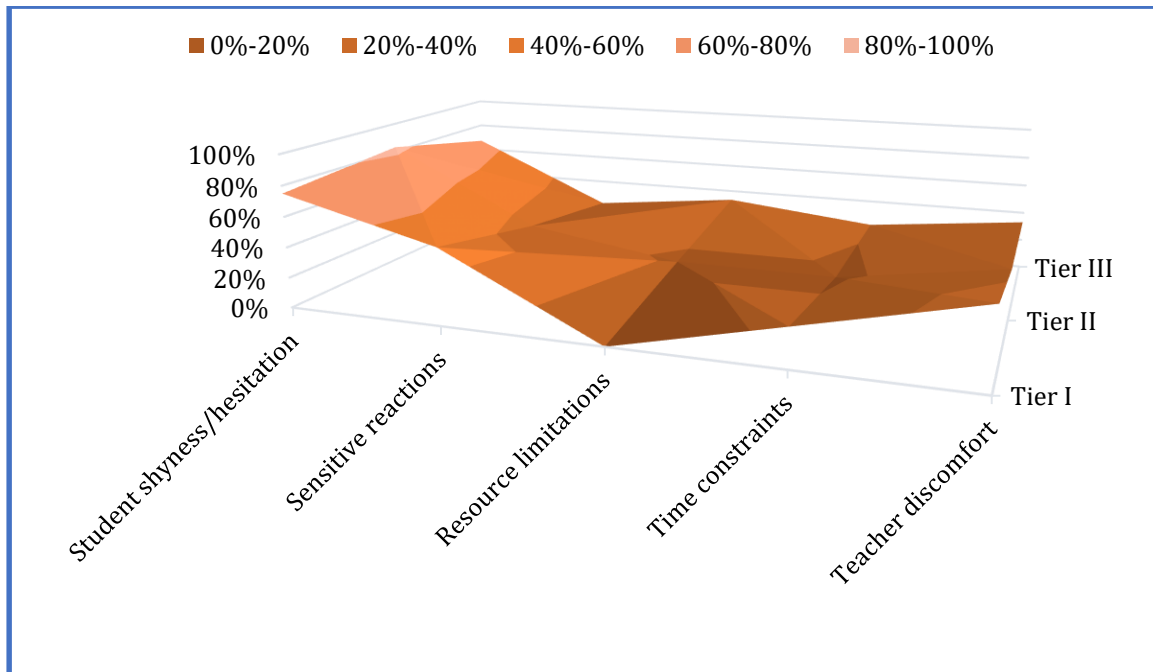
*Table 8: Challenge Frequency by Tier Level*

Challenges	Tier I	Tier II	Tier III	Total
Student shyness/hesitation	75%	83%	67%	74%
Sensitive reactions	50%	33%	22%	32%
Resource limitations	0%	17%	33%	21%
Time constraints	25%	17%	22%	21%
Teacher discomfort	50%	33%	33%	37%

*Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.*

The table demonstrates that Student hesitation existed as a common behavior which decreased through the different age stages of the study. The table demonstrates that Student hesitation existed as a common behavior which decreased through the different age stages of the study. Teacher discomfort reached its peak at Tier I because educators lacked confidence in selecting suitable methods for different age groups.

*Figure 13: Implementation Challenges Faced by Educators*



Source: Authors' compilations based on own survey.

#### 4.5.2.8. Social Media as a Double-Edged Space for Consent Learning

Post-implementation data showed that digital consent topics which included online harassment and sextortion and privacy settings and ethical sharing attracted strong student interest from Tier II students who were 10 to 13 years old and Tier III students who were 14 to 18 years old. Social Learning Theory explains this phenomenon because students develop digital behavioral patterns through their online activities which do not provide specific guidelines for obtaining consent. The curriculum provided structured scenarios (e.g., responding to unwanted messages, navigating peer pressure to share images) that allowed students to rehearse and reinforce positive digital behaviors in a safe environment.

The analysis found two main research gaps because students could explain digital consent but they failed to use this knowledge during their online interactions. The gap exists because digital communication creates disinhibited environments which lead people to behave irresponsibly because they use anonymity and physical distance to diminish their sense of accountability. Students in educational settings believed that online violations did not show the same seriousness as physical violations thus students required deeper cognitive transformation to understand digital harm.

The analysis further shows that digital consent education required careful cultural translation. Digital spaces in the society face boundaries test because people maintain sexual matters as forbidden topics for discussion. The curriculum achieved success when it used culturally appropriate methods for teaching because it connected Islamic values of Haya (modesty) and Amanah (trust) to digital safety and used examples relevant to the local culture (e.g., WhatsApp groups, Facebook friends). This approach allowed digital consent to be taught as a universal safety skill rather than a culturally contentious topic which reduced resistance from educators and parents.

### **4.5.3. Implementation Readiness Profiles**

#### *4.5.3.1. Implementation Challenges and Adaptive Strategies*

➤ **Confirmed Anticipated Barriers:**

- Cultural taboos were navigated by linking concepts to Islamic principles (modesty, trust), medical safety, and universal rights.
- Parental resistance was less frequent than expected, mostly among younger children; it was mitigated through proactive guidance and safety emphasis.

➤ **Emergent Unanticipated Challenges:**

- A "Giggle response" in early adolescents signaled discomfort, not resistance; it was normalized with respectful acknowledgment.
- Differential classroom readiness required flexible teaching due to varying prior exposure, personal experience, and gender socialization.
- Terminology barriers, such as "consent" being oversimplified, demanded concept clarification through examples rather than just definitions.

#### *4.5.3.2. Resource and Institutional Limitations*

The study identified specific resource and institutional limitations that affected curriculum delivery. The study found that excessive use of worksheets restricted educational discussions because teachers deemed these materials to function as discussion starters. Teachers requested more visual materials that matched different cultural backgrounds to improve student engagement across multiple age groups. The research results demonstrate that effective facilitation requires a resource toolkit which contains diverse materials that suit various educational contexts.

#### *4.5.3.3. Content Adaptation Priorities*

The organization established content adaptation priorities because they needed to create material which would connect to local cultures and match suitable developmental stages of their target audience. Cultural bridging elements include connecting consent principles to Islamic values of respect and modesty, utilizing culturally familiar scenarios and relationship contexts, and explicitly addressing hierarchical consent dynamics with elders and authority figures. The developmental sequencing process uses three levels which progress from Tier I (ages 5–9) to Tier II (ages 10–13) and finally to Tier III (ages 14–18) which teaches relationship consent together with legal aspects and reporting procedures. The curriculum requires gender-inclusive approaches because it needs to teach about male vulnerability while providing gender-specific scenarios that do not reinforce stereotypes and training teachers to handle cross-gender situations.

#### *4.5.3.4. Support System Design*

A structured support system is essential for successful long-term implementation of the project. The training program should be divided into three phases which start with Foundation Phase to teach

consent basics and cultural skills and then go to Facilitation Phase which teaches scenario practice and disclosure response and finally reach Integration Phase to focus on curriculum development and peer coaching. The resource toolkit should contain scripted lesson plans which teachers can adapt through visual aids that suit different age groups and parent communication templates and school policy development guides. The ongoing support mechanisms which include peer mentoring circles and an expert consultation hotline and an online resource repository and a community of practice platform will assist in maintaining progress while they solve new problems that arise.

#### *4.5.3.5. Implementation Strategy Recommendations*

The Pilot Phase of our project from Month 1 to Month 3 will test educational materials in controlled environments while we run our program with teachers who show complete readiness for the role of educational leadership. The Expansion Phase of the project which lasts from Month 4 to Month 9 will implement a three-stage deployment plan which depends on each institution's current readiness while conducting simultaneous parental information programs that follow existing administrative policies. The Institutionalization Phase which lasts from Month 10 to Month 18 will implement curriculum integration into current subjects while developing teacher certification programs and promoting government programs that will deliver sustainable solutions and transformative results for the entire system.

### **4.6. Summary of Findings: Empowered Choices Curriculum Evaluation**

#### ***4.6.1. Pre-Implementation Baseline Analysis***

The survey conducted among educational professionals throughout Pakistan showed that educators regarded consent education as highly important yet had not received any prior training to teach it before the implementation of the academic program. Educators assigned a 4.72 score out of 5 to the significance of consent education which shows that almost all educators in Pakistan believe that this educational content holds value for their students. The research found that 61% of participants had encountered the concept before yet classroom instruction stayed at a basic level which covered boundary respect and safe touch versus unsafe touch at a 50% and 44% rate respectively while digital safety and reporting mechanisms received minimal instruction at 28% and 17% rates.

Educators used permission-based definitions to describe consent according to their conceptual framework of the term which combined hierarchical systems with transactional frameworks while 39% of educators used rights-based terminology which focused on personal autonomy together with boundary protection. People showed different levels of comfort with various subjects because abstract topics such as consent principles together with gender equality received high comfort (67% of participants felt very comfortable) whereas sexual harassment (33% of participants felt very comfortable) and reporting abuse (39% of participants felt very comfortable) presented considerable challenges. The expected difficulties arose from individual capacity shortages which 56% of participants identified as lacking training or confidence and from sociocultural obstacles which 50% of participants reported as cultural taboos while 39% of them anticipated parent or community pushback. Educators showed complete confidence in the curriculum's capacity to deliver positive outcomes because all of them believed that the program would improve student safety and

empowerment together with respectful behavior while 94% of educators chose to participate in extra training and follow-up activities.

#### ***4.6.2. Post-Implementation Outcome Analysis***

The feedback from teachers who delivered the curriculum demonstrated that they achieved successful student engagement which produced valuable outcomes while pointing out specific areas needing improvement. Students maintained strong engagement throughout the program, which showed an average interest rating of 4.16 out of 5 and a comprehension level of essential concepts at 4.11. The research showed that Tier II students aged 10 to 13 demonstrated their highest engagement because this age range developed the best skills for understanding consent education. The students demonstrated their strongest understanding of personal space because they could accurately demonstrate how to say "no" and request permission, but they struggled with understanding more complex concepts which included "no" from others and sextortion and consent requirements with elders and authority figures.

The research found that 89% of teachers witnessed positive shifts in student attitudes while 47% of teachers showed distinct positive changes. Students established links between their lessons and their actual life experiences with bullying and online harassment and peer pressure. Students asked deep context-specific questions which included "Can we say 'no' to elders?" and "Is silence with a smile consent?" The interactive discussions and worksheet activities and awareness demonstrations served as the most effective teaching elements which succeeded in making a traditionally prohibited topic understandable to students.

The process of implementing the system encountered obstacles during its execution. The main obstacle which educators encountered in the classroom existed because most students (74%) showed reluctance to participate in open discussions about their thoughts which cultural shyness and the sensitive topics that appeared in class created. The need for more teacher training emerged because teachers asked for additional training sessions and better procedures and counselor assistance to help students who face academic problems and emotional distress. The cultural and developmental differences became obvious because younger students had difficulties understanding abstract words while the curriculum needed additional adjustments to match local customs and social behaviors from the hierarchy system.

#### ***4.6.3. Synthesis and Overall Interpretation***

The analysis of pre-implementation and post-implementation data shows a clear pattern which demonstrates that Empowered Choices curriculum successfully started to fulfill the strong hidden need for consent education in Pakistan. The pre-testing process showed the need for better tools to achieve test objectives and the need for better training programs and dedicated learning times. The post-testing results showed that students and educators achieved better results through structured interactive cultural appropriate learning program implementation.

The complete implementation process shows how educational theories become real practices which empower students and help teachers learn while they face actual teaching challenges. The curriculum successfully develops critical thinking skills while students establish personal connections with the

course materials. The program development process operates in a complicated environment because ongoing challenges with cultural understanding and teacher confidence development and age-appropriate content creation exist. The findings prove that the Empowered Choices curriculum functions as an essential effective educational program which will achieve higher success through ongoing development and ongoing teacher assistance and expanded community involvement.

The research demonstrates that educational systems should implement structured consent education programs which respect local cultural values to establish educational environments that protect student safety and dignity while meeting essential objectives of community development. The pilot showed that students and educators needed this educational program which schools should provide through their existing training systems. Teachers observed that students displayed more involvement in classroom activities while grasping essential ideas which included boundary understanding and body autonomy and they felt safer to talk about subjects that had been considered forbidden before. The curriculum design which allows for age-appropriate learning through interactive activities successfully achieved its purpose of enabling people to share their experiences and develop self-awareness despite facing challenges from cultural beliefs and their need for training and the public's occasional opposition. The research presents concrete proof that national and provincial education systems should incorporate consent education into their curriculum and teacher training programs and child protection policies. The program helps Pakistan meet United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 4 which focuses on quality education and 5 which targets gender equality by using consent education as a preventative method that works together with current legal protections against harassment and abuse. The Empowered Choices program provides evidence-based consent education implementation methods which schools throughout Pakistan can use to create their educational systems. The curriculum empowers young people by sharing essential knowledge and giving them decision-making power which helps build a society that treats everyone with equality and respect while enhancing their personal development.

## DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

The Empowered Choices curriculum implementation across various educational institutions in Pakistan serves as an effective research case to study how consent education needs to be modified for use in traditional Pakistani society which has diverse cultural backgrounds. The study combines pre-implementation data and post-implementation data to evaluate educational innovation through teacher self-efficacy and sociocultural learning theory. The results show that educational systems which use boundary and consent education face major difficulties despite having the power to create transformative educational experiences.

### 5.1. Navigating Conceptual Frameworks: From Permission to Empowerment

The pre-implementation data showed that Pakistani educators defined consent through a permission-based framework which they used to determine hierarchical relationships between authority figures who grant or deny permissions. This research supports Hofstede's (2001) national cultural dimensions which show Pakistanis demonstrate high power distance because they accept social hierarchies and show deep respect for authority figures. The post-implementation reflections showed that people had developed better understanding of their subjects through their new knowledge about the topic. Educators began using language about mutual agreement and rights and bodily autonomy in their post-session reflections which showed that the curriculum helped them develop understanding beyond transactional permission-seeking.

The current evolution of the situation shows a direct connection to research results which originated from previous studies conducted in comparable conservative settings. Bay-Cheng (2003) establishes that effective sexuality and consent education inside restrictive environments requires educators to use "scaffolded unlearning" because they must first teach students about new concepts through existing knowledge before introducing them to advanced conceptual understanding. The Empowered Choices curriculum has effectively started this process by using respect (*izzat*) and modesty (*haya*) as culturally relevant concepts to introduce students to bodily autonomy, which researchers recommend for use in Muslim-majority countries (Roudsari et al., 2013).

The student questions which researchers collected from post-implementation data "Can we say 'no' to elders?" and "Does consent apply in marriage?"; show that the curriculum effectively taught students to evaluate how consent operates between people who hold different levels of authority. These questions represent what Freire (1970) would term "conscientization moments," where students start to challenge established systems of authority. Educators need more thorough training in cultural power dynamics because they lack confidence to answer intergenerational and marital consent questions.

### 5.2. Teacher Self-Efficacy and Implementation Fidelity

The Bandura self-efficacy theory from 1977 offers useful insights which researchers to study implementation processes. The pre-implementation study showed an important difference between efficacy and importance because educators viewed the curriculum as essential with a 472 out of 500 rating but their confidence about handling specific topics showed great differences especially in sexual harassment and abuse reporting. The perceived value of the program together with their self-

assuredness created a condition which researchers call the "readiness-implementation gap" which researchers discovered during their research on sensitive curriculum implementation (Galaige et al., 2022).

The post-implementation evaluation shows that the curriculum established essential learning opportunities through its organized learning resources and course activities which helped teachers build their self-efficacy abilities. The educators reported that their confidence increased after they saw students participate in activities and after they successfully led classroom discussions. The request for ongoing training and support services shows that educators need additional help because their current abilities in trauma-informed student response systems remain incomplete.

The study needs to focus on how different teacher subgroups develop their self-efficacy abilities. The veteran educators who had more than 12 years of teaching experience demonstrated greater initial confidence together with advanced understanding of educational concepts while the new teachers showed higher levels of anxiety about cultural backlash and parental resistance. The need for different professional development methods exists because research shows that teachers develop differently according to their career progress (Day & Gu, 2010).

### **5.3. Developmental Appropriateness and Pedagogical Effectiveness**

The research used three age groups 5-9 years 10-13 years and 14-18 years to evaluate developmental suitability which represents a key element in consent education research (Martin & Sokol, 2011). The post-implementation assessment showed that students used different methods to interact with the content and understand the material across different tiers. Tier II students (ages 10-13) showed the highest engagement levels, suggesting that early adolescence represents a particularly receptive developmental window for consent education, possibly because emerging abstract reasoning capabilities coincide with increased peer interaction and boundary-testing.

Young children in Tier I understood concrete things like personal space people need to keep between themselves while they failed to comprehend abstract things which included "respecting feelings. This aligns with Piagetian developmental theory, which posits that children aged 5-9 operate primarily at the concrete operational stage, requiring tangible examples and repeated practice (Piaget, 1978). The age group requires visual materials together with experiential content because students face difficulties which educators need to provide according to their recommendations.

Older adolescents in Tier III studied detailed situations which included sextortion and digital consent but they showed unease when they tried to use consent rules with hierarchical relationships. The tension between developing independence and following established authority systems makes collectivist societies face difficulties in social relationships (Kagiticbasi, 2005). The curriculum successfully generates questions which show tension between different cultural values yet educators lack confidence to handle these situations because they require better instruction on how to handle cultural value conflicts.

### **5.4. Cultural Navigation and Local Adaptation**

The implementation process revealed that culturally adapted consent education faced both potential benefits and implementation difficulties. The implementation phase confirmed pre-existing cultural

taboos and parental resistance concerns while educators identified student shyness and hesitation as the primary obstacle which 74 percent of them experienced. This situation demonstrates what [Bhabha \(2012\)](#) called "third space" through which Western individual autonomy concepts blend with South Asian collectivist cultural traditions.

The evidence shows that people from conservative backgrounds actually show strong interest in different cultural elements which counters existing beliefs about their views. The educators established Islamic-based consent teaching by applying respect (*hurmat*) and modesty (*haya*) values which led one teacher to describe their work as "culturally congruent pathways" to bodily autonomy. The approach follows research findings which demonstrate that effective health education works best when it matches Muslim community religious practices and cultural practices instead of Western methods ([Padela & Curlin, 2013](#)). The digital consent components proved particularly relevant in Pakistan's rapidly digitizing society where rising smartphone use among youth has led to new security challenges.

The students showed interest in sextortion and online harassment topics because the curriculum efficiently handled current digital security issues through its use of digital platforms which [Livingstone et al. \(2018\)](#) recommended for digital literacy education.

### **5.5. Structural Barriers and Systemic Enablers**

The implementation process showed different structural factors which verified ecological systems theory ([Guy-Evans, 2020](#)). The implementation process at microsystem level showed how classroom dynamics including gender segregation and teacher-student power differentials-controlled classroom implementation process. Female educators identified specific difficulties which emerged when they tried to explain consent to male students because of established gender norms that controlled their ability to discuss body-related topics and personal limits.

The mesosystem level showed school-family relationships as essential requirements for success. Some schools had supportive administrations while other schools faced parental resistance which matched previous studies about comprehensive sexuality education in conservative communities ([Fine & McClelland 2006](#)). The most successful implementations occurred in schools where administrators conducted parent orientation sessions which showed that family engagement needs to happen for implementation success.

The exosystemic factors which affected the system included institutional policies and resource distribution. Schools that had developed counseling services and child protection policies managed to implement the curriculum with more confidence while schools that lacked these essential supports faced difficulties in handling disclosures. The need for protective infrastructure develops as an essential element for protecting sensitive curriculum implementation which goes beyond the borders of Pakistan to impact educational systems in other resource-limited settings (UNESCO, 2018).

At the macrosystem level, national discourse around child protection and gender-based violence created both opportunities and constraints. The public gained better knowledge of protection needs because recent high-profile child abuse cases in Pakistan which one administrator described as a

"receptive moment" for consent education. Educators faced conflicting demands because conservative groups opposed "Western values" while they needed to maintain educational standards.

### **5.6. Social Media's Role and the Impact of Early Exposure**

The data collected after system implementation showed that social media sites and digital platforms served two functions which created educational challenges about consent. Teachers observed that Tier II students aged 10 to 13 and Tier III students aged 14 to 18 showed strong interest in learning about digital consent, online harassment, sextortion, and privacy controls. The literature review presents worldwide evidence that shows adolescents experience difficulty applying online consent ethical standards which results in higher chances of cyberbullying and forced image distribution (Powell & Henry,2017).

Social media became the main way Pakistanis could discuss consent because it served as both a common and urgent entry point. Students connected curriculum scenarios to their own experiences with unwanted messages, peer pressure to share personal information, and blurred boundaries in digital communication. The real-world connections of the material led to increased student involvement while educators used digital literacy to teach students about the concept of bodily autonomy, which students understood easily. The statement that people have the right to deny unwanted physical contact also gives them control over their online photo sharing rights, which shows the link between physical and digital consent.

The study found that its evidence showed students needed to learn about digital spaces whose unique challenges existed in the online environment. Educators observed that students tended to treat online interactions as something less than authentic human connections which created difficulties when they needed to understand consent rules. The research identified social media platforms' anonymous nature together with their distance-based interactions as elements which made it hard to detect instances of coercion and violations. The study results demonstrate that educational institutions must maintain their focus on digital ethics training because it serves as essential content for teaching consent to students through practical learning sessions which use their local social media platforms including WhatsApp, Facebook, and TikTok.

### **5.7. Theoretical Contributions and Extensions**

This research expands multiple existing theoretical frameworks. First, the research demonstrates that Von Everett M. Rogers diffusion of innovation theory faces new challenges as innovation adoption progresses through different steps which include both adaptation and negotiation and partial integration but does not follow the expected pattern of complete adoption or total rejection (Karnowski & Kümpel, 2015). The role of educators extended beyond their responsibilities as implementers because they acted as cultural translators, which researchers have not yet completely developed in their studies about innovation diffusion.

The research results expand self-efficacy theory because they show that collective efficacy, which includes school-wide and departmental confidence, functions as a mediator for teacher efficacy at the individual level. The educators in schools who studied the curriculum during simultaneous teacher

implementation showed better confidence levels and developed deeper classroom discussions, which demonstrates that peer learning and shared experience create their own support systems during implementation.

The research shows how postcolonial educational theory operates through "travelling concepts," which local communities transform into their own unique forms instead of simply accepting or rejecting them (Chakrabarty, 2000). The Pakistani educators' creative blending of rights-based discourse with Islamic ethics represents what might be termed "vernacular globalization," a process of selective incorporation and adaptation that deserves further theoretical attention.

## **5.8. Limitations and Methodological Considerations**

Researchers need to evaluate multiple restrictions which exist in their study. The research sample contained diverse elements which included private schools and urban centers but these elements restricted research results to apply only to rural public schools and madrassas which show stronger cultural conservatism. Future research should specifically examine implementation in these more restrictive environments.

The study used educator self-reports as its primary data source which creates a risk of social desirability bias when respondents report their comfort levels and implementation obstacles. Our knowledge of teaching methods and student learning paths faces constraints because we lack direct classroom assessments and student performance data which teachers use to report their findings. Future studies should incorporate classroom ethnography and pre- and post-assessments.

The system requires at least two sessions to execute its functions which prevents us from studying long term effects across extended time periods. To achieve understanding of consent people need ongoing strength training which becomes particularly difficult when educational programs become too full. The future evaluation process will benefit from tracking both knowledge retention and behavior changes that occur over time.

The research study failed to investigate how different social groups experience consent education because it does not analyze consent education effects on people from different genders and socioeconomic backgrounds and people with disabilities who represent crucial parts of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1994). The research must determine how consent education affects male and female students because gender differences create a critical investigation area within this context.

The educational interruption caused by COVID-19 during part of the study period may have influenced both the implementation process and educator capacity yet this effect remains unmeasured in any systematic way.

## **5.9. Implications for Practice and Policy**

The findings suggest several practical implications:

### ***5.9.1. For Curriculum Design***

- Develop more extensive tier-specific materials, with particular attention to visual and experiential components for younger children.

- Create explicit guidance for navigating cultural and religious values conflicts, including scripted responses to common concerns.
- Integrate digital consent more comprehensively, reflecting the youth's online realities.
- Include parent and community orientation materials to build supportive ecosystems.

#### ***5.9.2. For Teacher Development***

- Implement tiered training addressing different experience levels and confidence starting points.
- Incorporate simulated practice with challenging scenarios, particularly around disclosure management.
- Develop peer mentoring systems within and across schools.
- Create ongoing support mechanisms rather than one-time training.

#### ***5.9.3. For Systemic Support***

- Advocate for policy frameworks that support consent education while allowing local adaptation.
- Develop referral networks linking schools to counseling and legal services.
- Create assessment tools that respect cultural context while ensuring educational quality.
- Establish communities of practice for ongoing learning and adaptation.

#### ***5.9.4. For Future Research***

- Conduct longitudinal studies tracking student outcomes over time.
- Examine implementation in more conservative settings (rural areas, religious schools)
- Explore differential impacts across gender, class, and ability.
- Develop culturally grounded assessment instruments.
- Study parent and community responses more systematically

## CONCLUSION

The Empowered Choices curriculum implementation in Pakistan demonstrates that educational institutions require consent education while facing difficulties in teaching this program within conservative cultural environments. Educators showed exceptional flexibility because they combined international standards of bodily autonomy with traditional local customs of showing respect and maintaining modesty to develop a distinctive method of teaching consent that respects diverse cultural backgrounds. The curriculum successfully promotes students to question power dynamics and relationship limits because it enables students to raise inquiries which teachers cannot entirely answer.

The power to challenge established social hierarchies according to Giroux's concept of "boundary pedagogy" emerges through this educational framework which enables students to question established power structures. The ongoing difficulties with teacher confidence and cultural barriers as well as the lack of effective support systems demonstrate that educational programs need more than curricular changes to succeed because it requires simultaneous teacher training and community collaboration and infrastructure protection.

Consent education in Pakistan functions as a safeguard against risks because it builds essential relationship skills which support the development of a fairer society. The Empowered Choices program shows that consent education can succeed in difficult environments through proper cultural understanding and dedicated support systems and continuous program changes which provide young people essential skills for maintaining their safety and self-worth and building relationships with others.

The journey from permission to empowerment is necessarily incremental in conservative contexts, but as this study shows, even initial steps can open consequential conversations and plant seeds for more profound transformation. The future work should establish its base on existing foundations while fixing all discovered deficiencies through the development of consent education. The development process needs to create consent education which will provide immediate safety and long-term change while maintaining both cultural authenticity and rights protection.

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