

Analysis of the Lived Experience of Teachers' Violence towards Afghan Students in Primary Schools

Reza. Atri¹, Hamid. Shafizadeh^{2*}, Nader. Soleimani²

¹ PhD Student, Department of Educational Management, Garmsar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran.

² Associate Professor, Department of Educational Management, Garmsar Branch, Islamic Azad University, Garmsar, Iran.

* Corresponding author email address: shafizadeh11@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Immigration always faces challenges and one of the can be investigated challenges in this field is violence towards immigrants. Therefore, the aim of this study was to analysis the lived experience of teachers' violence towards Afghan students in primary schools.

Methodology: The present study in terms of purpose was applied and in terms of implementation method was descriptive from type of qualitative. The research population was of Afghan elementary school students who had experienced of violence from teachers and principals of elementary schools, which 20 students and 10 principals were selected as samples through purposive sampling method. The research tool was a semi-structured and in-depth interview based on researcher-made questions, and the validity of the interviews was confirmed by the triangulation method and its reliability was obtained by the agreement coefficient method between two coders at 0.79. The data of the present study were analyzed by the coding method in MAXQDA-Pro software.

Findings: The findings of this study indicated that the types of teachers' violence have 17 concepts in 3 components of verbal violence (6 concepts), behavioral violence (6 concepts) and physical violence (5 concepts), the effects of teachers' violence have 22 concepts in 4 components of mental (9 concept), academic (4 concepts), physical (3 concepts) and social (6 concepts) and control strategies of teachers' violence have 19 concepts in 5 components of educational (5 concepts), employment (3 concepts), planning (5 concepts), disciplinary (3 concepts) and cultural (3 concepts). Also, the pattern of types of teachers' violence, effects of teachers' violence and control strategies of teachers' violence were designed.

Conclusion: According to the results, it is recommended to the education managers to use the control strategies of teachers' violence in order to reduce the types of teachers' violence and its effects.

Keywords: Teachers' violence, Afghan students, primary schools, social effects, educational strategies.

1. Introduction

Migration is a global issue that has attracted the attention of many scientific fields and has been the subject of extensive research in recent decades (Chen et al., 2022). Migration, in the lexical sense, means leaving one's place of residence to settle or go elsewhere for a relatively long period, or moving to another country. In terms, this concept represents a form of geographic or demographic mobility occurring between two geographic units, fundamentally characterized by the occurrence of a spatial change, defined by the presence of both origin and destination locations (Jeong et al., 2020). Migration has been one of the ways humans adapt to life conditions and master their difficulties, but this human movement is not always accompanied by positive outcomes and also entails risks (Kieseppä et al., 2021). Afghanistan has long been a center of conflict and struggle among various countries such as England, Iran, India, and Russia, and shares an 850-kilometer border with Iran, parts of which belonged to Iran in the past and today still bears the cultural geography legacy of Greater Khorasan. The unstable political conditions in Afghanistan have consistently driven Afghans to migrate to the nearest regional countries such as Iran, Pakistan, and Tajikistan (Sajadpour & Jamali, 2016). For the past four decades, Iran has hosted the largest population of foreign migrants, primarily Afghans and Iraqis, and is now the second-largest recipient of Afghan migrants after Pakistan. Iran has historically witnessed the presence of these migrants within its territory. Additionally, according to the 2016 census, there were 839,912 Afghan migrants in Iran with refugee cards, 30,000 with long-term residence permits, 450,000 with short-term passports, and 734,622 without legal documents, but unofficial figures indicate the presence of nearly three million Afghan migrants in Iran (Mirzaei, 2017).

In Iran, due to various reasons including shared language and history, and seasonal scattered migration for work and livelihood, there has been a presence of Afghans for a long time. In the past four decades, fleeing war and insecurity in Afghanistan has been the main reason for the massive influx of migrants, resulting in the presence of two to three generations of Afghan migrant families in Iran. Most of these migrant groups are deprived of education, and parents often choose spouses for their children in childhood (Khosravi et al., 2018). The lived experience of migrants and the process of migration are rich, complex, and researchable topics for sociological studies (Chen, Slopen, & Lee, 2023).

Migration is a conscious and voluntary behavior based on various motivations such as finding work, pursuing education, seeking welfare, or fleeing war, insecurity, discrimination, and prejudice (Payton et al., 2021). Afghan migration is one of the largest migration movements in the modern world history over the last three decades, with more than 96% directed towards Iran and Pakistan. This migration has always been one of their economic and cultural strategies, with a long history of seeking seasonal work or performing pilgrimages (Akhlaqi et al., 2016). Migrants face difficult conditions such as humiliation, insult, and threat of expulsion, and are thus more predisposed to engage in improper behaviors. From the perspective of sociologists and psychologists, unemployment is one of the major roots of violence and deviance among migrants (Hanachi et al., 2023).

Migrants are more exposed to violence than native residents, and violence has a social nature that manifests itself in various forms in interpersonal and intergroup relationships (Pokharel et al., 2021). Violence means physical attack, imposition of limitations, and use of force in interpersonal and intergroup relationships, and should be understood as any act or activity that humiliates another individual or group (Han et al., 2019). Violence is any kind of verbal and non-verbal behavior that directly or indirectly aims to harm others sexually, physically, psychologically, and even through neglect (Merrill et al., 2018). Violence is a complex phenomenon influenced by internal and external factors, with some experts identifying three categories of factors. Internal or motivational factors create motives and inclinations in individuals towards violent behaviors. Deterrent factors prevent the free expression of violence. Situational factors mean that an individual's behavior is influenced not only by their personality but also by the situation, environment, and conditions they are in (Warszawski, 2021). Therefore, violence emerges when the balance between impulses and internal control is disturbed, and any conditions that increase aggressive impulses in the context of reduced control can lead to violence (Vanner, 2018). Issues of anger and aggression are risk factors among the student population leading to their acceptance in deviant groups, indicative of antisocial behaviors and substance use. In other words, anger and aggression are the roots of many psychological and behavioral problems in students, causing interpersonal issues, crime, delinquency, or infringement of others' rights (Delfan Beiranvand et al., 2021). Students, for various reasons in the educational environment, are subjected to different types of violence, leading to feelings

of insecurity and aversion to school, whose consequences gradually manifest in their academic life as academic decline and dropout. The adverse effects of this type of behavior will accompany them throughout life and also influence the behavior of individuals who have experienced violence (John et al., 2023). Nowadays, students experience various forms of violence, including physical punishment, humiliation, discrimination, insult, etc. Some of these violent acts stem from the prevailing culture in schools, to the extent that teachers in some cases consider themselves authorized to use various forms of violence for correction and further study of students (Nejat, 2018; Yarigholi et al., 2018).

In a study on the explanation of violence by women against men, Danesh (2023) concluded that the central phenomenon included categories of psychological violence, economic violence, physical violence, sexual violence, emotional violence, and verbal violence. Causal conditions included broken relationships, intertwined relationships, inappropriate family experiences, social factors, and cultural factors. Contextual conditions encompassed cultural issues, social issues, financial matters, and occupational and organizational conditions. Intervening conditions included personal differences, cultural differences, age differences, financial issues, differences in needs, marital beliefs, and gender beliefs. Strategies included unhealthy communication behaviors, a retaliatory interaction pattern, and a lack of love and intimacy. The consequences included psychological harm, despair, the man's lack of power at home, separation, high-risk behaviors, harm to children, undermining the family foundation, and lack of household financial management (Danesh, 2023).

Goodarzi, Satar, and Shekarbeigi (2022) introduced the lived experience of female heads of households facing violence, including four main categories: unequal access to resources (subcategories of discrimination, inequality, injustice, looting, and hoarding of relief resources, and unmet needs), the stigma of disgrace (subcategories of negative beliefs, stigmatization and shame, rejection, insult, and lack of mobility), lack of security (subcategories of infrastructure destruction, unseparated baths and toilets, thin walls of shelters, easy access, and lack of locks on tents and cabins), and destruction of communities (subcategories of the loss of neighborhood and kinship networks, collapse of social order, and chaos) (Goodarzi et al., 2022).

Nozarpour, Fallahi-Khoshknab, Arsalani, Norouzi Tabrizi, and Ahmadi (2022) in their research on explaining the concept of violence with the elderly concluded that its

types included physical violence, sexual violence, economic violence, social violence, emotional-psychological violence, neglect, and abandonment. Antecedents included being neglected, loss of interactive connections, factors related to the elderly individual, and factors related to the person exhibiting violent behavior. The consequences included destructive individual harm, and destructive family and social harm (Nozarpour et al., 2022).

Qaderpour and Mortezaejad (2021) found that teachers' lived experience of the reasons for increased violence against them included violence due to policy-making flaws, lack of status, family conditions, and professional factors (Qaderpour & Mortazanejad, 2021).

Yarigholi, Herfati Sobhani, Ghsabzadeh, and Rahimi (2018) identified precursors to violence in schools as individual factors (genetic and hereditary factors, upbringing and personality factors, ignorance of professional responsibilities, maturity, gender, and lack of attention to individual differences), school factors (non-standard physical environment of schools, inappropriate interaction between students and teachers in school, discriminatory behavior, weakness of educational laws and regulations, and educational level), and sociological factors (family factors, economic factors, cultural and social factors, and media) (Yarigholi et al., 2018).

According to official statistics from the 2016 census, there are 1,584,000 Afghan migrants in Iran (Askari et al., 2019), a figure that only includes registered and so-called legal individuals. Afghan migrants in various parts of Iran are considered vulnerable groups who have sought refuge in Iran due to reasons such as war, insecurity, and tribal and ethnic conflicts. The improvement of their welfare status and their access to facilities and upgrading their living standards have always been the focus of some countries and international organizations (Charvadeh Pakravan & Mohammadi-Nasrabadi, 2020). The issue of student violence in schools, especially against Afghan migrant students, has attracted the attention of many experts and opinion leaders in the education system, psychologists, and school counselors, and yet in Iran, no research has been conducted on violence against Afghan students. Considering that the school has a special role and place in education, learning, and the upbringing of students and they interact most with this environment after their family, the school should be a safe environment free from all kinds of violence to increase its effectiveness as an educational system. However, some violence against Afghan students seems an important subject to study. Migration always faces

challenges, and one of the challenges worthy of examination in this context is violence against migrants. Therefore, the aim of this study was to analyze the lived experience of violence by teachers against Afghan students in primary schools.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

The present study was applied in purpose and descriptive in implementation, of a qualitative type. In this study, descriptive phenomenology was used, including three stages of direct understanding, analysis, and description. In the direct understanding stage, the researcher immerses themselves completely in the phenomenon and, avoiding any criticism, examination, and personal comment, recognizes the phenomenon as described by the participants. In the analysis stage, the researcher seeks to identify the essence of the phenomenon and its main and common themes. In the description stage, the last and complementary stage, the main components and indexes of phenomena are linked together, and the themes and essences present in the phenomena are grouped. The research community consisted of Afghan primary school students who had experienced violence from teachers and principals, with 20 students and 10 principals selected as samples through purposive sampling. In this study, five key criteria were used for sample selection: being identified as fully facing violence, identified by others (were the individuals chosen for the interview identified by school principals as students subjected to violence?), theoretical understanding of the topic, diversity (were the interviewees selected from different schools?), and agreement to participate.

The research process began with designing interview questions with the help of professors and experts. Then, using the sample selection criteria, purposive sampling was employed, and sample selection and interviews continued until theoretical saturation was reached. In this study, data were saturated in 15 interviews with second-stage primary school students and 7 interviews with principals, and further interviews were conducted to ensure theoretical saturation. As a result, interviews were conducted with 20 students and 10 primary school principals. The importance and necessity of the research were explained to the samples, and they were reassured about ethical considerations; at the end, they were thanked for their participation in the research.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Semi-Structured Interview

In this study, semi-structured and in-depth interviews were used for data collection. The interview started with a general question about whether the students in question had ever been subjected to violence by their teacher, followed by exploratory questions to encourage participants and gain deeper information. The duration of interviews with samples ranged from 10 to 30 minutes in a single session. Before conducting the interview with each interviewee, necessary coordination was made to select the location and time, and with the permission of the interviewees, the interviews were recorded and transcribed immediately after listening several times. Then, the written information related to the interviews was read several times to understand their overall content, along with listening to parts of the recorded information. After that, a brief description of the hidden meaning in each important sentence was written, and this process was carried out separately and together by three people (researcher, supervisor, and advisor) and then the extracted meanings from the sentences were combined to form a common meaning. Next, they were categorized and examined for validation. The validity of the interviews was confirmed through triangulation, and their reliability was obtained with an inter-coder agreement coefficient of 0.79.

2.3. Data Analysis

In this study, ethical considerations were observed before starting the interview, participants were informed of the goals and importance of the research, and participated in the research with informed consent. Also, the data of the present research were analyzed using coding in MAXQDA Pro version software.

3. Findings and Results

In this study, interviews were conducted with 20 Afghan students in the second stage of primary school and 10 primary school principals regarding their lived experience of teacher violence towards Afghan students. The results of the analyses on the types of teacher violence, according to the lived experience of violence against Afghan students in primary schools, were presented in [Table 1](#) and [Figure 1](#).

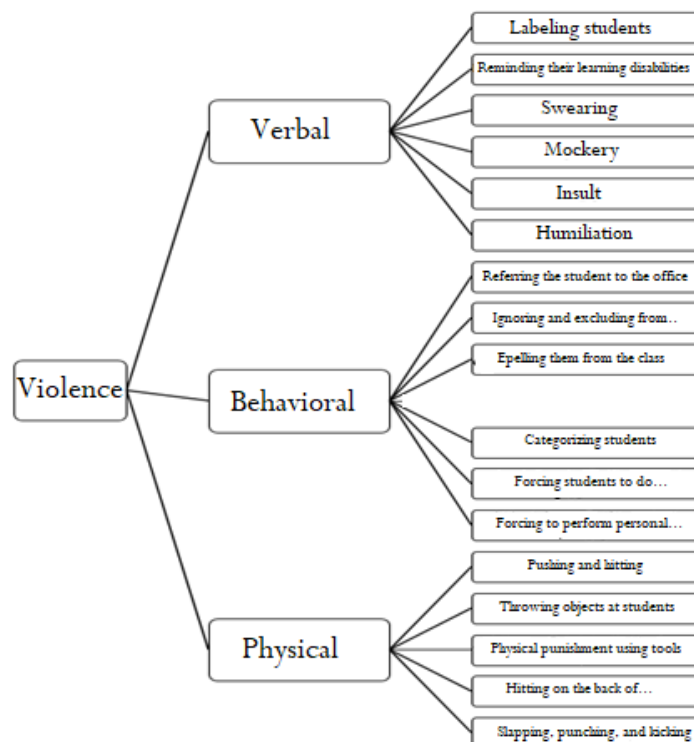
Table 1

Types of Teacher Violence According to the Lived Experience of Violence Against Afghan Students in Primary Schools

Component	Concept
1. Verbal Violence	Labeling students Reminding students of their learning disabilities Swearing Mockery Insult Humiliation
2. Behavioral Violence	Referring the student to the school office Ignoring and excluding the student from the lesson Expelling the student from the class Categorizing students Forcing students to do something against their will Forcing students to perform personal tasks of the teacher
3. Physical Violence	Pushing and hitting Throwing objects at students Physical punishment using tools like belts, hoses, etc Hitting on the back of the neck or feet Slapping, punching, and kicking

Figure 1

Analysis of Participants' Interviews Regarding the Customer Value Maturity Model Based on Dynamic Capabilities of Educational Institutions



According to the results in [Table 1](#) and [Figure 1](#), the types of teacher violence comprised 17 concepts in 3 components: verbal violence (6 concepts), behavioral violence (6 concepts), and physical violence (5 concepts). The results of

the analyses on the effects of teacher violence, according to the lived experience of violence against Afghan students in primary schools, were presented in [Table 2](#) and [Figure 2](#).

Table 2

Effects of Teacher Violence According to the Lived Experience of Violence Against Afghan Students in Primary Schools

Components	Concept
1. Psychological	Depression
	Multiple personality disorder
	Attention deficit disorder
	Delay in language development
	Cognitive development
	Low self-confidence
	Low self-esteem
	Anxiety
	Withdrawal, isolation, and feelings of loneliness
2. Educational	Severe academic decline
	Absenteeism from school
	Dropping out of school
	Difficulty concentrating in lessons
3. Physical	Eating disorders
	Self-harm
	Weakness in motor skills
4. Social	Antisocial behaviors
	Delinquency
	Substance abuse
	Aggression towards peers
	Aggression towards family
	Aggression towards other parents and school principals

Figure 2

Effects of Teacher Violence According to the Lived Experience of Violence Against Afghan Students in Primary Schools



According to the results in [Table 2](#) and [Figure 2](#), the effects of teacher violence comprised 22 concepts in 4 components: psychological (9 concepts), academic (4 concepts), physical (3 concepts), and social (6 concepts).

The results of the analyses on the strategies for controlling teacher violence, according to the lived experience of violence against Afghan students in primary schools, were presented in [Table 3](#) and [Figure 3](#).

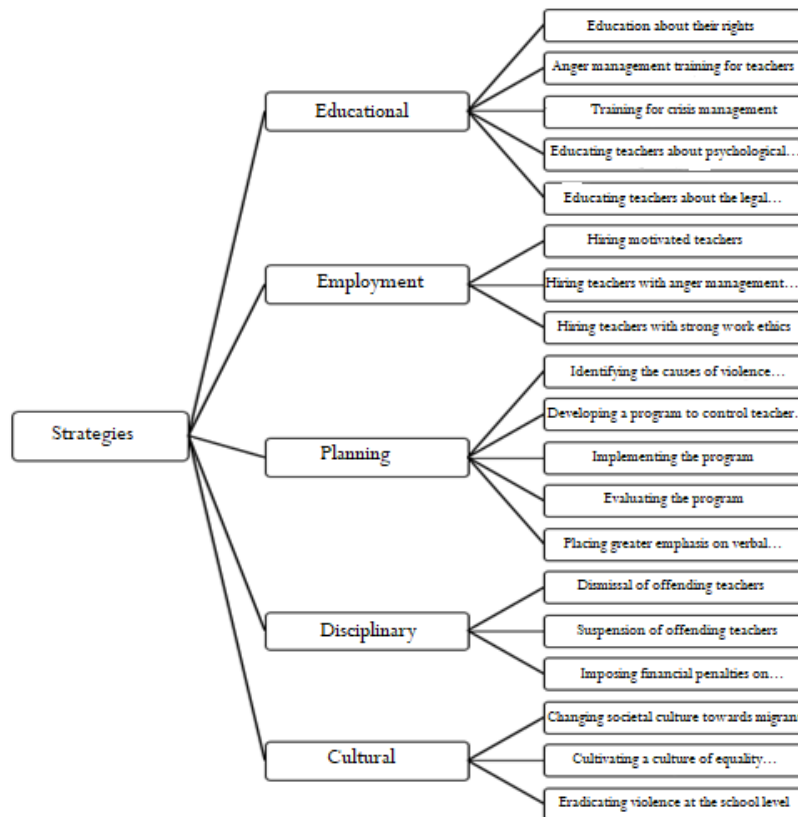
Table 3

Strategies for Controlling Teacher Violence According to the Lived Experience of Violence Against Afghan Students in Primary Schools

Components	Concept
1. Educational	Depression Multiple personality disorder Attention deficit disorder Delay in language development Cognitive development
2. Employment	Low self-confidence Low self-esteem Anxiety
3. Planning	Withdrawal, isolation, and feelings of loneliness Severe academic decline Absenteeism from school Dropping out of school Difficulty concentrating in lessons
4. Disciplinary	Eating disorders Self-harm Weakness in motor skills
5. Cultural	Antisocial behaviors Delinquency Substance abuse

Figure 3

Strategies for Controlling Teacher Violence According to the Lived Experience of Violence Against Afghan Students in Primary Schools



According to the results in Table 3 and Figure 3, the strategies for controlling teacher violence comprised 19 concepts within 5 components: educational (5 concepts), employment (3 concepts), planning (5 concepts), disciplinary (3 concepts), and cultural (3 concepts).

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Given the limited research background on teacher violence against students and the absence of research in this area concerning Afghan students, the aim of this study was to analyze the lived experience of teacher violence against Afghan students in primary schools. The findings of this study indicated that types of teacher violence comprised 17 concepts in 3 components: verbal violence (6 concepts), behavioral violence (6 concepts), and physical violence (5 concepts); the effects of teacher violence had 22 concepts in 4 components: psychological (9 concepts), academic (4 concepts), physical (3 concepts), and social (6 concepts); and strategies for controlling teacher violence had 19 concepts in 5 components: educational (5 concepts), employment (3 concepts), planning (5 concepts), disciplinary (3 concepts),

and cultural (3 concepts). Although there have been very few studies on teacher violence against students and none on Afghan students, the findings were consistent in some respects with past research (Danesh, 2023; Goodarzi et al., 2022; Nozarpour et al., 2022; Qaderpour & Mortazanejad, 2021; Yarigholi et al., 2018).

Considering the findings of this study, there were three types of teacher violence: verbal, behavioral, and physical. Verbal violence encompasses a wide range of words including labeling students, reminding them of their learning disabilities, swearing, mockery, insult, and humiliation. This type of violence can even be used by other students as a pretext against Afghan students. Behavioral violence is another type of violence, which includes referring a student to the school office, ignoring and excluding them from the lesson, expelling them from class, categorizing students, and forcing students to act against their will or perform the teacher's personal tasks. This type of violence has been less considered in other studies, yet these behaviors by teachers against Afghan students can be considered violence and have negative effects on the students' psyche. Physical violence is

the last type used by teachers against Afghan students, including harming the student through pushing and hitting, throwing objects, physical punishment with tools such as belts and hoses, hitting the back of the neck or legs, and slapping, punching, and kicking. Unlike other types of violence that are mostly resolved within the school environment, physical violence by teachers can become widely publicized in the media and have legal consequences for them. Another notable point is that each type of teacher violence against Afghan students can lay the foundation for other types of violence and occur in combination.

Moreover, considering the findings of this study, the four effects of teacher violence included psychological, academic, physical, and social. The psychological effects included depression, multiple personality disorder, attention deficit disorder, delay in language development, cognitive development, low self-confidence, low self-esteem, anxiety, and withdrawal, isolation, and feelings of loneliness, which are significant in terms of psychology and mental health. The academic effects of teacher violence against Afghan students included severe academic decline, absenteeism from school, dropping out, and difficulty concentrating in lessons. The physical effects of this phenomenon included eating disorders, self-harm, and weakness in motor skills. Given that one type of teacher violence against Afghan students is physical, it can be claimed that these effects can cause physical harm in students such as bone fractures, bleeding, eardrum rupture, etc., which in some cases receive a lot of media attention. Unfortunately, the range of harmful effects of teacher violence does not only return to the individual issues of Afghan students and can affect their social life and subsequently have a negative impact on society. The social effects of teacher violence against Afghan students included antisocial behaviors, delinquency, substance abuse, aggression towards friends, family, and aggression towards other parents and school principals.

In addition, considering the findings of this study, five types of strategies for controlling teacher violence included educational, employment, planning, disciplinary, and cultural. The first category of strategies for controlling teacher violence is educational, targeting teachers, principals, parents, and students. Initially, Afghan students and their parents must be aware of their rights to defend themselves in case of violence against them. Unfortunately, many students do not pursue their rights in case of violence because they feel that their complaints are not taken seriously. Most students believe that authorities will always give the right to the teachers or show indifference or even

the complaining student may be punished. Also, regarding teachers, some training is needed in anger control and familiarity with the legal, psychological, and behavioral consequences of uncontrolled anger against students, which can prevent the occurrence of their anger. Principals are also not ineffective in this regard, and their training in crisis management in schools during instances of teacher anger is very effective. Another strategy for controlling teacher violence is employment strategies, including hiring motivated teachers, teachers with high anger management ability, and teachers with high work ethics, and another strategy for that is planning strategies, including identifying the reasons for the emergence of violence in teachers, developing a program to control teacher violence, implementing the program, evaluating the program, and placing more emphasis on verbal and behavioral violence in planning. In this regard, it can be said that many factors such as individual factors, school factors, sociological factors, economic factors, teacher's inability to manage the class, overcrowded classes and their inappropriate space, lack of proper communication between teachers and parents and relevant officials, lack of interest and motivation of teachers in teaching, insufficient salary and income, pressures from classroom activities and interactions, negative and violence-inducing attitudes towards migrants, and use of violence to establish order and discipline and manage behavioral problems in teacher violence against Afghan students are effective. In the issue of teacher violence against Afghan students, disciplinary strategies should be considered, including dismissing offending teachers, suspending offending teachers, and imposing financial penalties on offending teachers, and cultural strategies including changing the culture of society towards migrants, creating a culture of equality among individuals of different nationalities in schools, and eradicating violence at the school level. Unfortunately, in many cases, there is a negative view of Afghan migrants, which seems to be because their negative behaviors are exaggerated in society. Of course, for various reasons, including cultural, linguistic differences, etc., they may have differences and even unintentionally have behaviors that are contrary to the national and religious values of Iran, and the solution for that is undoubtedly not the application of violence. Of course, before applying cultural strategies, necessary regulations regarding the application of violence against Afghan students should be set and implemented.

In this study, due to the limitation of the research title, there was no possibility of extending and developing the

research results in some areas. For example, in this research, the effects of teacher violence were only studied on Afghan students, while teacher violence has negative impacts on the teachers themselves, Iranian students, the school, and the entire educational system, which can be considered by other researchers. The findings of this study indicated the existence of three types of teacher violence including verbal, behavioral, and physical violence, four effects of teacher violence including psychological, academic, physical, and social effects, and five control strategies for teacher violence including educational, employment, planning, disciplinary, and cultural strategies. In light of the results, educational administrators are advised to use strategies for controlling teacher violence to reduce the types of teacher violence and its resulting effects. Consequently, educational authorities are advised to use the strategies presented in this research, including educational, employment, planning, disciplinary, and cultural strategies, to prevent the occurrence of teacher violence against Afghan students or to reduce them.

Authors' Contributions

The first author was responsible for conducting the interview and collecting data, and the other authors were responsible for analyzing the data and writing the article.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethics Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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