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The impact of 'playing victim' behavior on students' communication skills in chemistry learning

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ABSTRACT

Students' communication skills can be influenced by "playing victim" behavior. No study explicitly links playing victim behavior with a decrease in student communication skills in chemistry learning, even though affective aspects such as this have great potential to influence interaction and understanding of scientific concepts collaboratively. This research aims to discover how such behavior impacts students' communication skills at SMAN 1 Sindue Tobata. This study used descriptive and inferential quantitative methods. As part of this study, 64 students from two Natural Science Program Batch 2023 classes were given questionnaires. The analysis showed that the p values for the victim group (p = 0.4194) and the non-victim group (p = 0.8846) were greater than alpha 0.05, indicating normal data distribution. In addition, the t-test showed a significant difference in communication skills between the two groups (t = -3.7365, p = 0.0004), with the victimized group showing lower communication skills. According to this study, students' communication skills in chemistry learning can be affected by "playing-victim" behavior.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The practice of "playing victim" has become a worrying worldwide problem in recent years, particularly among teenagers (Akın, 2023; Yusuf & Qomaria, 2023). Playing victim is a behavior in which a person consciously or unconsciously positions himself as a victim in a particular situation, even though he actually has a role or contribution in the occurrence of the problem. Individuals who play this role tend to avoid responsibility, seek sympathy, and place blame on others for emotional or social gain. This behaviour has been seen in a variety of social and educational situations and is typified by people who purposefully portray themselves as victims in an effort to win sympathy, escape accountability, or influence others (Carrasco, 2022; Soares et al., 2021). Globally, these trends have been connected to a decrease in positive peer connection, a deterioration in personal accountability, and deeper psychological problems. This behavioural tendency is becoming more prevalent nationwide in Indonesia among students who overrely on others, avoid taking on group responsibilities, and manipulate their emotions. These behaviours all impede personal development and lower learning results. Students' capacity to acquire important academic and life skills, especially communication, will be negatively impacted by the increasing normalisation of this behaviour (Bazier et al., 2024; Werth et al., 2024).

Researchers, school counsellors, and educators have all taken notice of the problem of playing victim in the context of education in Palu, Central Sulawesi. The effects of such behaviour are evident in peer interactions, teacher-student relationships, and classroom dynamics, despite the fact that they are frequently subtle. Students who engage in victim-playing may withdraw from others, reject helpful criticism, or manipulate circumstances in order to get out of their academic obligations. Even though they are occasionally disregarded, these behaviours have the potential to seriously disturb the classroom. When such behaviours are prevalent, teachers have more difficulty fostering collaborative learning, preserving healthy communication, and establishing mutual trust. Therefore, identifying and resolving the impact of playing victim behaviour becomes crucial to raising the standard of education, especially in topics like chemistry that are in great demand.

The abstract nature of chemistry necessitates active student participation and communication in addition to cognitive comprehension. It takes conversations, explanations, and collaborative problem-solving to properly understand concepts like chemical structures, reaction processes, and periodic trends. In this situation, effective communication is essential to improving students' understanding and academic achievement. Playing victim behaviour, on the other hand, might cause students to retreat from group discussions, become passive participants, or refrain from raising questions out of fear of criticism (Choi et al., 2024; Nedumpully et al., 2024). Such inclinations have a detrimental impact on group relations, collaborative learning, and the classroom atmosphere overall in addition to restricting their own comprehension (Satria Ahmar & Fath, 2024; Suparman et al., 2023). More significantly, a larger moral problem that threatens honesty, responsibility, and empathy values crucial to the growth of young learners is reflected in the normalisation of this manipulative victimisation. Figure 1 below is an overview of Playing Victim Behavior in Educational Contexts.

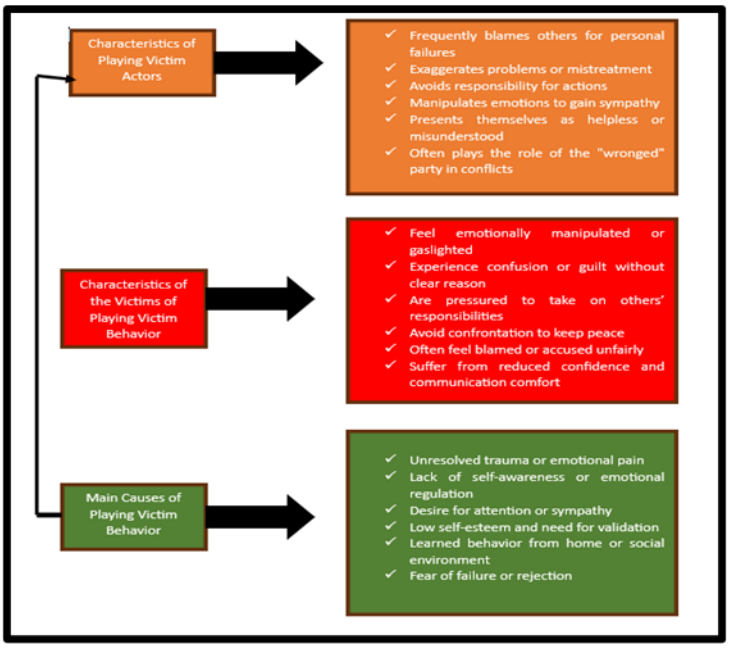

Figure 1. Overview of playing victim behavior in educational context

The issue is not limited to official educational settings. Playing victim can also occur in non-formal and informal contexts, such as peer groups, family relationships, and extracurricular activities (Fazrina et al., 2023; Sihaloho et al., 2023; Suparman et al., 2022). The results are consistent across all of these situations: a decrease in social resilience, an increase in emotional conflicts, and a decrease in interpersonal communication (Sahertian et al., 2021; Xie & Derakhshan, 2021). Both verbal and nonverbal manifestations of this behaviour might occur in the classroom, such as complaints, a lack of initiative, or persistent self-deprecation, all of which restrict effective involvement (Israelashvili & Fischer, 2023; Jama & Menggo, 2023). Because of its complexity, this problem need a multifaceted understanding that crosses the boundaries of moral development, education, and psychology. The following table 1 contains information on the impact of Playing-Victim behavior in schools (Addressed vs. Ignored).

Table 1. Impact of playing-victim behavior in schools (addressed vs. ignored)

Aspect	**If Addressed**	**If Ignored**
Emotional Development	Students develop emotional awareness and resilience	Students remain stuck in victim mentality and emotional dependency
Responsibility	Encourages accountability and growth mindset	Reinforces blame-shifting and denial of personal responsibility
Communication Skills	Improved assertiveness, empathy, and conflict resolution	Breakdown in communication, passive-aggressive behavior increases
Academic Engagement	Increased motivation and proactive learning	Disengagement, avoidance, and declining performance
Teacher-Student Dynamics	Stronger relationships based on openness and growth	Distrust and frustration from repeated drama and lack of progress

In educational and professional settings, playing victim can disrupt the dynamics of communication, teamwork and evaluation processes. For example, students or employees who

constantly blame the environment or others for their failures can hinder personal development and undermine a healthy work or learning climate. In the classroom, this impacts communication skills, collaboration and conflict resolution abilities. This study is to investigate the relationship between students' victim-playing behaviour and their communication skills in chemistry learning, given the urgent need to comprehend the influence of this behaviour on educational results, particularly in demanding academic areas like chemistry. Palu is an appropriate context for examining this phenomena since it is a fast growing city with a variety of sociocultural processes. It is anticipated that the research's conclusions will give educators, school counsellors, and legislators vital information for spotting victim-playing tendencies early on, comprehending how they affect communication and learning, and creating interventions that encourage more resilient and morally sound student conduct.

In the end, this research is significant not only for improving chemistry academic performance but also for advancing the more general objective of producing future generations that are moral, articulate, and emotionally intelligent.

2. METHODS

This study examines how playing victim behaviour affects students' communication abilities when studying chemistry using a quantitative descriptive research methodology and an inferential technique. This study uses total sampling technique because the number of population reached is relatively small and can be sampled as a whole. The research subjects were 64 students of class XI of the Science Program of SMAN 1 Sindue Tobata in the 2023 academic year, consisting of two classes. All students in the two classes were included as respondents to obtain comprehensive and representative data related to playing victim behavior and communication skills in chemistry learning. To ensure that the research instrument (questionnaire) used is valid, content validity test and construct validity test are conducted.

There were two primary phases to the study's design: a. Identification Phase: To find students displaying traits of playing victim behaviour, a Playing Victim Detection Questionnaire was given to all 64 students in two science courses (XI IPA 1 and XI IPA 2), b. Assessment Phase: Students who were found to have engaged in victim-playing behaviour in the first stage were chosen to participate in a second survey that assessed their communication abilities particularly in relation to studying chemistry.

Playing victim behaviour is an independent variable that describes students' propensity to act like victims in order to escape accountability or control the dynamics of the classroom. The capacity of students to articulate, debate, and share ideas on abstract chemistry topics in both individual and group contexts is the dependent variable for communication skills in chemistry learning. The goal of the study is to examine how students who participate in playing victim behaviours could find it difficult to communicate in chemistry classes, which need a high level of participation and group discussion.

Location SMAN 1 Sindue Tobata, a senior high school in Central Sulawesi, Indonesia, is where the study was carried out. Population: Students in the Grade XI Science Programme (class of 2023)

made up the population. As an example, two classes, XI IPA 1 and XI IPA 2, totalling 64 pupils, were included in the purposively selected sample. The primary responders for the second round of data collection were students who had been classified as displaying playing victim behaviour.

Data was gathered using two primary tools: a) Based on recognised behavioural and psychological characteristics, the Playing Victim Behaviour Detection Questionnaire is intended to screen and identify pupils who display symptoms of playing victim behaviour, b) Communication Skills Questionnaire in Chemistry Learning: This assessment gauges how effectively these selected students can ask or answer questions, participate in conversations, and convey concepts linked to chemistry. To guarantee dependability and content relevance to the intended audience, both instruments were verified before use.

In order to summarise the data and characterise the broad patterns of both playing victim behaviour and communicative skill levels, the gathered data were examined using the following methods, Descriptive statistical analysis and the influence of portraying victim behaviour on students' communication abilities was assessed using inferential analysis (Effect Test) and SPSS software. Depending on the assumptions and data distribution, this involved utilising suitable statistical procedures, such regression or ANOVA, to test for effect and association.

A methodical approach to detecting behavioural patterns and their educational implications is ensured by this methodological framework, particularly when it comes to abstract and communication-intensive disciplines like chemistry. The following table 2 contains information Instrument for Detecting Playing Victim Behavior.

Table 2. Instrument for detecting playing victim behavior

Indicator	**Statement (Item)**	**Scale**	**Interpretation Criteria**
Avoidance of Responsibility	I often blame others when I fail at something.	1 = Strongly Disagree 5 = Strongly Agree	4.0–5.0: Strong tendency 3.0–3.9: Moderate tendency 1.0–2.9: Low tendency
	I feel it's unfair when I'm expected to complete tasks others can do better.	Same as above	Same as above
Seeking Sympathy	I want others to feel sorry for me when I'm struggling.	Same as above	Same as above
	I share my problems more to gain support than to solve them.	Same as above	Same as above
Manipulative Behavior	I sometimes exaggerate my problems to get others on my side.	Same as above	Same as above
	I feel satisfied when others take action because they feel bad for me.	Same as above	Same as above
Perceived Victimization	I often feel that people are unfair or targeting me even without clear reasons.	Same as above	Same as above
	I think people don't appreciate how hard life is for me.	Same as above	Same as above
Emotional Avoidance and Withdrawal	I tend to withdraw from group activities if I feel misunderstood.	Same as above	Same as above
	I feel better when others notice that I'm upset or suffering.	Same as above	Same as above

Scoring and Conclusion Guidelines, Total Score Range: 10 items × 5 (max) = 50 points, Interpretation Based on Total Score: 40–50 = High indication of playing victim behavior, 30–39 = Moderate indication, Below 30 = Low indication. Students with a total score of 40 or above are categorized as "playing victim behavior victims" for further analysis in relation to their communication skills in chemistry learning.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A. Victim detection playing victim

Using a structured questionnaire given to 64 Grade XI science-track students at SMAN 1 Sindue Tobata, the first phase of this study was to identify students who engage in playing victim behaviour. Exaggerated self-victimization, emotional manipulation, and blame avoidance were among the behavioural indications that were examined by the detection tool. Students were divided into three groups based on their scores on a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5: those with high, moderate, and low indicators of playing victim behaviour. According to the findings, 15 students (23.4%) had a strong propensity to act like victims, with scores between 40 and 50. In contrast, 24 students (37.5%) showed poor signals (scores below 30) and 25 students (39.1%) were in the moderate range (scores 30–39). This distribution shows that the playing victim phenomena is rather prevalent in the classroom, which calls for more research into how it could affect students' academic engagement and communication abilities, especially in challenging and esoteric disciplines like chemistry. The following figure 2 contains information Distribution of Playing Victim Scores Among 64 Students.

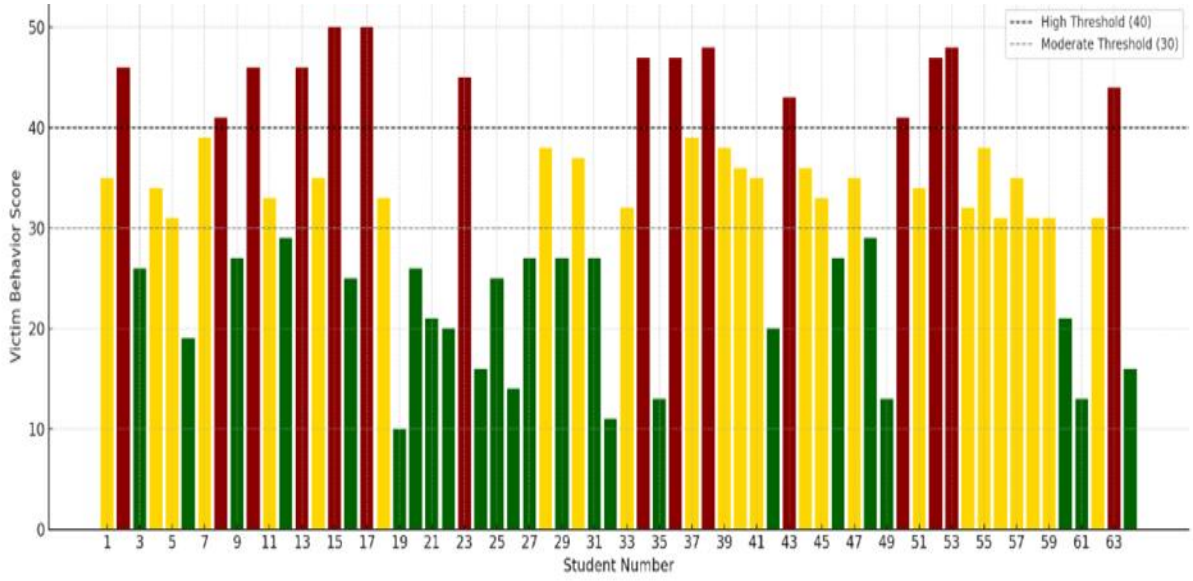

Figure 2. Distribution of playing victim scores among 64 students

The following table 3 contains information Descriptive Analysis of Playing Victim Behavior Among Students.

Table 3. Descriptive analysis of playing victim behavior among students

Category of Playing Victim Behavior	Score Range	Number of Students (n)	Percentage (%)	Interpretation
High Indication	40–50	15	23.4%	Strong tendency to exhibit playing victim behavior
Moderate Indication	30–39	25	39.1%	Moderate tendency with partial behavioral signs
Low Indication	Below 30	24	37.5%	Minimal or no signs of playing victim behavior
Total		64	100%	

Regarding the frequency of playing victim behaviour among students in Grade XI science classrooms at SMAN 1 Sindue Tobata, the descriptive analysis of the detection phase produced a number of significant findings. Out of the 64 students that were evaluated, 15 students, or 23.4%, showed a high indication of playing victim behaviour, which is a strong inclination to play victim, escape responsibility, and manipulate sympathy. This group poses a serious risk as their actions can seriously impair learning, lower student engagement, and obstruct clear communication particularly in courses like chemistry that need active student participation and mental clarity.

Additionally, 25 students, or 39.1% of the total, were in the intermediate group, exhibiting partial symptoms that might change according on the situation, the pressure, or the dynamics of the relationship. Despite not always playing the victim role, these kids are prone to doing so in specific situations, indicating that early intervention and supervision are crucial to preventing escalation. A healthy emotional and behavioural adjustment that promotes cooperation and candid communication in academic contexts is suggested by the 37.5% of students (24 students) who were classified as having low indications of playing victim behaviour. The following figure 3 contains information Classification and frequency of students' communication skills based on playing-victim.

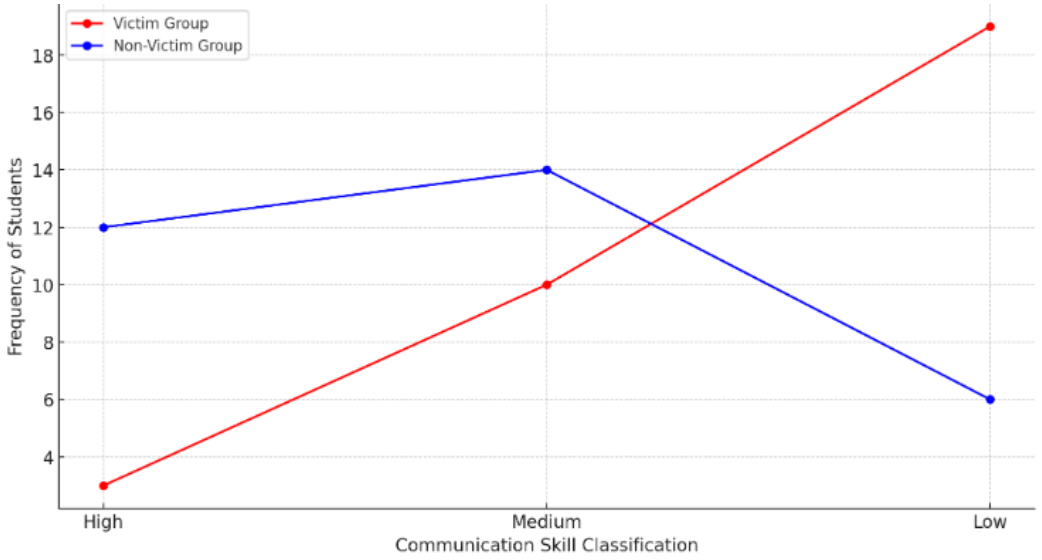

Figure 3. Classification and frequency of students' communication skills based on playing-victim

These results highlight the necessity for educational institutions to acknowledge victim-

playing as a psychological impediment to social and intellectual development. This behaviour can affect group projects, student confidence, and teacher-student interactions, particularly in a high-stakes academic setting. As a result, recognising and resolving these tendencies is essential for both enhancing individual learning results and preserving a supportive and effective learning environment in the classroom.

B. The effect of playing victim on communication skills in chemistry learning

With average scores amongst indicators ranging from 2.90 to 3.35 (range 1–5), data analysis reveals that playing victims' communication abilities in chemistry learning typically fall into the moderate to low category. "Using Scientific Terms Appropriately" (3.35), the indicator with the highest average score, shows that pupils can still utilise scientific terminology, but not to their full potential. The playing victim propensity, on the other hand, significantly impacted their active engagement in learning encounters, as seen by the lowest score on "Active Participation in Discussions" (2.90).

This supports the idea that students who exhibit symptoms of playing victim tend to isolate themselves, feel unworthy, and be unwilling to participate fully in learning activities that need scientific cooperation and communication, like chemistry classes. The following figure 4 contains information Distribution results of analysis of communication skills in chemistry learning.

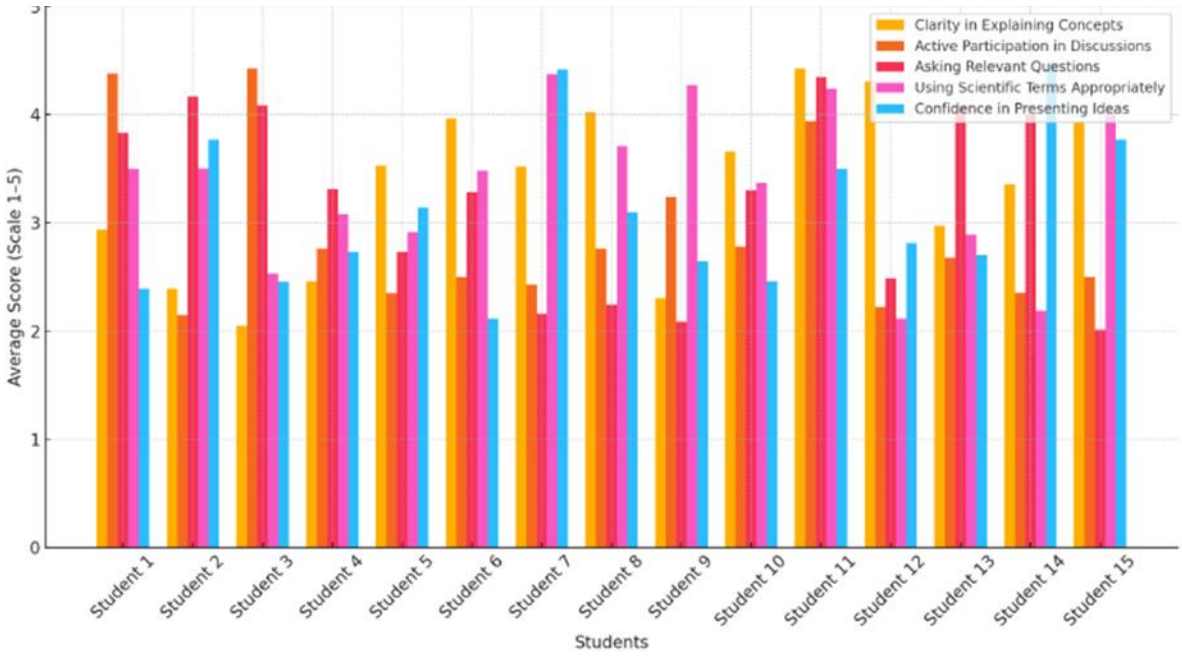

Figure 4. Distribution results of analysis of communication skills in chemistry learning

On indicators Clarity in Explaining Concepts, This indicator's score ranged from 2.05 to 4.42, with an average of 3.32. Many pupils' articulations of chemical ideas were inconsistent, but some exhibited reasonable clarity. This illustrates the difficulty of converting abstract scientific information into intelligible justifications. Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory states that language and interaction are key components of cognitive development (Tang et al., 2023, 2024).

Pupils who frequently play the victim role might not have the courage or self-motivation to verbally digest information, which hinders their mental clarity. One of the most important skills in scientific education is verbalising comprehension, which is disrupted by their inner narrative of impotence.

On indicators Active Participation in Discussions, With the lowest average score of 2.90, this indication indicates a substantial obstacle to collaborative learning. Students pick up information through participation, modelling, and observation, according to Bandura's Social Learning Theory. Because they are afraid of being judged or seen to be incompetent, victims of victim behaviour may avoid conversation, which limits their chances to practice thinking or argumentation. Low involvement undermines peer-to-peer knowledge creation in addition to impeding their own learning. In chemistry, where inquiry-based conversations and group problem-solving are essential, this is especially troublesome.

On indicators Asking Relevant Questions, This metric, which has an average score of 3.21, shows a moderate capacity to create insightful questions during chemistry classes. Asking questions is essential to higher-order thinking, according to Bloom's Taxonomy. But pupils who self-victimize frequently internalise a sense of helplessness, which stifles their curiosity or inclination to ask questions. They avoid the opportunity to gain a deeper knowledge by withdrawing rather than expressing uncertainty. This supports Seligman's theory of learned helplessness, which holds that even in the presence of assistance, students give up attempting after a series of unfavourable events.

On indicators Using Scientific Terms Appropriately, Even kids who struggle with playing victim inclinations may still have some cognitive knowledge with chemical terminology, as indicated by this indicator's highest average score of 3.35. However, their terminology frequently lacks nuance and coherence in their logical justifications. Cognitive Load Theory states that extreme emotional stress, such as that caused by internalising victimisation, lowers working memory capacity, which makes it more difficult to recall and use academic language fluently. Although they might be able to recall words, their contextual use skills are still weak.

On indicators Confidence in Presenting Idea, With an average score of 3.10, this skill indicates difficulties in properly expressing ideas in front of peers. According to Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory, performance is significantly impacted by one's conviction in one's own talents. People who play victim frequently have low academic self-efficacy because they are afraid of being laughed at or performing poorly in public. Low confidence inhibits performance and skill development in chemistry lectures that require students to evaluate experiments, discuss findings, or solve problems openly. Their emotional instability and moral detachment restrict the communication skills necessary for academic expression (Cuic Tankovic et al., 2023; Reith-Hall & Montgomery, 2022).

All of these results show that playing victim interferes with the development of important communication skills in chemistry. The psychological tendencies linked to this behaviour weaken the foundational elements of successful science learning: self-initiative, collaborative involvement, and expressive confidence. Since communication is a social and cognitive act, educational solutions need to address social integration and emotional resilience in addition to academic training.

To restore student agency, educators should think about treatments based on growth mindset frameworks, restorative practices, and emotional intelligence training. Especially in topics

as cognitively demanding as chemistry, changing victim identity into learner identity requires a supportive learning environment that gently challenges maladaptive narratives while affirming student voice. The following table 4 contains information SPSS-based statistical test results on communication skills in chemistry learning.

Table 4. SPSS-based statistical test results on communication skills in chemistry learning

Test	Statistic	p-value
Shapiro-Wilk (Victim Group)	0.9428	0.4194
Shapiro-Wilk (Non-Victim Group)	0.9877	0.8846
Levene's Test for Homogeneity	0.4245	0.5171
Independent Samples t-test	-3.7365	0.0004

Both the victim group's (p = 0.4194) and the non-victim group's (p = 0.8846) p-values above the conventional alpha threshold of 0.05. This satisfies one of the fundamental presumptions for parametric testing by confirming that the data distribution in both groups is about normal. There is no discernible difference in the variance between the two groups, according to the Levene's Test result (p = 0.5171). The use of an independent samples t-test with equal variances assumed is therefore validated since the assumption of homogeneity of variance is satisfied. The results of the t-test show a statistically significant difference in communication abilities between students who were recognised as victims of playing victim behaviour and their peers who were not victims (t = -3.7365, p = 0.0004). The victim group performed worse on communication skills when studying chemistry, as indicated by the negative t-value.

These statistical results offer compelling empirical evidence that students' communication skills in chemistry classes are significantly harmed by playing the victim. Since communication is crucial for expressing ideas, taking part in debates, and understanding complicated topics in scientific classes, the difference is not only statistically significant but also pedagogically relevant. This is consistent with Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, which highlights how self-efficacy affects academic achievement. Pupils with a playing victim mentality are more likely to lack confidence, avoid interaction, and do poorly on communication skills, especially in cognitively demanding courses like chemistry.

In order to help vulnerable learners and make sure that emotional and behavioural tendencies do not impede academic expression and achievement, the results highlight the need of psychological and pedagogical interventions.

By investigating how playing victim behaviour affects communication skills in chemistry education a topic seldom investigated in empirical research this study offers a distinctive and relevant addition. This study's dual-layered instrument technique is one of its strong points. It first uses a diagnostic questionnaire to identify victims of playing victim behaviour, and then it uses a focused scale that is in line with chemical learning to evaluate the victims' communication skills. Strong statistical support for the influence of emotional-behavioral inclinations on the development of academic skills is provided by the application of SPSS-based inferential analysis, which adds scientific rigour. The study also provides useful information for teachers, highlighting the need of taking into account students' psychological makeup when developing lesson plans, especially for

cognitively demanding courses like chemistry.

The study does have several drawbacks, though. Although the sample size (n=64) was typical for its environment, it was limited to a particular school and academic stream, which limited the findings' applicability to more general educational situations. Furthermore, self-reported data was the only source used to identify playing victim behaviour, which makes it susceptible to bias or social desirability effects. Understanding how such behavioural patterns change over time or in response to treatments is further limited by the absence of longitudinal data. Additionally, qualitative techniques (such as observations or interviews) that may have improved the understanding of student behaviours and classroom dynamics were not included in the study.

To improve external validity, future research must broaden the study to encompass a variety of academic subjects, educational environments, and cultural situations. Combining surveys with classroom ethnography or reflective journaling are two examples of mixed-methods approaches that might provide greater insights into the lived experiences of students who take on a victim identity. In order to evaluate the effects of psychological counselling or resilience-building programmes on the communication skills of students who engage in playing victim behaviour, researchers may also investigate intervention-based approaches. In the end, this study provides a first step towards comprehending the psychological obstacles to successful scientific learning and opens the door for further research that links pedagogical success with emotional well-being.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to look at how playing victim affects students' communication abilities when they are studying chemistry. The results unequivocally show that students who engage in a lot of victim-playing behaviour typically have far poorer communication skills than their counterparts who do not engage in victim behaviour. Both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses confirmed this negative association, demonstrating that emotional-behavioral patterns, especially those originating from victimisation narratives, can hinder students' capacity to communicate ideas clearly, participate actively in chemistry-based learning processes, and engage in scientific discourse. The study also emphasises how playing victim behaviour is a serious academic problem that impacts classroom communication and cognitive engagement, in addition to being a social or emotional issue. These findings highlight how important it is for teachers to identify and help students overcome psychological obstacles by combining socioemotional support with instructional techniques to improve learning outcomes. Thus, the study comes to the conclusion that enhancing students' communication skills, particularly in difficult and abstract disciplines like chemistry, requires addressing playing victim tendencies through early detection and intervention.

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