

Investigating Role of Family Violence in Intergenerational Transmission of Abusive Parenting: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how abusive parenting techniques are passed down across generations, with a particular emphasis on how early experiences affect parenting. To learn about parents' experiences with childhood trauma, parenting philosophies, and upbringing, qualitative research design was used. Purposive sampling technique was employed. Semi-structured interviews were conducted of parents in middle adulthood (40-65). Data was analyzed through thematic analyses. This research indicates that although some parents emulate the authoritarianism and strictness they were subjected to, others take a more transparent and communicative stance. Gender disparities were noted, mothers exhibited greater flexibility and empathy toward their children, whereas fathers tended to imitate harsher parenting methods. The study emphasizes how crucial it is to give kids a respectful and caring environment, promote honest communication, and end the cycle of abusive parenting through instruction and positive reinforcement.

Keywords: *Intergenerational Transmission, Abusive Parenting, Family Violence*

1. INTRODUCTION

The transfer of behavior, attitude, learning skills and good or bad attributes from one generation to the next through observation is referred to as intergenerational transmission. Research involving three generations has repeatedly shown evidence to support the idea that disruptive behavior is passed down over generations (Capaldi et al., 2003). Parental child abuse risk may be influenced by intergenerational processes, according to research (Buisman et al., 2020). A substantial body of research supports the traditional intergenerational transmission of abuse theory, which postulates that people who experience abuse as children, abuse their own children when they become parents (Bartlett et al., 2017). This theory is constant with social learning theory and is demonstrated

through modeling of parent behavior (Khan et al., 2021), particularly aggressive behavior (Huesmann et al., 2018).

Given that parents frequently embrace and emulate the parenting philosophies they were exposed to as children, parenting practices also exhibit intergenerational patterns (Dixon et al., 2009). One's past parenting style—the kind of parenting they experienced as children—influences their likelihood of abusing children and applying strict discipline (Boppana et al., 2017). According to Conger et al. (2013), adults who were subjected to strict, authoritarian treatment as children are more likely to chastise their children harshly as parents. On the other hand, a history of authoritative, positive parenting can encourage the intergenerational adoption of this style of parenting (Schofield et al., 2014), which may reduce the likelihood of child abuse. Uncertain processes underlie this association, parents who experienced abuse as children are more likely to continue unhelpful parenting techniques.

In order to determine if family violence plays a mediating role in the generational transfer of abusive parenting—that is, mentally and physically assaultive parenting—this study looks at family violence prospectively. One factor that may increase parent's risk of abusing their children is intergenerational processes (Greene et al., 2020). A significant body of research assist the traditional intergenerational transmission of abusive theory, which necessitate that people who experience abusive parenting as children have more chance to abuse their own children when they become parents (Bartlett et al., 2017). This theory is related with social learning theory and is mainly based on modeling of parent behavior (Khan et al., 2021), particularly aggressive behavior (Huesmann et al., 2018).

Studies regularly uncover evidence supporting the intergenerational transmission of externalizing psychopathology across generations, even while a personal history of child abuse is connected with three generations (Capaldi et al., 2003). From the standpoint of prevention, this familial transmission is essential due to the serious cumulative consequences of antisocial behavior throughout life (Moffitt et al., 2001). These discoveries have prompted the search for hypotheses that explain the spread of other intergenerational dynamics may increase the chance of abuse in a parent's increased abuse risk. Given that parents frequently imitate the parenting philosophies they were exposed to as children, parenting practices also exhibit intergenerational patterns (Dixon et al., 2009). The probability of child abuse and the need for strict discipline are influenced by a person's

heritage and parenting style history. On the other hand, a history of authoritative, positive parenting can encourage the intergenerational adoption of this style of parenting (Schofield et al., 2014), which may reduce the likelihood of child abuse. A child raised by a permissive parent is likely to receive irregular discipline because they are upraised in an environment that is generally warmed but unrestrictive. Authoritative parenting, on the other hand, emphasizes open communication and respect for others while combining warmth with firm expectations and boundaries (Kamran et al., 2023). The present study aims to fill the knowledge gap on the intergenerational patterns of early adoption of authoritative parenting methods, as there has been less research in this area.

According to Anda et al. (2006), there is a substantial and well-documented effect of childhood abuse, neglect, and exposure to violence on adult physical and emotional health and behaviors. These include higher rates of PTSD, depression and other mental health disorders; substance abuse; obesity; risky health behaviors; perceived stress and difficulty controlling one's anger; and physical health issues. It is not unexpected that mounting data indicates parenting techniques are impacted by childhood maltreatment experiences given the significant influence on adults' affective and behavioral reactions. The clinical and scientific literature have operationalized child maltreatment in a variety of ways over the years (Gardner et al., 2019).

Even though most of the literature focuses on the transmission of abusive parenting techniques over generations, there is a growing body of research that looks at links with various parenting outcomes, both positive and negative.

1.1. Intergenerational effect in child abuse risk

The likelihood that parents may abuse their own children is increased by a personal history of abuse, and intergenerational processes also play a role in this risk. It's common for parents to emulate the parenting approaches they were exposed to as children (Dixon et al., 2009). According to Conger et al. (2012), individuals who experienced severe, authoritarian treatment as children are more prone to employ harsh discipline themselves, which increases the risk of child abuse. On the other hand, favorable parenting experiences can encourage authoritative parenting, which lowers the likelihood of abuse (Schofield et

al., 2014). According to a long-term study, authoritative parenting during adolescence frequently influences an adult's parenting style (Chen & Kaplan, 2001).

1.2. Parenting differences across gender

The current study intends to contribute to the intergenerational literature by investigating the ways in which parenting practices are impacted by the gendered parenting style history. Due to traditional assumptions that see fatherhood as less fundamental to a man's identity and motherhood as central to a woman's, parenting identities, including gender g beliefs and attitudes regarding childcare, may differ by (Katz-Wise et al., 2010). These gender roles reinforce intergenerational patterns by encouraging parents to model their parenting after that of their same-gender parent (Campbell & Gilmore, 2007). Although some research reveals cross-gender impacts, especially in mother-child dyads and rising child abuse risk, demonstrate stronger same-gender continuity in severe discipline and parenting behaviors (Gonzalez et al., 2022). Furthermore, the stress of parenting increases the transfer of severe discipline between generations, particularly among mothers. The complex relationship between a parent's movement to raising their child and the child's consequent development of coping mechanisms to navigate life's challenges is crucial to understand the psychosocial well-being of children (Ali et al., 2024).

1.3. Research Objectives

- ❖ To analyze the role of family violence in intergenerational transmission of abusive parenting.
- ❖ To explore the generation to generation transmission of abusive parenting.
- ❖ To analyze the role of social learning and attachment theory in abusive parenting.

1.4. Research base question

What is the role of family violence in abusive parenting and how it is transmitted through generation to generation and the children who faced abusive parenting also became abusive parents.

1.5. Research gap

Although there has been progress in research, there are still large gaps on the intergenerational transmission of abusive parenting within the context of family violence. It is essential to comprehend the mechanics of transmission, including the functions of genetics, culture norms, and observation. Examining resilience processes and protective factors, like coping mechanisms and supportive connections, can provide information about successful interventions. To create culturally sensitive techniques, further research on contextual and cultural elements is required. For a whole picture, longitudinal studies that monitor families over time and take Intersectionality into account are crucial. In order to end the generational cycle of abusive parenting, preventative and intervention efforts can be improved by addressing these gaps.

1.6. Theoretical framework

- ❖ **Social learning theory:** Social learning is a theory of learning process social behavior which proposes that new behaviors can be acquired by observing and imitating others. (Albert Bandura, 1977) is known for studying this theory. In our study parents who were abused as children are at increased risk of imitating same behaviour in their parenting.
- ❖ **Attachment theory:** Attachment theory focuses on relationships and bonds (particularly long-term) between people, including those between a parent and child and between romantic partners (Ainsworth, 1970). It is mainly proposed by Bowlby (1979). In our study it reveals that children's who were attached to their parents did positive parenting when they became parents.
- ❖ **Cycle of violence:** The other theory is Cycle of Violence Hypothesis proposed by Walker (1979). According to this theory, the people who are abused as children are more likely to abuse others and their children, which will continue the cycle of violence across generation to generation.

2. METHOD

2.1. Design of the research

Qualitative research method is used for this study. We conducted semi-structured interviews with six fathers and six mothers, ranging in age from 40 to 60. In our study, we focused on non-numerical data to obtain insights or understanding of an individual's social life. We took interviews on the intergenerational transmission of abusive parenting.

2.2. Sampling technique

The sampling technique we used in this thematic research analysis was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling method refers that researchers choose a group of peoples who have knowledge about their study. In our study we selected those participant who have knowledge about abusive parenting.

2.3. Procedure

We went through many publications after deciding the research topic in order to gain the data that has been acquired in relation to it. We developed semi-structured interview protocol of 15-20 interview questions after reading up on the subject or having a discussion about it. We identified a population of parents to interview who were dealing with a variety of obstacles in their day-to-day lives, such as health concerns, financial difficulties, and other issues they encountered in society. The interviewees included both men and women participants who were educated and uneducated, and they came from various cities or regions. The interviewees were from Faisalabad, Vehari, and neighbouring villages of Faisalabad. In order to ensure their comfort, we guaranteed that their information will be remained confidential and that we won't share it with someone else. We obtained their consent to record their voice and used their information in our study. We ensure the participant that we are gathering the information for a specific purpose. Given that we have chosen a particular generation. Members of this particular group ought to be married and raising children. We investigated and wrote in our own words after speaking with the

interviewees. Different finding and conclusion emerge from our study.

3.FINDINGS

Data analysis was carried through thematic analysis. This section adds to the comprehensive research analysis. This makes a connection between gathering data and drawing conclusions. Within the field of research, coding pertains to a phrase or set of terms that signify the confirm assessment and features of the data. Since every person has a unique personality, regardless of whether they are a parent, sister, brother, or daughter, some have authoritarian styles (those who handle situations with ego, anger, or harshness), and some have legitimate styles (those who ignore little incidents or treat them with love or kindness). We observed many similarities among how parents raised their children and how they were raised by their parents. And how much they have endured and how much they have adjusted to strictness. In this study our main focus is on inter-generational transmission of abusive parenting. M1-M6 and F1-F6 represents mothers and fathers in transcript. From our interviews, following themes were emerged;

3.1. Childhood trauma

It is a state of psychological, physical, or sexual abuse that can result in a variety of traumas that have an impact on a child's mental health is called childhood trauma. Parents who endured childhood trauma have been found to experience increased difficulty in various aspects of parenting including: Offering praise (Fujiwara, et al., 2012); holding appropriate developmental expectations (Kim, et al., 2013); and increased anxiety with intimate aspects of care (Douglas, 2000). However, we did not get in our interview any kind of serious childhood trauma that may affect their parenting throughout the interview. When they are by themselves at home or experience a serious accident, they become frightened, but these things don't affect their lives. Out of 15 people, this represents the total of 3% who did not experience any frightening events as children.

“Mai bachpan Mai well Mai gir giya tha (F1)”

“Raat ko Ghar Mai Akela hone ki waja se dar gia tha r Ghar koi b nhi tha (F 5).”

3.1.1 Intergenerational transmission of trauma

Trauma is passed down through generations through a variety of means, most prominently affecting gender roles, parenting practices, and parent-child relationships. Childhood trauma can have an impact on an individual's parenting style, frequently causing them to replicate detrimental habits they saw in their own upbringing. Gender norms and expectations also have a big impact; conventional ideas about what it means to be a mother or a father influence parental identities and actions. For example, fathers may find it difficult to communicate their feelings or ask for help, while mothers may feel under pressure to adopt care-giving duties. The dynamics between parents and children might become more complex as a result of these gendered expectations, which can have an impact on trust, communication, and emotional support. Breaking the cycle of intergenerational trauma and fostering healthy families requires an understanding of the interactions between trauma, parenting, and gender roles.

*“Meri ami muj pr sakhti karti thi r mji dant b deti thi r ab mai b
apni beti pr sakhti krti hun (M2)”*

3.2. Setting boundaries

Parental behavioral control consists of parenting behavior that attempts to control, manage or regulate child behavior, either through enforcing rules, knowledge base strategies, control of rewards and punishment, or through supervisory functions (Barber et al., 2012). Establishing limits with kids requires respectful behavior, consistency, and communication barrier. It's critical to establish clear limits, uphold them consistently, and modify them as the child matures and their needs change. Boundaries were often established more inflexibly and without as much justification or flexibility when I was a child.

“Hamare parents ne boundaries set ki thi Lekin hum ne nhi ki (F5)”

“Mere abu sakhti krte the lekin hum aj kal ke bacho per sakhti nhi Kr skty (F6)”

There are few factors that are involved in modern parenting:

3.2.1. Modern Parenting Principles: Respect, Rationale, and Consistency

Three essential elements are emphasized in modern parenting: respect, rationale, and consistency. Unlike in the past when enforcement was more inconsistent, consistency guarantees that rules are always followed and helps kids realize that there are no exceptions. Rather to just setting limits, justification is given to them in order to help kids to understand the consequences of their behavior. Respect is setting boundary with empathy rather than authoritarian behaviour which emphasized compliance without providing emotional support. The goal of these strategies is to help kids become more emotionally stable and competent and capable of making their decisions.

3.3. Positive reinforcement

Give praise and cheer for positive behavior rather than focusing only on what should not be done. Give awards and acknowledgement for good deeds. It's possible that conventional parenting placed greater intensity on punishing misbehavior. Beneficial reinforcement is becoming more important in the development of advantageous habits.

*“Mere parents appreciate ziada nhi krty the lekin mai apni beti
to appreciate krta hun r future mai b kron ga (F5)”*

3.3.1. Disparities

Bringing up positive communication patterns, problem solving method, and a consciousness of the biological and cognitive variations between genders are all essential components of modern parenting. In contrast to authoritarian methods, which can hinder independence and conflict resolution abilities, effective communication requires modeling courtesy and honesty during conflicts in order to build trust. Though slight, biological differences between males and females impact physical characteristics and cognitive abilities and are influenced by experiences, upbringing, and heredity. Gender norms effect social behavior, affecting relationships and career decisions, with men typically expected to be assertive and competitive and women to be cooperative and nurturing. Promoting fair

and nurturing conditions for kids' growth requires an understanding of these gender distinctions.

3.4. Intersectionality

It's critical to take into account the ways that gender interacts with other variables to influence people's experiences and identities, including race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, and disability. Intersectionality recognizes that a person's gender experience is molded by a variety of intersecting identities and social institutions.

Table 1: Difference of Strictness Level Between Mothers and Fathers

Interviewees	Age	Strictness	Single parent/ Co-parent
F1	38	Not much strict	Single parent
F2	41	Moderate	Co-parent
F3	51	Not strict	Co-parent
F4	61	Not strict	Co-parent
F5	40	Strict	Co-parent
F6	45	Moderate	Co-parent
M1	55	Strict	Co-parent
M2	35	Not strict	Co-parent
M3	45	Moderate	Co-parent
M4	45	Moderate	Co-parent
M5	35	Not strict	Single parent
M6	45	Moderate	Co-parent

4.DISCUSSION

The ratio of family violence in intergenerational transmission is less than previous generation. Now the parents have adopted different methods for upbringing. The objective of this study is to analyze the role of family violence in intergenerational transmission of abusive parenting. Interviews of mothers and fathers were conducted and thematic analysis were done to examine different themes. The interview between fathers and mothers vary

because mothers spent more time with their children instead of fathers, fathers have some social business that they suffer in their daily lives.

The first research question was about any scary moment in childhood. Most of them didn't have scary moment that impact their whole life. Neither they have childhood trauma. According to current research most of them in their childhood were afraid of when they go outside for playing while their parents restrict them. One of well-known psychological theory Social learning theory proposed by Albert Bandura (1977) when a child experience fear or anxiety. This theory suggest that individual learn through observation, imitation, and modeling of behaviour. Next research question was asked by parent was about type of boundaries set by their parents and what they have set. Then answer varies in both female and males. Males had communication barrier with their fathers because they were strict and close to their mothers, they had time limit for visiting outside, while females faced conditions of culture, society and less education. So when they became parent they provide open environment with minor strictness and change some of traditions like; embrace women rights and women education. In this attachment theory lies that was proposed by John Bowlby (1969) and further developed by Ainsworth (1970). According to this theory, quality of relationships with parents or caretaker and with friends shape child's internal working model and influence their emotional or social development process throughout life. The criticism on attachment theory is that although attachment theory offers important insights into how early experiences affect later development, some contend that it may oversimplify the connection between abusive behavior and attachment patterns, ignoring additional variables like individual differences and sociocultural influences.

The next question was to find out that they themselves doing things same like their parents? Analysis suggested that they tried their best to do same like their parents. In this, same phenomena of social learning theory lie. Because what they are observing, they learned it and implicit in their life. According to this interview or research it was examined that in their era, education was not promoted but they promote education and try anything to provide them best education. The trustworthy and comfortable environment in families is the biggest issue they suffer, so to ensure that there were two types of parents. One was literate people who can handle any situation politely, and illiterate people are those who

have short temper and can't handle situation so these factors affect the trust and comfortable environment.

The major changes occurred in this generation, according to research is that they listen their children point of view or try to accept it, because of generation gap, different ways to perceive society changes. They tried to convey or to make them understand in a polite way instead if harsh or yelling or hitting them. Discipline method they tried to make same as their parents set for them like ; not to spend more time outside or away from home , don't try to make friends elder, what they are doing at home or picking up something place it as it is e.t.c.

One of the theory that focus on violence is Cycle of Violence Hypothesis (Walker ,1979) ; According to this theory, those who are maltreated as children are more likely to abuse others as adults, which will continue the cycle of violence through successive generations. The research question also show that parents shared their tough situation or take advice about situation weather it is financial or physical or about health and this process is intergenerated. They provide them open environment children share their good or bad experiences of life instead of hiding it because of it they feel safe and happy or don't think that they have barrier between them.

Critics point out that both structural and sociolect-cultural factors play a part in determining the patterns of family violence. The transfer of violent parenting practices over generations can be attributed to various factors including as societal attitudes toward violence, cultural norms, institutional disparities, and socioeconomic stresses.

The major theories that contributed in this topic is Social learning theory and attachment theory. Both these theories help in observation, modeling and relationships between your peers and family.

According to information below we interviewed both male and female so results varies across gender. It is concluded that females strictly followed their parent's rules, boundaries set by their parents, don't get education because of restriction. They were much afraid from their parents and they never argued with their parents. But when they became mothers they were humble to their children, handle situation politely, didn't restrict their children for studies and provided best source for studies.

But in male they were apply strictness towards their child as they bear strictness from their parents. But they also try to provide them all facilities of life they provide open environment and follow the same traditions as they followed.

Table 2. Parenting Styles Evolved across Generations

Generation	Parenting Style	Mother	Father
1950s	Authoritarian	High	Low
	Authoritarian	Low	Low
1970s	Permissive	Low	High
	Authoritarian	Moderate	Moderate
	Authoritarian	High	Low
Current	Permissive	Low	High
	Authoritarian	Medium	Very low
	Authoritarian	High	Very low

Overall, the intergenerational transmission of violence occurs in males more as compared to females because sometimes male show their aggression on their child as they face strictness but females handled it in positive way.

5.1. Future recommendations

By analyzing the whole procedure or result in future we will recommend that parents should provide freedom to their child to some extent, if they want to study further then support them in their decision or if they do any wrong act then communicate with them in a polite way so they can understand their point of view or regulate it in their life.

5.1.1. Cease the Cycle of Violence

One of the most important way to end the cycle of violence is to recognize the ways that abusive activities is passed down through the generations. It is possible to construct treatments to stop the transmission of abusive patterns and support better family dynamics by recognizing the processes via which they are handed down.

5.1.2. Early Intervention and Prevention

Studies in this area can help develop early intervention plans that determine families at risk and offer assistance before abusive behaviors become deep-rooted. Parental stress and early revealing to violence are two examples of section that can be point of reference by hindrance efforts in order to reduce the risk of intergenerational transmission.

5.1.3. Child Protection and Welfare

Policies and practices consist to child protection are enlightened by the understanding of the generation to generation transference of abusive parenting. It helps professionals in distinguishing abuse indicators and enforce suitable measure to keep kids safe.

5.1.4. Encourage Healthy Parenting Practices

Different programs targeted at encouraging healthy parenting practices that can be formulated with the help of an understanding of the elements that lead to abusive parenting. The probability that abusive behaviors will continue can be decreased by giving parents with the knowledge and information they necessitate.

5.1.5. Educate the Judicial and Legal Systems

The legal and judicial systems can use different research findings of family violence to guide when treating family violence cases. This include custody consent, security orders, and offender restoration programs.

5.1.6. Public Health and Well-Being

It is necessary for public health and well-being to address family violence and the generation to generation transmission of it. Abusive parenting or family violence has many consequences that can affect whole families as well as society.

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