

## **Parenting Styles and Family Demographic Factors as Predictors of Abusive Parenting Among Adolescents**

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The present research was aimed to identify the abusive family environment in disciplinary context for adolescents through analyzing the link between parenting styles, risk family factors, and experiences of abusive parenting in adolescent girls and boys. Study involved a sample of 300 school going adolescents with age range from 14-17 years. Physical Abuse Scale (Rizvi & Najam, 2014), Psychological Maltreatment Experience Scale (Petretic-Jackson, Betz, & Pitman, 1995), and Parental Authority Questionnaire (Buri, 1991) were used to measure physical abuse, psychological abuse, and parenting styles (respectively) perceived by adolescents. Findings of study revealed that authoritarian parents were perceived more abusive, physically as well as psychologically as compared to permissive parents; while authoritative parents were perceived as non abusive parents. Findings of regression analysis showed that authoritarian parenting predicted abuse potential; while, authoritative parenting predicted non abusive parenting. Moreover among family demographic factors, larger families and joint family system were appeared as significant predictors of abusive parenting. The present research might be an effort to spark the recognition of an issue that parents are perceived abusive by their children though they are practicing different styles of parenting to control their children. Future implications of the study were also discussed.

*Keywords.* Parenting styles, abusive parenting, adolescents, physical and psychological abuse

Use of force against children has long been well established as serious public health concern by World Health Organization (WHO; 2013). A decade ago, child abuse has been recognized as main public health concern in the world (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002).

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Numerous studies have identified short or long term neurological, social, psychological, physical, and cognitive consequences on child's development (Norman, Byambaa, Butchart, Scott, & Vos, 2012; Twardosz & Lutzker, 2009). According to Gereshoff (2002), even less severe use of parental violence against children has also been associated with severe damage in child development and functioning. In fact, there is a large body of evidence based on scientific researches (e.g. Gereshoff, Lansford, Sexton, Davis-Kean, & Sameroff, 2012; Taylor, Manganello, Lee, & Rice, 2010), that establishes the negative consequences of punishment of children that has associated risk of escalating into child abuse (Zolotor, Theodore, Chang, Berkoff, & Runyan, 2008).

According to WHO (2013), child abuse is not only battering but it is the abuse and neglect faced by children under age of 18 years, includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. Physical abuse comprised of corporal punishment (e.g., beating, choking, biting, or burning), causing short-term or enduring destruction to physical functioning of child (Espeleta, Palasciano-Barton, & Messman-Moore, 2017; Wasif, 2017), while psychological abuse is the ongoing emotional abuse against children and adolescents, mostly under reported and under recognized form of abuse (Hibbard, Barlow, & MacMillan 2012), including intimidating terrifying, negative, resentment, teasing, accusing, and judgmental against children (WHO, 2006), has been given less attention globally as compare to physical abuse.

Although there is extensive knowledge on child abuse in developed countries, but literature on child abuse in developing countries is relatively limited (Kara, Bicer, & Gokalp, 2004). Children often do not disclose and share abusive experiences; thus, it is thwarted to identify abuse at home. There is scarcity of research in Pakistan; most of the studies are descriptive and inconclusive in nature and identified four major factors; demographic variables, family relationship, parent characteristics, and children characteristics (Iram & Butt, 2006; Malik, 2010; Malik, & Rizvi, 2009). Families are naturally critical for healthy growth and development of children. Under best conditions, parents support their young ones in the situation of stress and provide appropriate support for effective behavior. However, the development of children would be significantly compromised either by absence of appropriate support or presence of intimidating environment, known as abusive behaviors of parents (Petersen, Joseph, & Feit, 2014). Machado, Goncalves, Mates, and Dias (2007) pointed out that research on child abuse is expanding and a better consideration about the factors linked with high child

abuse potential is desirable to increase the awareness about the strong correlates of child abuse potential at home to avoid and intervene in child abuse. Devastatingly, research has found that not a single factor contributes to lead the parents to be abusive toward their child but rather complex factors are determinant of child abuse (Black, Smith-Slep, & Heyman, 2001).

According to Wolf (2000), the psychiatric model emphasized on the personality traits of abusive parents and suggested that abusing a child is a deviant behavior. Narcissistic and psychopathic and aggressive parents are more abusive. Limitations of psychiatric model were addressed by psychological model which focuses on parent-child relationship and psychological processes in terms of stress management, coping skills and attribution style of parents toward child rearing. Li, Chu, Ng, and Leong, (2014) found three out of seven risk factors of child abuse pertained to the family. These factors were family income, family size, and unemployment of parents.

Research has indicated many family factors, associated with child abuse in family, such as physical abuse is positively associated with low socioeconomic status (Herrenkohl & Herrenkohl, 2007), mostly happened in nuclear families from middle socioeconomic status, while Tıraş, Dilli, Dallar, and Oral (2009) found that overcrowding housing correlates with all type of abuse. They also found that mostly abuse start at age of 6 and 58% cases are with girls. Overall rates of abuse and neglect seemed different according to culture, socioeconomic, and literacy rate of any country. Moreover, gender and age of child are also claimed predictor of child abuse (Chan, Rhee, & Berthold, 2008). Family composition, such as large family has established an increased risk for abuse (Ijzendoorn, Euser, Prinzie, Juffer, & Bakersmans-Kranenburg, 2009). In large family size, the presence of more children may be a reason of more quarrels among children and family members, which in turn may require more parental disciplinary techniques. These disciplinary techniques can contribute to child abuse (Van Zeijl et al., 2006).

Parenting is very challenging when considering styles of parents with relation to impacts of these styles. Baumrind (1996) has unified the idea of three basic parenting styles, authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive, with certain types of disciplinary techniques and attachment toward children. Permissive parents, usually with less demand and low responsiveness, authoritarian parents exert control over child with unquestioned obedience to absolute principals; and authoritative parent remain firm in establishing standards but with cooperation and opinion of child. Authoritative parenting is considered most optimal parenting while permissive and authoritarian

parenting are generally construed as dysfunctional parenting.

The use of discipline and authority, a main factor of parenting (Wissow, 2002), comprises both cognitive and behavioral aspect. Parents' beliefs and values establish the cognitive part, while in behavioral context parents use disciplinary techniques, verbal and may involve physical or psychological violence. Role of cognitive processes is now increasingly recognized in the violent and abusive parental behaviors. A parent with several problematic cognitions combine, believes in authoritarian parenting style, Under-recognizing the damaging consequences of coercive style on children, and more likely to use violence against them (Chamberland, 2013).

Although Baumrind (1996) typology of parenting addressed non-abusive parenting practices in families on general population, while some other have been developed particularly for abusive families. Very rare studies have proposed classification of abusive families. Gagne and Bouchard (2004) have suggested four types of abusive families, based on the nature of psychological abuse suffered by child as well as child and parents' characteristics. Very few researches have studies the link of parenting styles and abusive parenting. One by Thompson et al. (1999) was conducted on parents and children of 17 and under, identified three parenting style based on disciplinary techniques used by parents associated with different degree of risk toward children. The riskiest type of parenting was higher on physical discipline, neglect, verbal abuse, and judgmental toward children. Comprehensively it was authoritarian style of parenting; and theoretically, authoritarian parenting is probably related to the threats of abuse, has some support in few researches which found significant relation between authoritarian style and abusive parenting (Rodriguez & Richardson, 2007). Moreover, possibility of child abuse is found to be positively related with coercive parenting, an approach, associated with typology of styles of parenting (authoritarian) and negative link with responsive and dependable parenting, that is authoritative (Margolin, Gordis, Medina, & Oliver, 2003).

Majority of the incidents of abuse that come to the surface arise from situations where parents are attempting to control or discipline their children. Abusive parents are significantly more authoritarian and harsh towards their children and are less appropriate in their choice of disciplinary methods as compared to non-abusive parents (Pilai, 2004). Physically abusive parents practice unnecessary, irrational and strict corporeal penalizing strategies to discipline their children (Velkamp & Miller, 1994). Any form of aggression of parent toward child can have a connection of physical discipline which may be perceived by child as abusive (Rodriguez & Richardson, 2007).

Generally, the array of association in physical discipline, actual and possible abusive behavior, and parenting styles has yet to be studied and clarified. Although researchers found authoritarian parenting as more problematic style, but permissive parenting is found risky too (Arnold, O'Leary, Wolff, & Acker, 1993; Baumrind, 1996), however literature has still to explore how permissive parenting may relate with potential of child abuse. Permissive parenting may theoretically be linked with neglectful parenting that is basic factor of psychological abuse. Neglect is frequently reported in families who involve in physical abuse of child (Rodriguez, 2010). Outcomes of Rodriguez (2010) study recommended a link between parental aggression and abuse toward child with these two malfunctioned styles, specifically authoritarian practices and potential of child abuse. Moreover, dysfunctional parenting was found more strongly related with parental psychological aggression toward child as compare to physical aggression. Overall, literature discussed above suggested that an authoritarian parenting may contain psychological aggressive practices which might increase physical disciplinary techniques.

The concept of parenting styles is not same as in western societies due to collectivist culture and religious practices. Stewart et al. (1999), suggested in their comprehensive view of parenting in Pakistan that conformity to parents has great value in culture as well as religion in Pakistani society. There is extensive research in Pakistan on parenting styles, focused on relationship of parenting styles with different related variables e.g. mental health functioning (e.g. Akhter, Hanif, Tariq, & Atta, 2011), socio-emotional adjustment (Kausar & Shafique, 2008), psychosocial and family factors, (Malik, 2010) and emotional regulation (Jabeen, Anis-ul-Haque, & Riaz, 2013). Use of punishment to rectify the behavior of children is acceptable in Pakistan. Parental control on children is very high and accepted in Pakistani culture. Parents don't have any pressure to develop individual independence in raising children. Abuse in home may happen in many different ways in the name of disciplinary techniques. Existing literature has suggested that majority of abuse is perpetrated by family members and acquaintances. Therefore, current research was carried out to find out the how family factors and parenting styles of child rearing are associated with abuse experiences of adolescents. Moreover, current research is also significant due to its focus on adolescents view point and perception regarding parenting styles and abusive experiences. Till date, abuse toward children has basically been explored on the basis of reported abuse cases. A public health concern to child abuse and abusive parenting warrants studies that can also investigate their scope and magnitude in general population in

order to have a comprehensive overview of phenomena and to provide information on nation-wide prevention strategies. Researches has been conducted on many associated factors and consequences of child abuse and parenting styles separately but this paper aimed to find how parenting styles and disciplinary strategies are linked with abuse of children in general population of Pakistan that never has been reported.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There will be a significant relationship between family demographic factors and abusive parenting among adolescents
2. There will be a positive relationship between authoritarian and permissive parenting style and abusive parenting (physical & psychological) among adolescents.
3. There will be a negative relationship between authoritative parenting style and abusive parenting (physical & psychological) among adolescents
4. Family demographic factors and parenting styles will predict perception of abusive parenting (physical & psychological) among adolescents.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

The sample included 300 school going adolescents with age range of 14-17 years ( $M = 15.8$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ) living with both parents enrolled in grade 7, 8, 9 and 10. Adolescents were selected from only secondary schools, further divided into three categories, which are girls' schools, boys' schools, and co-educational schools from the list provided by Education Department, Lahore. Total sample ( $N = 360$ ) was selected from which 35 adolescents were not allowed by their parents to participate, ten adolescents left questionnaires and 15 forms were rejected due to incomplete information.

## Measures

**Personal and Family Information Form.** Demographic information was taken from adolescents; that is age, gender, class of student in school, parental education (less than or secondary schools, graduation, post graduate and higher studies), parental profession (unemployed, govt. job, private job, personal business, labour, retired) and income, family system (joint or nuclear), school system (private or public), family size (small = 4 or less, large = 5 or more), birth order of adolescent, and number of siblings.

**Physical Abuse Scale (PAS; Rizvi & Najam, 2014).** This scale was used to measure adolescents' experiences of physical abuse from both father and mother. Scale was developed in Urdu language for this study. It was consisted of 15 items, Likert type with four response options (1 = *never* to 4 = *fairly often*). Score on PAS was taken as total of each item ranged from 15-60. The cut-off score on PAS was calculated on the basis of percentile scores analysis. Mild, moderate, and severe physical abuse was measured on the basis of cut-off score. PAS had high significant reliability coefficient ( $\alpha = .93$ ) for both mother and father form and good discriminant validity as well.

**Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ; Buri, 1991).** PAQ was used to measure the retrospective reports of parenting styles of adolescents. Items of PAQ were based on Baumrind's (1996) descriptions of the parenting style prototype. It was a 30-item scale, comprising of 10-item for each style of parenting (authoritarian, authoritative, & permissive), filled twice for both father and mother. PAQ based on 5 point Likert-scale ranging from (*strongly disagree* = 5 to *strongly agree* = 1). Possible score range on each parenting style was 10-50. Each of these scores was derived from the phenomenological evaluation of parents' authority by son or daughter. PAQ has been appeared to have good internal consistency and Cronbach alphas for six subscales were .75 for mother permissiveness, .85 for mother authoritarianism, .82 for mother authoritative, .74 for father permissiveness, .87 for father authoritarianism, and .85 for father authoritative and test-retest reliability ranged from .77 to .92 (Buri, 1991).

**Psychological Maltreatment Experience Scale (PMES; Petretic-Jackson, Betz, & Pitman, 1995).** PMES comprised of 53 items to be responded on Likert type with four response options that is (1 = *never* to 4 = *very often*). It measured five types of psychological

abuse, how frequently experienced by adolescents. PMES was intended to evaluate the nature and occurrence of an individual's experiences of child/adolescent psychological abuse and its components. The measure was consequently tested on a sample of self-identified sufferers of childhood psychological abuse, which resulted in an empirical organization scheme consisting of the five types of psychological maltreatment; Verbal abuse included 16 items (e.g., yell at you, criticize you, and make you feel ashamed); Neglectful behavior included 17 items (e.g., hurt your feelings, break promises, and call you names); Minimizing, isolating, and terrorizing acts include 9 items such as threaten to abandon you, keep you inside the room, and favor a brother or sister and the last factor exploitative parental behavior included five factors such as use you as weapon against parent, and allow you witness family violence.

PMES was translated in Urdu language in present research with all protocols of translation (translation, back translation, & expert rating). Psychometric properties of scale were developed. Inter-item consistency of scale was .92 for father form and .94 for mother form. Two items of PMES (i.e., force or permit you to watch pornographic acts or view pornographic materials such as actual, videotaped, or printed materials depicting sexually explicit acts, and Allow or force you to use illegal drugs or alcohol) were eliminated due to cultural loading and objection of parents, teachers, and adolescents as well.

## **Procedure**

While conducting present research, ethical issues were addressed. Permission was sought from authors of scales to use and/or translation, education department, and consent from parents and adolescents. Class teachers of required age group students were contacted through principal and all selected schools were visited many times before data collection. Data collection was not possible without their cooperation. Teachers were briefed about the purpose and nature of research. Class teacher communicate with students before researcher and briefly describe the research and how students can participate. Then researcher explained the purpose and told them we have to select those adolescents who experience neglect, and verbal and physical ill-treatment from parents. Unexpectedly many students were willing to participate. Researcher met with students many times before data collection in separate room collectively and separately, provided by school principal and explained the research in detail. Any adolescent, experienced any act, seemed sexually abusive were not included in sample.

Adolescents, participated in study were guaranteed that information provided by them would be completely trusted and will never be used other than research purpose. Participants were given enough time to decide to participate or refuse to participate in the study. Consent forms were given to finally agreed adolescents to take permission from their parents. They were also provided contact details of the researcher to reply any query from parents. Researcher was present during data collection to clarify any question that students might have about the items of any questionnaires as well as to help them if they felt upset during filling the questionnaires.

### **Ethical Considerations**

All ethical issues regarding present research were addressed. Project was approved from Advanced Board of Studies, University of Punjab, Lahore. Permission was taken from authors of scales used in study, Education Department to collect data from school, and principals of schools. Informed consent was also taken from parents and adolescents through schools. Adolescents, parents and school authority were ensured about confidentiality and privacy of information obtained through data collection. Furthermore it was acknowledged that involvement in such discussions as well as during data collection questions may potentially upset to some participants. To avoid this potential harm researcher was present all the time by herself and being psychologist was ready to intervene as well as to give attention to relax the child.

### **Results**

In order to achieve the objectives of study data was screened and cleaned prior to the required statistical analysis. Descriptive statistics for all variables, and reliability analysis to find Cronbach alpha were carried out. Pearson correlation was used to find the relationship among study variables and to determine significant predictors of outcome variables regression analyses was carried out.

Findings of correlation between family factors and abusive parenting revealed that family size, family system and mother education were significantly related with abusive mother and father. Larger family size, joint family system and less education have significant positive relationship with abusive parenting of mother and father.

Table 2

*Correlation Between Family Factors and Abusive Parenting by Mother and Father (N = 300)*

	Paternal Physical Abuse	Paternal Psychological Abuse	Maternal Physical Abuse	Maternal Psychological Abuse
Age	.10	.08	.10	.11
Gender	.10	.06	.02	.05
Family size	.20*	.21*	.20**	.24**
Father education	-.06	-.11	-.07	-.11
Mother education	-.21*	-.21**	-.20**	-.21
Family system	-.20	-.18**	-.21	-.19**
Income of family	-.06	-.08	-.08	-.10
Birth order	.01	.03	.02	.16

\*  $p < .05$ . \*\*  $p < .01$ .

Table 3 presented Correlational analysis between abuse and parenting styles for both father and mother revealed that parenting styles had significant relationship with experiences of abusive parenting in adolescents. Authoritative mother (below the diagonal) was perceived least abusive ( $p < .01$ ) as there was significant negative relationship of mother using authoritative style with physical and psychological abuse of mother. There is significant positive relationship between authoritarian style of mother with perception of physical abuse and withholding support mother. Mother verbal abuse, neglectful/rejecting mother, terrorizing mother, exploitative mother and total psychological abuse are positively related with the perception of authoritarian mother but relationship is not significant. Perception of permissive mother is not significantly related with mother physical abuse as well as psychological abuse and its factors.

While above the diagonal correlation analysis revealed that authoritative style of father was perceived non abusive and perception of authoritarian father has significant positive relationship with perception of abuse by father except one factor of psychological abuse i.e. withholding support by father. These findings revealed that adolescents perceiving their father more abusive in authoritarian style as compare to the adolescents who perceive their father authoritative. Perception of permissive father has negative relationship with some types of abuse (physical, verbal abuse, neglectful/rejecting and exploitative father) though not significant (see Table 3).

Table 3  
 Summary of Inter-correlations, Means, Standard Deviations, and Cronbach Alpha for Scores on Parenting Styles and Abusive Parenting (Physical and Psychological) in Adolescents (N = 300)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	M	SD	$\alpha$
1. Authoritative	—	-.21**	-.27**	-.53**	-.48**	-.48**	-.34**	-.45**	-.38**	-.53**	36.67	9.26	.86
2. Authoritarian	-.22**	—	.16**	.24**	.25**	.19*	.02	.26**	.16**	.22**	39.24	8.22	.73
3. Permissive	-.28**	.22**	—	-.04	-.04	-.02	.05	.01	.10	-.01	28.72	7.09	.61
4. Physical Abuse	-.42**	.14*	.05	—	.61**	.89**	.42**	.86**	.77**	.96**	22.76	9.12	.93
5. Verbal Abuse	-.50**	.10	-.02	.78**	—	.37**	.35**	.83**	.79**	.95**	26.98	10.88	.93
6. Neglecting/Rejecting	-.47**	.07	-.02	.79**	.92**	—	.42**	.30**	.29**	.50**	24.83	9.67	.85
7. Withholding Support	-.40**	.13*	.08	.39**	.54**	.50**	—	.48**	.77**	.90**	14.88	4.15	.50
8. Terrorizing Acts	-.44**	.11	.04	.78**	.86**	.86**	.44**	—	.51**	.83**	15.11	5.45	.87
9. Exploitative	-.39**	.09	-.02	.67**	.77**	.82**	.45**	.73**	—	.81**	5.57	2.18	.73
10. Total Psychological Abuse	-.44**	.11	.01	.81**	.97**	.96**	.62**	.90**	.84**	—	87.38	28.50	.95
M	37.58	30.22	28.58	23.42	28.1	25.4	14.19	15.91	5.73	89.38			
SD	9.1	6.8	7.06	8.63	10.38	9.07	3.66	5.16	2.27	27.68			
$\alpha$	.80	.63	.61	.93	.92	.89	.63	.81	.73	.96			

Note. Inter-correlation for fathers (N = 300) parenting styles and abuse are presented above the diagonal, and Inter-correlation for mothers (N = 300) parenting styles and abuse are presented below the diagonal.

Table 4

*Correlation between Combined Abusive Parenting of Mother and Father (Physical & Psychological) with Combined parenting styles of Mother and Father (N=300)*

	Physically Abusive Parents	Psychologically Abusive Parents
Authoritative Parents	-.49*	-.56*
Authoritarian Parents	.20*	.17*
Permissive Parents	.02	.02

\* $p < .01$ .

Table 4 presented correlational analysis of combined parenting styles of both mother and father revealed that both parents with same style of parenting have more significant relationship with combined abusive parenting. Both authoritative parenting is significantly perceived as non-abusive, while both authoritarian parenting are found significantly linked with abusive parenting. Findings revealed that both parents with same parenting style have strong impact of that style.

A two stage hierarchical multiple regression analysis was conducted with abusive parenting (see Table 5). Demographic variables (age, gender, parental education, family system & family size) were put in first step. Nominal variables were dummy coded with 0, 1, and 2 for example, mother and father education (matric/under matric, graduate, masters and above), family size (small & large), family system (nuclear & joint). While parenting styles of mother and father were put in the second step.

Table 5 showed findings of hierarchical regression revealed that only three demographic factors joint family, larger family size and mother having education more than graduation were appeared as significant predictors of abusive parenting in adolescents and significantly contributed to the regression model,  $F(7, 292) = 6.73$ ,  $p < .001$  and accounted for 14 % variance and in the second step all three parenting styles of mother were significant predictors of abusive mother with  $F(10, 289) = 15.27$ ,  $p < .001$  and contribute for 25% variance in the physical abusive mother.

While for psychological abuse by mother in the first step, joint family, larger family size were significant predictors with  $F(7, 292) = 5.27$ ,  $p < .001$  and contributed 11% and in second step parenting styles appeared as significant predictors with  $F(10, 289) = 18.95$ ,  $p < .001$  and contributed 33% in psychologically abusive mother (see Table 5).

Table 5

*Hierarchical Regression Analysis for Demographic Variables, and Parenting Styles Predicting Abusive Parenting (N =300)*

Criterion Variables	Predictors	$\beta$	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F
<b>Physically Abusive Mother</b>					
Step 1			.37	.14	6.73*
	Joint Family System	.18**			
	Larger Family Size	.22*			
	More Than Graduation Mother	-.17*			
Step 2			.50	.25	15.27*
	Authoritative Mother	-.48**			
	Authoritarian Mother	.19**			
	Permissive Mother	.14*			
<b>Psychologically Abusive Mother</b>					
Step 1			.33	.11	5.27*
	Joint Family System	.18**			
	Larger Family	.22**			
Step 2			.57	.33	18.95*
	Authoritative Mother	-.57**			
	Authoritarian Mother	.17**			
	Permissive Mother	.12*			
<b>Physically Abusive Father</b>					
Step 1			.33	.11	5.07*
	Joint Family System	.19**			
	Larger Family	.18*			
Step 2			.63	.39	18.54*
	Authoritative Father	-.55*			
	Authoritarian Father	.31**			
	Permissive Father	.06			
<b>Physically Abusive Father</b>					
Step 1			.33	.11	5.06*
	Joint Family System	.18**			
	Larger Family	.22*			
Step 2			.67	.45	23.17*
	Authoritative Father	-.62**			
	Authoritarian Father	.28**			
	Permissive Father	.11*			

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$ .

Regression analysis for father parenting styles and abuse showed that for physical abuse of father joint family, and larger family size were appeared as significant predictors in adolescents and significantly contributed to the regression model,  $F(7, 292) = 5.07$ ,  $p < .001$  and accounted for 11% variance and in the second step all three parenting styles of father were significant predictors with

$F(10, 289) = 18.54$ ,  $p < .001$  and contributed 39% variance, While for psychological abuse by father in the first step, joint family, larger family size were significant predictors with  $F(7, 292) = 5.06$ ,  $p < .001$  and contributed 11% and in second step parenting styles of father appeared as significant predictors with  $F(10, 289) = 23.17$ ,  $p < .001$  and contributed 45% in psychologically abusive father. Findings of regression analysis revealed that authoritative parenting of both mother and father significantly predicted non abusive parenting while authoritarian and permissive parenting of mother and father were found significant predictors of abusive parenting.

## Discussion

Present study is an effort to find how parenting styles and family demographic variables are related and predicted abuse experiences in adolescents. The degree of harm experienced by the abuse may be related to the subjective meaning the victim ascribes to a specific abusive act or pattern of parent-child interactions. Therefore, present research was aimed to develop a topology of abusive family environment on the basis of parenting styles, strategies used by parents and family demographic factors.

Findings of present research revealed that parenting styles of both parents were strongly associated with perception of abuse experiences in adolescents. Findings clearly indicated the significant negative relationship of authoritative parenting and positive relationship of authoritarian parenting practices with abusive parenting. It was found in present research that authoritative parenting style of mother and father was perceived as non-abusive while authoritarian practices were perceived as physically and psychologically abusive in adolescents. Findings of present research also suggested that authoritarian father is perceived more abusive as compare to authoritarian mother. The father can perform more negative role in parenting the child, being abusive father, neglect his child, use authoritarian discipline, use physical punishment, and be unable to deliver supportive discipline (Edleson et al., 2007; Holt, Buckley, & Whelan, 2008).

Moreover, regression analysis also supported the hypothesis and revealed that parenting styles predicted perception of parenting as abusive or non-abusive in adolescents. Authoritarian and permissive parenting styles were significant predictors of abusive parenting along with demographic factors, larger family size and joint family system, while authoritative parenting style predicted non-abusive parenting.

Biological parents are more likely to abuse and neglect their child as compare to other people. Child abuse is not only a commonly practiced but increasing phenomena in Pakistan, however, less addressed problem due to social and cultural pressures and there is false perception that problem is under control (Jillani, 2003). Supposedly, repeated physical disciplinary techniques and physical abuse are expected to correlate with greater likelihood of child abuse and dysfunctional parenting styles. A parent using authoritarian parenting style and practices in child rearing, under-recognizing the damaging consequences of coercive style on children, and more likely to use violence against them (Chamberland, 2013). Findings of study are consistent with prior literature which suggested that greater child abuse potential was found in dysfunctional disciplinary style of parenting i.e., authoritarian parenting and coercive family relationships (Rodriguez, 2010; Rodriguez & Richardson, 2007; Thompson et al. 1999).

Although child abuse potential was found strongly associated with lax parenting disciplinary approach (Rodriguez, 2010), but in present study there was not significant relation in permissive parenting and abusive parenting, however, permissive mother and father are appeared as significant predictor of abusive parenting in hierarchical regression. It may be that permissive parents are inconsistent and indecisive between over-reactive and permissive disciplinary techniques. Statistically it may be clarified that although permissive parenting has not significant relationship with abusive parenting so in linear regression it was not a significant predictor but in multiple regression with other parenting styles it was appeared as significant predictor as it is possible that it has some characteristics like other factor put in multiple regression so it became as significant predictor of abusive parenting. Overall, this pattern does suggest that greater inquiry into the link between permissive parenting practices and parent-child aggression may be warranted.

It was also found in findings that same combined parenting style either authoritative or authoritarian has more impact on children and adolescents as with same parenting styles are significantly related to the perception of abusive parenting. Family system theory suggested that parenting style of mother and father are dependent on each other and joint parenting has more strong effect on the functioning of children than parenting style of individual parent (Lindsey & Mize, 2001). Developmental psychologists' and family consultants are also focusing on settlement of combined parenting style. Although findings regarding agreeing parenting style between mother and father are inadequate but present evidences showed that usually one

authoritative parent is likely to have authoritative spouse (Deal, Halverson, & Wampler, 1989).

Researches conducting on abuse potential and studies on abuse potential and disciplinary style must include diverse samples or, more pointedly evaluate the role of socioeconomic level or educational level in abuse risk, as has been previously recommended. Thus, studies of abuse risk need to include other factors of family such as education of parents, family size, and socioeconomic indicators as well. Without considering these factors that may also influence the parent and child, research risks inadvertently concluding that factors that increase abuse potential. In present research, it was found in hierarchical aggression that family size and family system were significant predictors of abuse potential in parents. Abusive parenting is greater in larger families and joint family system. Moreover, less abuse potential is found in families with educated mothers as compare to less educated mothers. Tıraş et al. (2009) found that overcrowding housing correlates with all type of abuse. Moreover gender and age of child is also claimed predictor of child abuse (Chan et al., 2008), however, economic conditions, education of father, age and gender were not significant predictors of abuse potential in present study although researches indicated that mostly abuse start at age of 6 and 58% cases are with girls (Tıraş et al., 2009), and in low socioeconomic status, (Herrenkohl & Herrenkohl, 2007). Economic status of family is not a significant predictor of abuse in present study, It may also an argument that sample of present research was not diverse with respect to economic status of family and in countries like Pakistan most of groups especially belonged to low socioeconomic background are most likely to believe that physical and psychological aggression toward children in the name of discipline is justified (Graham-Bermann & Brescoll, 2000). Moreover, sample of this research was small and was drawn from a very limited area.

Overall findings of present study suggested that parenting style; particularly authoritarian parenting is closely linked with abusive parenting. Parents with authoritative style are perceived as non-abusive by adolescents. Conclusion may be drawn that parents with certain style to control and discipline are abusing their children knowingly or unknowingly. May be parents are using certain style of parenting to control and discipline their child but that style is abusive as psychological model explain that parents-child relationship is linked with abusive parenting. Child aggression and oppositional behavior that basically leads parents toward authoritarian style is closely linked with abusive parenting. Overall, however, the pattern of link between parenting style and abusive parenting has not yet been

adequately and empirically studied. However, findings also suggested that parent-child relationship should be studied depending on many factors including demographic factors. Findings of research are very important as a plethora of research has confirmed that abusive parenting has many negative consequences on children. These negative consequences might be very upsetting to youth, parents, and society at large.

### **Limitations and Suggestions**

While interpreting findings of research, a number of limitations to present research should be acknowledged. Sample of research should be large and diverse as it was small, drawn only from urban area of Lahore was a major limitation. Furthermore data was gathered from a single source (adolescents) which may amplify observed association. Cross informant report would be more informative rather than self-report of adolescents so future research should include parental report as well. Scale used in research except physical abuse scale were not indigenous that might cause cultural bias.

### **Implications**

The present study has targeted the most neglected and least heard population that is, children and adolescents and addressed a sensitive phenomenon of child abuse and neglect in common families in Pakistani cultural context. Current research will shift the attention of parents, clinicians, school psychologists to identify the family factors that are perceived as abusive by adolescents and may be an effort to provide researchers, clinical psychologists and community as well with information to assist earlier recommended risk factors of abusive parenting to develop further effective intervention and guidance and child rearing strategies for parents. The findings might help parents to understand the adolescents' perception about their parenting styles and behaviors which may be considered abusive. The parental awareness regarding child rearing practices and children's rights is highly important to enhance the quality of family life and to prevent incidence of child abuse and neglect.

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