

Acceptance of Victimization of Pakistani Women
from a Husband's Aggressive and Controlling Behaviours

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Abstract

Aim: The aim of the study was to investigate attitudes towards victimisation of women from domestic aggression and controlling behaviours in a Pakistani sample.

Method: An electronic questionnaire was completed by 360 respondents, 194 females and 154 males. The mean age for females was 26.7 years ($SD = 8.0$) and 31.9 ($SD = 9.3$) for males, the age difference was significant. The questionnaire included four scales.

Results: Males scored significantly higher on acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's aggression and controlling behaviours, the idea that women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo, and that women should not divorce. In general, respondents with a low education scored highest on all four scales. For females, age correlated with acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's aggression, the idea that women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo, and that women should not divorce, but not with acceptance of controlling behaviours. For males, age did not correlate with any of the scales in the study.

Conclusions: The study shows that Pakistani males accepted victimisation and controlling of women to a higher degree than did the women themselves, and that a low educational level was associated with acceptance of aggression towards women. For females, but not for males, age correlated with acceptance of victimisation of women.

Key words: Domestic aggression against women, controlling behaviours, blaming the victims, divorce, Pakistan

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1. Introduction

1.1 Aim of the Study

The aim of the study was to investigate acceptance of victimisation of women from domestic aggression in a Pakistani sample.

1.2 Definition of Violence against Women

Article 1 of the resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly (1993), has defined violence against women as *"Any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life"* United Nations Secretary-General Ban-Ki-Moon (2008) has stated *"There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, and never tolerable"* (García, Pallitto, Devries, Stöckl, Watts, & Abrahams, 2013, p. 2).

Violence against women is not new, it is a public health problem and a violation of human rights (Garcia et al., 2013). Intimate partner violence such as shouting, wife beating, pushing, threatening and controlling behaviours, sexual violence and non-consensual sex are different forms of violence against women (Shaikh, 2003; Watts & Zimmerman, 2002). Violence against women can have devastating effects on women's mental and physical health and can cause depression, as well as adverse pregnancy consequences (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999; Khan & Hussain, 2008). The risk for battered women to become depressed and commit suicide is higher as compared to non-battered women (Haqqi, 2008). The connection between depression, suicide attempts and intimate partner violence can be mediated by traumatic stress. Traumatic situations can lead to anxiety, panic, isolation, depression and suicidal attempts (Garcia et al., 2013).

Approximately 35% of women internationally have suffered from intimate partner violence at some point in their lives (Garcia et al., 2013). A global study on homicide shows that among all female victims of homicide in 2012, around 50% were murdered by an intimate partner or by another member of the family (UNODC, 2014). Globally, approximately one in three women has been physically or sexually abused in her life time and in most cases, the abuser is a family

member such as a brother, a father or a husband (Shaikh, 2003). Globally, 38% of homicides of women were committed by an intimate partner (Garcia et al., 2013). Approximately 120 million girls have been victims of non-consensual sex or sexual assault at some point in their lives. Current or former husbands and partners are the most common offenders of sexual violence (UNICEF, 2014).

1.3 Violence against Women in Pakistan

Domestic violence against women is problematic in Pakistan. Men believe that women are their possessions and indebted to satisfy their needs without querying (Amnesty International, 2002). A survey conducted by Thomson Reuters Foundation in 2011 categorised Pakistan as the third most unsafe country for women after Afghanistan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Sarfraz & Noreen, 2016). The Thomson Reuters Foundation has also found that about 90% of the women in Pakistan had been victimised from domestic exploitation, and nearly 700 were murdered in the name of honour by their family members every year (Girls & Movement, 2014; Aurat Foundation, 2014). This issue has been unnoticed by the government, the society and especially by the women themselves (Hassan, 1995). The incident of the gang rape of Mukhtar Mai and the role of the police, the judiciary system and the government have drawn the attention of the international media (Khan & Hussain, 2008). The woman was raped and forced to walk naked in front of the entire village, this was ordered by a local tribal council in Pakistan. Her 12-year-old brother was suspected of an unlawful sexual relationship with a girl (Asif, 2011). Abuse on a daily base goes unobserved by the Pakistani media (Khan & Hussain, 2008).

A study on male perspectives regarding violence against women in Pakistan reported that all the participants (70) verbally abused their wife and 77.1% of the men forced their wives to have sex sometimes, and 58.7% responded that in case their wife were to have an illegitimate affair, they would murder her (Shaikh, 2000, 2003).

It has been shown that there was a 28.2% increase in cases of domestic violence in Pakistan from 2008 to 2014. The percentages of domestic violence in the provinces of Pakistan are as follows: Sindh scored highest with 41%, followed by Punjab 39%, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (13%), and Baluchistan (6%). One explanation for the low percentage of domestic violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan is the lack of reporting and the judiciary system (Aurat Foundation, 2014). A study conducted in Pakistan in 2010 found that about two thirds of 23,430

female respondents had suffered from one or more types of abuse, 30% of them were victims of physical violence, and among physically abused women, only 35% had shared their experiences with anyone, 14 out of 7895 had reported it to the police. The reasons behind the low reporting were the family's honour, their reputation, fear of divorce, and risk of losing the custody of the children (Andersson, Cockcroft, Ansari, Omer, Ansari, Khan, & Chaudhry, 2010).

1.4 Laws Regarding Domestic Violence in Pakistan

The domestic violence act of 2012 is an effort by the Pakistani Government to solve this issue (Shahid, n.d.). The act proclaims that a court must provide the first date of a hearing in seven days after recording the complaint and resolve the case in 90 days. The penalty for convicted offenders includes six-month imprisonments with a minimum fine of Rs.100, 000 (Domestic violence act, 2012). Currently, the jurisdictional system of Pakistan is overloaded, and people try to evade it by relying on *jirgas* and *panchayat* to resolve their disputes, which is a local tribal council of seniors and an informal system to settle the disputes (Shah and Tariq, 2013; Malik, 2014). These *jirgas* and *panchayat* are run by the reigning class of the society such as tribal leaders and primitive lords. Decisions made by *jirgas* and *panchayat* are based on traditional norms and used in violations of human rights like the customs of *Vani* and *Karo Kari* (Shah and Tariq, 2013). *Vani* is a custom of arranging child marriage in Pakistan, where young girls are wedded in reimbursement to settle the disputes between two tribes. The local tribal council uses it as a method for settling of disputes. *Karo-Kari* is a form of honour killing, especially in the province Sindh in Pakistan. Locally, it refers to double homicides, where a girl, or woman, and a boy, or a man, are both murdered by the family member of a girl, or woman to restore the honour of a family when both victims are involved or suspected in the illegitimate affair outside the marriage (Malik, 2014).

In 2001, the *jirga* in the province Sindh settled a dispute over the killing of Mohammad Juman Jatoi by two brothers who were infuriated about the barking of his dog. The tribal leaders decided to offer two young daughters of the accused (11-year-old and 6-year-old) to the victim's family. They were wedded to the 46-year-old father and the 8-year-old brother of the victim. This decision was accepted by both sides (Amnesty International, 2002).

The actions of the police make the situation even worse. If a woman contacts the police regarding abuse, it is not unusual for the police to physically and mentally abuse her and her

family (Andersson et al., 2010). Often the police do not record the complaint and pressure the victims to accept a compensation to drop the charges. It is also not rare for the police to support the tribal leaders and accept their norms rather than protecting the victims (Amnesty International, 2002).

Najma Sadeque, a women's rights activist in Karachi has said that some of the reasons that women fail to receive help is because they are not physically able to go to the police station, that the police is influenced by people in high positions or by criminals, lack of accommodation, legal support, and the unwillingness of the family to allow the media to cover their case because of fear of social condemnation (Amnesty International, 2002).

The main targets of violence prevention campaigns are attitudes because attitudes play a significant part in domestic violence against women by determining perpetration of violence and reactions to this of the victims and the community. To change domestic violence against women, it is necessary to target the attitudes (Flood & Pease, 2006; 2009).

1.5 Factors that Affect Attitudes towards Violence against Women

1.5.1 Culture and Gender

Hofstede (2011) has defined culture as *"The collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from others"*. Khyade (2018) has defined culture as social behaviours and norms established in human societies. Culture is a fundamental concept in anthropology, encircling the array of phenomena that are conveyed through social learning in human societies.

In science a differentiation between gender and sex is made. Gender is psychological and cultural while sex relates to biological and physical attributes (Sigelman & Ryder, 2006). According to the World Health Organization (2018), gender means socially constructed attributes of men and women and it includes the roles, norms and relations of and between groups. Most people are born either male or female and they learn appropriate roles and norms through interactions with the environment.

The Council of Europe (2013) has defined gender stereotypes as *"Generalised views or ideas, which classified the individuals into particular gender groups, typically called as "women" and "men" and are randomly allotted attributes and roles determined and restricted*

by their sex". Former president of Finland Tarja Halonen has stated that *"All nations have their own traditions, and gender stereotypes are part of it. But it is good to remember that they are made by people and can be reformed by people"* (Council of Europe, 2013).

Gender and culture are two factors that have impact on attitudes of individuals (Flood & Pease, 2009). Cultural and social norms influence the individual behaviour (World Health Organization, 2009). Many cultural beliefs and norms are related to violence against women (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottemoeller, 1999; Flood & Pease, 2006; Do, Weiss, & Pollack, 2013; Michau, Horn, Bank, Dutt, & Zimmerman, 2015). Cultural and social norms support violence in Pakistan, divorce is considered shameful and sex is the right of a married man (Khan & Hussain, 2008). Cultural acceptance of violence is a risk factor for interpersonal violence (World Health Organization, 2012).

Gender is related to attitudes that favour violence against women. Attitudes towards gender roles support the custom of violence against women (Flood & Pease, 2009). A study has shown that violence against women is linked to the gender gap (Miller, 1999).

Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory outlines the impact of culture on the values of people and explains the association between these values and behaviours. Cultural dimensions include power-distance, individualism, masculinity, uncertainty avoidance and long-term orientation (Hofstede, 2011; Khayde, 2018). Individualism deals with the degree of interdependence among the members of a society. The Power Distance Index is the inequality between people and it displays that all individuals are not treated equally in the society. The Uncertainty Avoidance Index defines the tolerance level of a society for uncertain situations (Hofstede, 2011). Masculinity is about expected gender roles in the society (Hofstede, 1998).

The Power distance index is high in Asia, Africa and Arab countries while Anglo and Germanic countries score low in it. India (77), United Arab Emirates (90) and Nigeria (80) are considered large power distance societies. ("Compare countries," n.d.). The view that men are higher on the social hierarchy than women, may lead to women believing that a husband's offensive behaviour is acceptable (Do, Weiss, & Pollack, 2013; Kasturirangan, Krishnan, & Riger, 2004).

The Nordic countries have very low scores on masculinity. Norway and Sweden score eight and fifth while Japan is a truly masculine society with scores of 95 ("Compare countries," n.d.). Cultures which are viewed as feminine have a balance between the sexes (Kalra & Bhugra, 2013). Traditional masculine traits include authority and control over women. Studies have

indicated that strong masculinity is allied with traits that support sexual violence and because of acceptance of this sexual violence, men objectify women (Seabrook, Ward, Reed, Manago, Giaccardi, & Lippman, 2016). Sexual violence is more common in cultures that foster beliefs of superiority of male and cultural and social inferiority of women. Across cultures, the male-female relationship outlines the views regarding sexual offenders and victims. A predominant stereotypic belief is that an eye-catching and seductively dressed woman inflames sexual violence if she is out unaccompanied at night. This situation stimulates a man for sexual violence (Ward & Inerto, 1990; Kalra & Bhugra, 2013). A study of sexual behaviour in India showed that wife beating was part of the sexual act. Males considered beating their wife as a symbol of love during intercourse but not as part of illicit sex outside marriage (Miller, 1999). In rural India, it is considered that women do not have control over their sexuality and therefore it is controlled by the father before marriage. The control is relocated from the father to the husband after marriage. Men have control over women not only in India but in many other cultures which have macho attitudes (Ward & Inerto, 1990; Kumari, 1995). Low self-esteem is common among girls in India who are brought up in a culture where sons are preferred, and women are taught to serve others first. This stimulates a strong sense of inferiority among women and they blame themselves for the abuse and believe that most of the time it is their own fault (Miller, 1999).

Pakistan scores 70 on the Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI) and 14 on individualism. Pakistan is thus a truly collectivistic society (“Compare countries,” n.d.). People from low UAI countries are more open to accept changes and innovations as compared to people from high UAI countries. Countries with high UAI scores hold firm beliefs and non-traditional behaviours and ideas (Hofstede, 2011). Honour killing is a crime that is difficult to understand in individualistic societies. In individualistic societies, people believe in personal goals but in collectivistic societies, there is more emphasis on group identity (Nørmark, 2013; Do et al., 2013). In Pakistan, almost 1100 women were murdered in 2015 in the name of the honour by their families (BBC, 2016). In collectivistic cultures, people do not bear the guilt and shame alone. If one member of the family is doing something against the cultural norms then whole family is liable for action, and to save the honour of the family, it is necessary to kill the member of the family who is responsible for the shame (Nørmark, 2013). In March 2000, 28-years-old Niazul Mugheri murdered his 14-year-old wife Rahima Mugheri on their wedding night in Pakistan. He told his family and friends that his wife had admitted to premarital sex. She was buried within hours of her marriage (Amnesty International, 2002). Cultural beliefs such as

family honour and biased legislation make this issue complex (Khan & Hussain, 2008; Hassan, 1995).

In 2014, a survey conducted by Aware Girls, an organisation in Pakistan reflected the common attitudes about domestic violence against women, 52.17% of the participants responded that wife beating is justified if the wife disobeyed the husband, and 26.09% accepted it if the wife did not take care the husband, and 21.4% vindicated wife beating if the wife had gone out without asking permission from the husband. The survey outlined the expected gender roles of women. According to the study, obedience to the husband and control of movement were the two foremost gender expectations for women (Girls & Movement, 2014). Similar results were found in another survey conducted by NIPS and ICF International 2013 in Pakistan (National Institute of Population Studies & Inner-City Fund, 2013).

Similarly, a comparative analysis of 17 sub-Saharan African countries showed that Intimate partner violence against women was generally accepted in most of sub-Saharan African countries by both men and women. Neglecting the children and going out without permission of the husband were the most typical reasons for justifying it (Uthman, Lawoko, & Moradi, 2009).

1.5.2 Witnessing and Experiencing Violence

Factors that influence attitudes towards violence have been found to include witnessing violence and being victimised from it (Flood & Pease, 2009, 2006; World Health Organization, 2012). Tolerance of violent behaviour can be learned at an early age if a child is victimised from corporal punishment or witnesses' violence in the family (World Health Organization, 2009). Social acceptance of corporal punishment is high in countries where it considers lawful (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006). In many cultures parents have the right to hit the children in order to punish them (Krug, Mercy, Dahlberg, & Zwi, 2002; CRC, 2006). Corporal punishment has deleterious effects, a short-term affect is physical injuries. A long-term effect is mental health problems as adult (Krug et al., 2002; Lansford and Dodge, 2008).

Early life experiences of abuse including corporal punishment and sexual exploitation surface as a solid risk factor for Intimate partner violence (Abramsky, Watts, Garcia, Devries, Kiss, Ellsberg, & Heise, 2011). Associations have been found between early sexual violence and behavioural problems. Children who were victims of sexual exploitation were more likely

to become perpetrators as adults (UNICEF, 2014). Through observing the practice of violence by one parent against another, children may learn that violence is an effective strategy (Heise, 1998). Studies have also shown that girls who had been sexually molested at some time in their life were more likely to become victimised from intimate partner aggression (UNICEF, 2014; Heise, 1998).

1.5.3 The Media

The media is a societal factor that shape attitudes towards violence against women (Flood & Pease, 2009, 2006; Russell & Trigg, 2004). The media replicates and outlines cultural metaphors and social scripts (Malamuth, 2014). It is involved in the process of shaping gender stereotypes (Aalberg & Jenssen, 2007). Social and cultural norms regarding gender stereotypes influence how women's roles are shown in the media (Council of Europe, 2013). The biased display of women in the media in Pakistan has adverse effects on the improvement of women's status in the society (Asif, 2011).

1.5.4 Religion

Spiritual institutions have an influence on attitudes toward violence (Flood & Pease, 2006). In Islamic countries, violence against women is not considered a chief issue despite its growing occurrence. Studies in Egypt, Palestine, and Israel have shown that at least one out of three women was victimised. The attitude that domestic violence is a private matter is used to justify violence against women (Douki, Nacef, Belhadj, Bouasker, & Ghachem, 2003). Religious leaders play a significant role in authenticating the custom of violence against women by giving religious versions taken out of milieu to support their opinions (Shahid, n.d.). Selective verses from the Quran are used to validate that men who beat their wives are following the instructions of God (Douki et al., 2003). The macho culture is reinforced by the support of some religious leaders, who practice Islam as a tool to keep women submissive (Asif, 2011; Shahid, n.d.).

Some women do not want to share their experience of domestic violence in order to protect the honour of the family. Religious justifications and the honour of family endorse silence rather than revealing the wrongdoings (Douki et al., 2003; Kasturirangan et al., 2004; World Health

Organization, 2014). Rational knowledge of the Quran shows that intimate partner violence and honour killing are a product of the culture not of the religion (Douki et al., 2003).

1.6 Protective Factors

To develop intervention programs, it is substantial not only to reduce factors that endorse violence but also to enhance protective factors that avert violence. The transformation of gender norms and attitudes have been said to be the chief focus of intimate partner violence prevention programs (Abramsky, Watts, Garcia, Devries, Kiss, Ellsberg, & Heise, 2011).

The Sustainable Development Goals are seventeen global goals with 169 targets established by the United Nations on 25 September 2015 (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2015). These goals were established after the Millennium Development Goals adding new areas such as peace, justice and innovation. These interconnected goals offer long-term solutions to challenge injustice and violence by addressing gender discriminations in the secondary education and endorsing gender equality and women's access to resources. It aims at preventing all forms of violence. It is a global development agenda that besieges all forms of violence (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2015).

1.6.1 Education

Mahatma Gandhi has said *"If we are to teach real peace in this world, and if we are to carry on a real war against war, we shall have to begin with our children"* (Lewis & College, 2014, p. 236). The Sustainable Development Goal 4 points out the prominence of education in order to improve people's lives and a sustainable development (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2015). Aristotle, 3rd Century B.C. said, *"Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all"* (Lewis & College, 2014, p. 226). Education can play a noteworthy role in non-killing global transformation by fostering tolerance from an early age (Paige, 2009).

1.6.1.1 The Relationship between Education and Intimate Partner Aggression

A positive association has been found between education and low level of intimate partner violence (Ahmad & Mardi, 2005; Ali & Gavino, 2007; Behrman, Peterman, & Palermo, 2017). Studies have shown that finishing secondary education is a protective factor against violence against women, whereas primary education alone fails to deliberate akin benefits (Vyas & Watts, 2009). A Low level of education can upsurge the peril of experiencing or committing violence. In contrast, a high level of education has been shown to be a protective factor for plummeting such risks and varying the attitudes regarding domestic violence (Sexual Violence Research Initiative, UNICEF, La Strada, & World Bank Group, 2017). One Study also showed that women with higher education than their husband suffer higher levels of physical and sexual violence compared to women who had a lower education than their husband (Vyas & Watts, 2009). Equal opportunities for females and males for getting an education play a central role in violence prevention (Abramsky et al., 2011).

Studies in the USA and in South Africa have found an inverted U-shaped relationship between education and intimate partner violence, whereby low and advanced education protect against intimate partner violence (Harvey, Garcia, & Butchart, 2007). Lower rates of aggression have been found when both partners had completed a secondary education (Abramsky et al., 2011).

1.6.1.2 Early Intervention

It has been shown that school based early intervention strategies are effective to alter violent behaviour among young children (Albert, 2017). Early childhood interventions are successful in teaching good social behaviour (Chamberlain, 2017). Interventions that inspire a safe, steady and healthy relationship between parents and children can preclude child abuse and child aggressive behaviour (World Health Organization, 2010). These interventions contain educating parents to a healthy relationship, to evade hard corporal punishment, to manage negative behaviours of children and promote anger management, and problem communication skills (Harvey et al., 2007). Parental training has been shown to improve parenting skills and to support the parents to manage conflicts with the children (Krug et al., 2002).

School based intervention programmes target child sexual exploitation by providing information to children about sexual exploitation and how to defend themselves (Harvey et al.,

2007). Worldwide prevention and educational campaigns strive to decrease child abuse by increasing awareness regarding negative outcomes (Krug et al., 2002).

1.6.2 Gender Equality

The Sustainable Development Goal 5 is related to the elimination of violence, gender equality and empowerment of women (Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, 2015). In peaceful societies, such as Paliyan located in the southern India and Ladakhi located in the northern India, there is no partition of labour between the sexes (Peaceful Societies, 2018). Collaboration and affection are vital characteristics of spouse relations and there is a solid understanding of gender equality and equal distribution of power (Peaceful Societies, 2018). In San Andrés (Colombia), there is an extensively held countervailing value system that tolerates violence, and absence of respect for women, wife-beatings, corporal punishment of children, drunken brawling, slaying in sexual rivalries (Paige, 2009).

Stereotyping can be used as a mean to vitiate women. Jettisoning negative gender stereotypes is basic to gain gender equality (Council of Europe, 2013). The School system can play a role in violence prevention by teaching gender equality, relationships and bullying (Abramsky et al., 2011). These programmes can teach gender equality and attitudes before they become embedded in the minds of the youngsters and children. A study also found that programmes on gender equity training can play a role in reducing intimate partner violence (World Health Organization, 2010).

According to the Council of Europe (2013), the following practices are considered necessary in eradicating gender stereotypes: targeted media campaigns, legislation, awards for non-stereotyped advertisement that endorse healthy behaviour, and educating the media professionals about gender.

The advertising industry UK has made initiatives towards speaking about gender stereotypes. Some brands in the UK have endorsed gender equality. Standards projected to elude gender stereotypes in ads would increment initiatives commenced by the advertising industry (The Advertising Standards Authority, 2015). There is also a prerequisite to nurture awareness about gender stereotypes in the educational system (Council of Europe, 2014).

1.6.3 The Mass Media

Public information and awareness campaigns are tactics to prevent intimate partner violence and sexual violence. These campaigns are considered to be protective against intimate partner violence (Harvey et al., 2007; World Health Organization, 2009). The main objective of using these campaigns all over the world is to address all forms of violence, generate awareness, and try to stimulate attitudes (Harvey et al., 2007).

Mass media campaigns play a role in conveying messages about healthy behaviour through different platforms such as the internet, magazines and newspapers (World Health Organization, 2010). They use different strategies to alter norms or tie a social stigma to unwanted behaviours. They emphasise adverse outcomes of violence and stimulate positive parenting styles (Henley, Donovan, & Moorhead, 1998). They do this directly through messages and indirectly by modifying social norms (Wellings & Macdowall, 2000).

1.6.4 Legislation

Legislation can be a device in changing behaviours, opinions, and cultural and social norms. Laws and policies that make vicious conduct a crime deliver a message to society that it is not tolerable (World Health Organization, 2005).

There is requisite to reinforce civil rights of women by reorganising the legal system. This includes improving the prevailing laws defining rape and sexual assault within marriage (World Health Organization, 2012). Governments can play a role by endorsing gender equality in laws and policies (World Health Organization, 2005). Plans to improve practices of the police are common forms of intervention. There is a necessity to train the police and to amend their behaviour regarding domestic violence and there should be obligatory detention for offenders in all regions of the world (Krug et al., 2002). The progress of international and national legal frameworks can have a significant effect in preventing violence against women (World Health Organization, 2010). There is also a necessity to strengthen the policies regarding the health sector by guaranteeing safe and high-quality treatment of victims of domestic violence (Michau et al., 2015).

There is a prerequisite to ban the corporal punishment of children by all states, and to condense violence against children by changing attitudes and practices (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2006). Sweden became the first country that banned all forms of corporal

punishment of children in 1979 (Krug et al., 2002). Since then, 24 more countries have forbidden it (Zolotor & Puzia, 2010). All reports of violence against children should be investigated accurately (CRC, 2006). In several countries like Finland, Argentina, Spain, Sri Lanka, and United States, it is obligatory by law for professionals to report suspected child exploitation and negligence. The rationale behind obligatory reporting is to notice the abuse early and aid the victims. These laws are useful in protecting children against abuse and neglect (Krug et al., 2002).

1.7 Research Questions

1. Respondents with a low education were expected to show more acceptance of aggression against women than respondents with a higher education.
2. Males were expected to show more acceptance of aggression against women compared to female respondents.
3. Older female respondents were expected to show more acceptance of aggression than younger ones.

2. Method

2.1 Sample

A questionnaire was completed by 360 respondents in Pakistan, 194 females and 154 males, and 12 persons categorised their gender as “other” living in Pakistan. The age range was between 12 and 67 years. The mean age for females was 26.7 years ($SD = 8.0$) and 31.9 ($SD = 9.3$) for males, the age difference was significant [$t_{(346)} = 5.57, p < .001$].

The educational level of the respondents was as follows: no education (1.9%), middle school level (9.2%), high school (11.4%), intermediate level (16.4%), college degree (32.8%), and master’s degree or higher (25.3%), other (3.1%).

2.2 The Instrument

The questionnaire included scales for measuring a) acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband’s aggression, b) acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband’s controlling behaviours, c) women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo, and d) women should not divorce (Table 1). The response alternatives were all on a five-point scale (0 = I completely disagree, 1 = I slightly disagree, 2 = neutral/undecided, 3 = I almost agree, 4 = I completely agree).

Table 1

Single Items and Cronbach’s Alphas for the Scales in the Study (N = 360)

Acceptance of Victimisation of Women from a Husband’s Aggression (9 items, $\alpha = .94$)

1. It is ok for a husband to make degrading comments about appearance of his wife.
2. It is acceptable for a husband to verbally abuse his wife if he says he is sorry afterwards.
3. A husband is justified in verbally abusing his wife if she neglects the children.
4. It is ok for a husband to push his wife.
5. It is acceptable for a husband to hit his wife if he says he is sorry afterwards.
6. A husband is justified in beating his wife if she neglects the children.
7. A man is justified in beating his wife if she has illicit relationships with other men.
8. It is ok for a husband to force his wife to have sexual intercourse even if she does not want to.

Acceptance of Victimisation of Women from a Husband’s Controlling Behaviours (5 items, $\alpha = .92$)

1. If a husband controls and puts restrictions on his wife, it shows that he cares about her.
 2. Controlling behaviour of a husband is justified if he is financially responsible or providing good money to his wife.
 3. It is completely ok for a husband to check the phone and social media account of his wife.
 4. A husband has the right to control the clothes of his wife.
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5. A wife should get permission from her husband before leaving the house or going out.

Women Have Themselves to Blame for the Domestic Abuse They Undergo (10 items, $\alpha = .92$)

1. Women who are obedient and take care of their husbands are never beaten.
2. Domestic violence often happens because the woman is really provoking it by criticising and emotionally hurting her partner.
3. Some women are so nasty and manipulative that they deserve control.
4. It is difficult to have a good relationship with mother in law, sister in law, because women can cause a lot of problems by manipulating.
5. Strong character and holy women don't think about divorce and try to improve marriage even if they are abused by their husbands.
6. Some women personally blame themselves when being abused and feel guilty. Sense of guilt is a vital reason for not considering divorce.
7. Women who dress less modestly or indecently should be held responsible for rape and sexual assault.
8. Many women who want to stay single for long time are usually flirtatious and they cannot live with only one man.
9. Extra marital affairs are acceptable for a man if his wife is not meeting his sexual needs or providing him sex.
10. It is unfair with a husband if his wife is not a virgin on the wedding night.

Women Should Not Divorce (7 items, $\alpha = .81$)

1. Married women are rightfully more respected in society.
 2. Marriage is a lifetime commitment, both partners should be ready to stay together no matter what occurs.
 3. The issues of right to divorce for women in Pakistan should be discussed openly. *
 4. Divorce stains the honour of the family.
 5. The adverse outcomes of divorce on children have been significantly exaggerated.
 6. Financial reasons should prevent a woman from divorcing even though the relationship is abusive.
 7. Religious beliefs and interpretations should prevent women from leaving abusive relationship.
-

2.3 Procedure

An electronic questionnaire was constructed with Google Drive. A link to the questionnaire was published electronically; a paper version was also used. The link was active between 23.10 and 29.11 2018 on social media. The paper version was made available for distribution on 23.10 2018, and the questionnaires were hand delivered to participants.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to the principles concerning human research ethics of the Declaration of Helsinki (World Medical Association, 2013), as well as guidelines for the responsible conduct of research of The Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity (2012).

3. Results

3.1 Correlations between the Scales

For females, all scales in the study correlated significantly with each other on a $p < .001$ -level (Table 2). The highest correlational coefficients were found between the view that women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo and acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's controlling behaviours ($r = .76$).

Table 2
Correlations between the Scales in the Study, Females Only (N = 194)

	1.	2.	3.
1. Acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's aggression			
2. Acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's controlling behaviours	.63 ***		
3. Women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo	.59 ***	.76 ***	
4. Women should not divorce	.43 ***	.52 ***	.65 ***

*** $p \leq .001$

For males, all scales in the study correlated significantly with each other on a $p < .001$ -level (Table 3). The highest correlational coefficients were found between the opinion that women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo and that women should not divorce ($r = .84$), and with acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's controlling behaviours ($r = .84$).

Table 3
Correlations between the Scales in the Study, Males Only (N = 154)

	1.	2.	3.
1. Acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's aggression			
2. Acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's controlling behaviours	.80 ***		
3. Women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo	.77 ***	.84 ***	
4. Women should not divorce	.65 ***	.75 ***	.84 ***

*** $p \leq .001$

3.2 Correlations with Age

For females, age correlated positively with acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's aggression ($r = .28, p < .001$), the idea that women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo ($r = .18, p = .012$), and that women should not divorce ($r = .18, p = .011$). Acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's controlling behaviours did not correlate with age ($r = .11, ns.$). For males, age did not correlate with any of the scales in the study. A tendency was found for a correlation between age and the opinion that women should not divorce ($r = .16, p = .051$).

3.3 Sex Differences

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with sex (female/male) as the independent variable, age as covariate, and the four scales as dependent variables. The multivariate test was significant (Table 4). The univariate tests showed that males scored significantly higher on all four scales.

Table 4
Results of a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Sex as Independent Variable, Age as Covariate, and Four Scales as Dependent Variables (N = 348)

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	η_p^2	Group with higher mean
Effect of Sex					
Multivariate analysis	3.12	4, 342	.015	.035	
Univariate analyses					
Acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's aggression	7.33	1, 345	.007	.021	Males
Acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's controlling behaviours	12.06	“	.001	.034	Males
Women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo	6.24	“	.013	.018	Males
Women should not divorce	5.25	“	.023	.015	Males

3.4 Education

A multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was conducted with educational level as the independent variable and four scales as dependent variables. The multivariate test was significant (Table 5, Figs. 1–4). The univariate tests were significant for all four scales. Scheffé’s test revealed that in general, respondents who had a lower education scored higher on all four scales compared to those with a higher education.

Table 5
Results of a Multivariate Analysis of Variance (MANOVA) with Education as Independent Variable and Four Scales as Dependent Variables (N = 349)

	<i>F</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i> ≤	η_p^2
Effect of Education				
Multivariate analysis	6.10	20, 1372	.001	.082
Univariate analyses				
Acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband’s aggression	17.58	5, 343	.001	.204
Acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband’s controlling behaviours	6.05	“	.001	.081
Women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo	7.24	“	.001	.095
Women should not divorce	8.74	“	.001	.113

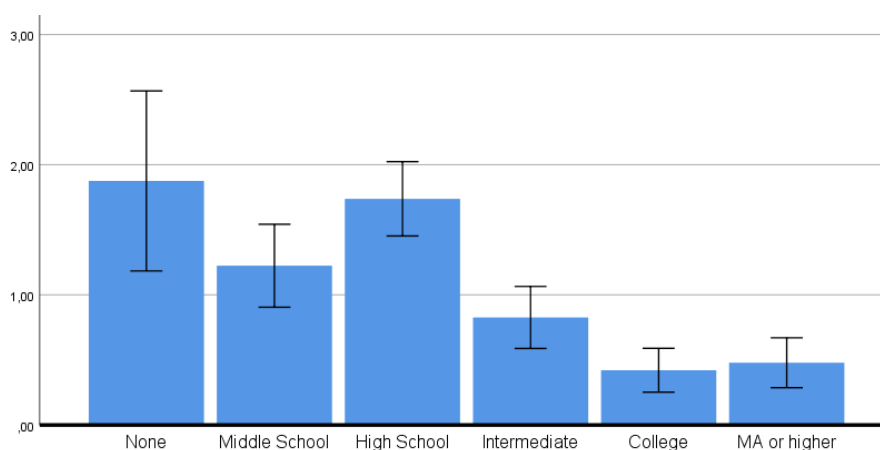


Figure 1. Mean values for respondents with different education on acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband’s aggression (N = 360).

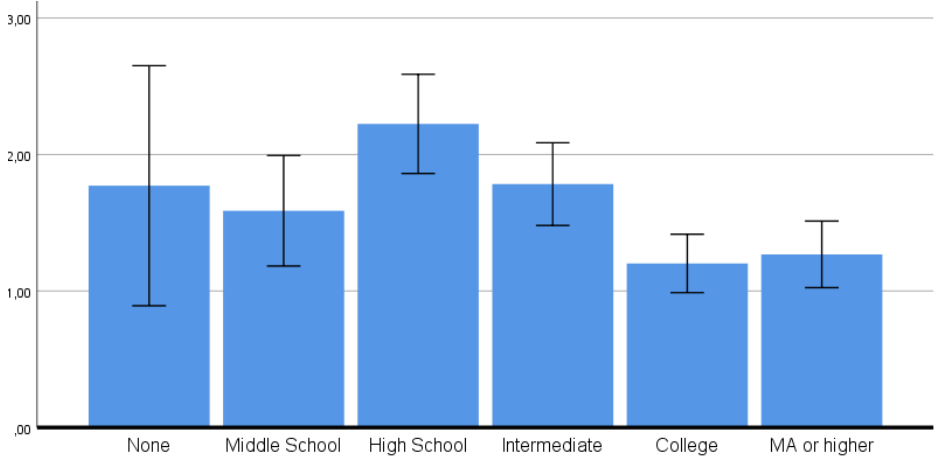


Figure 2. Mean values for respondents with different education on acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's controlling behaviours (N = 360).

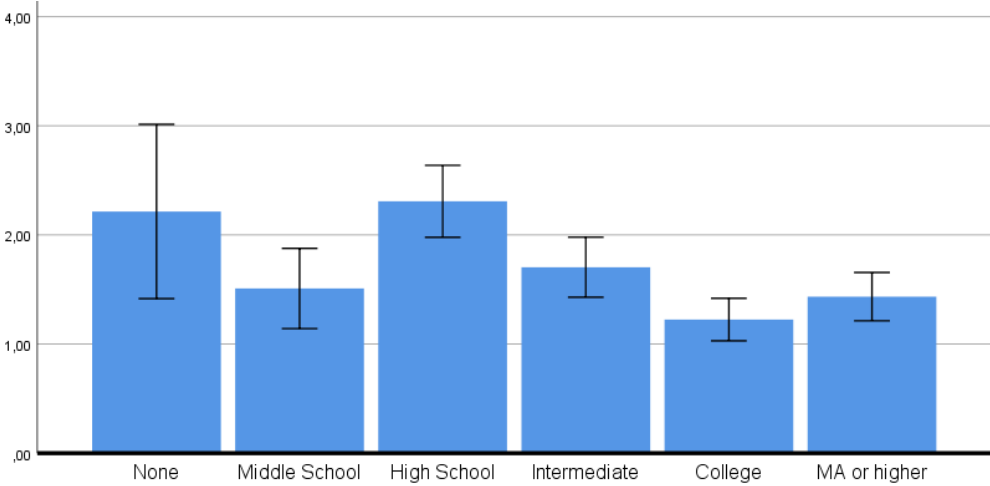


Figure 3. Mean values for respondents with different education on the assumption that women have themselves to blame if they are victimised by their husband (N = 360).

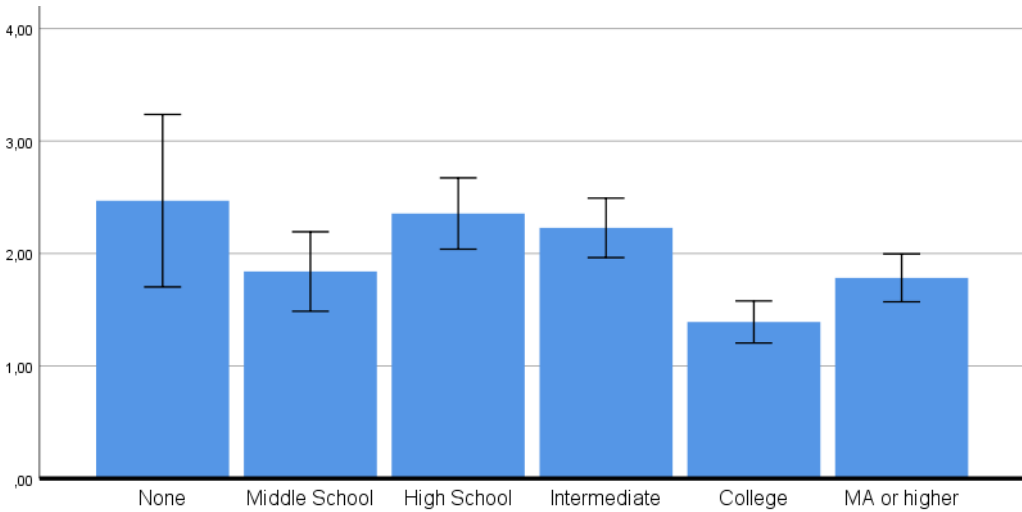


Figure 4. Mean values for respondents with different education on the view that women should not divorce (N = 360).

4. Discussion

The results of the study showed that males, compared to females, scored significantly higher on acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's aggression and controlling behaviours, the idea that women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo, and that women should not divorce. The outcomes of the study supported all three research questions. The study provided evidence that attitudes accepting of aggression were higher among Pakistani males compared to female respondents in the sample. This mirrors the perception of the Pakistani society as patriarchal. A national survey conducted in Australia (2006) found that in general, attitudes supportive of violence were more common among males than females (Taylor & Mouzos, 2006). Similar results were also found in a survey conducted in England in 2005 (Burman & Cartmel, 2005). Similarly, a study in the US showed that male respondents were more likely to blame women for provoking their partners to behave aggressively (Carlson & Worden 2005).

The present study also showed that in general, respondents who had a low education scored highest on all four scales as compared to those with a higher education. The study showed a negative association between education and accepting attitudes of aggression against women. A previous survey in Pakistan found similar results (NIPS and ICF, 2013). A survey has shown that domestic violence was most common among uneducated women (44%), and less common among educated women (20%) (NIPS and ICF, 2013). Similarly, another study from Sudan found that uneducated women were more often abused (Ahmad & Mardi, 2005). Education and sexual violence against women were studied in Malawi and Uganda using statistics from 2004 to 2011 (Behrman, Peterman, & Palermo, 2017). The study found that higher levels of education in women reduced the risk of their suffering from sexual violence in Uganda and lowered the risk of abuse by enhancing literacy among women (Sexual Violence Research Initiative, UNICEF, La Strada and World Bank Group, 2017; Behrman, Peterman, & Palermo, 2017). According to an international gender equality study, men with low education articulated biased gender attitudes and were more violent (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2016). Another study conducted in Karachi found a similar correlation between low level of education and a higher degree of acceptance of old-style gender roles (Ali & Gavino, 2007). However, other studies have revealed that women with a higher education than their husband suffer higher levels of physical and sexual violence (Vyas & Watts, 2009; Abramsky et al., 2011).

In Pakistan religion has deep impact on the lives of people (Shahid, n.d). The Quran asks the readers to gain education in order to understand its teachings and to avoid speculations and confusion along with belief. An educated mind can understand the knowledge of the Quran in a much better way than the uneducated mind (Yazdani & Mamoon, 2012). Some religious leaders deliberately target uneducated people to control their minds and teach them in such a way that allows them to keep women submissive through wrong interpretation of religious verses (Asif, 2011; UNICEF, 2014; Shahid, n.d.).

The present study also showed that for females, age correlated with acceptance of victimisation of women from a husband's aggression, the idea that women have themselves to blame for the domestic abuse they undergo, and that women should not divorce, but not with acceptance of controlling behaviours. For males, age did not correlate with any of the scales in the study.

A study undertaken in Karachi from 2002-2003 found that younger female participants considered emotional and physical abuse to be wrong compared to older participants who did not consider smacking to be domestic violence (Khan & Hussain, 2008). Similarly, a study in the US showed that older respondents were not very clear about the definition of domestic violence and were more likely to accept aggression as normal (Carlson & Worden 2005). A national survey conducted in Australia (2006) found that younger participants held less violent attitudes than older participants (Taylor & Mouzos, 2006). Similarly, a study in Missouri provided support for the positive association between age and attitudes towards rape. Younger participants showed more sympathy towards victims of rape as compared to older participants (Nagel, Matsuo, McIntyre, & Morrison, 2005).

The findings of the present study contrast with a study from the US (Simon, Anderson, Thompson, Crosby, Shelley, & Sacks, 2001), which showed high acceptance of intimate partner violence among young males (younger than 35). A low level of education and a history of violence were also contributing factors to intolerant behaviours regarding violence (Simon, Anderson, Thompson, Crosby, Shelley, & Sacks, 2001).

In the present study, the marital status of the respondents could be a probable reason to justify aggression. A study conducted in 17 sub-Saharan African countries showed that married respondents justified more violence against women as compared to never married respondents (Uthman et al., 2009).

A study on male perspectives regarding domestic violence in Karachi, found that 55% of the males had early life experience of physical violence and 65% had witnessed their mother being abused. To preclude spousal abuse in Pakistan, interventions could focus on preventing child abuse (Fikree, Razzak, & Durocher, 2005). Early intervention can play a role in preventing sexual abuse and violence against women by spreading awareness regarding gender equity and promoting healthy behaviours among young children (Harvey et al., 2007; WHO, 2010; Chamberlain, 2017).

Domestic violence is common in Pakistan and its consequences are lethal (Amnesty International, 2002). In male dominated societies such as Pakistan, males are considered higher on the social hierarchy than women which makes the offensive behaviours of husbands acceptable. The attitude that domestic violence is a private matter makes the situation even more complex (Do et al., 2013; Kasturirangan et al., 2004). Most women in Pakistan have limited information regarding domestic violence and do not consider it to be a crime. Furthermore, social norms do not encourage young women to live independently and make divorce unacceptable (Khan and Hussain, 2008). The Pakistani police and media display leniency towards women associated issues which makes the victims more vulnerable (Asif, 2011). The findings emphasise the importance to establish a strong legal system to protect victims of domestic abuse and to challenge cultural and gender norms regarding accepting of violence against women.

The results underline the importance of education for both males and females in Pakistan. Education has the potential to plummet spousal violence. To counter violence against women, a higher quality and gender sensitive education is required, and this could also support a more peaceful, comprehensive society (Global Education Monitoring Report, 2016).

The study provided knowledge about the current situation of domestic violence in a sample in Pakistan. Attitudes could be a target of spousal prevention campaigns to alter domestic aggression. The study also highlighted the positive role of education in violence prevention against women. Outcomes of this study can be used by officials to draw intervention programmes in Pakistan.

One of the limitations of this study was a small sample size that limits the generalisability of the results. Most of the respondents were from small or large cities; the study did not cover rural areas in Pakistan. There are noteworthy cultural differences, such as family honour and

shame between regions, in revealing sexual violence. This may have desisted some traditional Pakistani women from sharing the knowledge (Hassan, 1995).

To facilitate future studies, there is a need to use the large sample size or a population-based survey and to include rural areas. Future studies could consider early experiences of violence and their impact on attitudes. Future studies could also compare the level of education of the partners and its association with domestic violence.

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