

## PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE AND REJECTION AS A DETERMINANT OF PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT AND CONDUCT OF PAKISTANI ADOLESCENTS

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### ABSTRACT

#### OBJECTIVE

This study investigated differences in psychological adjustment and conduct of Pakistani adolescents experiencing acceptance and rejection by their fathers and mothers.

#### STUDY DESIGN

Comparative Study

#### PLACE AND DURATION OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted at the Institute of Clinical Psychology, University of Karachi under International Father Acceptance-Rejection Project, (IFARP) in duration of two years.

#### SUBJECTS AND METHODS

The first sample consisted of 116 adolescent children, (61 girls; 55 boys) who were between the ages of 14-17 years. Their personal information was taken and then Child Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire-Mother/father (PARQ, Short Form), and Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Child PAQ) were administered. The second sample consisted of 116 mothers of these children. They were requested to complete the form of Parent's Evaluation of Child's Conduct (PECC).

#### RESULTS

Results revealed that psychological adjustment of those adolescents who perceived acceptance by their fathers and mothers was significantly better than those children who perceived rejection. The results also found significantly lower misconduct scores for children perceiving acceptance by their parents than for those children perceiving rejection.

#### CONCLUSION

It is concluded that parental acceptance is highly important not only in psychological adjustment of their children but also with reference to their conduct.

#### KEY WORDS

Psychological adjustment, misconduct, adolescents, acceptance/rejection.

### INTRODUCTION

Parental attitude, style and rearing practice and its impact upon children has mostly being center of attention of researchers in the field of psychology. The literature indicates that scientific research on the effect of parental acceptance and rejection began in the years following 1890<sup>1</sup>. Significant work of PAR theory highlights prediction of situation under which parents are expected to accept or reject their children,<sup>2</sup> It was found that parental hostility was significantly related to hostility, negative self esteem, self adequacy, emotional instability, negative world view and dependency of children,<sup>3</sup> and poor psychological adjustment<sup>4</sup>.

Psychological adjustment of youths of African American families was related to their self reported perceived paternal and maternal acceptance.<sup>5</sup> It was also proposed that there is a strong relationship between parental acceptance-rejection and psychological problems inclusive of conduct disorders, misbehavior; substance abuse and externalizing behaviors<sup>6</sup>.

Practicality of the PAR theory can be seen in Pakistani culture too. It was found that paternal warmth has positive relationship with child's self image whereas maternal aggression is inversely related with child's self image.<sup>7</sup> Self-esteem was found positively related with parental acceptance and negatively related with parental rejection.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, it was documented that father's rejection in childhood can lead to maladjustment in adulthood.<sup>9</sup> It was also found that those adolescents who perceived their fathers as rejecting were more prone to depression.<sup>10</sup>

With reference to misconduct highly important relation of parental rejection with delinquency in 300 adolescents was determined.<sup>11</sup> It was recognized that not having proper parental supervision, their rejection and lack of proper parent child interaction were considered as the most influential predictors of juvenile delinquency and conduct problem.<sup>12</sup>

From the above researches, it is clear that parental acceptance/rejection determines adolescent's adjustment and conduct. Hence, the present research would further focus upon analysis of the theory of parental acceptance-rejection in Pakistani culture particularly in the city of Karachi.

## OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the present research is to determine differences in psychological adjustment of adolescents experiencing acceptance and rejection by their fathers and mothers. It further investigated variations in conduct of these children.

## HYPOTHESES

1. Psychological maladjustment of those adolescents receiving acceptance by their fathers and mothers would be less than those receiving rejection.
2. Misconduct of those adolescents receiving acceptance by their fathers and mothers would be less than those receiving rejection.

## SUBJECTS AND METHODS

### Participants

It is a two sample study. Two hundred and fifty students and their mothers participated in the study; however all forms of students and their mothers were not score able. Hence the first sample consisted of 116 children, (61 girls; 55 boys) who were between the ages of 14-17 years. They were students of grade 8th up to O' level in different private sector schools of Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan. The second sample consisted of 116 mothers of these adolescents. All participants belonged to middle and upper middle socio economic class.

### Measures for adolescents

A demographic sheet, Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire-Mother (Child PARQ, Short Form)<sup>13</sup>, Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire- Father (Child PARQ, Short Form)<sup>14</sup> and Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Child, PAQ)<sup>15</sup> were used to gather data. In these questionnaire adolescents express their view about mother's and father's accepting-rejecting and controlling behavior toward them. Questionnaire includes four scales namely warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, and undifferentiated rejection. A child can rate items of PARQ/Control on a 4-point scale where 4 =almost always true and 1 = almost never true. Total score help to understand parental acceptance- rejection<sup>13,14</sup>

The Personality Assessment Questionnaire children version is a self report measure that evaluates Child's perception of psychological adjustment through seven personality attributes. These as cited are "(1) hostility and aggression, including physical aggression, verbal aggression, passive aggression, and problems with the management of hostility and aggression, (2) dependency, (3) self-esteem, (4) self-adequacy, (5) emotional responsiveness, (6) emotional stability, and (7) worldview."<sup>15</sup> It consists of 42 items and child responds to items on a 4-point rating scale from 4 (almost always true) to 1 (almost never true). The demographic sheet was used to gather personal information of the participants, such as name, gender, date of birth, residential area etc.

### Measures For Mothers

Parent's Evaluation of Child's Conduct (PECC)<sup>16</sup> was used to measure child's conduct.

It consists of 18 items, where parents rate their children on 5 point rating scale regarding their child's conduct.

## PROCEDURE

School authorities first took consent of parents for their and their child's participation in the study. Then students were approached in school settings and their parents at their residence. Participants were given written introduction about the purpose of the research. They were requested to give consent to administer few questionnaires on their children as well as on them. They were further informed that entire individual data would remain confidential and collective data would be used for research purpose only. Further they reserve the right to withdraw from the research at any time during administration of Questionnaires. At school the purpose of the research was explained to students and then they were requested to complete Personal Information Form, which was followed by administration of PARQ, Short Form (Mother and Father), and Child PAQ . After scoring t'test was applied for statistical analyses of the data.

## RESULTS

Results showed that psychological maladjustment scores of children who perceived acceptance by their fathers (t (114) = -381, p <.01), and mothers (t (114) = -4.67, p<.01) were significantly lesser than the children who perceived rejection (see table 1). Table 2 shows that there were significantly lower misconduct scores of children receiving acceptance from their fathers (t (114) = -2.391, p<.01) and mothers (t (114) = -2.50, p<.01) than children receiving rejection.

**Table 1**

Difference in Maladjustment scores of children with mothers and fathers acceptance and rejection

Adolescents	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
Mother's Acceptance	84	90.3	2	13.73		
Mother's Rejection	32	103.25	12.09	4.67	114	000**
Father's Acceptance	80	90.64	14.33	-3.81	114	.000**
Father's Rejection	36	101.11	12.06			

\*\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.01 level (p<.01)

**Table 2**

Difference in Misconduct scores of children with mothers and fathers acceptance and rejection

Adolescents	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
Mother's Acceptance	84	26.65	8.85			
Mother's Rejection	32	31.41	9.89	-2.50	114	014*
Father's Acceptance	80	26.60	9.11	-2.391	114	.018*
Father's Rejection	36	31.00	9.29			

\* The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level (p<.05)

## DISCUSSION

It is clear from the results that psychological adjustment of adolescents who perceived parental acceptance is much better than adolescents who perceived rejection. Hence our first hypothesis was

proved. Other Pakistani researchers also reported parallel findings, that childhood parental acceptance has positive impact in adulthood.<sup>17</sup>

Further it is also noticeable from our results that, there is significant lower misconduct scores of those adolescents with accepting parents than rejecting parents. Again our second hypothesis was proved. Alike as mentioned earlier, in parental rejected children, behavioral problems including conduct and delinquent behaviors were also noticed.<sup>6</sup>

Hence, results highlight importance of parental attitude towards their children in their psychological adjustment and personality development. It can be interpreted that children who are accepted by their fathers/mothers are more adjusted and well behaved as compared with children who are rejected by their fathers/mothers.

## CONCLUSION

Acceptance from both parents' results in well adjustment and less misconduct, while parental rejection can result in maladjustment and conduct problems.

## IMPLICATIONS

It is suggested that parents should take out some time to understand their patterns of handling their children. If it is contributing in psychological problems then they should try to bring change in their attitude for wellbeing of their children.

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