

## Perceived Parental Acceptance-Rejection and Self-efficacy of Pakistani Adolescents

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The present research investigated relationship between Parental Acceptance-Rejection and Self-efficacy of Pakistani adolescents. Sample was recruited from different public sector schools of Lahore, Pakistan and it comprised of 162 adolescents with equal number of girls and boys (Mean age=14 years, age SD=2 years). Shortened Urdu Versions of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) and General Self-efficacy Scale (GSE) were used for assessment. Majority of the adolescents rated their parents as warm and less rejecting. Significant positive relationship between mother and father's warmth and general self-efficacy of adolescents was found. There was significant negative relationship of mother and father's hostility, neglect and undifferentiated rejection with self-efficacy of adolescents. Findings revealed no gender differences in perceived mother warmth, hostility, indifference, undifferentiated rejection and self efficacy. However, fathers were perceived as significantly more rejecting by sons as compared to daughters. Findings highlight significance of parental acceptance rejection in adolescents' psychological development.

**Keywords:** Parental acceptance, Parental rejection, Adolescents, Self-efficacy.

Relationship between parents and children is the closest one that an individual experiences throughout his/her life. Adolescence phase of growth is very critical in the lives of human beings and implication of parental relationship at this stage of development has great importance. This relationship is important as it provides the most important environment in which children develop as individuals and as functioning members of their society (Russell, Mize, & Bissaker, 2002). Healthy and warm relation of parents with their children can have profound effects on personality as well as psychological adjustment of their children. Thus the present study aimed to investigate the outcome of parental acceptance-rejection for self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents.

As the child enters adolescence, logical and abstract reasoning skills increase, and there is a greater inclination towards questioning the authority. At this time,

emotional adjustment becomes necessary for both adolescents and their parents. During puberty, the young adolescent begins to seek out an adult identity, which involves progressively establishing emotional independence from parents. Parents may respond with anger or feelings of rejection. Shared feelings of rejection may also be experienced by the adolescent. Thus, this is often a difficult period in the parent-adolescent relationship (Pardeck & Pardeck, 1990 as cited in Levy, 2001).

Parental acceptance is defined as a parent's feelings of warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, nurturance, support, or love which they communicate to their children. The communication of these feelings can be physical or verbal or both. Physical communication can take different forms such as hugging, gentle loving and kissing, smiling and other behaviours expressing their approval or support. Verbal communication

includes praising, polite expression of praise, appreciative words for nice deeds (Rohner, 2005). Parental rejection refers to the nonappearance of behaviour of the parents' acceptance including withdrawal of warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, lack of attention to nourishment, support, or even love by parents toward children or adolescents. In spite all, parents communicate a range of physically and psychologically hurtful behaviors and emotions (Rohner, 2005). According to Kagan (1977) parental rejection is not a specific set of actions by parents but a belief assumed by the child.

Bandura introduced the construct of self-efficacy in 1977 (Pajares, 2002). Self-efficacy is the person's own judgment about his or her own ability to succeed in reaching a specific goal, e.g., quitting smoking or losing weight or a more general goal, or dealing with unexpected situations. Self-efficacy is the faith on one's own ability to regulate and carry out the succession of actions required to manage expected situations. He explained self efficacy as determinant of how people think, behave, and feel. People with a strong sense of self-efficacy view difficult and demanding problems as challenges to be mastered and not as threats to be avoided. They take greater interest in the activities in which they participate. They recover promptly from setbacks and disappointments (Bandura, 1994). Role of self-efficacy beliefs in human functioning is that "people's level of motivation, affective states, and actions are based more on what they believe than on what is objectively true" (Pajares, 2002). Self-efficacy beliefs provide the foundation for motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment in all areas of life (Pajares, 2005).

Over the past sixty years, there is an increase in research on parenting styles and their child rearing ways generally showing that parenting styles may have a greater

impact upon children's and adolescents' mental health and psychological development (Collins & Kuczaj, 1991). Dekovic and Meeus (1997) found that children' self-concepts varied directly with the perceived level of warmth provided by their parents, but not with levels of freedom provided by parents. Pajares (2002) stated that it is usually easier to weaken self-efficacy beliefs through negative appraisals than to strengthen such self-efficacy beliefs through positive encouragement. Negative parents particularly notice on all the mistakes which children cannot avoid making, correcting them insensitively and even degrading the children. Even worse, a negative parenting style simply takes for granted that what the child does should be right or well and never offers praise him/ her or provide encouragement because good behaviour is simply expected.

### ***Theoretical Framework***

#### ***Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PART)***

Rohner (2005) Parental acceptance-rejection theory is an evidence-based theory of socialization and lifespan development that tries to forecast and explain important causes, outcomes, and other correlates of parental acceptance and rejection (Rohner, 2005; Rohner, Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2005; Parmer & Rohner, 2008). This theory provides a complete picture of expected relations between perceived acceptance-rejection and individuals' mental and emotional health status. PARTheory's personality sub-theory explains the personality, psychological or mental health related outcomes of perceived parental acceptance and rejection. The necessity for positive regard and feedback, from the time of birth in human beings, includes an emotional desire, or craving, whether consciously or unconsciously, for support, care, concern, nurturance, and the like. In adulthood, the need becomes more

complicated and differentiated to include the desire, whether known or unknown, for positive response from people with whom one has a loving and affectional bond of attachment. . In PAR Theory's personality sub-theory, to form the concepts of impaired self-esteem, self-efficacy and impaired self-adequacy, individuals who feel rejected are likely to be anxious and self-doubting. Theory posits that children and adolescents mental and emotional health is expected to become impaired in direct amount to the form, frequency, severity, and duration of rejection experience (Rohner, Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2005).

### **Social Cognitive Theory**

The Social-Cognitive Theory by Albert Bandura explains how coping behaviour is initiated, how much effort is spent, and how long it requires to deal with the aversive experiences and hurdles in the way to reach a specific goal. According to Bandura, an individual, who has faith to being able to generate a desired effect, can lead a more active and self-determined life. One of the vital sources that influence the formation of self-efficacy is vicarious experience i.e. by observing others or most importantly significant others perform activities successfully. Individuals can improve their own functioning by learning from what they have observed. Another vital source is Social persuasion, where people learn, through suggestion, into believing that they can deal effectively with difficult tasks. Educating, guidance and giving evaluative feedback on performance are common types of social persuasions. Guidance and feedback have great worth which is given by caregivers or significant others (Bandura, 1994).

In the Pakistani context, where parental efforts in raising children are neither realized nor appreciated, parenting is a real demanding and difficult task. Studies conducted in Pakistan suggest that parental rejection and overprotection is positively

associated with higher adjustment problems and impaired mental health of children (Bhutto, 2004) and that children with low self-efficacy beliefs have more rejecting parents (Imam, 2004; Imam & Shaikh, 2005; Kausar & Shafique, 2008).

In Pakistan, there is not much research done on implications of parental acceptance and rejection for psychological development of adolescents. The present research therefore aimed to examine effect of parental acceptance and rejection on self- efficacy of adolescents.

### **Hypotheses**

It was hypothesized that:

1) There would be positive relationship between parental acceptance and adolescents' self-efficacy beliefs.

2) There would be negative relationship between parental rejection and adolescents' self-efficacy beliefs.

3) There would be gender differences in parental acceptance-rejection and adolescents' self-efficacy beliefs.

### **Method**

#### **Sample:**

Sample consisted of 162 adolescents, including 82 boys and 80 girls. Sample was drawn from different single sex public sector schools in Lahore, Pakistan. The participants ranged in ages between 12 and 17 years, were from intact families and were living with their both parents in the same premises. Mean age of adolescents in sample was 14.48 years and majority had joint family system (71.6%). Majority of the adolescents belonged to Middle socio-economic status with the average monthly income of 15271.43 Pak Rs.

#### **Assessment Measures:**

*General Self-efficacy Scale (GSE, Jerusalem & Schwarzer, 1993).* This is a ten item scale which assesses a general sense

of perceived self-efficacy to anticipated coping with daily hassles and different types of stressful life events. On each statement respondent is required to rate his/her response on a 4-point rating scale where 1 means not at all true and 4 means exactly true and total scale score ranges from 10 to 40. The scale was translated in Urdu (national language) and used in the current study. Urdu version of scale emerged to be fairly reliable ( $\alpha = 0.75$ ).

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ, Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). It measure parents' different kinds of accepting and rejecting responses to certain acts of children. It consists of 24 items and contains four subscales warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, and undifferentiated rejection. Respondents rate the truth of statements on a four-point Likert like scale, almost always true, sometimes true, rarely true, almost never true. Permission for translating and using scale in the present research was provided by the authors. Reliability coefficient alpha of PARQ mother and father were reported to be .86 and .82 respectively in an earlier study conducted in Pakistan (Naz & Kausar, 2010). For the current study, reliability coefficient alpha for shortened version of PARQ mother and father Urdu, was .85 and .82 respectively.

### **Procedure**

An authority letter explaining nature of the study and requesting their cooperation for provision of data was submitted to authorities of different public sector single sex schools in Lahore, Pakistan. Authorities of those schools who permitted data collection assigned a school teacher to work out logistics of data collection with the researcher. The sample was recruited according to specified inclusion criteria. The adolescents meeting inclusion criteria were informed about nature and purpose of the study. The potential participants were assured of full confidentiality of information provided by them

and those willing to participate were requested to sign the consent form. All research protocols were completed by adolescents in group form while researcher remained present in the classes in order to answer queries by the respondents. Average time taken to complete assessment measures ranged between 15-25 minutes.

### **Results**

Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyze data using SPSS-16. Descriptive statistics for the subscales of Parental Acceptance-Rejection questionnaire that are warmth / affection, hostility / aggression, neglect / indifference and undifferentiated rejection for both mother and father is presented in table 1.

**Table 1 Descriptive statistics of Parental acceptance-rejection subscales (N= 162)**

Sub Scales of PARQ	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Warmth Scale (Mother)	27.88	4.08
Hostility Scale (Mother)	10.67	3.56
Neglect Scale (Mother)	13.20	3.20
Undifferentiated		
Rejection Scale (Mother)	6.71	2.55
Warmth Scale (Father)	27.13	3.71
Hostility Scale (Father)	10.10	3.12
Neglect Scale (Father)	13.12	3.01
Undifferentiated		
Rejection Scale (Father)	6.44	2.16

Both parents were perceived higher on warmth / affection and lower on undifferentiated rejection. Adolescents perceived their parents as more affectionate, warm and less rejecting and hostile towards them. In order to examine relationship between parental acceptance-rejection and self-efficacy, Pearson correlation analysis was carried out. Three sets of analyses were performed for total sample, for girl adolescents and for boy adolescents (table 2). In regression analysis mother warmth and father neglect emerged as significant predictors for adolescent's self-efficacy beliefs. However, mother warmth alone

accounted for 26% of variance in self-efficacy beliefs. In line with our hypotheses, there was significant positive relationship between parental warmth and adolescents' self-efficacy. Significant negative relationship was

found between parental rejection and self-efficacy of adolescents. Findings were in the same direction for three sets of analyses.

**Table 2 Relationship between parental acceptance rejection and adolescents' self efficacy**

	W/A scale	H/A Scale	I/N Scale	U/R Scale
<b>Total sample</b>				
Mother	.52**	-.36**	-.28**	-.32**
Father	.32**	-.19*	-.22**	-.13
<b>Male adolescents</b>				
Mother	.24**	-.18	-.13	-.23**
Father	.32**	-.34**	-.17	-.27**
<b>Female Adolescents</b>				
Mother	.64**	-.46**	-.35**	-.39**
Father	.33**	-.08	-.24**	-.01

\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$

Key: W/A= Warmth/ Affection scale, H/A=Hostility/ Aggression scale, I/N= Neglect/ Indifference scale and U/R= Undifferentiated Rejection. .

**Table 3 Stepwise multiple regression analysis of PARQ for father, mother and self-efficacy,  $F_1 = 0.00$ ,  $F_2 = .02$**

		B	$\beta$	$R^2$ Change	t
Step 1	Constant	14.94			
	Mother warmth	0.60	0.52	0.27	7.62**
Step 2	Constant	18.87			
	Mother warmth	0.58	0.50		7.41**
	Father neglect	-0.26	-0.16	0.03	-2.40*

\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*  $p < 0.05$ .

**Table 4 Gender differences in perceived warmth, hostility, neglect, and undifferentiated rejection of Father and Mother (only significant results reported)**

Variable	Gender	M	SD	t
Hostility Scale (Father)	Male	11.72	2.78	7.74*
	Female	8.45	2.59	
Neglect Scale (Father)	Male	14.26	2.80	5.26*
	Female	11.95	2.78	
Undifferentiated Rejection Scale (Father)	Male	7.11	2.46	4.21*
	Female	5.75	2.66	

$df = 160$ , \* $p < 0.05$

To find out the significant predictors of adolescents' self-efficacy multiple regression analysis using stepwise method was carried out (see table 3). To examine gender differences in perceived parental acceptance-rejection and self-efficacy among adolescent, a series of independent sample t-test was carried out (table 4).

Result indicated no significant gender differences in perceived mother acceptance-rejection and father acceptance. However, there were gender differences in perceived father rejection. Male adolescents perceived fathers more rejecting, neglecting and hostile as compared to the girl adolescents. No significant gender differences were found in level of general self-efficacy.

### Discussion

The findings from the present study revealed that perception of both maternal and paternal affection has relationship with the development of high self-efficacy beliefs of adolescents. Adolescents having more accepting and less rejecting parents are more likely to have high self-efficacy beliefs as compare to those who perceive their parents more rejecting and less affectionate. The results of the present study need to be interpreted in the light of existing related research evidence. The results from the current study extend support to the view that feelings of acceptance by parents allow adolescents independence and an opportunity to learn competencies. Parents who are affectionate and loving are likely to have children with high self-efficacy (Dekovic & Meeus, 1997; Cournoyer, Sethi & Cordero, 2005). Findings by Geeca & Schwallbe (1986), Parish & McCluskey (1992), Haung & Prochner (2004), Garrett (2007), Smith (2007) and Nishikawa, Sundbom & Haggolf (2010) provide substantial support to our findings. Parental practices that involve love and warmth are reported to be associated with higher self concepts in young

adolescents (Parish & McCluskey, 1993; Pajares, 2005). In a meta analysis of 43 studies carried out worldwide, Rohner and Kahlique (2010) empirically affirm this postulate.

The present study revealed negative relationship between parental rejection and self efficacy, indicating that adolescents who perceived their parents more rejecting and less affectionate tended to have low self-efficacy beliefs. In consensus with our findings, Ryotaro (2007), Padilla-Walker and Laura (2008) and Ohannessian et al (1998) found that parental child abuse has a negative effect on adult self-efficacy and those children who have history of rejecting experiences are low in self-concept. In the present study, a significant negative relationship between parental rejection, especially maternal rejection and paternal neglect and self-efficacy beliefs was found. In case of male adolescents, a strong positive relationship was found between both maternal and paternal acceptance and self-efficacy concepts of male adolescents and a significant negative relationship with perceived hostility and undifferentiated rejection of father and self-efficacy beliefs for boys. Moreover, the present research indicated that boys' self-efficacy beliefs have significant negative relationship with father's hostility. Ohannessian, Lerner, Von Eye and Lerner (1996)'s study also indicated that girl's view of self-worth was greatly influenced by parental affection and that for boys, paternal but not maternal acceptance significantly predicted self-competence, and opposite pattern was found for girls. Gecas and Schwalbe (1986) found that in formation of self-concept paternal behaviour was somewhat more significant for boys than were perceptions of maternal behaviour.

In our study, significant gender differences were found in perceived father's hostility, indifference and undifferentiated rejection. Boys perceived their fathers more

hostile, neglecting and perceived more undifferentiated rejection than girls. This finding needs to be interpreted in Pakistani context as in Pakistani society male adolescents perceive both their Parents especially fathers to be significantly more hostile, more neglecting and more rejecting as compared to the female adolescents (Khan, Quaid, Khan & Mansoor, 2003) and fathers are reported to have more authoritarian attitude toward their children in particular towards sons (Deeba, 2001). In eastern societies, father-adolescent relationship is perceived to be less positive than is the mother-adolescent relationship (James & Smollar, 1985; Shek, 2000; Khan, Quaid, Khan & Mansoor, 2003). Lempers and Clark-Lempers (1992) found gender differences on some measures at some stages of adolescence. For instance female middle adolescents perceived maternal nurturance to be more positive than they did paternal nurturance.

#### Limitations and Implications

In the present study, restricted time at hand resulted in small sample size and data could be gathered from few schools of Lahore Pakistan, so one needs to be cautious while generalizing the findings. The present research used correlational design which does not allow one to draw inferences about causality. Longitudinal design with larger sample size allow assertion about causality of parental acceptance rejection in adolescents' self-efficacy and competence.

Findings from the present study have important implications. Pakistan is a developing country and now a days is facing many difficulties in social and economical areas. The society needs highly competent young generation to take charge of tomorrow's Pakistan. Adolescents with strong sense of self concept and self-efficacy beliefs is need of today's Pakistan. The research findings emphasize an important aspect that

parents should raise their children in affectionate manner and should provide them accepting environment so our future generation can be beneficial for his/her family as well as for the society. A special care and tailored support system needs to be devised to help parents learn parenting skill who in turn can nourish the capabilities of adolescents. To develop positive self-concept and strong self-efficacy among adolescents, it is important that parents develop friendly relationship in order to help adolescents grow in healthy and self-actualizing environment.

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