

PERCEIVED MATERNAL WARMTH AND PERSONALITY DISPOSITIONS OF HIGH AND LOW ACHIEVING GIRLS IN KARACHI[#]

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The present study was designed to see the differences in perceived maternal warmth and personality dispositions of high and low achieving girl students. The Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (Child PARQ) and the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Child PAQ) developed by Rohner, Saavedra, and Gramum (1978) were administered on a sample of 119 girl students of class VII and VIII, belonging to upper strata of the society at English medium schools in Karachi. The t-tests indicated non significant mean differences on Parental Acceptance-Rejection scale. The mean differences between the two groups of respondents were non significant on Child PAQ scales as well except on Self-esteem, and Self-adequacy subscales. Positive correlations were found between the total Child PARQ (Mother, referent) and total Child PAQ scores of high and low achieving girls showing consistency with the general assumptions of parental acceptance and rejection theory.

Researches have identified a number of variables which are thought to influence children's academic performance (Ansari, 1984; Barwick & Arbuckle, 1962; Riaz, 1979). Among these variables, parental warmth, and home environment appear to be very important (Clark-Stewart, 1973). It may be indicated that much of the research on this important issue has been done in the Euro-American cultures, where substantial evidence suggests that the authoritative style of parenting (Baumrind, 1968, 1991) is often associated with optimum academic, social, and psychological development of children (Baumrind & Black, 1967; Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992).

In Pakistan, Ansari (1975) examined the relationship between democratic-authoritarian family environment and academic achievement. Positive correlation was found in female students coming from democratic homes as compared to non-democratic

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family environment. In a subsequent study, Ansari, Farooqi, Khan, Naheed and Yasmin (1980) found achievement motivation to be significantly related to positive attitudes toward female education. Age and income were found to be negatively related to achievement motivation. Khalid (1990) found significant relationship between self-esteem and academic performance of the children. The children of high self-esteem group performed significantly better at school than the children of low self-esteem group. Haque (1988) designed a study to compare high and low achieving boys in Hyderabad city. The study comprised of 20 talented and 30 low achieving boys of Higher Secondary Schools of Hyderabad. The results indicated that the talented boys perceived significantly more maternal warmth as compared to the low achieving boys.

Parental warmth is a bi-polar dimension where acceptance stands at one pole of the scale in opposition to rejection (or the absence of warmth/affection) at the other pole. The term "maternal warmth" includes such feelings and behaviors (or children's perceptions of such feelings and behaviors) as maternal nurturance, warmth, affection, support, comfort, and concern. Maternal rejection on the other hand, is defined as the real or perceived absence, or withdrawal of these feelings, and behaviors (Rohner, 1999). The parental acceptance rejection theory by Rohner (1975) begins with the assumption that all human beings have a generalized need for positive response (i.e., love, approval, warmth, and affection) from the people most important to them. This need for positive response is basic to the normal development, and the withdrawal of warmth, and affection is sufficient by itself to produce negative consequences for emotional and personality functioning. PART predicts that rejected children would tend to be more hostile and aggressive; to be dependent; to have a low sense of self-esteem and self adequacy; to be emotionally unstable; to be emotionally unresponsive; and to have negative world view than the accepted children.

The postulates of parental acceptance rejection theory are supported by converging evidence from numerous psychological studies conducted in more than 230 cities in the United States and internationally, including Pakistan (see, for example, Babree, 1997; Bello, 1985; Haque, 1981, 1987, 1988; Ibrahim, 1988; Kim & Rohner, 2002; Kithara, 1986, Paulcheng, 1983; Riaz, 1991, 1996; Rohner & Chaki-Sircar, 1988; Rohner, Hahn, & Rohner, 1980; Rohner, Roll, & Rohner, 1980).

The main purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between perceived maternal warmth and personality

dispositions of high and low achieving girl students belonging to upper strata of society in Karachi City. For the past 40 years Karachi has become a leading industrial city of Pakistan. People from all walks of life have migrated to this city, Finance and trade has been at its height, creating a new city culture. That was the reason to select this city for the present study.

The present study was designed: (i) to examine differences in perceived maternal warmth, and personality dispositions of the high and low achieving girls, and (ii) to see the relationship between perceived maternal acceptance-rejection and personality dispositions of the high and low achieving girl students.

METHOD

Sample

Sample consisted of girl 119 students of Karachi English medium schools. The respondents scoring in the school tests, 75% and above (ranging 75% to 89%) were considered as high scorers, whereas those scoring 54% and below formed the group B, i.e., low achievers. The students were from academic class VII and VIII. Eighty per cent of the girls' fathers of both groups were in business and industry. All the subjects belonged to upper strata of the society, income ranging from Rs. 30,000 and above. The mean age of the high and low academic performers was 12.4 and 12.8 years, respectively.

Instruments

In this study, two self-report questionnaires, the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) and Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) developed by Rohner, Saavedra, and Granum (1978) were used.

Child Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire

This scale was developed by Rohner, et al. (1978). Child PARQ (Mother Version) with 60 items were designed to elicit the children's perceptions of their mothers in terms of maternal Warmth/Affection (20 items), maternal Neglect/Indifference (15 items), maternal Hostility/Aggression (15 items), and maternal Undifferentiated Rejection (10 items). Representative items in Child PARQ includes "My mother treats me harshly" (Perceived Neglect/indifference); "My mother views me as a burden" (Perceived Undifferentiated rejection).

Cronbach's alpha reliability ranged from 0.72 to 0.90 (Less warmth=.90; Hostility/ Aggression=.87; Neglect/Indifference=.77; Undifferentiated Rejection =.72).

Personality Assessment Questionnaire

Child PAQ (Rohner, et al., 1978) attempts to measure children's perceptions of their own personality, and behavioral dispositions which include seven behavioral dispositions consisting of six items in each scale, making a total of 42 items in all. The subscales measure, hostility/aggression, dependency, negative self-esteem, negative self adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability, and negative world view. Representative items include, "I want to hit something or someone" (Aggression/Hostility); "I like my friends to make fuss over me when I am hurt or sick" (Dependency); "I wish I could have more respect for myself" (Negative Self-Esteem); "I feel inept in many of the things I try to do" (Negative Self-Adequacy); " I feel distant and detached from most people." (Emotional Unresponsiveness); "Small set-backs upset me a lot" (Emotional Instability); and "For me the world is an unhappy place" (Negative World View).

The reliability and validity studies of the Child PAQ were originally carried out on a sample of 220 children, whose ages ranged from 9 to 12 years (Rohner, et al., 1978). The subjects were almost equally distributed in sex, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. For the Child PAQ alphas ranged from 0.46 to 0.74 with a median reliability of 0.63 (Rohner, 1999).

Procedure

The questionnaires Child PARQ and Child PAQ together with family data sheet were administered to girl students of Class-VII and VIII of Karachi English medium schools. The questionnaires were administered in a group of 30 students in each class.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data were analyzed to see the differences between high and low academic performers in terms of the subjects' perceptions of maternal warmth (i.e., Less Warmth; Hostility/Aggression; Neglect/

Indifference; Rejection (Undiff.); and assessment of their own personality dispositions by computing *t*-tests. Table 1 presents means, S.D., and *t*-values for Child PARQ scale.

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values for PARQ Scores of High and Low Achiever Respondents

PARQ	High Ach. (<i>N</i> = 63)		Low Ach. (<i>N</i> = 56)		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Aggression/Hostility	24.7	7.4	24.1	6.1	0.21
Neglect/Indifference	22.1	5.5	22.2	5.4	0.11
Rejection (Undiff)	19.3	4.2	19.8	4.2	0.69
TOTAL PARQ	94.7	18.0	94.7	16.8	0.00

df=117

The results on the four Child PARQ subscales show non significant mean differences. Table 1 reveals that neither the girls with high academic scores nor with lows scores, perceive their mothers to be more accepting or rejecting. It suggests that mothers of high socioeconomic status do not give much importance to the academic achievements of the girl child. When the results of the girl students of the present study were compared with those of middle socioeconomic class, conducted in Hyderabad City by Haque (1987), differences on "Acceptance-Rejection" scale appeared to be significant. In other words, the girl child of middle class families perceive their mothers to be more accepting and less rejecting than the girls of upper socioeconomic status did. Girls of middle class families very often submit to the social norms, and expectations, and are obedient to their mothers. After school hours, girls of middle class normally help their mothers in cooking and taking care of siblings (Haque, 1987). On the other hand, girls of upper strata of the society do not usually share household responsibilities. It may be observed that there are less interactions between the children and their parents of the upper class society, as they are too busy in their business and social lives. Also the children do not have much contact with grand-parents, or other close relatives.

Table 2

Mean, Standard Deviations and t-values for Child PAQ Scores of High and Low Achiever Respondents

Scale: Child PAQ	High Ach. (N = 63)		Low Ach. (N = 56)		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Hostility/Aggression	11.03	2.9	11.98	3.2	1.79
Dependency	18.56	3.4	19.02	2.7	0.87
Negative Self-esteem	11.08	3.3	12.20	3.1	2.00*
Negative Self-Adequacy	10.14	2.7	11.39	2.6	2.78**
Emotional Unresponses	11.92	3.2	11.50	2.9	0.79
Emotional Instability	15.40	2.8	15.38	2.9	0.04
Negative Worldview	10.05	3.9	10.32	3.4	0.42
Total PAQ	88.17	13.1	91.79	11.8	1.66

df = 117; **p* < .05; ***p* < .01

Table 2 shows that the high achieving girls evaluate themselves more positively in terms of self-esteem and self adequacy than the low achieving girls.

To examine the relationships of the total PAQ to total PARQ scores of high and low achieving girls, the correlations were computed as could be seen in Table 3.

Table 3

Correlations between Total PARQ (Mother referent) Scores and Total PAQ scores of High and Low Academic Achievers

Scales	n	r
Total PARQ (High Achievers)	63	0.39***
Total PARQ (Low Achievers)	56	0.56***

****p* < .001

Table 3 indicates that the total PARQ scores are significantly correlated with their total PAQ scores. These results demonstrate that the behavioral and personality dispositions of girls are positively associated with perceived maternal warmth, which is consistent with Rohner's parental acceptance-rejection theory (Rohner, 1975).

More recently, Kim and Rohner (2002) has reported that paternal involvement in schooling partially mediated the relationship between father reported warmth, and adolescents' Grade Point Average (GPA). The overall results of their study, highlighted the importance of Korean-American youth's perceptions of their fathers' warmth, and school involvement as significant predictors of youth's academic success. Indeed, results from their work reinforce a growing awareness, that fathers in general have great impact, and sometimes greater than the mothers on the social, emotional and cognitive development of children (Rohner 1998; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). The research findings of the present study did not find any significant mean differences with the maternal scale only. It is suggested that in future, researchers should combine the maternal as well as paternal scale for the prediction of academic achievement of school children.

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