

Predicting Role of Parental Relationship on the Self-Concept and Body Image of Daughters

Syeda Batool Najam and Zainab Hussain Bhutto

Bahria University

The study was aimed to find out impact of parental relationship on daughter's self-concept and body-image. The hypotheses formed were that there would be a significant impact of parental relationship on self-concept and body image of daughters. Through convenient sampling the data was collected from 150 unmarried females aged between 18 to 20 years. The data was collected by utilizing Inventory of Parents and Peer Attachment-Revised (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) measuring parental relationship (incorporating only the parent inventory), Robson Self-Concept Questionnaire (Robson, 1989) and Multidimensional Body Self Relations Questionnaire-Appearance Scale (Cash, 2000). In conclusion, parental relationship was found to have a significant impact on self-concept of daughters; however, no such effect was noted on body image of daughters. Additionally, a noteworthy impact of maternal relationship was identified on self-concept and body image along with significance on the subscales of competence, overweight preoccupation, and self-classified weight. Although nonsignificant impact was found of father's relationship with daughter's self-concept and body image. However, the results verified impact on all sub-scales of self-concept and three subscales (body areas satisfaction, overweight preoccupation and self-classified weight) of body image. Lastly, inclusion of a more diverse population with wide age range was recommended for further studies.

Keywords: Self-concept, body image, parental relationship, daughter

Relationship as a word first appeared in 1944 however, it specifically did not discuss the nature of it but later in the 1970's, horizon of the word expanded to specifications of sexual, emotional, physical and other involvements (Buss, 1992). Among those, one of the most important relationships is that of a parent with his/her child. Maccoby (1992), a developmental psychologist, narrates that each parental behavior or personality trait contributes toward the unique

Syeda Batool Najam and Zainab Hussain Bhutto, Institute of Professional Psychology, Bahria University, Karachi, Pakistan.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Syeda Batool Najam, Institute of Professional Psychology, Bahria University, Karachi, Pakistan.
Email: batoolnajam94@gmail.com

development of the child (Han & Jun, 2013). Studies about the importance of parenting started in 20th century with Freud (1905) when he talked about stages of development in a child with regard to parenting styles and Bowlby (1988) who also discussed about the impact of this bond in early years for development of personality in the future. It has been found that children, who are closer to their mothers and fathers, present a healthy sense of psychological well-being throughout their lives (Sobolewski & Amato, 2007).

However, it has been noted that unconscious notions of gender contribute highly towards the way parents respond to their child; either boy or girl (Mascaro et al., 2014). Though parents play an equally vital role for all children, but the nature of this relationship has been researched to produce numerous long-lasting effects on personality development of a daughter (Oliker, 2011). During early years, as the daughter is young to define her own measures of self, she tends to develop these ideas based on her learning experience through this relationship which later in life becomes the source of defining her self-concept (Flouri & Buchanan, 2004). Yahaya et al. (2009) described the importance of self-concept as central to gradual evolution for an individual's personality. According to a study, the importance of self-concept was emphasized by stating that the term helps us understand a broad idea which is used to develop ourselves as to who we are in context of emotional, social, physical, spiritual and all other aspects (Marsh & Neil, 2005).

Stating further individual analysis, a mother and father's influence was assessed through parenting styles. The findings suggested that mothers with authoritative parenting style had a correlation with daughters who possessed a negative sense of image for themselves. Therefore, it can be stated that she contributes a vital role in the development of her daughter's self-concept (Hayee & Rizvi, 2017). Moreover, according to attachment theory, a daughter tends to display body ideals that has been either picked by modeling her mother's lifestyle pattern or has been granted approval through her comments to get close to her mother (Bex, 2014). On the other hand, role of a father presents symbolization of a law bearer therefore encouragement from him possess the power of instilling a sense of worth in them. Absence of support can often lead to feelings of guilt for disappointing the father and unrealistic doubts about her capabilities among daughters (Dunlop et al., 2001).

Furthermore, self-concept is usually defined as a multidimensional term which also consists of how one physically views and evaluates the self (Cash, 2004). The term body image is the subjectively defined concept of one's physical appearance based on

self-perceptions and self-attitudes, including thoughts, beliefs, and feelings (Cash & Pruzinsky, 2002). Additionally, a society that exposes standards of beauty and physical appearance to girls through cultural values and media portrayals, it tends to increase the chances of negative self-perceptions regarding how one views their body image. This is where parents play an integral role in determining a daughter's image on how she defines her body (Golan & Walter, 2015). According to another research, a child receives their moral and social definition of body satisfaction parameters through their family (Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006). Parents who show concern and comparison about their daughter's weight often instill feelings of dissatisfaction in them about their body that exists throughout their life (Ogden & Steward, 2000). Moreover, a mother-daughter relationship being one of the most intricate yet complex of bonds between two people, has presented itself as a pathway for a daughter to explore this world in early years (Holzgraefe, 2003). It has been studied that mothers who do not establish standards of a daughter's identity through her looks and body have managed to rear them with satisfaction about her looks (Attie & Brooks-Gunn, 1989). While on the other hand, it has also been noted that mothers who share weak bonds and are verbal about their negative body attitudes often contribute into development of Anorexia Nervosa among daughters (Ferreira et al., 2021). Furthermore, fathers have been known to serve the role of being primary source of evaluation for the way she physically perceives herself. Studies have suggested that daughters who are deprived of social and emotional support from their fathers develop high levels of body image discrepancy (Ata et al., 2006).

Among the few research that have been conducted in Pakistan to explore dynamics and empowering influence of parental relationship on children, verified that adolescents who suffer from psychological disturbances like depression and anxiety have had past experiences of rejection by parents (Liaquat & Dawood, 2010). The study has also been confirmed by Munaf (2010) as she found out that there were evident patterns of childhood neglect in adults who suffered from psychological maladjustment while adults with psychological adjustment had histories of paternal acceptance (Munaf, 2010). Considering the pressures around today's girl, it has become integral to nurture daughters who are confident in themselves to keep up with the emotional obstacles that they might have to surpass. Therefore, combining the analysis of above-mentioned literature it can be stated that the influence of parent daughter relationship plays an integral role in defining a daughter's self-concept and body image. Hence, the present research targets to find important factors that contribute

towards developing a healthy self-concept and body image of a daughter. With the help of this research, the aim is to explore the impact of parental relationship in life of a daughter while providing a foundation that could help further studies. So the present study was based on the objectives i.e., to identify if relationship with parents impact the self-concept and body image of daughters.

Hypotheses

1. Positive parental relationship has significant impact on self-concept of daughters.
2. Positive parental relationship has significant impact on body-image of daughters.

Method

Sample

A sample of 150 female participants from the city of Karachi were recruited for the research. The age range selected was from 18 years to 20 years. According to research the age range of young adulthood plays a vital role in personality development of daughters (Razali & Razali, 2013). In order to be precise while collection of data these two years were considered. It is also recommended for future researches to include wide range of age group. Convenient sampling was used to approach the participants among which 36% ($n = 54$) had completed A' Levels while 64% ($n = 96$) were enrolled in the first year of Bachelors. The inclusion criteria for selection of participants comprised the females to be unmarried, unemployed and living with both parents. The criteria was observed in order to generate results to justify the nature of participants. Furthermore, individuals belonging to a joint family system were 23% ($n = 35$) whereas 77% ($n = 115$) belonged to nuclear families. Majority of the participants were from middle socio economic status 55% ($n = 83$) while 6% ($n = 9$) and 39% ($n = 58$) held the status of lower and upper class respectively. Moreover, the sample group had an equal division of 50% ($n = 75$ each) for participants who had or had not received psychological help.

Measures

The following measures are employed to appraise the study variables.

Inventory of Parents and Peer Attachment-Revised

Inventory of Parents and Peer Attachment-Revised (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987) is a self-report questionnaire designed to assess adolescents' perceptions of their attachment to their parents and peers. For the purpose of this research, only the parent inventory was used in the questionnaire incorporating the 50-item father and mother questionnaire. The items measure a global score of attachment along with three dimensions of attachment, that is, Trust (10 items), Alienation (9 items), and Communication (6 items). The questionnaire reported to have valid psychometric properties as it had good reliability with Cronbach alpha range of .92. The items included in the questionnaire are responded on a 5 point-likert scale ranging from 1 = *Almost Never or Never True* to 5 = *Almost Always or Always True* concluding a positive relationship if higher scores and negative relationship for lower scores, whereas, the negatively worded items are coded reversely. In the present study, alpha coefficient of .76 is acquired for the scale.

Robson Self-Concept Questionnaire

The scale of Robson Self-Concept Questionnaire (Robson, 1989) is a 30 item self-report questionnaire designed to measure attitudes and beliefs that an individual possesses about self. It comprises of five subscales including Attractiveness (5 items), Contentment (6 items), Autonomy (5 items), Competence (6 items), and Value of Existence (6 items); while 14 statements were positively marked and scores for the rest 14 were reversed. However, two statements for items 14 and 22 are omitted from factor scoring. The scores are generated on an 8-point Likert scale ranging from 0 = *completely disagree* to 7 = *completely agree*. The questionnaire has shown adequate reliability with Cronbach's alpha of .73 for the present sample.

Multidimensional Body Self Relations Questionnaire-Appearance Scale

To measure attitudinal facets of body image Multidimensional Body Self Relations Questionnaire-Appearance Scale (MBSRQ-AS; Cash, 2000). The scale consists of 34 items along with five subscales including Appearance Evaluation (7 items), Appearance Orientation (12 items), Body Areas Satisfaction (9 items), Overweight Preoccupation (4 items), and Self-Classified Weight (2 items). It uses a 5-point Likert scale and reverse scoring on all items to measure results. The response options for first 25 items range from 1=

definitely disagree to 5 = definitely agree; while, for the last 9 items response range from 1= *very dissatisfied* to 5 = *very satisfied*. The MBSRQ-AS achieved reasonable alpha coefficient of .73 in the present study.

Procedure

Participants were approached individually after receiving permission from concerned authorities of colleges and universities. The questionnaire booklet comprised of informed consent, demographic information questionnaire and three scales. The procedure took approximately 20-25 minutes for completion of questionnaire. Consent of participants was gained before initiating the study to be certain that their participation is voluntary. Considering the rights and welfare of the participants, a brief background of the study along with its purpose was shared with them. Moreover, their right to withdraw from the research at any point was also communicated. Researcher's compliance was ensured as participants were encouraged to clarify any query they had regarding the questionnaires. Participants were also allowed to take their time in filling out the items of these measures and were not rushed through the process. At the end of the data collection, participants were shown gratitude for their cooperation in the whole process.

Results

The results section states the descriptive statistics of variables, bivariate correlation matrix and use of linear regression analysis to determine the impact of paternal relationship on self-concept and body image among daughters. Furthermore, additional analysis was also conducted to explore maternal and paternal relationship separately with our study variables.

Table 1

Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Role of Parental Relationship on Self-Concept and Body Image of Daughters (N=150)

Variables	β	p	R	R^2
Self-Concept	0.18	0.02	0.18	0.03
Body Image	0.11	0.15	0.11	0.01

Table 1 shows linear regression analysis between parental relationship with self-concept and body image. The aim of the analysis was to check the combined effect of parental relationship

(both maternal and paternal) with both outcomes, that is, self concept and body image. Based on the results, parental relationship showed a significant impact on self-concept; however there was nonsignificant impact verified on body image and 3% variance is caused in self-concept by paternal relationship.

Table 2

Bivariate Correlation Matrix of Parental Relationship (Maternal and Paternal) With Self-Concept and Body Image of Daughters (N=150)

Predictors	Criterion	Trust	Alienation	Communication
Maternal Relationship	Self-Concept	0.30	0.34	0.23
	Body Image	0.20	0.36	0.03
Paternal Relationship	Self-Concept	0.38	0.41	0.37
	Body Image	-0.02	-0.06	0.07

Table 2 shows the bivariate correlation of maternal and paternal relationship and its sub-facets with self-concept and body image. According to the findings the relationship between self-concept and all sub-facets of paternal relationship is significant. However, it is partially significant between body image and sub-facets of paternal relationship. It shows a significance impact with trust but nonsignificant with communication and alienation. Moreover, findings display a significant relationship between all sub-facets of maternal relationship and self-concept but nonsignificant with body image on any of the sub-facets.

Table 3

Linear Regression Analysis Showing Impact of Maternal Relationship on Facets and Sub-Facets of Self-Concept in Daughters (N=150)

Variables	β	p	R	R^2
Self-Concept	0.15	0.05	0.15	0.02
Attractiveness	0.12	0.13	0.12	0.01
Contentment	-0.00	0.92	0.00	0.00
Autonomy	0.14	0.08	0.14	0.02
Competence	0.21	0.00	0.21	0.04
Value of Existence	-0.01	0.87	0.01	0.00

Table 3 shows linear regression analysis between maternal relationship with facet and sub-facets of self-concept. Based on the

results, maternal relationship showed a significant impact on self-concept and sub-facet of competence.

Table 4

Linear Regression Analysis Showing Impact of Maternal Relationship on Daughter's Body Image and Its Sub-Facets (N = 150)

Variables	β	p	R	R^2
Body Image	0.18	0.02	0.18	0.03
Appearance Evaluation	0.04	0.55	0.04	0.00
Appearance Orientation	0.10	0.21	0.10	0.01
Body Areas Satisfaction	0.02	0.74	0.02	0.00
Overweight Preoccupation	0.19	0.01	0.19	0.03
Self-Classified Weight	0.15	0.05	0.15	0.02

Table 4 shows linear regression analysis between maternal relationship with facet and sub-facets of body image. Based on the results, maternal relationship showed a significant impact on body image. Moreover, there is significant impact on the sub-facets of overweight preoccupation and self-classified weight.

Table 5

Linear Regression Analysis Showing Impact of Paternal Relationship on Daughter's Self-Concept and Its Sub-Facets (N = 150)

Variables	β	p	R	R^2
Self-Concept	0.13	0.10	0.13	0.01
Attractiveness	0.25	0.00	0.25	0.06
Contentment	-0.25	0.00	0.25	0.06
Autonomy	0.38	0.00	0.38	0.14
Competence	0.38	0.00	0.38	0.14
Value of Existence	-0.24	0.00	0.24	0.05

Table 5 shows linear regression analysis between paternal relationship with facet and sub-facets of self-concept. Based on the results, paternal relationship showed nonsignificant impact on self-concept. However, there is significant impact found on all sub-facets of the variable.

Table 6

Linear Regression Analysis Showing Impact of Paternal Relationship on Daughter's Body Image and Its Sub-Facets (N=150)

Variables	β	<i>p</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²
Body Image	0.03	0.66	0.03	0.00
Appearance Evaluation	0.17	0.03	0.17	0.03
Appearance Orientation	-0.05	0.49	0.05	0.00
Body Areas Satisfaction	0.22	0.00	0.22	0.05
Overweight Preoccupation	-0.22	0.00	0.22	0.05
Self-Classified Weight	-0.24	0.00	0.24	0.05

Table 6 shows linear regression analysis between paternal relationship with facet and sub-facets of body image. Based on the results, paternal relationship showed nonsignificant impact on body image. However, there is significant impact on the sub-facets of appearance evaluation, body areas satisfaction, overweight preoccupation and self-classified weight.

Discussion

The research intended to quantitatively analyze the significant impact of parental relationship on self-concept and body image among daughters. The first hypothesis of the research, that there would be a significant impact of positive parental relationship on self-concept of daughters was advocated with statistically significant results. Endorsing empirically, parental relationship is likely to be associated with the self-concept of the daughter. The results for the variable of parental relationship are in line with previous research supporting its sub-facets of trust and communication. According to a research conducted in Malaysia with adolescents, it has been found that communication plays a significant role in emerging self-concept of daughters. Furthermore, the analysis could also be supported by their collectivist nature as a society where harmony is emphasized along with ability to nourish their familial relationships through practices of active communication (Razali & Razali, 2013). Thus, the current research also denotes a strong positive correlation between communication of mothers and fathers with daughters' self-concept. It shows that as the communication with parents increase, a rise in the self-concept of a daughter is observed and vice versa. Moving ahead, another research quotes that daughters struggle the most when it comes to forming a relationship with her parents due to many reasons like gender divide and the cultural formalities that surrounds this

relationship. This can often lead to feelings of mistrust experienced by daughters toward the parents (Prior et al., 2000). This past research is also in line with the current study that validated a significant correlation between trust for parents found in daughters. Therefore, it could be concluded that positive feelings of being able to trust parents often lead towards a healthy self-concept and vice versa.

While exploring the individual impact of relations, many studies have suggested how a father and a mother separately as well as together influence a daughter's self-concept. As the results suggest, it was found out that there was no significant impact of a father alone when it comes to formation of a daughter's self-concept. Pakistan being a patriarchal society often follow the patterns of male dominancy therefore many times involvement of a father becomes less in lives of their daughters. This often results in daughters being emotionally distant with their fathers and not taking much impact of this relationship on themselves. It was also found out that most daughters in the Eastern culture never get a chance to bond with their fathers as good as their mothers based on a gender divide prevailing in the society (Zia et al., 2015). Moreover, as a toddler, fathers are not expected to take care of her hygiene and cleaning in order to respect privacy of female anatomy. Ahead during teenage, the communication about puberty has also been generalized as a responsibility of the mother. This prevailing gap in an Eastern society seems to cause confusion for fathers as to how he is supposed to carry forward his role with love and availability while depicting authority, distance and respect at the same time (Bornstein et al., 2011). Furthermore, as stated in a study conducted on the population of Arab Muslims, it was found out that, children of such cultural backgrounds are expected to frame their social, emotional and physical needs based on the prevailing circumstances and family's conjecture. Therefore, these standardized ideas might have become the base on which a daughter does not develop emotional expectations from the father (Henry et al., 2008).

Meanwhile, mothers have been found to play a pivotal role in a daughter's self-concept. According to the present research, there is a significant impact of mother-daughter relationship on the formation of self-concept. As quoted by another study, it was figured that a relationship with mother has a stronger impact on the formation of self-concept for a daughter than a son (Mboya, 1993). As the sample of the current study is dominated by Muslim participants, it has to be taken under consideration that the role of a mother receives heightened prestige not just in the country but also in the religion followed by the nationals' i.e. Islam. As per religion, although the

rights of parents are far beyond any other relationship, but the mother still carries more if compared with a father. The results also corresponded with another study that investigated a comparison of parental influence on self-concept between Scottish and Pakistani children. The results found out that mothers who used the method of withdrawing their love from their girls as a parenting technique ended up negatively affecting their self-concept. It was further reported by the daughters that display of such behavior from the mother contributed towards making them doubt their self-worth and causing alarming symptoms of depression with suicidal thoughts (Khalid, 1990).

Moving ahead, the second hypothesis which stated that there would be a significant impact of positive parental relationship on body image of a daughter was not verified in the light of the present results. A statistically nonsignificant influence is found between the two variables of paternal relationship and body image. Many research have supported the impact of parental relationship on body image of a daughter (Amianto et al, 2017; Dohnt & Tiggemann, 2006; Michael et al., 2014; Phares et al., 2004) but there have been contradictions as other studies have tapped multiple external factors of influence on a woman's body image. Body image disturbances have found to be more common in girls than boys. According to research, it was figured out that among young adolescents, 40% girls and around 23% boys were dissatisfied with their body weight and shape (Bearman et al., 2006). According to the biopsychosocial model, the three highlighted stressors that contribute towards the negative formation of body image among girls are; parents, peer and media (Keery et al., 2004). Moreover, patterns of body dissatisfaction were found emerging among young females who were not surrounded by positive support from parents (Helfert & Warschburger, 2011). The idea was also supported by another research about how parental and peer factors are associated with body image discrepancy. The results confirmed that girls, or daughters, do present a significant impact on their body image due to fear of negative evaluation by parents and peers (Michael et al., 2014).

Furthermore, as the results suggest, a significant impact is prominent between a maternal relationship and a daughter's body image unlike with that of a father. It is also found that mother's nurturance is directly proportional with a daughter's body image while a father plays an important contribution in the development of a son's physical self-worth (Michael et al., 2014). Another study conducted on mother-daughter dyads verified the vital importance of mother's role in this relationship for development of a daughter's body image

(Fischer, 1991). Other studies have further explored common patterns of eating disorders among daughters who were raised by mothers with a critical attitude towards their physical appearance (McDermott et al., 2015). Although, due to prevalence of above-mentioned cultural values in Pakistan, there is nonsignificant impact of father's influence on body image of the daughter but it does show significance with some sub-facets of this study. Considering the dominant position that father holds in the society of Pakistan, his positive opinions about daughter's body structure adds more value in formation of a positive body image (Zia et al., 2015). Study suggests that confidence of father in a daughter and the way he views her serves as an asset in order to increase the level of satisfaction she experiences with different parts of her body (East et al., 2006) which also corresponds with significant impact of paternal relationship with body areas satisfaction found in this study. Body satisfaction then lead towards less preoccupation with her being overweight and accepting her real body in the true sense, which was also verified through significance found with sub-facets of overweight preoccupation and self-classified weight. Therefore, it could be concluded that a negative body image could influence the regular growth of self-concept in females who have been exposed to multiple factors as obstacles in the way they view themselves.

Limitations and Recommendations

Due to time constraints participants were only chosen from limited regions of Karachi city; and from only two educational institutes, which prevents the inclusion of subcultural perspective displayed by both the population and institute's environment. The study only comprised of participants of ages 18-20 years and therefore is not able to provide the difference in findings due to the developmental differences displayed by ages above 20. Based on these limitations, it is recommended to collect data from a diverse population in terms of age, socio-economic status, regions and educational institutes. Moreover, based on the number of questions and time required to complete the questionnaires, it might have also resulted in participants losing interest and responding to the answers without actively thinking about their choices. Also, the questionnaires were self-reported questionnaires which might have resulted from social desirability from the participants. With the help of these considered limitations, further studies can be conducted that could possibly produce ameliorate research outcomes.

Conclusion

It was aimed to investigate predicting role of parental relationship on the self-concept and body image of daughters. With the help of Regression Analysis and Bivariate Correlation Matrix, parental relationship was found to have a significant impact on self-concept of daughters. However, there was no significant impact of parental relationship evident on body image of daughters. Further analysis suggested that there was a significant impact of maternal relationship on self-concept and body image. Although no significant impact was found of a father's relationship with self-concept and body image of daughters, but the results did verify impact of paternal relationship on all sub-facets of self-concept and three sub-facets (body areas satisfaction, overweight preoccupation and self-classified weight) of body image. In conclusion, the hypotheses of the research were partially verified.

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