

Relation among Parental Acceptance-Rejection, Depression and Academic Achievement of Bangladeshi Adolescents

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Abstract

The present study explored the relationship among parental acceptance-rejection, depression and academic achievement of Bangladeshi adolescents. Bengali version of the following measures: (i) Child PARQ: Father (Short form), (Rohner and Khaleque, 2005); (ii) Child PARQ: Mother (Short form), (Rohner, and Khaleque, 2005); and (iii) Depression Scale (Uddin and Rahman, 2005) were administered on a sample of 200 adolescents of 9 grades, selected at random from three different high schools of Rajshahi City, Bangladesh. Data were analyzed through Pearson product moment correlation. Results revealed that there is significant relation between parental acceptance and depression of adolescents. Depression was found to have significantly negative correlation with academic achievement. But significant relation was not found between parental acceptance and academic achievement as well as maternal acceptance and academic achievement of the adolescents.

Key words: parental acceptance-rejection, depression, academic achievement

Introduction

Parental acceptance-rejection refers to a bipolar dimension of parental warmth, with parental acceptance at the positive end of the continuum and parental rejection at the negative end (Rohner and Khaleque, 2005). Parental acceptance refers to the love, affection, care, comfort, support, nurturance that parents can feel or express toward their children. On the contrary, parental rejection refers to the absence or withdrawal of love, warmth, affection, or support by parents toward their children. In spite of differences in culture, race, gender, geographical context, worldwide parental acceptance-rejection can be expressed or perceived in any one of a combination of four major ways including warmth/ affection, hostility/ aggression, indifference/ neglect, and undifferentiated rejection (Rohner and Khaleque, 2005). Undifferentiated rejection refers to children's affectively charged belief that their parents do not really love, want or care about them, but where clear behavioral indicators may be absent that parents are neglecting, unaffectionate, or aggressive toward them.

Rohner, Khaleque and Cournoyer (2007) have reviewed a number of longitudinal studies showing that perceived parental rejection in childhood tends to be associated with the

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development of depressive symptoms in adolescence and adulthood. Parental rejection has been found to be linked consistently with both clinical and non-clinical depression within almost all major ethnic groups in America, including African-Americans, Asian-Americans, European-Americans, and Mexican-Americans as well as in many countries including Australia, China, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Sweden and Turkey.

A number of studies explored that parental acceptance has significant influence on adolescents' academic achievement in terms of knowledge obtained or skills developed in the school subjects, usually designated by test scores or by marks assigned by teachers or by both (Rayan and Adams, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997). Parental rejected children cannot succeed in their academic achievement as observed by Bowlby (1967). Ziegler (1987) reported that children's higher school achievement rates, higher attendance rates and increased high school completion rates are positively influenced by a strong warm parent-child relationship. Recently Uddin (2011), in a study on 300 seventh, eighth and ninth grade Bangladeshi adolescents, found that both paternal and maternal acceptance were positively related to adolescents' academic achievement. On the other hand, depression was found to be negatively related to academic achievement in a study by Chen (Chen et al., 2000). In another study, depressed adolescents were found to have the characteristics of low self-esteem, feeling of loneliness, anger and suicidal tendency (Al-Qaisy, 2011). Depression impairs cognitive functioning and blocks cognitive sources and many of the academic performances (Frojd, 2008).

The studies conducted by the researches cited above have indicated that the children, whose parents are being perceived positively (parental acceptance) by them, suffer less from depressions and have better academic achievement than those students whose parents are being perceived negatively (parental rejection). Since healthy living and better academic achievement of the children is a prime concern of the society. It is necessary to understand the level of acceptance-rejection of the parents by their children and the interrelationship among the variables being studied. So, the present study was designed to explore the relationship between parental acceptance-rejection, academic achievement, and depression of Bangladeshi Adolescents.

Method

Sample

A total of 200 ninth grade students (100 boys and 100 girls- 50 from boys school, 50 from girls school and remaining 100 (50 boys+50 girls) from co-education school) were selected at random from three secondary schools, who served as sample. The schools (one from each category-boys, girls and co-education schools) were selected through lottery from three different lists of schools prepared by Rajshahi education board. Questionnaire survey method was used to conduct the study. Data were collected

personally from the respondents in a face-to-face situation. Age range of the students was 13 -15 years with almost similar means and standard deviations ($M=13.93$ yrs, $SD=.78$ for boys and $M=13.79$ yrs, $SD=.59$ for girls). All the students live in the city corporation area with their biological parents. Students' academic achievement was taken from the records of their JSC (Junior School Certificate) examination.

Measures

Following measures were used to obtain information from the respondents:

Personal Information Form (PIF): The PIF was used to collect demographic information on gender, age, grade, academic achievement and family income of the respondents.

Child PARQ (Short Form) Mother and Father (Rohner and Khaleque, 2005): Adapted Bengali version of Child PARQ (Uddin, 2011) was administered to measure children's perceptions of maternal and paternal acceptance or rejection. The two versions (Father and Mother) were virtually identical except for reference to mother's behavior versus father's behavior. Each measure consisting of 24 items which were distributed into four subscales: Warmth/ Affection (8 items), Hostility/ Aggression (6 items), Indifference/ Neglect (6 items) and Undifferentiated Rejection (4 items). The items were scored on a 4-point Likert-type scale with 4 (almost always true), 3 (sometimes true), 2 (rarely true) and 1 (almost never true). Scores on the four acceptance-rejection sub-scales were summed after reverse scoring which provides an overall measure of perceived acceptance-rejection that ranges from a low of 24 (maximum perceived acceptance) to a high of 96 (maximum perceived rejection). The alpha coefficient of the Adult PARQ: Father and Mother in the present study were .85 and .78 respectively.

Depression Scale: Depression scale was developed by Uddin and Rahman (2005) to measure depression of Bangladeshi people. It was a 5-point rating scale consisting of 30 items with 1 (not at all applicable), 2 (not applicable), 3 (uncertain), 4 (a bit applicable) and 5 (totally applicable). All items were scored in positive direction. Higher scores indicate higher level of depression. Highest score in this scale was 150 and lowest was 30. The split-half and test-retest reliability coefficients of the scale were 0.76 and 0.59 respectively. The scale had high levels of content, concurrent and constructs validity. It had two types of norms-severity norm of the depression scale consisting 4 types of depression: minimal (scores from 30 to 100), mild (scores from 101 to 114), moderate (115-123) and severe (scores from 124 to 150). For screening norm the score of 94 or more should be designated as "depressed." The Alpha coefficient of the Depression scale in the present study was .93.

Results

Results obtained from the analysis of data are presented in the following tables:

Table 1: *Inter-relationship among perceived paternal acceptance, maternal acceptance, academic achievement and depression of adolescents*

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Paternal acceptance	-----	.591*	-.081	.322*
2. Maternal acceptance	.591*	-----	-.116	.405*
3. Academic achievement	--.081	-.116	-----	.220*
4. Depression	.322*	.405*	--.220*	----

* $p < .01$ level (two tailed)

Results displayed in Table 1 show that perceived paternal acceptance ($r = .322, p < .01$) and maternal acceptance ($r = .405, p < .01$) were significantly correlated with depression of adolescents. More the adolescents perceived their parents as accepting the lower was their depression level. But there was no significant correlation between paternal acceptance and academic achievement ($r = -.081$) and maternal acceptance and academic achievement ($r = -.116$). Adolescents' depression was found to have significantly negative relation with their academic achievement ($r = -.220, p < .01$).

Discussion and Conclusion

Result of the present research revealed that perceived parental acceptance was significantly negatively related to depression of adolescents. This finding was in agreement with the findings of McDougall who found that rejected children were likely to be at greater risk for internalizing problems like depression (McDougall, 2001). Rohner and Khaleque (2005) found that children of rejecting parents were at increased risk for depression, substance use disorders, and externalizing behavioral problems (including delinquency) during adolescence and adulthood (Ge, et al., 1996; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005).

Findings of the present study were not in line with the results obtained by the previous researchers, who indicated positive relations between parental acceptance and academic achievement of children and adolescents. But the result is consistent with the previous study by Elias (2006) on 100 fourth and fifth grade students who found no significant relation between parent-child interaction and academic achievement. Tulviste & Rohner (2010) also found in their study in Estonia on 224 sixth graders that parental acceptance (both father and mother acceptance) was not significantly related to academic achievement of either boys or girls.

The research revealed a significant negative correlation between depression and academic achievement of adolescents - the higher the level of depression the lower were their academic achievement. Depression decreases students' motivation in ability attention,

concentration, increases their interfering, irrelevant thoughts that hampers cognitive tasks and then leads them to academic failure (Yousefi, Mansor, Juhari, Redzuan, and Talib, 2010) and to have poor academic achievement (Al-Qaisy, 2011).

Since the sample of the study was taken only from three schools, it is not convenient to draw a clear cut conclusion. Further research with a large sample covering more schools may lead to more conclusive decision. But, the findings can be a valuable source of information to the parents of adolescents and to the teachers of different educational institutions to have a better understanding of the issue for further reference.

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