

Relationship between Father Rejection and Psychological Maladjustment of Criminals

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The present study assessed the degree of perceived father acceptance-rejection and its relationship with psychological maladjustment in a group of 81 prisoners (40 males and 41 females) with the mean age of 37.2 years (SD=13.77), selected from the Central Jail, Peshawar. For comparison, 90 non-criminal adults (45 males and 45 females) having mean age of 36.23 (SD=12.68), were selected from the general population, matched with the criminal group in terms of their demographic characteristics. Short form of Father Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (Adult PARQ Father), and Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult PAQ) by Rohner & Khaleque (2008), translated into Urdu by Riaz (2011) were used for assessment. Results revealed that criminals perceived more father rejection than non-criminals and multiple regression analysis showed that father rejection, specifically father indifference/neglect, is a significant predictor of psychological maladjustment in criminals/prisoners. These findings, therefore, support the hypotheses of the study.

Keywords. Father acceptance, rejection and psychological maladjustment

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Crime is a developmental issue (Osofsky, 1997) and developmental trajectories of disruptive behaviors from early childhood through adulthood originate from different environmental stimuli. According to Tremblay (2012), parents are the prime factors to create the early environment for their children and psycho-social adjustment of children reflects the efficacy of the parental control across the life span. Several researches are available in literature emphasizing the importance of parents in the process of socialization of children. Nevertheless, sole contribution of fathers as an attachment figure is also gaining researchers' attention over the recent years. Evidence that fathers play their central role in psycho-social development of children comes initially from a large number of cross-cultural studies related to father's absence (Leidy, Schofield, & Parke, 2013). Adverse effects of father's absence on personality development of children have been measured by Zaid (as cited in Shwalb, Shwalb, & Lamb, 2013). According to his findings, self-reports of children who perceived lack of father's involvement showed significantly lower level of academic achievement as compared to those who received father's attention. Similarly, serious personality problems such as higher level of aggression have been assessed as correlated with father's absence (Abdalla, 1992). Further, Hossain (2013) investigated the negative impact of father's absence on psychosocial adjustment of adolescent children. Empirical findings by Lamb (2004) suggest that the nature of father-child attachment, and the amount as well as the quality of time fathers spend with their children, all possess equal importance for social and psychological adjustment of a child. Lamb & Lewis (2013) found that fathers' presence and nurturance are also essential for monitoring children's behavior as paternal influences exhibit later in adolescence and through adulthood in the form of behavioral outcomes.

Cross-cultural studies by Lamb (2004; 2010) emphasized on Muslims' beliefs and the Islamic ideology on 'parental roles', often followed by the instructions articulated in the Qur'an. He referred that there are a large number of verses in the Quran that explain the responsibilities of parents towards children. The overall message of these verses stresses on the importance of involved parenting, close parent-child relationship, and equality in attitude toward both male and female children. More specifically, the Quran instructs that the father must provide unconditional love, respect, protection, and care to his child. Moreover, Muslim parents attempt to follow the example of what their Prophet Muhammad taught and practiced in relation to treatment of children.

Literature proves that he was very affectionate father who was always concerned with his child's welfare and took active part in all her activities. He expected all Muslim fathers to follow the same and provide social, emotional, and psychological shelter to their children without any gender discrimination.

Based on Rohner's IPARTheory, recently revised by Rohner & Khaleque (2015), the present study examined the possible relationship between father's acceptance-rejection and psychological maladjustment among criminals/prisoners. According to the IPARTheory, father's acceptance refers to the warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, nurturance, support, or love shown by fathers to their children, whereas, father's rejection refers to the neglect, detachment, negative attitude, and harsh/hostile treatment of fathers towards their children. Absence of father/paternal love has found to be a significant predictor of specific child outcomes, such as conduct problems, personality and psychological maladjustment, and substance abuse. Research on the effects of maternal versus paternal acceptance on the psychological adjustment of daughters versus sons suggested that daughters' remembrances of paternal acceptance were significantly linked with their psychological adjustment later in adulthood as compared to their remembrances of maternal acceptance (Ali, Khaleque, & Rohner, 2015). Father acceptance is an important element for psychological and social adjustment of young individuals that safeguard them from adopting delinquent behaviors (Furstenberg & Harris, 1993; Cookston & Findlay, 2006). Father's love and care lead to overall well-being of children (Rosenberg & Wilcox, 2006), whereas, aggressive attitude and rejection by fathers have found to be significant predictors of psychological maladjustment and behavioral difficulties among adolescents (Najam & Kausar, 2012).

In the last two decades, countries throughout the Western world have witnessed dramatic change and awareness concerning the influences of fathers' role in child development. In the United States of America, fathers actively interact with their children from birth through various stages of growing years. They often share all the child-care responsibilities with mothers. Review of studies in this area provide evidence that prolong paternal absence is one the major causes of personality and psychological abnormalities among youth, including psychological maladjustment, emotional disturbances, feelings of insecurity, antisocial activities such as theft and drug abuse, frequent absence from school, and problems in maintaining social relations, etc. (Lamb & Sagi, 2009). Similarly,

McLanahan, Tach, & Schneider (2013) studied that adverse psychological signs in children including negative well-being and poor social-emotional adjustment resulted from lack of paternal love and attention.

A comprehensive description of such empirical findings labels satisfactory paternal parenting as capable of reducing behavioral problems in children and young adolescents (Cabrera & Tamis-LeMonda, 2013). To elucidate, close connection between father love and desirable personality outcomes in offspring is increasingly drawing researchers' attention in the developed countries. In Pakistan, it is unfortunate that there is not much research available on father acceptance-rejection and occurrence of psychological maladjustment of individuals involved in criminal activities. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the degree of father acceptance-rejection among criminals/prisoners and its relationship with their psychological maladjustment. Following are the objectives of the study

Objectives of the study

1. To measure the degree of perceived father acceptance-rejection among criminals as compared to non-criminals
2. To explore the relationship between perceived father neglect and psychological maladjustment among criminals

Hypotheses

1. Criminals perceive their fathers as more rejecting as compared to non-criminals.
2. Father neglect is likely to be a significant predictor of psychological maladjustment among criminals.

Method

Research Design

It is a differential/correlational research design which measured the degree of perceived father rejection and its possible relationship with psychological maladjustment of respondents who were inmates of Central Jail, Peshawar.

Participants

The sample consisted of two groups: criminals and non-criminals. The criminal group comprised of 90 criminals/prisoners, selected from the Central Jail, Peshawar using purposive sampling technique. The convicts were involved in drug-trafficking (n=38), murder (n=30), kidnapping (n=12), and theft/robbery (n=10). However, during scoring and analysis of data, it was found that five respondents did not answer all the questions comprising PARQ, whereas four subjects left many questions unanswered in PAQ. Thus, only 81 criminals/prisoners (40 males and 41 females) with the mean age of 37.2 years and SD= 13.77 were considered as participants for the study.

For comparison, 90 non-criminal adults (45 males and 45 females), having mean age of 36.23 and SD=12.68, were selected from general population using convenience sampling technique. It was observed that majority of respondents of both the groups belonged to low socioeconomic status, both in terms of occupation as well as education (Table 1).

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

Characteristics	Criminal (n=81)	Non-Criminal (n=90)
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	40	
Female	41	
<i>Age in years</i>		
M(SD)	37.20 (13.77)	36.23 (12.68)
<i>Occupation</i>		
	f (%)	f (%)
Unemployed	56 (61.9)	3 (3.3)
Labor class	15 (18.5)	48 (53.3)
Low-paid private jobs	4 (4.9)	25 (27.8)
Govt. servants	2 (2.5)	10 (11.1)
Business	4 (4.9)	4 (4.4)
<i>Education</i>		
Illiterates	59 (72.8)	48 (53.3)
School level	12 (14.8)	2 (2.2)

Intermediate	3 (3.7)	9 (10)
Bachelor	5 (6.2)	16 (17.8)
Masters	1 (1.2)	7 (7.8)
Others	1 (1.2)	8 (8.9)

Figures in Table 1 show that 72.8% of the criminals were illiterates, whereas 14.8% possessed school-level education. Moreover, 3.7% criminals were educated up to HSSC level and 6.2% possessed B.A/B.Sc degree whereas only 1.2% had M.A/M.Sc degree and a further 1.2% had other professional trainings/ education, too. On the other hand, 53.3% of non-criminals were illiterates whereas 2.2% reported that they had school level education. Among the non-criminals, 10% had studied up to HSSC level, whereas 17.8% were possessing B.A/B.Sc degree. In addition, 7.8% had M.A/M.Sc degree and 8.9% had other professional training/education.

Measures

The following self-reported questionnaires devised by Rohner (Rohner & Khaleque, 2008) and translated in Urdu language by Riaz (2011) were used in the present study:

1. Adult PARQ: Father Version (Short Form)
2. Adult PAQ
3. Personal Data Sheet (devised by the researcher for the present study)

Adult Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaires (PARQ; Father)

In order to assess an individual's perception of the degree of parental acceptance-rejection received during childhood, Rohner has devised three versions of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaires (PARQ): the Adult PARQ; the Parent PARQ; and the Child PARQ (Rohner & Khaleque, 2008) All of these scales are available in two forms: the Standard Form comprising 60 items and the Short Form comprising 24 items. All versions of PARQ represent four-point Likert-like rating scales ranging from "Almost Always True" to "Almost Never True" (4-1). Each scale consists of four subscales: Warmth/Affection; Hostility/Aggression; Indifference/Neglect; and Undifferentiated Rejection. Following the same response pattern and scoring systems, all PARQ subscales are keyed in the direction of perceived rejection, that is, the higher the score on any scale or total PARQ, the greater the perceived parental rejection. Scores on the standard PARQ range from a possible low of 60 indicating maximum

perceived parental acceptance to a high of 240 that reflects maximum parental rejection perceived by the respondent(s). On the other hand, the possible scores on PARQ (Short Form) range from 24 to 96. Summing up scores on the four subscales with the entire warmth scale reverse scored, provides a measure of perceived overall parental acceptance. Psychometric properties of Urdu translation of PARQ have been established by Riaz (2011). Reliability of PARQ measures revealed by alpha coefficient was .89 for Mother Version and .88 for Father Version .Validity of scales was determined by item-sum correlations and inter-scale correlation methods. All the correlations were significant yielding evidence of validity of measures.

Adult personality assessment questionnaire (PAQ) Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult PAQ: Rohner & Khaleque, 2008) is a self-report questionnaire used to measure individuals' perceptions of themselves on personality and behavioral dimensions of hostility/aggression, dependence, self-esteem, self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness, emotional stability, and world-view. Total number of items comprising PAQ is 63. Each of the seven subscales consists of nine items which collectively assess the individuals' overall psychological adjustment/maladjustment. Urdu version of the Adult PAQ was used in the present study (Riaz, 2011). This scale has certain features that are identical with the PARQ and PCS in that they all share the same instructions and rules for administering the questionnaires. Moreover, they also follow the same response pattern representing the four-point Likert-like scale ranging from "Almost Always True" to "Almost Never True" (4-1). By summing up the seven PAQ subscale scores, researchers can obtain an overall or total (composite) PAQ score. The Total Composite Test Score (TCTS) may spread from a low of 63 (revealing excellent psychological adjustment) to a maximum possible score of 252 (revealing serious psychological maladjustment). The theoretical midpoint is 157.5. Scores at or above this midpoint indicate overall psychological maladjustment (Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2012). In addition, psychometric properties of Urdu translation of Adult PAQ have been established by Riaz (2011). Reliability of Adult PAQ measure revealed by alpha coefficient was .73.

Personal data Sheet A self-devised questionnaire was used to gather information regarding demographic variables of the participants, namely,

age, gender, family structure, the type of crime committed and its underlying reasons, socioeconomic status and educational background.

Procedure

The prisoners at the Central Jail, Peshawar were approached by taking formal written permission from the concerned authorities, including Inspector General (I.G.) Prisons Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Jail Superintendent. The researcher contacted each prisoner individually to seek his/her consent for participation in the study. After recording demographic information, Urdu version of Adult PARQ (Short Form) and Adult PAQ were administered on each participant. It was observed that majority of the prisoners belonged to rural areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and came from low socioeconomic class with less or no formal education. The researcher first read out the instructions written on the title page of each questionnaire and encouraged the participants to answer all the questions in a single sitting by giving rapid response to the questions in the way they actually feel. Later, the same measures of the study were administered following the similar sequence on the non-criminal group. For both the groups, all the instruments were administered to each respondent in one to one situation. It took about 30-40 minutes by each participant to complete all the questionnaires.

Results

Data collected using the assessment measures was carefully recorded and scored using procedure prescribed by Rohner & Khaleque (2008). Statistical analysis of the results was carried out through SPSS, version 22. To test our first hypothesis that criminals perceive their fathers as more rejecting as compared to non criminals, dependent t-test analysis was carried out. The results are presented in the following table (Table 2).

Table 2

Means, SDs and t-values showing differences between scores of criminal and non-criminal groups on Short Form of PARQ-Father and its subscales

Variables	Criminals (n=81)		Non Criminals (n=90)		t	p	95 % CI		Cohen's d
	M (SD)	SE _M	M (SD)	SE _M			LL	UL	
W/A	26.30	0.79	15.30	0.68	10.95	.001	9.01	12.97	1.68

Ho/Ag	(6.65) 18.77	0.58	(6.44) 10.25	0.43	11.77	.001	7.09	9.94	1.79
In/N	(5.27) 17.89	0.56	(4.13) 11.15	0.46	9.29	.001	5.31	8.17	1.42
URej	(5.08) 12.84	0.40	(4.36) 6.55	0.32	12.13	.001	5.26	7.31	1.85
TPARQ	(3.65) 74.59	1.89	(3.10) 44.24	1.41	12.98	.001	25.73	34.96	1.93
	(17.67)		(13.41)						

Note: W/A= Warmth/ Affection, Ho/Ag=Hostility/Aggression, In/N= Indifference/Neglect, URej= Undifferentiated Rejection, TPARQ= Total PARQ Score

According to Table 2, scores on PARQ-Father reveal that criminals perceived more father rejection as compared to non-criminals.

Table 3

Means, SDs and t-values showing differences between scores of criminals and non-criminals on PAQ and its subscales

Variables	Criminals (n=81)		Non Criminals (n=90)		t	P	95 % CI		Cohen's D
	M (SD)	SE	M (SD)	SE _M			LL	UL	
Ho/Ag	26.75 (6.88)	0.76	18.58 (4.87)	0.51	8.99	.001	6.37	9.96	1.37
Dep	18.62 (4.73)	0.52	22.25 (4.69)	0.49	-5.01	.001	-5.05	-2.20	-0.77
NSE	23.59 (4.56)	0.50	18.84 (3.74)	0.39	7.37	.001	3.49	6.01	1.13
NSA	25.58 (5.25)	0.58	15.72 (4.03)	0.42	13.79	.001	8.45	11.27	2.10
EU	25.72 (5.81)	0.64	20.53 (3.65)	0.38	7.02	.001	3.73	6.64	1.06
EIn	20.23 (4.97)	0.55	21.53 (4.06)	0.43	-1.84	.06	-2.66	.07	-0.28
Nwv	24.74 (5.24)	0.58	16.96 (4.45)	0.47	10.38	.001	6.31	9.25	1.60
TPAQ	165.23 (25.46)	2.83	134.40 (19.66)	2.08	8.77	.001	23.97	37.68	1.35

Note: Ho/Ag=Hostility and Aggression, Dep= Dependency NSE= Negative Self Esteem, NSA= Negative Self Adequacy, EU Emotional unresponsive, EIn=Emotional instability, Nwv= Negative worldview. TPAQ= Total score of PAQ

Table 3 shows a comparison of scores of criminals and non-criminals on PAQ and its subscales shows that criminals as compared to non-criminals

are significantly higher on hostility/aggression, dependency, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, emotional unresponsive, and negative worldview. Total PAQ score indicates that criminals are psychologically maladjusted. On the contrary, non-criminal group seems to be well-adjusted.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis showing Father Acceptance-Rejection as Predictor of Psychological Maladjustment in Criminals/Prisoners (N=81)

Predictor Variables	Psychological Maladjustment	
	B	95% CI
Constant	125.26**	(102.4,148.1)
W/A	0.54	(-1.58, .48)
Ho/Ag	0.91	(-.65, 2.48)
In/N	2.53*	(.67, 4.39)
URej	-0.35	(-2.3, 1.6)
R ²	0.23	
F	5.94**	
ΔR^2	0.19	

* $p < .01$, ** $p < .05$

Table 4 shows the results of multiple regression analysis that explains father's rejection 23% of the variance. Specifically, the findings suggest that indifferent/neglecting attitude of fathers is a significant predictor of respondents' psychological maladjustment.

Discussion

The current study was undertaken to investigate the degree of father acceptance-rejection perceived by criminals/prisoners as compared to non-criminals and to explore perceived father rejection as a significant predictor of psychological maladjustment of criminals/prisoners. Two hypotheses were formulated based on a systematic review of previous literature. Hypothesis 1 assumed that criminals/prisoners perceived more father rejection than non-criminals, whereas hypothesis 2 suggested that paternal rejection is likely to predict psychological maladjustment of the criminal group. Both these assumptions were supported by the results of our research. Moreover, the demographic information of the participants

revealed that the criminal group belonged to lower socioeconomic status in terms of education and occupation when compared with a control group of non criminals.

It has been well documented that impact of fathers on overall development of children has increasingly remained the center of attention for researchers over the recent years. One of the major challenges often faced by researchers in this area is the variety of ways in which fatherhood and fathers' involvement are defined and described. Lamb and his colleagues presented their extensive and widely used explanation of father's involvement in terms of interaction, availability, and responsibility. They further observed that fathers follow unique child-rearing practices and interact differently with their children from an early age, with father's style of interaction being more influential and effective (Lamb & Lewis, 2003). Similarly, remarkable work done by Newland, Coyl-Shepherd, & Paquette (2013) focused on similarities and differences as well as implications of mother-father interactions with children. They observed that as compared to mothers, fathers' attachment led to more positive influences on children's development across social, emotional, and cognitive domains from infancy through middle childhood.

Paternal concern towards children has found to be a significant predictor for desirable behavioral as well as psychological outcomes in offspring (Grossman et al., 2002). On the other hand, serious behavioral and psychological problems among children have been associated with neglecting attitude and lack of warmth shown by fathers (Ramchandani, Stein, Evans, & O'Connor, 2005; Jaffee, Moffitt, Caspi, & Taylor, 2003; Lamb & Lewis, 2006). According to Sarkadi, Kristiansson, Oberklaid, & Bremberg (2008), fathers' direct involvement with children in different activities, such as play or care-giving lowered the risk of behavioral difficulties in boys and emotional problems in girls.

In addition, Herbert, Harvey, Lugo-Candelas, & Breaux (2012) conducted a longitudinal study in order to assess the relationship between early fathering and social, emotional and academic conditions of 128 preschool-aged children with behavior difficulties. The sample was studied annually for three years. According to the findings, depressive symptoms of fathers along with low socioeconomic status resulted in later adverse psychosocial, emotional, and academic functioning among preschool-aged children with conduct problems.

Rohner & Khaleque (as cited in Shwalb, Shwalb, & Lamb, 2013), carried out a meta-analysis of 68 IPARTheory studies and concluded that

children's perception of father-acceptance was more strongly correlated with their psychological adjustment than perceived mother-acceptance. Similarly, Ahmed, Rohner, & Carrasco (2012) explored the relationship between acceptance by fathers and psychological adjustment of 249 Kuwaiti male and female adolescents. Interestingly, the findings revealed that perception of fathers' acceptance was important for psychological adjustment particularly among girls than boys.

To sum up, the present research concluded that lack of father love and attention leave negative impact on psychosocial, emotional, and personality development of children that may be demonstrated in the form of deviant attitudes during adolescence and young adulthood. Moreover, father rejection might be considered as an important contributing factor in causing psychological maladjustment of individuals as multiple regression analysis in our study proved that indifferent/neglecting attitude of fathers is a significant predictor of criminals/prisoners' psychological maladjustment.

Limitations

A major limitation of the present research was that there were only a limited number of criminals/prisoners available at the Central Jail, Peshawar. More extensive results could be derived if a larger number of participants could be included in the study. Further, majority of the respondents were illiterates or had low level of education, therefore, filling in the questionnaires took more time than the actual time allotted. This made the process of data collection more time-consuming.

Suggestions

In order to cope with such a situation for future studies, it is suggested that basic education to read and write may be provided to the prisoners by the concerned authorities within the jail premises. In addition, keeping in view the poor socioeconomic status of the sample, the findings of the present study cannot be generalized as crimes are also committed by individuals who come from highly educated, elite class of the society.

Implications

The results of our study may have significant implications for parents specifically fathers, forensic counselors, and mental health experts. Our findings highlight the urgent need for therapeutic practices that must be provided to the prisoners so as to help them to cope with their psychological maladjustment. Moreover, this research emphasizes a strong need to create awareness among the masses of the developing countries such as Pakistan about the effective role of fathers and the urge to adopt desirable parent-child relationship.

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