

University Students' Perception of Acceptance & Rejection

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to extend the existing body of knowledge on the perception of acceptance and rejection among the university students. A conceptual framework which illustrates three dimensions of acceptance and rejection including parental, siblings and peer group was developed. The present research was a descriptive study which used an indigenous research inventory to measure acceptance and rejection. The study was carried out on a sample of 100 university students and it explored the impact of demographic variables including gender, age, birth order, and family income level on determining the level of acceptance and rejection. Result of the study revealed that the phenomenon of university students' acceptance and rejection does exist among. Male students experience higher parental and siblings rejection than females. Students from higher income families experience higher rejection compared to students from low income families. The findings also indicated that different demographic variables contribute significantly in determining the perceived level of acceptance and rejection.

Index terms— Parental, siblings and peer group acceptance and rejection, indigenous inventory, university's students

1 INTRODUCTION

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: Lecturer City University of Science & I-T, Peshawar E-mail : dr_f_khurshid@yahoo.com Physical and verbal expressions are considered as two principle behavioural expressions. The physical expressions include hugging, caressing, approving glances, kissing, smiling, and other such signs of compliment, approval or support. The verbal expressions of acceptance include praising, complimenting, saying nice things to or about the child or other person, perhaps singing songs or telling stories to a young child, and the like. Acceptance is also characterized by the absence or minimal presence of rejection (Waltres j. & Stinnett, (1971).

On the other hand rejection is the absence or withdrawal of feeling of love and behaviours marked by the presence of a different physically and psychologically destructive acts. It can be observed by cold, unaffectionate, hostile, aggressive, indifferent neglecting and rejecting behaviours. Such behaviours may hurt a person physically or emotionally. Rejection occurs when an individual is deliberately excluded from a social interaction. A person can be rejected on an individual basis or by an entire group of people. It can be either active such as bullying, teasing, ridiculing, ignoring a person or giving the "reticent medication." The experience of being rejected is subjective for the recipient. While humans are social beings, some rejection is an inevitable part of lifespan. Yet, rejection can become a problem when it is prolonged, when the relationship is important, or when the individual is highly sensitive to rejection. Experience of rejection can lead to a number of psychological problems such as low self-esteem, aggression, loneliness, and depression. It can also lead to feelings of insecurity and an intensified sensitivity to imminent rejection.

Parental acceptance-rejection is commonly represented along a continuum representing the condition of the adoration bonds between parents and their offspring with the physical, verbal, and symbolic behaviours that they

44 use to convey their feelings. One end of this continuum represents warmth dimension whereas the other end is
45 marked by parental rejection demonstrated in the form of physically and psychologically hurtful actions. Empirical
46 evidence demonstrates that children who do not receive adequate parental love tend to be psychologically
47 maladjusted

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49 he phenomena of perception of the acceptance and rejection affect a person from psychologically and behaviourally
50 and consequently it influences emotional and social health ??Leafgran, 1989). University students' academic
51 learning typically takes place in a social context. Their perception of acceptance or rejection is shaped by
52 a combination of cognitive and social learning processes and it can influence their normal learning activities
53 (Patrick, 1997; Welsh, Parke, Widaman, & O'Neil, 2001). In the university years, a number of important changes
54 occur in student's social worlds. These shifts produce both new demands and new opportunities for adult social
55 and emotional growth. Peer groups enlarge and mostly the students become free of adult supervision, including
56 their older siblings and even parents. The experience of acceptance refers to the warmth, love, affection, care,
57 comfort, concern, nurturing and support that a person can experience from parents , siblings and peers. In the
58 context of T parent-child relationship, acceptance can be defined as love, care, support or simply affection that
59 parents feel and communicate toward their children and others.

60 and exhibit poor self-esteem and self-adequacy and are likely to develop a negative worldview. Rejected
61 children often perceived other individuals as untrustworthy, unfriendly, threatening and even dangerous. All
62 such misconceptions negatively influence their interpersonal relationships and psychological wellbeing ?? Rohner,
63 Khaleque, Cournoyer, 2009). Maslow suggested that the need for love and belongingness is fundamental for
64 human motivation. All humans, even introverts need to be able to give and receive warmth to be psychologically
65 strong. Coie (1990) stated that rejected individuals are likely to have lower self-esteem, and to be at greater
66 risk for internalizing psychological problems like depression while some rejected individuals display externalizing
67 behavior and show aggression rather than depression. Children with problems are more likely to be rejected and
68 this rejection may leads to even greater problems for them. Parental acceptance is defined as parent's willingness
69 to see a child's strength, weaknesses, potentials and limitations. Parental involvement matters because parental
70 warmth or acceptance appears to be crucial to the development of childe's self-esteem ??Mruk, 2003). Parental
71 rejection is known as absence of acceptance and lack of warmth is detrimental to children selfesteem. Rohner
72 (1986) presented parental acceptancerejection theory (PAR Theory), which described the 4 causes, effects and
73 other correlates of perceived parental acceptance-rejection. It is exploratory research for universals pertaining
74 to the antecedents, consequences, and other associate of interpersonal acceptance and rejection. It accentuates
75 a global perspective of sampling widely across all known sociocultural groups of the world, including across all
76 languages, ethnicities, socioeconomic status , ages, sex, and other related variables. Moreover, Rohner employed
77 multi-method and multi-procedure approach to the study of acceptance-rejection and to the search for universals.

78 Pfouts (1976) stated that the Relationship with siblings is independent source of variance in the child
79 personality development. One of the most striking qualities of sibling relationship is their dual nature of positive
80 and negative attributes moreover this relationship is also seen among the most volatile of human relationships
81 as they are rooted in ambivalence. Sibling's rivalry is seen as the basis for most of the negative aspects of
82 sibling relationship such as emotional struggles involving issues of sibling anger, identity and competition for the
83 recognition and approval from their parents. However, sibling acceptance is attached with a number of positive
84 features such as, closeness, supportiveness, care giving and companionship.

85 Although this world is by no means independent from the family, the school, and other social institutions,
86 there are unique features of peer relationships that set the world of peers apart from children's other socialization
87 experiences. Contexts for peer interaction also increasingly include remote electronic contact by computer (e-
88 mail, "instant messaging," and on-line "chatting"), an area that, to our knowledge, has not yet received focused
89 research attention despite the growing number of anecdotal reports from parents of the many hours their children
90 spend in such activities. According to Bierman most students who are rejected by their peers display low rates
91 of social behavior, high rates of aggressive, disruptive, inattentive, immature and social anxious behaviour. He
92 further stated that that well-liked children show social expediency and know when and how to join play groups.
93 Those who are at risk for rejection are more likely to rush in obtrusively, or hang back Students experiencing
94 higher rejection may find it hard to concentrate, worry about themselves, feel pressure to do well to pass the
95 exams and may push themselves which may be counter-productive for them. It can also lead to conduct disorders,
96 externalizing behaviour, drug abuse and delinquency ??Light et.al, 1989). Most of the previous research, however,
97 in this area has been done in the western culture context. Very few researches were available in the field of
98 acceptance and rejection in the context of Pakistan. The present research is therefore, designed to investigate
99 the university students' perception of acceptance and rejection as experience by them as they interact with their
100 parents, siblings and peers. The study further examines the relationship of gender, age, number of siblings, birth
101 order and family income in determining the perception of acceptance and rejection.

102 4 II.

103 5 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

104 1. The phenomenon of acceptance and rejection does exist among the university students. 2. Age is positively
105 associated with the students' perception of acceptance. 3. Female students perceive more rejection than male
106 students. 4. The perceived level of acceptance is higher in students from higher income families. 5. Students who
107 are the last born in their families perceive higher level of rejection. 6. Number of siblings is inversely related to
108 perceived acceptance. 7. The female university students are more accepted by their peer groups than the male
109 students.

110 III.

111 6 METHODOLOGY

112 The acceptance and rejection inventory was developed through standardized procedure. A sample of 20 students
113 was collected from the local universities for items generation purpose. 75 items were generated from this source
114 and after weeding out the repetitions, the remaining items were converted into 52 statements

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116 to comprise the initial pool. These statements were presented to 3 judges including one educationalist and two
117 psychologists for qualitative item analysis in terms of accuracy and appropriateness of contents. As a result the
118 statements were further reduced to 40. The psychometric properties of the scale were determined by administering
119 it on a random sample of 50 students including 28 males and 22 females. In order to determine the validity of
120 rating scale the data was subjected to principle component analysis. Factor loading less than .35 was considered
121 as non-significant. A total of 35 items were retained in the acceptance and rejection inventory. Total variance
122 explained by all 3 factors was 57.2864 and were named as parental acceptance scale, siblings acceptance scale and
123 peers acceptance scale. Item-total correlations were computed in order to determine the Reliability of acceptance
124 and rejection inventory. The results reveal that all items have significant correlation with the total score on the
125 inventory, ranging from .39 to .92. Cronbach's Alpha coefficient yields an internal consistency coefficient of .83
126 for the entire 35 items. It ranges from .81 to .86. The inter-correlations of the subscales as well as with the total
127 scale analysis indicated that all subscales have significant correlation with each other and with the total
128 score on acceptance inventory. The results of alpha reliability coefficients and inter-correlations of the subscales
129 indicated that this inventory has enough reliability and content validity to measure the perception of parental,
130 siblings and peers acceptance and rejection for the present sample. Norms were established through percentile
131 analysis to interpret the scores obtained by an individual on acceptance inventory 1 shows the range of score on
132 acceptance inventory, it ranged from 73 to 143. It also highlights the percentile ranks of respondent's scores on
133 the acceptance inventory.

134 A random sample of 100 university students was collected from various local universities. Respondent's age
135 ranged from 20 to 28 years, their family's income level ranged from Rs. 20,000 to Rs.100,000. The respondents
136 were contacted at their respective departments. After obtaining their consent the purpose of study was explained
137 to them and acceptance and rejection inventory was given to them with the assurance of anonymity and
138 confidentiality. They were asked to complete it in one sitting. The results indicate that 31% students experience
139 rejection, 47% experience moderate acceptance whereas 22% students experience high level of acceptance. Gender,
140 Age, Birth order and Income (N=100).

141 Table # 3 illustrates that the male students reported the scores for rejection by their peers were the higher.
142 As far as the peer acceptance is concerned female university students experience more peer acceptance than the
143 male university students. Age wise differences in the respondents' scores revealed that students whose age ranged
144 from 26 and above experienced more rejection. Student's with age ranging from 20-25 years, experience higher
145 peer and siblings acceptance. Overall the first born child experienced higher acceptance whereas, the last born
146 experienced higher rejection. The last-born experienced higher peer acceptance than the first born. Moreover,
147 third, fourth, and fifth born children experience higher siblings acceptance than first and last born children.
148 The students from low income families experienced higher rejection as compared with students from the higher
149 income families. siblings, birth order and family income with the perception of acceptance and rejection was
150 examined. The study found that as a whole, majority of respondents experience moderate acceptance (41%)
151 and only 22% students experienced high level of acceptance, whereas, 31 % respondents reported experiencing
152 rejection. Overall female students experience higher rejection as compared to their male students. Overall male
153 students experienced higher rejection from their peer group. Age was found significantly related to the perception
154 of acceptance and rejection. The students aged 26 years and above experience higher rejection. The students aged
155 20-25 years experience higher peers and siblings acceptance. Previous research has highlighted the significance
156 of peer rejection for adolescent's concurrent and subsequent adjustment as peer group provide a sense of identity
157 to adults ??Hamburg, 1992). Rejection experienced by peers envisages different problems in adulthood, such
158 as, dropout, misbehavior, and psychopathology. Negative response of peers is usually linked with rule-violating
159 behavior. In all cultures, adolescents have learned to become adults by following, imitating, and interacting with
160 peer group.

8 V. CONCLUSIONS

161 Another important variable in this study was birth order as it can affect the perception of acceptance and
162 rejection. Birth order play a very important role in determining the direction of relationship with siblings, as older
163 siblings are more likely to perceive themselves as responsible, nurturing and dominating while younger siblings
164 are more likely to report being nurtured and dominated somehow older sibling are more likely to dominate
165 (Bierman, 2003). In the context of Pakistan the average family size is a bit large. A family with higher number
166 of siblings has its advantages and disadvantages. For example, one has to share many things with siblings or
167 experience siblings' attitude. The literature perused on peer rejection indicates the significance of peer rejection
168 for adolescent's concurrent and subsequent adjustment as it envisages different psychological problems in the
169 adulthood. Peers also play a vital role in maintaining rejected status. Moreover rejected adults experience
170 more negative prospect, behaviors and explanation of their own actions than other do. Interestingly, the results
171 revealed that the first-born child experiences higher acceptance and the last born experience higher rejection.
172 These results are in line with research results drawn by Copper Smith (as, cited in ??ruk, 2003) suggesting that
173 birth order can have an impact on self-esteem as first born slightly enhances the acceptance. It seems that first
174 and only children receive more attention from and interaction with parents than those who arrive late, which
175 other ordinal positions.

176 8 V. CONCLUSIONS

177 The study identified that the phenomena perception of acceptance and rejection of parental, siblings and peer
178 does exist and affects students' personality development and adjustment in their lives. The conclusions drawn
179 from the study included; male university students experience higher rejection as compared to female students,
180 age is positively associated with rejection, female university students experience higher peer acceptance than
181 male students. Birth order affects the level of acceptance and rejection as the first born child experience
182 higher acceptance and the last born experience higher rejection. Moreover, third, fourth, and fifth born children
183 experience higher siblings acceptance than first and last born children and students from low income families
184 experience higher acceptance as compared to the students from higher income families. The present research was
185 an attempt to increases an understanding of perception of acceptance and rejection of the university students.
186 Further studies may look into acceptance and rejection from other angles such as, self-esteem, stress and academic
achievement of students at various levels in wider jurisdiction. ^{1 2}



Figure 1: Table 3 :

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P Percentile	Scors
5 10	73 91
15	93
20	96
25	100
30	102
35 40	104 107
45	115
50	116
55	119
60 65	125 129
70	131
75	132
80	138
85 90	140 141
95	143

Figure 2: Table 1 :

Figure 3: Table

2

Levels of Acceptance and Rejection	n	Percentage
Rejection	31	31%
Moderate Acceptance	47	47%
High Acceptance	22	22%

Figure 4: Table 2 :

4

Source	(N=100).
Age	df
	97
Income	96
Birth order	91
P < .01	

Table 4 indicates a highly significant difference between the scores of students belonging to different age groups, $F(3, 97) = 5.147$, $P < .008^{**}$, income $F(4,$

Figure 5: Table 4 :

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