

Risk Taking Behaviour of Parentally Accepted and Rejected Children

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ABSTRACT

The main objective was to study the risk taking behaviour of parentally accepted and rejected children. Rohner's Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) Child Form- (1978) was used to identify the parentally accepted and rejected children and after administering this questionnaire the sample was selected which comprised of parentally accepted children (N=204) and parentally rejected children (N=204). Self-constructed risk taking behaviour scale was used to collect the data. The data was analysed by using Mean, S.D and t-test. The results reveal that parentally accepted children are low on unhealthy risk taking behaviour as compared to parentally rejected children. Parentally accepted children exhibit low or no unhealthy academic risk; exhibit less or no unhealthy social risk; are low on unhealthy future/goals risk. They are less interested in the adventurous risks which are dangerous for their health in particular and life in general in comparison to parentally rejected children who exhibit unhealthy adventurous risk. Both parentally accepted and rejected children exhibit average level of unhealthy security/peace risk like protesting against human rights violation without caring about their own life which may be due to the fact, that state is facing armed conflict since 1989.

Introduction

Parent child relationship is one of the most overwhelming, meaningful and powerful relationship out of all interpersonal relations. So far as Parental Acceptance-Rejection (PAR) theory is concerned parent's love-related (i.e., accepting-rejecting) parenting styles affect the development of offspring's mental representations about themselves and about how sensitively and reliably they

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can expect their caregivers to respond to their emotional needs (Ainsworth, 1989; Rohner et al., 2010). The theory speculates that these representations are likely to generalise to other close relationships, influencing offspring's appraisal and behaviour in intimate relationship throughout life (Rohner/et al. 2010).

A variety of personality-related studies have investigated relationships between acceptance-rejection and self-esteem (Salama, 1991), self-assertiveness (Elyan, 1992), personality traits/dispositions (El-Sayed, 2000), locus of control (Al-Nafie, 1997), loneliness (Mekhemer, 2003), dependency and self-criticism (Faied, 2000), overall psychological adjustment (Abdel-Wahab, 1999), and ego-strength and single-mindedness (Al-Otaibi, 2005). Results of these studies have shown significant correlations between perceived parental acceptance and positive personality traits. Further, children's perceptions of parental rejection correlate significantly with high levels of depression, anxiety, and neuroticism. Solangi (2012) revealed that status offenders have perceived more parental neglect than home children.

Salama (1987) reveals that respondents who perceived their parents as more rejecting tended to show higher rates of phobias, especially social phobias, than did respondents who felt accepted. In addition, El-Sayed (2000) showed that children who perceived their parents as more accepting also tended to exhibit higher levels of (self-reported) emotional stability and social adjustment, together with lower levels of anxiety. Almousa (2007) investigated the relationship between perfectionism (normality/neuroticism) and university students' perceptions of parental socialisation styles by using Rohner's PARQ. Results revealed that normal students perceived their parents as more accepting and warm, while neurotic students perceived their parents as more aggressive (hostile), more neglecting, more controlling, and more rejecting.

Trivedi (1987) found that parental attitude (acceptance-rejection) was significantly related to security-insecurity of children. Campo & Rohner (1992) reveal that perceived parental rejection in childhood was higher among substance abusers than non-abusers. The study by Zaeter (1998) found that juvenile delinquents tended to perceive their parents to be less accepting than did non-delinquents.

Risk has been a concern of human beings from the earlier days of recorded history and most likely even before that. The safety of

children as they learn and develop is of prime concern for parents, teachers and legislators alike. John et al. (2005) examined the relationship between adolescents' perceptions of life satisfaction, behavioural risky acts, and self-reported acts of violence. Analyses indicated that higher levels of life satisfaction are associated with lower violence. Participation in work and involvement in health-related risk-taking behaviours pertaining to sex, drugs, and alcohol are also associated with increased violence. Learning how to respond appropriately in risk situations comes not only from the child's direct experiences but also through the guidance of those around them. The role of parent practices in guiding children's decision-making in risky situations has mainly been investigated in experimental contexts. Parents mainly supervise their child's activities and provide encouragement/discouragement. Parent's intervention to prevent children's risky play and advice on how to complete the activity safely may possibly depend upon the acceptance/rejection of the child by them (Helen, 2010). Risk taking behaviour has been studied in connection with variables like social factors, affective factors, peer relations, societal conditions etc. but need to be studied in relation with parental acceptance/rejection. Therefore, the present investigator made a humble attempt in this direction.

The present study aims to provide the directions to parents, teachers, and educational administrators to organise the belongingness of the children and is expected to influence child rearing practices, counselling process in schools and adult education centres.

Objectives

1. To identify the parentally accepted and rejected children.
2. To study risk taking behaviour of parentally accepted and rejected children.

Hypotheses

1. There is significant difference between parentally accepted and rejected children on risk taking behaviour (Composite Score).
2. There is significant difference between parentally accepted and rejected children on risk taking behaviour (Factor Wise).

Operational definitions of the terms used

Parentally Accepted and Rejected Children

In the present study parentally accepted children refer to those children who scored equal to 25th percentile and below on Rohner's Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ). Parentally rejected children refer to those who scored above 75th percentile on the Rohner's Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire.

Risk Taking Behaviour

In the present study Risk Taking Behaviour refers to the scores obtained by the sample subjects on the self-constructed Risk Taking Behaviour Scale of the researcher which measures unhealthy risk taking behaviour.

Methodology

Initial Sample

There are ten (10) districts in Kashmir valley of Jammu & Kashmir. Out of these, three (03) districts namely Srinagar, Baramulla and Kupwara were randomly selected for selection of initial sample. There are 08, 18 and 13 educational zones in district Srinagar, Baramulla and Kupwara, respectively. Out of these educational zones one from each district namely Gulab Bagh zone of Srinagar, Pattan zone of Baramulla and Sogam zone of Kupwara were selected randomly for collection of data. The initial sample of the present study comprised of 828, 8th class children of age range: 13-14 years.

Final Sample

Rohner's Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) Child Form (1978) was administered to all the 828 sample subjects in different sittings after building a rapport with the subjects and the concerned teachers and headmasters of respective schools. The subjects who scored equal to 25th percentile and below on Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) were termed as parentally accepted children and the subjects who scored above 75th percentile on Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) were termed as parentally rejected children. The same technique of extreme scores has been adopted in many studies (Kithara, 1987; Lila et al., 2007; Rohner, 1978). Six (06) students were screened out from the final sample of the study as they were

continuously absent from the school. Therefore, the final sample comprised of 204 parentally accepted children and 204 parentally rejected children.

Tools used

1. Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) Child Form by Rohner (1978) for the identification of parentally accepted and rejected children was used.
2. For measurement of risk taking behaviour of parentally accepted and rejected children self constructed Risk Taking Behaviour Scale was used which measures unhealthy risk taking behaviour.

Analysis of data

Tests were administered as per the instructions provided in the test manuals. The collected data were analysed through statistical techniques viz: Mean, S.D and t-test.

Results and Discussion

The results of the present study conducted on the risk taking behaviour of parentally accepted and rejected children are discussed below:

Table 1
Significance of the mean difference between Parentally Accepted and Rejected Children (N=204 on each) on composite score of Risk Taking Behaviour

Factor	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	't'-value
Total Risk Taking Behaviour	Parentally Accepted Children	223.59	21.09	24.28**
	Parentally Rejected Children	285.25	29.56	

**Significant at 0.01 level

When parentally accepted and rejected children were compared on composite score of risk taking behaviour, the mean difference was found to be significant. On composite score of risk taking behaviour, Table 1 makes it clear that parentally accepted and rejected children differ significantly. The parentally accepted children have the mean score of 223.59 and parentally rejected children 285.25. The 't'-value computed is 24.28 which is greater than table value and is significant at 0.01 level. The mean score favours the rejected

group; therefore it can be asserted that parentally rejected children are taking high unhealthy risks as compared to parentally accepted children. Parentally rejected children perform unwanted acts. They take unhealthy risks like learning only selected questions to pass examination, habitual of using unfair means in examination, keeping parents in dark regarding their academic achievements, etc. They are accepting the responsibilities to get praise which are far beyond their capacities. They don't accept elder's suggestions, use pain killers without medical prescription. They decide things for future without assessing their pros and cons. They are often involved in conflict with police and public. They don't care for the reputation of their parents. On the other hand parentally accepted children take less unhealthy risks. They are always serious about their academics and study the whole content or syllabi. They are taking assignments as per their capacity. They keep themselves away from conflicts and problems. They care about the reputation of their parents in their society. They are deciding the things after looking properly into its pros and cons. From the above discussion it is clear that parentally rejected children exhibit unhealthy risk taking behaviour as compared to parentally accepted children who exhibit healthy risk or low unhealthy risk taking behaviour. These results are further shown in Fig. 1 given below:

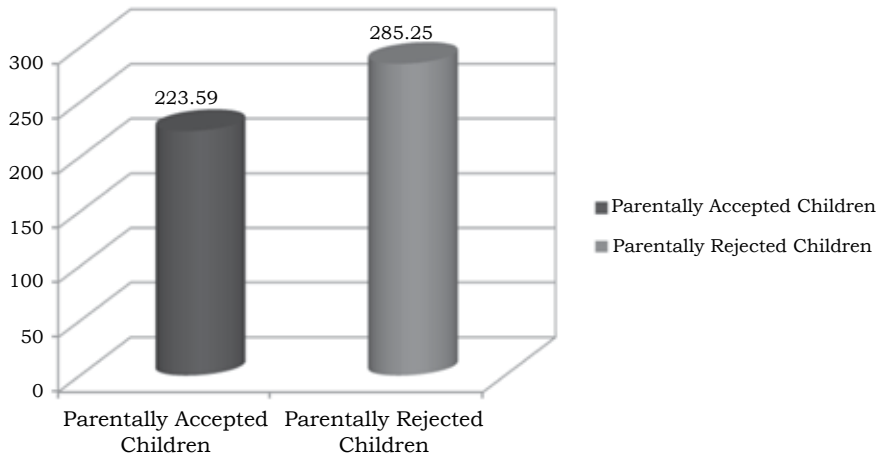


Fig. 1: Comparison between Parentally Accepted and Rejected Children (N=204 on each) on composite score of Risk Taking Behaviour

Table 2
Significance of the mean difference between Parentally Accepted Children (PAC) N=204 and Parentally Rejected Children (PRC) N=204 on Risk Taking Behaviour (Factor wise)

Factors	Groups	Mean	Std. Deviation	't'-value
Academic Risk (A)	PAC	40.25	8.1	17.68**
	PRC	56.16	10.01	
Social Risk (B)	PAC	40.84	7.85	17.66**
	PRC	56.38	9.89	
Future/Goals Risk (C)	PAC	41.1	8.1	18.95**
	PRC	57.4	9.16	
Adventurous Risk (D)	PAC	42.19	8.1	16.71**
	PRC	57.23	10.78	
Security/Peace Risk (E)	PAC	59.21	9.01	1.26*
	PRC	58.09	9.005	

**Significant at 0.01 level

*Not significant

The perusal of the Table 2 makes it obvious that parentally accepted and rejected children differ significantly on factor 'A' (Academic Risk) of risk taking behaviour. The mean score of parentally accepted children is 40.25 and that of parentally rejected children is 56.16. The obtained 't'-value is 17.68 which is significant at 0.01 level. The results support the argument that parentally rejected children take high unhealthy academic risks, because they experience aggression and hostile attitude from their parents. They conceal their academic weaknesses before their parents; they are habitual of making use of unfair means in examination. They don't care about the difficulty level of course or subjects while selection and selecting courses beyond their capacity. They don't consult teacher and parents while facing any difficulties in academics. While as parentally accepted children do take less or no unhealthy risks related to their academics. They consult parents and teachers freely while facing any difficulty. They don't get indulged in any sort of unfair means in examination. They select courses and take assignments according to their capacity. The results envisage that parentally accepted children are taking less academic risks as compared to parentally rejected children.

On the factor 'B' (Social Risk) of risk taking behaviour the mean score of parentally accepted children is 40.84 and that of parentally rejected children is 56.38. The 't'-value computed 17.66 is significant at 0.01 level. The Table 2 makes it clear that parentally accepted and rejected children differ significantly on factor 'B' (Social Risk) of risk taking behaviour. Parentally accepted children are low on social risk as compared to parentally rejected children who take more unhealthy social risks. This may be due to the fact that parentally accepted children are enjoying the love, affection, warmth from their parents which possibly results into less or no unhealthy social risks. They don't disagree with the authority usually figuring a major issue. They try to convince others about their decisions. While helping others in the society they take care of themselves first. They are very much reserved in the gathering or crowd, while as parentally rejected children due to aggression or hostile attitude from parents don't care about themselves. They don't care about the norms of the society or cultural restrictions.

On the factor 'C' (Future/Goals Risk) of risk taking behaviour the mean score of parentally accepted children is 41.1 and that of parentally rejected children is 57.4. The 't'-value is 18.95 which is significant at 0.01 level. The results imply that two groups differ significantly from each other on factor 'C' (Future/Goals Risk) of risk taking behaviour. Parentally rejected children are high on this dimension as compared to parentally accepted children. Parentally accepted children are taking less unhealthy future/goals risks as they are following the predetermined goals. They don't wait for the suggestions of other people regarding their future. They consult teachers, parents and other experts as early as possible for sake of their future. They are eager to safeguard their present as well as future. In contrary to them parentally rejected children are taking high unhealthy future/goals risk. They follow the path without caring about the type of destinations. They are not caring about their future. They believe that present should be charming and joyful. They prefer the jobs of economic privilege even if being completely opposite to their physique or capacity. They are not caring about the success of their coming life. Parentally accepted children are getting healthy environment at home, therefore, it is just possible that they take less unhealthy future/goals risk. They accept the guidance of parents and teachers. While as parentally

rejected children get unhealthy home environment and possibly due to parental rejection they take revenge against maltreatment of parents. They do not accept the guidance of parents and teachers and take unhealthy future/goals risk.

The perusal of Table 2 makes it evident that parentally accepted and rejected children differ significantly on factor 'D' (Adventurous Risk) of risk taking behaviour. The t -value computed is 16.71 which is significant at 0.01 level. The mean difference favours the parentally rejected children indicating thereby that parentally accepted children are taking less or no unhealthy adventurous risks. They love their lives and care about themselves. They don't visit the dangerous places and are less interested in the adventurous risks which are dangerous for their health in particular and life in general. On the other hand parentally rejected children take unhealthy adventurous risks without caring about their life and parents. They are fond of taking risks by visiting dangerous places and wild forests, swimming in deepest waters etc. They are habitual of climbing large trees. This can be explained on the grounds that when parents reject their children they hardly bother about their lives and want to be away from home at any cost. Therefore, they take refuge while taking unhealthy adventurous risk while as parentally accepted children feel home like a heaven, therefore, are hardly bothered to move away from home and take unhealthy adventurous risks.

It is evident from Table 2 that parentally accepted and rejected children do not differ significantly on factor 'E' (Security/Peace Risk) of risk taking behaviour. The mean score of parentally accepted children is 59.21 and that of parentally rejected children is 58.09. The t -value computed is 1.26 which is not significant even at 0.05 level. These results reveal that parentally accepted and rejected children don't differ from each other on factor 'E' (Security/Peace Risk) of risk taking behaviour. However, the mean scores depict that both parentally accepted and rejected children have an average level of security/peace risk, this can be due to the fact that the state is facing armed conflict since 1989. Therefore, both the groups take a social responsibility to go against the human rights violations and hardly bother about their lives. As both the groups have high mean score on this factor and the difference is not significant, no conclusive decisions can be taken.

These results are further shown in Fig. 2 given below.

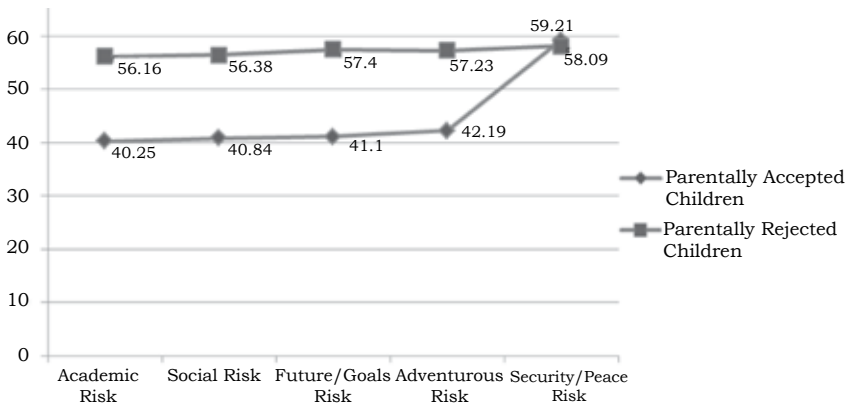


Fig 2: Comparison between Parentally Accepted and Rejected Children (N=204 on each) on Risk Taking Behaviour (factor wise)

The results presented in the Table 1 and 2 and Fig. 1 and 2, interpreted and discussed above imply that parentally accepted and rejected children differ significantly on the composite score of risk taking behaviour and also differ significantly on the factor ‘A’ (Academic Risk), factor ‘B’ (Social Risk), factor ‘C’ (Future/Goals Risk) and factor ‘D’ (Adventurous Risk) of risk taking behaviour, but don’t differ significantly on factor ‘E’ (Security /Peace Risk) of risk taking behaviour from each other. The results are in line with many studies as discussed below. (Bhan, 1984; Bierman et al., 1993; Elyan, 1992; Hernandez, 2007; Medinnus, 1965; Rasmi, 2008; Salama, 1991; Steward et al.,1999.

Medinnus (1965) found that rejected children had more delinquent problems as compared to accepted children and they had strong feeling that their parents rejected and neglected them. Bhan (1984) reveals that the aggressive children had poor family relationships. Parental acceptance–Rejection happens to be an important factor responsible for aggressive behaviour in children (Sinha, et al. 1990). Bader (2008) and Salama (1991) found significant positive correlations between children’s perceptions of parental rejection and children’s and adolescents’ high levels of aggression, hostility, and violent behaviour.

Early research on peer rejection has focused precisely on the high rates of aggressive behaviour that rejected students show (Bierman et al., 1993). Steward et al. (1999) reveal that individuals

who reported a tendency to misbehave during precollege years and whose mothers expressed less warmth and more aggression, and whose fathers expressed more aggression and more neglect were found to engage in at-risk behaviours more often. Hernandez (2007) found that children suffering from reactive attachment disorder-a condition related to poor or nonexistent caregiver bonding in early childhood may exhibit risky behaviours such as violence to themselves and others, setting fires, and a lack of inhibition in behavior toward strangers. Rasmi (2008) found that individuals who were rejected in childhood were consistently less likely to enjoy a higher level adjustment and psychological well-being, more likely to engage in risky behaviour, less likely to be satisfied with their lives, and more likely to encounter socio-cultural difficulties in young adulthood. Therefore, the hypotheses no. 01 and 02 which read as:

1. "there is significant difference between parentally accepted and rejected children on risk taking behaviour (composite score)" stands accepted and
2. "there is significant difference between parentally accepted and rejected children on risk taking behaviour" (factor wise)" is partially accepted.

Conclusions

1. Parentally accepted children are low on total unhealthy risk taking behaviour as compared to parentally rejected children.
2. Parentally accepted children are exhibiting low or no unhealthy academic risk; they learn whole content to pass the examination; they don't get indulged into any sort of unfair means in examination; they consult parents and teachers freely while facing any difficulty regarding their academics. On the other hand parentally rejected children are exhibiting unhealthy academic risk; they learn only selected questions to pass the examination; they use unfair means in examination; keeping parents in dark regarding their academic weaknesses.
3. Parentally accepted children exhibit less or no unhealthy social risk and they care about themselves while helping others in the society. They try to convince others about their decisions and they also care about the norms of society and cultural restrictions. While as parentally rejected children exhibit the opposite behaviour. They are usual of speaking about an unpopular issue in a meeting and don't care about the norms of society and cultural restrictions.

4. Parentally accepted children are low on unhealthy future/goals risk and they follow the path with predetermined goals. They are eager to safeguard their present as well as their future. On the other hand parentally rejected children are high on unhealthy future/goals risk.
5. Parentally accepted children exhibit less or no unhealthy adventurous risk. They are less interested in the adventurous risks which are dangerous for their health in particular and life in general. Parentally rejected children exhibit high unhealthy adventurous risk. They are fond of visiting dangerous places and wild forests, swimming in deepest waters and are habitual of climbing large trees.
5. Both parentally accepted and rejected children exhibit average level of unhealthy security/peace risk like protesting against human rights violation without caring about their own life. Helping people during the time when encounter like situation is on. This may be due to the fact, that state is facing armed conflict since 1989.

Suggestions for parents, teachers/counsellors

1. Parents should be sensitised by counselors about the ill effects of parental rejection so that they may change their attitudes towards their children which in turn is expected to result in healthy risk taking behaviour.
2. Parentally rejected children are exhibiting highly unhealthy risk taking behaviour as compared to parentally accepted children, so they need special care.
3. Parentally rejected children should be motivated to realise that the unhealthy risk taking behaviour exhibited by them destructs their life as well as the life of those associated with them. For this teachers need to give insight to these children so that they will exhibit healthy risk taking behaviour.
4. Parents should avoid rebuking their children and should encourage them for taking positive initiatives.
5. Administrators and planners should be sensitised for helping institutions by providing the counsellors so that the children with parental rejection can be cared properly.
6. Teachers should engage parentally rejected children in some school work and should seriously check the assigned work, so that they may not remain free to go for unhealthy risks.

7. The co-ordination of parents, teachers, children and other staff members of the school should be sought by the guidance and counselling worker in order to plan intervention programmes for parentally rejected children. This co-ordination can go a long way in helping these children in developing healthy risk taking behaviour.

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