



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Perceived Paternal Acceptance-Rejection as a Mediator of the Association Between Perceived Maternal Acceptance-Rejection and Psychological Adjustment: Effect of Gender

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ABSTRACT

The present study explores the mediating role of perceived paternal acceptance-rejection on the association between perceived maternal acceptance-rejection and psychological adjustment and its gender-related facets among 551 secondary school students aged 11 to 15. Results suggest paternal acceptance-rejection partially mediates this relationship for both genders, impacting positive self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness, and positive worldview. It partially mediates hostility and emotional stability for females and fully mediates for males. However, it does not affect self-esteem for either gender.

The relationship between mother-father-child is at the heart of our understanding of the social and psychological child development. Most theories in psychology have focused on this relationship and reported that childhood is a significant stage in the lives of individuals (Freud, 1942; Bowlby, 1951). Another theory within the same vein is the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory developed by Rohner (1975) and recently known as the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection (IPAR) Theory (Rohner, 2016; Khaleque, 2017). This theory can be explained as a 'theory of socialization' and 'lifespan development' that seeks to explain the causes, consequences, and other relevant factors of parental acceptance and rejection throughout the world (Rohner, 1986). The concepts of perceived acceptance and rejection, which are the basic concepts of the theory, are related to the way individuals interpret the parental behaviours of their caregivers. It assumes that the perceived acceptance or rejection of the parents has a powerful and unique effect on the child (Rohner et al., 2005; Putnick et al., 2015; Khaleque, 2017). This study is based on the IPAR Theory mentioned above. A key aspect of IPAR Theory is the dimension of warmth in parenting, which posits that individuals need to be accepted

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by people who are important to them. It is furthermore argued that the need for acceptance is valid for all people and is independent of their culture, ethnicity, appearance, social status, language, and geography (Rohner, 1986; Rohner, 2016). Within the framework of this theory, warmth is the emotional bond established between parents and children and the physical, verbal, and symbolic behaviours used by the parents to reveal their feelings of warmth. The dimension of warmth represents a continuum with acceptance at one end and rejection at the other. While the perception of acceptance forms because of closeness, care, relaxation, nutrition, support and love experienced by the child with their primary caregivers, the perception of rejection is formed as a result of both the absence of these experiences and the presence of harmful physical and/or psychological behaviours (Rohner et al., 2012; Rohner, 2016).

However, extensive research within the framework of the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory indicates that parental rejection will occur from any combination of the four basic representations. These are (1) cold/unaffectionate, (2) hostile and aggressive, (3) indifferent and neglecting, and (4) undifferentiated rejection. Cold/unaffectionate is depicted as the parent withholding warmth, love and affection from the child and behaving coldly towards the child; thus, the child perceives the parental behaviour as rejecting. Hostile and aggressive include parents' feelings of hostility and aggressive behaviour towards their children. Another representation, indifference and neglect, is the negligent behaviour of parents by being indifferent towards their children. Undifferentiated rejection is the belief that the child is not loved by his parents even though there is no apparent coldness, aggression, or indifference towards the child from the parents (Rohner, 1986; Rohner et al., 2012; Rohner, 2016).

The IPAR Theory consists of three sub-theories: personality sub-theory, coping sub-theory, and sociocultural sub-theory. Personality sub-theory suggests that everyone will react the same way to the acceptance or rejection they perceive from their parents or other attachment figures, regardless of sociocultural system, race, or gender. The first question of the theory is whether this view is correct. The second question is about the extent to which the effects of childhood rejection continue into adulthood and old age. The other sub-theory of coping has only one question: Why are some people rejected by their parents, coping more effectively than others? One of the questions that belong to the final sub-theory sociocultural is why the behaviour patterns of parents change towards children and whether certain psychological, familial or social factors are related to these behaviour patterns; another question is how the general structure, and beliefs of society are related to acceptance or rejection in childhood (Rohner, 1986; Rohner et al. 2012; Rohner, 2016).

Moreover, in the IPAR Theory, psychological adjustment is defined regarding acceptance-rejection syndrome. According to this syndrome, individuals who perceive acceptance from their attachment figures tend to develop (a) low hostility/aggression, (b) independence, (c) positive self-esteem, (d) positive self-adequacy, (e) emotional stability, (f) emotional responsiveness and (g) positive worldview yet individuals who perceive rejection from their attachment figures tend to develop (a) hostility/aggression, (b) dependence or defensive independence, (c) negative self-esteem, (d) negative self-adequacy, (e) emotional instability, (f) emotional unresponsiveness and (g) negative worldview (Khaleque & Rohner, 2012; Rohner, 2016).

The seven psychological dimensions mentioned above are accepted to develop concerning acceptance or rejection because when the individuals' need for positive responses from people who are important to them, which occurs during the evolutionary process on the biological basis, is not sufficiently met by parents or other attachment figures, they tend to behave in an anxious and insecure manner. At this point, hostility/aggression consists of every behaviour intended to harm someone or something deliberately and an internal feeling of hatred, anger, or rage (Rohner, 2005). The dependence or defensive independence dimension includes an inner desire or behaviours to see emotional support, care, attention, or similar behaviours from attachment figures. As the perceived rejection from attachment figures increases, the level of addiction increases. After a point, this situation turns into defensive independence. In other words, for children who perceive a continuous rejection from their parents, asking for love/attention from their parents, who are hostile and/or indifferent, turns into a painful situation. After a while, these children become withdrawn and attempt less and less positive reactions or deny their needs (Rohner, 1986, 2005; Rohner et al., 2012). The third dimension of adjustment self-esteem universally corresponds to the emotional judgments made by people about their values. Rejected people believe their attachment figures do not love them, so they develop negative self-esteem by not seeing themselves as worthy of being loved. They feel that they cannot meet the need for love and acceptance, one of their most basic needs. By generalizing these feelings, they also develop a negative sense of self-adequacy with the view that they are not good at meeting their needs (Khaleque & Rohner, 2012). The emotional-

unresponsiveness dimension is defined as the ability of individuals to express their feelings openly and freely. According to Rohner, children rejected by their parents emotionally shut themselves out to avoid the pain of rejection; since they cannot learn to give and receive love within the family, they have difficulty in receiving and giving love even though they need it (Rohner, 1986; Rohner, 2016). Emotional stability, on the other hand, is described as the state of being tolerant of setbacks, failures, difficulties, or stressful circumstances without overreacting and having a balanced mood. However, emotional instability may occur because of negative emotions created by rejection, and individuals may display inconsistent behaviours with extreme emotions in the face of stressful situations. According to Rohner, children rejected by their parents have low stress tolerance and can exhibit extreme emotions when faced with a stressful situation (Rohner, 1986; Rohner, 2016). All these painful emotions cause rejected people to develop a negative worldview by perceiving life and interpersonal relationships as unreliable, hostile, threatening, and dangerous (Khaleque & Rohner, 2012).

As was mentioned before, IPAR Theory focuses on the individuals' perceived acceptance and rejection from the people who are important to them and the possible effects it has on the person. The significant people mentioned in the theory are those with whom a child or an adult has a long-term emotional bond that cannot be exchanged with anyone else. In adulthood, these people are seen as intimate partners, while the most significant persons in childhood are parents. According to the result of a meta-analysis study conducted in 2001, even parents generally refer to mothers and fathers. 84% of the studies examining this concept were related to mothers, and only 16% of the fathers were included (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). The reason why the focus is on mothers in the studies is that the main caregiver is the mother in many psychological theories and the explanation of child development through mothers in general (Palm, 2014). The fact that most of the studies using the concept of parents involve only mothers resulted in ignoring the possible effects of fathers on children for a long time, and the number of studies on this subject remained limited during this period (Daniel, Madigan, and Jenkins, 2016; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). While there may be points where the functions of mothers and fathers overlap on the child, both parents may also have independent effects and contributions in raising children. Therefore, it is not the correct approach to see the mother and father as one and to examine the effects of only one of them in research (Jeynes, 2016). Based on the view that parents are the most important contributors to child development, more research is missed on the different contributions of parents to children (as cited in Finley et al., 2008). In fact, in the Interpersonal Acceptance- Rejection Theory, which is the basis of the study, it is emphasized that while many studies are based only on mothers, mothers and fathers should also be studied together through parallel scales (Rohner & 2001; Sultana & Khaleque, 2016). Therefore, it is beneficial to examine the possible effect on the child of the father but not only of the mother.

Similarly, when examining the effects of parental acceptance-rejection on children and looking at studies examining maternal and paternal rejection together, it is seen that the results are not consistent. While some studies show that the perceived acceptance-rejection of only one parent is significant, other studies report that both parents are, and the perceived acceptance-rejection of one parent is better than the perceived level of the other (Rohner, 2014; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). Therefore, in this case, it may be significant to evaluate the contributions of the mother and father to the child together.

On the other hand, relevant studies also reported that examining the differences based on parent and child's gender will provide valuable information on parent-child interaction (Droppleman & Schaefer, 1963; Nilsson, 2016). In this context, some studies reported that girls tend to perceive their parents as more accepting than boys; however, studies that have obtained the opposite results or did not find a gender difference are also available in the literature (Ali et al., 2015). Rohner and Khaleque (2003) report that gender-related changes in parental acceptance and rejection perception are cultural, and the results may vary from country to country and thus cannot be consistent. At this point, when the IPAR Some studies, including the examination of Turkish samples, stated that there are no significant differences in parental acceptance-rejection levels according to the gender of the child (Gürmen & Rohner, 2014; Polat, 1988). Moreover, there are research findings that perceived maternal and paternal acceptance-rejection levels differ significantly according to the child's gender. According to these studies, boys perceive more rejection from their mothers and fathers than girls (Keskiner, 2012).

Finally, the IPAR Theory literature indicates that studies on the level of perceived acceptance-rejection from parents usually focused on the general psychological adjustment level obtained from the total score of the Personality Assessment Scale developed within the scope of the theory (Rohner, 2014; Ali et al., 2015). There

are relatively few studies with a focus on the effects of perceived acceptance-rejection from the mother and father on the sub-dimensions of psychological adjustment (Ansari, 2013). To illustrate, in a meta-analysis study conducted by Khaleque and Rohner (2012), the psychological adjustment dimension was limited to its sub-dimensions and the relationship between the perceived acceptance-rejection level from the mother and father and the sub-dimensions was analysed. It was found that there was a significant relationship between children's perceived levels of acceptance and rejection from both parents and the sub-dimensions of psychological adjustment (as cited in Rohner et al., 2012).

In conclusion, considering the findings mentioned above, this study aims to examine the possible mediating role of perceived paternal acceptance-rejection in the association between the perceived maternal acceptance-rejection and the psychological adjustment with its sub-dimensions in terms of gender.

Method

Participants

A total of 592 students, consisting of 283 females and 309 males, whose parents are married and cohabiting, participated in the study conducted in secondary schools located in the Kağıthane district of Istanbul. However, 551 subjects (272 females, 279 males) aged between 11 and 15 ($\mu = 12.78$; $SD = 1.28$), whose data were complete after the loss of subjects due to not answering some of the scales properly, were included in the sample.

Measures

Personal Information Form: Demographic information such as age, gender and education level, was collected with this form

Parental Acceptance and Rejection Questionnaire – Mother and Father (Child Short Form): The current study used the short form of the Parental Acceptance and Rejection Scale Child Form to determine the perceived parental acceptance and rejection levels of the participants. Parental Acceptance and Rejection Scale (PARQ) is a self-report scale designed by Rohner in 1971 to determine the levels of acceptance and rejection perceived by individuals from their parents. The three versions of the scale are adult, parent, and child. The Child PARQ, the short form used in this study, assesses levels of acceptance and rejection perceived by children aged 9-17 in their relationships with their parents. PARQ is evaluated separately for the mother and father. Perceived acceptance and rejection in the relationship with the father is evaluated by "PARQ: Father;" perceived acceptance and rejection of the relationship with the mother is evaluated by "PARQ: Mother". In addition, in the mother and father forms, the sentences of the items are parallel and only the subjects change to "my mother" or "my father" (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005). There are 60 questions in the original form, but the short form consists of 24 items. Polat (1988) made the Turkish adaptation of the scale. Reliability analysis of Turkish short forms yielded that the Cronbach alpha value of the mother form was .89; the father form was .90 (Polat, 1988). In this study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient of the Child PARQ short form was found to be .82 for both the mother and father forms.

Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Child PAQ): The Personality Assessment Scale (PAQ), developed by Rohner in 1978 was used to determine the general psychological adjustment of children in the study (Rohner, 1978). The scale consists of seven subscales: hostility/aggression, dependence, self-esteem, self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness, emotional stability, and worldview. These subscales also represent seven personality traits thought to be influenced by acceptance and rejection in IPAR Theory. The sum of these subscales also shows the general psychological adjustment of the individual. The Child PAQ used in this study evaluates the general psychological adjustment of children between the ages of 7-12 and consists of a total of 42 items that examine each of the seven subscales mentioned above with 6 items. PAQ is a 4-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (almost never true at all) to 4 (almost always true). Cronbach alpha value of child PAQ varied between .50 and .74. The Cronbach alpha value of the whole form was .88. The Turkish adaptation of the scale was made by Varan (2013) with 1657 subjects between the ages of 9-18. The internal consistency Cronbach alpha values of the subscales varied between .53 and .80; the total internal consistency value was calculated as .86. In this study, Cronbach alpha values of subscales of Child PAQ; .76 for hostility/aggression, .73 for dependence, .68 for negative self-esteem, .75 for negative self-adequacy, .74 for emotional unresponsiveness, .75 for emotional instability, .65 for negative worldview. Cronbach's alpha value for the whole scale, which means general psychological adjustment, was found to be .86.

Procedure

The study obtained approval from the relevant university ethical committee before the data collection started. The application was carried out collectively in classrooms, during school class hours, with volunteers, who allowed their data to be used. Before the students started answering the scales given to them, the instructions for the scales were explained to them. The students were asked not to write names in any part of the scale forms, and it was declared that the information collected from them would only be read by the researchers and that this information would not be given to the school administration, teachers or parents. The order of the scales was changed in each application to avoid the effect of the order. Each application took 30-35 minutes on average.

Results

The data was checked for outliers and missing values before the analyses. By using the list-wise deletion procedure (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005), cases missing data on more than one item on any scale and more than two items on the overall questionnaire were removed from the data set. The mean substitution method was employed for the remaining missing cases. Non-normality, linearity, and restriction of range assumptions were also checked in the data. The data from the Parental Acceptance and Rejection Questionnaire mother and father forms were found to violate the normality assumption, so the inverse transformation method was utilized to normalize them. Statistical analysis was undertaken after the data revealed appropriate features for parametric testing.

Firstly, Pearson's *r* correlation coefficients were calculated to understand the relationships among the variables. As expected, the results showed that both maternal and paternal acceptance-rejection scales were positively correlated with psychological adjustment, low hostility/aggression, positive self-esteem, positive self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness, emotional stability, and positive worldview. In addition to that, there was no significant correlation between dependence and both parental acceptance-rejection scales (Table 1).

Table 1. Correlations between variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Maternal Acceptance-Rejection	1									
Paternal Acceptance-Rejection	.649**	1								
Psychological Adjustment	.556**	.526**	1							
Low Hostility/Aggression	.376**	.412**	.768**	1						
Dependence	-.027	-.005	.178**	.103**	1					
Positive Self-Esteem	.338**	.270**	.539**	.245**	-.183**	1				
Positive Self-Adequacy	.449**	.428**	.684**	.391**	-.105*	.489**	1			
Emotional Responsiveness	.481**	.398**	.660**	.341**	-.151**	.389**	.530**	1		
Emotional Stability	.342**	.330**	.745**	.611**	.106*	.247**	.349**	.328**	1	
Positive Worldview	.493**	.443**	.806**	.556**	-.010	.421**	.457**	.504**	.531**	1

p*<.05, *p*<.001

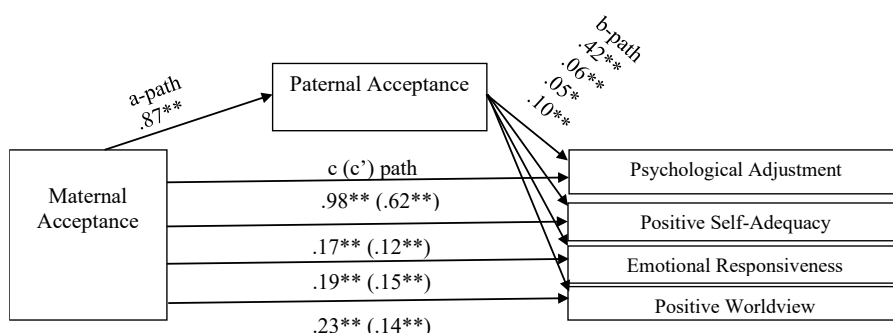
To be able to evaluate the relationships between the variables of the study, all analyses were carried out using the PROCESS macro statistical software program, developed by Hayes (2013). The mediating role of paternal acceptance-rejection in the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection and psychological adjustment, low hostility/aggression, positive self-esteem, positive self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness, emotional stability, and positive worldview was investigated separately for males and females to determine the effect of gender. To assess for mediating roles, the four-step method suggested by Baron and Kenny was followed (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

A variable mediates the relationship between two variables only if, according to Baron and Kenny: 1) the Predictor should significantly predict the outcome, 2) the Predictor should significantly predict the mediator, 3) the Mediator should retain predicting outcome after controlling for the effect of predictor, 4) After adding the mediator to the model, predictive effect of predictor either disappears or diminishes.

As it was mentioned earlier, there was no significant correlation between dependence and parental acceptance-rejection; therefore, dependence was discarded from further analysis. Seven different models were evaluated separately for male and female participants. The significance of indirect effects was assessed using the bootstrapping procedure and Sobel test. The indirect effect was calculated for every 1000 bootstrapped samples and indirect effects of mediating variables were accepted as significant if there was no zero between the %95 confidence intervals obtained (Preacher and Hayes, 2008). The proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by indirect effects was also calculated to see the effect size (R^2_{med}) (Hayes, 2013).

Mediational analysis showed that paternal acceptance-rejection has a “partial” mediational role in the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection and psychological adjustment, positive self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness, and positive worldview separately for both male and female participants (Figure 1 and Figure 2). There was a significant indirect effect of maternal acceptance-rejection on psychological adjustment (0.36, $Z = 4.18$, $p < .01$, $R^2_{med} = .23$), positive self-adequacy (0.05, $Z = 2.66$, $p < .01$, $R^2_{med} = .15$), emotional responsiveness (0.04, $Z = 2.05$, $p < .05$, $R^2_{med} = .15$) and positive worldview (0.09, $Z = 3.35$, $p < .01$, $R^2_{med} = .17$) for male participants. There was also a significant indirect effect of maternal acceptance-rejection on psychological adjustment (0.29, $Z = 4.01$, $p < .01$, $R^2_{med} = .23$), positive self-adequacy (0.06, $Z = 3.77$, $p < .01$, $R^2_{med} = .15$), emotional responsiveness (0.04, $Z = 2.26$, $p < .05$, $R^2_{med} = .15$) and positive worldview (0.06, $Z = 3.04$, $p < .01$, $R^2_{med} = .18$) for female participants. There was no zero between the %95 confidence intervals obtained for all models.

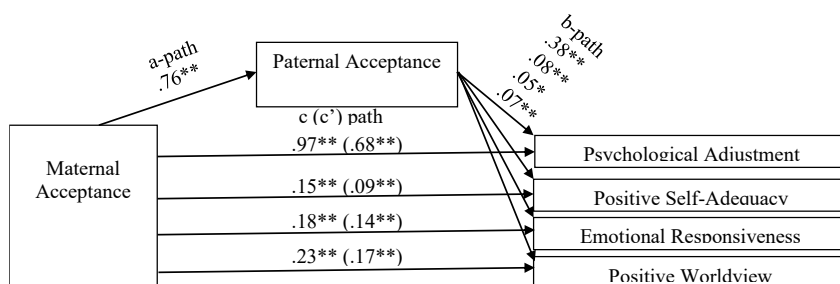
Figure 1. Mediational role of perceived paternal acceptance-rejection in the relationship between perceived maternal acceptance-rejection and psychological adjustment, positive self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness, and positive worldview for male participants



Note1: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Note2: Unstandardized coefficients were presented in the figure

Figure 2. Mediational role of perceived paternal acceptance-rejection in the relationship between perceived maternal acceptance-rejection and Psychological Adjustment, Positive Self-Adequacy, Emotional Responsiveness and Positive Worldview for female participants



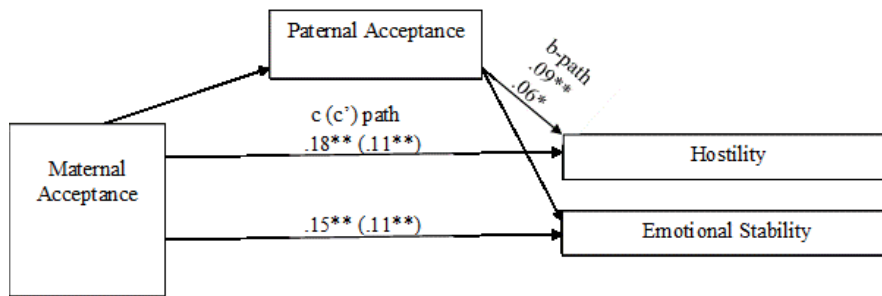
Note1: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Note2: Unstandardized coefficients were presented in the figure.

In addition, results also showed that paternal acceptance-rejection is not a mediator in the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection and self-esteem for both male and female participants, respectively ($Z = 1.30$, $p > .05$; $Z = 0.83$, $p > .05$). Moreover, 95% bootstrap CI contains zero for both males and females. R^2_{med} indicates only 9% of variance explained for males and 5% for females.

Finally, paternal acceptance-rejection has a "partial" mediational role in the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection and hostility and emotional stability for female participants. The indirect effect of maternal acceptance-rejection on hostility and emotional stability is also significant (0.07 , $Z = 3.25$, $p < .01$, $R^2_{med} = .12$; 0.04 , $Z = 2.42$, $p < .05$, $R^2_{med} = .11$) (Figure 3). On the other hand, paternal acceptance-rejection has a full mediation role in the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection and hostility (Figure 3) and the relationship between maternal acceptance-rejection and emotional stability (Figure 4) for male participants only. The indirect effect of maternal acceptance-rejection on hostility and emotional stability is also significant (0.10 , $Z = 4.00$, $p < .01$, $R^2_{med} = .11$; 0.08 , $Z = 3.29$, $p < .01$, $R^2_{med} = .07$). There was no zero between the %95 confidence intervals obtained for models. Unstandardized direct, indirect, and total effects of all tested mediational analysis and effect sizes (R^2_{med}) can be seen in Table 2.

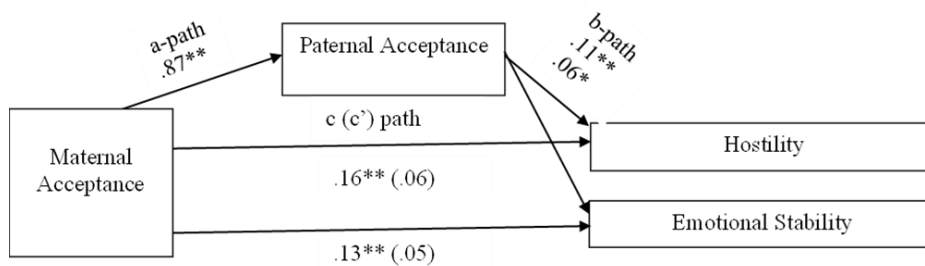
Figure 3. Mediational role of perceived paternal acceptance-rejection in the relationship between perceived maternal acceptance-rejection and hostility, emotional stability for female participants



Note1: ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Note2: Unstandardized coefficients were presented in the figure.

Figure 4. Mediational role of perceived paternal acceptance-rejection in the relationship between perceived maternal acceptance-rejection and hostility, emotional stability for male participants



Note1: ** $p < .01$

Note2: Unstandardized coefficients were presented in the figure.

Table 2. Unstandardized direct, indirect, and total effects of all tested mediational analysis and effect sizes for tested models

Gender	Predictor	Mediator	Criterion	Effects	%95 CI	R^2_{med}
Male	Maternal Acceptance-Rejection	Paternal Acceptance-Rejection	Psychological Adjustment	Direct	.62**	0.38 - 0.86
				Indirect	.36	0.19 - 0.56
				Total	.98**	0.80 - 1.17

Table 2. (Continued)

Male	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Hostility	Direct	.06	0.00 – 0.13	
				Indirect	.10	0.04 – 0.15	
				Total	.16**	0.11 – 0.21	
Male	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Self-Esteem	Direct	.09**	0.04 – 0.12	
				Indirect	.02	0.00 – 0.04	
				Total	.10**	0.07 – 0.13	
Male	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Self-Adequacy	Direct	.12**	0.07 – 0.18	
				Indirect	.05	0.001 – 0.09	
				Total	.17**	0.13 – 0.21	
Male	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Emotional Responsiveness	Direct	.15**	0.09 – 0.20	
				Indirect	.04	0.005 – 0.08	
				Total	.19**	0.15 – 0.24	
Male	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Emotional Stability	Direct	.05	-0.02 – 0.12	
				Indirect	.08	0.03 – 0.14	
				Total	.13**	0.08 – 0.18	
Male	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Positive Worldview	Direct	.15**	0.07 – 0.21	
				Indirect	.09	0.03 – 0.14	
				Total	.23	0.18 – 0.29	
Female	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Psychological Adjustment	Direct	.68**	0.47 – 0.88	
				Indirect	.29	0.13 – 0.49	
				Total	.97**	0.80 – 1.14	
Female	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Hostility	Direct	.11**	0.04 – 0.17	
				Indirect	.07	0.02 – 0.12	
				Total	.18**	0.13 – 0.22	
Female	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Self-Esteem	Direct	.07**	0.03 – 0.11	
				Indirect	.01	-0.01 – 0.04	
				Total	.08	0.05 – 0.11	
Female	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Self-Adequacy	Direct	.09**	0.05 – 0.14	
				Indirect	.06	0.02 – 0.10	
				Total	.15**	0.11 – 0.19	
Female	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Emotional Responsiveness	Direct	.15	0.10 – 0.19	
				Indirect	.03	0.002 – 0.07	
				Total	.18**	0.014 – 0.21	
Female	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Emotional Stability	Direct	.11**	0.05 – 0.16	
				Indirect	.04	0.01 – 0.09	
				Total	.15**	0.11 – 0.19	

Table 2. (Continued)

Female	Maternal Acceptance- Rejection	Paternal Acceptance- Rejection	Positive Worldview	Direct	.17**	0.11 – 0.23	.18
				Indirect	.06	0.01 – 0.11	
				Total	0.23**	0.18 – 0.27	

Adequacy of Sample Size

The study of Fritz and Mackinnon (2007) was used as a reference point to decide the adequacy of the sample size. The significant direct effects (c) obtained in this study include wide range of values from .09 to .68. Moreover, significant relationships between maternal acceptance-rejection and the mediator (a) obtained in the study are between .76 and .87, and significant relationships between the mediator and dependent variables (b) are between .05 and .42. In the light of these findings, it has been seen that the significant effects obtained in the tested models range from small to huge (Cohen, 1988). Since .08 power was suggested in mediation analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986), the number of participants in this study was compared with the values reported by Fritz and Mackinnon (2007) for a small and huge effect in their study at .08 power. This comparison showed that 551 participants are higher than the suggested number of participants for both the direct effect of .14 and the direct effect of .59 (445 and 404 respectively). In other words, the current study has an adequate number of participants to find mediated effects.

Discussion

As mentioned before, the study aimed to examine whether perceived acceptance-rejection from the father plays a mediating role in the relationship between the level of perceived acceptance-rejection from the mother and the general psychological adjustment along with its sub-dimensions in the context of gender. In this context, a finding obtained is that there is a positive relationship between perceived acceptance-rejection from the mother and father and all sub-dimensions of psychological adjustment except dependency. This finding supports the literature on the subject. Results of a meta-analysis showed that studies conducted with children from 1975 to 2010, including 14 published, 22 unpublished, and 36 studies in total, perceived acceptance-rejection from both mother and father shows a significant correlation with personality traits in all societies (Khaleque & Rohner 2012).

However, in this study, it is seen that there is no significant relationship between perceived acceptance-rejection from parents and the dependency dimension. The probable reason for this can be the fact that the so-called relationship is non-linear. Six of the sub-dimensions (hostility/aggression, self-esteem, self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness, emotional stability, and worldview) are claimed to be related to parental acceptance-rejection level in the personality sub-theory of the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory. While they have a linear relationship with the level of acceptance; dependency has a nonlinear relationship. As the perceived rejection from parents increases, the need for positive reactions of children increases to a point. After a point that varies from person to person, anger and other negative emotions prevent the person's desire to receive a positive response, and dependence begins to decrease and turns into reactive independence (Khaleque & Rohner, 2012; Rohner et al., 2012). As a matter of fact, in a meta-analysis study conducted with 43 studies from different cultures, it was stated that the relationship between dependency and parental rejection is often very low compared to other sub-dimensions (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002).

From a personal perspective, this finding highlights the complexity of the dependency dimension. It suggests that children's emotional needs may vary significantly based on their perception of parental rejection, potentially evolving from a desire for acceptance to emotional detachment. This non-linear trajectory seems to align with interpersonal dynamics that change with increased rejection. In future studies, it would be important to explore how socio-cultural factors shape this development.

Another finding obtained from the study showed that perceived acceptance-rejection from the father played a partial mediating role for both girls and boys in the relationship between perceived acceptance-rejection from the mother and general psychological adjustment, positive self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness, and positive worldview. In other words, the father has an effect that partially strengthens the mother's effect in terms of the mentioned dimensions. To the best of our knowledge, no research has been found in the relevant literature that examines it in the context of the mediation of the previously mentioned relationship. However, this result supports the findings of studies indicating that the possible effect of the father on the child should not be ignored rather than focusing only on the mother (Jeynes, 2016).

From our perspective as the researchers, these findings underscore the need to consider traditional assumptions about parental roles. While the mother is often seen as the primary caregiver, it is clear that the father's influence is also significant in shaping children's psychological outcomes, particularly in positive self-concepts. This challenges conventional thinking, especially in societies where father-child interactions may be culturally minimized, suggesting that fathers should be more actively involved in parenting for healthier development outcomes.

In addition, another finding obtained from the study is that while perceived acceptance-rejection from the father is a partial mediator for girls in the relationship between perceived acceptance-rejection from the mother and hostility and emotional stability for females; it has a full mediating role in the relationship between perceived acceptance-rejection from the mother and hostility and emotional stability for males. In other words, while factors other than paternal factors are also effective in this relationship for girls, only father acceptance-rejection in boys has a mediating role in the mentioned relationship. Although there is no study on the sub-dimensions of psychological adjustment in the relevant literature (as far as we know), the finding seems to support the relevant findings showing its effectiveness in boy-father interaction, especially in terms of hostility (Hussain & Munaf, 2012).

As researchers, we find these gender-specific findings particularly intriguing. It suggests that boys may be more sensitive to their father's acceptance-rejection, which could have implications for how we understand gendered parenting dynamics. Boys might model emotional stability and hostility management more closely on their father's behaviour, whereas girls may draw from a wider range of influences. Future research could delve into how cultural and familial expectations of gender roles shape these dynamics and further clarify why boys appear to be more influenced by paternal figures in certain areas.

Finally, the finding obtained from the study was that perceived acceptance-rejection from the father did not have any mediating role in the relationship between perceived acceptance-rejection from the mother and self-esteem, for both girls and boys. In this context, it is seen that self-esteem is only related to acceptance and rejection perceived by the mother, and the father has no effect on both girls and boys. However, this result has not previously been described. Preliminary work on this subject was undertaken by many researchers and findings suggest that interaction with both parents is important for the development of self-esteem (Keizer et al., 2019; Amat, 2014). Furthermore, studies focused solely on fathers also found a significant association between father-child interaction and self-esteem (Antonopoulou et al., 2012). Even if this finding contradicts the previous works, it is also in line with findings related to the association between socioeconomic status (SES) and self-esteem. Findings suggest that SES is a significant predictor of self-esteem, specifically lower SES may lead to lower self-esteem (Malka & Miller, 2006). In this study, research data were obtained from children living in an area that represents a relatively lower socio-economic level so, this finding related to self-esteem can be affected by SES. To develop better understanding, findings must be replicated in a different sample from different SES in the future.

In our view, this finding, while unexpected, aligns with broader research indicating the complex role of socio-economic factors in shaping self-esteem. Given the lower socio-economic status of the sample in this study, it's plausible that the mother's role is more pronounced, as fathers in such contexts might be less involved due to traditional or economic pressures. This suggests that the father's role in self-esteem development may be more context-dependent, and future research should explore how varying socio-economic environments influence these dynamics.

In line with the findings obtained, this study is thought to be important in three aspects. First, the study tried to contribute to revealing the points where the mother and father effects differ by examining the maternal and paternal acceptance and rejection levels together. The second importance of the study is the effects of mother and father acceptance and rejection levels on sub-dimensions of general psychological adjustment, which are lacking in the literature. Finally, the possible parental effects were examined in terms of child gender in the study, and it is observed that the literature shows a limited number of such studies.

On the other hand, the research has some limitations. One of these is the sample. Research data were obtained from children living in an area that represents a relatively lower socio-economic level. Therefore, the dominance of traditional roles in the region may have increased the effectiveness of the mother on the child, while the father is a more distant figure, which may have led to less activity on the child. In our opinion, this highlights the need for future studies to sample diverse socio-economic levels to examine how these cultural

and economic contexts affect the roles of both parents. Another limitation of the study is that it has single informants and a cross-sectional design, so it can be seen as a common method bias, but because of Harman's single factor score of .19 in the study, possible negative effects seem tolerable. However, future studies may use other methods to avoid this bias.

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Data Availability: The datasets generated and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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