

Parental Acceptance-Rejection and Delinquent Behaviour among Adolescents: A Case Study of Slum Areas of Islamabad

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Abstract

The present study intended to explore the relationship between parental acceptance-rejection and delinquent behaviour among the adolescents of slum areas. The study sample consisted of 200 adolescents having an equal number of boys (n=100) and girls (n=100) with the age range of 13-17 years and informants (n=188) within the age range of 28-60 from the slum areas of Islamabad. The sample was approached from the slums of F-7 sector, Fauji Colony and Railway track near H-10 sector with the help of convenient sampling technique. To measure the perception of adolescents about their parents the Urdu translated Child version of Parental Acceptance-Rejection questionnaire (Rohner, 2005; Malik, 2011) was used. The reliability coefficient for Father Version and Mother Version was calculated to be .89 and .90 respectively. Whereas, for measuring the delinquent tendencies Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (SRDS) and Informant Reported Delinquency Scale (IRDS) (for boys) and SRDS-F and IRDS-F (for girls) were used. Strong correlation was found between all the measures that were significant at $p < 0.01$. Results suggested that boys and girls do not have differential perception of parental acceptance-rejection and both genders have equal likelihood of developing delinquent behaviour. Result also showed significant tendency of delinquent behaviour among adolescents who perceived more parental rejection than acceptance at $p < 0.01$.

Key words: Parental Acceptance-Rejection, Delinquent Behaviour, Slum Areas, Self

Reported and Informant Reported Delinquency Scale

Introduction

In the modern time period juvenile delinquency has become worldwide dilemma that has hindered the constructive growth of society on a larger extent (Nas, DeCastro, & Koops, 2005). Delinquency is separate from crime in a way that a crime is an act that breaks the society's written laws referred as criminal code whereas delinquency refers to those acts that are deviant to cultural laws or standards. Delinquency includes a variety of norm-breaking behaviours for which adolescents are illegitimately responsible; drug use, violent acts against

other persons and carrying weapon are some example of delinquency (Marte, 2008).

In Pakistan, during 2008 and 2009 the overall recorded juvenile crimes were estimated to be 374,076 and 383,383 with an increase ratio of 2.487%, as compared to 380,737 and 419,690 during 2010-2011, respectively (Tahir, Kauser, Tousif, Nazir, Arshad, & Butt, 2011). Yearly crime statistics of Punjab depicts 47.34% increase in reported theft cases and 69.62% increase in burglary incidents, whereas about 24,704 theft cases and 8,704 incidents of burglary were reported in 2007 as compared to 36,400 and 14,764 in 2011 (Ahmad, 2014).

This rapid increase in adolescents crimes have made researchers obliged to investigate the factors inculcating the delinquent tendencies in adolescents and address this problem that has serious impact over the social and moral structure of the society. Evidence suggests that family serves as a primary institution where child's behaviour is encouraged, suppressed, modified or learned (Dishion & Patterson, 2006). In this regard, parental affection and attachment are considered as an important mechanism relative to delinquency. Literature illustrates that adolescents perceived parental acceptance or rejection largely influence their social, behavioural and emotional capabilities (Kejerfors, 2007). Parental acceptance is the parental love and affection that can be expressed with physical (hugging, kissing, caressing, and comforting), verbal (praising, complimenting, and saying nice things to or about the child) and symbolic gestures. Whereas parental rejection is their aggression that refers to any behaviour physical (hitting, pushing, throwing things, and pinching), verbal (sarcastic, cursing, mocking, shouting, saying thoughtless, humiliating, or disparaging things to or about the child) and other hurtful, nonverbal symbolic gestures toward their children (Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2012).

Adolescents who are closer to their parents feel more affectionate and supporting and have strong self-control that helps them involve lesser in delinquency and other behavioural issues (Barnes, Hoffman, & Welte, 2006). Likewise adolescent's perception of strong relationship with parents make them more responsible, they respect the rules and regulations made for them, and withhold themselves from engaging in delinquent behaviour because they feel accountable, as compared to their peers who have weak bonding with their parents (Church, Wharton, & Taylor, 2009).

On the other hand, parenting to young children and adolescents in slum settlements is phenomenon of great difficulty and concern. Such parents face economic hardships and to encounter this poverty they usually work day and night and cannot keep themselves updated with their children's whereabouts. As a consequence, they get rude and aggressive

with law abiding behaviours like early involvement in risky sexual behaviours and unintentional pregnancy (Mumah, Kabiru, Izugbara, & Mukiira, 2014). Literature also signifies that the families where parent-child relationship is not strong can be the result of; their low socioeconomic background, family headed by uneducated parents, living in disadvantage neighbourhoods and facing financial difficulties. These distressing conditions have, in turn, been found to increase depression and negatively impact parental warmth and attentiveness toward children (White, Roosa, Weaver, & Nair, 2009). Previous literature also depicts that extremely negative behaviours of parents for example rejection, neglect and hostility are associated to self-reported delinquency (Barnown, Lucht, & Freyberger, 2005).

Theoretical Explication

It is commonly suspected that slums are characterized by the rebellious culture where there is no law acting and criminal activities are encouraged. Some theorists have profound theories that explain the foundation of delinquent behaviour. According to *Differential Opportunity Theory* there are different ways in which adolescents reach their aspirations, which may be either through legitimate or illegitimate means. In disorganized slum areas, under the presence and control of adult criminals on adolescents, assimilation of different age levels and mutual understanding of genuine people and criminals may lead an adolescent to adapt illegal ways to survive (Cloward & Ohlin, 1960). In *Sub-Culture Theory*, Cohen (1955) explained the phenomenon in terms of status frustration and strain that adolescents of these slums experienced in contrast with the standards of middle class boys. Moreover, *Theory of Differential Association* argues that delinquent behaviour is not innate but a learning process. The learning process is same for everyone and especially neighbours play a significant role in socialization of the children. Children becoming delinquents are due to their consistent exposure to disobedience towards the legal system. This learning occurs with interacting different people and discovering techniques to commit crime. Another reason is the unnecessary encouraging attitude of peers and elders including parents breaking laws (Sutherland, 1939).

Therefore, purpose of the present research is focused to investigate the tendency of delinquency among adolescents of slum areas as a result of their perceived parental acceptance and rejection. The slum areas are observed with increased crime risk and psychosocial problems (Das, Khara, Giri, & Bandyopadhyay, 2012). In spite of this serious notion, no such research is carried out that emphasizes the role of parents in delinquent behaviour of adolescents in slum areas of Pakistan. In an effort to fill this gap in the literature, many intervention plans can be devised and implemented by social scientists in these slum areas in order

to control the increased involvement of adolescents in delinquent activities.

METHOD

The objective of the research is to study the relationship between perceived Interpersonal (Parental) acceptance-rejection and delinquent behaviour among adolescents of slum areas.

Hypotheses

Following hypotheses have been formulated for the current study:

1. There will be a relationship between perceived Parental acceptance-rejection and delinquent behaviour of adolescents of slum areas.
2. Delinquent behavior will be higher among adolescents who perceive parental rejection than who perceive parental acceptance.
3. Boys will show high delinquent behaviour as compare to girls of slum areas.
4. There will be a difference between perceived parental acceptance-rejection scores of boys and girls of slum areas.

Sample

The sample comprised of 200 adolescents and 188 informants (in some cases informants provide information about more than one adolescent therefore the number of informants is less than adolescents) of slum areas. An equal number of boys (n=100) and girls (n=100) with age range between 13-17 years were taken. The age range of informants was between 28-60 years. For the present study data was collected from the slum areas of F-7 sector including boys (n= 28) and girls (n= 21), Fauji Colony boys (n= 39) and girls (n= 30), and railway track near H-10 sector boys (n= 40) and girls (n= 42) who were easily accessible to the researcher and willing to participate with the help of convenience sampling technique.

Sampling inclusion Criteria

To overcome the problem of natural reluctance to admit more serious offences with self-reports measures, coupled with the informant reported measures have been used in previous researches (Terman, 1995).

Therefore, the adolescents with informants available were selected for the sampling. Informants were people who were at least 10 years older to the sample taken and did not have blood relation with the subject, in order to be main unbiased

Instruments

For the present study following instruments were used:

Child Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire: Father and Mother, Short Forms (Child PARQ; Rohner, 2005): It is a self-report instrument designed to measure individuals' perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection (i.e., the warmth dimension of parenting). It measures individuals' perceptions of parental acceptance or rejection they received in their family. For the particular study Urdu versions (translated by Malik, 2011) of Child PARQ/Short form (Mother and Father Version) were used. The both PARQ forms were comprised of 24 items, and had four scales: (1) warmth/affection, (2) hostility/aggression, (3) indifference/neglect, and (4) undifferentiated rejection, each of which is scored to the following four categories: '4' as "almost always true", '3' as "sometimes true", '2' as "rarely true", '1' as "almost never true".

Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (SRDS) and Informant Reported Delinquency Scales (IRDS), Self-Reported Delinquency Scale-Female Version (SRDS-F) and Informant reported Scale-Female Version (IRDS-F):

To measure the delinquent behaviour among male adolescents SRDS and IRDS were used, whereas to measure the construct among female adolescents the adapted SRDS-F and IRDS-F developed by Zafar and Gul in 2014 (Unpublished Manuscript) were used in the study. The underlying patterns or dimensions of delinquency on both SRDS, IRDS, SRDS-F and IRDS-F are (1) Theft (2) Drug abuse (3) Lying (4) Non-compliance to adults (5) Police encounter and escape (6) Violence related delinquency (extortion, vandalism and aggression) (7) Cheating and gambling (8) Sex related delinquency (harassment, homosexuality and heterosexuality) The response categories of these scales were "never" = 0, "one time" = 1, "2-5 times" = 2 "5-10 times" = 3 and "10 or more times" = 4. Higher the score on both the scales mean higher the delinquency among adolescents. The alpha reliabilities for SRDS and IRDS were estimated to be .94 and .92 respectively.

Research Design and Procedure

For data collection adolescents of slum areas were selected by following convenience sampling technique. The participant's homogeneity and willingness to participate in the research was assured. Prior to the administration of the questionnaire booklet, the purpose of the study and details regarding all instruments were explained to the participants. After taking the informed consent a booklet comprised of PARQ (Mother and Father Form), SRDS for males and SRDS-F for females was administered individually on a sample of 200 participants (100 boys and 100 girls) by the researcher. For collecting the data from informants (n= 188) the IRDS and IRDS-F were administered. Researcher gave instructions about the questionnaires and explained each statement to the participants and informants and recorded the information carefully. The participants were assured that their identity will not be disclosed and this information will be used only for the research purpose.

RESULTS

Table 1

Mean, Standard Deviation and Reliability Coefficient of Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (SRDS), Informant Reported Delinquency Scale (IRDS), Self-Reported Delinquency Scale-Female Version (SRDS-F), Informant Reported Delinquency Scale-Female Version (IRDS-F), Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (Father, Mother Version)(N=100)

| Scales | N | M | SD | No. of Items | Alpha Coefficient |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|--------------|-------------------|
| SRDS | 100 | 8.19 | 9.26 | 27 | .86 |
| IRDS | 100 | 32.66 | 26.18 | 27 | .96 |
| SRDS-F | 100 | 4.15 | 6.27 | 28 | .82 |
| IRDS-F | 100 | 30.86 | 22.14 | 28 | .93 |
| PARQ-F | 200 | 60.18 | 17.86 | 24 | .89 |
| PARQ-M | 200 | 55.31 | 15.99 | 24 | .90 |

Table 1 shows Alpha Coefficient of the SRDS and IRDS for boys are .86 and .96 whereas, reliability of SRDS-F and IRDS-F for girls is .82 and .93, respectively. Furthermore, the reliability of PARQ (father version) is .89 and PARQ (mother

version) is .90. The results indicate overall good reliability and validity of all measures for the present study.

Table 2

Correlation matrix of scores of PARQ (Father & Mother version), SRDS (Self-Reported Delinquency Scale), and IRDS (Informant Reported Delinquency Scale) of boys (N=100).

| Scales | PARQ (Father version) | PARQ (mother version) | SRDS | IRDS |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|-------|
| PARQ (Father version) | - | .77** | .38** | .65** |
| PARQ (mother version) | | - | .45** | .70** |
| SRDS | | | - | .42** |
| IRDS | | | | - |

** $p < .01$

Table 2 shows that there exists strong correlation between PARQ Father and PARQ Mother ($r = .77, p < .01$), PARQ Father and SRDS ($r = .38, p < .01$), PARQ Father and IRDS ($r = .65, p < .01$), PARQ Mother and SRDS ($r = .45, p < .01$), PARQ Mother and IRDS ($r = .70, p < .01$), SRDS and IRDS ($r = .42, p < .01$). These statistics illustrate that these measures are the strong predictors of delinquency among males.

Table 3

Correlation matrix of scores of PARQ (Father & Mother version), SRDS-F (Self-Reported Delinquency Scale-Female Version), and IRDS-F (Informant Reported Delinquency Scale-Female Version) of girls (N=100).

| Scales | PARQ (Father version) | PARQ (mother version) | SRDS-Female | IRDS-Female |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| PARQ (Father version) | - | .77** | .86** | .64** |
| PARQ (mother version) | | - | .76** | .51** |
| SRDS-Female | | | - | .80** |
| IRDS-Female | | | | - |

** $p < .01$

Table 3 indicates that there exists strong correlation between PARQ Father and PARQ Mother ($r = .77, p < .01$), PARQ Father and SRDS-F ($r = .86, p < .01$), PARQ Father and IRDS-F ($r = .64, p < .01$), PARQ Mother and SRDS-F ($r = .76, p < .01$), PARQ Mother and IRDS-F ($r = .51, p < .01$), SRDS-F and IRDS-F ($r = .80, p < .01$). These statistics illustrate that these measures are the strong predictors of delinquency among females.

Table 4

Mean, Standard Deviation and t value of scores of Mother Acceptance-Rejection groups on SRDS (Self-Reported Delinquency Scale), for boys, (N=100).

| | | | | | | 95% CI | | | |
|------|------------|-----|-------|-------|------|--------|-------|------|-------------|
| | Mother | n | M | $S.D$ | t | p | LL | UL | Cohen's d |
| | Acceptance | 44 | 3.57 | 6.37 | | | | | |
| SRDS | | | | | 5.92 | .00 | 13.46 | 6.69 | 1.26 |
| | Rejection | 56 | 13.64 | 9.23 | | | | | |

Results in the table 4 show that the two groups differ significantly on SRDS ($t= 5.92$, $df= 98$, $p < .01$). The findings depict that boys who perceive more mother rejection ($M= 13.64$, $SD= 9.23$) have high tendency of delinquent behaviour as compared to those boys who perceive more mother acceptance ($M= 3.57$, $SD= 6.37$) on SRDS.

Table 5

Mean, Standard Deviation and t value of scores of Mother Acceptance-Rejection groups on SRDS-F (Self-Reported Delinquency Scale-Female Version) for girls (N=100).

| | | | | | | | 95% CI | | |
|--------|---------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| | <i>Mother</i> | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>S.D</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>LL</i> | <i>UL</i> | <i>Cohen's d</i> |
| | Acceptance | 54 | 1.59 | 2.92 | | | | | |
| SRDS-F | | | | | 3.72 | .00 | 7.26 | 2.20 | 0.83 |
| | Rejection | 46 | 6.33 | 7.47 | | | | | |

Self-Reported Delinquency Scale- female version(SRDS-F)

Results in the table 5 show that the two groups differ significantly on SRDS-F ($t= 3.72$, $df= 98$, $p<.01$). The results depicts that girls who perceive more mother rejection ($M= 6.33$, $SD= 7.47$) have high tendency of delinquent behaviour as compared to those girls who perceive more mother acceptance ($M= 1.59$, $SD= 2.92$) on SRDS-F.

Table 6

Mean, Standard Deviation and t value of scores of Father Acceptance-Rejection groups on SRDS (Self-Reported Delinquency Scale) for boys (N=100).

| | | | | | | | 95% CI | | |
|------|---------------|----------|----------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| | <i>Father</i> | <i>n</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>S.D</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>LL</i> | <i>UL</i> | <i>Cohen's d</i> |
| | Acceptance | 43 | 1.22 | 2.16 | | | | | |
| SRDS | | | | | 6.54 | .00 | 14.2 | 7.58 | 1.62 |
| | Rejection | 57 | 12.12 | 9.24 | | | | | |

| | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-----|------|------|------|
| Father Acceptance-rejection | 63.00 | 18.41 | 61.15 | 16.78 | 3.07 | .75 | 6.30 | 4.61 | 0.04 |
|-----------------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|------|-----|------|------|------|

$p=n.s, df=198$

The results of the table 8 illustrate no significant difference among the perception of boys as compared to girls on the PARQ father acceptance-rejection ($t= 3.07, df= 198, p= n.s$). The results indicate that boys and girls equally perceive their father to be less warming, aggressive and rejecting. However, the boys' mean is slightly higher that indicates that they perceive their father to be more rejecting.

Table 9

Mean differences, Standard Deviation, t value and Cohen's d of boys and girls on dimensions of Mother Acceptance-Rejection on PARQ (N=200).

| | boys | | girls | | | | 95% CI | | |
|-----------------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|------------------|
| | (n=100) | | (n=100) | | | | | | |
| PARQ | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> | <i>LL</i> | <i>UL</i> | <i>Cohen's d</i> |
| Mother Acceptance-rejection | 56.81 | 15.33 | 54.42 | 16.65 | .97 | .33 | 2.46 | 7.23 | 0.14 |

$p=n.s, df= 198$

Table 12 shows no significant difference among the perception of boys as compared to girls on the PARQ mother acceptance-rejection ($t= .97, df= 198, p= n.s$). Both genders equally perceive their mother to be less warming, aggressive and rejecting. However, the boys' mean is slightly higher that indicates that they perceive their mother to be more rejecting.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study was aimed at exploring the relationship between perceived parental acceptance-rejection and delinquent behaviour

among adolescents of slum areas. The result analysis showed strong relationship between parental acceptance-rejection and the delinquent tendencies of the adolescents (Table 2 and Table 3). When a child is born his first social interaction develops with parents, therefore, family environment plays a significant role in establishing harmony and sense of affiliation with the new born.

It is generally believed that the base of parent-child relationship and the way it is carried out identifies their social abilities and attitudes further in. In this context, many researchers have agreed to the fact that behavioural issues and maladjustment in children is fostered by negative family environment and poor relationship of parents with their children. Major characteristics are noted to be the presence of frequent and unresolved conflicts and negative communication or lack of communication with parents, which enhances the likelihood of developing socially inappropriate behaviours in other social contexts as well (Dekovic, Wissink, & Meijer, 2004).

In the study, result analysis showed significant presence of delinquent behaviour among rejected adolescents (Table 4 and 5). Further results also indicated that boys and girls, who perceive their father was rejected, have high tendency of delinquency (Table 6 and 7). A child starts to perceive his parents' rejection, when he comes across their cold and aggressive reactions. These perceived rejected parents do not give quality time to children and maintain strict discipline at home. They do not respond timely to the psychological, emotional and physical needs of their children that ultimately reflects their negligence towards children. The results of the present study are consistent with literature depicting that parents (father) of criminals are judged to be more aggressive and neglecting in contrast of non-criminals (Rafail & Haque, 1999). Likewise, consistent relationship was found between poor family interactions and delinquent behaviours (Sankey & Huon, 1999).

Further, current study results also indicated lower tendency of delinquent behaviour in those adolescents who perceive more parental acceptance (Table 4 and 5). Its natural need of a child to be appreciated, loved, and encouraged by parents. A strong parent child bonding can be developed when parents give quality time according to the requirement of the child. As a result of this strong emotional bonding, a child shows compliance to the parents and refrains from all those activities that are prohibited by parents. Thus, good association of parents and child endorses healthy development of child by promoting good peer relationship which in turn lessens the chances to deviate (Reitz, Dekovic, Meijer & Engles, 2006).

The result findings further indicated that boys and girls of slum areas both have significant tendency of delinquent behaviour (Table 4 and 5). Both genders perceive their parents to be rejected as a result of which they exhibit delinquency in more or less equal manner (Table 6 and 7). It was also observed during data collection that boys tend to involve more in violence related delinquency, gambling, and have increased encounter with police. Whereas, girls are found to be more aggressive and have tendency to do less threatening crimes like theft, lying, cheating and drug use. In Pakistani society, it is generally observed that girls are raised under close supervision, while boys are less monitored. By nature boys are bold, active, and confident and have more social exposure whereas girls are more family-oriented (Gecas & Seff, 1990; Obioha & Nthabi, 2011).

The result of the study further showed that boys and girls do not have different perception of parental acceptance-rejection (Table 8 and 9) and the prior research of Malik (2010) provides consistency and support to the findings of the present study. It is generally observed that adolescents perceive warmth and affection of mother greater than father. Slum area is marked with antisocial environment where there is increased prevalence of paternal criminality that ultimately cultivates negative perception of children about their fathers. In these circumstances fathers are usually substance users which make them negligent of their responsibilities that result in family conflicts. In this scenario, prior research reflects that adolescents are more comfortable to communicate with mothers as compared to fathers (Shek, 2002).

The above discussion of results leads to conclude that the slum areas serve as an obstacle in the normal upbringing of a child. It hinders personality characteristics flourishing, provokes delinquent behaviour and cultural conflicts. The inadequate facilities of schools and recreation force children to exert their energy in non-productive activities. As the slum community consists of people from different regions, they have their own personal values and most of them are criminals or have high tendency of delinquency.

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