

Relationship Between Parental Rejection and Personality

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Abstract:

Background: Parental rejection plays an important role in individual's life at different stages of their development. Some types of personality are the major predictors of mental illness and individuals' maladjustment. **Objective:** The purpose of the present study was to explore the possible relationship between parental rejection and personality of adults in the context of Bangladesh. **Methods:** A total 100 adults (39 male and 61 female) participated in this study. Their age range was 18 to 60 years. They were selected from Department of Psychiatry, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University, University of Dhaka and some residential areas of Dhaka city by purposive sampling. The instruments used in this study were a Demographic questionnaire, validated Bangla version of Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ), validated Bangla version of Adult version of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire for Father (Adult PARQ: Father) and Adult version of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire for Mother (Adult PARQ: Mother). **Results:** From this study, we found that paternal rejection is positively correlated with psychoticism but negatively correlated with extraversion at the 0.05 levels of significance. The result showed that there was no significant correlation between paternal rejection and neuroticism. Results also showed that maternal rejection is positively correlated with psychoticism and neuroticism at the 0.01 level of significance but negatively correlated with extraversion (at the 0.05 levels). **Conclusion:** These results suggest that there is an association between parental rejections and individual's personality.

Key word: Parental rejection, Personality, Psychoticism, Neuroticism, Extraversion.

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Introduction:

Parent-rearing style plays an important role in children's lives at different stages of their development. Longitudinal studies showed that well-adjusted children were associated with a consistent, firm, warm and supportive parental style^{1, 2}. On the other hand, a parental style defined by punishments and excessive control could help to develop a pattern of hostility and a lack of socialization in children³.

Parenting experiences, particularly warmth, rejection, overprotection, and discipline, have an important impact on personality formation and development⁴.

Parents are the persons who give birth and take care of us. The term parent is defined in Parental Acceptance-Rejection (PAR) theory as any person who has a more or less long term care giving responsibility for a child. Such person may be biological or adoptive parents, older siblings, grand parents or relatives⁵.

Parental rejection refers to the absence or withdrawal of warmth, love, or affection by parents toward their children. It can occur by the parents by the presence of a variety of physically and psychologically hurtful behaviors and affects to their children.

Extensive cross-cultural research over the course of 45 years reveals that parental rejection can be experienced by any combination of four principal expressions: 1) Cold and unaffectionate, the opposite of being warm and affectionate 2) Hostile and aggressive 3) Indifferent and neglecting and 4) Undifferentiated rejecting. Parental affection can be shown physically or verbally or with the use of culturally specific gesture. Aggression is the fact when parents act on feelings of hostility, anger, resentment or enmity. Neglect is the failure to provide for the material and physical needs of children and parents failure to attend appropriately to children social and emotional needs. Undifferentiated rejection refers to individuals' beliefs that their parents do not really care about them or love them even though there might not be clear behavioral indicators that the parents are neglecting, unaffectionate or aggressive toward them. PAR Theory predicts that parental

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rejection has consistent negative effects on the psychological adjustment and on behavioral functioning of both children and adults worldwide.

The behavior of a person depends upon his or her personality. Generally, personality refers to those characteristics of a person that account for consistent patterns of behavior, over Situations and time.⁶ The word personality “conveys a sense of consistency, internal causality, and personal distinctiveness”⁷. This issue of “personal distinctiveness is very important. Each individual is unique to the dimensions of personality. Eysenck developed a three-factor model of personality including Extroversion, Neuroticism, and Psychoticism⁸.

Extraversion is characterized by being outgoing, talkative, high on positive affect (feeling good), and in need of external stimulation. Psychoticism is associated not only with the liability to have a psychotic episode (or break with reality), but also with aggression. Psychotic behavior is rooted in the characteristics of tough mindedness, non-conformity, inconsideration, recklessness, hostility, anger and impulsiveness. Neuroticism is characterized by high levels of negative affect such as depression and anxiety. Neurotic people, who have low activation thresholds and unable to inhibit or control their emotional reactions, experience negative affect (fight-or-flight) in the face of minor stressors-they are easily nervous or upset. For children parent-child relationships are particularly important. A vast research literature shows that the quality of parent-child relationships characterized by parental acceptance (love) and rejection (lack of love) is a major predictor of psychological functioning and development for children and adult universally^{9, 10}.

However, any study dealt with the possible relationship between parental rejection and personality (Personality dimensions of Eysenck) has yet not been reported in Bangladesh as well as other countries. The outcome of this study is expected to contribute to find out a relationship between parental rejection and personality. So that using the information of this finding we can adapt appropriate parental behaviors towards children. The objective of this study is to find out whether there is any relationship between parental rejection and personality.

Methods:

Participants: The sample of the present research consisted of 100 healthy normal adult participants. The respondents were collected purposively from Department of Psychiatry,

Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (most of the participants were the attendance of psychiatric patients), University of Dhaka (most of the participants were students) and some defined residential area of Dhaka city namely- Jhikatola, Malibag and Mirpur. The age range of participants was between 18 to 60 years. Their educational qualifications were from class five to post graduation and they belonged to mostly middle class with urban background. Illiterate participants were excluded from this study.

Instruments: At first, a demographic questionnaire was given to get the personal information of the participants like age, sex, educational qualification, socioeconomic status, etc. Then three types of psychometric questionnaires were used. The first questionnaire was Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ) Bengali version¹¹, translated and standardized¹². The second questionnaire was Adult version of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire for Father (Adult PARQ: Father; originally developed⁵ and translated and standardized¹³. The third questionnaire was Adult version of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire for Mother (Adult PARQ: Mother; originally developed⁵ and translated and standardized¹³.

Rahman and Eysenck developed a norm of EPQ on 531 Bangladeshi women and 544 Bangladeshi men¹². The reliability of the EPQ is shown on Table-1 and was found high ($r=.70$ to $.80$).

Lie scale refers to the consistency of responses of the participant.

Table-I

The reliability of the Eysenck Personality questionnaire

	Psychoticism	Extraversion	Neuroticism	Lie scale
Males	.70	.77	.78	.80
Females	.70	.79	.80	.78

Split half reliability coefficient of Adult PARQ scale (Father) and Adult PARQ scale (Mother) was found .94 and .89 respectively and Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of these two scale were found .95 and .92 respectively. Both the scales were satisfactory in criterion and construct validity.

Procedure: The sample was collected from the mentioned study areas. The respondents were contracted individually

in hospital settings (psychotherapy room), University of Dhaka (common room, classroom, seminar and library room) and in their home. Before responding the questionnaires, participants' informed consent was taken and the researchers assured that the data would be kept confidential and would be used only for research purpose. The psychometric questionnaires were administered individually with a brief introduction about the purpose of the study. Rapport was established with the participants who agreed to fill the questionnaires. Most of them instantly filled-up the questionnaires with much enthusiasm. Those who had time constrain, questionnaires were left behind with them to be filled at their own suitable time and latter collected by the researchers. The first questionnaire was given to collect participants' personal information and the EPQ was the self-directed questionnaire. The participants answered the questions by circling the 'yes' or 'no' answer. For each positive item, score 1 indicated 'yes' and 0 for 'no'. Reverse scoring was used for the negative items. The sum of scores of all items was the total score of the scale for an individual. Then PARQ: Father and PARQ: Mother scales were administered. The respondents were instructed to read the items of the scales attentively. They were asked to give tick (") mark in the appropriate box. The respondents were given 4 for Almost always true, 3 for Sometimes true, 2 for Rarely true and 1 for Almost never true in case of positive items. The reverse scoring was made in case of negative (reverse coded) items. The sum total of the scores of both the scales provided the attitude score of a respondent. The participants were also requested not to omit any item in the questionnaire and told that there was no right or wrong answer. After finishing the job, they were given many thanks. To administer all the instruments approximate average time was required from forty to fifty minutes per individual respondent. All data were collected within nine months. After scoring, data were entered and analyzed by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results:

After collecting the data from one hundred healthy normal adults, it was found that there is a correlation between parental rejection and personality. In this study, data were analyzed by Pearson product moment correlation. Following tables (Table-I and Table-II) show the demographic information and the correlations between parental rejection and personality dimensions of EPQ.

Table-II

Distribution of sample by age, sex, marital status, Education and economic condition (n=100)

Parameters		No. of participants	Percentages
Age	18-38	79	79
	39-59	20	20
	60and above	01	01
Sex	Male	39	39
	Female	61	61
Marital status	Married	46	46
	Unmarried	54	54
Education	Primary	5	5
	Secondary	13	13
	Higher Secondary	38	38
	Graduate	33	33
	Post graduate	11	11
Economic condition	Low	7	7
	Middle	81	81
	High	12	12

This result indicated that the age of most of the participants' (79%) ranged from 18-38 years. Among the total participants, 61% were female and 54% were married. A good number of participant's educational qualification was higher secondary (38%) to graduation (33%) and majority of them belonged to middle economic class (81%).

Table-III

Correlations between parental rejection and personality dimensions

	Psychoticism	Extraversion	Neuroticism
Father: PARQ	.237*	-.246*	.166
Mother: PARQ	.398**	-.135	.378**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

This result reveals that paternal rejection is positively correlated with psychoticism at the 0.05 level of significance. It also shows that paternal rejection negatively correlated with extraversion at the 0.05 level of significance. The result was found no significant correlation between paternal rejection and neuroticism. Maternal rejection is positively correlated with psychoticism and neuroticism at the 0.01 level of

significance. Though it was found that maternal rejection is negatively correlated with extraversion, the correlation is not significant.

Discussion:

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the relationship between parental rejection and personality. In this research among the different types of participants, it was found that there was a correlation between parental rejection and personality. Our present study indicated that most of the participants were female (61%). It may be because of the nature of Bangladeshi culture. In Bangladeshi culture, female are more rejected than male by their parents. However, our main finding revealed that parental (both paternal and maternal) rejection is positively correlated with psychoticism at higher significant level. That means parental rejection influenced the child to develop psychotic trait afterward. In Kuwait, similar findings were reported in the representative studies¹⁴⁻¹⁶. Results of these studies revealed significant positive correlations between children's perceptions of parental rejection and children's high levels of aggression, hostility, and violent behavior. In this line, researchers found that high hostile subjects perceived more rejection and less emotional warmth than low hostile subjects¹⁷. The results of an Egypt research revealed a positive correlation between perceptions of parental rejection and impulsivity¹⁸.

The result of the present study was revealed that maternal rejection is positively correlated with neuroticism at higher significant level. Research on child development indicates that anger, loneliness, anxiety, and depression, which are the characteristics of neurotic people, are the typical results of rejection¹⁹.

Our study revealed that there was no significant correlation between paternal rejection and neuroticism. It may be due to characteristic feature of Bangladeshi culture. In Bangladesh, children are primarily attached with their mother. Mother supervises their all of activities. Most of the time, the role of the father is only earning money for running the family. In this point of view, children may not expect more from their father. Therefore, paternal rejection may not create significant difficulty to them. On the other hand, it was found that there is a significant positive correlation between paternal rejection and psychoticism. It may be because most of the cases, people with psychoticism have biological causes rather than neuroticism. Therefore, for biological causes, person would be less able to cope with the negative experience like paternal rejection (where some of the participants gave

less priority to paternal rejection). That could be the possible explanation of positive correlation between paternal rejection and psychoticism.

It was also found from this study that there is a negative correlation between parental (both paternal and maternal) rejection and extraversion. That means persons who were rejected by their parents were not extrovert. This may be because in the present study, 'extraversion' is used to reflect person's positive mental state. Extrovert is characterized by being outgoing, talkative, high on positive affect (feeling good). However, parental rejection is a negative experience. It might be that, negative experiences prevent them to be high on positive affect. Rather they might experience high levels of negative affect such as depression and anxiety²⁰. Moreover, negative parenting behaviors have been found to predict psychopathy among both males and females²¹. The experience of more parental rejection and lack of warmth have been found to be a predictor of conduct problems, antisocial and delinquent behavior^{22, 23}.

This study is the first to explore the relationship between parental rejection and personality in Bangladeshi context. However, the present study has several limitations. The sample did not represent the population of the whole country. Sample size was small to get the exact picture. The participants were not balanced according to their age, sex, education, marital status and economic conditions. Illiterate people were excluded from the study. Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) has bipolar dimensions. One is parental acceptance and other is parental rejection. According to the objective of this study, the researchers only assessed the relationship between parental rejection and personality dimensions. To have a proper understanding of a complicated phenomenon like personality, it would be better to assess the relationship between all the subscales of PARQ with each of the personality dimensions. In order to overcome the limitations, further research need to be done including a greater number of representative samples. This would enable us to understand better about relationship between parental rejection and personality.

Conclusion:

From this finding, it can be concluded that there is a relationship between parental rejection and personality. It is assumed that parental rejection is not only related to personality but also may produce personality disorder and other psychological problems. Therefore, longitudinal data is needed to be used in future studies to examine the relationships between parental rejection and personality

disorder or problem behaviors. However, the findings of our present study can help us to give a message to the parents for modifying their dealings with their child. It also helps us to develop an appropriate parenting style for Bangladeshi children. So that we could prevent maladjustment and behavioral problems of child and adults linked with their personality.

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