

Parental Rejection and Psychological Adjustment among Adolescents: Does the Peer Rejection Mediate?

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The study examined the mediating role of peer rejection in direct relationship of parental rejection and psychological adjustment among adolescents. Researchers used self-report measures e.g., Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ), Children Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (CRSQ), and Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) to assess perception of parent-peer rejection, psychological adjustment among adolescents (14-18 years). Findings revealed that peer rejection did not mediate the parental rejection and psychological adjustment whereas parental rejection emerged as strong predictor when demographic variables were statistically controlled. On average, girls were psychologically less adjusted than that of boys. Despite of equal perception of peer rejection, girls more anxiously anticipated peer rejection than did the boys. It is suggested that peer influence on adolescents, specifically girls, should not be underestimated.

Keywords: Peer relationships, parental perception, Psychological adjustment.

The transition from childhood to adolescence accompanies several physical, emotional, social, and psychological changes. Early adolescents shift their sphere of interaction from parents to peers and mostly their behaviours are determined through peer interaction or influence. Peer pressure becomes an impetus in determining adolescent's positive or negative activities and peer group demands unquestioned conformity to peer group thinking, no matter, whether right or wrong. Peer group may compel adolescents to show acceptance of group activities if they wish to stay in the group or to be accepted by the peers (Larkin, 1979).

Peer groups thus, either vicariously or directly facilitate the adolescent transition into the larger social environmental world (Brown, Pokhrel, Ashmore, & Sussman, 1986). Peer rejection has been recognized as a serious threat to socio-emotional development of children and adolescents and it has been found to be associated with several psychological disorders namely conduct disorders, anxiety disorder, schizoid personality disorder, and attention deficit disorder (APA, 2013). Studies demonstrate that poor peer relationship was significantly associated to delinquent behaviour,

learning problems, and mental health problems (Bierman, 1989). Adolescents' relationship with peer has appeared as strongest predictor of psychological adjustment, academic achievement, and interpersonal conflicts. Further, peer rejection leads towards negative developmental outcomes (Ladd, 2005). Some developmental trends continue to transfer from childhood to adolescents. Adolescents begin to be influenced by peer more than that of parents (Ferguson, Muñoz, Garza, & Galindo, 2014; Tillfors, Persson, Willén, & Burk, 2012; Chaplin, & John, 2010). Researchers have elucidated the role of parents in psychological adjustment of adolescents. Specifically, mother's negative emotional responses contribute in developing sensitivity to negative emotional responses which, in turn, deteriorate the perception of positive emotion and reduce the capability of expecting positive emotional responsiveness in societal interactions (Sheeber, Hops, & Davis, 2001; Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, & Robinson, 2007). A study conducted on children demonstrates that maternal warmth and acceptance acts as protective shield against peer rejection. Children experiencing peer rejection whose mothers show warmth and