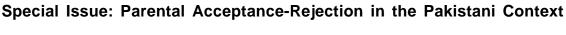
INTERPERSONAL



ACCEPTANCE

September 2012

Review of Journal of Behavioural Sciences, 2012, 22 (1)





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This

Special Issue consists of eight empirical papers, each of which focuses on examining aspects of Rohner's (1986) Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory) in Pakistan. Each paper supports the basic tenets of PARTheory, namely that perceiving parents as warm and accepting rather than rejecting is related to better psychological and behavioral adjustment. A large body of research from many countries now supports PARTheory. As Duncan, Engel, Claessens, and Dowsett (2012) have argued, replication in the social sciences has great value because it increases confidence that findings represent an underlying "truth" and can be generalized beyond narrow samples, measures, and methods. These eight papers serve as a replication of previous research on PARTheory in other countries and as replications of the other papers in the Special Issue in terms of using different samples to replicate the general finding regarding the link between parental acceptancerejection and adjustment in Pakistan. In this review, I first

provide a brief overview of each paper in the Special Issue and then comment on strengths and limitations of the Special Issue as a whole.

First, Najam and Kausar recruited students from an English school to examine relations among fathers' acceptancerejection, fathers' involvement, and adolescents' adjustment. Perhaps the most important finding, because it was based on data from more than one informant and therefore could not be accounted for solely by shared method variance, was that teachers' reports of student conduct were significantly correlated with adolescents' reports of their fathers' hostility and involvement.

Second. Malik focused on relations among parental acceptance-rejection, paternal authoritarianism, and child abuse. A major strength of this paper was the review of factors in Pakistani family relationships, beliefs about children, and attitudes about discipline and acceptability of harsh treatment of children, which helped situate this study in the broader context in which it was conducted. Another strength of the special issue was the inclusion of two indigenously developed scales (the Child Abuse Scale and the Paternal Authoritarianism Scale).

Third, Najam and Ijaz asked congenitally amputated children to report on their perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and their own social adjustment. Findings with this sample replicate previous research showing a positive correlation between perceptions of parental warmth and children's social adjustment and a negative correlation between parental neglect and rejection and children's social adjustment.

Fourth, Riaz and Qasmi investigated relations among self-reported parental acceptance-Continued on page 3

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Scientific Committee

Ronald P. Rohner, Chair Abstract submission to: <u>isipar2013@gmail.com</u> <u>www.isipar.org</u> for abstract forms and information







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rejection, psychological adjustment, and self-concept of children with physical, hearing, and visual disabilities. The authors reported that the respondents had high levels of psychological maladjustment overall, but relations between perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and adjustment were in anticipated directions.

Fifth, Najam and Batool analyzed relations among perceptions of parenting style, of parental acceptance-rejection, and of God among young adults and found that perceptions of parents as being accepting and not rejecting were related to positive perceptions of God. This paper provided an informative review of literature regarding the religious socialization of children with good attention to differences in gender socialization in Pakistan in general and in relation to religion in particular.

Sixth, Hussain and Munaf examined gender differences in university students' retrospective reports of their fathers' rejection in childhood and their reports of current psychological adjustment. The authors reported gender differences in perceptions of paternal rejection.

Seventh, Najam and Majeed explored the relation between depression and parental acceptance-rejection in a sample of adolescents who had been nominated by their teachers as being withdrawn and unhappy. Children who reported feeling depressed also reported perceiving higher levels of parental rejection.

Finally, Naz and Kausar investigated parental rejection and comorbid disorders in a sample of adolescents with somatization disorder that was matched on age, education, and SES with a sample of adolescents without somatization disorder but with other general medical conditions. Adolescents with somatization disorder perceived their parents as being more rejecting and reported more anxiety and depression symptoms than did adolescents without somatization disorder.

A strength of the entire Special Issue is the inclusion of samples from Pakistan. Although empirical examinations of PARTheory have been conducted in a larger range of countries and cultural contexts than have empirical examinations of many other major theories, the psychological literature overall is limited by a reliance on samples that are predominantly from North America and Western Europe (Arnett, 2008;

Henrich, Heine, & Norenzayan, 2010). Therefore, the Pakistani samples in this Special Issue are important in diversifying the populations to which PARTheory can be generalized. In addition to providing a focus on an understudied population, the Pakistani background of the authors of the papers in the Special Issue is important because these authors are able to provide an emic perspective on the Pakistani research participants.

Despite the inclusion of Pakistani participants, however, I found myself wanting throughout to have more information about family and cultural contexts of Pakistan. At a basic descriptive level, it would have been helpful to have additional information about the education system and family structure in Pakistan to be better able to contextualize the authors' reports of sample characteristics to determine how representative the samples were of the broader population. At a more conceptual level, what attitudes, beliefs, customs, and behaviors make Pakistan unique? Are there reasons to think the relations hypothesized to be important in PARTheory (which have been argued to be universal) would differ in Pakistan compared to other places? The Malik paper in the Special Issue did a good job of discussing child abuse and neglect from an international perspective as well as in Pakistan more specifically. This type of approach is a good example of how researchers can justify why it is important to examine research questions that have been addressed elsewhere in a new country. Future research will benefit from delving more into beliefs, values, and attitudes that might be countryspecific to understand what shapes parenting and child development in particular settings.

All of the papers in the Special Issue use Rohner's measures of parental acceptance and rejection, and many of the papers use other measures developed by Rohner (e.g., Personality Assessment Questionnaire, Teacher's Evaluation of Student Conduct), too. Collectively, the papers in the Special Issue validate the Urdu versions of these measures and the use of both Urdu and English versions of the measures in Pakistan. Another collective strength of the papers in the Special Issue is their attention to how education and socioeconomic status might affect relations of interest. Furthermore, the papers as a set were attentive to issues related to gender by collecting

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data about perceptions of both mothers and fathers and analyzing gender differences related to males' and females' reports.

The Special Issue would have benefited from a general introductory paper to provide basic descriptive information about the parenting context in Pakistan and a concluding paper to make connections among the eight studies and suggest directions for future research. One direction for future research will be to move to multi-informant and longitudinal approaches. The papers in the Special Issue relied exclusively on self-report data, with the exception of the Najam and Kausar paper, which also included teachers' reports. Although the perception of parental acceptance and rejection is a crucial aspect of PARTheory (and one best measured via self-report), psychological and behavioral outcomes can be assessed in a variety of ways (e.g., by parent, teacher, or clinician report; behavioral observations). Using different reporters to assess different constructs helps to minimize shared method variance and reduce concerns that findings can be accounted for merely by individuals' propensity to have generally positive versus negative outlooks on a wide range of topics. Furthermore, all of the papers in the Special Issue relied on cross-sectional data. In the future, longitudinal research will help advance understanding of the direction of effects. For example, do individuals who perceive their parents as being more accepting than rejecting develop better psychological and behavioral adjustment over time, do individuals with psychological and behavioral problems develop worse relationships with their parents over time (because children with such problems are more difficult to parent), or both? Parent and child effects are likely to develop in a transactional way over time that can only be captured in longitudinal analyses.

This Special Issue would be of interest to researchers studying PARTheory in a range of cultural contexts. In addition, given the special populations of children used in some of the studies (e.g., children who are congenitally amputated, maltreated, have disabilities, have somatization disorders), the findings are relevant to practitioners who work with children and families in a variety of applied settings. The overarching

message is that in Pakistan, as in other countries, children's, adolescents', and young adults' perceptions of their parents as accepting are related to better psychological and behavioral adjustment.

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How "International" Is Psychology?

The American Psychological Association's Division of International Psychology (Division 52) is doing a survey of Psychologists' views about the internationalization of psychological training and education. They hope to learn how "international" psychology education has become, what international elements it should contain, and what internationally related goals psychology education should provide to students. They also hope to learn about similarities and differences between European and American psychologists' views and practices incorporating international elements in academic psychology education. Accordingly, they would like to invite all psychologists involved in the academic training and education of psychologists to participate in a brief online survey of about 10-15 minutes. All responses will be confidential. The brief online survey can be accessed at:

> http://pace.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV bjyfDpJL5rw3hOY



Editor: Ronald P. Rohner

Maternal Support in Early Childhood Predicts Larger Hippocampal Volume at School Age

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The data for our study on maternal support and hippocampal volume [1] were gathered through a National Institute of Mental Health funded longitudinal study of depressed and healthy preschool-age children, the Preschool Depression Study. The study has been ongoing for more than 10 years, and has had numerous annual data collection waves. One purpose of the Preschool Depression Study is to learn more about brain development in children who demonstrate signs and symptoms of depression during the preschool period. To accomplish this goal, functional and structural brain imaging was conducted after the children reach school age. The imaging study investigates the shape and size of key brain areas involved in emotion processing and regulation, as well as the function of these brain regions in children who have shown preschool depression compared to controls. The children in the study were recruited when they were 3-6 years old; the first wave of neuroimaging was conducted when they were 7-13 years old.

At each annual wave, parents were interviewed about their child, using the Preschool Age Psychiatric Assessment (PAPA). The PAPA is an age-appropriate diagnostic interview addressing the child's psychiatric symptoms and stressful life events. During the second annual wave, we also acquired parent-child interaction data about these children. When children were between 4-7 years, parents and children were observed interacting in a mildly stressful and challenging task—"the waiting task"—during which maternal support was measured. The waiting task is a parent-child interaction paradigm designed to elicit mild stress from both the parent and the child [2]. The task requires the child to wait for 8 minutes before opening a brightly wrapped gift that sat within arm's reach. The child's primary caregiver

completed several questionnaires during this time. The supportive and/or nonsupportive caregiving tactics that the parent used to help regulate the child's behaviors and impulse to open the gift were then coded by trained raters who were blind to the child's diagnostic status.

At school age (7-13 years), 92 participating children who met all inclusion/exclusion criteria for magnetic resonance brain imaging underwent neuroimaging. From the data acquired from this neuroimaging, as well as the caregiving data acquired during "the waiting task", we investigated how a key brain region—the hippocampus, known to be central to cognitive development and emotion regulation—was influenced by early maternal support. The hippocampus was of particular interest since it is an area known to be highly sensitive to maternal nurturance in animal studies. We found that maternal support observed in early childhood was strongly predictive of hippocampal volume measured at school age.

Numerous studies to date have documented a relationship between influential environmental factors in early childhood and later cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes. A few studies have looked at the impact of early nurturance on structural brain development in populations experiencing early life stress. These studies suggest a relationship between the lack of early nurturance—based on the experience of trauma or neglect—and later reactivity to stress and hippocampal volume in a variety of human populations, including those with depression [3, 4]. Many studies have reported that major depressive disorder (MDD) is associated with smaller hippocampal volume in adults. However, the findings in children and adolescents are less consistent. Some investigators have reported no hippocampal volume differences between depressed and nondepressed children [5, 6], while others report decreased hippocampal volume [7-9].

Of particular importance, numerous studies have demonstrated that non-supportive or harsh parenting strategies are a risk factor for childhood MDD [10]. This emphasis on the importance of early parenting has implications for healthy emotional and cognitive functioning of the child in later life. Furthermore, a few studies suggest that smaller hippocampal volume in adolescents at risk for MDD is associated with increased susceptibility to the effects of psychosocial stress and subsequent risk for recurrence or development of MDD [11, 12]. With these lines of evidence taken together, the findings from these previous studies

suggest intriguing although potentially complex relationships among experiences of early stress, low nurturance, stress reactivity, and hippocampal volume in humans.

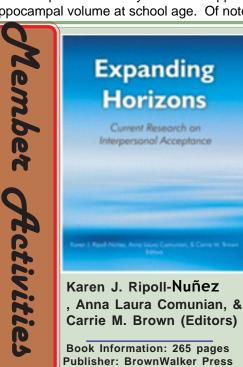
Given this body of evidence, we hypothesized that early maternal nurturance contributed to adaptive stress reactivity and larger hippocampal volume in young children. However, to date there has been no data documenting the positive relationship between early maternal support and structural development of the hippocampus in either typically developing children or groups at risk for MDD. To address this question, we investigated the relationship between maternal nurturance— objectively measured through structured observation ("the waiting task") during the preschool period—and later hippocampal volume measured at school age using structural neuroimaging. Examining the relationship between early maternal nurturance and later hippocampal volume subsequently allowed us to examine mediators in the relationship between hippocampal volume, maternal nurturance, and childhood depression in both healthy and depressed children.

We found a highly significant positive relationship between early maternal support and hippocampal volume at school age. Of note was

that this relationship was evident only in children without depression. This interaction was detected by dividing the 92 participating children into four groups: nondepressed children with high maternal support, nondepressed children with low maternal support, depressed children with high maternal support, and depressed children with low support. The nondepressed children with high maternal support and nurturance had significantly larger hippocampal volume than the other three groups. These findings provide some of the first evidence in humans of the positive relationship between early experiences of maternal nurturance and hippocampal volume, which was previously well-documented in animal studies. Maternal support measured at preschool age through "the waiting task" was a powerful predictor of larger hippocampal volume in both hemispheres during neuroimaging at school age. Although the majority of caregivers in this study were mothers (96.7%), we expect that this effect pertains to the primary caregiver (the provider of nurturance) whether it be mother, father, grandparent, or other.

The relationship between maternal support and hippocampal volume remained significant even when other variables known to impact hippocampal

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Expanding Horizons: Current Research on Interpersonal Acceptance offers readers an outstanding collection of papers that reflects current trends in research on interpersonal acceptance. Papers in this volume cover a variety of questions and topics with regard to issues of acceptance-rejection by significant figures in parent-child, sibling, peer, and adult intimate relationships. Also, several papers deal with the implications of interpersonal acceptance for the development and educational achievement of children, college students, as well as children with special needs. Lastly, an entire section of the book is devoted to methodological issues in the evaluation of interpersonal acceptance across cultures. The authors draw on the perspectives of different disciplines such as educational psychology, anthropology, sociology, developmental psychology, and family studies.

Research findings discussed in this collection of papers have important implications for professionals working in different contexts to strengthen family relationships, teacher and peer relationships in schools, and couple relationships. As such, the book constitutes a useful reference source for graduate students, academic researchers, clinicians, teachers, special educators, school counselors, and service agencies.

Scholars who contributed to this book come from different parts of the world, including the Americas, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Middle East.

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volume (e.g., stressful life events, sex, and severity of depression) were included in the model. Additionally, we found that maternal support and severity of depression interacted in predicting volume. Positive maternal support was a strong predictor of greater hippocampal volume in nondepressed children than in depressed children. These findings suggest that the detrimental effects of depression may mitigate the potential benefits of maternal support in children with preschool depression.

This program of research provides evidence that the well-established significant impact of nurturing parenting on enhancing and maintaining hippocampal neuroplasticity may be just as influential in humans as it is in animals. These data extend the current literature by demonstrating that the early experience of supportive caregiving also positively impacts structural development of the hippocampus, at least in children without early-onset depression. This finding establishes the crucial role of the caregiver in early childhood for healthy social and emotional development and future adaptive responses to stress. Whether maternal support in early childhood is more or less powerful than at later periods of development is of interest and should be the focus of future investigations. However, given the central role of the caregiver in early childhood, this influential developmental period would seem to be an optimal time for enhancing the early motherchild relationship.

These findings have potentially profound public health implications and suggest that greater emphasis on early parenting could be a very fruitful public health investment. The finding that early parental support is directly related to healthy development of a key brain region known to impact cognitive capacities and emotional regulation provides an exciting opportunity to impact the emotional development of children. Of course it also speaks to the power of the interpersonal relationship between parent and child in brain development. This finding—after being replicated by independent research groups—would strongly suggest the need for enhancing public policies and programs that provide support and parenting education to caregivers early in children's development.

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Announcements

Help Us Set Up a Research Group From Different Countries To Study The Effects of of Teacher Acceptance-Rejection Across Different Cultures

Francisco Machado, flbsmachado@netcabo.pt

Due to the excellent feedback and interest I've been getting on teacher Acceptance and Rejection (A-R) research, I think that it would be interesting to set up a research group from different countries to study the effects of teacher A-R across different cultures. We have colleagues that already manifested interest from Bangladesh, Cyprus, Portugal, and Thailand. What do you think? We are all interested on working with Teachers' A-R, so I suggest that we start from that variable. I think that it would be very interesting to compare teacher-student relations between different cultures. I think that what we must find and agree on is the variables that we want to include and associate with Teachers' A-R. We focus on different themes, ranging from aggressive, violent behavior to vocational development or xenophobia. Obviously we would have to compare also the educational and teaching models and methodologies across different cultures, but that's one of the parts I find very interesting.

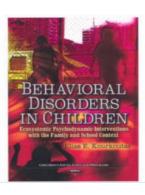
ISIPAR Member Publishes Articles in JESP

Isipar Member Zhansheng Chen had 2 of his papers published in JESP for the September 2012 Issue of the Journal of Experimental Social Psychology:

Chen, Z., DeWall, C.N., Poon, K.T.,& Chen, E.W. (2012). When destiny hurts: Implicit theories of relationships moderate aggressive responses to ostracism. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48, 1029-1036.

Teng. F.,& Chen, Z. (2012). Does social support reduce distress caused by ostracism? It depends on the level of one's self esteem. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 48, 1192-1195.

Behavioral Disorders in Children: Ecosystemic Psychodynamic Interventions within the Family and School Context: Elias E. Kourkoutas, University of Crete



This book aims to present an extensive review of the available research evidence regarding children with behavioral problems, together with a synthesis of new theoretical and epistemological models whose purpose is to examine and address critical issues within the school and family context. The key elements that characterize the intrapsychic and interpersonal functioning, as well as the family dynamics of these children, are presented analytically from a developmental and transactional perspective. A central argument of this book is that professionals who work with these children should go beyond symptomatic reactions to meet the vulnerable and suffering child behind the disordered behavior. The final purpose of this work is to suggest a holistic model of treating behavioral problems using a meaningful synthesis of various theoretical approaches and techniques. More specifically, an ecological comprehensive child-centered model is proposed that takes into account each child's particular traits, vulnerabilities and strengths, as well as the dynamics of his/her family and school environment. The book is enriched by a series of brief

clinical cases aimed at outlining the emotional reactions of parents and teachers, as well as presenting the psychological interventions that might be appropriate in each particular case of behavioral difficulties.

2012 ISIPAR Elections, Results

ISIPAR'S Executive Council is pleased to announce the results of this year's elections of Officers and Regional Representatives. The following persons will take office at the end of the 4th International Congress On Interpersonal-Acceptance Rejection in Chandigarh, India, January 10th-13th, 2013.

PRESIDENT
ELECT:
Karen Ripoll-Núñez
(kripoll@uniandes.edu.co)



Regional Representative for the INSULAR PACIFIC & AUSTRALIA:



Rapson Gomez (Rapson.gomez@utas.edu)

Regional Representative for MEXICO, CENTRAL AMERICA, AND THE CARIBBEAN:

Claudia X. Alvarez Romero (claualv@hotmail.com



Regional Representative for NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST

Ricky Finzi-Dottan (rikifnz@biu.013.net.il)



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Yours Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Rukhsana Kausar

News From the Rohner Center

The Rohner Center at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, is pleased to introduce



Dr. Dara Musheer Ibrahim, lecturer in the Department of Educational Sciences - College of Education at the University of Salahaddin, in the Kurdistan region of Northern Iraq. Dara will be a postdoctoral Research Scholar in the Rohner Center from September 1, 2012 through September 1, 2013. Here he plans to work on the contribution of remembered paternal and maternal acceptance-rejection in childhood to the level of rejection sensitivity among male and female young adults.

Wisdom Quotes

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

Leo Buscaglia