



## **PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE-REJECTION, SELF-CONTROL AND DELINQUENCY AMONG INCARCERATED ADOLESCENTS**

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### **Abstract**

This research aimed to study the relationship of parental acceptance-rejection and self-control with delinquency among incarcerated adolescents. It also intended to identify the predictors of delinquency among incarcerated adolescents. Correlational research design and purposive sampling was used to collect data from convicted adolescents of age ranging from 12 to 18 years. The data was collected from two different jails; (a) District Jail, Lahore and (b) Borstal Institution and Juvenile Jail, Faisalabad. Demographic sheet, Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire – both father and mother short forms (Rohner, 2004), Brief Self-Control Scale (Tangney *et al.*, 2004), and Self- Reported Delinquency Scale (Naqvi & Kamal, 2008) were used to assess the variables. Urdu version of all the measures was used to collect data. Results exhibited that there is significant positive relation of father's hostility/aggression, and mother's indifference/neglect and undifferentiated rejection with delinquency among incarcerated adolescents. Moreover, self-control has significantly negative relationship with delinquency among incarcerated adolescents. The results of multiple hierarchical linear regression showed that the combined effect of father and mother acceptance-rejection and self-control is significant. Self-control is the individual significant predictor of delinquency among incarcerated adolescents as well. Research findings suggest future implications for forensic counselors or psychologists and parents.

### **Keywords**

Parental Acceptance-Rejection, Self-Control, Delinquency, Predictors, Incarcerated Adolescents



## 1. Introduction

The research in the field of juvenile delinquency has been quite trending in Pakistan as rates of juvenile delinquency have increased in recent years (Kausar & Pinguart, 2016; Sajid & Riaz, 2016; Maria, 2012). It led to the fulfillment of desired literature in predicting causes for the delinquent behavior among incarcerated adolescents in Pakistan. According to the statistical report of April 2018 by World Prison Brief, it has been estimated that about 1.7% of the prison population comprises of adolescents incarcerated in jails across the Pakistan. Another statistical report published by Punjab Prisons, Government of the Punjab (2018) disclosed that the total number of juveniles in jails of Punjab is more than 600; most of them are under trial and few of them are convicted. Unfortunately, the number of reported cases of juvenile delinquency is increasing day-by-day. Many delinquent individuals were constituted of street teenagers, and the ratio was increasing due to the possible factors of increase in population, suburbanization, poverty and parental neglect. This situation became worse with the critical reality that approximately half of the population was below eighteen years and about three million children indulged into delinquency due to any of social, interpersonal or personal reasons (Punjab Prisons, 2018). Therefore, this research aimed to evaluate the major predictors of the juvenile delinquency.

Delinquent referred to a person who commits offensive behavior. Juvenile delinquency included a range of norm-breaking behaviors committed by

adolescents. Theft, drug abuse, carrying weapon, cheating and gambling are just some instances of delinquency (Naqvi & Kamal, 2008). Incarcerated Adolescents referred to the individuals with age 12 – 18 years imprisoned on committing unlawful acts (McLeod, 2013; Barnett *et al.*, 2015). The developmental theory of crime presented by Moffitt in 1993 proposed that delinquency is just a phase in an individual's life and it normally ends after teenage. However, there also have been findings which suggest that adolescents arrested before age 14 are twice more likely to become chronic adult offenders (Loeber & Farrington, 2001). In some cases, these behaviors continue as the individual grows and develops into persistent delinquent personality (Lawson, 2011). Incarcerated adolescents often complain on behalf of their parents for visiting them only once a year because of the distance. Some of them had given up communicating with their families as it was reported that their parents know about them, send letters to them but never come to visit them. It indicated that parental neglect and rejection is experienced by the adolescents with delinquent behaviors before and after incarceration (Khosro, 2012).

Parental acceptance – rejection referred to the attitude of both mother and father towards their children. The attitude of parents can be love, affection and support known as acceptance or aggressive, neglecting and forceful known as rejection. Parental attitude regarding development and growth of adolescents was better explained via Parental acceptance – rejection theory (PAR Theory) reviewed by Rohner (2004). The

evidence - based Parental Acceptance Rejection theory described the individual's development and socialization to predict major root-causes, consequences and other correlating factors specifically for the parental acceptance – rejection towards their children. This theory is further divided into three sub-categories i.e., personality, coping and sociocultural systems sub-theories. Personality sub-theory stated that parental-rejection leads to the inappropriate personality upshots among adolescents like dependence, aggression, emotional unresponsiveness, hostility or psychological problems. These psychological issues can be in the form of mental- health problems e.g., depressed emotion and unipolar depression; behavioral problems including delinquency, externalizing-behavior, conduct disorder; and substance abuse. Coping sub-theory maintained that some rejected adolescents withstand the rejection through coping skills and avoid becoming a prey of mental health problems. Sociocultural systems sub-theory provoked thinking about the antecedent, consequences and other correlating factors of parental acceptance – rejection among adolescents and their community. It assessed the maintenance of an individual facing parental rejection within social systems such as family, school, friends, organization (Rohner *et al.*, 2005). It has been asserted that the juvenile delinquency is the outcome of lack of sense of responsibility amongst parents for monitoring and taking care of their children by their hands (Kausar & Pinquart., 2016). Other than parental-acceptance rejection, research on self-control suggested that it may be a

precursor to delinquent behavior. Self-control correlated with the personality traits that trigger offending behavior among adolescents (John *et. al*, 2013). Self-control referred to the tendency to control the instantaneous fulfillment or immediate gratification also known as self-regulation (Nugent, 2013). Self-regulation was conceptualized as the capacity to regulate the emotions, attention and behavior; this concept has also been linked to emotional control (John *et. al*, 2013; Chapple, 2005). According to the theory of Gottfredson & Hirschi (1990), delinquency and deviant peer relations are linked with the self-control (Gottfredson, 2017).

Research evidences indicated that parental acceptance- rejection, self-control and delinquent behavior of adolescents are inter-linked with each other. The findings from the literature suggested that the delinquent behaviors of adolescents are influenced by family system (Sajid & Riaz, 2016; Maria, 2012; Haque & Rafail, 1999), parental attitude (Kausar & Pinquart, 2016; Perrone *et. al*, 2004), perceived parental acceptance and rejection (Arzeen *et al.*, 2012) and lack of self-control (Cheung & Cheung, 2008) to some extent. This study will help to generate research findings regarding parental acceptance, self-control and delinquency among young adolescents within the context of Pakistan. Additionally, Knowledge about significant predictors can help parents, court officials, teachers, forensic psychologists, and other mental health professionals when discovering early warning signs of a juvenile delinquency.

### 1.1 Hypotheses

1. There is likely to be a significant relationship between parental acceptance – rejection and delinquency among incarcerated adolescents.
2. There is likely to be a significant relationship between self- control and delinquency among incarcerated adolescents.
3. Parental-acceptance rejection and self-control would likely to predict delinquency among incarcerated adolescents.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

Correlational design was used to identify the correlates and predictors of delinquency among incarcerated adolescents.

### 2.2 Participants

In this research, a sample of 100 incarcerated male adolescents was taken from two jails of Punjab, Pakistan one was District Jail, Lahore and other was Borstal Institution & Juvenile Jail, Faisalabad. The participants within the age range of 12- 18 years as per criteria of Erikson’s psychosocial theory (1959) were approached ( $M=16.25$ ;  $SD=1.855$ ). Purposive sampling strategy was applied. Participants were male within age range of 12 – 18 years. Participants were incarcerated against criminal act at the time of data collection. Participants with their both parents alive were selected. Participants were capable of understanding and speaking Urdu language. The adolescents with any diagnosed psychological and physiological impairment were intended to be excluded. Demographic characteristics of the participants are given in Table 2.1.

**Table 2.1** Showing Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N= 100)

Variables	<i>M(SD)</i>	<i>f (%)</i>
Age	16.25(1.855)	
Education		
Illiterate		36(36)
Primary		19(19)
Middle		20(20)
Matric		25(25)
Religion		
Islam		98(98)
Christianity		2(2)
Number of siblings	5.01(1.749)	
Birth order		

First born		33(33)
Middle born		42(42)
Last born		25(25)
Monthly Family Income (in PKR)	25811.225(13117.925)	
Type of crime		
Theft		21(21)
Drug abuse		11(11)
Robbery		9(9)
Unnatural offences		10(10)
Murder		27(27)
Attempt to commit murder		8(8)
Unlicensed weapons		1(1)
Rape		11(11)
Age at incarceration (in years)	15.69(1.819)	
Type of incarceration		
Accused		85(85)
Convicted		15(15)
Duration of incarceration (in months)	8.14(8.205)	
Remaining period (in years)	4.21(1.626)	
Family history of crime		
None		79(79)
Father		3(3)
Brother		8(8)
Uncle		6(6)
Cousin		4(4)
Visit of parents		
Yes		77(77)
No		23(23)

Note: *M*= Mean, *SD*=Standard Deviation, *f*=Frequency, %=*Percentage*

### 2.3 Instruments

Demographic sheet was developed by researchers and administered at first. Demographic sheet was comprised of personal information such as age, education, nature of crime, age of committing crime, date of incarceration, duration of incarceration and family history of crime.

#### 2.3.1 Parental Acceptance – Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005)

This standardized tool was used to measure the perceived acceptance and rejection of both mother and father towards the children. The short forms of questionnaire for children comprises of 24 items each for both mother and father. The scale is further divided into sub categories and each sub category contained different number of items such as eight items in the warmth/affection subscale, six items in the aggression / hostility, neglect / indifference subscales, and four items in the undifferentiated-rejection subscale. It is based on 4 points Likert scale that ranges from 4 “almost always true” to 1 “almost never true”. It is a valid and reliable tool for all sociocultural groups across the world (Rohner & Ali, 2016). The Urdu translated version of the scale was used for the current study and its reliability was .89 (Malik, 2011). The Cronbach’s alpha value for scores of all subscales of PARQ range from .30 to .69 in this study.

#### 2.3.2 Brief Self – Control Scale (BSCS; Tangney et al., 2004)

This scale measures the dispositional self-control among adolescents and young adults. It is

comprised of thirteen self-reporting items. The scores on scale range from 1 (*not at all like me*) to 5 (*very much like me*). The Cronbach’s alpha value for reliability of this scale is reported as .86 (Tangney et al., 2004). The Urdu version of the scale was used (Yosuf et al., 2016). The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of brief self-control scale scores comes out to be .33 in this research.

#### 2.3.3 Self-Reported Delinquency Scale (Naqvi & Kamal, 2008)

It is an indigenous scale that helps to measure the delinquent behavior from the individual. It has twenty-seven positively stated items. Each item is categorized on five points on Likert scale ranging from 0 “never” to 4 “10 or more times”. The alpha reliability value of self-reported delinquency scale scores was .94 (Naqvi & Kamal, 2013). Its reliability value comes out to be .86 for the present study.

### 2.4 Procedure

The permission was taken from Institute Review Board to conduct this research. The researcher took permission from the authors of the tools to administer them for the current research. Then the researcher visited the jails to collect the data. Later, permission was sought from the Inspector General (IG) Punjab to collect the data from jails ethically. Before administering the test, the participants were given the informed consent, telling them the guidelines and taking their permission to administer the questionnaire. All the participants were briefed about the purpose of the study, the limitations and their rights while administering the set of questionnaires. Each

participant took 20-25 minutes for filling the questionnaire. The forms were then collected by the researcher as each participant finished. It took about five visits of the jail of about four to five hours each visit to collect the desired data.

### 3. Results

The obtained data were analyzed by using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 22). The skewness and kurtosis values of

all three scales i.e., Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ), Brief Self-Control Scale (BSCS) and Self- Reported Delinquency Scale (SRDS) fall within the acceptable range of  $\pm 1.96$ , revealed that the sample followed approximately normal distribution and free from significant skewness and kurtosis (see table 3.1).

**Table 3.1:** Showing Psychometric Properties of Major Study Variables in the Sample (N= 100)

Variables	<i>k</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\alpha$	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
PARQ (Father) Warmth/Aff ection (W/A)	<b>24</b> 8	3.18	.54	0.65	.04	-1.19
Hostility/ Aggression (H/A)	6	2.26	.59	0.51	.27	-.55
Indifference/ Neglect (I/N)	6	2.10	.62	0.65	-.15	-.89
Undifferenti ated Rejection (UR)	4	2.33	.56	0.01	.17	-1.06
PARQ (Mother)	<b>24</b>					
Warmth/ Affection (W/A)	8	3.23	.52	0.66	-.12	-.84
Hostility/ Aggression (H/A)	6	2.18	.68	0.69	.48	-.73
Indifference/ Neglect (I/N)	6	2.08	.68	0.68	-.04	-1.02

Undifferentiated Rejection (UR)	4	2.25	.66	0.30	.36	-0.23
Self-Control	13	2.99	.45	0.33	.40	.07
Delinquency	27	1.81	.57	0.86	.85	-.33

Note: *PARQ*= Parental Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire, *k*= Total no of items, *M*=Mean, *SD*=Standard Deviation,  $\alpha$ =Cronbach's alpha

The relationship between parental acceptance – rejection, self-control and delinquency among incarcerated adolescents was tested with the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient (see table 3.2).

**Table 3.2** Showing Inter correlations among Parental Acceptance Rejection, Self-Control and Delinquency in Incarcerated Adolescents (N= 100)

Measures		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1.	PARQF W/A	-	-.39***	-.43***	-.30**	.44***	-.35***	-.31**	-.20*	.37***	-.04
2.	PARQF H/A		-	.68***	.59***	-.43***	.56***	.51***	.51***	.39***	.20*
3.	PARQF I/N			-	.71***	-.44***	.49***	.71***	.51***	-.39***	.16
4.	PARQF UR				-	-.33**	.43***	.52***	.42***	-.35***	-.01
5.	PARQM W/A					-	.33**	-.45***	-.22*	.33**	-.18
6.	PARQM H/A						-	.60***	.65***	-.34**	.10
7.	PARQM I/N							-	.69***	-.42***	.23*
8.	PARQM UR								-	-.34**	.27**
9.	Self-Control									-	-.31**
10.	Delinquency										-
	<i>M</i>	3.18	2.26	2.10	2.33	3.23	2.18	2.08	2.25	2.99	1.81
	<i>SD</i>	.54	.59	.62	.56	.52	.68	.68	.66	.45	.57

Note: *PARQF W/A*= Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire Father Warmth/ Affection, *PARQF H/A*= Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire Father Hostility/ Aggression, *PARQF I/N*= Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire Father Indifference/ Neglect, *PARQF UR*= Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire Father Undifferentiated Rejection, *PARQM W/A*= Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire Mother Warmth/ Affection, *PARQM H/A*= Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire Mother Hostility/ Aggression, *PARQM I/N*= Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire Mother Indifference/ Neglect, *PARQM UR*=Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire Mother Undifferentiated Rejection; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Multiple Hierarchical Linear Regression analysis was used to identify the predictors of delinquency among incarcerated adolescents (see table 3.3).

**Table 3.3** Showing Multiple Hierarchical Linear Regression Analysis Showing Parental Acceptance Rejection and Self-Control as Predictors of Delinquency among Incarcerated Adolescents (N= 100)

Predictors	Delinquency	
	$\Delta R^2$	$\beta$
Block I	.04	
PARQF Warmth/ Affection (W/A)		.11
PARQF Hostility/ Aggression (H/A)		.10
PARQF Indifference/ Neglect (I/N)		-.08
Block II	.07	
PARQM Warmth/ Affection (W/A)		-.13
PARQM Hostility/ Aggression (H/A)		-.20
PARQM Indifference/ Neglect (I/N)		.02
PARQM Undifferentiated Rejection (UR)		.28
Block III	.05*	
Self-control		-.27*
Total $R^2$	.17*	

Note: *PARQF*= Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire – Father, *PARQM*= Parental Acceptance- Rejection Questionnaire- Mother; \* $p < .05$ ; \*\* $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

The correlation result indicated that there is significant positive relationship of father’s hostility/aggression, mother’s indifference/neglect and mother’s undifferentiated/rejection with delinquency among incarcerated adolescents. These findings indicate that if there is perceived hostile behaviour and aggression from father as well as neglect and rejection from mother for the adolescents, the more the chances prevail that the adolescents are to be delinquent. A significant negative relation of self-control was found with delinquency among incarcerated adolescents indicating that low self-control among incarcerated adolescents is linked with higher likelihood of delinquency. The results of multiple hierarchical linear regression showed that the combined effect of father and mother acceptance-rejection as well as self-control is significant, ( $R^2$

= .17,  $F(8, 91) = 2.29$ ,  $p = .028$ ). In the first model for delinquency, three predictors i.e., father’s warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, and indifference/neglect were added and a non-significant regression equation was found ( $R^2 = .04$ ,  $F(3, 96) = 1.42$ ,  $p = .241$ ) for delinquency. In the second model, the effect of warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect and undifferentiated rejection from the perspective of perceived mothers Acceptance-Rejection were added along with three dimensions of fathers’ acceptance-rejection. The regression equation came out to be non-significant, ( $R^2 = .12$ ,  $F(7, 92) = 1.71$ ,  $p = .117$ ). However, when the effect of three dimensions of fathers’ parental acceptance-rejection was excluded from model two, the remaining model remain insignificant, ( $R^2 = .07$ ,  $F(4, 92) = 1.88$ ,  $p = .121$ ). When the effect of

parental acceptance-rejection was subtracted from model three, the model still remained significant, ( $R^2 = .05$ ,  $F(1, 90) = 7.12$ ,  $p = .009$ ) and explains significant 5% variance. As far as individual contribution of each predictor is concerned, self-control emerged as significant negative predictor of delinquency among incarcerated adolescents. It is concluded that the father's hostility/ aggression and mother's neglect and rejection towards the activities and behaviors of adolescents resulted in significantly positive relationships of delinquency among adolescents. Furthermore, lack of self-control was also related with the delinquency. Parental acceptance- rejection and self-control collectively predicted the delinquent behavior among adolescents.

#### 4. Discussion

Adolescence is the crucial time period of one's life, when individual needs the affection and attention of father more in case of male adolescents. Similarly, mother's attention and concern are also required to overcome the behavioural problems faced by adolescents. The past researches also supported that ignorant parenting style (Kauser & Pinguart, 2016); parents' neglect, rejection and aggression (Arzeen *et al.*, 2012; Haque & Rafail, 1999); parental maltreatment and lack of parental affection (Kimonis *et al.*, 2013) associated with delinquent behaviour. Another research finding also stated that most of the behavioural problems and misconduct originate from homes where the parents presented themselves as poor models by expressing negative attitude towards their children (Sajid & Riaz, 2016). Contrary to this, parents'

healthy relationship with their children reduces the likelihood of antisocial behaviours among adolescents (Fabrizio *et al.*, 2014).

Empirical evidence by Reder and Lucey (1995) stated that the parental treatment towards the children during early period of life reveals the fact that either a child would become socially acceptable member of society or not. As parents serve as primary role models for children to learn behaviours, regulate emotions and understand social norms; parents play an important role in determining the individual's personality and behaviours. So, they must show compassion, unconditional positive regard and concern to the child's behaviours and attitude. Parental Acceptance Rejection theory also indicated that the likelihood of parents showing either acceptance behaviour or rejection behaviour towards the adolescents shaped the behaviour of these adolescents. The personality sub-theory of Parental Acceptance Rejection theory supported the results of the present research that parental rejection can increase the likelihood of adolescents being falling prey to anti-social activities (Rohner *et al.*, 2005).

Despite of the effect of parental acceptance-rejection, individual's personality measures are also responsible for the delinquent behaviour among adolescents. Present finding is consistent with literature that linked low self-control with juvenile delinquency (John *et al.*, 2013; Cheung & Cheung, 2008; Hay, 2006). Developmental researches supported that the individuals with low self – control are more prone to be rejected by the peers and this rejection might lead to the

delinquent behavior (Chapple, 2005). A meta-analytic study discovered that low self-control is the strongest predictor for general-deviance and physical violence (Gottfredson, 2017).

The results showed that the parental acceptance rejection and self-control collectively made significant variance of 17% in delinquency among incarcerated adolescents. Evidence indicates that family characteristics such as child maltreatment, parental ignorance, neglect and rejection, and family size predict juvenile delinquency (Derzon & Lipsey, 2000). Self-control theory implies that personal and social controls are the most significant factors leading to crime and delinquency. Moreover, increasing evidence indicates that the lack of effective restraints from self, family, friends and society cause delinquency than motivation for delinquency or crime. Therefore, control theories are also referred as restraint theories (Gottfredson, 2017). Low self-control emerged as a significant predictor of delinquency among incarcerated adolescents in this study and it is supported by literature as well (Gottfredson, 2017; Hay, 2006; Chappel, 2005). However, Ambert (2013) held that in certain cases, other factors also contribute to the delinquent behaviour of adolescents such as problems at school, low academic performance, lack of commitment to the school, and poor educational aspiration during primary and middle schooling.

#### *4.1 Implications of the study*

This research adds to the existing indigenous literature including that of Kauser & Pinquart (2016), Sajid & Riaz (2016), Arzeen, Hassan &

Riaz (2012), Maria (2012) and Haque & Rafail (1999). The findings of this study provide significant implications for forensic psychologists or counselors and parents. These findings bring into account the urgent need of preventive and therapeutic practices for the convicts. The adolescents must be taught coping skills and preventive measures for self-control against deviant behaviors. The results indicate only 17% percent of combined predictability of parental acceptance-rejection and self-control for the delinquency, therefore other predicting and risk factors can be studied further to design prevention plan against delinquency.

#### *4.2 Limitations and suggestions*

The data was collected from two different jails of Punjab, Pakistan, so the results cannot be generalized over vast population of incarcerated adolescents. Moreover, the participants might withhold the information as self-reported scales were used. The Cronbach alpha value of brief self-control scale and subscales of undifferentiated rejection of both father and mother forms were low as compared to that of other subscales.

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