

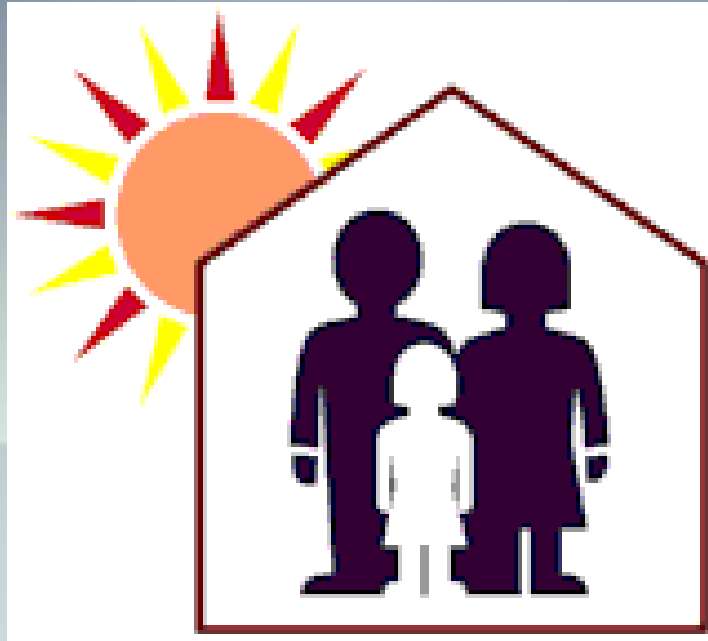


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Children's Perception of Parental Acceptance and Rejection: Age and Gender Differences



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Introduction

Parenting has long been known to have a profound impact on the socialization of children in the family. There are no simple answers to the question of how to parent, and no optimal parenting style exists for all children of all ages in all situations.

Parental control and parent-child relationship are the two broad dimensions of parenting that have been identified in research as significant to child adjustment.

Parental acceptance-rejection theory (PART) is a theory of socialization which attempts to explain and predict major consequences of parental acceptance and rejection for behavioral, cognitive and emotional development of children.

Parental acceptance and rejection together form the warmth dimension of parenting. Parental warmth is construed as a bipolar dimension where rejection, or the absence of parental warmth and affection, stands at one pole of the scale in opposition to acceptance at the other pole.

Introduction

Although each of these parenting dimensions shares significant variance in predicting individual differences in children's externalizing problems, internalizing symptoms, and competence, each of them also has unique effects on child adjustment even after considering the effects of the other dimensions.

Behavioral control consists of multiple dimensions of parental behavior, characterized by communication of a set of rules, enforcement of the rules, monitoring and supervision of children's whereabouts, and the use of inductive discipline techniques (Barber, 1996; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; according Cummings et al., 2000).

Although complexity and diversity in operational definitions of "acceptance" or "emotional availability" are appreciable many, if not most, conceptualizations refer to a common set of parenting characteristics, including parental support, expressions of warmth or positive emotional tone, sensitivity to children's psychological states, and responsiveness to children's psychological needs.

Aim - method

Aim

The aim of this study was to determine specific aspects of parental behavior towards boys and girls of different age.

Problem

1. To examine the differences between boys and girls considering perceptions of the various family variables: family satisfaction, father acceptance, mother acceptance, father rejection, mother rejection

Participants and procedure

The research was conducted on the sample of 527 children aged 11 to 15 years (276 boys and 251 girls).

The participants completed the questionnaires during a regularly scheduled classroom period.

Measures

The Quality of Family Interaction Scale (KOBI)

KOBI is a 55-item questionnaire designed to assess children's perceptions of the family climate as well as their parents' behaviour towards them, along five subscales (Table 1).

Besides the general climate dimensions, each scale asked for mother and father with the same number and same kind of items. Subjects were asked to assess, on a 5-point scale, satisfaction with their family climate and parental behaviour on two dimensions (according to the PART theory): acceptance and rejection.

Table 1. Item examples and main psychometrics of The Quality of Family Interaction Scale - KOBI

KOBI- subscales:	No. Of items (55)	α	Example items
1. Family satisfaction	11	0.89	I feel like a stranger in my family.
2. Father acceptance	10	0.90	My father is full of understanding for my problems.
3. Mother acceptance	10	0.89	I have the feeling that my mother would sacrifice everything for me.
4. Father rejection	12	0.86	My father has no time for me.
5. Mother rejection	12	0.85	It seems to me that my mother would be much happier without me.

Results

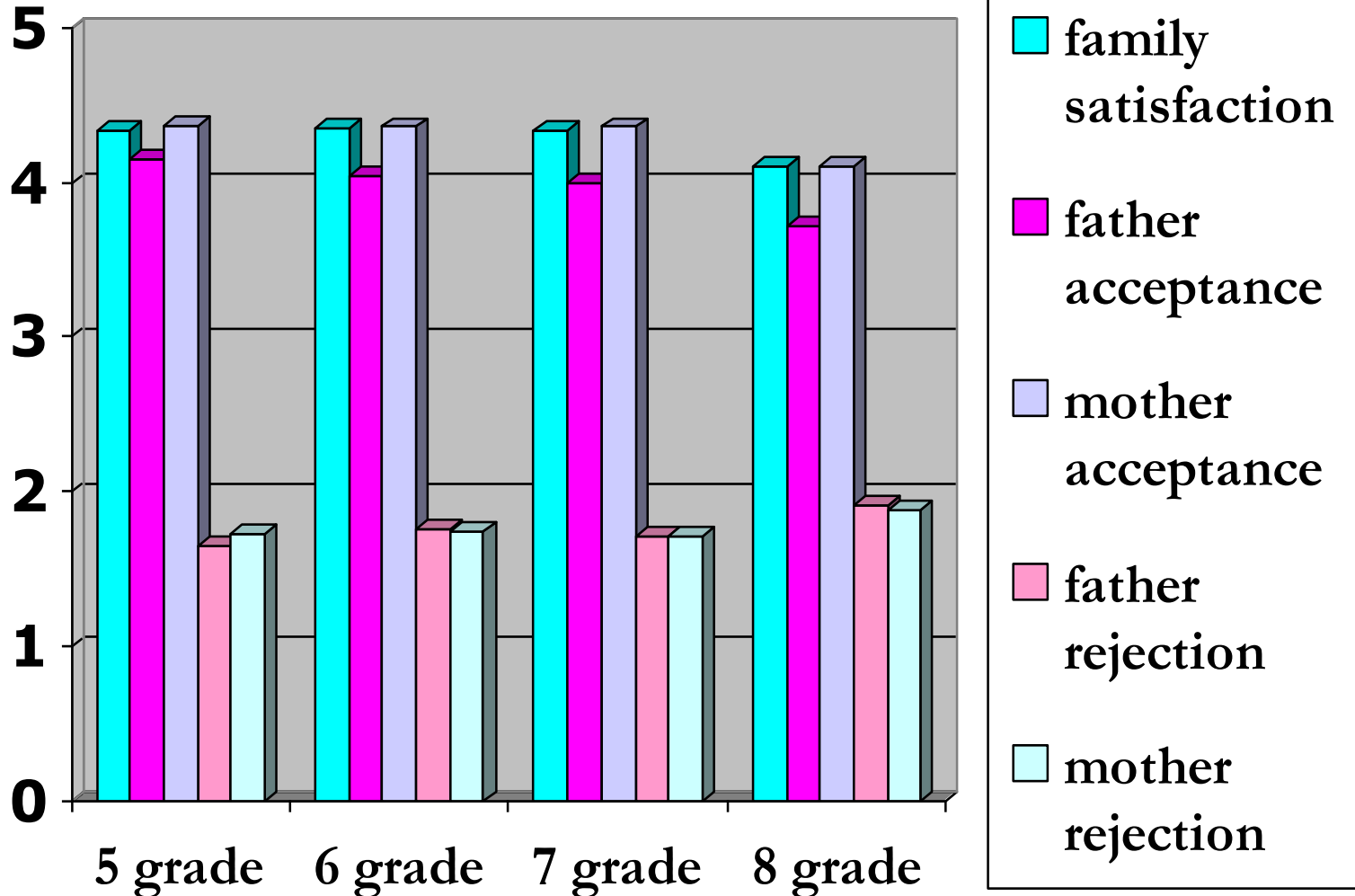
Table 2.

Results of the ANOVA: means and F values for the KOBİ subscales

KOBİ Subscales	Boys	Girls	F (df=1;525)	p
	M (N=276)	M (N=251)		
1. Family satisfaction	4.20	4.37	8.409*	0,003
2. Father acceptance	3.99	4.00	0.065	0,799
3. Mother acceptance	4.16	4.46	24.92*	0,000
4. Father rejection	1.85	1.65	12.37*	0,000
5. Mother rejection	1.86	1.64	20.54*	0,000

Results:

- differences between children of different age -



The conclusion:

The specific forms of parental behavior change as the child grow up, although the structure of parental behavior is mainly stable.

The results show that the girls perceive significantly more positive emotional aspects in the relations with their mothers and significantly less rejection and misunderstanding in relations with both, mothers and fathers, than boys. Also, girls were more satisfied with family life, in general, than boys.

Results show significant differences in children's perception of parental acceptance and rejection considering the age of subjects. Older children are less satisfied with family life and the relations with their fathers are evaluated more negatively than in younger children. Compared with younger children, the older ones consider the relations with both parents as less close, with less support and confidence.

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