

# Role of Parental Acceptance-Rejection in Juvenile Delinquent Behaviours

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## Abstract:

### ➤ Purpose

The objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between parental acceptance-rejection and delinquent behaviours.

### ➤ Research Design/methodology/approach

A correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between the variables. A total of 160 juvenile delinquents participated in the study, from the observation homes of Delhi, India. Juvenile delinquents were between 12 and 18 years of age. Parental acceptance and rejection (mother's form) and self-reported delinquency scale were used to assess the parental acceptance-rejection and delinquent behaviours, respectively.

### ➤ Findings

Results revealed that all the dimensions of parental acceptance-rejection (lack of affection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, undifferentiated rejection) were significantly positively correlated with delinquent behaviours. Furthermore, regression analysis revealed that only indifference/neglect and undifferentiated rejection significantly predict delinquent behaviours among juvenile delinquents.

### ➤ Originality/value

Based on the present study, it may conclude that parental rejection and delinquent behaviours are positively correlated and indifference/neglect and undifferentiated rejection had a positive effect on delinquent behaviours among juvenile delinquents.

**Keywords:** Parenting; Parental Acceptance-Rejection; Juvenile; Delinquent Behaviours.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Adolescents are the nation's backbone; they build the nation's future. Although in today's scenario, they are getting more involved in criminal acts in developed and developing countries. At present, juvenile delinquency is a worldwide problem, and this problem is becoming a matter of concern. According to UNICEF's global databases (2023), there are around 30 per 100,000 children in detention on any given day in 2022. According to the available data, North America has the greatest regional rate of children in detention (126 per 100,000 children), whereas East Asia and the Pacific have the lowest incidence (19 per 100,000 children). In India, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB, 2022), the number of crimes committed by juveniles in India

fell from 43,506 in 2013 to 30,555 in 2022, a 30% decrease in ten years. However, the crime rate against children in India grew by nearly 9% in 2022 over 2021, from 33.6 to 36.6 instances per lakh children.

A widely used definition was proposed by Hirschi (1969): "Delinquency is defined by acts, the detection of which is thought to result in punishment of the person committing them by agents of the larger society." A person who violates the law by committing a crime and whose age is between 12 and under 18 is called a juvenile delinquent (Sahmeyer, 2013). Juvenile delinquency refers to an adolescent-age crime. From the age of 12 to 18 years, adolescents who violate legal laws are referred to as delinquent behaviour (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983).

Delinquent behaviour as a violation of legal laws and includes anti-social behaviours such as the use of drugs, illegal or dangerous activities, dropout, unethical and immoral activities, etc. Criminal acts committed by any individuals who were between the ages of 7 and 18 are called juvenile delinquents (Houston & Barton 2005).

In India, the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act 2015 defines “juvenile or child as a person who has not completed 16 years of age”. As per this definition, children under 16 who commit crimes are called juvenile delinquents or child crimes. This child crime is treated specially and separately per the provision of the JJ (C&P) Act of 2015. In today's scenario, juvenile delinquency is a major issue for every society. It is a global epidemic that needs serious attention. Every society has its own rules, conduct and way of life; delinquency or crime are unacceptable (Antwi, 2016). There are many causes related to juvenile delinquency, such as parents, teachers, community, poverty, illiteracy, etc. Juvenile criminal behaviours, i.e., stealing, deception, sex promiscuity, thuggery, drug use, cultism, etc., have been observed in every society (Yusuf et al., 2021). When offenders participate in deviation and violence, the nation faces enormous economic costs (Simões et al., 2008).

Theft, property destruction, physical aggressiveness, and other juvenile delinquent behaviors contribute to low educational performance, school absenteeism, escape from home, self-harm, drug abuse, anxiety, and other negative outcomes (Stenbacka et al., 2019). Juvenile delinquents always lack affection, instability and low moral standards. Juvenile delinquents have a low level of intelligence and lack of ability to differentiate between the right and wrong side of a situation (Chakma, 2022).

Chowdhury et al. (2016) have identified several risk factors for increasing delinquent behaviour among adolescents, such as illiteracy, low family income, lack of relationships with family members, etc. Cultural deprivation and status frustration, adolescents can occasionally develop a delinquent subculture (Albert Cohen, 1955). Cloward and Ohlin (1960) found that adolescents delinquent tendencies vary depending on the opportunities in their environment. If adolescents have the chance to learn about illegal activity, they might turn into criminals. If they are unable to succeed in severe crime or are denied these options, they may engage in hooliganism and street fights. Similarly, Farrington and Welsh (2005) found that 50 percent of adolescent delinquent behaviour was linked with the elements of the family environment, i.e., ineffective parenting strategies, parental discord and deficient oversight. In adolescence, family dynamics play a significant role in shaping adolescent behaviour, including criminal activities. Adolescents increase or decrease involvement in criminal behaviour based on parental and sibling relationships, parenting style and overall family environment (Vazsonyi & Huang, 2010; Pratt & Cullen, 2000).

In adolescent delinquent behaviour, parenting is also a significant factor that plays an important role. An analysis of NCRB data gathered between 2006 to 2016, children living

with their parents or guardians have committed more crimes than children, who are living on the streets. There are several factors that both directly and indirectly lead to this, including domestic violence, parental drug use, maternal depression, family poverty, parents with low education, stressful households, and single-parent status (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2008; Bloomquist & Schnell, 2005). Numerous parenting practices have been identified by prior research as having the potential to either improve or exacerbate behavioural problems in children. Numerous studies have discovered a connection between strong parental warmth and a decline in children's externalising behaviour issues (Garber et al., 1997). Lack of involvement and insufficient monitoring and supervision of children's activities, as well as antisocial conduct, are significantly predicted by the study (Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986). Parents of children that exhibit antisocial conduct are more likely to be unsupportive, inconsistent, and negative and to employ harsher punishment methods (Reid et al., 2004). Research conducted by Welsh and Farrington (2005) demonstrate that up to 50% of the delinquent behaviours of adolescents can be traced back to aspects of the family environment, such as ineffective parenting approaches, conflict between parents, and inadequate supervision. After doing a thorough review, Rutter et al. (1998) concluded that hostile, critical, punitive, and coercive parenting are all related to antisocial behaviour.

In the parenting literature, two perspectives have emerged: dimension of parenting and typology (Darling & Steinberg 1993; O'Connor 2002; Ten Haaf, 1993). Dimensions are terms used to category parenting behaviours like affection, punishment, and monitoring, whereas typologies are groups of parenting dimensions like an authoritative parenting style, which is a combination of supportive parenting, attachment, and guiding the child's behaviour through explanation and appropriate conformity expectations. Although various parenting dimensions have been provided (Holden, 1997), two core characteristics, support and control, have been used to assess parental behaviour quality (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). The support dimension is also known as warmth, responsiveness, or acceptance-rejection by some researchers. It has to do with how parents interact with their children to help them feel comfortable, accepted, and approved (Rollins & Thomas, 1979). Acceptance, affection, love, support, warmth, responsiveness, sensitivity, communication, and intimacy, but also antagonism, neglect, and rejection, can be depicted as positive and negative behavioural characteristics of the support dimension (Rohner, 2004; Rollins & Thomas, 1979; Ten Haaf, 1993). These many characteristics of parental support, whether negative or positive, can be classified as low to high and are often seen as one-dimensional (Ten Haaf et al., 1994). Rejection, for example, is represented by low scores whereas acceptance is represented by high scores. In general, supportive parenting practices are negatively connected with delinquency, implying that high levels of support and warmth are associated with low levels of delinquency, whereas low levels of support or even rejection are associated with high levels of delinquency (Barnes & Farrell, 1992; Juang & Silbereisen, 1999).

Parental rejection can manifest in various forms, including verbal and physical aggression, neglect, and inconsistency in parenting (Rohner & Khaleque, 2010). Such behaviours can lead to internalising problems like anxiety and depression, as well as externalising problems like cognitive distortions and delinquency. Longitudinal and cross-cultural studies have confirmed these associations, highlighting the universal importance of parental acceptance in fostering healthy child development and preventing delinquent behaviours (Rohner, 2004; Khaleque & Rohner, 2012). Adolescent become deviant when they have lack of self-control and are not properly controlled by society, parents, and guardians (Karzon, 2008 and Ferdousi, 2011). Researchers also found that a juvenile delinquent behaviour can be influenced by a variety of factors, including parental criminality, rejection, divorce, and lack of parental participation (Wright and Wright, 1994). Although parental behaviour greatly influences adolescent behaviour, the purpose of this research is to explore the role of parental acceptance and rejection in delinquent behaviour.

#### ➤ *Objective of the study:*

The objective of the present study was to examine the relationship between parental acceptance-rejection in delinquent behaviours.

Based on reviews of literature, it was hypothesized that: there would be a positive relationship between parental acceptance-rejection and delinquent behaviours.

## II. METHODS

#### ➤ *Research Design:*

A correlational research design was used to examine the relationship between the variables under study.

#### ➤ *Sample:*

Purposive sampling methods were used in the present study, and 160 male juvenile delinquents participated. All these respondents were temporary residents in observation

homes in Delhi, India. Juvenile delinquents were between 12 and 18 years of age and had at least a primary school education.

#### ➤ *Measures:*

Instruments were used to measure parental acceptance and rejection and delinquent behaviours. Prior studies have often used these instruments to measure desired variables and domains.

The parental acceptance and rejection questionnaire was constructed by Rohner (1973), and the Hindi adaptation was by Dr Jai Prakash. The respondent should respond to the way their mothers treat them at present. There are 60 items in the questionnaire, and each has four responses: 1. almost always true, 2. sometimes true, 3. rarely true, and 4. almost never true. The measure consists of four scales: (1) warmth and affection (or coldness and lack of affection, when reverse scored), (2) hostility and aggression, (3) indifference and neglect, and (4) undifferentiated rejection.

Self-reported delinquency was used to measure delinquent behaviours in juvenile delinquents. This scale was developed by Elliott and Egiton (1980). The questionnaire consist 47 items measure to assess self-reported involvement in delinquency. In the present study Hindi translated version was used. The Cronbach's alpha of the Hindi-translated version is .916.

#### ➤ *Procedure*

The data for the present study was collected from the observation home in Delhi. All the legal formalities (permission, ethical considerations, etc.) were completed by the Department of Women and Child Development, New Delhi, India. Each participant in the present study was screened as per the norms and was provided with information about the aim of the research as well as the nature of the test. After obtaining consent from the participants, the above questionnaire was given with specific instructions.

## III. RESULT

**Table 1:** Correlation coefficients between dimension of parental acceptance and rejection and delinquent behaviours among juvenile delinquents.

	n	M	SD	Lack of Affection	Hostility/ Aggression	Indifference/ Neglect	Undifferentiated Rejection	Delinquent Behaviours
<b>Lack of Affection</b>	160	31.46	6.86	1				
<b>Hostility/ Aggression</b>	160	33.95	7.02	.313**	1			
<b>Indifference/ Neglect</b>	160	21.52	5.47	.431**	.528**	1		
<b>Undifferentiated Rejection</b>	160	23.85	3.86	.292**	.642**	.522**	1	
<b>Delinquent Behaviours</b>	160	77.11	29.53	.206**	.192*	.315**	.353**	1

\*p<.05, \*\*p<.01

Summarizes the results of correlation analyses (table 1) between dimensions of parental acceptance-rejection and delinquent behaviour among juvenile delinquents. It is evident from the findings that lack of affection was found to be significantly positive correlated with hostility/aggression ( $r(158) = .313, p < 0.01$ ), indifference/neglect ( $r(158) = .431, p < 0.01$ ), undifferentiated rejection ( $r(158) = .292, p < 0.01$ ) and delinquent behaviours ( $r(158) = .206, p < 0.01$ ). Hostility/aggression was found to be significantly positive correlated with indifference/neglect ( $r(158) = .528, p < 0.01$ ), undifferentiated rejection ( $r(158) = .642, p < 0.01$ ) and delinquent behaviours ( $r(158) = .192, p < 0.05$ ). Indifference/neglect was found to be significantly positive correlated with undifferentiated rejection ( $r(158) = .522, p < 0.01$ ) and delinquent behaviours ( $r(158) = .315, p < 0.01$ ). Further, undifferentiated rejection was found to be significantly positive correlated with delinquent behaviours ( $r(158) = .353, p < 0.01$ ).

**Table 2:** Multiple regression analysis with dimension of parental acceptance and rejection as predictor and delinquent behaviours as criterion among juvenile delinquents.

Model	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	Sig.
Constant	6.178	15.064		.410	.682
Lack of Affection	.318	.353	.074	.901	.369
Hostility/Aggression	-.575	.423	-.137	-1.358	.176
Indifference/ Neglect	1.011	.512	.187	1.975	.050
Undifferentiated Rejection	2.461	.765	.322	3.218	.002
R	.402				
R <sup>2</sup>	.162				
F change	7.478				.000

Table 2 shows the impact of dimensions of parental acceptance-rejection (lack of affection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, undifferentiated rejection) on delinquent behaviours in juvenile delinquents. The  $R^2$  value of .162 revealed that the predictors explained 16.20% variance in the criterion variable  $F(4, 155) = 7.478, p < .000$ . The findings revealed that indifference/neglect ( $\beta = .187, p < .05$ ) and undifferentiated rejection ( $\beta = .322, p < .01$ ) significantly predict the delinquent behaviours, whereas, lack of affection ( $\beta = .074, p > .05$ ) and hostility/aggression ( $\beta = -.137, p > .05$ ) have a nonsignificant effect on delinquent behaviours.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

The present study was undertaken to examine the relationship between parental acceptance and rejection in delinquent behaviours among juvenile delinquents. Correlational analysis revealed that all the dimensions of parental acceptance and rejection (lack of affection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, undifferentiated rejection) are significantly positive correlated with delinquent behaviours among juvenile delinquents. Previous studies reported that children who perceive their parents as warm and affectionate are less likely to exhibit behavioural problems (Rohner & Britner, 2002). Similarly, Amato & Fowler (2002) reported that parental warmth is associated with lower levels of adolescent problem behaviours, including delinquency and suggest that warm, supportive parenting helps foster secure attachment and positive social behaviours. Some other studies reported that children who experience parental aggression or harsh and aggressive parenting were more likely to engage in aggressive and delinquent behaviours (Simons et al., 1994; Dodge et al., 1990). Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber (1986) found in their meta-analysis that delinquency and neglect were also positively correlated and concluded that neglected children were at greater risk for involvement in criminal

activity due to a lack of monitoring and emotional support. In a longitudinal study, Widom (1989) found that neglected children were significantly more likely to be arrested for delinquency, criminal behaviour, and violent crime than non-neglected children. Further, in a meta-analysis, Khaleque & Rohner (2002) found that perceived parental rejection is strongly associated with psychological maladjustment, and also perceived parental rejection is linked to higher levels of aggression, conduct problems, and delinquent behaviour (Rohner et al., 2005).

Furthermore, multiple regression analysis revealed that dimensions of parental acceptance and rejection, especially indifference/neglect and undifferentiated rejection, are significant predictors of delinquent behaviours and predict 16.20% of the variance in delinquent behaviours. Numerous studies have shown that parental acceptance and rejection impact delinquent behaviours. Rejection by parents is an important antecedent to delinquent behaviour (Schwartz et al., 1998). Similarly, Rohner and Khaleque (2010), found that children who are rejected by their parents tend to be more involved in externalized activities such as aggression and delinquency. Parents' behaviour, whether rejecting or accepting, has a significant role in their children's behaviour. Higher rates of parental acceptance may decrease the likelihood of delinquency, but higher levels of parental rejection may increase it. Recognizing these connections emphasizes the need to develop healthy parent-child relationships as a means of preventing juvenile delinquency.

#### V. CONCLUSION

Based on the present study, it can be concluded that parental rejection and delinquent behaviour are positively correlated and indifference/neglect and undifferentiated



rejection had a positive effect on delinquent behaviour among juvenile delinquents. The present study will make a significant contribution to the understanding of parent-child relationship. This will help in understanding and preventing increasing criminal behaviour in children.

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