

Effect of Perceived Maternal Warmth on Psychological Adjustment among Public Secondary School Students in Port-Said Governorate, Egypt

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Abstract: Parental warmth was considered as an important dimension of parenting. Perceived maternal warmth has a fundamental role in the personality development and adolescents' psychological adjustment. When a mother accepts or rejects the child, it significantly affects personality formation and development of the child and this in turn will affect the adolescents' psychological adjustment and their self-esteem. This study aimed at evaluating the effect of perceived maternal warmth on psychological adjustment among public secondary school students in Port-Said Governorate, Egypt. The descriptive correlational design was used. The study was conducted in public secondary schools in Port-Said Governorate, Egypt. A sample of 442 teenagers was included in this study. Data was collected by: Teenagers' Demographic Data sheet, Schaffer Parental Treatment Inventory and Self-Esteem Inventory. Results revealed that, maternal warmth is positively correlated with positive adolescents' self-esteem. In addition, positive and significant correlation was found between maternal rejection and negative self-esteem while, positive self-esteem was negatively correlated with maternal rejection. The study concluded that, there was a statistically significant relation between perceived maternal warmth and adolescents' psychological adjustment. The study recommended that, health education program need to be carried out in schools to teach mothers about positive maternal styles, further studies are required to assess other factors and other maternal styles that affect the adolescents' psychological adjustment.

Key words: Teenagers • Maternal warmth • Maternal styles • Pediatric Nursing • Self-respect • Self-esteem • Psychological adjustment • Psychological adaptation

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence stage, is one of the most critical phases in teen development. This period is referred to as "a life stage beginning in biology and ending in society." With the rapid growth and physical, social and psychological development of teens, the growth of self-esteem can influence many variables in their lives. Research has shown that the warmth of their relatives is one of the most significant variables [1-3].

Maternal warmth refers to "the positive affective quality of maternal parenting behavior during interactions with the children". It is an indicator of positive parenting, which expressed by positive affect, admiration and affection toward the child, including manifestations of fondness and enjoyment. Maternal warmth has been shown to be related to a range of child outcomes across multiple domains of functioning and is therefore a clinically significant index of parenting behavior. It has an

essential role in the adolescent's identity development, due to its effects on their capabilities in their life [4, 5]. However, parental warmth is considered as a continuum ranging from parental acceptance to rejection. According to "Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PART), these two parental sets are defined in terms of "the child's perception of parental behavior". It is proposed that any person has a basic need for a positive response as affection, support and warmth from the most important people to them as parents, peers and teachers which is vital for the adolescent's growth [6].

Many studies emphasized that the perceived maternal acceptance-rejection has a vital role in the personality development and psychological adjustment. When a mother accepts or rejects the child, it significantly affects personality formation and development of the child and this in turn will affect the psychological adjustment and self-esteem in adolescents. Therefore, rejection in childhood leads to psychological

maladjustment in adolescents and adult's life, while acceptance enhances positive feelings in the child, which is the future adult and thus promoting normal psychosocial adjustment [7-10].

Pediatric nurse is concerned with adolescents' health, their normal growth and development and their gaining full potential as adults. Also, pediatric nursing activities, particularly, educational program for parents, especially mothers about how to deal with teens would promote the maternal understanding of adolescent development. As well as, pediatric nurse needs to recognize different parenting styles and provide support to parents by discussing the effects of different parenting models and teaching parenting skills, for helping parents deal with the adolescents' psychological stresses and selecting an appropriate parenting style for them to enhance their psychological adjustment and self-esteem [8, 11].

In the light of the importance of the maternal role in influencing adolescents' psychological adjustment which in turn affect adolescents' self-esteem and forming their personality, the present study was undertaken to evaluate the effect of perceived maternal warmth on psychological adjustment among public secondary school students in Port-Said Governorate, Egypt.

Aim of the Study: This study aimed at evaluating the effect of perceived maternal warmth on psychological adjustment among public secondary school students in Port-Said Governorate, Egypt.

Operational Definition: Teenagers' psychological adjustment in this research is expressed by self esteem. When adolescent has positive self-esteem that means he has positive psychological adjustment, otherwise, when adolescent has negative self-esteem that means he has negative psychological adjustment.

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Research Design: The descriptive correlational design was used in this study.

Subjects: A convenient sample of a total 442 teenagers of both sexes and who were free from any disease or deformity was included in this study,

Setting: Subjects were selected from eight public secondary schools in Port-Said Governorate, Egypt.

Tools for Data Collection: The following tools were used to collect data pertinent to the study.

Teenagers' Demographic Data Sheet: This sheet developed by the researcher to collect demographic data about teenagers and their mothers, after reviewing of literature. It includes student's age, sex, family size, mother's education level and occupation, number of siblings and teenager's order.

Schaffer Parental Treatment Inventory: This tool is used to measure perceived maternal treatment styles by teenagers for all subjects of the current study. It was developed in an English version by Schaffer [15], translated into Arabic version by Abou Nahia and Moussa [16] and modified by Ahmed [17]. It consists of 18 subscales. The researcher assesses maternal warmth by using two maternal subscales. Firstly, the acceptance style scale which consists of 16 items and secondly, rejection style scale, which consists of 14 items. The tool is scored using a rating scale with three choices; " No ", "sometimes" and " Yes " for each of the 30 items and scored 0,1,2 respectively. The scores were reversed for negative items. For each subscale; acceptance and rejection, the scores of the items were summed up and the total was divided by numbers of items, giving a mean score. These scores were converted into a percentage score, the percentage of maternal styles of each subject were considered acceptable if the teenager's score was equal to or exceed the mean+1 standard deviation, otherwise it was considered rejectable. The validity and reliability of the maternal treatment inventory are 0.93 and 0.86, respectively [17].

Self-esteem Inventory: This scale was developed in an English version by Cooper Smith [12] to collect data about teenager's self-esteem and it was translated into Arabic by Abdel Hafeiz [13]. It consists of four domains, namely: General, Social, Academic and Family self-esteem. The tool includes Lying scale, which is measured by eight statements. The maximum score of the lying scale is 12 to accept checked answer of each participant. This scale was scored using a Likert scale with a two choices; "apply" (2 scores) or "not apply" (1 score) for each of the 58 statements. The scores were reversed for negative items, for each subscale, the scores of the items were summed up and the total of the items, giving a mean score for the subscales. These scores were converted into a percent score. The self-esteem of the adolescents will consider positive if the score is equal or exceed the mean

+1 standard deviation, otherwise it will consider negative. The total score of the inventory is 50 to 100. The reliability is 0.86 [14].

Field Work: Subjects were chosen from the three academic years of the eight public secondary schools in Port-Said Governorate, Egypt. The headmasters were informed about the study. The researcher introduced themselves to the students through the headmasters. Then, the purpose of the study and how to complete the scales was explained to the students. Participants were informed about their right to participate in the study, or withdraw at any time and that all their information is very confidential. Also, the adolescents were informed that there are no possible harms or risks associated with the research. The participants were requested to fill in confidential scales that took approximately 20-30 minutes to be completed.

Ethical Considerations: An oral consent was obtained from subjects to participate within the study. The aim of the study was explained to each student. Respect for privacy of each participant in the study. In all settings of the study, each participant was assured that the information obtained for the study was confidential and used only for the aim of the present research. Moreover, ensure that all participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

Statistical Analysis: The data collected were organized, coded, tabulated, computerized and analyzed by using SPSS statistical program version 16. Descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were used.

RESULTS

Table 1 illustrates demographic characteristics of studied sample. The research findings revealed that, the mean score of the adolescent's age was 16.4 ± 0.95 years, 54.8% of the sample were males and 45.2% were females, 36.9 of them were first child, followed by 28.3% were second child. 43.4% of them had a family of four to five members. Regarding mother's education, 68.6% had secondary school education levels and 58.8% of mothers not work.

Table 2 reveals that the mean score of maternal acceptance was 22.40 ± 6.76 , while maternal rejection was 10.89 ± 5.96 with a total mean score of maternal warmth "maternal styles" as perceived by the adolescents was 33.34 ± 5.99 .

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of studied teens and their mothers (n=442)

Characteristics	No.	%
Age		
15-<16	78	17.6
16-<17	191	43.2
17-18	173	39.14
Mean \pm SD		16.37 \pm 0.95
Student's sex		
Male	242	54.8
Female	200	45.2
Student's order		
The First	163	36.9
The second	125	28.3
The Third	83	18.8
The Fourth	50	11.3
Above Fourth	21	4.7
Family No.		
2-<4	12	2.7
4-<6	299	67.6
6-8	131	29.7
Mother's Education		
Literacy	5	1.1
Primary	13	2.9
Preparatory	121	27.4
Secondary	303	68.6
Mother's job		
Work	182	41.2
Not work	260	58.8

Table 2: Total mean scores of perceived maternal warmth by studied adolescents (n=442)

	Maternal warmth	
	Maternal acceptance	Maternal rejection
Mean \pm SD	22.40 ± 6.76	10.89 ± 5.96
Total	33.34 ± 5.99	

Table 3 shows that, the mean score of negative self-esteem, which indicated negative psychological adjustment was higher than the mean score of positive adolescent's self-esteem (47.61 ± 4.62 & 31.82 ± 3.29 respectively) with a total mean score of overall adolescents' self-esteem 79.43 ± 4.12 .

Table 4 illustrates the correlations between maternal warmth and adolescents' psychological adjustment as expressed by self-esteem. The research findings revealed a statistically significant negative correlation between perceived maternal acceptance by teens and total negative adolescent's self-esteem ($P=0.000$, $r=-0.30$). Conversely, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between perceived maternal acceptance by teens and total positive adolescent's self-esteem ($P=0.000$, $r=0.49$). Furthermore, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between total maternal rejection

Table 3: Total mean scores of adolescents' psychological adjustment (n=442).

	Adolescents' psychological adjustment	
	Positive	Negative
Mean \pm SD	31.82 \pm 3.29	47.61 \pm 4.62
Total	79.43 \pm 4.12	

Table 4: The Correlations between maternal warmth and adolescents' psychological adjustment (n=442).

	Maternal warmth			
	Maternal acceptance		Maternal rejection	
	R	P	R	P
Self-esteem				
Total negative self-esteem	-0.30	0.000*	0.36	0.000*
Total positive self-esteem	0.49	0.000*	-0.34	0.000*

*Correlation is significant at 0.05

Table 5: The Correlations between Maternal warmth and self-esteem subscales among studied adolescents (n=442)

Self-esteem subscales	Maternal warmth			
	Maternal acceptance		Maternal rejection	
	R	P	R	P
Social	0.145	0.002*	-.070	0.141*
Family	0.120	0.012*	-.018	0.701
Academic	0.022	0.652	-.104	0.029*
General	-.057	0.230*	0.185	0.000**
Total	0.055	0.246	0.125	0.008

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05

and total adolescents' negative self-esteem ($P=0.000$, $r=0.36$), while a statistically significant negative correlation was found between adolescent's positive self-esteem and maternal rejection ($P=0.000$, $r=-0.34$).

Table 5 shows a statistically significant positive correlations between adolescent's social self-esteem and maternal acceptance ($P=0.002$, $r=0.145$). Also, a statistically significant positive correlation was found between adolescent's family self-esteem and maternal acceptance style ($P=0.000$, $r=0.120$) while a statistically significant negative correlation was found between both adolescent's academic and social self-esteem and maternal rejection style ($P=0.029$, $r=-0.104$, $P=0.141$, $r=-0.070$). While a statistically significant negative correlation was found between adolescent's general self-esteem and maternal acceptance style ($P=0.000$, $r=-0.057$).

DISCUSSION

Maternal warmth which includes maternal acceptance and maternal rejection styles, is an important indicator in predicting adolescents' psychological adjustment as emphasized by parental acceptance-rejection theory. Therefore, it is important to take into account that what happened during the childhood will influence teens'

behaviors later. So, how mothers feel about adolescent boys and girls and how they treat them are important factors in promoting their psychological adjustment and in turn promoting their self-esteem [18]. Many researches concluded that, adolescents who were accepted by their parents, especially mothers, had a positive psychological adjustment and positive self-esteem, better than those who perceived rejection, which associated with negative effects such as mistrust, aggression and negative self-esteem. Self-esteem was conversely associated with maternal warmth characterized by low acceptance which goes with the current study findings [19, 20]. These findings may be referred to maternal rejection that lead to lower adolescents' aspiration, which in turn leads to develop poor psychological adjustment.

The result of the present study confirmed that there was a statistically significant negative correlation between maternal acceptance and adolescent's negative self-esteem. This finding could be related to the adolescent's feeling of being accepted by their mothers and other factors affecting adolescents' self-esteem such as peer interaction and group identity which are very important in this stage as they help adolescents to increase their self-esteem. On the same line, Gota [21] and MacDonald *et al.* [22] studied child rearing behaviors and

adolescent self-esteem, indicated that there was a positive association between maternal acceptance and adolescent self-esteem, as well as the study of Driscoll [23]. Such findings were supported by Potter *et al.* [1] who pointed out that adolescents seek a “group identity” because they need esteem and acceptance. So, being unlike their peers in this period of development is considered a problem for them to be accepted, which consequently affect their psychological adjustment and their self-esteem regardless their relationship with their mothers/fathers.

The current findings revealed that, all types of self-esteem were positively correlated with maternal acceptance except general self-esteem. Self-worth of teens is concerned with their effectiveness at school, within the family and in social situations. These results were paralleled with those of Kim [24] who found that, maternal warmth has a significant effect on the development of self-esteem. The highest level of a child’s well-being which includes psychological adjustment and positive self-esteem was associated with high levels of “maternal warmth”. This is explained by the fact that maternal acceptance helps children to build up the “intrinsic motivation” in their academic activities and vocational goals and also help them in their academic achievement which will increase as their self-esteem increase. So, adolescents with low academic achievement are due to family interruptions and negative self-esteem because of lack of love, support and warmth of their parents. Therefore, they have a bad feeling regarding their self as inferiority, temper, missing interest in school and future, lack of confidence, low self-respect [18, 25-27].

Family, especially parents play a vital role in the development of adolescents thought, feeling and behavior. The parenting style practice by parents decide the success or failure of adolescent [28]. The current study findings showed that, general self-esteem was negatively correlated with maternal acceptance and positively correlated with maternal rejection. This is referring to the fact that maternal styles may not be the only factor that determines the adolescents’ self-esteem. Achievement motivation, significant figures as teachers and peers are also contributing to their self-esteem. Sometimes, rejected children find acceptance through identification with their friends [8].

CONCLUSION

Maternal warmth affects the well-being in adolescents. There were positive and significant correlations among maternal acceptance-rejection and

adolescents’ psychological adjustment. Maternal acceptance was positively correlated with positive self-esteem. Furthermore, positive and significant correlation was found between maternal rejection and negative self-esteem, while positive self-esteem was negatively correlated with maternal rejection. In short, perceived maternal warmth which includes acceptance and rejection plays a vital role in adolescents’ psychological adjustment.

Recommendations: Based on the study findings the researcher recommends the following:

- A health educational program for mothers about the various maternal styles and the most effective and positive parenting skills to increase their warmth.
- Further assessment of the adolescents to evaluate factors affecting their self-esteem to promote their psychological adjustment.
- Replicate the study on paternal warmth and its relation to adolescents’ psychological adjustment.

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