Parental Acceptance and Rejection:

Theory, Measures, and Research in the Arab World

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Abstract

Purpose. The purpose of this article is to summarize the rich and growing body of research that draws from parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory) and associated measures as used throughout the Arab world.

Methodology. This body of work includes more than 100 studies that explore the reliability and validity of Arabic adaptations of several measures of parental acceptance-rejection, antecedents of acceptance-rejection, and mental health and educational consequences of perceived acceptance-rejection in the Arab world.

Results. Overall, Arab research provides strong support for the pan-Arab applicability of PARTheory and the research instruments derived from it.

Conclusions and Recommendations. Evidence provided in this review tends to be so robust and so consistent that we believe educators, psychologists, and other professionals should feel confident developing policies and practice-applications based on PARTheory and its associated measures in the Arab world. For example, Arab educators, psychologists, and others might consider preparing written and visual materials based on evidence provided here that would provide advice and guidance to parents and other members of the general public for helping promote educational achievement and optimal mental health in children and adults throughout the Arab world.

Key words: Parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory), PARTheory measures, PARTheory research in Arab countries.

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory, Measures, and Research in the Arab World

Overview of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory)

Parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory) is an evidence-based theory of socialization and lifespan development. The theory attempts to predict and explain the pancultural causes, consequences, and other correlates of interpersonal acceptance and rejection within the United States and worldwide (Rohner, 1986, 2004; Rohner, Khaleque, & Cournoyer, 2010; Rohner & Rohner, 1980). It attempts to answer five classes of questions divided into three subtheories. These include personality subtheory, coping subtheory, and sociocultural systems subtheory.

Personality subtheory, described at greater length later, asks two general questions. First, it asks: Is it true, as the subtheory postulates, that children everywhere—regardless of differences in culture, language, race, ethnicity, gender, or other defining conditions—respond in the same way when they perceive themselves to be accepted or rejected by their parents or other major caregivers? Second, it asks: To what degree do the effects of childhood rejection extend into adulthood and old age?

Coping subtheory asks one basic question: What gives some children and adults the resilience to emotionally cope more effectively than most with the experiences of childhood rejection? Finally, sociocultural systems subtheory asks two very different classes of questions. First, it asks: Why are some parents warm and loving and others cold, aggressive, neglecting/rejecting? Is it true, for example--as PARTheory predicts--that specific psychological, familial, community, and societal factors tend to be reliably associated the world over with specific variations in parental acceptance-rejection? Second, in what way is the total fabric of society as well as the behavior and beliefs of individuals within society affected by the fact that most parents in that society tend to either accept or reject their children? For example, is it true, as PARTheory predicts, that a people's religious beliefs,

artistic preferences, and other expressive beliefs and behaviors tend to be universally associated with their childhood experiences of parental love and love withdrawal?

The vast majority of empirical studies testing the major postulates of PARTheory fall within the realm of personality subtheory. This is as true of the hundred or more studies in the Arab world as it is elsewhere (Ahmed, 2007, 2008; Ahmed & Gielen, 2006, June). Accordingly, we focus heavily in this article on those studies. Before reviewing details of this subtheory and of the Arab studies that pertain to it, however, we must define the concepts of parental acceptance and rejection (i.e., the warmth dimension of parenting).

The Warmth Dimension of Parenting

As construed in PARTheory, the warmth dimension of parenting has to do with the quality of the affectional bond between parents and their children, and with the physical, verbal, and symbolic behaviors parents use to express these feelings. One end of the dimension is marked by parental acceptance, which refers to the warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, nurturance, support, or simply love that children can experience from their parents and other caregivers. The other end of the dimension is marked by parental rejection, which refers to the absence or significant withdrawal of these feelings and behaviors, and by the presence of a variety of physically and psychologically hurtful behaviors and affects. All humans can be placed somewhere along the warmth dimension because all have experienced as children various degrees of love at the hands of their parents or other major caregivers.

Extensive cross-cultural research over the course of many decades has shown that parental rejection can be experienced by any one or a combination of four principal expressions: (1) Cold and unaffectionate behavior and affect, the opposite of being warm and affectionate, (2) hostile and aggressive behavior and affect, (3) indifferent and neglecting behavior and affect, and (4) undifferentiated rejection. Undifferentiated rejection refers to individuals' beliefs that their parents or other attachment figures do not really care about them

or love them, even though there might not be clear behavioral indicators that the parents or others are neglecting, unaffectionate, or aggressive toward them.

PARTheory's Personality Subtheory

As we said earlier, PARTheory's personality subtheory attempts to predict and explain major personality or psychological—especially mental health-related—consequences of perceived interpersonal—especially *parental*—acceptance and rejection. The subtheory is driven by the assumption that humans have an enduring, biologically based emotional need for positive response from the people most important to them (see also Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Bjorklund & Pellegrini, 2002; Leary, 1999). The need for positive response includes an emotional wish, desire, or yearning (whether consciously recognized or not) for comfort, support, care, concern, nurturance, and the like. In adulthood, the need becomes more complex and differentiated to include the wish (recognized or unrecognized) for positive regard from people with whom one has an affectional bond of attachment. People who can best satisfy this need are typically parents for infants and children, but include significant others and non parental attachment figures for adolescents and adults.

Additionally, PARTheory's personality subtheory postulates that when children do not get this need for positive response satisfied they are predisposed to respond emotionally and behaviorally in specific ways. In particular, individuals who feel rejected are likely— according to the subtheory—to be anxious and insecure. In an attempt to allay these feelings and to satisfy their needs, persons who feel rejected often increase their bids for positive response, but only up to a point. That is, they tend to become more dependent.

Parental rejection—as well as rejection by other attachment figures throughout life— is also expected in PARTheory to lead to other personality outcomes as well. These include: Hostility, aggression, passive aggression, or problems with the management of hostility and aggression; emotional unresponsiveness; immature dependence or defensive independence

depending on the form, frequency, timing, duration, and intensity of perceived rejection; impaired self-esteem; impaired self-adequacy; emotional instability; and negative worldview. The theoretical rationale for these expectations is laid out in Rohner, Khaleque, and Cournoyer (2009) and elsewhere (e.g., Rohner, 1986).

Negative worldview, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, and some of the other personality dispositions just mentioned are important elements in the social-cognition or mental representations of rejected persons. Thus, along with one's emotional state, mental representations tend to shape the way in which individuals perceive, construe, and react to new experiences, including interpersonal relationships. Mental representations also influence what and how individuals store and remember experiences (see also Baldwin, 1992; Clausen, 1972; Crick & Dodge, 1994; Epstein, 1994). Once created, individuals' mental representations of self, of significant others, and of the world around them tend to induce them to seek or to avoid certain situations and kinds of people. In effect, according to PARTheory, the way individuals think about themselves and their world shapes the way they live their lives. This is notably true of rejected children and adults. For example, many rejected persons have a tendency to perceive hostility where none is intended, to see deliberate rejection in unintended acts of significant others, or to devalue their sense of personal worth in the face of strong counter-information. Moreover, rejected persons are likely to seek, create, interpret, or perceive experiences, situations, and relationships in ways that are consistent with their distorted mental representations. And they often tend to avoid or mentally reinterpret situations that are inconsistent with these representations. Additionally, people who feel rejected by significant others often construct mental images of personal relationships as being unpredictable, untrustworthy, and perhaps hurtful.

According to PARTheory, these negative mental representations are often carried forward into new relationships where rejected individuals may find it difficult to trust others

emotionally or where they may become hypervigilant and hypersensitive to any slights or signs of emotional undependability. Because of all this selective attention, selective perception, faulty styles of causal attribution, and distorted cognitive information-processing, rejected individuals are expected in PARTheory to self-propel along qualitatively different developmental pathways from accepted or loved people.

Methods in PARTheory Research

Even though five discrete methods or types of studies—described in Rohner *et al.* (2009)—have been used internationally to test core aspects of PARTheory, the overwhelming majority of studies in the Arab world and elsewhere have used self-report questionnaires. Most often used are the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) (Rohner, 2005*a*), the Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire (PARQ/Control) (Rohner, 2005*b*), and the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005*b*). These and the other self-report questionnaires used in PARTheory research are described at length in the *Handbook for the Study of Parental Acceptance and Rejection* (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005).

Three versions of the PARQ and PARQ/Control have been used in Arab research. One is used to assess *children's* perceptions of the degree of acceptance or rejection (and behavioral control) they receive at the hands of their mothers, fathers, or other caregivers. Another assesses *adults*' recollections of their childhood experiences of maternal or paternal acceptance-rejection (and behavioral control). The third asks *parents* to reflect on their own accepting-rejecting and controlling behaviors. The PAQ, on the other hand, assesses individuals' (adults' and children's) self-perceptions of overall psychological adjustment as defined by seven of the personality dispositions central to personality subtheory described earlier.

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Research in the Arab World: An Overview

The Arab world consists of 22 countries in which more than 320 million people live. This world stretches from the Atlantic Ocean (e.g., Morocco) to Central Asia (e.g., Iraq), and from the Mediterranean Sea (e.g., Egypt) to the Horn of Africa (e.g., Somalia). This territory encompasses a vast realm of historical and cultural complexity. Throughout history, its influence has radiated throughout the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe—and to practically every other part of the world as well. The earliest civilizations arose on the Mesopotamian plain between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in the country that now includes Iraq, as well as on the banks of the Egyptian Nile. Prophets whose religious teachings are followed by hundreds of millions of people walked in this territory.   On the following pages we provide a concise overview of research on parental acceptance-rejection conducted mostly by Arab researchers in this region during the last few decades.

Recent reviews of Arab literature related to children's perceptions of parents' behavior (Ahmed, 2007, 2008; Ahmed & Gielen, 2006, June) point out that Arab psychologists showed an early interest in investigating parental behavior as perceived by children (e.g., Nagaty, 1974) in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, and the USA. Since the early 1960s, more than 500 Arab studies have been completed on children's perceptions of parental behavior. At least 100 of these studies employed Rohner's Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ). Rohner's PARQ was first translated into Arabic by Salama in 1986 (1986a). It was widely used in Egypt by her and her students (1986, 1987a, 1987b, 1987c; & 1990a, 1990b). Her translation was also used in other Arab countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Yemen. At the same time another Arabic translation of the PARQ was made by Ahmed in Sudan (Ahmed, 1985). This translation was used in several later studies (e.g., Ahmed, Gielen, & Avellani, 1987; Ahmed & Khalil, 1999; Gielen, Ahmed, & Avellani, 1992).

Most Arab studies using the PARQ have employed the Adult form with adolescents (e.g., Al-Baghdady, 2001; Al-Sabah, 2010; Al-Shayji, 2003; Mekhemer, 2003; and Taher, 2005). Other Arab studies administered the adult version to youth, mainly university students (e.g., Ahmed, 2007; Faied, 2000, 2005; and Rasmi, 2008). A third group of Arab researchers employed samples of adolescents and youth. Among them are: Ahmed and Gielen (2006 February); Ahmed, Gielen, & Avellani (1987); and, Al-Otaibi (2005). Only a few Arab researchers have used the Child PARQ to assess children's perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection. This group includes: Ali (2000); Bader (2001, 2008); and Salama (1987a, 1987b). The majority of Arab studies using the PARQ have employed both sexes as subjects. However, some studies used either males or females only (Bader, 2001, 2008). The majority of Arab studies using the PARQ have employed the standard 60-item version for mothers, fathers, adults, and children. Examples include: Al-Shayji (2003) and Al-Otaibi (2005).

Additionally, the majority of Arab studies on the relationship between the perception of parental acceptance-rejection (as measured by the PARQ) and personality traits, have used several personality questionnaires to assess personality traits in children in relation to perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection. Examples include: Gielen, Ahmed, and Avellani (1992); and Taher (2005). Some of these studies employed both the PARQ and Rohner's Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) to assess this relationship. Included among these are: Salama (1986, 1987c, 1991); Abou-el-Kheir (1999); and Abdel-Razek (2005).

In comparison with researchers from other Arab countries, Egyptian researchers have shown an earlier and more pronounced interest in using the PARQ. Additionally, researchers in some Arab universities and institutes have shown a greater interest than in others in investigating children's perception of parental acceptance-rejection by using the PARQ.

Some of these major research centers include: The Faculty of Arts, Zagazig University, Egypt; the Institute of Higher Studies on Childhood, Ain Shams University, Egypt; the College of Social Sciences, Kuwait University, Kuwait; the Faculty of Education, Qatar University, Qatar; the Faculty of Education, Umm el-Qura University, Mecca, Saudi Arabia; the Faculty of Education, Tanta University, Egypt; the Faculty of Education, Mansoura University, Egypt; and, Al-Azhar University, Egypt.

Reliability of the Arabic Version of the PARQ

Salama (1986, 1987c) administered the Arabic version of the PARQ to 84 college students in Egypt. The students were evenly distributed by age and sex. Item analysis was conducted on their responses. Correlations of each item within a scale with the total score of the scale were computed as were correlations of the total score of each scale with the total PARQ score. All items were found to be significantly correlated (p less than 0.01), and no item was rejected. Correlations of items with the total score of the perceived Warmth/Affection scale ranged from 0.30 to 0.68, with a median of 0.52. Within the Hostility/Aggression scale the correlations ranged from 0.30 to 0.79, with a median of 0.58; within the Indifference/Neglect scale, item-total scale correlations ranged from 0.30 to 68 with a median of 0.55, and those of the perceived Undifferentiated Rejection scale ranged from 0.46 to 0.64, with a median of 0.54. Cronbach's alpha coefficients of the Arabic version of the PARQ scale ranged from 0.62 to 0.81, with a median reliability of 0.76.

Several other Arab studies, using either the adult form or the child form of the PARQ, have reported similar or sometimes even higher Cronbach alphas. Typical examples include: Ahmed (2007); Ahmed and Gielen (2006); Al-Sabah (2010); Salama (1986); and, Taher (2005).

Moreover, a recent study in Kuwait (Ahmed & Gielen, 2006 February) revealed alpha coefficients ranging from .74 to .94 on the four PARQ subscales (Adult form),

including Warmth/Affection, Hostility/Aggression, Indifference/Neglect, and Undifferentiated Rejection. A more recent study (Rasmi, 2008), which used the Adult PARQ (Short Form), reported even higher alpha coefficients (.90 for European Canadians, .89 for Arab Canadians, and .87 for Arabs from Egypt and Lebanon). A single Arab study (Helewa, 1997) used the test-retest method on the basis of a small sample of deaf adolescents, and reported correlation coefficients ranging between .94 and .98.

Salama (1991) adapted and translated into Arabic the Parenting Pattern Questionnaire (36 items), which is—as noted earlier—based on Rohner's PARQ. The scale was used in her 1991 study as well as in later ones. These include six Egyptian studies: Abou-el-Kheir (1995, 1998); Zaeter (1998); Zaeter and Abou-el-Kheir (1999); Abdel-Razek (2000); and Hamaza (2002). Results of these studies revealed fairly high alpha coefficients. For example, Zaeter and Abou-el-Kheir (1999) reported the alpha Cronbach coefficients; .95 for warmth/affection; .85 for control; and .76 for consistency.

Several Arab studies have assessed PARQ reliability estimates by using the split-half method. For example, Bader (2001) in Saudi Arabia reported an overall correlation coefficient between PARQ odd and even items of .82, which became .91 after being corrected by the Spearman-Brown formula. Virtually all of these studies show the PARQ and measures derived from it to be reliable for use in the Arab world. Further evidence regarding this conclusion is shown in Table 1.

[Insert Table 1 about here]

Validity of the Arabic Version of the PARQ

Several Arab studies have sought to establish the validity of the PARQ by using a variety of methods. F. M. Bader (2001) in Saudi Arabia, for example, correlated item scores with the total score of related subscales. Correlations ranged between .49 and .82. Additionally, the total score of each subscale and the total PARQ score were computed.

Results revealed the following correlation coefficients for the four subscales: Warmth/Affection .91; Hostility/Aggression .87; Indifference/Neglect .89; and Undifferentiated/Rejection .84. Similar results appeared in several other Arab studies such as one by El-Sayed (2000), conducted in Egypt.

M. M. S. Abou-el-Kheir (1989) assessed the concurrent validity of the PARQ by administering Arabic versions of Schaefer's CRPBI and Rohner's PARQ to 40 university students in Egypt. The author reported the following correlations between subscales: .33 between CRPBI's and PARQ's acceptance subscales, and .38 between CRPBI's and PARQ's rejection subscales ($p < .05$ for both correlations). Moreover, E. M. A. Mekhemer and Abdel-Razek (1999) found a significant positive correlation ($r = .78$, $p = .01$) between children's scores on the PARQ's three subscales of rejection: (Aggression/Hostility, Indifference/ Neglect, and Undifferentiated/Rejection) and the children's score on a questionnaire used to assess childhood abuse experiences.

Factorial validity:

Several Arab studies investigated the PARQ's factorial validity by using samples of children. Relevant examples include: Salama (1987a, 1987b); El-Sayed (2000); Askar (1996a); Bader (2001); and Al-Sabah (2010). A perceived parental rejection and a perceived parental acceptance factor emerged in all of these studies. For example, Salama (1987a, 1987b) found that the two factors explained 67% of the obtained variance. The first, very powerful factor was the parental rejection factor (57%), whereas the second one was the parental acceptance factor (10%). Virtually all studies in the Arab world that have attempted to assess the validity of the PARQ have concluded that the measure is valid for use throughout the region.

Context Factors Associated with Parental Acceptance-Rejection Demographic Variables

Several Arab studies have focused on the association between demographic variables (such as socioeconomic status, family size, birth order, mother's employment, economic hardship, place of residence, and children's sex and age) and children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance-rejection. Examples of these studies include: Salama (1987b, 1990a), Faried (1990), Abdel-Razek (1996), Helewa (1997), Abou-el-Kheir (1999), and Taher (2005). Results of these studies generally show that children of higher socioeconomic status families, those living in small families, children of non-working mothers, and rural children tend to perceive their parents to be more accepting, less aggressive, less neglecting, and less overall rejecting when compared to other children. Additionally, Taher (2005) found that Bedouin children in Kuwait tended to perceive their parents as being less accepting than did urban Kuwaiti children.

The majority of Arab studies (for example Salama, 1987b; A. S. Ibrahim, 1988; El-Sayed, 2000) have reported no significant differences between boys and girls in their perceptions of maternal and paternal acceptance. Helewa (1997), however, found that deaf male Egyptian adolescents perceived their parents to be significantly less accepting, more aggressive, more neglecting, and more rejecting, than did their female counterparts. A recent study (Ahmed and Gielen, 2008 July) showed the age and sex differences in perception of parental behavior. Additionally, Ibrahim (1988) reported that Egyptian college men perceived their fathers to be less accepting than their mothers.

Poverty

A single Arab study (Abdel-Razek, 1996) dealt with the relationship between economic hardship and perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection in children. The author found a positive correlation between families' economic hardship and their children's perceptions of parental rejection. This finding supports the results of other studies mentioned above which

find that children of lower socioeconomic status families perceive their parents as more neglecting and rejecting, and less overall accepting.

Cross-National and Cross-Cultural Comparisons

A few Arab studies have investigated perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection cross-nationally, and especially between rural and urban children and between Bedouin and urban children (e.g., Hassab-Allah & El-Aqad, 2000; Taher, 2005). Askar (1996a), for example, focused on differences between Egyptian and Yemeni primary school children's perceptions of parental acceptance. No significant differences were found between parental warmth or aggression, but Yemeni children perceived their parents to be more neglecting than did Egyptian children. Beyond this, both Egyptian and Yemeni boys perceived significantly more parental aggression than did girls. Additionally, Egyptian boys perceived their parents to be more neglecting and rejecting than did Egyptian girls. In the second study, Al-Theifairy (1996) compared Saudi and Egyptian male and female adolescents by using the PARQ (mother form) and PAQ. Parental rejection correlated significantly and positively with all PAQ subscales (except dependency) in both nations. Both Saudi and Egyptian males tend to perceive their mother as less accepting than their female counterparts. Finally, results showed that Egyptian males and females tended to perceive their mother as less accepting than did their Saudi peers.

A study by Al-Ragieeb (1996) investigated perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and its relation with linguistic creativity and personal and social adjustment in samples of Kuwaiti and Egyptian adolescents. Results showed significant positive correlations between Kuwaiti's and Egyptian's adolescents' perception of parental acceptance and the levels of verbal and ideational creativity, and personal and social adjustment. While Kuwaiti adolescent boys perceived their parents as being more rejecting, adolescent Egyptian boys tended to perceive their parents as more accepting. But adolescent

Egyptian girls perceived their parents, and especially mothers, as more rejecting; Kuwaiti adolescent girls tended to perceive their parents, especially mothers, as more accepting. The overall differences between Kuwaiti males and Egyptian males, and between Kuwaiti females and Egyptian females, were significant.

Recently, Rasmi (2008) examined the relationship between parental rejection in childhood and three types of adjustment in youth adulthood: Positive (life satisfaction), negative (risky behavior), and acculturative (sociocultural difficulties). Subjects were 407 male and female university students from three ethnocultural groups: European Canadians (*n* = 147*)*, Arab Canadians (*n* = 129), and Arabs in Egypt and Lebanon (*n* = 131) between the ages of 18 and 25 years. Results showed that individuals who were rejected in childhood were consistently less likely to enjoy a higher level of psychological well-being, more likely to engage in risky behavior, less likely to be satisfied with their lives, and more likely to encounter sociocultural difficulties in young adulthood. Moreover, psychological well-being mediated the relationships between parental rejection and both risky behavior and life satisfaction.   Finally, results showed that while European Canadians reported significantly lower scores of parental rejection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, undifferentiated rejection, self-construal followed by Arab Canadians, then Arabs of the Middle East (Egypt and Lebanon), European Canadians perceived their parents as having more warmth/affection and reported higher scores on life satisfaction, followed by Arab Canadians, then Arabs from the Middle East (Egypt and Lebanon). No significant differences were found between the three ethnocultural groups concerning their performance on the two scales used for assessing psychological well-being and risky behavior.

Relations Between Corporal Punishment and Perceived Parental Acceptance-Rejection

Four Arab studies were carried out to investigate possible relationships between children's perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and corporal punishment. These

studies were conducted by Mohammed (1996) and by Abou-el-Kheir (1995, 1998) in Egypt;

and by Ahmed and Gielen (2006) in Kuwait. The studies employed Rohner's PARQ, PAQ,

and the youth form of his Physical Punishment Questionnaire (PPQ; Rohner, Ripoll-Núñez,

Moodie, & Ruan, 2005). Results of these studies generally indicate that children's and

adolescents' perceptions of the severity and harshness of physical punishment are positively

linked to their perceptions of parental rejection.

Psychological Consequences of Perceived Parental Acceptance-Rejection

In the following pages we selectively review some of the major Arab studies pointing

to the psychological consequences of perceived parental acceptance-rejection.

Studies examining these consequences have focused on a broad variety of personality

disposition, including: The formation of ego-identity; internalizing problems such as anxiety,

depression, and phobias; externalizing problems and behaviors such as aggression, hostility,

and delinquency; and a variety of positive feelings, behaviors and personality traits including

school achievement, altruistic behavior, and aesthetic feelings. Arab researchers have made

significant contributions to the international research literature by examining such a broad

range of personality-linked psychological phenomena in the context of PARTheory.

Personality Dispositions:

A variety of personality-related studies have investigated relationships between

acceptance-rejection and self-esteem (Salama, 1991; Abou-el-Kheir, 1998), self-assertiveness

(Elyan, 1992), personality traits/dispositions (Al-Baghadady, 2001; Askar, 1996b; El-Sayed,

2000; Mansour, 2000; Mohammed, 1996), locus of control (Al-Nafie, 1997; Ibrahim, 1988),

psychological hardiness (Mekhemer, 1996,), irrational beliefs, dogmatism, and flexibility-

rigidity (Hassab-Allah & El-Aqad, 2000), loneliness (Mekhemer, 2003), dependency and

self-criticism (Mohammed, 1994; Faied, 2000), feelings of shame (Faied, 2005), self-esteem

and self-concept (Salama, 1991; Ali, 1997; Abou-el-Kheir, 1998, in Egypt; Bader, 2001,

2008, in Saudi Arabia), overall psychological adjustment (Abdel-Wahab, 1999; El-Shamy, 2004, in Egypt; and Gaber, 1998, in Algeria), level of aspiration (Ali, 2000, in Egypt), feelings of psychological security (N. A. A. El-Sayed, 1994), positive emotions of female kindergartners' teachers (Ibrahim, Parmar, & Rohner, 2006), and ego-strength and single-mindedness (Al-Otaibi, 2005). Results of these studies are largely consistent with results found in Western studies. All, for instance, have shown significant correlations between perceived parental acceptance and positive personality traits.

On the other hand, Ismaeel (2001) found in a study of child abuse and personality dispositions (using Rohner's PAQ) that those Saudi intermediate school children who experienced abuse (by fathers only) tended to self-report the negative personality dispositions assessed on the PAQ. Moreover, he found that Saudi males perceived significantly more abuse than did their female counterparts.

Ego-Identity, Identity Formation, and Identity Disorders:

Four Arab studies (Al-Beheray, 1990; Abdel-Moety, 1991; Al-Otaibi, 2005; Ahmed, Al-Otaibi, & Gielen, 2008 July) focused on the relationship between perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and ego identity, identity formation, and identity disorders in children, adolescents, and youth—in the light of Erikson's theory. In general, results of these studies are consistent with results of previous Western studies. For example, Al-Otaibi (2005) found a positive correlation between children's perceptions of their parents' rejection and higher scores on identity statuses such as moratorium, foreclosure, and diffusion.

Internalizing Problems: Depression, Anxiety, and Neuroticism.

Several Arab studies have assessed relationships between children's perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and their respective levels of depression, anxiety, and neuroticism. Examples include: Salama, 1990a; Ahmed and Khalil, 1999; Faied, 2000; and El-Sayed, 2000. In general, results of these studies show that children's perceptions of

parental rejection correlate significantly with high levels of depression, anxiety, and neuroticism. In addition, El-Sayed (2000) showed that children who perceived their parents as more accepting also tended to exhibit higher levels of (self-reported) emotional stability and social adjustment, together with lower levels of anxiety. Recently, Almousa (2007) investigated the relationship between perfectionism (normality/neuroticism) and university students' perceptions of parental socialization styles by using Rohner's PARQ. Results revealed that normal students perceived their parents as more accepting and warm, while neurotic students perceived their parents as more aggressive (hostile), more neglecting, more controlling, and more rejecting. The differences between the two groups were significant ($p = .01$).

Phobias in Children and Adolescents. Three Arab studies (Salama, 1987a; Salem, 2005; Al-Shayji, 2003) focused on the relationship between perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and phobias in samples of children and adolescents. Findings reveal that respondents who perceived their parents as more rejecting tended to show higher rates of phobias, especially social phobias, than did respondents who felt accepted.

Children's Psychological Problems. Several Arab psychologists have studied the relationship between perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and children's psychological problems. Examples include: Salama, 1984; Abdel-Razek, 1996; Abdel-Rahman, 2003; Khalifa, 2003. Results of their works indicate that children who perceive their parents as more rejecting tend to suffer from more psychological problems than those children who feel more accepted by their parents.

Psychopathology. Only one Egyptian study (Abou-el-Kheir, 1999) has investigated perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection in samples of schizophrenic and normal subjects. Schizophrenics—compared with normal individuals—perceived their parents as less accepting, more aggressive, more neglecting, and more rejecting.

Chronically Ill and Handicapped Versus Normal School-Aged Children. A single Arab study investigated the relationship between perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection among chronically ill versus normal school-aged children (Kamal, 1985). Results of this study showed that the chronically ill—compared with normal school-aged children—tended to perceive their parents as less accepting, more aggressive, more neglecting, and more rejecting in its undifferentiated form. Also, results revealed the importance of parental acceptance for both chronically ill and normal children.

Helewa (1997) investigated parental acceptance-rejection in a sample of deaf male and female intermediate and secondary school students in Egypt. Males perceived their parents to be significantly less accepting, more aggressive, more neglecting, and more rejecting than did females. Similar results have been found by Abdalla (2001) in Egypt.

Finally, an Egyptian study by El-Sayed (1994) focused on the relationships between feelings of psychological security and perceptions of parental acceptance in samples of blind and sighted students. Her work showed that feelings of psychological security correlated significantly with perceived parental acceptance.

Children's Social Interaction Styles.   Only a few Arab studies have investigated the relationship between perceptions of parental behavior and children's and adolescents' social interaction styles. Research topics in this grouping include: Peer rejection and loneliness among adolescents (Mekhemer, 2003), and children's prejudicial attitudes (Abou-Ghali, 1999). Results of these studies revealed significant positive correlations between children's perception of parental rejection and children's and adolescents' high levels of peer rejection, loneliness, and prejudicial attitudes.

<p style="text-align:center;">**Externalizing Problems and Maladaptive Behavior Patterns**</p>

Children's Aggression/Hostility and Violent Behavior. Several Arab studies focused on the relationship between children's perceptions of their parents' acceptance-

rejection and children's aggressive and violent behavior. Examples include: Salama, 1991; Elyan, 1992; Helewa, 1997; Alhanati, 1990; Bader, 2008; and Taher, 2005. Results of these studies revealed significant positive correlations between children's perceptions of parental rejection and children's and adolescents' high levels of aggression, hostility, and violent behavior.

Juvenile Delinquency and Other Forms of Deviant Behavior. Few Arab studies have focused on the relationship between youth's perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and juvenile delinquency (Al-Falaij, 1991; Zaeter, 1998; Zaeter & Abou-el-Kheir, 1999). The study by Zaeter (1998), for example, found that juvenile delinquents tended to perceive their parents to be less accepting than did non-delinquents. Zaeter and Abou-el-Kheir (1999) assessed the relationship between perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and children's dependent personality and attitudes toward drug addiction among secondary school students. Results supported conclusions reached in previous Western studies.

Cognitive Styles. The relationship between perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and cognitive styles, especially impulsivity/reflectivity, has attracted the attention of a few Arab psychologists. One of these studies was conducted by Ramadan (1989). She investigated relationships among perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and impulsivity/reflectivity in samples of gifted and normal students. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between perceptions of parental rejection and impulsivity, as well as a significant positive correlation between perceptions of parental acceptance and reflectivity.

Positive Psychological Consequences of Parental Acceptance:

Cognitive Aspects.   Several Arab studies have dealt with the relationship between perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and cognition, such as cognitive distortion (Salama, 1990b), creative thinking in deaf-mute children (Abdalla, 2001), creative thinking

(Al-Ragieeb, 1996), and critical thinking (Ahmed, in preparation). Results indicate significant positive correlations between parental rejection and children's cognitive distortions, as well as significant positive correlations between perceived acceptance and various components of critical thinking in children.

Children's Achievement Motivation and Academic Achievement. Very few Arab studies have been conducted on the relationship between parental acceptance-rejection and achievement motivation. However, Mussellem (1997) and Zaidan (1995) reported significant correlations between parental acceptance and positive achievement motivation. Additionally, Bader (2001, 2008) studied the relationship between parental acceptance-rejection, self-concept, and scholastic achievement in a sample of Saudi primary school children. She found a strong correlation between parental acceptance and scholastic achievement. Results of a recent Saudi study by Bader (2008) support her earlier results.

Gifted Versus Normal Students. Only one Arab study (Ramadan, 1989) has compared perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection of gifted students compared to those of their non-gifted peers. Results indicate that gifted students, especially those students in higher academic levels, tended to perceive their fathers (but not necessarily their mothers) as more accepting.

Altruistic Behavior. A single Egyptian study (Abdel-Razek, 2000) investigated the perception of parental acceptance-rejection (as measured by the Parenting Pattern Questionnaire) and personality dispositions (as measured by Rohner's PAQ) as predictors of children's altruistic behavior. Both measures predicted altruistic behavior in children.

Development of Moral Judgment. Two Arab studies investigated the relationship between perceived parental acceptance (measured by Rohner's PARQ) and the development of moral judgment (as measured by Rest's Defining Issues Test) (Ahmed, Gielen, & J. Avellani, 1987; Gielen, Ahmed, & Avellani, 1992). Results showed a modest correlation

between perceived parental acceptance and the development of moral judgment/reasoning. In addition, an Egyptian study (Abdel-Sadek, 1994) investigated the development of moral judgment (as measured by Piaget's stories and a locally developed scale based on Kohlberg's theory), and its relation to intelligence and the perception of parental acceptance-rejection (as measured by the Child version of Rohner's PARQ) in samples of rural and urban children and young adolescents. Results showed a significant positive correlation between children's and young adolescents' perceptions of parental acceptance, and the development of moral judgment and intellectual levels.

Aesthetic Feelings. Only one Arab study has dealt with the relationship between perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection and aesthetic feelings. This study by Ahmed and Khalil (1999) drew from a sample of intermediate and secondary-school male and female students in Egypt. The authors found that students who perceived their parents as being more accepting tended to express more aesthetic feelings, compared with students who perceived their parents as being more rejecting.

Social Responsibility. Only one Arab study (Mansour, 2006) focused on the relationship between perceived parental acceptance-rejection as measured by the PARQ and social responsibility among secondary-school male and female students in Egypt. Results showed a significant relationship between perceived parental acceptance and social responsibility.

Conclusions and Suggestions for Future Research

In the foregoing pages we have reviewed major features of PARTheory and its associated measures. We also reviewed research conducted in Arab countries that tested a variety of hypotheses and research questions derived from the theory. On the whole, evidence from the more than 100 available Arab studies provides strong support for the theory while also being consistent with research being conducted in many other nations worldwide. We

find, for instance, that Arab children living in poverty, in rural areas, in difficult circumstances, and those lacking in education are more likely to feel rejected than do children who live in more favorable conditions. Additional evidence suggests that chronically ill and handicapped children are more likely than healthy children to feel rejected. Further evidence also suggests that boys in the Arab world often feel more rejected by parents than do girls.

Moreover, evidence suggests that perceived parental rejection sometimes leads to such internalizing problems as depression, neuroticism, various forms of anxiety, feelings of loneliness, phobias, low self-esteem, and feelings of impaired self-adequacy. Other Arab children, however, react to feelings of rejection by developing externalizing behavior patterns and emotional syndromes such as acting out, experiencing aggressive and hostile impulses, engaging in delinquent actions, experiencing feelings of emotional numbness, and a lack of emotional expressiveness. When children are physically punished they tend to see their parents as more rejecting while also developing a variety of maladaptive personality dispositions. On the positive side, however, research in Arab countries also supports the idea that children who feel accepted by their parents are more likely than rejected children to achieve a stable identity, excel in school, be gifted, engage in altruistic behavior, develop a rich inner world of aesthetic feelings, and report feelings of positive self-esteem and positive self-adequacy.

From a methodological point of view, it should be pointed out that Arab researchers have typically employed questionnaires in their studies, while neglecting ethnographic, holocultural, and other approaches that have been used by other PARTheory researchers. Thus, the conclusions of Arab researchers tend not to be based on a triangulation of methodologies. Future research would profit from a greater use of the ethnographic method in order to add cultural specificity and culturally structured behavioral observations to the already available evidence. For an example of this kind of approach readers may profit from

consulting Rohner and Chaki-Sircar's (1988) study of *Women and Children in a Bengali Village* that combines ethnographic description and analysis with interview results as well as data from the PARQ and the PAQ.

It seems appropriate to suggest that the rich body of evidence reviewed in this article should be made available in a variety of applied settings. For instance, Arab psychologists and educators might consider preparing written and visual materials for parents and other members of the general public that would provide advice and guidance for them about how to best bring up and educate children. A sustained effort along those lines might help parents and others foresee the deleterious consequences of rejection, and thereby help to improve the mental health of children in the Arab world. Such efforts might also be conducive to convincing the Arab public that psychologists can contribute useful and relevant ideas for the betterment of society, thereby lifting the status of the field in the eyes of laypersons.

In recent years, PARTheory has taken a new turn. It is now believed that similar psychological reactions to feeling either accepted or rejected by parents may occur in a broad range of social relationships that include but also go beyond parent-child relationships. Several completed and ongoing Arab studies (e.g., Al-Sabah, 2010; El-Shamy, 2004; Ibrahim, Parmar, & Rohner, 2006), for example, explored the possibility of relationships among perceptions of parental rejection, perceptions of rejection by teachers, personality dispositions and emotions in children and adolescents. Such studies have paved the way for a more comprehensive understanding of how humans generally react to experiences, perceptions, and feelings of either being accepted or rejected by others such as teachers, siblings, peers, friends, intimate partners, spouses, and other attachment figures. We hope that Arab researchers will play an important role in demonstrating the theoretical propositions, empirical support, and practical applicability of such an expanded version of PARTheory.

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Table 1. *Selected Studies Estimating PARQ Reliability in Arab Countries*

Subscale	Items	M. M. Salama (1986): Egypt; 109 M+F 9-12 yrs.	M. M. Salama, (1987): Egypt; 119 M+F 9-13 yrs.	M. M. El-Sayed, (2000): Egypt; 156 M+F 10-12 yrs.	F. M. Bader, (2000): Saudi Arabia; 104, M+F, 9-12 yrs.	B.M. Khalifa, (2003): Qatar; 235 M+F 9-12 yrs.	
		Mother Form	Mother Form	Mother & Father Form	Mother & Father Form	Mother Form	Father Form
Warmth	20	0.81	0.92	0.87	0.58	0.66	.66
Aggression	15	0.87	0.89	0.88	0.89	0.73	0.72
Neglect	15	0.72	0.89	0.81	0.79	0.84	0.83
Rejection	10	0.62	0.85	0.74	0.82	0.74	0.76
PARQ Total	60	0.76					

Subscale	Items	M. A. M. Helewa (1997): Egypt; 156, M+F, 14-18 yrs.	R. A. Ramadan, (1989): Egypt; 30 M+F Adolescents	M. S. Al-Shayji, (2003): Kuwait; 275 M+F 14-18 yrs.		D. R. Al-Otaibi, (2005): Kuwait 451 M+F 13- yrs.		R. A. Ahmed + U. P. Gielen (2006): Kuwait 892 M+F 13-25 yrs.	
		Deaf Adolescents	Adolescents	Mother Form	Father Form	Mother & Father Form	Mother & Father Form	Mother Form	Father Form
Warmth	20	0.94	0.84	0.90	0.90	0.92	0.95	0.93	0.92
Aggression	15	0.98	0.83	0.92	0.87	0.92	0.94	0.93	0.92
Neglect	15	0.95	0.88	0.86	0.82	0.55	0.52	0.88	0.88
Rejection	10	0.95	0.87	0.71	0.80	.85	0.89	0.86	0.84
PARQ Total	60	0.95	0.85	0.79	0.76			-	-

Subscale	R. A. Ahmed, (2007): Kuwait, 212 M+F 18-23 yrs.				A. D. Al-Sabah, (2007): Kuwait; 990 M+F 13-19 yrs.		N. S. Taher, (2005): Kuwait, 777 M+F 13-17 yrs.
	Long Form		Short Form		Mother Form	Father Form	Mother Form
	Mother	Father	Mother	Father			
Warmth	0.94	0.94	0.84	0.86	0.91	0.93	0.67
Aggression	0.94	0.94	0.84	0.83	0.88	0.93	0.53
Neglect	0.88	0.90	0.75	0.84	0.84	0.86	0.57
Rejection	0.85	0.89	0.74	0.81	0.79	0.85	0.62
PARQ Total	0.84	0.82	0.74	0.66	0.79	0.84	0.70