MOTHER'S WARMTH AND SOCIAL SUPPORT: A RELATIONAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT: This study was an attempt to see the relationship between perceived mother's warmth (an important ingredient of maternal acceptance) and social support (an ingredient of quality of relationship). After literature review it was hypothesized that perceived mother's acceptance would be positively correlated with social support from mother. A sample of 200 students (100 male, 100 female), of ages 20-25 years was randomly sampled from educational institutions. The participants provided their consent and demographic information and filled following questionaries; (1) Perceived Maternal Warmth Sub-scale of Adult PAQR/CONTROL: Mother (Short form) (Rohner, 2004), (2) Quality of relationship inventory (QRI, Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, Solky-Butzel & Nagle, 1994). Statistical analysis reveals that perceived mother's warmth is positively correlated to social support with mother. Avenues for future researches are also suggested.

KEYWORDS: Mother's Warmth and Social Support, Relational Analysis.

1   INTRODUCTION

Parenting has always been a topic of interest for modern Psychology. Early works in this regard date back to the works of great philosophers like the 18th century philosopher Rousseau, who stressed on parenting and did not consider any innate tendencies in child but according to him, everything in a child is taught to him (Delany, 2005).

The importance of parent-child relationship in later psychological life of the child is monumental in Freudian psychoanalysis (Freud, 1900). The initial psychosexual conflicts are related to parent child relationship. Freud and his paradigm contributed a great deal to the development of the scientific understanding of effects of parenting on what a person becomes. With the advent of behaviourism the notion that became very popular in the scientific circles of psychology is that, all children are born the same and can be trained for any particular profession and personality trait (Watson, 1913). So it can be said that this training is primarily gained from family environment so it's also a product of parenting.

The other important concept in this research is "Acceptance". The word acceptance is derived from the Latin verb *acquiescere* that means, to find rest in. In Psychology this word is used to express the recognition of the reality of something without changing it. Acceptance is a central concept of Abrahamic religions. One of the meanings of the word *Islam* is also acceptance (McDowell, Josh & Stewart, 1983). "Acceptance" became a subject of interest for Psychology after the advent of cognitive approach to Psychology. It brought new insight towards parenting. Some researchers explored perceptions (or cognitive representations) of childhood experiences and their emotional aspects to know how it contributed in current personality (Rohner, 2005). PAR-theory (Rohner, 2005) considers maternal acceptance as comprising of maternal warmth or affection that can be manifested in verbal, physical or symbolic forms. The word Warmth, if translated literally refers to a state of being warm in temperature (Merriam-Webster, 2013). The term is more often used for being warm in feeling. In current research the term is used in the context of feeling. The word feeling is also from the realm of Psychology of perception. It refers to the tactile sense of something. But the word is not just limited to the touch sensation but also refers to emotional reactions and states (Merriam-Webster, 2013).

The word "relationship" refers to the connection between two or more objects, concepts of people being connected. Human beings interact with each other throughout life spam for the fulfilment of their needs and for the sharing of

experiences. Every relationship is a discourse and has some value and roles attached to it. "Quantity" is the measurable dimension of something but quality refers to a criteria based judgement about the properties of something. When the word quality is combined with the term relationship it refers to the criteria based subjective evaluation of the value of any relationship. A study by Mallers, Charles, Neupert and Almeida (2010) that investigated the perception of childhood relationship with parents through retrospection suggests that the quality of mother and child is related to stressor exposure. This study also suggests that the quality father to son relationship is related to low level of emotional reactivity to stressors during adulthood.

The quality of relationship is a construct related to what a relationship means for a person in various domains of life i.e. emotional support, conflict avoidance, fulfilment etc. (Pierce et al, 1997). The perceptions of a person's role in another person's life in past has a significant impact on present relationship with the person. Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, Solky-Butzel and Nagle (1994) suggest 3 dimensions of quality of relationship i.e. social support, depth and conflict. According to House (1981) social support is the perception that one is cared for and has available assistance from others and that one has a fulfilling social system. Such a system could be related to emotions, financial, related to advice available in the dilemmas, and pertaining to belongingness. It indicates that how much a person in integrated in own system. This support can be gained through a number of sources. The prime source is family and friends. Institutions and groups also provide it.

This study is an attempt to know whether the people who received warmth as child receive more social support from mother as adult also or these two variables are unrelated. for   current study it is assumed that perceived mother's warmth will be positively correlated with social support with mother.

2   METHODOLOGY

SAMPLING

For this study a sample of 200, (100 male and 100 females) between ages 20-25 (Mean age=19.81, SD=1.863) was randomly selected form educational institutions of Karachi-Pakistan. For this purpose 2 reputable educational institutions i.e. University of Karachi and Iqra University (*Gulshan-e-Iqbal* and *North Nazimabad* campuses) were approached. The entire sample was taken from student population. The sample belonged to middle and upper middle socio economic strata and was unemployed (fulltime students).

PROCEDURE

University of Karachi and Iqra University were selected for data collection. These universities were contacted for consent. The universities were visited and some departments were randomly selected. List of students were obtained for random sampling. The selected students were contacted and testing sessions were conducted for the selected students in classroom setting. Verbal and written consents were taken from students. The subjects were given the questionnaires and asked to answer the statements according to relevant scales. It was made sure that all the participants go through the same procedure of testing.

MEASURES

1) DEMOGRAPHIC DATA SHEET

That included items for getting information about participant's gender, age, date of birth, birth order, educational level, occupation, socio economic status, residential area and marital status. A special column will record if the parents of the respondent are alive or not.

2) QUALITY OF RELATIONSHIP INVENTORY (QRI, PIERCE, SARASON, SARASON, SOLKY-BUTZEL & NAGLE, 1994)

It's a self-report measure of conflict, depth and support in any peer or family relationship. It has 25 items that are rated on 5 point scale considering the relationship with any particular individual (in current research, with mother). Strong reliability and validity of the scale is reported by the authors (Pierce, Sarason, Sarason, Solky-Butzel & Nagle, 1994)

3) PERCEIVED MATERNAL WARMTH SUB-SCALE FROM ADULT PAQR/CONTROL: MOTHER (SHORT FORM) (ROHNER, 2004)

The scale is based on the recollection of the perception of parenting of age 7-12 years. Various domains of mother's acceptance/rejection and control are taped. The scale has 29 items and has a subscale of mother's warmth (physical, verbal and symbolic). Current research will only utilize the items maternal warmth subscale (8 items). Studies suggest strong theoretical background and reliability and validity for this scale.

DATA ANALYSIS

Predictive relationships were calculated for the given constructs (i.e. to test the hypothesis) through the Pearson product moment correlation. Descriptive statistics (i.e. measure of central tendencies, percentages etc) were also calculated. For these calculations statistical package for social sciences SPSS (12.0) was used.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participants were approached through proper channel i.e. concerned department were approached and after their consent students were approached. Students were asked for consent for the participation in this research. Those who agreed to participate marked their agreement through their signature in the consent form. Participants were made aware that they can leave the test at any point if they feel discomfort. They were assured that their name or identifying information will not appear in any part of research and will be used only for the research.

3 RESULTS

Table 1. Correlation between Perceived Mother's Warmth and Social Support with Mother

N=200

	Perceived Mother's Warmth	Sig.
Social Support With Mother	.356*	.00

* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

Table 1 indicates that the Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Perceived Mother's Warmth and Social Support with Mother for the given sample is 0.356. The value is significant at 0.01 level i.e. there is a strong predictive relationship between these two variables.
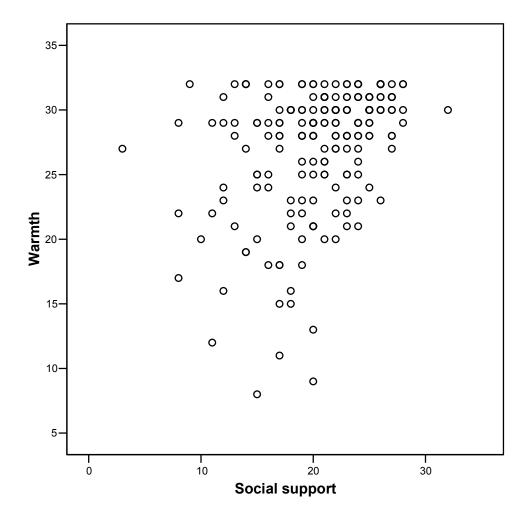
Fig. 1. *Scatter plot between Perceived Mother's Warmth and Social Support with Mother*

4   DISCUSSION

Results indicate that the hypothesis of current study i.e. perceived mother's warmth would be positively correlated with the social support with mother is proved. There was a strong relationship found between these two variables (r= 0.356, p<0.05). From these results it can be inferred that the experience of mother's warmth is a positive indicator of social support from mother. This is another finding that is in line with the notion that parenting has long lasting implications for the individual. Mother's warmth is the first experience that a child gains after birth. The perception of other caregiver(s) and members of family develops with time. It is the first social experience for the child and the quality inherent in this interaction shapes the upcoming interactions in life. This result indicates that those people who receive the warmth from mother as children are more able to receive social support from the mother also. This is a straightforward finding and suggests a consistency in quality human relationships.

Social support is essential to the Psychological wellness also and people who lack it are more venerable to psychological problems. Malik (2002) suggests that lower level of social support is related to symptoms of depression. Many psychological disorders are caused and exasperated due to lack of social support. . A study on quality of mother child relationship by Patterson, Cohn, and Kao (1989) suggests that the children who receive low level of warmth by their mothers and are rejected by their peers have more behavioural problems and are less competent then other children. Imam (2004) also report similar findings. A study by Kim (2008) on Korean American adolescents suggest that perceived lower maternal warmth is positively related to poor psychological adjustment of adolescents.   A study (Cox, 2003) suggests that warmth in the relationship between the parent and child is related to fewer psychological problems. In accordance with the finding of this study another study (McIntyre & Dusek, 1995) suggests that parental warmth is found related to children's use of social support. I.e. warmth is not only the predictor of social support form mother in the later life but also it is related to using other available social support also. Current study has implications for the primary prevention of the psychological disorders

that have relation to the lack of social support. I.e. by increasing the amount of mother's warmth the quality of later life and psychological wellbeing can be safeguarded.

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