

# **INTRODUCTION TO INTERPERSONAL ACCEPTANCE- REJECTION THEORY, METHODS, EVIDENCE, AND IMPLICATIONS**

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## **Overview of Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory)**

Interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory (IPARTheory) is an evidence-based theory of socialization and lifespan development that aims to predict and explain major consequences and other correlates of interpersonal acceptance and rejection worldwide (Rohner, 1986, 2004; Rohner and Rohner, 1980). Historically (beginning about 1960) the theory focused mostly on the effects of perceived parental acceptance-rejection in childhood and extending into adulthood. At that time the theory was called “parental acceptance-rejection theory” (PARTheory). But by 2000 the theory had broadened to include intimate adult relationships and other significant interpersonal relationships throughout the lifespan. This shift in emphasis led in 2014 to the transition of the theory and its name from parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory) to its current designation: Interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory (IPARTheory). Despite this change in name and emphasis, significant portions of the theory continue to feature the effects, causes, and other correlates of children’s perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection, and of adults’ remembrances of parental acceptance-rejection in childhood. This fact is amplified in the following pages.

IPARTheory attempts to answer five classes of questions divided into three subtheories. These are personality subtheory, coping subtheory, and sociocultural systems model and subtheory. Personality subtheory asks two general questions: First, is it true, as the subtheory postulates, that children everywhere—in different sociocultural systems, racial or ethnic groups, genders, and the like—respond in the same way when they perceive themselves to be accepted or rejected by their parents and other attachment figures? Second, to what degree do the effects of childhood rejection extend into adulthood and old age?

Coping subtheory asks one basic question. That is, what gives some children and adults the resilience to emotionally cope more effectively than most people with the experience of childhood rejection? Finally,

sociocultural systems model and subtheory asks two very different classes of questions. First, why are some parents warm and loving and others cold, aggressive, neglecting/rejecting? Is it true, for example—as IPARTheory 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 IPARTheory 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?

Several distinctive features guide IPARTheory's attempts to answer questions such as these. First—employing a multimethod research strategy—the theory draws extensively from worldwide, cross-cultural evidence as well as from every major ethnic group in the United States. Additionally, it draws from literary and historical insights as far back as two thousand years. And more importantly, it draws from and helps provide a conceptual framework for integrating empirical studies on issues of interpersonal acceptance-rejection published since the end of the nineteenth century, mostly within the United States. From these sources the theory attempts to formulate a lifespan developmental perspective on issues surrounding interpersonal acceptance and rejection. Much of this lifespan perspective is incorporated into IPARTheory's personality subtheory, described later. First however, we discuss the concepts of interpersonal acceptance and rejection, or the warmth dimension of interpersonal relationships. At this point we should remind readers that in IPARTheory the term parent refers to whoever the major caregiver(s) is/are of a child—not necessarily to biological or adoptive parents.

### **The Warmth Dimension of Interpersonal Relationships**

Together, interpersonal acceptance and rejection form the warmth dimension of interpersonal relationships. This is a dimension or continuum on which all humans can be placed because everyone has experienced more or less love at the hands of the people most important to them. Thus, the warmth dimension has to do with the quality of the affectional bond between individuals (e.g., between children and their parents, and between intimate adults, among others). In particular, the warmth dimension focuses on the physical,

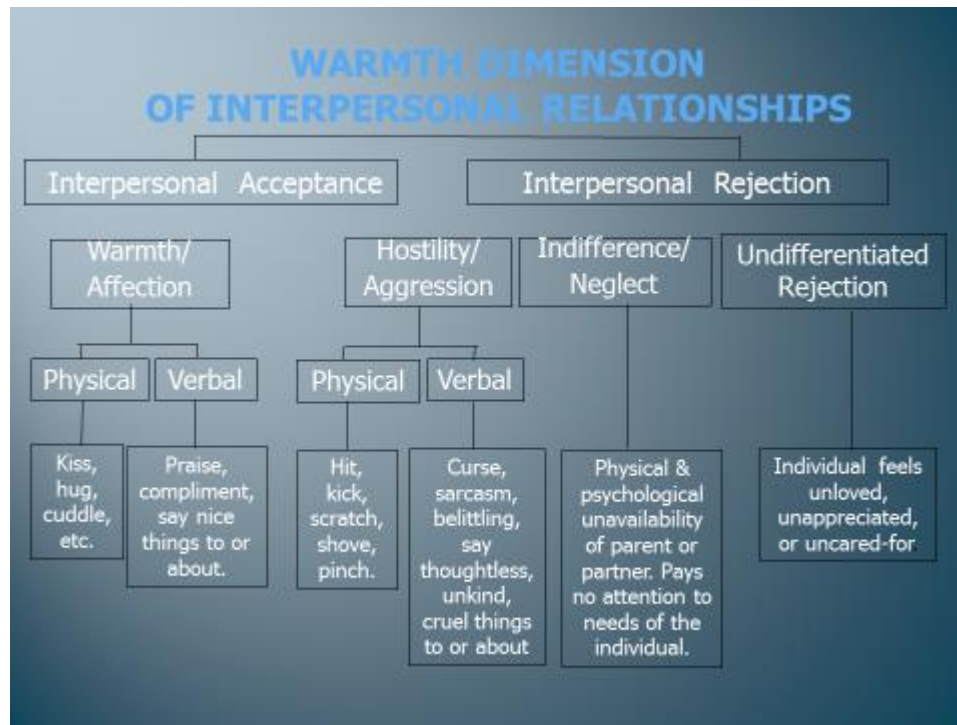
verbal, and symbolic behaviors that individuals use to express their caring or lack of caring about the other person, as described below. One end of the continuum is marked by interpersonal acceptance, which refers to the warmth, affection, care, comfort, concern, nurturance, support, or simply love that one person can express to or experience from another person. The other end of the continuum is marked by interpersonal rejection, which refers to the absence or significant withdrawal of these positive feelings and behaviors, and by the presence of a variety of physically and psychologically hurtful behaviors and affects. It is important to note that individuals are not either accepted or rejected in any categorical sense. Rather, everyone falls somewhere along the warmth dimension, experiencing varying degrees of interpersonal acceptance and rejection.

Extensive cross-cultural research over the course of six decades in IPARTheory reveals that interpersonal rejection can be experienced by any combination of four principal expressions: (1) cold and unaffectionate, the opposite of being warm and affectionate, (2) hostile and aggressive, (3) indifferent and neglecting, and (4) undifferentiated rejecting. Undifferentiated rejection refers to individuals' beliefs that the other person (e.g., attachment figure) does not really care about them or love them, even though there might not be clear behavioral indicators that the other person is neglecting, unaffectionate, or aggressive toward them.

These behaviors are shown graphically in Figure 1. Elements to the left of the slash marks (i.e., warmth or coldness, hostility, and indifference) in the Figure refer to internal, psychological states of individuals. That is, people may perceived significant others to be warm (or cold and unloving) or to be hostile, angry, bitter, resentful, irritable, impatient, or antagonistic toward them. Alternatively, individuals may perceive significant others to be unconcerned and uncaring about them, or to have a restricted interest in their overall well-being. Elements to the right of the slash marks in the Figure (affection, aggression, and neglect) refer to observable behaviors that result when significant others are perceived to act on these emotions.

As noted in the Figure, interpersonal affection can be shown physically (e.g. hugging, kissing, caressing, and comforting), verbally (e.g. praising, complimenting, and saying nice things to or about the other), or symbolically in some other way, as with the use of culturally specific gestures. These and many other caring, nurturing, supportive, and loving behaviors help define the behavioral expressions of interpersonal acceptance. When people act on feelings of hostility, anger, resentment, or enmity, the resulting behavior is generally called aggression. As construed in IPARTheory, aggression is any behavior where

there is the intention of hurting someone, something, or oneself (physically or emotionally). Figure 1 shows



**Figure 1. The Warmth Dimension of Interpersonal Relationships**

that people may be physically aggressive (e.g., hitting, pushing, throwing things, and pinching) and verbally aggressive (e.g. sarcastic, cursing, mocking, shouting, saying thoughtless, humiliating, or disparaging things to or about the other). Additionally, individuals may use hurtful, nonverbal symbolic gestures toward others.

The connection between indifference as an internal motivator and neglect as a behavioral response is not as direct as the connection between hostility and aggression. This is true because people may neglect or be perceived to be neglected by significant others for many reasons that have nothing to do with indifference. For example, individuals may neglect significant others as a way of trying to cope with their anger toward them. Neglect is not simply a matter of failing to provide for the material and physical needs of significant others, however. It also pertains to individuals' failure to attend appropriately to the social and emotional needs of others. Often, for example, neglecting persons pay little attention to significant others' needs for comfort, solace, help, or attention; they may also remain physically as well as psychologically unresponsive or even unavailable or inaccessible. All these behaviors, real or perceived—individually and collectively—are

likely to induce individuals to feel unloved or rejected by their significant others. Even in warm and loving relationships, however, individuals are likely to experience—at least occasionally—a few of these hurtful emotions and behaviors. Thus it is important to be aware that interpersonal acceptance-rejection can be viewed and studied from either of two perspectives. That is, acceptance-rejection can be studied as perceived or subjectively experienced by the individual (the phenomenological perspective), or it can be studied as reported by an outside observer (the behavioral perspective). Usually, but not always, the two perspectives lead to similar conclusions. IPARTheory research suggests, however, that if the conclusions are very discrepant one should generally trust the information derived from the phenomenological perspective. This is true because an individual may feel unloved (as in undifferentiated rejection), but outside observers may fail to detect any explicit indicators of interpersonal rejection. Alternatively, observers may report a significant amount of interpersonal aggression or neglect, but the target person may not feel rejected. This occurs with some regularity in reports of child abuse and neglect. Thus there is only a problematic relation between so-called "objective" reports of abuse, rejection, and neglect on the one hand and children's perceptions of parental acceptance-rejection on the other. As Kagan (1978, p. 61) put it—in the context of parent-child relations—"parental rejection is not a specific set of actions by parents but a belief held by the child."

In effect, much of interpersonal acceptance-rejection is symbolic (Kagan, 1974, 1978). Therefore, to understand why rejection has consistent effects on children and adults, one must understand its symbolic nature. Certainly in the context of ethnic and cross-cultural studies investigators must strive to understand people's symbolic, culturally-based interpretations of love-related behaviors if they wish to fully comprehend the acceptance-rejection process in those settings. That is, even though individuals everywhere may express, to some degree, acceptance (warmth, affection, care, concern) and rejection (coldness, lack of affection, hostility, aggression, indifference, neglect), the way they do it is highly variable and saturated with cultural or sometimes idiosyncratic meaning. Parents anywhere, for example, might praise or compliment their children, but the way they do it in one sociocultural setting might have no meaning (or might have a totally different meaning) in a second setting. This is illustrated in the following incident:

A few years ago I [Rohner] interviewed a high caste Hindu woman about family matters in India.

Another woman seated nearby distracted my attention. The second woman quietly and carefully peeled an

orange and then removed the seeds from each segment. Her 9-year-old daughter became increasingly animated as her mother progressed. Later, my Bengali interpreter asked me if I had noticed what the woman was doing. I answered that I had, but that I had not paid much attention to it. "Should I have?" "Well," she answered, "you want to know about parental love and affection in West Bengal, so you should know...." She went on to explain that when a Bengali mother wants to praise her child—to show approval and affection for her child—she might give the child a peeled and seeded orange. Bengali children understand completely that their mothers have done something special for them, even though mothers may not use words of praise for to do so would be unseemly, much like praising themselves. (Rohner, 1994, p. 113; see also Rohner and Chaki-Sircar, 1988).

At this point we should caution that in everyday American English the word rejection implies bad parenting and sometimes even bad people. In cross-cultural and multiethnic research, however, one must attempt to view the word as being descriptive of parents' and others' behavior, not judgmental or evaluative. Regarding parenting, for example, this is so because parents in about 25 percent of the world's societies behave normatively in ways that are consistent with the definition of rejection given here (Rohner, 1975; Rohner & Rohner, 1980). But in the great majority of cases—including historically in the United States—these parents behave toward their children the way they believe good, responsible parents should behave, as defined by cultural norms. Therefore, in the context of cross-cultural research on parental acceptance-rejection, a major goal is to determine whether children and adults everywhere respond the same way when they experience themselves to be accepted or rejected as children—regardless of cultural, linguistic, racial, ethnic, gender, social class differences, or other such defining conditions. This issue is discussed next in the context of IPARTheory's personality subtheory.

### **IPARTheory's Personality Subtheory**

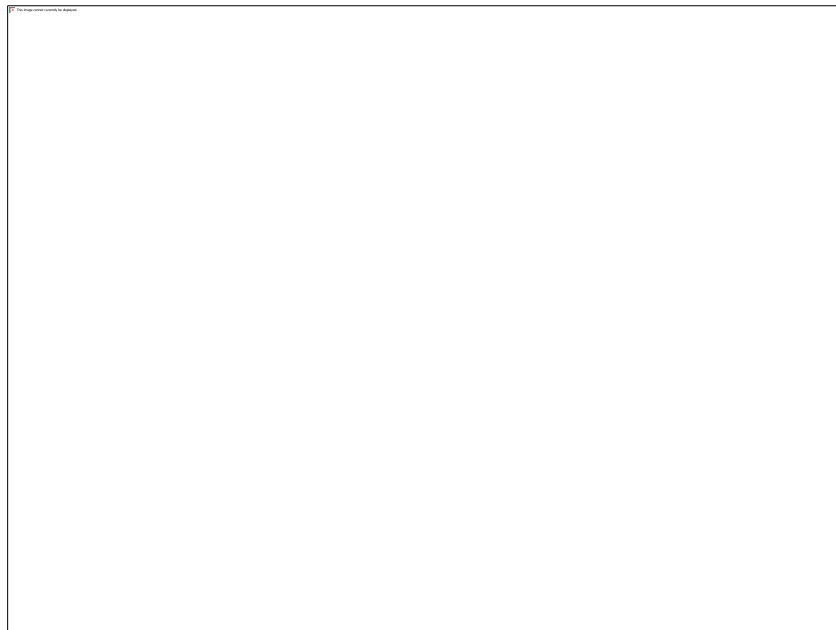
As we said earlier, IPARTheory's personality subtheory attempts to predict and explain major personality or psychological—especially mental health-related—consequences of perceived interpersonal acceptance and rejection. The subtheory begins with the probably untestable assumption that over the course of biocultural evolution, humans have developed the 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 (consciously 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.

As construed in IPARTheory, a *significant other* is any person with whom a child or adult has a relatively long-lasting emotional tie, who is uniquely important to the individual, and who is interchangeable with no one else (Rohner, 2005a). In this sense, parents and intimate partners, for example, are generally significant others. But these people also tend to have one additional quality not shared by most significant others. That is, the sense of emotional security and comfort of these people tends to be dependent on the quality of their relationship with their significant others. Because of that fact, these people are usually the kind of significant other called *attachment figures* in both IPARTheory (Rohner, 2005a) and attachment theory (Ainsworth, 1989; Bowlby, 1982; Colin, 1996). Parents are thus uniquely important to children because the security and other emotional and psychological states of offspring are dependent on the quality of relationship with their parent(s). It is for this reason that parental acceptance and rejection is postulated in IPARTheory to have unparalleled influence in shaping children's personality development over time. Moreover, according to IPARTheory's personality subtheory, adults' sense of emotional security and well-being tends to be dependent on the perceived quality of relationship with adult attachment figures. Thus acceptance or rejection by an intimate partner is also postulated to have a major influence on adults' personality and psychological adjustment.

The concept *personality* is defined in personality subtheory (Rohner, 2005a) as an individual's more or less stable set of predispositions to respond (i.e., affective, cognitive, perceptual, and motivational dispositions) and actual modes of responding (i.e., observable behaviors) in various life situations or contexts. This definition recognizes that behavior is motivated, is influenced by external (i.e., environmental) as well as internal (e.g., emotional, biological, and learning) factors, and usually has regularity or orderliness about it across time and space. IPARTheory's personality subtheory postulates that the emotional need for

positive response from significant others and attachment figures is a powerful motivator, and when children do not get this need satisfied adequately by their parents—or adults do not get this need met by their attachment figures—they are predisposed to respond both emotionally and behaviorally in specific ways. In particular—according to the subtheory—individuals who feel rejected are likely 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, as shown in Figure 2. The term *dependence* in the theory refers to the internal, psychologically felt wish or yearning for *emotional* (as opposed to instrumental or task-oriented) support, care, comfort, attention, nurturance, and similar behaviors from attachment figures. The term, as used in IPARTheory, also refers to the actual behavioral bids individuals make for such responsiveness. For young children these bids may include clinging to parents, whining, or crying when parents unexpectedly depart, and seeking physical proximity with them when they return.



**Figure 2. Dependence/Independence in Relation to Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection**

In IPARTheory, dependence is construed as a continuum, with independence defining one end of the continuum and dependence the other. Independent people are those who have their need for positive response met sufficiently so that they are free from frequent or intense yearning or behavioral bids for succor from significant others. Very dependent people on the other hand are those who have a frequent and



intense desire for positive response, and are likely to make many bids for response. As with all the personality dispositions studied in IPARTheory, humans everywhere can be placed somewhere along the continuum of being more or less dependent or independent. According to the theory, much of the variation in dependence among children and adults is contingent on the extent to which they perceive themselves to be accepted or rejected. Many rejected children and adults feel the need for constant reassurance and emotional support.

According to personality subtheory, parental rejection as well as rejection by other attachment figures also leads to other personality outcomes, in addition to dependence. These include hostility, aggression, passive aggression, or psychological problems with the management of hostility and aggression; emotional unresponsiveness; immature dependence or defensive independence depending on the form, frequency, duration, and intensity of perceived rejection and parental control; impaired self-esteem; impaired self-adequacy; emotional instability; and negative worldview. Theoretically these dispositions are expected to emerge because of the intense psychological pain produced by perceived rejection. More specifically, beyond a certain point—a point that varies from individual to individual—children and adults who experience significant rejection are likely to feel ever-increasing anger, resentment, and other destructive emotions that may become intensely painful. As a result, many rejected persons close off emotionally in an effort to protect themselves from the hurt of further rejection. That is, they become less emotionally responsive. In so doing they often have problems being able or willing to express love and in knowing how to or even being capable of accepting it from others.

Because of all this psychological hurt, some rejected individuals become defensively independent. *Defensive independence* is like healthy independence in that individuals make relatively few behavioral bids for positive response. It is unlike healthy independence, however, in that defensively independent people continue to crave warmth and support—positive response—though they sometimes do not recognize it. Indeed, because of the overlay of anger, distrust, and other negative emotions generated by chronic rejection they often positively deny this need, saying in effect, "To hell with you! I don't need you. I don't need anybody!" This attitude is epitomized in the words to Simon and Garfunkel's classic folk song, "I Am a Rock". Defensive independence with its associated emotions and behaviors sometimes leads to a process of counter

rejection, where individuals who feel rejected reject the person(s) who reject them. Not surprisingly, this process sometimes escalates into a cycle of violence and other serious relationship problems.

In addition to dependence or defensive independence, individuals who feel rejected are predicted in IPARTheory's personality subtheory to develop feelings of impaired self-esteem and impaired self-adequacy. This comes about because—as noted in symbolic interaction theory (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934)—individuals tend to view themselves as they think significant others view them. Thus, insofar as children and adults feel their attachment figures do not love them, they are likely to feel they are unlovable, perhaps even unworthy of being loved. Whereas self-esteem pertains to individuals' feelings of self-worth or value, self-adequacy pertains to their feelings of competence or mastery to perform daily tasks adequately and to satisfy their own instrumental (task oriented) needs. Insofar as individuals feel they are not very good people, they are also apt to feel they are not very good at satisfying their needs. Or alternatively, insofar as people feel they are no good at satisfying their personal needs, they often come to think less well of themselves more globally. Anger, negative self-feelings, and the other consequences of perceived rejection tend to diminish rejected children's and adults' capacity to deal effectively with stress. Because of this, people who feel rejected often have problems with emotion regulation. That is, they tend to be less emotionally stable than people who feel accepted. They often become emotionally upset—perhaps tearful or angry—when confronted with stressful situations that accepted (loved) people are able to handle with greater emotional equanimity. All these acutely painful feelings associated with perceived rejection tend to induce children and adults to develop a negative worldview. That is, according to IPARTheory, rejected persons are likely to develop a view of the world—of life, interpersonal relationships, and the very nature of human existence—as being untrustworthy, hostile, unfriendly, emotionally unsafe, threatening, or dangerous in other ways. These thoughts and feelings often extend to people's beliefs about the nature of the supernatural world (i.e., God, the gods, and other religious beliefs) (Batool & Najam, 2009; Rohner, 1975, 1986), discussed more fully below in IPARTheory's sociocultural systems subtheory.

Negative worldview, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, and some of the other personality dispositions described above are important elements in the social-cognition or mental representations of rejected persons. In IPARTheory, the concept of *mental representation* (Rohner, 2005a)

refers to an individual's more-or-less organized but usually implicit conception of existence, including conception of things that individuals take for granted about themselves, others, and the experiential world constructed from emotionally significant past and current experiences. Along with one's emotional state—which both influences and is influenced by one's conception of reality—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). **Update references**

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, 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, rejected children and adults often construct mental images of personal relationships as being unpredictable, untrustworthy, and perhaps hurtful. These negative mental representations are often carried forward into new relationships where rejected individuals develop a fear of intimacy—finding it difficult to trust others emotionally (**cite references**). They are also likely to become hypervigilant and hypersensitive—and to overreact—to any slights or signs of emotional undependability. This process is often referred to as rejection sensitivity (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Ibrahim, Rohner, Smith, & Flannery, 2015). Because of all this selective attention, selective perception, faulty styles of causal attribution, and distorted cognitive information processing, rejected individuals—especially children—are generally expected in IPARTheory to self-propel along qualitatively different developmental pathways from accepted or loved people.

Many of these effects of perceived rejection are also found in developmental trauma disorder (DTD; van der Kolk, 2010) and in complex posttraumatic stress disorder (Complex PTSD or simply CPTSD; Courtois,

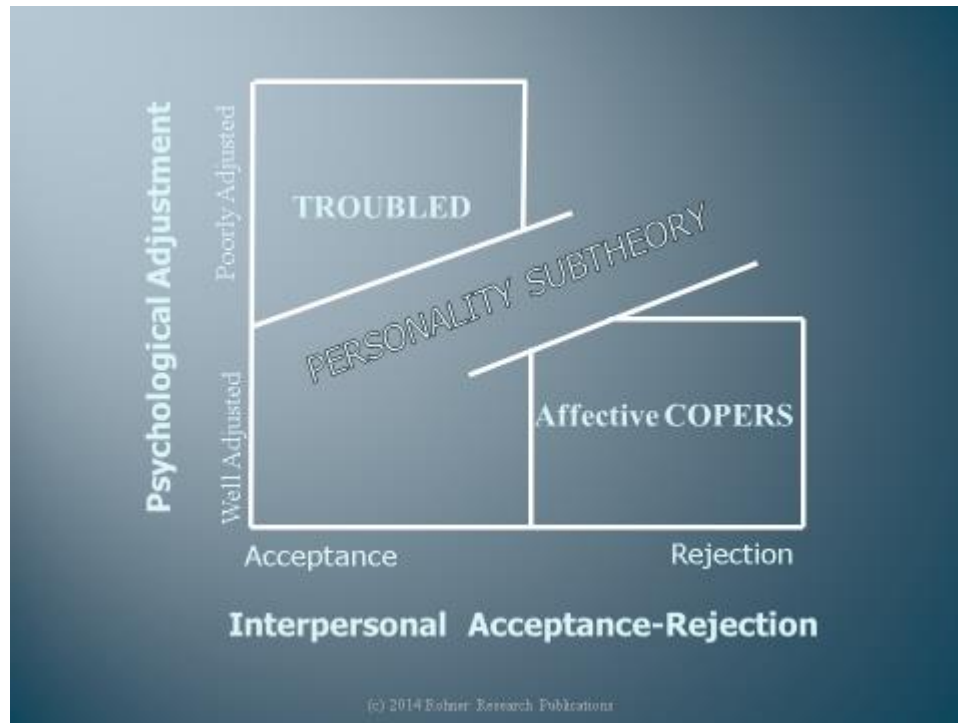
2004). These are conditions where youths experience repeated trauma—especially interpersonal trauma—over an extended period of time and developmental periods. Included among the shared effects of perceived rejection, DTD and CPTSD are issues of hypervigilance, anxiety, often self-hatred, and problems with interpersonal relationships, and suicidality, among several others. Additionally, issues of depression and substance abuse, discussed later, are also implicated in both perceived rejection and in DTD and CPTSD.

The pain of perceived rejection is very real. In fact, brain imaging (*fMRI*) studies reveal that specific parts of the brain (i.e., the anterior cingulate cortex, and the right ventral prefrontal cortex) are activated when people feel rejected, just as they are when people experience physical pain (Eisenberger, 2012; Eisenberger, Lieberman, & Williams, 2003. See also Squire & Stein, 2003). Moreover, Fisher, Aron, and Brown (2005) found that different regions of the brain were activated among adults who were happily in love versus those who had been recently rejected by their partners. **Update references Eisenberger 2015, etc.**

In addition to research using *fMRIs*, results of both animal and human studies suggest that emotional trauma in childhood may affect brain structure and function in other ways. For example, evidence shows that emotional neglect in childhood may be a significant risk factor for cerebral infarction in old age (Wilson, et al., 2012). Moreover, perceived rejection and other forms of long-term emotional trauma are often implicated in the alteration of brain chemistry (Ford & Russo, 2006). The effect of these and other neurobiological and neuropsychological changes may ultimately compromise children's central nervous system and psychosocial development (Ford, 2005). On the positive side, however, Luby et al. (2012) found that the early experience of maternal nurturance among preschoolers was strongly predictive of larger hippocampal volume among the same children at school age. These results are important because the hippocampus is a region of the brain that is central to memory, emotion regulation, stress modulation, and other functions—all of which are essential for healthy social and emotional adjustment.

It is perhaps for reasons such as these that several hundred studies involving tens of thousands of participants cross-culturally and among major American ethnic groups consistently show that about 60% to 80% of the children and adults measured so far respond as personality subtheory predicts (Ki, 2015; Rohner, 2015). **(Confirm this from Ki data)** In fact no adequate study anywhere in the world—across cultures, genders, ages, geographic boundaries, ethnicities, and other defining conditions—has failed to show the same

basic trend portrayed in Figure 3. That is, Figure 3 graphically displays IPARTheory's postulates about expected



**Figure 3. Copers and Troubled Individuals in Relation to IPARTheory's Personality Subtheory**

relations between perceived acceptance-rejection and individuals' mental health status. More specifically, the Figure shows that—within a band of individual variation—children's and adults' mental health status is likely to become impaired in direct proportion to the form, frequency, severity, and duration of rejection experienced. Some individuals who come from loving families, however, also display the constellation of psychological problems typically shown by rejected individuals. These people are called "troubled" in IPARTheory; many are individuals (e.g. adults) who are in rejecting relationships with attachment figures other than parents. This fact helps confirm IPARTheory's expectation that, for most people, perceived rejection by any attachment figure at any point throughout the lifespan effectively compromises the likelihood of healthy social-emotional functioning. However, it is also expected in IPARTheory that a minority of individuals will be able to thrive emotionally despite having experienced significant rejection by an attachment figure. As shown in Figure 3, these people are called *affective copers*. They are the focus of IPARTheory's coping subtheory briefly discussed next.

### [IPARTheory's Coping Subtheory](#)

As we said earlier, IPARTheory's coping subtheory deals with the question of how some rejected individuals are able to withstand the corrosive drizzle of day-to-day rejection without suffering the negative mental health consequences that most rejected individuals do. Theoretically and empirically the coping process is the least well-developed portion of IPARTheory. As is true for most other bodies of research on the coping process (Ki, 2015; Somerfield & McCrae, 2000), little is yet known with confidence about the mechanisms and processes that help answer coping subtheory's basic question. Nonetheless it seems clear that in order to understand the coping process—indeed the entire acceptance-rejection process—one must adopt a multivariate, person-in-context perspective. This perspective has three elements: self, other, and context. Specifically, the multivariate model of behavior employed in IPARTheory states that the behavior of the individual (e.g., coping with perceived rejection) is a function of the interaction between self, other, and context. "Self" characteristics include the individual's mental representations along with the other internal (biological) and external (personality) characteristics discussed earlier. "Other" characteristics include the personal and interpersonal characteristics of the rejecting other, along with the form, frequency, duration, and severity of rejection. "Context" characteristics include other significant people in the individual's life, along with social-situational characteristics of the person's environment. A specific research hypothesis coming from this perspective states that, all other things being equal, the likelihood of individuals being able to cope with perceived interpersonal rejection is enhanced by the presence of at least one warm, supportive, attachment figure in their life.

IPARTheory's emphasis on mental activity—including mental representations—leads us to expect that specific social cognitive capabilities allow some children and adults to cope with perceived rejection more effectively than others. These capabilities include a clearly *differentiated sense of self*, a sense of *self-determination*, and the capacity to *depersonalize* (Rohner, 1986, 2005a). More specifically, coping subtheory expects that the capacity of individuals to cope with rejection is enhanced to the degree that they have a clearly differentiated sense of self, one aspect of which is a sense of self-determination. Self-determined individuals believe they can exert at least a modicum of control over what happens to them through their own effort or personal attributes. Other individuals may feel like pawns: They feel as though things happen to them because of fate, chance, luck, or powerful others. Individuals with a sense

of self-determination are believed in IPARTheory to have an internal psychological resource for minimizing some of the most damaging consequences of perceived rejection.

Similarly, individuals who have the capacity to depersonalize are believed in the theory to be provided with another social-cognitive resource for dealing with perceived rejection. *Personalizing* refers to the act of "taking it personally," that is, to reflexively or automatically relating life events and interpersonal encounters to oneself—of interpreting events egocentrically in terms of oneself, usually in a negative sense. Thus, personalizers are apt to interpret inadvertent slights and minor acts of insensitivity as being deliberate acts of rejection or other hurtful intentions. This, too, is related to rejection sensitivity discussed earlier. Individuals who are able to depersonalize, however, have a psychological resource for dealing in a more positive way with ambiguities in interpersonal relationships. All three of these social cognitive capabilities are thought in IPARTheory to provide psychological shields against the more damaging effects of perceived rejection. However, these attributes themselves tend to be affected by rejection, especially rejection occurring during the formative years of childhood. This complicates the task of assessing the independent contribution that each attribute might make in helping children and adults cope with perceived interpersonal rejection.

It is important to note here that the concept *copier* in IPARTheory's coping subtheory refers to affective copers versus instrumental copers. *Affective copers* are those persons whose emotional and overall mental health is reasonably good despite having been raised in seriously rejecting families or despite being seriously rejected by other attachment figures throughout the life span. *Instrumental copers*, on the other hand, are rejected persons who do well school, in their professions, occupations, and other *task-oriented* activities, but whose emotional and mental health is impaired. Instrumental copers maintain a high level of task competence and occupational performance despite experiencing serious rejection. Many prominent personalities in history have been instrumental copers. Included among them are such personages as Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong, John Stuart Mill, Richard Nixon, Edgar Allen Poe, Eleanor Roosevelt, Babe Ruth, and Mark Twain, among many, many others (Goertzel & Goertzel, 1962; Howe, 1982). Biographies and autobiographies of these individuals reveal that even though they were successful instrumental copers, they were not affective copers. All appear to have been psychologically distressed in ways described by

IPARTheory's personality subtheory.

Even though the mental health status of affective copers is reasonably good, it is generally not as good as that of individuals coming from loving (accepting) families or in other emotionally satisfying relationships—but it does tend to be significantly better than that of most individuals coming from rejecting families or seriously rejecting adult relationships. Over time, from childhood into adulthood, however, all but the most severely rejected and psychologically injured individuals are likely to have enough positive experiences outside their families of origin to help ameliorate the most damaging emotional, cognitive, and behavioral effects of parental rejection. Thus, given the ordinary resilience characteristic of most people most of the time (Masten, 2001 **add newer references**)—in combination with successful psychotherapy, positive work experiences, satisfying intimate relationships, and other emotionally gratifying experiences—adults who were rejected in childhood are often better adjusted emotionally and psychologically than they were as children under the direct influence of rejecting parents—though they tend not to have as positive sense of well-being as adults who felt loved all along. That is, important sequelae of rejection are apt to linger into adulthood, placing even affective copers at somewhat greater risk for social, physical, and emotional problems throughout life than persons who were loved continuously. This is especially true if the rejection process in childhood seriously compromised the individual's ability to form secure, trusting relationships with an intimate partner or other adult attachment figure.

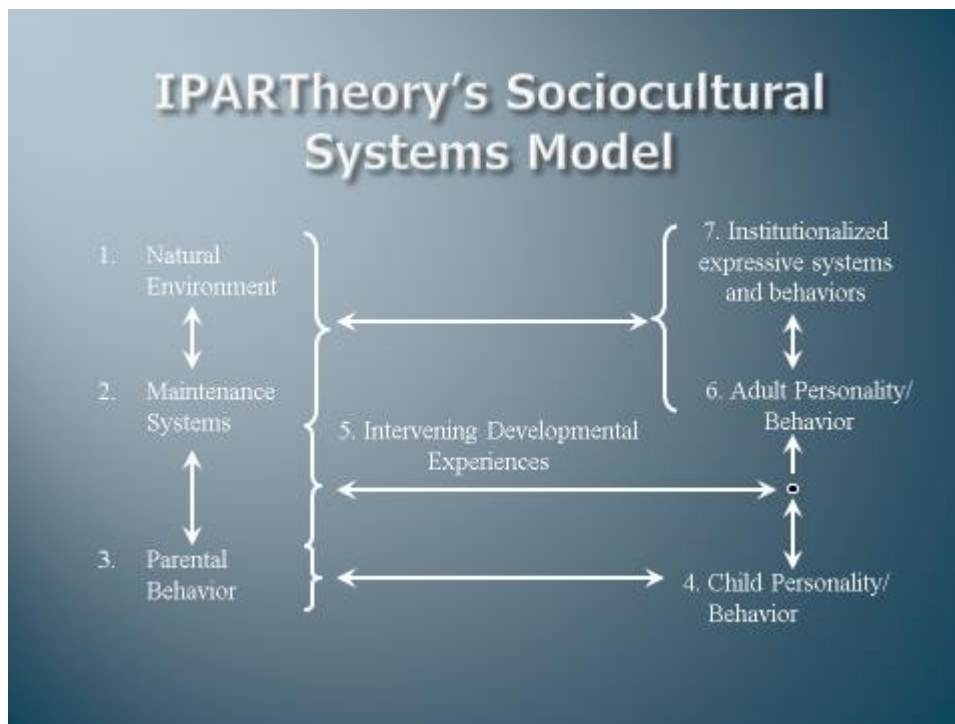
The first empirical study to assess key features of the affective coping process was conducted by Ki (2015). The study was based on 11,946 adults from 10 nations. Almost 17% of the respondents in the study reported having been seriously rejected in childhood by one or both parents. Nonetheless, 40% of the respondents fit the conceptual and operational definition of affective copers. According to Ki, significantly more women than men tend to be affective copers. At this point it is unclear why this gender difference exists, except that women everywhere appear to seek emotional support from others more often than do men (Temres et al, 2002). Beyond this, it is worth noting that both male and female copers tend internationally to report significantly more maternal acceptance than paternal acceptance (Ki, 2015). However, male copers report experiencing significantly more maternal acceptance in childhood than do women, and female copers report experiencing more paternal acceptance in childhood than do men. Nonetheless, remembrances of both maternal and paternal acceptance in



childhood tend to be significant and independent predictors of male copers' psychological adjustment in adulthood. For women, on the other hand, an interaction between remembered maternal and paternal acceptance in childhood are significant predictors of adjustment. That is, female copers' remembrances of *paternal* acceptance in childhood moderate the relation between remembered maternal rejection and women's psychological adjustment. Similarly, female copers' remembrances of *maternal* acceptance in childhood moderate the relationship between remembered paternal rejection and women's adjustment. Alternatively stated, the psychological adjustment of female copers who experienced serious maternal rejection in childhood *improves* to the extent that they remember their fathers as having been a loving (accepting) parent. But under the condition of high paternal rejection in childhood, the intensity of the relation between remembered maternal rejection in childhood and female copers' psychological *maladjustment* intensifies. The same pattern appears when the moderator is maternal acceptance.

### IPARTheory's Sociocultural Systems Model and Subtheory

As we noted above in our discussion of IPARTheory's multivariate model, interpersonal acceptance-rejection occurs in a complex ecological (familial, community, and sociocultural) context. IPARTheory's sociocultural systems model shown in Fig. 4 provides a way of thinking about the antecedents, consequence,



#### Figure 4. IPARTheory's Sociocultural Systems Model

and other correlates of interpersonal acceptance-rejection within individuals and total societies. This model has its historical roots in the early work of Kardiner (1939, 1945a, 1945b), and later in the work of Whiting & Child (1953). It also shares notable similarities with Bronfenbrenner's (1979, 1994) ecological model, and with Berry's (2006) eco-cultural model. It shows, for example, that the likelihood of parents (element 3 in the model) displaying any given form of behavior (e.g., acceptance or rejection) toward their children is shaped in important ways by the *maintenance systems* of that society—including such social institutions as family structure, household organization, economic organization, political organization, system of defense, and other institutions that bear directly on the survival of a culturally organized population within its natural environment (element 1 in the model). The model also shows that parents' accepting-rejecting and other behaviors directly impact on children's personality development and behavior (as postulated in personality subtheory).

The double-headed arrow in the model (designed to show a bidirectional flow between elements) suggests that personal characteristics of children such as their temperament and behavioral dispositions shape to a significant extent the form and quality of parents' behavior toward them. Arrows in the model also reveal that—in addition to family experiences—youths have a wide variety of influential experiences (element 5, intervening developmental experiences) in the context of the natural environment in which they live, the maintenance systems of their society, peers, and adults in the society (element 6), and the institutionalized expressive systems of their society (element 7).

*Institutionalized expressive systems* and behaviors refer to the religious traditions and behaviors of a people, to their artistic traditions and preferences, to their musical and folkloric traditions and preferences, and to other such symbolic, mostly non-utilitarian, and non-survival related beliefs and behaviors. They are called "expressive" in IPARTheory because they are believed to express or reflect people's internal, psychological states, at least initially when the expressive systems were first created. Thus, expressive systems are believed in IPARTheory to be symbolic creations, formed over time by multiple individuals within a society. As the people change, the expressive systems and behaviors also tend to change, though sometimes slowly and grudgingly—especially if the systems have been codified in writing. It is important to note here—according to

sociocultural systems subtheory—that even though expressive systems are ultimately human creations, once created and incorporated into the sociocultural system they tend to act back on individuals, shaping their future beliefs and behaviors.

Guided by the sociocultural systems model, IPARTheory's sociocultural systems subtheory attempts to predict and explain worldwide causes of parental acceptance and rejection. The subtheory also attempts to predict and explain expressive correlates of parental acceptance and rejection. For example the subtheory predicts—and substantial cross-cultural evidence confirms—that in societies where children tend to be rejected, cultural beliefs about the supernatural world (i.e., about God, gods, and the spirit world) usually portray supernaturals as being malevolent, that is hostile, treacherous, unpredictable, capricious, destructive, or negative in other ways (Batool & Najam, 2009; Bierman, 2005; Dickie, Eshleman, Merasco, Shepard, Venderwilt, & Johnson, 1997; Najam & Batool, 2013; Rohner, 1975, 1986; Thiele, 2007). However, the supernatural world is usually thought to be benevolent—warm, supportive, generous, protective, or kindly in other ways—in societies where most children are raised with loving acceptance. No doubt these cultural differences are the result of aggregated individual differences in the mental representations of accepted versus rejected persons within these two different kinds of societies. Parental acceptance and rejection are also known to be associated worldwide with many other expressive sociocultural correlates such as the artistic traditions characteristic of individual societies, as well as the artistic preferences of individuals within these societies (Brown, Homa, Cook, Nadimi, & Cummings, 2014; Rohner & Frampton, 1982). Additionally, evidence suggests that the recreational and occupational choices adults make may be associated with childhood experiences of acceptance and rejection (Aronoff, 1967; Mantell, 1974; Rohner, 1986). Hoarding, too, tends to be associated with adults' remembrances of the experience of childhood rejection (Brown, et al, 2015). All these and other expressive behaviors and beliefs appear to be byproducts of the social, emotional, and social-cognitive effects of parental acceptance-rejection discussed earlier.

Why do parents in most societies tend to be warm and loving, and parents in about 25% of the world's societies tend to be mildly to severely rejecting (Rohner, 1975, 1986; Rohner & Rohner, 1981?). What factors account for these societal differences and for individual variations in parenting within societies? Questions such as these guide the second portion of IPARTheory's sociocultural systems subtheory. No single

or simple response answers these questions, but specific factors noted below do appear to be reliably associated with societal and intrasocietal variations in parental rejection. Principal among these are conditions that promote the breakdown of primary emotional relationships and social supports. Thus, single parents (most often mothers) in social isolation without social and emotional supports—especially if the parents are young and economically deprived—appear universally to be at greatest risk for withdrawing love and affection from their children (Rohner, 1986). It is useful to note, however, that from a global perspective poverty by itself is not necessarily associated with increased rejection. Rather, it is poverty in association with these other social, economic, and emotional conditions that place children at greatest risk. Indeed, much of humanity is now and always has been in a state of relative poverty. But despite this, most parents around the world raise their children with loving care (Rohner, 1975).

**Paradigm Shift From Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory) to  
Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection Theory (IPARTheory)**

As reported earlier, IPARTheory initially focused on *parental* acceptance and rejection. But in 1999 it went through a paradigm shift from parental to *interpersonal* acceptance and rejection. More specifically, the central postulate of what was then called PARTheory stated that perceived *parental* rejection is associated with the specific cluster of personality dispositions noted in personality subtheory. The reformulated postulate now states that perceived rejection by an *attachment figure at any point in life* tends to be associated with the same cluster of personality dispositions found among children and adults rejected by parents in childhood. Now the theory and associated research is focused on all aspects of *interpersonal* acceptance-rejection, including but not limited to parental acceptance-rejection, peer and sibling acceptance-rejection, teacher acceptance-rejection, grandparent acceptance-rejection, acceptance-rejection in intimate adult relationships, parent-in-law acceptance-rejection, and acceptance-rejection in other attachment relationships throughout the lifespan. Despite this paradigm shift in theory and research-focus, the theory continued to be known as PARTheory until 2014 because that label had become so widely recognized internationally.

However, by 2014, overwhelming empirical evidence supported the theory's basic postulate that children and adults in many classes of relationships other than parent-child relationships understand themselves to be cared about (i.e., accepted or rejected) in the same four ways that children do in parent-child relationships.

Additionally, evidence supported the postulate that individuals in these non-parental relationships tend to respond to perceptions of acceptance-rejection in the same way that children do when they perceived themselves to be accepted or rejected by their parents. In view of these facts, the name of the theory was officially changed on June 25, 2014 (Rohner, 2014) at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Congress on Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection.

The first empirical study to test IPARTheory's reformulated postulate was conducted in 2001 (Khaleque, 2001; Rohner & Khaleque, 2008). That study examined the impact of perceived acceptance-rejection by intimate male partners on the psychological adjustment of 88 heterosexual adult females in the U.S. This path-breaking study sparked great international interest, so much so that the study was conducted in more than 15 countries worldwide. One of the earliest of these studies (Parmar & Rohner, 2005) dealt with 79 young adults in India. There, the authors found that the less accepting both men and women perceived their intimate partners to be, the worse was their psychological adjustment. Simple correlations also showed the expected positive correlation between adults' psychological adjustment and remembered maternal and paternal acceptance in the childhood of the adults. However, results of multiple regression analysis showed that partner acceptance was the strongest single predictor of men's psychological adjustment, though this relation was partially mediated by remembered paternal (but not maternal) acceptance in childhood. For women, on the other hand, both partner acceptance and paternal (but not maternal) acceptance were approximately coequal as predictors of psychological adjustment.

More recently, similar findings have been reported in eight other international studies, thus suggesting the possibility of universal relationships between adults' mental health states and their perceptions of acceptance-rejection by intimate partners, as well as by parents in childhood. These studies were conducted in: Colombia and Puerto Rico (Ripoll-Nunez & Alvarez, 2008) Finland (Khaleque, Rohner & Laukala, 2008); India (Parmar & Rohner, 2008); Japan (Rohner, Uddin, Shomsunaher, & Khaleque, 2008); Korea (Chyung & Lee, 2008); Kuwait (Parmar, Ibrahim, & Rohner, 2008); Turkey (Varan, Rohner, & Eryuksel, 2008), and the USA (Rohner, Melendez, & Kraimer-Rickaby, 2008). **Add newer references**

The second major issue to be studied following the reformulation of IPARTheory in 1999 dealt with the relative contribution of perceived teacher versus parental (maternal and paternal) acceptance and

behavioral control to the psychological adjustment, school conduct, and academic achievement of school-going youths (boys and girls) within six nations cross-culturally (Rohner, 2010). These nations included Bangladesh, Estonia, India, Kuwait, the Mississippi Delta region of the US, and Turkey. Results of analyses exposed enormous gender and sociocultural variability in patterns of predictors assessed with each of the three outcome variables studied. As expected from IPARTheory, however, predictors of variations in youth's psychological adjustment were much more stable. More specifically, both perceived teacher acceptance and parental (maternal and paternal) acceptance were significantly correlated with the adjustment of both boys and girls in all nations where this relationship was studied. Results of multiple regression analyses, however, showed that perceived teacher acceptance mediated to a large degree the relationship between perceived parental acceptance and youth's psychological adjustment in Bangladesh and India. On the other hand these analyses showed that only perceived parental acceptance made independent or unique contributions to student's psychological adjustment in Kuwait and Estonia. The issue of psychological adjustment was not explored in Turkey or in the Mississippi Delta region of the US.

[insert paragraph re official change in name in 2014 from PARTheory to IPARTheory]

### **Methods in IPARTheory Research**

IPARTheory's six-decade program of research is guided methodologically by conceptual models called *anthroponomy* and the *universalist approach*, respectively (Rohner, 1986, 2005a; Rohner & Rohner, 1980). Anthroponomy is an approach to the human sciences characterized by a search for *universals*, that is, for worldwide principles of behavior that can be shown empirically to generalize across our species (*Homo sapiens*) under specified conditions whenever they occur. Although many propositions advanced by Western social scientists are assumed to apply to all humans, verification of such claims is complex and involves attention to the role of culture, language, migration, history, and other such factors. It also requires attention to the strengths and weaknesses of individual measurement procedures (e.g., self-report questionnaires) and general paradigms of research (e.g., the holocultural method) (Cournoyer, 2000; Cournoyer & Malcolm, 2004; Rohner, 1986).

In IPARTheory these issues are addressed in the universalist approach, a multi-methodology and

multi-procedure research strategy that searches for the convergence of results across an array of discrete measurement modalities and paradigms of research in a broad range of sociocultural and ethnic settings worldwide. More specifically, five discrete methods or types of studies have been used to test core aspects of the theory. These methods can be discussed in two clusters, as follows.

### Quantitative Psychological Studies

The first cluster consists of two types of studies. The first involves *quantitative psychological studies* using techniques such as interviews, behavior observations, and self-report questionnaires, most often the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) (Rohner, 2005b), the Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire (PARQ/Control) (Rohner, 2005c), and the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005b). All these along with many other self-report questionnaires were developed to help researchers and practitioners study issues of interpersonal acceptance-rejection. All relevant self-report questionnaires are listed in the Appendix to this article. Moreover, all are available from [www.rohnerresearchpublications.com](http://www.rohnerresearchpublications.com). Others are currently under development, and will become available online after their reliability and validity have been assessed. Extensive information about the reliability and validity of many of these measures and others for use internationally and among American ethnic groups is already available in the *Handbook for the Study of Parental Acceptance and Rejection* (Rohner & Khaleque, 2005a), and elsewhere (e.g., Gomez & Rohner, 2011, Martorell & Carrasco, 2014; and Senese et al, 2015). References to over 4,000 quantitative psychological studies using these and related measures may be found in Rohner (2015). There, interested students and researchers may do keyword searches to locate articles and books dealing with specific topics of special interest to them.

*Meta-analyses*, the second type of study in the quantitative psychological-studies category, summarize and synthesize results of a collection of these discrete psychological studies. In all, 11 such meta-analyses testing central aspects of IPARTheory have been completed. They are based on 551 quantitative psychological reports representing an aggregated sample of 125,437 respondents in 31 countries on every continent except the Antarctic. The first meta-analysis by Khaleque and Rohner (2002a), illustrates this method. That meta-analysis was based on 43 studies representing 7,563 respondents in 15 nations and most major ethnic groups in the U.S. (e.g., African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, and

Hispanic Americans). Results of the study supported IPARTheory's postulate about the pancultural association between perceived parental acceptance and the overall psychological adjustment of both children and adults.

The second meta-analytic review (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002b) was based on 51 studies representing 6,898 respondents in eight nations and most major American ethnic groups. The purpose of that meta-analysis was to assess the reliability (as measured by coefficient alpha) of the two major classes of self-report questionnaires used in all these meta-analyses—that is, the PARQ and the PAQ. Results of the study confirmed that both sets of measures were reliable in all studies.

The third meta-analytic review (Rohner & Khaleque, 2003) tested the reliability and validity of the Parental Control Scale (PCS; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005a). This meta-analysis was based on 11 studies representing 4,203 respondents from seven countries on four continents. The results of the analysis confirmed that the Parental Control Scale is a reliable and valid measure for cross-cultural research.

The fourth meta-analytic review (Rohner & Khaleque, 2010) expanded and refined the results of the first review, and it added an additional element. Specifically, that meta-analysis analyzed the association between men's versus women's overall psychological adjustment in relation to their remembrances of maternal versus paternal acceptance in childhood. Additionally, it analyzed men's versus women's overall psychological adjustment in relation to their perceptions of their intimate partners' current acceptance or rejection of them. The principal question addressed in that study was whether the psychological adjustment of adults who perceived themselves to be accepted or rejected by their intimate partners tended panculturally to be affected in the same way as is the psychological adjustment of adults who remembered themselves to have been accepted or rejected by major caregivers in childhood. The meta-analysis was based on 17 studies involving 3,568 adults in ten nations. Results showed that perceived partner acceptance in adulthood and remembered paternal and maternal acceptance in childhood tended in all societies studied to correlate highly with the current psychological adjustment of both men and women.

The fifth meta-analytic review (Khaleque & Rohner, 2012a) substantially expanded the first review. More specifically, that review was based on 68 studies involving 19,511 respondents from 22 countries on five continents. Results of analysis showed that the effect sizes of correlations between perceived maternal and



paternal acceptance with offspring's psychological adjustment were significant for both children and adults across all cultures studied. Very importantly, the results also showed that the mean weighted effect size of the correlations between perceived *paternal* acceptance and children's psychological adjustment was significantly stronger than the mean weighted effect size of the correlation between perceived *maternal* acceptance and children's psychological adjustment. This conclusion was left in doubt, however, when the eleventh meta-analysis (Ali, Khaleque, & Rohner, 2015) described later failed to confirm these results. An explanation for this discrepancy awaits future research.

The sixth study (Khaleque & Rohner, 2012b) took these meta-analyses a step further. Whereas the prior studies reviewed the pancultural association between perceived or remembered acceptance-rejection and overall psychological adjustment, this study broke the concept of psychological adjustment (as construed in IPARTheory) into its constituent components—i.e., the seven personality dispositions most central to the acceptance-rejection syndrome described earlier. Our objective was to ascertain if each of the seven dispositions is panculturally associated with perceived maternal and paternal acceptance in childhood and with adults' remembrances of their childhood experiences of maternal and paternal acceptance. Results of the meta-analysis showed that both maternal and paternal acceptance correlated significantly and panculturally with all seven personality dispositions measured on the Child PAQ. Additionally, remembered maternal acceptance correlated significantly and panculturally with all seven personality dispositions of adult offspring. Remembered paternal acceptance, however, did not correlate as expected with dependence. These results were based on 36 studies that included 10,943 respondents from 22 countries.

The seventh meta-analysis (Khaleque, 2012) addressed the pancultural relationship between perceived parental *warmth/affection* (as assessed on the child version of the PARQ) and children's overall psychological adjustment, as well as individual personality dispositions as assessed on the PAQ. The meta-analysis was based on 30 studies from 16 countries on five continents involving 12,087 children. Results showed that perceived parental warmth/affection correlated significantly and transculturally with children's psychological adjustment as well as with all seven personality dispositions measured on the PAQ.

The eighth meta-analysis (Khaleque, 2015) explored the pancultural relation between perceived parental *indifference/neglect* (as assessed on the child version of the PARQ), and children's overall psychological

maladjustment, as well as individual personality dispositions as assessed on the PAQ. The meta-analysis was based on 33 studies from 15 countries on four continents involving 11,755 children. Results showed that perceived maternal and paternal indifference/neglect correlated significantly and transculturally with overall psychological maladjustment and with each of the seven negative personality dispositions.

The ninth meta-analysis (Khaleque, 2015) explored the cross-cultural relation between perceived parental *hostility/aggression* (as assessed on the child version of the PARQ), and children's overall psychological maladjustment, as well as individual personality dispositions as assessed on the child PAQ. The meta-analysis was based on 35 studies from 16 countries on four continents involving 13,406 children. Results showed that both maternal and paternal hostility/aggression correlated significantly and transculturally with children's overall psychological maladjustment and with all seven negative personality dispositions of children cited above.

The tenth meta-analysis (Ali, Khaleque, & Rohner, 2014) tested the contribution of parents' and teachers' acceptance to youth's psychological adjustment and school conduct. The meta-analysis was based on nine studies involving 2,422 school-going youth in 12 nations. The study addressed two questions drawn from one of the basic postulates of IPARTheory. That is: (1) To what extent are boys' and girls' perceptions of teacher acceptance related multi-culturally to their psychological adjustment and school conduct? (2) To what extent are boys' and girls' perceptions of maternal and paternal acceptance related multi-culturally to their psychological adjustment and school conduct? Results showed that both parental and teacher acceptance correlate significantly in all countries with the psychological adjustment and conduct of school-going children, regardless of gender differences. The study also showed that children's perceptions of teacher acceptance have a significantly stronger relation with teachers' reports of boys' conduct in school than of girls' conduct in school.

Finally, the eleventh meta-analysis (Ali, Khaleque, & Rohner, 2015) was based on 220 studies involving 33,081 respondents from 23 nations across five continents. The study addressed one major question drawn from IPARTheory: Do perceptions of parental (maternal and paternal) acceptance and offspring's current psychological adjustment vary by the gender of parents, children, and adult offspring? Results showed that both paternal and maternal acceptance correlate significantly with the psychological adjustment of both children and adult offspring across all cultures studied. The study also showed that there were no gender differences in the relation between *children's* perception of *maternal* and *paternal* acceptance and children's psychological adjustment. However,

remembrances of *maternal* acceptance showed significantly stronger relations with *adult sons'* current psychological adjustment than that of adult daughters. Moreover, *paternal* acceptance was found worldwide to have a significantly stronger relation with *adult daughters'* psychological adjustment than with that of adult sons. Overall, the results of these 11 meta-analyses offer strong support for the central postulates of the IPARTheory's personality subtheory.

In summary, these meta-analyses show that perceived parental (both maternal and paternal) acceptance panculturally predict the psychological adjustment of children (both boys and girls). Additionally, the meta-analyses show that all seven of the personality dispositions featured prominently in IPARTheory's personality subtheory are panculturally associated with children's perceptions of parental acceptance. It is worth noting, too, that children's perception of parental warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, and indifference/neglect—along with overall perceived acceptance—each panculturally predict significant variations in children's overall psychological adjustment as well as the seven personality dispositions measured on the PAQ.

It is not only variations in parents' love that panculturally predict children's adjustment and behavior, but so too do other significant people in children's lives. For example, as noted in the tenth meta-analysis described earlier, children's perceptions of their teachers' acceptance tend panculturally to predict children's overall psychological adjustment as well as children's—especially boys'—conduct in school.

Regarding adults, the meta-analyses show that both men's and women's psychological adjustment are panculturally associated with their remembrances of both maternal and paternal acceptance in childhood. Additionally, adults' remembrances of *maternal* acceptance in childhood predict all seven of the personality dispositions among both men and women. Adults' remembrances of *paternal* acceptance, however, do not appear to correlate as expected with dependence.

Beyond this, it is important to note that both men's and women's psychological adjustment tends to be panculturally associated with their perceptions of their intimate partners' acceptance in the same way that adults' adjustment is associated with remembrances of parental acceptance-rejection in childhood.

Finally, we should observe that men's remembrances of their mothers' acceptance in childhood tend to be associated to a significantly greater extent with the *adult sons'* psychological adjustment than do adult daughters' remembrances of maternal acceptance in childhood. Adult daughters' adjustment, however, tends to be influenced

by remembrances of *paternal* acceptance in childhood to a greater degree than do adult sons' remembrances of paternal acceptance. Almost all of these conclusions are based on data using the PARQ and the PAQ. One of the meta-analyses described earlier shows that these measures are reliable assessment devices to use in international and cross-cultural comparative research.

### Ethnographic Research

The second cluster of distinctive methods used in IPARTheory consists of three types of studies based on *ethnographic research*. The first of these is the *ethnographic case study* such as the one done by Rohner and Chaki-Sircar (1988) among women and children in a Bengali village. Ethnographic case studies employ long-term (e.g., six months to several years) participant observation procedures within a specific culturally organized community, along with structured and unstructured observations, interviews, and other such procedures. Such ethnographic studies produce a context-rich account of the lifeway of a people. A second method within this cluster is the *controlled comparison* or *concomitant variation study* (Naroll, 1968; Pelto & Pelto, 1978; Rohner, 1977). In these studies investigators usually locate two or more culture-bearing populations in which one of two conditions is true: (1) Relevant variables in the sampled populations vary, but other sociocultural factors remain constant, or (2) relevant variables in the sample population remain constant while other sociocultural factors are free to vary. Rohner's (1960) comparative study of parental rejection in three Pacific societies (i.e., a Maori community of New Zealand, a traditional highland community of Bali, and the Alorese of Indonesia) illustrates the second type of study in this cluster.

Finally, the *holocultural method* (traditionally called the cross-cultural survey method) is the third approach within this cluster (Naroll, Michik, & Naroll, 1976; 1980; Whiting & Child, 1953). This method is a research design for statistically measuring the relation between two or more theoretically defined and operationalized variables in a random, stratified sample of the world's adequately described sociocultural systems. The sources of data are ethnographic reports rather than direct observations, self-report questionnaires, interviews, or other such procedures (Rohner, et al., 1978). Rohner's 1975 study of parental acceptance-rejection in 101 well-described non-industrial societies distributed widely throughout the major geographic regions and culture areas of the world illustrates this type of study.

### Strengths and Weaknesses of Each Research Modality

Each of these five types of studies contains unique strengths and weaknesses. The strengths of the psychological-study cluster, for example, are several—including valid, reliable, and precise descriptions of phenomena. Estimates of both central tendency and variability in data generated in this cluster of methods allow sensitive and powerful statistical procedures to be employed to tease out subtle effects. A typical weakness of these studies, however, is the fact that rich contextual data is usually missing. Special strengths of the methods in the ethnographic research cluster are validity and groundedness. That is, ethnographic studies produce accounts that are rich in cultural detail and context. Derived as they are from ethnography, holocultural studies are also grounded, but they have an important additional strength in that they allow for truly pancultural sampling that takes into account the full range of known sociocultural variation throughout the world, especially of non-industrial societies. A weakness of these methods, however, is the fact that measures coded from ethnography are sometimes imprecise, and therefore may be low in reliability.

### Further Evidence Supporting the Main Features of IPARTheory

Overwhelmingly, the most highly developed portion of IPARTheory is its personality subtheory. Evidence bearing on that subtheory comes from all five types of studies described above. Because of their robustness and simplicity, however, several hundred researchers internationally have chosen to use the PARQ, PARQ/Control, and the PAQ—and associated IPARTheory measures—with two hundred thousand (or more) children and adults in many ethnic groups and societies on every continent of the world except for Antarctica. More evidence has been compiled from these studies than from studies using any other set of measures. Accordingly, results of these studies are given greatest attention here.

Virtually every competent study that has used these measures—regardless of racial, cultural, linguistic, geographic, economic, and other such variations—has reached the same conclusion. Specifically: The experience of interpersonal (especially parental) acceptance or rejection tends to be associated transculturally with the form of psychological adjustment (or maladjustment) postulated in personality subtheory. The first meta-analysis described earlier of 43 studies drawing from 7,563 respondents worldwide using the PARQ and PAQ, for example, showed that 3,433 additional studies, all with nonsignificant results,

would be required to disconfirm the conclusion that perceived acceptance-rejection is panculturally associated with children's psychological adjustment; 941 such studies would be required to disconfirm this conclusion among adults (Khaleque & Rohner, 2002a). All effect sizes reported in the meta-analysis were statistically significant. Additionally, results showed no significant heterogeneity in effect sizes in different samples cross-culturally or within American ethnic groups.

That meta-analysis also showed that regardless of culture, ethnicity, or geographic location, approximately 26% of the variability in children's psychological adjustment and 21% of the variability in adults' adjustment is accounted for by perceived parental (paternal as well as maternal) acceptance-rejection. These results support IPARTheory's expectation that the magnitude of the relation between perceived acceptance-rejection and psychological adjustment is likely to be stronger in childhood—while children are still under the direct influences of parents—than in adulthood (Rohner, 1986, 1999). Obviously, a substantial amount of variance in children's and adults' adjustment remains to be accounted for by factors so far unmeasured in this program of research. No doubt a variety of cultural, behavioral, genetic, neurobiological and other such factors are implicated in this variance (Reiss, 1997; Saudino, 1997; South & Jarnecke, 2015).

As we said above, three other classes of data also support the major postulates of IPARTheory's personality subtheory. These are cross-cultural survey (holocultural) studies, ethnographic case studies, and controlled comparison (concomitant variation) studies. Regarding the first, results of the major holocultural study (Rohner, 1975) of 101 well-described non-industrial societies mentioned earlier confirmed the conclusion that parental acceptance-rejection is associated panculturally with the psychological (mal)adjustment of children and adults. Additionally, the controlled comparison of three sociocultural groups in the Pacific mentioned earlier (Rohner, 1960) also supports this conclusion, as did an 18-month ethnographic and psychological community study in West Bengal, India (Rohner & Chaki-Sircar, 1988). Moreover, a six-month ethnographic and psychological case study of 349 9- through 16-year-old youths in St. Kitts, West Indies (Rohner, 1987) along with a six-month ethnographic and psychological case study of 281 9-through 18-year-old youths and their parents in a poor, biracial (African American and European American) community in southeast Georgia, USA (Rohner, Bourque & Elordi (1996); Veneziano & Rohner, 1998) also confirm the conclusion that perceived parental acceptance-rejection is associated with youth's

psychological adjustment.

All this evidence about the apparently universal expressions of acceptance-rejection along with evidence about the worldwide psychological effects of perceived acceptance-rejection led Rohner (2004) to formulate the concept of a relational diagnosis called *the acceptance-rejection syndrome*. The acceptance-rejection syndrome consists of two complementary sets of factors. First, nearly 500 studies at that time showed that children and adults everywhere appear to organize their perceptions of interpersonal acceptance-rejection around the same four classes of behavior, including warmth/affection—or its opposite, coldness/lack of affection—hostility/aggression, indifference/ neglect, and undifferentiated rejection). Second, as noted earlier, cross-cultural and meta-analytic evidence supports the conclusion that children and adults who experience their relationship with parents and other attachment figures as being rejecting tend universally to self-report the specific form of psychological maladjustment specified in personality subtheory. Together these two classes of behavior comprise a *syndrome*, that is, a pattern or constellation of co-occurring behaviors, traits, and dispositions. Any single psychological disposition (e.g., anger, hostility, or aggression) may be found in other conditions; it is the full configuration of dispositions that compose the syndrome. Collectively, all this evidence has led us to postulate a *deep structure*—i.e., a biocultural co-evolutionary foundation—to the human affectional system.

In addition to issues of psychological adjustment described in personality subtheory and in the acceptance-rejection syndrome, evidence also strongly implicates at least three other mental health issues as likely universal correlates of perceived parental rejection. These issues are (1) depression and depressed affect, (2) behavior problems, including conduct disorders, externalizing behaviors, and delinquency, and (3) substance (drug and alcohol) abuse (Rohner & Britner, 2002). Some of these issues appear to be direct effects of perceived interpersonal acceptance-rejection, and some appear to be more indirect effects mediated by preexisting problems with psychological maladjustment of the type described in personality subtheory. Evidence regarding each of these topics is briefly amplified below.

**Depression.** Parental rejection and other forms of interpersonal rejection have been found to be consistently related to both clinical and non-clinical depression and depressed affect within major ethnic groups in the United States, including African Americans (Crook, Raskin, & Eliot, 1981), Asian

Americans (Greenberger & Chen, 1996), European Americans (Belsky & Pinsky, 1988; Jacobson, Fasman, & DiMascio, 1975; Whitbeck, Conger, & Kao, 1993; Whitbeck, Hoyt, Miller, & Kao, 1992), and Hispanic Americans (Dumka, Roosa, & Jackson, 1997). In addition, perceived rejection has been found to be linked with depression in many countries worldwide, including Australia (Parker, 1983a; Parker, Kiloh, & Hayward, 1987), China (Chen, Rubin, & Li, 1995), Egypt (Fattah, 1996; Hassab-Allah, 1996; Salama, 1990), Germany (Richter, 1994), Hungary (Richter, 1994), Italy (Richter, 1994), Sweden (Perris et al., 1986; Richter, 1994), and Turkey (Erkman, 1992). Moreover, a number of longitudinal studies show that perceived parental rejection in childhood tends to precede the development of depressive symptoms in adolescence and adulthood (Chen, Rubin & Li, 1995; Ge, Best, Conger, & Simons, 1996; Ge, Lorenz, Conger, Elder, & Simons, 1994; Lefkowitz & Tesiny, 1984; Peterson, Sarigiani, & Kennedy, 1991; Robertson & Simons, 1989).

**Behavior problems.** Parental rejection and other forms of interpersonal rejection also appear to be major predictors of almost all forms of behavior problems, including conduct disorder, externalizing behavior, and delinquency. Cross-cultural findings that support this conclusion come from Bahrain (Al-Falaj, 1991), China (Chen, Rubin, & Li, 1997), Croatia (Ajdukovic, 1990), Egypt (Salama, 1984), England (Farrington & Hawkins, 1991; Maughan, Pickles, & Quinton, 1995), India (Saxena, 1992), and Norway (Pedersen, 1994). Studies also support this conclusion among American ethnic groups, including African Americans, Asian Americans, European Americans, and Hispanic Americans (Chen et al., 1998; Marcus & Gray, 1998; Rothbaum & Weis, 1994; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Ackley, 1997). Finally, a number of longitudinal studies in the U.S. (Ge, Best, Conger, & Simon, 1996; Loeber & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; Simons, Robertson, & Downs, 1989), and globally (Chen et al., 1997) show that parental rejection tends to precede the development of these behavior problems.

**Substance abuse.** Support for the worldwide correlation between parental acceptance-rejection and substance abuse comes from studies conducted in Australia (Rosenberg, 1971), Canada (Hundleby & Mercer, 1987), England (Merry, 1972), the Netherlands (Emmelkamp & Heeres, 1988), and Sweden (Vrasti et al., 1990). Some of these studies clearly suggest that parental rejection is *causally* connected with both drug abuse and alcohol abuse. Parental rejection has also been found to be connected with substance abuse in major ethnic groups in the U.S., including among African Americans (Eldred, Brown, & Mahabir,



1974; Myers, Newcomb, Richardson, & Alvy, 1997; Prendergast & Schaefer, 1974; Shedler & Block, 1990), Asian Americans (Shedler & Block, 1990), and Hispanic Americans (Coombs & Paulson, 1988; Coombs, Paulson, & Richardson, 1991). Moreover, Rohner and Britner (2002) found a number of studies providing evidence about the relation between parental rejection and substance abuse among middle class and working class European Americans.

It is possible that perceived parental rejection is really only related to one or two aspects of child adjustment (e.g., behavior problems), which in turn could overlap with other aspects of child adjustment (e.g., prosocial behavior). To explore this question, Putnick et al. (2014) tested five indicators of child adjustment (i.e., internalizing and externalizing behaviors, school achievement, prosocial behavior, and social competence) in a single development model within nine nations internationally. Drawing from a sample of 1,247 families, this three-year longitudinal study found that children's perceptions of parental (both maternal and paternal) rejection uniquely (i.e., independently) predicted increases in parents' reports of children's internalizing and externalizing behavior problems as well as decreases in children's school performance, prosocial behavior, and social competence. This study shows the more-or-less invariant effects of perceived acceptance-rejection across nations, and it shows that children's perceptions of paternal and maternal acceptance have roughly equivalent effects on children's adjustment and behavior.

**The importance of father love.** Substantial evidence in all these classes of study suggests that father love (acceptance-rejection) is often as strongly implicated as mother love in the development of behavioral and psychological problems as well as in the development of offspring's sense of health and well-being (Rohner, 1998; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Veneziano, 2000, 2003). Studies supporting this conclusion tend to deal with the following issues among children, adolescents, and adults: (1) personality and psychological adjustment problems (Ahmed, Rohner, & Carrasco, 2011; Amato, 1994; Dominy, Johnson, & Koch, 2000; Khaleque & Rohner, 2011a; Komarovskiy, 1976; Stagner, 1933); (2) mental illness (Barrera & Garrison-Jones, 1992; Lefkowitz & Tesiny, 1984); (3) psychological health and well-being (Amato, 1994); (4) conduct disorder (Eron, Banta, Walder, & Laulicht, 1961; Putnick et al., 2014); (5) substance abuse (Brook & Brook, 1988; Emmelkamp & Heeres, 1988); (6) delinquency (Andry, 1962); (7) prosocial behavior (Putnick et al., 2014); (8) children's social competence (Putnick et al., 2014); and, (9) school performance (Putnick et al.,

2014).

Some of these studies, especially those carried out in the 1990s and later, use multiple regression, structural equation modeling, and other powerful statistical procedures that allow investigators to estimate the relative contribution of each parent's behavior to youth outcomes. Many of these studies conclude that father/paternal love explains a unique and independent portion of the variance in specific child outcomes over and above the portion explained by maternal love (Ahmed, Rohner & Carrasco, 2011; Carrasco & Rohner, 2011; Rohner & Carrasco, 2014; Veneziano, 2003). Other studies conclude that paternal love is sometimes the sole significant predictor of specific child outcomes (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). Studies in this latter category tend to address one or more of the following issues: (1) personality and psychological adjustment problems (Barnett, Marshall, & Pleck, 1992; Bartle, Anderson, & Sabatelli, 1989; Dickie et al., 1997); (2) conduct and delinquency problems (Kroupa, 1988); and (3) substance abuse (Brook, Whiteman, & Gordon, 1981; Eldred, Brown, & Mahabir, 1974).

It is now known that paternal acceptance is sometimes a better predictor of offspring's psychological and behavioral adjustment than maternal acceptance, but until recently it wasn't clear why. Conclusions reached in a recent study of offspring's (children's and young adults') perceptions of parents' (mothers' versus fathers') interpersonal power and prestige within the family (Rohner & Carrasco, 2014) helps to explain why the love-related behavior of one parent (e.g., fathers) sometimes has a significantly greater impact on offspring's psychological adjustment than does the love-related behavior of the other parent (e.g., mothers). Results of research within the 11 nations in that study revealed that the love-related behaviors of both parents tended in most countries to make unique (i.e., independent) contributions to the psychological adjustment of both sons and daughters. This fact notwithstanding, results of analyses also showed that in many instances offspring's perceptions of one parent's (e.g., fathers') power and/or prestige within the family tended to *moderate* the relation between perceived parental (maternal and/or paternal) acceptance and offspring's psychological adjustment. The study of 785 college students in Portugal illustrates this phenomenon (Machado, Machado, Neves, & Favero, 2014). There the authors found that both men's and women's remembrances of maternal and paternal acceptance in childhood made independent contributions to the psychological adjustment of the young adults. But the magnitude of the relation between perceived paternal acceptance and *daughters'*

adjustment intensified significantly the more interpersonal *power* fathers were perceived to have relative to mothers. The magnitude of the relation between perceived paternal acceptance and *sons'* adjustment, however, intensified the more *prestige* fathers were perceived to have relative to mothers.

### Implications of IPARTheory Evidence

The search in IPARTheory for cross-culturally valid *principles* of behavior is based on the assumption that with a scientific understanding of the worldwide consequences, antecedents, and other correlates of interpersonal acceptance-rejection comes the possibility of formulating culture-fair and practicable programs, policies, and interventions affecting families and children everywhere. This research contributes to the goal of culture-fair programs and policies in that it asks practitioners to look beyond differences in cultural beliefs, language, and custom when making assessments about the adequacy of parenting, and to focus instead on whether individuals' fundamental needs (e.g., the need for emotional support, nurturance, affection, and the like from significant others, especially attachment figures) are being met. Social policies and programs of prevention, intervention, and treatment based on idiosyncratic beliefs at a particular point in history are likely to prove unworkable for some, and probably even prejudicial for many minority populations. Policies and programs based on demonstrable *principles* of human behavior, however, stand a good chance of working as nations and people change. The values and customs of a particular sociocultural group, therefore, are not—according to IPARTheory—the most important criteria to be used to evaluate the adequacy of parenting in that group. Rather, the most important question becomes how loved (accepted) do children perceive themselves to be. Insofar as children perceive their parents and other attachment figures to be accepting, then—according to both theory and evidence presented here—it probably makes little difference for children's developmental outcome how external reporters view parents' behavior.

It is thoughts such as these that have motivated a great part of IPARTheory research. Now, after almost six decades of research with more than 200,000 children, adolescents, and adults in over 60 cultures worldwide, and with members of every major American ethnic group, at least two conclusions seem warranted. First, the same classes of behaviors appear universally to convey the symbolic message that "my parent. . ." (or other attachment figure) "loves me" (or does not love me, care about me, want me—i.e., rejects me). These classes of behavior include the perception of warmth/affection (or its opposite, coldness and lack of

affection), hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, and undifferentiated rejection, as defined at the beginning of this article. Second, differences in culture, ethnicity, social class, race, gender, and other such factors do not exert enough influence to override the apparently universal, biologically-based tendency for children and adults everywhere to respond in essentially the same way when they perceive themselves to be accepted or rejected by the people most important to them, especially attachment figures. Having said this, however, we must also stress that the association between perceived acceptance-rejection and psychological outcomes for youths and adults is far from perfect. Indeed, even though perceived acceptance-rejection appears to account universally for an average of about 26% of the variance in the psychological adjustment of youths and adults, approximately 74% of the variance is yet to be accounted for by other factors (**cite reference**). No doubt, behavior genetics, neurobiological, sociocultural, and other experiential factors are among these influences. Nonetheless, results of research completed so far are so robust and stable the world over that we believe professionals should feel confident developing policies and practice-applications based on the central tenets of IPARTheory—especially IPARTheory's personality subtheory—despite the fact that much is yet to be learned about the effects, causes, and other correlates of perceived interpersonal acceptance and rejection.

### **IPARTheory's Place in the History of Research on Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection**

Until recently, very little research was done on the issue of interpersonal acceptance-rejection beyond studying *parental* acceptance-rejection. The empirical study of parental acceptance-rejection, however, has a history going back to the 1890s (Stogdill, 1937). It was not until the 1930s, however, that a more-or-less continuous body of empirical research began to appear dealing with the effects of parental acceptance-rejection. Today more than 4,300 studies are available on the topic (Rohner, 2015). A great many individuals have contributed to this body of work, but a handful have made especially significant and sustained contributions. These individuals and groups represent different programs of research, employing distinctive concepts, measures, and research designs. For example, an especially productive early collection of acceptance-rejection research papers came from the Fels Research Institute in the 1930s and 1940s (Baldwin, Kalhorn, & Breese, 1945, 1949). Researchers associated with the Institute used the Fels Parental Behavior Rating Scales (Champney, 1941). During the 1930s and 1940s the Smith College Studies in Social Work also

produced a long and useful series of research chapters on the effects of parental acceptance-rejection (e.g., Witmer, Leach, & Richman, 1938).

Especially noteworthy in the 1950s and 1960s—and extending into the 1970s and 1980s—was the seminal work of Schaefer and associates using the Children's Report of Parental Behavior Inventory (CRPBI; Schaefer, 1959, 1961, 1965; Schludermann & Schludermann, 1970, 1971, 1983). Also noteworthy from the 1960s and 1970s was the work of Siegelman and colleagues using the Parent-Child Relations Questionnaire (Roe & Siegelman, 1963). Rohner's program of research, which ultimately led to the construction of IPARTheory and associated measures in the 1970s and 1980s grew directly out of these psychological traditions in the United States as well as from his own program of cross-cultural comparative research beginning in 1960 (Rohner, 1960, 1975; Rohner & Nielsen, 1978; Rohner & Rohner, 1980, 1981).

Other independent programs of research on issues of acceptance-rejection have also evolved, especially in the 1980s and 1990s but also expanding well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Four of these programs in the U.S. are especially prominent. One is the sociological tradition of research based on the concept of "parental support" and "parental supportive behavior" advocated by Rollins & Thomas (1979)—and utilizing a wide variety of research measures and research designs (Amato & Booth 1997; Amato & Fowler, 2002; Barber & Thomas, 1986; Barnes & Farrell, 1992; Peterson & Rollins, 1987; Peterson, Rollins & Thomas, 1985; Whitbeck, Conger, & Kao, 1993; Whitbeck, Hoyt, Miller & Kao, 1992; Young, Miller, Norton, & Hill, 1995).

Another program of research comes from Baumrind's widely recognized conceptual model dealing with parenting prototypes, including the concepts of authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and rejecting/neglecting styles of parenting (Baumrind, 1966, 1968, 1989, 1991). Her work has been widely discussed and incorporated into the research of many other investigators. Perhaps most prominent among these investigators is Steinberg and colleagues (Glasgow, Dornbusch, Troyer, Steinberg, & Ritter, 1997; Gray & Steinberg, 1999; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991; Steinberg, Elman, & Mounts, 1989; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992). Baumrind's parenting prototypes have also generated more controversy than any other single parenting model, especially the claim that the authoritative style of parenting produces the most competent children. Increasingly, doubt is growing whether authoritative

parenting necessarily produces optimum developmental outcomes for such ethnic minorities as African Americans (Baumrind, 1972; Smetana, 2000), Chinese Americans (Chao, 1994), Hispanic Americans (Torres-Villa, 1995), Korean Americans (Kim & Rohner, 2002), and others.

A third program of research comes from the work of Downey, Feldman, and colleagues (Downey & Feldman, 1996; Downey, Khouri, & Feldman, 1997; Feldman & Downey, 1994; Ibrahim, Rohner, Smith & Flannery, 2015; Zimmer-Gambeck, **dates**). These researchers explore the issue of "rejection sensitivity." According to them, interpersonal rejection—especially parental rejection in childhood—leads children to develop a heightened sensitivity to being rejected. That is, the children become disposed to anxiously and angrily expect, readily perceive, and overreact to rejection in ways that compromise their intimate relationships as well as their own wellbeing. Additionally, these authors and their colleagues have found that rejection sensitive children and adults often interpret the minor or imagined insensitivity of significant others—or the ambiguous behavior of others—as being intentional rejection.

Finally—as noted earlier—a seminal body of research is now emerging on the neuropsychological and psychobiological correlates of perceived rejection. This body of work is not associated with a specific person or named group of persons, but rather is derivative from the neurosciences, especially from research dealing with the genetic, neurological, and physiological underpinnings of perceived rejection. This research shows clearly that the pain and suffering associated with perceived rejection is no mere epiphenomenon, but rather has a directly measurable impact on the physical and mental health and development of individuals (e.g., see **add references** MacDonald & Jensen-Campbell, 2011; Van Harmelen, et al, 2011).

All these bodies of work, except Rohner's, focus heavily—though not exclusively—on European Americans. However, at least three programs of international acceptance-rejection research also exist. First, with the construction and validation of a self-report questionnaire called the EMBU (Perris, Jacobsson, Lindström, von Knorring, & Perris, 1980), Perris, Emmelkamp, & others launched a productive European and cross-cultural program of research on the psychological effects of acceptance-rejection (Arrindell, Gerlsma, Vandereycken, Hageman, & Daeseleire, 1998; Emmelkamp & Hecrus, 1988; Perris, Arrindell, & Eisemann, 1994; Perris et al., 1985; Perris, Arrindell, Perris, Eisemann, van der Ende, & von Knorring, 1986).

**Update references.**

Second, a somewhat less-developed body of international research is that of Parker and associates, working primarily in Australia and England, and using the parental bonding instrument (PBI) (Parker, 1983a, 1983b, 1984, 1986; Parker, & Barnett, 1988; Parker, Tupling, & Brown, 1979; Torgersen, & Alnaes, 1992). **Update references.** Finally, beginning in the 1990's Chen and colleagues have been developing a productive series of longitudinal and cross-sectional studies primarily in The People's Republic of China and Canada on issues surrounding both maternal and paternal acceptance and rejection (Chen, Dong, & Zhou, 1997; Chen, Hastings, Rubin, Chen, Cen, & Stewart, 1998; Chen, Liu, & Li, 2000; Chen, Wu, Chen, Wang, & Cen, 2001). **Update references.** Among these programs of research on interpersonal acceptance-rejection, the work of Rohner and colleagues— drawing from IPARTheory and its associated measures—is most highly developed.

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## Appendix

### Measures Used in IPARTheory Research

Best Friend Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (BFARQ)

Early Childhood Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (ECARQ)

Early Childhood Best Friend Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (Early Childhood BFARQ)

Gender Inequality Scale (GIS)

Grandparent Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (GARQ)

In-Law Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (ILARQ)

In-Law Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire (ILAR/CQ)

Intimate Adult Relationship Questionnaire (IARQ)

Intimate Partner Attachment Questionnaire (IPAQ)

Intimate Partner Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire (IPAR/CQ)

Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Loneliness Scale (IPARLS)

Interpersonal Relationship Anxiety Questionnaire (IRAQ)

Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ)

Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire (PARQ/Control)

Parental Control Scale (PCS)

Parental Power-Prestige Questionnaire (3PQ)

Parent's Evaluation of Child's Conduct (PECC)

Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ)

Physical Punishment Questionnaire (PPQ)

Teacher Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (TARQ)

Teacher's Evaluation of Student's Conduct (TESC)