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Perceived teacher and parental acceptance-rejection, and the academic achievement, adjustment, and behavior of children: Literature review

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Parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory) is a socialization theory which attempts to predict and explain major causes, consequences and other correlates of parental acceptance-rejection globally. Academic achievement and psychological adjustment have long been of concern to educators, parents and policymakers. Researchers have explored variables which interact between parental acceptance-rejection and children's academic performance. A burgeoning literature suggests that the quality of the relationship which children have with their parents and teachers has significant developmental consequences. Research in this area has indicated that security in the teacher-child relationship influences children's development in the same way that parent-child attachment does. Children may look to their teachers for the same kind of security and emotional response as they do to their parent. This article is a review of 17 publications appearing since 1994. Our primary purpose is to present a comprehensive and cross-cultural picture of the relationship between children's perception of their teachers' and parents' (or primary caregivers') acceptance-rejection, children's level of academic achievement and psychological adjustment. This article was written in recognition of the fact that majority of the research on the consequences of perceived teacher acceptance-rejection has been done in the United States of America and other predominantly English countries and therefore, little is known about this phenomena outside these countries. Findings of the present study have important implications for the researchers, policy makers, educational psychologists, and counselors in taking appropriate measures for improving students' school-conduct, psychological adjustment, and academic achievement in more significant ways.

Key words: Teacher acceptance, parental acceptance, psychological adjustment, academic achievement.

INTRODUCTION

The relationship between school and family has been noted as an important mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1977) that surrounds and shapes development and adaptation in children. This relationship has received considerable attention and concerns with the impact of parental and teacher acceptance on life of children. This article is a review of publications investigating parent-child-teacher relationship and the outcomes of this relationship. In recent years a growing number of researchers (Davis, 2001; Parmar and Rohner, 2010; Rohner, 1999; Tulviste and Rohner, 2010) have focused their attention on understanding how supportive relationship with teachers and parents can promote positive

development in various life settings of children, thus this relationship fits within a broader ecological models of development and can serve as a resource. Teacher-child relationship has been recognized as a significant factor that contributes to the child's academic achievement and development (Pianta, 1999) in the same way as parent-child relationship does (Cause et al., 2003; Furstenberg et al., 1999; Grant et al., 2000; Richman et al., 1998; Woolley and Bowen, 2007). Developmental contextual theories have emphasized parents' roles in determining children's proximal developmental contexts (Lerner et al., 1995). Similarly, according to Rubin et al. (2004) from the earliest years of childhood, children develop significant

relationships with their family members.

Over the years, researchers have examined the influence that children's experiences with these relationships may have on their functioning. Links have been developed between parent-child relationship quality and adjustment during the student life of pre-elementary and middle as well as in later adolescence (Rubin and Burgess, 2002). Recently, researchers have examined links in which experiences in both familial and extra-familial relationships may interact to influence psychosocial functioning (Rubin et al., 2004). A burgeoning literature suggests that school plays a vital role in students' development, academic achievement, and psychological adjustment (Birch and Ladd, 1997; Davis, 2001; Goodenow, 1993; Howes, 1999; Pianta, 1999; Wentzel, 1999), research has supported that children having high-quality teacher relationship perform better and achieve more than those who have low-quality relationship (Birch and Ladd, 1997; Furrer and Skinner, 2003; Pianta, 1999; Pianta et al., 1997; Pianta and Stuhlman, 2004), therefore, it may serve as a resource for a child. Children may look to their teachers for the same kind of security and emotional response as they do to their parent. Therefore, the school and the family serves as the most sustaining and influential context that surrounds and shapes a child's development in today's world.

The quality of relationship between children and their parents has interested many researchers over decades. Various well known theoretical orientations (Harter, 1998; Ryan et al., 1995; Sroufe and Waters, 1977) have considered the processes whereby parents' behavior helps determine the quality of children's school functioning and problem behavior. For example, social learning theorists (Patterson et al., 1989) posit that behaviors modeled and reinforced in the parent/child relationship will be strengthened, encoded cognitively, and later generalized to other social settings. Attachment theorists (Waters et al., 1986) posit that the quality of parents' responsiveness to children influences the development of parent/child attachment and the quality of children's schemes and expectations about the self, others, and relationships. Motivational theorists (Ryan et al., 1995) emphasize that the quality of parents' responses to children's basic psychological needs come to be internalized in a child's developing self-regulatory abilities. All these bodies of literature and research work rely heavily if not exclusively on American population. Thus, Rohner's parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory), which is an evidence based theory of socialization and life span development attempts to predict and explain major causes, consequences and other correlates of parental and intimate acceptance-rejection globally (Rohner, 1986, 1999; Rohner et al., 2009).

PARTheory postulates a well research and pancultural relation between parental acceptance-rejection in childhood

and individual's adjustment throughout life. The association between accepting relationship of parents and child's development is a robust finding in psychology; there is a large body of literature demonstrating that high-quality parental relationship supports child's social, emotional, educational, and behavioral development (Armsden et al., 1990; Cassidy and Shaver, 1999; Sameroff et al., 1998; Sroufe, 1983). Since academic achievement and psychological adjustment has long been of concern to educators, policy makers, and parents; and researchers have well explored this phenomenon. PARTheory has broadened its horizon from its original focus on parental acceptance-rejection to all forms of interpersonal acceptance-rejection.

Despite the seeming importance of parents' and teachers' relationship and children outcomes, relatively few studies taking into account both the relationships among children or adolescents have been performed to date. However, at least two factors suggest the need for such a review: First, it is important to critically examine the magnitude of effects and outcomes that have been found in various studies and then analyze them in the light of PARTheory. Secondly, a systematic review that identifies inconsistencies in the existing research, and describes what has not been investigated in the growth of an area of investigation. For these reasons, a review of past literature on parent and teacher relationship and children outcomes seems warranted at this time.

REVIEW PROCEDURES

Selection and inclusion criteria

Studies were included in this review only if they had met the following criteria: (a) the studies must be empirically investigating at least two quantitative variables in relation to parents and/or teachers relationship with children, and excluded qualitative and descriptive research like narrative interviews, observation, grounded theory research (b) the sample must consist of children under the age of 18 years (c) the studies should be written in English language (d) only if full-text published article is available, as unpublished studies, thesis, or dissertations could not be located or accessed. Under this criterion, 17 studies consisting of around 4710 children were included. Along with the selection criteria of the studies homogeneity of the sample was also maintained with the help of selection criteria. However, it was not possible to control all possible variables nor was it desirable because then it would have become very limited.

The considerations taken into account for the selection of the participants were: (a) children were full time students in local English medium schools and, (b) they were living in an intact family that is with both mother and father. Children from broken homes, single parent met the exclusion criteria.

Literature search strategies

To locate the relevant studies, a literature search of studies from 1994 through 2010, four strategies were used to establish the literature to be included in the review. First the 2009 online bibliography

of the Rohner Center for the study of Parental Acceptance and Rejection at the University of Connecticut. In addition, online searches were conducted on major databases. Secondly, three major databases, PsycINFO, PsycArticles, and Sage Journals Online were searched using the specific search terms "teacher acceptance-rejection", "teacher-student relationship", "mother acceptance-rejection", "father acceptance-rejection", and "parent-child relationship". General searches were additionally carried out for the terms "psychological adjustment", and "academic achievement". The latter terms were used to describe the outcomes of the study.

The search results for these general terms were screened for their relevance and significance to the review. Non-empirical (theoretical or literature review) publications were not included. The third source was the ancestral method and collected published material that was referenced in other publications containing any of the search terms. These publications were searched and then collated. Fourth source was the references that were known to the authors and were directly relevant to the review. In this way only the studies with direct focus to the topic under consideration were selected. No previous review on this topic was found. These strategies collectively netted 17 publications (Table 1).

Description of studies

The information which was abstracted from the studies included year of publication, sample size (total, number of boys and girls), age of the participants, measures used, statistical techniques used to analyze the data, geographical location, and the key findings (Table 1).

RESULTS

The findings of the studies were qualitatively reported and then contrasted. The results of the current review have pointed to the fact that despite the growing awareness of importance of adult-child relationship process, relatively few researches have examined both the unique and cumulative impact of these relationships on school functioning among children. The findings that do exist suggest that different aspects of relationships with parents and teachers may affect adjustment and functioning differently and, that an accumulation of support from multiple adults can have a cumulative positive impact on achievement and functioning. Findings from this review are:

- i) Children (both boys and girls) tended to perceive their teachers as well as their parents to be warm and accepting.
- ii) Secure teacher-child relationship was negatively related to students' hostile aggression, and positively with peer play.
- iii) Negative teacher-child socialization was negatively related to school-conduct, and positively to teacher rating of difficulty among school-going youths.
- iv) Cultural differences are found in teacher-child relationship. Beyazkurk and Kenser (2005) in their

comparison of teacher-child relationship in US and Turkey, found that Turkish teachers report less conflict and greater closeness in relation with the US teachers. The authors found the impact of culture (social dimensions) on this relationship. Dependency in relation was more in Turkish culture whereas individuality and autonomy was supported in US culture. Similarly, Dumka et al. (2009) found that mother's enculturation associates with girls' higher academic achievement and acculturation of both parents was related to problem at school for both boys and girls.

- v) Parent-child relationship is a contributory factor of child's development but schooling significantly affects it.
- vi) Perceived teachers' and parents' acceptance significantly accounts for children's psychological adjustment.
- vii) Parental behavior is significantly related to children's self-representation.
- viii) Lack of warmth from mother is associated with poor academic and behavioral outcomes.
- ix) At the age of 11 through 14 years the roles parents exercised in influencing were different for sons and daughters. Fathers had involvement in parenting boys as compared to daughters at this age. Girls had more attachment security with mothers and boys had with fathers
- x) Children's symptoms of anxiety and depression were negatively predicted by level of attachment to parents.
- xi) Low-support from parents and teachers had lower perceived school competence as compared to those who enjoy positive relation with only teachers, only parents, or both parents and teachers. Positive relation with both the parents and the teachers did not enhance perceived school competence to a greater extent than having supportive relation with the either adult.
- xii) High quality friendship buffers effect of low maternal support on girls. Whereas, boys having supportive maternal support view themselves as social competent as those who enjoy high quality friendship.
- xiii) Unsupportive relationship with teachers leads to behavior problems in later adulthood for boys and girls, and low perceived self-competence for girls than for boys, and also delays in high school graduation.
- xiv) Parents give children early behavioral orientations which are related to the relationship they form with significant adult figures in the school environment that is classroom teachers.

DISCUSSION

This review sheds light on the emergent research on parents-child-teacher relationships, answering important questions regarding these relationships, and there associations with children's outcomes.

Table 1. Summary of the studies.

Author (Year)	N	Age		Gender	Geographical location	Key finding
		M	Range			
Howes et al. (1994)	48	5.4 months	2 to 11 months	Mixed M 25 (52%) F 23 (48%)	USA	Teacher-child secure relationship was negatively associated with hostile aggression and positively with complex peer play and gregarious behavior. Whereas, prosocial behavior, security, and withdrawing behaviors were associated with teachers. Positive socialization of toddler-teacher was associated with higher perceived peer acceptance, whereas, negative socialization was negatively related to school conduct/behavior, and positively to teacher rating of difficulty.
Pianta et al. (1997)	55	3 to 4 years	4 years 3 months	Mixed M 33 (60%) F 22 (40%)	USA	Quality of mother-child interaction predicted teacher-reported social adjustment in kindergarten, and quality of both mother-child and teacher-child interaction predicted children's performance on a measure of concept development. Furthermore, the qualities of mother-child interaction are more strongly related to preschool and kindergarten adjustment outcomes than are qualities of the teacher-child relationship.
Birch and Ladd (1998)	199	5 Years	6 months	Mixed M 96 (48%) F 103 (52%)	United States	The results support that early styles of interpersonal interaction have important implications for children's social-psychological adjustment by illuminating how children's early behavioral orientations are related to the relationships that they form with significant adult figures in the school environment i.e. classroom teachers. The findings are that the behavioral orientations children display in Kindergarten (moving against, away from and toward others) are associated with the quality of later teacher-child relationships.
Jahangir and Tahir (1999)	106	—	—	-	Pakistan	Parental warmth is the most important factor in the parent-child relationship and is a significant contributing factor, but schooling status effects it
Repinski and Shonk (2002)	76	12.6	12 to 14 years	Mixed M 41 (54%) F 35 (46%)	USA	The pattern of result indicates that the behavior of parents' is significantly related to adolescents' self-representation and also the children's self-representation mediated, in part, the association between the behavior of parents and their own adjustment. Parental, but more strongly mothers', warmth/supportive behavior correlated with more adaptive school functioning and less involvement in problem behavior. Furthermore, mothers' hostile behavior was associated independently and significantly with poorer academic and behavioral outcomes. The results also indicated that adolescents' self-representations, in part, mediated the association between parents' behavior and adolescents' adjustment.
Rubin et al. (2004)	162	10.33	—	Mixed M 69 (43%) F 93 (57%)	USA	Perceived parental support and quality of friendship made significant contributions in prediction of adolescents' adjustment and less internalizing problems. Perceived parental support alone predicted less externalizing problems, paternal (not maternal) predicted lower rejection and victimization for girls. School going children and young adolescents were found to be better adapted if they have secure relation with their

Table 1. Contd.

Author (Year)	N	Age		Gender	Geographical location	Key finding
		M	Range			
Rubin et al. (2004)	162	10.33,	—	Mixed M 69 (43%) F 93 (57%)	USA.	primary caregiver. There is a buffering effect of high quality friendship on the relation between perceived parental support, but perceived paternal support predicted self-worth, perceived social competence, and peer victimization, and these relations were not moderated by friendship of even high quality for both boys and girls.
Duchesne et al. (2009)	626	11.8	—	Mixed M 289 (46%) F 337 (54%)	Canada	Attachment security with the parents, especially with mother, predicts less teacher-academic worries in middle school transition. Girls perceived more attachment security with mothers whereas boys perceived more attachment security with their fathers. Adolescents, who perceive good quality relation with their parents, especially mother, benefit from close relational experience, which help them to regulate their emotional state. The supportive parent relation helps them overcome their distress, and makes them able to express their emotions. Adolescents' symptoms of anxiety and depression were negatively predicted by level of attachment to their parents.
Dumka et al. (2009)	560	12.3	11 to 14 years	Mixed. M 279 (50%) F 281 (50%)	USA.	Mothers and fathers both had potentially significant role to play in the child's school outcome. At the same time the relation of parents differed for daughters and sons. There was a significant path found between fathers' warmth and lower problematic behavior for boys. Whereas, for both mothers and fathers harshness was related to higher level of problems. Regarding cultural orientations, mothers' enculturation associated with girls' higher academic achievement, and acculturation of both parents' was related to greater problem at school conduct for both boys and girls. When parental educational level was associated with adolescents academic outcome fathers' higher income was related with boys' less problem at school conduct. Furthermore, fathers' had involvement in parenting sons as compared to daughters at this age.
Levpuscek and Zupancic (2009)	365	13.47		Mixed M 174 (48%) F 191 (52%)	Republic of Slovenia.	Both parental involvement in educational pursuits as well as math teachers' classroom behavior to students' motivation and performance in math were found to be significant. Students' perceptions of math teachers' behavior were predictive of both motivational beliefs and achievement in math, over and above the account of students' evaluations of their parents' involvement. Parental academic pressure and support were directly (negatively) related to students' math grades. The contributions of parental pressure, math teachers' academic press, and teachers' mastery goal on math achievement were mediated through the students' self-efficacy in this school course.

Table 1. Contd.

Murray (2009)	104	6, 7 and 8th grades.	Mixed M 48 (46%) F 56 (54%)	USA.	Quality of parent-child interaction accounted for significant variance in student rated school competence, engagement, and reading. Teacher-student relation after controlling achievement and parent-child relation suggested significant variation in language and math's grades, and student reported engagement. An accumulation of supportive or non-supportive relationship of student with teachers and parents suggested that students who perceive low support from parents and teachers had lower perceived school competence as compared to those who enjoy positive relation with only teachers, only parents, or both parents and teachers. Having positive relation with both the parents and the teachers did not enhance perceived school competence to a greater extent than having supportive relation with the either adult.
Erkman et al. (2010)	223	11, 10 to 12 years.	Mixed M 109 (49%) F 114 (51%)	Turkey.	Perceived teacher acceptance significantly correlated with adolescents' (boys and girl) positive school attitude and higher self-concept, and it also correlated with boys' but not girls' academic achievement. Teacher acceptance and academic self-perception (component of school attitude) were important, unique, and independent predictor of boys' academic achievement, but for girls' academic self-perception was the sole predictor of their academic achievement. In spite of that, boys and girls who perceived their teachers warmth and care tended to have positive school attitude and self-concept.
Khan et al. (2010)	362	13, 12 to 16 years	Mixed M 174 (48%) F 188 (52%)	Mississippi Delta, USA.	Majority of the adolescents, boys and girls, perceived their teachers and parents to be accepting, and teachers reported that majority of the adolescents well-behaved in school. The academic achievement of the boys significantly correlated with perceived teacher and maternal acceptance, the more accepting they perceived their teachers and mothers the better were their grades were. Females' grades did not correlate either with parental nor with teacher acceptance. But more the adolescents perceived acceptance from their teachers the better behaved their teachers reported the students to be. Teacher acceptance contributed uniquely to boys' school conduct and academic achievement, but not for girls'.
Parmar and Rohner (2010)	217	14, 12 to 16 years.	Mixed M 102 (47%) F 115 (53%)	India	Students perceived their parents and teachers to be accepting, but boys perceived more teacher and maternal acceptance than girls. Teachers reported both boys and girls to be well behaved, but girls tended to behave better as compared to the boys. Students reported minor psychological disturbances; though more caring they perceive their parents and teachers better was their psychological adjustment. Furthermore, the less controlling girls perceived teachers and parents the better was their psychological adjustment. Perceived parental acceptance accounted for boys' school conduct that is the less the boys perceived their parental acceptance more they misbehaved at school, whereas, for girls both teachers' and parents' acceptance was significant but only teacher acceptance made a unique contribution.
Rohner et al. (2010)	200	13, 12 to 15 years.	Mixed M 89 (44%) F 111 (56%)	Bangladesh	Students perceived their parents and teachers to be loving. The teachers reported boys but especially girls as well behaved, and students reported to be psychologically well adjusted. The students' perceptions of teacher acceptance and parental acceptance were not correlated significantly with teachers' reports of student conduct in school. Children's perception of both the parents and teachers were significantly correlated with their psychological adjustment, and perceived teacher acceptance made unique contribution to variations in the adolescents' (both males' and females') psychological adjustment.

Table 1. Contd.

Tulviste and Rohner (2010)	224	12.29, 11 to 14 years.	Mixed M 109 (49%) F 115 (51%)	Estonia	Though both the boys and the girls perceived their parents and teachers to be accepting and moderately controlling, but the gender difference points out to the fact that despite there was no significant gender difference between boys and girls in their perception about maternal acceptance and behavioral control, boys reported less paternal and teacher acceptance than did girls, and they also perceived teachers be more behaviorally controlling than did the girls. Parental acceptance independently associated with girls', but only maternal for boys' psychological adjustment. Perceived paternal control was the only significant predictor of boys' and perceived teacher acceptance accounted for girls' school conduct. None of variables parental, teacher, or behavioral control contributed to the boys as well as girls academic achievement.
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KEY FINDINGS FROM THIS REVIEW

The studies in this review attempted to investigate contributions of teacher and parental (mother and/or father) acceptance-rejection, academic achievement, school-conduct, and sometimes adjustment. Results of these studies have diversity in the impact of teachers' versus parents' behavior on boys' versus girls' outcomes. Majority of the findings have tended to be gender-specific, outcome-specific, and cultural-specific. Thus, a generalized pattern that emerged out of this review is that parents as well as teachers play a significant role in a child's brought up. There accepting relation has positive impact on children's outcomes and rejection has negative outcomes, but who (parents or teachers), exerts greatest influence on the outcomes of children is yet to be answered.

Integrating findings with theory

Our review of 17 studies directed toward documenting children outcomes of parent-child-teacher relationship in various life settings. To synthesize these findings, we place our summary

within a theoretical framework proposed by Rohner (1986, 1999), Rohner et al., (2009). PARTheory, which has now extended to interpersonal acceptance-rejection, is an evidence based theory of socialization and lifespan development that attempts to predict and explain major causes, consequences, and other correlates of parental acceptance-rejection world-wide. Research on parent-child relations consistently indicates that perceived parental rejection has serious consequences for the psychological development and personality functioning of children and adults (Khaleque and Rohner, 2002). The most common consequences and correlates of rejection includes: depression, conduct disorders, delinquency, and substance abuse. Further-more, there are personality outcomes of rejection like: aggression/hostility, dependence, impaired self-esteem, impaired self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability, and negative worldview, which accounts for an individual's level of overall psychological adjustment. Whereas, perceived acceptance has been implicated in: development of prosocial behavior (generosity, helpfulness, empathy) in childhood, positive peer relations in adolescence, overall well-being in adulthood (life satisfaction, sense of

happiness, low psychological distress), and an overall buffer against the development of the forms of behavior associated with rejection (Rohner and Khaleque, 2005). Thus, the key findings as reported in Table 1 fully incorporate in PARTheory (Figure 1). Because research on variables associated with parent-child-teacher relationship and its outcome variables is just developing therefore it is impossible to create a complete or final model of specific key variables and their interrelations.

Figure 1, however offers a preliminary conceptual model with a few confirmed and many hypothetical relations for future investigations. On this point in time this model is offered as a starting point to investigate many mediator and moderator variables in this relationship. Some variables may be dropped others may be added, and the arrow heads may be altered, as the future research elucidates.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS

The findings have several implications not only for teachers and parents but also for other personnel in school or educational set up. Thus, in accordance

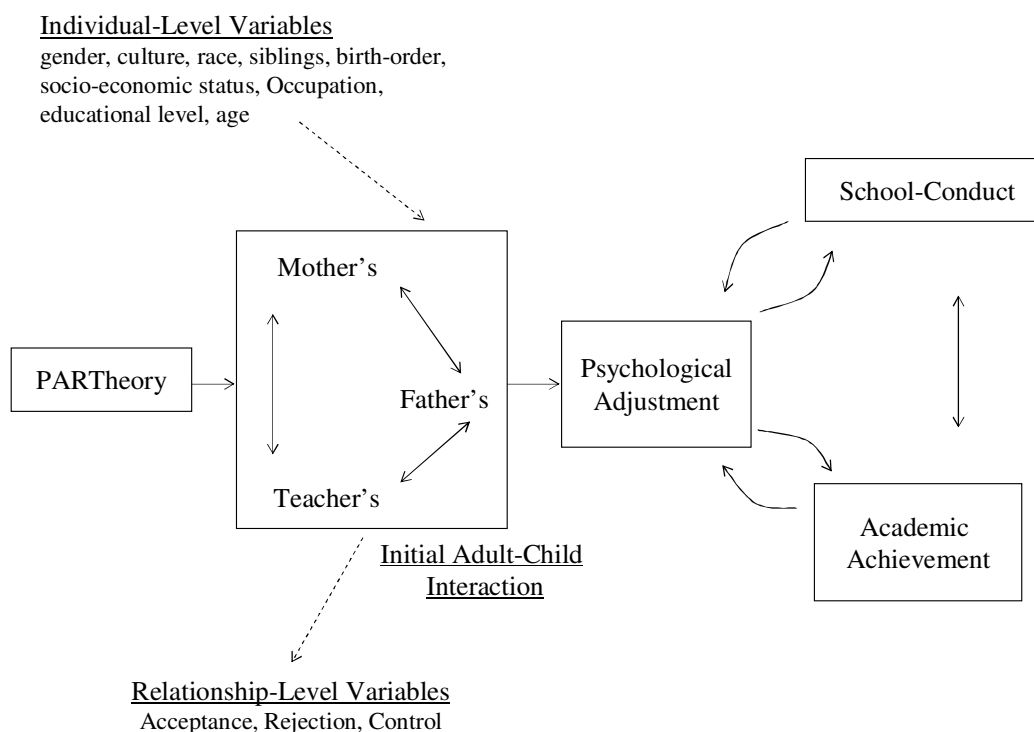


Figure 1. A preliminary conceptual model and suggestions for research.

with the results there are certain implications for example, this study suggests possible approaches that must be taken by the parents and the teachers of the children to maintain a secure and loving (accepting) relationship with them. It could be useful to make parents and teachers aware of the main challenges in a student's life. Furthermore, there is awareness for parents and teachers that they are important factors in the psychological adjustment, school conduct and academic achievement of children. In addition, educational policies can be framed and modified accordingly. Davis-Kean and Eccles (2005) suggested that explicit efforts focused on creating a welcoming school environment, the establishment of effective school-home communication systems, and the provision of support to parents in navigating school-related tasks and activities are essential for establishing trust and for enhancing the continuities between schools and homes. In the light of the existing literature, as discussed earlier, which suggests that parents as well as teachers play a significant role in children's psychological adjustment, school-conduct, and academic success, it becomes necessary to improve the consistency between the classroom and home. In order to do that there should be frequent teacher-parent meetings, this knowledge will, in turn, alter teachers' and parents' attitudes and practices in ways that will enhance school-home communication and practices in classrooms (Gonzalez et al., 2001; Moll et al., 1992).

Murray and Malmgren (2005) suggested that in order to enhance relation between students and teachers, the teachers should meet their students on individual basis regularly, discuss the progress reports and provide students with increased positive feedback within classrooms. It is expected that the results of this review will be helpful not only to the parents and the teachers but also to researchers, policy makers, educational psychologists, and counselors. The policy makers will aid in enhancing the educational system. The teachers will modify their teaching strategies and improve relationship with the students, and parents will realize the importance of their role. Thus, they should ponder over these issues think more critically and seriously to uplift the standards of education to benefit the youths, as they are the pillars of a strong nation.

Conclusions

Our review was motivated, in part, to determine whether there was sufficient evidence to suggest that parental and teacher acceptance-rejection play a central role in a child's life and whether they can be considered a reasonable vehicle for promoting healthy life in this era. We discovered that parents as well as teachers are important purveyors of development of both girls and boys. However, the final word remains relatively immature. We

make several recommendations that will hopefully strengthen this field, so that we can accurately determine the outcomes of parent-child-teacher relationship. Some important issues are that researchers should endeavor to identify new variables that contribute to this relationship. Then, some models are needed that account for the range of mediating and moderating variables involved (Rohner et al., 2010). With this regard there are two take-home messages. First, parents and teachers significantly play an important role in a child's brought up, and his whole life depends on these early relations. Secondly, culture and gender is sensitive in the expression of this triad of relationship, and thus may pave the way for more informed stance in this relationship.

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