

PARENTAL ACCEPTANCE-REJECTION AND CHILD DELINQUENCY IN NORTH MACEDONIA

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Abstract

Parenting significantly influences a child's decisions to engage in delinquent behavior. A non-stimulating family environment dominated by disapproval, a lack of emotional warmth, and a tense and conflicted atmosphere, where parents reject their children, whether through intentional or unintentional actions, is reflected in the children's actions which are socially unacceptable or in conflict with the law. The research aimed to examine the impact of parental acceptance/rejection of children on the occurrence of delinquent behaviors. For this purpose, we analyzed the individual perception of children regarding parental acceptance/rejection, using a combined research method, quantitative and qualitative. The study sample consisted of children who had committed criminal offenses and were serving in prison for children or were sent to correctional-educational institutions. The findings show that the respondents perceived their parents as significantly more aggressive, neglectful, and rejecting, and provided less parental emotional warmth. The findings are in line with Rohner's theory of parental acceptance/rejection and its relation to delinquency and behavioral issues of children, which is the theoretical basis of this research.

Keywords: parental rejection, parental acceptance, child delinquency, risk factors, PART.

1. Introduction

Child delinquency poses a significant issue for contemporary societies, and as a societal issue, it concerns our country as well, as evident from the official statistics regarding the prevalence of this phenomenon.

Throughout history, the engagement of children in criminal activities has been prevalent in all societies, and in today's society, its presence continues to expand and exhibit itself in various forms (Shaqiri, 2020). To address the phenomenon of child delinquency, it is essential to have an understanding of the concept on which varies from country to country and evolves over time. Additionally, it is crucial to examine the factors that lead to these behaviors (Muncie, 2015).

Taking into account the distinctive aspects of age, including their lack of physical and cognitive maturity, as well as the impact of risk factors, which contribute to their engagement in diverse criminal acts, they often fail to comprehend the significance of their actions and manage them, as it occurs with adult offenders. Consequently, this group of delinquents should necessarily enjoy distinct and more favorable treatment in comparison to adult offenders, in order for national legislation to effectively prevent this phenomenon. Hence, in our country, the pursuit of justice for children is implemented through legal reforms that are reflected in the enactment of the Law on Juvenile Justice. This law, in 2007 represented a reform in the juvenile legislation in our country since international standards for juvenile justice were implemented in it, and the conduct of the new Law on justice for children 2013, whose novelties are the amendments and

terminological adaptations (Велкова, 2016).

In 2013, the Law on Child Justice replaced the Law on Juvenile Justice, incorporating principles that prioritize the best interests of children, their assistance, protection, and rights, proper socialization, care, education, and re-education, restorative justice, particularly emphasizing the role, interests, and position of the aggrieved party, as well as protection of child-victim of criminal offenses (Лажетик-Бужаровска, Нанев & Кошевалиска, 2015). The new legislation aligns its definitions with the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which provides special treatment of children when they are involved as offenders, are at risk, or are victims. Notably, the Law on Child Justice replaces the term “minor” with “child”, ensuring compliance with international legislation, unlike the Law on Juvenile Justice of 2007.

When exploring the reasons leading to the emergence of delinquent behaviors in children, numerous studies consistently highlight the pivotal role of parents’ relationship with their children, namely the dysfunctionality of the family. Thus, in children whose family interaction is dominated by aggression (hostility), neglect and rejection by parents, the likelihood of delinquent behavior is significantly heightened.

The observations and research presented in this paper align with Rohner’s socialization theory, which seeks to explore the relation between a child's experiences and their perception of acceptance or rejection, which represents the purpose of this research as well. By delving into the concept of acceptance and rejection, we observe that they collectively constitute the dimension of parental warmth. Parental warmth is a bipolar dimension, with parental rejection in one side and parental acceptance on the other (Rohner, 1984). Parental rejection is determined by the absence of warmth and emotionality, while parental acceptance is defined by the presence of the same.

2. Definition of child delinquency

Any serious study of any given social phenomenon requires that it be conceptually defined first (Dimovski & Mirić, 2013). There are several terms used to denote the behavior disorder of children and young people, but the most commonly used terms are: delinquent behavior, criminal behavior, deviant behavior, juvenile delinquency, risky behavior (Киткањ, 2014).

Since there are diverse definitions that define child delinquency, in this paper we will argue about the broad meaning, the sociological-criminological definition and the narrow formal legal meaning of child delinquency.

In its most expansive sense, juvenile delinquency encompasses a spectrum of deviant conduct, ranging from pre-delinquent behaviors to behaviors that are criminalized in legislation, thus including behaviors that are contrary not only to legal norms but also to moral norms (Nikolić-Ristanović & Konstantinović-Vilić, 2018). Building upon the aforementioned, juvenile delinquency in a broader sense can be defined as “deviant behaviors exhibited by young individuals within a specific age range that contravene the legal norms of their societal milieu” or “any actions undertaken by minors or groups of minors that constitute a violation of social norms.” In a broader sense, the term “youth delinquency” is also employed, encapsulating behaviors deemed unacceptable by society, including those classified as criminal offenses and offences according to the law, as well as various other behaviors necessitating the implementation of educational and other social measures, such as unemployment, running away from home or school, vagrancy, and other behaviors disapproved of by society (Dimovski & Mirić, 2013).

In accordance with the specific definition, the concept of juvenile delinquency or youth criminality encompasses the entirety of minors' behaviors that, similar to adults, are classified as criminal offenses by the criminal legislation (Krstić, 2014). According to Jovasevic, this constitutes a legal formal concept of juvenile delinquency, which sets it apart from other manifestations of deviant conduct. It is crucial to differentiate juvenile delinquency from pre-delinquent behavior, with the latter serving as a herald to undertake comprehensive preventive measures (Kostić & Mirić, 2015).

A commonly employed term to denote the deviant conduct of youth is juvenile delinquency, encompassing all the actions undertaken by minors that are classified as criminal offenses under the legal framework of specific countries. Consequently, the terms “delinquent” and “pre-delinquent” emerge. A delinquent is a minor who commits a crime, which according to the criminal code is defined as a crime, while a pre-delinquent performs activities that are undesirable and disapproved and lead him to delinquent behavior (Киткањ, 2014).

In this research, criminal behavior refers to all the actions undertaken by children that are incriminated according to the positive criminal legislation in RNM, namely it refers to behaviors exhibited by children who have come into conflict with the law, i.e. perpetrators of a criminal offense for which proceedings were conducted before the competent Public prosecutor and the competent court for children, whereupon they were sentenced to measures, i.e. punishments that are in accordance with the Law on Justice for Children. These are children whose criminal activities have been discovered, processed, resulting in appropriate sanctions such as institutional measures, Referred to a correctional-educational institution and/or prison for children and they have been registered as perpetrators of a criminal offence.

3. The family as risk factors in the occurrence of child delinquency

The risk factors that contribute to the occurrence of child delinquency are numerous and vary from one person to another.

They have a cumulative and interactive effect with each other. Children exposed to more risk factors are considered at higher risk for the onset of deviant behaviors (Wasserman et al., 2003).

One of the risk factors that increase the likelihood of delinquent behaviors is the family environment, which plays a crucial role in shaping the values and abilities of children (Mwangangi, 2019), since a supportive and positive family environment acts as a protective factor against delinquency, while a negative environment increases the risk, hindering the family's ability to fulfill its socializing and educative function.

The impact of the family on delinquent behavior operates through influencing parent-child relationship, parenting educative styles, a single parent, and sociopathological phenomena within the family (Žuvela, Vučković Matić & Sindik, 2016).

According to the author Vukasović, the first condition that must be fulfilled for a successful family education is definitely harmonious family relationships, because having a calm, stable life, with mutual love and trust, fair distribution of obligations and consistency in accomplishing them have an extremely positive impact on the development of a young person's personality (Paušek et al., 2017).

Based on aforesaid, this study will examine the role of inadequate parental behavior as a risk factor for delinquent behaviors, respectively acceptance/rejection that children experience from both parents. This aspect is categorized into four dimensions, namely parental warmth/acceptance, parental aggression-hostility, parental neglect - indifference, and

undifferentiated parental rejection.

3.1. Parental Acceptance/Rejection: The emotional bond within the family represents a significant segment of the family and is crucial for individuals' development, especially in the parent-child relationships. Emotional warmth and closeness in these relationships have a profound impact on shaping the characteristics of younger family members. The mother's love and affection play a significant role in molding their upbringing, while the father's active involvement and positive qualities serve as a role model for them to follow. Children's behavior, values, and attitudes are influenced by their identification with their father. On the other hand, when family relationships are disrupted, the focus shifts from organizing life to internal conflicts and disputes among family members. Under such conditions, children are left on their own, lacking parental control and supervision. They may resort to running away from home, thereby becoming susceptible to negative influences from the streets. This behavior, with certain exceptions, often leads to socially unacceptable conduct that may result in criminal acts.

The observations of many authors indicate that the social behavior of the young person (prosocial or antisocial) is defined by the quality and reliability of the relationship from the early attachment of the child to the mother (Lamb & Nash, 1989). Some authors (Deković, 1997) lead to the conclusion that the roots of the behavior of the child or young person in the direction of his adaptation in the social world should be sought in the early social experience acquired in the family. Based on early social experience, the child develops social cognition and learns social behavior that forms the core component of behavior in the wider social environment.

According to research conducted by Hoeve et al., (2009), there is a strong link between poor parental support and delinquency, particularly between the same parent-child sex. The findings of the study also show that poor support from fathers is more related to delinquency than poor support from mothers, so the researchers suggest that to treat delinquency, more work should be done with fathers by including them in intervention programs for violent youth because they have more influence on their sons' delinquency than mothers.

Rejected children are more prone to delinquent behavior than those who are not rejected, especially those who have experienced a severe rejection (Bartollas & Schmallegger, 2017). According to Vukasović, another precondition for adequate education of children is their appropriate position in the family. Above all, they must feel safe within the family, in their relationship with their parents, in such a way that he feels that he is loved and belongs to them. The feeling of safety, satisfaction, joy and happiness gives the child the feeling of being valuable and self-confidence, which will undoubtedly help them in transmitting in future interpersonal relationships what they have learned from their family, such as kindness, tolerance, respect for others, compassion (Paušek et al., 2017).

Parental rejection contains three dimensions: parental aggression-hostility, parental neglect-indifference and undifferentiated parental rejection.

Rohner describes two types of parents, one type is a parent who accepts the child, exhibits physical and/or verbal love to them, shares compliments, praises and rewards them, while the second type of parent rejects them, shows unfriendliness and aggression towards the child or shows indifference and neglect.

In this paper, the family climate established by parents is operationalized using the dimension of emotional warmth, which encompasses expressions of acceptance such as love, interest in the child, and establishing a significant role within the family. Conversely, rejection is manifested through aggressive behavior and neglect towards the child, respectively through the

Questionnaire for measuring individual perception regarding parental acceptance/rejection and the conducted interview defined in 4 dimensions:

- Parental warmth/acceptance;
- Parental aggression/hostility;
- Parental indifference/neglect;
- Undifferentiated Parental Denial.

3.2. *The parental acceptance and rejection theory (PART)*: The behavior and relationship of parents play a vital role in shaping their children's behavior and overall functioning. The consequences of varying parental relationships with their children are also explored in Rohner's theory of parental acceptance and rejection. This theory aims to predict and explain the primary causes, consequences, and correlations between parental acceptance/rejection and the child's behavioral, cognitive, and emotional development.

The theory addresses a range of questions, which can be categorized into three sub theories (Rohner, Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2005).

- ❖ *Personality Subtheory*, seeks to clarify what happens to children, who are perceived as loved/unloved by their parents, when they become adults if in childhood they were perceived as accepted/rejected by their parents.
- ❖ *Coping Subtheory*, tries to answer the question of what it is that enables some children or adults to better cope with parental rejection, unlike others.
- ❖ *Sociocultural Systems Subtheory* clarifies why some parents are warm and love their children, while others are cold, aggressive, reject and neglect them, namely, it tries to answer whether there are societies that encourage parental acceptance /rejection.

According to the theory of parental acceptance/rejection, a parent is defined as any adult caregiver who assumes long-term, primary responsibility for a child's care (Rohner, 1984). Within this theory, the dimension of parental warmth pertains to the quality of the emotional bond between parents and children, involving both physical and verbal expressions of affection. On one end of the spectrum lies acceptance, characterized by warmth, attention, care, concern, protection, or shortly, the love that parents feel and show towards their children. On the other end of the spectrum lies rejection, which refers to the absence or significant lack of acceptance-related emotions and behaviors, accompanied by various hurtful psychological and physical (offending) actions and sentiments (Rohner, Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2005).

Parental rejection can be experienced by any combination of the four main expressions: 1. Cold and unemotional; 2. Hostile and aggressive; 3. Indifferent and neglectful; 4. Undifferentiated rejection (Шурбановска, 2013). Warmth and hostility refer to the internal psychological feelings of parents, which means that parents can feel warmth (or be cold, do not feel love) for their children, or they can feel hostility, anger, bitterness, restlessness, irritability, impatience, antagonism. Also, parents can feel indifference, carelessness or a reduced sense of physical and emotional needs for their children (Rohner, Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2005).

Affection, aggression, neglect, and undifferentiated rejection refer to behaviors that result in parents' internal psychological feelings. For example, when the parents react based on the feeling of love, they will be gentle. Parental affection can be expressed physically (hugging, caressing, kissing) or verbally (praising, sharing compliments). When parents act on the basis of feelings of anger, hostility, the behavior is called aggression. Within the framework of parental acceptance/rejection theory, aggression is that behavior in which there is an intention to hurt someone, something or oneself (Rohner, Khaleque & Cournoyer, 2005).

Parents can display aggression towards their children through physical actions (hitting, causing pain, scratching, pushing), as well as through verbal means (cursing, sarcasm, etc.). In addition, parents may also make painful non-verbal symbolic gestures towards children. The relationship between indifference as an internal motivator and neglect as a response is not as straightforward as the connection between hostility and aggression. Neglect goes beyond the mere denial of material and physical care, encompassing parents' inability to prioritize their child's social and emotional needs. Neglectful parents often fail to address their child's requirements for comfort, care, assistance, or attention, being physically and emotionally unavailable. These behaviors, whether exhibited individually or in combination, can lead the child to feel unloved or rejected.

3.3. Consequences of parental acceptance/rejection: The family holds paramount significance in shaping the personality of a young individual. It is within the family that a child adopts their initial habits and cultivates their foundational personality traits. Any child who feels rejected by their parents becomes offended, angry and filled with fear of new rejections. They either develop defensive independence or withdraws emotionally. In extreme cases, such a child becomes emotionally blind, or less tolerant to stress, less emotionally stable than children who are accepted. On the other hand, any child who receives imposed attention and blind love from their parents develops dependent needs and as a result is more dependent than the children who receive "moderate" love from their parents.

Children necessitate their parents' presence and genuine interest for all aspects of their lives. As such, it is vital for parents to demonstrate sincere interest in their child's endeavors, while refraining from imposing corrections and criticisms on how should they do their actions. By doing so, the child's motivation increases for what they do, paving the way for self-fulfillment and the development of their individuality. The child fosters self-esteem and the ability to impartially evaluate their own personality, drawing upon the perceptions of their parents, other adults, and peers. Often, a child who is belittled and subjected to criticism develops a sense of diminished worth. Frequent reprimands, critiques, and blaming impede the emergence of the need for self-esteem.

According to the PART theory, disobedience and aggression often occur in children who are exposed to parental rejection, and emotions such as compassion, sociability, sacrifice, selflessness, occur less in these children. They are often scared, helpless, with difficulties in adjustment. They may also face challenges such as weight gain, delayed mental and physical development, or display neurotic behavior. In contrast, children who are accepted by their parents are good-natured, cheerful, dynamic, self-confident, sweet, sensitive and brave. Physical tenderness, which is used as a reward when the child meets the demands of his parents, contributes to the development of a strong need for achievement. Mothers of children with a strong need for achievement tend to perceive their children as successful, offer more rewards, exhibit a more positive outlook towards their behavior, impose fewer limits, and encourage independence and self-control from an early age.

Parental avoidance of relationship hinders the establishment of lasting emotional bonds and can lead to a lack of persistence and hostility towards the environment. When parents consistently avoid relationships with their children, particularly during a phase of complete dependency, it diminishes their emotional bonds, which subsequently impacts their ability to form close relationships with others later in life. The avoidance of a child may be:

- Avoidance by both parents;
- A situation where the child has the feeling that both parents are avoiding them, although only one parent is doing so;

- When the child is accepted by the mother but rejected by the father, but the mother is unable to compensate the father.

In situations where avoidance is not explicitly displayed, the child may exchange certain socially desirable emotional interactions with their parents. According to Шурбановска (2013), in such family dynamics, the child may exhibit a strong desire for acceptance from various groups' members, but this is insufficient to form an expressed attachment, resulting in disordered dependence and difficulty establishing close and affectionate relationships with others. Despite the need for acceptance, these children experience fear towards novel situations and individuals, fueled by a sense of diminished worth. They display biases and are prone to boasting or self-pity. As a consequence of parental avoidance, the child struggles to sustain focus and perseverance in their endeavors, exhibiting distrust and timidity. Conflict with others becomes commonplace, and the emergence of delinquent behavior is not out of the question.

An excessively protective attitude and the provision of overly favorable conditions within their living environment result in the emergence of conformity, lack of ambition, insecurity, and low self-esteem during adolescence. When children are excessively protected by their parents, it hampers the development of chronic anxiety and insecurity. Moreover, oversensitive and anxious parents often tend to overprotect their children.

Conversely, a significant lack of interest and distance from parents fail to satisfy the child's need for love, attention, and affection. The child does not feel supported by their parents and experiences a sense of abandonment within their own home. This feeling of loneliness can lead to partial or total stoppage in the development of meaningful emotions and hinder the ability to form lasting bonds with others. A cold relationship, avoidance, rejection, or neglect towards a child often contributes to juvenile delinquency.

A positive family atmosphere, stemming from harmonious relationships, serves as a crucial tool for educating and preparing young individuals for social life. When parents exhibit politeness, dignity, consistency, discipline, empathy, sincerity, and warmth within the home, children tend to emulate these positive qualities. To prevent the adoption of negative behaviors, it is essential to acknowledge, approve, and praise children for their actions.

4. Methodology

This study employed a combined-methods approach, quantitative and qualitative methods. The qualitative data served to support the findings obtained by the quantitative analysis. The first phase involved administering a questionnaire to gather quantitative data, which took place between December 2015 and May 2016 (Ристовска, 2017), while the second phase involved conducting semi-structured interviews in November 2022.

4.1. The sample of the quantitative and qualitative study: Purposive sampling was used to select children who had committed criminal offenses and were serving a child prison sentence or were referred to a correctional institution for educational measures. The first phase sample consists of 30 respondents and all of them are male in the age group of 14-18 years. This research included the category of young adults, who according to the law, at the time verdict have reached the age of 18, but have not reached the age of 21. These children were serving their prison time in Ohrid Juvenile Prison, while the educational measure referred to a correctional-educational institution. The sampling of the second phase respondents was also purposive and it is a group limited to children who were involved in criminal acts, and since they were of the age of criminal

responsibility, they were imposed the measure ‘referred to a correctional home in VP Dom - Tetovo. Since participation in the study was on a voluntary basis, 13 of them agreed to partake in the study.

4.2. Research instruments: The instruments used in this study are as follows:

The Parental Acceptance/Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ-shortened version) measures children's individual perception of parental acceptance/rejection, referring to both parents (mother and father). The questionnaire contains a total of 24 statements categorized into four dimensions: parental warmth/acceptance; parental aggression/hostility; parental indifference/neglect and undifferentiated parental rejection. Children responded to what extent they agree with each statement on a scale from (1) never to (4) always. The questionnaire has shown high reliability (.91).

The semi-structured interview was devised for the purposes of this study, to verify the data obtained from the quantitative part.

4.3. Quantitative research findings: To examine the objectives of this study, the following statistical measures were used for processing the obtained quantitative results of the questionnaire: arithmetic mean and standard deviation. In the following part, the results obtained from the instruments for measuring perceptions of parental acceptance/rejection are presented in tabular form.

Table 1 shows the theoretical minimum and maximum score of the data, i.e. the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the results for the self-assessment of acceptance/rejection by the mother in children who manifest delinquent behavior. Considering the minimum and maximum theoretical score of each dimension of parental acceptance and rejection, it can be noted that warmth (acceptance) scored low (M=8.77), that is, namely it approaches the minimum theoretical score, in contrast to the assessments of aggressiveness of the mother (M=18.4), the mother's indifference (M=18.43) and the mother's undifferentiated rejection (M=17.67) which scored high, that is, they approach the maximum theoretical score.

Table 1. Arithmetic means and standard deviations of perceived behavior of mothers in *children manifesting delinquent behavior* (N = 30)

Perceived behavior of the mother	Min. theoretical score	Max. theoretical score	M	SD
ACCEPTANCE–WARMTH	5	20	8.77	2.75
AGGRESSIVENESS–HOSTILITY	7	28	18.4	2.8
NEGLECT–INDIFFERENCE	6	24	18.43	3.62
UNDIFFERENTIATED REJECTION	6	24	17.67	3.54

The results obtained from the self-assessment of the father’s behavior in children who manifest delinquent behavior are listed in table 2. The father’s warmth was assessed low (M=8.33), while

the father's aggressiveness (M=20.27), indifference (M=9.50) and the undifferentiated rejection (M=19.10) scored high in relation to the theoretical maximum score.

If we compare the obtained scores, we notice that the assessment of the aggressiveness of the father (M=20.27) is on average higher than the aggressiveness of the mother (M=18.40). In line with the previous data, the father's indifference and undifferentiated rejection are assessed higher than the mother's indifference and the differentiated rejection (the arithmetic mean of the father's perceived indifference is 19.50, and the mother's is 18.43, while the father's undifferentiated rejection is 19.10, and on the mother's is 17.67).

Table 2 Arithmetic means and standard deviations of perceived behavior of fathers in children manifesting delinquent behavior (N = 30)

Perceived behavior of the father	Min. theoretical score	Max. theoretical score	M	SD
ACCEPTANCE-WARMTH	5	20	8.3	2.58
AGGRESSIVENESS-HOSTILITY	7	28	20.27	2.59
NEGLECT-INDIFFERENCE	6	24	19.5	2.11
UNDIFFERENTIATED REJECTION	6	24	19.1	2.42

4.4. Quality research findings : To achieve the study's objectives of examining inadequate parenting, specifically parental acceptance and rejection as significant risk factors influencing children's engagement in criminal behavior, and to enhance our quantitative results, we conducted interviews with a sample of institutionalized children in conflict with the law.

The study revealed that a lack of communication regarding children's concerns, insufficient attention and emotional support from parents, aggressive behavior, indifference, and rejection were identified as significant factors contributing to delinquent behavior. Many of the children reported having weak relationships with their parents, particularly with their mothers. This finding is related to the fact that six of them lived with their mother and siblings, four of whom expressed to have experienced the loss of their father, while the parents of the other two were separated.

“I have good relations only with my sister. My mother has abandoned me since my father died and has not contacted me” - Respondent no. 7

“I lived with my father and grandparents. I don't have good relationships with my mother, she abandoned me and I didn't know anything about her until I was 19 years old” - Respondent no. 11

“My father was aggressive towards me, he didn't talk to me about the issues I had, I was a victim of violence, that is why I'm now similar to them” Respondent no. 3

The remaining children expressed positive and close family relationships, highlighting frequent communication with their parents regarding their needs and receiving emotional support from them.

Respondent no. 13 stated, *“I have great relationship with my parents. We often communicate, and they offer their maximum support.”*

“I have good relations with my parents, I contact them regarding things I need, and they offer their emotional support.” - Respondent no. 1

5. Discussion and conclusions

According to this paper we can conclude that family, respectively the relationship parent-child is one of the most significant factors of proper development of children. Families from which children who manifest delinquent behavior originate are dominated lack of compassion, as well as inability to understand the needs of others. Most of these persons are impulsive, aggressive, lacking the sense of guilt, and are not able to maintain more sustainable affective relations with others.

Based on the quantitative and qualitative study, we can conclude that children who manifest delinquent behavior experience their mothers, just as their fathers, as cold, with no emotional support or love, which enhances the feeling of rejection. The study proved that the relationship with both parents is significant in terms of delinquent behavior of young people.

Furthermore, in line with the aforementioned findings are the data gathered concerning the perception of the mother's actions on the aggression-hostility dimension, which show that children who manifest delinquent behavior perceive excessive aggressiveness and hostile behavior of the mother towards them and a feeling of rejection. Those children have significantly more aggressive fathers, resulting in the feeling of rejection, and other difficulties as well, which confirms our expectations based on the study objectives.

Concerning the dimension neglect-indifference, children with delinquent behavior perceive their mothers' actions as highly neglectful. Consequently, children who experienced neglect or indifference from their mothers are children are more likely to display problematic behavior, delinquency, and drug and alcohol abuse in their adolescence. Similarly, the perceived actions of fathers on the neglect-indifference dimension indicate that fathers of children who manifest delinquent behavior also exhibit higher levels of neglect towards their children. Therefore, children who were neglected by their fathers or faced their fathers' indifference in their childhood demonstrate aggressive behavior in their relationships with others during adolescence.

The perceived actions of mothers on the undifferentiated rejection dimension show a high degree of rejection by mothers. Namely, the children delinquents believe their mothers did not really care for them when they were children, they convinced that they were neglected by their mothers, who were unemotional or aggressive towards them. Regarding the same dimension, the actions of fathers show to what extent the father manifests behavior that does not belong to aggressiveness and hostility, nor to neglect, yet in some other way shows the rejection of the child. For example, they perceive them as a burden, do not understand their problems, do not talk to them, etc.

The findings are in line with Rohner's theory of parental acceptance/rejection and its relation to delinquency and behavioral issues of children. From all this we can conclude that the inadequate relationship of parents towards children represents a significant factor in emerging of delinquent behavior of young persons. Hartup and Leshot (1995) reference numerous studies that document the hypothesis that an insecure affective bond in youth contributes to their aggressive and even delinquent conduct. Notably, the influence of the mother and her negative interactions is prominent in this regard. The role of the father in those studies is not mentioned, except in the

context of the influence of both parents, but we found that the relationship of the father has an almost equal role and influence. Accordingly, research shows that the father is a greater “regulator” of the child's behavior, as a parent who is more involved in that part of upbringing in which clear boundaries and control of the child's behavior are set. The mother provides more emotional support, warmth and love, which also affects the development of empathy, prosocial behavior and adaptation of the child and young person in the environment in which they live. Another study by Clarke-Stewart (Clarke-Stewart, 1980; according to Kapor-Stanulović (1985) shows that the absence of the father impacts the child's intellectual development in their later development. The father engages in conversations, praises and compliments the daughter, while stimulates the son through games, and new activities in which he introduces his son. In general, it can be said that the mother provides more verbal stimulation, while the father's contribution is in the variety of activities and games with which he engages and stimulates the children, which leads us to the conclusion the father contributes significantly and differently from the mother, and it should be paid more attention than so far. Considering the fact that in modern living conditions, the family is disabled as an upbringing institution, a broader societal intervention is necessary, including all institutions whose involvement will have an impact on enhancing the cohesion of the family as a fundamental factor of socialization, complementing its shortcomings, all with the objective of eliminating the influences that contribute to the family being one of the factors affecting the emergence of delinquent behaviors in children.

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