



GSJ: Volume 12, Issue 11, November 2024, Online: ISSN 2320-9186

www.globalscientificjournal.com

**BEST FRIEND REJECTION IS THE PREDICTOR OF PSYCHOLOGICAL
WELL - BEING AMONG ADOLESCENTS**

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ABSTRACT

Best friend acceptance and rejection acts as an important role in psychological well-being during adolescent period. The purpose of study is to present a picture of impact of best friend rejection on psychological well-being among adolescents. This article was written in recognition of the fact that majority of research on best friend rejection and its consequences has been done in other countries and therefore, little is known in Pakistan. Based on study findings, it is concluded that best friend plays a significant role in personality and social development but best friend rejection greatly impacts on reduction in psychological well-being in adolescents. Findings of the study have important implication for the researchers, clinical psychologist and counselors in taking appropriate measures for improving adolescent's psychological well-being in more significant way as it will help in customizing the therapeutic process according to the personality of client. This study will provide another dimension to adolescent's emotional response when they are rejected/accepted which enhances or reduces their psychological well-being.



Key words: Best Friend Rejection, Psychological Well-Being, Gender, Adolescents

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is the transitory period between the childhood and adulthood age that overlaps with the physical, intellectual, and communal changes that are based on biological and developmental growth (Drabick & Steinberg, 2011). When children move into adolescence stage, other attachment figures show a significant role in their need to be loved, liked, support and to belonging, during identity phase most of the adolescent experience conflicting relationship with parents as a result many adolescents try to engage in friends gathering and rely on each other and reported “Friends” as a most significant person in their life (Reitz et al., 2014; Steinberg, 2001; Tatar 1998).

The term “friend” has defined as the person who would be present in time of crisis for social and emotional support, help in life adjustment and emotional development (Rubin et al., 2016;). The most significant friends are called best friends, a best friend is defined as a person who display kindness, sympathy, and honesty; a person with whom you can relax and be yourself (Urbanski, 1992 ; Rubin et al., 2006). These friends relatively significant in adjustment as well as academic and emotional development.

The purpose of friendships vary across different stages of development during early childhood, friendship offer chances for pleasurable play and helps children to normalize their actions, provide opportunities to learn about their actions, opportunities for emotional and community support and helpful aid for children to develop the necessary social skills for the later close relationships (Newcomb & Bagwell, 1995). However, during late childhood and early adolescence, friendship provide opportunities for the demonstration and regulation of affect. At adolescence, the friendship play an important role in development of a meaningful identity in teens (Rubin et al. 2006; Denton & Zarbatany, 1996; Erikson, 1968).

Friends may take positive and negative influences on adolescent’s behavior

depending on their experiences. Patterson et al., (1998) has shown that best friends can impact maladaptive consequence, such as actions beyond social norms. There is some evidence in literature that indicate acceptance and rejection can coexist in the same individual (Coie et al., 1982). Klima and Reppetti (2008) explored that psychological/emotional adjustment based on best friends' acceptance as they are unique source of warmth, intimacy, and nurturance, whereas less acceptance from best friends lead to poor adjustment. Asher and Dodge (1986) found that less sympathetic close friends predicted more emotional, social and behavioral problem. Different studies on adolescent's close friend have shown that people having close friend reported better self-esteem (Berndt & Keefe, 1995), interactive social participation (Parker & Asher, 1993), and on the other hand, absence of close friend linked with depression and anxiety (Windle, 1994).

Shek (1992) defined psychological well-being as a state of mentally healthy people having abilities such as energetic interaction and involvement in society and positive personality development. Moreover, people with good mental health report active involvement in leisure activities and fewer illnesses in their lives (Ryff, 2017). Armsden and Greenberg (1987) indicate that self-esteem and life satisfaction are directly linked to adolescents' high psychological well-being. Klima and Reppetti (2008) found that persons who are welcomed in peer group are possibly to develop better well-being. Whereas, being rejected by friends has an unfavourable effect on the psychological well-being.

Moreover, Howarth, et al., (2013) investigated that when adolescents are accepted by friend with whom they wanted to communicate and gather, they reported feeling of happiness and when they are rejected by them, they feel disappointed. Friends' rejection is often explained as a process that unfolds overtime and reflects numerous social experiences. Asher and Doge (1986) explored that rejected individuals have relatively lower likelihood of positive reinforcement compared to non-rejected individuals and rejection has subsequent

impact on aggressive behavior.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Adolescents and Friendships

Friends gathering vary in their relation from weak to very close ones, such as with best friends (Trinke & Bartholomew, 1997). Different experiences with friends plays an important developmental background. As adolescents experience different behaviours, skills, attitudes, and practices that effect their adjustment lifetime. Therefore, family, school, and neighbourhood could be influenced by experiences with friends that affect social, emotional, and cognitive functioning (Rubin et al., 2006). Studying different literature review, recent literature focused on Best Friend Acceptance Rejection and Psychological Well-being. Close contact with people as best friend has a great and direct impact in shaping individual's psychological development. Establishing a close relationship between two individual means spending great time together, engaged in interactive networking, self-disclosing and providing emotional support together (Laurenceau et al., 1998).

The presence of best friend in lives most likely influence on reshaping the personality. Plato (1968) observed in Phaedrus that "similarity begets friendship" (p. 837). Japanese college students discovered that best friend relation are those who are on your side by side when needed, engaged in give and take relation and helps in a tough situation and is caring and not moody (Maeda & Ritchie, 2003).

Acceptance-Rejection and Psychological Well-Being

Giordano (1998) explains that friends gathering are nice-looking for adolescents since they are more independent, less controlling, and less demanding relation as compare to

other blood relations. Klima and Reppetti (2008) conducted a longitudinal study on 677 adolescents. Results revealed that adolescents who are not accepted by friends mainly develop aggression, impulsivity and social withdrawal. And those who are accepted by friends are likely to develop positive behavior and high self-esteem.

Bakalim and Taşdelen-Karçkay (2016) conducted a study to examine role of friend among adolescents. The results showed that a social support from close person positively linked between friendship and psychological well-being.

Goodman (2002) explained that adolescents who are rejected by friends could lead them to reduce their future expectation, which in turn, likely to develop depressive symptoms and social withdrawal. On the other hand, support and positive role in peer group contribute to adolescents' positive self-view, which reduces chances for evolving internalizing symptoms.



METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample of 100 adolescents (50 boys & 50 girls) between the ages of 13 to 19 years was selected from the urbanized city Karachi through a purposive sampling technique. Adolescents who were studying between 9th to 12th Grade, gave consent to participate, can understand English, having any best friend with at least one year of friendship, living with both parents and not having any psychiatric illness were part of study. Although 120 participants were approached for the present study. About 20 participants did not appropriately fill the form according to the instruction. Their questionnaire was either incomplete or inappropriately filled not meeting the inclusion/exclusion criteria. Therefore, 20 sets of questionnaires were excluded from the final analysis of the result. Data of 100 participants were statistically analyzed.

MEASURES

Demographic Data Sheet:

Self-designed Demographic form were used to obtain specific information related to participant age, gender, qualification, birth order and having any best friend. Then to fill information to obtain information about best friend related to best friend age, gender, duration of friendship, contact with friend and medium of contact.

Best Friend Acceptance Rejection Questionnaire (BFARQ); (Rohner, 2004)

Best Friend Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire developed by Rohner (2004) measures the personality traits and reveals Best Friend Acceptance-Rejection. It consists of 24 items each. BFARQ is a 4-point Likert type scale having response categories of “Almost always true” (scored as 4) and “Almost never true” (scored as 1). The range of scores is 24-96; meaning

that if a participant obtains high scores then that adolescents perceives as rejecting. It is a psychometrically adequate measure of good reliability; ranging from .72 to .90 with a medium of .82.

Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being (PWB); (Ryff, 1989)

The Psychological Well-Being Scale, a self-report Questionnaire developed by Ryff's (1989) was used on respondents to respond according to their perception that how they perceive their own self and about their behavior indicate your degree of agreement. The 52 items were rated on a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (= strongly disagree) to 6 (=strongly agree). The items were distributed in six subscales. The higher the score the higher the level of Psychological well-being in adolescents. Its reliability was checked through spilt-half reliability method which shows that the scale is highly reliable ($r=.07$). The internal consistency of items ($\alpha = .70$).



RESULTS

Table 1: Summary of demographic characteristics of 100 students. Results reveals the demographic characteristics of the 100 participants. Highest percentage of participant education were of grade 10th i.e., 44%. Regularity of contact with friend were mostly daily i.e., 69%. Majority of participants on medium of contact is in person i.e., 68%.

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Study Sample (N=100)

	Frequencies	Percentages (%)
Gender of Participants		
Boys	50	55*
Girls	50	50
Grade of Participants		
Ninth	33	33
Matric	44	44*
First year(Intermediate)	4	4
Second year(Intermediate)	19	19
Gender of Best friend		
Boys	43	43
Girls	57	57*
Regularity of Contact With Best Friend		
Daily	69	69*
More than once in a week	14	14
Only once in a week	5	5
Once in 15 days	1	1
Once in 3 month	3	3
Fewer time in 6 month	8	8
Medium Of Contact		
In person	68	68*
On call	13	13
On Social App	19	19
Duration of Friendship		
1-4 years	49	49*
5-9 years	25	25
10-14 years	26	26

*Shows highest percentages of demographic of participants

Table 2: Mean (\bar{X}), Standard deviation (SD) and Cronbach’s alpha reliability (α) analysis of Best Friend Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (BFARQ) (\bar{X} =207.68, SD=20.72, α = .72) and Ryff Scale of Psychological Well-Being (PWB) (\bar{X} =46.43, SD=11.33, α = .70)

Table 2: Reliability analysis of Best Friend Acceptance-Rejection Scale and Psychological Well-Being Scale				
Scale	No. of items	\bar{X}	SD	α
BFARQ	24	207.68	20.72	.72
PWB	52	46.43	11.33	.70

Note: BFARQ = Best friend acceptance and rejection questionnaire, PWB= Psychological well-being

Table 3: Statistically significant difference were found among gender of participant on variable of Hostility/Aggression. [t (93.34) = -2.168, p= .033]. Descriptive statistics also indicate mean difference between boys (\bar{X} = 11.40) and girls (\bar{X} = 13.00). Levene’s test has adjusted the df value according to the unequal variance found for Hostility/Aggression Variable. Girl’s participants feels more Hostility/Aggression and Indifference/Neglect from best friend. Statistically significant difference were found among gender of participants on variable of Indifference/Neglect. [t (98) = -2.804, p= .006]. Descriptive statistics also indicate mean difference between boys (\bar{X} = 6.74) and girls (\bar{X} = 8.30). No significant difference were found among gender of participants on variable of total of Best Friend Rejection, Warmth/Affection and Rejection (p>.05)

Table 3: Gender Difference among Best Friend Rejection and its components Warmth/Affection, Hostility/Aggression, Rejection and Indifference/Neglect

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
Best friend rejection	Boys	50	45.00	9.36	-1.265	89.25	.209
	Girls	50	47.00	12.95			
Warmth/Affection	Boys	50	14.78	4.05	.806	90.05	.422
	Girls	50	14.00	5.51			
Hostility/Aggression	Boys	50	11.40	3.25	-2.168*	93.34	.033
	Girls	50	13.00	4.08			
Rejection	Boys	50	12.08	3.09	-.685	93.53	.495
	Girls	50	12.56	3.86			
Indifference/Neglect	Male	50	6.74	2.02	-2.804**	98	.006
	Female	50	8.30	3.37			

** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 4: Statistically significant difference were found among gender of best friend on variable of Hostility/Aggression. [t (98) = -2.341, p= .021]. Descriptive statistics also indicate mean difference between boys (\bar{X} = 11.20) and girls (\bar{X} = 812.94). Statistically significant difference were found among gender of best friend on variable of Indifference/Neglect. [t (96.7) = -2.011, p= .047]. Descriptive statistics also indicate mean difference between boys (\bar{X} = 6.88) and girls (\bar{X} = 8.00). Levene's test has adjusted the df value according to the unequal variance found for Indifference/Neglect Variable. Regardless of gender, if best friend is female participants feels Hostility/Aggression and Indifference/Neglect, she rejects more than boys best friend. No significant difference were found among gender of best friend on variable of Best Friend Rejection, Warmth/Affection and Rejection (p>.05)

Table 4: Difference among Gender of Best Friend on the variable of Best Friend Rejection and its components Warmth/Affection, Hostility/Aggression and Neglect/Indifference

Variables	Gender	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig.
Best friend rejection	Boys	43	45.11	11.04	-1.013	92.57	.314
	Girls	57	47.12	11.54			
Warmth/Affection	Boys	43	15.25	4.87	1.561	89.07	.122
	Girls	57	13.73	4.73			
Hostility/Aggression	Boys	43	11.20	3.051	-2.341*	97.99	.021
	Girls	57	12.94	4.081			
Rejection	Boy	43	11.76	3.40	-1.388	92.33	.169
	Girls	57	12.73	3.08			
Indifference/Neglect	Boys	43	6.88	2.46	-2.011**	98	.047
	Girls	57	8.00	3.08			

** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 5: Regression analysis was carried out to determine the impact of Rejection on Psychological Well-Being. PWB accounted for 5.7% variance in Rejection ($F(1, 98) = 5.90$, $p = .017$). Rejection ($\beta = -.238$, $t(98) = -2.430$, $p < 0.017$) significantly predict Psychological Well-Being.

Table 5: Summary of Linear Regression Analysis with best Friend Rejection as a predictor and psychological well-being as dependent variable

Variables	Rejection		β
	B	SE	
PWB	-.415	-.582	-.238
R²	.057		

F	5.90*
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* $p < 0.05$

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DISCUSSION

Human survival is based on some basic needs Abraham Maslow (1943) was the first to identify the hierarchy of needs one of basic need is the need for love and belongingness. However, when children move from childhood into adolescents, friends become important source of support and socialization (Bukowski et al., 1998).

The purpose of present study is to contribute to a theoretical understanding of role of best friend in psychological well-being among adolescents. Results indicate that best friend rejection has produced significant reduction on score of psychological well-being in adolescents. Best friend rejection clearly revealed that experiencing less support and high negative attitude from friends group in adolescents strongly linked to psychological well-being. These results in line with Harris' (1998) assertion that friend's relations are more important factor in the psychological development of adolescents. Other studies also support that close friend's rejection correlates with disruptive behavior (Coie & Dodge, 1998; Rubin et al., 1998). Whereas, when people fail to find out close relationships, they report unhappiness, depression, and other adjustment problems (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). For instance, Tatar (1998) in a study on adolescents found out that friends are the most meaningful persons in human lives as they produce great impact on their psychological well-being. Asher and Doge (1986) explored that development of aggressive attitude in adolescents are the major reason of experiencing rejection from friends and that rejected adolescents have relatively lower positive well-being compared to non-rejected.

Adolescents who experience poor networks within friend's group are at risk for the development of unhealthy well-being (Parker & Asher, 1987; Rubin et al., 1995). On the other hand, adolescents want to gain a sense of belonging within social network and for such purpose they establish stable and close relations with peers (Baumeister & Leary 1995).

Psychological well-being in adolescents develops a sense of belongingness and experiencing positive emotions such as happiness, maintaining satisfactory relation with others, development of personal abilities and having some control over their lives (Huppert, 2009). The results of present study confirms the impact of best friend rejection. Rejection impact on psychological well-being can be explained by a recent study that explored that rejection is one of the topics that almost everybody hates, everyone has to face rejection to some extent in society e.g., some people report that they feel being uncontrolled, some reported that they felt unaccepted, unwelcome, and a few reported with suicidal attempts (Furqan & Ashiq, 2020). Klomek et al., (2008) explored that some people report that they feel being uncontrolled, some reported that they felt unaccepted, unwelcome, and a few reported with suicidal attempts and suicidal attempts are found to be the increasing factor when it comes to compromise on self-identity within social context when rejected.

Wichström et al., (1996) explained that experiencing rejection and less acceptance from significant one (family, peer) produces great impact on global functioning and increased general psychological distress, while Chamberlain and Haaga (2001) revealed that individual who possess low self-acceptance may experience depression and anxiety.

CONCLUSION

Other than the family people are born in, tend to form relationships with others to whom they meet. Some of these relationships become very significant specially with 'best friend'. This is expected with best friend to care, support and stand in any crisis of life however when the expectation does not fully meet and deeply hurt it produces great effects on adolescents psychological well-being. Consistent to this notion, overall present findings reveals that best friend rejection greatly impact on psychological well-being in adolescents. Present study

concluded that, experience rejection from best friend reported reduce score on psychological well-being.

LIMITATION AND RECOMMENDECTIONS

This study has some limitations that should be considered, first, the present study did not take into consideration the socio-economic status of the participants or their best friends. In future, could consider socio-economic status as it greatly influence the acceptance in peer gathering.

The data used in our study focuses on overall adolescents group as discussed earlier, in different parts of adolescence, the importance or impact of friends differ (Denton & Zarbatany, 1996). When we look at adolescence, the friendship plays an important role in development of a meaningful identity for them (Erikson, 1968). So, for further investigation, adolescence sub groups could be considered for comparison (early, middle and late adolescents).

Parental attachment might show possible effects on identity crisis, our study was built upon the best friend acceptance-rejection, it is recommended for future studies to consider and explore rejection from parents.

As we found for majority of our participants, the mode of contact was “direct contact” with friend and data was collected during second phase of covid-19. In future, comparison between on-line and direct contact with friends could be part of the study which may provide more details about possible reasons of rejection.

Data was collected from the participants without any recent school drop-out history. Recent school drop-out could be considered as main factor in future. As recent drop-out

could be a factor of best friend less acceptance as we found best friends' mode of contact was physical in our study.

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