

PERCEIVED PATERNAL ACCEPTANCE–REJECTION AMONG FEMALE SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

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Abstract: This study examines the relationship between perceived paternal acceptance–rejection in childhood and the tendency to engage in abusive relationships in female adults.

The sample consisted of 60 adult females aged 23–58 ($M=37.95$; $SD=8.102$): 30 survivors of domestic violence and 30 randomly selected participants. The data were collected through self-assessment questionnaires: (1) Adult Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire/Control (mother and father versions); and (2) Adult Personality Assessment Questionnaire.

The results show that perceived paternal and maternal rejection in childhood is significantly higher in female survivors of domestic violence than in the control group. The female victims also perceived their fathers as significantly more rejecting than their mothers. The level of psychological adjustment correlates positively with the perceived acceptance by both parents. The results are discussed within the framework of IPARTheory.

Keywords: IPARTheory; perceived paternal acceptance–rejection; abusive relationships; PARQ/C; PAQ.

Introduction

Interpersonal Acceptance–Rejection Theory (IPARTheory) is „an evidence-based theory of socialization and lifespan development

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that aims to predict and explain major consequences, causes, and other correlates of interpersonal acceptance and rejection worldwide“ (Rohner, 2021). Initially, the theory focused on parental acceptance–rejection in childhood, but in 2014 it shifted to include all important relationships throughout the lifespan (Rohner, 2016).

IPARTheory steps on the basic assumption that evolutionary humans have developed with the enduring and biologically based need for a positive response from the figures most important to them. These are usually the parents, but also significant others in childhood and later in life.

IPARTheory views parental acceptance and rejection as forming „the warmth dimension“ of interpersonal relationships. R. Rohner (1986) describes the warmth dimension as a continuum on which every person in the world can be situated, as everyone has received more or less affection from his/her parents/caregivers in childhood and from other attachment figures, or the intimate partner in adulthood.

The warmth dimension corresponds to the quality of the emotional relationship between a child and a parent or between partners, and to the physical, verbal, and symbolic acts and gestures they use for expressing their feelings. On the one hand, acceptance is expressed through warmth, kindness, care, comfort, interest, meeting one’s needs, support, or simply love; on the other hand, rejection is marked by absence or significant withdrawal of these feelings or behaviours, and eventually by the presence of physically and psychologically harmful behaviours and emotions.

It is important to notice that, in IPARTheory, interpersonal acceptance–rejection can be viewed and studied from two perspectives: behavioural (through the observable expressions of emotional attitude), and phenomenological (through the subjective experiences of the individual). When there is a difference between the two, priority is given to the phenomenological one, as IPARTheory shares Kagan’s understanding that „parental rejection is not a specific set of behaviours but a belief held by the child“ (Kagan, 1978, p. 61, in Rohner, 2021). Implicit in IPARTheory is the view that parental acceptance–rejection as a whole is symbolic and, to be understood, it is necessary

to figure out the symbolic nature of the relationship between a parent and a child.

According to IPARTheory, individuals who feel rejected tend to feel anxious and insecure. They would then increase the efforts to obtain a positive response from their attachment figure, but only to a limit. This increase of the efforts leads to a state of dependency of the attachment figure, but can consequently turn into defensive independency (Rohner, 2021). Many of the rejected individuals continue this dependency to external validation and emotional support throughout their lives.

Another studied construct in this regard is the level of psychological adjustment. Experiencing perceived rejection in childhood may lead to psychological maladjustment in adulthood (Ali et al., 2015; Koltcheva, 2018; Koltcheva, 2019). It could be expressed by higher levels of hostility, aggression, passive aggression, or psychological problems with control over hostility or aggression; emotional unresponsiveness; immature dependency, or defensive independency; impaired self-esteem; impaired self-adequacy; emotional instability; a negative worldview. In some cases, rejected individuals might close themselves and struggle with feeling or expressing love, or with accepting it from others (Rohner, 2021).

Sometimes, this cycle of mutual rejection can escalate into a cycle of violence, as well as into other forms of impairment of the ability to create attachments. Furthermore, experiences of rejection from significant others reduce the ability for psychological adjustment and the capacity to manage stress (Koltcheva, 2022). This might lead to long-lasting dysfunctional relationships, including relationships intense in violence.

The Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention), adopted in 2011, defines domestic violence as „all acts of physical, sexual, psychological or economic violence that occur within the family or domestic unit or between former or current spouses or partners, whether or not the perpetrator shares or has shared the same

residence with the victim“ (Council of Europe, 2011). It is understood as a violation of human rights.

Such violence, also known as ‘domestic abuse’ or ‘intimate partner violence,’ is defined by the United Nations as „a pattern of behaviour in any relationship that is used to gain, or maintain, power and control over an intimate partner.“ According to the report „Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018,“ published jointly, one in three women experience domestic violence globally (WHO, 2021).

An EU-wide survey, published by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights in 2014, found out that, of all interviewed women who are or have been in a relationship with a man, 22 % have experienced physical and/or sexual violence. The survey results also show that two in five women (43 %) have experienced some form of psychological violence by either a current or a previous partner (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014).

Domestic violence is a significant problem affecting millions of women worldwide, and it has serious physical and psychological consequences for victims. Women who experience domestic violence may suffer from injuries, chronic health problems, and mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Additionally, domestic violence can lead to a loss of autonomy, economic hardship, and social isolation for victims (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2014). There are attempts to measure the economic cost of violence against women as direct and indirect tangible costs, and it is estimated that this cost is enormous (Day, McKenna, Bowlus, 2005).

A literature search in the IPARTheory body of research (Rohner, 2023) shows that, despite its global significance, this type of relationship is not well studied. We managed to find only nine related studies, with only two of them targeting the issue of domestic violence of women (Dalal & Lindqvist, 2012; Zakar, et al., 2016).

On the other hand, IPARTheory specifically addresses the importance of paternal love as a factor that has previously been neglected by researchers (Rohner, 1998, 2016, 2021). Its findings suggest that a substantial body of evidence from all classes of research indicates that

paternal acceptance–rejection is often as significant for development as maternal acceptance–rejection; it is significant in both the emergence of behavioural or psychological problems and the development of a sense of health and well-being in the generation (Li & Meier, 2017; Rohner, 1998; Rohner & Veneziano, 2001; Veneziano, 2000, 2003). Much of this research suggests that paternal love explains a unique and independent portion of the variance in child outcomes that exceeds the portion that can be explained by maternal love (Ahmed et al., 2012; Carrasco & Rohner, 2012; Rohner & Carrasco, 2014; Veneziano, 2003). Other research shows that, sometimes, paternal love is the only significant factor in specific outcomes for children (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001).

Current research comes as a response to the need for further exploration of the father–child emotional attachment and its effects, as identified by Rohner and Veneziano’s extensive meta-analysis (Rohner & Veneziano, 2001). It also contributes to the understanding of abusive relationships among females.

Aim and Research Hypotheses

Our research aims to explore the significance of perceived paternal acceptance–rejection in childhood among female survivors of domestic violence.

We have four basic hypotheses:

- (1) Female victims of domestic violence will perceive their fathers as more rejecting than the women in the control group;
- (2) Female victims of domestic violence will perceive their mothers as more rejecting than the women in the control group;
- (3) Female victims of domestic violence will perceive their fathers as more rejecting than their mothers;
- (4) Perceived parental rejection from the mother and father in both groups, female survivors of domestic violence, and women not exposed to domestic violence will correlate positively with their current psychological maladjustment.

Research Methods

The data were collected via the following self-assessment questionnaires:

1. Adult Parental Acceptance–Rejection/Control Questionnaire – mother and father versions (Adult PARQ/C). Both versions are the same. They differ in the nature of the statements. This questionnaire assesses the adult’s recollections of his/her childhood experiences between 7 and 12 years of age in respect to the perceived maternal or paternal acceptance, rejection, and behavioural control. The questionnaire has five subscales: (1) warmth/affection; (2) aggression/hostility; (3) neglect/indifference; (4) undifferentiated rejection; and (5) control. We used the Bulgarian adaptation (Koltcheva & Borisova, 2014; Koltcheva & Djalev, 2017).

2. Adult Personality Assessment Questionnaire (Adult PAQ). This questionnaire measures the current level of psychological adjustment. It consists of seven subscales: (1) hostility/aggression (incl. physical, verbal, passive aggression, and problems in controlling aggression and hostility); (2) dependency; (3) self-esteem; (4) self-adequacy; (5) emotional responsiveness; (6) emotional stability; and (7) worldview. The Bulgarian adaptation was used (Koltcheva, 2017).

Procedure

To conduct the study, permission was obtained from the Ethics Committee of the Animus Association Foundation and from the Ethics Committee of the Department of Cognitive Science and Psychology of the New Bulgarian University. Participation was voluntary and confidential, and instructions were provided to participants before administration by one of the researchers (P. Milcheva). All participants signed an informed consent form.

The order of completing the questionnaires was randomized for each subject to avoid influences on the obtained data by the order in which participants would read and answer the questionnaires. Participants had to fill in both versions of the Adult PARQ/C. In order to avoid mixing the information provided for both parents, the data collection was divided into two sessions with a time interval of one

week between them. This interval was based on the frequency of psychological consultations women were receiving, and it was random in relation to the study.

The selection of participants for the research group excluded subjects in a state of acute crisis, as well as comorbidities with other relevant factors (e.g., adoption, human trafficking, psychiatric diagnosis) that could influence the results.

Sample

The sample included 60 female adults aged between 23 and 58 ($M=37.95$; $SD=8.102$). They were separated into two groups: 1) an experimental group of female victims of domestic violence, clients of social services at the Animus Association Foundation: accommodated at the St. Petka Crisis Unit, Mother and Baby Unit, and engaged in psychological counselling at the Centre for Public Support for Children and Families (an outpatient service), and 2) a group of randomly selected controls. Each group consisted of 30 participants.

The distribution for both groups according to several basic demographic characteristics is presented in the tables below (Tables 1, 2, and 3). The selected criteria for the control group were age, educational level, marital status, and employment.

We made efforts to balance both samples by age. The participants in the experimental group were between 28 and 53 ($M=39.73$; $SD=7.168$), and in the control group between 23 and 58 ($M=36.10$; $SD=8.707$). There were no significant differences between the participants in both groups ($t=-1.751$, $p=0.087$).

Table 1. *Distribution of Participants in the Experimental and Control Groups According to Educational Level*

Educational Level	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Number	%	Number	%
Primary	2	6.7	0	0
Secondary	12	40	1	3.3
Graduate/ Undergraduate	15	50	29	96.7

None	1	3.3	0	0
Preliminary	0	0	0	0
Total:	30	100%	30	100%

As we can see in Table 1, almost all participants (96.7%) in the control group had a higher level of education in comparison with the experimental group, where only 50% of the women had a higher degree. 40% of them had a secondary level of education, and 10% had a primary or lower level of education. This shows a certain disproportion in the distribution of the studied persons according to the level of education.

Table 2. Distribution of Participants in the Experimental and Control Groups According to Their Family Status

Family Status	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Number	%	Number	%
Married, living together	6	20	11	36.7
Separated (married but not living together)	10	33.3	0	0
Married but living with another partner	1	3.3	0	0
Not married but living with a partner	2	6.7	9	30
Divorced	7	23.3	5	16.7
Widowed	0	0	0	0
Never married (and not living with a partner)	4	13.3	5	16.7
Total:	30	100%	30	100%

The total number of women in family or partnership relationships in the experimental group was 9 (33.3%) against 20 (66.7%) women in the control group. This, however, is likely due to the fact that female survivors were service users, and many turned to institu-

tions for support when ending an abusive relationship or soon after taking this step.

Table 3. *Distribution of Participants in the Experimental and Control Groups According to Their Employment Status*

Employment Status	Experimental Group		Control Group	
	Number	%	Number	%
Unemployed, not looking for a job (incl. retired)	5	16.7	0	0
Unemployed but looking for a job	0	0	1	3.3
Employed part-time	4	13.3	4	13.3
Employed full-time	17	56.7	24	80
Other	4	13.3	1	3.3
Total:	30	100%	30	100%

Most of our participants in the control group were employed in full-time jobs (80%), while only a bit more than half of the participants in the experimental group (56.7%) were working full-time; 16.7% of the latter were unemployed.

Results

Correlations

Correlations were run between perceived parental rejection (maternal and paternal) and psychological adjustment for both groups (Table 4).

Here we need to clarify that the total scores for maternal and paternal acceptance–rejection are in fact a measure of the rejection part of the continuum. So, below, when we present total scores, we will refer to perceived rejection. The same applies to psychological adjustment. The scale is oriented towards the negative end of the continuum, so we will refer to psychological maladjustment.

Table 4. *Correlations between Perceived Acceptance-Rejection for Both Parents, and Psychological Adjustment for the Group of Female Survivors of Violence and the Control Group*

		Experimental Group		Control Group	
		Perceived maternal rejection	Perceived paternal rejection	Perceived maternal rejection	Perceived paternal rejection
Perceived paternal rejection	r	.540**		.517**	
	p	.002		.003	
	N	30		30	
Psychological maladjustment	r	.494**	.458*	.469**	.532**
	p	.006	.011	.009	.002
	N	30	30	30	30

** . Correlation is significant at 0.01.

* . Correlation is significant at 0.05.

The results from the correlation analyses show that all correlation total scores are significant. There are statistically significant relationships between perceived rejection by the mother and by the father in childhood, as well as between perceived parental rejection and psychological maladjustment for both groups: experimental (mother – $r=0.494$, $p=0.006$; father – $r=0.458$, $p=0.011$) and control (mother – $r=0.469$, $p=0.009$; father – $r=0.532$, $p=0.002$). This means that the higher the degree of perceived parental rejection in childhood is, the higher the level of psychological maladjustment in adulthood will be.

T-test

A t-test for two independent samples was used to test some of the hypotheses. In Table 5, analyses of the total scores for both groups are presented.

Table 5. *Comparisons of Perceived Maternal Rejection, Perceived Paternal Rejection, and Psychological Maladjustment for Both Groups*

	Group	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Perceived maternal rejection	Female survivors of violence	30	119.400	44.623	2.429	0.018
	Women not exposed to violence	30	96.133	27.602		
Perceived paternal rejection	Female survivors of violence	30	142.033	46.131	3.892	0.001
	Women not exposed to violence	30	100.867	35.050		
Psychological maladjustment	Female survivors of violence	30	143,566	32,214	-5,068	0.000
	Women not exposed to violence	30	109,533	8,707		

The results show that there is a significant difference between perceived maternal and paternal rejection between female survivors of violence and women who are not exposed to violence. The mean score in the group of female victims was more than 40 points higher than the mean score in the control group.

There is also a significant difference between both groups regarding their level of psychological adjustment.

Besides comparisons between both groups, we also compared the results for maternal and paternal acceptance specifically for the group of female survivors of violence.

Table 6. Comparison of Perceived Maternal and Paternal Acceptance–Rejection Scores for Both Groups of Women

		N	Mean	SD	t	p
Female survivors of violence	Perceived maternal acceptance–rejection	30	119.40	44.623	2.874	0.008
	Perceived paternal acceptance–rejection	30	142.03	46.131		
Women not exposed to violence	Perceived maternal acceptance–rejection	30	96.133	27.602	0.824	0.417
	Perceived paternal acceptance–rejection	30	100.867	35.050		

The results indicate a significant difference ($p < 0.008$) between the scores on the perceived rejection by the mother and the scores on the perceived rejection by the father in the group of female victims of violence. We also analyzed the results for the control group. The results for the women not exposed to violence were not statistically significant. The perceived relationships with both parents were more towards the acceptance end of the continuum. Women in the control group did not perceive that, in their childhood, their fathers were more rejecting than their mothers.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to reveal the relationship between perceived paternal rejection in childhood and the engagement in abusive relationships in adulthood in females, based on the idea that the perceived quality of the emotional relationship with the father is as important as that of the emotional relationship with the mother.

The data obtained shows that female survivors of domestic violence perceived both parents as more rejecting in their childhood than women in the control group, and that this trend is even more pronounced for the father than for the mother – fathers were perceived as more rejecting than mothers. In both groups, the perceptions of warm relationships with both parents in childhood corresponded to higher personal adjustment in adulthood. These results are consistent with IPARTheory’s theoretical postulates regarding the importance of emotional attachment to both parents in childhood for adult development, as well as with the proposition that the father’s love contributes to a unique part of this influence.

The first and second hypothesis compared both perceived maternal and paternal acceptance–rejection in childhood between the experimental and control groups. Both parents were perceived as more rejecting by women in the experimental group – survivors of domestic violence. These findings support IPARTheory’s views on the processes of dependence between the two factors – rejection by a caregiver as a contributing factor for the development of dependency, potentially leading to cycles of violence.

According to IPARTheory (Rohner, 2021), individuals who feel rejected tend to experience anxiety and feel insecure. To satisfy the needs for a positive response, the individual who feels rejected increases his/her efforts to obtain such a response. Such individuals often remain dependent on external validation and support in adulthood, leading to a state of excessive dependence on the attachment figure. However, this only continues to a certain point, and at a later stage it can turn into „protective independence“, i.e. an external display of independence from the rejecting attachment figure despite a deeply hidden strong need for warmth and acceptance. Sometimes this process of mutual rejection develops into a „cycle of violence“, as well as into other serious disorders of attachment.

Thus, IPARTheory outlines a direct link between perceived parental rejection in childhood and the creation of abusive relationships in adulthood through the continuation of a pattern of intense search for a positive response from the attachment figure (which for women

in adulthood is most often the intimate partner) and the eventual escalation of this pattern into protective independence and a subsequent cycle of violence.

Such a view is, of course, valid, but it does not differentiate between perceived rejection in childhood by either parent. Therefore, the third hypothesis of the current study set out to examine this question, and the obtained data confirmed our expectation that female survivors of violence would perceive their fathers as more rejecting than their mothers. For the sake of completeness, the control group was tested for the presence of the same trend, and the result showed that this effect had not been observed. This result is significant only for our experimental group of women engaging in abusive relationships.

The data demonstrated that a specific and statistically significant difference in the perception of acceptance–rejection by both parents in childhood could be observed in the experimental group of survivors, where the father was perceived as more rejecting than the mother.

An explanation for such a result could be looked for in the assumption that a large proportion of women who form abusive intimate relationships in adulthood come from families with an abusive father. However, a look at the scores by subscales for the Adult Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire/Control (mother and father versions) (Table 6) shows that the factor „aggression and hostility“ is indeed dominant yet accompanied by other significant factors, such as „neglect/indifference“ and „control.“

These data point to the need for more precise examination of the interrelationships between the various factors shaping the perception of paternal acceptance–rejection in childhood, and their potential influence on the formation of violent relationships in adulthood. It would be interesting to trace the extent to which factors like neglect and emotional abuse by either parent, rather than physical violence solely, contribute to the formation of abusive relationships in adulthood. Furthermore, a question may be posed as to the way these can influence the specific outcomes for the offspring – identification with the aggressor or with the victim.

Another potential for further research could be assisted by the sociocultural systems subtheory. This part of IPARTheory allows research questions to be asked about traditional methods of upbringing or moral norms introduced by leading religions and their potential relationship with prevailing types of parenting in the community. This would also create a path for exploration of various gender stereotypes. Unfortunately, the goals of such research would exceed the focus group of the current study.

The data obtained in our research also confirmed the fourth hypothesis, which stated that, in both groups (experimental and control), the perceived acceptance–rejection by both the mother and the father in childhood correlates positively with the psychological adjustment of adults. This result is in line with IPARTheory’s preposition that the emotional bond with the father in childhood is of direct formative significance for the offspring’s psychological adjustment, as opposed to approaches that explicitly or implicitly view the father’s role as instrumental or solely as a supporting figure to the child-caring mother.

According to IPARTheory, paternal acceptance–rejection is as important to development as maternal acceptance–rejection; it is significant not only in the emergence of behavioural or psychological problems, but also in the development of a sense of health and well-being in the generation. These behavioural or psychological problems can be hostility, aggression, passive aggression, or psychological problems managing hostility and aggression, emotional coldness, immature dependence, or protective independence, all of which symptomatic of abusive relationships. In relation to psychological adjustment, the data confirms the positive correlation between perceived rejection by both parents in childhood and problems in adulthood, such as impaired self-esteem, an impaired sense of self-adequacy, emotional instability, and negative perception of the world.

In summary, the present study demonstrated that the emotional connection with the father in childhood has a substantial and individual significance for the formation of abusive relationships in women in adulthood. Thus, it ranks among other research conducted in the context of IPARTheory in different countries, finding that paternal

acceptance–rejection in childhood is no less important than maternal acceptance–rejection for personality development in adulthood, and that it sometimes seems to have a unique significance for the development of specific outcomes in adult development.

Rohner (2021), for example, cites research demonstrating through regression analysis that paternal love explains a unique and independent portion of the variance in child outcomes beyond the portion that can be explained by maternal love. He also cites research showing that, sometimes, a father’s love is the only significant factor in specific outcomes for children. These consequences most often seem to be in the direction of 1) personality problems and problems of psychological adjustment; 2) behavioural problems and delinquency; 3) substance abuse. The work of Sultana and Khaleque (2015) presents data on the influence of both parents on the development of their sons in adulthood, while for daughters, the perception of the relationship with the father in childhood turned out to be a much more significant factor. Their research indicates that the influence of parental acceptance–rejection can also vary according to the child’s biological sex. Therefore, it would be interesting to examine whether the influence of paternal acceptance–rejection in childhood is symmetric in men forming abusive relationships in adulthood.

South and Jarnecke (2015) conducted a national twin study that established a significant relationship between perceived acceptance–rejection by the father in childhood and the ability to cope with mental disorder symptoms in adulthood. Rohner and Carrasco (2014) show the significance of „interpersonal influence“ and „prestige“ of each parent in the family for a certain part of the generation’s development in adulthood. They also found that, in many cases, the perception of interpersonal influence and prestige of one of the parents moderates the corresponding perception of the other, and therefore the psychological adjustment of children. Machado et al. (2014) demonstrated that perceived maternal and paternal acceptance in childhood made independent contributions to youth psychological adjustment, with daughters appearing to be more significantly influenced by the strength of the factor „father’s interpersonal influence“, while for sons

the perceived higher „prestige“ of the father seems to have a stronger effect in comparison with the mother. These studies have different research tasks and target groups compared to the current study, but their conclusions are in line with our data on the specific importance of the subjective feeling of acceptance or rejection by the father in childhood.

This study has some limitations. We rely only on retrospective self-reported data regarding perceived parental acceptance–rejection. It is thus a correlational study. It is necessary to note that 30 participants in a group is the minimum for acquiring statistical validity, and for greater certainty of the conclusions it would be appropriate to increase the size of the sample.

Another limitation is that only female subjects were included in this study, and survivors of various types of abuse by the intimate partner or other important figures of attachment can also be male. A study of the latter problem would be of great interest, as some existing data show that men are less likely to seek help following an experience of abuse, and therefore such cases are underreported in official statistics. It would be interesting to study the group of aggressors too. Based on our knowledge on IPARTheory, we can postulate that they would also have perceived higher levels of parental rejection and/or psychological maladjustment. To our knowledge, there are no such studies yet.

It might be argued whether the observed disproportion in educational levels in the research group impacts the results, and further research would provide more clarity on the matter. However, it might be relevant to consider here that the coping subtheory of IPARTheory discriminates between two types of „copers“: instrumental and affective copers, with instrumental ones experiencing successful professional or academic lives while still struggling in their personal lives with the consequences of emotional rejection in childhood (Rohner, 2021).

The present study focuses only on parental figures in childhood due to the stated research objective. However, some recent research suggests that acceptance or rejection by the intimate partner is very

important for psychological adjustment in adults (Parmar & Rohner, 2005). It would be relevant for more of the important figures throughout the lifespan to be included in future empirical research.

In conclusion, the four hypotheses of this study were confirmed. The findings suggest that perceived paternal acceptance–rejection in childhood has a unique significance for psychological well-being or for the formation of violent relationships in adulthood in females.

Domestic violence is a pervasive and devastating problem that affects individuals, families, and communities worldwide. Therefore, it is crucial to address the issue of domestic violence by promoting positive parenting practices that prioritize love, support, and respect for children. By providing children with a stable, nurturing home environment, we can help break the cycle of violence and create a safer, healthier society for all.

This problem is complex and multifaceted, requiring a comprehensive approach that addresses the root causes of violence, provides support and resources for victims, and holds perpetrators accountable for their actions. The current study is an attempt to understand these relationships and to generate directions for future research on the role of emotional relationships with the father and with other attachment figures later in life for better understanding the tendency to engage in abusive relationships in adulthood.

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