

# Personality and Psychological Adjustment of Greek-Cypriot Youth in the Context of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory

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## Abstract

*Research reported here is based on Rohner's personality sub theory component of the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PART) of Socialisation: Perceived parental rejection has consistent negative effects on the psychological adjustment of children and adults worldwide (Rohner and Khaleque, 2008). As part of a research project on antisocial behaviour of Cypriot youth we postulated the hypothesis that the individual's overall psychological adjustment (comprised and represented by the Total Composite Test Score and the scores on the seven scales of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire – PAQ), can predict antisocial behaviour in form of racist tendencies in a given population. We tested 1,185 Greek Cypriots (aged 15-23 years) using PART's Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ) and other especially developed questionnaires. Here we present the findings of the initial stages of our research, namely the analysis of the responses of the Greek Cypriot sample on the Adult-PAQ scales. The majority of the Greek Cypriot respondents were found to be in the zone of good emotional and behavioural functioning. These findings, paired with the results of the Cyprus Child PARQ for high perceived acceptance and low rejection in childhood (Demetriou and Christodoulides, 2006) seem to confirm Rohner's postulates in the Parental Acceptance Rejection personality sub theory.*

**Keywords:** Parenting styles, Parental Acceptance-Rejection, personality functioning

## SECTION 1

### Introduction

What kinds of childhood experiences affect the personality and the overall psychological adjustment of individuals? Parenting style is a critical ingredient of the early childhood environment. Parenting style is conceptualised as a variable that moderates the relation between parenting practices and developmental outcomes (Darling and Steinberg, 1993). The significant relationship between warm and accepting parenting style and positive personality outcomes has been established repeatedly within ethnically diverse populations and it applies to adult and adolescent behaviours as well as those of young children (Baumrind, 1991; Lamborn, Mounts, Steinberg and Dornbusch, 1991). On the other hand, the most consistently negative outcomes on

personality have been associated with cold, rejecting and uninvolved parenting which is linked with such personality characteristics as low self-esteem, increased aggression, reduced control over impulses, and insecure attachment (Egeland and Sroufe, 1981).

The Parental acceptance-rejection theory (PARTheory) (Rohner, 1980, 2004) is an evidence-based theory of socialisation and lifespan development that attempts to predict and explain major causes, consequences, and other correlates of parental acceptance and rejection within the United States and worldwide. The theory counters five classes of questions divided into three sub theories. These are personality sub theory, coping sub theory, and socio-cultural systems sub theory (Rohner, Khaleque and Cournoyer, 2009b). Because this article discusses central issues within personality sub theory the other two sub theories will not be elaborated upon, though they are described at length in Rohner (1986, 2004), Rohner, Khaleque, and Cournoyer (2009a) and elsewhere.

PARTheory's personality sub theory proposes four fundamental postulates: First, it postulates that children everywhere – in different socio-cultural systems, racial or ethnic groups, genders, and the like – respond in essentially the same way when they perceive themselves to be accepted or rejected by their parents (Postulate 1: Child adjustment). Second, it postulates that the effects of remembered childhood rejection extend into adulthood and old age (Postulate 2: Adult adjustment). Third, it postulates that the perception of rejection by an intimate partner or other attachment figure in adulthood is likely to be associated with the same form of psychological maladjustment as experienced by rejected children (Postulate 3: Partner adjustment). Fourth, the sub theory postulates that variations in culture, language, race, gender, and other similar defining conditions are not sufficient to override the apparently universal tendency for individuals who perceive themselves to be rejected by attachment figures to develop a specific form of psychological maladjustment called in PARTheory the acceptance-rejection syndrome (Rohner, 2004) (Postulate 4: Universality) (Rohner and Khaleque, 2008).

Postulates regarding universality in PARTheory draw from the phylogenetic perspective (Rohner, 1975, 1976, 1986) or from what some now call evolutionary developmental psychology (Geary and Bjorklund, 2000). This viewpoint asserts that human beings have developed over the course of behaviour-genetic co-evolution the enduring biologically based emotional need for positive response from their major caregivers. According to the theory, this need in childhood is for parental affection, nurturance, and support or in the context of the PARTheory, acceptance. PARTheory's Postulates 1 (Child adjustment), 2 (Adult adjustment), and 3 (Partner adjustment) all draw from the phylogenetic perspective and phylogenetic model (Rohner and Khaleque, 2008). Following this perspective leads PARTheory researchers to assume that when this need for positive response is not fulfilled by significant others, humans have the phylogenetically acquired tendency to develop a specific set of negative socio-emotional and cognitive dispositions specified in personality sub theory (Rohner, 1999). Similar concepts can be encountered in Erikson's Psychosocial Theory of Personality where in the first year of life development of basic trust toward

oneself and toward the world stems from the mother's sensitive care. On the contrary the early development of the sense of basic mistrust derives from primary caregivers who act in unreliable, arbitrary and rejecting ways toward the infant (Erikson, 1968). Consequently failure to develop basic trust may seriously interfere with a child's sense of security and compromise her ability to successfully master the challenges of the personality development stages that follow.

Furthermore, in the attachment theory, Bowlby (1969/1982, 1973, 1980) saw attachment as being crucial to a child's personality development and to the development of healthy ways of relating to others. The theoretical basis of most of the attachment research is that secure attachment in infancy will predict good psychosocial outcomes in later years. Ainsworth and Bowlby (1991) distinguished between two types of attachment called secure and anxious. It appears that the primary cause of secure versus insecure attachment is the parent's behaviour toward the infant. Caregivers who are consistently sensitive and responsive to their infants' needs are more likely to raise children who are securely attached to them. Securely attached children are more likely to have close friends, be more socially competent, more accepted by their peer group, have more empathy for others and be able to read emotional cues (Waters *et al.*, 1979; Minnesota Parent-Child Project).<sup>1</sup>

According to the PARTheory personality sub theory the emotional need for positive responses from significant others is a very powerful motivator in children. In adulthood, the need becomes more complex and differentiated to include the wish (recognised or unrecognised) for positive regard from people with whom one has an affectional bond of attachment. People who can best satisfy these needs are typically parents for infants and children, but include significant others and non parental figures for adolescents and adults (Rohner and Khaleque, 2008). A significant other is any person with whom a child or adult has a relatively long-lasting emotional tie and who is interchangeable with no other person.

Among other things the PARTheory personality sub theory asserts that parental rejection has consistent effects on the personality and behavioural dispositions of children and adults everywhere, regardless of culture, ecology, language, or other limiting conditions. Evidence suggests that as much as 21% of the variability in adults' psychological adjustment can be explained by childhood experiences of caregiver acceptance-rejection (*ibid.*). With respect to the consequences of perceived parental acceptance-rejection research has been concerned mainly with a limited constellation of personality dispositions, dispositions that are thought to be an expectable outcome of parental aggression or neglect everywhere (*ibid.*). Seven personality dispositions among both children and adults tend to vary with the childhood experience of parental rejection. These dispositions include (a) hostility, aggression, passive aggression; (b) dependence or defensive independence, depending on the form, frequency, and intensity of rejection; (c) impaired self-

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1 Minnesota Parent-Child Project. Available at [[www.cehd.umn.edu/research/highlights/Parent-Child/default.html](http://www.cehd.umn.edu/research/highlights/Parent-Child/default.html)], accessed on 6 April 2011.

esteem; (d) impaired self-adequacy; (e) emotional unresponsiveness; (f) emotional instability; and (g) negative worldview. Theoretically these dispositions are expected to emerge because of the great psychological pain produced by perceived rejection. According to the personality sub theory children and adults who experience significant rejection are likely to feel increasing anger, resentment and other negative emotions that may become intensely painful. As a result, many rejected persons close off emotionally in an effort to protect themselves from the hurt of further rejection.

In the context of this study, obtaining data on the aforementioned seven personality dispositions of our Greek Cypriot youth sample through the PAQ and comparing it to findings obtained on perceived parental acceptance and rejection in Greek Cypriot children through the PARQ-Child (Demetriou and Christodoulides, 2006) aims at examining cross-culturally Rohner's postulates in the PARTheory personality sub theory as well as testing for a potential predictor of antisocial behaviour, in form of racist tendencies, in our sample.

In section 2 of the present study we explain the method (including sample, procedure and instrument) used to reach the goals of this study. In particular we give a summary of the features of the Adult PAQ, a developed Greek version of which is the instrument applied on our sample of the Greek Cypriot youth population. In section 3 we show the analysis of the data resulting from the application of the Greek Adult PAQ leading to a profile of the dimension 'parental warmth' (acceptance-rejection) experienced by our sample of Greek Cypriot youth. Finally in section 4 we conclude with an assessment of the results.

## SECTION 2

### Method

#### *Sample and Procedures*

The Limassol district, with a population of 226,700, was chosen to serve as the background population field for the research. The district includes Limassol, the second biggest city of the Republic of Cyprus, with a metropolitan population of 183,000.

The participants of the present research were students and soldiers aged 15-25 years, with an approximate mean age of 17.5, in almost all secondary and tertiary education institutions as well as military units of the district of Limassol in the spring of 2000. This was done in the framework of a research programme that studied antisocial behaviours in the form of racism within Cypriot youth (Harakis, 2005). The valid sample (N = 1185) resulted in the following stratification that corresponded to the real population characteristics – in the selected age range – for the selected strata: (a) lower secondary school students (13%), (b) higher secondary school students (51%), (c) tertiary education students (19%), and (d) soldiers (17%).

As far as gender is concerned 66% of the sample was male while 34% was female. The actual proportion within the population under investigation is 57:43 (due to the presence of the soldiers' strata). However, since the sample size is particularly high – for the purposes of the present study – this disproportion has no effect on the results. Moreover, it must be clear that – again for the purposes of the present study – the social characteristics of the sample is not a factor, and is not presented here, but can be seen in Harakis (2005).

### ***Instruments***

#### *The Greek Adult PAQ*

In order to be used with the Cypriot sample the Adult Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ, see §2.2.2) was translated into the Greek language by a bilingual person familiar with the questions asked and with the nature of the research. A second translator then back translated them into English. The original English and the back-translated versions of the PAQ were then compared, and discrepancies were noted and corrected. The process was repeated until the back-translated version matched very closely the original English version. We henceforth refer to the questionnaire that resulted through the above-mentioned process as Adult Gr-PAQ.

Cronbach's coefficient alpha ( $\alpha$ ) a measure of internal consistency of items within a scale (Nunnally, 1978; Guilford and Fruchter 1973) was used to test the reliability of the Adult Gr-PAQ. The internal consistency of Gr-PAQ is judged as satisfactory since the coefficients are reasonably high for all the scales and range from 0.60 to 0.78 ( $p < .001$ ) with a median of 0.71 (see table 1, p. 88). Moreover, the overall coefficient alpha turns out to be 0.75, well within the acceptable region for reliability, and in accordance with most previous studies on PAQ (Khaleque and Rohner, 2002b).

#### *Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ)*

The Personality Assessment Questionnaire is a self-report questionnaire designed in 1971 to assess individuals' perceptions of themselves with respect to the aforementioned seven personality dispositions. Collectively the seven PAQ scales represent a measure of the respondents' overall psychological adjustment. This is a form of adjustment or maladjustment predicted in PARTheory to be universally associated with the experience of parental acceptance-rejection, and with the experience of acceptance-rejection by attachment figures in other relationships throughout life (Rohner and Khaleque, 2008).

The PAQ was constructed on a rational-theoretical basis. In order to facilitate its cross-cultural use the following additional considerations guided its development:

- (a) Scales were to have worldwide applicability;
- (b) Terms within each scale were to have common international referents; and
- (c) Phraseology of the items was to be decentred from standard idiomatic English (Rohner *et al.*, 1978).

Two versions of the PAQ are available: (i) The Adult PAQ is used by adolescents and adults and asks them to reflect on their own personality dispositions. The adult version contains 9 items per scale for a total of 63 items; (ii) The Child PAQ is designed to be used with children from about seven through twelve years of age. It asks children to reflect on their personality dispositions. The child version contains 6 items per scale for a total of 42 items. Both versions of the questionnaire are written in the present tense and ask respondents to reflect on their true – not ideal – feelings about themselves.

In the current research we administered the Adult PAQ after having translated it into Greek. It is probably needless to say that, apart from the translation, all the features of the questionnaire remain unaltered with respect to the original Adult PAQ. Although all these (and more) details can be found in Rohner and Khaleque (2008), we find it useful, for reader's sake, to give a summary of the above-mentioned features.

Each questionnaire has a title page, which should be read by adult respondents before they begin. Respondents are encouraged to complete the questionnaires by themselves and not to dwell for any length of time on any particular item, because the object of the test is to ascertain the respondents' first overall reaction. They are also reminded that there is no right or wrong answer to any item.

Both versions of the PAQ utilise the same response options and scoring system described below thus maximising direct comparability between versions. In all versions of the PAQ, respondents are instructed to ask themselves if an item is basically true or untrue about the way they see themselves or believe the child sees him/herself. If an item is basically true then they have to ask themselves, 'Is it almost *always* true?' or, 'Is it only *sometimes* true?' If an item is basically untrue about the way they perceive themselves or the child sees him/herself they are instructed to ask, 'Is it *rarely* true?' or 'Is it almost *never* true?' The numerical scoring is done as follows: 4 for Almost always True, 3 for Sometimes True, 2 for Rarely True and 1 for Almost Never True.

All scales are designed so that a high score (e.g. a score of 4) indicates a maximum of the behaviour that is predicted to be associated with parental rejection, namely high hostility, dependence, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability, and negative worldview. In order to minimise response acquiescence or agreement response-set, certain items in each scale, as described below, are phrased so that a high score (e.g. a score of 4) reveals independence (rather than dependence), positive self-esteem, emotional responsiveness, and so forth. Twenty items (32%) in the adult version (as opposed to thirteen items, i.e. 31%, in the child version) must be reverse-scored (Rohner and Khaleque, 2008). The PAQ is scored on the PAQ Scoring Sheet by summing the item scores in each scale, and by recording this number at the foot of each column. All seven PAQ scale-scores are added and that number is recorded on the bottom of the score sheet.

By summing the seven PAQ scale scores researchers can form an overall or total (composite) PAQ score: The higher a total-test score, the more impaired an individual's psychological adjustment is regarded to be.

From the structure of the Adult-PAQ it is clear that the possible (theoretical) maximum and minimum values as well as the midpoints of each scale are 936 and 22.5 respectively. The Total Composite Test Score (TCTS) may spread from a low of 63, revealing excellent psychological adjustment, to a high of 252, revealing serious psychological maladjustment. The theoretical midpoint is 157.5. Scores at or above this test midpoint on the Adult-PAQ indicate more overall maladjustment than adjustment. However it should not be automatically assumed that very low composite PAQ scores (e.g. low to mid 60s on the Adult-PAQ) are necessarily accurate representations of the level of respondents' psychological adjustment because such scores may sometimes indicate social desirability, response bias, denial, wish fulfilment, or other forms of bias (Rohner and Khaleque, 2008).

### SECTION 3

#### Results

##### *Total Composite Test Score*

The statistical analysis of the current research yields the results shown in tables 1 to 3 (pp. 88, 90). Based on these data we can then attempt a first assessment of the emotional and behavioural adjustment of our sample (the standardisation will be the object of further research).

Our first data analysis regards the Total Composite Test Score since this data yields a general profile of the Greek Cypriot sample participating in the research.

In theory, because the mean and standard deviation of the seven scale scores are likely to vary in different samples, researchers may need to convert scale scores to standardised z-scores (Guilford and Fruchter, 1973) prior to summing the Total Composite Test Score. Here, it has been verified that the use of standardised z-scores does not affect the results, as the standard deviations of the individual scales range on the same levels. Strictly in theory, one may say that individuals or groups with a TCTS lying close to or below the midpoint (157.5) generally have good emotional and behavioural functioning. The higher a TCTS lies above 157.5, the more impaired an individual's adjustment is regarded to be. On a practical level though, where we encounter the sample/standard errors and the confidence levels, as well as the degree of reliability of the questionnaire, the theoretical midpoint cannot on its own constitute the critical point (threshold) between the zones of good and bad emotional and behavioural functioning.

As already mentioned, the theoretical midpoint of the Adult PAQ is 157.5. The analysis of our results shows the TCTS to range from a low of 92 to a high of 209. The mean is 144.4 and is well below the theoretical midpoint. The majority of our sample (78%) has a TCTS below the midpoint, with only 22% above it (see tables 1 and 2, p. 88). These scores (with all reservation mentioned above about errors and reliability) allow us to assume that the majority of our respondents are within the zone of good emotional and behavioural functioning.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Adult Gr-PAQ Scales (N = 1185)\***

Scale	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	Median	Range	Theoretical		<i>a</i>
					Low	High	
Hostility/Aggression	22.5	4.7	21	9 – 36	9	36	0.71
Dependency	24.4	4.3	27	10 – 35	9	36	0.68
Negative Self-Esteem	17.6	4.7	18	9 – 35	9	36	0.78
Negative Self-Adequacy	18.6	4.5	17	9 – 36	9	36	0.76
Emotional Unresponsiveness	19.0	4.3	20	9 – 36	9	36	0.66
Emotional Instability	22.9	3.8	24	11 – 36	9	36	0.60
Negative Worldview	19.3	4.5	21	9 – 36	9	36	0.75
Total Composite Test Score	144.4	18.4	146	92 – 209	63	252	

\* It should be noted that the highest of the typical errors for the mean (for the Adult Gr-PAQ scales) lies at 0.14 and for the Total Composite Test Score at 0.53

For the investigation of possible differences between the genders we used a two-sample two-tailed t-test, both for the TCTS as well as for the seven scales. Where statistically significant differences were detected the p-value is mentioned. The analysis of the TCTS of our Greek Cypriot sample does not yield statistically significant differences between the genders (table 3, p. 90).

### ***Individual Scales of the Gr-PAQ***

All the PAQ scales are designed so that a high score should indicate the highest form of behaviour that the PARTheory predicts to be associated with parental rejection, namely high hostility and aggression, high dependence vs. independence, negative self esteem, negative self adequacy, emotional unresponsiveness, emotional instability and negative worldview.

**Table 2: Scores of the Adult Gr-PAQ Sample in Relation to the Theoretical Midpoint**

<i>Scale</i>	<i>Theoretical</i>	<i>% Scores</i>	<i>% Scores</i>
	<i>Midpoint m</i>	<i>&lt; m</i>	<i>&gt; m</i>
Hostility / Aggression	22.5	50	50
Dependency	22.5	33	67
Negative Self-Esteem	22.5	84	16
Negative Self-Adequacy	22.5	82	18
Emotional Unresponsiveness	22.5	79	21
Emotional Instability	22.5	46	54
Negative Worldview	22.5	79	21
Total Composite Test Score	157.5	78	22



The behavioural dispositions described below have a continuum-like quality, which is not emphasised in the following definitions, but this fact of variability among individuals should not be overlooked (Rohner, Kean and Cournoyer, 1991).

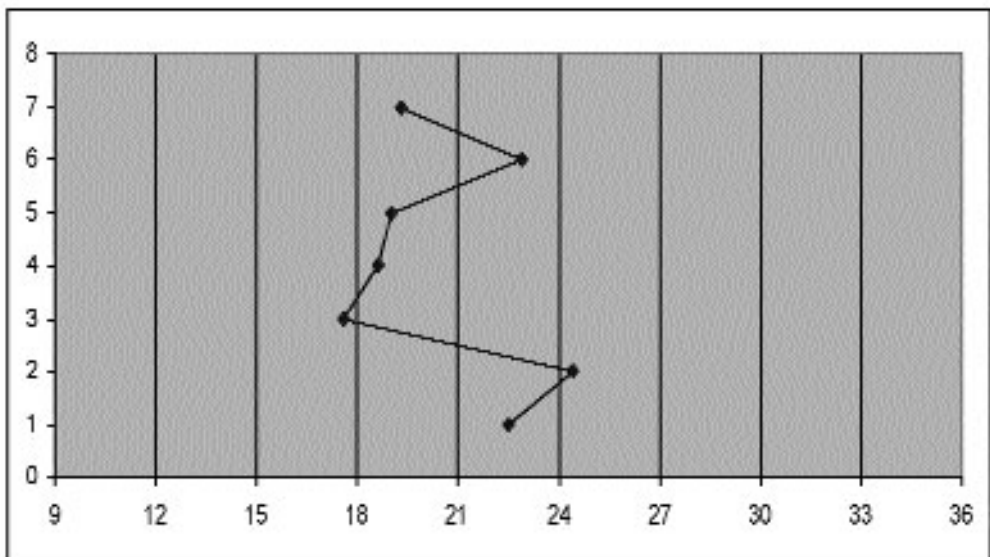
Finally, a schematic synopsis of the means of the individual scales and the TCTS of the respondents participating in the Adult-Gr PAQ gives in a way the personality profile of the 'average' Greek Cypriot youth (see figure 1).

*Hostility/Aggression*

Hostility is an emotional response or feeling of anger or resentment toward another person or situation or toward the self. Hostility is expressed on a behavioural level in the form of aggression, with acts that aim to harm another person, object or the self. Active aggression may be manifested verbally in such ways as sarcasm, humiliating acts toward another person, criticism or by saying cruel things. Passive aggression is a less direct expression of aggression in such forms as stubbornness, bitterness, vindictiveness, irritability, and temper tantrums. A high score on this scale suggests that a person or a group of individuals tend(s) to experience the above named negative emotions to an extent that is above the average.

**Figure 1: Schematic Personality Profile of the 'Average' Greek Cypriot Youth**

↑ Individual scales and TCTS of the Adult-Gr PAQ



→ Means of individual scales and TCTS of the Adult-Gr PAQ

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics for the Adult Gr-PAQ Scales with regard to Gender**

Gender Scale	Men		Women					
	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	% > <i>m</i>	% < <i>m</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	% > <i>m</i>	% < <i>m</i>
Hostility/Aggression	22.9	4.7	53	47	21.6	4.6	43	57
Dependency	23.7	4.2	62	38	25.7	4.2	77	23
Negative Self-Esteem	17.5	4.6	14	86	17.9	5.0	19	81
Negative Self-Adequacy	18.5	4.6	17	83	18.7	4.4	20	80
Emotional Unresponsiveness	19.4	4.1	23	77	18.2	4.6	17	83
Emotional Instability	22.4	3.7	48	52	24.0	3.8	66	34
Negative Worldview	19.3	4.6	23	77	19.4	4.3	18	82
Total Composite Test Score	143.7	17.9	21	79	145.6	19.2	25	75

In our sample the mean is 22.5, thus corresponding to the theoretical midpoint. In comparing the men and women of the sample we find statistically significant differences between the genders on this scale ( $p < 0.001$ ). While the men (53%) of our sample exhibit a mean of 22.9 that lies slightly above the theoretical midpoint, women (57%) exhibit a mean of 21.6 that lies quite below the theoretical midpoint of 22.5 (see tables 1-3). This difference corresponds with the stereotypical perception of the Greek Cypriot society that men tend to be more hostile/aggressive than women.

### *Dependence*

Dependence is the internal psychologically felt yearning for emotional (vs. instrumental) support, care, comfort, nurturance, attention, and similar positive responses from significant others and attachment figures. Dependence in PARTheory also refers to the actual behavioural bids individuals make for such responsiveness. Independence is essential freedom from such emotional reliance. Overall the dependence scale on the PAQ stresses items dealing with the individual's need to have sympathy or encouragement from significant others when they are ill or troubled.

It should be noted that dependence is the only personality disposition in PARTheory that is expected to have a curvilinear relation with perceived acceptance rejection. That is, we expect children and adults to become increasingly dependent as they experience more and more rejection (Rohner and Khaleque, 2002).

The scores of the Greek Cypriot sample show firstly that the mean of the sample is 24.4 and thus higher than the theoretical midpoint of 22.5. This mean shows a tendency of the entire sample regardless of age and gender toward emotional dependence. A large percentage of respondents (67%) exhibit scores above the theoretical midpoint and fall within the zone of psychological/emotional dependence while only 33% of our respondents are within the zone of psychological/emotional independence.

Additionally, statistically significant differences between the Greek Cypriot men and women of our sample were established ( $p < 0.001$ ). It is however interesting that despite these differences the scores of both men and women of our sample tend toward the zone of emotional dependence. Men's scores have a mean of 23.7 but only 38% of men's scores lie within the zone of psychological/emotional independence. On the other hand the mean amongst the Greek Cypriot women's scores is 25.7 with the majority of them (77%) being within the zone of psychological/emotional dependence (see table 3).

#### *Self-Evaluation (Self-Esteem and Self-Adequacy)*

The Self-Evaluation scale includes emotions, attitudes or perceptions regarding the self, ranging on a continuum from positive to negative. Self-evaluation consists of two related dimensions, self-esteem and self-adequacy.

Self-esteem is a global, emotional appraisal of oneself in terms of worth. Positive emotions of self-esteem indicate that a person likes himself, accepts himself, is rarely disappointed in himself and generally perceives himself as a person of worth, or worthy of respect. Negative self-esteem on the other end of the continuum, implies that a person dislikes or disapproves of himself, devalues himself, perhaps feels inferior to others, and perceives himself as being a worthless person.

The first significant finding is that the mean of this scale is much lower (17.6) than the theoretical midpoint (22.5). We see the vast majority of respondents (84%) to have scores below the theoretical midpoint and to be within the zone of high self-esteem. No statistically significant differences were found between men and women. However we can see from the scores that men have a slightly higher tendency than women toward high self-esteem. While 19% of the Greek Cypriot women are in the zone of low self-esteem, only 14% of the Greek Cypriot men are within this zone (see table 3).

Self-Adequacy is an overall self-evaluation of one's competence to perform daily tasks adequately, to cope satisfactorily with daily problems and to satisfy one's own needs. If a person has positive feelings of self-adequacy it means that he views himself as capable of success in the things he sets out to do; he is self-confident and feels socially adequate. Negative feelings of self-adequacy imply that the individual feels incompetent to meet the challenges of everyday life. The person perceives himself as a failure and as being unable to successfully compete for the things he aspires to.

Our findings on this scale show that the respondents in the Greek Cypriot sample tend to be more in the zone of high rather than low emotional self-adequacy since the mean (18.6) is well below the theoretical midpoint (22.5). The large majority of respondents (82%) have scores below the theoretical midpoint thus being within the zone of positive self-adequacy. Only 18% of our sample feels inadequate to respond successfully to the challenges of everyday life. No statistically significant differences can be observed between men and women. There is a slightly higher percentage of the Greek Cypriot men (83%) than women (80%) in the zone of positive self-adequacy (see table 3).

### *Emotional Responsiveness*

This fifth scale of the PAQ refers to the person's ability to openly express his/her emotions (e.g. warmth and affection). Emotional responsiveness is expressed through the spontaneity and ease of the individual to respond emotionally to another person. Emotionally responsive persons have little difficulty forming intimate and lasting attachments, which are not burdened by defensiveness. Individuals with low emotional responsiveness tend more toward social isolation and are able to form only restricted and/or defensive emotional relationships. They may be friendly and sociable but their relationships with other people tend to be superficial and with very little emotional involvement. Often individuals with low emotional responsiveness are unable to give or receive affection.

In this scale the Greek Cypriot sample tends to be more in the zone of high rather than low emotional responsiveness. The mean (190) lies below the theoretical midpoint (22.5). The majority of the participants (79%) exhibit scores below the theoretical midpoint. However in this scale there are statistically significant differences between men and women ( $p < 0.001$ ). Women, with a mean score of 18.2, tend to be more emotionally responsive than men (mean score of 19.4). Only 17% of the women compared to 23% of the men are within the zone of poor emotional responsiveness (see table 3).

### *Emotional Stability*

The sixth scale of emotional stability refers to a person's steadiness of mood and his ability to withstand frustrations, setbacks and failures without becoming emotionally upset. A person with emotional stability can maintain his composure when faced with minor emotional stress and is not easily excited or angered. On the other end of the continuum emotionally unstable individuals have frequent and unpredictable mood swings from such poles as e.g. friendly to hostile.

More than half of the respondents of the Greek Cypriot sample (54%) tend toward the zone of emotional instability. There are statistically significant differences between the genders ( $p < 0.001$ ) with a significantly higher percentage of men (52%), with a mean of 22.4, than women (34%), with a mean of 24.0, having scores below the theoretical midpoint and thus being within the zone of emotional stability (see table 3).

### *Worldview*

This scale describes a person's overall evaluation of life and the universe as being essentially a positive or negative place or in Erikson's (1968) words develops a Basic Trust and views the universe as being essentially positive (positive worldview) or Mistrust where he perceives the universe as a bad, insecure, threatening and uncertain place full of danger and evil (negative worldview). Worldview does not refer to a person's empirically derived knowledge of the economic, political, social or natural environment in which they live.

The results of our sample show that the population tested has a positive worldview. The mean (19.3) is below the theoretical midpoint (22.5) and the vast majority of our sample (79%) is within

the zone of positive worldview (see tables 1-3). The analysis does not reveal statistically significant differences between men and women. However there are certain tendencies to be mentioned: Fewer women (18%) than men (23%) are within the zone of negative worldview thus implying that the Cypriot women of our sample tend to view the universe as being essentially positive more than the Cypriot men (see table 3).

## SECTION 4

### Discussion

As established by Rohner and Khaleque (2008), as much as 26% of the variability of children's psychological adjustment can be accounted for by the degree to which they perceive themselves to be accepted or rejected by their major caregivers. Additionally, as much as 21% of the variability in adults' psychological adjustment can be explained by childhood experiences of caregiver acceptance-rejection.

In order to assess the relationship of perceived parental acceptance-rejection to the personality functioning of the Greek Cypriot sample we used a study on the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire in a sample of 220 Greek Cypriot boys and girls aged 9 to 12 years, henceforth called Child Gr-PARQ (Demetriou and Christodoulides, 2006).

In summing our analysis of the Adult Gr-PAQ we established that the vast majority (78%) of the Greek Cypriot participants shows a general profile (see TCTS) below the theoretical midpoint and lies therefore within the zone of good emotional and behavioural functioning. Moreover the vast majority of our Greek Cypriot sample is within the zone of positive self-esteem with no significant differences between the genders and tends more toward high emotional adequacy. Also regarding emotional responsiveness the Greek Cypriot sample tends more toward the zone of high rather than the zone of low emotional responsiveness. Lastly the vast majority of our sample is within the zone of positive worldview.

The aforementioned Adult Gr-PAQ TCTS findings paired with the analysis of the Child Gr-PARQ seem to confirm R. Rohner's postulate in the PARTheory that parental acceptance and rejection has a major impact on adults' personality and psychological adjustment (Rohner and Khaleque, 2008). Namely, the results on the Child Gr-PARQ reveal that in the TCTS 97% of the Greek Cypriot children had totals below the theoretical midpoint and were well in the region of 'acceptance'. The overall acceptance-rejection profile of the Greek Cypriot children of that sample showed that they perceived their parents as warm and affectionate thus indicating that they felt 'loved' and accepted by their parents. The analysis of the particular warmth/acceptance scale, which refers to parent-child relationships where parents are perceived to give love or affection without qualification, showed that 98% of the Greek Cypriot children's scores were below the theoretical midpoint and were thus well in the 'acceptance region'.

Furthermore, recall that Cypriot men appear to have significantly higher tendencies toward hostility/aggression than the women (47% of the men and 57% of the women have scores below the theoretical midpoint). It turns out that these results compare well with those obtained from the Child Gr-PARQ on the same aggression/hostility scale. This scale, in the Child PARQ, refers (a) to the conditions where the individual as a child perceives his/her parents as angry or resentful of him/her (hostility), and/or (b) to conditions where the child believes his/her parents intend to hurt him/her (physically or verbally). In their vast majority (94%) the children of the Child Gr-PARQ were below the theoretical midpoint. With a mean score lying well below the theoretical midpoint one could establish that the level of aggression/hostility perceived by the respondents was very low (Demetriou and Christodoulides, 2006). It seems, therefore, that the fact that children in the Greek Cypriot society seem to perceive very low hostility/aggression from their caregivers may account for their very low hostile-aggressive tendencies on the corresponding PAQ scale.

In general, our results seem to confirm the PARTheory's postulates about expected relations between perceived acceptance-rejection and individuals' mental health status (psychological adjustment). According to Rohner and Khaleque (2008) within a band of individual variation, children and adult's mental health status is 'likely to become impaired in direct proportion to the form, frequency, severity, and duration of rejection experienced'. The findings both on the Child Gr-PARQ as well as on the Adult Gr-PAQ point in the direction that adult emotional security and wellbeing tends to be dependent on the perceived quality of relationship with major caregivers. These findings coincide with those of many studies (Khaleque and Rohner, 2002a) involving thousands of participants cross-culturally and among major American ethnic groups showing that about 80% of the children and adults respond as personality subtheory predicts. Perceived acceptance by major caregivers in childhood is an important predictor for good psychological functioning in adulthood.

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