

Article

Parental Acceptance–Rejection and Psychological Maladjustment Among Slovenian High School Students: Gender and Contextual Correlates

Jana Krivec *  and Tjaša Stepišnik Perdih 

School of Advanced Social Studies, Gregorčičeva ulica 19, 5000 Nova Gorica, Slovenia;

tjasa.stepisnik.perdih@fuds.si

* Correspondence: jana.krivec@fuds.si

Abstract

Perceived parental acceptance–rejection is associated with adolescent psychological adjustment, but evidence from Central Europe remains limited. Guided by IPARTheory, this cross-sectional study examined associations between perceived maternal and paternal acceptance–rejection and psychological maladjustment among 544 Slovenian secondary-school students (58% girls; M age = 16.5 years). Participants completed the Child Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) for mothers and fathers and the Adult Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ). Maternal PARQ scores were modestly lower than paternal scores, indicating greater perceived maternal acceptance (Wilcoxon signed-rank test, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.27$). In a regression model adjusted for gender, paternal PARQ ($B = 0.161$, $SE = 0.048$, $\beta = 0.183$, $p < 0.001$) and maternal PARQ ($B = 0.273$, $SE = 0.055$, $\beta = 0.274$, $p < 0.001$) were independently associated with higher PAQ maladjustment scores; female gender was also associated with higher PAQ scores ($B = 15.47$, $SE = 1.98$, $\beta = 0.308$, $p < 0.001$). The model explained 25.1% of PAQ variance. The results were similar after adjustment for programme type and year. Academic achievement was weakly associated with lower perceived parental rejection and lower psychological maladjustment, whereas parental employment status showed no significant associations. Exploratory family-status comparisons and interaction models were nonsignificant. Findings support the cross-cultural relevance of IPARTheory, but causal interpretation is limited by the cross-sectional, single-informant design and the absence of school identifiers.

Keywords: adolescents; gender differences; IPARTheory; parental acceptance–rejection; psychological maladjustment; Slovenia



Academic Editor: Silvia Cimino

Received: 12 June 2026

Revised: 31 July 2026

Accepted: 13 August 2026

Published: 14 August 2026

Copyright: © 2026 by the authors.

Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland.

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and

conditions of the [Creative Commons](#)[Attribution \(CC BY\) license](#).

1. Introduction

Parental acceptance has been consistently associated with children and adolescents' psychological adjustment [1–3]. Because schools interact with family environments in shaping developmental outcomes [4], understanding factors associated with psychological adjustment has relevance for educational and counselling practice. Previous meta-analyses demonstrate that acceptance–rejection processes are relevant across cultural contexts [2,5]. However, less is known about these associations in Central European settings, and research examining maternal and paternal acceptance–rejection alongside relevant demographic and educational characteristics remains limited.

The present study examines associations between perceived parental acceptance–rejection and psychological maladjustment in a sample of Slovenian adolescents. Slovenia

represents a Central European context in which these associations have received limited empirical attention. The study therefore provides an opportunity to examine whether patterns described in previous acceptance–rejection research are also observed in this setting, while interpreting contextual variables as exploratory characteristics rather than tested cultural mechanisms.

1.1. Theoretical Framework

Psychological research has consistently highlighted the importance of parent–child relationships for children and adolescents' psychological adjustment. Attachment theory proposes that responsive and supportive caregiving contributes to the development of emotional security and regulation [6]. Related developmental perspectives further emphasize that family relationships are embedded within broader social contexts, including cultural and educational environments [4,7].

Building upon these frameworks, Interpersonal Acceptance–Rejection Theory (IPARTheory [3]) provides a specific operational model for understanding how parental behaviours are related to an individual's psychological functioning. IPARTheory distinguishes between perceived parental acceptance, characterized by warmth, affection, and support, and perceived rejection, which may be expressed through hostility, aggression, indifference, neglect, or undifferentiated rejection [8]. A central proposition of IPARTheory is that perceived parental acceptance–rejection is associated with psychological adjustment across diverse cultural settings [9]. The present study applies this framework to examine associations between maternal and paternal perceived acceptance–rejection and psychological maladjustment among Slovenian high school students.

Although IPARTheory emphasizes cross-cultural patterns, recent research also suggests that cultural norms may influence how parental warmth is expressed and interpreted [10–12]. Therefore, in the present study, cultural context is considered as a relevant background characteristic rather than as a mechanism directly examined in the data.

1.2. Parental Acceptance–Rejection and the Child's Psychological Adjustment

Perceived parental warmth and affection, as well as perceived rejection, have been consistently associated with the social, emotional, cognitive, and physical well-being of children and adults [6,13]. Psychological adjustment refers to affective, cognitive, perceptual, motivational, and behavioural dispositions that characterize how individuals respond across life situations [13]. Within IPARTheory, psychological adjustment is conceptualized as a personality subtheory and is commonly assessed using the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ).

A substantial body of research has linked perceived parental acceptance–rejection with psychological adjustment across age groups and cultural contexts. The meta-analysis by Khaleque and Rohner [8] indicated that perceived parental acceptance–rejection accounted for approximately 26% of the variance in psychological adjustment among children and adolescents and approximately 21% among adults (mean weighted effect sizes of $r = 0.51$ and $r = 0.46$, respectively). Similarly, Khaleque and Ali [5] reported that perceived parental emotional coldness, lack of affection, hostility, aggression, and indifference/neglect were consistently associated with psychological maladjustment across cultures.

Research has also examined specific parental behaviours and parent-specific associations. Khaleque [14] found that maternal and paternal hostility/aggression were significantly associated with psychological maladjustment and with the negative personality dispositions assessed by the PAQ. These findings support the relevance of examining maternal and paternal acceptance–rejection separately, as done in the present study.

Perceived parental rejection has been associated with a psychological profile described in IPARTheory as parental acceptance–rejection syndrome [15]. The profile includes anxiety, insecurity, anger or hostility, impaired self-esteem and self-adequacy, emotional instability, and a negative worldview. Evidence across cultural, linguistic, ethnic, and gender groups suggests that perceived rejection by primary attachment figures is associated with psychological maladjustment [8,15]. Meta-analytic findings likewise show associations between perceived parental warmth and psychological adjustment [2] and between childhood acceptance by maternal and paternal figures and adult psychological well-being [16]. These findings describe robust associations but do not by themselves establish causal effects.

1.3. The Role of Demographic Variables

To better understand the contextual factors associated with adolescents' perceptions of parental acceptance and psychological adjustment, the present study examines several demographic and educational characteristics, including gender, age, academic achievement, reported family situation, and parental employment status. These variables have been examined in developmental and educational psychology as potential correlates of family relationships and youth well-being [17,18].

Gender differences have been reported in adolescents' perceptions of interpersonal relationships and psychological adjustment. Previous research suggests that girls may report greater sensitivity to relational experiences and higher levels of internalizing symptoms, whereas boys may show different patterns of adjustment [15,19]. Examining gender differences is therefore relevant for understanding variation in adolescents' reports of parental acceptance–rejection and maladjustment.

Age represents another developmental characteristic that may be associated with differences in parent–adolescent relationships and psychological adjustment. Some evidence suggests that older adolescents may perceive greater emotional distance from their parents and experience more negative self-assessment [20]. However, the extent to which such age-related patterns generalize across adolescent populations remains unclear.

Academic achievement has been examined both as an outcome and as a possible correlate of emotional well-being. While previous studies [21] have linked perceived parental warmth to better academic achievement, these associations may also reflect broader motivational, educational, and family-related factors.

Reported family situation is another relevant characteristic when examining adolescent–parent relationships. Previous research has identified parental separation as a potential risk factor for reduced parental engagement, particularly among fathers following divorce [22]. However, a broad family-status category does not capture the quality of parent–adolescent relationships or the processes underlying adolescents' experiences of acceptance and rejection.

Parental employment status was included as a limited contextual indicator that may reflect differences in family resources and time availability [23]. It was not interpreted as a comprehensive indicator of socioeconomic status because income, parental education, occupation, financial strain, and subjective socioeconomic position were not assessed.

1.4. Theoretical Gap

While prior meta-analyses [8,15] emphasize the cross-cultural relevance of acceptance–rejection processes, less is known about the unique associations of maternal and paternal acceptance–rejection with adolescent maladjustment in Central European settings. To our knowledge, these associations, together with demographic and educational correlates, have not been examined simultaneously in a Slovenian high school sample.

Adolescence is a relevant developmental period because rapid personal and social-contextual changes can strain parent–adolescent relationships [24]. Slovenian evidence also points to socioeconomic inequalities in adolescent mental health [25], yet parental acceptance–rejection processes have received limited empirical attention in this context. The present study therefore examines the association proposed by IPARTheory in a Slovenian high school sample, evaluates maternal and paternal PARQ scores separately, and explores demographic, family-status, and educational-context differences without interpreting them as evidence of underlying cultural mechanisms.

1.5. Research Aim and Questions

The present study examined perceived parental acceptance–rejection and psychological maladjustment among Slovenian adolescents. Guided by IPARTheory [3], we addressed three aims: (1) to describe perceived maternal and paternal acceptance–rejection and psychological maladjustment in a Slovenian high school sample; (2) to examine whether maternal and paternal PARQ scores were associated with PAQ maladjustment scores; and (3) to explore whether selected demographic, family-status, and educational-context variables were associated with these outcomes. The primary analyses focused on maternal and paternal PARQ total scores in relation to PAQ total scores. Dimension-level, demographic, and family-status analyses were exploratory. We expected higher perceived parental rejection/lower acceptance to be associated with greater psychological maladjustment.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Sample

The population studied comprised Slovenian high school students. Using a stratified regional sampling approach, 11 schools were randomly selected from the 181 Slovenian secondary schools listed in the Records of Institutions and Programmes (“Evidenca zavodov in programov”); one selected school declined participation. Within participating schools, study programmes and years were randomly selected, and all students present in the selected classes on the data-collection day were invited. Trained researchers who were not involved in writing the manuscript administered the paper questionnaires during regular lessons under standardized conditions. The final school-only analytic dataset contained 544 records: 315 girls, 226 boys, and 3 students with unknown gender (M age = 16.52 years, SD = 1.00, range = 13–19). School programme counts were 34 in three-year vocational programmes (type A), 151 in four-year technical/professional programmes (type C), 356 in general secondary programmes/gymnasias (type D), and 3 were other or missing. Year-of-schooling counts were 182 first-year, 187 second-year, 173 third- or fourth-year, and 2 missing. Self-reported academic performance was the final grade from the previous school year on the Slovenian 1–5 scale. Girls reported higher grades than boys (girls: M = 3.83, SD = 0.85; boys: M = 3.56, SD = 0.98; Mann–Whitney U = 29,301, $p = 0.001$). Parental marital-status counts were 442 married/in a relationship, 86 divorced, 11 with at least one parent deceased, 4 in foster families, and 1 missing. Parental employment-status counts were 91 with one employed parent, 445 with both parents employed, 3 with both parents unemployed, and 5 missing. Detailed records distinguishing absence, non-consent, and refusal were not retained; consequently, a precise participation rate cannot be reconstructed and is not reported.

2.2. Instruments

Parental Acceptance–Rejection. The child version of the Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ [26]) assessed adolescents’ perceptions of their relationships with their mother and father. The study used Slovenian-language versions of the PARQ that

were linguistically translated and adapted with reference to International Test Commission test-adaptation principles [27] and with the permission of the original author. Translation and adaptation steps included forward translation, reconciliation, back-translation, expert review, and/or pilot testing performed by three field specialists and an English-language translator. A separate published Slovenian validation study was not available; accordingly, reliability in the present sample is reported, and subgroup comparisons are interpreted cautiously. The PARQ contains 60 items covering warmth/affection, hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, and undifferentiated rejection. Responses range from 1 = almost never true to 4 = almost always true. Total scores range from 60 to 240; lower scores indicate greater acceptance, whereas higher scores indicate greater perceived rejection/lower acceptance. Internal consistency was high in the present sample (paternal $\alpha = 0.86$; maternal $\alpha = 0.93$).

Psychological Maladjustment. The adult version of the Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ [28]) assessed psychological maladjustment. The same Slovenian-language translation and adaptation procedure described above was used for the PAQ. The adult version was selected because the child form is intended for children up to 11 years of age [13], whereas the sample consisted of secondary-school adolescents aged 13–19 years. Previous research has applied the adult PAQ in adolescent samples (e.g., Demetriou and Christodoulides [29] and Nida et al. [30]), providing empirical precedent while not eliminating the need for age-appropriate validation. The 63 items assess Hostility/Aggression, Dependence, Negative Self-Esteem, Negative Self-Adequacy, Emotional Unresponsiveness, Emotional Instability, and Negative Worldview on a 1-to-4 response scale. Total scores range from 63 to 252, with higher scores indicating greater self-reported psychological maladjustment. Internal consistency for the PAQ total score was high ($\alpha = 0.93$).

Demographic and contextual variables. Gender, age, self-reported academic achievement (the final grade from the previous school year on the Slovenian 1–5 scale), parental marital status, parental employment status, school programme type, and year of schooling were assessed using single-item questions on the questionnaire's demographic cover sheet.

2.3. Procedure

Before data collection, participating schools confirmed that parents or guardians had been informed about the study and had been given an opportunity to refuse their child's participation in accordance with the schools' internal procedures (passive/opt-out parental permission). No minor whose parent or guardian objected participated. Minor participants provided voluntary assent, whereas participants aged 18 years or older provided their own informed consent (see Supplementary File S1). Students were informed about the study purpose, questionnaire procedure, anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and their right to decline or withdraw without consequences. Questionnaires were completed anonymously in paper-and-pencil form during one school lesson, with a researcher available for questions. The data-protection and consent procedure was informed by a documented telephone consultation with the Slovenian Information Commissioner on 1 April 2019 concerning whether anonymous questionnaire responses could permit identification (see Supplementary File S2). The Research Ethics Committee of the School of Advanced Social Studies approved the study procedure and content (see Supplementary File S3); the Information Commissioner's role was consultative rather than an additional ethics approval.

2.4. Data Preparation and Analysis

For the revised analysis, maternal and paternal PARQ total scores were treated as the primary explanatory variables, and gender was included as a covariate based on prior

evidence of gender differences in adolescent self-reported adjustment. Age, academic achievement, parental marital status, parental employment status, school programme type, and year of schooling were treated as contextual or exploratory variables rather than components of the primary model. For regression models, gender was coded 0 = boy and 1 = girl; the three unknown-gender cases were excluded. The reported family-status indicator was coded 0 = parents married/in a relationship and 1 = other reported family situations (divorced, at least one parent deceased, foster family, or other). School type A and first year were reference categories in sensitivity models. Higher PARQ scores were interpreted as greater perceived rejection/lower acceptance and higher PAQ scores as greater maladjustment. Missing data were handled by listwise deletion within each analysis, so analytic N varies across models. Outliers were inspected using standardized residuals (± 3.0), with no cases exceeding the exclusion threshold. Raw data are available in Supplementary File S4.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize perceived parental acceptance–rejection and psychological maladjustment. Non-parametric tests were used when assumptions for parametric testing were not met. Because maternal and paternal PARQ scores were reported by the same adolescents, they were compared using a paired Wilcoxon signed-rank test. Gender and family-status comparisons were treated as exploratory. Benjamini–Hochberg false discovery rate (FDR) correction was applied separately to the 18 gender comparisons in Table 1 and the five family-status comparisons in Table 2; $q < 0.05$ was used as the adjusted significance criterion. Academic achievement was treated as a self-reported school-performance indicator rather than an independently verified school record.

Table 1. Exploratory gender differences in paternal and maternal PARQ and PAQ scores, with FDR correction.

PARQ Scores		Girls		Boys		Gender Difference			FDR q	r
		M	SD	M	SD	U	Z	p		
Warmth/affection	F	34.68	11.97	37.07	11.91	26,609	−2.512	0.012	0.022	0.11
	M	30.64	9.85	33.44	10.01	25,899	−3.748	<0.001	<0.001	0.16
Hostility/aggression	F	24.83	7.99	25.63	7.26	27,574	−1.911	0.056	0.078	0.09
	M	26.20	7.76	25.65	7.06	31,372.5	−0.456	0.649	0.649	0.02
Indiff./neglect	F	24.77	7.44	25.54	7.25	28,350	−1.427	0.154	0.184	0.06
	M	22.32	5.90	23.55	5.93	27,509.5	−2.782	0.005	0.014	0.12
Undiff. rejection	F	16.09	5.36	16.72	4.60	26,804.5	−2.395	0.017	0.027	0.11
	M	16.74	5.30	16.84	4.84	31,054.5	−0.648	0.517	0.548	0.03
PARQ total	F	100.36	29.02	104.96	26.19	26,298.5	−2.704	0.007	0.015	0.12
	M	95.90	25.16	99.49	23.85	28,542.5	−2.241	0.025	0.038	0.10
PAQ scores										
Hostility/aggr.		18.79	4.84	19.38	4.68	31,298.5	−1.565	0.118	0.151	0.07
Dependence		23.72	4.56	22.42	4.77	28,309.5	−3.292	<0.001	0.003	0.14
Neg. self-esteem		19.64	6.32	16.46	5.66	23,911	−5.828	<0.001	<0.001	0.25
Neg. self-adequacy		19.15	6.09	16.04	5.41	23,628.5	−5.991	<0.001	<0.001	0.26
Emotional unresponsiveness		18.94	5.03	18.39	4.81	31,868	−1.236	0.216	0.244	0.05
Emotional instability		23.02	5.10	19.92	4.65	22,101	−6.875	<0.001	<0.001	0.30
Neg. worldview		19.59	5.43	18.14	5.32	29,378.5	−2.673	0.008	0.015	0.12
PAQ total		142.86	24.36	130.75	23.45	24,127	−5.696	<0.001	<0.001	0.25

Notes: U = Mann–Whitney U test statistic; Z = standardized Mann–Whitney test statistic; F = father rating; M = mother rating; PARQ = Parental Acceptance–Rejection Questionnaire; PAQ = Personality Assessment Questionnaire. Warmth/affection was reverse-scored so that higher PARQ values consistently indicate lower acceptance/greater rejection. *p* values are from Mann–Whitney U tests; *q* values are Benjamini–Hochberg false-discovery-rate-adjusted *p* values across the 18 comparisons; $r = |Z| / \sqrt{N}$. Maximum subgroup sizes were 315 girls and 226 boys; analytic Ns vary by measure because of missing data.

Multiple regression models tested the primary association of maternal and paternal PARQ scores with PAQ maladjustment scores while controlling for gender. Visual inspection of scatterplots, Q-Q plots, and residual plots supported linearity, approximate residual normality, and homoscedasticity; VIF values were below conventional thresholds. School identifiers were not retained in the anonymized dataset, so school-level intraclass correlations, multilevel models, and school-clustered standard errors could not be estimated. Sensitivity analyses therefore adjusted for the available educational-context indicators—school programme type and year of schooling—without treating them as substitutes for school-level clustering. Exploratory family-status models were interpreted only as robustness checks and not as evidence of causal, mediating, or developmental mechanisms. Exploratory analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 27.0.1 and the PROCESS macro for SPSS [models 1, 4, and 5 (Hayes, 2018) [31]]. Model 1 tested whether reported family status moderated the association between paternal PARQ and PAQ scores; Model 4 tested the indirect association of family status with PAQ scores through paternal PARQ scores; and Model 5 tested whether gender moderated the direct family-status–PAQ association while retaining the indirect path through paternal PARQ. Continuous predictors involved in interaction terms were mean-centred prior to analysis to reduce multicollinearity; binary variables retained their 0/1 coding. Indirect effects were estimated from 5000 bootstrap samples with 95% confidence intervals (CI).

Table 2. Exploratory comparisons by reported family situation.

Outcome	Partnered		Other		Mean Difference [95% CI]	U	z	p	FDR q	r
	N1	M1 (SD)	N2	M2 (SD)						
Paternal PARQ total	422	102.42 (27.63)	83	102.19 (29.91)	0.23 [−6.80, 7.26]	16,911.5	−0.495	0.621	0.621	0.02
Maternal PARQ total	423	98.11 (24.90)	96	95.36 (24.69)	2.75 [−2.78, 8.28]	18,841.5	−1.103	0.270	0.593	0.05
PAQ total	433	138.47 (24.69)	99	135.87 (24.76)	2.60 [−2.85, 8.05]	20,129.5	−0.945	0.345	0.593	0.04
Paternal indiff./neglect	422	24.99 (7.16)	83	25.84 (8.34)	−0.85 [−2.79, 1.09]	16,879	−0.522	0.602	0.621	0.02
Maternal indiff./neglect	423	22.96 (5.93)	95	22.51 (6.19)	0.45 [−0.93, 1.83]	18,877	−0.923	0.356	0.593	0.04

Note. Partnered parents = parents married/in a relationship; other situations = divorced, at least one parent deceased, foster family, or other. Mean-difference confidence intervals are descriptive Welch intervals (partnered parents minus other situations); *p* and FDR *q* are based on the non-parametric group comparisons; *U* = Mann–Whitney *U*; *z* = standardized test statistic; *q* values are Benjamini–Hochberg-adjusted across the five comparisons; *r* = $|z|/\sqrt{N}$ is the reported effect-size magnitude.

3. Results

The results are organized around (1) descriptive findings; (2) exploratory demographic and family-status comparisons; (3) primary regression analyses of maternal and paternal PARQ scores in relation to PAQ scores; (4) educational-context sensitivity analyses; and (5) concise family-status robustness models.

3.1. Descriptive Findings

3.1.1. Parental Acceptance

Mean paternal and maternal PARQ scores were 102.40 (SD = 27.99) and 97.34 (SD = 24.76), respectively. Maternal scores were modestly lower, indicating greater perceived maternal acceptance. Because the observations were paired, a Wilcoxon signed-rank test was used; paternal PARQ scores were significantly higher than maternal scores, $W = 30,679.00$, $p < 0.001$, $r = 0.27$. Both means fall within score ranges commonly associated with perceived parental acceptance in previous research. However, because Slovenian normative data are

unavailable, the scores should not be interpreted as formal normative or clinical classifications. Comparisons with published US reference values in Figure 1 are descriptive only.

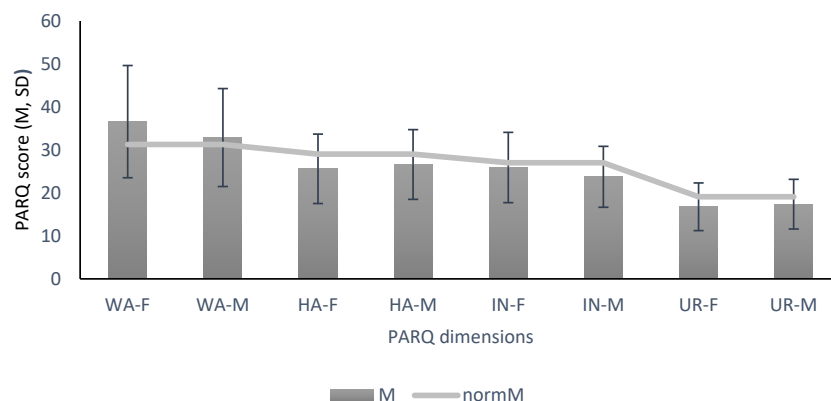


Figure 1. Mean PARQ dimension scores among Slovenian high school students and published comparison means reported by Rohner and Ali [26]. WA = warmth/affection; HA = hostility/aggression; IN = indifference/neglect; UR = undifferentiated rejection; suffix F = father score; suffix M = mother score; M in the legend = observed mean; normM = published comparison mean; error bars represent SD. The comparison values are descriptive and are not Slovenian norms.

3.1.2. Psychological Adjustment

Mean PAQ total scores were 142.86 (SD = 24.36) for girls and 130.75 (SD = 23.45) for boys (Table 1). Dependence and emotional instability were the relatively highest-scoring dimensions, whereas negative self-adequacy and negative self-esteem were the lowest (Figure 2). The score bands in Figure 2 are descriptive interpretive ranges and should not be treated as diagnostic categories, particularly because Slovenian norms and measurement-invariance evidence are unavailable.

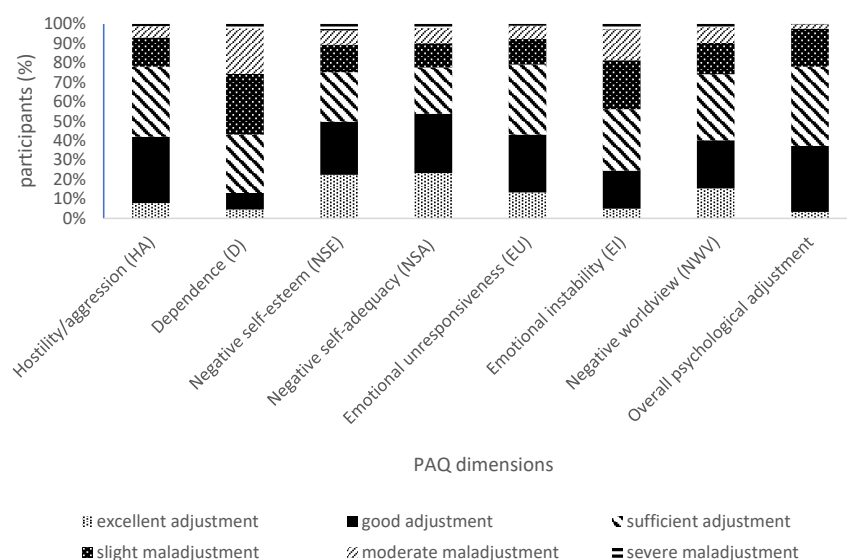


Figure 2. Descriptive distribution of PAQ score bands overall and by dimension.

3.2. Inferential Statistics

3.2.1. Associations of Socio-Demographic Variables with Parental Acceptance–Rejection and Psychological Maladjustment

Gender

Gender differences were found in several PARQ and PAQ scores (see Table 1). Compared with boys, girls generally reported lower PARQ scores on several parental acceptance–

rejection indicators, reflecting higher perceived acceptance/lower rejection, although the PARQ effect sizes were mostly trivial to small. Girls also reported higher PAQ maladjustment scores on dependence, negative self-esteem, negative self-adequacy, emotional instability, negative worldview, and the PAQ total score, with effects ranging from small to small-to-medium. After FDR correction, the main gender differences in PAQ total and several PAQ subscales remained significant, whereas marginal PARQ differences should be interpreted cautiously. Gender was included as the covariate specified in the primary regression model.

Employment Status of Parents, Children's Academic Achievement, and Age

No statistically significant differences were found in paternal PARQ, maternal PARQ, or PAQ total scores across parental employment-status groups. However, group sizes were highly imbalanced, including only three adolescents with both parents unemployed; the null findings are therefore inconclusive and are reported only descriptively. Partial correlations controlling for gender showed weak negative correlations between academic achievement and paternal PARQ scores ($r = -0.188, p < 0.001$), maternal PARQ scores ($r = -0.189, p < 0.001$), and PAQ maladjustment scores ($r = -0.192, p < 0.001$). Thus, higher academic achievement was weakly associated with lower perceived parental rejection and lower psychological maladjustment. Age was not significantly associated with paternal PARQ or PAQ scores but showed a weak positive association with maternal PARQ scores ($r = 0.117, p = 0.008$), indicating slightly greater perceived maternal rejection/lower acceptance among older adolescents.

Reported Family Situation

Direct comparisons between adolescents whose parents were married/in a relationship and those reporting other family situations showed no statistically significant differences in paternal PARQ total, maternal PARQ total, PAQ total, paternal indifference/neglect, or maternal indifference/neglect; no comparison was significant after FDR correction (Table 2). Because the non-intact category combines heterogeneous and sometimes small subgroups, these comparisons are exploratory and do not establish equivalence between family situations.

3.2.2. Relationship Between Perceived Parental Acceptance and Psychological Adjustment

The Wilcoxon signed-rank test indicated that adolescents reported significantly higher PARQ scores for fathers than for mothers, $W = 30,679.00, p < 0.001, r = 0.27$, reflecting greater perceived paternal rejection/lower paternal acceptance. Partial correlation analysis controlling for gender showed a strong positive correlation between paternal and maternal PARQ scores ($r = 0.703, p < 0.001$), indicating substantial shared variance between perceived maternal and paternal rejection. Paternal PARQ scores were positively associated with PAQ maladjustment scores, and maternal PARQ scores showed a similar positive association, indicating that higher perceived parental rejection/lower acceptance was associated with greater psychological maladjustment. Partial correlations between specific dimensions of parental acceptance–rejection and psychological maladjustment were strongest for hostility/aggression dimensions.

As seen in Table 3 the primary regression model including paternal PARQ, maternal PARQ, and gender was statistically significant, $F(3, 487) = 54.45, p < 0.001$, and explained 25.1% of the variance in PAQ maladjustment scores ($R^2 = 0.251$, adjusted $R^2 = 0.247$). Higher paternal PARQ scores were independently associated with higher PAQ scores ($B = 0.161$, $SE = 0.048, \beta = 0.183$, 95% CI [0.066, 0.256], $p < 0.001$), as were higher maternal PARQ scores ($B = 0.273$, $SE = 0.055, \beta = 0.274$, 95% CI [0.165, 0.381], $p < 0.001$). Female gender was also associated with higher PAQ scores ($B = 15.47$, $SE = 1.98, \beta = 0.308$, 95% CI [11.59, 19.35],

$p < 0.001$). These results indicate that both perceived paternal and maternal rejection/lower acceptance were associated with adolescent psychological maladjustment when gender was controlled.

Primary regression equation: PAQ maladjustment score = $84.87 + 0.161 \times \text{paternal PARQ score} + 0.273 \times \text{maternal PARQ score} + 15.47 \times \text{female gender}$.

Table 3. Primary regression model of PAQ maladjustment scores with paternal PARQ, maternal PARQ, and gender ($N = 491$; $R^2 = 0.251$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.247$).

Predictor	B	SE	β	95% CI	p
Intercept	84.869	4.373		[76.278, 93.461]	<0.001
Paternal PARQ	0.161	0.048	0.183	[0.066, 0.256]	<0.001
Maternal PARQ	0.273	0.055	0.274	[0.165, 0.381]	<0.001
Female gender	15.470	1.977	0.308	[11.587, 19.354]	<0.001

Sensitivity analyses additionally adjusting for school programme type and year of schooling produced substantively similar results (see Table 4). Paternal PARQ ($B = 0.162$, $SE = 0.049$, $\beta = 0.184$, $p < 0.001$), maternal PARQ ($B = 0.282$, $SE = 0.055$, $\beta = 0.284$, $p < 0.001$), and female gender ($B = 15.78$, $SE = 2.09$, $\beta = 0.314$, $p < 0.001$) remained significantly associated with PAQ scores, whereas school programme type and year of schooling were not. The primary associations were therefore similar after adjustment for the available educational-context indicators, although this analysis does not replace a school-clustered model.

Sensitivity regression equation: PAQ maladjustment score = $86.81 + 0.162 \times \text{paternal PARQ score} + 0.282 \times \text{maternal PARQ score} + 15.78 \times \text{female gender} + \text{school programme type and year-of-schooling covariates}$.

Table 4. Sensitivity regression model additionally adjusted for school programme type and year of schooling ($N = 488$; $R^2 = 0.257$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.246$).

Predictor	B	SE	β	95% CI	p
Intercept	86.806	5.813		[75.384, 98.229]	<0.001
Paternal PARQ	0.162	0.049	0.184	[0.066, 0.258]	<0.001
Maternal PARQ	0.282	0.055	0.284	[0.173, 0.390]	<0.001
Female gender	15.779	2.093	0.314	[11.666, 19.891]	<0.001
School type C	1.602	4.637	0.029	[−7.509, 10.713]	0.730
School type D	−2.790	4.364	−0.053	[−11.364, 5.785]	0.523
Year 2	−2.052	2.359	−0.040	[−6.687, 2.584]	0.385
Year 3+	−2.928	2.469	−0.055	[−7.779, 1.924]	0.236

3.3. Exploratory Family-Status Models

Consistent with the direct group comparisons, the reported family-status indicator did not moderate the association between paternal PARQ and PAQ scores. The interaction was nonsignificant in the unadjusted model ($N = 494$; $B = -0.101$, $SE = 0.095$, $p = 0.289$) and after adjustment for maternal PARQ and gender ($N = 490$; $B = -0.038$, $SE = 0.091$, $p = 0.677$).

A cross-sectional PROCESS-style robustness model [31] likewise did not support an indirect association of reported family status with PAQ scores through paternal PARQ scores ($N = 491$; indirect $B = -0.052$, bootstrap 95% CI [−2.496, 2.407]); the gender-by-family-status interaction was also nonsignificant ($B = 7.555$, $p = 0.161$). These exploratory analyses provide no support for moderation or a conditional indirect-effect interpretation.

4. Discussion

4.1. Perceived Parental Acceptance and Psychological Adjustment Among Slovenian High School Students

Slovenian high school students reported generally low-to-moderate PARQ and PAQ scores, but the absence of Slovenian norms precludes formal normative classification. The observed association between perceived parental acceptance–rejection and psychological adjustment is compatible with the central proposition of IPARTheory across cultural settings [15]. However, the present study did not assess welfare access, parental education, household income, school climate, or institutional support. The findings therefore cannot be attributed to specific contextual influences or mechanisms.

Consistent with previous findings from different cultural contexts [20], adolescents reported lower maternal than paternal PARQ scores, indicating somewhat higher perceived maternal acceptance. Although this difference was statistically significant, the effect size was small to moderate ($r = 0.27$), indicating a modest difference in adolescents' perceptions of maternal and paternal acceptance. One possible interpretation is that differences in parental involvement and patterns of interaction may contribute to variations in adolescents' perceptions of mothers and fathers' acceptance [32,33]. However, parental involvement and caregiving patterns were not assessed in the present study, and other unmeasured family or cultural factors may also contribute to this pattern. Recent cross-cultural research further suggests that cultural norms influence how parental care is expressed and perceived [10,12]. Consequently, the present findings should be interpreted as describing differences in adolescents' perceptions rather than the processes underlying those differences.

Mean PAQ scores were higher for girls than for boys, with dependence and emotional instability representing the relatively more elevated dimensions. Previous research has reported associations between these aspects of adjustment and family relationships, environmental stability, and school climate [34–36]. Because these factors were not examined here and the displayed score bands are not diagnostic categories, the pattern should be interpreted as a descriptive self-report profile rather than evidence about underlying mechanisms or clinical status.

4.2. Associations of Demographic and Contextual Characteristics with Parental Acceptance–Rejection and Psychological Maladjustment

4.2.1. Gender

Girls reported slightly higher perceived parental acceptance (lower rejection) than boys, although the effect sizes for PARQ scores were mostly trivial to small. In contrast, girls reported higher levels of psychological maladjustment, with a small-to-medium gender difference in PAQ total scores. Together, these findings indicate that gender differences in perceived parental acceptance and psychological maladjustment were not directly parallel. However, the present study was not designed to examine the mechanisms underlying this pattern. Because the gender differences in PARQ scores were small, PAQ reflects multiple dimensions of maladjustment, and measurement invariance was not examined, the findings should not be interpreted as evidence that perceived parental acceptance is less important for girls than for boys. Alternative explanations, including differences in reporting, relational sensitivity, or other unmeasured factors, remain possible and require investigation in longitudinal and multi-informant studies.

4.2.2. Employment Status

Parental employment status was not significantly associated with paternal PARQ, maternal PARQ, or PAQ total scores. Employment status represents only one aspect of so-

socioeconomic circumstances and does not capture parental education, household income, occupation, financial strain, or subjective socioeconomic position. Moreover, the employment groups were highly imbalanced, and only three adolescents reported that both parents were unemployed. These null findings are therefore inconclusive and should not be interpreted as evidence that socioeconomic circumstances are unrelated to adolescent adjustment.

4.2.3. Age

Age was not significantly associated with paternal PARQ scores or PAQ maladjustment scores, but it showed a weak positive association with maternal PARQ scores, indicating slightly greater perceived maternal rejection/lower acceptance among older adolescents. Although statistically significant, the association was small. The absence of a consistent age pattern is consistent with previous work suggesting that changes in parent–adolescent relationships may depend more on individual developmental trajectories and relationship quality than on chronological age alone [37,38].

4.2.4. Academic Achievement

Higher academic achievement was weakly associated with lower paternal PARQ scores, lower maternal PARQ scores, and lower PAQ maladjustment scores. These findings indicate that adolescents with better self-reported academic achievement also tended to report slightly lower perceived parental rejection and lower psychological maladjustment. However, the associations were small, academic achievement was self-reported, and the cross-sectional design precludes conclusions regarding the direction of these relationships.

4.2.5. Reported Family Situation

Reported family situation showed limited associations with perceived parental acceptance–rejection and psychological maladjustment. After correction for multiple comparisons, adolescents whose parents were married/in a relationship and those reporting other family situations did not differ significantly in paternal PARQ total, maternal PARQ total, PAQ total, paternal indifference/neglect, or maternal indifference/neglect. This pattern is broadly consistent with research suggesting that family relationship quality may be more closely associated with adolescent adjustment than broad family-status categories [39]. However, the second group combined divorced, bereaved, foster, and other situations. Parental separation, parent–child contact, custody arrangements, and interparental conflict may be relevant [1,22], but these characteristics were not assessed, and several subgroups were small. The study therefore cannot determine whether specific family processes or circumstances are associated with adolescent adjustment.

4.3. *The Relationship Between Parental Acceptance and Psychological Adjustment*

Greater perceived parental rejection/lower acceptance was associated with greater psychological maladjustment. In the primary regression model, paternal and maternal PARQ scores were each independently associated with PAQ maladjustment scores when gender was controlled. The findings therefore support the relevance of both parent–adolescent relationships while also showing substantial shared variance between maternal and paternal PARQ scores. The high correlation between the two PARQ scores suggests that adolescents' reports may partly reflect a broader family relational climate rather than entirely distinct maternal and paternal influences.

The findings are compatible with IPARTheory and previous evidence linking perceived parental rejection with psychological maladjustment [2,8,15]. However, because the study was cross-sectional and relied on adolescent self-report, the results do not establish causal parental effects. Rather, they indicate associations between perceived parental acceptance–rejection and self-reported maladjustment.

Because both maternal and paternal PARQ scores remained significant in the revised primary model, interpretations emphasizing the exclusive importance of either parent should be avoided. Future longitudinal, multi-informant, and observational research is needed to clarify whether maternal and paternal acceptance–rejection have distinct developmental roles, reflect shared family relational processes, or vary across different family contexts.

4.4. Exploratory Family-Status Models

The exploratory analyses did not support moderation of the association between paternal PARQ scores and PAQ maladjustment by reported family status, nor did they support an indirect association through paternal PARQ scores. Together with the nonsignificant direct comparisons, these findings do not support a family-status-specific explanation of the association between perceived paternal acceptance–rejection and adolescent maladjustment. Interpretation is limited by the heterogeneous second category and the absence of information on custody arrangements, parent-child contact, interparental conflict, time since separation, and stepfamily relationships.

4.5. Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the cross-sectional design precludes conclusions regarding causality or developmental processes. The analyses estimate associations but cannot establish temporal direction. Longitudinal research is therefore needed to examine how perceived parent–adolescent acceptance–rejection and psychological maladjustment develop over time.

Second, all main variables were assessed through adolescent self-report, introducing the possibility of common method variance, recall bias, temporary mood states, and shared perceptual tendencies. Future research would benefit from incorporating parent reports, teacher reports, observational measures, or clinical indicators where appropriate. In addition, PAQ scores should be interpreted as indicators of self-reported psychological maladjustment rather than clinical diagnoses.

Third, although participants were recruited through schools, school-level identifiers were not retained in the final anonymized dataset. Consequently, intraclass correlations could not be estimated, and multilevel analyses or school-clustered standard errors could not be applied. We partially addressed school-related heterogeneity by controlling for school programme type and year of schooling in sensitivity analyses; however, these variables cannot fully account for shared variance among students attending the same school or classroom.

Fourth, the sample consisted of adolescents attending mainstream high schools. Adolescents who had left school, were enrolled in alternative educational settings, or were absent on the day of data collection were not represented. In addition, detailed records distinguishing absence, non-consent, and refusal were not retained, meaning a precise response rate could not be reconstructed. Consequently, the proportion of eligible students not captured in the final sample remains unknown, and the findings may not generalize to all Slovenian adolescents, particularly those with educational or psychosocial characteristics that differ from students attending mainstream secondary schools.

Fifth, several contextual variables were measured only broadly. Parental employment status represents only one aspect of socioeconomic circumstances and does not capture parental education, household income, occupation, or subjective financial strain. The employment groups were also highly imbalanced. Similarly, divorced, bereaved, foster, and other reported family situations were combined because of small subgroup sizes, although these contexts are not equivalent and should be examined separately in future research.

Sixth, the study focused specifically on perceived parental acceptance–rejection and did not assess other family processes that may be relevant to adolescent adjustment, including autonomy support, psychological control, parental interference, academic pressure, interparental conflict, custody arrangements, or parent-child contact following parental separation.

Finally, although the Slovenian versions of the PARQ and PAQ demonstrated high internal consistency, formal psychometric validation in a Slovenian sample has not been published, and measurement invariance across gender and family-status groups was not examined. Use of the adult PAQ with participants as young as 13 years also warrants caution and age-appropriate validation. In addition, gender was treated as a binary variable in the primary analyses, with three participants classified as unknown. These limitations restrict the strength and generalizability of subgroup comparisons.

5. Conclusions

The present study examined perceived parental acceptance–rejection and psychological maladjustment among Slovenian adolescents within the framework of IPARTheory, providing initial evidence from a Central European context that has received relatively little attention in this literature. Overall, the findings are compatible with the central proposition of IPARTheory that greater perceived parental rejection/lower acceptance is associated with greater psychological maladjustment. Both paternal and maternal PARQ scores were independently associated with PAQ maladjustment scores when gender was controlled, and these associations remained stable after adjustment for school programme type and year of schooling.

The findings also provide several descriptive insights. Adolescents reported modestly lower maternal than paternal PARQ scores. Girls reported slightly lower perceived parental rejection but higher psychological maladjustment than boys, although the differences in perceived parental acceptance–rejection were small. Academic achievement showed weak associations with lower perceived parental rejection and lower psychological maladjustment. Exploratory family-status comparisons and robustness models were nonsignificant, but heterogeneous categories and small subgroups limit interpretation.

Taken together, the findings contribute to the growing cross-cultural literature on IPARTheory by demonstrating that adolescents' perceptions of both maternal and paternal acceptance–rejection are associated with psychological maladjustment in a Slovenian high school sample. Because the study was cross-sectional and relied on adolescent self-report, the findings should be interpreted as evidence of associations rather than causal relationships. Future longitudinal, multi-informant, and culturally diverse research that incorporates more detailed family and contextual measures will help clarify the developmental processes underlying these associations and further evaluate the applicability of IPARTheory across different cultural settings.

Supplementary Materials: The following supporting information can be downloaded at <https://www.mdpi.com/article/10.3390/adolescents6040061/s1> and is also available at the Open Science Framework osf.io/vsur2: Supplementary File S1: Informed consent, Supplementary File S2: documented telephone consultation with the Slovenian Information Commissioner, Supplementary File S3: Ethics committee approval and Supplementary File S4: Raw data.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization, J.K. and T.S.P.; methodology, J.K. and T.S.P.; formal analysis, J.K.; investigation, J.K. and T.S.P.; writing—original draft preparation, J.K.; writing—review and editing, T.S.P. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research was funded by the European Social Fund and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Slovenia, grant number 11083-14/2018.

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki and approved by the Research Ethics Committee of the School of Advanced Social Studies. The data-protection and consent procedure was additionally informed by a documented consultation with the Slovenian Information Commissioner on 1 April 2019.

Informed Consent Statement: Parental permission for participating minors was obtained through the participating schools' procedures giving passive parental permission. No minor participated if a parent or guardian objected. Adolescents provided voluntary assent, whereas participants aged 18 years or older provided their own informed consent. Original ethical committee approval and informed consent are available at the Open Science Framework: osf.io/vsur2.

Data Availability Statement: The raw data are available at the Open Science Framework: osf.io/vsur2.

Acknowledgments: The authors thank the participating schools and students for their cooperation. Special thanks goes to Matej Zaplotnik for his work on the project. During the preparation of this manuscript, the authors used AI-assisted language-editing and formatting support. The authors reviewed and edited the output and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

1. Kelly, J.B.; Emery, R.E. Children's adjustment following divorce: Risk and resilience perspectives. *Fam. Relat.* **2003**, *52*, 352–362. [CrossRef]
2. Khaleque, A. Perceived parental warmth, and children's psychological adjustment, and personality dispositions: A meta-analysis. *J. Child Fam. Stud.* **2013**, *22*, 297–306. [CrossRef]
3. Rohner, R.P. Introduction: Parental acceptance-rejection theory studies of intimate adult relationships. *Cross-Cult. Res.* **2008**, *42*, 5–12. [CrossRef]
4. Bronfenbrenner, U. The bioecological theory of human development. In *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*; Smelser, N.J., Baltes, P.B., Eds.; Elsevier: New York, NY, USA, 2001; Volume 10, pp. 6963–6970.
5. Khaleque, A.; Ali, S. A Systematic Review of Meta-Analyses of Research on Interpersonal Acceptance-rejection Theory: Constructs and Measures. *J. Fam. Theory Rev.* **2017**, *9*, 441–458. [CrossRef]
6. Bowlby, J. The Bowlby-Ainsworth attachment theory. *Behav. Brain Sci.* **1979**, *2*, 637–638. [CrossRef]
7. Bandura, A. *Social Learning Theory*; Prentice-Hall: Englewood Cliffs, NJ, USA, 1977.
8. Khaleque, A.; Rohner, R.P. Perceived parental acceptance-rejection and psychological adjustment: A meta-analysis of cross-cultural and intracultural studies. *J. Marriage Fam.* **2002**, *64*, 54–64. [CrossRef]
9. Rohner, R.P.; Khaleque, A.; Cournoyer, D.E. *Introduction to Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory, Methods, Evidence, and Implications*; Ronald and Nancy Rohner Center for the Study of Interpersonal Acceptance and Rejection, University of Connecticut: Storrs, CT, USA, 2012; Available online: <http://www.csjar.uconn.edu> (accessed on 4 May 2026).
10. Rothenberg, W.A.; Lansford, J.E.; Bornstein, M.H.; Chang, L.; Deater-Deckard, K.; Di Giunta, L.; Dodge, K.A.; Malone, P.S.; Oburu, P.; Pastorelli, C.; et al. Effects of Parental Warmth and Behavioral Control on Adolescent Externalizing and Internalizing Trajectories Across Cultures. *J. Res. Adolesc. Off. J. Soc. Res. Adolesc.* **2020**, *30*, 835–855. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
11. Lansford, J.E. Annual Research Review: Cross-cultural similarities and differences in parenting. *J. Child Psychol. Psychiatry Allied Discip.* **2022**, *63*, 466–479. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
12. Esposito, C.; Miranda, M.C.; Rothenberg, W.A.; Skinner, A.T.; Lansford, J.E.; Gurdal, S.; Junla, D.; Oburu, P.; Pastorelli, C.; Sorbring, E.; et al. Parent-adolescent discrepancies in perceptions of parental warmth: Cross-cultural differences and longitudinal associations with internalizing symptoms. *J. Res. Adolesc. Off. J. Soc. Res. Adolesc.* **2025**, *35*, e70093. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
13. Rohner, R.P. *They Love Me, They Love Me Not: A Worldwide Study of the Effects of Parental Acceptance and Rejection*, 1st ed.; Human Relations Area Files: New Haven, CT, USA, 1975.
14. Khaleque, A. Perceived parental hostility and aggression, and children's psychological maladjustment, and negative personality dispositions: A meta-analysis. *J. Child Fam. Stud.* **2017**, *26*, 977–988. [CrossRef]
15. Rohner, R.P.; Lansford, J.E. Deep structure of the human affectional system: Introduction to interpersonal acceptance-rejection theory. *J. Fam. Theory Rev.* **2017**, *9*, 426–440. [CrossRef]
16. Rohner, R.P.; Khaleque, A. Testing Central Postulates of Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PARTheory): A Meta-Analysis of Cross-Cultural Studies. *J. Fam. Theory Rev.* **2010**, *2*, 73–87. [CrossRef]

17. Brumariu, L.E.; Kerns, K.A. Parent–child attachment and internalizing symptoms in childhood and adolescence: A review of empirical findings and future directions. *Dev. Psychopathol.* **2010**, *22*, 177–203. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
18. Engels, R.C.; Finkenauer, C.; Meeus, W.; Deković, M. Parental attachment and adolescents' emotional adjustment: The associations with social skills and relational competence. *J. Couns. Psychol.* **2001**, *48*, 428. [CrossRef]
19. Rose, A.J. Co-rumination in the friendships of adolescent girls and boys. *Child Dev.* **2002**, *73*, 1830–1843. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
20. Kim, E. Psychological Adjustment in Young Korean American Adolescents and Parental Warmth. *J. Child Adolesc. Psychiatr. Nurs.* **2008**, *21*, 195–201. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
21. Kim, K.; Rohner, R.P. Parental warmth, control, and involvement in schooling: Predicting academic achievement among Korean American adolescents. *J. Cross-Cult. Psychol.* **2002**, *33*, 127–140.
22. Amato, P.R. The consequences of divorce for adults and children. *J. Marriage Fam.* **2000**, *62*, 1269–1287. [CrossRef]
23. Rohner, R.P.; Hahn, B.C.; Rohner, E.C. Social class differences in perceived parental acceptance-rejection and self-evaluation among Korean-American children. *Behav. Sci. Res.* **1980**, *15*, 55–66. [CrossRef]
24. Steinberg, L.; Silk, J.S. Parenting adolescents. In *Handbook of Parenting: Vol. 1. Children and Parenting*, 2nd ed.; Bornstein, M.H., Ed.; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: Mahwah, NJ, USA, 2002; pp. 103–133.
25. Klanšček, H.J.; Žiberna, J.; Korošec, A.; Zorc, J.; Albrecht, T. Mental health inequalities in Slovenian 15-year-old adolescents explained by personal social position and family socioeconomic status. *Int. J. Equity Health* **2014**, *13*, 26. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
26. Rohner, R.P.; Ali, S. Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ). In *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*; Zeigler-Hill, V., Shackelford, T., Eds.; Springer: Cham, Switzerland, 2016. [CrossRef]
27. International Test Commission. ITC guidelines for translating and adapting tests (second edition). *Int. J. Test.* **2018**, *18*, 101–134. [CrossRef]
28. Rohner, R.P.; Ali, S. Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ). In *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*; Zeigler-Hill, V., Shackelford, T., Eds.; Springer: Cham, Switzerland, 2016. [CrossRef]
29. Demetriou, L.; Christodoulides, P. Personality and psychological adjustment of Greek-Cypriot youth in the context of the parental acceptance-rejection theory. *Cyprus Rev.* **2011**, *23*, 81–96. Available online: <https://cyprusreview.org/index.php/cr/article/view/167> (accessed on 20 April 2026).
30. Nida, A.; Haider, A.; Zhang, X.Y. Psychosocial Factors and Psychological Adjustment Among Adolescents and Young Adults: A Comparative Analysis of Occasional Drug Craving and Non-Craving. *Psychiatry Investig.* **2024**, *21*, 947–957. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
31. Hayes, A.F. *Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach (Methodology in the Social Sciences)*, 2nd ed.; The Guilford Press: New York, NY, USA, 2018.
32. Lamb, M.E. *The Role of the Father in Child Development*; John Wiley & Sons: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2004.
33. Campbell, L. Parenting Girls and Boys. In *Handbook of Parenting: Vol. 1. Children and Parenting*; Lawrence Erlbaum Associates: Mahwah, NJ, USA, 2002; pp. 127–152.
34. Latsch, A. The interplay of emotional instability and socio-environmental aspects of schools during adolescence. *Eur. J. Educ. Res.* **2018**, *7*, 281–293. [CrossRef]
35. Gao, M.; Liu, W. Exploring Family Functioning and Adolescent Academic Anxiety: Emotional Stability and Social Support as Mediators. *Psychol. Res. Behav. Manag.* **2025**, *18*, 1111–1124. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
36. Smith, K.E.; Dimitroff, S.J.; Faig, K.E.; Silver, E.M.; Norman, G.J. Instability in the environment and children's in-school self-regulatory behaviors. *Front. Psychol.* **2025**, *16*, 1498961. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
37. Laursen, B.; Collins, W.A. Parent–child relationships during adolescence. In *Handbook of Adolescent Psychology*, 3rd ed.; Lerner, R.M., Steinberg, L., Eds.; John Wiley & Sons: Hoboken, NJ, USA, 2009; pp. 3–42.
38. Scott, L.N.; Whalen, D.J.; Zalewski, M.; Beeney, J.E.; Pilkonis, P.A.; Hipwell, A.E.; Stepp, S.D. Predictors and consequences of developmental changes in adolescent girls' self-reported quality of attachment to their primary caregiver. *J. Adolesc.* **2013**, *36*, 797–806. [CrossRef] [PubMed]
39. Miranda, M.C.; Affuso, G.; Esposito, C.; Bacchini, D. Parental Acceptance–Rejection and Adolescent Maladjustment: Mothers' and Fathers' Combined Roles. *J. Child Fam. Stud.* **2016**, *25*, 1352–1362. [CrossRef]

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.