

## **Teacher Rejection Sensitivity and Psychological Maladjustment among Adolescents: Moderating Role of Peer Rejection Sensitivity**

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Abstract

This cross-sectional study addressed the question of how peer rejection sensitivity may contribute to the relationship between teacher rejection sensitivity and psychological maladjustment among adolescents. Data were collected through Urdu version of Children Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (CRSQ; Shujja et al., 2017) and Personality Assessment Questionnaire (PAQ; Naz & Kausar, 2013) from the conveniently drawn sample including boys ( $n = 140$ ) and girls ( $n = 160$ ) of 14-18 years. Moderation analysis was carried out and results revealed that peers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection positively moderated the relationship between teachers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection and psychological maladjustment. It means that that the nature of relationship between teachers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection and psychological maladjustment becomes positive when peers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection is low. Partially inconsistent with the existing literature, girls were high on peer and teacher rejection sensitivity but low on psychological maladjustment compared to boys. Findings were discussed within indigenous perspective.

*Keywords:* Rejection cues, rejection sensitivity, psychological maladjustment, Pakistan<sup>2</sup>

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## **Introduction**

Researchers conceptualized Rejection sensitivity as tendency to expect ambiguously intentioned interpersonal rejection and overreaction to it based on childhood rejection experiences (Downey & Feldman, 1996). Children and adolescents develop sensitivity to rejection in result of childhood interaction with parents suggesting that parental support was strongly associated with high academic achievement and positive self-esteem (Doyle & Markiewicz, 2005; Milevsky et al., 2007). However, parental rejection may lead towards hostility, aggression, loneliness, depression, anxiety, and relationship dissolution (Ayduk et al., 2001; Downey et al., 2000; Shujja, 2018; Zimmer-Gembeck, & Wright, 2007). Within the social cognitive framework, rejection sensitivity develops in early childhood due to parental rejection and its effects may transfer to other interpersonal relationships like friends, peers, teachers, and other non-familial adults (Feldman & Downey, 1994; Shujja, 2018). Researchers argue that parental and peer rejection may play important role in development of rejection sensitivity and plenty of research has focused on psychological correlates of parental and peer rejection sensitivity (Butler et al., 2007; Parker et al., 1999; Schmidt & Bagwell, 2007), however, teacher rejection sensitivity is a largely ignored construct around the globe and especially in Pakistan.

Researchers argued that quality of teacher-child relationship significantly contributes to psychological adjustment of children in the same way as quality of parent-child relationship does. It implies that high quality teacher-child relationship predicts high level of psychological adjustment than low quality teacher-child relationship (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Pianta, 1999; Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004). Meta-analytical review reported that the children who develop secure and warm relationship with their teachers are also likely to have secure and warm relationship with their parents. Secondly, secure attachment with teachers tends to negatively correlate with hostility, delinquency, conduct problems, and positively correlate with peer interaction (Ali, 2011).

Rejection sensitivity theory proposed that internalization of childhood rejection experiences related to parents or peers and proliferation of these experiences to other interpersonal relationships like teachers and other non-familial adults are central to rejection sensitivity (Downey, et a., 1999). Researchers further extended rejection sensitivity theory suggesting that peer rejection may be more significant precursor

of rejection sensitivity than parental rejection but parental support may buffer the negative effects of peer rejection (McLachlan et al., 2010). Although impact of parent-peer rejection on psychological adjustment of adolescents has been investigated (Shujja, 2018), however, teacher-peer rejection sensitivity interaction effect on psychological maladjustment of adolescents is yet to be known.

Attachment researchers have focused on influence of children's secure attachment with parents and teachers on their peer relationship (Howes, 1988; Rubin & Lollis, 1988; Turner, 1991) but moderating role of peer rejection sensitivity between teacher rejection sensitivity and psychological maladjustment is still to be unfolded. Researchers agree that teachers are not only responsible for children's academic success but for their psychosocial adjustment, and positive peer relationship as well (Audley-Piotrowski et al., 2015), however these researches have been conducted on elementary school children. It seems logical that at elementary school level, teachers have control over children and they can easily socialize children, however socializing rejection sensitive adolescents may be much more difficult because of their differential characteristics. For example, adolescents who have history of parental and peer rejection experiences are less likely to trust other interpersonal relationships like teachers (see Howes et al., 1994).

A study investigated moderating effect of parent-child and friend-child supportive relationship on rejection sensitivity and depression among middle adolescents. Findings demonstrated that angry expectation of rejection was associated with depressive symptoms for only those adolescents who reported low parental and friend support (McDonald et al., 2010). Another study reported that adolescents who retrospectively perceived parental or peer rejection were more vulnerable to antisocial behaviors (Dodge et al., 2003).

Growing number of researches provide evidence about negative impact of peer rejection on psychological adjustment as rejected children experience loneliness, depression symptoms, negative worldview, negative self-esteem, lack of emotional responsiveness, and anxiety compared to those who are well-accepted by their peers (Asher et al., 1990; Coie, 1990; Patterson et al., 1990, Shujja, 2018). Researchers assert that children characteristics determine psychological adjustment depending on how they perceive their peer relationship (Ladd & Troop-Gordon, 2003). Another study reported that perceived rejection

significantly moderated the relationship between peer relationship and depression symptoms. It means that perception of rejection is a subjective experience of young adolescents and peer rejection turns out to be strongly associated with psychological adjustment only for those who perceive high level of rejection (Sandstrom, Cillessen, & Eisenhower, 2003).

In short, adolescents perceive their peers as an important source of psychological adjustment compared to parents or other family members. Relationship researchers claimed that teachers play important role in social and self-esteem of children but these findings had limited implications covering primary school children's psychological adjustment. Shujja (2018) reported that parental and peer rejection significantly predicted psychological adjustment in adolescents in Pakistan, however, the association between teacher rejection sensitivity and psychological maladjustment in Pakistani adolescents was to be unfolded especially when peer rejection sensitivity is likely to play a moderating role.

### **Purpose of the Present Study**

The scarcity of literature on teacher rejection sensitivity especially in adolescents limited our search for its correlates. The information about the link between teacher rejection sensitivity and psychological adjustment of adolescent through the moderating role of peer rejection sensitivity is missing. However, plenty of research (see Uslu & Gizir, 2017; Veríssimo et al., 2017) is devoted to teacher attachment or rejection and its role in developing positive peer relationship. For example, teachers unintentionally help the children to affiliate with like-minded peer groups by creating opportunities to engage in group tasks, seating arrangement in the class room, and joint play (Audley-Piotrowski et al., 2015). Expanding the role of teacher, researchers found that evaluation of children's social behaviors and peer acceptance or rejection depends on whether the teachers like or dislike the focal child. It means that teachers' liking or disliking moderates the child's social behaviors and peer acceptance or rejection (Chang, 2003). The primary purpose of the present study was to investigate moderating role of peer rejection sensitivity between teacher rejection sensitivity and psychological maladjustment in adolescents.

To the best of our knowledge, no study has yet reported gender difference in teacher rejection sensitivity. However, researchers demonstrate that boys appear to experience more peer rejection sensitivity in adolescence because they face more emotional and psychological difficulties during transition from childhood to adolescence than girls (Kuttler et al., 1999; LaGreca & Mackey, 2007). In addition, boys are more rejection sensitive especially, in circumstances that threaten their social status (Downey et al., 1998; London et al., 2007). Prior research reported no gender difference in rejection sensitivity perhaps because of wider age range of the sample (14-21 years) (Harper et al., 2006). Another study reported that boys faced more peer rejection sensitivity than the girls do (McLachlan et al., 2010). Besides, girls are likely to face more psychological problems like anxiety, stress, depression than boys do (Evren et al., 2015, Shujja, 2018). The secondary objective was to identify gender differences on teacher rejection sensitivity, peer rejection sensitivity, and psychological maladjustment. In the light of the aforementioned objectives, the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. Teacher rejection sensitivity and peer rejection sensitivity would positively correlate with each other and with psychological maladjustment in adolescents.
2. Peer rejection sensitivity will moderate the relationship between teacher rejection sensitivity and psychological adjustment of adolescents.
3. Boys would be more sensitive to peer and teacher rejection compared to girls whereas girls would be psychologically more maladjusted than that of boys.

## **Method**

### **Participants**

Sample of the present study comprised of 300 adolescents of 14-18 years ( $M = 15.11$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ) including girls ( $n = 160$ ) and boys ( $n = 140$ ), which was recruited from various private and public schools and colleges of Lahore through convenient sampling technique. Mostly adolescents belonged to lower middle and middle class families as their family income ranged from 11000-60000 Pakistani Rupees per month. Moreover, 50% fathers completed school education compared to 47% mothers who attained school education (see Figure 1).

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of the Sample*

Variables	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)	<i>f</i> (%)
Gender	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Girls</i>			
	140(46.6)	160(53.3)			
Grades	<i>8<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>9<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>10<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>11<sup>th</sup></i>	<i>12<sup>th</sup></i>
	05(1.66)	50(16.66)	82(27.33)	100(33.33)	63(21)
Schools	<i>Public</i>	<i>Private</i>			
	154(51.33)	146(48.66)			
Father education	<i>Illiterate</i>	<i>School</i>	<i>College</i>	<i>University</i>	
	47(15.66)	150(50)	76(25.33)	27(9)	
Mother education					
	85(28.33)	139(46.33)	61(20.33)	15(5)	
Monthly Family Income (PKR)	<i>Lower class</i>	<i>Lower middle class</i>	<i>Middle class</i>	<i>Upper middle class</i>	<i>Higher class</i>
	≤10000	11000-25000	26000-60000	61000-99000	≥100000
	31(10.33)	104(34.66)	110(36.66)	28(9.33)	27(9)
	258(82.4)	28(8.9)	27(8.6)		
Family system	<i>Joint</i>	<i>Nuclear</i>			
	182(60.66)	118(39.33)			

*Note.* The bar graph shows the categorical description of the sample along with the variable names and frequency counts on the top of the bars.

**Instruments**

***Children Rejection Sensitivity Questionnaire (CRSQ; Downey et al, 1998)***

This measure comprised 12 vignettes and 3 subscales a) angry expectations of rejection, b) angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection, and c) feeling rejected for assessing teacher and peer rejection sensitivity in children and adolescents. Respondents rate each vignette on three questions corresponding to the subscales mentioned above. Sample vignette is “Imagine you want to buy a present for someone who is really important to you, but you don’t have enough money. So you ask a kid in your class if you could please borrow some money. The kid says, “Okay, wait for me outside the front door after school. I’ll bring the money.” As

you stand outside waiting, you wonder if the kid will really come” followed by three questions a) How NERVOUS would you feel, RIGHT THEN, about whether or not the kid will show up? b) How MAD would you feel, RIGHT THEN, about whether or not the kid will show up? c) Do you think the kid will show up to give you the money?

Respondents were asked to rate first question of each vignette on 6-point Likert type scale from *not nervous* (1) to *very, very nervous* (6), second question of each vignette from *not mad* (1) to *very, very mad* (6), and third question of each vignette on *yes* (1) to *no* (6). For the current study, Urdu version of CRSQ was used and alpha reliability estimates ranged from .74- .85 (Shujja et al., 2017)

***Personality Assessment Questionnaire-Child (Child PAQ; Rohner & Khaleque, 2008)***

Child PAQ comprised 42-items and seven subscales named as hostility and aggression (physical aggression, verbal aggression, passive aggression, problem with management of hostility and aggression), dependency, self- esteem, self-adequacy, emotional responsiveness, emotional stability and worldview that is used to measure psychological maladjustment. Sample items are “I have trouble controlling my temper” ; “I can compete successfully for things I want” and respondents were asked to rate each item on *almost never true* (1), *rarely true* (2), *sometime true* (3), or *almost always true* (4). All the positive items showing high scores were reverse coded. Scoring procedure demonstrates that high score on Child PAQ indicates high level of psychological maladjustment and vice versa. For the current study, Urdu translation of Child PAQ (Naz & Kausar, 2013) and alpha reliability for the overall Child PAQ was .82.

**Procedure**

Prior to administration of CRSQ and Child PAQ, formal permission was sought from principals of schools and colleges and informed consent was obtained from participants. Participants were briefed about the purpose of research, potential risks and benefits, rights, responsibilities, and role of researcher. Their questions related to study were satisfactorily answered and clear instructions were communicated regarding completion of data completion. The above mentioned questionnaires along with demographic sheet were administered in the group of 15-20 participants. Demographic sheet included variables that

may potentially relate to our study i.e., age and gender of respondents, father occupation, mother occupation, father education, mother education, family income, private and public schools/colleges. Participants took 30-35 minutes form completion of data set and all the participants were formally thanked for their cooperation. The obtained data were subject to statistical analyses in order to evaluate whether data set support the proposed hypotheses.

**Results**

Prior to conduction of statistical analyses through SPSS 21 and Process software (Hayes, 2013), missing value analysis was run in order to screen out the irregularities in the data. Results indicated no missing value or irrularity in the data. The obtained data set was subjected to verious statisitcal analyses i.e.correlation, t-test, and moderation analysis.

**Table 2**  
*Intercorrelations for Study Variables*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>α</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
1. Anxious Expectation of Rejection_Teacher	20.80	7.19	.75		.72**	.70**	.65**	.19**
2. Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Reejction _Teacher	15.83	7.19	.80			.53**	.64**	.17*
3. Anxious Expectations of Rejection _Peer	18.59	6.61	.70				.82**	.16*
4. Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection _Peer	17.22	6.81	.72					.16*
5. Psychological Maladjuatment	90.21	13.33	.82					

*Note.* The results are shown for the adolescents (*N* = 300) after statistically controlling for the age and gender. All the correlation coefficients supported the hypothesized positive correlation between study variables.

\**p*<.01, \*\**p*<.001.

Table 1 demonstrates that dimensions of teacher rejection snesitivity (anxious expectations of teacher rejection and angry reaction to ambiguously intetioned teacher rejection) were positivily and significantly correlated with dimensions of peer rejection sensitivity (anxious expectations of peer rejection and angry reaction to

ambiguously intetioned peer rejection). In addition, dimensions of teacher rejection sensitivity and peer rejection sensitivity were also significantly and positivily correlated with psychological adjustment in adolescents after statistically controlling for the age and gender of the participents (high score on Personality Assessment Questionnaire [PAQ; Rohner & Khaleque, 2005a] pertained to maladjustment and vice versa). Further, alpha coefficients of all measures of study variables found within acceptable range (.70-.82).

**Table 3**

*Peers' Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection as Moderator between Study Variables*

Variables	Psychological Maladjustment	
	$\beta$	SE
Constant	90.92***	2.89
Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection _Teacher	.08**	.036
Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection _Peer	.06	.036
Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection _Teacher X Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection _Peer	-.002*	.001
Low Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection _Peer	.13*	.04
Moderate Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection _Peer	.08	.05
High Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection _Peer	.04	.037
$R^2$	.06	
$F$	6.78***	

*Note.* Moderation analysis was based on the data obtained from the adolescents ( $N = 300$ ) showing moderating role of peers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection between teachers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection and psychological maladjustment.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

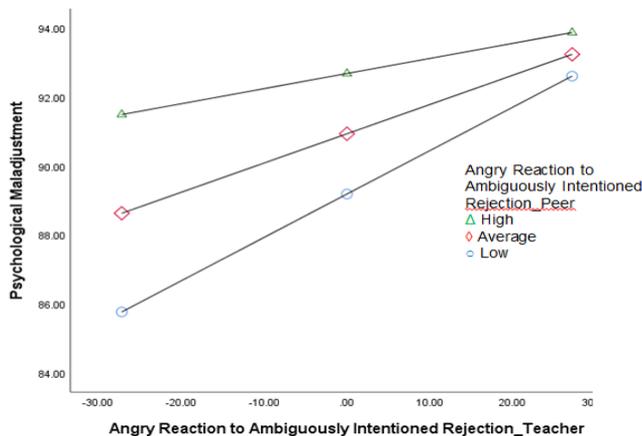
In order to investigate moderating effect of peer rejection sensitivity between teacher rejection sensitivity and psychological maladjustment, PROCESS macro for SPSS (Hayes, 2013) was used. Moderation analysis was conducted separately for the two dimensions of peer rejection sensitivity. In the first model, anxious expectation of peer

rejection did not moderate the relationship between anxious expectation of teacher rejection and psychological maladjustment ( $B = -.001, p = .07$ ). Moreover, main effect of anxious expectation of teacher rejection and anxious expectation of peer rejection on psychological maladjustment also remained non-significant.

Moderation analysis was separately conducted for determining interaction effect of angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned peer rejection (moderator) and angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned teacher rejection (predictor variable) on psychological maladjustment (predicted variable) in adolescents. Findings revealed that angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned teacher rejection had significant positive main effect on psychological maladjustment, however, angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned peer rejection did not predict psychological maladjustment. Further, interaction effect of angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned teacher rejection and angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned peer rejection was found to be significant. It implied that the positive relationship between ambiguously intentioned teacher rejection (independent variable) and psychological maladjustment (dependent variable) was the strongest at low level of angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned peer rejection (moderator).

**Figure 1**

*Peers' Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection as Moderator*



*Note.* The positive relationship between teachers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection and psychological adjustment is strongest at the low level of peers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection. It means that peers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection weakens the positive association between angry

teachers' reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection and psychological maladjustment.

Figure 1 elucidates that the degree of peers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection has minimal influence on the relationship between high levels of teachers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection and psychological maladjustment, however, when teachers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection is at low levels, the degree of peer rejection does modulate the association between teacher's angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection and psychological maladjustment. The adolescents exposed to low levels of teachers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection and peers' angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned rejection have the lowest degree of psychological maladjustment. However, adolescents experiencing low levels of teachers' rejection and high levels of peers' rejection are more vulnerable to psychological maladjustment. Therefore, we may conclude that peer rejection could be a significant threat to the psychological adjustment of adolescents who are less exposed to teachers' rejection, however, in case of adolescents who perceive high degree of teachers' rejection, peer rejection may not further increase their vulnerability to psychological maladjustment.

**Table 4**

*Gender Difference in the Focal Constructs of the Present Study*

Variables	Boys(n=140)		Girls(n=160)		<i>t</i> (311)	<i>p</i>	95%CI		Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
AER_Teacher	43.33	21.68	54.92	29.93	3.83	.001	17.5	5.6	.44
ARAIR_Teacher	33.31	23.56	43.63	29.48	3.36	.001	16.3	4.2	.38
AER_Peer	40.48	26.58	50.21	27.88	3.13	.001	15.8	3.6	.35
ARAIR_Peer	38.79	27.34	47.54	30.26	2.65	.01	15.2	2.2	.30
PMA	87.89	13.4	92.09	13.01	2.80	.01	7.1	1.2	.31

*Note.* The difference between adolescent girls ( $n = 160$ ) and boys ( $n = 140$ ) on the study variables were reported along with effect sizes based on Cohen's *d*. AER\_Teacher = Anxious Expectation of Rejection\_Teacher, ARAIR\_Teacher = Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection, AER\_Peer = Anxious Expectations of Rejection\_Peer, ARAIR\_Peer = Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection\_Peer, PMA= Psychological Maladjustment.

Gender-wise comparisons of means demonstrated that girls scored high on both dimensions of rejection sensitivity related to peer and teacher, and psychological maladjustment than did the boys. It means girls more anxiously expect and angrily react towards rejection cues

(unintentional, ambiguous, or even no cue) from peer or teachers than boys do. As demonstrated in Table 3, the effect size of gender differences ranges from .30 to .44 suggested a medium effect size.

## **Discussion**

In the current study, we aimed to investigate three objectives i.e., identifying a) association among dimensions of peer rejection sensitivity, teacher rejection sensitivity and psychological maladjustment in adolescents b) moderating role of dimensions of peer rejection sensitivity between teacher rejection sensitivity and psychological maladjustment c) gender differences on dimensions of peer rejection sensitivity and teacher rejection sensitivity, and psychological maladjustment.

Firstly, Peer rejection sensitivity appeared to be strongly correlated with teacher rejection sensitivity suggesting that adolescents who are sensitive to peer's rejection tend to develop sensitivity to teacher rejection and vice versa. Previous research demonstrated that in comparison to parental rejection, peer rejection played more important role in developing rejection sensitivity to other interpersonal relationships like teachers (McLachlan et al., 2010). The results of current study further demonstrate that peer and teacher rejection sensitivity significantly correlated with psychological maladjustment in Pakistani adolescents. These findings are consistent with existing literature (Butler et al., 2007; McDonald et al., 2010; Parker et al., 1999; Schmidt & Bagwell, 2007). Keeping the results in view, we inferred that adolescents are more likely to be attached with peer and strive for acceptance within peer group. Cues related to peer rejection may lead to the development of negative image about other interpersonal relationships. The individual who is sensitive towards peer rejection is likely to develop stigma of being "unlikable". Owing to which s/he is at increased risk of perceiving teacher rejection, which, in turn may further deteriorate her/his capacity to relate with peers.

Secondly, a dimension of peer rejection sensitivity named as angry reactions to ambiguous intentioned rejection moderated the relationship between angry reaction to ambiguous cues of teacher rejection and psychological maladjustment in adolescents. It means that adolescents experience low anger related to ambiguous cues of teacher rejection and less psychological maladjustment if anger related to ambiguous peer rejection cues is low. Existing research claimed that peer

rejection sensitivity is stronger predictor of psychological adjustment in children than the parental rejection (McLachlan et al., 2010) and findings of current study demonstrate that peer rejection sensitivity component (angry reaction to ambiguously intentioned peer rejection) holds significant value in determining the relationship between corresponding teacher rejection sensitivity and psychological maladjustment in adolescence. The reason may be that enjoying secure and accepting relationship with peers may pave the way to develop accepting and secure relationships with teachers resulting in better psychological adjustment in adolescence. Researchers are of the view that adolescence is an age full of emotional turmoil, behavioral abruption, and relationship issues (American Psychiatric Association, 2000b; White & Hayman, 2006). In such a critical age, need for peer acceptance or lower level of peer rejection sensitivity may help the adolescents to develop secure interpersonal relationships with teachers and other non-familial adults, and get psychologically adjusted.

Thirdly, teacher serves as mentor in paving the way towards psychosocial adjustment of adolescents (Asher et al., 1990; Coie, 1990; Patterson et al., 1990), however, rejection sensitive adolescents remain at distance from their teachers. This communication gap may halt their academic, psychological, and social progress. Teachers may reject such students by considering them as deviant cases. This interplay of perceived or actual rejection in teacher-adolescent relationship may worsen the situation culminating anxiety, stress, and other pathological symptoms. On the contrary, psychologically disturbed adolescents are more vulnerable to detect mild or even non-rejecting cues from teacher and react accordingly.

Previous studies demonstrate that boys experience more peer rejection sensitivity whereas girls experience more psychological maladjustment (Downey et al., 1998; Evren et al., 2015; Harper et al., 2006; Kuttler et al., 1999; LaGreca & Mackey, 2007; London et al., 2007; McLachlan et al., 2010). Our data partially supported these findings as girls appeared to be more peer and teacher rejection sensitive, and psychologically maladjusted compared to boys. In Pakistani culture, adolescent girls rarely interact with cross-gender peers due to cultural norms and customs. Both girls and boys remain more comfortable in interacting with same sex peers. Same sex peers become the primary source of affiliation for the adolescent girls due to limited opportunity of developing extended relationships especially in lower middle and middle

class families. In our research, most of the respondents belonged to lower middle and middle class (see Figure 1) and girls were more likely to rely on peers social support, care, and belongingness compared to boys. On the other hand, boys are free to develop interpersonal relationships on larger scale and have greater opportunity of sharing and expressing emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. Early childhood rejection experiences of adolescent girls make them vulnerable to increased rejection sensitivity related to peers or teachers and, which in turn may result in poorer psychological adjustment compared to the boys.

### **Conclusion**

Conclusively, the relationship among peer rejection sensitivity, teacher rejection sensitivity, and psychological maladjustment in adolescents was positive and significant as anticipated in the current study. Secondly, the relationship between a dimension of teacher's rejection sensitivity (Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection) and psychological maladjustment of adolescents appeared to be stronger if the corresponding dimension of peer's rejection sensitivity acting, as moderator (Angry Reaction to Ambiguously Intentioned Rejection) is low. Finally, girls scored higher on rejection sensitivity and psychological maladjustment than that of boys suggesting gender differences on the study variables.

### **Implications and Limitations**

This research may help interpersonal researchers, clinical psychologists, career counselors, teachers, parents, and school counselors in understanding the factor like rejection sensitivity related to peers and teachers and its influence on psychological adjustment in adolescents. Based on the understanding of rejection sensitivity, school counselors may devise intervention plans for rejection sensitive adolescents. Although the study provides new directions for interpersonal researchers, yet few limitations restricted broad generalization of our findings e.g., data were collected through self-report measures and teachers or peer perspective was not taken into account. This poses problem of common method variance suggesting that respondents could have been biased in reporting rejection sensitivity and psychological maladjustment. Future research should use multi-informant approach in order to avoid aforementioned problem.

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