

## Abstract

Research literature has always indicated how the perception of Parental Acceptance or Rejection influences an individual's personality development. However, the *dark* personality traits have scarcely been explored in relation to parental rejection simultaneously in one model and the involved internal mechanisms despite their importance have not been much of a focal point of exploration. Thus, the current research aimed to explore one such important internal phenomenon that may lead to 'dark' personality dispositions or tendencies. Hence, it was hypothesized that Psychological Maladjustment strengthens the positive relationship between parental rejection and the Dark Triad personality traits. The sample comprised of 474 undergraduates, 111 men ( $M(\text{age}) = 21.67$ ,  $SD = 1.894$ ) and 363 women ( $M(\text{age}) = 21.59$ ,  $SD = 1.740$ ) aged 18 to 25, assessed through carefully designed online survey questionnaire. Data were collected from these participants using Adult Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire and Adult Personality Assessment Questionnaire, and the Short Dark Triad Scale. The results did not indicate any significant correlation between remembered paternal rejection and Machiavellianism. Remembered maternal rejection was not correlated with narcissism. Mean based comparisons revealed that men had overall higher scores on Dark Triad traits; young adults with remembered parental rejection, specifically maternal rejection, had significantly higher scores on psychopathy; and psychological maladjustment significantly predicted all the Dark Triad traits and mediated the positive relationship between parental rejection and the Dark Triad personality traits. Study will be of extensive benefit to mental health professionals, researchers and professionals working in forensic settings enabling them to better understand the on-set of antisocial behavior or how adverse personality dispositions develop under the impact of adverse rearing environments.