

Parental Rejection and Emotional Reactivity: The Mediating Role of Self-Esteem

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ABSTRACT

Objective: This study aimed to examine the relationship between perceived parental rejection and emotional reactivity among adolescents, with self-esteem as a potential mediating variable.

Methods and Materials: A descriptive correlational design was used, involving 600 adolescents aged 15 to 18 years from urban areas in China, selected through multi-stage cluster sampling based on the Morgan and Krejcie table. Standardized self-report instruments were employed: the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ), the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and the Emotional Reactivity Scale (ERS). Data analysis was conducted using SPSS-27 for descriptive and inferential statistics and AMOS-21 for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). The assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were tested and confirmed.

Findings: Pearson correlation analysis revealed significant relationships among the variables: parental rejection was positively correlated with emotional reactivity ($r = .52, p < .001$) and negatively with self-esteem ($r = -.49, p < .001$), while self-esteem was negatively correlated with emotional reactivity ($r = -.55, p < .001$). The SEM model showed acceptable fit indices ($\chi^2/df = 2.53$, GFI = 0.94, CFI = 0.96, RMSEA = 0.048). Path analysis indicated that parental rejection had a significant direct effect on self-esteem ($\beta = -0.49, p < .001$) and emotional reactivity ($\beta = 0.30, p < .001$). Self-esteem significantly predicted emotional reactivity ($\beta = -0.55, p < .001$), and a significant indirect effect of parental rejection on emotional reactivity through self-esteem was observed ($\beta = 0.27, p < .001$).

Conclusion: The findings support a partial mediation model, indicating that self-esteem serves as a significant mechanism through which parental rejection influences adolescents' emotional reactivity. These results highlight the importance of promoting positive parental behaviors and enhancing adolescent self-esteem to reduce emotional vulnerability.

Keywords: Parental Rejection, Emotional Reactivity, Self-Esteem, Adolescents.

1. Introduction

Emotional reactivity, characterized by heightened sensitivity and intense emotional responses to external stimuli, is a critical aspect of psychological functioning in adolescence. It significantly influences interpersonal behavior, emotion regulation, and vulnerability to mental health problems during this sensitive developmental stage (Miller et al., 2019; Palmer et al., 2022). Understanding the antecedents of emotional reactivity has become increasingly important in contemporary psychological research, particularly in the context of early relational experiences such as parental behavior. Among the various parenting-related constructs, parental rejection stands out as a powerful environmental predictor of emotional vulnerability and instability (Gardner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018; Kosson et al., 2020). Adolescents exposed to repeated emotional dismissal or neglect from their primary caregivers often develop a heightened reactivity to perceived interpersonal threats, leading to emotional dysregulation, impulsive behaviors, and internalizing symptoms (Jin, 2023; Reis et al., 2021).

Parental rejection is a multidimensional construct encompassing a lack of warmth, critical or hostile behavior, emotional unavailability, and neglect (Kosson et al., 2020). These behaviors impair the child's sense of emotional security, disrupt attachment formation, and undermine the development of internalized self-worth (Ali et al., 2024; Zeng et al., 2025). The influence of parental rejection extends beyond immediate emotional consequences, often predicting long-term psychological issues such as depression, anxiety, and difficulties in self-regulation (Bekaroğlu & Yılmaz, 2023; Slagt et al., 2018). Research has demonstrated that adolescents who perceive themselves as unloved or emotionally rejected are more prone to heightened emotional reactivity and poorer emotional coping skills (Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2019; Palmer et al., 2020). Moreover, emotional reactivity may not emerge in isolation but is shaped by various mediating processes, among which self-esteem plays a pivotal role.

Self-esteem, defined as the individual's overall evaluation of self-worth, is deeply rooted in early caregiving experiences. Positive parental involvement typically fosters a secure self-concept, whereas rejecting parenting fosters internalized feelings of unworthiness and inadequacy (Gufeng et al., 2024; Yuan, 2023). Adolescents who internalize parental rejection often develop negative self-schemas, which may amplify their emotional responses to

interpersonal stressors (Shin & Bae, 2023; Westermann et al., 2023). In this way, self-esteem may serve as a psychological bridge between early parental behaviors and later emotional adjustment. Indeed, adolescents with low self-esteem have shown greater susceptibility to emotional lability and interpersonal difficulties in the face of social or familial rejection (Razvaliaeva & Polskaya, 2023; Reis et al., 2021). The internalized impact of parental rejection may thus undermine self-esteem and subsequently heighten emotional reactivity, establishing a mediating pathway that warrants empirical examination.

Recent theoretical frameworks and empirical models have underscored the importance of this mediating mechanism. For instance, the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory) posits that perceived parental rejection can erode an individual's sense of worth, leading to affective instability and maladaptive behaviors (Ali et al., 2024). Research has validated this model across diverse cultural contexts, demonstrating that emotional outcomes such as anxiety, emotional eating, and aggression often stem from the psychological consequences of rejection, mediated through internal variables like self-concept and esteem (Gardner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018; Vandewalle et al., 2017). Moreover, studies among Chinese adolescents and young adults have emphasized the cultural sensitivity of parenting styles and their effects on mental health, suggesting that high parental control and rejection are particularly detrimental in collectivist contexts where parental approval is deeply internalized (Gufeng et al., 2024; Yuan, 2023).

Evidence from neurodevelopmental research also supports the role of early parenting in shaping emotional reactivity. Neuroimaging studies have shown that the amygdala and prefrontal cortex, key structures involved in emotion generation and regulation, are sensitive to parental feedback and caregiving behaviors (Tan et al., 2020). Emotional rejection disrupts normative neural pathways, making adolescents more reactive to social cues and less capable of adaptive emotion regulation (Miller et al., 2019; Palmer et al., 2022). Furthermore, emotional reactivity has been linked to difficulties in academic performance, peer relationships, and general psychological well-being, especially when accompanied by low self-esteem (Nurhafizah et al., 2024; Slagt et al., 2018). These findings underscore the cascading impact of parental rejection on core developmental outcomes, further emphasizing the need for a more integrated model that incorporates both environmental and psychological mediators.

Parental rejection also has gendered and developmental implications. Research suggests that girls may internalize rejection more than boys, resulting in elevated emotional sensitivity and self-critical tendencies (Havewala & Wang, 2021; Reis et al., 2021). Additionally, the impact of rejection appears to be cumulative, intensifying with age and reinforcing maladaptive patterns of emotional response (Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2019; Shin & Bae, 2023). Notably, adolescents who experience ongoing parental rejection often exhibit a constellation of psychological difficulties, including emotion dysregulation, impulsive aggression, social withdrawal, and interpersonal hypersensitivity (Palmer et al., 2020; Razvaliaeva & Polskaya, 2023). These outcomes are especially concerning given the transitional challenges of adolescence, a period when identity, autonomy, and self-worth are being actively negotiated.

From a cultural standpoint, the construct of parental rejection must also be understood in relation to culturally normative parenting practices. In China, parenting styles often emphasize academic achievement, obedience, and emotional restraint. While these values can foster discipline and responsibility, they may also inadvertently promote emotional distancing and rejection if not balanced with warmth and support (Zeng et al., 2025; Zheng et al., 2022). Adolescents raised in such contexts may internalize emotional detachment as a sign of disapproval or rejection, contributing to negative self-evaluations and emotional hypersensitivity (Gufeng et al., 2024; Yuan, 2023). Therefore, cultural sensitivity is essential in evaluating how parental behaviors are perceived and how these perceptions influence psychological outcomes such as self-esteem and emotional reactivity.

Despite the growing body of literature supporting these associations, few studies have empirically examined the mediating role of self-esteem in the specific relationship between parental rejection and emotional reactivity in large samples of Chinese adolescents.

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This study employed a descriptive correlational design to investigate the relationship between parental rejection and emotional reactivity, with self-esteem as a potential mediating variable. The target population consisted of adolescents residing in urban regions of China. Using the Morgan and Krejcie (1970) sample size determination table, a sample of 600 participants was selected through a multi-

stage cluster sampling method to ensure broad demographic representation. Eligibility criteria included being between 15 and 18 years old, enrolled in secondary school, and having the ability to understand and complete self-report questionnaires in Mandarin. Prior to participation, informed consent was obtained from all students and their legal guardians, and the study was approved by the appropriate ethics committee.

2.2. Measures

2.2.1. Emotional Reactivity

Emotional reactivity was assessed using the Emotional Reactivity Scale (ERS), developed by Nock, Wedig, Holmberg, and Hooley in 2008. The ERS is a 21-item self-report measure designed to evaluate three key dimensions of emotional reactivity: sensitivity, intensity, and persistence of emotional responses. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (not at all like me) to 4 (completely like me), with higher scores indicating greater emotional reactivity. The total score is derived by summing the responses to all items, with subscale scores also obtainable for research requiring a more nuanced analysis. The ERS has demonstrated strong psychometric properties, with internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) typically exceeding 0.90 and good test-retest reliability. Numerous studies have confirmed its convergent and discriminant validity in both clinical and non-clinical populations, establishing it as a robust tool for measuring emotional reactivity (Pourkhiyabi et al., 2024; Ttofa & Greenhouse, 2022).

2.2.2. Self-Esteem

Self-esteem was measured using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), developed by Morris Rosenberg in 1965. This widely used instrument contains 10 items that assess global self-worth by capturing both positive and negative feelings about the self. Respondents rate each item on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree), with total scores ranging from 10 to 40. Higher scores reflect higher self-esteem. The RSES includes items such as "On the whole, I am satisfied with myself" and "I feel I do not have much to be proud of" (reverse-scored). The scale has been validated across diverse age groups and cultural backgrounds, showing excellent internal consistency (typically $\alpha > 0.85$) and test-retest reliability. Its construct and criterion validity have also been well-

established in psychological research, making it a standard measure for self-esteem assessment (Phuttharo, 2025; Wulandari, 2025).

2.2.3. Parental Rejection

Parental rejection was assessed using the Parental Acceptance-Rejection Questionnaire (PARQ) – Short Form, developed by Ronald P. Rohner and Abdul Khaleque in 2005 as part of the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory framework. The short form of the PARQ contains 24 items for each parent (mother and father versions are administered separately), covering four subscales: warmth/affection (reverse-coded), hostility/aggression, indifference/neglect, and undifferentiated rejection. Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale from 1 (almost never true) to 4 (almost always true), with higher total scores indicating greater perceived parental rejection. The PARQ has been extensively validated across over 60 nations and cultures, demonstrating high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha typically between 0.85 and 0.95), strong test-retest reliability, and robust construct and cross-cultural validity. Its comprehensive framework makes it one of the most established tools for examining perceived parental rejection in psychological research (Jin, 2023; Sajid & Shah, 2021).

2.3. Data Analysis

For data analysis, both descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. Pearson product-

moment correlation coefficients were calculated using SPSS version 27 to examine the bivariate relationships between parental rejection, self-esteem, and emotional reactivity. Additionally, the hypothesized mediating role of self-esteem in the relationship between parental rejection and emotional reactivity was tested using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) in AMOS version 21. Model fit was assessed through multiple indices including the Chi-square test, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA), Comparative Fit Index (CFI), and Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI). Statistical significance was set at $p < 0.05$ for all analyses.

3. Findings and Results

The study sample consisted of 600 Chinese adolescents aged 15 to 18 years. Among them, 318 participants (53.0%) identified as female and 282 (47.0%) as male. Regarding educational level, 216 students (36.0%) were in grade 10, 198 (33.0%) in grade 11, and 186 (31.0%) in grade 12. In terms of parental marital status, 429 participants (71.5%) reported that their parents were currently married, while 105 (17.5%) reported divorced parents and 66 (11.0%) reported widowed or separated parents. Additionally, 372 adolescents (62.0%) reported having one sibling, 138 (23.0%) had no siblings, and 90 (15.0%) reported having two or more siblings. These frequencies indicate a relatively balanced distribution across key demographic variables.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Study Variables

Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
Parental Rejection	68.34	12.47
Self-Esteem	24.81	4.32
Emotional Reactivity	58.67	10.19

The descriptive results in Table 1 indicate that the participants reported a moderate level of perceived parental rejection ($M = 68.34$, $SD = 12.47$) and emotional reactivity ($M = 58.67$, $SD = 10.19$), alongside a moderately low level of self-esteem ($M = 24.81$, $SD = 4.32$). These distributions are consistent with the expectation for adolescent populations in high-pressure cultural contexts where parental control is prevalent.

Prior to conducting Pearson correlation and Structural Equation Modeling, the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity were examined and

confirmed. Skewness values ranged from -0.84 to 0.39 and kurtosis values ranged from -0.71 to 0.58 , indicating no severe deviations from normality. Linearity was verified through scatterplots showing consistent directional relationships between variables. Multicollinearity was not a concern, as all Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were below 2.10 and tolerance values exceeded 0.48. The assumption of homoscedasticity was also met, as assessed by the distribution of residuals in scatterplots. Therefore, the dataset was deemed appropriate for both correlation analysis and structural equation modeling.

Table 2*Pearson Correlation Coefficients Between Study Variables*

Variables	1	2	3
1. Parental Rejection	—	-.49** (p < .001)	.52** (p < .001)
2. Self-Esteem	-.49** (p < .001)	—	-.55** (p < .001)
3. Emotional Reactivity	.52** (p < .001)	-.55** (p < .001)	—

Table 2 displays the Pearson correlation coefficients. Parental rejection was positively and significantly correlated with emotional reactivity ($r = .52, p < .001$) and negatively correlated with self-esteem ($r = -.49, p < .001$). Self-esteem was also significantly and negatively correlated with

emotional reactivity ($r = -.55, p < .001$). These results support the theoretical model suggesting both direct and indirect pathways linking parental rejection to emotional outcomes.

Table 3*Fit Indices for the Structural Equation Model*

Fit Index	Value	Recommended Threshold
χ^2	214.87	—
df	85	—
χ^2/df	2.53	< 3.00
GFI	0.94	≥ 0.90
AGFI	0.91	≥ 0.90
CFI	0.96	≥ 0.95
TLI	0.95	≥ 0.95
RMSEA	0.048	≤ 0.06

Table 3 presents the model fit indices for the structural equation model. The model demonstrates good fit across all indices: $\chi^2/df = 2.53$, GFI = 0.94, AGFI = 0.91, CFI = 0.96,

TLI = 0.95, and RMSEA = 0.048. These values fall within the acceptable thresholds for model adequacy, confirming that the hypothesized mediation model fits the data well.

Table 4*Path Coefficients for the Structural Model*

Path	B	S.E.	β	p
Parental Rejection → Self-Esteem	-0.43	0.06	-0.49	<.001
Self-Esteem → Emotional Reactivity	-0.56	0.07	-0.55	<.001
Parental Rejection → Emotional Reactivity (Direct)	0.28	0.05	0.30	<.001
Parental Rejection → Emotional Reactivity (Indirect via Self-Esteem)	0.24	0.04	0.27	<.001
Parental Rejection → Emotional Reactivity (Total)	0.52	—	0.57	<.001

Table 4 summarizes the path analysis. The direct effect of parental rejection on self-esteem was significant and negative ($B = -0.43, \beta = -0.49, p < .001$). In turn, self-esteem significantly predicted emotional reactivity ($B = -0.56, \beta =$

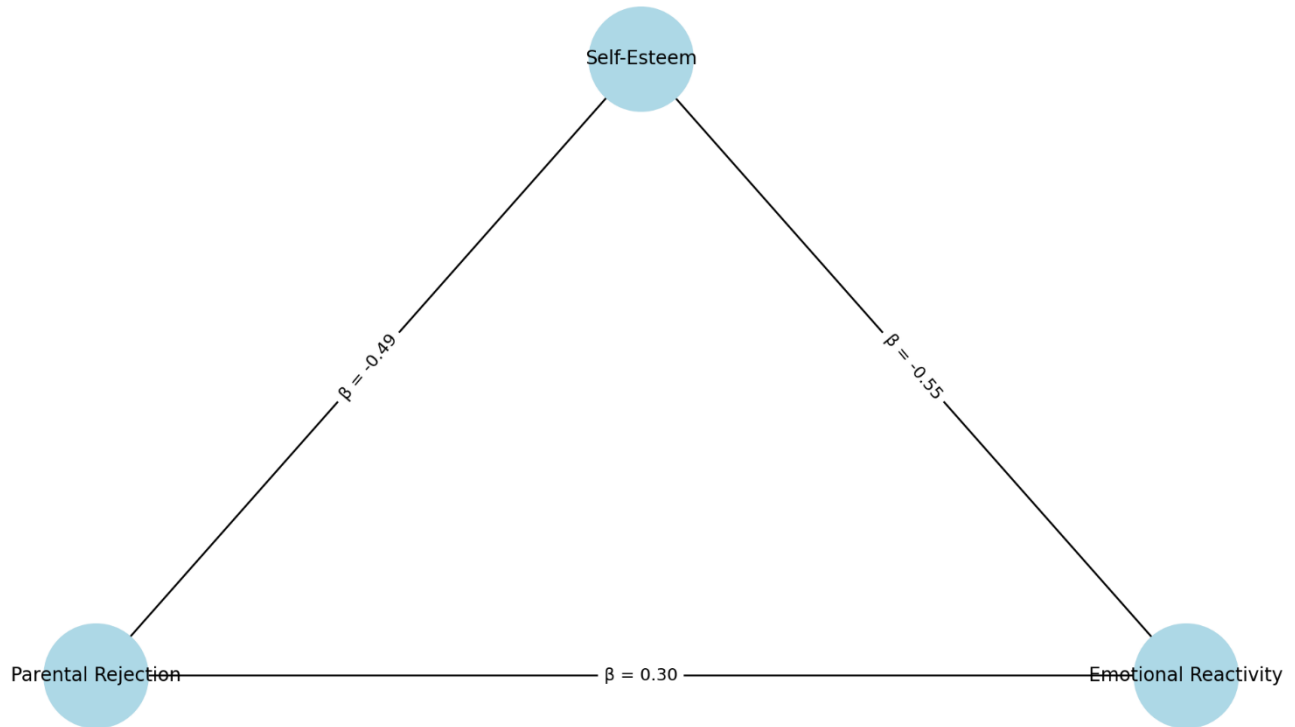
$-0.55, p < .001$). A significant direct effect of parental rejection on emotional reactivity was also observed ($B = 0.28, \beta = 0.30, p < .001$). Importantly, the indirect effect through self-esteem ($B = 0.24, \beta = 0.27, p < .001$) was also

significant, resulting in a total effect of 0.52. These findings confirm the partial mediating role of self-esteem in the

relationship between parental rejection and emotional reactivity.

Figure 1

Structural Model of The Study



4. Discussion and Conclusion

The present study aimed to investigate the relationship between perceived parental rejection and emotional reactivity among adolescents, as well as to test the mediating role of self-esteem in this relationship. The results indicated a significant positive correlation between parental rejection and emotional reactivity, as well as a significant negative correlation between parental rejection and self-esteem. Furthermore, self-esteem was found to negatively correlate with emotional reactivity. The structural equation modeling confirmed that self-esteem significantly mediated the effect of parental rejection on emotional reactivity, suggesting that adolescents who experience higher levels of parental rejection are more likely to exhibit increased emotional reactivity, and this association is, in part, explained by lower levels of self-esteem.

These findings align with prior literature emphasizing the detrimental impact of perceived parental rejection on adolescents' emotional development. Adolescents interpret repeated emotional neglect, hostility, and lack of warmth from their parents as indicators of unworthiness and personal

inadequacy, which in turn contribute to affective instability and heightened emotional sensitivity (Ali et al., 2024; Kosson et al., 2020). Numerous studies have confirmed the link between rejecting parenting and elevated emotional reactivity, highlighting that such parenting undermines the child's emotional security and coping capacity (Gardner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018; Jin, 2023). Emotional reactivity, characterized by quick and intense emotional responses to interpersonal stimuli, becomes particularly pronounced when the child lacks the internal resources, such as positive self-evaluation, to buffer against environmental stressors (Palmer et al., 2022; Slagt et al., 2018).

The mediating role of self-esteem observed in this study provides valuable insight into the psychological mechanisms underlying the impact of parental rejection. Self-esteem functions as a regulatory construct, shaping how individuals perceive and respond to emotional experiences. Low self-esteem, often rooted in a history of parental rejection, renders adolescents more susceptible to emotional dysregulation, as they lack the internal affirmation needed to appraise social challenges with resilience (Razvaliaeva &

Polskaya, 2023; Zeng et al., 2025). These results are consistent with the work of Gardner and Zimmer-Gembeck (2018), who demonstrated that self-esteem and self-perceptions serve as serial mediators between parenting behaviors and adolescents' emotional responses to rejection (Gardner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2018). Similarly, Mendo-Lázaro et al. (2019) found that adolescents with low parental acceptance exhibited increased emotional instability, largely due to impaired self-worth and identity insecurity (Mendo-Lázaro et al., 2019).

Cultural context may further explain the strength of these associations in this sample of Chinese adolescents. In East Asian cultures, where parental authority and academic performance are highly emphasized, emotional expression is often discouraged, and parental warmth may be less explicitly conveyed (Gufeng et al., 2024; Zheng et al., 2022). In such contexts, a lack of explicit emotional validation may be perceived as rejection, particularly among adolescents who are socialized to value familial harmony and parental approval. Yuan (2023) observed that Chinese college students who reported more authoritarian parenting styles also reported less willingness to seek psychological help, suggesting that perceived rejection has broader implications for emotional functioning and help-seeking behaviors (Yuan, 2023).

The positive relationship between parental rejection and emotional reactivity is also supported by neuroscientific and developmental findings. Tan et al. (2020) reviewed evidence indicating that children exposed to negative parenting exhibit hyperactivation in brain regions such as the amygdala, which are responsible for detecting social threat and generating affective responses (Tan et al., 2020). When self-esteem is low, this hyperreactivity is not adequately moderated by prefrontal regulatory systems, resulting in more intense emotional responses to environmental cues. Similarly, Palmer et al. (2022) reported that adolescents from families experiencing adversity, such as homelessness or rejection, demonstrated elevated emotional reactivity linked to disrupted emotional processing and regulation (Palmer et al., 2022). These findings support the present study's conclusion that emotional reactivity is not only a behavioral response but is deeply rooted in developmental and neuropsychological mechanisms shaped by early caregiving.

In addition, the mediating role of self-esteem observed in this study corresponds with findings from recent models of psychological functioning that integrate attachment theory, emotion regulation, and self-concept. For example, Reis et

al. (2021) found that individuals with attachment insecurity and low self-worth showed stronger negative emotional responses to rejection, supporting the idea that a compromised self-concept amplifies emotional vulnerability (Reis et al., 2021). Similarly, Westermann et al. (2023) noted that children with poor self-regulation skills—often a consequence of inadequate parental support—display greater emotional instability over time (Westermann et al., 2023). These studies reinforce the view that self-esteem acts as a protective mechanism, mitigating the emotional consequences of relational stress.

Another important implication of the study concerns gender differences and developmental sensitivity. Prior research has shown that girls may internalize parental rejection more deeply than boys, leading to heightened emotional reactivity and lower self-esteem (Havewala & Wang, 2021; Shin & Bae, 2023). Although the current study did not focus explicitly on gender moderation, the literature suggests that future work may benefit from examining how the interaction of gender and parenting experiences contributes to adolescent emotional development. For example, Bekaroğlu and Yılmaz (2023) showed that perceived parental rejection among adults was linked to somatic symptoms through impaired emotion regulation, a process that was more pronounced in females (Bekaroğlu & Yılmaz, 2023). This underscores the potential for cumulative and gendered effects of early rejection on emotional functioning.

Furthermore, the current study extends the literature by providing empirical support for the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory (IPARTheory), which posits that perceived rejection undermines an individual's psychological adjustment by damaging self-esteem and emotional resilience (Ali et al., 2024). While many studies have validated components of this theory independently, the current mediation model consolidates these pathways and confirms that self-esteem is a central mechanism through which rejection leads to heightened emotional responses. Vandewalle et al. (2017) also reported a similar pathway in which parental rejection predicted emotional eating in adolescents through the mediating role of negative affect, highlighting the broader psychosocial consequences of disrupted early relationships (Vandewalle et al., 2017).

Finally, the study's findings are consistent with broader developmental frameworks that highlight the cascading effects of parenting behaviors on adolescent well-being. For instance, Голубева and Истратова (2018) emphasized that parental emotional rejection not only affects emotional

outcomes in the short term but also impairs long-term psychological resilience, self-image, and interpersonal functioning (Голубева & Истратова, 2018). These effects can persist into adulthood, making the identification of mediating mechanisms like self-esteem critical for developing targeted interventions. Moreover, Nurhafizah et al. (2024) demonstrated that parental involvement plays a crucial role in shaping early social-emotional skills, implying that a lack of involvement—conceptualized here as rejection—has inverse effects on emotional development (Nurhafizah et al., 2024).

5. Limitations & Suggestions

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design restricts the ability to draw causal inferences about the directionality of the relationships among parental rejection, self-esteem, and emotional reactivity. Longitudinal studies would be necessary to determine whether changes in parental behavior or self-esteem predict subsequent changes in emotional reactivity. Second, the study relied on self-report measures, which may be subject to social desirability bias or retrospective distortions, particularly when assessing parental behavior. Third, although the sample size was large and diverse in terms of school representation, the findings may not generalize to other age groups, regions, or cultural settings outside of China. Finally, potential moderating variables such as gender, temperament, or peer relationships were not examined and may influence the strength of the observed associations.

Future research should adopt longitudinal or experimental designs to establish causality and explore the temporal dynamics between parental rejection, self-esteem, and emotional reactivity. Studies should also consider using multi-informant approaches, including parent and teacher reports or observational methods, to validate adolescents' self-perceptions. Additionally, future research could explore potential moderators such as gender, socioeconomic status, and peer attachment, which may influence the vulnerability or resilience of adolescents to parental rejection. Comparative cross-cultural studies would also be valuable to investigate how parenting practices and their emotional consequences vary across different cultural contexts and family structures.

Educational and mental health practitioners should prioritize early identification of adolescents who experience emotional rejection by parents, as these experiences can

have lasting emotional effects. School counselors and psychologists can incorporate self-esteem enhancement programs into their interventions to help mitigate emotional reactivity among at-risk adolescents. Parenting programs should focus on promoting emotional warmth, communication, and responsiveness to children's emotional needs. Teachers and caregivers should be trained to recognize the signs of emotional insecurity and provide supportive environments that compensate for rejection experienced at home. Furthermore, community-based initiatives aimed at fostering healthy parent-child relationships could serve as a preventive measure to support adolescent mental health.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors of this article declared no conflict of interest.

Ethical Considerations

The study protocol adhered to the principles outlined in the Helsinki Declaration, which provides guidelines for ethical research involving human participants.

Transparency of Data

In accordance with the principles of transparency and open research, we declare that all data and materials used in this study are available upon request.

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Authors' Contributions

This article is derived from the first author's doctoral dissertation. All authors equally contributed to this article.

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