

ABSTRACT

The objective of the present study was to examine the relative contribution of mother's marital adjustment and child-perceived family functioning in predicting a child's peer acceptance level. 106 late primary school children and their mothers served as subjects. Each student was asked to: 1) complete a self-reported questionnaire on the perception of his/her family functioning; and 2) to rate each of his/her same-sex peers on how favourable that peer was. A score of peer acceptance level for each child was obtained by taking the average of the ratings from all the same-sex peers in the same class. The mothers of these 106 subjects completed a self-reported questionnaire on marital adjustment. Results showed that marital adjustment acted as a mediator in affecting the relationship between family functioning and peer acceptance level. Among the variables under tested (affective expression, dyadic cohesion, dyadic consensus, dyadic satisfaction, family health, family pathology), child's perception of "family health" and mother's "dyadic satisfaction" were found to be significant in predicting a child's peer acceptance level. Gender difference in terms of peer rating among same sex peers was observed. The present findings were discussed in relation to the systems perspective to explain the link between marital variables, perceived family characteristics, and children's peer acceptance level. Implications for clinical practice were also discussed.