

How do Family Factors Impact Children's Emotional Regulation?

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ABSTRACT

Emotion regulation had become an independent reach field in psychology in the last 40 years. Emotions includes anger, disgust, fear, joy, sadness, and surprise. Normally, individuals need to let off their emotions to maintain good health, and to decide whether it the right time to show or hide their emotions. Through reviewing previous studies, this paper found that emotion regulation is deeply connected with family factors. Specifically, family serve as a model and environment either to improve children's emotion regulation ability or results in a children's failure recognizance of emotion regulation. Parental relationship significantly affects children's emotional regulation as children learn from their environment. Nowadays, mental health has become an important topic, kids will be healthier in mental development if their parents can help the development of their emotion regulation. More longitudinal studies are needed in the future to further assess and investigate the causal link between family factors and children's ability to regulate emotion.

Keywords: children, family factors, emotion regulation.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Definition of Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is a crucial function and ability that plays a key part throughout one's whole life, including but not limited to childhood. Before talking about the importance of self-regulation for children, it is necessary to define the meaning of self-regulation. Self-regulation is defined as a process of people using extrinsic and intrinsic functions for supervising, assessing, and adjusting emotional responses [1]. Extrinsic affects children's early emotional regulation and continues to influence them in the late future, while intrinsic affects the development of children's emotional self-regulation abilities, such as language, cognitive abilities, children's emotional development, self-evaluation, and self-identity [1].

Emotions are complicated signs that makeup by countless elements, including physical arousal, cognitive appraisal, situational demands, and social custom, the list

goes on, so it is not surprising that emotional regulation is fairly complicated to evaluate as well [2].

1.2 The Importance of Emotional Regulation in Childhood

The short form of a child's early age will have a significant effect on their whole childhood and adulthood. Babies cry if they feel cold or hungry, they use crying as a form of expression to release their signals of uncomfortable. Their needs concern their satisfaction and living, thus correspondingly, they require their mother to respond to their demand. However, after meeting their survival demands, they further require emotional satisfaction. They want to touch, kiss, and hug their mothers. Babies require happiness through interaction with their mothers [3]. Although children's emotional regulation (ER) started from simply self-soothing to lift their daily distress from the infant period, it then quickly turns into a certain strategy, a specific coping routine which they use for emotional regulation

during their childhood and may even still exist when they enter adulthood [2]. This is fairly important since these strategies will later be used in the process of finding mental well-being, healthy relationships, self-image, and self-identification and determines whether they are active in personal social life or the failure and achievement in one's life [2]. It's inevitable to ignore that in adulthood, poor emotional regulation skills planted in childhood have the potential to grow into a much bigger issue. Undeniably, continuous accumulation of negative and unresolved emotions can be spiteful and narrow one's view to only focus on the negative side of the world, these negatively processed emotions might also closely connect to the formation of psychopath behaviors [4]. Therefore, children's emotional regulation should also be put into consideration when discussed prevent emotional disorders and later achievement in careers and relationships.

Psychological study on human emotions, as well as how people express and manage emotions, has exploded in the last three decades. The review of Morris et al. presumes children learn about emotion regulation through observation, modeling, and social reference [5]. Emotional regulation is influenced by parenting methods relating to emotions and emotion management, as well as family emotional climate factors like parenting style, attachment, family expressiveness, and marital relationships. Paley and Hajal's review paper explored the impact of caregiver-child, parents, and sibling relationships on children's ER. It also emphasizes the importance of societal and familial interactions in children's emotion management skills' development [6]. Hitherto, much of the research about children's ER ignores economically disadvantaged children.

1.3 Focus of the review

The essay focuses on how family factors affect children's emotional regulation. The first body part talks about the development of emotional regulation and how family factors affect it starting at the infant age. The second body part explains how different mother-father relationships and parent-child relationships influence children's self-regulation development and further discussed how culture and living standards affect children's self-regulation. The supplement reading explains how parental attention to children's emotions brought development to children's ER (emotion regulation).

2. MOTHER-FATHER RELATIONSHIP

2.1 Conflict and violence in the family

The status of parent relations and the condition of the families are crucial elements in children's psychological health. Childhood trauma results from family affect

children's mental health in all age ranges. Study shows infants, children and teenagers have a higher psychological symptom of stress, indicated by a higher heart rate when facing parental conflict [7]. Children who suffer from domestic or even witness one of the parents perform violence tend to have a higher potential to suffer from a clinical mental health issue that worsens their emotional regulation ability, causing psychological or psychical problems at school. These can be explained as parent-children are weakened and become harder to form an adhesive bond when domestic violence happens [8].

2.2 Divorce family

This is inevitable children raise in divorced families tend to grow up in a rather different pattern and environment compare to children who come from not divorce families due to family difficulties and conflicts and potentially, the lack of attention from parents [9]. Growing up in a divorced family is tough and might involve living in two different patterns. It is might be harder for children to comprehend remain a key influential element long after they become adults, some might even feel like they have been living and interacting with their parents in two diverse worlds [9].

Children with divorced parents are more likely to have relatively poor emotional regulation. Multiple studies show that children who came from divorced families were rather likely to have an unstable status with undesirable emotions such as anxiety or depression. Especially those children whose parents have constantly or continuously conflict over the period of their childhood [10]. The negative effect of divorce families seems to remain unsolved these days. The study shows that higher pressure comes from schools towards split up families. They tend to have a higher possibility to suffer from depression and behavior outside of normal patterns or substance abuse behavior [11]. Research also indicates that people with a divorce parent background who lack parental care tend to have higher emotional, physical abuse, and emotional abandonment. In addition, mental disorders are more likely to materialize in divorce backgrounds children compare to those who come from non-divorce families, they have a higher tendency to feel loneliness, stress, or attach to avoidance [12].

However, some researchers argue that the relationship between husband and wife did not affect children's emotion regulation ability [13]. Children in harmonious family relationships typically had better emotion perception skills than children who have a not too close and intimate family relationship. A good family relationship does not necessarily impress children 's ER ability. that when parents have bad relationships, children are more likely to hide their emotions and manage their emotions in order to cope with the various contingencies that may arise in the home.

3. PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

The parent-child relationship is bound together by family environment and parenting style which further impacts children's growth and development. Reactions from parents to children affect how children respond to future experiences [14]. A healthy parent-child relationship involves providing children unconditional understanding, acceptance, and love; the ability to guide children, setting boundaries, and offering children opportunities. The parent-child relationship not only brought impacts children but also parents' emotional regulation, learning, and understanding towards children.

3.1 The quality of the parent-child relationship

A safe parent-child relationship helps children feel supported and emotionally safe and is a prerequisite for efficient emotional regulation. A warmth and close relationship with parents help children to express their emotions more comfortably [15]. A high parent relationship quality tends to lead the families and children better outcomes. Numerous studies suggest that relationship quality predicts a child's development [16]. The following review measures the parent-child relationship's quality through four scales: modeling, responding, assisting, and motivating children.

Research indicates parents provide important models for children on emotional regulation, when parents display certain emotions in certain situations, children are more likely to learn and display the emotion in similar situations [14].

Parents who accept children with both positive and negative emotions led to children's free expression of their emotions in socially accepted ways [14]. Free expression of thoughts improves children's ER by giving them better control of their emotions. For example, when the child thinks his behavior is misunderstood by the parents, instead of sinking in anger and disqualification, the child is more open to taking a conversation with his parents and explaining their thought. Parents' understanding of children's negative emotions, and giving children guidance and comfort led to children's stronger ER. Parents' responses not only comfort children but also serve as a model that helps children to respond to future situations as mentioned previously.

Parents who accept the emotions of their children (positive and negative) and help them understanding their emotions and communicate them in a socially appropriate way to help children improve their ER [17].

Parents' behavior of positive and negative reinforcement on children's expression of emotions alters the way they behave and produces the same consequence on children's EF. For example, when punishment such as criticism is given to the child after he screams and yells

at the public would negative reinforce the child for further negative ER.

The family environment in which the child lives also plays a significant role in global emotional development and emotional regulation [18]. The emotional climate of the family is the total response to family relationships (e.g., attachment, marital relationships, and parenting styles) and should include both positive and negative emotions expressed by family members, and the emotional climate of the family should be the sum of them all. When a child lives in an emotional climate that is predominantly unresponsive, negative, and coercive, then the child is more likely to be exposed to strong emotional responsiveness, which should be attributed to frequent manifestations of undesirable emotions or emotional treatment. Conversely, if children live in an environment that is responsive and feels accepted and encouraged, they will feel emotionally safe and free to express their emotions because they are confident that their emotional needs will be fulfilled. They also feel emotionally safe when they know that the behaviour is expected and that the wrong behaviour will lead to these results. The emotional climate of the family is a multifactorial dynamical system, with some factors of the emotional environment influencing the emotional regulation's development: overall environmental predictability and stability; the extent to which positive emotions are expressed within the family; parental expectations and needs; and the extent to which negative feelings are expressed in the family [19].

3.2 Parental responses and emotional regulation

The higher the level of parental attention to emotional change, the stronger the emotional regulation ability of the children [13]. Through over 360 questionnaires, Liu found that as parents pay more attention to their children and observe their children's emotions, the more they understand and treat their children's emotions correctly [13]. This helps their children to solve their emotions and gradually improves their emotion management skills.

Liu also found that as parents increasingly respected the negative emotions of their children, they tended to have a greater capacity to control emotions [13]. Parents who take their children's emotions seriously, respect and accept their children's negative emotions, discuss and allowed them to experience their own emotions, and ask them for ways to manage their emotions. The children are more likely to experience and recognize how to regulate emotions correctly, making an improvement in children's emotion management skills.

Gottman investigated emotion-related parenting style and related it to children's emotion regulation, suggesting parents who are able to respond positively to their children's emotions in a timely manner, demonstrate

certain types of parental behaviours and have certain emotional beliefs that influence the control of their children's emotions [18]. They propose a meta-emotional philosophy that suggests that emotional guidance involves the following parenting behaviors: parents are sensitive to their children's emotions; they perceive their children's emotions as opportunities for privacy or education; they assist their children in expressing their emotions; they understand or value the emotions of their children, and they help their children solve their problems [20]. Conversely, parenting behaviors that ignore emotions include parents who are uneasy expressing emotions and who are more inclined to be unsupportive or reluctant to express emotions. Parental responses to emotions have been studied in two main areas: on the one hand, in relation to parental sensitivity to children's emotional needs and emotional responses, and on the impact of parents' particular responses to children's emotions on children's emotional ability [21]. Regarding parental sensitivity to their child's emotional responses, research has found that if parents do not express and respond to emotional signals expressed by their infants, infants have fewer positive emotional responses and more negative, indifferent emotional responses resulting in their independent use of emotional regulation such as self-soothing or gaze shifting.

Research on the effects of specific parental responses to children's emotions on children's ER found that parents who showed punitive or negative reactions to emotions expressed by their children have increased their emotional excitement, teaching children to avoid repressing negative emotions more than understanding and expressing them appropriately [22]. In accordance with this theory, some research has found that parents who respond punitively to their children's emotions are associated with inappropriate emotional regulation strategies (as avoidance or revenge-seeking) in real-life anger situations and also show lower levels of social-emotional competence overall [23]. In contrast, however, mothers' performance in coping with problems was positively associated with their children's ability to cope constructively. Overall, the study suggests that adverse parental reactions to children's emotions are associated with low levels of social functioning and emotional regulation and that children's behavioral problems are closely related to whether parents' attitudes towards them are punitive or rehabilitative. This, therefore, suggests that it is important for parents to be sensitive not only to their child's emotional responses and to interact sensitively, but also in a way that does not show a punitive or negative response to the child's negative reactions, as this may affect the child's capability to express and regulate negative emotions in their lives [18].

The openness of parents to express their emotions may also influence the emotional expression of their children and hence their emotional regulation [24]. If parents are comfortable expressing themselves in

different situations on a regular basis, children are most likely to learn to handle different emotions in different situations. The mechanism by which the family influences a child's emotional regulation is the total amount of emotion expressed in the family, in verbal or non-verbal form, and also the nature of the emotion expressed, such as positive and negative emotions.

4. FAMILY POVERTY AND CULTURE

Family context has a significant effect on children's emotional development by imperceptibly influencing parenting style, family expression, and family background [25]. Although the core processes of emotion regulation are consistent in different contexts, especially in dissimilar cultures, the ways these processes play out exist sociocultural variation. Low-income family's children are more likely to lose their control of emotion regulation because they are exposed to more environmental stressors.

4.1 Family poverty

Children's emotional problems are closely related to the economic level of their families. Children from poor families may experience early life stress exposure and caregiving challenges. In this particular group, they are at greater risk for emotional adjustment [26,27]. Families with a low socioeconomic status (SES) are more prone than ordinary families to encounter unemployment, income instability, and changes in living situations. These situations can lead to home chaos. For example, chronic exposure to high levels of noise, many people sharing one bedroom, and the presence of disorder [26]. Home chaos is negatively associated with children's emotional regulation [28]. It indicates that young people with low incomes are more likely to experience emotional management problems. Despite this, the majority of poor early children do not acquire problems such as emotional disturbances or behavioural issues [29].

4.2 Culture

Similarly, culture can indirectly affect parents' reactions to the emotional manifestations of their children, as well as reactions to their children's emotional development, via culturally valued competencies and cultural values [30]. It has been shown that Eastern individuals are more likely to use suppression than Western individuals when they meet a maladaptive situation [31]. In China, appropriate suppression fits Chinese cultural expectations for social expression of emotions, and Chinese culture has more value expectations for expression suppression [32,33]. This suggests that parents in Chinese families are more restrained in their emotional responses to children. Simultaneously, the effect of parental suppression in

reactions to children's unpleasant emotions on socio-emotional regulation varies by race and ethnicity. For example, parental suppression of their child's negative emotional expression is not linked to poorer emotional regulation outcomes for children in Latin American and African American families [34,35]. While parental suppression responses are linked to worse emotion regulation in European American children [15]. It is vital to emphasize that socioeconomic and socio-political issues, such as racial discrimination and disparities in average income by race, cannot be ruled out.

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, family function plays a critical role in developing the ability of children to regulate their emotions. According to previous research and studies, children learn emotional regulation through observation of surroundings, parents' emotional rearing style, and family emotional atmosphere. A better mother-father relationship with less conflict and violence and a higher quality of parent-child bond where parents pay more attention to children can result in a better level of children's emotional regulation ability. However, there are still arguments on whether children's self-regulation ability would be affected by the status of their parents, as some researchers have pointed out that there was no significant change in the emotional regulation capacity of children in a divorced family.

Furthermore, there are still some limitations of the previous papers. The participants in different papers are from different countries, thus there is a possibility that the paper fails to focus on a specific region, and to compare the children's emotional regulation in different countries as children in different regions receive different rules and customs during childhood is hard. Moreover, the corresponding experiments are mainly done by questionnaires or surveys filled by the parents, the scale-and-ranking questionnaire may be inaccurate and lack validity since the emotional ties are hard to definite. To overcome the limitation, there should be more specific studies on a single sub-topic to determine the effect of the single factor on children's emotional regulation. In addition, more longitudinal research instead of horizontal research is needed to be taken to further evaluate and investigate the connection between family factors and children's emotional regulation ability as it is important to know if the effect on emotional regulation will be coherent in children as age increases.

The principal objective of this review is to enlighten researchers and parents to recognise family function's role in the children's ER and emotional development, as every adult or parent needs to set himself as a great example of emotional regulation through sophisticated emotional education methods, to build a harmony family atmosphere for children, and to make efforts for children

to have good emotions and good emotional regulation ability.

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