



Maternal Overparenting and Filial Perception in Junior High School Students: The Mediating Effect of Mother-Child Relationship

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Abstract. A total of 336 junior high school students in Fujian Province were selected as subjects to explore the relationship among maternal overparenting, mother-child relationship and filial perception. The results showed that: (1) There is a pairwise significant positive correlation among the maternal overparenting, the mother-child relationship and the filial perception; (2) The maternal overparenting can positively predict the filial perception, but also indirectly affect the filial perception through the mother-child relationship. The mother-child relationship has a mediating effect among the maternal overparenting and the filial perception.

Keywords: Maternal overparenting · Mother-child relationship · Filial perception · Filial education · Filial responsibility

1 Introduction

Research suggests that overparenting, also known as helicopter parenting, doesn't just occur in emerging adulthood, but because the child is already well developed physically and mentally, the effects of helicopter parenting on children of this age have attracted much attention from scholars [1]. For children entering adolescence, excessive parental intervention can have a significant impact on their health and can lead to depression and anxiety in children [2]. Overparenting is also known as helicopter parenting. Some scholars believe that overparenting is when parents provide their children with excessive care and help in order to make them more successful [3]. Some scholars point out that overparenting is the aggressive and selfish rearing of children by parents out of their own strong sense of responsibility, that is, the excessive tendency of parents to over-guide, over-protect and over-intervene in children's life [4]. Some researchers define overparenting as a parenting style in which parents are overly involved and controlling their children [5]. But the effects of overparenting are both good and bad, and it's hard to dismiss them all. Research suggests that overparenting is a form of emotional regulation

by parents that involves excessive parenting and attachment to adult children [6]. Some studies refer to overparenting as an inappropriate way for parents to raise their children for their success and well-being [7]. To sum up, overparenting is parents' excessive control over their children's lives in order to achieve their own value expectations. Although it protects their children's safety to a certain extent, it also limits their autonomy. In this study, overparenting is more likely to be interpreted as the excessive intervention of mothers on their children's lives due to their high expectations, and the influence of their control over their children's daily life on their perception formation.

Mother-child relationship is the result of psychological interaction and mutual influence between mother and children, and the attitude and behavior of children will also have an impact on parents [8]. The mother-child relationship is a part of the mother-child relationship and an important component of it. Mother-child relationship is the sum of natural and social relations developed from communication and exchange between parents and children who are related by blood in their common life [9]. It covers the emotional relationship between parents and children, as well as the relationship and conflict between parents and children in terms of behavior. Mother-child relationship is a kind of interpersonal relationship and related psychological experience produced by an individual in the process of interacting with their parents [10]. The mother-child relationship is between mother and child, that is, the result of the interaction between mother and child. The mother-child relationship plays an important role in the development of children [11]. The definition of mother in this study includes both biological mother, adoptive mother and stepmother. To sum up, this study believes that the mother-child relationship is an important part of the family relationship, and it is a specific and stable influence established between mother and children through a series of daily communication and behavioral contact.

Filial perception is children's understanding of filial role. Filial generation should be shown in line with parents' expectations and create a healthy and beautiful family atmosphere together with parents in the interactive situation [12]. Some scholars believe that the perception of child's role is the subjective idea and meaning of child's role constructed by children after they realize their own role, fulfill their obligations and responsibilities to their parents, accept the expectations of society and parents and experience a series of internal psychological processes [13]. This is also the concept of filial perception that most scholars agree on. Some scholars believe that child duty perception is a special sense of responsibility that children have for their parents: they know that we should do something for our parents, but we can't do it for anyone [14]. Some researchers believe that the perception of child duty is the subjective cognition and view of the individual to the child duty, is the duty of the individual for children [15]. Filial education is to discuss the "duties and obligations of children" as the center, so that children know what they should do [16]. Each cultural group has its own requirements for filial duty. Filial piety is the concept that is close to filial duty in Chinese society. To sum up, this study believes that the filial perception duty is children's recognition of children's responsibilities and obligations stipulated by social culture. It is influenced by different time background and regional culture, and there may be differences in the filial perception in different periods and regions. As subjective knowledge of children, it is rooted in the conceptual hotbed carefully constructed by parents. It is mainly influenced

by the ideas instilled by parents. The external environment also has a certain influence on it, but the effect may not be as good as that given by parents.

Previous studies have shown that there is a correlation between overparenting and filial perception, but there is no consensus on the specific correlation between the two. Some studies have pointed out that parental overparenting positively affects family intimacy, and children feel loved in overparenting, thus improving their closeness to their parents. Mother-child relationship, as the emotional bond between parents and children, plays a key role in parental involvement [17]. Mother-child relationship is an important component of family relationship, and strong emotional intimacy is the characteristic of mother-child relationship [18]. The mother-child relationship can predict the occurrence of problem behaviors in offspring [19]. Based on this, this study proposes the following hypothesis: Firstly, there is a significant pairwise correlation among maternal overparenting, mother-child relationship, and filial perception; Secondly, there are mediating effects among maternal overparenting, mother-child relationship and filial perception.

2 Research Method

2.1 Research Sample

The whole class random sampling method was adopted to select several classes of students from junior high school in a middle school in Fujian Province to carry out offline test with the maternal overparenting scale, mother-child relationship scale and filial perception scale of junior high school students. A total of 345 questionnaires were sent out, and 336 valid questionnaires were collected, with an effective rate of 97.39%. There were 166 male students (49.40%) and 170 female students (50.60%); 127 (39.80%) from rural areas; 94 (27.98%) were only children.

2.2 Research Tools

Maternal overparenting scale for junior high school students. Fu was used in this study [20]. Take Leung [21] “The Chinese maternal overparenting scale, CMOS” revised maternal overparenting scale for junior high school students, with 31 items, using a six-point scale to calculate scores, from “1” to “6”, with 1 being “strongly disagree” and 6 being “strongly agree”. The higher the score, the higher the degree of maternal overparenting. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficient on the maternal overparenting scale in this study was 0.90.

Mother-child relationship scale. Wang et al. [22] revised and translated a subscale of FACESIII (family Intimacy and adaptability scale, 3rd Edition) revised by Olson et al. Adapted the mother-child compatibility scale. The scale was divided into two subscales of father and mother with exactly the same questions. The mother scale consisted of 10 items. The 5-point scale was used to indicate that the higher the score was, the higher the mother-child affinity level of the subjects. The third, fourth, eighth and ninth questions are reverse scoring questions. Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of the mother-child relationship scale in this study is 0.78.

The filial perception scale was adopted by Chen [23]. The revised filial perception role scale has a total of 20 items, all of which are positive scoring questions. Using the 4-point scoring method, the higher the score, the higher the degree of filial perception. The content of the filial perception scale consists of five levels: active communication, independent self-control, empathy, contact peace of mind and feedback of new knowledge. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the scale in this study was 0.90.

3 Results

3.1 Test of Common Method Deviation

In this study, Harman single factor homologous error test was used to test. The exploratory factor analysis of maternal overparenting, filial perception, and mother-child relationship was conducted using the non-rotation of factors. The results showed that among all the factors, the eigenvalue was greater than 1 in 26, and the variance explained by the first factor was 15.565% (less than the cumulative contribution rate of 40%), indicating that there was no serious common method bias.

3.2 Correlation Analysis

Product-moment coefficient of correlation analysis was carried out for overparenting, mother-child relationship, and filial perception. The specific results are shown in Table 1. It is found that there is a significant positive correlation between maternal overparenting and the mother-child relationship ($r = 0.22$, $p < .01$), there is a significant positive correlation between maternal overparenting and the filial perception ($r = 0.12$, $p < .05$), and there is a significant positive correlation between the mother-child relationship and filial perception ($r = 0.47$, $p < .01$). It can be concluded that there is a significant pound-wise correlation among the three variables of maternal overparenting, mother-child relationship and filial perception.

Table 1. Correlation analysis of maternal overparenting, mother-child relationship and filial perception

	M ± SD	1	2	3
1 maternal overparenting	109.83 ± 21.58	–		
2 mother-child relationship	34.22 ± 6.01	.22*	–	
3 filial perception	65.50 ± 8.46	.12*	.47**	–

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

3.3 Regression Analysis

Firstly, the filial perception is the dependent variable and maternal overparenting is the independent variable. Secondly, the mother-child relationship was the dependent

Table 2. Regression analysis of maternal overparenting, mother-child relationship, and filial perception among junior high school students

dependent variable	independent variable	R^2	Adjusted R^2	β	t	F
filial perception	maternal overparenting	0.01	0.01	0.05	2.26*	5.11
mother-child relationship	maternal overparenting	0.05	0.04	0.06	4.19**	17.60
filial perception	mother-child relationship	0.22	0.22	0.69	9.65***	49.16
filial perception	mother-child relationship	0.22	0.22	0.68	9.63***	97.19
maternal overparenting	gender	0.01	0.01	-5.72	-2.44*	5.97
	grade	0.01	0.01	2.82	2.36*	5.58
filial perception	gender	0.02	0.01	2.58	2.72**	7.44

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$

variable and maternal overparenting was the independent variable. Again, the perception of filial as the dependent variable, maternal overparenting and mother-child relationship as the independent variable; Then, the perception of filial as the dependent variable and the mother-child relationship as the independent variable; Finally, multiple stepwise regression method was used to analyze maternal overparenting and filial perception and mother-child relationship respectively as dependent variables and demographic variables as control variables.

Table 2 shows that maternal overparenting can significantly predict filial perception ($\beta = 0.05, p < 0.05$), and independent variable maternal overparenting can explain 1.5% variation of dependent variable filial perception. Maternal overparenting had a significant predictive effect on the mother-child relationship ($\beta = 0.06, p < 0.001$), and it could be seen that the independent variable could explain 5% of the variation in the dependent variable. The mother-child relationship was a significant predictor of filial perception, and the mother-child relationship explained 22.4% of the variation in filial perception. Both maternal overparenting and mother-child relationship could positively predict filial perception ($\beta = 0.68, p < 0.001$), and both could explain 22.8% of the variance in filial perception. Gender was a significant predictor of maternal overparenting ($\beta = -5.72, p < 0.05$), and gender explained 1.8% of the variance in maternal overparenting. Grade was a significant predictor of maternal overparenting ($\beta = 2.82, p < 0.05$) and explained 1.6% of the variation in maternal overparenting. Gender had a significant predictive effect on filial perception ($\beta = 2.27, p < 0.01$), and gender could explain 2.2% of the variance in filial perception.

3.4 Analysis of the Mediating Effect

The significant pairwise correlation between mediating variable, independent variable and dependent variable is the prerequisite for the existence of mediating effect. This study meets the premise that maternal overparenting is significantly correlated with the mother-child relationship and the mother-child relationship is significantly correlated with the

Table 3. Decomposition table of total effect, direct effect and mediation effect

	Effect	Boot SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI	Effect ratio
total effect	0.0447	0.022	0.001	0.088	
direct effect	0.0012	0.020	-0.039	0.041	0.027
indirect effect	0.0433	0.013	0.019	0.070	0.973

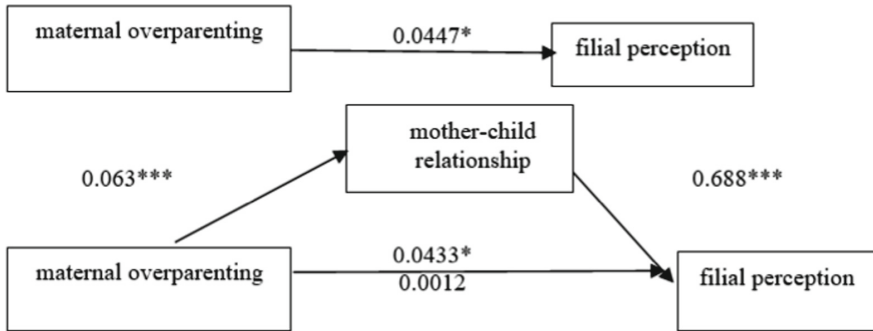


Fig. 1. The mediating effect of mother-child relationship between maternal overparenting and filial perception

filial perception, so it can test the mediating effect of the mother-child relationship between maternal overparenting and the filial perception.

Table 3 shows that the total effect of maternal overparenting on filial perception is significant $c = 0.04, p < .001, SE = 0.02$, with a 95% confidence interval of [0.001,0.088]. The direct effect of maternal overparenting on filial perception was not significant $c = 0.001, p > 0.05, SE = 0.00$, and 95% confidence interval was [-0.039,0.041].The indirect effect was significant $c = 0.04, p < .001, SE = 0.013$, with 95% confidence interval [0.019,0.070], and the mother-child relationship played a complete mediating role in the maternal overparenting and filial perception, taking the filial perception as the dependent variable, the maternal overparenting as the independent variable and the mother-child relationship as the intermediary variable. And the mediating effect accounted for 97.30%. According to the above results, a model with the mother-child relationship as the mediating variable is proposed, as shown in Fig. 1.

4 Discussion

4.1 The Relationship Among Maternal Overparenting, Mother-Child Relationship and Filial Perception

This study found a significant pairwise correlation among overparenting, mother-child relationship and filial perception. Dong (2021) believes that the influence of overparenting on adolescent children depends on good mother-child relationship and effective mother-child communication [24]. Li and Hu (2021) said that it is possible to achieve

“successful children” when parents’ expectations are consistent with children’s expectations and the relationship between mother and child is close [25]. Xu (2021) pointed out that excessive parental expectations will arouse children’s negative emotions. It can be considered that excessive parenting will arouse children’s negative emotions, which is not conducive to the establishment of intimate relationships [26]. However, Zhou et al. (2020) pointed out that parenting style is not the key to the mother-child relationship, but the way and behavior parents treat their children is the key to the closeness of mother-child relationship [27]. This suggests that even overparenting can have positive effects on children.

In the process of filial education, overparenting has both advantages and disadvantages. We should not generalize. Although overparenting is seen as inappropriate in the development of college students, research on its effect on child outcomes has mixed results. Some studies have shown no direct relationship between overparenting and student health. For example, it has been found that high levels of parental involvement (overparenting children) are not correlated with how well American students adjust to college life [28]. Some scholars further report that in the United States, where students’ self-efficacy is considered a mediating variable, overparenting is not directly related to students’ mental and physical health [29]. They found that parental overparenting indirectly affects children’s life satisfaction through their sense of self-efficacy as well as their physical well-being.

In addition, other literature suggests that overparenting is not necessarily bad for adolescents and may have a positive correlation with the mother-child relationship [30]. Studies have found that overparenting among American college students is positively correlated with mother-child relationships, as some children have positive feelings about certain aspects of their relationship with their parents, including emotional support and connection [31]. Others further suggested that the strong involvement of overparenting parents could be actively utilized to improve their children’s adaptability to future college life [32]. Obviously, the effects of overparenting on children are still uncertain.

The results of this study suggest that the mother-child relationship is a complete mediator between maternal overparenting and filial perception. This indicates that when the mother-child relationship is good, the maternal overparenting affects the filial perception through the mother-child interaction, and the son’s understanding of the filial job is more profound and specific. Previous studies have found that good mother-child relationship can enhance some perception of child duties, such as parental conflict intensity, coping efficacy, etc. [33]. This is consistent with other research findings [34]. If the mother-child relationship is not good, the child woman’s filial perception is not susceptible to the influence of the maternal overparenting.

When the mother-child relationship is good, teenagers gain effective family protection and trust to the mother, and the mother can better supervise and protect teenagers through monitoring, informed and other ways [35]. In the socialization process of adolescents, a good mother-child relationship can provide behavioral standards for children’s behavior [36]. The findings are consistent with the fact that the vast majority of subjects in this study reported a better mother-child relationship.

5 Conclusion

Filial education has always been an important part of our traditional Chinese education [37]. However, Chinese parents tend to worry too much about their children and take matters into their own hands to the fullest. Overparenting is common. Some scholars believe that an overparenting family environment is like a greenhouse, in which the children who grow up lack a correct understanding of their roles, are self-centered and lack the ability to take care of themselves. He believes that overparenting is one of the causes that induce children's problematic behaviors [38]. Children's filial perception is an important component of their role identification, and it is the basis for them to form correct social outlook, outlook on life and values.

A good mother-child relationship can promote the growth and development of children and play an important role in the growth process of children. A good mother-child relationship will promote the sound development of children's personality. However, many parents are eager for quick success and instant benefits in the process of raising children. They only attach importance to students' academic performance and neglect the necessary emotional communication and spiritual companionship with their children in daily life [39]. However, children in adolescence are eager to be cared by others. If parents can always pay attention to their children's emotions in the process of parent-child education and patiently listen to their children's emotional talk, they will get a closer parent-child relationship. Lack of communication for a long time will lead to children closing their hearts and becoming more and more introverted and estranged from their parents. From the perspective of overparenting, this study examines the relationship between filial perception, and discusses the influence of maternal overparenting on filial perception in junior high school, as well as the mediating role of mother-child relationship. This study provides scientific guidance for junior high school students to establish correct perception of filial perception and improve maternal overparenting.

Some deficiencies, this study summarized as follows. Firstly: In terms of sampling, the paper version of questionnaire was issued with a narrow coverage. Only students from one middle school were selected as subjects, so the quality of subjects could not be guaranteed. Moreover, due to the limitations of practical conditions, the coverage of subjects in different grades was not comprehensive and unequal, resulting in a large disparity in sample size between the two grades. This also has an impact on the reliability of data analysis results. In the follow-up research, schools in different regions can be selected for comparative analysis, and the number of subjects in each grade can be proportioned to control within a reasonable proportion range to ensure the reliability of the data. Secondly, in the process of testing, due to the limited testing time, coupled with not all the testing personnel have been professionally trained; There may be improper expression of the test instruction; The test environment is a common classroom, not standard, and the subjects influence each other and other reasons; The quality of the collected questionnaires was not high. In the follow-up research, professional training can be provided to the test personnel in advance, or the test can be conducted by oneself, so as to improve the effective recovery rate. Thirdly, testing by questionnaires will lead to more omission. In addition, the subjects are prone to fatigue effect. The authenticity of the subjects' answers may be affected by the social expectation effect. In addition, due to the large number of questionnaire questions in this study, the subjects are prone to fatigue

effect. In the process of testing, the authenticity of the answers of the subjects may be affected by the social expectation effect. Fourthly, in terms of the research content, there are many factors affecting the filial perception. This study only discusses some factors, and it should be developed and improved in more aspects in the future.

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