

Investigation of the Impact of Positive and Negative Parenting on Pre-school and School-aged Children's Emotion Regulation

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Abstract. Parenting plays a crucial role in child development. Emotion Regulation (ER) is considered as an important ability during development since it is tightly associated with children's future social competence and also their external and internal behaviors. This research investigation explores the profound impact of positive and negative parenting on pre-school and school age children's ER. The essay finds positive parenting, characterized by warmth, support, and consistent discipline, emerges as a crucial factor in nurturing healthier emotion regulation in pre-school children. These children exhibit greater emotional awareness and competence, fostering overall well-being and improved social interactions. Conversely, negative parenting, marked by harsh discipline and emotional neglect, obstructs emotional growth, leading to emotional dysregulation and behavioral challenges. Additionally, this paper delves into the nuances of the influence exerted by fathers and mothers on children's emotion regulation. While both parental figures play vital roles in a child's emotional development, their impact can vary due to unique parenting styles and interactions. In conclusion, this research underscores the pivotal role of positive parenting practices in cultivating robust emotion regulation skills in pre-school children. It emphasizes the necessity for parents to establish nurturing and supportive environments conducive to emotional growth and the importance of recognizing the distinct roles of fathers and mothers in shaping children's emotional development. Ultimately, comprehending the dynamics of parenting and their implications on children's emotional regulation is vital for creating a positive and nurturing environment that promotes children's well-being and emotional resilience.

Keywords: Positive parenting, Negative parenting, pre-school children, school-aged children, Emotion Regulation.

1. Introduction

The intersection of parenting and children's emotion regulation (ER) has remained a focal point within the domains of developmental and educational psychology, with an ongoing stream of research devoted to this vital area. According to pertinent theoretical frameworks, parenting constitutes a multifaceted construct, encompassing intricate behavioral, intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental dimensions [1]. Consequently, it stands to reason that parenting exerts a pivotal influence on the trajectory of child development. For instance, the theoretical framework of parental meta-emotion philosophy posits that parents' emotional awareness and their proficiency in regulating their emotions bear direct implications for their parenting behaviors, which, in turn, significantly impact their offspring's developmental outcomes [2]. Moreover, within the field of parenting research, there has been a division of parenting into the categories of positive and negative parenting, grounded in parental emotional states and behaviors. These two categories significantly influence children's socioemotional development.

Emotion regulation (ER) pertains to the capacity to modulate emotional arousal, respond appropriately to negative emotions, and accurately discern the emotional states of others. ER is widely believed to take root in early childhood. Deficiencies in ER competencies have been empirically linked to deleterious outcomes encompassing both externalizing and internalizing psychological disorders [3]. Consequently, parenting emerges as a salient factor in the socio-emotional development of offspring from the earliest stages of their lives. Thus, inquiries into early ER, particularly among preschool children, assume paramount importance in comprehensively elucidating the developmental trajectory of emotional regulation in youth. Given that parents play a main role in the daily lives of

their children, investigating the intricate interplay between parenting practices and the nascent ER capabilities of young children affords an avenue for disentangling the roots of ER development and, thereby, facilitating timely interventions to promote healthy child development.

The intersection of parenting and children's ER has remained a focal point within the domains of developmental and educational psychology, with an ongoing stream of research devoted to this vital area. Although there is abundant timely research, little attention has been given to related systematic reviews. A systematic review of the impact of positive and negative parenting on pre-school children's ER can gather a full picture of this topic and thus provide an efficient platform for future research in the field. Hence, this paper will review recent literature on this topic by first understanding the latest concepts and characters for positive and negative parenting, then differentiate the impact of positive and negative parenting on children's ER and finally analyze the group differences in the influence of father's and mother's parenting on children's ER base on latest studies.

2. Concepts and Determinants of Positive and Negative Parenting

From previous research and literature, positive parenting and negative parenting mostly differ in aspects of affects and behaviors. Positive parenting is defined as the display of positive effects such as warmth and supportiveness on children's socioemotional development. In contrast, negative parenting is defined as the display of negative effects such as irritability, frustration, anger and annoyance towards children's socioemotional development. Commonly, positive parenting has always been set up as the ideal parenting type whereas negative parenting should be avoided and intervention has always been set up to transfer negative parenting to positive parenting. More recent research aims to have a clearer understanding of the character of two parentings by analyzing the more detailed concepts of each parenting.

2.1. Concepts of Positive and Negative Parenting

Since the concepts of positive parenting have far-reaching implications, an adequate definition of positive parenting is necessary and was long advocated by earlier studies. For instance, one study reviewed a broad range of positive parenting-related studies and then summarized all applicable positive parenting definitions from those studies [4]. The application of concept analysis was a systematic method to detect all critical constructs in positive parenting. After analysis, the new concept of positive parenting therefore referred to as the enduring connection between a parent and child or children, which entails the consistent and unconditional provision of care, education, guidance, communication, and meeting the child's needs [4]. It is believed that this definition includes all the constructs that appeared in previous studies' positive parenting, and thus allows for future exploration and development of measurable outcomes for future parenting development.

In contrast, there are few studies investigating or trying to understand the full picture of the negative parenting construct. This may be due to the undesirable characteristics of negative parenting which are supposed to be avoided during parenting practice. Parents should aim to achieve positive parenting as much as possible, and therefore give the significance and thus the urgent need to set a clear and detailed standard for positive parenting compared to negative parenting. However, setting up a comprehensive concept for negative parenting may also be beneficial. From a clinical perspective, a thorough understanding of negative parenting will help to develop more timely and targeted interventions. From a practical perspective, well notice of negative parenting will make parents realize their potential problematic parenting behavior, at an early stage and change their parenting in time. Hence, this paper believes a good indication of both positive and negative parenting concepts is beneficial for both clinical and practical purposes.

2.2. Determinants of Positive and Negative Parenting

Apart from understanding the concepts of positive and negative parenting, recent researches also aim to identify critical characteristics of positive and negative parenting, which may act as a predictor

at an early stage to predict future parenting types. Since mothers are the closest attachment figure for children the most of time, maternal characteristics may help to predict future parenting patterns. In a longitudinal study, the study used a sample of 160 mothers from a longitudinal study of parent-child dyads and measured a broad range of maternal characteristics such as life events, social support, aggression and maternal bonding between four months to five years old of their children [5]. The result shows positive parenting can increase with maternal age at delivery, which means the older the mother gives birth, they are more likely to carry out positive parenting, whilst younger mothers exhibited higher rates of negative parenting and lower rates of positive parenting. Notably, the study reveals a constructive correlation between prenatal anxiety levels and subsequent positive parenting behaviors, which enlightens the possibility that prenatal anxiety level during late pregnancy has a rather adaptive effect. Moreover, the gender of children is also an important predictor for parenting type, where boys are more likely to receive negative parenting compared to girls. However, although there are distinct predictors for positive and negative parenting, it should be noted that further research is still needed since there are mixed findings in earlier studies. For instance, an earlier study testing the association between self-efficacy and positive parenting suggested mothers under age 30 had higher self-efficacy and therefore high possibility of conducting positive parenting [5]. Although different findings may exist, maternal characteristics are considered the top predictors of parenting. Specifically, more attention should be put on maternal age. This also indicated a completed study of early maternal characteristics may help in developing early precautions and interventions for parenting. Besides maternal characteristics, Additional factors, such as the child's gender, may also exert an influence on parenting, although the effect may be relatively trivial.

It is believed that parenting may also impacted by social values and cultural context. Remarkably, a recent study considers the cultural effect on parenting. The authors used a survey to ask parents from two cities in China, Shanghai and Nanning, where parents from these two cities are respectively influenced by individualism and collectivism [6]. The results show parents from Shanghai are more likely to conduct positive parenting since they are influenced by individualism culture and demand themselves to be more protective of children's self-esteem and more focused on maintaining positive parent-child relationships. In contrast, parents from Nanning are more accepting of using negative parenting to build up discipline in the family. Hence, parents with different social values are also an important source for consideration, since the social value can affect their opinion towards parenting, and therefore child education, which will lead to different developmental outcomes for children.

3. Children's emotion regulation differences between positive parenting and negative parenting

With a deep understanding of parenting typologies, it will be clearer to study the impact of how parenting influences children's ER from different perspectives. Appropriate regulation of emotion has a far-reaching impact on promoting social and emotional health for children. As indicated by many studies, parents play a significant role in the development of children's emotion regulation abilities. This was shown by the proposal of a tripartite model between parenting and child's ER, which suggests that parents can influence children's ER through three pathways: a child's observation of parental ER strategies, parenting practices related to emotions, and also the overall emotional climate within the family [7], which highlights ER includes both internal and external features in the parent-child relationship.

3.1. Children's Emotion Regulation and Positive Parenting

It is believed that children in their early developmental stages hold particular significance in the establishment of ER capabilities, and children from age 1 to 5 are dependent on their primary caregiver to teach and help them regulate emotions. This was proved by positive parenting in recent studies. In a recent systematic review, the researchers noted that positive parenting is associated with the cultivation of a secure parent-child relationship, fostering an emotional environment in which

children feel safe and supported [10]. A secure and supportive emotional climate in the family is a prerequisite for children to learn ER effectively since the feeling of closeness and warmth will help them to freely express their emotions. Moreover, as mentioned previously, positive parenting also includes teaching and leading children, which means beyond support and warmth, positive parenting is also composed of setting clear rules to let children know how to express their emotions in a socially appropriate way and also make them understand what to anticipate regarding the emotional expressions of others. This finding was shown by earlier studies, which indicated parenting who teach their children on ER promote more successful ER development compared to parents who dismiss and punish children for expressing their emotions [2]. Hence, positive parenting can have a positive impact on children. However, apart from the general idea that positive parenting is to provide warmth and support, parents' correct leading and teaching is also another important aspect of children's ER development. While warmth and support through parenting are usually tested as the main criteria for positive parenting, studies assessing parents' coaching on emotion are lacking. However, researchers should also consider this factor when assessing children's ER.

3.2. Children's Emotion Regulation and Negative Parenting

In contrast, evidence shows negative parenting also has a direct impact on children's ER. When parents are overly harsh, permissive and controlling, it provides a sign for children to conform to their own emotions, and therefore learn to suppress their emotions rather than correctly express them. In another study of preschool children, Negative parenting, exemplified by excessive control, exhibited a notably robust association with both internalizing and externalizing issues, particularly among children with elevated levels of negative emotionality. This underscores the detrimental effects of negative parenting on children's challenges in emotion regulation. In a more recent study, researchers also found that parental coercion in negative parenting also has a direct positive impact on child-dysregulated emotion expression [8], and this impact is rather long-term. One of the possible explanations may be negative parenting is interplayed with a negative home environment and therefore the family's emotional climate. This is detrimental to children's socioemotional development including ER, because children are required to focus on coping in their home environment rather than aiming to improve their emotional and social competence. Hence, when considering children's ER, more attention should be given to characteristics of negative parenting, especially parental level of control and harsh treatment. Moreover, studies have shown permissive parenting is detrimental to ER development, which shows a contrast in parental coaching for children's emotions. This again suggests the importance of parental ER teaching and coaching for children.

3.3. Comparative Studies Between Positive and Negative Parenting on Children's Emotion Regulation

When comparing positive and negative parenting in children's ER, multiple meta-analysis and systematic reviews have raised general trends that positive parenting is negatively related to ER difficulties, whilst negative parenting is positively associated with ER difficulties [10]. For instance, in one meta-analysis, the results reveal a small yet significant effect [9]. However, the analysis also suggests a high heterogeneity of current related studies in the field, which may potentially be due to varying conceptualization of ER [9]. Hence, while there is a rich source of studies on this topic, an urgent uniformity of related concepts is also necessary for future studies. Moreover, there are also inconsistent findings between each type of parenting and children' ER. For instance, while many studies find an association between parental supportiveness and children's ER, another study did not find mother-report supportiveness was associate with children's ER ability such as emotional liability and emotion dysregulation [10]. However, a recent study using an Italian children sample indicates both parental-report and teacher-report results revealed a significant negative association between positive parenting and ER difficulties and a positive association between negative parenting and ER difficulties [11]. The inconsistent results also raised another issue in ER studies. Since the operationalized definition of ER includes various aspects, focusing on specific ER aspects may also

be important for future comparative studies. Hence, evidence shows that both positive and negative parenting significantly influence children's ER. Although findings are mixed, the impact on both parenting cannot be neglected.

4. Group Differences in the Influence of Fathers and Mothers on Children's Emotion Regulation

In the topic of parenting, or even the extent of the broader range of developmental and educational psychology, it is a common problem that the majority of parental samples are maternal samples. Even though some of the studies include paternal samples, there is still a large gap between maternal and paternal data. However, relative research still shows that both maternal and paternal parenting have an impressive influence on children's ER.

4.1. Influence of Fathers on Children's Emotion Regulation

Numerous studies have focused solely on mothers. However, the trend has started to put more attention on the paternal sample since the parental role involves both mother and father, and the results are also quite impressive. Some clinical evidence proved paternal parenting is also as critical as maternal parenting for children's ER. In a recent dissertation related to the father and children relationship, the author extracted the paternal data from a longitudinal study The New Parent Project, which is a project that studied parenthood from children from three-month-old until their school-age [19]. The results from the study indicated higher levels of paternal support was associated with a lower level of children's interpersonal impulsivity, which includes ER skills. Concurrently, fathers' higher quality of parenting was associated with greater children's emotion and inhibitory control. From the perspective of negative parenting, paternal undesirable parenting behavior is also linked with a child's serious negative developmental consequences. For instance, in the case analysis study, the finding shows the impact of erratic, unreliable and aggressive fathers on the psychological development of children at school age. The analysis indicated a serious emotional dysregulation development as well as aggressive behavior of the child. Moreover, various interventions have shown ineffectiveness for the child, which suggests long-term yet hard-to-eradicate problems of paternal negative parenting. The critical role of paternal parenting is shown to be consistent across various cultural contexts. For instance, by studying 216 children and their fathers, the study found a positive relationship between parent-children relationships and children's ER, which suggested paternal parenting is important for children to develop superior ER [13]. Furthermore, ER also acted as a mediator between paternal parenting and other development outcomes of children, such as peer competence and environmental adaption. Hence, paternal parenting may solely affect children's ER but also play a role in multiple developmental aspects at an early stage of children, which increases the necessity to conduct more paternal research in the future.

4.2. Comparative Studies between Fathers and Mothers on Children's Emotion Regulation

Investigation into both maternal and paternal parenting has increased in recent decades. However, the findings are mixed. For instance, when assessing positive parenting and negative parenting for both mother and father, a meta-analysis was conducted based on 48 maternal and paternal-related studies in children's ER and the findings indicated that both maternal and paternal positive parenting were linked to a rise in children's relational aggression, attributable to difficulties in emotional regulation [14]. However, children's aggression was associated with maternal and paternal different parenting characteristics. In more detail, paternal negative parenting characteristics, and parental psychological control was found to have a significant effect on children's emotional regulation, whereas maternal psychological control did not demonstrate a significant influence on children's emotional regulation.

Moreover, from a meta-analytic perspective, there is still a lack of paternal samples in the field. For instance, when researchers assess the uninvolved parenting within negative parenting, the

paternal sample is absent. Otherwise, research has shown both paternal and maternal parenting is associated with children's ER and therefore relational aggression. Similar finding also exists in more recent finding regarding specific demographic factors, such as Chinese parents and children sample. Researchers assessing parenting and children's emotional dysregulation based on 800 Chinese mothers and 702 Chinese fathers [15], the results indicated both paternal and maternal harsh parenting negatively predicted children's ER. Similarly, maternal psychological control has no impact on children's ER, and this did not apply to the paternal sample. Noticeably, paternal positive parenting, specifically paternal warmth, may act as a mediator for increasing the negative impact of corporal punishment on children's ER. Hence, by summarizing the above studies, both maternal and paternal parenting play crucial roles in children's ER. In the aspect of the father, psychological control is an important criterion for a child's ER development. However, maternal psychological control may not indicate the same effect on children's ER. This circumstance therefore suggests while noticing both paternal and maternal parenting is important, noticing more detailed differences between parenting is also vital for thoroughly understanding children's ER.

It is noteworthy that although both positive and negative parenting can significantly predict children's ER, this association may disappear when children move toward, the adolescent stage. This switch may indicate some important switch and development in children's ER from the toddler period to the adolescent period, which advocates the need to understand the potential mechanism behind this change. Currently, the theoretical model suggests both maternal and paternal parenting is a causal and maintaining factor for children's ER [9]. However, empirical data are scant, and there are also mixed findings. In the future, more longitudinal studies should be conducted to confirm the plausibility of the causal relationship.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the investigation into the impact of positive and negative parenting on pre-school children's ER has shed valuable light on the profound influence parents have on their children's emotional development. This paper has delved into the concepts and characteristics of both positive and negative parenting, highlighting the stark differences in their approaches and outcomes.

It is evident that positive parenting, characterized by warmth, support, and consistent discipline, fosters healthier ER in pre-school and school-aged children. Such children are better equipped to understand and manage their emotions, promoting their overall well-being and social competence. On the other hand, negative parenting, marked by harsh discipline and emotional neglect, hampers children's emotional growth, often resulting in emotional dysregulation and behavioral issues.

Furthermore, this paper's exploration revealed that the influence of fathers and mothers on children's ER may vary. While both parental figures play vital roles in a child's emotional development, their impact can differ due to unique parenting styles and interactions. Recognizing these distinctions allows for a more nuanced understanding of how parental dynamics shape children's ER.

In summary, this paper underscores the significance of positive parenting practices in fostering healthy ER in children. It emphasizes the need for parents to provide a nurturing and supportive environment that facilitates emotional growth. Additionally, it underscores the importance of considering the distinct roles of fathers and mothers in this process. Ultimately, understanding the dynamics of parenting and their impact on children's emotional development is essential for creating a positive and nurturing environment conducive to children's well-being and ER. Interestingly, there are a great number of mixed findings on this topic. Future studies should conduct more longitudinal studies in order to generate a comprehensive picture of ER development pathway based on positive and negative parenting. Moreover, maternal and paternal data should collect and analyzed separately to get a direct view of group differences.

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