

The Effects of Maternal Negative Socialization of Emotion Practices on Children's Behaviour Problems

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Abstract

Models of maternal emotion socialization emphasize that mothers' responses to their children's emotional experiences play a central role in shaping children's emotional development and behavioral functioning. Maternal negative emotion socialization, particularly about children's negative emotions, may be imprinted on children's current and future emotion regulation capacities and behaviour management. This paper reviews how maternal negative emotion socialization practices contribute to child problem behaviour, with a specific focus on sub-domains that are associated with internalizing and externalizing outcomes. Participants included 380 mothers of middle-aged children, whose data was collected through standardized assessments. Maternal emotion socialization was measured by the Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scale (CCNES). The regulation of children's emotion was measured using the Emotion Regulation Checklist (ERC). Children's behavioral problems were estimated using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The results of this study have proven that such a maternal punitive, distress, and minimization reaction is positively related to behavioral issues in children, including both externalizing and internalizing problems. These findings emphasize the significant impact of maternal responses on children's emotional and social well-being. These insights underscore the importance of targeted interventions to improve maternal emotion socialization practices as a means to enhance child developmental outcomes.

Keywords: Children's Behaviour Problems, Children's Emotion Regulation, Externalizing Behaviour, Internalizing Behaviour, Maternal Emotion Socialization

Introduction

Parent-child interactions are the influences brought about by several aspects such as the characteristics of parents and inherent attributes of the child. Responsiveness of parents to their children's emotions in either a positive or negative way can shape their behavioral patterns, particularly among middle-aged children. Children become more actively involved

with their family, peers, and teachers during middle childhood, which is believed to be a sensitive period for developing the skills in both cognitive and emotional domains. This stage presents numerous opportunities for the parents to shape the development of the child's emotional regulation. As De Raeymaecker and Dhar (2022), stated that maternal practices bear influence on the children's emotional and behavioral outcomes.

Maternal attitudes toward emotions greatly influence the developing child's own emotional regulation and social behaviour. The studies conducted so far suggest that emotionally supportive mothers who validate the emotional experiences of the children themselves and model good emotional regulation. Children with superior emotional regulation can more easily find adaptive coping strategies, show empathy, and have a larger repertoire of social behaviours that enable them to negotiate social situations more adeptly. Conversely, maternal negativity towards emotions may lead to children who have emotional dysregulation difficulties, and this can enhance problems during social interactions. Children are likely to adopt their parent's behaviours as models for their expressive behaviour. A child then learns to suppress their emotions or inappropriately responds toward the social environment and develops behavioral issues.

This be the necessary understanding of maternal emotion socialization, which either influences various positive or negative developmental paths for children. The socialization of children regarding their emotional development and behaviour is very critical in the manner through which they understand, express, and regulate emotions as they grow older (Berona et al., 2022; Katz & Hunter, 2007). Behavioral problems in children are usually categorized into two broad sections including externalizing and internalizing behaviours. Whereas the externalizing problems stand for the disruptive behaviours of aggression and hyperactivity, internalizing problems include anxiety, depression, and social withdrawal (Mash & Barkley, 2003).

The prevalence of behavioral problems among children there has been a noticeable rise over recent decades in Malaysia, just like in most of the Western countries (Idris et al., 2019). Research has shown that maternal unsupportive emotion socialization is linked to various problems during adolescence and later stages of life, including disciplinary problems (Crespo et al., 2017). The findings by Kopala-Sibley and colleagues (2016), complementing the ideas of diathesis-stress model, showed that found that children in early to middle childhood with high levels of negative emotionality are more vulnerable to traumatic events as compared to those children with low negative emotionality.

Maternal emotion socialization is uniquely noted to affect children's emotional and behavioral development. Supportive maternal responses, focused on facilitation of understanding and encouraged positive emotion regulatory skills in children (Fabes et al., 2002). On the other hand, the negative emotional responses, including ignoring and punishing negative emotions to their children's emotions, are associated with higher levels of behavioral problems in children. From the past studies indicated that when mothers provide non-supportive responses to their children's emotions are associated with higher levels of behavioral problems in children (Zeman et al., 2016). In agreement with the findings provided in the studies involving children, the focus on adolescents suggests that unsupportive reactions to negative emotions can have adverse effects.

The present study aims to examine specific aspects of maternal negative emotion socialization, such as punitive reactions, distress reactions and minimization reactions, to understand their effects on children's internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems. By examining these factors, the research attempts to provide a more detailed understanding of maternal contributions to variations in children's emotional and behavioral development. Despite considerable research into the area of maternal emotion socialization, empirical studies have remained scant in Malaysia and, more precisely, have focused upon middle childhood. This study attempts to bridge these significant gaps in the literature on cultural and contextual factors that may influence the associations between maternal behaviours and children's outcomes. The current study develops the growing literature on issues regarding maternal specific domains of emotion socialization and behaviour problems within Malaysian context.

Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between maternal negative emotion socialization practices and children's behaviour problems.
2. To study the relationship between maternal negative emotion socialization practices and children's emotion regulation.
3. To study the relationship between children's emotion regulation and children's internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems.

Significant of the Study

The analysis examines how maternal emotion socialization affects child behaviour, thus making a meaningful effort towards progressing the field of child development and parenting. By looking at how maternal negative emotion socialization practices relate to children's behaviour problems, the study offers valuable responses on how negative parental emotions lead to the dysfunctional psychological responses in children. Such findings can be useful in designing parenting programs and therapeutic interventions targeting children with behavioral problems.

In addition, this study contributes to the literature that explains how maternal emotion socialization practices contribute to children's emotion regulation capabilities. Considering how important emotion regulation is for a child's behavioural status and social interactions, this study identifies critical maternal practices that tend to promote or inhibit the development of emotional capacity among children.

Additionally, by investigating the connection between children's emotion regulation and internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems. Identifying emotion regulation as a key component can pave the way for targeted interventions that focus on improving children's emotional management skills to mitigate behavioral challenges, such as anxiety, depression, or aggression. In summary, this study has progressed theoretical concepts relating to child development and maternal emotion socialization along with their application in practice for children and family workers. It can help inspire the development of approaches, which would lead to better emotional and behavioral outcomes in children.

Types of Measures of Behaviour Problems in Middle Childhood

Behavioral problems in middle childhood, approximately the age period of 6 to 12 years, are considered important in their assessment through various measures that would help in conceptualizing and addressing the problems in development effectively. This section reviews some key measures that find common usage in research and clinical settings, hence the focus is on their psychometric properties, domains assessed, and implications for intervention. There are several ways to measure behaviour problems among middle childhood. Child Behaviour Checklist (CBCL) is a common measure used by the researcher, this tool was developed by Achenbach and Rescorla, CBCL is widely used by parents and teachers to assess behavioral and emotional problems. Type of the domains assessed include internalizing problems, such as anxiety, depression, and withdrawal; and externalizing problems, including aggression, rule-breaking behaviour, and hyperactivity. This tool has had exceptionally high reliability and validity in varied populations, hence making it a strong tool for both clinical and research purposes.

The other method to measure children's behaviour problems, many researchers also used Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). This is a brief behavioral screening questionnaire that assesses emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer relationship problems, and prosocial behaviour. Besides clinical use, SDQ is favoured for its brevity and ease of administration in community and school settings. This test shows very good discriminant validity and predictive utility in identifying children at risk for behavioral difficulties.

In addition, Behaviour Assessment System for Children (BASC-3) also one of a method. It is a multifunctional tool assessing wide areas of behavioral and emotional concerns. The domains that come under measures are problems which are externalized, internalized and adaptive behaviours. In that respect, the tool helps in developing norm-referenced scores and profiles which shall aid in clinical decision making and intervention planning.

Literature Review

Maternal socialization of emotion practices plays an important role in shaping children's emotional competence and behaviour problems. Mothers as the primary caregivers, they are the central figures in the children's emotional learning process, and their responses to their children's emotional expressions provide a model for how emotions should be understood and regulated. Negative socialization practices including distress, punitive and minimization which may contribute to children's development of emotional and difficulties of behavioural (Acar-Bayraktar et al., 2019)

Several studies have shown that mothers who often provide unsupportive reactions their children's emotion, they are more likely to have children with poor emotional regulation and behaviour problems. Hence, this may impact the child from early childhood and middle childhood (Frogley et al. 2023). Similar results were obtained by other researchers of these populations in terms of even more problematic behaviour problems such as aggression or withdrawal (Trevethan et al., 2021). Maternal negative emotion socialization practices do not provide children with the tools they need to cope with distress and therefore they express their emotions in inappropriate ways (Shadur & Hussong, 2020).

The maternal impact on child emotional and behavioural development has been well-explained in the literature. For example, the proposed problem behaviour theory provides a wider approach to understanding individual, social and environmental influences to problem behaviours. Within this framework, maternal practices are viewed as a critical social factor that contributes to the development of behaviour problems in children (Jessor et al., 1977).

According to Hong et al. (2020), they have pointed out that negative maternal emotion socialization practices relate to higher behavioral problems of the children. It had been indicated that consistently provide maternal unsupportive reactions enhance the possibility of externalizing problems like aggression and internalizing problems of anxiety and depression among children. As stated by the authors, this is because children in such context do not obtain appropriate models or guidelines for emotions, thus turning out to be victims of maladaptive ways of coping with their negative emotions.

The current study narrows this down to maternal negative emotion socialization practices in the Malaysian context. Even though previous studies have documented that negative maternal responses are associated with the development of behaviour problems, this study aims at deciphering how these dynamics unfold in Malaysia due to social factors unique to this setting. This research is done to find the implications of unsupportive maternal practices like distress, punitive, and minimization to explain how children develop emotional regulation and behavioral problems.

Theoretical Perspective

The Problem Behaviour Theory is a framework in social science that seeks to explain the causes and the reason why particular behaviours, such as alcohol use, delinquency, and risky sex behaviour, are sustained over time. It holds that such actions are synergistic as they are all subject to intra personal, inter personal as well as contextual influences, and do not exist in fragments. The theory holds that problem behaviour is not accounted for just by individual characteristics or decisions, but through an interaction of individual features such as personality and intellect, social factors from family, peer groups, and neighbourhood, and external elements which include economic and cultural factors. The theory argues that problem behaviours cannot be understood from a one-dimensional perspective and recognises that there are several variables which have to be considered in explaining their onset and sustenance (Jessor & Jessor, 1977).

For this reason, the research seeks off to look into the impact of mother's negative socialization to their children's negative emotions on their children's behaviour attitudes. Problem Behaviour Theory proposes a reason as to why mother's practices are an important social factor that has consequences toward the establishment of behaviours problems among children. This perspective also agrees with the view expressed by the theory on the influence of personal emotional processes, family dynamics, and broader environmental factors on children's behaviour.

By investigating the influence of maternal negative emotion socialization on children's behaviour problems, the study aims to show that these maternal practices, as a critical social factor, affect children's emotional regulation to ultimately determine behaviour. This perspective aligns with the theory's view that children's behaviour results from the complex

interplay between personal emotional processes, family dynamics, and broader environmental factors.

The Current Study

The goal of the current study is to investigate the relationship between maternal negative emotion socialization with children's behaviour problems. This study can provide valuable guidance for mothers, who play a critical role in their children's development and directly impact their behavioral issues. Practitioners have better understanding (1) on the relationship of maternal specific negative reactions (distress reactions, punitive reactions, minimization reactions) and children's behaviour problems (2) the predictors of children's behavioural problems (3) the mediation of children's emotion regulation between the variables of maternal negative emotion socialization and children's behaviour problems.

Methods

The methodology sets the platform on which the research is conducted and gives a formalized way towards the collection and analysis of data. According to Neuman (2014), a survey is a specific type of research that uses a scientific methodology, hence the parameter estimation is effective, as pointed out by Rozmi (2013), in applied social research. This study will utilize a quantitative survey research design and employing questionnaires as the instruments for data collection in this study. These would involve questionnaires such as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), which can be used in measuring the behaviour problems of children; the Emotion Regulation Checklist (ERC) in measuring the regulation of children's emotions; and the Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scales (CCNES) to measure maternal negative emotion socialization. Many research studies combine of both non-probability sampling (purposive sampling) and probability sampling (stratified sampling) is often used in current research. In non-probability sampling, the researcher deliberately selects individuals or cases to include in the sample, based on the presence of certain characteristics that help achieve the research objectives. Probability sampling requires a division of the population into distinct subgroups or categories on the basis of relevant characteristics, then random selection of samples from each subgroup, and combining into one sample to ensure representation. This would definitely improve the accuracy of the results and reduce the incidence of sampling errors.

Participants

This study was conducted across several primary schools in Selangor and focused on mothers of children exhibiting behavioral problems. The sample included 380 mothers of children aged 10 to 12 years, who displayed various internalizing and externalizing behavioral issues. The age distribution of the children was as follows: 31.8% were 10 years old, 33.4% were 11 years old, and 34.7% were 12 years old. The gender breakdown was 52.4% female and 47.6% male. The mothers were predominantly Malaysian, representing a range of ethnic and religious backgrounds: 88.4% Malay, 5.3% Indian, 3.9% Chinese, and 2.4% from other ethnicities such as Iban, Bajau, and Kadazan. In terms of religion, 90.3% were Muslim, 4.8% Hindu, 3.7% Buddhist, 1.1% Christian, and 0.3% adhered to other religions. The average age of the mothers was 40.51 years (SD = 5.64, range 31). All participating mothers were married. Educationally, 19.2% were highly educated, 4% attended college, 2.4% had STPM or polytechnic education, 68.2% had high school certificates, and 6.3% had only completed primary school.

Procedures

The structure of Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scales (CCNES) has been used to measure maternal emotion socialization. The internalizing and externalizing behaviour were explained based on the conceptual definition and these behaviours had been measure using the tool of Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). In addition, Emotion Regulation Checklist (ERC) was also employed to evaluate children's emotion. Upon development, the questionnaire items underwent content validity review by several professors and psychologists recognized as experts in Psychology. Before commencing with data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the UKM Institutes of Ethics Study to ensure adherence to ethical standards and safeguard participant welfare. Additionally, permissions were obtained from the Department of Social Welfare Malaysia, the Ministry of Education in Malaysia, and the Selangor State Education Department to ensure compliance and access to schools.

Measures

Maternal Emotion Socialization

Maternal emotion socialization has been assessed using the Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scales (CCNES), developed by Fabes and colleagues in 2002. This instrument evaluates parental reactions across six dimensions: distress reaction, punitive reaction, emotion-focused reactions, problem-focused reactions, expressive encouragement, and minimizing reactions. It consists of 72 items, rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Very unlikely" (1) to "Very likely" (7). Parents rate their responses to 12 scenarios depicting their children experiencing negative emotions or distress.

The CCNES measures a range of parental reactions, including harsh and minimizing responses. Distress reactions gauge the extent to which parents experience enduring suffering and distress when their children display negative emotions. Punitive reactions assess the degree to which parents use punitive measures to reduce or avoid dealing with their children's negative emotions. Minimization reactions evaluate how much parents downplay or diminish their child's emotional distress. Subscale scores are derived by averaging the scores of the items within each subscale.

The creators of the scale reported internal test-retest reliabilities (Cronbach's alpha) as follows: punitive responses (.69), distress reactions (.70), minimization responses (.78), problem-focused responses (.78), emotion-focused responses (.80), and expressive encouragement (.85) (Fabes, Poulin, Eisenberg, & Madden Derdich, 2002). The CCNES demonstrates adequate test-retest reliability, as well as construct and predictive validity, in assessing parental responses to children's negative emotions. Higher scores on each subscale indicate a greater propensity for parents to use those specific types of responses.

Children's Behaviour Problems

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), created by Robert Goodman in 2001, is widely employed for assessing children's externalizing behavior issues. It consists of 25 items rated on a three-point Likert scale (1 = "Not true" to 3 = "Certainly true"). The SDQ includes five subscales: emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems, and prosocial behaviour. The total difficulties score, derived from the sum of emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, and peer problems subscales, highlights areas

where the child may require support, with higher scores indicating more significant behaviour problems. Reliability coefficients for SDQ subscales demonstrate its robustness: total difficulties (.82), emotional symptoms (.67), conduct problems (.63), hyperactivity (.77), peer problems (.57), and prosocial behaviour (.85) (Goodman, 2001). These coefficients affirm the SDQ as a reliable tool for assessing a range of emotional and behavioral challenges in children.

The SDQ is widely utilized in clinical, educational, and research settings due to its effectiveness in screening and monitoring behavioral problems over time. SDQ has multiple languages and validation across diverse populations globally supports its utility in cross-cultural studies. The SDQ's reliability and versatility make it indispensable for professionals and researchers aiming to address children's mental health needs and promote positive developmental outcomes.

Children's Emotion Regulation

The Emotion Regulation Checklist (ERC), developed by Shields and Cicchetti in 1997, is utilized to evaluate children's abilities in regulating emotions. This comprehensive assessment tool consists of 24 items rated on a four-point Likert scale, ranging from "Never" (1) to "Almost always" (4). To ensure accurate scoring and mitigate response biases, negatively worded items are reverse-coded. The ERC demonstrates strong internal consistency reliability, with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of .89, and robust concurrent validity, affirming its efficacy in measuring emotion regulation (Shields & Cicchetti, 1997).

Higher scores on the ERC indicate greater proficiency in emotion regulation, suggesting that children are adept at managing and appropriately responding to emotional experiences. Conversely, lower scores indicate challenges in regulating emotions, implying difficulties in handling emotional responses effectively. The ERC not only assesses the frequency and appropriateness of emotional expressions but also evaluates the strategies children employ to modulate their emotions.

Findings of the Study

Descriptive statistics and Cronbach Alpha were done for all the domains in CCNES, as well as for the SDQ and ERC. Descriptive statistics would be used to describe demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, minimum, and maximum values. Inferential statistics make use of statistical techniques toward analysing sample data to make inferences about population parameters or relationships among variables. Such methods allow the researcher to make inferences about the whole population based on data from a sample.

Internal Consistency

The internal consistency of current study indicates varying levels of maternal reactions to children's emotions, with punitive and minimization reactions being notably present. The measurement reliability for these domains is generally good. In terms of children's behavioral problems, moderate levels of conduct problems, hyperactivity, emotional symptoms, and peer problems were reported. The total scores on both the SDQ and emotion regulation measures highlight significant issues in the children's behaviour and emotional management. The data underscore the importance of understanding the impact of maternal emotion socialization practices on children's behavioral outcomes.

Table 1

The Reliability Test of Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scale (Ccnes), Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), and Emotion Regulation Checklist (Erc)

Domains	Mean	SD	No of Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Distress Reactions (DR)	42.83	10.42	12	0.73
Punitive Reactions (PR)	47.59	12.08	12	0.78
Minimization Reactions (MR)	49.98	11.05	12	0.77
Total CCNES	322.22	37.32	72	0.87
Conduct Problem	6.66	1.25	5	.63
Hyperactivity	7.58	1.55	5	.67
Emotional Symptoms	6.87	1.67	5	0.61
Peer Problem	7.41	1.57	5	.64
Total SDQ	29.45	16.38	20	.66
Total emotion regulation (deleted item 12)	51.71	6.40	23	.73

Relationship between Maternal Negative Emotion Socialization and Children's Behaviour Problems

Table 2 and table 3 indicated that there was a significant positive correlation between the variable of maternal punitive reactions and children's conduct problem ($r=0.06$, $p<0.05$), hyperactivity ($r=0.14$, $p<0.05$), and total externalizing behaviour ($r=0.14$, $p<0.01$). In other words, it can be explained that when maternal punitive reactions increase, children's conduct problems, behaviour, hyperactivity will increase. In addition, the correlation table also indicated that maternal punitive reactions have positive relationship with both internalizing behaviour ($r=0.23$, $p<0.05$) such as emotional symptom ($r=0.24$, $p<0.05$), and peer problems ($r=0.13$, $p<0.05$). These correlations suggest that emotional symptoms, and peer relation problems, indicating that higher punitive reactions are associated with increased behavioral and emotional issues. In summary, maternal punitive reactions have a positive relationship with both externalizing and internalizing behavior, including conduct problem, hyperactivity, emotional symptoms, and peer problems, further emphasizing the impact of punitive parenting on a child's emotional and social well-being.

Moreover, the results of correlation showed that maternal distress reactions have a positive significant relationship with all the behaviour problems such as conduct problem ($r=0.11$, $p<0.01$), hyperactivity ($r=0.23$, $p<0.05$), as well as total externalizing behaviour ($r=0.23$, $p<0.05$). Punitive reactions also found a positive linked with children's internalizing behaviour included of emotional symptoms ($r=0.29$, $p<0.05$), peer problem ($r=0.17$, $p<0.05$) and total score of internalizing behaviour ($r=0.28$, $p<0.05$). These correlations highlight the significant impact of maternal distress reactions on various aspects of children's behavior, emphasizing the importance of addressing maternal practices in interventions aimed at reducing behavioral problems in children.

In addition to punitive and distress reactions, maternal minimization reactions also impacted to children's behavior problems. The results showed that maternal minimization reactions are positively related to children's conduct problem behavior ($r=0.37$, $p<0.05$), hyperactivity ($r=0.10$, $p<0.05$), and the total score of externalizing behavior ($r=0.14$, $p<0.05$). Besides externalizing behavior, internalizing behavior is also affected by maternal

minimization reactions, with positive relationships found with children's emotional symptoms ($r=0.17$, $p<0.05$), peer problems ($r=0.14$, $p<0.05$), and the total score of internalizing behavior ($r=0.15$, $p<0.05$). The conclusion of the analysis is that maternal minimization reactions are significantly associated with various children's behavior problems. Specifically, these reactions are linked to increased conduct problems, hyperactivity, and overall externalizing behaviors, as well as emotional symptoms, peer problems, and overall internalizing behaviors. These findings highlight the negative impact of maternal minimization reactions on both externalizing and internalizing behavior problems in children.

Table 2

Results of Correlation between Maternal Emotion Socialization and Children's Externalizing Behaviour Problems

Variables	Conduct Problem	Hyperactivity	Total Externalizing Behaviour
Punitive reactions (PR)	0.06**	0.14**	0.14**
Distress reactions (DR)	0.11**	0.23**	0.23**
Minimization reactions (MR)	0.31**	0.11**	0.14**

Note: * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$

Table 3

Results of Correlation between Maternal Emotion Socialization and Children's Internalizing Behaviour Problems

Variables	Emotional Symptoms	Peer Problem	Total Internalizing Behaviour
Punitive reactions (PR)	0.23**	0.14**	0.23**
Distress reactions (DR)	0.29**	0.17**	0.28**
Minimization reactions (MR)	0.17**	0.14**	0.15**

Note: * $p<0.05$, ** $p<0.01$

Relationship between Maternal Negative Emotion Socialization and Children's Emotion Regulation

Based on the table 4 the results have indicated that maternal punitive reactions have a negative correlation with children's emotion regulation ($r = -0.26$, $p < 0.01$), This can be explained that as maternal punitive reactions increase, the level of emotional regulation decreases significantly. In terms of maternal distress reactions also found negative correlation with children's emotion regulation ($r = -0.31$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher maternal distress reactions are associated with lower levels of children's emotional regulation. Hence, there is a negative relationship between maternal minimization reactions with children's emotion regulation ($r = -0.24$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that higher maternal minimization reactions are associated with lower levels of children's emotional regulation. In summary, all three types of maternal reactions punitive, distress, and minimization are negatively correlated with children's emotional regulation, meaning that as these maternal reactions increase, children's ability to regulate their emotions decreases.

Table 4

Results of Correlation between Maternal Emotion Socialization and Children's Emotion Regulation

Variables	Total Emotion Regulation
Punitive reactions	-0.26**
Distress reactions	-0.31**
Minimization reactions	-0.24**

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Relationship between Children's Emotion Regulation and Children's Behaviour Problems

Table 5 indicated there is a significant negative correlation between children's emotion regulation and children's conduct problem ($r = -0.38$, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that better emotion regulation is associated with fewer conduct problems in children. Hence, the correlation between emotion regulation and hyperactivity is also negative and significant ($r = -0.36$, $p < 0.01$). This implies that children who have better emotion regulation tend to show less hyperactivity. In addition, the total score for externalizing behaviour shows a significant negative correlation with emotion regulation ($r = -0.48$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that higher levels of emotion regulation are linked to lower levels of overall externalizing behaviour problems. In summary, the findings from Table 4 suggest that better emotion regulation in children is associated with fewer externalizing behavior problems, including conduct problems, hyperactivity, and the overall measure of externalizing behaviors.

Table 6 showed there is a significant negative correlation between children's emotion regulation and children's emotional symptoms ($r = -0.41$, $p < 0.01$). The correlation between emotion regulation and peer problems is negative and significant ($r = -0.21$, $p < 0.01$). The total score for internalizing behaviour shows a significant negative correlation with emotion regulation ($r = -0.38$, $p < 0.01$). In summary, the findings from Table 5 suggest that better emotion regulation in children is associated with fewer internalizing behaviour problems, including emotional symptoms, peer problems, and the overall measure of internalizing behaviours.

Table 5

Results of Correlation between Maternal Emotion Socialization and Children's Externalizing Behaviour Problems

Variables	Conduct Problem	Hyperactivity	Total Externalizing Behaviour
Emotion regulation	-0.38**	-0.36**	-0.48**

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Table 6

Results of correlation between maternal emotion socialization and children's internalizing behaviour problems

Variables	Emotional Symptoms	Peer Problem	Total Internalizing Behaviour
Emotion regulation	-0.41**	-0.21**	-0.38**

Note: * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Discussion of the Findings

The present results highlight that maternal emotion socialization is the central determinant of children's emotional and behavioral outcomes. More particularly, the present study underscores the consequence of maternal punitive, distress, and minimization reactions to children's behavioral problems such as externalizing and internalizing behaviours. These findings, therefore, corroborate previous studies showing that how mothers react to their children's expressed emotions does make a difference in their psychological and social development (Hooper et al., 2018).

Maternal unsupportive ways have always been significantly associated with problematic behaviours. In regard to Acar-Bayraktar and colleagues (2019), higher levels of maternal negative emotion socialization reactions, such as punitive, distress, and minimization reactions, are associated with higher both externalizing-including conduct problems, hyperactivity-and internalizing-including emotional problems, peer problems-behaviours in children (Mckee et al., 2022). These findings are in agreement with the previous studies that found supportive emotion socialization of children's negative feelings by mothers were related to fewer behaviour problems (Trevethan et al., 2021), whereas negative emotion socialization was associated with the development of behaviour problems in children (Castro et al., 2018). Maternal unsupportive reactions may actually escalate emotional distress in children due to the feeling of misunderstanding or lack of love, or alternatively, overwhelm which exacerbates the problems they are having with their emotions and behaviour generally (Eisenberg et al., 2010).

Maternal distress reactions, whereby mothers respond to their children's emotions with anxiety, frustration, or worry, also play a very important role in determining the emotional and behavioral outcomes in children. Children whose mothers react with distress may internalize these emotions, leading to increased symptoms of anxiety or depression (Morris et al., 2011). In cases when the mothers respond with distress, the child learns more about the regulation of the state of his or her mother than that of his or her own, thus impairing his or her emotional development. Such a pattern is in agreement with the literature suggesting that maternal distress reactions may be associated with increasing the child's vulnerability to internalizing and externalizing behaviours (Shaffer et al., 2012).

Results show that maternal minimizing reactions such as dismissing or minimizing the feelings of children are associated negatively with the emotion regulation of children and, consequently, to behaviour problems. A study by Acar-Bayraktar and colleagues (2019) indicated that when mothers minimize or dismiss their children's emotional experience, this constrains the development of effective emotion regulation strategies in children and results in higher behavioral problems. Current study findings emphasized the critical importance of maternal emotion socialization in developing children's emotion regulation and behaviour. These results therefore find support from previous literature, thus bringing into focus the requirement for interventions at maternal emotion socialization in an effort to enhance the emotional and behavioural developments of children for different age groups and genders (Sanchis-Sanchis et al. 2020). Moreover, maternal supportive responses may encourage emotion regulation in children, thus decreasing the risk of behavioral difficulties (Berona et al., 2022).

It has also been noted that maternal punitive, distress, and minimizing reactions were inversely related to the emotion regulation of children at a significant level. This means that with the increase in maternal negative reactions, a child's ability to regulate his/her emotions drops significantly. Hence, the results were supported from the previous study by Hong and colleagues (2020), they stated that those children whose mothers give unsupportive reactions might have low ability to control one's emotion. Children with better emotion regulation since early childhood to middle childhood tend to have fewer conduct problems and cope better with social problems (Perry et al., 2020). Such findings suggest that emotion regulation represents a protecting factor in the development of behavioral problems. Overall, evidence underlines the adverse influence of maternal negative emotion socialization on children's behavioral outcomes and the capability for emotion regulation, thus reinforcing the importance of supportive practices in fostering children's emotional and social well-being.

These findings also provide robust evidence that emotion regulation among children is associated with fewer externalizing and internalizing problems. The findings indicate the development of emotion regulation skills in children as one way of promoting better behavioral and emotional outcomes. Children who are well in emotion regulation not only reduces conduct problems and hyperactivity but diminishes emotional symptoms and problems regarding peers, making the child better equipped for healthier psychological development. These findings find support from earlier research by showing that children with conduct problems were less likely to possess the ability to regulate their emotions while children who usually have problems in controlling their emotions tend to have more behavioral difficulties (Jin et al., 2017; Shadur & Hussong, 2020). In fact, Fan and colleagues (2023) found that children with more negative perceptions of maternal emotion socialization than their parents exhibited the most internalizing and externalizing problems. For instance, in a study by Eisenberg et al. (2001), it was suggested that children who experienced unsupportive reactions from their mothers led to poorer regulation of emotions, which involved developing more aggressiveness and externalizing problems. Along this line, Ugarte and colleagues (2021) reported that children displayed more behavioral problems, particularly those reflecting externalizing problems, in relation to their mothers showing more negative reactions against their emotions.

Limitations & Future Recommendations for Future Research

In view of these limitations of the past research in the study of maternal negative emotion socialization, children's behaviour problems, and children's emotion regulation, several limitations of the present research and future research directions come into view. One serious constraint involves homogeneity within the samples under study that limits the generalisability of findings across diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts. Given this limitation, future research should make considerations of inclusivity paramount by incorporating more diverse samples that will serve to advance current understanding of how maternal socialization practices vary and affect children's outcomes across different backgrounds.

While for the methodology limitation, the current study relies on mothers' self-report measures, which may be prone to biases due to social desirability or inaccuracy of recall. Future research needs to adopt multi-methods, such as observational and experimental designs, in order to get more objective measures of maternal responses and their influences

on children's emotional development and children's behaviour problems. Also, most of the studies are cross-sectional, hence restricting any causal conclusions and temporal ordering of the effects of maternal variables on children's behaviour and emotion regulation.

Because most of these studies use cross-sectional methods, they do not allow for the determination of specific cause-and-effect relationships and exactly how mothers' actions over time impinge on the changes in children's behaviour and emotional regulation. Longitudinal research would explain how such dynamics are clarified over time and offer insight into developmental trajectories among children exposed to different levels of maternal negative emotion socialization. Furthermore, the several studies use different ways of defining and measuring these concepts, hence, comparisons of findings are quite hard to make. This further weakens the generalization of our understanding of the subject at hand. Further research should adopt conceptual clarity and methodological consistency as the first order of concern toward forging a more cohesive understanding of these complex relationships. Last but not least, while studies allow us to learn about important associations, it is challenging to translate these findings into effective treatments since so many family and individual factors influence child development. Targeted clinical interventions, in which research is used and developed in selected settings that focus upon how mothers influence children's emotions, are among the interventions used to promote better emotional and behavioral health of children.

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