

CHINESE MATERNAL BELIEFS ABOUT CHILDREN'S EMOTION: RELATIONS TO REACTIONS TOWARDS CHILDREN'S POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

II

Abstract

Many empirical findings have suggested that parental reactions towards the expression of children's emotions is an important process of parental socialization of emotion during the development of children. Despite ample evidence for the potential benefits and harms on adolescents' psychological well-being by employing different types of reactions towards children's positive and negative emotions by parents, little is known about what foreshadows and drives these parenting behaviors, especially in the Chinese cultural context. Part of the parental beliefs about children's emotion, namely negative consequences, value and acceptance, parental respect and parental knowledge, may have driven different types of parental reactions to children's emotion and these beliefs should be regarded as important components in understanding parental socialization of emotion. Moreover, the relationship between different parental beliefs and reactions to children's emotions may be different depends on the gender of children.

The current research tested the hypothesis that the above-mentioned parental beliefs about children's emotions of Hong Kong Chinese mothers may predict the tendency of employing certain types of reactions, such as supportive or unsupportive, specifically to positive and negative emotions expressed by their children. It also explored the role of children's gender, whether as a direct influential factors or a moderator, in affecting the parental reactions to children emotions.

Two hundred and eight Hong Kong Chinese mothers (mean age = 43.16 years) of seventh graders (mean age = 12.55 years, 27 % female) participated the study. Mothers reported on their educational attainment levels; their levels of different parental beliefs about children's emotions; and their own tendencies of using certain types of reactions to children's specially to expression of positive and negative emotions.