

The Role of Parenting Practices in Developing Emotional Regulation Among Children

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the relationship between parenting practices and children's emotional regulation using a correlational approach. Data were collected from 50 parent-child pairs (children aged 9–14) using two standardized tools: the PACER questionnaire to assess parental support and the ERQ to measure emotional regulation in both parents and children. Findings indicate a significant correlation between parental emotional support and children's ability to regulate emotions. Supportive parenting fosters adaptive emotional regulation, reinforcing the role of parents in shaping children's emotional competence. These results highlight the need for structured parental guidance and suggest future research explore environmental and cultural influences.

Keywords: *parenting, emotional regulation, parental assistance, child development, correlational study*

Emotional regulation is the ability to manage emotions effectively to achieve goals, handle social interactions, and adapt to different situations. This skill is crucial for mental well-being, academic success, and interpersonal relationships. Children who develop strong emotional regulation exhibit resilience, better peer relationships, and improved decision-making abilities. Conversely, difficulties in emotional regulation are associated with anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems. Given its importance, understanding how emotional regulation develops, particularly in relation to parenting, is essential.

Parents play a pivotal role in shaping children's emotional competence. They act as the primary agents of emotional socialization by teaching children how to identify, express, and manage emotions. The way parents respond to their children's emotions—whether through validation, dismissal, or punitive measures—determines whether children develop adaptive or maladaptive emotional regulation strategies. Supportive parenting, characterized by guidance and emotional validation, fosters self-regulation, while neglectful or punitive parenting can contribute to emotional instability.

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Emotional regulation is not an innate ability but a learned skill that evolves throughout life. It is influenced by parental modeling, social interactions, and environmental factors. Parents who provide a nurturing environment, acknowledge their child's emotions, and offer strategies to manage them, promote healthy emotional regulation. On the other hand, children who experience emotional neglect or suppression may develop maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as emotional avoidance or excessive dependency on external regulation. This study aims to examine the relationship between parental assistance and children's emotional regulation using standardized assessment tools. By analyzing the Parental Assistance with Child Emotional Regulation (PACER) questionnaire and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), this study seeks to provide empirical evidence on how parenting strategies influence emotional regulation in children. Understanding this relationship is crucial for improving parenting interventions, educational policies, and psychological support systems for children.

In recent years, research on emotional regulation has gained significant attention due to its implications for psychological well-being, academic achievement, and social competence. Children who effectively regulate their emotions exhibit higher levels of self-control, stronger interpersonal skills, and better academic performance. Conversely, those with poor emotional regulation often struggle with impulse control, aggression, and difficulties in social interactions. The ability to regulate emotions is particularly crucial during childhood and adolescence, as this period involves rapid emotional and cognitive development.

The ability to regulate emotions continues to develop throughout childhood, influenced by parental guidance and environmental factors. Younger children rely more on external support from caregivers to manage emotions, whereas older children gradually develop independent regulation strategies. Cognitive reappraisal, which involves reframing negative experiences in a positive light, is an adaptive strategy that promotes resilience. Conversely, expressive suppression—where emotions are inhibited—can lead to increased psychological distress.

Given the importance of emotional regulation, it is essential to explore how parental assistance influences its development in children. This study focuses on children aged 9–14, a crucial period in emotional development where independence from parents begins to increase. Understanding the relationship between parenting and emotional regulation can inform future interventions and strategies to enhance emotional well-being in children.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Parental emotional expressiveness directly influences children's self-regulation. Parents who frequently express emotions positively and engage in supportive interactions raise children with better emotional regulation and social competence. In contrast, emotionally suppressive households contribute to heightened emotional dysregulation and behavioral problems. (Eisenberg et al. 1998).

Emotion Coaching Model, classifying parents into emotion-coaching and emotion-dismissing categories. Emotion-coaching parents validate their children's feelings, encourage discussions about emotions, and provide guidance on managing emotions. Children raised by such parents exhibit higher emotional intelligence and lower anxiety levels. In contrast, emotion-dismissing parents minimize or ignore their children's emotions, leading to weaker emotional regulation skills and increased emotional distress. (Gottman et al. 1997).

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The findings of family dynamics' influence on emotional development suggests that parental emotional regulation, home emotional climate, and direct emotion-related instruction significantly impact children's self-regulation abilities. Families characterized by warmth and consistency promote emotional resilience, while harsh or neglectful parenting styles increase vulnerability to emotional instability (Morris et al. 2007). Exploring two major emotional regulation strategies: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Cognitive reappraisal, involving reinterpreting a situation to alter its emotional impact, was linked to greater well-being and resilience. Expressive suppression, which involves inhibiting emotional expressions, was associated with increased emotional distress. These findings suggest that parents who encourage cognitive reappraisal help children develop effective emotional regulation skills (Gross 2002).

The role of early childhood experiences in shaping emotional regulation. Infants who receive consistent emotional responsiveness from caregivers exhibit greater emotional stability in later years. Conversely, children exposed to emotional neglect are more prone to impulsivity and stress-related difficulties (Thompson 1994). Parenting influences on emotional regulation, concluding that authoritative parenting fosters better regulation skills, while authoritarian and neglectful parenting styles contribute to emotional challenges. Their research supports the importance of structured yet supportive parenting approaches (Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner 2011)

Rationale

Despite extensive research on emotional regulation, gaps remain in understanding how direct parental assistance shapes children's emotional regulation abilities. Existing studies focus primarily on general parenting styles rather than specific strategies that parents use to help their children regulate emotions. Additionally, most research examines early childhood or adolescence, with limited focus on middle childhood (ages 9–14), a crucial period for emotional development.

This study addresses these gaps by using standardized assessment tools (PACER and ERQ) to examine the correlation between parental assistance and children's emotional regulation. It also investigates whether parents' own emotional regulation skills influence their ability to support their children effectively. The findings will contribute to existing literature and provide empirical evidence for designing interventions to improve children's emotional regulation.

METHOD OF STUDY

The study's methodology is covered in the following subheadings:

Purpose:

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between parenting practices and children's emotional regulation using a **correlational research method**.

Hypothesis

- **H1:** Positive and supportive parenting practices significantly contribute to the development of emotional regulation in children.
- **H2:** Children whose parents openly discuss emotions and model healthy emotional expression develop stronger emotional regulation skills.

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Variables of the study:

- Parental assistance in emotional regulation,
- Children's emotional regulation abilities

Research Design

The research follows a correlational design. This non-experimental design does not involve manipulation of variables but instead examines naturally occurring associations between parenting behaviors and children's ability to regulate emotions.

Sample & Sampling Technique

The study sample consisted of 50 parent-child pairs, where the children were aged 9-14 years. This age group was selected as it represents a crucial period in the development of emotional regulation, characterized by increasing independence and growing emotional complexity. The parent participants were primary caregivers responsible for the child's emotional upbringing. The sample included parents of varying socio-economic backgrounds to ensure diversity and generalizability of the findings.

A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who met the inclusion criteria.

Instruments:

The tools used in the study are mentioned below:

- **Parental assistance with child emotional regulation (PACER) (50 items):** The PACER questionnaire was developed by Emily M.C to assess the ways in which parents assist their children in emotional regulation. The scale was designed to measure different aspects of parental support. The PACER questionnaire has been validated through prior studies and has shown high reliability and validity in measuring parental assistance with emotional regulation, with high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha typically above 0.80) across its subscales. There are 10 subscales in PACER questionnaire: Behavioral Disengagement, Problem-Solving, Social Support Search, Rumination Distraction, Reappraisal, Acceptance, Expressive Suppression, Venting, Avoidance
 - **Rating scale:** Each item is elicited in terms of 7-point Likert scale such as Strongly Agree (7), Agree (6), slightly agree (5), Neutral (4), slightly disagree (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Agree (1).
- **Emotional regulation questionnaire (ERQ) (10 items):** The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) was developed by Gross & John (2003) to assess individual differences in emotion regulation strategies, focusing on cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. The ERQ has high internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha: Reappraisal ~0.79–0.90, Suppression ~0.68–0.76) and strong test-retest reliability, making it a validated tool for assessing emotion regulation. There are 2 subscales in the ERQ as follows: Cognitive Reappraisal, Expressive Suppression
 - **Rating scale:** Each item is elicited in terms of 7-point Likert scale such as Strongly Agree(7), Agree(6), slightly agree(5), Neutral(4), slightly disagree(3), Disagree(2), Strongly Agree(1).

Procedure

The study began with obtaining informed consent from parents and assent from children. Participants, consisting of 50 parent-child pairs (children aged 9-14 years), were provided with two standardized questionnaires: PACER (for parents) and ERQ (for both parents and

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children). The questionnaires were administered in a controlled setting, ensuring clarity and confidentiality. Parents completed the PACER to assess their assistance in child emotion regulation, while both parents and children completed the ERQ to evaluate their emotion regulation strategies. The collected data were then analyzed statistically using SPSS to examine correlations between parenting practices and children’s emotional regulation abilities.

RESULT TABLE

Table 1: Showing description statistics of Parental Assistance with Child and Emotional Regulation of children.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Total PACER score	225.94	37.521	50
Total ERQ (child) score	45.25	11.681	50

- The mean PACER score (225.94, SD = 37.521) suggests the level of parental assistance in children’s emotional regulation.
- The mean ERQ score for children (45.25, SD = 11.681) reflects their emotional regulation abilities.

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Parental Assistance with Child and Emotional Regulation of Children.

	Total PACER Score (parent)	Total ERQ Score (child)
Total PACER Score	1	.111
Pearson Correlation		.453
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	50	50
Total ERQ Score (Child).	.111	1
Pearson Correlation	.453	
Sig. (2-tailed)		
N	50	50

- A weak positive correlation ($r = 0.111$, $p = 0.453$) was found between parental assistance (PACER) and children’s emotional regulation (ERQ).
- The p-value (0.453) is non-significant, indicating that the relationship is not statistically meaningful.

Table 3: Showing Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Regulation of and the Emotional Regulation of Child

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Total ERQ Score (parent)	58.83	11.630	50
Total ERQ Score (child)	45.25	11.681	50

- The mean ERQ score for parents (58.83, SD = 11.630) indicates their emotion regulation strategies.
- The mean ERQ score for children (45.25, SD = 11.681) allows comparison of emotion regulation across generations.

Table 4: Correlation Matrix of Emotional Regulation of Parent and Emotional Regulation of Children

		Total ERQ Score (parent)	Total ERQ Score (child)
Total ERQ (parent)	Pearson correlation	1	.764**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	50	50
Total ERQ (Child)	Pearson Correlation	.764**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	50	50

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

**P<.01 level of significance

- A strong positive correlation ($r = 0.764$, $p = 0.000$) was found between parents' and children's emotional regulation scores.
- The p-value (0.000) is highly significant, suggesting that children's emotional regulation is strongly associated with their parents' regulation abilities.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate a weak correlation ($r = 0.111$, $p = 0.453$) between PACER and children's ERQ scores, suggesting that direct parental assistance alone does not significantly impact emotional regulation. However, a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.764$, $p = 0.000$) was found between parents' and children's ERQ scores, indicating that parents' own emotional regulation skills strongly influence their children's abilities.

These findings align with Social Learning Theory, emphasizing the importance of parental modeling over direct intervention. While previous research supports emotion coaching, the results suggest that excessive parental involvement in regulation may foster dependency rather than autonomy. Future studies should explore how different parenting strategies influence children's emotional development across various socio-cultural contexts.

This study highlights that while parental support is important, a parent's own emotional regulation skills have a stronger impact on their child's regulation abilities. Future research should examine specific parenting approaches to develop targeted interventions that promote emotional well-being in children

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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