

The Relationship between Parents' Behavior and Children's Emotional Development

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ABSTRACT: Children's emotional development is important to one's empathetic and social skills, and influence how well they connect to the society. However, there is an increase in numbers of children with autism since early 2000s. Few scholars has explored the contribution of parents' negative behavior to the development of autistic probability of children (Jones, Hastings, Totsika, Keane & Rhule, 2014). Parents are key attachment figures and cognitive and emotional example of their children. This study aims to explore the relationship between the number of parents arguments in front of children and the extend of children's emotional development. A sample of 43 parents with autistic and typical development children completed the questionnaires. The Pearson correlation confirmed the hypothesis and showed a positive correlation between parents' arguments in front of children and children's emotional development. The result suggests that parents can improve the condition of children's emotional development by argue less, and behave properly in front of children, engaging more in children's inner thoughts by playing effectively with one's children, and helping children to connect more with the community. Future study that considers how regional difference and other diversities affect children's emotional development is recommended.

KEY WORD: Autism; emotional development; parents' behavior

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I. INTRODUCTION

There has been a continued increase in the population of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) children in the past decade (Blumberg, Bramlett, Kogan, Schieve, Jones, & Lu, 2013; Kim, Leventhal, Koh, Fombonne, Laska, Lim et al., 2011). Certain studies from the United States, Europe, and Asia have reported ASD prevalence estimates based on national survey data, statewide administrative data, or community screening approaches (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2008). The raising population of autism children make a burden of both the family and the society to pay more funding and attention on doing related study. With an increase living pressure and social responsibilities, parents tend to bring their bad moods back toward their closest family members, where younger people feel the most vulnerable to such negative influence.

Children's emotional development can be disturbed and suffer the impact their parents put on them (Cooklin, 2013) Emotional development is showing affections of others. Theories of emotional development are attachment theory, Skinner's behavioral theory, and Freud's psychodynamic theory. The three stages of emotional development are: noticing, expressing, and managing emotions. It is essential for people to have emotional development, and the effects influence one's whole life. It was found that developing emotional awareness can help people express their own feelings and also understanding others, which is so-called empathy.

Researchers have been working on the causation, effects, and remedy of patients with ASD for a long period of time (Bahmani, Sarrafchi, Shirzad, & Rafieian-Kopaei, 2016) ASD is now understood to be a disease of complex interaction between genetics and the environment, with heritability estimates ranging from 40 to 80%. Therefore, with the advocacy of ASD patients by psychiatric hospitals, people tend to pay more attention to the development and conditions for people with ASD. One indication shows that people's personalities can be greatly influenced by others who constantly interfere with. As a result, there may further show that parents, who educate and cultivate children most commonly, are the essential factor that causes the diagnosis of ASD for children. Meanwhile, having autism can affect a lot of people's normal decisions and behaviors, not to say on people who live with those patients. Extensive genetic studies have revealed hundreds of genes linked to autism. Both pharmacological and non-pharmacological interventions are available for ASD. Pharmacological treatments include psychostimulants, atypical antipsychotics, antidepressants, and alpha-2 adrenergic receptor agonists. These medications provide partial symptomatic relief of core symptoms of ASD or manage the symptoms of comorbid conditions. Non-pharmacological interventions, which show promising evidence in

improving social interaction and verbal communication of ASD patients, include music therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy and social behavioral therapy.

It has been proved that a trauma experienced through childhood can last a lifelong impact on a person. For example, the arguments between parents in front of children can significantly affect children's emotional development (Emery, 1982) Study has indicated how important social activities can be on emotional development, not to say for children who are on their formation of habits and personalities (Cooper, Phillips, Johnston, Radlak, Hamilton, & McLeod, 2013)

There are lots of related study on the emotional issues of children with ASD. A recent study indicated that a high rate of problems among children with autism emerges, with 53% of children having four or more problems, like sensory difficulties (Mazureka, Kannea, Wodka, 2012). Emotional and behavioral problems among autistic children encourage people to design more appropriate devices to support and reduce those inconveniences (Maskey, Warnell, R. Parr, Le Couture & McConachie, 2012)

On the other hand, the article indicates that symptoms of deficits in social communication and restrictive, repetitive behavioral patterns emerge early in a child's development. Lack of social contact with others can cause reduce in parent-child interactions, and parental stress can have negative transactional effects that impede children's development. Parents can play a vital role in the development of children's emotions. It shows that parental sensitivity, synchrony, and support also can influence children with ASD.

There are some related theoretical foundations for children's emotional development. For instance, the James-Lange Theory states that the feelings of bodily changes come first and form the basis of an emotional experience. (Cannon, 1987) One study shows stimulating events trigger a physical reaction. Children with autism tend to have sleep problems. (Schreck, Mulick, 2000) Therefore, children will realize they are depressed or not feeling emotional good since they can't sleep well and have lower heart rates.

Theory of mind (ToM) - the specific ability to attribute mental states to oneself and to others (Baron-Cohen, Leslie, & Frith, 1985) - and executive function (EF) - a term describing a set of functions thought to be necessary for flexible, future-oriented behavior, especially in novel circumstances (Pennington & Ozonoff, 1996) - have each been hypothesized to play a causal role in the development of these behavioral features. individual differences in false-belief prediction were significantly related to individual differences in executive control. Thus, ToM seems to be reliably linked to aspects of executive control throughout early childhood and adolescence for individuals with autism.

While early study lacks the perspectives of parents who have children with ASD, many studies are about children with ASD in European countries rather than Asia. This report will look at the relationship between arguments among parents and the emotional development conditions for children with ASD. The study will particularly focus on children with ASD in the region of China.

The objective of the research is to identify the factors that directly or indirectly affect the inflow of FDI in Malaysia. Further to examine whether FDI inflow has lead to export diversification in Malaysia or not.

II. Method

2.1 Design

A between-participant survey study was carried out. It examined the correlation between two variables namely children's emotional development and the number of parents' argument in a week.

2.2 Participants

A sample of 43 parents ages between 36 and 45 ($M=38.8$, $SD=2.05$). Over half of them have an undergraduate degree. There are 26 males and 17 females, and the participants are all from China. There are 31 parents with typical developed children family are sampled from a community in Beijing, and 12 parents with ASD children are sampled from a school with special needs children.

2.3 Materials

The questionnaire was consisted of 32 questions. The first set of the questionnaire measured children's emotional development using a five-point Likert scale ranged from strongly agree (1) to disagree (5) strongly. It featured all positive sentences such as "my child can articulate his needs." The second set of questions measured behaviors and habits of parents including "I try to communicate with my child when my child is anxious," representing how parents deal with emotional problems in families in front of children. Scores were generalized across the 8-items in each set to form a summary score, with an increase in scores being associated with a lower feeling of a sense of belonging or negative peer relationships.

2.4 Procedure

The questionnaire was distributed to all participants via Qualtrics online. There were no time limits imposed. Participants were told the study topic, asked five basic demographic questions first, and then read and rated their likelihood of the given sentences. The process was done voluntarily and anonymously. The data was collected generated by Qualtrics.

2.5 Data Analysis Plan

First, descriptive statistics were carried out to describe the sample population. Pearson correlation was done in EXCEL between children's emotional development and the number of parents' argument in a week by using the formula.

III. Results

The relationship between parents' arguments in a week and children's emotional development was investigated and speculated by the data from the questionnaire. The relationship between 'my child can articulate his need' (TTEST=1.21), 'I will always stop my work and accompany my children when they need me' (TTEST=0.92), and 'I believe it's good for my children's development to let them socialize in their own way' (TTEST=0.45) is significant ($p < .05$). These results show that the more times parents have arguments in a week, the less stable children's emotional development would become, and thus more likely to have an autism disorder. It supports the hypothesis that the correlation between the two variables is positive.

IV. Discussion

The study aimed to look at the correlation between the number of arguments between parents in a week and the condition of children's emotional development, particularly for those children with autism. Conversely, parents' negative emotions toward intimate partners or other people can greatly impact children's emotional development with ingrowing personalities. The effects can be interpreted in two ways. One explanation is that bad relationships between parents result in wrong values for children and further influence their decisions in all kinds of social tasks (Li, Li, Wu & Wang, 2019) Another cause is that having a disharmonious relationship inside families makes children feel disvalues and couldn't find the right way to connect with the community (McCarthy, 2014)

Most participants were male. Therefore, this may have influenced the results. Also, this study focused merely on Chinese families. Since in traditional Chinese families, males usually take charge of business and outside tasks, which sometimes lack connections with trivial things that appear in the questionnaire. A different cultural background may influence how parents deal with various emotional issues.

The finding is potentially useful for doctors, scholars, parents, and teachers. For example, it will help doctors and scholars to explore a new angle of explaining the reason for children with autism. It can also assist parents or individuals in being aware of the harms of expressing negative emotional state in front of children. People will notice the risk and pay more attention to immature children and need guidelines for their development of personalities. Future study can distinguish between the gradual formation of characters by surrounding environment and behaviors from their family members and the seemingly fast progress through external material or requirements on children. Meanwhile, different hospitals may find other factors prior to cause the formation of autism and therefore put less attention on the influence from parents' extreme behaviors in front of their children. The differences between hospitals or schools with the sampling results may be due to limited sample variety. The sample results are different between samples from parents with autism children and parents with normal children because of limited sample variety. As this report looks explicitly at a comparably small program, future study can more thoroughly look at how to detect children with autism in earlier stage or better way for parents to communicate with their children in order to ensure their emotional development from the influence of parents' behaviors on children's emotional development.

In conclusion, the more parents have arguments in front of children, the more children's emotional development can be influenced in a negative way, which further results in autism. The report found a moderate correlation between the two variables. It indicates that parents' behavior is essential to the formation of children's personalities and habits. Parents can engage more with their children to provide emotional support and add more effective education on cultivating emotional perception.

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