



## Parent emotion socialisation practices and their associations with personality and emotion regulation

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine parent emotion socialisation practices and their association with personality and emotion regulation (ER). Mothers ( $n = 353$ ) and fathers ( $n = 206$ ) of children and adolescents ( $n = 372$ ; 10–18 years) completed measures of the five factor model of personality, ER, responses to child negative emotions, and emotional expressiveness. All five personality factors were related to parenting, with openness and agreeableness being most pertinent to socialisation practices. Although there were some significant associations between parent ER and emotion socialisation, ER explained very little variance in parenting after controlling for personality. The findings provide important insights into individual differences in emotion socialisation practices.

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### 1. Introduction

According to Belsky (1984) the determinants of parenting fall into three categories: parent characteristics, child characteristics and contextual factors. Of these, he argued that parent personality is the most important. Subsequently, researchers have utilised the five factor model of personality (neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), openness (O), agreeableness (A) and conscientiousness (C); McCrae & John, 1992) to investigate this proposition (Metsäpelto & Pulkkinen, 2003; Oliver, Guerin, & Coffman, 2009). Despite a growing body of research demonstrating important links between emotion socialisation practices and children's socioemotional functioning (Denham, Bassett, & Wyatt, 2007; Saarni, 2007), there have been very few studies investigating associations between parent characteristics and emotion socialisation.

Studies of parent personality have generally hypothesised that optimal parenting is associated with lower N and higher E, O, A and C. This is based on the assumption that these traits lead to positive parenting practices via their influence on factors such as emotional stability, enjoyment of and engagement in parent–child interactions, degree of restrictiveness regarding child behaviours and experiences, tendency toward compassion and the provision of structure (Belsky & Jaffee, 2006). Although there are some inconsistencies, existing studies of factors such as warmth, control,

communication and limit setting have found general support for the above hypothesis (e.g., Metsäpelto & Pulkkinen, 2003; Oliver et al., 2009). Moreover, a meta-analysis of 30 studies yielded small but significant effect sizes indicating that lower N and higher E, O, C and A were associated with greater parental warmth and behaviour control, while lower N and higher A were associated with greater autonomy support (Prinz, Stams, Dekovic, Reijntjes, & Belsky, 2009).

Emotion socialisation represents the various social agents that shape children's development of emotional competence (Denham et al., 2007). This can include direct influences occurring during parent–child interactions, or more indirect influences such as overall family emotional climate (Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers, & Robinson, 2007). Of relevance, Fabes and colleagues (Fabes, Leonard, Kupanoff, & Martin, 2001; Fabes, Poulin, Eisenberg, & Maden-Derdich, 2002; Jones, Eisenberg, Fabes, & MacKinnon, 2002) investigated the way in which parents respond to children's negative emotions. In general, they found that parents who responded by addressing the cause of their child's distress, by helping their child cope with the emotion, or by encouraging emotional expression had children with positive socioemotional outcomes. In contrast, parents who responded by minimising the child's experience, by punishing emotional expression or by becoming distressed themselves had children with poorer functioning. Studies investigating relationships between parent personality and these types of responses are needed.

Parents' valence and frequency of emotional expressiveness (EE) is thought to be a key aspect of family emotional climate

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and in turn related to child outcomes. Numerous studies support this, finding that parents who express more positive emotion and less negative emotion have children with greater emotion understanding, social competence and psychological well-being (Eisenberg et al., 2003; Halberstadt & Eaton, 2003). Furthermore, Smith et al. (2007) reported that greater positive EE was associated with mothers' higher E, O and A, while greater negative EE was associated with mothers' higher N and lower A and C.

Parents' emotion regulation (ER) may also be of relevance to emotion socialisation. ER refers to the processes through which emotional experience is evaluated, monitored, maintained and modified (Thompson, 1994). Gross and colleagues (Gross & John, 2003; Gross & Levenson, 1997; John & Gross, 2004) have investigated two specific ER strategies: cognitive reappraisal which involves changing the way one thinks about a situation and expressive suppression which involves hiding one's emotional response from others. Their findings have indicated that greater use of reappraisal and less use of suppression are associated with better psychological and interpersonal functioning. In addition, reappraisal and suppression have been found to be related to the five factor model of personality (Gross & John, 2003). Although it is feasible that parents who have more functional ER would use more constructive emotion socialisation practices, there is little empirical research examining this. In one related exception, Gottman, Katz, and Hooven (1996) reported that parent meta-emotion (i.e., the way parents feel about emotion) predicted parenting practices including warmth, praise and negative affect.

The current study aimed to examine associations between parent personality, ER, and two types of emotion socialisation practices: (1) the way parents respond to children's negative emotions and (2) the valence and frequency of parents' EE. It was hypothesised that positive socialisation practices (supportive responses, expressive encouragement, positive EE) would be associated with higher levels of E, O, A, C and reappraisal, and lower levels of N and suppression. In contrast, it was hypothesised that less positive socialisation practices (non-supportive responses, distress reactions, negative EE) would be associated with lower levels of E, O, A, C and reappraisal, and higher levels of N and suppression. The study further aimed to examine the incremental validity of ER in relation to emotion socialisation over and above that of personality. Although previous studies have reported differences in personality and parenting between men and women (e.g., women report higher O and A and more positive socialisation practices; Metsäpelto & Pulkkinen, 2003; Wong, McElwain, & Halberstadt, 2009), the investigated relationships were not expected to differ between mothers and fathers. Nevertheless, due to the lack of research in this field, mothers and fathers were examined separately.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants and procedures

Parents were recruited via their children who were participants in a longitudinal study of emotional development (see Gullone, Hughes, King, & Tonge, 2010). The study took place in Melbourne, Australia, and was approved by the institutional ethics committee. Data presented herein were collected during Wave 4, in which 846 children participated. Questionnaires were posted to parents who, at the time of providing written consent for their child's participation, indicated that they spoke English and would be interested in completing questionnaires. For families with two or more participating children, one child was randomly selected using a random number generator and parents were instructed to respond in relation to this child.

Of 518 eligible families, 383 (74%) female and 215 (42%) male caregivers completed questionnaires. Respondents were excluded if they were not the child's biological or step parent, lived with the child less than half the time, or if the child was outside the targeted age range (10–18 years). The final sample is described in Table 1. This represented 372 children of which 187 (50%) had two parents who completed questionnaires.

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. NEO-Five Factor Inventory-3 (NEO-FFI-3)

The NEO-FFI-3 (McCrae & Costa, 2007) is a 60-item self-report measure assessing the five factor model of personality. Each item comprises a descriptive statement rated on a 5-point scale to indicate how much the respondent agrees the description is true of them (1 = *strongly disagree* 5 = *strongly agree*). The NEO-FFI-3 has high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .78-.86$ ), sound factor structure and convergence with the longer NEO-Personality Inventory (McCrae & Costa, 2007). Earlier versions of the NEO-FFI have been well validated including convergence with other measures of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992). In the current study, internal consistency ranged from .73 (mother A) to .89 (father N).

#### 2.2.2. Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)

The ERQ (Gross & John, 2003) comprises 10 items assessing the ER strategies cognitive reappraisal (six items) and expressive suppression (four items). In the current study, the 7-point response scale was reduced to a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 5 = *strongly agree*) for consistency with the child version in the larger project. Higher scores on each scale indicate greater use of the corresponding strategy. The ERQ has been reported to have high internal consistency ( $\alpha = .79$  reappraisal, .73 suppression) and test-retest reliability ( $r = .69$  both scales), and sound convergent and discriminant validity (Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2004). In the current study, internal consistency ranged from .64 (father suppression) to .84 (mother reappraisal).

#### 2.2.3. Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scale (CCNES)

The CCNES (Fabes, Eisenberg, & Bernzweig, 1990) comprises 12 scenarios in which children express negative emotion. As the scenarios are designed for school-aged children, parents were asked to recall how they responded when the child was less than 10 years old (e.g., "If my child lost a favourite toy and reacted with tears, I would have..."). Each scenario includes six responses which parents rate regarding their likelihood of responding that way (1 = *very unlikely*, 7 = *very likely*). Responses include emotion-focused (e.g., "distracted my child by talking about happy things"), problem-focused (e.g., "helped my child to think of places they hadn't looked yet"), minimisation (e.g., "told my child they were

**Table 1**  
Sample characteristics.

	Mothers	Fathers
N	353	206
%		
Australian born	67	63
Married/De facto	83	98
Tertiary education	28	35
Household Income $\geq$ AUD\$100 k	27	19
Biological parent	99	93
Male child	44	41
M (SD); Range		
Age (years)	44.9 (5.5); 30–59	48.1 (6.5); 31–66
Child age (years)	14.8 (2.4); 10–18	14.8 (2.4); 10–18
Number of children	2.4 (1.0); 1–7	2.4 (1.0); 1–7

over-reacting”), punitive (e.g., “told my child that’s what happens when you’re not careful”), expressive encouragement (e.g., “told my child it’s OK to cry when you feel unhappy”) and distress responses (e.g., “gotten upset with my child for being so careless and then crying about it”).

Fabes et al. (2002) reported sound reliability and validity for the CCNES including adequate internal consistency ( $\alpha = .69$  for punitive to  $.85$  for expressive encouragement) and convergence with other measures of parenting. In the current study, internal consistency ranged from  $.64$  (mother distress) to  $.90$  (mother emotion-focused). Consistent with past factor analytic (Fabes et al., 2002) and empirical studies (e.g., Wong et al., 2009), supportive (emotion-focused, problem-focused) and non-supportive (minimisation, punitive) composites were formed by averaging the respective highly correlated scales (supportive  $r = .75$  and  $.86$ , non-supportive  $r = .68$  and  $.71$ , mothers and father, respectively,  $p < .001$ ).

#### 2.2.4. Self-expression in the Family Questionnaire – Short Form (SEFQ)

The SEFQ (Halberstadt, Cassidy, Stifter, Parke, & Fox, 1995) assesses the frequency of positive (12 items) and negative (12 items) emotional expressions within the general family context (1 = never, 5 = always) with higher scores indicating more frequent expressions. Halberstadt et al. (1995) reported sound psychometric properties for the SEFQ including high internal consistency (positive  $\alpha = .88$  and  $.89$ , negative  $\alpha = .88$  and  $.76$ , for mothers and fathers, respectively) and convergence with measures of parental anger expression and affect intensity. In the current study, internal consistency ranged from  $.82$  (mother negative) to  $.88$  (father positive).

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Preliminary analyses

Means and standard deviations of the variables are presented in Table 2. Compared to fathers, mothers reported significantly greater supportive responses, expressive encouragement, positive EE, N, E, O, A and C. Mothers also reported fewer non-supportive responses and less use of suppression than fathers. Two-tailed *t*-tests by child sex indicated that fathers reported more distress responses to negative emotions of daughters ( $M = 37.2$ ,  $SD = 13.2$ ) than sons ( $M = 34.4$ ,  $SD = 8.9$ ,  $t(199) = 2.06$ ,  $p = .040$ , Cohen’s  $d = 0.30$ ). Coefficients examining parent and child age indicated a small significant correlation between maternal age and negative EE ( $r = -.11$ ,  $p = .040$ ).

Pearson’s correlation coefficients for emotion socialisation with personality and ER are shown in Table 3. With some exceptions, there were significant correlations ranging from small to large in magnitude. There were also significant small to moderate correlations for emotion responsiveness with expressiveness ( $r = -.13$  to  $.41$  for mothers;  $r = -.18$  to  $.49$  for fathers). For mothers, ER strategies correlated significantly with all five personality factors ( $r = -.13$  to  $.32$ ) with the exception of suppression with C. For fathers, there were significant correlations for reappraisal with N, O and C ( $r = .18$  to  $-.26$ ), and for suppression with E and O ( $r = -.21$  to  $-.23$ ).

#### 3.2. Regression analyses

A multiple regression analysis was conducted for each of the six emotion socialisation variables for both mothers and fathers. Personality variables were entered first followed by ER. Child sex was included as a covariate in the analysis predicting fathers’ distress responses (0 = girl, 1 = boy) and maternal age was included as a covariate in the analysis predicting mothers’ negative EE. Results are shown in Tables 4 and 5.

##### 3.2.1. Supportive responses

Mothers’ and fathers’ higher A and C significantly predicted greater supportive responses to children’s negative emotions. Mothers’ higher O significantly predicted greater supportive responses. Neither mothers’ nor fathers’ ER significantly predicted supportive responses.

##### 3.2.2. Non-supportive responses

Mothers’ and fathers’ lower A significantly predicted greater non-supportive responses to children’s negative emotions. Mothers’ higher N, lower O, and greater use of suppression significantly predicted greater non-supportive responses. Fathers’ lower E significantly predicted greater non-supportive responses. Although fathers’ ER explained significant additional variance in the model for non-supportive responses, the individual beta coefficients for reappraisal and suppression were not significant.

##### 3.2.3. Distress responses

Mothers’ and fathers’ higher N and lower O significantly predicted greater distress in response to children’s negative emotions. Mothers’ lower A significantly predicted greater distress responses. Neither mothers’ nor fathers’ ER significantly predicted distress responses.

**Table 2**  
Descriptive statistics of study variables for mothers and fathers.

	Mothers <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	Fathers <i>M</i> ( <i>SD</i> )	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>	Cohen’s <i>d</i>
<i>Emotion responses</i>						
Supportive	67.86 (8.55)	62.15 (11.19)	6.69	542	<.001	0.60
Non-supportive	30.15 (9.81)	36.47 (10.70)	7.02	543	<.001	0.62
Distress	35.41 (8.53)	36.09 (9.43)	0.86	543	.388	0.08
Expressive encouragement	57.40 (12.29)	49.06 (13.02)	7.48	543	<.001	0.67
<i>Expressiveness</i>						
Positive	3.94 (0.54)	3.53 (0.56)	8.50	553	<.001	0.75
Negative	2.43 (0.45)	2.39 (0.47)	1.00	556	.320	0.09
<i>Personality</i>						
Neuroticism	22.21 (8.24)	19.54 (8.05)	3.70	550	<.001	0.33
Extraversion	28.60 (6.33)	27.18 (5.92)	2.58	550	.010	0.23
Openness	29.60 (5.91)	27.38 (6.18)	4.26	550	<.001	0.38
Agreeableness	33.97 (5.27)	29.95 (5.78)	8.34	550	<.001	0.74
Conscientiousness	34.56 (5.82)	32.31 (6.17)	4.56	550	<.001	0.40
<i>ER strategies</i>						
Reappraisal	21.10 (3.65)	20.81 (3.73)	0.89	551	.372	0.08
Suppression	10.32 (2.88)	12.12 (2.44)	7.46	551	<.001	0.66

**Table 3**  
Correlations between emotion socialisation practices, personality, and emotion regulation.

	Emotion responses				Expressiveness	
	Supportive	Non-supportive	Distress	Expressive Encouragement	Positive	Negative
<b>Mothers</b>						
<i>Personality</i>						
Neuroticism	-.11*	.18**	.36***	-.07	-.25***	.53***
Extraversion	.17**	-.05	-.20***	.16**	.38***	-.15**
Openness	.24***	-.19***	-.18**	.23***	.30***	-.12*
Agreeableness	.25***	-.33***	-.25***	.31***	.36***	-.49***
Conscientiousness	.19***	-.06	-.17**	.11	.35***	-.18**
<i>Emotion Regulation</i>						
Reappraisal	.21***	.00	-.08	.15**	.29***	-.12*
Suppression	-.07	.25***	.08	-.13*	-.23***	.06
<b>Fathers</b>						
<i>Personality</i>						
Neuroticism	-.27***	.20**	.45***	-.08	-.22**	.40***
Extraversion	.31***	-.31***	-.38***	.18*	.43***	-.25***
Openness	.22**	-.21**	-.29***	.16*	.34***	-.17*
Agreeableness	.28***	-.34***	-.26***	.19**	.38***	-.47***
Conscientiousness	.32***	-.12	-.31***	.18*	.34***	-.27***
<i>Emotion Regulation</i>						
Reappraisal	.19**	.03	-.16*	.13	.11	-.20**
Suppression	-.04	.22**	.15*	-.08	-.25***	-.04

Note.

\*  $p < .05$ .

\*\*  $p < .01$ .

\*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

**Table 4**  
Multiple regressions predicting mothers' reported emotion socialisation practices from personality and emotion regulation.

	Emotion responses								Expressiveness			
	Supportive		Non-supportive		Distress		Expressive encouragement		Positive		Negative <sup>a</sup>	
	$\beta$	$p$	$\beta$	$p$	$\beta$	$p$	$\beta$	$p$	$\beta$	$p$	$\beta$	$p$
<i>Step 1</i>												
Neuroticism	.04	.521	.14	.022	.32	<.001	.08	.198	.02	.699	.51	<.001
Extraversion	.07	.276	.10	.106	.03	.679	.10	.105	.23	<.001	.15	.003
Openness	.17	.002	-.16	.005	-.14	.011	.14	.010	.17	.001	-.06	.163
Agreeableness	.18	.002	-.29	<.001	-.12	.029	.29	<.001	.23	<.001	-.36	<.001
Conscientiousness	.12	.044	.06	.316	-.01	.807	.01	.906	.20	<.001	.07	.125
$\Delta R^2$	.12		.14		.17		.13		.29		.41	
$F$	8.62	<.001	11.15	<.001	13.65	<.001	10.34	<.001	27.44	<.001	47.91	<.001
<i>Step 2</i>												
Reappraisal	.11	.068	.03	.43	.05	.346	.08	.175	.15	.004	.00	.932
Suppression	.01	.840	.18	.001	-.08	.166	-.07	.253	-.12	.017	-.10	.039
$\Delta R^2$	.01		.03		.01		.01		.02		.01	
$F$	1.89	.153	6.62	.002	1.16	.313	1.28	.279	5.676	.003	2.33	.099
Total $R^2$	.13		.18		.18		.14		.31		.43	
$F$	6.73	<.001	10.13	<.001	10.09	<.001	7.76	<.001	21.80	<.001	31.66	<.001

Note.

<sup>a</sup> For mothers' negative emotional expression, maternal age was entered as a covariate prior to steps 1 and 2,  $\beta = -.11$ ,  $p = .041$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .012$ ,  $F(1340) = 4.22$ ,  $p = .041$ .

### 3.2.4. Expressive encouragement

Mothers' higher levels of O and A predicted greater expressive encouragement in response to children's negative emotions. In contrast, none of the personality factors significantly predicted fathers' expressive encouragement. Neither mothers' nor fathers' ER significantly predicted expressive encouragement.

### 3.2.5. Positive emotional expression

Mothers' and fathers' higher levels of E, O, A and C significantly predicted greater positive EE. Further, mothers' greater use of reappraisal and lesser use of suppression significantly predicted greater positive EE. Although ER did not explain significant additional variance in the overall model for fathers' positive EE, fathers' lesser use of suppression significantly predicted greater positive EE.

### 3.2.6. Negative emotional expression

Mothers' and fathers' higher N and lower A significantly predicted greater negative EE. Mothers' higher E significantly predicted greater negative EE. Neither mothers' nor fathers' ER strategy use significantly predicted negative EE.

## 4. Discussion

The results indicated that emotion socialisation practices were significantly associated with parent personality and, to a lesser extent, ER strategy use. With some exceptions, greater utilisation of positive emotion socialisation practices was associated with higher levels of E, O, A and C, greater use of reappraisal, and less use of suppression as expected. This pattern of findings was most consis-

**Table 5**  
Multiple regressions predicting fathers' reported emotion socialisation practices from personality and emotion regulation.

	Emotion responses								Expressiveness			
	Supportive		Non-supportive		Distress <sup>a</sup>		Expressive encouragement		Positive		Negative	
	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i>
<i>Step 1</i>												
Neuroticism	-.09	.235	.05	.555	.34	<.001	.06	.495	.05	.813	.27	<.001
Extraversion	.12	.114	-.23	.003	-.10	.182	.10	.216	.28	<.001	.00	.953
Openness	.12	.080	-.10	.144	-.23	<.001	.09	.217	.20	.002	-.07	.266
Agreeableness	.16	.029	-.26	<.001	-.07	.320	.13	.082	.23	<.001	-.36	<.001
Conscientiousness	.17	.025	.07	.342	-.08	.286	.11	.168	.16	.023	-.06	.413
$\Delta R^2$	.19		.18		.30		.08		.32		.31	
<i>F</i>	8.76	<.001	8.44	<.001	16.40	<.001	3.04	.012	17.98	<.001	17.03	<.001
<i>Step 2</i>												
Reappraisal	.08	.268	.10	.155	-.01	.933	.09	.228	.01	.769	-.05	.436
Suppression	.02	.745	.13	.051	.04	.556	-.05	.496	-.14	.018	-.08	.194
$\Delta R^2$	.01		.03		.00		.01		.02		.01	
<i>F</i>	0.75	.473	3.51	.032	0.17	.841	0.85	.428	2.85	.061	1.36	.260
Total $R^2$	.19		.21		.32		.08		.34		.32	
<i>F</i>	6.45	<.001	7.19	<.001	10.92	<.001	2.41	.022	13.90	<.001	12.60	<.001

Note.

<sup>a</sup> For fathers' distress responses, child sex (0 = girl, 1 = boy) was entered as a covariate prior to steps 1 and 2,  $\beta = -.15$ ,  $p = .043$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .021$ ,  $F(1,195) = 4.15$ ,  $p = .043$ .

tent for mothers and for expression of positive emotion in the family. Further, greater utilisation of negative emotion socialisation practices was associated with lower levels of O and A, higher levels of N, and greater use of suppression. Once again this pattern of findings was most consistent for mothers. The current findings are comparable to past studies of relationships between personality and parenting practices (Prinz et al., 2009; Smith et al., 2007) and provide unique information regarding associations between ER and emotion-related parenting.

Of the five personality factors, O and A were the most salient. For mothers in particular, these two factors significantly predicted all assessed socialisation practices with the exception of negative EE which was predicted by A but not O. In general, parents who reported being more open to experience or more agreeable also reported using more positive and less negative emotion socialisation practices. The findings may be attributable to parents high in these traits being more tolerant and supportive of child negative emotional expression, being more eager to engage in positive parent-child interactions, or having a greater tendency to experience and express positive emotion. Such characteristics and practices are likely to be beneficial to children's development of emotional competence by supporting their ability to cope with negative emotion and by providing a model for positive emotional interactions.

In regard to extraversion (E), higher levels were associated with less non-supportive responses to children's emotions by fathers and greater positive EE by mothers and fathers. However, contrary to expectations, higher levels of E were also associated with greater negative EE by mothers. It is possible that extraverted parents tend to be more emotionally expressive regardless of emotional valence. Furthermore, negative EE may not always be detrimental to child well-being as parents who frequently but effectively regulate negative emotion may be positive role models (Gottman et al., 1996).

Personality generally appeared to be more strongly related to emotional expressiveness than to responses to child emotions. That is, while personality factors explained a relatively substantial portion of variance in EE (29–41%), only a modest amount of variance was explained for the emotion response variables (8–19%) with the exception of fathers' distress (30%). It may be that emotion responses are more strongly related to other factors, such as child characteristics. However, it must be noted that parents reported on their current personality and expressiveness, but retro-

spectively on their emotion responses. Therefore, differences may be partly due to personality being more closely related to current, as opposed to past, emotion socialisation practices. In addition, there are limitations associated with retrospective reports including, for example, inaccurate recall or the likelihood of idealising earlier parenting.

In contrast to personality, ER explained only a small and often non-significant portion of variance in emotion socialisation (0–3%). This may be due to a number of factors. First, ER style is partly determined by personality (John & Gross, 2004). Thus when personality was included in the multivariate analyses, many of the significant correlations observed between ER and parenting were no longer significant. That is, the incremental validity of ER to emotion socialisation over and above personality was minor. Second, only two ER strategies were investigated from a myriad of potential ER competencies. ER is a complex multifaceted construct and there are undoubtedly other facets of relevance to emotion socialisation. These issues aside, the current findings provide some initial indications of associations between parent ER and emotion socialisation. For example, the finding that mothers who use suppression to manage their own emotions tend to punish or minimise their child's negative emotion expressions is compelling. Further research regarding other aspects of parent ER and their relation to emotion socialisation is clearly needed.

Despite differences between mothers and fathers in reported personality, ER and emotion socialisation, the overall findings were remarkably similar. Some notable exceptions were related to distress reactions for which greater variance was explained by fathers' than mothers' personality (30% vs. 17%), and negative EE for which greater variance was explained by mothers' than fathers' personality (41% vs. 31%). This suggests that although emotion-related parenting practices may differ between mothers and fathers, they are related to similar characteristics.

The findings of the study are limited by a number of factors. Already noted are caveats related to the retrospective format of some measures and the limited scope of ER constructs assessed. In addition, all constructs were assessed via self-report and thus the significance of the findings could be magnified by shared method variance or affected by the presence of psychopathology. The cross-sectional study design also limits conclusions regarding causality. For example, experiences in the parenting role may lead



to changes in parents' values and interaction styles and in turn their personality traits (Jokela, Kivimaki, Elovainio, & Keltikangas-Jarvinen, 2009). There may also be other factors, such as genetics, which influence both parent characteristics and parenting practices. Further, numerous analyses were conducted without correction for potential Type I error. This was due to the novel area of investigation and potential for a lowered alpha to increase Type II error. Nonetheless, the *p*-values indicate that even with alpha set at a low level, many of the analyses would have remained significant.

Overall, the study provided important insights into associations between emotion socialisation practices and parent characteristics, an area previously neglected in both the parenting and emotion development literature. Avenues for research include expanding the range of parent characteristics examined and investigating child characteristics (e.g., temperament, psychopathology) and contextual factors (e.g., culture, poverty) which may also be associated with emotion socialisation practices (Belsky, 1984). By further understanding emotion socialisation practices, we may not only identify risk and protective factors associated with child socioemotional functioning, but also enable more effective communication between families and treatment service providers. For example, clinicians may be better equipped to sensitively and effectively address problematic socialisation processes once they have a sound understanding of the parent's own interactional and emotion regulation style.

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