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Main Editor
Karina Weichold

ISSBD Bulletin
Department of Developmental Psychology
CADS – Center for Applied Developmental Science
University of Jena, Am Steiger 3/Haus 1
D-07743 Jena, Germany
Email: karina.weichold@uni-jena.de

Co-Editor
Deepali Sharma

ISSBD Bulletin
Department of Psychology
Christ University, Hosur Road
Bangalore 560029
India
Email: deepali.sharma@christuniversity.in



Special Section: Introduction to Emotion Regulation across the Life Span

Karina Weichold

University of Jena, Germany

E-mail: karina.weichold@uni-jena.de

and

Deepali Sharma

University of Bangalore, India

E-mail: deepali1sharma1@gmail.com

Every day, individuals are confronted with many stimuli of potentially arousing impact. To respond to these stimuli in an inappropriate and extreme fashion (with regards to thoughts, actions, and social interactions) hinders positive psychological adaptation within a given society and relates to the emergence of problem behaviors. Thus, individuals have to learn to regulate their emotions to optimally cope with daily demands. Emotion regulation across the life span is a fascinating topic within developmental science: In children, knowledge of how to regulate strong emotions grows, and they begin to regulate their emotional expressions according to standards for social appropriateness (mostly with the help of external scaffolding). During adolescence, inner capacities for emotion regulation increase tremendously, also as a result of advances in brain development. Finally, emotion regulation in adults still continues to evolve and shape social interactions tremendously.

This special section brings together a series of feature articles focusing on emotion regulation issues by applying a developmental perspective. First, Larsen and English discuss the importance of authentic emotion regulation. Then,

three papers deal with emotion regulation processes in adolescence with a specific focus on the emergence of problem behaviors (Schipper et al.; Di Giunta & Iselin), and competence development (Liew), with some focus on a cross-cultural perspective. One other paper addresses emotion regulation in intimate relationships in adulthood (Haase), and another investigates the ability to regulate emotions across the life span (Tuck et al.). These articles are discussed by two extraordinary experts in the field, Susan Charles and Laura Carstensen (together with their colleague Tamara Sims), who developed the well-known life-span theory on emotion regulation within social relationships. We are grateful to all authors within the special section who present and discuss on their work, and we hope that the readers enjoy reading this interesting selection of new work in the area of emotion regulation as much as we did.

This Bulletin also includes the notes by the president of ISSBD, Wolfgang Schneider. His position as president will end this summer – we would like to thank him for his enduring support of the ISSBD Bulletin, which we really appreciated and enjoyed during the past years. Also, Brett Laursen as the new Editor of the IJBD introduces its new editorial team to the readers – we would like to take the opportunity to wish him lots of success in this new position.

Finally, as usual, we would like to invite the readers of the Bulletin to share their ideas with us to improve this outlet of the International Society for the Study of Behavioral Development, to give us feedback, and to discuss with us topics for upcoming special issues.

The Importance of Authentic Emotion Regulation

Junilla K. Larsen

Radboud University Nijmegen, The Netherlands

E-mail: j.larsen@pwo.ru.nl

and

Tammy English

Washington University in St. Louis, USA

E-mail: tenglish@WUSTL.EDU

Authenticity is an important psychological construct, reflecting the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self in one's daily enterprise (Kernis, 2003). In this feature article, we discuss how authenticity operates in the context of emotion regulation (ER). In particular, we propose that individuals differ in the extent to which they engage in *authentic emotion regulation* and this individual difference predicts how effectively emotions will be regulated. First, we provide a broad overview of existing emotion regulation frameworks. Next, we define authentic emotion regulation. Finally, we discuss the implications that authentic emotion regulation has for emotional well-being and suggest some potential future directions.

Definitions and existing emotion regulation frameworks

Recently, there has been a growing interest in the construct of emotion regulation. Different definitions of emotion regulation exist in the developmental and the social psychology literatures. However, most researchers agree that emotion regulation stands in service of accomplishing goals and facilitating adaptive responses to the environment. The predominant framework is Gross' process model of emotion regulation (Gross, 1998). The process model distinguishes between different types of emotion regulation strategies based on where they occur in the emotion generative process. In total, it identifies five categories of emotion regulation: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. The first four categories are termed "antecedent-focused", because they include efforts to regulate emotions *before* the activation of a full emotional response. The fifth category, response modulation, is termed "response-focused", because it occurs *after* a full emotional response has been activated.

The process model of emotion regulation has been a useful heuristic for guiding systematic research into emotion regulation deficits, and recently this model has received increased attention in the developmental literature. Two key strategies that have received significant empirical attention in this regard are the antecedent-focused strategy of cognitive reappraisal (reinterpreting emotional stimuli in terms that modify the emotional impact) and the response-focused strategy of expressive suppression (inhibiting the behavioral

display of emotion). Response-focused (late) strategies (e.g., suppression) are thought to be less effective than antecedent-focused (early) strategies (e.g., reappraisal) because timing is regarded as a proxy for emotional intensity. Although there has been some support for this position, recent work suggests that the story may be more complicated. For instance, emotion timing and intensity seem to be more important for certain types of regulation (reappraisal but not distraction) (e.g., Sheppes & Gross, 2011).

Most empirical investigations, including our own work, have examined the overall effectiveness of specific strategies without taking into account the context in which they are deployed. Considering that the effectiveness of regulation strategies may differentially vary across situations, optimal regulation requires that people be sensitive to the situational context, have a diverse repertoire of regulatory strategies to draw on, and are able to monitor feedback about the effectiveness of a strategy (Bonanno & Burton, 2013). We propose that components of authentic emotion regulation are important in enabling people to be more sensitive to the situational context and to monitor feedback about the relative efficacy of a chosen regulatory strategy.

Authentic emotion regulation: A conceptual framework

Several theoretical models view authenticity as integral to well-being, although there has been some definitional confusion regarding this construct (Kernis, 2003; Wood, Linley, Maltby, Baliousis, & Joseph, 2008). We define authentic emotion regulation based on Kernis' conceptualization of authenticity as an individual difference construct that distinguishes between four different components: awareness, acceptance, action, and relational. The awareness component of authenticity involves knowledge of one's needs, values or feelings. Non-awareness has also been defined as self-alienation and refers to the mismatch between conscious awareness and actual experience (Wood et al., 2008). Focusing on authentic emotion regulation, the awareness component is synonymous with emotional clarity (people's meta-knowledge of their affective experience). The acceptance component of authenticity involves the unbiased processing of self-relevant information. In the context of authentic emotion regulation, this component would be reflected in objectivity and acceptance of one's emotions, instead of denial of the existence of certain emotions. The action component of authenticity focuses on whether people live in accord with one's true self. In terms of authentic emotion regulation, this refers to the use of strategies that are in line with one's values, preferences, and needs. Finally, the relational component of authenticity refers to being genuine and not "fake" in one's relationship with close others. With regards to authentic emotion regulation, this relational aspect would involve sharing one's



genuine emotions and subsequent regulation efforts with close others.

Similar to global authenticity, we regard authentic emotion regulation as the unobstructed operation of one's true, or core, self in one's daily emotional experiences. The four-stage model likely reflects an ongoing developmental process. You must first come to understand and accept what you are feeling in order to facilitate behavior that deals with your inner values about authentic emotion regulation and to share this process with close others. There can also be feedback loops between these different components. For example, objective emotional acceptance may facilitate further emotional clarity. Obstructions to authentic regulation can occur at many steps along the way (e.g., fear of rejection may interfere with authentic display of emotion). Next, we review existing empirical evidence relevant to the four different components of authentic emotion regulation, and discuss whether and how each separate component may influence the effectiveness of emotion regulation and impact broader well-being.

Emotional clarity

The first component of authentic emotion regulation refers to people's meta-knowledge of their affective experience, which typically increases during development. Individual differences in emotional clarity are a core component in several higher order constructs, including emotional intelligence and alexithymia. If you don't know how you are really feeling, you'll have a hard time trying to manage those feelings, which likely explains why people who have relatively less insight into their own feelings appear to be at higher risk for developing diverse forms of psychopathology, including depression and anxiety disorders (O'Toole, Hougaard, & Mennin, 2013).

There is some evidence to suggest that emotional clarity is associated with better executive functioning (Koven & Thomas, 2010) and self-regulatory strength (Muraven & Baumeister, 2000), and that the benefits of clarity may also come from availability of cognitive resources (Wilkowski & Robinson, 2008). As such, emotional clarity might be most important for 'cognitive engagement' strategies (Parkinson & Totterdell, 1999), including rumination and reappraisal, which rely on deliberate, controlled, executive processes (e.g., Koster, De Lissnyder, Derakshan, & De Raedt, 2011). In line with this idea, survey studies have shown interactive effects of low emotional clarity with the use of frequent cognitive reappraisal in explaining psychopathology and future problematic substance-use outcomes in adults (Boden, Bonn-Miller, Kashdan, Alvarez, & Gross, 2012; Boden, Gross, Babson, & Bonn-Miller, 2013). Moreover, people with better updating ability of emotional information in working memory (an executive process) report less negative emotions when reappraising and ruminating at both the trait level and in daily life (Pe, Raes, & Kuppens, 2013). The moderating role of working memory functioning for efficacy of emotion regulation is also supported by experimental research (Schmeichel, Volokhov, & Darnaree, 2008). Individuals who have low emotional clarity may let themselves be more overwhelmed by emotional situations due to executive dysfunction, and then try to repair this problem afterwards by using different emotion regulation

strategies, some of which may be less successful when implemented later (e.g., cognitive reappraisal).

From a developmental perspective, it would be interesting to examine emotional clarity, executive function, and the effectiveness of 'cognitive engagement' emotion regulation strategies across different age groups. If emotional clarity increases with age, some emotion regulation strategies that are considered generally adaptive (such as reappraisal) might not necessarily work as effectively for adolescents as for adults. Taking a life-span approach, older adults may be less successful using strategies that require cognitive control, but may compensate for lowering cognitive control by changes in emotional preferences, insights, and optimization of emotion regulation through lifelong learning and practice (Scheibe & Carstensen, 2010; Shiota & Levenson, 2009).

Objective emotional acceptance

The second component of authentic emotion regulation involves the unbiased processing of self-relevant information, including both objectivity and acceptance of one's emotions. Acceptance is not conceptualized as a passive process; instead, it is regarded as a process of non-judgmentally engaging with negative emotions. The judgment that an emotion is unacceptable may lead to negative emotions and maladaptive efforts to regulate these subsequent emotions, whereas acceptance may present opportunities to enhance emotional clarity and flexibility and may reduce maladaptive regulation strategies. A meta-analysis of experimental studies has shown that induced emotional acceptance, regarded as a specific emotion regulation strategy, is superior to other emotion regulation strategies with respect to pain tolerance, but not for pain intensity and negative affect (Kohl, Rief, & Glombiewski, 2012). However, experimental paradigms only investigate short-term effects of acceptance of specific, manipulated emotions. Randomized controlled trials that assign participants to acceptance interventions (e.g., mindfulness interventions) have proven effective and several survey studies have shown a negative association between acceptance and negative affect, with acceptance mediating the relationship between age and negative emotions (Shallcross, Ford, Floerke, & Mauss, 2013).

As already mentioned, emotional acceptance as an individual difference variable may importantly determine well-being through influencing the effectiveness of emotion regulation strategies. People having difficulties acknowledging certain emotions in themselves may develop defensive processes to deny their emotions, which can impede effective regulation. Along these lines, research has for instance found that rumination is no longer associated with depressive symptoms after controlling for negative evaluation of one's emotions, suggesting that a lack of emotional acceptance is an important mechanism explaining the maladaptive effects of rumination (Rude, Maestas, & Neff, 2007). Moreover, we propose that emotional acceptance may be particularly important for facilitating the effectiveness of emotion regulation strategies in the context of uncontrollable life events. Recent work has shown that reappraisal is differentially associated with depression depending on the controllability of the experienced stress, with reappraisal only being effective among people experiencing uncontrollable

stress (Troy, Wilhelm, Shallcross, & Mauss, 2010). Future research is needed to better understand the interaction between emotion acceptance and regulation strategies in different contexts (i.e., controllable versus uncontrollable life events), mechanisms underlying the effectiveness of emotional acceptance, and possible age-related changes in acceptance during development.

Emotion regulation in accord with one's inner authentic experiences

The third component of authentic emotion regulation refers most directly to the process of authentic emotion regulation itself. Specifically, it involves regulating emotions in accord with one's inner authentic experiences—that is, choosing strategies that fit with one's own attributes. We propose that emotion regulation in accord with one's inner authentic experiences is important in all situations. However, expressive suppression is an example of an emotion regulation strategy that might be more likely to lead to feelings of incongruence and inauthenticity, as the direct outer display of one's emotions is not in accord with one's inner feelings. Recent studies among (young) adults support the idea that subjective authenticity is important, finding that it mediates the association between use of expressive suppression in daily life and socio-emotional well-being (English & John, 2013; Impett et al., 2012). However, this strategy does not necessarily have to lead to feelings of incongruence. For instance, individuals from Eastern, interdependent cultures (e.g., Chinese) may value expressive suppression because it can help to preserve interpersonal harmony, and therefore they may feel more authentic when suppressing their visible display of emotions. We propose that the adverse effects of suppression will be reduced if individuals do not feel inauthentic when suppressing their emotions. In support of this idea, a 14-day daily-experience study of people in romantic relationships showed that Canadian undergraduates with higher levels of interdependence experienced boosts in personal well-being and relationship quality if they suppressed their negative emotions during sacrifice (Le & Impett, 2013). In addition, many studies have failed to find a relationship between suppression and well-being in more collectivistic cultures, such as China or other Asian countries (e.g., Soto, Perez, Kim, Lee, & Minnick, 2011). Another group that might not feel inauthentic suppressing their emotions is adolescents: Although suppression has been shown to have clear socio-emotional costs among (young) adults (e.g., English, John, Srivastava, & Gross, 2012; Srivastava, Tamir, McGonigal, John, & Gross, 2009), these effects do not seem to emerge among adolescents (Larsen et al., 2012; Larsen et al., 2013). Future research is needed to determine whether and why this might be the case. Moreover, future studies should specifically ask about whether the emotion regulation strategy leads one to feel authentic, and test how this translates to well-being.

Balanced sharing of emotions with close others

The final component of authentic emotion regulation includes sharing of emotions with close others. We propose that a balance is needed because both too much and too

little sharing emotions with close others can be maladaptive. The well-known 'writing paradigm' of Pennebaker and colleagues has shown the cathartic view of expression (Pennebaker, 2004). Social sharing of emotion is also important because of the reactions it can elicit from others. For instance, individuals can benefit from sharing their emotions with close others by social integration, social support, and help in putting things in perspective. On the other hand, the prolongation of sharing processes can be maladaptive (Curci & Rime, 2012), as in the case of coruminative interactions (Rose, Carlson, & Waller, 2007). We found that depressive symptoms preceded the development of increased use of expressive suppression over time, and this effect was mediated by less experienced parental support for adolescent girls (Larsen et al., 2012). Depressive people often seek excessive reassurance of affective bonds and overly express their emotions, which may elicit stress in their close relationships (Hankin, Stone, & Wright, 2010). Our findings suggest that inhibition of the outer display of feelings may sometimes be a reaction to the experienced lowering of support that can occur after overly expressing one's negative emotions. Future research is needed to further examine this proposition and the prolongation of the emotional sharing processes.

Short concluding remarks

We hope that the four components of authentic emotion regulation outlined in this feature article will provide some insight into when regulatory efforts will be most effective and stimulate research on the development of authentic emotion regulation. We suggest that individuals will experience the greatest well-being if all four components have been fulfilled, that is, when they fully understand what they are feeling, can accept it, can mostly act (i.e., regulate) in accordance with their inner authentic experiences, and are able to have a balanced sharing of their emotions with close others. These components of authentic regulation can help people be sensitive to the context and monitor the effectiveness of ER strategies (e.g., if you are more aware of your emotions and accept them then you'll have a better sense of the impact of your regulation efforts). We suggest that the success of context-sensitive emotion regulation efforts is not determined by the type of regulation strategies per se, but rather by whether strategies are combined with aspects of authentic emotion regulation.

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Parental Assessment of Emotional Symptoms and Psychological Abnormalities in Adolescents

Marc Schipper

University of Bremen, Germany

E-mail: marc.schipper@uni-bremen.de

Dennis Nitkowski

University of Bremen, Germany

E-Mail: nitkowski@uni-bremen.de

Ute Koglin

University of Bremen, Germany

University of Oldenburg, Germany

E-mail: ute.koglin@uni-oldenburg.de

and

Franz Petermann

University of Bremen, Germany

E-mail: fpeterm@uni-bremen.de

In the present study emotional symptoms, social competence and behavioral deficits were assessed in 333 students between 12 and 17 years of age. Additionally these factors were assessed by the students' parents in order to gain information about their viewpoint on the students' competences. For assessment the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) was administered, using both the parent and child versions. The aim of this study is to observe to what degree parents are able to infer certain psychological problems of their children, such as emotional symptoms or conduct problems, by comparing students' survey responses with those of their parents. Parents' estimation of their children's psychological abnormalities differs significantly from the adolescents' own assessment in three scales of the SDQ: Adolescent emotional and conduct problems are estimated higher by the parents compared to the adolescents' own indications whereas hyperactivity scores are lower in parental assessment. These discrepancies imply that parents do indeed recognize their children's behavioral or emotional problems but may not be able to reliably infer the degree of these problems, or whether psychological intervention is advisable.

That more attention needs to be paid to adolescent mental disorders was shown by the Bremer Adolescent study (Essau, Karpinski, Petermann, & Conradt, 1998) more than a decade ago. Almost half of the study's participants fulfilled the diagnostic criteria for at least one of the mental disorders assessed. Current data indicates that anxiety and affective disorders are the most common mental disorders in adolescence. The average age of depression onset lies in early and mid-youth (Groen & Petermann, 2011; Petermann, 2011). Affective disorders in adolescence accompany

high relapse rates and an increased risk for mental disorders in adulthood (Fombonne, Wostear, Cooper, Harrington & Rutter, 2001). Furthermore such disorders often engender distinct feelings of loneliness and isolation (Lassgaard, Goossens, & Elklit, 2011) and heighten the risk of repeated suicide attempts (Monnin et al., 2012). Such serious consequences illustrate the importance of a profound level of awareness concerning the etiology and prevalence of adolescent mental disorders. In recent years several attempts have been made to increase this awareness (Petermann et al., 2012).

Another important factor in dealing with adolescent mental disorders is, to what degree and at what stage can such disorders or precursors of mental disorders be recognized? During adolescence, distinguishing between normal and abnormal behavior, in particular within the emotional domain, is a difficult task – difficult not only for the adolescents themselves, but also for an external observer (from the third-person-perspective).

Parents face a difficult challenge in deciding whether their child's behavior is normal or might deviate into abnormality; this particularly holds for weighing the relevance of emotional problems. During adolescence emotional problems increase. Because for a considerable number of adolescents these problems can become chronic (Laufer & Laufer, 1984; Dodge & Pettit, 2003), it is vital to recognize them.

Parental support remains a very important factor with regard to emotional problems, although during adolescence the network of "significant others" is restructured. During childhood and in early adolescence this network is dominated by parents but with ongoing adolescence peer relations develop increasing importance (Helsen, Vollebergh, & Meeus, 2000; Meeus, Iedema, Helsen, & Vollenbergh, 1999; Steinberg, 2001). Yet several investigations have found that support from parents during adolescence provides a better indicator of positive development than does peer support (Barrera, Chassin, & Rogosch, 1993; Dekovic & Meeus, 1995; Laible, Carlo, & Raffaelli, 2000). Good relationships with parents are found to be significant for positive self-esteem (Blyth & Traeger, 1988), social competence (Cauce, 1986; Engels, Finkenauer, Meeus, & Deković, 2001) and general well-being (Raja, McGee, & Stanton, 1992).

Considering the positive effects of parental support on adolescent mental problems the question arises as to how likely parents are to recognize such problems in their adolescent children. A frequently used tool for assessing behavioral abnormalities and emotional problems as well as social competence in children and adolescents is the



strengths and difficulties questionnaire (SDQ; Goodman, 1997). The SDQ was not developed solely for child and adolescent assessment but can be completed by parents, too.

In this contribution we report our findings on differences between adolescent assessment and parental estimation in order to gain more insight into how well parents are able to recognize their adolescent children's mental problems. We assumed that adolescent and parental responses might for instance differ in the domain of emotional symptoms, and used the SDQ as assessment tool: The presence of a parental version makes the SDQ a suitable tool for investigating differences between the parental estimation of their adolescent children's behavioral attributes (such as emotional problems) and the adolescents' own assessment.

Method

A total of 104 Adolescents (51% female; 49% male) aged between 12 and 17 years ($M = 14,12$; $SD = 1,33$) and their parents agreed to take part in the assessment. Both adolescents and their parents completed the SDQ. Parents received the parental version, a slightly modified informant-rated version of the SDQ (Schmidt et al., 2012), in order to assess their children's strengths and difficulties. The SDQ is a 25-item measure of emotional and behavioral problems in young people. It was translated by a German children's psychiatrist and a professional translator, and improved and standardized by Woerner and Colleagues (2002). The SDQ consists of five scales that assess emotional symptoms, conduct problems, hyperactivity, peer problems and prosocial behavior. Each item is answered on a three-point scale ranging from "not true" to "somewhat true" to "certainly true." Test-retest reliability of 0.70-0.85 and internal consistency of 0.51-0.76 have been demonstrated for the scales of the measure (Goodman, 1997). Even though SDQ scores can be used as continuous variables they are often classified as normal, borderline or abnormal. In order to generate dichotomous traits we decided to pool *borderline* and *abnormal* within one category: *deviant*. Hence, the resulting two categories are *normal* and *deviant*. For our purposes this step proves adequate regarding our aim to investigate at what SDQ scale parents can recognize whether their child's behavior deviates from normal.

Results

The collected data was analyzed using the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics 20. For analysis the rating scales were dichotomized in "normal" versus "deviant". Adolescent and parent group differences were computed by Pearson's chi-squared test. To test whether adolescents and parents differ in the individual SDQ Subscales as well as in the overall SDQ score we performed a Chi²-Test. Additionally an interrater reliability analysis using the Kappa statistic was performed to determine consistency among raters (Table 1).

Differences between adolescent and parental scoring were found in the SDQ-subscales *emotional symptoms*, *conduct problems*, and *hyperactivity*. Here parents seem to misjudge their children's behavior. In the remaining subscales

Table 1. Parent-Adolescent comparisons for the individual SDQ-subscales. Presented are Chi² and Kappa values.

SDQ-Scales	Chi ²	p	Kappa
SDQ: total difficulties	2.83	.093	.166
SDQ: emotional symptoms	4.67	.031	.178
SDQ: conduct problems	16.71	.000	.396
SDQ: hyperactivity	5.95	.015	.204
SDQ: peer Problems	1.25	.263	.108
SDQ: prosocial behavior	.72	.397	.083

as well as in the overall SDQ score adolescent and parental scoring do not significantly differ from each other.

Parents' estimates of the children's emotional symptoms differ significantly from the children's own assessment ($\chi^2 = 4.67$; $p < .031$). Also the parents' estimates of their children's conduct problems differ significantly from the children's own assessment ($\chi^2 = 16.71$; $p = .000$). A descriptive view of the data shows that parents estimate the children's emotional symptoms and conduct problems higher than adolescents do themselves. The contrary is the case for hyperactivity. Parents' estimates of their children's hyperactivity differs significantly from the children's own assessment ($\chi^2 = 5.95$; $p = .015$), but here parents estimate the children's hyperactivity lower than adolescents do themselves (Figure 1).

For observing the interrater reliability Cohen's Kappa was calculated. For claiming a good level of agreement a Kappa of at least .6 is necessary. Significant interrater agreements were found for all subscales in which significant differences have already been found between parental and adolescent estimations as well. These are: emotional symptoms (Kappa = .178, $p = .031$), conduct problems (Kappa = .396, $p = .000$) and hyperactivity (Kappa = .204, $p < .015$). While being statistically significant these Kappa values only indicate a poor or slight agreement.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate whether differences can be found between parental estimation of their adolescent children's behavioral attributes (like emotional problems) and the adolescents' own assessment. We assumed that especially within the SDQ subscale *emotional symptoms* parents might misjudge their children's behavior – an assumption arising due to the domain of emotional processing being a very dynamic factor during adolescence.

In fact, next to hyperactivity and conduct problems, emotional symptoms represent the subscale in which adolescent and parental scores differ significantly. Interestingly, parents estimate the children's emotional symptoms as well as conduct problems higher than adolescents do themselves and, vice versa, parents estimate their children's hyperactivity lower than adolescents do themselves.

A reason for this imbalance might be that during adolescence children are emotionally unstable and may seem deviant to adults, although in actuality attributes which could be classified as deviating from normal in other phases of life might still be in a normal range during adolescence. Therefore parents might overestimate their children's emotional instability as being not normal. The same might hold

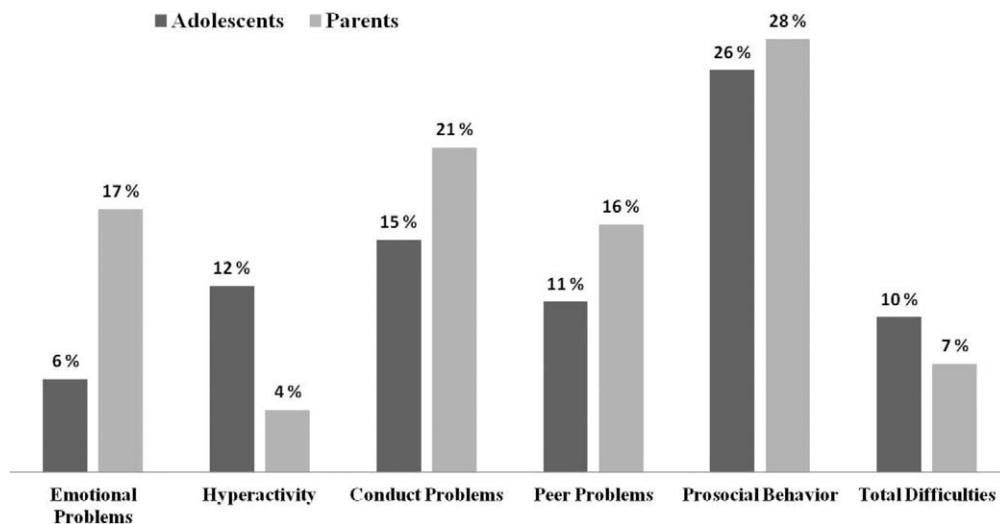


Figure 1. Parental misjudgements.

Note: Percentage of participants classified as *deviant* by self-assessment (in case of adolescents) or respectively by third-person-estimation (in case of parents) are presented. Parents estimate the adolescent children's emotional and conduct problems higher than the children themselves whereas parents score hyperactivity lower.

for the estimation of conduct problems: parents might overestimate their children's inconvenient behaviors as deviating from normal although these behaviors are still in a normal range within the framework of adolescence.

On the other hand our results show that hyperactivity scores deviating from normal are more frequently identified by the adolescent group, indicating that parents might not always recognize a too high amount of hyperactive behavior in their children, again possibly due to their affiliation of hyperactive behavioral attributes to adolescent behavior.

Remarkably, parental estimation and adolescent assessment do not differ in the SDQ total difficulties score, which builds the sum over all subscales. Significant differences are only found in the above-presented subscales. This indicates an agreement of the parental and the adolescent estimation of deviance concerning strengths and difficulties in general: Both sides seem to recognize that problems are present. The only problem is the lack of agreement between parents and adolescents on where the problems are exactly based.

One important factor to be taken into account when discussing discrepancies between self-assessments and third person estimations are judgement biases, which implicitly represent a limitation of this study. Judgement biases can be represented by Halo effects (the valuation of a perceived trait is influenced by another perceived trait), the differential extremity bias (the tendency – varying from observer to observer – to choose extreme values) or biases associated with social desirability (Asendorpf, 2004).

In conclusion, the results of this study show that parents indeed recognize their children's behavioral problems but often seem unable to reliably infer the degree of these problems, here shown for the SDQ subscales *emotional symptoms, conduct problems and hyperactivity*. Hence, parents might often have problems in deciding whether their children's behavior does or does not deviate from what is normal, which may affect the decision to engage psychological intervention or not. In consideration of the

fact that mental problems in childhood and adolescence can represent precursors and constitute an increased risk for mental disorders in adulthood this decision has a high relevance.

The question emerges as to how this discrepancy between children's assessments on certain behavioral problems and their parents' estimations of these factors can be overcome. One way could be offering a better parental psychological education: providing deeper knowledge for parents on what is normal and what might be classified as deviating from normal in adolescence. These results point to the need for further research, to investigate in more detail parents' ability to recognize potential behavioral problems of their adolescent children. Parental understanding and recognition of hyperactivity, emotional symptoms and conduct problems in adolescents should be probed in depth. Special attention should be paid to the role of judgement biases.

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Parenting and Emotion Regulation in the Adaptive and Academic Competencies of Chinese American Youth

Jeffrey Liew

Texas A&M University, USA

E-mail: Jeffrey.Liew@tamu.edu

This research was supported by a grant from the Hogg Foundation for Mental Health to Jeffrey Liew. In 2010, Liew launched Project CASL (Chinese American Successful Living) to study adolescents' social-emotional and academic adjustment, and project findings are shared in this report. Project CASL 2.0 is in progress, with data being collected on the original adolescent sample who are now emerging adults in college. The Liew Human Development Lab expresses gratitude for the families that participated in this research, as well as the Asian American community organizations and social services agencies and all the research assistants who helped and contributed to the efforts of Project CASL.

Chinese parenting has often been characterized as overly strict and controlling. While strict parental control has been considered a defining feature of traditional Chinese parenting that dates back to Confucian, Buddhist, and Taoist teachings (Shek, 2007), modern Chinese parenting practices appear to have changed with the times with developmental science and a growing body of studies confirming changes in Chinese parenting practices (Kim, Wang, Orozco-Lapray, Shen, & Murtuza, 2013; Way et al., 2013). In the 21st century, Chinese parenting is a combination of traditional and modern ideologies and practices, consisting of *guǎn* (管) and *jiào xun* (教訓) with autonomy support; this type of strictness-supervision counterbalanced by autonomy support is the *yin and yang in parenting* (Liew, Kwok, Y. Chang, B. Chang, & Yeh, in press). This report highlights study findings that challenge the popular notion that overly controlling or restrictive parenting is the best way to raise academically successful children from Chinese and immigrant backgrounds.

Chinese parenting and semantics

Guǎn and *jiào xun* are Chinese concepts that exemplify Chinese parental duties (Chao, 1994). The literal translation of *guǎn* (管) is "to rule" or "to control", and the literal translation of *jiào xun* (教訓) is "to reprimand" or "to punish". However, literal translations often lead to mistranslations or misinterpretations. Semantic translation may better capture or signify the semantics and nuances of the original concepts. From a semantic translation approach, *guǎn* (管) could be interpreted as "to look after or govern" and "to

safeguard" while *jiào xun* (教訓) could be interpreted as "to teach or train" and "to discipline." While the literal translation conveys cold harshness, the semantic translation conveys Chinese parental duties of safeguarding and demanding excellence from children (Liew et al., in press).

To those unfamiliar with Chinese culture, *guǎn* and *jiào xun* may easily be interpreted as intrusive or oppressive. However, Chinese parents practice *guǎn* and *jiào xun* out of love and caring for their children. In fact, these parenting concepts overlap with constructs in the developmental science literature on parental control (Shek, 2007). In the study of parental control, it is important to distinguish between parental structure and parental psychological control (Grolnick & Pomerantz, 2009). Parental structure includes monitoring and setting limits, whereas parental psychological control includes pressuring and being intrusive. In our research, we view *guǎn* and *jiào xun* as more aligned with parental structure than psychological control. We propose that when *guǎn* (safeguarding) and *jiào xun* (demandingness of excellence) are counterbalanced by parental autonomy support, this form of parental control is akin to authoritative parenting which consists of high responsiveness and high demandingness.

Autonomy support and emotion regulation

Parental autonomy support is often reflected in parental warmth, support, and responsiveness that predict adolescents' emotional well-being, and this pattern has been found in studies conducted in North America and Asia (Wang, Pomerantz, & Chen, 2007). Emotion regulation research indicates that empathic and encouraging parenting behaviors promote children's self-regulation. Parents' expressions of warmth and positive emotions predict children's effortful control two years later (Eisenberg et al., 2005), and parents' expressions of warmth and positive emotions predict children's physiological and behavioral self-regulation (Liew, Johnson, Smith, & Thoemmes, 2011). By contrast, parental psychological control undermines children's emotion regulation (Wang et al., 2007).

Emotion-related self-regulation (henceforth termed *emotion regulation* for brevity) refers to "processes used to manage and change if, when, and how one experiences emotions and emotion-related motivational and physiological states, as well as how emotions are expressed behaviorally" (Eisenberg, Hofer, & Vaughan, 2007, p. 288). The voluntary and "top-down" aspects of emotion regulation include capacities such as effortful control and executive functions (Blair & Raver, 2012; Liew, 2012). In contrast, negative emotionality



Project CASL members: Yu-pei Chang (lower left) and Bonny Chang (upper right) at the Asian American Psychological Association Annual Convention.

is a dimension of temperament that is more reactive. In our research, we conceptualize the construct of emotion regulation as representing high levels of voluntary aspects of self-regulation and low or modest levels of negative emotionality.

Findings from Project CASL

Project CASL was launched to study factors associated with social-emotional and academic competencies in Chinese American adolescents from immigrant backgrounds. We targeted this sample because these youths often experience bicultural and intergenerational pressures or conflicts. Families were recruited from the Houston area in Texas, USA. Texas is the second most populous and the second-largest of the 50 U.S. states, with Houston being the largest city in Texas. In terms of Asian population in the U.S., Texas ranks third largest in the U.S., with the Houston area having the largest Asian population in the state (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). Our sample consisted of 92 Chinese American adolescents aged 14 to 18 years and their parents. While the majority of adolescents (80%) were born in the United States, all parents were first generation Chinese immigrants (majority born in China or Taiwan).

Data for this study were collected with online surveys on 92 parent-adolescent dyads, with the parent and adolescent completing surveys separately. Measures included parental autonomy support, adolescent emotion regulation, adolescent adaptive skills, and adolescent academic achievement. Parental autonomy support (low parental psychological control) was assessed using parent and adolescent ratings of reverse-scored items from the Parental Control Scale (PCS; Barber, 1996). Adolescent emotion regulation and adaptive skills were assessed using parent ratings on the

adolescent version of the Behavior Assessment System for Children - 2 (BASC-2; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 2004). Adolescents reported on their school grades in the subjects of English, math, science, and social studies.

We tested a measurement model for the latent construct of emotion regulation, consisting of emotional self-control, negative emotionality, executive functioning, and anger control. Our measurement model fit the data well. In addition, we examined the mechanisms by which parenting may influence academic achievement. Our findings showed that emotion regulation mediated the effect of parental autonomy support on adaptive skills, while adaptive skills mediated the effect of emotion regulation on academic achievement. Our findings are consistent with the view that overly controlling and restrictive parenting is not the only way to achieve academic success (Kim et al., 2013). For Chinese American adolescents with first generation immigrant parents, parental autonomy support and emotion regulation are promotive factors in adaptive and academic competencies.

Future directions

Our research group has begun work on Project CASL 2.0, a follow-up study on the original sample of adolescents to examine their adjustments as emerging adults and their transition to college and work life. While we used the reversed score of parental psychological control as a proxy for autonomy support in Project CASL, we have included direct measures of parental autonomy support in the follow-up study. For children from collectivistic cultures such as Chinese Americans, limited data exists on parenting and child factors that relate to adjustment outcomes during the transition period from adolescence to early adulthood.



Jeffrey Liew with Project CASL 2.0 team members Xin Dong, Michelle SooHoo and Amanda Lomax (from left to right).

Collectivistic cultures tend to emphasize family obligations and respect for the parents, and a sense of family obligation may have implications for educational, employment, and adjustment outcomes (Fuligni & Pedersen, 2002). The Liew Human Development Lab is committed to continuing research on child and parent factors that contribute to children growing into socially, emotionally, and academically competent young adults.

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Adolescent Depressive Symptoms: An Integrative Examination of Parenting and Sadness Regulation in Italy and the United States

Laura Di Giunta

Sapienza University of Rome, Italy
E-mail: laura.digiunta@uniroma1.it

and

Anne-Marie R. Iselin

University of North Carolina Wilmington, USA
E-mail: iselina@uncw.edu

The transition to adolescence gives rise to a wide range of externalizing and internalizing problems (e.g., Loeber & Farrington, 2000) that have long-term effects on both physical and mental health in adulthood (e.g., Odgers et al., 2007). Self-regulation related processes have figured prominently in scientific inquiries about factors that contribute to the onset and duration of mental health symptoms. Emotion regulation is of growing empirical interest in the domain of self-regulation research. Emotion regulation involves initiating, avoiding, inhibiting, maintaining, or modulating feelings and related physiological processes, cognitions, and behaviors in the service of accomplishing social competency (Eisenberg & Spinrad, 2004).

Throughout childhood and adolescence, emotion dysregulation is related to both externalizing behaviors and internalizing symptoms (e.g., Mullin & Hinshaw, 2007; Yap, Allen, & Sheeber, 2007). These associations may, however, depend on both the specific emotion being managed and the type of the strategy being used to deal with that emotion. For example, hostile rumination has been found to actively increase anger and aggression (e.g., Caprara, Barbaranelli, & Zimbardo, 1996), whereas depressive rumination have been found to actively increase sadness and depression (e.g., Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008). Overall, the consensus is that it is crucial to test emotion-specific regulation strategies.

Parenting behaviors are likely early antecedents of the relation between emotion regulation and psychological adjustment. Several studies show that parenting behaviors influence how youth maintain, alter, and modulate their emotional experiences and expression (e.g., Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Aucoin, & Keyes, 2011). There is also strong empirical evidence that negative parenting behaviors predict both internalizing and externalizing problems in children and adolescents (e.g., Barber, 2002; Gershoff, 2002). Feng et al., (2009) found that it is the interplay between parenting behaviors and children's emotion regulation that

predicts maladjustment. Negative parenting (i.e., low acceptance) prompted a disturbance in girls' sadness regulation followed by depressive symptoms one year later. Researchers are just beginning to understand the unique and complex effect of parenting behaviors on children's emotion regulation and its associated outcomes. Our study expands this data by examining a mediational pathway from parenting behaviors through emotion regulation to psychological adjustment.

Our study also seeks to expand the literature on children's emotion regulation by examining the influence of culture on this mediational pathway. One way to examine culture is through its effect on parenting behaviors (e.g., Lansford et al., 2005). For example, Bornstein et al. (2008) found that Italian mothers were more responsive to and involved with their children than mothers from the United States. Within a specific country there can be regional and ethnic differences in parenting styles. For example, mothers from Italian northern regions (i.e., presumably more educated and open to modern values) were more responsive to and less controlling of their children than mothers from Italian southern regions (Genta, Brighi, Costabile, & Wijnroks, 1995). Within the United States, African American and Latino parents use more physical discipline than European American parents (e.g., Deater-Deckard, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 1996). More recent cross-cultural investigations highlight the importance of examining the perceived normativeness of parental behaviors within a specific cultural context (Lansford et al., 2005). The detrimental effect of negative parenting on child adjustment appears to be weaker within cultural contexts characterized by high normativeness of a certain parental behaviors. In this report, we examine how the cultural normativeness of parenting behavior influences the mediation pathway from parenting behavior through emotion regulation to psychological adjustment.

Method

Participants and procedure

This study is part of the Parenting Across Cultures project (PAC; e.g., Lansford et al., 2010). PAC has followed 1,417 children and their parents from 13 cultural groups (China [Jinan and Shanghai]; Colombia; Italy [Rome and Naples]; Jordan; Kenya; the Philippines; Sweden; Thailand; and the United States [European American, African American, and Latino families]) beginning when children were

approximately 8 years old. Participants in the current study included 456 parent-child dyads from five different cultural groups: Naples, Italy ($n = 93$); Rome, Italy ($n = 95$); U.S. European Americans ($n = 101$); U.S. African Americans ($n = 91$); and U.S. Latinos ($n = 76$). Participants were 10.59 years old ($SD = 0.69$) at Time 1 and 12.62 years old ($SD = 0.69$) at Time 2. Half of the sample was female. Specific socio-demographic dimensions are available for Italy (Bombi et al., 2011) and the U.S. (Lansford et al., 2011). PAC procedures can be found elsewhere (Bornstein, Putnick, & Lansford, 2011).

Measures

Time 1 measures. Youth-reported psychological control was assessed using the Psychological Control and Autonomy Granting scale (Silk, Morris, Kanaya, & Steinberg, 2003). Parent-reported normativeness of psychological control was assessed across several questions that asked about how normative psychological control was among other parents in their community.

Time 2 measures. Participants reported their emotion regulation strategies in response to ambiguous vignettes involving peer social situations. Using questions from prior research measures (Abela, Brozina, & Haigh, 2002; Zeman, Shipman, & Penza-Clyve, 2001), youth reported how they would respond to such situations in terms of dysregulated sadness expression (e.g., make a sad face or cry) and depressive rumination (e.g., keep thinking and thinking about how sad you feel). Parents and children completed the Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1991) as a measure of depressive symptoms.

Results

Table 1 presents partial correlations among all variables within our mediation model for the aggregate sample ($N = 456$) controlling for the child's gender.

Across the five cultural groups, partial correlations were generally consistent, especially between emotion dysregulation and depressive symptoms. Given these results, we tested the mediation pathway from psychological control through sadness rumination to depressive symptoms again for the aggregate sample. The indirect effect (0.04) was significant (95% bootstrapped asymmetric confidence interval = 0.01-0.07). The indirect effect for dysregulated sadness expression was not significant, but we hypothesized this was because of the influence of culture on psychological control. Mean scores on the normativeness of psychological control differed significantly across the 5 cultural groups [$F(4, 451) = 17.47, p < .01$; see Table 2].

We therefore tested whether the normativeness of psychological control moderated the mediational pathways by including an interaction term between psychological control and normativeness of psychological control using procedures outlined by Preacher and colleagues (2007). As seen in Figure 1, the strength of the mediated effect varies based on levels of the normativeness of psychological control (where $-1 = 1$ SD below the mean, $0 =$ the mean, $1 = 1$ SD above the mean). The indirect effect of psychological control on depressive symptoms through dysregulated sadness expression is significant only when the use of

Table 1. Partial correlations among predictor, mediators, and outcome.

	Psychological Control	Depressive Symptoms
Psychological Control	—	.03
Sadness Rumination	.14**	.27**
Dysregulated Sadness Expression	.09	.22**

Note: ** = $p < .01$.

psychological control is not normative (values ≤ 0). We obtained highly similar results from a moderated mediation model testing sadness rumination as the mediator.

Discussion

We longitudinally examined whether two facets of emotion dysregulation—dysregulated sadness expression and sadness rumination—mediated the relation between parental psychological control and youth depressive symptoms among 5 different cultural groups. Youth whose parents used more psychological control engaged in more sadness rumination which was related to more parent- and child-reported depressive symptoms. This was not the case for dysregulated sadness expression; though we theorized that cultural differences in the normativeness of psychological control were influencing our mediation pathways. We found evidence in support of this supposition. The strength of the pathways from psychological control to depressive symptoms through both sadness rumination and dysregulated sadness expression varied based on levels of normativeness of psychological control (i.e., parents' perception about how frequently other parents use psychological control within a specific cultural context). Both indirect effects were attenuated as psychological control became more normative and were stronger as psychological control became less normative. In other words, the detrimental effects of psychological control on emotion regulation and in turn on mental health symptoms are more pronounced when psychological control is less culturally normative. Considering that psychological control is generally less normative in the United States than in Italy, the effects of psychological control on emotion regulation and ultimately on children's well-being might correspond to an even worse scenario in the United States than in Italy.

This study highlights the importance of considering cultural characteristics that may interact with predictors of emotion regulation. Given that many interventions for youth target parenting, emotion regulation, or some combination of both mechanisms, findings from our study have clear implications for enhancing existing empirically-based interventions that target children's well-being. Using an intervention developed in one culture with families from different cultural backgrounds and without considering the cultural values surrounding the family may produce less than optimal results. It will be important for treatment developers and clinicians to consider cultural variables that might influence the effectiveness of a given intervention. For instance, depending on a family's cultural background, interventions may target different parenting behaviors or emotion-regulation strategies.

Table 2. Mean scores (SD) on normativeness of psychological control.

Naples ^a	Rome ^{ab}	US-European American ^{bc}	US-Latino ^{cd}	US-African American ^d
3.49 (0.76)	3.23 (0.69)	3.10 (0.65)	2.82 (0.91)	2.63 (0.85)

Note: Shared superscripts indicate that means are not significantly different from each other.

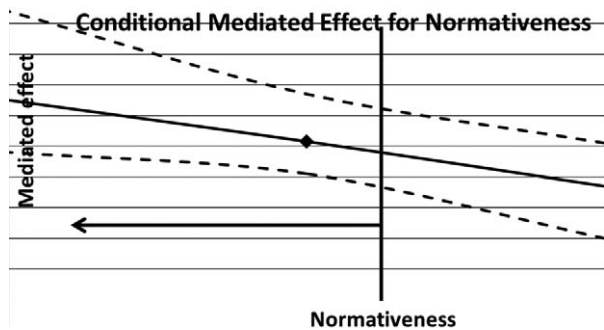


Figure 1. Indirect effect from psychological control to depressive symptoms via dysregulated sadness expression as moderated by normativeness of psychological control.

Notes: Jennifer Lansford is the Principal Investigator of PAC and Concetta Pastorelli and Anna Silvia Bombi serve as the Principal Investigators of Italian data for PAC. The PAC project has been funded by NICHD and the Jacobs Foundation. Laura Di Giunta and Anne-Marie Iselin received funding for their portion of the project from a young scholars grant by the Jacobs Foundation, the Duke University Transdisciplinary Prevention Research Center, and the Josiah Trent Memorial Foundation.

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Emotion Regulation in Intimate Relationships

Claudia M. Haase
Northwestern University
E-mail: claudia.haase@northwestern.edu

Intimate relationships are one of the most important social relationships in the lives of many people. According to the US census, 96% of US adults over the age of 65 have been married at least once in their life.

Social relationships in general (Butler, 2011; Campos, Walle, Dahl, & Main, 2011) and intimate relationships in particular (Levenson, Haase, Bloch, Holley, & Seider, 2013) are hotbeds of emotions. Navigating these complex socioemotional landscapes requires considerable regulatory efforts. In fact, the vast majority of emotion regulation episodes takes place in social contexts (reports suggest up to 98%; Gross, Richards, & John, 2006).

Although emotion regulation is a blooming research topic (e.g., Gross, 2013), most studies have focused on emotion regulation in individuals. In a review of studies conducted since 2001, Campos and colleagues (2011) estimated that less than 12% of the studies assessed emotion regulation in the presence of another person (and this is an optimistic estimate, including studies involving imagined as well as real others).

The present article takes a (selective) look at emotion regulation in intimate relationships, zooming in on defining qualities, reviewing key developmental periods, highlighting consequences, presenting some of our recent empirical findings, and outlining suggestions for future research and applications.

Defining qualities

Most existing definitions emphasize individual emotion regulation focusing, for example, on “the processes by which *individuals* [emphasis added] influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions (Gross, 1998, p. 275). Clearly, there are aspects of emotion regulation that are relevant for both individuals and couples. In individuals and couples, emotion regulation can be explicit (effortful) or implicit (automatic) (Gyurak, Gross, & Etkin, 2011), successful or unsuccessful (Gross & Levenson, 1993), and in both contexts it can be difficult to distinguish between emotion reactivity and emotion regulation (Gross, Sheppes, & Urry, 2011).

However, emotion regulation in couples also has a number of defining, special qualities (Levenson et al., 2013). Emotion regulation in couples is (a) *dynamic and iterative* as couples engage in an ongoing emotional dance with partners acting and reacting to each other’s emotion. Emotion regulation in couples is (b) *bidirectional* as couples engage in both down- and upregulation of emotions

(although downregulating emotion is important, spouses can become quite frustrated when their partner engages in constant downregulation). Emotion regulation in couples is (c) *bivalent* as couples’ regulation may target both negative and positive emotion (upregulating positive and downregulating negative emotion are important, but downregulating positive and upregulating negative emotion may be critical, for example when one partner needs support and consolation; Clark, Ouellette, Powell, & Milberg, 1987). Finally, emotion regulation in couples is *co-regulatory* (a partner may regulate not only their own but also their partner’s emotions and both partners may have quite different regulatory goals, strategies, and blind spots). Clearly, some of these qualities (e.g., bidirectionality, bivalence) are also important for individuals, but they may become crucial in intimate relationships.

To illustrate these defining qualities, consider a couple who is driving to visit the husband’s family over the holidays. As the wife is driving, the husband is starting to get excited to see his family. His wife, however, wants to concentrate on the drive, which in turn starts to irritate the husband (*dynamic and iterative regulation*). He says to her: “Can’t you just relax and enjoy yourself a little bit?” (*attempted co-regulation*). The wife remains silent, takes a couple of deep breaths to calm herself down, and continues driving (*downregulating negative emotion*). The husband tries hard to keep a cheerful look on his face (*upregulating positive emotion*) when the wife suddenly turns to him and says: “I would love to be excited, but it’s just hard for me. When we visit your family, I start thinking of my own family and . . .”; she starts to tear up (*upregulating negative emotion*). Suddenly realizing that his wife is really sad, the husband says: “I understand, honey. I am sorry. How about we stop somewhere and get something to eat?” She smiles, nods, and turns up a song that he likes on the radio (*mutual co-regulation*).

Development across the life span

We are part of many intimate relationships throughout the life span. We focus here on three dyadic relationships that are key for the development of emotion regulation, parent-infant relationships, early romantic relationships, and intimate relationships in late life.

Parent-infant relationship. The parent-infant relationship is the cradle of emotion regulation. As emotion regulation skills are just beginning to develop, infants rely primarily on their caregivers to regulate their emotions (Thompson, 1991). The focus is often on downregulating negative emotion (e.g., managing distress), but upregulating positive emotion (e.g., engaging in amusing and calming activities) is fundamental as well (e.g., Tronick, 1989). If all goes well, successful regulation of emotion in the

parent-infant dyad sets the stage for infants' development of their own emotion regulation skills.

Attachment theory and research (Bowlby, 1988) reminds us that parent-infant dyads greatly differ in their attachment styles and, accordingly, in their capacity for emotion regulation. The "Strange Situation" paradigm (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978) uses observation of mother-infant separation episodes (analyzing infants' separation anxiety, exploration, stranger anxiety, and reunion behavior) to classify attachment styles and sheds light on how deeply attachment and emotion regulation are intertwined. Securely attached infants are distressed when the mother leaves, but easily soothed and happy when she returns; insecurely attached infants are not. Exciting longitudinal research has documented the implications of parent-infant attachment for long-term developmental outcomes including emotion regulation in intimate relationships later in life (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007; Sroufe, Coffino, & Carlson, 2010).

Early romantic relationships. Choosing a romantic partner and starting an intimate relationship have traditionally been regarded as developmental tasks of young adulthood (Havighurst, 1976). However, individuals may enter romantic relationships throughout the life span (i.e., 14% of US singles between age 57 and 85 are dating; Brown & Shinohara, 2013).

The early stages of a romantic relationship often focus on upregulating positive emotions such as passionate love, affection, and excitement (Gable, Gonzaga, & Strachman, 2006). Romantic love has been coined a "mammalian system for mate choice" (Fisher, Aron, & Brown, 2006) and is associated with feelings of euphoria, obsessive thinking about and craving for connection with the partner; expanded sense of self; and increased energy (Aron, Fisher, Mashek, Strong, Li, & Brown, 2005; Aron & Aron, 1996), which may assume an almost addictive quality (Aron et al., 2005; Fisher et al., 2006). Downregulating negative emotion is important for couples at all stages of development with managing jealousy thought to be particularly critical for early romantic relationships.

Relationships in late life. As individuals grow older, they face many new challenges; earlier sources of meaning (e.g., family building, career choice) may no longer be as relevant (Erikson, 1950); social networks become smaller (Wrzus, Hänel, Wagner, & Neyer, 2012); physical abilities and health may become impaired (albeit with considerable individual differences, Rowe & Kahn, 1997); and cognitive functioning may decline (Salthouse, 2004). However, numerous aspects of emotional functioning are preserved or even enhanced in late life, with (aspects of) emotion regulation being a prime example (Gross, Carstensen, Pasupathi, Tsai, Skorpen, & Hsu, 1997; Shiota & Levenson, 2009).

Socioemotional selectivity theory (e.g., Carstensen, 2006; Carstensen, Isaacowitz, & Charles, 1999) posits that, as time horizons shrink, older adults prioritize emotion regulation (i.e., upregulating positive and downregulating negative emotions) over other goals. Positive emotions have soothing effects (Fredrickson & Levenson, 1998), which may be one reason for why they become so important in late life. Intimate relationships in turn are key for emotion regulation in late life, enhancing positive emotions such as affection and reducing negative emotions such as fear (Coan & Maresh, 2013).

Consequences

Emotion regulation matters for many developmental outcomes including well-being, mental health, physical health, and social functioning (e.g., Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010; Côté, Gyurak, & Levenson, 2010; Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2004; Lopes, Salovey, Cote, Beers, & Petty, 2005; Nelis et al., 2011).

A number of studies have examined consequences of emotion regulation in couples (most interesting perhaps when looking at actual couples' interactions) for individual (e.g., cognition; Richards, Butler, & Gross, 2003) as well as relationship (e.g., spousal abuse; McNulty & Hellmuth, 2008; marital satisfaction; Smith, Cribbet, Nealey-Moore, Uchino, Williams, MacKenzie, & Thayer, 2011) outcomes. One laboratory-based paradigm has looked at the simple act of spouses holding hands and documented its threat-reducing effects, especially in happily married couples (Coan, Schaefer, & Davidson, 2006).

Another laboratory-based paradigm (Levenson & Gottman, 1983) has also provided insights into the consequences of couples' emotion regulation. In this paradigm, couples engage in several unrehearsed 15-minute conversations on relationship topics (e.g., events of the day, area of disagreement, pleasant topic). During these conversations, a number of physiological measures (e.g., heart rate, skin conductance) are measured continuously from both partners. Couples are videorecorded so that trained raters can code their emotional behavior later. After the conversations, partners view these videotapes and use a rating dial to indicate how positive or negative they felt (Gottman & Levenson, 1985). These streams of continuous multi-method data (physiology, behavior, subjective experience) can be used to create measures of emotion reactivity and regulation for the individual partners as well as the couple.

Studies utilizing this paradigm show how the regulation of (a) physiology (e.g., low levels of physiological arousal and physiological linkage; Gottman & Levenson, 1992; Levenson & Gottman, 1985); (b) emotional behavior (e.g., high ratio of positive to negative emotional behaviors; Gottman & Levenson, 1992), and (c) subjective experience (e.g., negative emotional experience by one partner followed by negative emotional experience by the other partner; Levenson & Gottman, 1983; Levenson & Gottman, 1985) predicts greater marital happiness and/or lower risk for divorce.

New findings from a 20-year longitudinal study of marriage

I want to highlight some findings from a 20-year longitudinal study of long-term married middle-aged and older couples directed by Robert W. Levenson, Laura L. Carstensen, and John M. Gottman. In this study, couples visited the laboratory to engage in a series of unrehearsed 15-minute conversations in 1989/1990 and were followed up longitudinally over 20 years. This study has produced a rich body of findings (e.g., Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1993; Levenson, Carstensen, & Gottman, 1994). Important earlier studies demonstrated the power of couples' emotion regulation for predicting concurrent relationship outcomes. Less escalation of negative emotional behavior was found to be associated with higher marital satisfaction (Carstensen,



Gottman, & Levenson, 1995). Greater levels of physiological soothing were associated with higher positive emotional behavior (Yuan, McCarthy, Holley, & Levenson, 2010).

More recently, we have been able to start analyzing longitudinal associations utilizing these data. We (Bloch, Haase, & Levenson, in press) developed a new performance-based measure of emotion regulation by determining how *quickly* spouses reduce signs of negative emotion in experience, behavior, and physiological arousal after negative emotion events during the marital conflict discussion. Our findings show that greater downregulation of wives' negative experience and negative behavior predicted greater marital satisfaction for wives and husbands concurrently. Moreover, greater downregulation of wives' negative behavior predicted positive changes in wives' marital satisfaction over time. Wives' use of constructive communication mediated the longitudinal associations. These results demonstrate the benefits of wives' downregulation of negative emotion for marital satisfaction and highlight wives' constructive communication as a mediating pathway. Interestingly and defying common stereotypes, wives and husbands did not differ in their actual ability to downregulate emotion; the gender difference emerged in whether emotion regulation mattered for marital satisfaction or not, suggesting that women may be perceived as the emotional centers of the marriage (at least in these cohorts). In another study, we (Holley, Haase, & Levenson, 2013) analyzed changes in demand-withdraw behaviors in this sample over a 13-year period and found stability in most behaviors and increases in avoidance behaviors (e.g., diverting attention or changing topics). We interpret this finding as reflecting couples' capacity for greater disengagement from conflict as they are growing older (cf. Haase, Heckhausen, & Wrosch, 2013a; Heckhausen, Wrosch, & Schulz, 2010).

We are currently exploring longitudinal links between emotion regulation and outcomes beyond relationship satisfaction. Initial findings suggest that wives' and husbands' ability to downregulate negative emotion predicts anxiety and depression longitudinally above and beyond marital satisfaction (Haase, Bloch, & Levenson, 2014, April). Other analyses are currently underway, examining age-related changes in positive and negative emotional behavior and links between emotion and empathy. Moreover, we have studied how genetic polymorphisms moderate the association between emotion and long-term changes in marital satisfaction (Haase et al., 2013b).

Future directions

We need more research on emotion regulation in social relationships in general and couples in particular. This research will provide exciting insights into the nature of emotion regulation, its development, consequences, and sources; and it has tremendous potential for informing applications.

First, studies are needed that go beyond self-report measures to assess actual emotion regulation in couples by examining multiple response systems (e.g., subjective experience, emotional behavior, language, autonomic and central physiology) and collecting data in the laboratory as well as in the field. These studies may be particularly

interesting if they capture the dynamic, iterative, and co-regulatory qualities of couples' emotion regulation, probe not only downregulation but also upregulation, and pay attention to the regulation of both positive and negative emotion.

Second, more research is needed on the *development*, looking at both *change and continuity*, of emotion regulation in couples across the life span. It will be greatly interesting to learn more about how couples' emotion regulatory styles and skills develop over time, when they are malleable, and when they become stable.

Third, more research is needed on the *consequences* of emotion regulation, with special attention given to linking different kinds of emotion regulation with different kinds of outcomes (examining not only relationship stability and quality but also individuals' well-being, mental health, and physical health).

Fourth, more research is needed on the *sources* of emotion regulation in couples, looking both at biological (e.g., genetic, temperamental) and psychological (e.g., personality, attachment history) factors that predispose individuals and couples to develop particular regulatory styles.

Finally, we believe that this research can inform as well as benefit from couples' counseling and therapy. Couples who struggle often struggle with regulating emotions, be it with downregulating negative emotion (e.g., fights over money, child rearing, in-laws) or with upregulating positive emotions (e.g., loss of intimacy, sexual interest, joy). Couples therapies often zoom in on the non-emotional aspects of these problems, addressing early experiences, individual psychopathology, or communication problems. While these factors are clearly important, addressing emotion and emotion regulation in the couple may be a particularly fruitful point of entry for intervention (see, for example, our finding that better emotion regulation predicts improvements in communication for wives; Bloch et al., in press). There are a number of therapeutic approaches that afford particular attention to emotion (e.g., Gottman & Gottman, 2008; Lebow, Chambers, Christensen, & Johnson, 2012). More cross-talk between researchers and practitioners may be greatly informative.

In sum, the potential is enormous and we are looking forward to future research on emotion regulation in intimate relationships.

Author note

This article draws from a recent chapter written by Robert W. Levenson, myself, Lian Bloch, Sarah Holley, and Benjamin J. Seider (Levenson et al., 2013).

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Are we Really Getting Better? Lifespan Differences in Emotion Regulatory Ability from the Perspective of Developmental Functionalism

Natalie Tuck

University of Auckland, New Zealand

E-mail: natalie.tuck@auckland.ac.nz

Iris Mauss

University of California, Berkeley, USA

E-mail: imauss@berkeley.edu

and

Nathan S. Consedine

University of Auckland, New Zealand

E-mail: n.consedine@auckland.ac.nz

Despite assertions that emotion regulation improves with age, evidence objectively testing this claim is uncommon. In this article, we briefly review data relevant to this important lifespan thesis, arguing that we are nearing the limits of the insights we can gain with cross-sectional, self-report data; designs in which regulatory skills are objectively assessed are needed. Next, we summarize *developmental functionalism*, a framework that makes specific predictions regarding the types of regulation that might be expected to improve (and decline) across the adult lifespan. This view suggests that while skills based in developmentally-acquired knowledge such as situation selection may generally improve with age, skills that rely on capacities that decline (e.g., executive processing) may show age-linked decrements. Finally, we present early data from a study testing aspects of this model. In the study, 64 adults from across the lifespan were required to enhance and suppress anger and sadness expressions after being randomized to being either warned (experimental) or not warned (control) about the forthcoming tasks. Preliminary analyses examining whether suppressive and enhancement ability improves with age and is consistent for anger and sadness across warned versus non-warned conditions are presented. Implications for the objective study of age differences in emotion regulatory *abilities* and later life adaptation are discussed and directions for future research are given.

Method

Although it is widely accepted that emotion regulatory functioning improves across the adult lifespan (Blanchard-Fields, 2007; Carstensen, Fung, & Charles, 2003;

Carstensen & Mikels, 2005; Urry & Gross, 2010), surprisingly little empirical evidence is directly demonstrative of this claim. Broadly speaking, there are three classes of data relevant to this assertion: self-reported affect balance data, self-reported improvements/differences in emotional control, and experimental data in which regulation is objectively assessed. Inferring better regulation based on self-reported emotion is problematic, self-reports on traits or abilities may not correspond with objective assessments (Bonanno, Pat-Horenczyk, & Noll, 2011; Schwartz, Neale, Marco, Shiffman, & Stone, 1999), and studies that objectively assess regulatory performance are scanty. Commentators tend to *infer* superior regulation based on greater positive affect or accept self-reported regulation as evidence of improved *skill*. Insights based on inferential methodologies are limited, and the systematic study of age differences in objectively assessed regulatory performance is a necessary next step in this area.

A recent review of lifespan studies in which emotion regulatory skills were objectively assessed (Consedine & Mauss, 2014) concludes by suggesting that although aging does not appear to bring a unilateral decline in ability, different types of regulatory task show distinct patterns of improvement and decline, and distinct tactics may be employed to accomplish the same regulatory ends (Consedine, 2011a; Emery & Hess, 2011; Magai, Consedine, Krivoshekova, McPherson, & Kudadjie-Gyamfi, 2006). Overall, there may be improvements in forms of emotion regulation linked to positive states (Isaacowitz, Toner, & Neupert, 2009; Phillips, Henry, Hosie, & Milne, 2008; Shiota & Levenson, 2009), social contexts or use of social supports (Akiyama, Antonucci, Takahashi, & Langfahl, 2003; Birditt & Fingerma, 2005; Opitz, Gross, & Urry, 2012), situation selection or modification (Blanchard-Fields, 2007; Blanchard-Fields, Mienaltowski, & Seay, 2007; Charles & Carstensen, 2008; Charles, Piazza, Luong, & Almeida, 2009), and, perhaps, in acceptance (Shallcross, Ford, Floerke, & Mauss, 2013). However, skills relying on executive processes may decline. Expressive suppression, for example, shows few age differences (Emery & Hess, 2011; Kunzmann, Kupperbusch, & Levenson, 2005; Magai, et al., 2006; Phillips, et al., 2008; Shiota & Levenson, 2009) and studies of reappraisal to decrease negative emotion suggest reduced ability (Opitz, Rauch, Terry, & Urry, 2012; Shiota & Levenson, 2009), despite greater use with age (John & Gross, 2004).

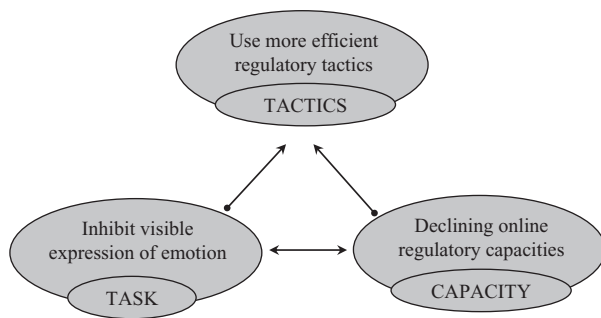


Figure 1. The task, capacity, and tactic framework as applied to changes in emotion regulation across the adult lifespan (adapted from Consedine & Mauss, 2014).

Lifespan differences in emotion regulatory skill – the view from developmental functionalism

Developmental functionalism is a discrete emotions-based approach to the study of emotions (Consedine & Magai, 2003; Consedine, Magai, & Bonanno, 2002; Consedine & Moskowitz, 2007) and emotion regulation (Consedine, 2011a, 2011b; Consedine & Mauss, 2014; Magai, et al., 2006), that pays explicit attention to lifespan development. In this view, changes in emotions and emotion regulation across the lifespan involve the conjoint influences of developmental variation in tasks, capacities and tactics. The approach suggests that understanding emotion regulation requires an examination of developmental variation in regulatory targets (the states, experiences or expressions that we are regulating towards or away from – the “task”), the capacities available to accomplish different forms of regulation (e.g., emotional understanding, executive resources), and the strategies that can be used to accomplish tasks *given* the available resources.

Because different emotion regulatory tasks are based in distinct resource or capacity sets, that have normative trajectories of improvement and decline, it is possible to make predictions regarding the specific regulatory skills that might improve or decline. Developmental functionalism organizes the capacities relevant to emotion regulation – self-awareness, cultural referencing, executive functioning, linguistic ability, knowledge of others, and the like – into two broad categories: basic biological capacities and acquired characteristics (Consedine, 2011a). Predictively then, capacities in which learned improvement seems likely (reflectiveness, awareness of emotion, emotional and situational knowledge) might enhance forms of emotion regulation occurring earlier in the regulatory process (Gross, 1998), while normative declines in somatic resources, energy, and executive capacities may interfere with “online” forms of regulation.

Furthermore, the aging process itself can be seen as creating a pressure to accomplish regulation within the constraints imposed by fluctuating capacities. While some regulatory tasks may become automatized and require fewer resources (Mauss, Bunge, & Gross, 2007; Mauss, Evers, Wilhelm, & Gross, 2006), changes in capacity necessitate changes in both the targets of regulation and the tactics used to attain them. We should expect changes in tactics,

with a general increase in the “efficiency” of regulation and a tendency to (a) regulate earlier in the emotion-generation process or (b) use available resources to offset reductions in the capacities needed for online regulation. Below, we present preliminary data from a study conducted within this conceptual framework.

Results

Preliminary data from an ongoing study

In this initial report, 64 (of a target 120) adults grouped into <40 year and 40+ year groups completed regulatory tasks (enhance and suppress expression during anger and sadness-inducing films) after either being warned or not warned regarding the forthcoming tasks. We expected that when participants were warned, performance would be comparable across age groups because the warning would allow the older group to offset declines in online processing by drawing on other resource sets. However, in the absence of a warning, we expected the younger group to demonstrate greater flexibility in expressive regulation.

Two independent raters, blind to condition, coded expressivity relative to a neutral condition in four 50-second videos (angry and sad, enhanced and suppressed) for each participant; scores were coded to indicate greater suppression or enhancement ability. A 2 (age group) x 2 (condition) repeated-measures ANOVA with emotion (anger/sad) and task (suppress/enhance) as within subject variables, and age group and condition as between subject variables was conducted.

Early analyses (see Figure 2) suggest that warned participants were marginally more successful, $F(1, 56) = 2.57$, $p < .10$, with greater success in modulating anger versus sadness expressions, $F(1, 56) = 18.45$, $p < .001$, and had better enhancement (versus suppressive) ability, $F(1, 56) = 9.11$, $p < .05$. While there was no main effect for age or evidence for the expected interaction between age and warning, a trending 2-way interaction between task and warning suggested that warnings promoted better enhancement, but did not alter suppression of expression, $F(1, 56) = 3.74$, $p < .10$.

This interaction was qualified by 3-way interaction between age, emotion, and warning condition, $F(1, 56) = 3.34$, $p < .10$; when warned, both younger and older adults were better at regulating anger than sadness. When unwarned, however, older adults were no better at regulating anger than sadness. Finally, there was a 4-way interaction between emotion, task, age and warning, $F(1, 56) = 5.03$, $p < .05$. Follow-up t-testing indicated that while the older group tended to benefit from a warning when enhancing anger ($p = .068$) the younger group did not. Conversely, the younger adults benefitted from warnings when attempting to enhance sadness ($p < .01$) while the older group did not. There were also additional differences *within* the older group, who were better at enhancing (versus suppressing) sadness ($p < .05$), but better at suppressing anger than sadness ($p < 0.05$).

Discussion, interpretations, and future directions

Although the number of experimental reports examining lifespan differences in emotion regulation has increased

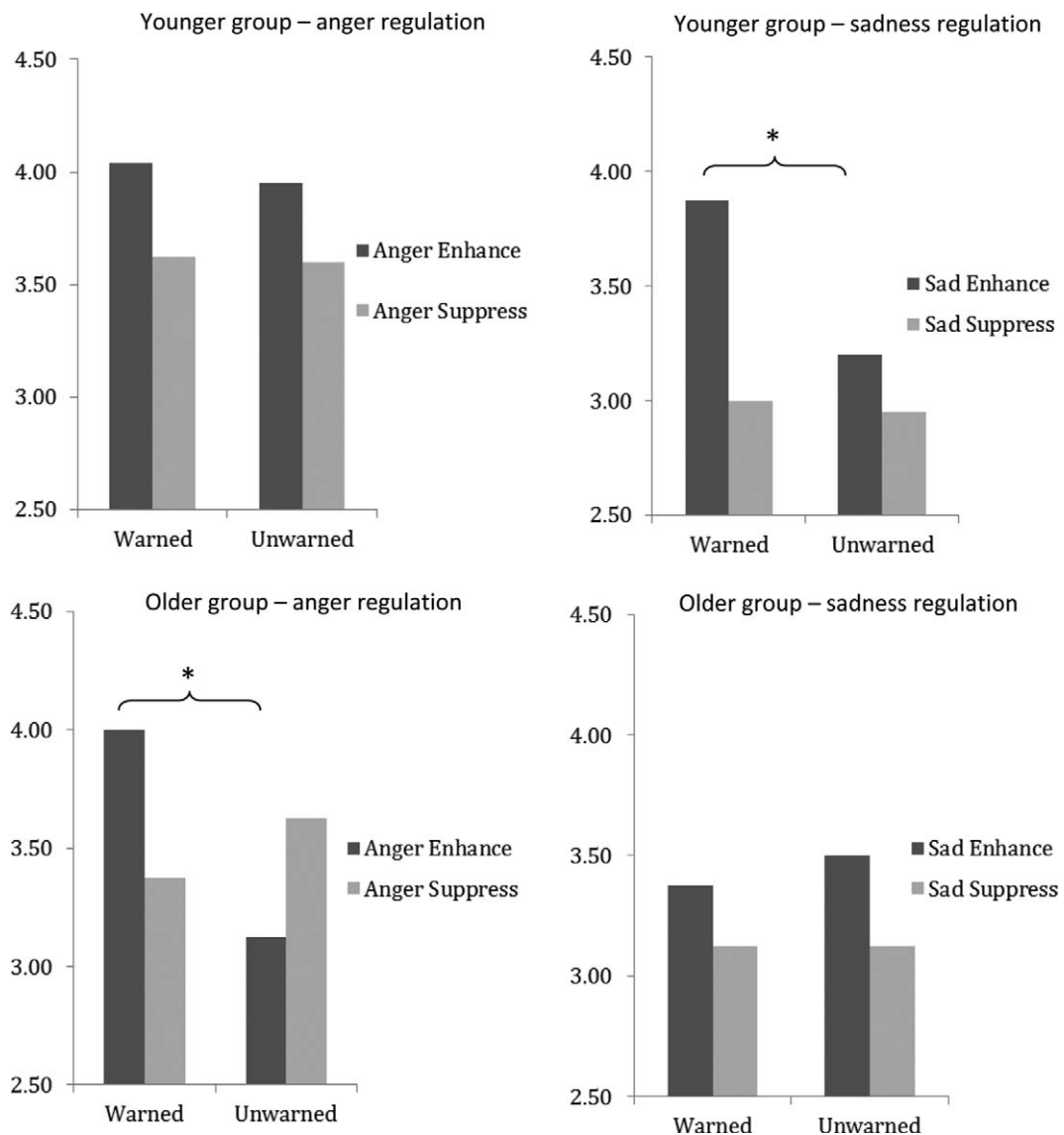


Figure 2. Enhancement and suppression scores for anger and sadness inductions under warned and unwarned conditions in two age groups.

across the past decade, the field remains in its infancy (Consedine, 2011a). Few experimental studies have investigated developmental variation in regulatory targets or attempted to experimentally manipulate which resources participants are able to use in regulation (the warning manipulation). Consistent with prior work, these preliminary analyses found no overall age differences in broad regulatory ability. When participants were warned regarding the upcoming tasks, both younger and older groups performed comparably, being more successful in enhancing (versus suppressing) expressions and being more able to regulate anger (versus sad) expressions. However, warnings appeared to help the older group but not the younger group enhance anger, while the younger group differentially benefited from a warning when seeking to enhance sadness. Consistent with notions that motivational priorities may lead to more socially-facilitative emotion regulation, the older group were better at suppressing anger than sadness, but better at enhancing versus suppressing sadness.

Although these data are clearly preliminary and our analyses underpowered, they provide indications for at least several important possibilities. First, consistent with indications from other lifespan research (see Consedine & Mauss, 2014 for a review), there were no age-related differences in the ability to *suppress* emotional expressions; most effects were in the enhance component of the tasks where the older group performed more poorly when unwarned. While this may reflect issues in coding suppression (i.e., degrees of “less” expression are harder to reliably score than degrees of “more”), it may also be that enhancement is more demanding because it requires the communication of a *specific* target while suppression simply requires the elimination of all expression. Equally, it may be that differences in suppression are masked because current cohorts of older adults are dispositionally more prone to suppress and thus derive benefits from automatization (i.e., reduced resource demand).

Second, it is also notable that it was in the older group performance during the ‘naturalistic’ (unwarned) condition



that most differences emerged; despite being marginally lower in performance overall, this group was differentially better at (a) suppressing anger and (b) enhancing sadness. Such a pattern may reflect age-related practice and/or priorizations in reducing the expression of interpersonally-damaging (versus facilitating) expression. It is possible, for example, that the older sample perform more poorly on specific tasks requiring the up-regulation of anger because they must override a tendency to automatically downplay such expressions before they are able to enhance them.

Effective emotion regulation is a critical adaptive capacity in both younger (Bonanno, Papa, Lalande, Westphal, & Coifman, 2004; Westphal, Seivert, & Bonanno, 2010) and older (Carstensen, et al., 2003; Charles & Carstensen, 2010; Consedine, 2011a) adults. Although these preliminary analyses have taken small steps towards identifying specific patterns of change, they raise as many questions as they answer. Does anticipating a regulatory task impact success differently in adults of different ages? If so, for which emotions? Future studies are needed to identify how the targets of emotion regulation vary across the lifespan and how capacities and tactics interact to determine the efficacy with which regulatory targets are attained. Additional questions regarding the links between regulatory skill and adaptive psychological, social and physical health outcomes are also salient and worth further investigation.

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A Commentary on Emotion Regulation across the Life Span

Susan T. Charles

University of Southern California, USA

E-mail: scharles@uci.edu

The current group of studies considers aspects of emotional experience and emotion regulation across populations ranging from adolescents to older adults, covering a diverse set of emotion regulation strategies, situations, and outcomes. These papers provide insight into different facets of emotion regulation, and in so doing highlight the challenges that researchers face when capturing this complex process using a single definition. In their work, they also point to gaps in the literature and future directions for life-span research. Below, I discuss each of these issues and comment on the papers by Tuck et al., Larsen, Liew, Haase, Giunta and Iselin, and Schipper et al., beginning with the challenges we have in the definition of emotion regulation.

Defining emotion regulation. Although different definitions of emotion regulation exist, almost all of them include a complex range of behaviors and experiences that encompass which emotions are felt, and how and when they occur and are expressed. Often, a definition is framed within a time series that describes emotion regulation strategies used immediately before an emotional event is encountered, while the event is occurring, and after the event has passed. Such a depiction organizes emotion regulation around a specific emotion-eliciting event. One concern with such a focus, however, is whether pre-existing factors, such as personality traits or other situational variables, belong in this definition. Emotional experiences do not start and stop, and pre-existing emotional states as well as more enduring characteristics influence how reactive people are when encountering emotion-eliciting stimuli. Two papers from this series discuss such factors.

Tuck and colleagues investigate the importance of knowledge about an emotional event before it occurs. They find that warning participants of the type of emotion-eliciting stimuli that will be shown leads to anger enhancement among older adults and sadness enhancement among younger adults. In addition to illustrating the importance of foreknowledge about the stimuli, they further discuss the role of dispositional traits. They consider how suppression may be a dispositional tendency that is generally greater among older adults, and thus will influence their performance on this emotion regulation strategy. By investigating the key role that foreknowledge plays when processing emotional stimuli as well as the potential cohort differences in trait characteristics of emotion regulation, Tuck and colleagues highlight the importance of predisposing factors that influence the emotion regulation process. Moreover, understanding how these factors may have differential effects across age groups and types of emotions brings a nuanced, complex approach to emotion regulation research.

The emphasis on individual differences such as personality, emotional intelligence, and other psychosocial measures for predicting emotional states is not new, yet it is unclear how researchers should include these characteristics in definitions of emotion regulation. Should they be portrayed as confounds that need to be controlled, or should they be included as factors that predict successful or unsuccessful emotion regulation? In her review, Larsen discusses the importance of emotional authenticity, focusing on how people understand and interpret their own emotional goals, needs and experiences. She stresses the significance of authenticity in both how people organize their lives to navigate and structure where emotions are experienced (an emotion regulation strategy often referred to as situation selection), and how they acknowledge, accept and act in response to these experiences. This description of emotional authenticity, including the determination of how and when emotions are experienced, parallels many definitions of emotion regulation. Rarely, however, are these dispositional traits included in models of emotion regulation in life-span research. Larsen's work presents a notable exception to most models.

More than up or down-regulation. Perhaps studies of emotion regulation often ignore dispositional traits because they focus on the dynamic modulation of emotional states. Studies of age differences in emotion regulation often examine movement of emotional states, either by up-regulating or down-regulating positive and negative affect. The dominance of this model makes sense earlier in the life span, when younger children lack the cognitive capacities for other emotion regulation strategies, such as planning activities that allow them to navigate their environment to control the types of emotions they have, and when they experience them. As a result, researchers focus on emotional reactivity and recovery, such as how likely children are to become distressed and their response to an upsetting event. With further cognitive development, older children are more capable of anticipating emotional states and engaging in antecedent strategies. Studies of older children's emotion regulation, however, often continue to focus primarily on stress reactivity, in both naturalistic studies using daily sampling and laboratory studies capturing reactions to experimental stimuli. Liew avoids this common trap in his study. He incorporates not only the importance of predisposing factors as mentioned before (in his case parental control), but examines emotion regulation strategies necessary to successfully avoid unpleasant outcomes in his studies. The capabilities necessary to anticipate and regulate the environment – executive functioning emotional control – allow adolescents to attain their personal goals. Liew measures these goals of adaptive functioning, such as academic success, as indicators of successful emotion regulation.

When studying people across adulthood, researchers focus on both antecedent-focused and response-focused

strategies, and many investigators make different age-related predictions dependent on the type of strategies examined. Strength and Vulnerability Integration, for example, posits that older adults more often engage in strategies that allow them to avoid or limit their exposure to negative experiences altogether, and only when people are placed in situations of sustained arousal do age-related benefits attenuate or disappear completely (Charles, 2010; Charles & Piazza, 2009).

The distinction, then, between antecedent versus response-focused strategies, is important in predicting age differences in emotion regulation abilities. Yet, definitions of emotion regulation often narrow to either actively down-regulating or up-regulating subjective emotional states. As a result, important information about age differences in emotional experience is lost. For example, one study examining goals to regulate emotions found that older age was related to greater desire to maintain positive affective states (Riediger, Schmiedek, Wagner, & Lindenberg, 2009). Should this be seen as successful emotion regulation, as indicated by the higher levels of well-being reported by the older adults in this study? Or, should we interpret these findings as not relevant to emotion regulation, because the respondents did not encounter a problem where modulation of emotion was necessary? Moreover, how can we further study the extent to which the older adults engaged in actions that allowed them to experience desired emotion-states, or whether they were simply fortunate to be in such salubrious surroundings?

More emphasis on socio-cultural context of emotion regulation. Researchers often discuss how adults shape their social networks consistent with their emotional goals (e.g., Carstensen, 1992, 2006), but rarely do researchers discuss how people at younger ages shape their social network in ways that influence their emotional well-being. Haase emphasizes the importance of interactional processes in her review. She describes how some of our strongest emotions are experienced within social situations, and emotion regulation strategies frequently include dynamic interactions with others. She provides specific examples of interaction patterns that serve as emotion regulation indicators, such as how quickly husbands and wives down-regulate negative emotions at the time they are experienced, and assesses their success with specific social outcomes (i.e., relationship satisfaction). This is an exciting new envisioning of emotion regulation that can be examined across different age groups.

In further probing the powerful influence of others in emotion regulation processes, Giunta and Iselin's paper focuses on the influence of parental behavior on the emotion regulation abilities of adolescents. Importantly, however, they describe how the cultural context – specifically social norms – influences the strength of these effects. They find that negative parental behavior (parental control) is related to poorer emotion regulation behaviors of their adolescent (dysregulated sadness expression; depressive rumination), which in turn are related to their adolescent's depressive symptoms. They also found, however, that the strength of these associations is related to the cultural norm of parental control. When parental control is more normative in a culture, it has less impact on depressive symptoms, as indicated by the attenuation of the indirect association between parental control and depressive symptoms.

Measuring emotion regulation and its success. Much of this discussion relates to methodology: how do we incorporate (or not) dispositional traits in models of emotion regulation; how do we interpret the same concept (e.g., parental control) in different environments; how do we expand definitions of emotion regulation to include interactive processes. These questions also highlight the difficulty encountered when making comparisons across people who rely on different types of emotion regulation strategies. For example, imagine two people: one who carefully navigates his or her environment to avoid potential negative situations, and as a result experiences high levels of overall well-being with few fluctuations in negative affect. The other person takes no preemptive emotion regulation measures, and encounters daily stressors often. However, this person reacts less strongly to these stressors when they occur than does the first individual. What, if anything, can we say about overall differences in emotion regulation? And how often do people flexibly move across different types of emotion regulation strategies (e.g., Bonanno & Burton, 2013), and how does this flexibility vary across age groups?

Comparison across groups of people who engage in such different emotion regulation strategies is further complicated by variations in methods of measuring successful emotion regulation. For those examining antecedent strategies, perhaps the number of daily stressors (or reported events) may be a guide, although these outcomes are complicated by the opportunities and challenges afforded by the environment. Studies of reactivity and recovery, in contrast, focus on the time needed for physiological arousal or subjective state to return to a baseline measure. These different measures of emotion regulation raise questions concerning what are the most important indicators of emotion regulation, and how best to capture them. On a related note, what are the important outcomes? These papers explore the range of emotion regulation literature, in studies that examine diverse outcomes such as depressive symptoms, facial expressions, academic performance, relationship satisfaction, emotional negativity, and other well-being indicators. Perhaps it is time for us to examine how strategies generalize, or not, to these diverse outcomes.

Studying a range of outcomes inspires questions regarding *what* is the best indicator of emotion regulation. Schipper and colleagues present findings that raise the intriguing question of *who* is the best judge of these outcomes. In their study, they had adolescents and their parents rate the adolescent's functioning using the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a standardized measure that provides both an overall score of emotional and behavioral functioning and separate subscales for five areas of psychosocial functioning. They found that although the overall score on the SDQ did not differ between the adolescents and their parent-informants, the pairs were discrepant on three subscale ratings. Specifically, the parents rated their adolescent higher on emotional and conduct problems that did the adolescents, and the adolescents rated their hyperactivity as higher than did their parents. Given such differences, these results raise questions regarding whose reports we weight more heavily, and whose are more predictive of later problems across a wide range of individual and social areas.

Conclusion. The current set of studies produces interesting results and raises intriguing questions regarding emotion regulation across the life span. Definitions of



emotion regulation are necessarily expansive, but these encompassing definitions present challenges with regard to how to incorporate the many facets of emotion regulation into a single model, and how to compare findings across different strategies. The papers also provide direction for our future research. They point to factors that influence emotional functioning and emotional experience that should be incorporated in studies of emotion regulation. They highlight the need to become more aware of the socio-cultural influences that surround these processes, and they point to the challenges of integrating different indicators and outcomes for the complex set of processes that fall under the term emotion regulation.

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The Elusiveness of a Life-Span Model of Emotion Regulation

Tamara L. Sims
Stanford University, USA
E-mail: tamarasims@stanford.edu

and

Laura L. Carstensen
Stanford University, USA
E-mail: laura.carstensen@stanford.edu

The articles published in this special issue offer an excellent characterization of the research questions and approaches that psychologists apply to the study of emotion regulation across the life span. Each of the articles addresses important inputs into the regulation of emotion, from the influence of parents and peers on the regulatory capacities of children and adolescents, to the roles of social norms and marriage in adulthood, to the effects of age on the regulation of discrete emotions.

Di Giunta and Iselin illustrate, for example, how emotional functioning in childhood relies heavily on parents and caretakers. Children are explicitly taught basic strategies that lay the groundwork for healthy emotional development. In western cultures, these primary strategies involve teaching children to up-regulate positive and down-regulate negative emotional states. The failure to do so can have detrimental consequences for well-being, particularly in societies that value these strategies. Liew examines how parental autonomy support shapes children's capacity for emotion regulation among Chinese immigrants, challenging the belief that Chinese parenting is restrictive and controlling. Rather, he maintains, parental guidance of emotion regulation reflects cultural norms and sets the foundation for children's healthy academic development.

Schipper, Nitkowski, Koglin, and Petermann address the transitional period of adolescence, in which emotion regulation becomes increasingly self-initiated while simultaneously influenced by peers. During adolescence, regulation takes on a new level of complexity as individuals learn to regulate emotions in the service of establishing and maintaining social connections outside of the family, learning how to up-regulate negative (expressing sadness to solicit comfort from friends) and down-regulate positive (e.g., downplaying receiving an award to fit in with friends) emotions. The departure from parental guidance and a prioritization of peer acceptance may explain why the emotional lives of adolescents can be particularly unstable. Schipper et al.'s findings about contrahedonic motivations and the difficulty parents have in inferring emotional states of their adolescent children complement those from a recent report by Michaela Reidiger and colleagues based on experience sampling spanning adolescence to very old age (Reidiger, Schmiedek, Wagner & Lindenberger, 2009). When paged, participants were asked what they were feeling and whether they wanted to increase those feelings or decrease

them. Among the adults, the predicted patterns were observed. When positive emotions were reported, participants wanted to maintain or enhance them; when negative emotions were experienced, participants expressed a motive to contain or diminish them. Adolescents, however, presented an important exception: The typical response to negative emotions was the desire to heighten the negative experience. These findings are consistent with Larsen's discussion of authenticity. Larsen's emphasis on authenticity challenges the assumption that effectively down-regulating negative experience is the inevitable "appropriate" response, an observation that may be particularly true of adolescents.

Haase's review suggests that emotion regulation in intimate relationships raises additional challenges. In the context of marriage, the ability to infer sometimes subtle cues and up-regulate or down-regulate one's own emotions accordingly is critical. Indeed, marital well-being, at least in modern western cultures, appears to rest fundamentally on partners' abilities to manage their own emotions while simultaneously attending to those of their significant others.

Tuck et al. question the widely held view that emotion regulation improves with age. By isolating an emotional elicitor (the need to up- or down-regulate either anger or sadness) and by the explicitness of the regulatory demand, they observe more age group similarities than differences. As they acknowledge, limitations in statistical power render their findings highly tentative. However, their theoretical framework and methodological approach offer readers a view of the types of hypothesis researchers test and how they test them when investigating the capacity for emotion regulation.

Individually, each of the papers raises important questions and issues. Together, the set also illustrates the disjointed conceptualization of emotion regulation evident in the broader field of life-span development. Not only are the research traditions and methods adopted by those studying child, adolescent and adult development different from one another, the implicit assumptions about emotion and related questions vary by life stage. Research on regulation in young children tends to focus on parental styles and relationships, thereby placing the emphasis squarely in social context. When studying increasingly older age groups, however, researchers focus on individuals, often on emotion regulation in the laboratory devoid of social context. Indeed, Tuck et al. maintain that this is the only way to really know whether or not emotion regulation improves with age.

The tacit assumption is that emotion regulation at the beginning of life is externally supported and gradually moves inward to the point where regulation can be studied outside of social and cultural contexts. In all likelihood, the assumption that regulation is externally resourced in early life and grows increasingly self-initiated is, at least



partially, true. Unable to coordinate movement and lacking neural pathways that allow them to quell emotional bursts, infants rely on touch and the vocal expressions of caregivers to regulate their emotions. Shortly after children begin to speak, researchers begin to study explicit strategies that individuals employ once an emotion has been elicited. Steadily, researchers move away from consideration of social context, asking whether individual differences in rumination styles place people at risk for depression, and whether the contexts in which people find themselves stimulate ruminative thinking or fail to offer opportunities for distraction.

In adulthood, a strong research tradition has developed, illustrated by Tuck et al., to study emotional regulation in the laboratory by eliciting specific emotions and observing the response as indexed by facial expressions, subjective reports and physiological reactivity. This research tradition tacitly downplays environmental contexts. The approach has methodological appeal. Yet, as Campos and colleagues (2011) have eloquently argued, it is unlikely that emotions are ever unregulated. Rather, emotion regulation is a dynamic, ongoing process. Indeed, emotional *experience* is arguably the best measure of the effectiveness of emotion regulation in daily life, and there is considerable evidence – both cross-sectional and longitudinal using a range of methods – that emotional experience improves with age (Carstensen, Pasupathi, Mayr, & Nesselroade, 2000; Carstensen et al., 2011; Charles, Reynolds, & Gatz, 2001; Grünh, Kotter-Grünh, & Röcke, 2010; Stone, Schwartz, Broderick, & Deaton, 2010; Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998).

Left unexamined, differences in theoretical and methodological approaches can also inadvertently obscure the ways that people actually regulate emotions, and lead investigators to overlook potential continuities and discontinuities across the life span. Through the lens of socioemotional selectivity theory (SST; Carstensen, 2006), *selection* is seen as a key emotion regulation strategy that presents itself very early in life – six-month-old infants bury their heads in the shoulders of caregivers when strangers approach, for example – and represents an increasingly effective and common regulatory strategy throughout life.

To elaborate, the SST life-span theory of motivation maintains that socioemotional goals change systematically as a function of time horizons. When time horizons are long and nebulous, as they typically are in youth, people engage in exploration and seek to acquire knowledge in preparation for an uncertain future. As time horizons grow increasingly constrained, people focus more on savoring existing relationships and enhancing emotional meaning. These shifting time horizons shape our social environments and their associated emotion regulatory demands. Indeed, the social world changes systematically with age (Wrzus, Hanel, Wagner, & Neyer, 2013) in ways suggestive of active pruning of networks such that they increasingly comprise well-known and emotionally significant partners (Lang & Carstensen, 2002).

Early adulthood ushers in a burgeoning number of relationships that promise opportunities for learning and expansion of the social world. Large and diverse networks also demand considerable flexibility and a range of regulatory strategies. Social networks include the widest range of partners at this stage in life; relationships with family and close friends open to include novel acquaintances,

professional associates, and eventually intimate relationships. As people move through adulthood, social networks become increasingly exclusive and meaningful; these smaller social networks hold benefits for emotional well-being (English & Carstensen, 2014).

According to SST, the expansion early in life adaptively prepares young people for the long and nebulous futures that they likely face. Chronically pursuing exploration, however, demands emotional risk-taking and can entail anxiety, frustration and anger. Ample research documents the highly emotional quality of adolescence and young adulthood (Larson & Sheeber, 2008). As time horizons shrink, goals change. Emotionally meaningful experiences are prioritized. Theoretically, networks change to reflect changes in goals. Selection is the key regulatory strategy. By focusing on important relationships, selection privileges emotionally meaningful experience and allows for a deepening of close bonds. Social networks that are comprised of emotionally close relationships allow goals to be achieved more effectively. Evidence suggests that older people, compared to their younger counterparts, are more likely to both pursue and realize affective goals (Scheibe, English, Tsai & Carstensen, 2013).

Even though selection is categorized as an antecedent emotion regulatory strategy, it gets relatively little attention in the field of emotion regulation. Yet selectivity serves as a key regulatory strategy across the life span and is arguably the most effective of strategies. When selectivity is effectively deployed, there is no need to suppress facial expressions or down-regulate negative emotions. Young children stay physically close to caretakers in the presence of strangers. Parents explicitly teach selection (Gross & Thompson, 2007) to their children, urging them to interact with people and in situations that make them feel good and to avoid ones that elicit negative emotions. With age, people use selection increasingly frequently. As they enter adulthood, they reliably choose products, activities, and people that help them feel how they want to feel (Tsai, 2007; Sims, Tsai, Koopmann-Holm, Thomas, & Goldstein, 2014). Goals direct cognitive resources. Scores of studies now show that age is associated with selective attention to positive over negative emotional stimuli (Reed, Chan, & Mikels, in press).

As people age and become more adept at selection (in part because they are better at predicting how a certain context will make them feel; e.g., Scheibe, Mata, & Carstensen, 2011), effectiveness of selection in regulating emotional states improves as well. True, selection is not always a viable option and in distressing situations, age may not offer an emotion regulatory advantage. Susan Charles developed an elegant model, Stress and Vulnerability Integration (SAVI) that aims to predict how well older people regulate emotions when they are unable to use selection (Charles, 2010).

As Consedine and Magai (2006) have argued, a full understanding of emotional changes with age requires consideration of distinct emotions and affective states according to their social function. We agree as do other authors in this issue. For example, Di Giunta and Iselin found that the impact of regulating negative emotion on mental well-being is largely shaped by culturally normative parenting practices; in the same vein, Larsen finds that suppression is not harmful to adolescents in the same way it may be for adults. As such, the interpretation and importance of findings examining emotional regulation across the life span vary as a function of social context and motivation.

Relatively poor execution of strategies that are rarely, if ever, used is not as important as understanding the effectiveness of strategies deployed on a regular basis. It may be, for example, that although younger adults often find themselves in situations (e.g., confrontation) that signal the utility of anger (Tamir & Ford, 2012), through selection older adults circumvent similar situations (Blanchard-Fields, Mienaltowski, & Seay, 2007).

Despite the conceptual and methodological limitations ever present in the study of emotional development, the work described in this bulletin offers a variety of insightful perspectives on the course of emotion regulation ranging across naturalistic and experimental settings. Notably, one commonality tying together these diverse approaches is the insight that how people regulate their emotions is largely determined by their socioemotional goals. Integrating socioemotional goals into models of emotion regulation across the life span raises questions about how we conceptualize and operationalize emotion regulation and emotional experience.

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Country Focus

Towards a Child Inclusive and Child Focused Child Custody Decision Making Model in Zimbabwe

Gwatirera Javangwe

University of Zimbabwe, Zimbabwe.

E-mail: g.javangwe@sociol.uz.ac.zw

Introduction

Child participation has been studied globally in a number of contexts. Although this global trend has to date produced impressive results and provides assurance about child sensitive care, the same cannot be said about the prevailing situation in Zimbabwe. One area where there is a dearth of literature and child inclusive practice in Zimbabwe is that of child custody decision making. Despite the principle that the best interests of the child play a pivotal role in all matters concerning children, there appears to be limited scope in the application of this concept in Zimbabwe family law contexts, particularly when parents separate or divorce. This is clearly shown in the study by Ncube (1998a, p. 5) in which he indicated that "most of the modern international human rights law on children is based on the assumption that there are universal values and norms." This assumptive universalism is not upheld in a number of contexts. Ncube (1988b) further notes that prior to the invention of childhood, children enjoyed the same rights as adults.

Gender specific bias in awarding child custody: how favoring the father leads to bruising of children's ego

Ruombwa (2004) noted that there is gender specific bias in the way child custody and guardianship is determined in Zimbabwe. The bias tips the scale in favor of the fathers. Giving stronger rights to fathers often fails to uphold the best interest of children. This is clearly shown in case law. For example, in *Zvorwadza v. Zvorwadza*, where the parties were married, the trial judge awarded custody to the father despite the father not even having indicated willingness to have custody of the children. Interestingly, this case further negated the children's rights to be heard as enshrined in the Convention of the Rights of the Child and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. Thus the children were never given an opportunity to be heard or consulted. This appears to be a noxious arrangement that still exists in the Zimbabwean courts of law. This further is demonstrated by Chirawu (2013, p. 9) who noted that "Zimbabwean courts have not been consistent in the application of the best interests of the child concept." In concurrence, Mutambara, (2005, p. 2) questioned the adequacy of

the Zimbabwean laws with regards to "compliance with international instruments on children's rights." It follows therefore that the "golden rule" of awarding custody to the father also further silences the children. The children reel in agony as it is considered uncouth for children to question the actions of adults.

Contradictions in Zimbabwean family law practice and impact on children's emotion regulation

Surprisingly and contrary the provisions of the law, Zimbabwean courts have also violated their own rules or produced some contradictions. This is well captured by Chirawu (2013) in the *Zvorwadza v. Zvorwadza* case in which custody was given to a third party, the maternal grandmother, despite the remaining parent, the father, being alive; or custody was given to the great grand-mother as in the *Domboka case*. It can be argued that the emotional developmental needs of the children tend to be neglected in these cases. As such, children may develop complex trauma which can manifest in disorganized and dysfunctional behaviors. These behaviors may encompass a variety of troubling self-regulatory and social-interactive adaptations, including aggression toward self and others, impulse control problems, anxiety, hypervigilance, coercive interaction cycles, and social withdrawal. Hussey et al. further note that complex trauma manifests in children with histories of both child maltreatment and attachment disruptions. This issue is further highlighted in a case law observation in *Z v Z* where the mother subjected the children to physical abuse. Children's emotional turmoil from abuse by a parent is rarely addressed.

It appears that in Zimbabwe the courts will only solicit the views of the children with respect to child custody when both parents qualify for custody (Chirawu, 2013). This was clearly illustrated by the *Zvorwadza* case in which the court faced a dilemma about which parent to grant custody to. The court, which did not consult the children, showed itself to be insensitive to the children's care, welfare and mental health needs. Part of the problem may lie in the legal practitioners' lack of knowledge and expertise in child participatory methodologies, even when the Judge or presiding Magistrate hears the children's views in Chambers or Children's Court respectively. Another area that is replete with controversy and related to child custody is guardianship following the death of both parents. This is adequately captured in the study by Nyamapfeni (2012) in which she noted that the guardianship decisions regarding double orphans often does not benefit the children. Thus where children have lost both parents due to HIV and AIDS, the extended families in Zimbabwe "strategize on who will be responsible for the care and welfare of the children" (p, 28). Subsequent to that the brother or sister of the

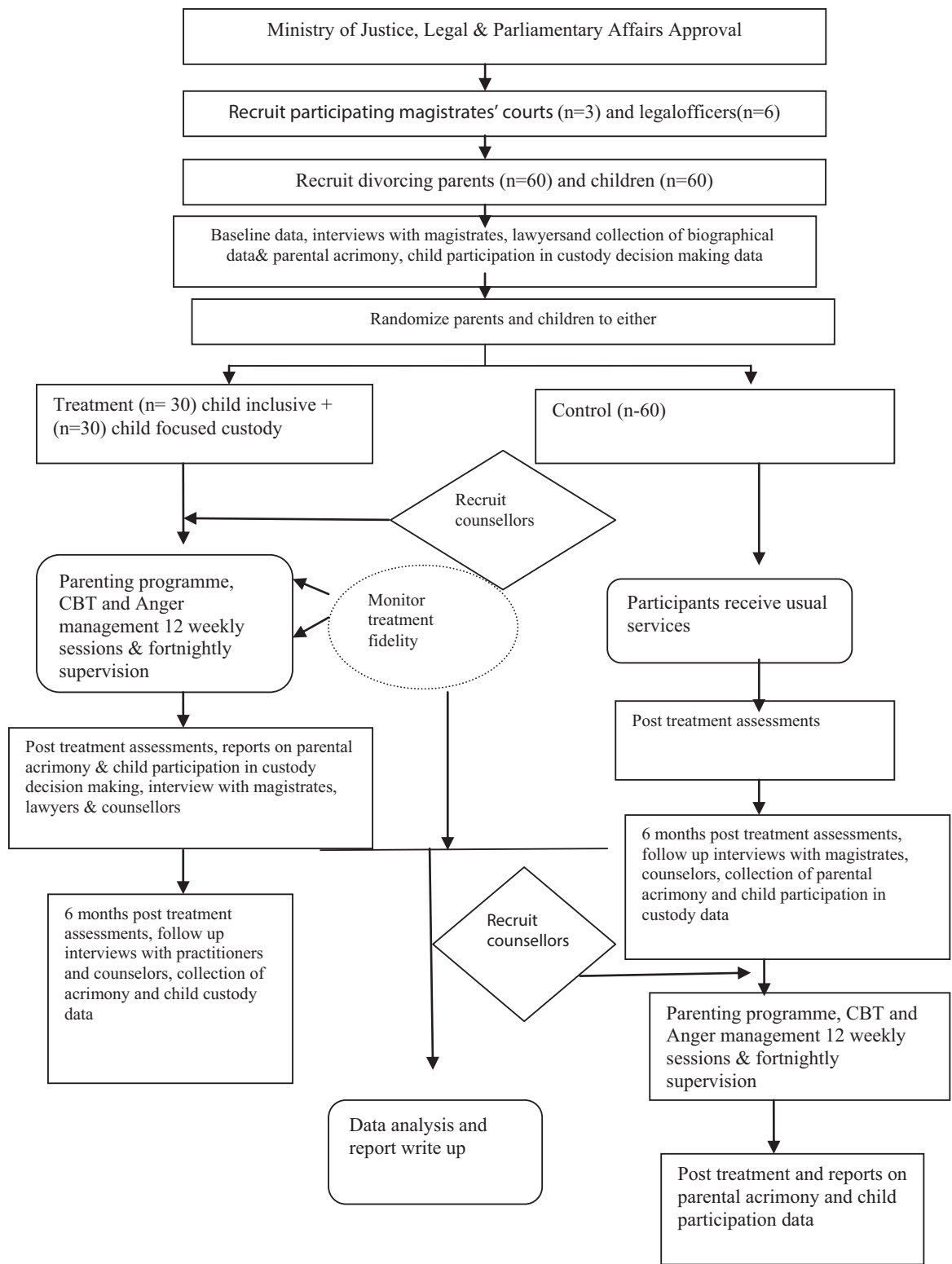


Figure 1. Conceptualizing child inclusive and child focused custody decision making in Zimbabwe.

deceased is usually appointed the *Sarapavana* (guardian). This culminates in the *Sarapavana* presiding over who gets guardianship of which child. In all these scenarios the children are not consulted. In most cases the children eventually become internally displaced persons. Their situations

may be worsened by having to live apart from each other and in different locations with limited communication. These children are highly likely to bottle up a lot of emotions as a result of all these arrangement but cannot vent them other than engaging in acting out behaviour. The

Dear Parents
 This letter i am writing shows how much i appreciate you as parents. However there are a few things i want to bring to attention. I am not happy with how dad treated mom the way he cheated with other ladies and still came back to my mum and she took you (dad back). I really dont appreciate you dad what you did long back. You never gave my mother money for my fees. I also want to complain mum about the way you beat me when i bedwettered ~~to be~~. I was not happy mom. For a long time i have kept this in but today i will say how i feel. Dad i dont like the way you cheated my mom.

Figure 2a. Therapeutic letter by a 14 year old girl.

Dear ~~Mother~~ Daughter
 I'm really sorry on the way I brought you up. I had no choice, I had to leave you with your father so that he may raise you because he had refused to pay for maintenance and I could not even afford a single decent meal for you. I know ^{your} step mother did not treat you well so much that you became bitter towards me. I am not supporting my act towards you but I ~~was~~ seriously had no option having no job and your father impregnated me whilst I was still in secondary school.

Figure 2b. sample therapeutic letter by a mother to her daughter.

Dear Child
 As my one and only daughter, I just want to take this opportunity to regret or to express my sorry to you. I didn't take charge of you, you didn't receive care from me as your father. I am trying to take you back and will do my responsibility as your father. I am really sorry for what I did and I hope you are going to feel for me so that we can go back and enjoy our life together.

Jesus Father

Figure 2c. sample therapeutic letter by a father to his daughter.

observation from the study by Nyamapfeni contradicts some observations in stating that the extended family in Zimbabwe cares for orphans and children affected by adversities (Chiedza Child Care, 2010; Bourdillon, 1993).

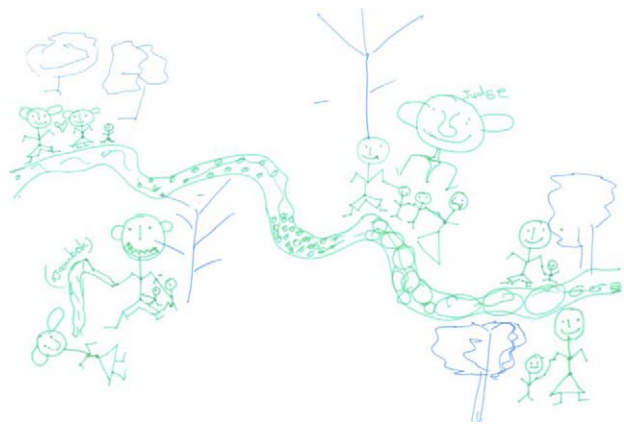


Figure 3. River map by 13 year old boy showing his experience of custody determination in the High Court of Zimbabwe.

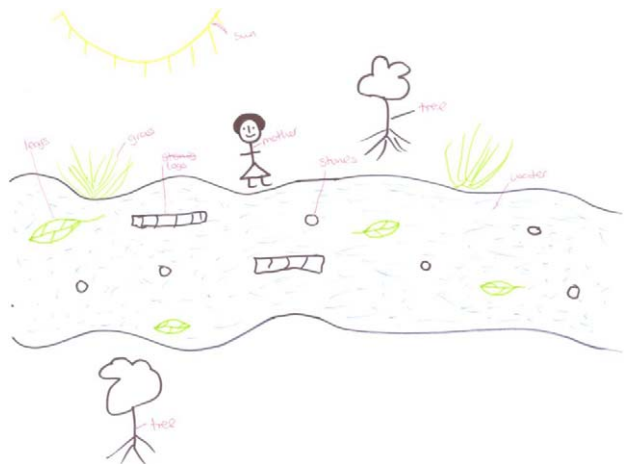


Figure 4. River map by 8 year old girl.

Even in the few cases of guardianship and adoption of double orphans that are presided over by the courts of law, the children's voice is not heard.

Towards a child sensitive model of child custody decision making

Consulting and informing children about what is happening is not only necessary when children are the most affected, but provides a way of gauging how responsible we are as adults. Family crises provide us with an opportunity to demonstrate how much we care for children during difficult and trying times. In this context, another way of gauging the best interests of the child is how well we create platforms for their protection, by upholding the ethical principle of confidentiality and anonymity when legal battles occur. It appears that strategies adopted and adapted by practitioners entrusted with the responsibility for soliciting views about separation or divorce and post living arrangements in Zimbabwe (and in many other parts of the world) can be described as chaotic at best. This disarray



Figure 5. Kinetic family drawing by a 6-year-old boy showing parental fights.

is aggravated by the dearth of a model to accompany the set of rules for use by professionals working in public and private agencies dealing with separation and divorce. The absence of uniform procedures for interviewing children, along with the lack of accountability by interviewers, leads to recurrent difficulties in child custody decision making and custody determination in Zimbabwe (Chirawu, 2013). If a child sensitive procedure were in place, there would most likely be a dramatic decline in the number of cases contested. This is because the procedure would not just be child sensitive but also be child inclusive and child focused. Adopting a nationally recognized protocol for use when gauging children's perspectives when parents separate can provide a way of defining and refining both children's and parents' participation in custody decision making. Such an approach would also benefit the professionals involved in that it would restore integrity considering the adversarial trap they inadvertently find themselves in.

Providing the ingredients and unveiling steps towards the proposed child inclusive and child focused custody decision making model in Zimbabwe

The figures above detail the methodological overview that I used in an attempt to gain an understanding of how children whose parents have divorced or separated have psychologically experienced participation in custody decision making. This framework provides the sequencing of the various components of the study. The framework was also informed by the need to design and implement an intervention for gauging (a) the thinking around child participation in custody decision making in Zimbabwe, (b) providing children and their parents with mechanisms for dialogue, and (c) for facilitating children's participation in custody decisions within the Zimbabwean context.

The above feat was achieved through a series of nine interwoven studies in which each study was conducted

at three time periods over an 18 month period. The studies sought to explore how adults are prepared to give up power to children when confronted by separation or divorce. The adults' views formed the perspectives on child participation in custody decision making while the reports of the children highlighted children's experiences with participation in custody decision making in Zimbabwe. Study 1 used therapeutic letters, expressive writing and "message in a bottle" in which children wrote letters to their parents about the things they were not happy about, recounting their fears and wishes regarding custody, parental communication, and post-divorce or post-separation living arrangements.

The same techniques allowed the parents to read the children's letters and to respond. Most parents cried when they read their children's letters, apologized and started focusing their thoughts and actions towards their children's needs. Some parents also stopped the acrimonious way of relating to one another.

Study 2 used the river map in which the children drew their family as a river. The children were also asked to explain what their rivers meant.

The results indicated different types of rivers. Some rivers were wavy and meandering, some had a lot of obstacles, such as crocodiles and snakes. In some of the rivers the children showed family members separated by the river.

In Study 3 the kinetic family drawing allowed the children to draw members of their family doing something and to provide a narration.

The children showed family members standing further away; some fathers and mothers were missing. These were emotional indicators of the way the separation or divorce had affected the children. As the children drew and narrated what their drawings represented, they gave meaning to their experiences, predicament and hopes. Study 4 used the self portraits in which the children made a drawing that represented how they viewed themselves. Studies 5 and 6 were done with parents only to gauge their acrimony and adversarial trap. Study 7 focused on the way professionals (judges, magistrates, lawyers, psychologists, social



workers and counselors) viewed the role of children in custody decision making. This study revealed that legal practitioners did not very much believe that children should have a say. In addition, the legal practitioners were not sure about how to involve children. Study 8 involved providing the legal practitioners with the letters that the children and their parents had written. Study 9 was an attempt to quantify the children's emotional experiences of the current model using randomized control trial study design. Study 9 provides a comparison of the views, behavior and attitudes of parents and children regarding child participation in custody decision making in Zimbabwe.

Conclusion: Development of holistic adaptive capacities

The several related studies (Study 1 to Study 9) provided a clearer, broader and in-depth understanding of children's experiences with parental separation or divorce. The findings of the studies also show that through expressive and participatory techniques such as kinetic family drawings, self-portraits, river maps, message in A bottle, children's capacity to cope with parental separation was enhanced. It was through the process of being actively engaged in matters that concern them that the children's adaptive capacities were developed and sustained. On another note, the parents were also aided in adapting to the separation and/or divorce without being entrapped in the acrimony and adversarial pattern that usually punctuates the discourse of separation and divorce. At an individual level each parent developed their adaptive capacity too. For legal and mental health practitioners, their ability to provide child sensitive mediation was developed and enhanced. In the same vein they also had to adjust their frames of operation in synch with the need to uphold children's rights and the best interests of the child. The practitioners were also given an opportunity to adapt to the new changes that the current way of thinking and acting ushered in at the conceptual, practical and professional levels.

This present submission provides an overview of the impetus for child-sensitive, child inclusive and child focused custody decision making in Zimbabwe.

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Notes from The President

This is my last ISSBD Bulletin note. My term as president of ISSBD will end at the Business and Awards Ceremony in Shanghai in July 2014. I look back to almost four busy years in office, and think that we have accomplished quite a bit during this time period. This was only possible because I have received strong and continuous support by the members of the ISSBD Steering Committee and the Executive Committee. I learned a lot about the dynamics of the ISSBD management system and the challenges you are confronted with when the task is to take the lead in a truly international organization. This experience was worthwhile and certainly helped in widening my personal horizon. When I started the new job, Past President Anne Petersen was particularly helpful. She patiently and carefully introduced me into all relevant topics and provided me with the basic knowledge concerning past developments and the information about necessary next steps in a broad variety of ISSBD "problem zones." Later on, I benefited from the valuable support and advice of President-elect Xinyin Chen and the Steering Committee members Katariina Salmela-Aro and Ingrid Schoon. I am also very grateful to Kerry Barner from SAGE who supported ISSBD efforts in many respects, in particular, regarding membership issues and the ISSBD flagship journal *IJBD*. Moreover, I appreciated the strong commitment of our EC members. It has been real fun to work with this stimulating international group of distinguished scientists! Last not least, special thanks go to Jacobs Foundation as a wonderfully supportive funder: I very much appreciated the generous support and valuable assistance provided by Gelgia Fetz and Simon Sommer through the years.

Although I said before that we have accomplished a great deal together during the past years, this is not true for all of the goals that I had in mind when I started my presidency. One goal high on my priority list was to significantly increase the number of ISSBD members. Although Ann Sanson, chair of the Membership Committee, Xinyin Chen, Membership Secretary, Kerry Barner and the members of the committee worked hard on this problem, success has only been modest. As I already told you in recent notes, the number of ISSBD members increased considerably from about 300 to about 1000 between 1980 and 1990 but has not changed much during the past 25 years or so. Since 2010, our ISSBD membership committee has come up with several attractive revisions and incentives regarding the membership fee structure, and we also recruited several new regional coordinators to improve the membership situation in countries where we were not well represented in the past. We hope that these measures will turn out to be successful in the long run, even though the immediate effects are not yet visible.

It seems important to note in this regard that at least one aspect of our recent efforts, namely, the recruitment of and support for early career scholars, has been fairly successful. The various initiatives to increase the attractiveness of the Society for young scholars first undertaken by Past Presidents Rainer Silbereisen and Anne Petersen have paid off in the end. The Young Scholar Initiatives introduced and successfully established by Karina Weichold, Deepali Sharma, and Zena Mello at the Biennial Meetings in Melbourne and Würzburg were followed by similar activities at the ISSBD meetings in Lusaka and Edmonton. My thanks go to Karina, Deepali, and the Young Scholar Representatives Zena Mello, Jaap Denissen, and Julie Bowker. As a consequence of these efforts, the number of early career scholars attending our Biennial Meetings has steadily increased.

It certainly helped that the EC established a new committee in 2010 which worked out a master plan regarding systematic support of young scientists in our Society. Past President Anne

Petersen and I came up with a proposal for a new "Jacobs-ISSBD Mentored Fellowship Program for Early Career Scholars" in early 2011 that was eventually approved by Jacobs Foundation. This program contains a long-term support contract with Jacobs Foundation and secures funding for several of ISSBD's early career scholar activities, including travel grants for ISSBD preconference workshops and the attendance of International Regional Workshops. One special element of the new Jacobs-ISSBD contract is that it also includes two different Early Career Scholarship Programs, one open to applicants from all countries in the world, the second focusing on early career scholars from "currency restricted" countries. In a first cycle of this program which started in January, 2012, we recruited a first cohort of 10 doctoral students who receive financial support and benefit from extended academic mentorship for a time period of 3 years. A second cohort of another 10 early career scholars will be selected at the end of this year. Thus this contract ensures that a total of 20 young scientists from all over the world are supported by the Jacobs-ISSBD program over a 6-year period.

I am particularly grateful for the enormous support we received in this matter by the members of the EC and the Committee on Research and Training of Young Scientists which was chaired first by Ulman Lindenberger and now by Toni Antonucci. Toni is currently making preparations for the recruitment of the second cohort. The progress report she recently delivered on the activities of the first cohort sounded very encouraging. I am fully convinced that this program will be a success story. Simon Sommer and Gelgia Fetz from Jacobs Foundation as well as Ulman and Toni together with the committee members deserve our deep gratitude.

This is not the only early career activity that ISSBD supports. We started an ISSBD Developing Country Fellowship (DCF) initiative in 2010 which supports research projects of early career scholars from majority world countries for 2 years, including travel and accommodation support for ISSBD Biennial Meetings. A committee chaired by Peter Smith, who also proposed and managed the DCF program, so far has selected 10 early career scholars out of about 60 candidates in three tranches of applications. The fellowship not only provides financial support but also ensures continuous advice by academic mentors. The expectation is that the 7 fellows of the last two tranches will present their projects at the next biennial ISSBD meeting in Shanghai. Our special thanks go to Peter Smith and his dedicated committee for their active engagement in this important task.

Another issue of major interest to most past presidents and also to myself has been to build capacity for the study of human development in the developing world. In order to fulfill this part of its mission, ISSBD has always been active in organizing regional workshops and conferences. I fully agree with my predecessors that such workshops and conferences underpin the Society's most important functions. That is, they provide opportunities for our members from currency-restricted countries as well as parts of the world that are not well represented in ISSBD to become acquainted with recent trends concerning research on behavioral development, and also to benefit from methodological advances in the various disciplines represented in our Society. So far, these efforts have been very successful. During my presidency, regional workshops were held in Chandigarh, India, in Lagos, Nigeria, Moscow, Russia, Budapest, Hungary, and Pretoria, South Africa. I attended most of these events and was always impressed by the careful organization, the high quality of scientific lectures, and last but not least, the motivation and commitment of the participants. There is no doubt for me that these workshops have proved to be effective from a scientific



point of view, and that they also helped in increasing ISSBD membership in the participating countries. At the ISSBD meeting in Edmonton, about 40% of the delegates belonged to this group. I hope that this trend will continue at our next ISSBD meeting in Shanghai.

A third issue requiring a lot of effort and time for ISSBD presidents concerns our Biennial Meetings, that is, our showcase of international research on human development. My predecessors worked hard to make our Biennial Meetings more appealing to all generations of scientists, offering interesting information for researchers interested in all periods of life. This has always been an important goal within the time period of my presidency. In my view, we managed to continuously increase the scientific standard of our meetings, and the latest one in Edmonton, Canada, was no exception to this rule. My impression was that all those who attended this meeting were impressed by the high-standard program with many highlights. Congratulations and sincere thanks go to Nancy Galambos, Lisa Strohschein, Jeff Bisanz, and their team for all their hard work in organizing such a great event.

I am confident that we will have another exciting Biennial Meeting in Shanghai, China, in July 2014. The conference chair Biao Sang and his team at East China Normal University, Shanghai, together with the International Program Committee worked hard to make final selections for keynote speakers, invited speakers, and invited symposium organizers. Most of the developmental scientists invited to present their work at the Biennial Meeting meanwhile accepted the invitation. Thus there is no doubt for me that our ISSBD 2014 meeting in Shanghai will become a very attractive event. I hope to see many of you at the conference and also at ISSBD's Business and Awards Ceremony meeting, where you will learn more about recent progress and the award winners.

Again, we are grateful to Jacobs Foundation for providing financial support (in terms of travel grants) for early career scholars who will attend the preconference workshops at the ISSBD meeting in Shanghai. My special thanks go to the Early Career Scholar Travel Grant Committee chaired by Suman Verma which worked very effectively when dealing with numerous applications for the 2014 ISSBD meeting. All early career scholars and developmental scientists from currency-restricted countries whose abstracts were accepted were encouraged to apply for travel grants at ISSBD and send proposals. Although we know from previous rounds that not all applications will be successful, we hope to be able to support many of you.

A final issue that I pursued concerned the archiving of historically important developments within our Society. A large number of ISSBD documents are stored in the North Holland Archives in Haarlem, The Netherlands, unfortunately still in boxes. Marcel van Aken and I tried very hard during the past three years to change this suboptimal situation. Although our plans to reactivate and reorganize these ISSBD documents were not very successful for a long time, Marcel eventually managed to hire a librarian (paid by ISSBD) at the Archives to go through the files, categorize the materials, and also identify core documents. The librarian delivered her first encouraging progress report at the end of January, 2014, and there is hope that we can present a success story at the next ISSBD meeting in Shanghai. Given the fact that there are new electronic archiving options, it should be possible to have core documents illustrating the history of ISSBD and its structural development digitalized and electronically available to ISSBD members. For the EC members, particularly, it could be helpful to know about all actions and motions described in the EC Minutes. We have already come up with an overview of EC actions and decisions based on EC minutes covering the time period between 1992 and 2013. We hope to be able to extend and complement this document fairly soon.

ISSBD continues to be in good shape financially and otherwise, and certainly has promising perspectives. Through its very active program of conferences and workshops, the Society has become an important player in the field of Developmental Science. ISSBD's major journal, the *International Journal of Behavioral Development (IJBD)*, has developed flagship properties and can be considered a very noteworthy publication outlet in the field of life-span and cross-cultural developmental science. During the last decade, its editors Rainer Silbereisen, Bill Bukowski, and Marcel van Aken have managed to continuously increase the journal's impact factor, which deserves our deepest respect. The term of our IJBD editor Marcel von Aken ended at the end of 2013. At our Executive Committee meeting in Seattle last year, we thanked Marcel and his team of associate editors as well as the managing editor of IJBD for their great work and accomplishments. From early 2014 on, Brett Laursen serves as the new IJBD editor. Given his rich journal editing experience and his special abilities in this regard, I am very confident that Brett and his new team of associate and managing editors will be equally successful and able to improve the journal's quality even further.

The transfer of IJBD to the publisher SAGE has certainly contributed to the positive development. We are particularly grateful to Kerry Barner, Ed Mottram, and the other SAGE colleagues for not only professionalizing our membership management but also for all the assistance they provided with regard to journal issues as well as the ISSBD website. Regarding the latter, Ed Mottram just came up with a revised version that in my view looks much better than the previous one. I invite all members to visit the new ISSBD website. Thank you, Ed, for this impressive job!

As I already stated in previous notes, a similarly positive development can be reported for the ISSBD Bulletin, and we are very grateful to the editor-in-chief, Karina Weichold, the former co-editor Bonnie Barber, and the current co-editor Deepali Sharma. I am convinced that the Bulletin will continue to be a valuable publication instrument stimulating the exchange among ISSBD members.

In addition, I want to thank our Social Media Editor Josafá Cunha for his great efforts. He has managed to develop a number of social media activities, including the ISSBD E-Newsletter, pages on Facebook and Twitter and also a video channel on YouTube. This channel continues to provide ISSBD members with updates on activities and events, especially for time sensitive information. Josafá is supported by several members of the Executive Committee, and also by SAGE through Kerry Barner and Ed Mottram.

As I noted at the beginning, my term as a president will end in July 2014, and the same is true for the terms of the Treasurer, the Secretary General, the Membership Secretary, and three EC members. We had ISSBD elections concerning these positions in the Fall of 2013. The new Secretary General will be Karina Weichold. Nancy Galambos will serve as new Treasurer, and Tina Malti was elected as new Membership Secretary. Our new Executive Committee members are Charissa Cheah, Marcel van Aken, and Sabine Walper. Congratulations to all of them!

I want to thank the members of the ISSBD Steering Committee, Katariina Salmela-Aro and Ingrid Schoon, as well as the EC members Toni Antonucci, Elena Grigorenko, Ulman Lindenberger, and Ann Sanson, whose term will end in July, 2014. We definitively owe them a lot!

Overall, I think that ISSBD is in very good shape and has promising perspectives. Through its very active program of conferences and workshops, the Society has become an important player in the field of Developmental Science. ISSBD provides a rich resource for developmental scientists. ISSBD's success is



mainly due to its active members and its hard-working executive. I have had many pleasant and reinforcing experiences when communicating and working with the members of the Steering Committee, the EC, and all the other committees that keep ISSBD alive. I am very impressed with the good spirit shown by all members, and to them I would like to express my sincere gratitude. We have a terrific organization. Thanks a

lot to all of you for your enormous efforts. Working with you has made my presidency a great experience!

Wolfgang Schneider
University of Würzburg, Germany
E-Mail: schneider@psychologie.uni-wuerzburg.de



News

News from the IJBD Editor Announcing the New Editorial Team for the International Journal of Behavioral Development

Brett Laursen

Florida Atlantic University, USA

E-mail: laursenbrett@gmail.com

Editor-in-Chief

Brett Laursen (Florida Atlantic University)

Associate Editors

Patricio Cumsille (Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile)

Denis Gerstorff (Humboldt University Berlin)

Peter J. Marshall (Temple University)

Letitia R. Naigles (University of Connecticut – starts 1 July 2014)

Olivier Pascalis (Université Pierre Mendès France – until 30 June 2014)

Melanie J. Zimmer-Gembeck (Griffith University)

Methods and Measures Editor

Todd D. Little (Texas Tech University)

Managing Editor

Donna Marion (Florida Atlantic University)

In 2012, IJBD had a two-year impact factor of 1.59 and a five-year impact factor of 2.10. Credit for these strong numbers goes to the current Editor-in-Chief, Marcel van Aken, his editorial team, and our friends at SAGE, who have worked tirelessly to raise the journal's profile.



MAJOR CONFERENCES OF INTEREST

July 2–4, 2014

7th European Congress on Positive Psychology
(ECPP 2014)
Amsterdam, The Netherlands
Web: [www.enpp.eu/index.php/events/
ecpp2014-in-amsterdam](http://www.enpp.eu/index.php/events/ecpp2014-in-amsterdam)

July 8–12, 2014

23rd Biennial Meeting of the International
Society for the Study of Behavioral
Development (ISSBD)
Shanghai, China
Web: www.issbd2014.com

July 8–13, 2014

28th International Congress
of Applied Psychology
Paris, France
Web: www.icap2014.com

July 14–16, 2014

9th International Conference on Child and
Adolescent Psychopathology
London, United Kingdom
Web: [http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/
Research-Centres/Centre-for-Applied-
Research-and-Assessment-in-Child-and-
Adolescent-Wellbeing/Child-and-Adolescent-
Psychopathology-Conference/](http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/Research-Centres/Centre-for-Applied-Research-and-Assessment-in-Child-and-Adolescent-Wellbeing/Child-and-Adolescent-Psychopathology-Conference/)

July 15–19, 2014

22nd International Congress of the
International Association for Cross
Cultural Psychology
Reims, France
Web: www.iaccp2014.com

September 3–6, 2014

14th Biennial Conference of the
European Association for Research on
Adolescence (EARA)
Izmir, Turkey
Web: www.eara2014.org/welcome