

Abstract

Family relationships are bi-directional according to family systems theory, and emotion regulation is a context-dependent process. The current study examined the predictive relation between adolescent emotion regulation and family functioning across time. Results indicate that emotion dysregulation predicted family satisfaction, but family satisfaction did not predict emotion dysregulation.

Background

◆ Emotion Regulation

- ◆ Is defined as the way that individuals experience and express emotions in their everyday lives.
- ◆ Is a dynamic process that changes over time (Kim-Spoon, Cicchetti, & Rogosch, 2013).

◆ Family Systems Theory

- ◆ Family members have a bi-directional and circular influence on one another.
- ◆ The emotional context of a family influences each family member's behavior (Broderick, 1993; Hughes & Gullone, 2008; Minuchin, 1985).

◆ The Role of the Family

- ◆ Young children require assistance from caregivers to help them manage emotions (Morris, Silk, Morris, Steinberg, Aucoin, & Keyes, 2011; Tronick & Beeghly, 2011).
- ◆ Family continues to play an important role in emotional experiences even into adolescence, as parents engage in emotion coaching with their children (Grienenberger et al., 2005; Hurrell et al., 2016; Shortt et al., 2010).
- ◆ Less is known about how family context impacts emotion regulation during adolescence than during childhood.

Objective

Research Question: What is the longitudinal association between emotion regulation and family satisfaction during adolescence?

Methods

Participants

- ◆ $N = 162$ adolescents and their mothers from seven public high schools in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States
- ◆ Adolescents: 56% female, 75% Caucasian
- ◆ Baseline age: $M = 16$ years, $SD = .70$

Procedures

- ◆ Data were collected using the same measures at two time points:
 - ◆ Time 1 (T1) : Spring 2007
 - ◆ Time 2 (T2): Spring 2008
- ◆ Adolescents completed paper surveys at their high school.
- ◆ Parents completed paper surveys that were mailed to their home and returned to researchers via mail.

To obtain a copy of this poster, please visit adolescentadjustmentproject.org.

Adolescent Emotion Regulation & Family Satisfaction: Longitudinal Relations



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Methods

Measures

| Construct | Reporter | Measure | Items | Internal Consistency |
|-----------------------|------------|---|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Emotion Dysregulation | Mother | Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL), Dysregulation Profile ⁺ | 32 items, 3 point Likert scale | $\alpha = .72 - .89$ |
| Family Satisfaction | Adolescent | Family Satisfaction Scale | 14 items, 5 point Likert scale | $\alpha = .91$ |

⁺ Dysregulation Profile of the CBCL is the sum of:

- 1) Aggressive Behavior Subscale
- 2) Anxious Depressed Subscale
- 3) Attention Problems Subscale

Analyses

- ◆ Dysregulation scores were log transformed to approach normality.
- ◆ Linear regression analyses were conducted in SPSS.

Results

Mean Scores

| Construct | Time 1 Mean (SD) | Time 2 Mean (SD) | Possible Range |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Emotion Dysregulation | 5.95 (7.36) | 5.48 (6.36) | 0-64 |
| Family Satisfaction | 51.24 (9.55) | 50.20 (11.09) | 14-70 |

Regression Analysis:

Predicting T2 family satisfaction from emotion dysregulation at T1

| Time 1 Predictor | β | SE | Beta |
|-----------------------|---------|------|------|
| Constant | 23.20 | 8.03 | -- |
| Gender | -.39 | 2.12 | -.02 |
| Race/Ethnicity | -1.74 | 2.89 | -.06 |
| Family Satisfaction | .63*** | .11 | .54 |
| Emotion Dysregulation | -2.73* | 1.23 | -.21 |

Results

Regression Analysis:

Predicting T2 emotion dysregulation from family satisfaction at T1

| Time 1 Predictor | β | SE | Beta |
|-----------------------|---------|-----|------|
| Constant | -.08 | .53 | -- |
| Gender | -.05 | .14 | -.03 |
| Race/Ethnicity | -.04 | .19 | -.02 |
| Emotion Dysregulation | .83*** | .08 | .80 |
| Family Satisfaction | .01 | .01 | .01 |

Regression notes: Gender coded as Boys = 0, Girls = 1. Race/Ethnicity coded as White = 1, non-White = 0.

*** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

◆ Regression analyses indicate:

- ◆ Emotion dysregulation at Time 1 negatively predicted family satisfaction at Time 2.
- ◆ Family satisfaction at Time 1 did not predict emotion dysregulation at Time 2.

Conclusions

- ◆ Previous research indicates that family interactions are important in adolescents' emotional lives (Grienenberger et al., 2005; Hurrell et al., 2016; Shortt et al., 2010).
- ◆ Results of this study indicate that adolescents' emotional experiences better predict their perceptions of family satisfaction than vice versa.
- ◆ In accordance with family systems theory, compromised emotional functioning of one family member can impact every other family member and the dynamics of the entire system (Hughes & Gullone, 2008; Minuchin, 1985).
- ◆ Interventions seeking to improve family functioning must target individual emotion regulation processes as well as overall interactional qualities in order to improve family relationships.

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