

Effects of maternal neuroticism and parent stress



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The Influence of Maternal Neuroticism, Parenting Stress and Parental Practices on Children Anxiety and Emotional Dysregulation

1. Introduction

Child behavior problems in early childhood have significant research attention especially in development psychology in recent years. However, it is not found meaningful research explaining how behavior problems are affected by parental personality, parental stress and also child rearing practices. Creech (2009) argued that parenting only mediates the relationship between negative life events and child behavior problems.

Belsky's (1984) model is explained the determinants of parenting include parent and child characteristics, as well as parental stress and social support. According to his model; parental personality affects parents's social relationship, work experiences and marital relations. These three factors is also important to explain parenting practices. However, personality is most important factor to affect parenting and also child rearing practices. It changes other social-contextual factors and forces that influence parenting. It is also stated parental stress and social support affect parenting and child behaviors. Moreover, he declared parental stress negatively affects parenting and child behaviors.

The study will examine how maternal neuroticism personality and parental stress are related to children's behaviors. Parenting practices will be contributor to explain how parental factors influence children social anxiety, emotional dysregulation and internalizing problems. The current study has several purposes. First, the study will examine how life event stress and

parental personality affect children's behavior problems. Secondly, childrearing practice will be investigated as a mediator to explain the effects on children's behavior problems in the light of emotional dysregulation.

1. Role of Maternal Neuroticism Personality and Maternal Stress

Personality has been defined by a number of broad levels. H. J. Eysenck (1967) and Eysenck (1985) have proposed three factors of personality, included as extraversion, neuroticism and psychoticism. Maternal personality is important role to maintain children's negative or positive reactivity to novelty. One of them personality aspect is neuroticism can influence children behavioral inhibition. Eysenck is defined neuroticism as

Bornstein, Hahn and Haynes (2011) emphasized that neuroticism reflects a proneness to psychological distress, unrealistic ideas, excessive cravings or urges, maladaptive coping responses, insecure, and vulnerable orientation to life.

Moreover; Costa and McCrae (1989) identify the " Big Five" traits which utilizes maternal personality and children's behavior problems in most of research. Neuroticism is one of these five traits. It refers to how a person deals with stress and negative emotions.

Ellenbogen & Hodgins (2004) stated maternal neuroticism correlates to especially social withdrawal and internalizing behavior problems. Kurdek (2003) found that maternal neuroticism is related to child behavior problems. Moreover, It has been suggested that maternal neuroticism is associated with child inhibition (Belsky & Barends, 2002).

Metsäpelto & Pulkkinen (2003) are declared that parental personality is conduced to the development of parenting styles. Crnic & Low (2002) are stated that maternal stress points out poorer outcomes in both the child and maternal parent fields. Researches indicate that parenting stress has seen as a risk factor for higher levels of child disruptive behavior problems (Barry, Dunlap, Cotten, Lockman, & Wells, 2005; Podolski & Nigg, 2001; Qi & Kaiser, 2003) and maladaptive parenting practices (Calkins, Hungerford, & Dedmon, 2004; Kazdin & Whitley, 2003).

Morgan, Robinson & Aldrigde (2002) are stated that children externalizing problems and parenting stress is association with each other. Creech (2009) examined maternal characteristics, parenting behaviors, and child behavior problems in 27 mothers and their 2-year-old children. It is not found the relationships between maternal parental stress and child behavior problems, parenting behavior or childrearing attitudes. Additionally, mother's neuroticism is not significantly related to any of the behavior problems. On the other hand, it was found that maternal neuroticism is related to traditional childrearing attitudes.

It is know that increased parenting stress has been influenced on children disruptive behaviors problems (Barry, Dunlap, Cotten, Lockman, & Wells, 2005; Podolski & Nigg, 2001; Qi & Kaiser, 2003) as well as maladaptive parenting practices (Calkins, Hungerford,& Dedmon, 2004; see Kazdin & Whitley, 2003).

Williford, Calkins, and Keane (2007) are emphasized that stability of parenting stress was subjected to child externalizing problems and emotion

regulation. Koshanska, Clark & Goldman (1997) found that the construct of maternal “negative emotionality” was related to more child behavior problems and defiance. Creecha (2006) was found that higher maternal neuroticism was related more traditional childrearing attitudes. Crnic & Low (2002) stated that children externalizing problems is seen as the result of parenting stress, but the directionality relationship is unclear.

Fewer studies give little information about what shapes parenting stress and children outcomes. This current study will investigate how maternal neuroticism personality and continues stress are related to children’s behavior problems. Parenting rearing practices will be examined as a mediator of these behaviors.

Although researches identifying parenting stress and personality affect child rearing practices, how these factors affects children outcomes is still unclear. Fewer studies have focused on understanding which factors influence on children emotional dysregulation, social withdrawal and also externalizing problems in terms of parenting stress and personality. Especially, in this domain, we chose to focus on neuroticism personality trait conceptually linked with the child behavior. Guided by the extant literature, we also focus maternal continues stress factor on neuroticism and also negative childrearing practices to explain how these maternal factors affect child behaviors with childrearing practices. We speculated that mothers who are more anxious may be more unlikely to exhibit warm and response parenting, like as rejected their children. Moreover, these children who rejected by their parents and they can show behavior problems in their development.

2. Childrearing Practices

It is known that personality is a part of parenting to play an important role. It also reflects personality characteristics (Belsky, 1984; Kochanska, Clark, & Goldman, 1997). Belsky's model (1984) is defined by three principal social-contextual determinants of parenting. These are the parent's personality and other personal psychological resources, the child's individual characteristics, and contextual stresses and supports. Bornstein, Hahn and Haynes (2011) stated that personality is the most important between in these three factors because it affects parenting directly, alters other causal factors and also influence parenting. Indeed, Belsky (1984) asserted that parenting practices are largely a statement of a parent's personality in childrearing.

Guided by the extant literature, it is known that maternal personality, especially neuroticism is correlated with intrusiveness, irritability, criticism, negative discipline, hostility, and power assertion (Clark et al., 2000; Kashdan et al., 2004; Kochanska, Aksan, & Nichols, 2003; Kochanska et al., 1997; Metsäpelto & Pulkkinen, 2003; Woodruff-Borden, Morrow, Bourland, & Cambron, 2002). Bornstein, Hahn and Haynes (2011) are stated that personality has both theoretical and practical significance for understanding, predicting, and changing parenting cognitions and practices. Rothbart & Bates (1998) explain that parent-child relationships and stressful life events influence children's social and psychological development

We expected neurotic mothers to feel less authorized and less contented with their child rearing practices during maternity. Moreover, even though it is known that there is relationship between parental practices with child

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outcomes (Bugental & Grusec, 2006), we have little information how it can be explained maternal personality and childrearing practice with stress factor.

In the current study, we examined whether maternal personality and maternal continues stress factors moderated the relations between childrearing practices and children's outcomes in childhood. Moreover, we expected parental personality to influence childrearing practices and childrearing practices are also affected by maternal stress factor. Finally, the role of child behavior problems in associations between maternal personality and parenting with stress factor was explained this current research.

3. Child's Emotional Dsyregulation and Behavior Problems

Thompson (1994) defined as emotion regulation " the extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions, especially their intensive and temporal features, to accomplish one's goals" (pp. 27-28)

Lack of emotional regulation abilities or emotional dysregulation has a key role to affect internalizing and externalizing problems in child development (Cicchetti et al. 1995; Southam-Gerow and Kendall 2002; Suveg and Zeman 2004).

It is known that children's emotional dysregulation is mostly shaped by their social environments, especially family context (Thompson and Meyer 2007). Maccoby (1992), Reiss & Price (1996), (Rothbart & Bates, 1998) were stated that parenting and child characteristic explain the development of adjustment problems.

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Several studies have shown that child behaviors and characteristics predict parenting, especially negative parenting behaviors (Ge et al., 1996; Lytton, 1990; Caspi & Moffit, 1995; Dumas & Wekerle, 1995;). Moreover, it is known that temperament characteristics predict parenting behaviors. Guided by the extant literature, researches stated that infant and toddler period in child development negative affect or difficulty predicts maternal behaviors, such as conflict interactions, responsiveness and control (Bates, Pettit, & Dodge, 1995; Braungart-Rieker, Garwood, & Stifter, 1997; Campbell, 1979; Crockenberg & Acredolo, 1983; Linn & Horowitz, 1983; Maccoby, Snow, & Jacklin, 1984; Malatesta, Grigoryev, Lamb, Albin, & Culver, 1986; Van den Boom, 1989;).

Kochanska et al. (2004) reported that child temperament predicted maternal behavior; however, in their study maternal personality factors predicted parenting after controlling for child temperament. Thus, if child effects are important to understanding maternal behavior, maternal personality predicts maternal parenting separately.

To begin with, we hypothesized that maternal neuroticism personality would be associated with multiple indices of child behavior problems. Drawing upon previous research in this area, firstly we expected maternal neuroticism to be associated with maternal continues stress, and then relation with childrearing practices and also child temperament traits correlation with child behavior problems (e. g., internalizing and externalizing behavior and aggression behavior).

Methods

Participant

Procedures and Measures

Maternal Personality. Mothers filled in the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire (EPQ, Eysenck and Eysenck, 1975) at child age 4. Inventory consists of 100 questions measuring extents of personality. The EPQ has three dimensions which are Psychoticism (P), Extraversion (E), Neuroticism (N) and Lie (L). Because of current research aim; only Neuroticism (N) subscale was examined.

Parenting Practices. Each mother completed the *Child-Rearing Practices Report Q-Sort (CRPR; Block, 1981)* at child age 4. The CRPR includes 91 items which are describing childrearing attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors, written on individual cards. *Child-Rearing Practices Report Q-Sort (CRPR; Block, 1981)* has seven subscales which are indexes of acceptance, rejection, encouragement of achievement, encouragement of independence, punishment orientation, protection and concern were formed based both on previously published research (e. g., Block, 1981; Lin & Fu, 1990). For this study it was analyzed on rejected subscales under our hypothesis.

Maternal Stress. *Recent Life Changes Questionnaire (RLCQ) (Miller & Rahe, 1997)* was completed by mothers when their children age 2 and 4. It is a 72 item measure of life-changes knowledge during a particular period of time. It has five subscales which was describing health, work, home and family, personal and social and financial. RLCQ was adapted from the Social Readjustment Scale which is created by created by Holmes and Rahe (1967) known as Life Change Units (LCU). It was applied to each item are related to <https://assignbuster.com/effects-of-maternal-neuroticism-and-parent-stress/>

the number of days usually needed to adjust to the new situation. All scores are totaled and computed as a stress factor in the recent life.

Child Temperament. Child temperament was assessed with the *Colorado Child Temperament Inventory (CCTI, Buss & Plomin, 1984)*. Of particular interest were CCTI subscales of *shyness* (7 items, $a = .87$, e. g., “ My child hovers near where other children are playing, without joining in”) and previously established procedures (e. g., Rubin et al., 1995), the emotionality and soothability (reversed) scales were combined to create an aggregate measure of child *emotional dysregulation* which were analyzed in this study.

Children Outcomes. A parent report of child behaviors problems were obtained using the *Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL; Achenbach 1991)*. Mothers completed and rated each item on a 3-point scale (0 = not true, 1 = somewhat true or sometimes true, 2 = very true or often true). The CBCL is a 109-item measure composed of several subscales including withdrawal, somatic complaints, anxiety/depression, social problems, thought problems, attention problems, delinquent behavior, aggressive behavior, internalizing, externalizing, and other problems. In this research, it was used *aggressive behavior*, *internalizing* and *externalizing problems* and *withdrawal* subscales for analyzing children outcomes.

Results

3. 1. Preliminary analyses

3. 2. Intercorrelations among study variables

Correlations between all study variables are presented in Table 2.

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Table 2 Correlations among study variables

	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2. Aggression Behavior (4 yr)	.432 ***	.978 ***	.247 *	.304 **	-.161	-.070	-.137	-.032	.327 **	.298 *	.31 **
3. Internalizing Behavior (4 yr)	1	.411 ***	.322 **	.823 ***	.294 *	.323 **	.175	-.054	.120	.197	.28 *
4. Externalizing Behavior (4 yr)	1	1	.277 *	.292 *	-.178	-.086	-.147	.004	.329 **	.285 *	.28 *
5. Emotional Dysregulation (4yr)	1	1	1	.360 **	.193	.192	.244 *	.164 *	.268 *	-.002	.25 *
6. Child Withdrawal (4 yr)	1	1	1	1	.250 *	.215	.115	-.020	.072	.257 *	.20
7. Reticence Behavior in play (4 yr)	1	1	1	1	1	.767 **	.292 **	.080	-.178	.124	.01

8. Approach-Avoid in play (4 yr)	1	.337**	.024	.173	.059	.08
9. Anxious Behavior in play (2 yr)	1	.042	.102	.177	.11	
10. Reticence Behavior in play (2yr)	1	.046	.043	.02		
11. Maternal Stress (4 yr)	1	.386**	.25*			
12. Maternal Stress (2 yr)	1	.26*				
13. Maternal Neuroticism Personality (4yr)	1					
14. Mother's Rejecting of Child (4 yr)	1					

* p <0. 1, ** p <0. 05, *** p <0. 01