

Does Filial Piety Mediate the Relation between Parental Meta-Emotion Philosophy and Mental Health in Chinese Youth?

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Abstract

Parental meta-emotion philosophy (PMEP), referring to a set of parental beliefs and thoughts toward parents' own emotions and those of their children, is linked with children's psychosocial adjustment. However, how components of PMEP may associate with mental health in Chinese societies remains unexplored. Grounded in the self-determination theory, youth cultural-specific mental representation of family interactions can be a potential mechanism for changes in mental well-being. To examine this assumption, we analyzed the relationship between PMEP, filial piety, and youth mental health, as well as the mediating role of filial piety, with a sample of 241 parent-adolescent dyads in mainland China. Results indicated that adolescents of parents with emotion-coaching philosophy were inclined to develop both high levels of reciprocal and authoritarian filial piety. Adolescents whose parents endorsed emotion-dismissing philosophy tended to exhibit a high level of authoritarian filial piety and increased anxiety/depression symptoms. As expected, reciprocal filial piety mediated the path from parental emotion-coaching philosophy to youth mental health. Emotion-dismissing philosophy was linked to adolescents' mental illness via the mediating effect of authoritarian filial piety. These findings revealed the importance of parental attitudes toward youth feelings in molding adolescents' perceived filial duties and mental functioning.

Keywords: authoritarian, emotion-coaching, emotion-dismissing, meta-emotion, reciprocity