

Abstract of thesis entitled:

Maternal Psychological Control and Chinese Children's Adjustment

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Parental psychological control (e.g., guilt induction, love withdrawal) has gained increased attention as a parenting dimension that proves influential on child development. The goal of this study was to investigate the outcomes as well as antecedents of psychological control used by mothers of young children in urban China. First, the study examined the extent to which psychological control would predict children's problem behavior as well as social and academic competence, and whether maternal warmth and provision of structure would moderate the effect of psychological control. Second, the associations between psychological control and mothers' affect and views regarding their children were tested. Also investigated were Chinese mothers' beliefs about the positive and negative effects of psychological control as antecedents of psychological control. A total of 301 mothers of preschool children filled in questionnaires (Time 1 and Time 2, 6 months apart) which measured their parenting behavior, affect and views regarding children, beliefs regarding the

effects of psychological control, and children's problem behavior. Homeroom teachers also reported on children's problem behavior as well as their social and academic competence displayed in preschool at Time 2. Psychological control was positively correlated with mother-reported problem behavior, both concurrently and prospectively, but did not predict longitudinal changes in problem behavior and was not related to teacher-reported outcomes. Warmth or structure did not moderate the associations between psychological control and children's outcomes. Beliefs about the positive effects of psychological control emerged as a significant predictor of psychological control. Taken together, this study suggests that psychological control undermines the development of Chinese children as early as in the preschool years. Findings in this thesis prove the utility of investigating parents' beliefs about the effects of psychological control, which bear the imprint of Chinese culture, to better understand the apparently controlling parenting of Chinese parents.

## 中國母親的心理控制和幼兒的行爲發展

### 摘要

父母的心理控制，如引發孩子的內疚感和對關愛的剝奪等，對孩子的發展有顯著的影響。本研究旨在探討中國母親的心理控制對幼兒的影響以及心理控制的發生原因。研究的第一部分考察母親的心理控制是否預測幼兒的問題行爲、社交和學習的能力，以及母親的情感溫暖和行爲控制是否對心理控制有調節作用。第二部分則考察心理控制與母親對孩子情感、看法之間的關係，並探索母親對心理控制的所帶來的正面和負面作用的信念。301名幼兒的母親完成了關於教養方式和孩子行爲的問卷，問卷分兩次進行，間隔六個月。幼兒的班主任老師也在第二次問卷調查期間填寫了關於孩子行爲的問卷。結果表明：母親的心理控制與母親報告的幼兒問題行爲呈正相關，但與教師報告的問題行爲、社交和學習的能力無顯著關係。母親的心理控制的作用不受情感溫暖和行爲控制所調節，對六個月后問題行爲的變化無顯著的預測作用。母親對心理控制的正面作用的信念預測了她們使用心理控制的程度。本研究的結果表明，母親的心理控制不良地影響了孩子在幼年的行爲發展。同時，母親對心理控制作用的信念和她們心理控制行爲之間的關係，間接地體現了中國的文化價值觀對教養方式的影響。