

How Early Childhood Teachers' Emotion Helpfulness Beliefs Impact their Reactions to Children's Negative Emotions

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Abstract

This study examined how teachers' beliefs in emotions, as helpful or hindrance factors, influenced their reactions to children's negative emotions. The researchers collected data through an online survey of 240 early childhood teachers in South Korea. Results revealed that teachers with firm beliefs regarding emotion as helpful (emotion-help belief) exhibited a higher degree of supportive reactions to children's negative emotions. Conversely, teachers with firm beliefs regarding emotion as a hindrance (emotion-hinder belief) showed more unsupportive responses to children's negative emotions. This study is significant because it is the first attempt to suggest teachers' beliefs about emotions as helpful or hindrance determinants as a predictive factor in their emotion socialization practices. The findings indicate the need for teacher education to strengthen teachers' positive beliefs about emotion. Such teacher education would, in turn, equip them to express more supportive reactions upon encountering children's negative emotions. Ultimately, this will promote emotional development and build resilience in the COVID-19 pandemic generation, helping them overcome the lack of emotional development caused by the crisis.

Keywords: early childhood teachers, emotion socialization, beliefs about emotion, emotional development

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Introduction

Early childhood is a critical period of emotional development. Research findings support this notion by indicating that emotional competence in this period significantly predicts children's future peer relationships, school adjustment, and academic achievement (Birch & Ladd, 1998; Denham et al., 2003; Garner, 1999; National Center for Children in Poverty, 2002; Schultz et al., 2001). The importance of emotional development in early childhood calls for attention to adults' efforts to promote children's emotional development, especially for the pandemic generation, who are more vulnerable in terms of lack of emotional development (Hartati, Rachmawaty, Rachmat, & Maryani, 2023).

Emotion socialization is behaviors in which socializers affect a child's learning concerning the experience, regulation, and expression of emotion (Denham, 1998; Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Cumberland, 1998). Relevant research has suggested three types of emotion socialization: socializers' reactions to children's emotions (contingency), socializers' discussion of emotion (teaching), and socializers' expression of emotion (emotional expressiveness) (Denham, 1998; Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998). Among these three types of behavior, the present study focuses on the socializers' reactions to children's emotions, especially the reactions to children's negative emotions (RCNE). The reason for focusing on the socializers' RCNE rather than responses to children's positive emotions is that socializers put more effort into socializing children's negative emotions (Capatides & Bloom, 1993; Denham & Grout, 1992; Yelinek & Grady, 2017).

Fabes et al. (1990) have described six types of socializers' RCNE. Subsequently, other researchers (Denham & Kochanoff, 2002; Fabes et al., 2002) have suggested theoretical distinction and found high correlations among certain types of reactions, recategorizing them into supportive reactions and unsupportive reactions. The categorization of supportive and unsupportive reaction is also explained as reinforcing and punishing further emotional expression (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011), and named as emotion-coaching and dismissing reactions as well (Denham, Bassett, & Miller, 2017). Supportive reactions include 'expressive encouragement' (i.e., validating children's negative emotional states and encouraging them to express negative emotions), 'emotion-focused reactions' (i.e., helping children feel better), and 'problem-focused reactions' (i.e., helping children solve problems

which caused their negative emotion) (Fabes et al., 1990). In comparison, unsupportive reactions include 'punitive reactions' (i.e., responding with punishment to reduce socializers' exposure to and need for dealing with the negative emotions expressed by children), 'minimization reactions' (i.e., minimizing the seriousness of the situation or the value of children's negative emotion), and 'distress reactions' (i.e., experiencing and expressing distress when children assert negative emotion) (Fabes et al., 1990).

Most studies examining emotion socialization focused on parents as emotion socializers. However, several researchers have suggested the need for attention to early childhood teachers as significant emotion socializers (Denham, 1998; Denham et al., 2012; Denham & Bassett, 2019; Kitzmann & Howard, 2011; Zinsser et al., 2014), with increasing enrollment rates and time spent in early childhood education (OECD, 2021), and their distinctive role from parents (Karalus, 2016). Also, there are studies on children's emotional development, but not many on teachers' strategies to improve children's emotional development (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011), adding to the need for research on early childhood teachers' emotion socialization.

Furthermore, researchers have found teachers' RCNE to influence children's emotional competence. Based on the theoretical review, Denham et al. (2012) expected a positive relationship between teachers' supportive reactions to children's emotions and children's positive expressiveness, emotion regulation ability, and emotion knowledge. On the other hand, the opposite would be true for teachers' punitive and minimization reactions. Denham et al. (2012) explained that supportive responses would help children better regulate and learn more about emotions by letting them "stay in the moment" (p. 141). Also, researchers have shown in their empirical study that teachers' reactions to children's emotion contribute to children's emotional competence (Bassett et al., 2017), emotion regulation and academic performance (Mirabile & Kodluboy, 2015). Furthermore, Poulou and Denham (2022) have found that teachers' supportive reactions to children's negative emotions positively and indirectly influence children's cooperative/sensitive behaviors, cooperative participation, self-directedness, school liking, and comfort with a teacher, while negatively and indirectly influencing children's angry/aggressive, anxious/withdrawn behaviors.

Subsequently, several studies consistently supported these expectations. For example, in an observational study, Bassett et al. (2017) documented that teachers' reactions to children's

emotions influence children's social-emotional behaviors. Specifically, teachers' display of fewer unsupportive reactions increased children's positive social-emotional behaviors, and teachers' validating responses decreased children's negative social-emotional behaviors. Additionally, more supportive reactions from teachers increased children's emotionally regulated behaviors. Moreover, King (2016) found a negative relationship between teachers' use of emotion-minimizing language and toddlers' emotional competence. Similarly, there is a positive relationship between teachers' reports of supportive RCNE and infants' emotional competence, while their punitive and minimizing reactions had a negative relationship (Bae & Kim, 2021). Also, in recent research, early childhood teachers' RCNE were found to indirectly influence children's socio-emotional development and school adjustment (Poulou & Denham, 2022). Given these findings, it is vital to determine the factors affecting teachers' RCNE.

Earlier literature identified factors relating to teachers' reactions to children's emotions, such as attention to and awareness of own emotions, the intensity of negative emotional experience (Ersay, 2007), use of healthy coping strategies (Buettner et al., 2016; Swartz & McElwain, 2012), and psychological load including stress, emotional exhaustion, and depression (Buettner et al., 2016). With these factors, researchers also assume teachers' emotion-related beliefs significantly influence teachers' RCNE. This assumption is because emotion socialization reflects socializers' beliefs and values concerning children's experiences, regulation, and expression of emotion (Eisenberg, Spinrad, & Cumberland, 1998). For instance, several studies examined the relationship between early childhood teachers' comprehensive beliefs about emotion introduced by Hyson and Lee (1996) and their emotion socialization practice. For example, teachers with more desirable beliefs about emotion displayed and reported more emotion-coaching behaviors (Yeon, 2005; Ornaghi et al., 2020). Furthermore, researchers observed that teachers' emotion socialization practices were consistent with their beliefs about emotion (Ahn, 2005; Bellas, 2009). However, these studies examined the specific beliefs about emotion within the context of education but failed to investigate more superordinate beliefs about emotion, that is, beliefs about emotion itself.

Superordinate beliefs about emotion have attracted researchers' attention. Gottman et al. (1996) developed a concept of meta-emotion philosophy and confirmed that parental meta-emotion philosophies impact their parenting and eventually influence children's outcomes

(Gottman et al., 1996). Kitzmann and Howard (2011) even suggested meta-emotion philosophy as one of the emotion socialization processes. They assumed that meta-emotion philosophy is translated into emotion socialization practices and indirectly influences children's emotional competence. However, the meta-emotion philosophy used by these researchers tend to have broad meaning, just as Gottman et al. (1996) collected qualitative data through interviews about the participants' meta-emotion philosophy. Recent researchers have suggested to classify meta-emotion philosophies into more specific categories. According to Ford and Gross (2019), the two central superordinate beliefs about emotion are helpfulness and controllability—these beliefs significantly influence emotion regulation. Among these beliefs, this study focuses on emotion helpfulness beliefs, specifically, help and hinder beliefs about emotion (HHBE). HHBE are lay people's beliefs about whether emotion overall helps or hinders and comprise emotion-help beliefs and emotion-hinder beliefs (Ford & Gross, 2019; Karnaze & Levine, 2018, 2020). Moreover, earlier literature found a relationship between the HHBE and individuals' emotion-related characteristics (De Castella et al., 2013; Ford et al., 2018; Karnaze & Levine, 2018, 2020; Linehan, 1993). Also, ~~For example,~~ teachers' interactions with children reflect their emotion-related characteristics (Buettner et al., 2016; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Thus, it is plausible that teachers' HHBE might also influence their RCNE.

Several studies found a relationship between emotional characteristics related to HHBE and one's RCNE, leading to specific hypotheses. First, individuals with solid emotion-help beliefs have high emotional acceptance (Karnaze & Levine, 2020). Thus, we can assume that individuals who believe emotion is helpful tend to accept emotions, making them react to children's negative emotions in more supportive ways. Furthermore, Karnaze and Levine (2020) found that individuals with solid emotion-help beliefs pay more attention to their emotions; Ersay (2007) indicated that individuals more attentive to their emotions reported more supportive RCNE. Additionally, individuals with firm emotion-help beliefs tend to use more adaptive emotion regulation strategies such as reappraisal, acceptance, and planning (De Castella et al., 2013; Karnaze & Levine, 2018, 2020). Using these adaptive emotion regulation strategies positively correlates to supportive RCNE (Buettner et al., 2016; Swartz & McElwain, 2012). Given these chained sets of findings, the current study hypothesizes that teachers with solid emotion-help beliefs may show more supportive RCNE and fewer

unsupportive RCNE.

On the other hand, Ford et al. (2018) revealed that individuals who view emotion as a hindrance reported more negative emotional reactions to stressors. Research findings suggest that teachers who experience their negative emotions intensely as a reaction to stress describe more punitive responses to children's expressions of anger (Ersay, 2007). Furthermore, individuals with firm emotion-hinder beliefs reported low social support and, well-being, high depressive symptoms, and more use of maladaptive emotion regulation strategies such as suppression and substance use (Karnaze & Levine, 2018, 2020). Additionally, believing emotion to be overwhelming, worthless, uncertain, and shameful hinders successful emotion regulation (Linehan, 1993). These findings also overlap with Buettner et al.'s study (2016): teachers with a high psychological load, including stress, emotional exhaustion, and depression, reported more unsupportive RCNE. Given these potential linkages, teachers with solid emotion-hinder beliefs may react unsupportively. However, few studies examined early childhood teachers' HHBE influencing their emotion socialization practice. Therefore, the present study explores early childhood teachers' HHBE as a possible predictor of their RCNE. Specifically, we examined the general tendency of and correlations between HHBE and RCNE as a preliminary analysis before regression and the influence of teachers' HHBE on their RCNE. The following research question guided the study: How do teachers' beliefs in emotions, as helpful or hindrance factors, influence their reactions to children's negative emotions?

Method

Participants

This study conducted an online survey of 240 early childhood teachers to examine general trends of teachers' HHBE and RCNE and whether HHBE correlates with and influences their RCNE. The participants were all female South Koreans in charge of 3 to 5-year-old children in kindergarten and childcare centers in Seoul, Incheon, and Gyeonggi province, South Korea. Their average age was 33.6 (SD = 8.6), the average year of teaching was 7.5 (SD = 5.2).

Their levels of education included training programs for high school graduates (7.5%), 2/3-year college certificates (28.3%), 4-year university graduate degrees (44.2%), and master's degrees (20%).

Measure

Teachers' HHBE.

We used the Help and Hinder Theories about Emotion Measure (HHTEM; Karnaze & Levine, 2020) to measure teachers' help and hinder beliefs about emotion. HHTEM measures lay people's beliefs about whether emotion overall is helpful (emotion-help beliefs) or a hindrance (emotion-hinder beliefs). This eight-item instrument comprises two variables designed to measure an individual's emotion-help beliefs (e.g., "Emotion helps people to focus on important things") and emotion-hinder beliefs (e.g., "Emotion hinders people from focusing on important things"). Each item uses a five-point Likert scale, with ratings from 0 'almost never' to 4 'almost always.' We summed and averaged items within each subscale, with a high score indicating firm beliefs. Karnaze and Levine (2020) stated that Cronbach's α of emotion-help beliefs and emotion-hinder beliefs were .74 and .64, respectively. Table 1 demonstrates the variables, number of items, and Cronbach's α of the current study.

Table 1. *Items of Help and Hinder Theories about Emotion Measure (HHTEM)*

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach's α
Emotion-help beliefs	4	.71
Emotion-hinder beliefs	4	.88

Teachers' RCNE.

The researchers used the Coping with Children's Negative Emotions Scale-Teacher Version (CCNES-T; Denham et al., 2017) to determine teachers' RCNE. CCNES-T consists of 60 questions with ten hypothetical situations in daily early childhood education and six reactions for each hypothetical situation. The CCNES-T consists of two categories, which are 'emotion-coaching reactions' and 'emotion-dismissing reactions.' However, we renamed them as 'supportive reactions' and 'unsupportive reactions' in the present study to ensure consistency with previous research findings. The 'supportive reactions' have three sub-

variables: Expressive encouragement (e.g., “Tell the child it’s OK to cry when they feel bad”), Emotion-focused reactions (e.g., “Comfort the child and try to get them to think about something happy”) and Problem-focused reactions (e.g., “Help the child think of places they haven’t looked yet”). The ‘unsupportive reactions’ also have three sub-variables: Punitive reactions (e.g., “Tell the child to behave, or they have to sit out for a while”), Minimization reactions (e.g., “Tell the child that they are over-reacting”) and Distress reactions (e.g., “Get upset with them for being silly”). The CCNES-T rates responses on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). However, the present study imported a four-point Likert scale from 1 (never) to 4 (always), assessing how frequently teachers react in a particular way. Denham et al. (2017) indicated that Cronbach’s α of supportive and unsupportive reactions were .93 and .72, respectively. Table 2 demonstrates the variables, number of items, and Cronbach’s α of the current study.

Table 2. *Items of Coping with Children’s Negative Emotions Scale-Teacher Version (CCNES-T)*

Variables	No. of items	Cronbach’s α
Supportive reactions	30	.90
Unsupportive reactions	30	.93

Design and Procedure.

This study was designed for regression modelling to investigate the relationship between HHBE and RCNE. The researchers collected data via an online survey. To recruit the participants, we used snowball sampling and posted the survey link to a popular online community used by early childhood teachers in South Korea. All measures used in this study were translated into Korean language. Although we did not undergo IRB approval, the researchers provided informed consent before the online survey began. It illustrates that researchers will use the data only for this research and collect them anonymously to keep personal information safe. Participants were asked to answer their demographic backgrounds and the two measures. After completing the survey, they received a gift card as compensation for their time spent. We used SPSS to analyze Cronbach’s α , descriptive statistics, Pearson’s correlation analysis, and simple regression.

Results

General Tendency of Teachers' HHBE and RCNE

The variables included in this study are teachers' emotion-help beliefs and emotion-hinder beliefs, and six types of teachers' reactions to children's negative emotions: expressive encouragement, emotion-focused reactions, problem-focused reactions, punitive reactions, minimization reactions, and distress reactions. In addition, we examined the variables' means, standard deviations, and ranges to understand the general trends of early childhood teachers' HHBE and RCNE (see Table 3).

Table 3. *General tendency of teachers' HHBE and RCNE*

Variables	M	SD	Range	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotion-help beliefs	3.25	.58	1.25~4.00	-.53	-.11
Emotion-hinder beliefs	1.68	1.07	0.00~4.00	.29	-.76
Supportive reactions					
Expressive encouragement	3.26	.46	1.80~4.00	-.29	-.46
Emotion-focused reactions	3.33	.43	1.80~4.00	-.48	.07
Problem-focused reactions	3.46	.38	2.10~4.00	-.66	.39
Overall	3.35	.36	2.13~4.00	-.30	-.18
Unsupportive reactions					
Punitive reactions	1.52	.57	1.00~3.60	1.39	1.29
Minimization reactions	1.92	.53	1.10~3.80	.78	.10
Distress reactions	1.77	.47	1.00~2.90	.42	-.70
Overall	1.74	.48	1.10~3.30	.99	.23

N = 240

The results indicate that teachers hold firmer emotion-help beliefs ($M = 3.25$, $SD = .58$) than emotion-hinder beliefs ($M = 1.68$, $SD = 1.07$). Relatively deviated values of emotion-hinder beliefs can be explained by the fact that the scale had only four items, and these items were relatively heterogeneous in order to keep it brief. Additionally, the results demonstrate

that teachers perform supportive reactions ($M = 3.35$, $SD = .36$) more than unsupportive reactions ($M = 1.74$, $SD = .48$), and perform problem-focused reactions most frequently ($M = 3.46$, $SD = .38$), while punitive reactions least frequently ($M = 1.52$, $SD = .57$).

The Relationship between Teachers' HHBE and RCNE

Before examining HHBE's influence on RCNE, we conducted a correlation analysis as a preliminary analysis. Table 4 demonstrates the correlations between teachers' HHBE and their RCNE.

Table 4. *Correlations between teachers' HHBE and their RCNE*

Reactions to children's negative emotion	Help and hinder beliefs about emotion	Emotion-help beliefs	Emotion-hinder beliefs
Supportive reactions			
Expressive encouragement		.36**	-.13
Emotion-focused reactions		.44**	-.01
Problem-focused reactions		.45**	-.16*
Overall		.48**	-.11
Unsupportive reactions			
Punitive reactions		-.11	.33**
Minimization reactions		.03	.31**
Distress reactions		-.17**	.32**
Overall		-.09	.35**

$N = 240$, * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

The study found a positive relationship between teachers' emotion-help beliefs and overall supportive reactions ($r = .48$, $p < .01$), expressive encouragement ($r = .36$, $p < .01$), emotion-focused reactions ($r = .44$, $p < .01$), and problem-focused reactions ($r = .45$, $p < .01$). However, there was a negative relationship with distress reactions ($r = -.17$, $p < .01$), which are unsupportive reactions. On the other hand, teachers' emotion-hinder beliefs showed a positive relationship with overall unsupportive reactions ($r = .35$, $p < .01$), punitive reactions ($r = .33$, $p < .01$), minimization reactions ($r = .31$, $p < .01$), and distress reactions ($r = .32$, p

< .01), but a negative relationship with problem-focused reactions ($r = -.16$, $p < .05$), which are supportive reactions.

The Influence of Teachers' HHBE on their RCNE

We performed a series of regression analyses to examine the influence of HHBE on RCNE. First, we set the independent variable as teachers' emotion-help beliefs and the dependent variable as their RCNE. Table 5 shows the results.

Table 5. *Regression analyses examining the influence of teachers' emotion-help beliefs on RCNE*

Reactions to children's negative emotions	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>
Supportive reactions						
Expressive encouragement	.28	.36	5.86***	.36	.13	34.34***
Emotion-focused reactions	.32	.44	7.51***	.44	.19	56.36***
Problem-focused reactions	.29	.45	7.70***	.45	.20	59.22***
Overall	.30	.48	8.35***	.48	.23	69.74***
Unsupportive reactions						
Punitive reactions	-.11	-.11	-1.69	.11	.01	2.87
Minimization reactions	.03	.03	.49	.03	.00	.24
Distress reactions	-.14	-.17	-2.69**	.17	.03	7.22**
Overall	-.07	-.09	-1.37	.09	.01	1.88

N = 240, *** $p < .001$. ** $p < .01$.

The results indicated that teachers' emotion-help beliefs positively predict teachers' overall supportive reactions ($\beta = .48$, $p < .001$), explaining 23% of the variance ($F = 69.74$, $p < .001$). Specifically, teachers' emotion-help beliefs positively predict problem-focused reactions ($\beta = .45$, $p < .001$), explaining 20% of the variance ($F = 59.22$, $p < .001$), emotion-focused reactions ($\beta = .44$, $p < .001$), explaining 19% of the variance ($F = 56.36$, $p < .001$) and expressive encouragement ($\beta = .36$, $p < .001$), explaining 13% of the variance ($F = 34.34$, $p < .001$). On the other hand, teachers' emotion-help beliefs negatively predict distress reactions ($\beta = -.17$, $p < .01$), one of the unsupportive reactions, explaining 3% of the variance ($F = 7.22$, $p < .01$). In other words, if teachers have firm emotion-help beliefs, they show more supportive reactions (problem-focused reactions, emotion-focused reactions, and

expressive encouragement) and fewer unsupportive reactions (distress reactions) to children's negative emotions. This finding shows that emotion-help beliefs play a significant predictor of teachers' RCNE. However, the negative influence that emotion-help beliefs have on distress reactions, which are unsupportive RCNE, is almost negligible.

Second, the independent variable was teachers' emotion-hinder beliefs, and the dependent variable was their RCNE. Table 6 shows the results.

Table 6. *Regression analyses examining the influence of teachers' emotion-hinder beliefs on RCNE*

Reactions to children's negative emotions	<i>B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>
Supportive reactions						
Expressive encouragement	-.06	-.13	-1.95	.13	.02	3.82
Emotion-focused reactions	-.00	-.01	-.08	.01	.00	.01
Problem-focused reactions	-.06	-.16	-2.43*	.16	.02	5.91*
Overall	-.04	-.11	-1.70	.11	.01	2.88
Unsupportive reactions						
Punitive reactions	.18	.33	5.46***	.33	.11	29.83***
Minimization reactions	.16	.31	5.05***	.31	.10	25.54***
Distress reactions	.14	.32	5.11***	.32	.10	26.13***
Overall	.16	.35	5.84***	.35	.13	34.05***

N = 240, *** $p < .001$. * $p < .05$.

The results demonstrated that teachers' emotion-hinder beliefs positively predict teachers' overall unsupportive reactions ($\beta = .35$, $p < .001$), explaining 13% of the variance ($F = 34.05$, $p < .001$). Specifically, teachers' emotion-hinder beliefs predict punitive reactions ($\beta = .33$, $p < .001$), explaining 11% of the variance ($F = 29.83$, $p < .001$), distress reactions ($\beta = .32$, $p < .001$), explaining 10% of the variance ($F = 26.13$, $p < .001$), and minimization reactions ($\beta = .31$, $p < .001$), explaining 10% of the variance ($F = 25.54$, $p < .001$). On the other hand, teachers' emotion-help beliefs negatively predict problem-focused reactions ($\beta = -.16$, $p < .05$), which are supportive reactions, explaining 2% of the variance ($F = 5.91$, $p < .05$). In other words, teachers with firm emotion-hinder beliefs show more unsupportive reactions (punitive, distress, and minimization reactions) and fewer supportive reactions (problem-focused reactions) to children's negative emotions. This suggests emotion-hinder beliefs as a significant predictor of teachers' reactions to children's negative emotions. However, the

negative influence that emotion-hinder beliefs have on problem-focused reactions, one of the supportive RCNE, is almost negligible.

Discussion

This research aimed to investigate the influence of teachers' HHBE on their RCNE. Before this investigation, we examined the general trends and correlations between the two variables as preliminary analyses. Results of the study indicate that early childhood teachers' HHBE plays a significant role in determining teachers' RCNE.

The Influence of Emotion-Help Beliefs on RCNE

Teachers' emotion-help beliefs positively predicted supportive RCNE: problem-focused reactions, emotion-focused reactions, expressive encouragement, while negatively predicted distress reactions, which are unsupportive RCNE. In other words, if early childhood teachers believe that emotion is helpful, they display more supportive RCNE while displaying fewer distress reactions.

Previous research found an association between emotion-help beliefs and greater emotional acceptance (Karnaze & Levine, 2020). Therefore, the current study expected teachers with firm emotion-help beliefs to be more likely to accept children's negative emotions, resulting in more supportive RCNE. Moreover, earlier literature suggested that individuals with firm emotion-help beliefs paid more attention to emotions (Karnaze & Levine, 2020) and used more adaptive emotion regulation strategies (De Castella et al., 2013; Karnaze & Levine, 2018, 2020). Additionally, researchers found a relationship between teachers' supportive reactions and their attentiveness to their emotions (Ersay, 2007) and more adaptive emotion regulation strategies (Buettner et al., 2016; Swartz & McElwain, 2012). Based on these two sets of previous research findings, there have only been presumable causal relationships between emotion-help beliefs and supportive RCNE. However, the present study confirmed the hypothesis and suggested attention to own emotions and adaptive emotion regulation strategies as possible mediating factors in the path

that HHBE influences RCNE.

The Influence of Emotion-Hinder Beliefs on RCNE

On the other hand, teachers' emotion-hinder beliefs positively predicted their unsupportive RCNE, including punitive, distress, and minimization reactions. The emotion-hinder beliefs also negatively predicted problem-focused reactions, a supportive RCNE. In sum, if teachers view emotion as a hindrance, they respond to children's negative emotions with more unsupportive and fewer supportive responses.

This result is consistent with findings from other researchers who have found that individuals with firm emotion-hinder beliefs reported more negative emotional reactions to stressors (Ford et al., 2018). Additionally, teachers who experienced negative emotions intensely had more unsupportive RCNE (Ersay, 2007). Thus, it is possible that teachers who believe emotion is a hindrance display more unsupportive RCNE because they experience more intense negative emotions due to children's emotional expressions. Furthermore, previous studies showed that believing emotion is a hindrance relates to low social support and well-being, high depressive symptoms, more use of maladaptive emotion regulation strategies (Karnaze & Levine, 2018, 2020), and curtailing successful emotion regulation (Linehan, 1993). Therefore, considering these earlier findings, teachers with firm emotion-hinder beliefs might react to children's negative emotions more unsupportively by holding these negative emotional characteristics. This interpretation seems consistent with Buettner et al.'s (2016) findings that teachers with high stress, emotional exhaustion, and depression reported more negative RCNE.

Implications of the Study

The current study is the first to shed light on early childhood teachers' HHBE as a predictive factor of their emotion socialization practice, thus highlighting its significance. The results from this study call for teacher education to enhance teachers' emotion-help beliefs while weakening emotion-hinder beliefs. Somerwil, Klieve, and Exley (2020) found that early childhood teachers need more well-developed teacher training programs to help them be more equipped to promote children's emotional competence. The current research

provides concrete content that can add to teacher training programs, thus meeting the teachers' needs. Teacher education will promote teachers' supportive reactions but reduce unsupportive responses to children's negative emotions, ultimately facilitating children's emotional development. Previous studies shed light on the possibility and methodologies to shape teachers' beliefs about the functionality of emotion. Karnaze and Levine (2020) randomly assigned participants to help-theory and control condition. They instructed the participants in the help theory condition to read and summarize short article excerpts that illustrate scientific evidence of how emotional experience helps relationship satisfaction, achieving goals, and physical and mental health. In turn, the participants were asked to write about their experience of emotion being helpful in their transition to college students and give advice about the functionality of emotion to an incoming college freshman. As a result, participants assigned to the help theory condition showed significantly more help theory and less hinder theory than participants in the control condition. Additionally, in a previous study conducted with middle school students, 'beliefs that emotions are controllable' increased through online courses (Smith et al., 2017). Likewise, it is plausible that teachers' HHBE can also be changed through education, introducing recent research findings emphasizing the functional aspects of emotion. Furthermore, although the present study generally views the positive side of supportive reactions and the negative side of unsupportive reactions, supportive responses without providing an appropriate limit might adversely influence children's development. For example, teachers' supportive RCNE was found to hinder children's initiative (Kim & Kim, 2018) and related to children's dysregulated and negative behaviors in high-risk classrooms (Denham & Bassett, 2019). Hence, in relevant teacher education, it is vital to emphasize that supportive reactions should accompany guidance about children's appropriate behavior. Additionally, most research on teachers' emotion socialization is done with the U.S. sample. However, the current study was conducted with a Korean sample which adds to the literature.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The present study focused on HHBE. However, as mentioned above, the controllability of emotion is another central superordinate belief about emotion playing a vital role in emotion

regulation (Ford & Gross, 2019). Future research could investigate whether the beliefs about the controllability of emotion also predict teachers' emotion socialization practices. Additionally, this study only focused on the RCNE. Future research could explore teachers' reactions to children's positive emotions, including discussion and expression of emotion, to solidify the influence of HHBE on emotion socialization practice. Furthermore, the current research was conducted via regression analysis. Thus, it was verified that HHBE influence RCNE, but the extent of the influence and underlying factors about the path remain a question. A subsequent investigation needs to conduct structural equation modelling with path analysis to reveal more detail about how HHBE influence RCNE. Finally, the present study measured teachers' RCNE via an online questionnaire with snowball sampling. Thus, it is necessary to be careful in interpreting and generalising the result. Future research could use more systematic sampling to better representation. Also, although the questionnaire was confirmed as a good reflection of the educational context with good reliability and validity and no social desirability bias (Fabes et al., 2002), the questionnaire method still has limitations. For example, we had only six options covering teachers' various reactions. Observational methodologies could be alternatives to questionnaires. An interview is another supplementary method to understand teachers' beliefs and intentions about their behaviors.

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