Parental Beliefs About Emotions in a Norwegian Cultural Context:

Gender Differences and Relations to Children's Emotion Regulation

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Abstract

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Aim: This study aimed to investigate gender differences in parental cultural beliefs about emotions among Norwegian parents, and to examine if there was a relationship between parental beliefs and children's adaptive emotion regulation.

Method: To assess these research questions 291 Norwegian parents of children between the age of 3 and 8 participated in the study. Parental beliefs about emotions were measured through the revised and shortened Parental Beliefs about Emotions Questionnaire, which measures beliefs related to six cultural dimensions based on the Hofstede model. Reliability analyses revealed that only three (Power Distance, Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance) of the six dimensions had acceptable levels of reliability, thus only these dimensions were used for the main analyses. Children's emotion regulation was measured through parent-report of the Emotion Regulation Checklist.

Results: Analyses revealed significant gender differences in all three dimensions related to parental beliefs about emotions with small to medium effect sizes. Norwegian mothers were more likely to agree with beliefs related to Uncertainty Avoidance, whereas Norwegian fathers tended to hold more power distant and masculine beliefs. Regression analyses indicated that beliefs related to the three cultural dimensions significantly explained variance in children's emotion regulation, even after controlling for parents' and children's age and gender. Power Distance and Masculinity had a significant unique contribution in explaining the variance in emotion regulation skills, with higher levels of power distant and masculine parental beliefs being associated with less adaptive emotion regulation in children. These findings suggest the importance of considering cultural influences on parental emotion socialization and potential gender differences within the same cultural context, as well as how this, in turn, affects children's emotion regulatory skills.

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Emotion regulation is an important part of emotional competence, and its development has been massively investigated over the past years. Significant knowledge has been produced about age-related changes and factors explaining individual differences in this development, such as social, emotional, and cognitive changes (e.g., Pons & Harris, 2019; Saarni, 1999). Emotion regulation is also associated with relevant developmental outcomes, such as psychological well-being and mental health (Hu et al., 2014), social competence (Bell & Calkins, 2000) and psychopathology (Esbjørn et al., 2012). This emphasizes the importance of understanding which factors influence emotion regulation development. However, studies within a cultural approach are still scarce. In this thesis, emotion regulation is therefore explored by combining developmental and cultural perspectives within an emotion socialization framework, where external influences, such as parents and culture, play a central role in the child's emotional development (Eisenberg et al., 1998). More specifically, the thesis addresses the question of the extent to which parental cultural beliefs about emotions influence children's emotion regulation skills, and take into account potential differences between Norwegian mothers and fathers regarding their emotional beliefs. The thesis also functions as a pilot study of the revised version of the newly developed Parental Beliefs About Emotions Questionnaire, which is a part of the Postdoc project entitled "Impact of culture on emotion understanding among Norwegian, Russian and Brazilian children: Effects of SES, parents and teachers' emotional beliefs", coordinated by the supervisor of this thesis.

Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation has emerged as a popular topic in the field of psychology, and several definitions have been proposed based on different theoretical models, creating a lack of a clear consensus on the operationalization of the term. In this thesis, we rely on the understanding that emotion regulation includes behaviors, skills and strategies that inhibit, enhance or modulate emotional experiences and expressions (whether they are conscious or unconscious, automatic or effortful; Calkins & Hill, 2007). Gross (1998) proposed a process-oriented model that provides a detailed framework for the different components involved in the conceptualization of emotion regulation. According to this model, an emotion begins with an evaluation of internal or external emotional cues. These evaluations trigger a set of behavioral, experiential, and physiological emotional responses, and together these responses facilitate an adaptive response to the perceived challenges and opportunities (Gross, 1998). Thus, emotion regulation refers to regulating the experience of emotions by monitoring one's expressive behavior (Saarni, 1984). Based on these definitions, emotion regulation includes the ability to handle emotions in productive ways, and express emotions appropriately

(Denham et al., 2012). Any emotion can be regulated in several different ways, and whether the result is regarded as adaptive or maladaptive is dependent on the specific demands of the situation.

Regulating emotions has been shown to be significantly related to mental health (Hu et al., 2014) and adaptive psychosocial functioning in children (Zeman et al., 2006). In fact, emotion regulation is associated with many beneficial outcomes, such as academic success (Denham & Brown, 2010; Graziano et al., 2007; Shields et al., 2001), psychological well-being and improved mental health (Haga et al., 2009; Hu et al., 2014) and social competence (Monopoli & Kingston, 2012; Reyes et al., 2020). In addition, adaptive emotion regulation has been found to be associated with prosocial behavior and sympathy (Carlo et al., 2012; Song et al., 2018). On the other hand, poor emotion competence and regulation have been associated with negative outcomes and psychopathology, such as internalizing problems (e.g., anxiety and depression), as well as externalizing problems (e.g., deficient empathy, aggression and other behavior problems; Esbjørn et al., 2012; Trentacosta & Fine, 2010; Zeman et al., 2002). The psychological outcomes of regulating emotions highlight the relevance of understanding the factors impacting emotion regulation development, including parental cultural beliefs.

Since the focus of this thesis is on the role of parental cultural beliefs and children's emotion regulation, it is important to consider conceptualizations of emotion regulation that emphasizes extrinsic factors and intrinsic regulatory processes (Saarni, 1984; Thompson, 1991). Intrinsic regulatory processes are influenced by the emergence of cognitive and language skills, and emotional- and self-understanding, while extrinsic factors are related to the ecological environment, such as parental influences through their beliefs and modeling (Thompson, 1991). Both of these aspects influence the monitoring, evaluation, and modification of emotional reactions and expressions. Extrinsic factors can be linked, for example, to how children's awareness of cultural display rules develops as they progress from early to later childhood (Saarni, 1999). This is essential for emotion regulation because display rules are social norms that determine when, where, and how different emotion-related behaviors should be expressed (Ekman & Friesen, 1969). Considering humans are social beings, they need to shape their emotions to fit with different demands in different situations. Thus, regulating emotions becomes an important adaptive mechanism. From this socio-cultural approach, the next section will explore the factors that might explain how emotion regulation develops, with emphasis on the parental role from a developmental perspective.

Emotion Regulation Development

In early infancy and toddlerhood, parents (or the primary caregivers) help infants and toddlers to regulate their emotional expression by using soothing behaviors and reducing the exposure of emotionally eliciting events (Zeman et al., 2006). In toddlerhood, self-conscious emotions, such as guilt, shame, and embarrassment, are beginning to develop (Saarni, 1999), and as children get older, they acquire a greater emotion lexicon that they use to label their emotions (Bretherton et al., 1986). By gaining more emotional language skills, toddlers can self-regulate by talking about emotionally challenging situations to others who can help them regulate their mood (Zeman et al., 2006). In the preschool years, children's emotion regulation repertoire is extended with an increase in behavioral strategies and cognitive reappraisal (Sala et al., 2014). Around the age of 4 to 5, children begin to understand how emotions can be regulated by seeking social support but are still figuring out how to use appropriate social display rules for expressing emotions (Pons & Harris, 2019). During preschool to early primary school age, there is an increase in the understanding and use of these display rules, and children's capacity to regulate emotions more effectively emerges during this time (Zeman et al., 2006). Because preschool children still spend a lot of time with their parents, the child's emotional development is still highly influenced by the parental relationship and practices towards emotional events (Are & Shaffer, 2016).

When children grow older, their emotion regulation strategies change from being predominantly external and behaviorally oriented, such as sucking thumbs or hugging a teddy bear, to being more internal and cognitive (Aldwin, 2007; Stegge et al., 2004). When children reach the age of 8 or 9, they have learned to regulate their emotions by the means of psychological strategies, such as positive reappraisal, acceptance, rumination, and catastrophizing (Garnefski et al., 2007). Indeed, psychological strategies do not necessarily mean that these are only positive. Pons and Harris (2019) also argue that between the age of 7 and 8 children understand the effect of moral rules on specific emotions (such as anger), and by the age of 10 to 11 years they begin to understand how they can control or regulate emotions through mental strategies.

In short, children learn to cope with stressful events from an early age, often with external strategies, and their repertoire increases as they grow up, going from external to more internal (cognitive) strategies (Fields & Prinz, 1997). As children become adolescents, and cognitive processes and brain structures related to the regulation of emotions mature (Perlman & Pelphrey, 2011), they develop more effective strategies for coping with emotions, such as planful problem-solving, positive self-talk and intentional self-regulation of emotion (Theurel & Gentaz, 2018; Zimmer-Gembeck & Skinner, 2011).

Previous studies have also shown that gender is one critically important moderator of children's emotion regulation processes. These gender differences are suggested to be a result of both biologically based predispositions, and socialization with gender-related rules for the expression of emotions (Brody & Hall, 2008). When comparing girls and boys in emotion regulation, it is relevant to look at emotional expression, a skill that is closely associated with emotion regulation (Gross, 1998). Emotional expression is the ability to, verbally or behaviorally, convey emotions externally; and regulating emotional responses often includes the regulation of expression of emotions. Typically, externalizing emotions, such as anger, are considered more acceptable in boys than girls (Birnbaum & Croll, 1984). Boys are also more likely to use externalizing expressions of emotions while girls are more likely to internalize them (Sanchis-Sanchis et al., 2020). Indeed, in a meta-analysis, Chaplin and Aldao (2013) found small significant differences in emotion expression. Girls expressed more positive emotions, and more internalizing emotions (e.g., sadness and anxiety) compared to boys, while boys expressed more externalizing emotions (e.g., anger) than girls. However, the magnitude of these gender differences became larger or smaller depending on contextual factors, such as the interpersonal context (i.e., who is present at the time), the valence of the situation (e.g., being in a negative or uncomfortable situation) and the demands of the situation (e.g., receiving an undesirable gift from a close relative resulting in a modulation of the expression of disappointment; Chaplin & Aldao, 2013).

Regarding emotion regulation strategies, some gender differences have been found in preschool children. In a study using an experimental design based on a story completion task for children aged 3- to -6 years old, Sala et al. (2014) found boys to refer to behavioral strategies more often than girls, while girls more often mentioned social support strategies. This is in line with the tendency for boys to use more externalizing strategies, whereas girls tend to seek social support to regulate their emotions. Throughout preschool and later childhood, boys are more physically active and show more anger, impulsivity and dysregulation of emotions compared to girls (see Zahn-Waxler et al., 2008 for a review). Moreover, one study found girls to endorse affective regulation strategies rather than aggressive strategies, while boys showed the opposite pattern when regulating anger or sadness (Zeman & Shipman, 1998). As preschool children get older towards adolescence, girls still score higher than boys in seeking social support and also problem-solving, whereas boys score higher in avoidant coping (Eschenbeck et al., 2007). However, this finding was particularly clear for middle adolescence compared to late childhood, suggesting a potential gender socialization. The socialization of gender is a process where individuals develop

beliefs about the roles and expectations associated with each sex group, as well as a self-identity as a result of being part of one sex group (Stockard, 2006). Understanding how parents socialize emotions is, therefore, an important step to acknowledge the developmental trajectories of emotion regulation strategies, both among boys and girls.

Emotion Socialization: The Role of Parents

Throughout the development of emotion regulation, parents play a fundamental role by modeling through their own emotion regulation behaviors, and by directly instructing their children on the use of emotional labels and expressions, as well as social and cultural rules around emotions (Von Salisch, 2001). One potential way parent's influence this development is through their cultural values about emotions: Do the way parents think about what is desirable or not in one's emotional life affect their children's emotion regulation skills?

This issue can be seen in light of the emotion socialization model developed by Eisenberg et al. (1998). Emotion socialization refers to the process where parents or caregivers share information and knowledge with their children regarding the understanding, experience, expression, and regulation of emotion. Eisenberg et al. (1998) presents a heuristic model stating that parental socialization of emotions often includes parental reactions to children's emotions, parental discussion of emotion and parents' own expression of emotion. In other words, values, beliefs, and norms about emotions are passed on by parents to the child through social interaction (Grusec, 2011), and they provide models of emotion displays, which very often are imitated by their children (Denham et al., 2007; 1998; Morris et al., 2007). Previous research has suggested that parental emotion socialization practices have an impact on children's emotion regulation. For example, studies with families from Western societies have shown how family acceptance and discussion around emotion expression is associated with improved emotion regulation skills in children (Blair et al., 2014; Morris et al., 2007). On the other hand, non-supportive emotion practices, such as minimizing, critical and punitive reactions to children's emotions, is associated with more maladaptive emotion regulation skills in children and predicts future dysregulation and poorer coping outcomes (Shaffer et al., 2012).

Emotion socialization is closely related to parenting styles and, therefore, emotion-related parenting practices, which can influence children's emotion regulation (Morris et al., 2007). Gottman et al. (1996) suggested that parents who coach their children's emotions by, for example, validating and labeling emotions, comforting children, and solving problems, help their children regulate emotions more effectively. This is in contrast to parents who dismiss emotions by, for example, ignoring them or punishing their children for expressing

them. When children feel closeness and warmth in the family emotional climate, it helps them express their emotions more comfortably (Houltberg et al., 2012). Thus, emotion coaching is associated with more successful emotion regulation in childhood and adolescence (Baker, 2018; Criss et al., 2016; Eisenberg et al., 1996; Morris et al., 2017).

Furthermore, Baumrind's model of parenting styles (1966) might also have an impact on how parents socialize emotions to their children. The authoritarian parent is characterized by valuing obedience, restricting autonomy, and attempting to shape, control and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child. In contrast, the authoritative parent values autonomous self-will and disciplined conformity, and aims to direct the child's activities rationally and issue-oriented. The authoritative parent also sets standards for future behavior with their child providing predictability and expectations but exerts warmth and support and is more considerate of the child's individual interests and developmental needs (Baumrind, 1966). Thus, the authoritative, positive, warm, and responsive parent is believed to promote the development of self-regulatory skills in children (e.g., Colman et al., 2006; Williams & Berthelsen, 2017). Authoritarian, negative, harsh and insensitive parenting, on the other hand, might inhibit development of self-regulatory skills and have detrimental consequences for the child's emotional development (Calkins et al., 1998; Colman et al., 2006; Eisenberg et al., 2005; Williams & Berthelsen, 2017). Thus, differing parenting styles seems to play a role in children's emotional development through emotion socialization and parental practices.

Notably, it is important to acknowledge that there are several other contributors to emotion socialization, other than parental beliefs about emotions and parental practices, for example, within-child characteristics such as the child's temperament, personality, and cognitive skills (Eisenberg, 2020). Furthermore, earlier findings have also indicated that children's emotion regulation may influence parental emotion socialization. For example, by assessing mother-child dyads, Premo and Kiel (2014) showed how toddlers' specific regulatory behaviors in novel situations predicted changes in maternal emotion socialization. Further, it has been demonstrated that when older children and parents discuss emotions, children's use of adaptive emotion regulation is followed by more supportive emotion parenting than unsupportive parenting (Morelen & Suveg, 2012). In addition, supportive emotion parenting elicited more use of adaptive than maladaptive emotion regulation among the children, indicating a bidirectional relationship between emotion regulation and emotion socialization. Taken together, these findings suggest that the emotion socialization process is dynamic and influenced by both parents and children. However, in this thesis the focus is on

parental influences, specifically parental beliefs about emotions and how this relates to children's emotion regulation.

Parental Beliefs About Emotion

Beliefs affect cognitive processes and form people's attitudes, evaluative judgements, and overt behaviors, governing our attitudes about what one thinks and how one should behave (Ajzen & Sexton, 1999). One important factor influencing emotion socialization is parental beliefs about emotions, so called meta-emotion philosophy. Meta-emotion encompasses organized sets of thoughts and feelings parents have regarding their own emotions and their children's emotions (Gottman et al., 1996), and how this guides their emotion socialization behaviors (Katz et al., 2012). Among many findings, Gottman et al. (1996) showed that parental meta-emotion philosophy impacts the way parents socialize emotions and, therefore, affect children's emotion regulation strategies (Denham et al., 2007; Denham, 2018). Thus, beliefs about emotions serves as the foundation for inferences regarding our own and others' emotions and behaviors (Shields, 2013).

Beliefs about emotions can also be linked to emotion related behaviors. De Castella et al. (2018) showed that beliefs about emotions were associated with both cognitive avoidance (e.g., suppressing thoughts or feelings related to unpleasant emotions, denying, or minimizing) and behavioral avoidance (e.g., avoiding an action, person, or thing to prevent distressing situations) in daily life. Additionally, another study found that parents' emotion-related beliefs about children's emotions was related to their own emotional experience and expression (Dunsmore et al., 2009). Findings suggested that beliefs had an effect on emotion expression, and that parents' expression was related to children's general skill at recognizing emotions. Similarly, Castro et al. (2015) found associations between parental beliefs and children's skills in emotion recognition. Other findings have identified characteristics of parental beliefs, such as attention to emotional reactions and the value of emotion self-regulation, to be related to children's self-regulation and parents' emotion socialization strategies (Meyer et al., 2014). In short, parental beliefs about emotions seem to influence parents' emotion socialization behaviors which, in turn, is related to children's emotion competence, including emotion regulation.

One interesting discussion around beliefs about emotions is related to gender differences, both in regard to the gender of the child and the gender of the parent. Nelson et al. (2012) examined what beliefs mothers had about their children's negative emotions and emotion socialization practices. The authors found that African American mothers of boys perceived more negative social consequences for displaying negative emotions and reported

more non-supportive reactions to submissive negative emotions, compared to African American mothers of girls. Other research has also shown how parents are more likely to support the expression of sadness in girls than in boys (Cassano et al., 2007; Thomassin et al., 2019). Importantly, Thomassin et al. (2019) also pointed out that parents not only acknowledged gender roles in emotional socialization, but also their child's unique personality.

There is also evidence suggesting that mothers and fathers differ in beliefs about emotions. For example, fathers have reported a greater belief that emotions are more dangerous than mothers (Stelter & Halberstadt, 2011). Regarding children's negative emotions, mothers have been found to report more supportive reactions, less non-supportive reactions, more expressiveness, and more accepting beliefs about children's negative emotions, compared to fathers (Wong et al., 2009). However, there are also studies showing no gender differences between fathers and mothers in their beliefs about emotions (Dunsmore et al., 2009). Based on the existing literature on gender differences in parental beliefs about emotions, it seems like there are both differences and similarities in parental beliefs, both in terms of the gender of the child and the gender of the parent.

Beliefs about emotions also seem to be culturally embedded, although cross-cultural studies on this topic is still quite limited. One qualitative study identified several beliefs held by parents and found cultural differences between three ethnic groups in America; African Americans, European Americans, and Lumbee American Indians (Parker et al., 2012). These beliefs involved values of emotion in the family (e.g., role and place of emotions), socialization of emotion (e.g., parents' socialization of negative/positive emotions) and controllability of emotions (e.g., children learning control over emotions). One example of the many findings from this study was that African American parents believed that it was important for children to freely express emotions in the family setting rather than suppressing them, whereas the European and Indian group more often shared beliefs regarding the restriction of expressing emotions (Parker et al., 2012). Furthermore, African American mothers have been found to report that the display of negative emotions was less acceptable than European American mothers, and that this was partly explained by their beliefs about emotions (Nelson et al., 2012). In addition, a recent master thesis aimed to develop a questionnaire that captured a variety of cultural dimensions in parental beliefs about emotions (Gundersen & Gjøen, 2020). In their thesis, a cross-cultural comparison between Norwegian and Russian parents revealed that cultural belonging had a clear impact on parental beliefs. Therefore, it seems evident that parents' beliefs about emotions are influenced by culture to a

greater or lesser extent. Further, this will likely affect children's emotional development due to parents, in many cultures, being the most important emotion socialization agents. The next section will explore culture more in depth, and how it is related to socialization of emotions and emotion regulation development.

Culture

The complex and dynamic relationship between different factors that influence the child's development, including culture, can be seen in light of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model of human development. According to his theory, child development is not only affected by within-child factors but also by the surrounding world, such as social, political, and economic conditions. The model considers the child's individual characteristics dynamically interacting with the environment, which consists of five levels of systems: microsystem (e.g., family and peers), exosystem (e.g., extended family, parents' workplace, and media), mesosystem (e.g., relation among school, home, and neighborhood), macrosystem (e.g., ideologies and cultures) and chronosystem (change and consistency over time; Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2007; Hayes et al., 2017). The dynamic and interactive relationships among these levels, guide the child's development. Figure 1 shows the levels of the ecological systems in relation to the interaction between culture, parental beliefs about emotions and children's emotion regulation.

Figure 1

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory
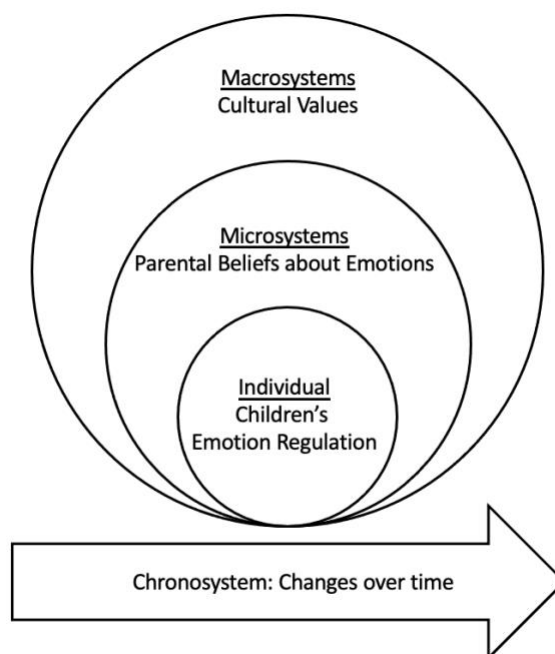
Note. Adapted from Bronfenbrenner (1979).

As discussed in the previous sections, in the child's microsystem of personal experience, their own emotions are to a large extent influenced by their parents' emotions. Additionally, both the child and parents are influenced by cultural beliefs and values, which are rooted and created within the macrosystem. Thus, it is believed that culture plays an important part in shaping parents' values and socialization goals (Bornstein, 2009) which, therefore, impact the way they teach children about emotions (Lillard, 1998).

One prominent researcher in the field of parental socialization of emotions is Carolyn Saarni. The emotional competence theory proposed by her emphasizes the relationship between emotions and social relations with parents or primary caregivers (Saarni, 1999). Additionally, she highlights that experiences with caregivers, as well as surrounding socio-cultural environments, is the basis for children's emotional development (Saarni & Crowley, 1990). There is an emphasis on the importance of cultural variations in emotional socialization, where cultural, historical, and social contexts influence the creating of beliefs and practices in which emotion socialization occurs (De Leersnyder et al., 2015). Thus, parents communicate culturally appropriate methods of dealing with the expression and experience of emotions and teach their children cultural rules related to their emotional life.

Culture and Emotions

In order to better understand the cultural mechanisms guiding emotion regulation, it is relevant to conceptualize culture and determine how culture and emotions are related. Culture can be defined as common values, beliefs and norms that provide necessary coordination and organization for individuals and groups who live in the complexity of human social life (Matsumoto et al., 2008; Nelson & Prilleltensky, 2010). Culture does this by giving a meaning and an information system to its members, which they share and pass on to younger generations (Bornstein, 2009; Matsumoto, 2007). Cultural clusters are often characterized by shared values, language, history, and religion (Molina et al., 2014), they also vary across geographical regions and change over time (Bilsky et al., 2011). However, it is important to note that a culture is rarely fixed and homogeneous as several factors come into play. When defining or characterizing a culture, it is important to remember that even though there is homogeneity within cultural groups, there are also distinct differences within a culture. This thesis is based on the Hofstede model which is a cultural approach that considers a variety of cultural dimensions.

Cultural Dimensions

There have been several attempts to categorize and capture characteristics for different cultures by developing distinct cultural dimensions (e.g., Hofstede, 2011; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Schwartz, 2006). A framework that has been widely recognized and used is the distinction between individualistic and collectivistic cultures (Triandis & Gelfand, 2012). Individualistic cultures promote independence (e.g., prioritizes to differentiate themselves from others, defines the self based on unique attributes), whereas collectivistic cultures promote interdependence (e.g., prioritizes harmony with others, defines the self based on social relations; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Even though these two dimensions are fundamental to how individuals conceive themselves and their emotions, cultures are often more complex and goes beyond individualistic versus collectivistic traits (Hofstede, 2011; Inglehart & Baker, 2000; Schwartz, 2006).

Among the different models that have been used to study cultural phenomena, Hofstede's 6-D model (2011) has proposed six dimensions to assess and compare cultures. His extensive work can be used to distinguish different cultures in terms of Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism, Masculinity, Long-Term Orientation, and Indulgence. The most central aspects of the six dimensions are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1

Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions

Power Distance	Distribution of hierarchical power and degree of equality in organizations and institutions. Large: hierarchy means existential inequality, parents teach children obedience. Small: hierarchy means inequality of roles - established for convenience, parents treat children like equals.
Uncertainty Avoidance	Society's tolerance for ambiguity, indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either comfortable or uncomfortable in unstructured situations. Strong: minimize unstructured situations by strict behavioral codes, laws and rules, disapproval of deviant opinions. Weak: uncertainty accepting cultures, more accepting and tolerant of novel and unstructured situations, fewer rules, are empiricist and relativist.
Individualism vs. Collectivism	Degree of interdependence a society maintains among its members. Individualism: ties between individuals are loose, "I" – consciousness, independent, emphasizes autonomy, right of privacy and speaking one's mind. Collectivism: integrated into strong cohesive in-groups, "we" –

	consciousness, interdependent, emphasizes belongingness and maintaining harmony.
Masculinity vs. Femininity	Distribution of values between the genders, and whether society will be driven by competition and success or caring for others and quality of life. Masculinity: assertive and competitive, large difference between emotional and social roles between the genders. Femininity: modest and caring, small difference between emotional and socials roles between genders.
Long-Term vs. Short-Term Orientation	Cultural focus on important life events; here and now vs. in the future. Long-term: prepare for future by encouraging thrift and modern education, perseverance, ordering relationships by status, having a sense of shame (humility). Short-term: prefer to maintain traditions and norms, tends to view societal change with suspicion, reciprocating social obligations, protecting one's "face", personal steadiness and stability.
Indulgence vs. Restraint	The degree of freedom given to citizens by societal norms in fulfilling their human desires. Indulgence: allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human desires related to enjoying life and having fun. Restraint: controls gratification of need and regulates it by means of strict social norms.

Note. Source: Hofstede, 2011

The model has been translated and utilized in more than 50 countries and has been used to categorize cultures by identifying cultural trends and values across countries (Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede et al., 2005). Considering Hofstede's model offers a broad perspective and investigates culture through these relevant dimensions, it is also applicable to exploring differences within a specific culture, for example, in relation to gender and generations. Additionally, the cultural dimensions have been associated with several emotional aspects. For example, Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance have been associated with emotional unpleasantness of emotional experience, whereas cultural femininity has been linked to lower levels of neuroticism and a higher frequency of positive emotions (e.g., joy; see Basabe et al., 2000 for review). Because of these reasons, the model will be used as a basis for comparing parental beliefs within Norwegian culture and examine how this is related to emotion regulation in children.

The Impact of Culture on Emotion Regulation

Emotions have both universal and culture-specific aspects, and recently researchers have been investigating which domains of emotions are more universal and which are more culture-specific (Matsumoto & Hwang, 2012). Shao et al. (2015) examined to which extent the three domains making up emotion competence (emotion perception, emotion understanding, and emotion regulation) are universal versus culture-specific, using data from Argentina, India, Japan, China, and the United States. Their findings revealed that emotion perception appeared to be the more universal domain of emotion competence, whereas emotion understanding, and emotion regulation were more culture specific. This illustrates the need to investigate the mechanisms behind how culture impacts emotion regulation in more detail.

Kitayama et al. (2004) proposed a dual process model of cultural regulation of emotion, where culture shapes emotional experience through personal and collective processes. Culture has an impact on each individual's emotional experience by collectively providing and reinforcing certain emotions (e.g., anger), but also by providing personal strategies for managing emotional experience and expression of these emotions (e.g., anger suppression). Within this functionalist view, culture creates rules, guidelines, norms, and values that govern our thoughts, which guide and regulate specific behaviors and, therefore, promote valued and adaptive competencies that are relevant to one's emotional life (Bornstein, 2009). Thus, emotional regulation tends to be congruent with culturally central values, ideals, goals and concerns, and this regulation occurs at the levels of individual tendencies as well as in co-regulation with others (De Leersnyder et al., 2013). Previous research has found that there are differences in which regulatory strategies individuals from different cultures prefer (Ramzan & Amjad, 2017), and findings with adult populations (e.g., Butler et al., 2007; Davis et al., 2012; Matsumoto et al., 2008; Tweed et al., 2004), have indicated cultural differences in the experience and expression of emotions (An et al., 2017; Miyamoto & Ma, 2011).

The majority of studies assessing cultural aspects and differences in emotion regulation compare individualistic and collectivistic cultures, and the two most notable emotion regulation strategies in the literature are cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression (Cutuli, 2014; Gross & John, 2003; Kwon et al., 2013). Overall, research has shown that individualistic cultures prefer emotional expression to regulate emotions while collectivistic cultures use expressive suppression (Ramzan & Amjad, 2017). In particular, there are differences in how often and when individuals from different cultures express anger,

and there appears to be a greater use of anger suppression among collectivistic than individualistic cultures (Cheung & Park, 2010; Matsumoto et al., 2010). This can possibly be explained by the tendency for collectivistic cultures to adjust their emotions to adapt to social norms, which value relational social harmony (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Wei et al., 2013).

Furthermore, the cultural differences in emotion regulation can also be related to both implicit and explicit attitudes. For instance, one study found that Chinese cultures explicitly evaluated emotional expression as more negative and implicitly evaluated emotional control as more positive than European American cultures (Deng et al., 2019). This goes in line with research among adults showing that detrimental effects of emotional suppression are stronger in Western European cultures than Eastern Asian cultures (Butler et al., 2007; Cheung & Park, 2010; Deng et al., 2019; Hu et al., 2014; Kwon et al., 2013; Soto et al., 2011). Thus, evidence suggests that cultural values can moderate the consequences of emotional suppression. This highlights how emotion regulation is strongly influenced by cultural contexts, considering there are different norms regarding emotional display.

The studies presented so far have mainly compared European American (western) cultures with Asian (eastern) cultures (Ford & Mauss, 2015; Ramzan & Amjad, 2017). Comparing adults from Norway, Australia, and the United States, Haga et al. (2009) found cross-cultural differences in the use of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression across gender, age, and culture. Further, reappraisal was predictive of positive well-being outcomes, whereas expressive suppression led to increased levels of negative well-being outcomes. Similarly, Potthoff et al. (2016) compared six European countries and found cross-cultural differences in emotion regulation. There were differences in which emotion regulation strategies northern and southern European countries used, but the relationship between strategies and psychopathology were however consistent. Furthermore, Matsumoto et al. (2008) aimed to assess differences between 23 countries based on the two emotion regulation strategies reappraisal and suppression. Using Hofstede's cultural dimensions, their findings provided evidence for differences in which strategies different cultures preferred. For example, cultures that valued autonomy and egalitarianism tended to have lower scores on suppression.

The literature seems to support the notion that one of the functions of culture is to create and maintain social order by creating value systems that facilitate norms for regulating emotions (Matsumoto et al., 2008). Cultural values, in turn, influence emotional development through emotion socialization and children learn to express and regulate their emotions in culturally acceptable ways to ensure success within their cultural context (Capobianco et al.,

2019). Thus, culture contributes to shape and guide how people interact, both socially and emotionally. Furthermore, culture shapes whether individuals are motivated to regulate their emotions and determines whether emotion regulation is considered adaptive or maladaptive (Ford & Mauss, 2015). However, there are few studies assessing the relationship between culture and emotion regulation within the same regions and similar cultures. For example, would cultural beliefs about emotions vary across gender within the same cultural context?

Overall, previous studies have found gender differences in relation to cultural values. For example, women tend to attribute more importance to values of benevolence and security, while men prefer values of power, achievement, and self-direction (Schwartz & Rubel, 2005). One recent study used Schwartz's cultural dimensions (2006) to compare gender role attitudes and found that high levels of embeddedness and hierarchy were associated with more traditional gender role attitudes (Lomazzi & Seddig, 2020). In contrast, societies that showed egalitarianism as the main cultural value displayed more progressive and egalitarian attitudes toward gender roles (Lomazzi & Seddig, 2020). Schwartz's and Hofstede's dimensions are believed to coincide and represent the same underlying values (Yeganeh & May, 2011). For example, Schwartz's "Autonomy vs. Conservatism" corresponds with Hofstede's "Individualism vs. Collectivism" where both the dimensions are characterized by the degree of independence and interdependence among the members of a society. "Hierarchy vs. Egalitarianism" corresponds with "Power Distance" considering that they both emphasize the legitimacy of an unequal distribution of power and wealth. Lastly, "Mastery vs. Harmony" resembles "Masculinity vs. Femininity", where mastery is associated with masculine values such as assertiveness, ambition, and achievement, whereas harmony is associated with feminine values that are opposed to assertiveness, ambition, and conflict. All these values might affect gender differences both within cultures and across cultures, and one study demonstrated that the cultural dimension of conservatism (collectivism) had significant implications for the gender gap across cultures (Yeganeh & May, 2011).

This thesis adopts Hofstede's (2011) theory of cultural dimensions as a perspective to investigate gender differences within a specific culture, specifically in cultural beliefs about emotions and how these beliefs are related to children's emotion regulation. Nordic countries such as Norway, Sweden and Denmark generally score low on Power Distance and value gender egalitarianism (Hofstede et al., 2005). However, Warner-Søderholm (2012) aimed to uncover differences between these similar countries and found unique country variances in cultural practices in the Nordic cluster. Thus, although Scandinavian cultures appear seemingly similar, differences were revealed between them as well. This gives reason to

investigate differences within Norwegian culture between mothers and fathers regarding their beliefs about emotions in relation to their children's emotion regulation. In the next section we present a summary of the gaps in the literature and previous studies that lead to our research questions and hypotheses.

The Present Study

Parental beliefs about emotions have been shown to have an impact on how emotions are socialized to children (Gottman et al., 1996), and therefore have an influence on children's emotion development. Culture and cultural values seem to have, in turn, an impact on both parental beliefs and children's emotion regulation development, thus affecting the child's development through the macro and micro system (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

The literature on parental beliefs, cultural values and emotion regulation presented so far is extensive and emphasizes the importance of these factors on the child's emotional development. Nevertheless, we have identified some gaps in the literature that require further attention. For example, there are many studies assessing cultural values across cultures, but fewer studies assessing differences in cultural values within the same culture, and especially about how these values might change as a function of gender. Furthermore, the literature suggests some gender differences in beliefs about emotions, both in terms of gender of the parent (Stelter & Halberstadt, 2011; Wong et al., 2008) and gender of the child (Thomassin et al., 2019). However, there is a general lack of responses from fathers and studies often emphasizes the mother-child relationship (e.g., Calkins et al., 1998; Nelson et al., 2012; Premo & Kiel, 2014). It is therefore important to include more fathers in studies examining parent's influence on children's emotional development.

Moreover, cultural aspects are already considered in the emotion socialization literature (e.g., Eisenberg et al., 1998), but there is a lack of studies expanding the cultural focus by including how cultural beliefs about emotions might influence the emotion socialization process. This study builds upon cultural aspects and adds cultural beliefs about emotions as a possible mechanism for children's development of emotion regulation. Moreover, cultural studies often do not include a wide range of cultural dimensions but focus largely on individualism versus collectivism. It is important to examine cultural aspects with a broader perspective, so that more aspects or nuances of the culture is captured. Lastly, most studies assessing beliefs about emotions within a multi-cultural dimension approach (e.g., Gundersen & Gjøen, 2020; Nelson et al., 2012; Parker et al., 2012) have rarely investigated how these beliefs are potentially associated with children's emotion regulation development.

Based on the gaps in the literature presented above, the aim of the present study was twofold. First, we wanted to assess and compare Norwegian mothers and fathers cultural beliefs about emotions, when their age was taken into account. Based on Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979), we assumed age might affect the results based on differences in characteristics and values between generational cohorts, due to for example different historical events (e.g., Ismail, 2016; Kraus, 2017). The technological explosion of the Internet and social media (Dimock, 2019) and increased globalization (Perruci, 2011) could also contribute to differences between younger and older parents. Additionally, Norway stands out as it is one of the countries that scores the lowest on Masculinity and generally promotes an equal and egalitarian society (Hofstede et al., 2005; Schwartz, 2008). Moreover, parenting in Norway is often child-focused and dialogue-based, where the child is a subject of individual and equal rights (Hollekim et al., 2016). Other arguments that suggest gender equality in Norway is the increased access to paternity leave, which in turn promotes father's emotional commitment in childcare (O'Brien et al., 2007). In fact, in 2019, up to 71% of fathers in Norway participated in parental leave (Gram, 2019). Notably, there have been found gender differences in previous studies assessing beliefs about emotions in Norway (Gundersen & Gjøen, 2020). However, the gender distribution was relatively skewed with more mothers than fathers participating and therefore we still expected (H1) no significant differences between mothers and fathers in cultural beliefs about emotions.

Second, we wanted to examine the relation between parent's cultural beliefs about emotions and their children's emotion regulation. More specifically, we wanted to see which cultural dimensions, if any, had an impact on children's emotion regulation skills. Based on the review of the literature previously presented, we expected (H2) significant relationships between cultural beliefs about emotions and children's emotion regulation, even when age and gender of the parents and children were taken into consideration. More specifically, we expected that (H2a) cultural beliefs characterized by a hierarchical and strict way of seeing the child, minimizing unstructured situations, and large differences between emotional and social roles between the genders would negatively affect children's emotion regulation. On the other hand, (H2b) cultural beliefs that were characterized by a more horizontal and egalitarian way of seeing the child, caring for others, quality of life and accepting novel and unstructured situations, would positively impact children's emotion regulation.

Methods

Ethical Considerations

This study was reported and approved by the Norwegian Social Science Data Services (NSD) and the Internal Ethics Committee at the Department of Psychology, University of Oslo. In line with the NSD guidelines, participants were contacted just after the ethical approval and received an information letter through a Nettskjema link explaining the project objectives, contact information of those in charge with the project, the use and storage of data and rights regarding participation (see Appendix A). Further, the letter informed the parents that participation was voluntary and anonymous, and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without any negative consequences. Following the information letter, participants were asked to consent to participate in the study. No identifiable sensitive information such as names, phone numbers, IP numbers and email addresses were collected and, thus, participants were anonymized from the start. In addition, the data was not stored on any local computers but on UiO home-area after being retrieved from Nettskjema.

Participants

Participants were recruited through the head of primary schools and kindergartens. A total of 150 schools and kindergartens from different parts of Norway were contacted. Selection of schools and kindergartens was based on areas that had less than 50% immigration (Otterlei, 2016). This was to ensure that the sample had a majority of participants with Norwegian as their native language. By excluding non-Norwegian native speakers, we could reduce the chances of other influences that could affect the results, such as influence from other cultural backgrounds as a result of immigration. Schools and kindergartens for children with special needs or disabilities were also excluded due to the potential effect it might have on beliefs about emotions (Reichman et al., 2008).

In total, 338 Norwegian parents of children aged 3-8 years old responded to the questionnaire. However, a total of 47 participants were excluded, 37 due to not having Norwegian as their native language and 10 due to their responses to open-ended background questions being unclear or difficult to interpret (e.g., reporting several ages when asked about the age of the child, not stating their place of living, etc.). Therefore, the final sample consisted of 291 participants (194 mothers, 97 fathers) between the ages 24- to 53-years-old ($M = 37.92$, $SD = 5.62$). The participants came from several different regions in Norway where the majority lived in western (35.1%) and eastern (30.2%) Norway, and some in

Trøndelag/central Norway (19.2%), northern (12.4%) and southern (3.1%) Norway.

Descriptive statistics of demographic variables are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Demographic Variables in the Sample

Variable		M (SD)
Parent gender	194 female (66.7%),	
	97 male (33.3%)	
Parent age range	24-53	37.92 (5.63)
Level of education		
High School	15.1%	
University degree	84.9%	
Number of children		1.40 (.63)
Shared custody		
Yes	267 (91.4%)	
No	25 (8.6%)	
Child gender	145 girls (49.8%),	
	146 boys (50.2%)	
Child age range	3-8	5.55 (1.66)

Parents and children were divided into two age groups for further analyses. Parents were grouped into younger parents consisting of "Generation Y" ranging from 24-to 40-year-olds ($n = 197$, 67.7%) and older parents consisting of "Generation X" ranging from 41-to 55-year-olds ($n = 94$, 32.3%). This was based upon differences in characteristics and values between younger and older parents (Ismail, 2016; Kraus, 2017). Children were divided into two groups, preschool children ranging from 3-to 5-year-olds ($n = 130$, $M = 3.95$, $SD = 0.85$), and school-age children ranging from 6-to 8-year-olds ($n = 161$, $M = 6.83$, $SD = 0.82$). This distinction was based on literature emphasizing differences in emotion regulation skills as a result of age-related changes between preschoolers and school-age children (e.g., Sala et al., 2014).

Procedure

An e-mail was sent to principals and heads of kindergartens with information about the project and a link to an official UiO website containing the link to the online

questionnaire. They were asked to forward the information and link to parents with children in the appropriate age range. Due to the low response rate via the head of schools, parent representatives in different schools were contacted and a link to the UiO website was posted in relevant Facebook-groups.

All participants responded to an online questionnaire through the University of Oslo's Nettskjema. The questionnaire was divided in three parts: 1) background information, 2) beliefs about emotions, and 3) emotion regulation skills. In the first part, demographic information such as gender, age, native language, area of upbringing, area of residence, educational level and shared custody was collected from all participants. If participants reported sharing custody with someone, they were asked to answer the same demographic questions for their partner. In addition, parents were asked to report how many children they had between the ages of 3-8 years, how many languages their children understood and could speak, and their children's age and gender. In case participants had several children between the ages of 3-8 years, they were asked to have only one child in mind while taking the survey. For example, they should only report the age of that one child in target.

In the second part, participants answered to the Parental Beliefs About Emotions Questionnaire (PBEQ) and, in the third part, to the Emotion Regulation Checklist (ERC). The Norwegian version of the PBEQ was already available and piloted by Gundersen and Gjøen (2020). Regarding the ERC, a Norwegian approved version was obtained through one of the original authors Dante Cicchetti (Berg-Nielsen et al., 2013).

Parental Beliefs About Emotions Questionnaire

To measure parental cultural beliefs about emotions a revised version of the Parental Beliefs About Emotions Questionnaire was used (PBEQ; Gundersen & Gjøen, 2020). The original PBEQ was developed by two master students at UiO as a part of their master thesis and supervised by Karine Viana and Francisco Pons. It contained 22 questions measuring parental beliefs about the child's emotional development and cultural values related to beliefs about emotions. Based on the pilot study carried out by the authors with Norwegian and Russian samples (Gundersen & Gjøen, 2020), the original version was revised and used as part of a second pilot in the present study. The PBEQ is based on Hofstede's six cultural dimensions, and in the revised version these dimensions are assessed through 12 questions with four underlying statements each (see Appendix B). Each question was related to one of six cultural dimensions: Power Distance, Individualism, Masculinity, Uncertainty Avoidance, Long-Term Orientation, and Indulgence. For example, Q6 measuring beliefs about emotions related to Masculinity: "When it comes to children's expression of emotions, you believe it is

ok that…", statements to these questions are: a) *boys use more physical expression than girls,* b) *girls use more verbal expression than boys,* c) *boys and girls express anger the same way,* and d) *girls are more emotional than boys.* The parents were asked to rate each of these statements on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (*Strongly disagree*) to 5 (*Strongly agree*).

Because this questionnaire is still under development and this thesis is piloting the short-version, reliability analysis of each of the cultural dimensions were conducted. The Cronbach's alpha for the dimensions were: Power Distance α = .71, Individualism α = .44, Masculinity α = .72, Uncertainty Avoidance α = .97, Long-Term Orientation α = .44 and Indulgence α = .46. The results showed that Power Distance, Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance were the dimensions with adequate or acceptable alphas (Cortina, 1993). Therefore, later analysis will only include these three dimensions.

To create a score for each of the three cultural dimensions included in the analysis, basic rules were used. First, reversed statements were re-coded. For example, Q6C "When it comes to children's expression of feelings, you believe it is ok that … *boys and girls express anger the same way*". If participants scored high on the reversed statements, this resulted in a low score on the dimension the statement was meant to capture, and vice versa. Following the example, a high score on this statement contributed to a low score for the dimension Masculinity. Second, average scores were created for each dimension by adding the score of each statement related to a specific dimension, and then dividing it by the total amount of statements included in the questions related to that dimension. Masculinity was, for example, measured by two questions, with four statements each. Irrelevant statements that did not measure any of the cultural dimensions were excluded in creating average scores. For example, in Q7 (measuring Masculinity) "You believe it is ok for your child to express and talk about feelings with his/her…" the irrelevant statements were "*Mother*" and "*Grandmother*". To make a sum score for Masculinity the 6 relevant statements were summed up and divided by 6. Because the questions were rated on a 5-point Likert scale, the dimension scores could range from 1 to 5 and indicated whether parents were more likely to agree or disagree with the beliefs underlying a specific dimension.

Emotion Regulation Checklist

To measure emotion regulation in children the Norwegian version of the caregiver-report Emotion Regulation Checklist was used (ERC; Berg-Nielsen et al., 2013; Shields & Cicchetti, 1997). The questionnaire consists of 24 items that describe different behaviors measuring a child's ability to understand and manage emotion regulation (see Appendix C). The ERC is assessed on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 4 (*Almost always*).

The questionnaire has two subscales: (1) Emotion Regulation (eight items) which assesses the child's emotional self-awareness, emotional expressiveness, emotion understanding and processes that are central in adaptive regulation, and (2) Emotional Lability/Negativity (L/N; 15 items) which includes emotional activation, intensity, reactivity, anger dysregulation and dysregulated negative affect. Item 12 was excluded due to not loading on either factor in early validation analyses by the original authors. Data on the validity and psychometric properties are reported in Shields and Cicchetti (1997).

To create scores for each subscale, we followed the same procedures as the original authors (Shields & Cicchetti, 1997). First, reversed items were re-coded (e.g., item 16; "Seems sad or listless"). This item is a part of the Emotion Regulation subscale, and a high score on this item results in a low overall score on Emotion Regulation. Next, a mean score for each subscale was created by summing up the scores from all items and dividing it by the number of items. The subscale scores could, therefore, range from 1 to 4, and higher scores on L/N reflect greater dysregulation, whereas higher scores on Emotion Regulation indicate greater regulation. As the interest in this thesis was to examine adaptive emotion regulation, only the subscale Emotion Regulation was used in analyses.

Statistical Analysis

Statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS 27.0. Preliminary analysis was first conducted through two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to assess the impact of children's age and gender on their emotion regulation skills. To test our first hypothesis, several two-way ANOVAs were performed to explore the gender and age differences in participants' scores on each cultural dimension. To test our second hypothesis Pearson's correlation coefficients between the three cultural dimensions, the Emotion Regulation subscale, age and gender of parents and children were first calculated. Finally, hierarchical regression analysis was conducted to investigate more in depth which of the cultural dimensions had significant contribution to the variance in Emotion Regulation when age and gender of the parent and child were controlled for.

<div align="center">

Results

</div>

Gender and Age Differences in Emotion Regulation

Descriptive statistics for mean scores on Emotion Regulation for each age group and gender of the child is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Mean Scores in Emotion Regulation

Emotion Regulation	Gender		Age	
	Girls	Boys	Preschool	School-age
M	3.47	3.42	3.43	3.45
SD	.31	.36	.34	.34

A two-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted to explore the effect of gender and age of the child on Emotion Regulation. There were no significant main effects for gender ($F(1, 291) = 1.67$, $p = .198$, partial $\eta^2 = .006$) or age of the child ($F(1, 291) = .08$, $p = .780$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$), and no significant interaction effect between them ($F(1, 291) = .00$, $p = .994$, partial $\eta^2 = .000$).

Gender Differences in Parental Cultural Beliefs

A two-way between-groups ANOVA was conducted separately for the three cultural dimensions to explore the effect of gender (mothers and fathers) and age (Generation Y, Generation X) of the parent on parental beliefs about emotions. These results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4

Mean Scores in Cultural Dimensions

Dimension	Gender of parent					Age of parent				
	Mother (*SD*)	Father (*SD*)	$F(1, 291)$	η^2 partial	Sig	Gen Y (*SD*)	Gen X (*SD*)	$F(1, 291)$	η^2 partial	Sig
Power Distance	1.59 (.40)	1.77 (.47)	8.73	.03	.004*	1.60 (.41)	1.75 (.45)	4.90	.02	.028*
Masculinity	1.66 (.42)	1.86 (.56)	8.56	.03	.004*	1.68 (.43)	1.83 (.55)	3.22	.01	.074
Uncertainty Avoidance	4.69 (.47)	4.50 (.60)	4.77	.02	.030*	4.72 (.44)	4.43 (.62)	17.07	.06	.000*

Note. *$p < .05$

The results from the ANOVAs revealed significant gender differences on all the cultural dimensions, with small to medium effect sizes. Generally, mothers scored significantly higher on Uncertainty Avoidance compared to fathers, regardless of age. In relation to Power Distance and Masculinity, fathers scored significantly higher compared to mothers, regardless of age. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the mean scores for the cultural dimensions according to gender of the parents.

Figure 2

Distribution of Mean Scores for Gender of the Parent on the Cultural Dimensions
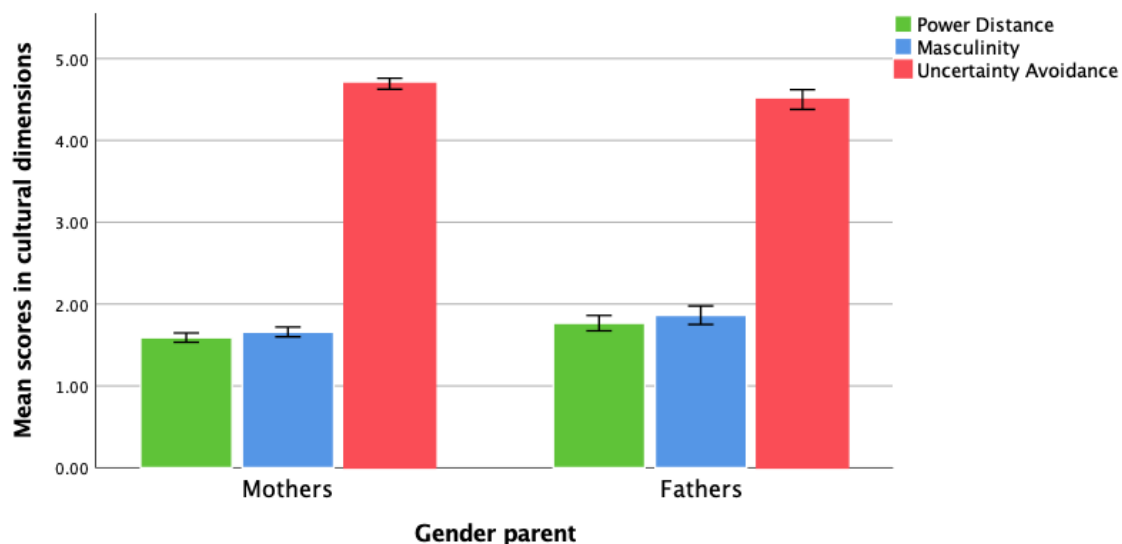
Note. Error bars: 95% CI

As shown in Table 4, results revealed significant age differences on two cultural dimensions with small to medium effect sizes. Generally, Generation Y scored significantly higher on Uncertainty Avoidance compared to Generation X, whereas Generation X scored significantly higher on Power Distance compared to Generation Y, regardless of gender. The ANOVAs did not reveal any significant age differences in regard to Masculinity. There were no significant interaction effects between the gender and age of the parent for any of the cultural dimensions.

Relationship Between Parental Beliefs About Emotions and Children's Emotion Regulation

A correlation matrix between scores on the different dimensions of the PBEQ, and the subscale Emotion Regulation is shown in Table 5. Emotion Regulation had small significant negative correlations with parents' age ($r = -.13$, $p < .05$) and gender ($r = -.19$, $p < .01$). Moreover, Emotion Regulation was significantly correlated to all three cultural dimensions. Because of these results, a hierarchical multiple regression analysis including age and gender of the parents and children, all the cultural dimensions and Emotion Regulation subscale was conducted. The regression analysis assessed more specifically which of these cultural dimensions were the best predictor of Emotion Regulation, when age and gender of the parents and children were taken into account.

Table 5

Correlation Matrix

	M	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1.Parent age	37.92	5.63	1							
2.Parent gender			.26**	1						
3.Child age	5.55	1.66	.31**	.06	1					
4.Child gender			.01	.01	-.09	1				
5.Power Distance	1.65	.43	.16**	.19**	.10	.07	1			
6.Masculinity	1.73	.48	.15*	.20**	.10	-.04	.37**	1		
7.Uncertainty Avoidance	4.63	.52	-.21**	-.17**	-.15*	-.05	-.42**	-.44**	1	
8.Emotion Regulation	3.44	.38	-.02*	-.19**	.02	-.08	-.31**	-.29**	.26**	1

Note. *p < .05. **p < .01

Hierarchical multiple regression was used to assess the extent to which the cultural dimensions (PBEQ) predicted the score on Emotion Regulation (ERC), after controlling for the influence of both parents and children's age and gender. Preliminary analysis was conducted to ensure no violation of the assumptions of normality, linearity, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity. Based on theoretical and empirical reasons, parents and children's age and gender were entered in step 1, and the cultural dimensions in step 2. The beta values are shown in Table 6.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent variable	Emotion Regulation				
	b (se)	β	R	R²	ΔR²
Step 1			.207	.043	.043
Constant	3.66 (-11)**				
Parent gender	-.14 (.04)**	-.20			
Parent age	.02 (.05)	-.02			
Child gender	-.05 (.04)	-.08			
Child age	.02 (.04)	.02			
Step 2			.402	.162	.119
Constant	3.60 (.28)**				
Parent gender	-.09 (.04)	-.12			
Parent age	-.05 (.04)	.08			
Child gender	-.04 (.04)	-.06			
Child age	.04 (.04)	.05			
Power Distance	-.15 (.05)**	-.19			
Masculinity	-.11 (.04)*	-.16			
Uncertainty Avoidance	.07 (.04)	.11			
Total R²	.162				

Note. $N = 291$; *$p < .05$, **$p < .01$

    The analysis revealed that the first model including age and gender of the parents and children had a significant impact on emotion regulation, explaining 4,3% ($R^2 = 0.43$) of the variance in Emotion Regulation score. However, only parents' gender had a significant unique contribution to the variance. After entering the three cultural dimensions at step 2 the total variance explained by the model as a whole was 16,2%, $F(7, 283) = 7,81$, $p < .001$. The three cultural dimensions explained an additional 11,9% of the variance in Emotion Regulation, after controlling for parent's and children's age and gender, *R* squared change = .12, *F* change $(3, 283) = 13.42$, $p < .001$. In the final model, only Power Distance ($b = -.15$, *p* $< .01$) and Masculinity ($b = -.11$, $p < .05$) had a significant contribution in explaining the variance in Emotion Regulation.

Discussion

The main aims of the current study were to examine gender differences in parental cultural beliefs about emotions among Norwegian parents, and the relationship between those beliefs and children's emotion regulation. Our results revealed gender differences in all three cultural dimensions related to beliefs about emotions included in the analysis (Masculinity, Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance), thus rejecting our first hypothesis. Our second hypothesis was partially confirmed, showing that parental beliefs about emotions – more specifically low levels of Masculinity and Power Distance – predicted better adaptive emotion regulation in children. The main findings, limitations, and future directions are discussed below.

Gender Differences in Parental Beliefs About Emotions in Norway

The results revealed gender differences in beliefs about emotions related to all three cultural dimensions among Norwegian parents, when their age was controlled for. Thus, our hypothesis that there were no gender differences in parental beliefs about emotions was rejected. The findings were however in line with some previous literature showing gender differences in beliefs about emotions (Stelter & Halberstadt, 2011; Wong et al., 2009), and contradicted findings suggesting that there were no differences between mothers' and fathers' beliefs about children's emotions (Dunsmore et al., 2009). Next, the gender differences will be discussed more in depth for each cultural dimension.

Norwegian fathers held more power distant beliefs than mothers, expecting children to hide their emotions when they are with adults and were more inclined to agree with punishment when children do something they are not allowed to. Contrastingly, mothers were more likely to believe in letting children express emotions freely around all adults and the importance of listening to children's emotional needs. An example illustrating this could be if a child got upset or angry at a family gathering and the mother allowed her child to express this feeling in front of other family members. Instead of shunning the child for being angry or trying to change their mood, the mother could talk to the child to find out why they are angry and help them regulate the emotion. It is interesting to see the relation between a cultural value as Power Distance and gender differences in parenting as parental practices often involves distribution of power. Thus, although we have not assessed parental practices, these findings resemble previous American and Australian studies demonstrating that mothers are more likely to use an authoritative parenting style, whereas fathers are more likely to use an authoritarian parenting style (Bornstein et al., 2011; Russell et al., 1998). Importantly, despite these gender differences, both mothers and fathers scored relatively low on the Power

Distance dimension if we consider the scores from other countries as presented by Hofstede et al. (2005).

Regarding beliefs related to the Masculinity dimension, mothers held more feminine beliefs, such as believing that boys and girls express emotions equally and that children should express emotions in the same way around males and females, compared to fathers. This suggests that parents tend to socialize girls' and boys' emotions differently considering cultural norms indicate whether emotions are more masculine or feminine (Brody, 2000). This finding is quite surprising, as Norway is considered a gender equal country. Norway's low score on the Masculinity dimension according to Hofstede et al. (2005) also suggests that mothers and fathers should hold similar beliefs related to emotions and both would be responsible for dealing with feelings. However, it is important to note that both mothers and fathers scored fairly low on this dimension if we take into consideration the scores of other countries. For instance, in a pilot study using the long version of the PBEQ, Gundersen and Gjøen (2020) found that Norwegian parents overall scored lower in this dimension when compared to Russian parents. This suggests that, from a cross-cultural approach, fathers and mothers in Norway hold more gender balanced beliefs about emotions, although within cultures they still show some significant differences in relation to their beliefs about the emotion socialization of boys and girls.

Compared to fathers, mothers also tended to agree more with beliefs related to Uncertainty Avoidance, such as believing children need help to understand the emotions they are experiencing. These findings contradict Dunsmore et al. (2009) work, which showed that mothers and fathers held similar beliefs about guiding children's emotions. Being uncertainty avoidant is associated with fear of ambiguous situations and of unfamiliar risk, higher stress, anxiety, emotionality, and neuroticism (Hofstede, 2011). Thus, mothers compared to fathers, may have the tendency to develop these traits and being more emotional, according to our findings. This goes in line with previous literature stating that women are more expressive of emotions and have a greater intensity in emotional experiences (Brody & Hall, 2008) in addition to reporting more stress (Matud, 2004) and anxiety (McLean & Anderson, 2009) than men. However, it is important to note that being more emotional does not only encompass negative emotions but also positive emotions, and it is likely that this can have an impact on children's emotional development.

Overall, our findings replicate and strengthen some of the results from Gundersen and Gjøen's (2020) original work where they developed the PBEQ and examined gender differences in a Norwegian sample. For example, Gundersen and Gjøen (2020) also found

that fathers were more likely to agree with masculine beliefs and less likely to agree with beliefs related to Uncertainty Avoidance, compared to mothers. Contrastingly, we found gender differences in Power Distance, with fathers holding more power distant beliefs than mothers, whereas Gundersen and Gjøen (2020) did not. One possible explanation for this could be that our sample was more equally distributed in regard to fathers responding to the questionnaire.

It is quite surprising that we found gender differences in parental beliefs about emotions regarding Power Distance, Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance considering Norway is rated as the third most gender equal country in the world (World Economic Forum, 2021) as well as the overall low score on Masculinity (Hofstede et al., 2005). In addition, Norway has enforced several legislations that promote equal caregiving responsibility, such as paternity leave (Folketrygdloven, 1997, § 14-1 - 14-18) and the Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act (Equality and Anti-Discrimination Act, 2017). This leads to equal opportunities to combine family and work life, and we assumed that this could result in mothers and fathers being more similar in their parenting practices and beliefs about emotions. It is therefore interesting that Norwegian mothers and fathers differed on beliefs related to Power Distance, Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance. One possible explanation for these gender differences is that, despite these policies paving way for mothers and fathers to be equally involved in family life, mothers still seem to be the main caregivers in most families. Even though most Norwegian mothers are involved in the labor market they are still expected to care for the family and children, while for men, caring is seen as an option and not an obligation (Melby et al., 2008). This is also reflected in Norwegian mothers reporting more work-family conflict compared to Norwegian fathers (Innstrand et al., 2009). Further, Nygren et al. (2020) found that traditional gender norms in relation to parenting responsibilities still persists in gender equal countries such as Norway and Sweden.

Overall, regarding creating a more gender equal society, women are more integrated in the labor market, but it has been harder to engage men in care and unpaid housework (Andenæs, 2005). Another point of consideration is that even in societies like Norway where men are overall more engaged as caregivers, women still feel more of the historical social pressure on child-rearing, as presented by Viana et al. (2021) in a recent report to Barne-, ungdoms- og familiedirektoratet (Bufdir). Thus, even though traditional gender roles have changed in Norway, there still seems to be differences between mothers and fathers on how involved they are in childrearing, which in turn may influence their beliefs about emotions. Future studies could explore more in depth how the narrative of these beliefs about emotions

are shaped by mothers and fathers in Norway, which could improve the policies in Norway to promote an ideal gender-balanced society.

Despite finding significant gender differences between Norwegian parents from a within culture approach, it is important to acknowledge the bigger picture. From a cross-cultural approach, both mothers and fathers scored relatively similar on all of the dimensions regarding high or low score, and although the differences were significant, they were also small. Future cross-cultural studies using the PBEQ should elucidate cultural differences while also controlling for the impact of gender.

In addition to our main analysis related to gender differences, the results also revealed significant age differences in beliefs about emotions related to Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance among parents, whereas no significant age differences in beliefs related to Masculinity was found. Younger parents tended to hold more beliefs related to Uncertainty Avoidance, compared to older parents. This suggests that younger parents agreed more with beliefs such as believing children need help to understand the emotions they are experiencing. Compared to younger parents, older parents tended to hold more beliefs related to Power Distance, such as expecting children to hide their emotions when they are with adults and punishing children when they do something they are not allowed to. These findings illustrate that certain parental beliefs about emotions do not only differ between mothers and fathers, but also between different generations. As mentioned previously, the Norwegian society values egalitarianism and promotes equality through different policies, such as paternal leave. These policies are however historically recent and therefore highlight how important macro policies help to revise and change beliefs. Hence, following Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979), changes in the macro system (e.g., policies) influence the microsystem (e.g., parental beliefs). Differences in beliefs about emotion could also differ in regard to other demographic variables such as socioeconomic status, but this was beyond the scope of this thesis. Future studies could explore more in depth, for example, which variables potentially moderate the impact of gender on cultural beliefs about emotions.

Relationship Between Parental Beliefs About Emotions and Children's Emotion Regulation

Considering the three cultural dimensions included in the final analysis, our second hypothesis was partially confirmed as we found a significant relationship between parental beliefs about emotions and children's emotion regulation. The correlational analysis showed that Emotion Regulation was positively related to Uncertainty Avoidance and negatively associated with Masculinity and Power Distance, indicating that there is a relationship

between what parents believe about emotions and adaptive emotion regulation in their children. More specifically, the hierarchical regression analysis revealed that Power Distance and Masculinity had significant unique contributions to the variance in Emotion Regulation, when age and gender of the parents and children were taken into account. The findings are overall in line with previous research showing how cultural values are related to emotion competence (e.g., Kitayama et al., 2004; Miyamoto & Ma, 2011), and how this directly (through emotion socialization) and indirectly (by being a part of a cultural context) affects the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1986).

Regarding the age and gender of the children, there were no significant differences in emotion regulation between girls and boys, or between preschool and school-age children. This was an interesting finding as it is inconsistent with previous research, which suggests both gender (e.g., Chaplin & Aldao, 2013; Eschenbeck et al., 2007; Zahn-Waxler et al., 2008; Zeman & Shipman, 1998), and age (e.g., Aldwin, 2007; Carlson & Wang, 2007; Sala et al., 2014) differences in emotion regulation development. Regarding age, it is possible that our sample was not diverse enough or not normally distributed resulting in no differences. In addition, emotion regulation skills were measured by parental report, and it is possible that the measure did not accurately reflect the children's actual skills. Differences in age could possibly have been found if the children were assessed directly, for example by observation or children-reports.

Previous literature has suggested gender differences in emotional expression, coping and emotion regulation. Generally, starting early and across development, girls are more able to inhibit negative behaviors, control impulses and suppress anger, and are more able to regulate emotions than boys (Zahn-Waxler et al., 2008). However, we did not find any gender differences in our results. One possible explanation could be that gender differences in emotional processes often are influenced by several other variables such as personality, social, and cultural variables, and in addition emotional processes (e.g., expression, experience), quality of emotions (e.g., intensity, frequency), and characteristics of the task (Brody & Hall, 2008). Notably, variances in the existing empirical evidence might be due to variations in studied age groups, as well as different assessment methods for emotion regulation. Another explanation could be that, overall, Norwegian society is very feminine according to Hofstede et al. (2005), with small differences between emotional and social roles among genders. This might also justify that although there were differences between mothers and fathers regarding their parental beliefs about emotions, gender of the parents was not a significant predictor of

children's emotion regulation skills when the cultural dimensions were entered into the regression model.

The cultural dimensions which had a significant contribution in explaining children's emotion regulation skills will be addressed separately in the next following sections.

Power Distance and Emotion Regulation

Parents who held more power distant beliefs about emotions had children with less adaptive emotion regulation. Following Hofstede's (2011) definition that Power Distance relates to the extent inferior members of organizations and institutions accept and expects unequal power distribution, this can be seen in the context of family life. Indeed, the family can be viewed as an institution where the children are in a position of lesser authority and autonomy than their parents. Therefore, parents have the power to create a foundation and environment for what the child is allowed to do. The cultural dimension of Power Distance is reflected in the parent-child relationship and might be related to parenting styles. Parents who score high on Power Distance often teach children obedience (Hofstede, 2011), and this coincides with an authoritarian parenting style which values obedience and restricts the child's autonomy, while at the same time shows little emotional availability and warmth towards the child (Baumrind, 1966). This strict way of upbringing might affect the child's emotional development, where the parent's do not allow the child to express their emotions freely. The literature reports that children with harsh and strict parents have more emotion regulation problems (Calkins et al., 1998; Eisenberg et al., 2005) and, although we have not assessed parenting styles directly, this is in line with our finding showing that parents who held more power distant beliefs had children with less adaptive emotion regulation skills. On the other hand, a warmer and more responsive parent might hold less power distant beliefs, and thus possibly have children with better emotion regulation skills. This is consistent with research showing how this style of parenting promotes self-regulatory skills in children (Colman et al., 2006; Williams & Berthelsen, 2017). Emotion-coaching parents promotes the development of emotion regulation in children by being warm, supportive and giving specific guidance on managing feelings (Calkins & Hill, 2007). Future studies should include actual parental practices when measuring the relationship between parental cultural beliefs and children's emotion regulation, so the links between what they think about emotions and what they do in emotional contexts can be better understood. Considering previous findings showing that parental beliefs are associated with parents' self-reported socialization behaviors (Wong et al., 2008), it would be interesting to investigate, for example, if parental practices mediate the relationship between parental beliefs and children's emotion regulation

development. Naturalistic observation can also be valid to investigate how the scores in the questionnaire are reflected in real parent-child social interaction.

However, it is important to point out that the parents in our sample scored relatively low on this dimension, suggesting again, that from a cross cultural approach, Norwegian mothers and fathers generally favor an equal distribution of power and that inequalities should be minimized. This coincides with Hollekim et al. (2016) finding that harsh parenting practices is considered inappropriate in Norway, and that the child is viewed as an equal individual. Our samples low score on Power Distance is also consistent with literature suggesting that Germanic and Western countries often score low on this dimension (Hofstede et al., 2005). This could further indicate that Norwegian parents have a less strict and harsh, and more open and responsive way of raising their children, which in turn results in more adaptive ways of regulating emotions. Moreover, this type of positive parenting also involves specific rules and boundaries that help the child know what to expect in terms of emotional expression in the home (Morris et al., 2013). Because children know what to expect, this might increase the emotional security and help them express emotions in socially accepted ways. Based on these findings, it would be interesting to investigate if the relationship between power distant beliefs and children's emotion regulation is the same, or possibly stronger, in cultures which score high in Power Distance (e.g., Asian cultures such as Malaysia and the Philippines, Latin cultures such as Panama and Mexico and Eastern European cultures such as Russia and Slovakia; Hofstede et al., 2005).

Masculinity and Emotion Regulation

Parents who held more masculine beliefs about emotions had children with less adaptive emotion regulation. Considering Masculinity was positively correlated to Power Distance, it is reasonable that both masculine and power distant beliefs were associated with less adaptive emotion regulation. The dimension of Masculinity versus Femininity is related to gender roles, both social and emotional (Hofstede et al., 2005). In masculine cultures the gender roles are distinct where men are supposed to be tough, assertive, and non-emotional whereas women are supposed to be nurturing, tender and emotional (Basabe et al., 2000). In feminine cultures on the other hand, gender roles are less distinct and overlap, where both men and women focus on intrapersonal relationships and are allowed to be emotional (Hofstede, 2011). Thus, in feminine cultures it is normal for both mothers and fathers to be equally involved in raising their children and guiding them emotionally.

Even though we found gender differences in beliefs related to Masculinity, both mothers and fathers scored relatively low on Masculinity, and this is also the case in Hofstede

et al. (2005) earlier work where both Norwegian men and women expressed equally tender and nurturing values. It is reasonable to assume that having two equally involved parents promotes adaptive regulation as is the norm in feminine cultures such as Norway. It also seems that paternal influences are beneficial for the development of children's regulatory behavior. For example, Parke (1996) demonstrated how father-child interactions were characterized by more emotional arousal in addition to more unpredictability and argued that these interactions could provide greater opportunities for learning emotion regulation skills. As previously mentioned, policies such as paternity leave make it more accessible for fathers to get emotionally involved with their children and a report with Nordic fathers showed that fathers who took long paternity leave (two months or more) were more likely to look into information about parenting, share childcare responsibilities equally and were less likely to adhere to traditional norms of masculinity (Cederström, 2019). Taken together these results suggest that feminine cultures, such as Norway, through overlapping gender roles and equality promoting policies foster an environment where children can develop adaptive emotion regulatory skills.

Having distinct gender roles in masculine cultures also sets the norm for how boys and girls are expected to express and regulate their emotions. This often involves boys being allowed to be aggressive, but not to cry, and girls being allowed to express sadness but not anger (Brody, 2000; Hofstede et al., 2005), possibly resulting in both girls and boys suppressing certain emotions. Use of emotional suppression has been associated with negative social consequences and detrimental effects for emotion regulation (Butler et al., 2003; Gross & John, 2003). In contrast, in feminine cultures where gender roles overlap, girls and boys might be allowed to express all emotions more freely and possibly learn how to regulate emotions in more adaptive ways. This is also reflected in our results where we found no gender differences between girls and boys in adaptive emotion regulation, whereas previous research on gender differences have found boys to show more dysregulation compared to girls, in samples from cultures scoring relatively high on Masculinity such as Germany (Eschenbeck et al., 2007) and the United States (Zahn-Waxler et al., 2008; Zeman & Shipman, 1998).

In addition to differences in gender roles, masculine and feminine cultures also have different societal values which may influence emotion regulation. In masculine cultures the dominant values are competition, performance, success, money, and assertiveness, whereas in feminine cultures, such as Norway, cooperation and concern for the weak is valued (Hofstede et al., 2005). Our results revealed high levels of feminine beliefs among the parents in

addition to high levels of adaptive emotion regulation among the children. Based on these findings it seems that when parents hold feminine beliefs, they potentially tend to create a consistent and responsive environment where children feel nurtured, accepted and emotionally secure, as well as feeling free to express their emotions because they know their emotional needs will be met (Morris et al., 2007). It has also been suggested that in feminine cultures there is a perceived responsibility to provide emotional support to others, and that social support may be higher in feminine cultures, providing the individual with a strong social network in times of distress (Basabe et al., 2002). When children are young, they often rely on caregivers for social support and guidance as a way to regulate their emotions (Calkins & Hill, 2007), thus having a large and caring social network may increase the amount of people the child can rely on to help them regulate distressing emotions. In fact, research from Norway shows that parents are not only concerned about caregiving towards their own children, but also engage in parenting practices and care for other people's children (Bendixsen & Danielsen, 2019). There is a desire for everyone to be taken care of, in order to create an egalitarian society (Bendixsen & Danielsen, 2019).

Cultural Beliefs About Emotions and Children's Emotion Regulation

To summarize, beliefs about emotions related to Power Distance and Masculinity had a unique contribution to children's emotion regulation skills, when age and gender of parents and child were controlled for. These findings strengthen the assumption that culture plays a role in children's development of emotion regulation through the way parents think about the emotional life. In other words, cultural values affect parent's beliefs about emotions and these cultural beliefs have an impact on children's ability to regulate emotions.

It is also important to raise some critical reflections on Uncertainty Avoidance. Although the dimension correlated with emotion regulation, it did not have a significant contribution to Emotion Regulation in children in the final model of the regression analysis. This could be a result of the questionnaire not adequately capturing the essence of the dimension, or the fact that it measured beliefs about emotions related to the dimension but not necessarily the dimension in question. The finding that the relationship with emotion regulation was positive was quite surprising because we would expect Uncertainty Avoidance to negatively influence emotion regulation. This is on the basis that this dimension is closely related to negative emotions and traits, such as fear, anxiety, stress, and neuroticism, and it is conceivable that these traits might be related to children's development. For example, one study found that maternal neuroticism was related to overprotective parenting (Coplan et al., 2009). This was in turn associated with an authoritarian and coercive parenting style and had

negative relations to child emotion dysregulation. Moreover, there is evidence suggesting that family stress is associated with how parents socialize their children's emotions, where more family stress leads to less supportive and more non-supportive techniques to teach children about emotions (Nelson et al., 2009). Parental stress has also been found to moderate the relationship between parental beliefs about emotions, such as the value of children's positive and negative emotions, and children's attachment security (Stelter & Halberstadt, 2011). Specifically, when parents are stressed, their beliefs about the value of children's emotions can act like a buffer, protecting or enhancing children's attachment security. Our contradicting finding could be a result of many factors related to the questionnaire or, possibly, that not all aspects of Uncertainty Avoidance play a role in children's emotion development.

Overall, the results show that parental emotional beliefs related to the cultural dimensions of Masculinity and Power Distance had an impact on children's emotion regulation. These findings could possibly indicate that not all aspects of culture are of equal significance in children's emotion development. Nevertheless, in light of the Bronfenbrenner ecological model (1979), this study has highlighted the importance of taking cultural values into consideration when assessing factors that might impact children's emotion development in general, and emotion regulation in particular. In this case, parental beliefs about emotions are influenced by certain cultural values and have an impact on more or less adaptive emotion regulation skills.

Limitations and Future Directions

The study presented in this thesis has clear limitations that must be taken into account when interpreting and generalizing the results. Firstly, the sample was relatively homogenous as all participants were mainly middle to upper class parents with higher education. Our goal was to examine Norwegian culture, and therefore we intentionally excluded non-Norwegian native speakers. However, this limits the generalizability of the results to other cultural groups, and future studies should aim to have a more diverse group to ensure representativeness of the results. It would also be interesting to replicate this design with immigrants as to understand the role of acculturation on beliefs about emotions and children's emotional development.

Furthermore, our findings showed that some parental beliefs about emotions were related to emotion regulation in children. If we had a comparison group (i.e., a different culture), we would have been able to see if this relationship was different for the two cultures. Cross-cultural studies may help to understand how these cultural mechanisms might operate

similarly or differently in various cultures. It should be noted that our original plan for this project was to compare two different cultures, namely Norwegian and Brazilian, to see if there were differences in beliefs about emotions and how this would be related to children's emotion regulation. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, cross-cultural cooperation became difficult to implement.

Another limitation was in relation to the methods used in this thesis. The data was based on self-report and parental report about their children's emotional competence and, thus, these findings are subject to the possibility of social desirability. In addition, self-reports cannot be linked to actual behavior. The same goes for parental reports; what parents observe and report in a questionnaire does not necessarily reflect actual behavior in real situations, especially when it comes to emotion regulation in children. Future research should combine measurements of parental beliefs and observation of parental behavior to control for consistency. It is also possible that the relationship we found between parental beliefs and children's emotion regulation is rather a relationship between parent's beliefs about emotions and parent's beliefs about emotion regulation, and not children's actual regulatory skills. Therefore, it is important for future studies to include other measurements of emotion regulation in children (such as direct observations) than parental report, to rule out these biases. In addition, including other emotional competences, for example, emotion understanding and expression, would be relevant to assess which aspects of emotion development seems more or less impacted by cultural values and beliefs.

There are also limitations concerning the questionnaires used in this study. Regarding the Parental Beliefs about Emotions Questionnaire, it is a newly developed questionnaire, and a shortened and revised version was piloted in this study. Even though this thesis did not have a psychometric goal, the reliability of the statements related to each of the six dimensions was calculated in order to evaluate the consistency of our measure. The analysis revealed that only three (Power Distance, Masculinity and Uncertainty Avoidance) out of the six dimensions had good or acceptable reliability. Therefore, the reliability data uncovered in the present study should be considered in future revisions of the PBEQ. In addition, the questionnaire still lacks a validation analysis, making it hard to guarantee that the questions included measured beliefs about emotions related to the Hofstede dimensions. Some of the cultural dimensions were also measured with few questions and therefore there is a high possibility that the questions did not capture all aspects of the dimensions. As part of Viana's postdoc project, this step will be taken into consideration before the present findings can be submitted to publication. Qualitative analysis through focus groups interviews is also planned to explore the narrative

around beliefs about emotions; this can provide in-depth insight on differences on the emotional beliefs within and across cultures and can potentially help to improve the questionnaire.

Regarding the Emotion Regulation Checklist, it does not differentiate between specific emotions. Parental beliefs and socialization practices related to children's emotions may vary for different emotions, for example, anger might be socialized and expressed differently from socialization processes associated with sadness. Thus, adaptive emotion regulation might vary depending on the emotion in question. This emphasizes the extent of studies within the field of emotions, and that findings from our and other studies should always be interpreted with caution due to the variances depending on methods and which specific emotions are assessed.

Moreover, we did not control for other potential variables that could affect the relationships found, such as personality and temperament. Future research could benefit from controlling for these variables when assessing both parental beliefs, and children's emotion regulation. Future research should also examine the relationship between parental beliefs and children's emotion regulation in other age ranges, such as infancy and adolescence, to see if there are differences in which beliefs (cultural values) that are associated with adaptive emotion regulation at certain developmental stages.

Lastly, it would be interesting to explore how cultural beliefs about emotions impact emotion regulation through parental practice. Our discussion points out that parental practices possibly is one of the explanatory mechanisms for the relationship found between beliefs and emotion regulation. Future studies should focus not only on what parents think, but also include measures of parenting styles and practices.

Conclusion

This thesis aimed to investigate differences between mothers and fathers regarding beliefs about emotions, and how these beliefs impact children's emotion regulation. Our findings therefore lead to two main conclusions. First, gender seems to have an impact on parental beliefs about emotions among Norwegian parents, suggesting that although Norwegian mothers and fathers overall scored similarly on the three cultural dimensions included in the analysis, there are within cultural differences explained by gender. Still, when gender of the parents was included in the model to test our second hypothesis, it did not take away the role of cultural beliefs about emotions in explaining children's emotion regulation. Thus, the second main conclusion is that parental beliefs about emotions related to the cultural dimensions of Masculinity and Power Distance had an impact on emotional development in children, specifically on emotion regulation skills. Overall, our study supports

Eisenberg et al. (1998) emotion socialization framework where external influences, such as culture and parents, is of great importance in the child's emotional development. Since the beliefs about emotions were intended to reflect cultural values, the findings also provide support for Bronfenbrenner's ecological model (1979) where culture has an influence on parents' emotional beliefs. Further, these beliefs have an impact on children's ability to regulate emotions and illustrates how macrosystems (cultural values) and microsystems (parents or primary caregivers) both influence the child's development. This thesis also sheds light on how complex the relationship between these different ecological systems is.

Our study shows the importance of taking cultural variations, specifically Power Distance and Masculinity related values, into account when assessing parental beliefs and children's development of emotion regulation. An important next step would be to include parent's socialization behaviors to investigate if these behaviors could mediate the relationship between parental beliefs and children's emotion regulation. Even though the present study gave an extensive look into parental beliefs and emotion regulation in a Norwegian cultural context, it is important to note that our results do not mean that the Norwegian culture (or similar cultures) is necessarily better for children's emotional development. Rather, that it is important to understand how cultural values regarding emotions, impact emotion regulation. This is also relevant to implement in intervention programs with parents which is culturally situated. Professionals should consider how cultural beliefs could have an impact on children's emotional development when developing intervention programs, to ensure that they are culturally sensitive. Considering our findings indicate that gender has an influence on parental beliefs about emotions, gender differences in beliefs should also be considered in clinical settings, as well as in the development of intervention programs. The Norwegian society, along with other countries in the world, is characterized by an increase in immigration and globalization, resulting in people with different cultural backgrounds living together. Therefore, parents, teachers, clinicians and generally all professionals working with children and families need to be aware of how parental beliefs about emotions may differ and how these beliefs might have an impact on children's emotional development.

Despite the limitations of this study, the present study has extended the knowledge of how culture plays a role in shaping parent's beliefs about emotions and, in turn, how these beliefs impact children's emotion regulation. It is important for parents to be aware of how their beliefs may influence their children's emotion regulation, and this study has highlighted the importance of acknowledging the cultural context. Overall, our findings have contributed

to better insights into the mechanisms behind emotion regulation, parental beliefs, and culture, as well as the interaction between them.

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Appendix A: Information letter

We invite you to participate in a research project which aims to investigate parents' thoughts about children's emotions, across different cultures. Below, we give you information about the project and what participation will mean for you.

Who is responsible for the research project?
Research Fellow Karine Viana, Department of Psychology, University of Oslo, is the person responsible for the project.

Why are you asked to participate?
We are interested in parents from different cultures who have children aged 3-8 years old and you have been contacted based on the age of your child. Approximately, 350 parents (with a Norwegian or Brazilian background) will be contacted via schools, kindergartens and Facebook groups.

What does it mean for you to participate?
If you choose to participate in the project, it means that you fill out an online questionnaire that contains some background questions and questions about parents' thoughts about children's feelings and children's emotion regulation. It will take you about 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Participation is voluntary and anonymous
Your responses are completely anonymous and they will be deleted after the end of the project. Your participation is voluntary and you can withdraw at any time without giving any explanation with no negative consequences for you.

Where can I find out more?
If you have questions about the study and ethical procedures, please contact the project coordinator at the Department of Psychology (UiO), Karine Viana (kmviana@psykologi.uio.no), or the master students responsible for data collection Elin Doan (elindoa@student.sv.uio.no) and Silje M. Nordvik (siljemn@student.sv.uio.no).

Please, tick the box below to indicate that you have received and understood the information about the project "Parents and feelings" in order to proceed.

☐ I want to participate in the survey

Appendix B: Parental Beliefs about Emotions Questionnaire

Questions marked "ur" are irrelevant for the dimension. Questions marked "r" are reversed.

Overview

Individualism: Question 1-3

Power Distance: Question 4-5

Masculinity: Question 6-7

Uncertainty Avoidance: Question 8

Long Term Orientation: Question 9

Indulgence: Question 10-12

Information to the participants before answering the questionnaire

You are now about to start the questionnaire, but first we will inform you about a few guidelines:

Throughout the questions it is important that you have your son/daughter of in mind. When the question is adult-directed, we ask you to keep yourself in focus (not the general population). If a question is hard to answer, we are interested in your best guess.

Parental Beliefs about Emotions Questionnaire

In the next section we have a series of questions with several following statements. We would like you to rate to what degree you agree or disagree with <u>all</u> the given statements. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your beliefs about your child's emotions. It is possible to agree or disagree with all or several statements in the same topic.

Response scale:

1-Strongly Disagree   **2**-Disagree   **3**-Neither Disagree nor agree   **4**-Agree   **5**-Strongly Agree

Q1. *You believe that when your child is sad, it would be ok/all right that he/she:*
   a. finds his/her own way to deal with his/her sadness   1 2 3 4 5
   b. talk about his/her sadness with others   1 2 3 4 5
   c. remains strong and brave by for example
      not showing his/her sadness (r)   1 2 3 4 5
   d. expresses his/her sadness regardless of the people around   1 2 3 4 5

Q2. *You believe that shame ….*
   a. … is important for learning what is right and wrong   (r)   1 2 3 4 5
   b. … is important for learning good social behavior   (r)   1 2 3 4 5
   c. … is a feeling that is harmful for children's development   1 2 3 4 5
   d. … does not impact children's social competence   1 2 3 4 5

Q3. *Imagine your child is expressing feelings of disappointment when receiving a gift that he/she does not like. You then believe it is important to…*
   a. Punish him/her   (r)   1 2 3 4 5
   b. Ignore and pretend that you did not hear it   (ur)   1 2 3 4 5
   c. Acknowledge the situation,   1 2 3 4 5
      and allow him/her to express his/her disappointment
   d. Tell him/her to be polite, and say thank you   (r)   1 2 3 4 5

Q4. *You believe that when your child is with adults in general (i.e. parents, neighbors, teachers, strangers) it is important that he/she hides feelings of:*
   a. Anger   1 2 3 4 5
   b. Sadness   1 2 3 4 5
   c. Fear   1 2 3 4 5
   d. Happiness   1 2 3 4 5

Q5. *Imagine being angry at your child when he/she did something he/she was not allowed to do (i.e. break a window, hit a friend). You then believe it is important to..*
   a. ... discuss with the child why it was wrong   (r)   1 2 3 4 5
   b. …give physical punishment   1 2 3 4 5

c. …take away privileges (e.g., no TV, no playing with friends)　　1 2 3 4 5

d. …express or talk about your feelings of
disappointment or anger with your child　　(ur)　　1 2 3 4 5

Q6. *When it comes to children's expression of feelings, you believe it is ok that*

a. boys use more physical expressions than girls　　1 2 3 4 5

b. girls use more verbal expressions than boys　　1 2 3 4 5

c. boys and girls express anger the same way　　(r)　　1 2 3 4 5

d. girls are more emotional than boys　　1 2 3 4 5

Q7. *You believe it is ok for your child to express and talk about feelings with his/her:*

a. Mother　　(ur)　　1 2 3 4 5

b. Father　　(r)　　1 2 3 4 5

c. Grandmother　　(ur)　　1 2 3 4 5

d. Grandfather　　(r)　　1 2 3 4 5

Q8. *You believe it is important to help your child to understand if he/she is ……*

a. Sad　　1 2 3 4 5

b. Angry　　1 2 3 4 5

c. Scared　　1 2 3 4 5

d. Happy　　1 2 3 4 5

Q9. *Imagine your child had a pet that died. A year later he/she sees a picture of his/her pet and starts feeling sad. You then believe it is important to…*

a. Talk to your child about why he/she is feeling sad　　(r)　　1 2 3 4 5

b. Tell your child to ignore this feeling and focus on the future　　1 2 3 4 5

c. Hug your child, show love and care　　(ur)　　1 2 3 4 5

d. pray with your child　　(ur)　　1 2 3 4 5

Q10. *You believe it is important to teach your child to carry on despite him/her feeling bored or restless...*

a. At family dinners　　(r)　　1 2 3 4 5

b. When the child has chores or homework (r)　　1 2 3 4 5

c. At public gatherings (religious meetings, parties, etc) (r)　　1 2 3 4 5

d. It is not important to teach your child this (ur)　　1 2 3 4 5

Q11. *You believe it is okay for your child to show, express or talk about happiness when ...*

a. ... in the store　　1 2 3 4 5

b. ... with grandparents　　1 2 3 4 5

c. ... when in class　　1 2 3 4 5

d. It is almost never okay to show happiness　　(r)　　1 2 3 4 5

Q12. *You believe it is okay for your child to show, express or talk about anger when ...*

a. … in the store　　1 2 3 4 5

b. … in the classroom	1 2 3 4 5
c. … at the doctor's office	1 2 3 4 5
d. It is almost never okay to show anger (r)	1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

Appendix C: Emotion Regulation Checklist

Below you will find several statements about your child. (Remember to only have one child in mind if you have several children). Please indicate to what degree each statement describes your child.

Read each statement and answer as honestly as possible. There are no right or wrong answers.

Response scale:

1 - Never   **2** - Sometimes   **3** - Often   **4** - Almost always

Please rate how often your child exhibits the following behaviors or emotional states.

1. Is a cheerful child.	1	2	3	4
2. Exhibits wide mood swings (for example, the child's emotional state is difficult to anticipate because s/he moves quickly from very positive to very negative emotional states).	1	2	3	4
3. Responds positively to neutral or friendly overtures by adults.	1	2	3	4
4. Transitions well from one activity to another (for example, does not become anxious, angry, distressed, or overly excited when moving from one activity to another).	1	2	3	4
5. Can recover quickly from episodes of upset or distress (for example, does not pout or remain sullen, anxious or sad after emotionally distressing events).	1	2	3	4
6. Is easily frustrated.	1	2	3	4
7. Responds positively to neutral or friendly overtures by peers.	1	2	3	4
8. Tantrums easily.	1	2	3	4
9. Is able to delay gratification.	1	2	3	4
10. Takes pleasure in the distress of others (for example, laughs when another person gets hurt or punished; enjoys teasing others).	1	2	3	4
11. Can modulate excitement in emotionally arousing situations (for example, does not get 'carried away' in high-energy play situations, or overly excited in inappropriate contexts).	1	2	3	4

12. Is whiny or clingy with teachers.   1   2   3   4

13. Is prone to disruptive outbursts of energy and exuberance.   1   2   3   4

14. Responds angrily to limit-setting by adults.   1   2   3   4

15. Can say when s/he is feeling sad, angry or mad, fearful or afraid.   1   2   3   4

16. Seems sad or listless.   1   2   3   4

17. Is overly exuberant when attempting to engage others in play.   1   2   3   4

18. Displays flat affect (for example, expression is vacant and unexpressive; child seems emotionally absent).   1   2   3   4

19. Responds negatively to neutral or friendly overtures by peers (for example, speaks in an angry tone of voice; or responds angrily and aggressively).   1   2   3   4

20. Is impulsive.   1   2   3   4

21. Is empathic toward others; shows concern or sadness when others are upset or distressed.   1   2   3   4

22. Displays exuberance that others find intrusive or disruptive.   1   2   3   4

23. Displays appropriate negative affect (for example, anger, fear, frustration, distress) in response to hostile, aggressive or intrusive acts by peers.   1   2   3   4

24. Displays negative affect when attempting to engage others in play.   1   2   3   4

Thank you for your participation!