Linking Mother Disclosure, Child Disclosure and Child Outcomes within a Domain Specific Approach

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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Abstract

Seventy seven mothers and their 12-14 year old children participated in a study exploring the role of maternal disclosure on children's disclosure and on positive child outcomes. Disclosure was examined in two domains: protection (referring to worries and distressing situations) and control (referring to values and proper behavior), and two child outcomes were assessed for each domain: empathy and prosocial behavior (protection), and compliance and conduct problems (control). Maternal disclosure facilitated children’s protection disclosure only if children liked this disclosure. Maternal control disclosure predicted compliance only for children who liked this form of disclosure, and maternal protection disclosure predicted compliance only for children who disclosed about their own worries and concerns. Motivations behind disclosure were also assessed, revealing that mothers disclose to their child as a means of teaching behaviors and to encouraging disclosure, whereas children disclose to seek advice and comfort.
Acknowledgments

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Table of Contents

Aknowledgements.......................................................................................................................... iii

Table of Contents ........................................................................................................................... iv

List of Tables .................................................................................................................................. vi

List of Figures ............................................................................................................................... vii

1 Introduction .................................................................................................................................. 1
  1.1 Child Disclosure.................................................................................................................. 1
  1.2 Facilitating Child Disclosure ......................................................................................... 3
  1.3 Mother Disclosure as a Facilitator of Child Disclosure ................................................. 4
  1.4 The Present Study: Liking Mother Disclosure, Child Disclosure and Child Outcomes within a Domain Specific Approach ............................................................................ 6
  1.5 Hypotheses.......................................................................................................................... 7

2 Method ......................................................................................................................................... 8
  2.1 Participants.......................................................................................................................... 8
  2.2 Procedure ........................................................................................................................... 9
  2.3 Measures ........................................................................................................................... 9
    2.3.1 Mother Disclosure........................................................................................................ 9
    2.3.2 Child Disclosure.......................................................................................................... 10
    2.3.3 Child Liking of Mother's Disclosure ......................................................................... 10
    2.3.4 Reasons for disclosure ............................................................................................. 10
    2.3.5 Prosocial Behavior ................................................................................................. 11
    2.3.6 Empathy .................................................................................................................. 11
    2.3.7 Child Compliance ................................................................................................... 11
    2.3.8 Conduct Problems.................................................................................................... 11

3 Results ......................................................................................................................................... 12
3.1 Preliminary Analyses ............................................................................................................. 12
3.2 Associations between Mother Disclosure and Child Disclosure ................................................. 13
3.3 Mother’s and children’s reasons for disclosure ........................................................................ 14
3.4 Child Liking of Mother’ Disclosure as Moderator between Mother Disclosure and Child Disclosure ................................................................................................................ 17
3.5 Associations between Child Disclosure, Mother Disclosure and Child Outcomes ........... 20
3.6 Child Liking of Mother’s Disclosure as a Moderator between Mother Disclosure and Child Outcomes ................................................................................................................ 21
3.7 Child Disclosure as a Mediator between Maternal Disclosure and Child Outcomes .......... 23
4 Discussion ........................................................................................................................................ 24
4.1 Does Mother Disclosure Facilitate their Children’s Disclosure? .......................................... 24
4.2 Why do Mothers and Children Disclose to each other? ....................................................... 24
4.3 Does Mother Disclosure Facilitate Positive Outcomes in their Children? ......................... 25
4.4 Does Children Disclosure Mediate the Relation Between Mother Disclosure and Positive Child Outcomes? ................................................................................................................. 25
4.5 Domain Specificity ................................................................................................................. 26
4.5 Limitations and Future Directions .......................................................................................... 26
References ...................................................................................................................................... 28
Appendices .................................................................................................................................. 32
List of Tables

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for the Study Variables .......................................................... 12

Table 2: Domain-Specific Correlations For Mother Disclosure, Child Disclosure, and Child Liking of Mother’s Disclosure................................................................. 14

Table 3: Reasons for Disclosure in the Protection Domain: Mother and Child Compared... 16

Table 4: Reasons for disclosure in the control domain: Mother and child compared .......... 17

Table 5: Child Liking of Mother’s Disclosure as A Moderator of the Relation Between Mother Disclosure and Child Disclosure........................................................................... 17

Table 6: Correlations Among Child Disclosure Variables and Domain Specific Outcomes 20

Table 7: Regression Analysis of Mother Disclosure and Child Liking of Mother’s Disclosure Predicting Domain-Specific Child Outcomes .......................................................... 21
List of Figures

Figure 1: Interaction Between Mother Protection Disclosure and Child Liking of Mother’s Protection Disclosure in the Prediction of Child Protection Disclosure ...................... 19

Figure 2: Interaction between Mother Control Disclosure and Child Liking of Mother’s Control Disclosure in the Prediction of Child Protection Disclosure .......................... 19

Figure 3: Interaction between Mother Control Disclosure and Child Liking of Mother’s Control Disclosure in the Prediction Of Child Compliance ................................. 22

Figure 4: Child Disclosure in the Protection Domain Mediates the Link Between Mother Disclosure in the Protection Domain and Child Compliance ................................. 23
List of Appendices

Appendix A: Disclosure Questionnaire Mother and Children Versions Compiled. ..................... 32
1 Introduction

Research has consistently shown that children’s voluntary disclosure is a major source of parents’ knowledge of their children’s whereabouts, activities, thoughts, and feelings (Stat tin and Kerr, 2000; Kerr and Stattin, 2002). Moreover, many features of the parent-child relationship have been shown to facilitate voluntary disclosure. In the present study we extended investigation of facilitators of disclosure to another area, that of parental voluntary disclosure. Although self-disclosure is reciprocal among peer dyads (Dindia, 1982), we know little about the extent to which it is reciprocal among mother-child dyads. Accordingly, the present study examined the relation between mother disclosure, child disclosure and outcomes, within a domain specific approach (Grusec & Davidov, 2010). We focused on two areas of behavior: situations related to distress (protection domain) and situations related to values and proper behavior (control domain). The main body of your thesis begins here.

1.1 Child Disclosure

Parents can try different alternatives for obtaining knowledge about their children, but these might not be as effective as the child’s willingness to tell things spontaneously. Studies by Stattin and Kerr (2000) and Kerr and Stattin (2002) have revealed the need for reinterpreting the traditional concept of parental monitoring. Theoretically, parental monitoring was conceived of as the active attempt to supervise children’s whereabouts and activities. In practice, however, this concept was measured as the knowledge parents reported having about their children’s activities without examining the specific behaviours that parents engaged in to obtain this knowledge (Kerr & Stattin, 2000; Stattin & Kerr, 2000). Their findings suggest that parent’s knowledge comes mainly from adolescents’ willingness to disclose information, and that the role of adolescents is more active than previously thought. In their study, child disclosure explained more variance than both parental control and parental solicitation. They state that parent’s knowledge of children’s lives outside home depends in large part on the information that children decide to disclose to them. Stattin and Kerr’s findings not only marked the beginning of a new approach to parental monitoring, but revealed the need for studying child disclosure in
greater depth, both as a predictor of parents’ knowledge and predictor of positive child outcomes.

Research about the many benefits of parent’s knowledge in relation to child outcomes is abundant. Low levels of parents’ knowledge of children’s activities, experiences and whereabouts have been associated with delinquent and antisocial behaviour (Stattin & Kerr, 2000; Vieno, Nation, Pastore, Santinello, 2009), conduct problems (Eaton, Krueger, Johnson, McGue & Iacono, 2009) experimentation with drugs (Chilcoat & Anthony, 1996), peer problems (Patterson & Stouthamer-Loeber, 1984), and reduced school achievement (Crouter, MacDermid, MacHale & Perry-Jenkins, 1990). In addition, high levels of parent’s knowledge of children’s thoughts and feelings have been associated with better coping abilities, more prosocial behavior (Vinik, Almas, & Grusec 2009), less fearful temperaments (Kiel & Buss, 2006), greater compliance (Grusec & Davidov, 2006), and fewer or more satisfactorily-resolved conflicts with parents (Hastings & Grusec, 1997). If, as previous research has shown, child disclosure is the main source of parent’s knowledge, and it is known that parent’s knowledge is associated with a variety of positive outcomes, then it is reasonable to assume that child disclosure may lead to similar outcomes.

Research about the direct benefits of disclosure is also plentiful. Past literature shows that disclosing emotional experiences to others is associated with better physical health, increased psychological and physiological well-being, and better coping (Pennebaker, 1990; Pennebaker, Colder, & Sharp, 1990; Pennebaker, Zech, & Rimé, 2001; for a review see Smyth, 1998). However, the specific topic of positive outcomes associated with child disclosure in the context of parent-child relationships has only recently been explored. Child disclosure to parents has been identified as the most powerful predictor of child adjustment (Kerr and Stattin, 2000). A study by Wissink, Dekovic and Meijer (2006) found that higher levels of disclosure were associated with lower levels of negativity in the parent-adolescent relationship and fewer aggressive acts. Tasopoulos-Chan, Smetana, and Yau (2009) found that adolescents who fully disclosed about all of their activities were more compliant with family obligations, trusted their parents more, and reported fewer conduct problems. Although these findings suggest that child disclosure acts as predictor of positive outcomes in the child, more evidence is needed regarding the mechanism by which child disclosure leads to better outcomes.
Both research about child disclosure and parent’s knowledge evidence the importance of parent-child communication processes in the development of healthier outcomes. Nonetheless, individual differences in children’s voluntary disclosure are likely to be attributable to family characteristics, factors in the context of the parent-child relationship or simply content of the information disclosed. Another important line of research has explored some of these variables that influence the likelihood of child disclosure to parents.

1.2 Facilitating Child Disclosure

Adolescent’s perceptions of the content they are obliged to disclose and their preferences in disclosing more to one parent than to another, are examples of factors that facilitate or inhibit children’s willingness to disclose to their parents. Smetana, Metzger, Gettman & Campione-Barr (2006) examined the role of disclosure in adolescent-parent relationships, particularly evaluating the adolescents’ and parent’s perceptions of adolescents’ obligations to disclose. They found that adolescents felt that they were more obligated to disclose about issues related to risk activities (i.e. drinking alcohol, smoking, consuming drugs), and less obligated to disclose about moral and conventional issues (i.e. how to treat friends, keeping promises, spreading rumors). On the other hand, parents perceived that adolescents were obliged to disclose to them more than what adolescents perceived they were actually obliged to. Although adolescents disclosed more to mothers than to fathers, mothers overrated their daughters’ disclosure. Similarly, Noller and Callan (1990) found that adolescent girls reported that they disclosed more to mothers about sexual attitudes, relationships, and plans, whereas adolescent boys reported disclosing equally to fathers and mothers. Younis and Smollar (1985) found that although adolescents disclose more to mothers than to fathers, they disclose to both parents about social issues, schoolwork and future plans, more than they disclose about issues such as dating. Taken together, these studies show that factors such as the parent’s sex and the content of the information disclosed, although independent of the parent’s particular behaviors, still affect the likelihood of children’s voluntary disclosure.

Nonetheless, there are other factors influencing child disclosure that are more specific to the parenting behaviors that facilitate or inhibit communication between them. Past research seems to converge upon two types of predictors of disclosure: The first set of predictors is more related to parental discipline strategies, as several studies have found that authoritativeness (Darling,
Cumsille, Caldwell & Dowdy, et al., 2006; Almas, Grusec & Tackett, in press; Wissink, Dekociv, & Meijer, 2006), restrictive control (Wissink et al.,2006), psychological control (Smetana et al.,2006; Soenens, Vansteenkiste, Luyckx & Gossens, 2006), and behavioral control (Soenens et al.,2006) predict child disclosure. And the second set of predictors is more related to parental behaviors relevant to the parent-child relationship. Research has shown that factors such as parental responsiveness (Almas et al., in press; Wissink et al.,2006; Soenens et al.,2006) parental warmth and acceptance (Keijser, Frijns, Branje, & Meeus, 2009; Wissink et al.,2006; Smetana et al.,2006) and parental approval (Tilton-Weaver, Kerr, Pakelniskeine, Tokic et al.,2010; Keijsers et al.,2009; Darling et al.,2006) also predict child disclosure.

As adolescent’s disclosure over personal issues is perceived as less obligatory than other types of disclosure, parental acceptance may be particularly essential in creating a trusting environment in which adolescents feel more comfortable revealing personal information (Smetana et al.2006). Assuming that child disclosure to parents most likely occurs in the context of conversation, creating this type of trusting environment might also require that parents share personal information about themselves. Dindia (1982) studied reciprocity in self-disclosure and found that the more one member of a dyad disclosed the more the other one did. However, little is known about the extent to which self disclosure is specifically reciprocal among mother-child dyads. Presumably, parents who disclose more to their children are parents who enjoy sharing personal information with them because they consider their children competent enough to deal with this type of information.

1.3 Mother Disclosure as a Facilitator of Child Disclosure

The few studies on parent disclosure have focused mainly on adolescents’ perceptions of their parent’s disclosure and on the content of the information disclosed. Miller and Stubblefield (1993) asked college students to report how much parents had shared about different topics in their lives and to evaluate the quality of their parent’s disclosure. They found that the more disclosure to parents that adolescents reported, the more they reported receiving it in return. The researchers also found that disclosure to fathers was positively associated with paternal closeness whereas disclosure to mothers was not. Similarly, Dolgin and Berndt (1997) examined adolescents’ perceptions of their parents’ disclosure, but focusing on the depth and intimacy of the topics disclosed, and exploring the perceived motivations for parent disclosure. They found
that parents were reported to disclose less on more intimate topics than on less intimate ones, and that mothers particularly disclosed more on intimate topics than fathers did. In terms of motivations, adolescents’ main perceived reasons for disclosure were because their parents believed that the information disclosed would be of interest to them, and because the parents saw disclosure as a means of feeling closer to them. However, the motivation that they perceived as the least important was that their parents disclosed to them as a way of modeling disclosure.

One of the few studies directly examining parental reports on their own levels of disclosure was done by Dolgin (1996). The author explored parental disclosure with their late adolescent children comparing mothers and fathers. Parents were both asked to report on various topics that concerned them and to indicate whether they had actually discussed each topic with their children within the past couple of months. Parents were also asked about their reasons for disclosure. Overall, the results showed that parents’ levels of disclosure about concerns are relatively high and that they do so for a variety of reasons. Mothers were more likely to disclose about problems than fathers, and divorced parents disclosed more than parents in intact families. Reasons for disclosure were also different, as mother disclosed because they wanted to ask for advice, to vent, and to ask for emotional support, whereas fathers were more likely to disclose because they were trying to change their children’s behavior. The findings of this study not only suggest that parents, particularly mothers, may perceive disclosure to their children as a strategy for coping with their own concerns but also, as previously mentioned, that parents may enjoy these types of interactions as they consider that their children will make contributions in response to the information disclosed. Nonetheless, it is important to note that this study examined disclosure to late adolescents/young adults, as parental disclosure to younger children has not been explored. Further, Miller and Lane (1991) found that adolescents perceive parental disclosure as a pleasant experience that promotes closeness in the relationship.

However, more recent research has shown that certain types of parent disclosure can be detrimental to the child. Lehman & Koerner (2002) found that mothers’ disclosure of family financial hardship following divorce was associated with their daughter’s psychological distress. Similarly, Afifi, McManus, Hutchinson & Baker (2007) found that adolescents’ perceptions of their parents’ disclosures about divorce issues as inappropriate negatively predicted adolescents’ well-being. These results highlight the importance of considering children’s perceptions of their parents’ disclosure when studying parental disclosure. In the present study child’s liking of
mother’s disclosure was included as a possible moderator, as it is reasonable to expect that it would influence the relation between parental disclosure, child disclosure and positive outcomes in the child.

Taken together, the existing research on parental disclosure offers important contributions to the perceptions that adolescents have about parental disclosure, the content that is more frequently disclosed by parents, and even some of the possible motivation behind parents’ disclosure. However, none of these studies assesses parent disclosure and child disclosure under equivalent contents, motivations, and domains of socialization. In addition, more research is needed regarding the role that different types of parental disclosure may have on the pathway to positive child outcomes.

1.4 The Present Study: Linking Mother Disclosure, Child Disclosure and Child Outcomes Within a Domain Specific Approach.

For the present study, disclosure was considered in two socialization domains; maternal protection and maternal control. Grusec & Davidov (2010) recently proposed a framework to integrate different perspectives on existing research on socialization theory. The framework suggests that socialization processes have to be understood within a domain perspective and each domain refers to a specific form of interaction between the parent and the child: The protection domain refers to the interactions in which the child seeks alleviation from distress and support from the parents, and parents seek to comfort the child’s distress. As a result, we examined parent and child disclosure on topics related to distressing or anxiety provoking situations. In contrast, the control domain refers to the relationship between the child and the parent as an authority figure whose objective is to control the child’s behaviour and help the child with the internalization of values. For this domain, we examined disclosure about situations related to values and proper behavior.

This approach also suggests that different socialization mechanisms and outcomes take place in the different domains, as some parental behaviours are more appropriate in one domain than other another one. Previous research has shown that children whose parents respond effectively in the protection domain, are more competent at self-regulating distress, have greater empathic capability, tend to be more compliant, have more available models of prosocial
practices, and are more likely develop effective coping strategies (Cassidy, 1994; Eisenberg, Wentzel, & Harris, 1998; Davidov & Grusec, 2006; Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998; Bretherthon, Golby & Cho, 1997; Gottman, Katz & Hoove, 1996; cited in Grusec and Davidov, 2010).

Alternatively, parents, who respond effectively in the control domain, may have children with autonomous principled behaviour, that is, children who are capable of inhibiting themselves in order to do the right thing without any parent surveillance (Grusec & Davidov, 2010). Thus, for the present study it was expected that maternal disclosure in the protection domain predicted outcomes particular to that domain (i.e. empathy and prosocial behavior). It was also expected that maternal disclosure in the control domain predicted outcomes associated with that domain (i.e. compliance without surveillance, and fewer conduct problems).

Accordingly, the purpose of the present study was to explore the relation between mothers’ disclosure, child disclosure, and child outcomes and examine if this relation was moderated by child liking of maternal disclosure. It was expected that the content of the information disclosed by mother-child dyads in protection and control domains would play a role in this relation, presumably making the path from mother disclosure to child outcomes a domain specific one. Moreover, the present study sought to examine and compare the reasons behind mother and child disclosure to obtain additional information about the motivations that link mother and child disclosure. Further, the study attempted to identify possible domain-specific outcomes in the child, that were associated with both mother and child disclosure. Finally, another objective of the present study was to integrate mother disclosure and positive child outcomes in a model, in which child disclosure mediated the relation between them.

1.5 Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: Mothers who disclose more in the protection domain would have children who disclose more in that domain, whereas mothers who disclose in the control domain would have children who disclose more in that domain.

Hypothesis 2: Reasons for disclosure would be rated differently by mothers and children, and children’s reasons for disclosure would be different for both the protection and control domains. Mother’s reasons for disclosure in the protection and control domain would be oriented to teach desired behaviors (associated with distressing situations, and situations to doing the right thing) and to encourage disclosure in their early adolescent children. In contrast, children’ main reasons
for disclosure in the protection domain would be related to seeking protection from their mothers (comfort, advice, feeling better); and for the control domain, they would be related to their mothers’ need for and interest in knowing this information.

Hypothesis 3: Children’s liking of mother’s disclosure in the protection domain would moderate the relation between mother protection disclosure and child protection disclosure. As well, children’s liking of mother’s disclosure in the control domain would moderate the relation between mother control disclosure and child control disclosure.

Hypothesis 4: Child and mother disclosure in the protection domain would be associated with both empathy and prosocial behavior as both outcomes are related to the protection domain. Correspondingly, child and mother disclosure in the control domain would be associated with compliance without surveillance and negatively associated with conduct problems, as both outcomes belong to the control domain.

Hypothesis 5: Child liking of mother’s protection disclosure would moderate the relation between mother protection disclosure and outcomes associated with this domain (i.e. empathy and prosocial behavior). Similarly, child liking of mother’s control disclosure would moderate the relation between mother control disclosure and outcomes associated with this domain (i.e. compliance without surveillance and conduct problems).

Hypothesis 6: Child disclosure would mediate the link between mother disclosure and outcomes, and this mediation would be domain-specific.

2 Method

2.1 Participants

The participants were 77 mothers and their 12 to 14 year old children (56% male, 44% female, mean age=13.1 years). Eighty six percent of the mothers were married or living with a partner. The majority of mothers (62.5%) were from Western European cultural backgrounds, the reminder were Asian (19.5%), Middle Eastern (3%), Eastern European (3%) and other/mixed backgrounds (12%). All but one mother had completed high school, 11.5% had some college or university, and 87% had completed college or university. Families were recruited from the
University of Toronto Summer Day Camps enrolment records and from the Child Studies Database at the University of Toronto Child Study Centre.

2.2 Procedure

Mother-child dyads were recruited by telephone and asked to complete the study questionnaires. They were given the option either to complete them at home over the internet, or to come to the university laboratory. Only four families chose to come to the laboratory computers to complete the study and when excluding them from the analyses the results were not altered. Either way, dyads were instructed not discuss the content of the questionnaires until both had completed them. In addition, children were not granted access to the questionnaires until mothers had completed theirs (with the exception of the dyads who came to the university). The questionnaires each took approximately half an hour to complete. Children were mailed a $15 gift certificate to Chapters & Indigo upon the completion of the study. The questionnaires included a number of measures besides those relevant to the present study. Only the measures that are relevant will be described here.

2.3 Measures

2.3.1 Mother Disclosure

A new measure was developed for the study. The questionnaire consisted of 14 items assessing how much mothers tell about themselves in two areas or domains of behavior: protection and control domains. (See Appendix A.) For the protection domain, questions referred to the likelihood of sharing situations in which the mother felt somewhat distressed, upset or anxious (e.g. “Someone close to you forgets to call you on your birthday and you feel hurt”). For the control domain, questions relate to situations in which the mother faced dilemmas about proper behavior and values (e.g. “You come home from the grocery store and realize you forgot to pay for an expensive item.”). Each item is to be rated on a Likert scale from 1 to 7 (i.e. 1=Not likely at all, 7=Extremely likely). Cronbach alphas for the two subscales were: .87 for the protection domain and .82 for the control domain.
2.3.2 Child Disclosure

This self-report measure was the same as the mother questionnaire, with the exception of one item which was adapted for age-appropriateness. In the control domain where mothers had “You were stopped for speeding” children had “You got in trouble with your teacher because you didn’t do your homework” instead. Cronbach’s alphas for the subscales were: .74 for the protection domain and .82 for the control domain (See Appendix A).

2.3.3 Child Liking of Mother’s Disclosure

After completing the Child Disclosure Questionnaire, children were asked a question to indicate their liking of their mothers’ disclosure. For the protection domain, the question was “Mothers sometimes talk to their children about things in their life that upset them (and do not have to do with any actions that you have done). When your mother talks to you about personal things that upset her, how much do you like it?” For the control domain, the question was “Mothers sometimes talk to their children about times when they did not do the right thing or were not sure what the right thing to do was. When your mother talks to you about these things how much do you like it? The two items were rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1, I do not like it at all, 7, I like it a lot).

2.3.4 Reasons for Disclosure

Both mothers and children filled out the same questionnaire (Dolgin and Brendt, 1996) that examines the motivations behind parent disclosure. At the end of the disclosure questions for each domain, participants were instructed to rate for 7 different reasons how likely would they be to disclose to their child/mother for each of the listed reasons (e.g. “Because you believe that your child might be interested in knowing that information”. “Because you believe that talking about yourself will encourage your child to talk themselves”). The original measure was adapted to suit the objective of the study. Although most of the reasons are the same for each domain, we included specific reasons that applied for one domain and not for the other (e.g. Because you need comfort, was included for the protection domain but not for the control domain). Moreover, additional reasons were included for each domain (e.g. “Because talking to your child/mother about these sorts of things gives you an opportunity to teach your child/mother how to be sensitive to other’s concerns and feelings” for the protection domain, and “Because talking to your child/mother about these sorts of things gives you an opportunity to teach your child/mother
what the right thing to do is” for the control domain). Finally, some of the wording was modified to be age-appropriate for children.

2.3.5 Prosocial Behavior

The prosocial behavior subscale from The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ, Goodmain, 1997) was used to evaluate child behaviors related to the protection domain. Mothers reported on 5 items (e.g. “Your child is helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill”) referring to certain acts in which their child might or might not engage in a scale from 1 to 3 (1=Not true, 2=Somewhat true, 3=Certainly true).

2.3.6 Empathy

One of the subscales from the Conscience Measure developed by Kochanska, DeVet, Goldman, Murray & Putnam (1994) called “Empathic and prosocial response to another’s distress” was used to measure children’s empathic ability, also an outcome in the protection domain. Mothers had to rate in a scale from 1 to 7 (1= extremely untrue, 7=extremely true) 13 statements of children’s engagement in behaviors related to children’s response to another’s distress (e.g. This child “Will feel sorry for other people who are hurt, sick, or unhappy”).

2.3.7 Compliance without Surveillance

Kochanska et al’s (1994) internalized conduct subscale from their Conscience Measure was used for evaluating child compliance without surveillance, an outcome in the control domain. Parents reported on 18 items such as “If out of parent’s sight, may ignore a household rule”, “If asked to do something, may not finish if not reminded”. Mothers had to rate these items in a scale from 1 to 7 (1=Extremely untrue, 7=Extremely true).

2.3.8 Conduct Problems

The conduct problems subscale from the SDQ (Goodman, 1997) was used to evaluate child behaviors related to the control domain. Parents reported on 5 items (e.g. “Often fights with other children or bullies them”) referring to certain acts in which their child might or might not engage on a scale from 1 to 3 (1=Not true, 2=Somewhat true, 3=Certainly true).
3 Results

The results are presented in seven main sections. After preliminary analyses, the question regarding the associations between mother disclosure and child disclosure is addressed (Hypothesis 1). Subsequently, comparisons between mothers’ and children’s reasons for disclosure (Hypothesis 2) are reported. The regression analyses regarding the role of child liking of maternal disclosure in the prediction of child disclosure (Hypothesis 3) are presented in the next section. For Hypothesis 4, the associations between maternal disclosure, child disclosure, and domain specific outcomes are explored. Next, the question of whether children’s liking of maternal disclosure moderates the relation between maternal disclosure and domain specific outcomes is addressed (Hypothesis 5). The last section presents the results of the mediation analyses involving mother and child disclosure in the path to domain specific outcomes (Hypothesis 6).

3.1 Preliminary Analyses

The means, standard deviations and ranges for all variables are presented in Table 1. All variables were normally distributed and met the assumptions for the relevant statistical analyses. In all cases fewer than 3% of the values were missing, and thus, missing values were replaced with series means. No outliers were found.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Descriptive statistics for the study variables</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother Disclosure Protection</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.43-7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Disclosure Control</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>1.00-7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection Disclosure</td>
<td>4.70</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>1.43-7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Control Disclosure</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.14-7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Liking of Mother Protection Disclosure</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>1.88</td>
<td>1.00-7.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Liking of Mother Control Disclosure</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>1.81</td>
<td>1.00-700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Empathy</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>3.00-6.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Prosocial Behavior</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>1.20-3.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A two-way repeated measures ANOVA 2(Domain)x2(Dyad) was conducted to compare the differences in the disclosure mean scores. The analysis revealed a significant main effect of domain [F(1,76)=4.18; p=0.04] indicating that disclosure means were different for the protection and control domains. Similarly, there was a significant main effect of dyad member, showing that mothers and children disclosed differently from each other [F(1,76)=33.22; p<0.01]. Finally, the analyses revealed a 2-way significant interaction between domain and dyad [F(1,76)=22.65; p<0.01] suggesting that disclosure means in the protection and control domains were different for mothers and children. Follow-up t-tests of significant effects indicated that children disclosed more about topics related to distressing situations (protection domain) than about topics related to situations about proper behavior and values (control domain) [t(77)=8.01; p<0.01]. In contrast, mothers disclosed similarly about both topics [t(77)=0.92; p=0.36]. Further, mothers disclosed more than children about topics in the control domain [t(77)=3.85; p<0.01] but mothers and children did not differ on how much they disclosed about distressing situations [t(77)=-1.17; p=0.25].

Children did not differ in how much they liked their mother’s disclosing about topics in the protection and control domains [t(77)=-1.13; p=0.26].

### 3.2 Associations between Mother Disclosure and Child Disclosure

Table 2 presents the zero order correlations among the variables involving disclosure. Results partially confirmed hypothesis 1, as mothers who disclosed in the protection domain had children who disclosed more in that domain [r=0.42, N=77, p<0.01]. This was not the case, however, for the control domain as mother control disclosure was not associated with children control disclosure [r=-0.05, N=77, p=0.67].
In addition, mother control disclosure also predicted more child disclosure in the protection domain \([r=0.27, N=77, p=0.02]\); mothers who disclosed in both domains had children who disclosed more about distressing situations.

Finally, mother disclosure in the protection and control domains were significantly correlated \([r=0.5, N=77, p<0.01]\), and children disclosure in both domains were also significantly associated \([r=0.5, N=77, p<0.01]\).

**Table 2**

**Domain-specific correlations for mother disclosure, child disclosure, and child liking of mother’s disclosures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>.42**</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.27*</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.50**</td>
<td>0.19</td>
<td>0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.26*</td>
<td>0.2^</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.53**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<0.01,* p<0.05,^ p<0.1

3.3 Mothers’ and children’s reasons for disclosure

Comparison of means for mother and child reasons for disclosure are shown in Table 3 (protection domain) and Table 4 (control domain). Hypothesis 2 stated that reasons for disclosure would be rated differently by mothers and children such that mothers’ higher-rated reasons for disclosure would be more educational (e.g. to teach, and to encourage disclosure) for both domains, and children’s highest rated reasons for disclosure would be more related to protection seeking behaviors for the protection domain (seek advice, seek comfort), and more related to the perceived obligation to disclose for the control domain (mother needs to know, or is interested in knowing). To examine these predictions a 3 within-subjects factors repeated measures ANOVA 2(dyad)X2(domain)X 7(reasons) was conducted.
Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity had been violated only for the main effect of reasons, $\chi(20)=33.63$, $p=0.03$ and for the 2-way interaction between dyad and reasons, therefore the degrees of freedom were corrected using the Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity (for the main effect of reasons $\epsilon=5.1$ and for the interaction between dyad and reasons $\epsilon=4.22$).

There was a significant main effect of dyad member [ $F(1,66)=6.89$; $p=0.01$] indicating that the ratings of mothers and children were different in general. There was also a significant main effect of reasons for disclosure [ $F(5.1,66)=15.07$; $p<0.01$] suggesting that reasons were rated differently among participants. However, there was no significant main effect of domain [ $F(1,66)=0.25$; $p=0.61$] indicating that overall the ratings did not differ from one domain to another.

With respect to 2-way interactions, there was a significant interaction effect between dyad member and domain [ $F(1,66)=11.97$; $p<0.01$] indicating that the ratings of reasons given to the protection and control domains differed in mothers and children. In addition, there was a significant interaction effect between dyad member and reasons for disclosure [ $F(4.2,66)=91.79$; $p<0.01$] suggesting that the ratings across the different reasons differed in mothers and children. Finally, there was a significant interaction effect between domain and reasons for disclosure [ $F(6,66)=2.93$; $p<0.01$] illustrating that the ratings of reasons for disclosure differed according to their domain.

All these interactions were qualified by a 3-way significant interaction suggesting that disclosure varied depending on who was disclosing (dyad), what was being disclosed (domain), and why it was being disclosed (reasons) [ $F(6,66)=2.18$; $p=0.04$]. Post-hoc tests following up the significant effects were conducted to compare both how each pair of reasons differed between mother and children across domains, and to compare how reasons within mothers and children differed across domain. Paired sample t-tests were used to compare the between differences (see number subscripts in Tables 3 and 4), and t-tests with Bonferroni adjustments were used to compare the within differences among mother and children reasons (see letter subscripts in Tables 3 and 4).

Overall, both the findings from the protection and control domains confirmed the predictions of Hypothesis 2 related to mothers’ main motivations for disclosure. Mothers did cite as their
preferred reasons for disclosure motivations related to perceiving disclosure as a means of both teaching desired behavior to their children and encouraging their children’s disclosure for both domains. Although in the control domain, mothers’ second reason for disclosure was because they thought their children needed to know that information; mothers’ next highest rated reason was because they wanted to encourage their children to disclose in return and these reasons did not differ from each other.

With respect to children reasons for disclosure, both the findings of the protection and control domains partially confirm the predictions of hypothesis 2 as the highest rated reasons for disclosure in the protection domain were in fact related to protection seeking behaviors (see advice, seek comfort and feel better), and two of the highest rated reasons for disclosure in the control domain were related to children’s perceived obligation to disclose to their parents (because mother needs to know, because mother might be interested to know). However, it was not expected that children disclosed in the control domain also for motivations related to protection seeking behaviors (seek advice, and feel better).

Table 3

Reasons for disclosure in the protection domain: Mother and child compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for Disclosure</th>
<th>Mother Mean</th>
<th>CHILD Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To teach to be sensitive</td>
<td>$2.5.8_c$</td>
<td>$1.313_c$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To encourage disclosure</td>
<td>$2.5.29_{bc}$</td>
<td>$1.264_c$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to know</td>
<td>$2.5.05_b$</td>
<td>$1.4.66_{ab}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested to know</td>
<td>$1.4.61_{ab}$</td>
<td>$1.4.52_{ab}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel closer</td>
<td>$1.4.19_a$</td>
<td>$1.4.28_b$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel better</td>
<td>$1.3.88_a$</td>
<td>$2.5.1_a$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To seek comfort</td>
<td>$1.3.09_d$</td>
<td>$2.4.95_{ab}$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To seek advice</td>
<td>$1.2.43_d$</td>
<td>$2.5.18_{ab}$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means in a row not preceded by a common subscripted number differ at p<.05
Means in a column not followed by a common subscripted letter differ at p<.05
Table 4
Reasons for disclosure in the control domain: Mother and child compared

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Vs.</th>
<th>Child</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To teach proper behavior</td>
<td>6.59&lt;sub&gt;d&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>2.87&lt;sub&gt;c&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs to know</td>
<td>5.76&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.63&lt;sub&gt;ab&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To encourage disclosure</td>
<td>5.42&lt;sub&gt;bc&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>2.55&lt;sub&gt;c&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested to know</td>
<td>5.02&lt;sub&gt;ac&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.33&lt;sub&gt;ab&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel closer</td>
<td>4.33&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel better</td>
<td>3.43&lt;sub&gt;e&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.72&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To seek advice</td>
<td>2.63&lt;sub&gt;c&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>4.88&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Means in a row not preceded by a common subscripted number differ at p<.05
Means in a column not followed by a common subscripted letter differ at p<.05

3.4 Child Liking of Mother’s Disclosure as Moderator between Mother Disclosure and Child Disclosure

Hierarchical linear regression analyses were conducted to test Hypothesis 3. Results of analyses for protection and control domains are presented in Table 5

Table 5
Child liking of mother’s disclosure as a moderator of the relation between mother disclosure and child disclosure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Child Protection Disclosure</th>
<th>Child Control Disclosure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-0.62</td>
<td>0.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Protection Disclosure</td>
<td>3.37**</td>
<td>0.36**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mother disclosure and child liking variables were centred before being entered into the regression such that each had a mean of zero. In the first step, child sex and child age were entered as control variables. In the second step, mother disclosure in the domain of interest and child liking of mother disclosure in that domain were entered as predictors. In the third step, the interaction between mother disclosure and child liking of disclosure in the given domain was entered as a predictor. The outcome variable for each analysis was child disclosure in the particular domain.

Results partially confirmed Hypothesis 3. As shown in Figure 1, child liking of maternal protection disclosure moderated the relation between mother protection disclosure and child protection disclosure ($\beta =0.21$, $t(77)=2.09$; $p<0.05$). Further analyses indicated that children who were high on liking their mothers’ protection disclosure disclosed more in the protection domain when their mothers disclosed to them in this domain. However, the slope was not significant for children who were low on liking of maternal protection disclosure. In contrast, child liking of maternal control disclosure did not moderate the relation between mother control disclosure and child control disclosure.

Considering that both mother control disclosure and mother protection disclosure were associated with child protection disclosure, two additional analyses were performed: Mother disclosure in the protection domain and child liking of maternal protection disclosure were used
to predict child control disclosure. Similarly, for the control domain, mother control disclosure and child liking of that disclosure were used to predict child protection disclosure.

Figure 1. Interaction between mother protection disclosure and child liking of mother’s protection disclosure in the prediction of child protection disclosure

As shown in Figure 2, child liking of maternal control disclosure did moderate the relation between mother control disclosure and child protection disclosure \( \beta =0.25, t(77)=2.3; p<0.05 \). Children, who were high on liking their mother’s control disclosure, disclosed more in the protection domain when their mothers disclosed to them in the control domain. This was not the case for children who were low in liking their mother’s control disclosure, as this slope was not significant.
Figure 2. Interaction between mother control disclosure and child liking of mother’s control disclosure in the prediction of child protection disclosure

3.5 Associations Between Child Disclosure, Mother Disclosure, and Domain-Specific Outcomes

The zero order correlations between both mother and child disclosure and domain specific outcomes are presented in Table 6. Results partially confirmed Hypothesis 4, as child disclosure in the control domain was significantly correlated with compliance \([r=0.25, n=77, p<0.05]\) and conduct problems \([r=-0.27, n=77, p<0.05]\) (both outcomes in the control domain). However, this was not the case for the protection domain, as child protection disclosure was not correlated either with empathy or with prosocial behaviour (both outcomes in the protection domain). Interestingly, child protection disclosure was significantly correlated with both outcomes in the control domain: compliance \([r=-0.41, n=77, p<0.01]\) and conduct problems \([r=-0.28, n=77, p<0.01]\).

Correlations between mother disclosure and child outcomes were also examined. Mothers’ protection disclosure was correlated with both outcomes in the control domain: compliance \([r=0.46, n=77, p<0.01]\) and conduct problems \([r=-0.31, n=77, p<0.01]\). No correlations were found with outcomes in the protection domain.

Table 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child Protection Disclosure</th>
<th>0.05</th>
<th>0.11</th>
<th>-0.28*</th>
<th>0.41**</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child Control Disclosure</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.27*</td>
<td>0.25*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Protection Disclosure</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>-0.31**</td>
<td>0.46**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Control Disclosure</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.23^</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p<0.01, *p<0.05, ^p<0.1
3.6 Child Liking of Mother’s Disclosure as Moderator between Mother Disclosure and Child Outcomes

Hierarchical linear regression analyses were conducted to test Hypothesis 5. Results of analyses for protection and control domains are presented in Table 7. Four regressions were conducted (one for each of the outcome variables in each domain). Mother disclosure and child liking variables were centred before being entered into the regression such that each had a mean of zero. In the first step, child sex and child age were entered as control variables. In the second step, mother disclosure in the domain of interest and child liking of mother disclosure in that domain were entered as predictors. In the third step, the interaction between mother disclosure and child liking of disclosure in the corresponding domain was entered as a predictor. The outcome variable for each analysis was one of the four outcome variables of the study: empathy and prosocial behavior (protection domain), compliance and conduct problems (control domain).

Table 7

Regression analysis of mother disclosure and child liking of mother’s disclosure predicting domain-specific child outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Protection Domain</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Control Domain</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>Prosocial Behavior</td>
<td></td>
<td>Conduct Problems</td>
<td>Compliance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>t</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>ΔR²</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>ΔR²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>1.89^</td>
<td>0.23^</td>
<td>0.06</td>
<td>-1.1</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-1.23</td>
<td>-0.15</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>-0.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Protection Disclosure</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Liking of Mother’s Protection Disclosure</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>1.44</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother Protection X Child Liking</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.84</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Figure 3, child liking of mother’s control disclosure moderated the relation between mother control disclosure and child compliance ($\beta = 0.3$, $t(77) = 2.49$; $p < 0.05$). This result partially confirms Hypothesis 5, as there was a domain-specific interaction between mother control disclosure and child liking of that disclosure predicting an outcome related to that domain. Further analyses indicated that children who were high on liking their mothers’ protection disclosure were more compliant when their mothers disclosed to them in that domain. However, the slope was not significant for children who were low on liking of maternal control disclosure. In contrast, child liking of mother’s protection disclosure did not moderate the relation between mother protection disclosure and any outcome related to that domain.

![Figure 3. Interaction between mother control disclosure and child liking of mother’s control disclosure in the prediction of child compliance](image)

Finally, considering the strong correlations between mothers’ protection disclosure and child compliance, a last regression was conducted to see if children’s liking of maternal protection
disclosure moderated the effect of mothers’ protection disclosure over child compliance. There was a significant main effect of maternal protection disclosure \( [\beta =0.44, t(77)=3.84, p<0.01] \) but the interaction was not significant \( [\beta =0.11, t(77)=1.0, p=0.33] \).

3.7 Child Disclosure as a Mediator between Maternal Disclosure and Child Outcomes

The only child disclosure, maternal disclosure, and child outcome variables that were intercorrelated, were child protection disclosure, mother protection disclosure, and child compliance. Thus, it was hypothesized that child disclosure would mediate the relation between mother disclosure and compliance. As recommended by Baron & Kenny (1986) mediation was tested using a series of regression analyses. Mother disclosure was a significant predictor of both compliance \( [\beta =0.46, t(77)=4.12, p<0.01] \) and child protection disclosure \( [\beta =0.42, t(77)=3.98; p<0.01] \). In addition, child protection disclosure was a significant predictor of child compliance when controlling for mother protection disclosure \( [\beta =0.25, t(77)=2.05; p=0.04] \). Finally, the standardized regression coefficient between mother protection disclosure and child compliance decreased when controlling for child protection disclosure \( [\beta =0.35, t(77)=2.86; p<0.01] \). As recommended by MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West, & Sheets (2002), the Sobel test was used to test for the statistical significance of this mediation which yielded a strong trend towards significance \( z=1.83, of \ p=0.07 \).

Figure 4. Child disclosure in the protection domain mediates the link between mother disclosure in the protection domain and child compliance.
4 Discussion

This study provided evidence for the role of mothers’ disclosure as a possible facilitator of children’s disclosure. It also highlighted the important role of children’s liking of mothers’ disclosure in their own disclosure and in outcomes associated with parent-child interactions. Further, it provided information about the contrasting motivations that mothers and children have for disclosing to each other. As well, however, it made clear that relations among these variables depend on the domain of socialization in which mother and child are operating.

4.1 Does Mothers’ Disclosure Facilitate their Children’s Disclosure? (Hypotheses 1 And 3)

It was hypothesized that maternal disclosure would predict child disclosure, with children’s liking of that disclosure a moderator of the relation. It was also expected that these relations would be domain-specific. Partial confirmation of these hypotheses indicated that mothers who disclosed in the protection and control domains had children who, if they liked such disclosure, disclosed in the protection (although not the control) domain. It seems, then, that children feel encouraged to talk about their worries and concerns when their mothers have provided them with an environment of sharing of information that children find pleasant. This environment does not encourage them however, to talk about issues that might get them into trouble with their parents, such as situations related to values and proper behavior (the control domain). These findings indicate the need to explore other aspects of maternal behavior that might predict this type of disclosure in children, but also provide support for the role of maternal disclosure as vehicle for gaining their children’s trust when they wish to share their worries and concerns.

The results also provide support for Dindia’s (1982) findings on reciprocity of self-disclosure, suggesting that disclosure can also be reciprocal among mother-child dyads even if the topics that are disclosed by each member are not entirely equivalent.

4.2 Why do Mothers and Children Disclose to Each Other?

Confirmation of hypothesis 2, that children’s and mother’s reasons for disclosure would differ, revealed that mothers talk about their own worries and concerns as well as about value-related issues in order to teach their children appropriate behavior, to encourage them to disclose, and because they feel their children need to know a particular piece of information. Children, in
contrast, disclose to mothers in search of advice and comfort. Interestingly, the results for
mothers contradict Dolgin’s (1996) findings that parents shared information mainly in search of
emotional support, advice, and venting opportunities. However, the children from
Dolgin’s (1996) study were from a college freshmen sample (18 and older) suggesting that
younger children (12 to 14 year olds) are more likely to be perceived as in need of parental
guidance, than older children who are more likely to be perceived as reliable sources of advice
and support.

4.3 Does Mothers’ Disclosure Facilitate Positive Outcomes in
their Children?

Hypotheses 4 and 5 had to do with the impact of mothers’ disclosure on child outcomes.
Mothers’ talking about events that distressed them did not predict either children’s empathy or
prosocial behavior, even when children liked mothers to disclose about these issues. This finding
indicates the need to explore other features of maternal conversations that might encourage these
types of skills. Perhaps children need further elaboration on the emotional implications of their
mothers’ shared concerns and worries in order for them to have an impact on their empathic and
prosocial abilities. In contrast, children who liked their mothers talking about values and proper
behavior were more likely to be compliant with their mothers, suggesting that mothers’
socialization of values in a pleasant environment facilitates children internalization of those
values in their subsequent behavior. Nonetheless, mothers who talked about their worries and
concerns had children who complied more and had fewer conduct problems, regardless of their
level of liking disclosure.

4.4 Does Children Disclosure Mediate the Relation Between
Mothers’ Disclosure and Positive Child Outcomes?

Findings relevant to Hypothesis 6, viz., that child disclosure would mediate between mothers’
disclosure and child outcomes, occurred only in the case of mothers’ and children’s disclosure in
the protection domain and children’s compliance. Mothers’ discussion of distressing events did
predict their children’s compliant behavior, as long as their children talked about things that
distressed them. Although children’s liking of mothers’ disclosure about worries and concerns
was not essential for maternal disclosure to lead to compliance, children’s disclosure about their
own concerns did play a role in this relation. Grusec & Davidov (2010) recognize the
complexity of compliance as an outcome that can differentiated in many forms: compliance as a means to internalization of values can be conceived as children’s ability to comply with parental values without their surveillance, which would pertain to the control domain. However, children may comply with parental values as a means of expressing their trust that parents’ requests are in their own best interests, or as a way of reciprocating parents’ compliance with their needs by cooperating with them (Maccoby & Martin, 1983). In this regard, the present finding suggests that reciprocal communication between the two dyad members, is essential in the development of cooperative compliance.

4.5 Domain Specificity

One of the objectives of this research was to evaluate to what extent the behaviors that happen in one domain remained specific to outcomes in that particular domain. Some findings partially confirmed this domain specific assumption, but other findings suggested an interesting interplay between domains, especially at the outcome level, as both mothers’ and children’ disclosure in the protection domain were not linked to their corresponding outcomes. However, taken together, the findings do illustrate that domain of socialization in which disclosure operates plays an important role when examining mother-child communication as the results of the present study did vary considerably depending on the domain.

4.6 Limitations and Future Directions

Due to the cross-sectional nature of the data, one of the main limitations of the present study is that causality and directionality of the effect in the relation between mother disclosure and child disclosure cannot be determined. Future work should explore these variables longitudinally.

Future work should also explore other parenting behaviors related to communication that may predict children’s disclosure about situations related to values and proper behavior, and that may elicit more empathy and prosocial behavior. Perhaps other forms of maternal disclosure are more related to these two outcomes.

Considering the important role that child liking of mother’s disclosure had in the present study, future studies should also explore what aspects of mothers’ disclosure are appealing to children, if child personality is a factor in the enjoyment of disclosure, or what factors related to the mother-child relationship make the disclosure experience more pleasant for some children.
Finally, the present study examined mother-child disclosure in a relatively homogeneous sample. Future work should also examine the relation between father disclosure and child disclosure and explore whether the study’s findings replicate for more socioeconomically and culturally heterogeneous samples.
References


Sherman, A., & Grusec, J. E., (under review) Integrating children’s disclosure and maternal accurate knowledge of children’s thoughts and feelings: A Longitudinal Examination, Developmental Psychology.


Neutral Domain

Instruction mother: Parents differ in how much they talk to their children about their activities and experiences. Some talk to their children about these things a lot, and some talk to their children about these things less. We want to find out what kinds of things parents tell their children and why they tell them these things.

Below you will find different activities and experiences that you might or might not share. Please indicate how likely you would be to share each of the following with your child (the child who is also participating in this research) if the occasion arose.

Instruction child: People your age differ in how much they talk to their mothers about their activities and experiences. Some talk to their mothers about these things a lot, and some talk to their mothers about these things less. We want to find out what kinds of things people in your age group tell their mothers and why they tell them these things.

Below you will find different activities and experiences that you might or might not share. Please indicate how likely you would be to share each of the following with your mother if the occasion arose.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 Not likely at all</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4 Somewhat Likely</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7 Extremely Likely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. Your plans for the weekend.
2. Your hobbies or leisure activities.
3. Things you have read or movies you have seen.
4. Something funny that happened during your day.
5. Happy stories from your past.
6. Something interesting you saw on TV.
7. Things that you would like to buy.
**Protection Domain**

**Instruction mother:** Parents differ in how much they talk to their children about their own concerns and worries. Some talk to their children about these things a lot, and some talk to their children about these things less. We want to find out what kinds of things parents tell their children and why they tell them these things.

Below you will find different somewhat upsetting events that have happened that you might or might not share. Please indicate how likely you would be to share each of the following experiences with your child (the child who is also participating in this research) if the occasion arose.

**Instruction child:** People your age sometimes share information about themselves with their mothers, and at other times they do not share this information. We are interested in why people your age do or do not share information with their mothers.

What do you think are the most important reasons for talking to your mother about the above topics (e.g. activities, hobbies, plans)? Please indicate how likely you would be to share this kind of information with your mother for each of the following reasons:

1. You have a disagreement with a good friend and you feel upset.
2. You have to give a presentation in public and you are not sure what you want to say, which makes you somewhat anxious.
3. A close friend forgot your birthday and you feel a bit hurt.
4. You got your hair cut but you do not like how it turned out and you are briefly upset.
5. You lost something of yours that had sentimental value and you are upset.
6. Your friends got together and forgot to invite you and you feel disappointed.
7. You are worried that you might not be able to finish a task before a deadline.
Control Domain

Instruction mother: Parents differ in how much they talk to their children about their experiences with doing the right thing. Some talk to their children about these things a lot, and some talk to their children about these things less. We want to find out what kinds of things parents tell their children and why they tell them.

Below you will find different events where you might have done something wrong or you were not sure what the right thing to do was. Please indicate how likely you would be to share each of the following experiences with your child (the one participating in this research) if the occasion arose.

Instruction child: People your age differ in how much they talk to their mothers about their own concerns and worries. Some talk to their mothers about these things a lot, and some talk to their mothers about these things less. We want to find out what kinds of things people in your age group tell their mothers and why they tell them these things.

Below you will find different somewhat upsetting events that have happened that you might or might not share. Please indicate how likely you would be to share each of the following experiences with your mother if the occasion arose.

1. You got in trouble with your teacher because you didn’t do your homework. (You were stopped for speeding).
2. You come home from shopping and you realize that you weren’t charged for an expensive item.
3. You realize that you have forgotten to return a book that your friend lent you a long time ago and made clear that they wanted back. Probably your friend has been too polite to ask you to return it.
4. Your friend was asking for your advice, and you became irritated because the conversation went on for too long.
5. Someone walking in front of you on the street dropped their parcels and you didn't go to help them pick things up.
6. Your friend asked you to help them practice a presentation, and you looked for an excuse not to do it.
7. You accidentally made a small scratch on a DVD that you borrowed from a friend and didn’t tell them that you did it.