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Exploring the Impact of Second-Child Mothers' Dislike on the Eldest Child: Understand its Influence and the Path to Building Intimate Relationships

By Haiyan Sheng
University Sains Malaysia

Abstract- This study aims to explore the influence of the mother's dislike on the eldest child in the second-child family, and to understand its influence and the way to establish intimate relationship. By interviewing and analyzing the mothers and eldest children of five groups of second-child families, the study found that the mother's dislike had a significant impact on the behavior and psychological state of the eldest children. The results show that the mother's dislike will lead the eldest children to feel neglected and ignored, thus affecting their study, mood, behavior and career choice. In addition, this study proposes to promote the establishment of intimate relationship between mother and eldest child through positive parent-child interaction, emotional expression and support. This study is of great significance to understand the influence of mother's dislike on the eldest child in the second child family and to establish a healthy parent-child relationship.

Keywords: *mother's dislike, eldest child, influence, intimate relationship, speech analysis, interview.*

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Exploring the Impact of Second-Child Mothers' Dislike on the Eldest Child: Understand its Influence and the Path to Building Intimate Relationships

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Abstract- This study aims to explore the influence of the mother's dislike on the eldest child in the second-child family, and to understand its influence and the way to establish intimate relationship. By interviewing and analyzing the mothers and eldest children of five groups of second-child families, the study found that the mother's dislike had a significant impact on the behavior and psychological state of the eldest children. The results show that the mother's dislike will lead the eldest children to feel neglected and ignored, thus affecting their study, mood, behavior and career choice. In addition, this study proposes to promote the establishment of intimate relationship between mother and eldest child through positive parent-child interaction, emotional expression and support. This study is of great significance to understand the influence of mother's dislike on the eldest child in the second child family and to establish a healthy parent-child relationship.

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I. Introduction

According to China's traditional concept that "Men are breadwinners, women are homemakers." Mothers usually take on more parenting work and spend the most time with their children. However, some mothers expressed their dislike of their eldest children in social media and life: Since I gave birth to my second child, I dislike my eldest children more and more.

Studies have shown that the expression of mothers' emotions greatly affects the development of children's emotional ability (Eisenberg et al., 1998). Mothers' emotions and attitudes have a far-reaching influence on their children's growth and development. Children are easily influenced by emotional signals transmitted by their mothers when interacting with them (Mesman et al., 2009). A study through a questionnaire survey of preschool children's emotional behavior problems and mother's emotional symptoms found that mother's emotional symptoms are related to children's emotional behavior problems (Wang et al., 2023). Another study found that the mother's mental health status will affect the internalization and externalization behavior problems of five-year-old children (Cooke et al., 8). Yu et al. (2023) found that the relationship between mothers' bad childhood experiences and children's emotional behavior problems was influenced by mothers' emotional symptoms. Guetal et al. (2014) found that mothers' bad experiences in early childhood indirectly affected children's emotional and behavioral problems through their emotions. The research of Li et al. (2023) also proved that there is a significant positive correlation between the expression of mother's negative emotions and mother-child conflict and children's anxiety, and the expression of mother's negative emotions significantly predicts children's anxiety.

In the second-child family, some researchers have also studied the psychological and behavioral state of the eldest child. It is found that parents pay more attention to the growth and development of their second-children than their eldest children, which will have an impact on their social cognition, self-concept and emotions (Guo, 2020). Due to the limited level of individual cognitive development of the eldest children, they may not be able to adjust their negative emotional problems well, resulting in negative emotions and behaviors such as tension, anxiety, and even fear and resistance (Volling, 2012). A survey of 502 eldest sons and daughters and their parents shows that most of them are prone to negative mood, even psychological problems such as jealousy, rebellion and inferiority complex. Among parents, 48.9% think that the eldest child is more mature and sensible, 37.2% think that the eldest child often competes with the second child for resources, 18.6% think that the eldest child has become naughty, 25.6% think that the eldest child often loses temper for no reason, and 9.3% think that the eldest child does not like to communicate with his parents (Zhang, 2019). Another study found that eldest children have common problems, such as obvious mood swings (anxiety, depression, paranoia), personality changes (introversion, sensitivity and irritability), abnormal behavior (suicide, damage to things, abuse of young children) and social withdrawal (truancy, running away from home, self-isolation), and found that other parenting styles may aggravate these problems (Wu, 2018). Lv et al. (2021) found that some eldest sons and daughters had poor psychological state in learning anxiety through the mental health diagnosis test of 400 eldest sons and daughters. Among them, the expression of mother's negative emotions is an important influencing factor of children's anxiety, but its mechanism remains to be studied (Wang et al., 2015).

Author: School of Educational Studies, University Sains Malaysia.
e-mail: ylx1234560806@163.com

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"Dislike" is a negative emotion, which is usually associated with a person, object or situation (Staub, 2003). When a person feels be disliked, they may have physical discomfort, emotional dissatisfaction or behavioral avoidance.

At present, most studies pay more attention to mothers' positive emotions or other types of negative emotions (such as anxiety, depression), while there are relatively few studies on mothers' clear "dislike". When studying the influence of emotions on children, the eldest children are often ignored. However, as the eldest son/daughter in the family, the eldest child may bear more responsibilities and expectations, and the mother's dislike may have a special impact on them.

Therefore, it is necessary to deeply study the specific influence and mechanism of the mother's dislike on the eldest child, and put forward the ways and methods to establish intimate relationship. This will help to fill this research gap and provide useful guidance and suggestions for family and individual development. Future research can further explore the relationship between aversion and family relations and the development of eldest children, so as to enhance the understanding of aversion.

a) Research questions

1. How does a mother's dislike affect the eldest child?
2. How can older children cope with their mother's dislike to maintain mental health and build close relationships?
3. What ways can the eldest child take to promote and improve the intimate relationship with their mother's dislike?

b) Study Objectives

1. Uncover the specific effects of mothers' dislike emotions on the psychology and emotion of the eldest children.
2. Analyze the coping strategies and mental health of eldest children when faced with their mothers' dislike.
3. Put forward effective methods and suggestions to help their eldest child form an intimate relationship with their mothers to ease the impact of disgust.

c) Study Significance

The significance of this study lies in a deep understanding of the effects of maternal dislike on the eldest child and providing helpful guidance and advice for building intimate relationships. The specific research significance will include:

1. *Fill the research gap:* There are relatively few studies on the impact of maternal dislike on eldest children, and this study will provide new insights and theoretical support for this field.
2. *Promoting mental health:* Mother's dislike may have a negative impact on the mental health of the eldest child. This study will explore effective coping strategies and psychological support to help the eldest child maintain a healthy mental state.
3. *Improve family relationships:* By understanding the mechanisms of mothers' dislike on eldest children, this study will provide ways to build intimate relationships and help improve the relationships between family members.
4. *Practice guidance:* The results and recommendations of this study will help professionals such as educators, psychological counselors and family counselors to provide better support and assistance in practice.

Through in-depth research on the effects of maternal dislike on eldest children, we can better understand and deal with this problem and provide practical guidance and advice for promoting family harmony and individual development.

II. Research Technique

To explore the impact of a mother's dislike on the eldest child and ways to build intimate relationships, this study spent two weeks to interview five groups of families, including students from (primary school, middle school, high school, university) and one social worker and their mothers. The interview data were transcribed by the researcher through the audio recordings of the existing interviews, coding and classifying the data, and using qualitative analysis to reveal the influential factors and solutions.

a) The influence of the mother's dislike mood on the eldest child

i. *Self-esteem and self-confidence*

Maternal dislike may lead the eldest child to doubt their values and abilities, reducing self-esteem and self-confidence.

A1: Mother

Sometimes I dislike my eldest child very much. Now my second-child is so young, and my eldest child is studying badly. I feel a lot of pressure. I neglect my first child because I take care of my second child, and sometimes it makes me feel guilty and frustrated. I often yell at my eldest child when her grades are bad, and I think she is a little useless. Her current school teachers say she is not confident enough and often lowers her head. She used to be lively. I don't know if it was reason for me. But I treat both children equally. The eldest child is the same as her father.

A2: Child, middle school student

My mother dislikes me, I can feel it. She used to like me, but then she changed when my sister was born. I think she doesn't care about me anymore. It makes me feel very lost, sometimes I feel depressed, not confident. Sometimes I want to be more mature and independent,

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so I don't need her to look after at all, hoping to get mother's attention and recognition, but she always says that I am not good enough and that I have no conscience. Also she said that I was old enough, but I did not take care of my sister. She also hit me before.

Content analysis

Emotions: Mother (stress, dislike, guilt, depression, worry, neglect), the eldest child (loss, depression, lack of confidence)

Content: The mother's dislike leads to problems dealing with the emotions and needs of her eldest child. She felt stressed and annoying, while also feeling guilty and depressed. The eldest child observes their mother's dislike, feels neglected, feels unimportant, and loses her mother's attention. This makes her feel lost, sometimes depressed and lack of confidence. For maternal attention and recognition, she tried to behave more mature and independent.

ii. *Emotional regulation and processing ability*

The eldest child may have difficulty in effectively handling and regulating their emotions in the face of their mother's dislike, and may show emotions such as anxiety, depression, or anger.

A3: Mother

I used to dislike my eldest child because I felt pressure to take care of two children. Especially when I feel that I cannot balance my attention and care for my two children. This emotion can make me tired and irritable, reducing me to the emotions and needs of my eldest child. I think my eldest boy is more wooden and vulnerable. He doesn't like to talk and is not as good as his sister.

A4: Child, Social worker

When I was a child, my mother often said she disliked me and preferred my sister. I felt ignored. I felt uneasy and confused, and I was very depressed for a while and felt that I was not valued. After I go into the society, I still don't like to express my emotions, because I think no one will care about it. Sometimes my mood is not very stable. Not long ago, I was paid by salary and I was so happy to tell her. My mother only told me not to be selfish, transfer a thousand yuan to my sister. Can you believe it? She doesn't like me. She likes my sister. I grew up wearing ordinary clothes, my sister is wearing famous brands.

Content analysis

Emotion: Mother (stress, dislike, tired, irritable), the eldest child (be overlooked, upset, confused, depressed)

Content: The mother's dislike leads to a poor response to the emotions and needs of her eldest child, which may lead he to feel less emotional support and attention, and show signs of anxiety, depression or frustration. The eldest child observed mothers' dislike, then feel ignored. This may lead to low mood and reduced sense of self-worth, and they may not regulate emotions, thus escaping or overlonging for emotional communication with others.

iii. *Social relationship and Interpersonal communication*

Mothers' aversion may affect how the eldest child interact with others, and they may show avoidance, isolation, or hostile behavior that struggle building healthy relationships.

A5: Mother

I find it's difficult to communicate with my eldest daughter. She often has a poker face. My younger daughter is more considerate and often smiles. So I actually dislike my eldest daughter. I am very strict with my eldest daughter, for example, I do not allow her to associate with people who are not studying well. But she thought it was fine. I was very angry and disgusted that she didn't listen to me. She refuses to talk to me now.

A6: Child, high school student

I think my mother dislike me, especially in my social relationship, I think people are the same, why can't we communicate with people who are not good at study? When I was young, my mother often neglected my emotional needs because she was too busy taking care of my sister. I feel left out and not valued, which makes me feel unconfident and confused in my interactions with others. I am often afraid to express my thoughts and feelings, afraid of being ignored or criticized by my mother. This makes me withdrawn and introverted in my interactions with others. At school, I am not willing to communicate with others, and I don't like to ask others. I think I am not valued. But if someone is very good to me, even if not really good. I will feel needed, my friend said that I have a little flattering personality.

Content analysis

Emotions: Mother (stress, dislike, alienation, indifferent, neglected), the eldest childchild (not valued, not confident, confused)

Content: Mother's dislike led to problems in her social relationship with her eldest child. She feels stressed and annoying, causing her to become estranged and indifferent and unable to control her emotions. She often ignores the eldest child's emotional needs and is unwilling to listen and understand, which may cause the eldest child to feel unvalued when interacting with others, affecting her social skills and relationships. The eldest child feels the impact of her mother's dislike on her, she feels neglected and not valued, causing her to feel insecure and confused when interacting with others. She is often afraid to express her thoughts and feelings, and for fear of being ignored or criticized by her mothers, thus becoming withdrawn and introverted in their interactions with others.

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iv. *Academic and Career Development*

The eldest children may lose interest and motivation in their studies or career due to their mothers' dislike of emotions, affecting their academic performance and opportunities for career development.

A7: Mother

I think my daughter makes a mountain out of a molehill. Don't I treat her and her little brother alike? She is too sensitive. I am very busy, and when she was a child, she did her own academic work. I feel guilty sometimes, but I think she is big enough to solve, I asked her to be a teacher, she said not. This kind of disobedience to me is annoying.

A8: child, university student

My mother still likes my brother more. She doesn't say she dislikes me like when I was a child, but I can still see it from her behavior. Before I went to the university, she often ignored my learning needs and could not give me enough support and guidance. She criticized me and praised my brother more often. Now I'm an university student, and I'm not sure about my career direction. In fact, I prefer to be a journalist, but my mother asked me to be a teacher, saying that if I failed the exam, I would be worthless, unlike my brother who could do everything well. I'm confused about my future.

Content analysis

Emotions: Mother(dislike emotions, guilt), the eldest child (neglect, confusion, loss)

Content: The mother's dislike leads to the eldest child not getting enough support and guidance in academic and career development. The mother feels guilty but can't understand the eldest child's incomprehension. The eldest child feels neglected, which makes her feel confused and lost in her studies. At the same time, she is also uncertain about her future career direction because she lacks guidance and support for the future. This may have a certain impact on her academic performance and career development.

v. *Appearance of behavior problems*

Maternal dislike may negatively affect the behavior of the eldest child, potentially leading to the emergence of challenging behaviors.

A9: Mother

I dislike the behavior of my eldest child. I get tired of taking care of my 3-year-old second - child sometimes. This may have had a certain influence on his behavior. I will roar and be angry because of something happened to my eldest son. He has been throwing things around a lot recently, and he has been fighting with his sister for food and toys, and sometimes he even deliberately beats her. I feel very angry, he is so old! So ignorant! He said I was partial, and I treated him as much as my sister, okay? Why doesn't he think about his behavior?

A10: Child, second grade of primary school

I think my mother dislikes me because she said she was bored when she saw me. She only likes my sister and often buys things for my sister, but she always says I'm not good. My sister is very bad. She often acts like a spoiled brat, acting, saying I did something wrong, and my mother called my sister to speak ill of me. I dislike my mother! So I sabotaged it to get back at her. Last time I peed at the school gate, she scolded me, but at least she didn't pay attention to my sister at that time.

Content analysis

Emotions: Mother (dislike mood, tired, irritable); the eldest child (restless, helpless, isolated, angry)

Content: The mother's dislike led to the eldest child's challenging behavior. Mother felt stressed and disgusted to control son's behavior, which made her tired and irritable. The eldest son felt the influence of his mother's dislike, felt that his mother was eccentric, and be ignored, which led him to retaliate and attract attention through some challenging behaviors such as throwing things, yelling, hitting his sister and urinating.

Table 1: Statistics of information of interviewees

Number	Mother	Influence (Child)
A1 A2	dislike mood on the eldest child	Self-esteem and self-confidence
A3 A4		Emotional regulation and processing ability
A5 A6		Social relationship and Interpersonal communication
A7 A8		Academic and Career Development
A9 A10		Appearance of behavior problems

Source: The Author's Interview

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III. Discuss

a) *Performance*

1. *Negative Words and Attitudes:* Mothers may use harsh language, dissatisfaction or critical attitudes to convey annoying feelings to their eldest children. She may often complain, blame or pick about the behavior, appearance or ability of her eldest child.
2. *Emotional Indifference or Anger:* Mothers may be cold or angry in front of their eldest child and ignore their needs and emotional needs. She may alienate them and refuse to offer the warmth and support.
3. *Neglect and Disregard:* Mothers may ignore the existence and feelings of their eldest children, and do not care about their needs and achievements. She may focus more attention and concern on other children or other things, ignoring the existence of the eldest child.
4. *Punishment and Threat:* Mothers may use punishment and threat to express their dislike. She may impose unreasonable punishment on the eldest child or control their behavior in a threatening manner.
5. *Emotional Instability and Emotional Outburst:* Mothers may show emotional instability and emotional outburst, and overreact to the emotions and behavior of their eldest children. She may lose her temper or rage at them when their mood is high.

b) *Reason*

1. *Stress and Burden:* Mothers may bear the dual responsibilities of family and work, and face great pressure and burden. These pressures may come from work pressure, family financial pressure, children's education and care responsibilities and so on. These stresses may cause her to dislike and manifest in interactions with her eldest child.
2. *Difficulties in Emotional Management:* Mothers may have difficulties in emotional management and fail to effectively deal with their own emotions. She may lack emotional regulation skills to not effectively cope with stress and challenges in daily life, leading to the generation of annoying emotions.
3. *Personal Experiences and Psychological Problems:* The mother's dislike may be related to her personal experiences and psychological problems. She may have experienced some negative emotional events, such as early childhood adverse experiences and education level or had some psychological problems, such as anxiety and depression. These personal experiences and psychological problems may lead to her dislike of emotions.
4. *Family Relationships and Dynamics:* Family relationships and dynamics may also be one of the reasons why mothers dislike emotions. Conflicts in the family, disharmonious relationships, lack of support and understanding may lead to the influence of the mother's emotions and produce annoying emotions.
5. *Other External Factors:* Other external factors, such as social pressure, economic difficulties, health problems and so on. These may also affect mothers' dislike. These factors may increase her burden and stress, leading to the development of annoying emotions.

c) *Suggestions*

1. *Listening and Understanding:* Mothers can build intimate relationships by listening to and understanding the feelings and needs of their eldest child. She can express her concern for her children, actively listen to their ideas and opinions, and try to understand their perspectives and feelings, which can make the eldest child feel valued and supported. The eldest child can take the initiative to communicate with the mother and express the concern for her.
2. *Encourage Open Communication:* A mother can encourage her eldest child to be open and honest with her. She can create a safe environment in which her child feel free to express their feelings and thoughts without fear of being criticized or denied. The eldest child can learn to manage emotions effectively, such as coping with maternal dislike through emotional expression and emotional regulation strategies.
3. *Cultivate Common Interests:* Mothers can develop common interests and hobbies together with their eldest children. Participating in activities of common interest, such as watching movies together, reading, doing handicrafts, or participating in outdoor activities, can enhance the mutual connection and intimacy.
4. *Provide Support and Encouragement:* Mothers can give support and encouragement to their eldest children to help them develop confidence and self-esteem. She can focus on her children's achievements and praise their efforts and progress, while providing help and support to help them overcome difficulties and challenges. The eldest can also offer support and help, reducing the burden of the mother such as taking the initiative to do housework, help take care of other family members, and providing emotional support and encouragement for the mother.
5. *Establish Common Goals:* Mothers can work with their eldest children to set common goals and work together to achieve them. This can enhance cooperation and solidarity with each other and create a sense of common struggle that can deepen intimacy.

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6. *Respect and Understand Individual Differences:* Mothers should respect and understand the individual differences of their eldest child. Everyone has their own unique needs and ways. Mothers can respect their children's personality and characteristics, and do not impose their own expectations and requirements, but try to understand and support the development and growth of their children. The eldest can also respect and express gratitude for his mother's contribution to her family.
7. *Guide the Children to Get Along:* Mothers can encourage the eldest and the second to shoulder family responsibilities and tasks, such as taking care of pets or family members together; encourage the eldest and the second to achieve common goals, such as completing learning tasks and organizing family activities; encourage the eldest to play the role of example, let the eldest understand their importance in the family, encourage the eldest to share their experience and knowledge, and help the younger siblings solve problems.
8. *Seek Outside Support:* If the mother did not realize the influence of their dislike to eldest children and communication, eldest children can seek other family members or professional support and intervention, common concern to solve this problem. Family members or professionals and support may have a positive impact on the mother's understanding and behavior.

IV. Conclusion

The results of this study indicate that maternal dislike had a clear effect on the behavior and mental status of the eldest child. This finding reminds us that the emotional state of the mother in the family has important effects on the development of the children. Therefore, this study suggests that family education focuses on maternal emotional well-being, providing support and resources to help mothers reduce stress and negative emotions.

Furthermore, this study highlights the importance of establishing intimate relationships. Mother-eldest child bonding can be facilitated through positive parent-child interaction, emotional expression and support. This provides some practice and intervention directions for family education, and has an important guiding significance for the educational practice of two-child families.

However, this study has methodological and data limitations, such as insufficient interview sample size, and the use of standardized measurement tools and statistical analysis. The study is based on literature review and interview data, and there may be bias in research selection. The conclusions of this study need further validation and further exploration in future studies.

Future studies could employ more empirical research approaches such as longitudinal studies and experimental designs to more fully understand the effects of maternal nuisance feelings on the eldest child and pathways to build intimate relationships. In addition, research can further explore the regulatory effect of other factors, such as family environment, parental relationship and so on.

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