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Explicit Regulation of Positive and Negative Emotion in Pre-Adolescents in a Kenya County

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This research report is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for a Master's Degree by Dissertation in the Department of Psychology Faculty of Humanities, School of Human and Community Development at the University of the Witwatersrand. Johannesburg.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at this or any other university.

Sign: R.W.M Date: November 2021

ABSTRACT

This study addresses a gap in research on how pre-adolescent boys and girls of age 10-12 explicitly regulate their positive and negative emotion as influenced by social-economic environments of peri-urban Kenya. This study took an explanatory sequential approach, employing quantitative and qualitative tools to respond to two research questions. It investigated pre-adolescents' application of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression strategies, based on their awareness and expression of positive and negative emotion. The quantitative results showed that pre-adolescent boys and girls are aware of, express and apply explicit emotion regulation strategies to both positive and negative emotion experiences similarly. Important socio-economic factors were also identified for further qualitative consideration. The qualitative findings revealed that pre-adolescent boys and girls outwardly express positive and negative emotion. This was shown to be variably influenced by pre-adolescents' school and family contexts, as well as their interaction with teachers, parents and peers.

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1.0 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Emotion is a universal concept and experience, found in all humanity in varying intensity, manner of expression, meaning and consequence. Walle (2020) notes the usefulness of researchers seeking to understand divergent views on emotion and emotion regulation seek to develop findings applicable beyond the developmental season of children. He notes that in defining emotion, there is a pull between being flexible and precise, with focusing of the functionality of behaviour rather than its form being more useful when identifying emotion. He appreciates the complexity of emotional dynamics and hence the need to find convergence in the study of emotion (Walle, 2020).

Today, research on emotion and its regulation continues to be indulged by modern scholars, from diverse perspectives, pointing to an insatiable interest in the matter, perhaps because of the centrality of emotion in human existence and rightly so. Hoemann et al. (2020) consider the conceptualization of emotion development in infants. They postulate that infants understand emotion in an abstract manner rather than as specific categories, a debate between classical and constructionist approaches to emotion development. Language was identified as useful in learning distinct emotion categories though studies have not clearly specified how this happens. Laukka & Elfenbein (2021) demonstrate how the voice is central in expression and identification of positive and negative emotion, as a medium of non-verbal communication of emotion. They argue that emotion can be recognized across cultures through application of voice and this is more viable for in-group contexts that provide cultural boundaries. Steger et al. (2021) argue for the inclusion of emotion in the description of the realities of how children connect to existing geographical spaces. This is important to research around children and their wellbeing as it emphasizes the need for depth in understanding the subjective experiences of children in such

spaces. Their attachment to places they interact with creates a sense of connection with them and the people involved that feeds into their cognitive and emotional development. They note that adults shape these experiences, as they select such places, imposing rules and values on the children without necessarily considering the children's preferences. This is significant as children spend much of their time in schools, which are important contextual influences on their development. They also noted the significance of this consideration in the current context of social distancing due to the Covid-19 pandemic and possible disconnect of children to such places and relations therein (Steger et al, 2021).

The experience of emotion is connected to internal cognitive and physiological processes as well as external socio-cultural factors. Such factors include parental influences in the home as well as school contexts (Raver, 2004; Walle, 2017). This experience of emotion is known to be both subjective and communal, regardless of a person's gender, developmental stage, philosophical orientation, belief system, geographical location or physiological state (Campos, 1994; Bandura, 2010). Raver (2004) had earlier indicated how the socio-cultural and socio-economic aspects of children in their infancy and early childhood are important considerations when studying emotion self-regulation. This is because there is an interplay of the social, psychological, physiological and attentional aspects of children as they master how to socialize. Muhati et al. (2017) highlighted the need for effective tools of research with children from vulnerable contexts which bring out unique socio-economic dynamics in Sub-Sharan Africa. Vingerhoets et al. (2008) explained that emotions serve to provide communication about a person's internal state to others around them. Emotions also communicate behavioural intentions and so assist others in knowing what to expect from a person. The authors express that emotions do create an innate awareness on what is of priority to an individual and therefore assist in

meaningful decision making. The three scholars also indicate that emotion supports specific actions that are dependent on emotionality, allowing a full experience or enjoyment of such actions. This means that in adapting to new situations, emotion allows one to prepare for the anticipated contextual changes and even assist in navigating through these (Vingerhoets et al. (2008).

Burkitt in his article in 2018, considered two ideas presented about emotions; that they need regulating because they are perceived as disorderly and the actual process of regulating them. This process was well explained by James Gross (2011; 2015) in his Process Model of Emotion Regulation and extended discussion on the dynamics involved. The emotion regulation strategies presented are part of the dynamic process of emotion awareness and its expression. Halperin in 2013 argued that explicit emotion regulation strategies such as cognitive appraisal can be useful in altering inter-group emotion experience. He noted the need to connect studies on emotion regulation with those of conflict resolution. A duality exists between explicit and implicit emotion regulation strategies, for positive and negative emotion, each having a different focus in the emotion regulation experience. Yang, et al, (2015) showed that the implicit aspects of emotion regulation have been shown to require no awareness or explicit intentions. This means that implicit emotion regulation is ongoing and unconscious, in contrast to explicit regulation that requires conscious effort. Cai, et al., (2016) explored gender differences in regulation of negative emotion using expressive suppression in consideration of temperament. They noted that extraversion does play a role in emotion regulation. Gender is a significant factor in social studies, and particularly in children as they develop gender identities and uniquely express these in their awareness and expression of emotion. Grecucci, et al., (2017) noted the need to study positive and negative emotion regulation as key foci in psychotherapy aimed at producing

frameworks for improving regulation of emotion. They challenged researchers towards exploring the cognitive, experiential as well as neurocognitive mechanisms involved. This study further narrows down on explicit strategies of regulating positive and negative emotion. Gross and John (2007) indicated early on that cognitive reappraisal has outcomes of better wellbeing, closer relations with peers, more social support, among others in adults. Scholars showed that despite cognitive reappraisal being effective, it was used less frequently than would be expected. Their study suggested that contextual factors may be significant in determining whether one does regulate positive and negative emotion (Suri et al., in 2015). This view supports the need to include environmental factors in studies involving regulation or dysregulation of emotion. Mathews et al., (2016) and Amelia, et al., (2010) showed that maladaptive emotion-related skills were linked to poor social competence as well as psychopathology in children.

Suppression of negative emotion was shown to be linked to psychopathologies such as depression and substance abuse in adults. Brans, et al., in 2013 noted that few studies have considered both explicit emotion regulation strategies of suppression and expression of emotion in the same study, probably because of the assumption that the two exist as opposites. These emotion regulation strategies are located in the framework of their awareness and expression, and this allows for flexibility in their exploration without having to be confine to the rigidity of how they have been conceptualized. This is achievable through a qualitative adventure into these variables, without compromising works already done to ascertain their truthfulness in describing or measuring emotion regulation. The advantage in this would be that the protection of research processes by ethical and methodical application of research tools and synthesis of data generated therein would safeguard this flexibility and allow for more subjective nuances to be felt in such studies. Chapman, et al (2020) highlighted the dysregulation of emotion, using specific

strategies, in possible development of psychosis in adolescents. This was considered on a continuum of psychosis with some research showing that lower use of reappraisal was associated with negative psychotic experiences. The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA) was one of the research tools applied in the research. They note that interventions which may be beneficial are those aiming at reappraisal of emotion. Ferschmann et al (2021) studied habitual use of Cognitive Reappraisal and Expressive Suppression in adolescents, in view of their brain development. They related both strategies to cortical development and noted the need for further study to ascertain the specific sex differences and dynamics in this. Their assumptions included application of Cognitive Reappraisal more by females and the males applying Expressive Suppression more, as postulated by Gross (2007). In their study, they applied the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire as one of the research tools. They alluded to the concept of gender, a broad one, interesting and equally challenging in conceptualizing in our current fluidity in its definition. It would be worthwhile to push for a distinct description of what gender really accounts for and in the process extract the relevant contextual application to the study of emotion and its regulation processes. It would be appropriate to apply a mixed method approach to adequately capture these aspects. This bearing in mind that positive and negative emotions vary in their situational or relational qualities, would offer a more stable grounding in articulating these variables. This variance is an important aspect because in many ways distinguishes the positioning of social cultural context as well as individual factors that contribute to the unique characteristics and the expression of emotion (Amelia et al, 2010; Gross, 2015; Bailen et al, 2018; Laukka & Elfenbein, 2021). These studies do guide on the more stable characteristics to consider without losing the fundamental understanding of emotion and its characteristics. Despite no one unifying stance on socio-

cultural or other central domains in the study of emotion, it is acknowledged that current studies should include a thorough scrutiny of the vast and daily updating of existing literature, to ascertain truly existing gaps.

1.2 Summary

This section connected the broader area of emotion regulation in children to explicit regulation strategies. This was more specifically in awareness of and expression of positive and negative emotion. It also explored the possible significant socio-cultural factors including family, peer and school dynamics that possibly influence and shape the process of emotion regulation in children. Literature indicates that the study of explicit regulation of positive and negative emotion in children is valuable for the general area of child development. It is also useful in imagining and sculpting creative interventions that are child-focused. This when considered, significant parental, peer, family and school contexts and their role in modulating this process, is likely to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the children's emotion experiences. These may be addressed in a more qualitative manner to produce otherwise unseen underlying issues that may inform better on why these features are the way they are. There is need to harness information that is of basic nature as well as deeper details, such as age, parental support, gender or other social interactions in considering that children are in a developmental continuum. This is expected to elicit need for identity, peer connection, attachment to adults and individuation. Such undertaking would require application of quantitative and qualitative tools to generate adequate information to explain this phenomenon.

In this chapter, it was been noted that there would be challenges posed in making sense of different works on emotion regulation processes. This is because there was literal indication that they exist in such diversity of philosophical and theoretical orientation. This can be expected to

be overcome over time. Hopefully and of necessity, scholars will in future pull in similar direction in their conceptualization of emotion, emotion regulation and environmental features around the emotional maturity of children. Another expected challenge is working through the massive yet relevant literature already available and soon to be. The current increased global access to literature has subsequently impacted digital research platforms which have in turn exponentially enabled access to these scholarly reports in a timely manner.

2.0 CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Definition of Terms

Emotion and Emotionality: A study by Izard in 2010 revealed that diverse definitions are in existence and hence no universal agreement on one definition. However, distinct and pluralistic descriptions of structural and functional aspects of emotion exist due to differences in interpretation. More neuro-biological, perceptual cognitive and phenomenal feeling processes have had an increase in focus and consideration, in the different definitions (Izard, 2010). Dixon (2012) observed that multiple concepts exist that refer to the term emotion. He explored categories, concepts and connotations in an attempt to address the diversity in understanding of mental states, bodily states as well as disciplines, lingual and intellectual aspects of the definition of emotion. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2018) considered emotion as feelings, evaluations and motivations in an attempt to describe the nature and function of emotion. The American Psychological Association Dictionary of Psychology (2020) defines emotion as a complex reaction pattern, involving experiential, behavioral, and physiological elements, by which an individual, attempts to deal with a personally significant matter or event. The American Psychological Association (2020) defines emotionality as the degree to which an individual does experience and express emotion, regardless of the quality of the emotional experience. In this study, it was observed that where the noun version of the term emotion remained unchanged, different definitions were elicited, though not unrelated. This study will adopt the definition of emotion as being multi-faceted and inclusive of physiological, psychological and behavioural processes.

Emotion regulation: Gross (2007) defines emotion regulation as "goal directed processes functioning to influence the intensity, duration and type of emotion experienced". He also defines it as "the heterogeneous set of processes by which emotions are themselves regulated" (Gross, 2011). In this broad definition, Gross includes the internal and external factors affecting regulation, as well as the conscious, unconscious, and automatic processes.

Explicit emotion regulation: Explicit emotion regulation according to Gyurak, et al. (2011) refers to "those processes that require conscious effort for initiation and demand some level of monitoring during implementation, and are associated with some level of insight and awareness". Braunstein et al., in 2017 depicted explicit-controlled emotion regulation as consisting of a well-defined regulation goal as well as controlled change processes.

Middle childhood: Middle childhood or pre-adolescence is a developmental stage between early childhood and adolescence, between 6-12 years (Bhana, 2010). The Oxford Bibliographies (2017) define it as the developmental period between early childhood and adolescence, sometimes referred to as late childhood or early adolescence.

This study will adopt these definitions, covering years 10-12, as they provide a broad and more stable sense of both the chronological and socio-cognitive aspects of emotion, emotion regulation and within the broader emotion development in pre-adolescents. The study will exclude features that do not significantly or relevantly impact on expression of emotion in pre-adolescents, within the environment of the participants.

2.2 Developmental Considerations

Keenan and Evans (2009) described child development presented in stages. This was expounded by outlining chronological age, with variations within the different existing theories. This developmental process is also presented as either continuous or discontinuous, as far as

smoothness of progression and distinct qualitative changes in behaviour or skills are concerned. Another key issue considered by Keenan and Evans (2009) is the role of biological nature and environmental nurture, as contributors to the development of a child. This is both in the extent of alteration of the biological by the child's context as well as the set patterns by their genetic predisposition. This then rolls out the context within which a child develops. These key issues are also brought out by various child-development theorists as outlined by Schaffer in 2009. He chronologically described the study of child development by various scientists dating back to Charles Darwin, who studied his own son and kept records of this. Another scientist, Stanely Hall, studied child development. He did focus on what children were able to understand in their school setting. James Baldwin who studied mental development, set the pace for the study of a child's mental processes, as done by William Blatz, who studied quintuplets in Canada. John Watson followed suit with a different approach. This was that there are environmental influences on a child's development and hence the outcome of a learning process. In his Theory of Evolution, he bought out the sense of core emotions that every child is born with. He understood these emotions to be products of evolutionary history. Arnold Gessel contrasted Watson, focusing on the genetic component determining child development (Schaffer, 2009). Jean Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development also provided an in-depth analysis of how a child between 7-11 years is able to process information, as explained by Beard (2006). This is the stage where a child begins to cooperate with other children and reduces their egocentric outlook. It is this outlook that uses the child's own schema to interpret others' activities. This connects to the child's improved mental operations, where they are increasingly able to unravel the complexity of tasks. These considerations of variations in developmental processes may pose a challenge in the application of theoretical framework. This would also be true of the fluidity in

internal and external factors affecting the general development of a child (Gross; 2015; Gross & Cassidy, 2019). These studies, though conducted in yester years do offer valuable directional and progressive work. They show the need to understand historical progressions of emotion development and glean from such applicable process, particularly those that allow for the subjective experiences of participants to be heard and addressed. Even where this may not be possible due to the selected data collection tools or its fusion, it may be worthwhile to pay more attention to it allowing fluidity in expression of circumstantial concerns. A child's increasing ability to engage with more complex cognitive, social and emotional demands is also a pointer to the difficulty in making firm conclusions on these processes. It is however possible to make meaningful pointers towards the intricacies involved (Diaz, 2015; Bottelli, 2017; Moreilla, 2017; Desantick, 2021).

In a review of the brain basis of emotion, it was observed that functions leaning on cognition were much more involved in regular construction of emotion perception and experience. This points to existence of brain activity in the production of emotion (Lindquist, et al. 2015). Piaget considered both genders in his studies and hence it is safe to generalize his findings to both boys and girls. However, he did not necessarily conduct comparative studies of the two genders and hence it may not be possible to conclusively extract gender-specific outcomes from his theory. His studies, having been done in the Western context to a greater extent, and rarely, if any on the African context, presents a fundamental challenge of generalization and interpretation of his research output to a non-Western context (Beard, 2006). This also means that multiple factors are at play during emotion regulation processes. Compas et al. (2017) in their meta-analytic study, considered broad, intermediate and specific coping and emotion regulation strategies. They note that suppression, among other maladaptive coping was

related to higher pathological symptoms. Guassi, et al. (2019) investigated how spatial and temporal changes took place during regulation of emotion. Their unique study is an eye opener on how effortful regulation of emotion influenced the age of an individual. De France and Hollestein (2019) argued that the strategy applied in regulation of emotion is associated with the well-being of the individual. They observed that this state changes throughout the lifespan of a person. Reappraisal and suppression of emotion, negative or positive, were found to vary across age groups. Herd & Kim-Spoon (2021) note that family emotional context is a useful influence on how adolescents regulate emotion. This was more in relation to socio-economic dynamics. This points to the need for inclusion of family and socio-economic dynamics in studies involving children's emotion regulation processes and experiences. In consideration of more specific application of emotion regulation strategies, there is diversity in such studies. Subsequently, this provides a broad understanding of these processes. Suppression of emotion being linked to possibly higher pathology, is of interest to this study as it serves to inform the more practical considerations of addressing psychopathology in children. Such psychopathology has been alluded to by many scholars, both in adults and children (Amelia, et al., 2010; Compas et al., 2017; Guassi et al., 2019). A more secondary influence of family and socio-economic dynamics sets the pace for inclusion of these factors in data collection and general scope of this study.

2.3 Family Dynamics

Children in general learn how to interact with other children as well as adults, primarily from the family level as explained by Smith and Hart (2004). They emulate their parents and caregivers, older siblings. This eventually extends to the larger society in formal or informal settings, making such a process multi-faceted. As children socialize with the external world, they exhibit varying degrees of competence in requisite skills (Smith & Hart, 2004). In the earlier

years of a child, research has shown that the children have different reactions depending on their differences in socialization agents. Thus, their socioemotional characteristics also differ as well as reaction to stressful experiences. Of concern to Schaffer (2004) are the rejected children, who out of their disruptive and aggressive behaviour are likely to develop pathology later in life. This would likely be externalized in the child's behaviour such as lacking in impulse control, being hostile and delinquent. Gilbert (2004) showed how triads formed by any three individuals in a family can affect other family members, especially during times of conflict. He explained how rejection can be perceived when one of the three members of a triad in a family feels excluded from the other two. Parental connection with children can fairly determine specific emotion regulation strategies from modelling and general upbringing or guidelines through cultural norms. This study recognizes this parental role as an important informative aspects worth investigating qualitatively for an in-depth understanding. Such perceptions can be carried over into the broader and diverse social connections of pre-adolescents and therefore shape their interactions. The home is a breeding ground for the child's general and primary interaction with persons and happenings that enable them to work out their emotions, including how their brain is wired to process these (Lindquist, et al., 2012). Emotions related to self-awareness such as shame, guilt, anger and embarrassment, emerge as the child is able to grasp their sense of self. They present s aa complexity as the child has to integrate several perspectives induced by external factors in order to make sense of their own emotion and how to express it. The general development of self is also shaped by persons playing the role of parent, in contexts beyond the home. Such include teachers and other caregivers interacting with children on a regular basis. These changes would be expected since pre-adolescence is a season of search for more autonomy in the midst of numerous developmental demands. It is also within parental

influences that shape them (Walle et al., 2017; Fuentes-Balderrama, et al, 2020). Many scholars consider family conditions and their impact within their studies, perhaps in their attempt to achieve a narrow evidence-based output rather than a generalized conclusion out of considering too many factors in one study. The more recent family-related studies have moved from a simplistic interpretation of environment to scrutiny of new ways of understanding this phenomenon. This has been generating many questions relevant to understanding these spaces (Leerkes, 2011; Zimmerman & Sprangler, 2014; Diaz & Eisenberg, 2015). This study was therefore challenged to move beyond the surface and general interpretation of observable phenomenon. It was also challenged into generating new questions concerning the research methods as well as output in a process of continual and renewed understanding of concepts in emotion expression in pre-adolescents.

Emotional health of pre-adolescents in the context under study, Kenya, is covered under the Children's Act 2019. This law clearly defines a child as any person under the age of 18 years. Legally, children are under the care and protection of their parents or legal guardians as primary caregivers. These adults have responsibilities towards the children and to the larger society (National Council for Law Reporting, 2017). These laws apply to both genders equally and do not explicitly prescribe specific laws according to developmental stages of children. The law is not explicit on specifics of how to manage expression or regulation of emotion but these are implied in the various sections governing the protection of the child from harm and abuse, their education as well as care by parents or caregivers. The emotional health of a child is placed under general health guidelines. (National Council for Law Reporting, 2017). This was important to this study as the participants in this study are guided by these laws as far as the general welfare of children is concerned.

2.4 Emotion Regulation

This chapter critically considered the progression of, theoretical assumptions and closely related concepts of emotion regulation. It also delves into significant contemporary and contextual issues, application and critique of the discussed theoretical assumptions.

2.4.1 Emotion and the Emotion Experience

The experience of emotion has been recognized by many philosophers and scholars over many decades. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy (2019) describes how Epictetus was one of the key philosophers in the second century. He advanced the concept of Stoicism. He described it as a system of personal ethics and a section of Hellenistic school of thought that had great Greek cultural influence. Stoicism argued that human beings have absolute power over choices made about things within their control, including opinions, decisions, action, likes and dislikes. Those things out of their control, Epictetus considered indifferent and so there would be no need to focus on them. He was a proponent of the idea that with practice and over time, one can be able to take control of one's actions as well as opinions and desires through choices made. Epictetus' outlook on hardships was that these were opportunities to strengthen inner resolve and should hence be welcomed. In the same encyclopedia, another philosopher, David Hume, who lived in the Age of Reason, presented the idea that we are more influenced by our feelings than rational thought. This he explained as human beings reasoning from the point of convictions rather than towards them. The outcome is that passions or feelings would be given the upper hand. He extended this view to religion, arguing that there can be no rational explanation of religion and hence such arguments based on facts are futile. Hume doubted our having a personal identity except that we experience perceptions about our inner selves. He also viewed morality as a sense of decency instilled in us rather than being a set of proposed moral ideas to adhere. (Boterrill, 1999). These philosophical arguments began to shed light on the ability to engage with

cognitive and emotional experiences in making choices. The extension into theories of emotion advanced this reasoning albeit in very diverse approaches. These have been very useful in a broad yet in-depth understanding of emotion, its processing and outcomes such as those on behavior.

Pioneers in child development studies such as Charles Darwin, prompted other theorists to delve into explanation of how emotions are formed and governed. One of these scholars, John Watson in his article in 1919, viewed emotional experience as being connected to one's external context. Schaffer in 2004 explored different theorists' view of emotion. One theorist was Silvan Tomkins who presented his view that there are eight basic emotions that are inborn. These were named as surprise, joy, fear, sadness, happiness, anger and disgust. He explained that each discrete emotion is accompanied by a set of facial and bodily reactions. Such are externally recognizable very early in the life of a child. This is similar to a study done by Paul Ekman in 1971 to prove the Discrete Emotion Theory. Similar ideas include the approach by William McDougal, who viewed the experience of emotions as a response to a delay in instinctual responses that are triggered by certain environmental factors (Shaffer, 2009).

This study considered what pioneers in studying the expression of emotions seem to agree on, that it includes environmental triggers, however specific. It is hence not just an internal hereditary process. Gyurak et al., (2011) describe how explicit emotion regulation requires effort that is conscious, involving initiative and a level of monitoring, as the individual is awake to their own emotional responses. Many other scholars do not distinctly distinguish between construction and regulation of emotion, resulting in an overlap in some of their perspectives, as highlighted by Gross and Barret (2011). They alluded to the need to distinguish between the different perspectives by scholars on the meaning of emotion regulation and use this to

encourage collaboration amongst those with similar views. They highlighted the major clusters of such perspectives or models as basic emotion, social construction, psychological construct and appraisal (Gross and Barret, 2011). Scholars explain how functionalist approaches to emotion link how emotion propels one to act in a manner that is aimed at helping them achieve a goal. The function of having emotion is viewed as achieved a pre-determined outcome or goal (Scherer, 2009; Gross & Barret, 2011; Sabatier et al., (2017). The emphasis was also on how emotions are adaptive in nature, affecting the different domains of a person's development. Regulation of emotion from a functionalist view, governs the influence of emotion on one's behaviour. This means that it is both extrinsic and intrinsic involving a cognitive process and outward behaviour. Barret, 2017 noted that functionalism involves human inference in making meaning. She noted that more emotion categories are linked to multiple goals or functions. She also notes that bias in researchers should be recognized more as it seemingly almost overrides evidence that challenges the subjective experience and interpretation of emotion.

Walle, et al., (2017) showed how emotional expression begins at infancy, with a new born showing a form of a smile, albeit not from external stimulation. This expression becomes increasingly complex, from internal stimulation to external influence and on to preference in outward show of emotion. The three scholars explained that babies do select which adults or children to express positive or negative emotions towards. As toddlers and onwards into adolescence, children are socialized by the family, including parents and siblings. Their peers and other external influences also shape when, how, and why to express emotion. This happens greatly between mothers and same-gender children, beginning at the infant stage where the mother is the primary caregiver to her child or children. In expounding on socialization of children, the three scholars and others showed the manner in which it differently shapes how

boys and girls express their emotion, with girls engaging in it more. (Schaffer, 2009; Lindquist, 2015; Walle et al., 2017; Fuentes-Balderrama, et al, 2020). Emotions related to self-awareness such as shame, guilt, anger and embarrassment, emerge as the child is able to grasp their sense of self. They present a complexity as the child has to integrate several perspectives in order to make sense of the emotion and how to express it. Typically, this involves self-evaluation of one's performance based on pre-existing social norms, a perceived sense of self, current behaviour, feedback from one's social environment, etc. Emotion scripts that involve development of language that describes emotion and emotion experiences is part of the process, with girls speaking out more than boys. It is linked to the understanding that emotions relate closely to one's beliefs, intentions and desires, and is realized increasingly as the child develops. A challenge to children is learning how to control this expression, in an attempt to fit into social norms or rules prescribed by socialization agents. This social referencing skill is also developed as children learn to understand situations using the emotional expressions of others as a signal about their internal states. This, in the recent past, has been extended to include the tone of another's person's voice during verbal communication (Schaffer, 2009; Lindquist, 2015; Walle et al., 2017).

Gross and Barrett (2011) explain how functionalist approaches to emotion link how emotions propel one to act in a manner that is aimed at helping them achieve a goal. This means that these emotions have the potential to interfere or support the functioning of an individual at various levels. The emphasis here is on how emotions are adaptive in nature, affecting the different domains of a person's development. Campos (1994) showed how emotions are conceptualized as flexible, context-bound and goal directed. This is similar to what was presented by Gross (2007) on emotion regulation being goal-directed. Gross and Barret (2011)

present their view of emotion as having consequences and hence a regulator of social and cognitive behaviour. Regulation of emotion from a functionalist view, governs the influence of emotion on one's behaviour, and is both extrinsic and intrinsic. This agrees with what Barret (1998) explains that emotions can be inferred directly from overt behaviour. She recommends use of multiple variables in assessing emotion and behaviour. Gross and Barret in 2011 in considering multiple variables involved in emotion regulation, explained that the Frontal Lobe, the nervous system and development of linguistic abilities are intrinsic regulators of emotion. Socio-cultural norms, peer appraisal, perceptions, among others, are extrinsic regulators. Beginning from infancy, extrinsic regulators increasingly give way to the intrinsic, as an infant no longer relies on a caregiver. At this point, the infant increasingly develops a deeper and more complex understanding of emotion and its expression. The regulation process thus links to goal attainment, which is a cognitive function (Campos et al., 1994; Barret, 1998; Gross and Barrett, 2011).

Self-regulation, a vast area of study spanning many years, covers aspects in self-observation, judgement and self-reaction. These important characteristics were discussed by Bandura (1986) and thereafter by other scholars. They were shown to govern how an individual is able to navigate their emotions, behavior and cognition. Emotion, having three domains as perception, understanding and regulation, has a universal sense as well as culture-specific biases that contribute to its experience, for any individual or group of people. Bandura (1986) indicated that emotion self-regulation, in general, delves into one's ability to cognitively recognize emotion and meaningfully interact with it for positive outcomes. Explicit emotion regulation requires effort that is conscious. It requires initiative and a level of monitoring, as an individual becomes awake to their own emotional responses (Gyurak et al., 2011). This seems to agree with a

functionalist perspective where emotions are seen to cause one to behave in a certain manner, making emotion a regulator of behaviour (Barret, 1998). If this is the case, therefore, it would be expected that the experience of emotion can be harnessed in a meaningfully positive manner. This process may be applied to predict and hopefully cause equally positive behavioural outcomes. Many other scholars do not distinctly distinguish between construction and regulation of emotion, resulting in an overlap in some of their perspectives, as highlighted by Gross and Barret (2011). They allude to the need to distinguish between the different perspectives by scholars on the meaning of emotion regulation and use this to encourage collaboration amongst those with similar views. They highlight the major clusters of such perspectives or models as basic emotion, social construction, psychological construct and appraisal (Gross & Barret, 2011). Contemporary appraisal scholars have presented a component view of the experience of emotion where assumptions can be made about the interaction between the different components as explained by Gross and Barrett (2011). This view focuses on the appraisal categories of emotion as separate parts that interact with each other to contribute to the final experience of emotion. Such categories include motivation, physiology and expression. This is in contrast to the focus of earlier appraisal theories on feelings rather than the different interactions between components, despite recognizing their existence and contribution to emotional experiences. It seems that studies on how the components simultaneously work to cause emotion are scarce but a few attempts have been made by researchers such as Scherer (2009). Sabatier et al., (2017) expound on neurobiological and environmental influences on the development of emotion regulation. Socio-cultural contexts and more so the family dynamics were identified as key factors in development of emotion regulation skills.

Nook et al., (2020) in their study, found that the use of reappraisal strategy to regulate emotion varies across ages 10-23. This underscores the need to study emotion regulation in a more age specific way. This subjective experience can be captured through a combination of qualitative and quantitative investigation of emotion regulation (Cresswell, 2018; Coates, 2021). The need to understand diverse processes involved in regulation of emotion experience is key to this and similar studies. The distinction or merging of processes of forming and regulating emotion needs to be clarified as it influences the understanding of emotion regulation.

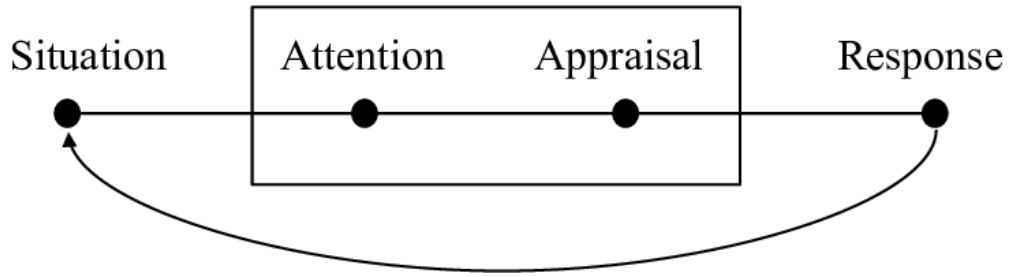
This enquiry agrees with the idea that emotion can precipitate both negative and positive experiences. Even so, these need to be specified much more, to identify the meaning of being positive or negative and to whom this experience is directed. As the integration of these characteristics happens, the study of emotion would be more comprehensive and enriched, rather than fragmented as it currently is perceived to be (Gyurak et al., 2011; Gross, 2015; Sabatier et al., 2017; Walle et al., 2017).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 The Process of Emotion

James Gross (2015) presented the Modal Model of Emotion based on three assumptions. One is that relevance needs to be situated in a context where emotion will occur. This relevance is linked to goals the individual has, which may be simple, complex, in a transient or more stable manner, as well as conscious or unconscious. Second is that the emotion experience involving physiological impulses. The third is that emotion is more a response tendency and this is the most critical aspect when considering emotion regulation. Gross explained this in the Modal Model of Emotions as indicated in figure 1. It highlights four stages of emotion experience as the situation, attention, appraisal and response. This forms the basis for regulation of emotion.

Figure 1: Modal Model of Emotions



The modal model of emotions from Gross. Adapted from (Gross, 2011, p.5)

Relevance in a situation where emotion occurs and linking it to goals of the individual is a guiding factor in consideration of socio-economic contexts of this study.

The target population set in a peri-urban environment does experience important family, peer and internal interactions with positive and negative emotion. These can be assumed to guide the outward expression of internal experience and possibly how often one applies it. As Gross explained the same process is involved in construction and regulation of emotion. It may be assumed that participants were likely to determine their regulatory responses as they constructed emotion experience, which played out in diverse ways (Gross, 2015; Sheppes et al., 2015; Barret, 2017).

2.5.2 Emotion Regulation Strategies

Gross (2015) identifies the response processes involved in construction of our emotional experiences as the same ones involved in regulation. These include physiology, motivation and expression. He identifies five points along these processes where an individual can regulate emotion before or after an emotion response is achieved in the Process Model of Emotion regulation. (Gross, 2011). Four are known as antecedent regulation strategies, occurring prior to

the achievement of an emotion response. The first is Situation Selection where an individual, through forethought or past experience, can identify that a specific situation would evoke potentially emotion and hence decide to avoid or allow themselves into it. The second is Situation Modification where an individual can influence the external aspects of a situation in order to suit the desired emotion response. The third is Attentional Deployment where an individual can focus closely or distract themselves from a situation and hence modify the emotion response therein. The Fourth is Cognitive Change where higher order processes are used to modify the meaning of a situation, the motivation in it as well as the desired goal. In regulation of emotion after the response has occurred, Gross (2015) identified Suppression which directly influences the physiology, behaviour and emotion experience a response-focused strategy. This means that suppression works after the emotion response has already been achieved. Gross and Jazaieri (2014) explain three factors that influence the regulation of emotion. He cites that the awareness of one's emotions within their particular context allows for a wider variety of regulation and flexibility on how to regulate them. They also cite that the goals of emotion regulation, as the magnitude of emotion experience, physiology and expression, do influence the emotion regulation process. They indicate that the specific strategies employed in the regulation of emotion thereby specify the means of this regulation (Gross and Jazaieri, 2014; Gross, 2015).

Figure 2: Emotion Regulation Strategies by James Gross

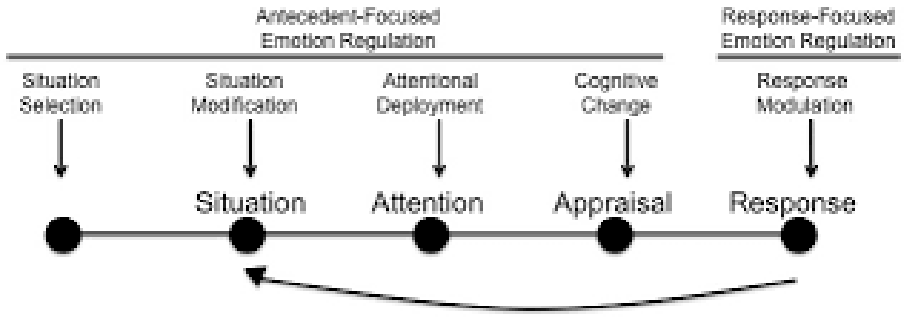


Figure 2. A Process Model of Emotion Regulation that highlights five regulation strategies.

Different emotion regulation strategies according to Gross. Adapted from (Gross, 2011, p.6). Adrian et al., (2011) identified different assessment scales, interviews, observational and physiological methods applicable in studying diverse aspects of the emotion regulation processes in children of different ages. This study, in focusing on the explicit or effortful regulation of emotion, will consider the cognitive change/appraisal and suppression, as the independent variables, representative of the time factor in the emotion regulation process. cognitive change occurs before emotional responses take place while suppression occurs after emotion has been achieved. Emotion intensity and awareness of positive and negative emotions will be considered as the dependent variables.

Theoretically, emotion regulation has been well presented in a way that is clearly understood. This being an important foundation in this study provided a clear picture of the quantitative and qualitative characteristics that could be satisfactorily addressed without compromising ethical and methodical capabilities of using selected tools. Thus, the study was careful to apply objective tools and processes that aimed at demonstrating the contextually impacted process of expressing positive and negative emotions in pre-adolescents. It was noted that many studies combined data collection tools to achieve objectivity in their research outcomes while demonstrating competence in understanding their application (Hughes, et al.,

2011; Gullone, 2012; Sheppes et al., 2014). Despite most studies being in the non-African socio-cultural environment, they were able to show the generalizable information and data collection tools while acknowledging limitations in their use in diverse cultures or even age groups. Literature on this model as applied in the local context was non-existent. A few scholars had made attempts to address general developmental aspects in children in view of socio-cultural contexts (Mwangi et al., 2018; Mwangi, et al., 2019; Shihundu, 2019; Thuku, 2020). Aspects pertaining to parental interaction with children were addressed though not explicitly considering emotion regulation processes (Munala, et al., 2020; Ngolya, 2020).

2.5.3 Application & Limitations of the Process Model

Limitations

This model has largely been applied to the adult population. Research with younger children remains limited, reflecting a lack of infusion with the general and adult studies in emotion regulation. Gross and Cassidy (2009) support the application of this model in enriching research on child developmental processes.

This model does not specify the unique interplay of underlying conflictive or social competencies for children, at each stage of emotion regulation progression. Such include decisions on which strategy to prefer, application of multiple strategies or major developmental transitions that can vary how this process is understood and implemented in children (Gross; 2015; Gross & Cassidy, 2019). It would likely be helpful to merge this model with a developmental perspective for a richer understanding of its progression across the life span.

Application

This model does focus a little more on Expressive Suppression process highlighting inter-linkage of its cause and effect. This allows for multiple components to be measured in the children's emotional responses. It does offer definitional clarity on the Expressive Suppression strategy and in this, allows researchers to compare it with other emotion regulation strategies. Out of this, relative advantages and disadvantages in applying Expressive Suppression can be grasped.

It is possible that some aspects of this model would apply differently at the developmental ages since specific ages are not accounted for. Thus, the better way to apply this model in studying children is in keeping a more prospective focus instead of a more conclusive one. This would also be important in view of parent-child dynamics that do strongly shape emotional development and learning processes that touch on use of emotion regulation strategies and increasing brain functionality in children (Diaz, 2015; Bottelli, 2017; Moreilla, 2017; Desantick, 2021).

There is growing recognition that the extent of emotion regulation adaptability is largely context-driven (English et al., 2017; Lu et al., 2018; Gross & Cassidy, 2019; McRae & Gross, 2020). This pours into current challenges in studying emotion regulation where the contribution of social and developmental factors is a truly complex process (McRae & Gross, 2020; Lindsey, 2020). Seemingly, the better way to address this is in using a mixed method approach. This would adequately and more broadly allow for integration of qualitative and quantitative information pertaining to the emotion experience. It would be expected that the insights gained from such a rigorous process anchors such a study on evidenced outcomes (Cresswell, 2018; Coates, 2021).

2.6 Rationale

This study of emotion regulation in a peri-urban context considered how this urbanization process possibly affected economic development, which has been cited as a worthy aspect to consider (Gross & Ouyang, 2021). Kenya's economic and socio-cultural pressures continue to push families out of unproductive rural areas as well as congested and expensive urban places to more peri-urbanized environments. A few scholars have attempted to address the broader socio-economic state of the constituency under study over the years (Ndikaru Wa Teresiah, 2012; Ngure et al., 2015; Maami, 2019; Munala, et al., 2020). Others attempted investigating general child development processes. There were those who considered family characteristics as well as public health facets in the broader context of study (Mwangi, 2009; Mwangi et al., 2018; Mwangi, et al., 2019; Shihundu, 2019; Thuku, 2020). Studies on emotion regulation of pre-adolescents in Kenya and specifically in Thika constituency are scarce. None of the considered literature had looked into explicit regulation of positive and negative emotion in pre-adolescents in this geographical location at the time of this study.

This study was inspired by observation in various media platforms and literature made over time. There were reports continually presented by mainstream and other media, on pre-adolescent boys' and girls' involvement in self-defeating, high-risk behavior and abuse in Kenya. This was described to involve negative emotion expression including sadness, anger, regret, fear, frustration and more as well as behaviour exhibiting the same (Mwangi et al., 2018; Muhia, 2021). Mwangi (2018) cited that girls do experience a higher prevalence of sexual abuse than boys. Business Today (2016) reported of nine primary school girls who became pregnant at the same time in Nandi county. Nandiemo (2017) reported of a 12-year old girl who went missing

and later committed suicide after getting pregnant, presumably out of shame and fear of repercussions. Cherono (2018) reported how a pre-teen committed suicide after an angry outburst and shame amongst his peers. Wanzala (2019) reported the sacking of primary school teachers across Kenya due to their sexual relations with pupils, indicating sexual, psychological and emotional relations. These incidences are among many more reported and some unreported, which left the children confused, angry, sad and traumatized. Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA, 2018) and The National Authority for the Campaign Against Drug Abuse (NACADA) jointly saw the need to undertake a study to determine the prevalence of drug abuse in 27 of Kenya's counties in 2018. Oduor (2019) reported on the increasing use and abuse of drugs in primary schools including alcohol, khat and tobacco. Much of the abuse is facilitated by a continuing process of disintegrating family ties that has lowered social protection for children in general. This has left them emotionally vulnerable and exposed (Osok et al, 2018). Morelen et al., (2012), in conducting comparative studies between Kenya, Ghana and USA, identified Kenyan children as suppressing anger more than children from the other two countries. This was observed more in girls than in boys. They also indicated that children in Kenya expressed sadness in a less dramatic manner than children from the other two countries. Alternatives 4 Children (2016) indicated in their annual report the diverse psychological challenges experienced by the orphaned and vulnerable children they assist. These included abandonment and neglect, sodomy, trauma, low self-esteem, which have a strong emotion component and exposes the children to the possible development of psychopathology. Such pathological behaviour, have been linked to suppression of emotion (Amelia, et al., 2010). Out of these observations, the study identified a target area, with similar issues experienced by children, in a peri-urbanized setting.

In the targeted area of study, Thika sub-county, children were reported to be facing an array of socio-economic and cultural issues such as abandonment, neglect, sexual abuse, death, or incarceration of parents (Macheo, 2020; WEMIHS 2021; International Child Development Programme, 2021). Reported teen crime on local residents has been blamed on abuse of drugs and alcohol such as bhang and illicit brew (Kanyara, 2021). Children have been targeted in criminal activity, a violation of their human rights such as in the murder of a 9 year-old boy in Thika East constituency (Meja, 2021). It was reported that various forms of defilement occurred in Thika Municipality with the most vulnerable being between age 6-10. Family members, peers and neighbours were found to be some of the perpetrators (Mwangi et al., 2018).

The negative emotions associated with this state of affairs includes aggression, anger, anxiety, fear, shame and sadness. Some positive emotion, such as excitement, euphoria and happiness would be expected in normal peer group activity. In 2016, children were rescued from sexual abuse from a home. This may indicate a sense of parental/caregiver neglect leading to the perpetrators taking advantage of this to exploit them (Ndun'gu Wa Gathua, 2016). In their 2020 report, Macheo, located in Gatuanyaga Ward, indicated that they attended to children who had been neglected or abused, among other socio-economic needs of education, housing and meals (Macheo, 2020). WEMIHS, a non-governmental organization in Thika attends to orphans and vulnerable children, 0-8 years, exposed to neglect and abuse. It also attends to teenage girls in the larger Thika East sub-county. The pre-adolescents are not explicitly given focus, probably assumed to fall in between the teenage or younger children categories. Their programs have spanned child protection, household food security, natural resource management among other in a bid to address gaps in infrastructure and economic empowerment in Thika constituency (WEMIHS, 2021). The targeted area, set in a peri-urban context has socio-economic dynamics

that somewhat predispose children to a level of parental neglect, influence from social media, increasingly competitive access to amenities, a less cohesive family connectedness among others. This is indirectly precipitated by economic challenges as exposed in how different economic entities are working (Munala, et al., 2020; Ngolya, 2020).

These happenings having had negative effect on children over time, with an increase in experience of negative emotion in children can be mitigated. Such include a holistic approach including research on emotion regulation, child protection, advocacy for vulnerable children and much more. This would be achieved better using a mixed method approach which flexibly captures diverse variables in context (Cresswell, 2018; Coates, 2021). It is by obtaining adequate knowledge on how preadolescents especially interact with emotion regulation processes that this aspect can inform practical interventions, policy and further researcher. This study hence focused on exploring cognitive appraisal and expressive suppression strategies as explicit processes of regulating both positive and negative emotion. This was in the backdrop of emotion awareness and expression of both negative and positive emotion in children (Gross, 2015).

The initial part of the study employed quantitative tools to grasp the general application of explicit emotion regulation strategies. It further investigated expressive suppression using qualitative tools as the more observable emotion regulation strategy. The results of this study poured into forming a basis for further study, offered insights to the practice of child therapy and contributed to existing theoretical and methodological processes. The researcher learnt new research skills and polished existing ones in both qualitative and quantitative method.

2.7 Summary

There is a general direction predicated by this review that in studying emotion. This is that one has to be keen to incorporate peripheral or perceived external inducements on the

emotion experience of pre-adolescents. It was also important to distinguish biographical details participants in this study. Such distinction was along useful human development stages such as puberty, along gender and its underpinnings, the quality, intensity and spatial expression of emotion. These offered an interesting yet complex diversity in how to engage meaningfully with the numerous aspects while seeking to remain anchored in relevant theoretical and philosophical bases.

The literature considered in this chapter carries numerous details. Due to the magnitude of content, it required a thorough and rigorous time-consuming review. This aimed at unravelling intricacies of emotion regulation in children. It must be appreciated that rarely would this be possible without the need to collaborate with other scholars in their diversity of location, philosophical, theoretical and contexts. This necessitated the appraisal of various forms of relevant existing literature despite the vast scope covered. This combining with very dynamic ethical concerns of the day made for a lively, enriched and progressive literature review experience. It was worth investing the time and other resources necessary to bring such work to a logical and well considered position.

3.0 CHAPTER 3: METHODS

3.1 Aims of the Study

The aims of this study were to empirically explore and establish how pre-adolescent boys and girls aged 10-12 years explicitly regulate positive and negative emotion, using both qualitative and quantitative tools. This was in the backdrop of their awareness and expression of such emotion (Gross, 2015). The study also aimed at establishing any significant family and socio-economic attributes involved in and influencing this process. The tools applied in the mixed method of this study were Focus Groups, Biographical Questionnaire and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA) developed by James Gross (Gullone, 2012) and a Biographical Questionnaire.

3.2 Design

Mixed Methods

The philosophical assumptions of mixed methods are varied depending on the adopted paradigm and application of qualitative and quantitative methods. The consideration of both philosophy and method is the basis for a continuing debate on whether to use the term 'mixed research' or 'mixed methods research'. Regardless of the term used, there is drawing of strengths and a more complete understanding of phenomenon from both methods. (Maarouf, 2019). Coates (2021) provides an argument for the need to report a critically reflected philosophical stance in mixed method research. He noted that researchers can derive meaning in research from its practical outcomes as pragmatism. They could also select one assumption and apply it to both sets of methods or have different methods meaningfully associated with diverse foundations. (Coates, 2021).

Pragmatism is one of the identified philosophical backgrounds justifying the use of mixed methods. In this, practical issues are valued above abstractness. Knowledge is seen as useful when it is active and practical, its use not necessarily fixated. It has been more commonly used to justify the use of mixed methods because it permits diversity in both philosophical and methodological applications. Its three forms, functional, referential, and methodological, further explain how it supports mixed methods. The researcher's own bias is seen as permitted to the extent it furthers research objectives. In this study, it was recognized that this bias was present and played out in the qualitative process, applied positively in seeking a deeper understanding of the issues. Bias has been criticized by scholars for not valuing assumptions underlying these methods, not specifically identifying methods that work nor addressing the diversity of assumptions underlying qualitative and quantitative paradigms (Cresswell, 2018; Maarouf, 2019).

The quality of mixed methods is an important and continuing debate considered from different fields of study. The two common views are that quality may be universal and fixed, the other view being contingent and flexible. The quality of mixed methods is expected to address complexities presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, one of the many challenges for mixed method research efforts. This is in the backdrop of individuals and communities now having to navigate constant contextual changes precipitated by health and safety protocols of the pandemic (Fetters & Molina-Azorin, 2021).

Design

The mixed method applied in this study was Explanatory Sequential in nature. The same research questions were responded to by analyzing quantitative data and subsequently, colleting

qualitative data to bring a deeper understanding of such analyses. The specific qualitative processes were informed and guided by insights drawn from analyzing descriptive and inferential statistics. These determined the method and scope of qualitative information to be collected. This process took more time in applying both quantitative and qualitative tools but offered a rich and contextual grasp of the phenomenon under study, both in design and output (Cresswell, 2018). This design combines a subjective approach to multiple realities and the application of scientific method of acquiring knowledge. This within social contexts is considered as an acknowledgment of the influence of external environment on what is studied (Coates, 2021). It offers an important interaction between individuals and communities within their external world in co-creation of meanings, while acknowledging the physical world. This explanatory mixed method offered a valuable opportunity for a deeper explanation of quantitative descriptive and inferential data. The integration and drawing of inferences from the findings of the qualitative information describe the added value consisting of insights and observations that would otherwise not be known. Research questions are answered by both sets of data, including qualifying outliers and insignificant information gathered (Cresswell, 2018).

3.2.1 Quantitative

This study applied the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA) to explore awareness of and expression of both negative and positive emotion in pre-adolescents of both genders. This questionnaire was selected as appropriate for use with child participants, in general, and also because it has been validated for use with adolescents. The tools were also available for use in the study without a demand on special permissions for its use. Some of the questions in this questionnaire include ‘I control my emotions by not expressing them’ which addresses negative emotion. Another question, addressing positive emotion is

'When I want to feel more positive emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation' (Hughes, et al., 2011; Gullone, 2012; Liu et al., 2017). The quantitative part of this study also used a Biographical Questionnaire to collect general socio-cultural and economic context details from head-teachers and parents/guardians. These tools were applied in seeking provide useful demographic data, a grasp on application of both cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression and the general socio-economic factors possibly underlying expression of positive and negative emotion in pre-adolescents. This study hypothesized that pre-adolescents do apply both explicit emotion regulation strategies and are to an extent, influence by family and socio-cultural dynamics. Beyond the demographic information, this section of the study sought to answer the research question below:

i. What is the nature of explicit regulation of positive and negative emotion in preadolescents?

3.2.2 Qualitative

The qualitative section of this study applied Focus Groups discussions to collect more subjective information on expression of positive and negative emotions by preadolescents, from their class and subject teachers. The teachers were viewed as regular interactors with pre-adolescents in the school context, best positioned to observe how pre-adolescents express their emotion. The Focus Groups were used as they would allow for more subjective details to be gathered and offer adequate time to make necessary clarifications during the discussions. This enriched the study and offer important observations and insights (Greg, et al., 2017). The discussions were held with selected teachers of both genders, who closely interacted with the targeted pre-adolescents in their respective classes and schools. Focus Group guides were prepared and presented to these teachers. The questions therein were open-ended to allow for

detailed responses from the participants. The questions also covered aspects that would adequately answer the research question below.

ii. In which ways do the children express their positive and negative emotion in the school/classroom setting?

3.3 Sample and Sampling

Pre-adolescents and their teachers were reachable through two public and one private primary school. These were day schools and not boarding ones. The sample for this study was sourced from a peri-urban setting where the three schools are located and children are subjected to perceived similar socio-economic conditions. The pre-adolescents interact when out of school as they share the same social amenities and engage in similar family gatherings, neighborhood meet-ups, entertainment and recreation, religious activities, among many more. They are thus most likely to engage with the rest of the society physically, in ideologies, beliefs, attitudes and emotions. These children also spend at least thirty-five hours per week in school, interacting with their teachers and peers. It is likely that they engage with the same peers or those with similar characteristics when out of school. The total sample size for this study from the three primary schools, was 8 teachers and 73 primary school boys and girls from a private and public school. It constituted 34 boys and 38 girls from both Standard 6 and 7 classes in the three selected primary schools in Thika Municipality, Kenya. The child participants were selected purposively by their age and class level. One school was private and the other two were public. Three head-teachers from each of the three sampled schools and at least one parent/guardian for each of the sampled children provided biographical information. 8 teachers as Class teachers from the two selected schools were targeted using the purposive convenience method. They included class teachers, social science teachers and one patron of the debate club. They were selected for their more

regular interaction with children in the classroom and school setting. The research was conducted while schools were in session.

3.3.1 Site of Study

The study was conducted in public and private primary schools in Thika Municipality in Kiambu County, Kenya. The schools were in the same peri-urban setting and hence subjected to similar socio-cultural and economic dynamics. The selected schools were in close proximity due to the researcher's limited time and resources. Population of 10-14-year olds is almost equal for both genders. This was as per their 2012 and 2019 census. Thika East sub-county had an average household of three. It was ranked twelfth out of thirteen in population density of 354 compared to 952 for the overall county in 2019. In the specific administrative Wards in which the schools were located, the population density varied, compared to that of the Sub-county housing both Wards. The population density was 324 for Gatuanyaga sub-location which hosted Gatuanyaga primary school. It was 442 for Komu sub-location, hosting Karizon Academy and Mountain View primary school. This population variance was visible in the population (Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019).

3.4. Instruments

3.4.1 Quantitative

The ERQ-CA questionnaire was used in this study. It is a ten-item questionnaire on a 7-point Likert-type Scale on expression of both positive and negative emotion as part of emotion regulation process. Hughes (2011) conducted a psychometric evaluation of the ERQ-CA to establish its validity and found that it demonstrated soundness in its construct and convergent validity. Liu et al., (2017) adapted this questionnaire to come up with its Chinese version. They indicated that this version had satisfactory reliability and validity, citing that its two factors were

consistent and there was good structure, identical to the original instrument. An African adaptation of this instrument was unavailable at the time of the study. The literature available did not identify a version of the ERQ-CA adopted for the Kenyan population. It was thus not possible to find a local comparison against which to determine how applicable it was. The study ensured that an explanation of technical terms in the ERQ-CA was provided to all child participants. Thus, the use of this instrument in the targeted context did not pose any explicit challenge in its application.

The Biographical Questionnaire was also used. It had 10 questions that sought to establish basic family, socio-economic and cultural aspects of the children's social background. It was filled out by parents/guardians and head-teachers on behalf of the child participants to provide a general view of the socio-economic and family context that the children under study lived in.

3.4.2 Qualitative

A Focus Group was best in collecting qualitative data from the teachers in regards to positive and negative emotion experiences of the children within the school setting. A sample of 8 teachers in two schools participated in the two separate Focus Group discussions in one public and one private primary school. There were three teachers in the public primary school and five teachers in the private primary school's group. Teachers of already sampled children were best suited as respondents because they were already familiar with this study and interacted with the children most of the day. They were also likely to be more consistent observers and reliable interactors with the children's emotional dynamics. A Focus Group Guide was prepared for use with the teachers and presented to them. The discussions took place in a designated private room within the school compound. The Focus Group discussions engaged the respondents in bringing

out additional information on how children experienced their negative and positive emotion. It shed more light on possible home and school contexts associated with these emotion experiences in children.

Thematic Content Analysis was used to explore how pre-adolescents interact with their positive and negative emotions, how they expressed these, under what circumstances this occurred and if under any external influences. This information was organized using codes that identified important aspects and subsequently, themes and sub-themes were generated after repeated synthesis of the data (Spiers & Riley, 2019). This was an important undertaking in this study because it facilitated a deeper understanding of the connection between this expression of emotion to possible influences from the children's family and school contexts. These outcomes support the pre-adolescent's identified use of emotion strategies using the ERQ-CA, directly and indirectly. The outcomes of Thematic Content Analysis also expanded on the understanding of family attributes reported using the Biographical Questionnaire and so highlighting the possibility of significant influence by socio-cultural dynamics on children (Herd et al., 2020).

3.5 Procedure

3.5.1 Quantitative

The heads of the primary schools were approached for formal permission to undertake research in their schools which they provided. The relevant University and National government permits were presented to them. The head-teachers were requested in writing for permission to invite pre-adolescents in Class 6 and 7 as well as selected teachers to participate in the research. The Head-teachers, selected teachers and children received a verbal briefing, separately, as a general introduction on the research purpose, and an explanation of the use of different documents in the study. The three Head-teachers received a Participant Information Sheet, a

Consent Form and a Biographical Questionnaire for them to complete. They provided their consent and their competed forms were collected. The children received a Participant Information Sheet, a Consent Form for their guardian/parent, an Assent form for the child and a Biographical Questionnaire for their parent/guardian. Signed consent forms from parents/guardians were received together with the completed Biographical Questionnaires and completed Assent forms, a day after issuance. A few were submitted two days later due to unavailability of parents/guardians. Only children with signed Assent forms were allowed to proceed to fill out the ERQ-CA. All eligible child participants in the public schools completed the questionnaire for about 30 minutes, concurrently, in a designated classroom. Those in the private school completed the questionnaires within their regular classrooms since the number was much smaller and more manageable. All completed and unused questionnaires were collected and stored safely for the data analysis process.

3.5.2 Qualitative

Each of the selected teachers received a Participant Information Sheet, a Focus Group Guide and a Consent Form. They were also informed that the Focus Group Discussions would be audio recorded. They were requested to complete the Consent Form as their indication of being willful participants in the study. Their completed Consent Forms were then collected and the teachers requested to avail themselves in the designated room for the Focus Group discussions. The selected teachers who consented to participating in the study, were gathered for Focus Group discussions, conducted in a private room within the school. Each Focus Group discussion was conducted on its own day. The discussions which took about one and a half hours for each, followed the Focus Group guide questions and also allowed for the respondents to make clarifications and comments as they spoke. These discussions were recorded using a recorder and

the recording stored safely for transcribing. A thank you note was sent via mobile phone and email given to the head-teachers of the three schools. The recordings were transcribed and the transcriptions for both Focus Groups edited for general grammatical errors. The transcriptions were then ready for use in analysis of the data.

Anonymity

The anonymity of child participants was guaranteed as none of their personal identifying details were included in this study. Anonymity to the researcher was not possible with the Focus Group participants during discussions as the teachers had to be specifically selected as per their role. It was possible in all subsequent use of data from these discussions. In this study, all the participants' personal identifying details were omitted from the results and discussion. This ensured protection of the participants when the research findings will be made public from responses and any form of tracing.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality was maintained throughout this study, as much as was possible. There was limited confidentiality in the Focus Group discussions as it was not possible to guarantee this amongst the participants. The researcher stored and analyzed all data collected in a protective manner. The transcription of Focus Group discussions was done by the researcher.

Trustworthiness & credibility

This study applied recommended ethical and methodological guidelines to the best possible level. Data was cleaned to remove errors and irrelevant information. The quantitative analyses were done using current software to provide accurate output. The researcher was flexible in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, which affected movement and access to participants. Adjustment to safety and health protocols were made.

3.6 Data Analysis

3.6.1 Pilot Test

The ERQ-CA was pilot tested prior to the main data collection exercise, on 2 pre-adolescent children in Thika Municipality, a boy and girl from one of the public schools. A pilot test of the Biographical Questionnaire was done prior to the main data collection exercise, on three adults due to their availability. All participants in the pilot test were excluded from the main research exercise. The outcome of the pilot revealed a few administrative challenges, in particular availability of the parents/caregivers and time taken by child participants to complete the ERQ-CA. This was overcome by allowing an extra day for the questionnaires to be completed.

3.6.2 Quantitative

Data collected through the two questionnaires, ERCQ-CA and Biographical Questionnaire was cleaned of errors, missing values and typos. It was then categorized per school and as a comprehensive set, then analyzed for frequency and inferential statistics, using the latest version 27 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Presentation of data included descriptive statistics using percentage, mean and standard deviation in simple tabulation and pie charts. Inferential statistics were generated using the paired t-Test, a paired t-test. These were also presented using simple tabulation. The data analysis conducted was in response to the research question.

3.6.3 Qualitative

Thematic Content Analysis was applied in synthesizing the transcribed data. This process involved familiarization with the transcribed data by reading through the transcripts and listening

to the recordings severally and noting emerging issues and ideas. This was followed by noting emerging concepts, interesting observations and nuances while looking out their recurrence throughout the transcribed data. Those that were similar were clustered together and assigned a word or befitting short phrase. Those that were non-recurring were also noted. Short phrases and words were then used to identify these clusters as well as the non-recurring ideas. These short phrases and words, which were codes, were evaluated severally to rephrase them appropriately and generate a smaller group of codes and eventually major themes were generated that represented these codes and details therein. This process ideally used codes to identify patterns in the transcriptions and described the data in the form of themes and sub-themes. Thematic Content Analysis was selected because of its flexibility in exploration of various qualitative aspects of the study as well as generating depth in the analysis of the transcribed data (Soratto, et al, 2020).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

The required permission to conduct research was obtained from the University through the Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical). And by submitting the requisite documentation within Kenya, a Research Permit was secured from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, NACSOTI. A Participant Information Sheet was provided to all the adult and child participants in the study. Written consent was given by head-teachers, teachers, parent/guardians and pre-adolescents, after verbal and written briefing on the purpose of this study. The questionnaires were administered once the adult and child consent process was verified and completed, in a private room. All the study documentation was stored safely. Key terms in the questionnaire for the pre-adolescents were explained for their understanding at their developmental level. The study ensured that Focus Group participants were also asked to provide

their consent to the discussions and on being audio recorded. The privacy of these discussions was met by having a secluded room where only the Focus Group participants were allowed.

4.0 CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presented the results of the study in two sections, first as the quantitative findings and second as the qualitative findings. Each set of results responded to the identified research question from the Methods chapter. In the quantitative section, basic background information on child participants including their age, gender, class level at school, family type and general challenges at the family level were presented as frequency statistics tables, bar graphs and pie charts. This section also presented inferential statistics of responses from child participants relating to regulation of positive and negative emotion using tables.

In the qualitative section, the results were presented in the form of a summary table showing overarching themes, themes and sub-themes generated from Thematic Content Analysis of the Focus Group discussion transcripts. The table also presented the selected responses from participants that relevantly addressed each sub-theme.

4.2 Quantitative Results

4.2.1 Demographic information

The qualitative process gathered demographic information of the child participants in terms of their age, gender, class level, family type, socio-cultural influences and parental challenges. It also generated data concerning the difference between boys and girls in expression of positive and negative emotion. The sample of child participants consisted of 34 (47%) male and 38 (52%) female, (N=73) as shown in Figure 1. Class level 6 had (51%) of all the child

participants while (22%) in Class level 7 as shown in Figure 5.2 Participants of both genders as per their age were represented in a pie chart as 12 years (52%), 11 years (38%) and 10 years (10%) as shown in Figure 3, 4 and 5.

Figure 1
Gender of Pre-adolescents

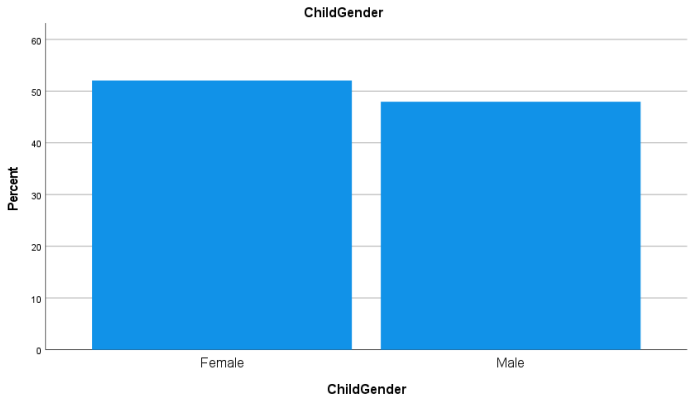


Figure 2
Class Level of Pre-Adolescents

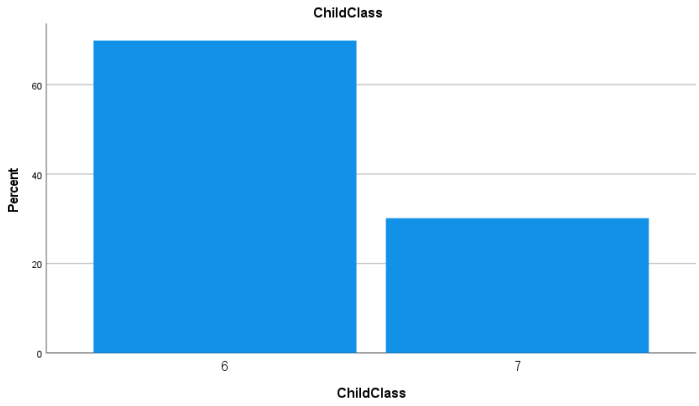


Figure 3
Age of Pre-adolescents

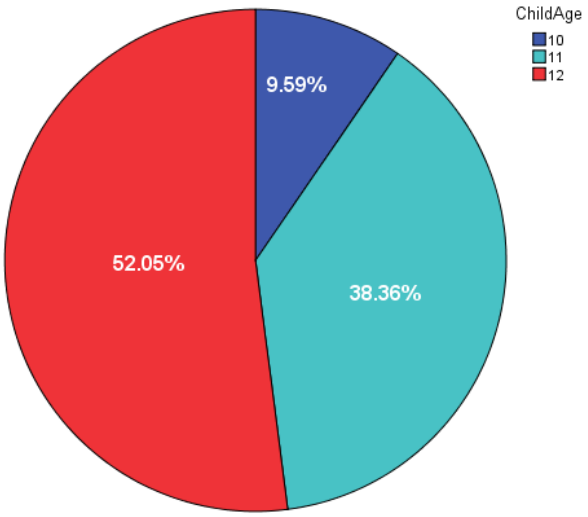


Table 1 shows the frequency statistics for preadolescents' age, gender and age per class level. According to the results, the mean age for child participants was *M* =11.4, *SD* = .67. At the specific class levels, the results show that more female pupils participated in this study in Class level 6. In Class level 7, there were more male participants in the study. In both Class 6 and 7, there was similar representation of child participants as per each age level, with less than 10% difference for each age.

Table 1
Frequency Statistics for Pre-adolescents' Age, Class Level and Gender

Mean & Standard Deviation for Child Age Combined for three schools				
	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	
Age	73	11.42	.665	
Gender Per Class Level in Percentage Combined for three schools				
	Total Count	Male	Female	% Total
Class level 6	51	41.2	58.8	100.0
Class level 7	22	63.6	36.4	100.0

Cumulative	73			
Age per Class Level in Percentage Combined for three schools				
	Total Count	10 years	11 years	12 years
Class 6	51	9.8	35.3	54.9
Class 7	22	9.1	45.5	45.5
Cumulative	73			

Table 2
Frequency table for Social-economic Influences Perceived to be Positive in Nature

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Technology	44	60.4	65.6
	Education	2	2.7	3.0
	Politics	16	21.9	23.9
	Children	5	6.8	7.5
	Total	67	91.8	
Missing	System	6	8.2	
Total		73	100.0	

Table 2 shows the social-economic influences on the participant's families perceived to be positive in nature. According to the results, technology was cited by the highest number of parents/guardians as being influential to these adults in their socio-economic context (f=44), followed by politics (f=16) with education and children being cited by only 2 and 5 participants respectively.

Table 3

Nature of Families

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent

Valid	Mother and Father	51	69.9	76.1
	Single Parents	13	17.8	19.4
	Divorced	1	1.4	1.5
	Separated	2	2.7	3.0
	Total	67	91.8	
Missing	System	6	8.2	
Total		73	100.0	

Table 3 shows the nature of families that the pre-adolescents belong to. According to the results, the mother and father was cited by the highest number of children (f=51), followed by single parent family (f=13), with separated family and the divorced being cited by only 2 and 1 participants respectively.

Table 4
Challenges faced by Pre-adolescents' Parents/Guardians

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
Valid	Family type	4	5.5	6.1
	Finances	53	72.5	80.2
	Health	1	1.4	1.5
	Education	4	5.5	6.1
	Politics	4	5.5	6.1
	Total	66	90.4	
Missing	System	7	9.6	
Total		73	100.0	

Table 4 shows the challenges faced by the children's parents/guardians within their socio-economic context. According to the results, finances were cited by the highest number of parents/guardians (f=53). Family type (f=4), education (f=4) and politics (f=4) were cited equally with health cited the least (f=1).

The socio-economic factors contribute to the environmental influence on the family causing it to function in ways that are meaningful to children in supporting their emotion development or even providing unique challenges to be overcome. These factors, also affecting the parents/guardians, are important to the emotional development of children as they impact on the adults in ways that trickle down to the children. The family structure provides a basic framework for the child to interact with either one or both genders of adults, who model how to interact with positive and negative emotion. This family structure also determines how different genders of children access parental support and in particular emotional support. This means that where both parents are present, children would be more likely to find positive emotional support and a better context to experience their positive and negative emotion. Parental challenges are strong on the general development of the child due to the modelling of behaviour by the parent and this can lay a foundation for the emotional competence of a child. Such challenges are therefore likely to negatively impact on how a child learns to interact with positive or negative emotion, including when and how to express it (Leerkes, 2011; Lindquist, et al., 2012; Zimmerman & Sprangler, 2014; Diaz & Eisenberg, 2015).

4.2.2 Research Question 1: What is the nature of explicit regulation of positive and negative emotion in preadolescents?

The study explored the relationship between the expression of positive and negative emotion as per the gender of participants to reveal any statistical significance.

A two-sample *t* test was conducted to determine whether boys scored differently than girls for expression of positive emotion. The results showed that the mean score for boys (M = 5.62, SD 1.69) was not significantly higher than for girls (M=5.10, SD=1.67), (t = 0.1, p = .92). This posits that there is no gender difference in expression of Positive Emotion.

A two-sample *t* test was conducted to determine whether boys scored differently than girls for expression of negative emotion ($M = 5.16$). The mean score for boys ($M = 5.07$, SD 1.68) was not significantly lower than for girls, $t = -0.30$, $p = .77$. These results show that there is no gender difference in expression of Negative Emotion. This is presented in Table 6 and 7 below.

Table 5
Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation for Positive and Negative Emotion

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Boys	Positive Emotion	34	5.62	1.688	.289
	Negative Emotion	34	5.074	1.6838	.288

Table 6
Paired t-test for Positive and Negative Emotion per Gender

					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Lower	Upper
Test Value = 5.59						
Boys	.096	33	.924	.028	-.56	.62
Test Value = 5.16						
Girls	-.299	33	.766	-.0865	-.674	.501

Note: The mean values for boys were compared against those of girls and $P > .05$

4.3 Qualitative Results

4.3.1 Research Question 2: In which ways do the children express their positive and negative emotion in the school/classroom setting?

Thematic Content Analysis was applied and it yielded four overarching themes, 8 themes and 16 sub-themes. Each overarching theme related to themes and sub-themes that represented the more specific and nuanced aspects of how children express their emotion within the school setting. Relevant examples of such expression were included in the summary for each of the sub-themes. These findings are presented in Table 7 below.

Thematic Content Analysis was applied and it provided the flexibility necessary in exploration of the various qualitative aspects of the study as well as generating depth in the data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Insights on qualitative data analysis presented by Vaismoradi, et al. (2013) on Thematic Analysis and Content analysis provided for a better grasp of Thematic Content analysis and its unique contribution in this qualitative study. Braun & Clarke (2013) provided guidance on how this is applied to capture the important points relating to the research question.

The flexibility in analysis of emerging themes, in contrast to rigidity in a pre-determined definition of prevalence, allowed this aspect for certain ideas or nuances to not only be considered but also not hinder other non-prevalent but equally relevant themes. The flexibility also refers to the ability to analyze the data inductively without necessarily and strictly using theoretical interest to generate codes and themes (Sorrato, et al., 2020). The inevitable influence of the researcher's theoretical understanding of the study means that data is coded within this backdrop, since no research can take place in a vacuum (Braun & Clarke, 2006). A key aspect considered in the analysis was the interpretive approach to the coded data with the mindset that these experiences do have an underlying meaning and causation and hence not simply words presenting an experience at the surface. The resultant patterning and their review of themes,

allowed for demonstration of what was considered most appropriate in presenting the findings of this study (Spiers & Riley, 2019).

Familiarization with the data formed a good basis for coding, seeing that there was a wealth of transcribed data. There was necessitated the listening to the recorded discussions several times, reading and re-reading the transcripts while asking questions and being curious about what the data was all about. Notes were made on ideas that began forming as well as things that stood out and were noteworthy (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017). From the familiarization then coding was easier to do, by thoroughly looking at segments of data and creating befitting labels using words or phrases. The relevance of the code to the research question allowed for open and flexible application of these segments of data to as many codes as applicable (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Spiers & Riley, 2019). This means that the interpretation of the meanings of words or phrases, beyond the semantic level, went into the deeper meaning of such. The revision of codes and not becoming content with just the initial interpretations was important in generating themes that captured the data with clarity. The diversity in coding is part of capturing as many relevant ideas from the data as posited by (Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017). Several broad themes were found fitting. This was after a thorough and repeated consideration of patterns in the coding. The repetitive evaluation of the codes allowed for revision of the wording applied in capturing the true spirit of the experiences and nuances therein (Fereday & Miur-Cochrane, 2006; Willig & Stainton-Rogers, 2017). Its suitability in this study was central to the exploration of explicit emotion regulation strategies and the need to meaningfully describe these amongst pre-adolescents.

Table 7: Summary of Thematic Content Analysis of Focus Group Discussions

Over-arching Themes	Themes	Sub-themes	Participants
Positive Emotion	A Picture of Joy	Expressions of Happiness	*Participant B: When they are playing, they are always excited, happy, yeah.*
		Drawing Beautiful Things	*Participant C: Maybe to add on to that, you find that when they are experiencing positive emotions they usually draw these beautiful things, flowers, weddings….. so you can detect their emotions in their drawings.*
	Participating with Peers	Getting Involved	*Participant A: In the modern journalism club, you find the girls who can report the news, there is no boy who has ever done it.*
		Shouting for Joy	*Participant E: They do vary, the boy from the girls. I think the girls are a little more emotional than the boys. If it is excitement, they get more excited.*
Over-arching Themes	Themes	Sub-themes	Participants
Negative Emotion	The Pain Inside	Negative Impact at Home	*Participant C: And even these children when they are at home, they may lack parental love, that is why we may see when they come to school they cling to the teachers, seeking that parental love.*
		Hiding Pain	*Participant B: Even like I can just say, for example, maybe a child has been raped, or has been assaulted or even physically abused performance the child tends to withdraw, low performance, may not talk in class and is absent minded. If they feel they may be disappointed, he withdraws.*
	Being Out of Sync	Disengagement at School	*Participant A: but at the same time you may find a child in the same class just seated down somewhere just alone doing nothing, so that child is disturbed because it is not normal for a child to just sit when the*

			others are just playing.
		Challenging the Rules	*Participant C: The another one, they go against the school rules, yah, trying to test the waters.*
		Releasing Tension	*Participants B: They tend to be jovial, you can compare when they are in class, at the end of the day they will be quiet but when they exit he class.*
Over-arching Themes	Themes	Sub-themes	Participants
Puberty in Boys & Girls	Changes in Girls	Interaction with Opposite Sex	*Participant A: To me, I have noted that the girls tend to like the male teachers, than the female.*
		Blossoming Hormones	*Participant A: I will take the discussion back to the monthly periods, their emotions, since they are almost developing puberty, they tend to be shy, sometimes they are disturbed….* *I think even shyness can be something because like for example the girls in the menstrual cycle they don't want to go in front of the class to present or do something and they don't want to get close to the boys*
	Changes in Boys	Distinct Change	*Participant A: …. and then also talk about picking of the ear, for the boys, shaving of the hair, that is it.*
		Identity	Participant E: *Some others they just want to be recognized, some recognition, such that, you find they group themselves especially maybe those who are at that, at that, puberty stage they group together…*
Over-arching Themes	Themes	Sub-themes	Participants
Home Versus School Influences	Influences at Home	Parental Attitude	*Participant B: Even I tend to blame the parents because this Corona period the parents have been lenient to their kids……*

			I also think even if a child is aggressive now they tend to be aggressive at an older age, the parent did not deal with it or were unable to tame it at some point.
		Social Class	*Participant A: Might be from the parents, they are so rich so they child asks their teacher, "what can you tell me? You haven't even been to Nairobi". They begin to size you up. I can be a factor.*
	School System	Rules at School	*Participant A: ....rules and regulations, you as the teacher you are supposed to tell them no,…… The another one, they go against the school rules, yah, trying to test the waters.*
		Teacher-Pupil Interaction	*Participant C: When you become harsh to them, you will not see their true picture of themselves.*

4.3.2 Summary

This chapter presented the outcome of using a mixed method approach. Both quantitative and qualitative results did answer each of the identified research questions to a great extent. The two approaches also provided support for the efficiency of the selected research tools in generating adequate data for synthesis. The results from both approaches provided a balanced and complimentary view of how pre-adolescent boys and girls express their positive and negative emotion. Both approaches also allowed for objectively and subjectivity in exploring the factors considered in this study, bringing into play the strengths of each to support this study. In the qualitative results, there were differences in pre-adolescent boys and girls in the observations made on their positive and negative emotion by teachers. This having been provided in detail, and with consideration of subjective nuances therein, allowed for such differences to be brought

to light and in their diversity, for each gender. Of particular interest were those cited due to the puberty-related changes in both genders, such as the need for identity and shyness. These offered a significant interaction with such visible changes in the children in the context of expressing positive and negative emotion, to generate meaningful and appropriate conclusions. In contrast, there was no significant difference in boys and girls as far as their emotion expression was concerned, from the quantitative results. This was seen in the paired t-Test conducted. This may have been due to the relatively small sample size available in this study, that may not have adequately capture any meaningful difference between the genders. Both quantitative and qualitative results were important in adequately meeting the aims of this study and within the limitations that were encountered.

The four over-arching themes represented developmental and the socio-cultural dynamics impacting on emotion regulation amongst pre-adolescents. Gross (2015) pointed to the need to further investigate such contextual influences for a more wholesome understanding of emotion regulation processes. This being an outcome of a thorough analysis did incorporate these aspects in the process of generating the overarching themes and hence they represent a good synthesis of the same. The eight themes generated from the sub-themes are provide a glimpse of the peer dynamics, external contexts and nuanced internal experiences of the children. They begin to answer the research question in a more diverse way, from the different inter-personal and intra-personal observations made by the teachers on children's expression of positive and negative emotion. The sub-themes showed that children do experience and express positive and negative emotion in varying degrees, contexts and external pressures. The findings also reveal that teachers are constant observers of the children's emotional experiences and hence are well able to describe these in detail. The results also expose the developmental nuances that underlie

expression of emotion, in both boys and girls with similar and some contrasting outcomes. The responses form participants reveal a good grasp of observations made and the language used to describe these. There was great accuracy in most of the responses from what the Focus Group guide questions asked. The respondents showed a mastery of language that described positive and negative emotion observed in their interaction with children in school. The participants' responses also revealed the participation of teachers in eliciting some of the emotion responses in the children, making them active influences on this. Their confidence while participating in the study was evident and this added to their ability to be articulate about the observations made on the expression of positive and negative emotion in children.

5.0 CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the implication of quantitative and qualitative results already presented on explicit regulation and expression of positive and negative emotion by pre-adolescents. It begins by discussing the demographic information and quantitative findings from the two questionnaires administered. These address research question one. It then delves into the qualitative results. These provided useful and relevant insights and observation on boys and girls in their application of explicit emotion regulation strategies and expression of positive and negative emotion. These answers respond to research question two.

5.2. Quantitative Findings

The qualitative findings of this study revealed that pre-adolescent boys and girls are aware of and express both positive and negative emotion, as poised in research question one. This awareness and expression may be varied as a complex interplay of factors happens in their affective processes (Gross, 2015). The findings also showed that pre-adolescents present observable behavior associated with positive and negative emotion. This association, explicit or inferred is observed by the children's peers and adult connections such as school teachers and parents. These findings did not necessarily explain the observable behaviors, qualities of expressed emotion or the intricate workings of contextual factors in these processes and relationships. They however, greatly allowed this study to generate useful and relevant insights on how pre-adolescents express positive and negative emotion, which contextual factors likely influence this process as set out in research question two.

It is worth noting that interactions amongst pre-adolescents, their peers, teachers and parents were regular. The family and school environments were also the two major social and

physical contexts where these interactions took place. Pre-adolescents and teachers did spend significant amounts of time in the school setting. The consistency with parents was assumed and partially inferred from the findings but could not be conclusively supported since the study did not specifically investigate on parental time spent with children. These considerations agree with scholars who highlight the need to study them alongside emotion regulation (Diaz 2015; Borelli, 2017; Walle, 2017; Steger et al., 2021; Desantick, 2021).

These qualitative findings were supportive of the Process Model of Emotion by Gross (2015) which relates awareness of and expression of emotion using different regulation strategies. Both Cognitive Reappraisal and Expressive Suppression contribute to observable behavior (Gross 2015; Gross & Cassidy 2019). The specific workings of each strategy and their interplay with each other and contextual factors is quite a complexity and these findings could not display the more inward and internal processes of both strategies.

The application of Expressive Suppression where a person consciously attempts to reduce their outward expression of emotion was observable to an extent in this study. This did not essentially exclude the possibility of Cognitive Reappraisal being at play, as an independent or inter-linked process in regulating positive and negative emotion, within contextual attributes. The model considered in this study guided subsequent discussions on generated themes and sub-themes (Gross 2015; Gross & Cassidy 2019). In general, the complexity in studying multiple factors at play in emotion regulation processes calls for the need for prospecting rather than concluding on such studies (Borelli, 2017; Walle, 2017; Steger et al., 2021; Desantick, 2021).

5.2.1 Demographic Information

Gender

This section considered information collected from both pre-adolescent boys and girls. This gender attribute was considered in view of its significance in studies involving children. It did provide equal opportunity to pre-adolescents to participate in this study. This finding provided a reflection of the larger population of children where there are just about as many boys as girls in Kenya. This would be expected to reflect in the sampled schools. It is important to note that the gender aspect was approached as a binary rather than a more fluid consideration of other genders because of the more conservative contextual consideration of this study. (Cai, et al., 2016; Kenya Population and Housing Census, 2019). Gender on its own, not adequate as a demographic allowed this study to consider other factors that closely relate to gender in the context of child development.

Class Level

Class level of the child participants was also an important consideration during this study because the selected classes do host majority or the targeted children between age 10 to 12 years. Within the local study context, these two classes would be expected to consistently host this age group even though there would be outliers older and younger children. The selected age was limited to a few years. This was because there was minimal literature to rely on concerning the exact age of pre-adolescence in the local context. The selected age to be involved in this study was to minimize the risk of selecting a range of years that was too wide.

Age and class level were closely associated because age is one of the factors used to select children as they enroll in school. It would be expected that children within the same age group would end up in the same class level. Age, gender and class level on their own, were not adequate demographics allowed this study to consider other factors that closely relate to gender in the context of child development.

Age of children

The mean age was found to be midway between the three ages considered. This is important to note as the study aimed at pre-adolescents who are generally below thirteen years. The age of a high percentage of children in the three schools, from both class levels, were around this mean age. This means that the pre-adolescents sampled in this study did meet the desired age criteria and likely the study addresses much more of pre-adolescent dynamics rather than lower childhood or adolescence. Few children were ten years old, an age closer to lower childhood but much further from adolescence. The low number of child participants at age ten may be understood that less of lower childhood dynamics were at play in the study. The age selected was within the general description of middle childhood (Bhana, 2010).

Social-economic Influences Perceived to be Positive in Nature

This study understood socio-economic influences as potential shapers of how emotion regulation is experienced and possible how it is expressed. This was s significant in providing peripheral attributes that induce, support or cause modulation of emotion regulation in pre-adolescents. These findings offered valuable basis for consideration of the specific factors.

Technology perceived as a positive influence at the family level is a pointer to how such families are interacting with a blend of conservative, liberal or other value systems from other social contexts via media platforms. The expected conservative outlook on life is constantly being challenges. It would be consistent with the growing understanding of an eroded social fabric in the local and broader context of this study. The scope of this study did not allow deep evaluation of specific workings of technology within families and why it was seen as a positive influence on them. Greater access to the internet and thus increased access to information

globally can be seen as contributing to this shift. Access to this by both adults and children can be seen to shape their experience of emotion to an extent.

The findings on politics and technology as the more frequently positive socio-economic social economy influences rather than children and education was an interesting result. This study understood politics as the general governance aspect involving leadership through elected positions. Wangari (2019) cited how the politically motivated devolution process was viewed by a local leader as detrimental to the economic welfare of citizens. The processes of governing impact on livelihoods of citizens. Politics are generally intertwined with ethnic factors of the day.

This may indicate an inclination towards interaction with activities that were less demanding on personal commitment. Both politics and technology represent more relaxed social economic factors because they provide a sense of connectedness, stimulation, adventure and leisure. Children and education come across as more laid back and deep factors to consider both in terms of mindset and engagement. It may be that these more serious aspects are only attended to as a matter of necessity and therefore may not feature prominently in their everyday concerns of the adult participants. It may also be that technology and politics are more accessible to both the adults and children due to the increasingly digitized context of the family.

Nature of Families

The nature of families from which child participants came from is probably a broader contextual factor because that particular family structure may not necessarily dictate upon the emotion development of a child. This notwithstanding, it is important to understand the meaning of each family structure in as far as other peripheral issues such as the duration of the family structure, the quality of family and engagement as well as other external factors to the family. It would also be worth noting that a surface evaluation of the nature of family may not reveal the

true characteristics of such family and hence the need for more detailed investigation of the same. This supported a finding that in effects the family more indirectly than directly as much as family type was identified challenge to parents it was at a very low frequency and may indicate that this factor. There is no gender difference in the expression of both negative and positive emotion amongst pre-adolescents. This may come across on the surface as not very useful in the study but it provides some good grounding for further study. One, the sample size may have been too small for any significance to be captured. Two, the lack of a difference between the genders can be investigated using a different tool that measures similar properties for an objective play song. Three, it may be that truly there is no significant difference in the expression of emotion and hence studies involving both genders of pre-adolescence may need to reconsider the value of using gender as a main factor in such studies.

The study context being peri-urban is still conservative in cultural norms relating to family and social structure. It follows that the family set ups in existence still adhere to the two-parent form. A significantly lower frequency of divorces and separated families may be attributed to a changing socio-economic environment that has resulted in detached relationships within the family. Urbanization which increases access to technology, education and diversity of cultures may have offered alternative ways of sustaining family relations, re-defined personal and family priorities and roles. The increased demand for higher education and skills for work opportunities may have put pressure on families, working against their social, emotional and economic sustainability (Ngure, et al., 2015; (Munala et al., 2020; Ngolya, 2020).

Challenges faced by Pre-adolescents' Parents/Guardians

The disparity in responses on challenges faced and specifically finances, does point to families in current economic struggles. This is consistent with different scholars alluding to

attempts in interventions for economic stability for the targeted population. The peri-urban nature of this study area is an indicator for possible economic instability that limits the development of basic amenities, infrastructure and providing a consistent flow of finances through stable jobs or business opportunities. The data indicating finances as the significantly greater challenge to families is an accurate reflection of existing literature on the study context. There is increasingly much effort to improve the economy of this context such as through job creation via small and medium enterprises, improved infrastructure and access to funding. This is an important observation because scholars have continually linked how parents shape their children's development by their presence or absence. (Ngure, 2015; Mwangi, 2018). The direct implication of financial struggle for parents in this local context may mean that they are more likely focused on securing employment, maintaining it, finding resources for basic needs through business and other economically viable activities. Recent efforts to ease water shortage as part of efforts to improve the livelihoods of families indicate that infrastructure is still a challenge in this peri-urban area (Muoki, 2020).

In turn, it may mean that their parental roles are interfered with, leaving a vacuum in emotional connection with them, modelling of behaviour or discipline. This form of neglect, albeit unintentional, is one of the issues identified in this study as affecting pre-adolescents. It would be important to focus on this dynamic as evidenced to fully grasp the complex interplay of these factors in regulation of emotion in children. The understanding of how parental interaction with children shapes their perception and experience of emotion is hence a key underlying matter that has informed further study areas.

Parents who have to be emotionally or physically absent from their children, due to work commitments, leave a vacuum. This is likely filled up be the next available person, who may be

another adult in the home, a peer or teacher at school, and the media. This offers insight when considering parental shaping of emotion experience in children to also consider the extent of this impact in view of socio-economic variables at play (Mwangi, 2020; Lindquist, 2015; Walle, 2017; Steger et al., 2021).

5.3 Qualitative Findings

5.3.1 General Observations

The qualitative findings in this study show that both boys and girls aged between 10-12 years do express both positive and negative emotion. This section responded to research question two. This question set out to identify how pre-adolescents express positive and negative emotion, which was shown by the findings. This expression of emotion was observable with variation in intensity. Such emotion includes joy, anger, excitement, among others. Teachers within the school setting did report that the children do express emotion verbally and also through observable behaviour within the classroom setting and beyond. This took place in ways that were quite visible and others less visible. Such observation was made throughout the interaction between the teacher and children in school under circumstances pertaining directly to the teacher-pupil connection as well as peer-to-peer interaction amongst the children.

This study did not necessarily find that any of the genders fail to express emotion much more than the other. This contrasts findings in other studies where boys suppress emotion more (Botrelli, 2017) or specifics of girls discouraged from expressing anger, and boys, fear or sadness (Chaplin and Aldao, 2013). The observation made by teachers may not have adequately differentiated the positive and negative emotion in the specific naming to attribute this more concretely to either gender. Possibly, pre-adolescents engaged a process of making meaning of

their emotion experiences, aiming at goals showing in the form of outward behavior such as dancing or crying. This meaning as explained by Barrett (1998; 2017) and Campos (1994) can be inferred via behavior observable within the school context. This environment may have been perceived to be a familiar environment. Gross in 2015 and 2019 highlighted that the construction of emotion shares the same process as its regulation and this provide a stable basis upon which to consider the explicit responses. Pre-adolescents can then be understood to have the ability, to an extent, to form emotional responses in a continual manner and modify the same. This is a complex process. Their ability to self-report on emotion regulation (Liu, 2017) allows this study to delve into intricacies of emotion regulation strategies applied and what factors impact upon them within specific social contexts.

The developmental stage of pre-adolescence presented some observable behaviour similar to puberty, as would be expected, on the continuum of developmental milestones in children (Herd et al, 2020). This came out distinctly as described in detail by the teachers and more so as characteristics that even they found to be quite interesting. This was in the way the children behaved towards each other and the teachers too. Teachers within the school setting did report that the children did express emotion verbally within the classroom setting and beyond. This was in ways that are quite visible with others less visible. Such observation was made throughout interaction between the teacher and children in school under certain circumstances. These pertained directly to the teacher-pupil connection as well as peer-to-peer interaction amongst the children. They spoke about it from the point of being knowledgeable about this developmental progression in the children. The teachers were able to accurately point out what was relevant to it.

The school settings were similar in their normal academic demands on the children including school rules and interaction with teachers. From the transcription, there was a general sense that children are quite emotional and almost do not hesitate to express this emotion, whether positive or negative. They also did not hesitate to hold back their motion as a way of expressing their general state of mind and wellbeing. It concurs with observations made on the general emotionality of children at this stage of development (Liu et al, 2017; Bailen et al, 2018; Herd et al, 2020). This was an interesting observation because the general expectation of adults concerning children is that they would be controlled, disciplined and likely seeking permission or consulting before doing most of their everyday activities. When this extends to the expression of emotion, the adults receive this expression somewhat as a threat to the state of control and also as though it were unusual for children to express the emotion.

In the field of psychology, it is generally understood that children do experience emotion at high and low intensity (Bailen et al, 2018). It should be understood that they would seek out ways of expressing this emotion as well as trying to understand them, as per their own socialization and developmental stage. Therefore, in discussion with teachers, it seemed that they took a position of being met almost by surprise with the children's expression of emotion rather than that they readily expected it. The teachers were interested in the subject under study, showing thoughtful reflection as they answered focus group questions and engaged in explaining their observations. They showed support for each other’s thoughts and did make a reference to what their colleagues spoke about. Even so, some of them showed hesitation in explaining some of the issues that would portray the school in negative light.

The personalities of teachers were also evident, with some almost dominating the discussion or having a lot more details to share than the rest. Their facial expression and

gesturing did convey what they felt about specific observations. It was noted that these subjective characteristics did shape how the teachers expressed their observations and probably how they understood or interpret them. They did speculate on the plausible causes of the observations made, particularly on the more concerning behaviour such as withdrawn children.

5.3.2.1 *Themes and Sub-themes*

The findings in this study produced four over-arching themes from the emergent codes and sub-themes, derived from careful and repeated consideration of the data. This process involved review of the codes and themes, incorporating the content of research questions as well as adjusting themes to form a good representation of the transcribed data (Spiers & Riley, 2019). The overarching themes were Positive Emotion, Negative emotion, Puberty and Home versus School Influences. These were selected because they represented the transcribed data in a way that captured aspects of theoretical, development and social- cultural dynamics that were found to be central to this study. Several sub-themes were also generated from the coding process and these were synthesized to form themes, as shown in Table 8 (Soratto, et al., 2020).

The reference to positive and negative emotion was in regards to their subjective nature, relating to the experience, behaviour as well as its physiology. It was also on whether the emotion elicited pleasant or unwanted experiences including different identified emotions as they are verbalized or acted out. This is in the backdrop of positive and negative emotions being known to vary in their situational or relational qualities (Amelia et al, 2010; Gross, 2015; Bailey et al, 2018; Laukka & Elfenbein, 2021). The children's perception of positive and negative emotion was considered. This was in view of how they associate it with their social environment, and more so with peers, was considered (Lindquist, et al, 2015; Sierksma & Bijlstra, 2019).

Puberty referred to the developmental stage in children that presents both internal and external physiological, behavioural and psychological changes in both boys and girls. These changes also occur at the family and peer relations within the children's community contexts which were part of this study. Their reasoning and thinking capabilities increasingly become complex in tune with their continuing cognitive and emotional development. It is in this stage that identity, autonomy and exploration of a child's social world is heightened. Puberty was considered with the wake of each child being unique in their subjective experience of emotion and its expression, similarities amongst peers and gender differences (Beard 2006; Liu et al, 2017; Bailen et al, 2018; Ferschmann et al., 2021).

Influences from home and school were considered as those that came from the external environments that the children were living in, exposed to, and significant in influencing their general social responses. The home context included parent-child interaction, perceived social status, marital dynamics and other peer relations that possibly shaped the child in their emotion development (Bailen et al, 2018: Herd et al, 2020). The school was viewed as having important teacher-child contact both within and outside the classroom. It was seen as a system that provided structure to the academic process, placing a demand on the children to adhere to rules set out by the school authorities. These factors have been seen to vary in their influence, both positively and negatively and subsequently play a role in how children interact with their own experience of emotion.

Positive Emotion

Positive emotion has been linked to adaptive benefits such inter-personal functioning, improved cognitive functioning, among others. Gross & Jazaieri, (2014) cite that emotion reactivity occurs both in valence as well as intensity. Gross (2015) did not however delve into

aspects of emotion intensity in his model. In this study, positive emotion was found to be expressed by pre-adolescents of both genders in various circumstances and in different ways in the school environment. This positive nature was observed and identified form the pleasant and seemingly beneficial manner in which this emotion impacted on individual children, their peers, the activities they were engaging in as well as the interaction with teachers. A study showed that empathy, social support and parenting efficacy as important factors in a positive parent-child experience (Gambi et al., 2020). It was clear that positive emotion was understood to be beneficial and a welcome experience for both children and teachers. In expression of positive emotion, the children did show a possible appreciation of their immediate environment. It agrees with scholars who underscore social competence as impactful on emotion experience (English et al., 2017; Gross & Cassidy, 2019; McRae & Gross, 2020).

The children expressed many instances of happiness, excitement and joy. They showed behaviour that was indicative of the experience of positive emotion such as laughter, drawing flowers, singing and dancing. There was identification of the intensity of positive emotion by use of words such as ‘overjoyed’. It would seem in the teacher’s opinion and evaluation that such intensity went beyond a certain known or unknown norm that they probably observed regularly. It may also reveal the teachers own subjective reaction to this intensity in terms of trying to locate the value of the emotion in the child in view of what they may have observed in the earlier general functioning of the child. Therefore, this intensity may be more a semantic description rather than a fair representation of the actual intensity of such emotion (Bailen, et al., 2018).

There were circumstances that seemed to catalyze the expression of positive emotion including the bell ringing when it was time to go home, when out of the classroom playing, when drawing, among others. This occurred more amongst the peer contexts where the children would

be out of the classroom playing without their teachers, or when going home, which normally would also exclude the teachers. The expression of positive emotion may be understood to mean that the children are appreciative of the circumstances that they were in. It also raises a question on whether the absence of teachers automatically precipitates experience of positive emotion across the genders. This response to being outside the classroom may also have become a habit and a conditioning with somewhat automatic positive emotion responses to such situations as a bell ringing. In a different light, it may also be seen as the release from the seemingly inflexible context of the classroom and school rules. Such a release would naturally elicit a pleasant experience at the individual and peer level. The positive nature of emotion and its expression was seen more with peer grouping and this provided a pointer to the significance of such grouping in understanding the emotion experiences of children.

A Picture of Joy

This theme sought to illustrate positive emotion in its very distinct description by participants which showed that children portrayed joy, excitement, happiness, amongst other positive emotion, verbally and through their visible actions. Such illustration was representative of the vivid and detailed observations made by participants. Teachers identified a number of expressions of happiness among the children as laughter, excitement, being jovial and in a good mood. From this, there is a portrayal of a state of harmony and pleasure in the children, in circumstances that they perceived or felt comfortable in, safe or non-threatening, favorable to them or simply devoid of negative emotion. This awareness of specific positive emotions and its visible expression can be interpreted to mean that much of it is not necessarily suppressed. This may not be conclusive and agrees with Gross (2015).

The insinuation is that these are desirable emotions and possibly perceived as appropriate for such contexts. Studies have shown that positive emotion is associated with better social and psychological outcomes as well as likelihood of repeated experience (Barrett, 2017; Moskowitz, 2021).

The teachers' own facial and gesture expressions indicated that they were actively involved in supporting the children's feeling positive emotion. It is possible that teachers did encourage this by their own favorable reactions and possibly facial expression understood by the children as a signal to continue with this behaviour. Positive emotion such as joy, is generally understood to relate to general well-being and health. There is increasingly more focus on interventions that apply positive emotion experiences in mitigating against the effect of negative emotion on the physiological and psychological wellbeing of a person (Moskowitz, et al, 2021). Teachers may very well be catalysts and consistent support for the wellbeing of children as they continually prompt and encourage them to show positive emotion.

Expressions of Happiness

The expression of happiness was evident in the outward articulation via verbal and non-verbal cues, as reported by the teachers. Verbal expression using language is a powerful way of communicating because it involves synthesis of what is perceived and linking it to known words or terms that best speak to this internal experience. It follows that words that describe emotion would mean that the individual has actively engaged in this process or has had a strong modelling on what words or verbalizations to assign to specific emotions. In the case of identifying happiness the children can be deemed to be accurately expressing the right emotions in terms of their positive nature. It cut across the children's genders and was observed in different situations and at different intensities. Physical activity beyond the classroom elicited

positive emotion in the children, including excitement and happiness. A harmonious connection with a teacher also elicited such emotion. Even in seemingly competitive classroom contexts, the expression of happiness was visible and possibly out of the conquest experienced across genders. This experience of happiness can be understood to mean that children are quite expressive of positive emotion beyond the classroom as well as in non-threatening teacher-pupil interaction.

Drawing Beautiful things

Drawing for children is a fun and welcome activity. It a much deeper concept that simply putting pen to paper. Drawing is expression of emotion. It is description of emotion. It is a driver of emotion in its intensity in the manner of expression. Drawing for children is not only an artistic way of learning but a wholesome activity that draws the mind and emotions of a child in a bid to harness their energies to bring out the deep conversations they may be having within themselves and use drawing to communicate this to the external world. Drawing needs to be understood as a tool and an influence on the emotion expression of children and with this understanding, it can be used to derive rich insights and observations on the children's emotional states as well as interventions to the more unpleasant ones. Children drew flowers and weddings when they were experiencing positive emotion. It was contrasted to when children drew a gunman or a gun when experiencing negative emotion. The drawing was performed as an artistic expression of the pleasant inner experience of the children. Drawing was also cited in reference to having courage because of a child’s competence in a particular activity, including drawing. Interesting relation between drawing and courage is an aspect to ponder on because it begins to address the larger sense of emotional competence of the children that would include their sense of self confidence in facing the different demands made on them in school and other contexts. Courage can be viewed as an outcome of consistent reassurance and a healthy self-esteem, useful

in allowing the child to express this as a strength and a receipt even more positive emotion from within themselves, their peers and teachers. This shows that drawing is one of the important activities that children value and attach a sense of pride to, when able to do. This artistic expression is important as a way that children may safely express their emotion, especially the negative ones, in contrast to applying aggressive approaches such as fighting. It would be interesting to investigate the therapeutic nature of drawing and the specific forms of it. It would make sense to incorporate drawing in the regular classroom experience as an intervention for emotional challenges that the children are faced with on a daily basis.

Participating with Peers

This theme was important to highlight because the children had distinct group-linked ways in their experience of positive emotion, as reported by their teachers. Their participation as peers was seen in activities that expressed their joy, enthusiasm and courage, both within and beyond the classroom. Sierksma & Bijlstra (2019) indicated that children tend to experience more positive emotion when in more familiar social and peer contexts. In some instances, the boys preferred being in their group and the same happened with the girls, for example when they were in the journalism club. This being the beginning of the adolescent stage, was consistent with their desire to associate with peers of the same gender and have a competitive angle to it. It was also evident from the findings that girls had a better participation record within the classroom than the boys. Peer interactions were also seen across gender for example when playing. Peer relations from the child's view take on a different form because children relate based on what they perceive as their own acceptable norms amongst themselves and sometimes those norms incorporate social nuances of social class, gender, age, among others. Children may not consciously grasp the complex nature of peer relations but at their level, it has a simplified

interpretation based on acceptance. Children in the puberty stage would also incorporate their own unique dynamic involving a sense of identity and autonomy also connecting with like-minded children.

Getting Involved

The sense of getting involved as based on a willful engagement in classroom or non-classroom activity. It was clear from the findings that children in school had better participation in classroom activities when they were experiencing positive emotion. This participation was evidenced by their answering of questions, without much prompting, when in a good mood. It was also shown in how the girls were more engaged in some activities such as the journalism club. This participation in answering questions in class, enthusiastically, is proof of the present nature of the child and willingness to be part of their school environment. Their being involved in peer activity such as play, is also indicative of being present to the current realities of their peer interactions at school. The motivations behind children getting involved may go beyond being present in school to how they understand their role amongst the peers and also in the bigger school setting. Children do understand the rules to be followed but when they do not grasp the value of taking up their position, they may get derailed from the mundane activities within the school and hence miss out on the benefits of just being active, whether they truly like it or seek to conform to the norms of the day.

Shouting for Joy

The children expressed great joy when they were in non-academic situations that they enjoy such as when leaving school, playing outside the classroom, on school trips among others. The heightened emotion and its outward expression show that children are able to be without hindrance in their experience of emotion. The children also seemed to enjoy the group

experience as they express positive emotion. This captures the interplay of inner experience of positive emotion with outward behaviour involving the physical body, a complex process as noted by Bailen, et al (2018).

Negative Emotion

Scholars have observed the inflexible application of emotion responses and linked it to negative symptoms of anxiety and depression. Negative emotion associated with such may be out of inflexibility in its suppression (Botrelli et al., 2017). It may be the outcome of orientation towards not expressing certain negative emotion (Chaplain & Aldao, 2013). The observation of more of the negative emotion does not necessarily contradict these scholars' ideas but allows for consideration of other factors at play. The expression shown by both genders also points to their active engagement with negative emotion despite known family norms that sometimes discourage its display (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013). Negative emotion is understood to elicit unpleasant experience. The general thought is that it does not have a 'positive' use even though studies show that it does. In this study, negative emotion was identified much more than positive emotion by the teachers. It was expressed by both boys and girls in a variety of ways. These included the children showing signs of inner pain and being out of sync with what was happening in school. Such pain is known to affect children negatively and cause them to withdraw from peers as they process it. In their investigation of the link between child maltreatment and emotion reactivity and regulation, scholars found that more of the negative emotion is expressed. They also showed that behavior indicative of this experience of negative emotion was present as well as a show of dysregulation. (Lavi et al., 2019).

The expression of negative emotion may be understood to mean that the children are expressing displeasure at the external factors at play within the school context including:

inappropriate behaviour from their peers; responses that do not meet their immediate emotional or physical needs; attempts to assert themselves as upcoming adult with an independent ability to think and make decisions; the use of an opportunity that is not restrictive to the emotion expression and hence used to offload their own internal experience This may be indicative of maladaptive social competence which has been linked to pathological behaviour (Mathews et al., 2016; Amelia, et al., 2010). The children did engage in activity that can be can be interpreted as aggressive and unsuitable for their social relations with peers as well as with their teachers. The description of bullying, particularly of younger children by the older ones, is one of concern because it points to behavior that has through much research been associated with negative emotion emotional state over a period of time. This inference in making meaning is central to functionalism in studying pertaining to emotion regulation (Barett, 2017). Bullying was identified as occuring amongst both boys and the girls, in different forms, even though negative emotion is not any less experienced by any of the genders. Amongst the girls it took the form of gossiping, which is a verbalized way of disapproving a particular child and applying ridicule in the process. This may be seen as a 'milder' form of expressing aggression amongst the girls though it may not mean that the intensity or presence of negative emotion is any less than that of the boys. It gives impetus to consider the unique ways in which boys and girls express aggression as a conduit of negative emotion pent-up in them. The experience of negative emotion is part of the general emotion development in children, with internal and external dynamics (Lindquist, et al, 2015; Sierksma & Bijlstra, 2019).

The Pain Inside

This theme represents a general observation of children who acted out in ways that did not necessarily express emotion but showed their much discomfort, a level of anxiety and

possibly looking to escape this. Teachers noted that some children were not in their usual mannerisms or had changed in their behaviour, which was identified as affecting their performance in school. They were not able to participate meaningfully in their school activity, academic or otherwise. The notion of pain inside, was an expression of the possible negative, uncomfortable and unwanted internal experiences which were only manifesting outwardly to a certain observable extent. Such 'pain' was deemed to be emotional in nature and impacting negatively on the general wellbeing of the children (Cole et al., 2004; Botrelli et al., 2017, Cole & Jacobs, 2018).

Negative Impact at Home

The study findings showed negative aspects at home as an influence on the negative attitude of children, who had unpleasant experiences with their parents. Some were neglected and lacked parental care, especially the motherly love. The home is deemed a safe haven for any child. When this is not the case, it would be expected that the impact on the child would be significant. The home, being a perceived place of safety and hence relied on by the children, may have been a great source of discomfort too. Children rely heavily on parents for care, nurture and love and so would naturally expect this to be provided. The next best parental figure is seemingly the teacher and that would explain why such neglected children would project their need for love and support to their teachers (Gilbert, 2004; De France & Hollenstein, 2019; Herd et al., 2020).

Hiding Pain

The observation by teachers was that some children were withdrawn and were not being active participants within and beyond the classroom. This withdrawal, was interpreted as an attempt to conceal painful emotion experiences internally, possibly in protecting the image of the

child or that of their family. The nuance of hiding pain comes from the children being amongst peers who may have been experiencing positive emotion and hence a different experience may have been perceived as out of place. Traumatized children are likely to exhibit isolation amongst many other forms of impairment in their attachment domain (Cole et al., 2004; Cook et al., 2017; Cole & Jacobs, 2018)

The nature of some of the highlighted contexts such as rape and physical assault, are quite traumatizing for a child and this hiding may very well be more of a traumatic reaction. The withdrawal is an indication of self-rejection, expressed as being uncomfortable around children who were not experiencing negative emotion. It may also present a sense of false belief as being in a unique state of emotion, and hence withdrawing seemed like a viable solution to this (Sheppes et al., 2015; Compass et al., 2017; Guassi et al., 2019).

Being Out of Sync

There were children who could not sustain concentration during class activity and hence seemed lost in their own thoughts. They may have been distracted by their own internal emotion experience and hence seemed not to be available to engage in peer or class activities. This disconnect with the rest of the pupils came across as a child not being in sync with the current happenings at school, possibly not ready to commit to the necessary emotional, mental or physical engagement required at school. This disconnect, though outward, may have been a glimpse into an even greater sense of being lost, experienced by some of the children experiencing challenges at home (Larsen, 2012; Herd & Kim-Spoon, 2021).

Disengagement at School

Some of the children were reported to show disengagement as their teachers observed their absentminded during class time. They also would isolate themselves from other children

during play time, a behaviour associate with possible psychopathology (Compas et al., 2017; Guassi et al., 2019). The observation that children can be absent minded is one that brought to the fore, a concern about the general welfare of children. This observation being made without necessarily referring to the frequency of this behavior, raised questions about whether teachers are able to note such behavior on a regular basis as well as make important notes about which children exhibit this.

The nuance here is that a child has lost focus and concentration on the current happenings in the classroom and seemingly is not able to participate meaningfully. They possibly were in a different focus without necessarily revealing the nature of emotion involved, as either positive or negative. In view of the process of emotion and its regulation follow the same path, it may be interpreted that this disengagement is the goal aimed at from the onset (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Gross & Barrett, 2011; Gross, J. 2015).

This may be a starting point in further investigation of whether this absentmindedness is linked to specific positive or negative emotion. This would further explore any significant factors involved from the internal or external context of the child. The observation of a child being absent minded may also point to their not being able to connect with the classroom environment, possibly due to the weight of academic engagement at the time or other interpersonal factors.

Challenging the Rules

School rules were seen to be broken by some children, in an attempt to provoke a reaction from their teachers. The children defied queuing, cleaning, adhering to the set dress code, among other rules. This happened when the teachers were enforcing such rules during meal times, class interactions and outside the classroom. The teachers were doing what was expected of them by the school. The children may have found this punitive and reacted to it, not

necessarily having understood what was expected of them. These may be interpreted as attempts for autonomy and authenticity despite parental shaping of behavior (Diaz & Eisenberg, 2015; Walle, 2017; Fuentes-Balderrama, et al, 2020).

The notion of challenging these rules may not be absolutely in negative light. It may indicate an attempt to test existing limits of such rules and their enforcement, purely out of curiosity. The children being in a pre-adolescent stage of development and not strictly bound by it, may have been expressing their search for meaning in their immediate environment (Beard 2006; Liu et al, 2017; Bailen et al, 2018; Ferschmann et al 2021). This defiance may also be an attempt by the children to release themselves from the discomfort brought about in adhering to them.

Releasing Tension

The school environment was seen to build tension in the children and they were eager to release this once they were out of the classroom. Their moments of play, leaving school, activities outside school were important to them. They were distinctly more at ease once they left the classroom or the school compound. It would be expected that long hours spend in school over time precipitate exhaustion as well as a need to change social and even physical environment.

The association of positivity with being out of the classroom may point to a less negative interpretation of tension, but rather, an expression of the reality of the monotony of being in school. The connection with peers in this experience is significant as a contextual factor in shaping emotion experiences in pre-adolescents (Moreira et al., 2017; Sierksma & Bijlstra, 2019).

Puberty

The pre-adolescents were reported to have some adolescent characteristics manifesting in body, behavioural and emotional changes. There were changes in girls pertaining to attraction to the opposite sex, specifically to their male teachers. They were also reported to be experiencing their menses and showing shyness. The boys had distinct body changes in growing hair and their behaviour in forming peer groups with other boys. Interaction between the genders explained why in some instance, one gender was better than the other in their ability to express themselves in the presence of the opposite gender. The girls were identified as showing more outward emotion than boys, and this possibly out of the interplay of hormonal changes during puberty.

The changes that take place during puberty extend to how children interact with their school environment. They show increased independence and changes that are due to increasing hormonal levels. This leading to physical and behavioral changes can be seen in their emotions known to change in frequency, intensity and even stability. These variables have been associated with certain behavioral outcomes, sometimes poor psychological outcomes, when there is low emotional clarity and instability of positive and negative emotions (Bailen et al., 2018; Fuentes-balderamma et al., 2020). Gender differences do exist during puberty and hence boys and girls exhibit certain distinct changes and their emotional experiences would also differ. Girls have been found to have high intensity in emotion both positive and negative than boys (Natasha, et al, 2018).

Home Versus School Influences

The home and school environments were found to be distinct in their influence on the children. These contexts provide raw material for the construction of emotion and its experience in the brain (Lindquist, et al., 2015). The developmental level of participants may not have

allowed them to fully grasp or even interpret the school or home contexts. They may have felt out of sync with what was happening in the world. They may have tried to reconcile these thoughts and perceptions and so missed out on normal activities with peers at school. It may also be that their own personality temperament and socialization is at play.

Emotions related to self-awareness such as shame, guilt, anger and embarrassment, emerge as the child is able to grasp their sense of self. They present a complexity as the child has to integrate several perspectives in order to make sense of the emotion and how to express it (Walle, et al., (2017). These changes were expected since pre-adolescence is a season of search for more autonomy in the midst of numerous developmental demands and also within parental influences that shape them (Fuentes-Balderrama, et al, 2020).

Influences at Home

The study ascertained that parents are key players in determining how a child learns to associate certain emotions with the school or teachers. Research show that there is direct parental supervision and hence the integration of what parents present to the pre-adolescents, into how they think and feel about various issues of life. When parents exert their ideas and discipline on children as well as their parents' love and support, these do affect how a child interprets their immediate and other environment (Ochieng, 2018; Maami, 2019; Gambin et al., 2020). The parenting environment is thus important to the child because it sets the pace for how they're able to interact with other external contexts as well as their own interpretation of the experiences they go through. Therefore, the impact of parents on pre-adolescence can be seen to be very central to determining how the learn to interact with their environment including the behaviour they present in such environments (Fuentes-Balderama, et al., 2020).

Parental Attitude

The study findings showed that attitude was more negative, directed towards parents by teachers and vice versa. This was an important factor noted by the teachers, as an influence on the children and how they perceive their teachers and subsequently, the emotion experience accompanying this. Negative parent attitudes towards teachers in particular incidences at the school was narrated. It was perceived as a key part of how children view their teachers. It offered insight into what kind of thought process or understanding they have about those particular incidences.

These insights were important to understand because indirectly, parents are an influence on whether a child leans on a positive or negative view of a teacher or processes involving the school. This influence came across as being quite significant as the behavior of the parent seemingly was replicated by a child in school. It points to a possible simulation of both the behavior and accompanying emotion outcomes parental influence. The influence is through behavioural modelling by parents which is known to greatly impact on children (Ochieng, 2018; Maami, 2019; Gambin et al., 2020). The attitude displayed by a parent is received by a child as something to be embraced, seeing that parents are highly valued by children as their primary caregivers. It would be worth noting that parents may not intentionally model a wrong attitude but that the school context may contrast what the child experiences from their parent at home. Possibly, the child may find himself or herself conflicted about a particular issue and so express this conflicted sense in a more negative manner. Expressive Suppression has been seen as applicable to some social contexts in order to preserve or protecting oneself, to avoid hurtful experiences of rejection. The outcome may not always be negative considering many factors are at play (Sheppes et al., 2014; Cole & Jacobs, 2018).

Social Class

The social class is a common stratification in our current society even though it does not manifest homogenously. In the case of the children under study, it would involve the ability to afford food, decent housing, education and luxuries. These are outward possessions and were visible to both adults and children. The reference to social class was partly indicating economic ability of parents in providing perceived 'proper' meals, luxuries at home and having desirable careers. In this, it can be seen that the nuance of being rich or poor, is instilled from home and extends to the school context through existence or non-existence of basic and other forms of provisions. This was explicitly and implicitly presented as a factor in how the children interpreted different school engagements and interactions with their peers.

The social cultural and economic context of some of the children was identified as difficult and hence it would be expected that different stressors at the family level would precipitate negative experience in the child and subsequently with the expression of negative emotion (Ngure, et al., 2015; (Munala et al., 2020; Ngolya, 2020). Such stressors include marital conflict between parents, lack of adequate emotional support, poor feeding, among others.
It would be expected that peer evaluation by the children based on such social class aspects, may precipitate ill-feelings in those experiencing economic lack.

School System

The three studied schools had different demands on their teachers and pupils that enabled their smooth running. The rules set out required children to keep to certain time limits within the school, attend classes, dress in a particular manner, have their meals in a planned way, among others. The teachers were also expected to enforce these rules as part of the overall learning process.

The intention of this was not detrimental in nature, even though it may have come across as punitive to the pupils, as they worked through fulfilling the requirements. Creating order and a structure for children in school is vital for their stability. Their development depends of consistency of adults interacting with them.

Rules at School

The school systems were based on rules that facilitated the smooth running of academic and non-academic processes. These were meant to shape the behaviour of both pupils and teachers, even though pupils may interpret them differently. Rules pertaining to pupils aimed at instilling work ethic, time management and other basic life skills for their primary benefit.

When these rules are made clear, the do potentially shape the behaviour and hence the emotion outcome of such. Teachers enforce these, taking up the parental role to an extent. This parental role is perceived to be a key factor in a child's developmental progress. This is because it is likely to have a more lasting effect on the child's perception, understanding and experience of their own emotion. (Larsen et al., 2012; Ochieng, 2018; Maami, 2019; Gambin et al., 2020).

Teacher-Pupil Interaction

The teacher-pupil interaction revealed an important role played by the teacher in catalyzing the experience of negative and positive emotion. It was seen for example, when a teacher was perceived to have been harsh with the children, the reaction was one of removing themselves from the specific situation by not speaking or responding or by physically going away. Another example is when a teacher went 'off topic' during the classroom interaction and this elicited excitement amongst the children. The idea that a teacher can be harsh or rigid did not come across as expected by children in school. There was consistent identification of negative

emotion by teachers among their pupils. This was through behaviour that pointed to experience of negative affect. It was found that in some instances, children were seen to be reserved or simply quiet rather than speaking to their teachers. The observation by teachers that rigid interaction and communication with the children likely breeds minimal engagement with them is worth noting. The explicit expression of such negative behaviour indicates that children had many more instances or opportunities to portray their negative emotion and not necessarily suppress this emotion. This does not mean that they did not apply expressive suppression as a strategy in regulating emotion. It may point to the fact that they found more latitude within the school setting to let out such emotion even if it meant engaging in behaviour that went against the school rules or caused harm to their peers such as bullying gossiping and fighting.

These observations provide insight into how teachers are recipients of the children's emotion expression and outward behaviour. This, compared to the parental influences on the child at home that have been alluded to, show that the adults in the child's life are constant points of contact with children. This interaction occurs multiple times in a day primarily within school and it should be expected to elicit different reactions from either party. It points to possibly more desirable interaction where children perceive positivity and so would be drawn into such interactions (Larsen et al., 2012; Moreira et al., 2017; Ochieng, 2018; Maami, 2019; Sierksma & Bijlstra, 2019; Gambin et al., 2020).

Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of analyzed data from two questionnaires, Biographical Questionnaire, Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA) and Focus Group discussions. Demographic information gathered was further investigated in its qualitative consideration of situational and relational contexts therein. The

qualitative Thematic Content Analysis of Focus Group discussions yielded very useful and relevant themes and sub-themes pertaining to expression of positive and negative emotion. The tools worked in concert to provide reliable evidence and generate unique qualitative descriptions of this evidence. Application of this thorough process produced relevant themes and sub-themes, a great wealth of insights available and satisfaction in addressing the aims of the study. These created an insightful input on the expression positive and negative emotion in pre-adolescents.

The aims of this study were met, in varying extents. Demographic data did identify key quantitative details of the children's age, gender, child class, significant positive influences, nature of families and challenges within the socio-economic environment of study participants. These answering the first research question, set the stage for further investigation on contextual factors involved in expression and regulation of positive and negative emotion. Theoretical, developmental and contextual aspects were integrated in making sense of observations made in this study. Important contextual issues that were identified include the role of parents, home and school environments as well as peer interactions. Some gaps were captured, relating to theoretical, literature and current research and practice. These include minimal localized studies, narrow focus of theory excluding contextual and diverse developmental stages, among others.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This study was explorative of both the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of the phenomenon and hence a limitation on time and resources did not allow for all possible factors to be adequately studied and explored. This limitation was also pegged upon the time limits of the program of study.

The study was affected by the global pandemic which presented additional precautionary measures to be taken as prescribed in the local context. In this study, it was unlikely that the

Covid-19 pandemic directly influenced the experience of emotion regulation in the targeted population considering the timelines involved prior to the onset of the pandemic and observations made by teachers occurred prior to this.

The nature of the study required greater interaction with literature on emotion expression in pre-adolescent boys and girls from prior studies done in Kenya, which were largely. This study found minimal literature addressing emotion regulation in in pre-adolescents in the context of African Countries and more specifically the peri-urban environment. There were few studies measuring context-specific emotion regulation in early development years in diverse cultural contexts. This limited exposure to methods that can adequately measure these variables. This study therefore did not draw context-specific conclusions on regulation of positive and negative emotion due to the complexity of integrating theoretical, developmental and social factors involved. The limitation on time and literature available for this study could not allow for adequate synthesis of all the factors involved.

5.5 Mental Health Interventions in Practice

The application of this study in mental health is a natural outcome of this engagement. Emotion regulation is a key component of child development and more so, an everyday experience. Its application in child development, contexts that influence this process and the outcomes, has consistently been alluded to by many scholars and this study further endorses this (Grecucci et al., 2017: Lindsey, 2020: McRae & John, 2020). This is possible as integration of theory, research and policy takes place.

Happiness

The concept of happiness as a sub-theme in this study can be adopted as a therapeutic intervention. Happiness is a positive emotional experience, indicating awareness of this emotion, which Gross (2015) cites as important to regulating emotion in general. He also noted the link between emotion experience and goals of such a process. In this case, achieving happiness may be conceptualized as a desireable goal. The need to focus on positive psychological interventions can be understood as harnessing existing positive experiences for the benefit of the children. Positive emotional experiences can be applied in healing anxiety and depression. (Moskovitz et al., 2021). Expression of positive emotion and hence happiness, can be encouraged amongst school going children. The assumption is that this affective process would have undergone synthesis of positive emotion including a context of secure attachment necessary for expression of emotion (Barett, 2017; Moskowitz, 2021). This would be expected to counter potential development of psychopathology as identified by scholars. This is with the background that not all suppression of emotion leads negative outcome (Amelia et al., 2010; Larsen, 2012; Sheppes, et al., 2014; Mathew et al., 2016; Chapman; 2020). It would be important to use an intervention such as this one to counter cultural norms that subtly or outrightly discourage the expression of positive or negative emotion (Chaplin & Aldao, 2013). Such a positive therapeutic approach would likely offer practical and evidenced interventions to mental health practitioners.

Caregiver Empowerment

Caregivers in general do shape the emotion experience of the children under their care. Their influence can be harnessed considering its direct and lasting impact on children (Raver, 2004; Walle, 2017; Fuentes-Balderrama, et al, 2020). Thus, the continuous empowerment of parents, teachers and other caregivers as primary contacts with pre-adolescents would be strategic. The aim and goal would be for more positive and meaningful emotional outcomes

during a child's emotion experience. This empowerment would involve dynamics of emotion development in children vigorously pursued and instilled in caregivers. The psycho-education would aim at mitigating negative parent-child and teacher-pupil experiences. Some efforts towards this are slowly being made in literature attempting to reach caregivers with information on emotion and its value in general (Mwangi, 2021). This empowerment and in context would be beneficial to children as socio-economic factors have been considered in recent study (Gross & Ouyang, 2021). The expected outcome of this would be a meaningful and possibly contextualized emotion experience in pre-adolescents, as an indirect impact of such empowerment.

Emotional Safety

Creating emotional safety can be shaped as a therapeutic intervention. This would be possible when focused more on social and emotional contexts that offer confidentiality, anonymity and affirmation during interaction with pre-adolescents. Social contexts that are safe for children need to be carefully considered in view of the children's developmental milestones. The aim would be to provide acceptance, compassion and trust as important components of developing healthy adult-child bonds. The purpose of this would be to allow for unhindered expression of both positive and negative emotion by children, perceived as a therapeutic experience. This would involve training teachers, parents and other caregivers to identify and create such emotional safety in their verbal and non-verbal communication, home and school activities and in use of language. This would be expected to translate into emotionally safe classrooms and homes. Caregivers could also be trained on how to quickly pick up on signs of possible psychopathology in children and report these to relevant professionals. This dysfunction has been associated with suppression of emotion, isolation and such behaviour (Amelia et al.,

2010; Mathew et al., 2016; Borelli et al., 2017; Chapman; 2020). By identifying potential dysfunction, children would be supported to access relevant and safe psycho-social support in a timely manner.

5.6 Recommendations

This study presented important findings that can form the basis for further study. The study also identified possible modulators of the emotion regulation experience in pre-adolescents. These factors can also be subjected to further scrutiny to reveal more relational aspects including parental influence, teacher-pupil interactions and school context. This study generated important and significant responses to the identified research questions which form recommendations for further study.

1. Further qualitative evaluation of the family and school environments as possible regular modulators and motivators of positive and negative emotion experience of the adolescent. There is a need to demonstrate how specific developmental and social-economic or cultural factors shape the selection of explicit emotion regulation strategies in pre-adolescents. These include age, diverse cultural and race contexts, peer interaction, family context, parenting practices and teacher-pupil dynamics.
2. A deeper interaction with adult perceptions on how pre-adolescents understand, express and interact with their positive and negative emotion experiences. This is key in view of the significant impact and influence that adults have on child development in general. Their role as parents, teachers or other caregivers is a potential modulator of the emotion experience in children
3. Investigation of methods applicable in qualitative and quantitative study of the ongoing pandemic and its impact on the emotional development of pre-adolescents. The outcomes

of applying emotion regulation strategies can be elaborated in how they play out in the affective, cognitive and social-economic scenes such as is very recently being done (Slovak et al., 2021). It would be useful to study further how expressive suppression can be framed as an adaptive response to children's unique contextual factors impacting on their emotional development.

5.7 Future Research

In the course of this study, it was clear that future research would benefit from more localized research pertaining to the developmental milestone of pre-adolescents in general. This would also be helpful in the area of emotion regulation, seeing much literature addressed other developmental age groups such as infancy and adolescence. This would strengthen the theoretical model applied in this study in considering specific developmental stage dynamics in the emotion regulation process Gross, 2015).

Another aspect to consider is the current influence of factors precipitated by the Covid-19 pandemic on child development in general and more specifically emotion regulation. This would be strategic and useful. Researchers would work through emotional impact on both adults and children such as increased anxiety, stress and adjustment to uncertainty in their study contexts. Such study does not have to be necessarily investigating detrimental impact but can seek out a more positive perspective on addressing these gaps as done by Gambin et al. (2020) and Mwangi (2021).

5.6 Conclusion

This study set out to explore, understand and describe explicit emotion regulation strategies in pre-adolescents in their experience of positive and negative emotion. This was in the backdrop of their awareness and expression of emotion. It also explored the possible significant

socio-economic factors that influence the process of emotion regulation in children. These included family dynamics, peer interaction, child gender and the school/classroom setting. These aims were achieved to within available research resources and to a useful extent.

The study provided a rationale that exposed the dire need for address and intervention in pre-adolescent children's emotion regulation process. This was in view of negatively evaluated socio-cultural and behavioural observations made over the years and publicly documented. A wealth of literature was reviewed, within given time limits, that described the many philosophical, theoretical and contextual diversities. This was within the basic understanding of emotion, emotion regulation process, expression of positive, negative emotion and impactful external issues. This was a rigorous activity which offered many opportunities to see an even more rigorous engagement with the subject of emotion regulation amongst older and younger scholars. The diversity of ideas was welcome and relevant as it gave a good basis for the study to address its aims and answer research questions. Literature considered also supported the identification of relevant quantitative and qualitative tools applicable in this study as well as how best to contextualize these. The identified tools as Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for children and Adolescents, Biographical Questionnaire and Focus Group discussions worked in harmony to generate data. This quantitative and qualitative information to a great extent described how pre-adolescents express positive and negative emotion. The tools further described important and impactful issues that distinguish contextual characteristics of the children under study in a bid to explore unique and otherwise ignored observations on the subject matter.

The wealth of information generated attests to the working combination of the data collection tools. The study benefited also from investigation of basic and general social cultural

dynamics at the family and school level of the child participants. This yielded, as expected, insight into aspects that are possible continuous modulators of the emotion process as well as a general understanding of these contexts. It is important to note that there was limited prior research on pre-adolescents in their local setting, as far as positive and negative emotion was concerned. This offered up a good challenge to apply quantitative and qualitative tools that would work in such a context while remaining ethical and objective. However, application of the Biographical Questionnaire and analyzing the data collected, it was possible to identify, in general, positive socio-economic influences and challenges faced at the family level.

The study went deep into the different nuances presented as the data collected was able to generate information that answered the research questions already identified. This in itself was a success as far as finding the qualitative aspects of how pre-adolescents show their positive and negative emotion and relating this to significant contextual underpinnings. Theses and sub-themes were identified which painted a picture of how pre-adolescents express their positive and negative emotions. These also revealed family and school context dynamics that are possible modifiers of the experience of emotion in children.

The school setting was understood as a key environment within which children experience and express positive and negative emotion. It does speak to different situational and relational interactions that set the pace for what the children assimilate and partially out of this process their emotion. An angle of the children's emotional experiences was their adult contacts in school combined with parental connections at home, seemingly intertwining to deeply converge in the child life. This being a potential shaper of their ability to regulate emotion plays a key role in the lives of the children. The showing of positive and negative emotion was observable because pre-adolescents may have learnt this from their adult influences, the teachers

and parents. It may also be that pre-adolescents and not necessarily pushed by external pressures such as adult demands on them find the space to explore their thought processes which culminates in their being emotional. The instances where positive emotion was identified pertaining to children in their peer grouping and not necessarily as individuals, points to a possible correlation between the group experience and positive emotion. It is important to also note that the school setting is by necessity much more controlled that would be the home context. Based on this assumption, the children could have been responding to the rigidity or inflexibility of the school system and its demands on their behaviour and in the process catalyzing a more retaliatory response interpreted as negative emotion.

This report revealed findings that provided insight into gender nuances in how pre-adolescents regulate their positive and negative emotion under contexts that support their everyday existence. The study also provided an opportunity to understand the value of the qualitative method in research with children. This study made an important contribution to the overall understanding of positive and negative emotion and their regulation, within pre-adolescent dynamics. It opens up great potential for further study of both developmental and socio-cultural factors influencing pre-adolescent regulation of positive and negative emotion.

This work provided the opportunity to address challenges identified from limitations, gaps and obstacles faced while generating data, literature review and general analysis of the results. This study was able to locate the expression of positive and negative emotion in pre-adolescence within emotion regulation and also within school, peer and family interactions, more specifically those with parents as primary caregivers. It was also able to provide a broad detailed understanding of the school context as a possible key contributor to the general emotional well-being of a child. This offered insight into the need to delve deeper in understanding the everyday

impact of the school system on preadolescents. This engagement also gave opportunity for questions to be asked pertaining to how deep such a study can go and what parameters would be best considered to generate objective and contextualized findings within the ethical considerations. Such ethics were navigated carefully, despite numerous hurdles in the cultural environment where the children and teachers were located during this study.

The study allowed the researcher to apply themselves to a rigorous and time-consuming process of such a study. This was accompanied by the benefit of refining research, writing skills, critical thinking and collaboration with other scholars. In connecting to such competent intellectuals in their own right, a sense of mentorship was experienced, more specifically on how to adequately address the complexity of emotion development in preadolescents. The study provided the researcher with an opportunity to express a unique mindset on the study of emotional development in children. It also offered up a challenge develop a stand on how preadolescents contextually express positive and negative emotion. This was in view of being an upcoming scholar. This study opened up the local research context to the larger academic world. In selecting such a peri-urban context for this study, it would be hoped that it succeeded in setting a precedence for other scholars. The aim would be to see them investigate interesting and unique child development processes and using this to objectively inform the field of psychology. The study appreciates the difficult travel, contact, communication and general mental states of all persons involved directly or indirectly in the study. All this was experienced within the ongoing global pandemic which has manifested in unique ways in research context. Despite these hurdles, this study is hoped to have made a lasting imprint in the broader study of child development and its relevant applications in the field of psychology.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Permission Letter to Schools

Ruth Mwangi
University of the Witwatersrand,
Jan Smuts Avenue, Johannesburg
Mobile: 0722 870 543
Email: 2241496@students.wits.ac.za

The Principal,
……..Primary School,
Thika, Kenya

Dear Sir/Madam, March 2021
REF: Application for permission to conduct research

I write to place a formal request for permission to conduct research in your organization. I am a Kenyan citizen by birth and currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Psychology at University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. I am presenting this formal request as part of the requirement by the University for Ethical Clearance, before conducting any research. My research is titled 'Explicit Emotion Regulation Strategies in Pre-adolescents in a Kenya County'. It aims at exploring the awareness and expression of positive and negative emotion in pre-adolescents between 10-12 years in Kiambu County. This is part of the general study on child development.

I intend to administer the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA) to 25 boys and 25 girls. These are targeted to be in class 6 and 7, for about 20-30 minutes and a biographical questionnaire assisted by their caregivers. The

biographical questionnaire can be collected one or two days after presenting it. I also intend to conduct Focus Groups with teachers who are well acquainted with Class 6 and 7. The University has provided guidelines on the permission letter from your school as quoted below:

'*a permission letter must: (1) be on a company/organization letterhead, (2) be signed/stamped and dated by a named person in that organization, (3) refer to you (the researcher) by name and/or refer to the title of your project, and (4) give you permission to do something specific (e.g. interview staff, make observations, send out a questionnaire, access contact details of organization members) – a general "we give you permission to do research in our organization" is not sufficient. An informal email correspondence with an organization will not be accepted by the ethics committee'*.

I have attached relevant supporting documentation for your reference. I look forward to your favorable response and further engagement.

Regards,
R.W.M.
Ruth W. Mwangi

Appendix 2a

Participant Information Sheet for Child Participant

Dear Pupil,

Greetings to you. My name is Ruth W. Mwangi, a current Master of Arts in Psychology (by Research) student at University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. I am doing a study on a topic titled 'Explicit Emotion Regulation Strategies in Pre-adolescents in a Kenya County'. This study wants to look into how boys and girls between 10-12 years are aware of and control their emotions. This study will help in the general study of how children grow. I am seeking to have you as a 10-12 year old pupil to voluntarily and without any force, accept to be part of this study. I have written permission from the University through the Human Research and Ethics committee (Non-Medical). I also have a research Permit from the National Commission for

Science, Technology and Innovation, NACSOTI, a permission letter from your school. I invite you to be part of this study. You will first be requested to take a form to your parent/guardian to sign it to give permission for you to be part of this study. Once you bring the signed form, you will be requested, out of your own choice, fill out a Child Participant Assent Form and then proceed to complete a questionnaire named Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA). The questionnaire should take you 10-20 minutes to complete. This will be done within your school compound, during lunch breaks and supervised by one of your teachers. I also invite you to complete a biographical questionnaire on the general life issues with help from your parent/guardian. In this study, you will not receive any money or gifts. There will be no punishment if you decide not to take part in the study. You may decide to not be in the study at any time or not answer any of the questions if you do not want to. The answers from the biographical questionnaire and the ERQ-CA will be hidden from others as I will not ask for your name or details that can identify you. All the information given to me will be kept safely and will not be shown to others. I will use fake names in my final research report. All children in this study can choose to stop being in the study without expecting any bad results on you or on other children. The results of this study will be appropriately released to your school, when it requests. Thank you for your agreement to be part of this study.

If you have any questions during or after this study, feel free to contact me using the details provided below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the University library website. If you wish to receive a summary of it, I will be happy to send it to you through your school (optional). If you have any other concerns or complaints regarding how you were treated, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research

Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27 (0) 11 717 1408, email Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Ruth W. Mwangi

Ruth W. Mwangi 2241496@students.witsac.za +254 722 870 543

Dr. Mambwe K. Hara, Mambwe.hara@wits.ac.za, 011 717 4552

Appendix 2b

Information Sheet for Parent

Dear Sir/Madam,

Greetings to you. My name is Ruth W. Mwangi, a current Master of Arts in Psychology (by Research) student at University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. I am undertaking research on a topic 'Explicit Emotion Regulation Strategies in Pre-adolescents in a Kenya County. This research aims to explore how pre-adolescent boys and girls between 10-12 years are aware of how they regulate their emotions. This research will contribute to the general study of child development as well as form part of knowledge on pre-adolescent emotional health. I am

seeking to engage child participants, who may voluntarily and without any form of coercion, accept to be part of this study. I have written permission from the University through the Human Research and Ethics committee (Non-Medical). I also have a research Permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, NACSOTI and from the schools involved. I invite you to consent for your child to be a participant in this study. Your child will be requested to voluntarily fill out a Child Participant Assent Form and then proceed to complete the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA) . This exercise should take 10-20 minutes to complete. This will be done within his or her school compound, under supervision. I also invite you to fill out a biographical questionnaire on general socio-economic issues. In this research, you will not receive any direct benefits including financial benefit. There will be no disadvantage or penalties for not giving consent or filling out the questionnaire. You may choose not to answer any of the questions in the Biographical Questionnaire if you do not want to. The responses from the biographical questionnaire and that of your child participant will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not ask for a name or identifying information. All the information you and your child give will be held securely and will not be disclosed to others. I will not use yours or your child's names in my final research report. All information collected will be kept safely and confidential. All child participants can voluntarily discontinue their participation without expecting any unfavorable effects. The results of this study will be appropriately released to the participating schools, on request. Kindly provide your consent and for your son/daughter by filling out the details provided.

If you have any questions during or after this research, feel free to contact me using the details provided below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online

through the University library website. If you wish to receive a summary of it, I will be happy to send it to you. If you have any other concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27 (0) 11 717 1408, email Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,

Ruth W. Mwangi

Email: Ruth W. Mwangi <2241496@students.witsac.za> Tel: +254 722 870 543

Email: Dr. Mambwe K. Hara,<Mambwe.hara@wits.ac.za> Tel: 011 717 4552

Appendix 2c

Participant Information Sheet for Teacher

Dear Sir/Madam,

Greetings to you. My name is Ruth W. Mwangi, a current Master of Arts in Psychology (by Research) student at University of the Witwatersrand, South Africa. I am undertaking research on a topic 'Explicit Emotion Regulation Strategies in Pre-adolescents in a Kenya County. This research aims to explore how pre-adolescent boys and girls between 10-12 years are aware of how they regulate their emotions. This research will contribute to the general study of child

development as well as form part of knowledge on pre-adolescent emotional health. I am seeking to engage teachers in a Focus Group, who may voluntarily and without any form of coercion, accept to be part of this study. I have written permission from the University through the Human Research and Ethics committee (Non-Medical). I also have a research Permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation, NACSOTI, a permission letter from the County Government of Kiambu and from the schools involved. The Focus Group should take 60-90 minutes. This will be done within the school compound observing the laid out health guidelines of sanitizing, wearing a mask and keeping a 1.5 meters' distance. You will not receive any direct benefits including financial benefit from participating in this research. There will be no disadvantage or penalties for not participating. You may withdraw from this research at any time or not answer any of the questions in the inteview if you do not want to. The responses from the Focus Group will be completely confidential and anonymous as I will not ask for a name or identifying information. All the information you give will be held securely and will not be disclosed to others. I will not use yours or your names in my final research report. All information collected will be kept safely and confidential. All participants can voluntarily discontinue their participation without expecting any unfavorable effects. The results of this study will be appropriately released to the participating schools, on request. Kindly provide your consent and for your son/daughter by filling out the details below.

If you have any questions during or after this research, feel free to contact me using the details provided below. This study will be written up as a research report which will be available online through the University library website. If you wish to receive a summary of it, I will be happy to send it to you. If you have any other concerns or complaints regarding the ethical procedures of this study, you are welcome to contact the University Human Research Ethics Committee (Non-Medical), telephone +27 (0) 11 717 1408, email Shaun.Schoeman@wits.ac.za

Yours sincerely,
Ruth W. Mwangi

Email: Ruth W. Mwangi <2241496@students.witsac.za> Tel: +254 722 870 543
Email: Dr. Mambwe K. Hara,<Mambwe.hara@wits.ac.za> Tel: 011 717 4552

Appendix 3a

Consent Form (Parent)

EXPLICIT EMOTION REGUALTION STRATEGIES IN PRE-ADOLESCENTS IN A KENYA COUNTY

Ruth W. Mwangi

I _____ give consent for my child named _____ in class_____ in _____ school to participate in this study and I have understood what his/her participation will involve.

Do you agree that your child's participation in this research will remain anonymous?

□ Yes □ No

Do you agree that data collected from your child can be stored and used for future research without revealing your identity?

□ Yes □ No

Do you agree that the data collected from your child can be used anonymously by different researchers?

□ Yes □ No

Sign: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3b

Consent Form (Head-teacher)

I _____ give consent to

_____ of the institution

_____

to conduct research under the topic

_____

in _____School. I also give my consent to

participate in this study as the Head-teacher.

Do you agree that data collected from you can be stored and used for future research

without revealing your identity?

□ Yes □ No

Head-teacher's Name: _____Sign: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3c

Consent Form (teacher)

I _____ give consent to participate

in the Focus Group sessions for the research topic

_____

in _____School.

Do you agree that data collected from you can be stored and used for future research without revealing your identity?

□ Yes □ No

Teacher's Name: _____Sign: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 3d

Child Participant Assent Form

I _____ of Class ____ at

_____ School agree to participate in this study.

Do you agree that information collected from you can be stored and used for research later, without revealing your identity?

□ Yes □ No

Child Participant's Name: _____ Sign: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 4a

Focus Group Guide

1. Have you had opportunity to observe the children's emotions?
2. What would you identify as expression of emotion in the children?
3. In which contexts would you identify where children were able to express their emotion?
4. In which contexts would you identify where children were not able to express their emotion?
5. What have you observed as positive emotion in the children? Please, explain.
6. What have you observed as negative emotion in the children? Please, explain.
7. In your view, what would be possible reasons for the children not expressing their emotion?
8. Do you have anything else to say?

Appendix 4b

Biographical Questionnaire (Key Informants)

Do you agree that data collected from you can be stored and used for future research without revealing your identity?

□ Yes □ No

SECTION A

1. Identify your gender.

□ Female □ Male

2. Which type of work are you engaged in?

□ Employed full-time □ Employed part-time □ Self-employed □ Currently Unemployed

3. What is your highest academic qualification?

□ Professional Certification □PhD □Masters □Bachelors □Diploma □Certificate

4. Identify your age bracket.

□25-35 years □36-45 years □46-55 years □56-65 years □65-75 years

5. What is the nature of your current family?

□ Mother and father □ Single-parent □ Step-family □ Divorced □Separated

SECTION B

6. Who is the head of your current family?

□Father □Mother □Other (specify)_____

7. What are the top 3 positive influences on your current family?

□ Religion □ Extended Family □Technology

□ Education □Politics □ Children

8. In your opinion, what is the greatest challenge to your current family?

□ Family type □ Finances □ Number of children

□ Health issues □ Education system □ Politics

9. Which is the greatest source of income in your neighborhood?

□ Farming □ Small businesses □ Factory work □ Transportation □ Rent collection

10. Are you satisfied with your current income?

□ Yes, very much □ Yes but I can improve □ No, I am not satisfied □ I am not sure

Appendix 4c

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire for Children and Adolescents (ERQ-CA)

Instructions and Items:

We would like to ask you some questions about your emotional life, in particular, how you control (that is, regulate and manage) your emotions. The questions below involve two distinct aspects of your emotional life. One is your emotional experience, or what

you feel like inside. The other is your emotional expression, or how you show your emotions in the way you talk, gesture, or behave. Although some of the following questions may seem similar to one another, they differ in important ways. For each item, please answer using the following scale:

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

strongly neutral strongly

disagree agree

1. ____ When I want to feel more positive emotion (such as joy or amusement), I change what I'm thinking about.

2. ____ I keep my emotions to myself.

3. ____ When I want to feel less negative emotion (such as sadness or anger), I change what I'm thinking about.

4. ____When I am feeling positive emotions, I am careful not to express them.

5. ____When I'm faced with a stressful situation, I make myself think about it in a way that helps me stay calm.

6. ____ I control my emotions by not expressing them.

7. ____When I want to feel more positive emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation.

8. ____ I control my emotions by changing the way I think about the situation I'm in.

9. ____When I am feeling negative emotions, I make sure not to express them.

10. ____When I want to feel less negative emotion, I change the way I'm thinking about the situation.

Appendix 5

Glossary of words to explain to pre-adolescents

1. Agree-to accept what is being presented.
2. Disagree-to have a different view from what is being presented.
3. Positive emotion-a good emotion such as happiness.
4. Negative emotion-a bad emotion such as anger.
5. Express-to show how you feel by saying it, actions, facial expression or writing it.
6. Stressful-making one to be worries.
7. Calm-to have something that is making you feel comfortable.

8. Situation-things happening at a particular place and time.

9. Control-able to decide how to do something.

Appendix 6 Transcription

Focus Group 1
Researcher: What have you observed in the children?
Participant A: I will take the discussion back to the monthly periods, their emotions, since they are almost developing puberty, they tend to be shy, sometimes they are disturbed, they tend to, of course now behaviour change there is that hatred, this basically comes from the boys in class, then also it's the time that they are discovering themselves. They tend to change their walking styles, now when it comes to fashion, they tend to, the dressing code can change maybe they would go back to trousers, short skirts, emotionally they think they should not pick the mothers union and then also talk about picking of the ear, for the boys, shaving of the hair, that is it.
Researcher: What you have observed, observing so with your senses not just seeing but with your senses.
Participant B: Some of the pupils they tend to be absent minded most of the time. As in, you are talking to someone, that someone he doesn't listen to you. You see that the person is absent minded.
Participant C: There is also this dullness, doesn't want to participate with other people, isolating. When something positive has happened, they are overjoyed, they just want to participate in everything, they are hyper, some just sit down and start crying, some just sit down and ….. If something is disturbing them mentally even their body function changes.
Participant D: Then in their performances, performance becomes low, they start performing very poorly.
Participant B: Sometimes there are some kids who tend to be aggressive at some point maybe like for example if back at home they have been, they have learnt to be told no, when they come to school because there are rules and regulations, you as the teacher you are supposed to tell them no, because there are some things that they are not supposed to do in school.
Participant A: I don't know if I will take this our Discussion back to there is this act of disobedience, yah, and the also the kind of movies they watch, yah, yes. Talk about that negative attitude when it comes to food, that's all, I think, okay.
Researcher: And then, so beyond the observation, what would you say is the way the children use to express their emotion? What do you pick out so that you know when this child does this is what they are meaning or they are trying to bring out in terms of their emotion?
Participant B: Okay for me, I think they tend to seek attention, let's say maybe because you are the one available in school, they tend to seek attention, they try to seek attention from you as the teacher. They come close to you, they touch you because at home there is no motherly figure, maybe to seek attention.
Researcher: So you see them touch you?
Participant B: Yes
Researcher: Can you tell whether it is positive or negative emotion from the touch?
Participant B: I think it might be positive ones.

Participant E: Some get angry over very small issues
Researcher: And would you be able to identify some of those issues?
Silence
Researcher: Alright, we will still come back to that
Participant B: Sometimes let's say they get angry with maybe a teacher used them as an example.
Participant A: Yeah, aaah….my center of discussion will be about the performance, maybe its composition then, maybe you are reading the first three and the last three, I want to support the teachers point, then from there they get annoyed over simple things. I am just supporting that point that she just said.
The another one, they go against the school rules, yah, trying to test the waters. What will be your next move? yes.
Researcher: Is that like provoking the teacher?
Participant A: Yes. Maybe you are on duty, they have not swept the class. You ask "where are the class sweepers? ", they just keep quiet, you want to test the waters, yah. That's another example.
I think even shyness can be Something because like for example the girls in the menstrual cycle they don't want to go in front of the class to present or do something and they don't want to get close to the boys
Researcher: And do the boys also display shyness for whatever reason.
Participant B: Unless, unless, I don't know….
Laughter
Researcher: So, all these things are interconnected and we are just trying to see we can look at the contexts. What are some of those contexts you have observed, where children do bring out emotion, and think about the positive and the negative.
Participant A: Like in what kind?
Researcher: If I can use an example, of like the provocation, so maybe they provoke you because it is the beginning of class, you have just come in, it is the routine you have, they know you come in and the first thing you check is the sweepers or some. In which other context do you see the children just bring out emotion, it doesn't have to be in class, but even in the school compound.
Participant A: Now, aah, might be, of course when they are going for lunch, they don't want to queue, Even, if they are called to go for lunch they still remain in class. Even if they queue, they must give you headache.
Researcher: Do they speak out, act out
Participant A: Now this is like an action movie, they won't speak but they want to judge if you will cane them.
Participant C: During physical activities, you find that if they are provoked negatively, they don't want to participate in them, some even are aggressive. If they are angry in class they become aggressive in the fields.
Participant D: Then sometimes, they can fight themselves, when the teacher is not there, when left alone, they can fight they get into fights
Researcher: Is this between both genders separately or across?
Sometimes they can, both a girl and a boy or a boy and a boy.

Participant A: Yeah, might be you have said something maybe it is positive or negative and it has touched one of the you fin d they just keep e quiet the whole day, so moody, mmm, as if they have been beaten or they are coming from Alshabaab camp.
Researcher: So that would be like just one of the children
Participants A: So quiet, what is wrong, yes.
Researcher: Do you see that more with boys or generally?
Participant A: It is general
Participants C: Maybe to add on to that, you find that when they are experiencing positive emotions they usually draw these beautiful things, flowers, weddings but when they are angry they start even drawing, Alshabaab, the gun, so you can detect their emotions in their drawings.
Participants D: Then in the girls, most of the time they do start crying over nothing, most of the time.
Researcher: And is the crying attracting attention or is it the quiet one
Participants D: It's the quiet, you just see tears rolling.
Participants A: I don't know, uuuhhm, maybe for the girls, you know sometimes when it reaches noon, I can say obey the weather but for us we say the gentlemen or gentle lady has no weather. They refuse to remove their sweaters.
Researcher: And do you feel that they understand the need to go with the weather?
Participant A: They get it.
Researcher: They do?
Participant A: They get it but they but they just assume.
Researcher: Okay, so let's go to the part on positive emotion. Now, the positive emotion, I think we can relate, the joy, the happiness, excitement and that kind of thing. What would you say is your observation, including intensity, including the gender, is it more with girls, boys, in the morning, in the evening, afternoon, during class, outside class, that kind of thing.
Participants B: For me I think it applies in both genders. Like when that pupil is in a good mood, they tend to answer questions, they participate, you don't force them to do things the way as per the school rules. So, when they are in a good mood or a positive mood, things are not forced, things tend to move smoothly anytime during free time, lunch time even in class time.
Participants A: Okay, I would like to support madam's point because now in a situation where the girls are now topping, then the boys are lagging behind, you find that the girls are so happy whereas the boys are really down. But when its vise-versa, you find the boys are also happy. It cuts across gender
Researcher: So, you have situations where you can clearly see the boys are on their own and the girls too?
Participant A: This is basically competition subject-wise.
Researcher: So you can pick the competitiveness?
Participants A: Yes, yes. Mmmm….of course now when they are going to the school bus you just find also now as they are going home, the reaction will differ also, now that they are simple things you find that the school you rely on becomes too much so now when they are relying on you so when you are their own standard, they talk, they laugh, it's not the same when they are in the school setting.
Researcher: So, when they know they are exiting school their emotions are more positive and you say they laugh, they jump. What else can they do?
Participant A: They interact, that's the time also they show Like in class

Participant B: Another positive one, let's say like for example maybe a student knows that her strong point is her talent that pupil will tend to have courage coz let's say for example that pupil she knows she is the best in drawing or singing she will tend to, mostly that becomes a number one goal, so now she is the best. I think they have courage during their, say something they are good in education maybe that student leads in the class, performance-wise, talent-wise if the person knows she knows how to draw or he knows how to draw they tend to have that courage, so they can, they know they can stand before a group of people to present something very clearly.
Participants A: Like today, I have had PPI, you this continuous process exercise, you find that the girls are the ones who are participating all the time, the boys are very shy, now this I learnt something that when they are alone, they learn a lot and they make those ones who are dull, the boys they can go there and sing, and learn from one another, they dance. I was just trying to support madam's point.
Researcher: So, when there is no teacher they still can connect with each other?
Yes, they connect to each other.
Researcher: And what would you say are some of the positive emotions you have seen or what would you list for you the one you have seen as positive emotion being expressed?
Participant A: Of course, now again I can say when they go for swimming, madam you can bear with me, when we went to Nairobi, the character changed.
Researcher: What would you call them? You are doing very well, say it.
Laughter
Participants B: They tend to be jovial, you can compare when they are in class, at the end of the day they will be quiet but when they exit he class
Participant A: I think outside class, there are many we can talk about, we talked about play games, kind of drama, the PPI, those can connect to the positive.
Researcher: Which positive emotion, the name of the emotion
Participant A: The name of the emotion. Yes, not so?
Yeah, she said jovial. What other name, what name would you give that emotion when they are scouting or they have gone swimming, when they are coming out to get into the buses?
Participant E: Can we say excitement?
Participant D: Curiosity
Participant B: Happiness.
Participant C: I don't know if we can say Self-esteem.
Participant A: high self-esteem?
Participant C: Yes.
Researcher: For this are you feeling it cuts both ways for the boys and the girls or do you feel like girls will express certain positive one than the boys
Participant E: They do vary, the boy from the girls. I think the girls are a little more emotional than the boys. If it is excitement, they get more excited.
Participant A: Now with the girl, even seeing a cartoon it makes her so happy but for the boys these ae just common things they are just like ……but the girls …..
Participant D: I tend to think when it comes to a let's say a talent like singing, you find that most girls are more exited to do it. In or school Most of the singers are girls. The boys tend to shy off because they think they have a deep voice or a sharp one, and people might question if he is a girl.

Participant A: In the modern journalism club, you find the girls who can report the news, there are no boy who has ever done it. So, I tend to think that I support that point, they are more shy. It comes out in that discovery stage.
They love. Like in a certain class, when someone is in need, they are always there.
Researcher: So, for the negative emotion, and again here, saying it and being able to identify the specific negative emotion, what have you observed for you that you pinpoint and say, "negative emotion".
Participant A: To me, I have noted that the girls tend to like the male teachers, than the female. In case of maybe they are approachable, yeah, I don't know. Most of the time when they talk to the male teachers they find that they are much okay. But they just have just negative attitude towards the female teachers, because I don't know if they are competitors.
Researchers: When you say competitors, what do you have in mind?
Participant A: Of course, now when you bring an idea, they tend to think that one we shall not do it, like division of labor.
Participant C: Bullying. You find that maybe when a boy is angry, he tries to express his anger by bullying others.
Researcher: Both the boys and girls?
Participant C: No, just the boys.
Researcher: That's an interesting one. Tell me more about the bullying and how it happens, like describe it.
Participant A: I can help you. Like in my class, mmm I have the young ones who say are not yet mature so you find now, most of the time the young boys will tell me, "these tall boys they can on us are pouring water on our heads because we have defeated the academically".
Researcher: So the younger boys or the smaller ones, know exactly what happens. Do you think that they understand that that is bullying?
Participant A: Yes, because they cry and they come to me they feel like, even going home they are harassing them on the way
Researcher: And for the girls, have you seen bullying happen? Any observation?
Participant C: It does but not more openly like with the boys.
Beating, gossiping, you know they gang up and gossip about you, they harass emotionally.
And do the girls come to you to ask, to say they have been bullied or to say that this is happening?
Participant C: Yes, they do.
Participant A: And how do you relate may be if I have chosen someone, not the class captain to write the noisemakers, maybe you find in that list the majority are just the girls and so they say, "madam, so and so just hates me, and that is bullying, I was not making noise, just mistaken identity". How do you handle that one, is that bullying?
It could be a perception of bullying. It could be actual bullying, it also depends on the specific context, definitely around the same.
Participant D Sometimes they tend to be jealous, for example you have someone we have the bright ones, sometimes they normally say that she is pretending.
Participant A: What about answering questions in class, that you find that the participants are just girls and the others ask "why is she asking all the questions in class, does the class belong to them".
Researcher: It's like they are complaining and maybe having an attitude?
Participant A: Yes, why doesn't she understand this repeated concept? You just hear from them.

So, we can look at possible reasons

Participant A: The grading. 'he teacher discriminates and yet I write so well'.
Participant A: There is Chapati…there is chapati, for which day?
Yesterday, Thursday.
Participant A: They love that!
I think the rewarding system, like for example the school only rewards only the top three and they leave out the improved students that student might not see that him or her has done something so even recognition helps the children have esteem
Just like I was asking myself, where do these broken hearts go we need to also appreciate the low achievers not just the improved ones I have been asking myself about that question. Do you know where they go
Participant B: No
Laughter
Participant A: Might be for the candidates they can feel now they are leaving. I am just generalizing basically about the school, my observation.
Participant B: I think I can help her, that transition from primary or secondary maybe they see as though, the others are younger, they are the older ones, maybe they begin to they are becoming more like their teachers, like we are in the same range
Participant E: Some others they just want to be recognized, some recognition, such that, you find they group themselves especially maybe those who are at that, at that, puberty stage they group together. So, if maybe they are discussing something you may realize when somebody whom they think should not be in that group, or they exclude him or her so they want to be recognized by their peers that they are grownups.
Participant B: I think even social class can be there at some point we have the ones we call rich kids or cool kids who lack nothing or tend to know many things. They tend to make the ones who have not feel inferior.
Participant A: Knows how to drive imagine I don't know how to operate a TV or a phone it can be a factor. Not so?
Laughter
Participant A: Might be from the parents, they are so rich so they child asks their teacher, "what can you tell me? You haven't even been to Nairobi". They begin to size you up. I can be a factor.
Participant E: I also think, the kind friends the pupils have from where they come from can also be a factor that can lead to how they behave for example if a pupil has friends who are in high school of course copy that is going to influence this one negatively

Participant B: I even tend to think that let's say tribe at some point, we might say tribe is not an issue but some places it is a big issue that we might need to deal with.
Participant A: And also, the same thing. Let us not forget about poverty like my father maybe is a charcoal seller and comes to school in that attire, it can make you feel small, it can affect, Not so? "You are our maid, he is not my dad, it can affect both academically. That one he is just our Shamba boy, he is not my dad. And also, activity maybe the mum washes clothes for people in the village and then the story goes back to school, how do you see the student now in class? So you can get demoralized, the performance, it comes

Participant C: And also illness. This persona has been taken ill has been absent he feels just there not like this person who has been there. Another factor poverty the person is seen to be low. Then when they come back they feel like they are in the wrong place.
Participant B: You also find the learner is a stamerer.
Participant A: There is something, the meals. We touched on meals. You find that our school provides meals and other people carry food from home. you find this day where we cook chapati here, then this person has carried Ugali or Githeri, they are not in a position to take the meals. They even forget it deliberately, they forget it intentionally at home so that they won't be ridiculed by the other children.
Participant B: Then also to support madam's point, okay, it can be carrying the food all the time. Might be their food goes off all the time so they can have that negative attitude towards such a child that they always have food that goes off.
Participant C: Or carrying the same meal over and over.
Researcher: So meals are a big thing, it sounds like they are a major thing.
looks so big for the child.
Let's say the child, one child carries chicken and the one carries Githeri. It's something big.
Laughter
You can imagine lunchtime you open you Sukumawiki with Ugali with no tomatoes, aaaaahh… Omena, you may think you are still in Nyanza, with no water. They carry what they can afford.
Researcher: Do you think the children understand know the nutritional value of what they have been given?
Participant B: They don't.
Laughter
Participant C: Or they do and they ignore.
Laughter
Participant B: I think at some point, you can have an issue like, there are some girls or some boys who have relationships between each other. It might tend to be an issue if it comes education-wise, performance-wise, because like for example maybe there is a girl who has a boyfriend in high school or they have a boyfriend inside class, it can be an issue. They can compare amongst themselves, it can be an issue amongst the pupils themselves or even at home if the parent deals with it.
Participant A: I can also add something on the same, like for me, I don't know if I did it mistakenly, I was punishing this girl then the boyfriend confronted me then he came to me and said 'teacher don't be punishing her in class because she is my wife-to-be. Confrontation.
Participant B: Even I tend to blame the parents because this Corina period the parents have been lenient to their kids. So even this Television stations are teaching kids a lot, Technology. In our days even having a boyfriend was a miracle. You knew having a boyfriend was at the age of 20. Some of them they do say but you the teacher would not want to contend with them because you don't know the real meaning on the term 'boyfriend'. They may tell you it's a boy who is a friend. They may begin asking you, "teacher are you are married".
Participant B: Maybe we would differentiate the social status and the background, not about how rich a parent is or how poor a parent is, but even the approach of the guardian or parent you find that some kids are brought up in very tough situation so even to speak up and tell you what is they are undergoing it's a challenge to them. They are not even given that freedom of expression, when mum says its this way, it has to be that way.

Participant A: Those children who are brought up in the Barracks that is the military, you know how they behave, so harsh, specifically, yes teacher, they are harsh.
Participant B: I tend to thing for example we have the bedwetters. They may come to school and one of the pupils may identify their bedwetting and at the end of the day, the child tends to withdraw because now everybody knows about it.
Participant E: I think, the emotional changes play a very big part and if not properly controlled they can end messing up your life as early as a teen, and I think that's why a lot of guidance is needed. You know emotions, here we are also involving the psychology of the child, so most of the things are psychological.
Participant B: Even like I can just say, for example, maybe a child has been raped, or has been assaulted or even physically abused performance the child tends to withdraw, low performance, may not talk in class and is absent minded. I also think even if a child is aggressive now they tend to be aggressive at an older age, the parent did not deal with it or were unable to tame it at some point.
Researcher: Anything else as we conclude, that you would want to bring out?
Participant B: I also think even if a child is aggressive now they tend to be aggressive at an older age, the parent did not deal with it or were unable to tame it at some point.
Researcher: Okay, any other? Anything else?
Silence
Researcher: Thank you for participating today, it is greatly appreciated.

Focus group 2
Researcher: Let's go through the first question. When we say emotion, it's the feeling, the positive and negative.
Participant A: Have you had an opportunity to observe children's emotions? Yes, we have been having the children in the class and in the field, I say yes.
Participant B: Yes.
Participant C: It is yes.
Participant C: Screaming, shouting.
Participant B: Fighting Crying, withdrawal
Participant A: Sometimes you even find for example children in school, maybe a child has, the background of the problem is not at school, its back at home and you might find the child spoiling her…..urinating on herself or himself and it does not mean that that child is sick, yah, something is wrong somewhere because you find a parent comes and says "she doesn't do that", but why? Something is happening somewhere.
Participant B: Even others, aaah… it's like for example if it is negative, eeehh.. and there is the learning, they tend to be… lag behind in performance. So, I don't know how you will put that one, but in my view, if they are emotionally affected they will not perform well in class, in class work.

Researcher: So where do you see children, being comfortable expressing whether its joy, anger, excitement?
Participant B: When they are playing, they are always excited, happy, yeah.
Participant C: When you are out of topic in class, *laughs*.
Participant A: At the same time, once they are out there you know they express different emotions because you may find some of them are very excited but at the same time you may find a child in the same class just seated down somewhere just alone doing nothing, so that child is disturbed because it is not normal for a child to just sit when the others are just playing.
Participant B: When you are out of topic, they really talk.
Participant A: or even not just in class, they may be out with others but just opts to sit down instead of playing with others.
Participant C: When you are also harsh. When you become harsh to them, you will not see their true picture of themselves.
Participant B: they will not be able to express themselves
Participant A: Or maybe where the children come across a stranger or a new teacher comes in Before the child copes with that teacher, the child cannot be able to express their emotions, you cannot be able to tell until you stay with that child for a time when you will be able to learn the child as the child also learns you, also when the child has problems at home, that's what I was saying.
Participant C: Sometimes you find you have a group of students who are just jolly, jolly I am not saying excited children who are jolly because in school we talk of a dull class. sometimes you find children who are very, very jolly. The reason as to why they are jolly is because the conditions they are conducive when the child is comfortable, when the child is comfortable you will always find them jolly, not excited, jolly there is a difference between those two words.
Silence
Participant B: Can you try and expound that, number 5.
Participant C: They are asking, what have you observed? Us?
Researcher: What have you observed, so it's for you. When you get into your class or when you are seeing them out there, what is that you look at and you say that this child let's say is happy, joyous?
Participant C: Even the way they ask the questions in class, because children who are negatively… emotionally….the are reserved they don't ask questions in class. Those who have negative emotions in class they will no answer questions in class, they will not ask any question, maybe they have an attitude towards the teacher or maybe they have other problems. When children you see children are happily answering your questions participating in class then that is positive emotion
Participant B: I wanted to say they also engage in teamwork which is fruitful, they are encouraged to participate in a discussion positively when they have that positive emotion.
Participant C: They also like talking to the teacher even outside the classroom. Those children who have positive emotion to the teacher just to ask something very little just to hear from the teacher because they are happy.
Participant A: I think some of these emotions they are also contributed in a big way by the parents because we as teachers, okay I have a class of 50 or I have a class of 40 whatever number but to me I handle these children the same way, because they are children I don't have on that is special. But you find a parent comes here, you know we are in school and starts trying to tell you his or her child is supposed to sit in a certain position, in class. I think I told you the other day

telling you there was one who came here, telling me that I should shift the boy from a certain desk that he sitting in, it's like now the boy has gone back home and reported to the mother that I sit with a boy know as so and so and I don't want to sit where….you see, so the mother comes, you know they are the, the… what do you call them, those pampered children. So the mother comes and tries to convince me that I should take the boy, I shift the boy from there, the mother mentions the names of those boys that sit with the son. Now, when you think about you can see something goes on at home, they do discuss issues with the child at home and that is why the mother has even got the names of the children who sit together with the boy, and now here you see that one, the mother may not know but that one affects the child a lot because now the mother shows the child you are supposed to sit with so and so. But, you know this is school and I cannot entertain you as a parent to come and tell me your child should not sit at the back, should sit here, yah, because I am the manager of the class, you are the manager at home do it there don't come here. So that one affects the child so much.

And especially again there are those parents who discuss teachers negatively with their children, telling the child maybe that teacher is not good, she does not even know how to teach, she does not even mark your you know, that one alone, negative emotion. So, I think that is what I can say about those negative emotions a child has. Yeah, they influence a lot and they do influence their children that is why, you find uum, you know, accidents do happen, and sometimes they happen in school. An accident can happen anywhere. So maybe the accident happens amongst the child and you find a parent takes the child takes them to hospital, has a child has broken an arm. But this same parent who takes up the responsibility of taking the child to hospital because they broke an arm or whatever while playing, for the teacher, something can happen in class, now touching on the teacher, and it may not be perceived in the same way when the child gets an accident amongst their peers. The parent may first report to a police station and get a P3 form and then go to the hospital. Already this child has been instilled something negative by the parent because instead of the parent showing the child that a teacher is a friend, they show that the teacher is like an enemy because a friend would not have your arm break. So for this child as you teach them in class, you have been in class for long, instead of understanding what is being taught, they block learning, yeah. Attitude is bad and cannot concentrate because the parent threatens to comes to school to confront the teacher. So how will this child perceive the teacher? A child always sees a parent as their hero and the parents then devalues the teacher, just as my colleague says, this child's learning is affected negatively.

Researcher: Thank you for that. Any other possible reason you can see?

Participant B: You know even the background, the way they are brought up at home. There are those who are told not to express themselves, things go wrong….

Participant A: .. yeah like to shut up, or that men should not cry

Participant B: Yes, don't cry, so there are families where if you try to say something….its like I had a case of a parent who had a child in the upper class. The child was telling about how things are at home. Later on the mother to the child came we met here the other day and we talked about the same issue. So the boy was telling me about what is making me underperform. Now when we were speaking with the mother, she wanted to know what the child had told the class teacher. Sometime the you may reveal what the child to you to the parent and maybe the parent react harshly to the child. I was hesitant to tell her it's about her marital challenges and how the boy feels mistreated by the father. Maybe after that the child was quarreled at home. This child was trying to express his emotions, how dissatisfied at home and affects even his performance. So the parents out there greatly contribute to the emotions of these children, okay, positively or

negatively as well as the teachers here we also contribute so much to the feelings of our children because there are things we tell them, we say even if there are times like the way we out here, "teacher may I go out and and buy something", Do you know that we have a teacher on duty? Who is she? Teacher… Go and ask teacher…." Then the child goes away. Maybe there is a way for the child to come to me, then there is a way that teacher affects her feelings when she asks for such permission.
Participant C: And even these children when they are at home, they may lack parental love, that is why we may see when they come to school they cling to the teachers, seeking that parental love.
Participant B: Another reason for this where children may not express emotion, maybe it the nature of the child, that thing that you want…the issue that the child has, that then determines whether they will speak it. If they feel they may be disappointed, he withdraws, yes the nature of that whatever, they may not speak it out. There are times they say it as it has happened like if they have performed and still had a person who did better than them.
Participant B: Emotion primarily depends on who the child lives with, the context, that person who….
Participant A: We talk of environment and bringing up, environment and bringing up.
Participant C: What about personality? Is it not there? Yes, there those are traits that someone is born with.
Participant A: And that's what we are calling nature, not environment, but they are just like that.
Participant B: Like if you are very harsh, then…like I am quite strict on the children but when you see the teachers and parents who brought me up, I was not taught like…especially when I see a child crying especially a boy, I just want to push them off my presence. Like yesterday we saw children in a particular class studying on their own, with their teacher away, we could not even tell if the teacher was present or not. The teacher has defined, and they know how the teacher reacts when angry.
Participant A: Yes, I was doing my work from here and they never spoke even for one minute. It's the way teacher had said we contribute a lot to the emotions of the children.
Participant C: And to how they express them.
Participant B: Then, there are those you enquire about an illness, their tears well up and they cry.
Researcher: Is there anyone else who would like to add anything?
Silence
Researcher: I am very grateful.