



The Interactive Effects of Parent-Child and Teacher-Child Relationships on Low Income Children's Self-Regulation Skills

➤ **Ibrahim H. Acar, M.S.**

➤ Early Development and Learning Lab

➤ Child, Youth and Family Studies

➤ University of Nebraska-Lincoln



Self-regulation in Early Childhood

- Critical component of children's school readiness (Blair, 2002; McClelland, Morrison, & Holmes, 2000; McCormick, & Haack, 2010).
- Difference in development of children's self-regulation depends on their home and classroom environments which widens up the school readiness gap between advantaged and disadvantaged children (Evans, & Rosenbaum, 2008; Martin, Ryan, & Brooks-Gunn, 2010).
- Understanding what factors account for development of self-regulation of children is essential to design effective intervention programs to support these children close up the school readiness gap in early years.



Parent-Child and Teacher-Child Relationships

- Children who experienced sensitive parenting and warm family environments demonstrated better self-regulation skills (Davidov, Grusec, 2006; Van der Mark, Bakermans-Kranenburg, & Van IJzendoorn, 2002; von Suchodoletz, Trommsdorff, & Heikamp, 2011).
- Quality of teacher-child relationships is also associated with children's self-regulation (Rimm-Kauffman et al., 2002)
- From contextual-developmental perspective, one context can play a compensatory role for effects of another context on children's outcomes (Hughes et al., 1999; Sabol & Pianta, 2012).



The Current Study

- The purpose of the current study was to examine moderator effect of teacher-child relationship (conflictual and close relationship) between children relationships with parents (conflictual and close relationship) on their self-regulation skills.


- **Participants:**

Participants were 291 children (159 boys, 132 girls) enrolled in 17 different classrooms across 3 Educare Programs in Lincoln and Omaha. Hispanic (46%); Non-Hispanic (54 %). Of these two ethnic groups, 57.9 % were White, 30.9% were Black/ African American, 1.1 % were Asian, 9.1 % were Biracial/ Multiracial, and .7 % were other race.

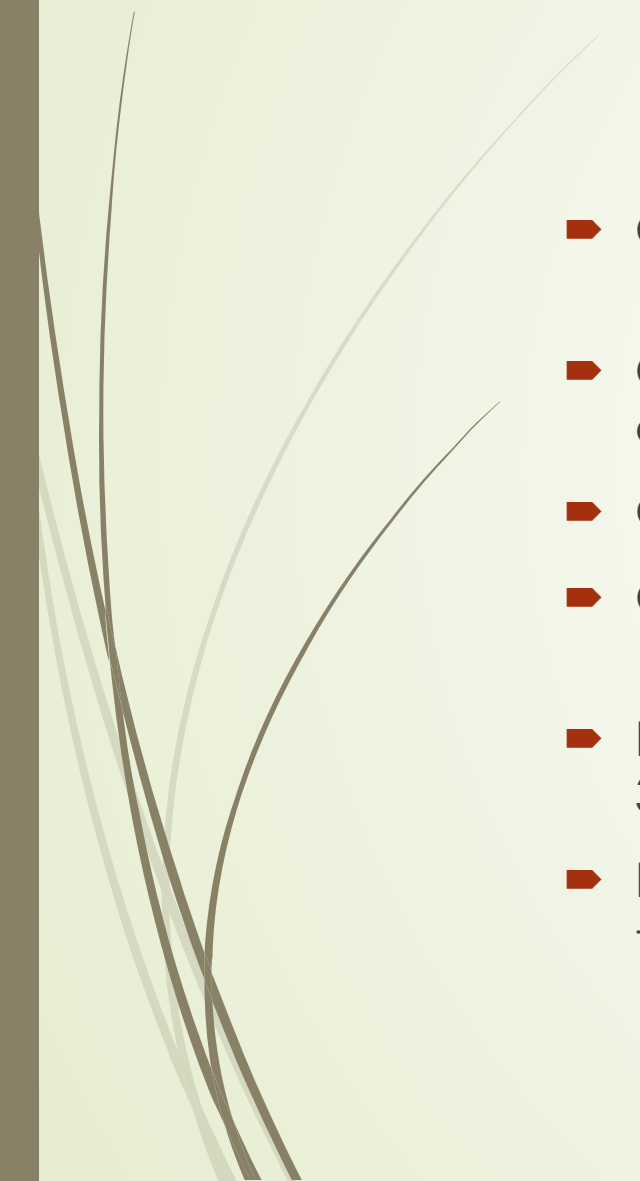


Data Collection & Analysis

- *Self-Regulation*: Several self-regulation tasks from The Preschool Self-Regulation Assessment (PSRA; Smith-Donald et al., 2007) and Carlson (2005) tapping on behavior regulation and executive function. Tasks included balance beam, pencil tap, tower task, snack delay, and gift wrap. Two trained assessors conducted the assessments; one completed the tasks with the child and the other assessor kept timing and scores as each task was implemented. Interrater reliability ranged from .83 to .99 across tasks.
- *Parent-child Relationship*: Parents completed the Child-Parent Relationship Scale (CPRS; Pianta, 1992). Closeness (7 items, $\alpha = .71$) conflict (8 items, $\alpha = .82$).
- *Student-teacher Relationship*: The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS; Pianta, 2001). Closeness (8 items, $\alpha = .85$) conflict (7 items, $\alpha = .90$).
- Random intercept models were run via SAS PROC MIXED (SAS Institute Inc. 2011); however, some models did not recommend using a random-intercept-model as part of the multilevel structure of the data due to lack of enough variance between classrooms (i.e., low ICCs).



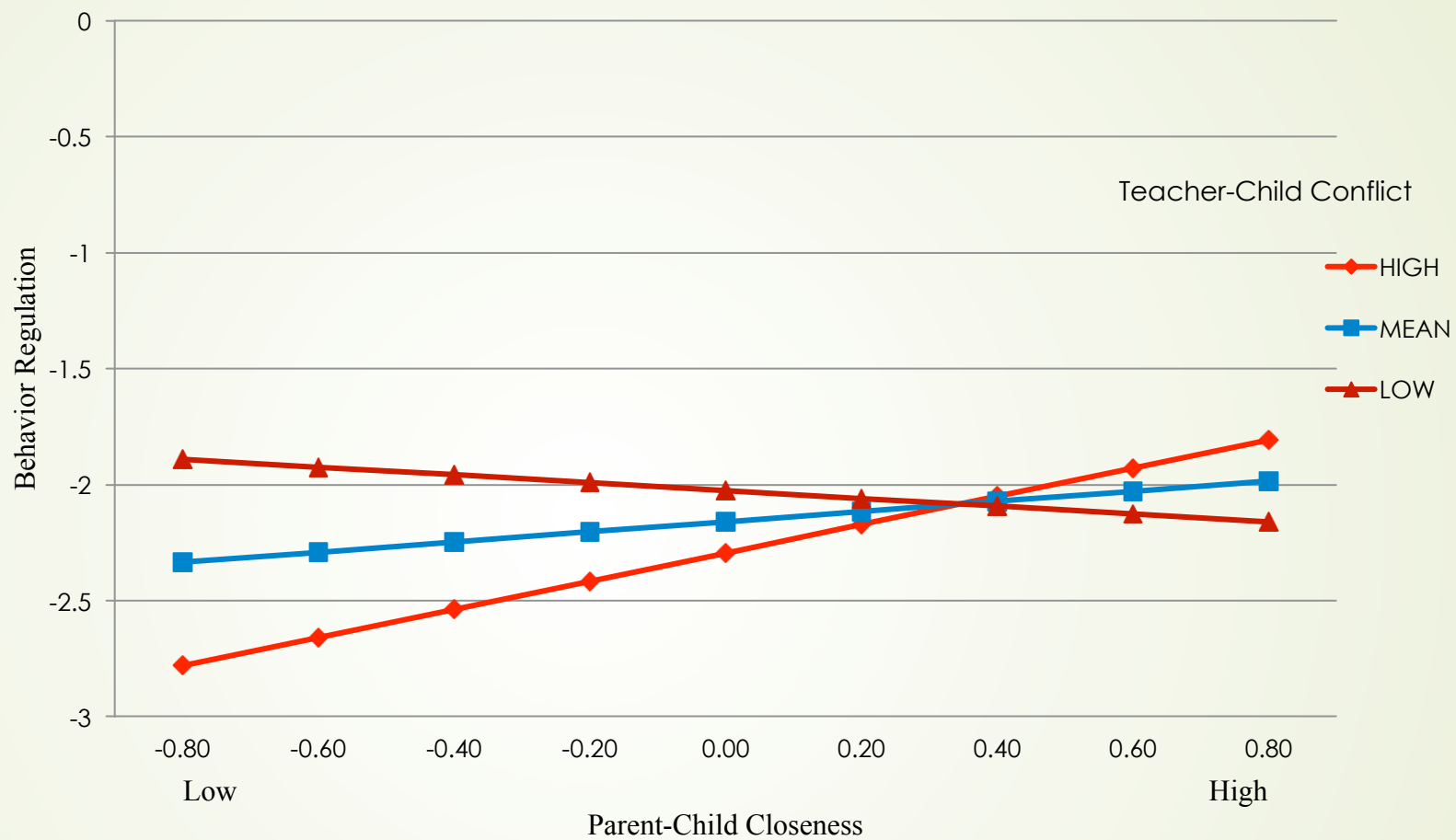
Results



- Older children scored on both BR ($t(199) = -4.81, p < .05, d = -0.72$) and EF ($t(199) = -7.47, p < .05, d = -1.04$).
- Older children were reported higher on teacher-child closeness than young children were ($t(283) = -2.14, p < .05, d = -0.26$).
- Girls scored higher than boys did on BR ($t(199) = -3.49, p < .05, d = -0.48$).
- Girls also had higher levels of close relationship with teachers than boys did ($t(283) = -4.45, p < .05, d = -0.54$).
- Hispanic children scored higher than non-Hispanic children on BR ($t(199) = 3.81, p < .05, d = 0.53$).
- Non-Hispanic children had higher levels of conflictual teacher relationship than Hispanic children did ($t(199) = -2.58, p < .05, d = -0.31$).


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- Parent-child closeness ($\beta = .452, t = 3.81, p < .001$) and teacher-child closeness ($\beta = .147, t = 1.99, p = .04$) predicted children's EF.
- Teacher-child conflict predicted children's BR ($\beta = -.135, t = -2.09, p = .03$).
- teacher-child conflict significantly moderated the association between parent-child closeness and behavior regulation ($\beta = .428, t = 2.28, p = .02$)
- Interaction: when teacher-child conflict is low or at mean level, parent-child closeness is unrelated to behavior regulation
- However, when teacher-child conflict is high, low and mean levels of parent-child closeness are related to lower levels of behavior regulation or parent-child closeness is a buffer for children's behavior regulation at high levels of teacher-child conflict ($t = -2.29, p = .02$ at mean level of parent-child closeness and $t = -3.07, p = .002$ at low levels of parent-closeness)





Discussion & Implications of the Results

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- Consistent with contextual systems of development where the effects of a characteristic of one system on development may be attenuated or amplified by characteristics of another system (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 1998; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007; Pianta & Walsh, 1996).
 - intervention programs focused on improvement of positive parent-child and teacher-child relationship can help development of children's self-regulation skills. Intervention programs such as the Triple P- Positive Parenting Program (Sanders & Woolley, 2005) and Brazelton Touchpoints (Brazelton, 1994; Singer & Hornstein, 2010) have helped parents to improve their parenting skills in terms of reducing parenting stress and creating close and sensitive parent-child relationships.



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