Is it Black and White?
Teacher-Child Relationships Across the Early Elementary Grades

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Relationships as Protective Factor

- Teacher-child relationships are a key resources for children's academic and social development
  - Far-reaching protective effects for children at-risk (Hamre & Pianta, 2001)
  - Particularly important for children from non-majority racial/ethnic backgrounds (Burchinal, Peisner-Feinberg, Pianta & Howes, 2002)

- Teacher-child relationships vary with child characteristics
  - Boys: more conflict and less closeness (Baker, 2006; Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Rudasill et al., 2006)
  - Children from lower SES families → lower quality relationships with teachers (O'Connor & McCartney, 2006; Rudasill et al., 2010)
  - Children from minority ethnic backgrounds tend to have lower quality relationships

- Black students are at a significant disadvantage compared to their White peers
  - Disadvantages emerge as early as preschool (U.S. Department of Education, 2016)

- There has been very little focus on child *race* alone as a predictor of teachers' perceptions of TCR
  - Studies have been either too small to parse out the effects beyond other factors such as family income, or have examined race with other risk factors (Aber, Morris, & Raver, 2012; Decker, Dona, & Christenson, 2007)
- There has not been a deliberate effort to investigate race as a primary predictor of TCR

- We investigated the longitudinal association between child race and gender and teacher-child relationship quality
  - Hypothesis: Controlling for SES...
    1. Black children, especially Black boys, will have higher levels of conflict and lower levels of closeness with kindergarten teachers than peers
    2. These relationships will remain high in conflict, low in closeness through 2nd grade

- Early Childhood Longitudinal Study
  - Follows K through 5th Grade
  - 18,174 children in the study
- Accounting for Complex Sampling Design

•The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale
 (Pianta, 2001)
  •Conflict
  •Closeness

STRS-SF

Definitely does not apply 1	Not really 2	Neutral, not sure 3	Applies somewhat 4	Definitely applies 5

1.	(CLOSE) I share an affectionate, warm relationship with this child.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	(CONFLICT) This child and I always seem to be struggling with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	(CLOSE) If upset, this child will seek comfort from me.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	(CLOSE-REVERSE) This child is uncomfortable with physical affection or touch from me.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	(CLOSE) This child values his/her relationship with me.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	(CLOSE) When I praise this child, he/she beams with pride.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	(CLOSE) This child spontaneously shares information about himself/herself.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	(CONFLICT) This child easily becomes angry with me.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	(CLOSE) It is easy to be in tune with what this child is feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	(CONFLICT) This child remains angry or is resistant after being disciplined.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	(CONFLICT) Dealing with this child drains my energy	1	2	3	4	5
12.	(CONFLICT) When this child is in a bad mood, I know we're in for a long and difficult day.	1	2	3	4	5
13.	(CONFLICT) This child's feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.	1	2	3	4	5
14.	(CONFLICT) This child is sneaky or manipulative with me.	1	2	3	4	5
15.	(CLOSE) This child openly shares his/her feelings and experiences with me.	1	2	3	4	5

- Other Measures:
  - SES
 - Race – Parent Report
  - Gender

- How to measure change in STRS from Kindergarten to 2nd Grade
- Growth Modeling
  - Every child has their own estimated change (Random effect)
  - Each group has its own estimated change (Fixed effect)
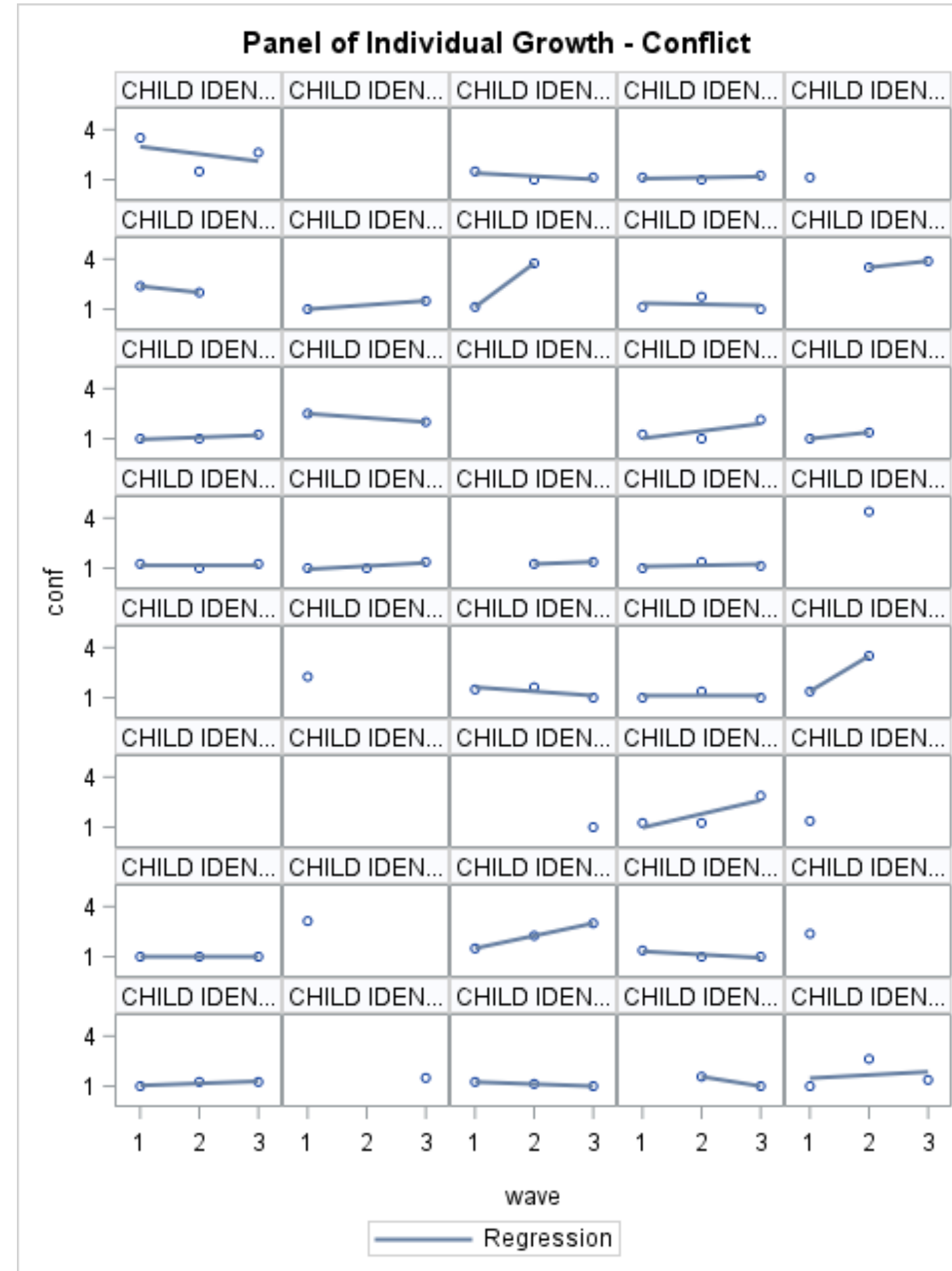 - Each group has its own effect of SES

Closeness:
- This is a random sample of 40 children to examine the change in Closeness over time
- Missing Data
- Linear Trends

SPAGHETTI PLOT OF Closeness ACROSS YEAR - REG LINEAR
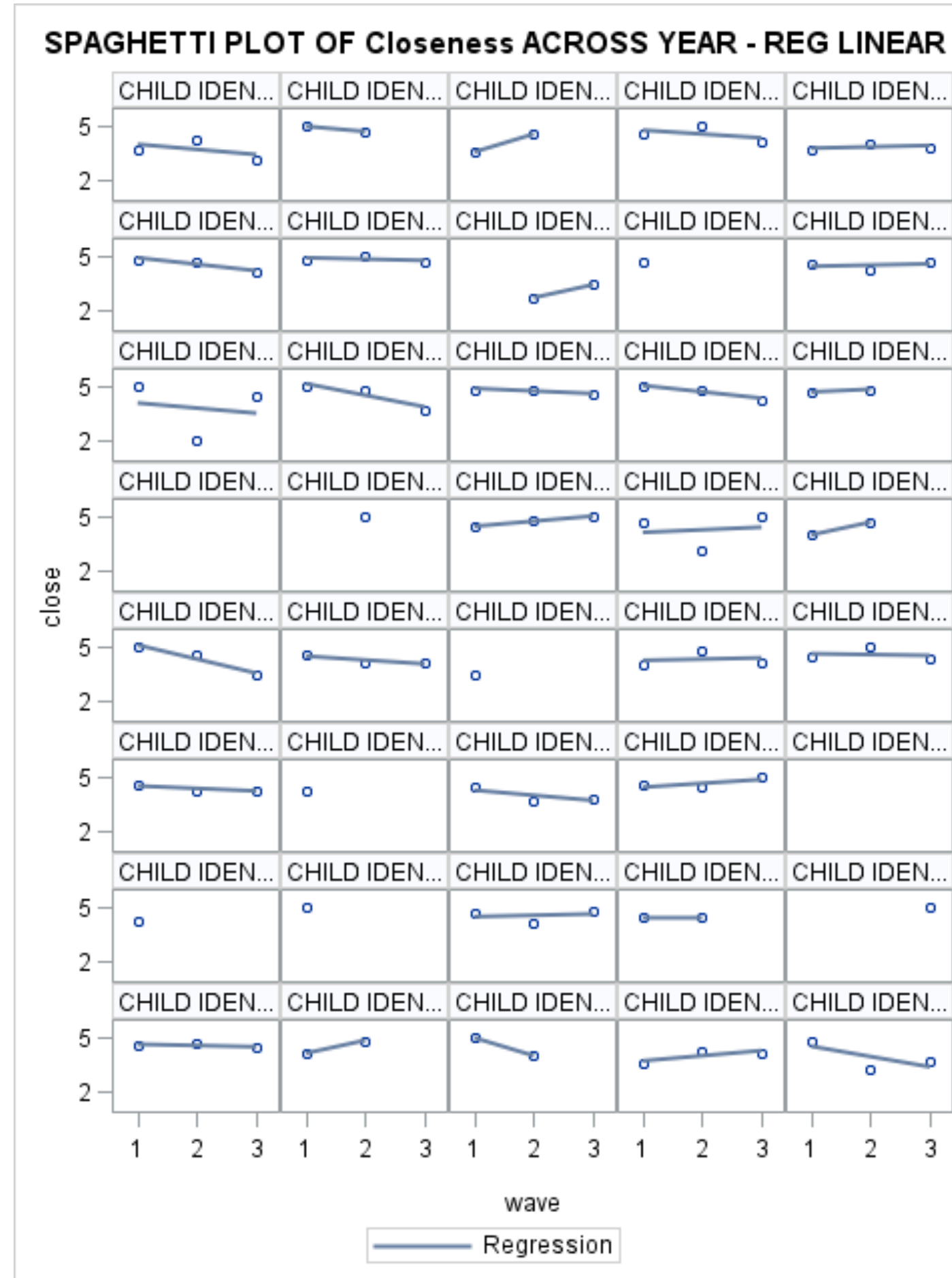
Conflict:

- A different set of 40 random children
- Typically low scores on Conflict

Change over time

	Closeness			Conflict		
	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade	Kindergarten	1st Grade	2nd Grade
White Male	4.31 (0.63)	4.25 (0.66)	4.19 (0.68)	1.74 (0.85)	1.75 (0.85)	1.73 (0.83)
White Female	4.54 (0.55)	4.50 (0.57)	4.48 (0.58)	1.45 (0.68)	1.44 (0.63)	1.41 (0.63)
Black Male	4.22 (0.68)	4.13 (0.69)	4.02 (0.75)	2.06 (1.03)	2.15 (1.04)	2.19 (1.06)
Black Female	4.41 (0.61)	4.32 (0.61)	4.29 (0.65)	1.71 (0.85)	1.75 (0.87)	1.77 (0.89)

Four Main Findings:

#1: In Kindergarten

- Black boys had the highest Conflict and lowest Closeness
- White girls had the lowest Conflict and highest Closeness

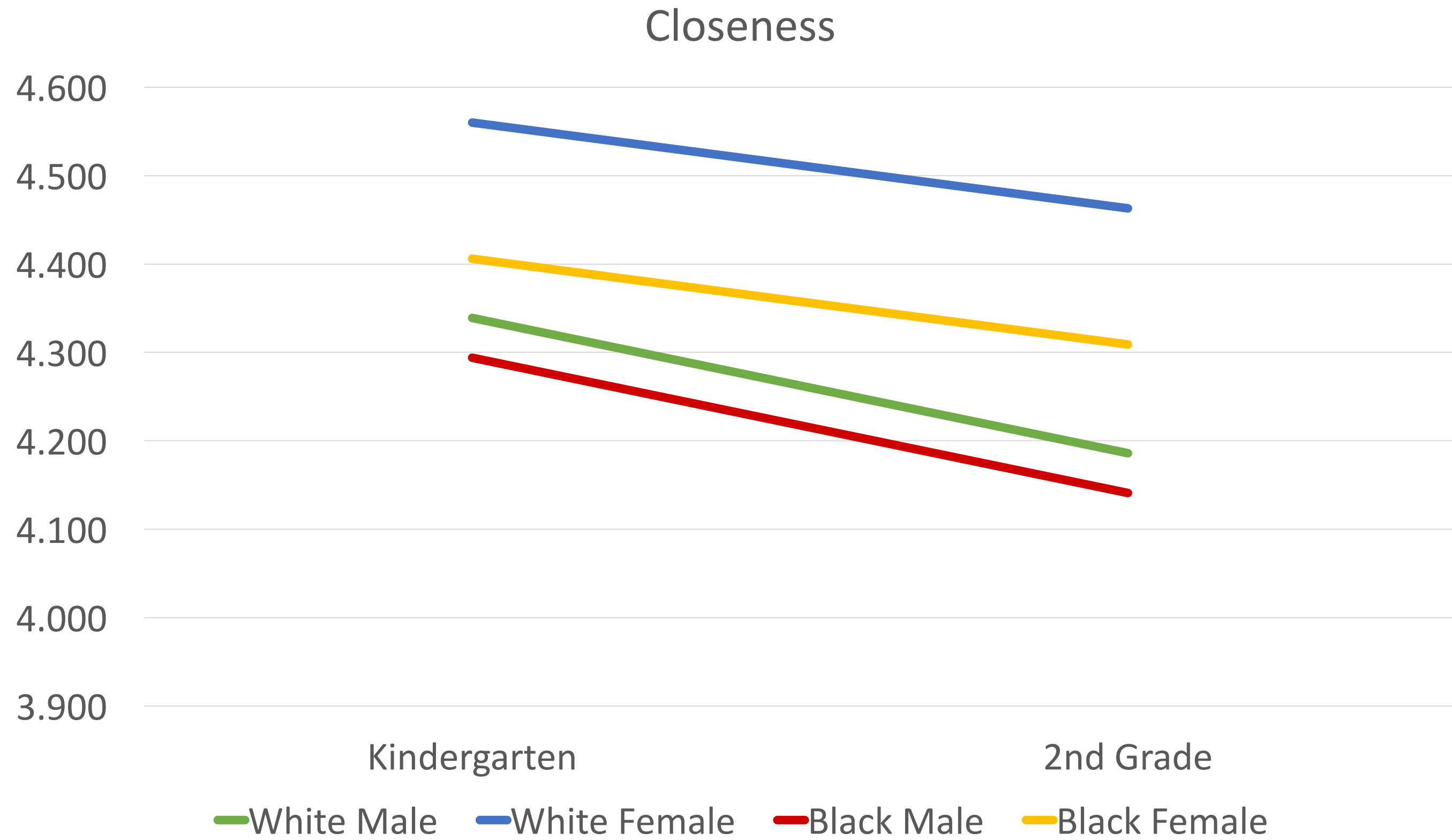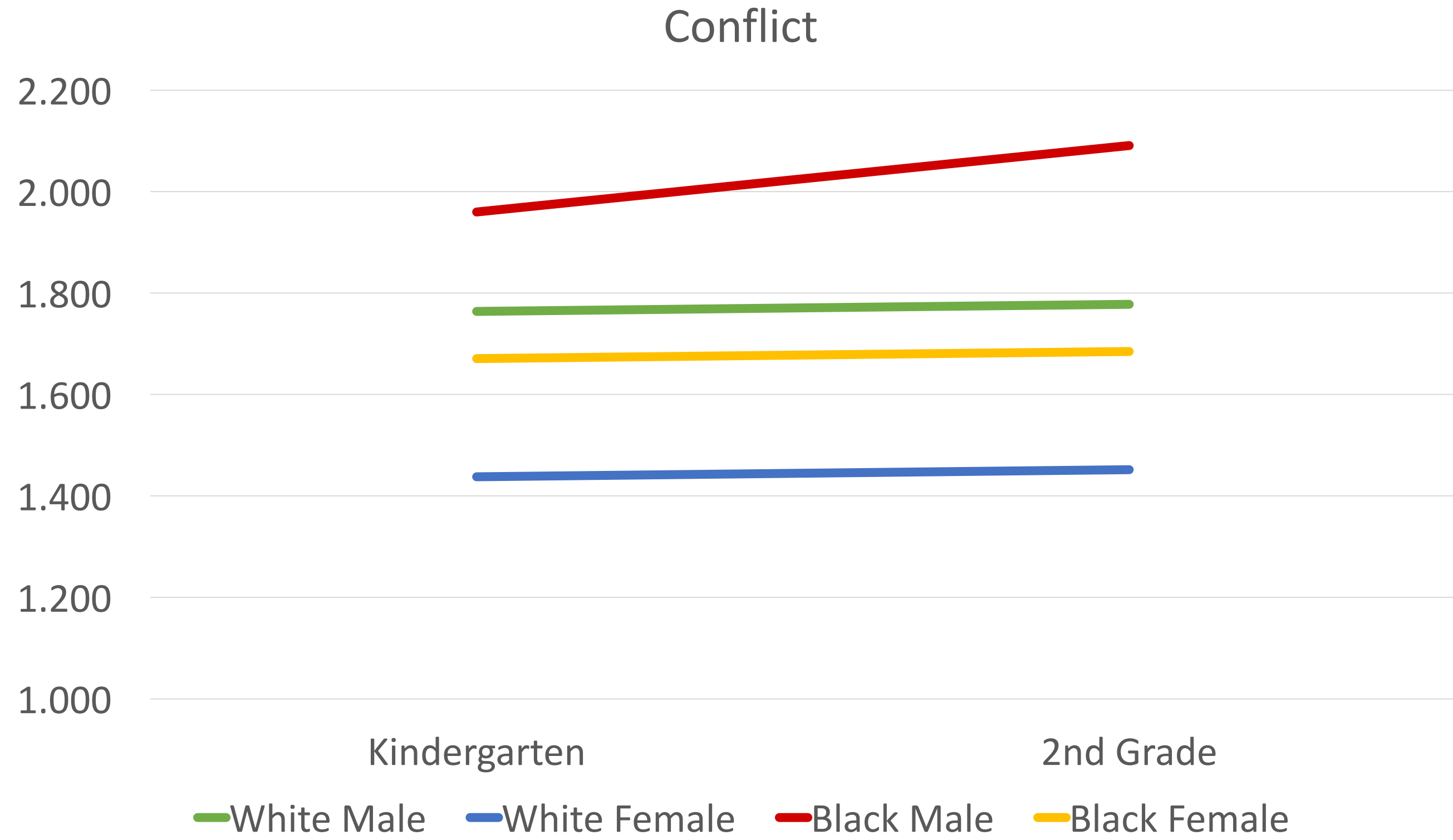**Figure 1.** Closeness Trajectory from Kindergarten to 2nd Grade

Closeness

Figure 2. Conflict Trajectory from Kindergarten to 2nd Grade

Conflict

#2: Black boys increased in Conflict from Kindergarten through 2nd grade more than Black girls, White boys, and White girls

#3: Girls decreased less in Closeness from Kindergarten through 2nd grade than boys

#4: SES benefitted

- White children more than Black children in Kindergarten for Conflict
- Black boys and White girls from Kindergarten through 2nd grade for Conflict

Teacher-child ethnic match did not affect the results

- Increased cultural competence
  - Fostering environments of competence

- Cultivating positive relationships with students
  - Banking time

- Celebrating equity practices
- Accountability measures

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QUESTIONS?