



The Influence of Parenting Behaviors on Prosocial and Antisocial Behavior of Children in Ecuador

Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between family dynamics, parental warmth, and child social competence of families in Ecuador. Structural equation modeling procedures were used to identify latent variables and to test a full-hypothesized model to predict social competence of children. Results indicate that positive family interactions predict warm and positive parenting dynamics, which in turn, predict child social competence. Implications are discussed.

Introduction

Many studies have examined the impacts of parenting behaviors on child outcomes, though few have examined these interactions in Ecuador (Schvaneveldt, 2014). In some samples, parental warmth is predictive of parental reports of child social competence (Eiden, Colder, Edwards, & Leonard, 2009). Family interactions also affect parenting interactions, with positive dynamics related to increased positive parenting practices (Houlberg, Henry, & Morris, 2012). The interaction between family dynamics, parenting, and child outcomes is founded in general family systems theory and parental practices shaping child development (Bowen, 1976; Tittleman, 2014).

Hypotheses

- Positive family dynamics predict higher levels of parental warmth.
- Parental warmth predicts higher levels of reported child prosocial behavior and lower levels of anti-social behavior.
- Differences will be identified comparing mothers and fathers, lower and higher SES groups, and those who are married and divorced/separated.

Methodology

A sample of 1,306 parents who had students enrolled in public and private schools in Ecuador completed a self-administered questionnaire. The survey, which was adapted from the school success profile (Bowen & Richman, 2005), included items reflecting the participant's perception of their child's social competence, family dynamics, and parental warmth. Measures were developed with researchers and faculty from Ecuador to ensure cultural competence. Missing data were replaced by multiple imputation procedures using AMOS software. Confirmatory factor analyses identified latent variables using structural equation modeling procedures. Multigroup analyses were also conducted using nested modeling procedures.

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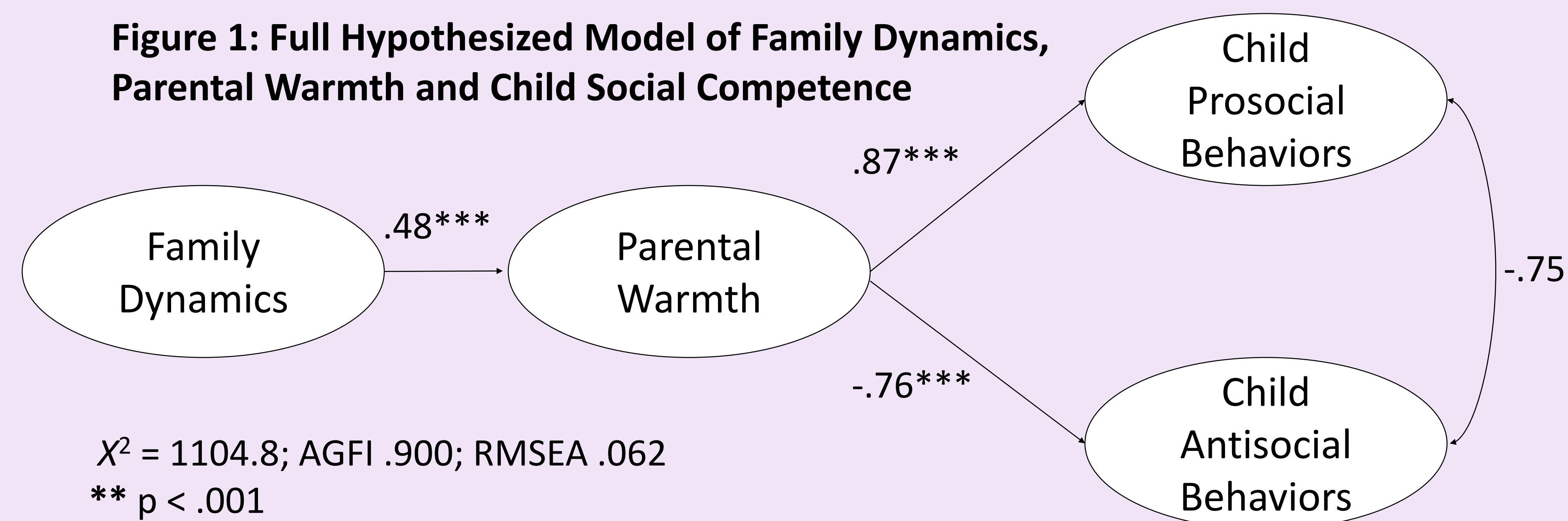
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Results

A full-hypothesized model examined the relationship between family dynamics, parental warmth, and both child prosocial and child antisocial behavior. Results indicate a good fit of the model to the data (X^2 (n= 1,306) = 1104.8, $p < .001$; AGFI = .900, RMSEA = .062; see Figure 1). Positive family dynamics predicted parental warmth (.48; $R^2 = .26$), which, in turn, predicted child antisocial behavior (-.76; $R^2 = .58$) and child prosocial behavior (.87; $R^2 = .76$). Parental warmth mediated the relationship between family dynamics and both child prosocial behavior and antisocial behavior.

Results of the nested group comparison indicated few statistically significant differences. A statistically significant difference was identified between parental warmth and child prosocial behavior (.88 mothers & .96 fathers). An additional statistically significant difference was identified in the path between parental warmth and anti-social behavior (-.70 married & -.87 divorced/separated).

Figure 1: Full Hypothesized Model of Family Dynamics, Parental Warmth and Child Social Competence



Discussion

The results support previous studies showing that family interactions impact parenting dynamics, which in turn, predict social competence in Ecuadorian children. Specifically, higher levels of positive family interactions predicted positive parenting behaviors, and ultimately, higher levels of prosocial and lower levels of antisocial competence among children. Group comparisons identified differences among married and divorced/separated parents and also between mothers and fathers. Implications for those who work with families in Ecuador include promoting positive family dynamics and high levels of warm parental interactions. Future research in Ecuador could examine family and parenting dynamics across the lifespan.

References

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