

Harsh Parenting and Black Boys' Behavior Problems: Single Mothers' Parenting Stress and Nonresident Fathers' Involvement

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INTRODUCTION

LITERATURE

- Prior research on the effects of *parenting stress* and *father absence* on child outcomes has focused on *middle-class white* samples.
- Single mothers' *parenting stress* (resulting from *economic hardship*) and nonresident *father involvement* in poor black families, and how they influence *child outcomes* over time is not well understood.

INTRODUCTION

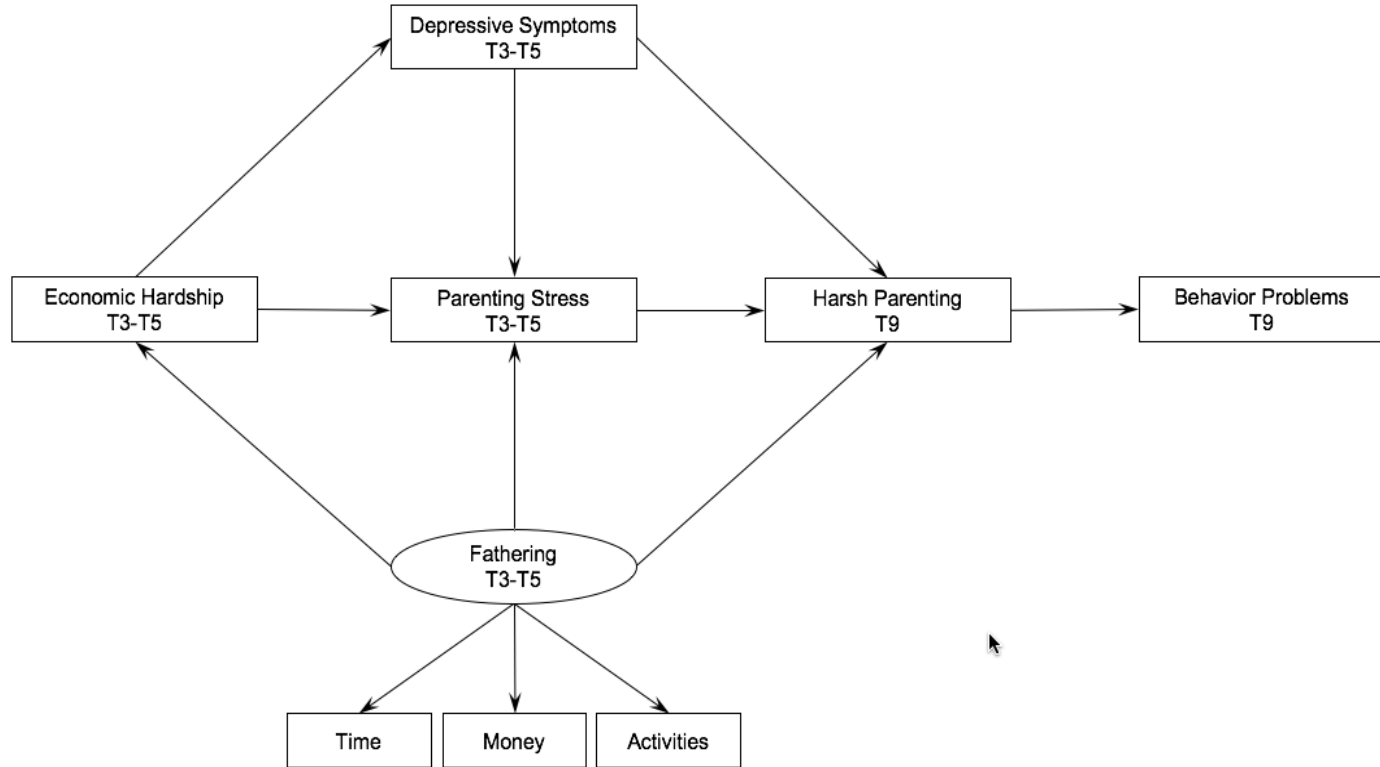
RESEARCH AIM

- This study examines whether and how *mothers' parenting stress* affects their *parenting* and whether nonresident *fathers' involvement*, in turn, affects *child socioemotional development* over time, using data from low-income unmarried black mothers with a focal child during early to middle childhood.

INTRODUCTION

CONCEPTUAL MODEL

Bronfenbrenner's (1986) "person-process-context" model



METHOD

DATA and SAMPLE



- Among 4,898 households in the *Fragile Families and Child Wellbeing* (FFCW) longitudinal study, 748 *single black mothers with young boys* were selected.
- Exclusion criteria – Married or cohabiting mothers; teenage mothers aged 17 or younger; and mothers who had never been poor.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

- The sampled mothers were, on average, **26.7 years of age**;
- Over a third (39.1%) reported having a high school diploma or GED;
- Close to a third (30.5%) reported some education beyond high school;
- 53% were employed at time 3
- Average reported annual income was **\$19, 926** (SD = 17,127).

METHOD MEASURES

Economic Hardship (TIMES 3 AND 5) –12-item scale that asked mothers about their financial difficulties during the 12 months prior to the interview; i.e., going hungry, not paying rent or bills, borrowing money.

Depressive Symptoms (TIMES 3 AND 5) – 14-item scale drawn from the Composite International Diagnostic Interview Short Form; i.e., losing interest, feeling tired, change in weight, trouble sleeping and concentrating, etc.

Parenting Stress (TIMES 3 AND 5) –12-item scale from the Early Head Start Study that asked mothers about feelings such as the following: feeling trapped by their parenting responsibilities; not being able to do things they like to do; giving up more of their life to meet child's needs than they expected, etc.

METHOD MEASURES

Father Involvement (TIMES 3 AND 5) – Assessed by scales asking about

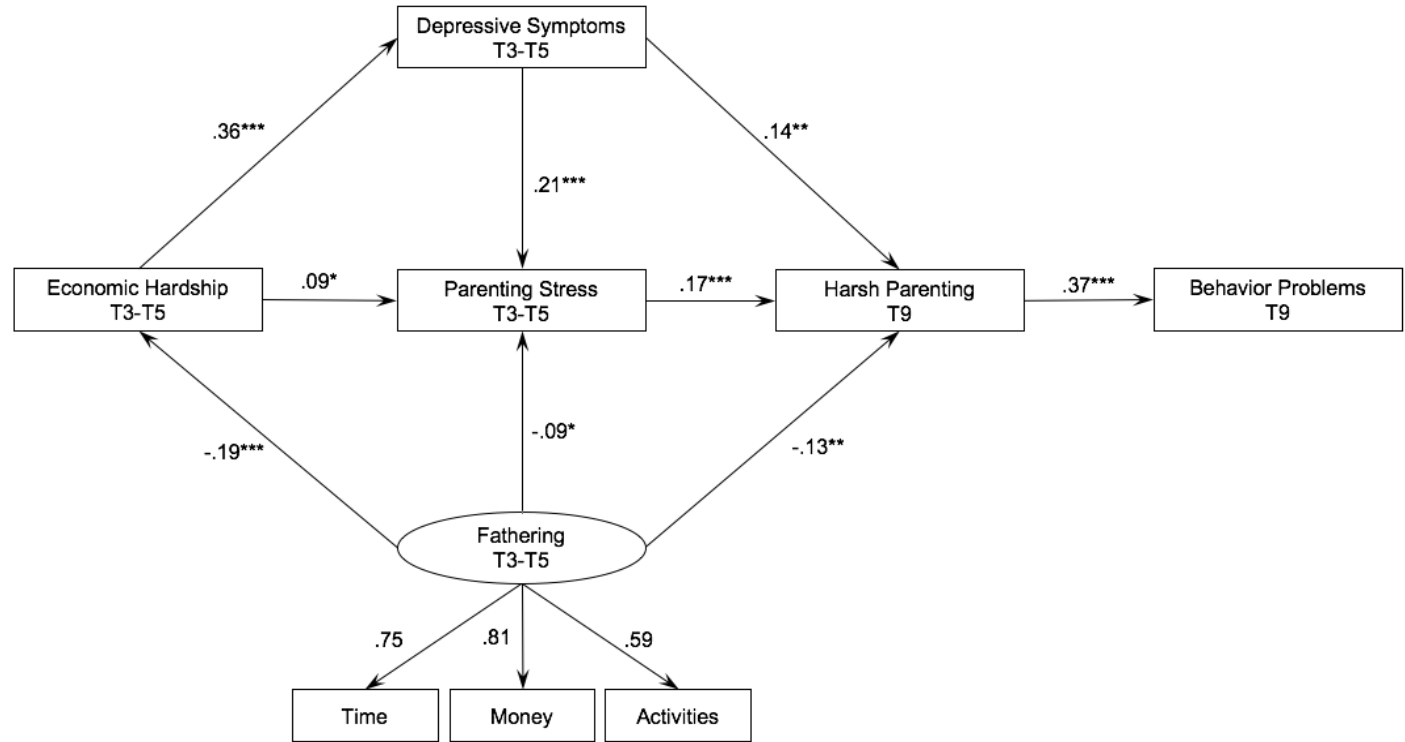
- Time with child – Frequency of visitation per month
- Money for child – Bought clothes, toys, food, medicine
- Activities with child – Sang songs, read books, told stories

Harsh Parenting (Time 9) – 14 questions adapted from the Parent Child Conflict Tactics Scale asking about shaking, hitting, yelling, spanking, swearing, explained why something was wrong, etc.

Behavior Problems (Time 9) – 111- item Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL/6-18) that asked about the frequency of behavior problems such as problems concentrating, bullying, meanness, disobedience, etc.

RESULTS

FINAL MODEL

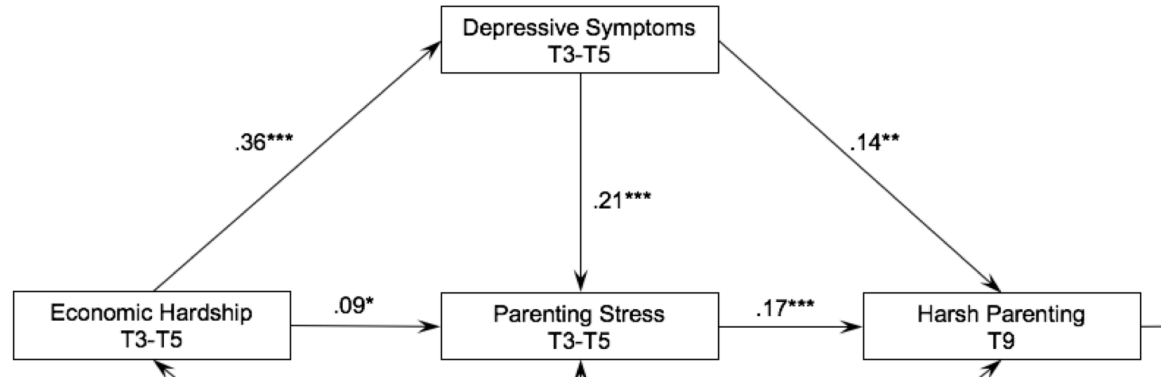


Bayesian Posterior Predictive Checking using Chi-Square Posterior Predictive P-Value = .182 [CI = -14.854, 36.945], Deviance (DIC) = 14511.406, Estimated Number of Parameters (pD) = 27.972, Bayesian (BIC) = 14640.294; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$ (One-Tailed).

RESULTS

KEY PATHWAYS

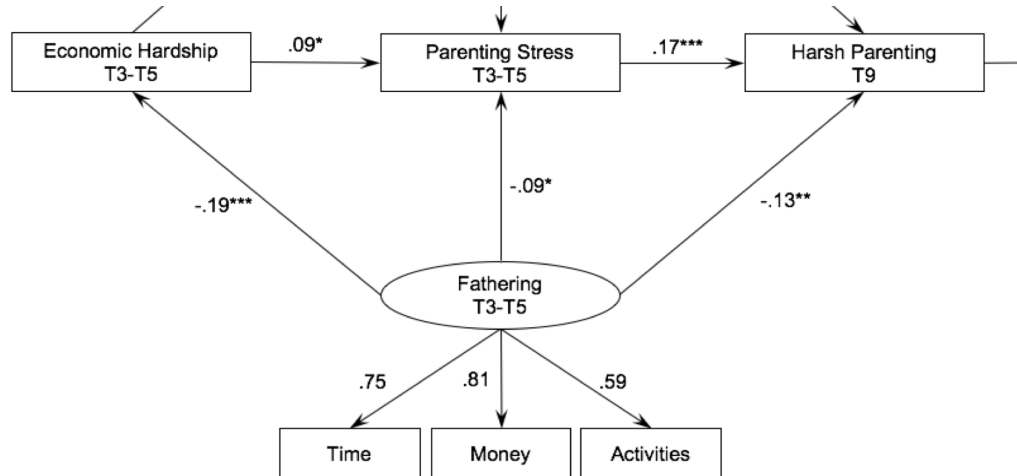
- *Economic hardship* is associated with higher *depression* and *parenting stress*, which are, in turn, associated with more *harsh parenting*.



RESULTS

KEY PATHWAYS

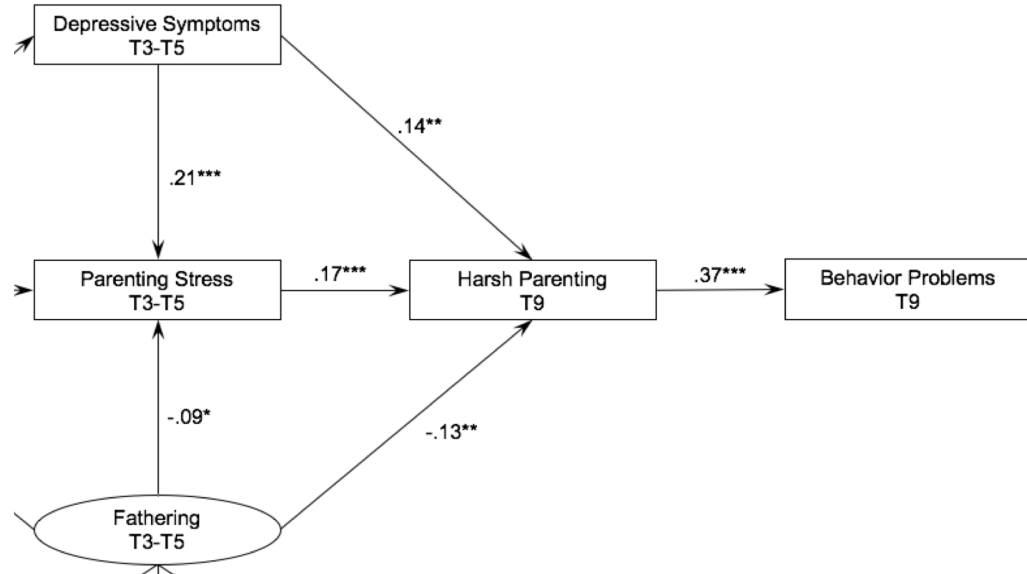
- *Father involvement* is related to reduced *economic hardship* and *stress*, and concurrently, reduced *harsh parenting*.



RESULTS

KEY PATHWAYS

- *Harsh parenting* exhibited the positive relationship to *behavior problems*.



RESULTS

DECOMPOSITION of DIRECT and INDIRECT EFFECTS

Outcome	Predictor	Direct	Indirect	Total
Behavior Problems (T9)	Harsh parenting (T9)	.36***		.36***
	Father involvement (T3-T5)		-.06**	-.06**
	Parenting stress (T3-T5)		.06***	.06***
	Depressive symptoms (T3-T5)		.09***	.09***
	Economic hardship (T3-T5)		.04***	.04***
Harsh parenting (T9)	Father involvement (T3-T5)	-.12**	-.03**	-.15**
	Parenting stress (T3-T5)	.17***		.17***
	Depressive symptoms (T3-T5)	.15***	.04**	.18***
	Economic hardship (T3-T5)		.08***	.08***

DISCUSSION

IMPLICATIONS

- Prevention and intervention approaches should focus on:
 - Honing *relationship* and *co-parenting skills* between unmarried nonresident black biological fathers and the mothers of their children early on when the couple may still be involved in a romantic relationship should be a high priority.
 - Often gate-keeping mothers deny fathers access to children after the romantic relationship ends. Most of these couples are no longer in a romantic relationship by the time the child is 5 years old.
 - Thus, prevention and intervention efforts might address the discordant relationships that are cited as a significant barrier to sustained involvement by unmarried and nonresident black biological fathers with their children over the preschool years.

Thank You