

Family Stressors and Korean Children's Behavior Problems:

The Roles of Couple Conflict and Maternal Mental Health and Warm Parenting

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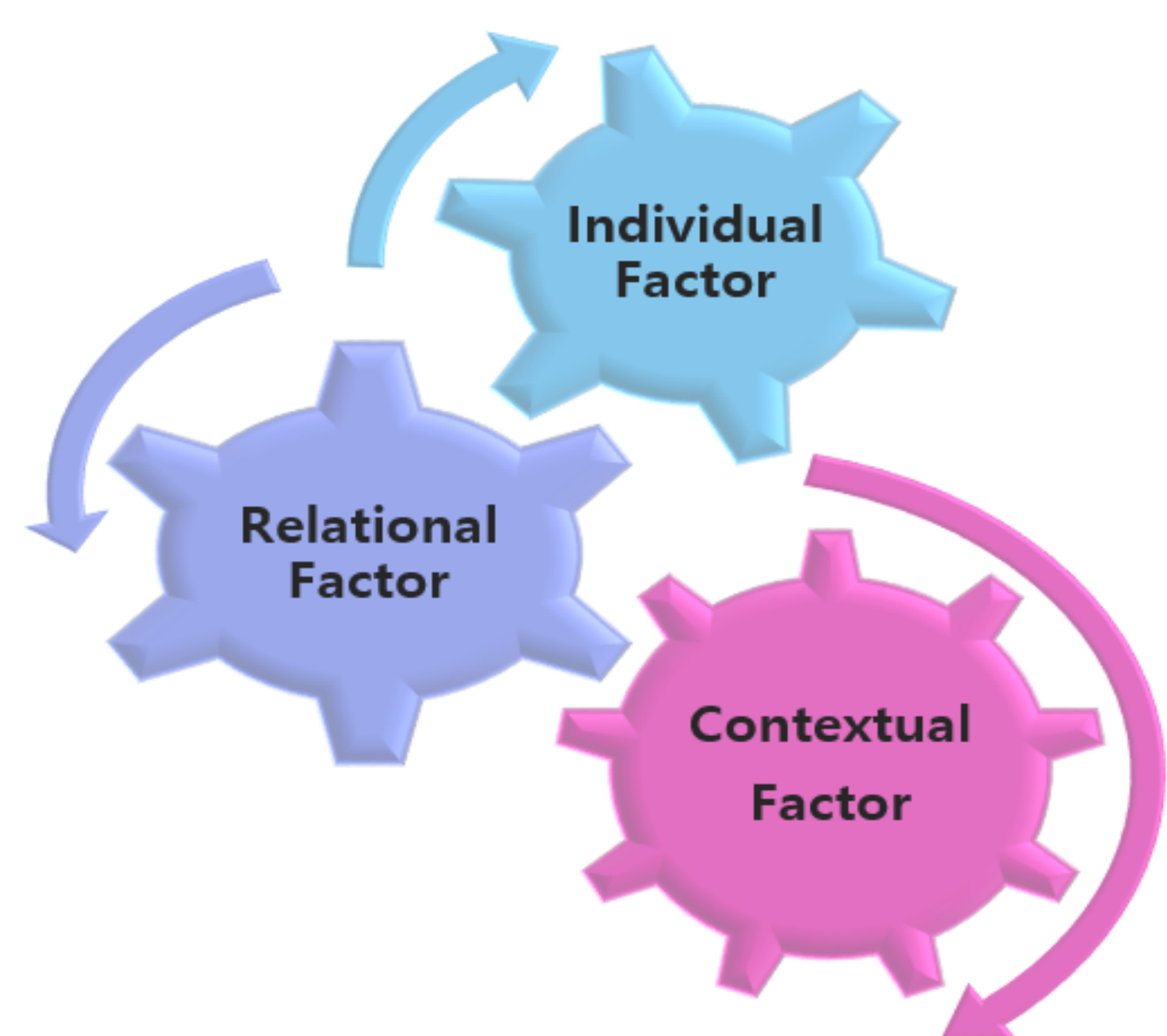
INTRODUCTION

- Family systems theory: Family subsystems such as the couple and parent-child subsystems influence one another (White & Klein, 2008).
- Family stressors directly have a negative impact on parents' mental health and increase couple conflict (McLoyd, 2011).
- Mothers' negative life experience deteriorate the quality of mother-child relationship which in turn increases children's behavioral problems (Nelson et al., 2009).
- Mother's warmth is positively related to children's adjustment and negatively related to children's externalizing problems (Sebre et al., 2015).

STUDY AIMS

- This study investigated whether the effects of family stressors (contextual), mothers' psychological distress (individual), and marital conflict (relational) on children's externalizing problems operated through mothers' warm parenting.

Predictors of Parenting Behaviors (Doherty, Kouneski, & Erickson, 1998)



Multi-dimensional Model of Parenting Determinants

METHODS

- **Data:** Three waves of longitudinal data drawn from the Panel Study on Korean Children (PSKC)
- **Sample:** 1,687 families (mothers *Age* = 33.79; children *Age* = 4.25, 51% males)
- **Measures**

Predictor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological Distress - The Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K6; Kessler et al., 2002) and the Pearlin Self-Efficacy Scale (Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan, & Mullan, 1981) • Couple Conflict - The Relationship Dynamics Scale (Markman, Stanley, & Blumberg, 2001) • Negative Family Life Events - Normative and non-normative stressful family life events within the last 12 months (McCubbin, Patterson, & Wilson, 1982).
Mediator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm Parenting Behaviors - The Korean parenting style scale (Cho et al., 1999)
Outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Externalizing Behavior Problems - The Korean version of the Child Behavior Checklist for ages 1.5-5 (K-CBCL 1.5-5; Oh & Kim, 2009)

RESULTS

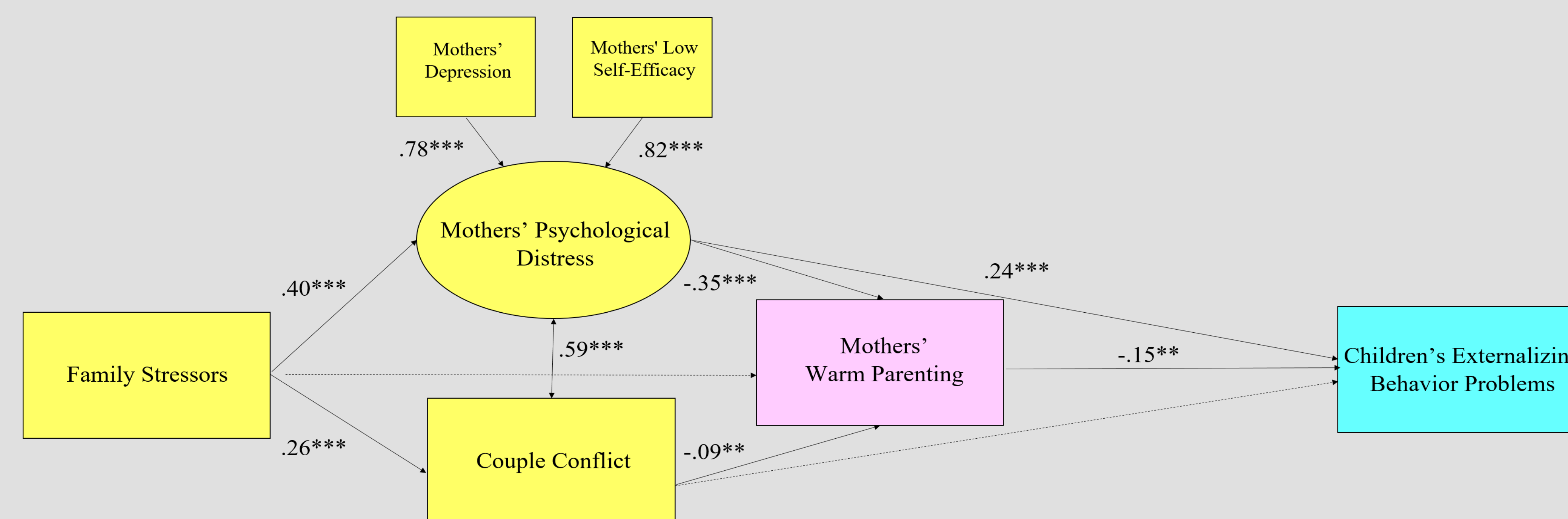


Figure 1. Path analysis model representing the indirect effects of mothers' warm parenting behaviors between family stressors as predictors, and resulting children's externalizing behavior problems. Note. *N* = 1,687. Controlling for child gender, family income, mothers' employment, and mothers' education. Model fit indices of Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) : CFI = 1.00; TLI = .98; RMSEA = .03; SRMR = .01. Dotted lines are non-significant pathways. ** *p* < .05. *** *p* < .001.

○ Direct Effects

- Negative family life events → psychological distress and couple conflict
- Psychological distress and couple conflict → less warm parenting
- Psychological distress, couple conflict, and less warm parenting → externalizing problems

○ Indirect Effects

- Negative family life events → psychological distress → less warm parenting → externalizing problems
- Negative family life events → couple conflict → less warm parenting → externalizing problems
- Psychological distress → less warm parenting → externalizing problems
- Couple conflict → less warm parenting → externalizing problems

CONCLUSIONS

- Consistent with family systems theory, family stressors deteriorated the quality of mother-child relationships.
- Environmental factors contributed to children's behavior through family dynamics such as couple relationship and mother-child interactions.
- Findings pointed out the significance of considering the individual, relational, and contextual factors through which mothers' parenting contributes to children's outcomes.
- Greater understanding of mothers' psychological health and the marital relationships within the family context, may further our understanding and inform clinicians regarding how to provide useful services to prevent and treat children's behavior problems.

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