



Longitudinal Relations between Maternal Parenting Behaviors and Preadolescent Children's Ego-Resiliency: the Mediating Role of Self-Esteem

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Introduction

- Ego-resiliency is the capacity to adapt to changing environments, which is associated with many positive developmental outcomes such as better academic achievement, peer relationships, and well-being throughout one's life (Block & Kremen, 1996; Masten, 2018)
- Among various factors contributing to ego-resiliency, parenting plays a central role as it serves as a resource for future relationships and strategies to adapt to adverse experiences and challenges (Masten, 2001; 2018; Boss et al., 2017)
- Although previous studies have found the link between maternal parenting and children's resiliency (Sroufe et al., 2005), the psychological mechanism underlying this connection is largely unknown
- Thus, this study examines the contributions of two core dimensions of parenting, control and support (Malti et al., 2019), to early childhood ego-resiliency in preadolescence, and the role of child self-esteem as a mediating mechanism

Method

Participants

- 1,281 Korean children (aged 4 to 11 years old; 49.6% girls) and their mothers who participated in the Panel Study on Korean Children (PSKC)

Measures

Maternal Parenting Behaviors

- Mothers completed a questionnaire with warmth and control subscales at age 4 (Cho et al., 1999; 12 items; $\alpha=.78$)

Children's Self-Esteem

- Children's self-esteem was measured at age 7 using the revised Rosenberg's Self-Esteem Scale (Rosenberg, 1965; 5 items; $\alpha=.77$)

Children's Ego-Resiliency

- Children completed the Ego-Resiliency Scale at age 11 (Block & Kremen, 1996; 14 items; $\alpha=.85$)

Note: All scales have been translated and validated to be used in Korea

Analysis

- Child's gender was included as a control variable in the main analysis
- Data analysis was performed using SPSS PROCESS macro, and the significance of indirect effects of the mediation model was tested through 5,000 bootstrapping

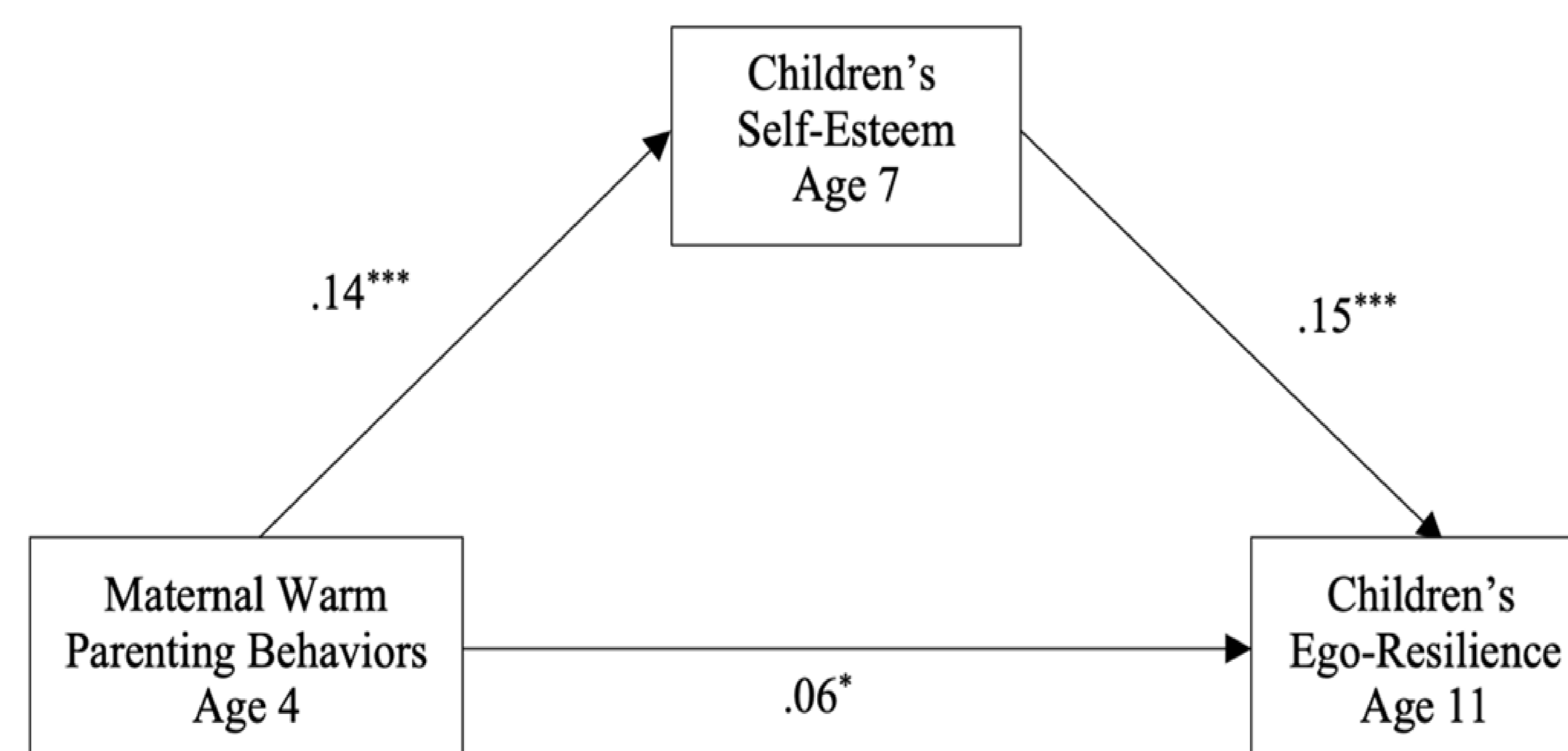
Results

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

	1	2	3	4
1. Gender	—			
2. Maternal Control	-.02	—		
3. Maternal Warmth	.04	.13***	—	
4. Children's Self-Esteem	.12***	.03	.14***	—
5. Children's Ego-Resiliency	-.03	.04	.08**	.16***
M (SD)	3.66 (.55)	3.37 (.52)	3.45 (.49)	3.01 (.42)

Note. Scale ranges: Maternal control/ warmth parenting (1–5), Children's self-esteem (1–4), Children's ego-resiliency (1–4), and gender (1 = boys, 2 = girls). ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Figure 1. Mediation Model Predicting Children's Ego-Resiliency From Maternal Warmth Through Children's Self-Esteem, Controlling for Child Gender



Note. Standardized coefficients depicted * $p < .05$, *** $p < .001$.

Results

- The mediation analysis revealed that the indirect path from mothers' control parenting to children's ego-resiliency through children's self-esteem was not significant, $B=.004$, 95% CI [- .004, .012]
- However, the indirect effect of maternal warmth on children's higher ego-resiliency through children's higher self-esteem was significant, $B=.02$, 95% CI [.01, .03]
- Maternal warmth positively predicted children's self-esteem, $\beta=.14$, $p<.001$, which, then predicted higher ego-resiliency in preadolescence, $\beta=.15$, $p<.001$

Discussion

The unique importance of maternal warmth for child self-esteem and ego resilience

- Children who perceive their parents are supportive and fulfilling are more likely to report themselves as positive and capable, and show less maladaptive behaviors later (Rohner & Cournoyer, 2005; Plunkett et al., 2007); however, harsh or controlling parenting is related to impaired self-esteem and independent coping skills (Power, 2004)
- Positive effect of maternal warmth might be particularly pronounced in early childhood, which has implication for early intervention for children's positive development
- Self-esteem in middle childhood as a potential psychological mechanism for developing ego-resiliency in preadolescence
- Children with high self-esteem tend to be more positive when internalizing subjective evaluations of themselves (Dumont & Provost, 1999)
- Children with high self-esteem may perceive life changes as less stressful and show positive adjustment (Chemers et al., 2001)

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