



Matched and Mismatched Parental Support for Young Adolescents Experiencing Peer Stress

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Introduction

- Parents' best efforts may come up short if their adolescents are unreceptive to their support. Adolescents' reception of parental support refers to their interest in and attention to supportive messages.
- Theoretical frameworks suggest that adolescents should be more receptive to emotional support (i.e., protection) when they want or need comfort and more receptive to behavioral advice (i.e., guidance) when they want or need advice.
- The present study examined whether the support domain of the adolescent moderates the associations between the support domain of the parent and adolescent reception of parental support.

Hypotheses

- According to our **matching hypothesis**, parental sensitivity (protection domain) would be more strongly associated with adolescent reception at higher levels of adolescent discomfort and heart rate (protection domain)
- Based on our **mismatching hypothesis**, we did not expect parental sensitivity (protection domain) to predict adolescent reception at higher levels of desire to complete the peer evaluation challenge (guidance domain).
- According to our **matching hypothesis**, parental behavioral advice (guidance domain) would be more strongly associated with adolescent reception at higher levels of desire to complete the peer evaluation challenge (guidance domain)
- Based on our **mismatching hypothesis**, we did not expect parental behavioral advice (guidance domain) to predict adolescent reception at higher levels of subjective discomfort or heart rate (protection domain).

Method

Participants: 80 young adolescents ($M = 12.36$ years, $SD = 1.33$, range = 9.45 – 15.05 years; 55% males, 45% females) and one parent/guardian per adolescent

- 55% Black adolescents, 42.5% White adolescents, and 2.5% adolescents of other races or ethnicities

Procedure: During the lab protocol adolescents were told that the conversation would be viewed by peer judges, who were fictitious, and the peer judges would decide how well they performed compared to other participants. Adolescents were told that if they were not chosen as the best performer, they would have the chance to speak directly to the peer judges. They were asked to have a 3-minute conversation with their parents about what they should do if they were not selected by the peer judges.

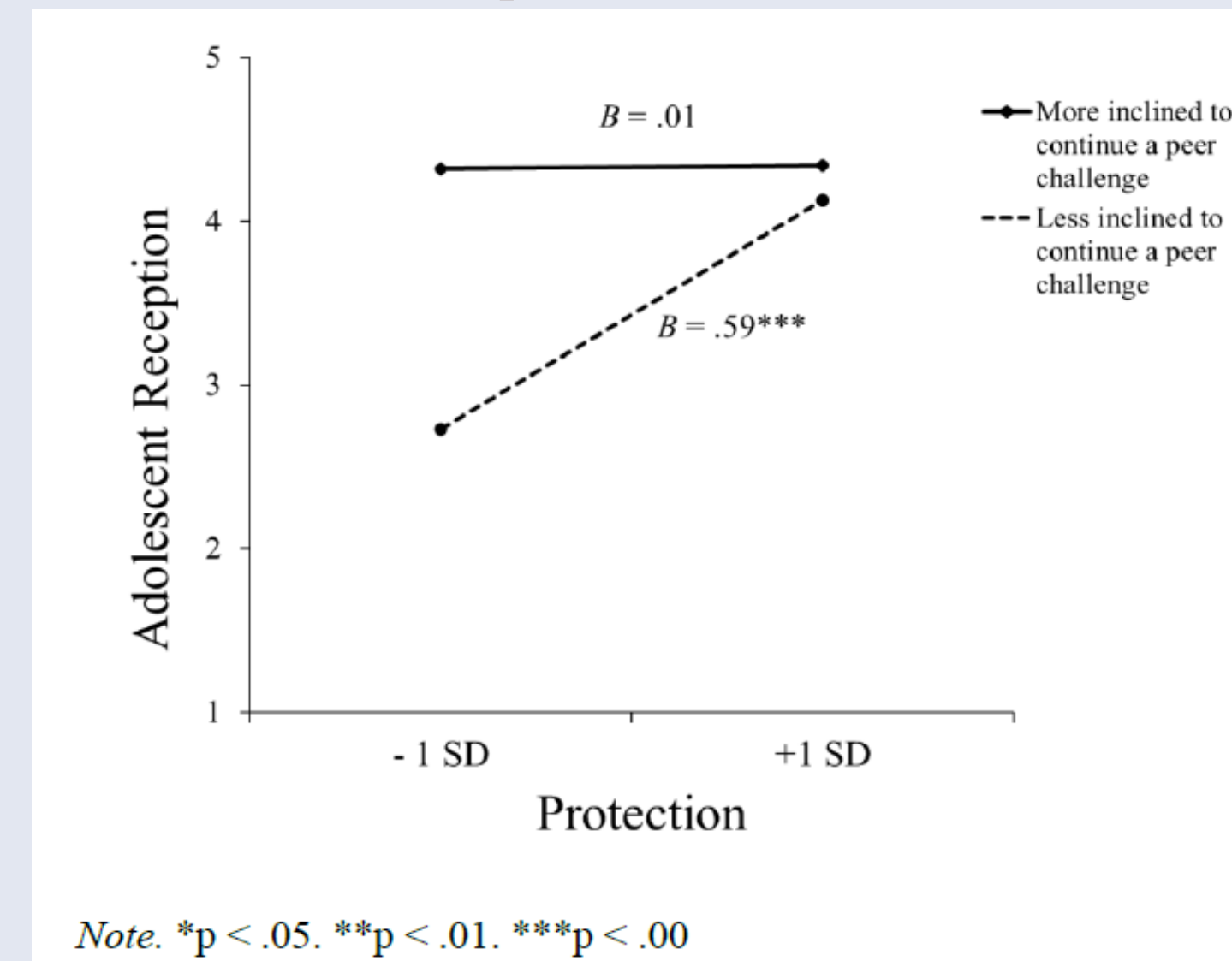
Measurements

- Parental sensitivity** (parental protection domain): the parent's attunement to the adolescent's feelings, thoughts, and behavioral plan as well as positive affect
- Parental prosocial behavioral advice** (parental guidance domain): prosocial or friendly advice that the parent provided about reconnecting with the peer judges that would likely promote a favorable reaction from the judges
- Adolescent discomfort** (adolescent protection domain): subjective discomfort and heart rate at the beginning of the parent-adolescent discussion
- Adolescent desire to complete the peer evaluation challenge** (adolescent guidance domain): desire to reconnect with the peer judges if they were not selected as one of the best performers
- Adolescent reception of support**: measured with an observational code of adolescent attentiveness and responsiveness to the parent during the parent-adolescent discussion

Results

1. Parental sensitivity, adolescent subjective discomfort, and adolescent desire to continue the peer challenge, and their interactions were entered as predictors of adolescent reception (see Table 1).

- The interaction between parental sensitivity and desire to continue the peer challenge was associated with reception



2. Parental sensitivity, adolescent heart rate, and adolescent desire to continue the peer challenge, and their interactions were entered as predictors of adolescent reception.

Table 1

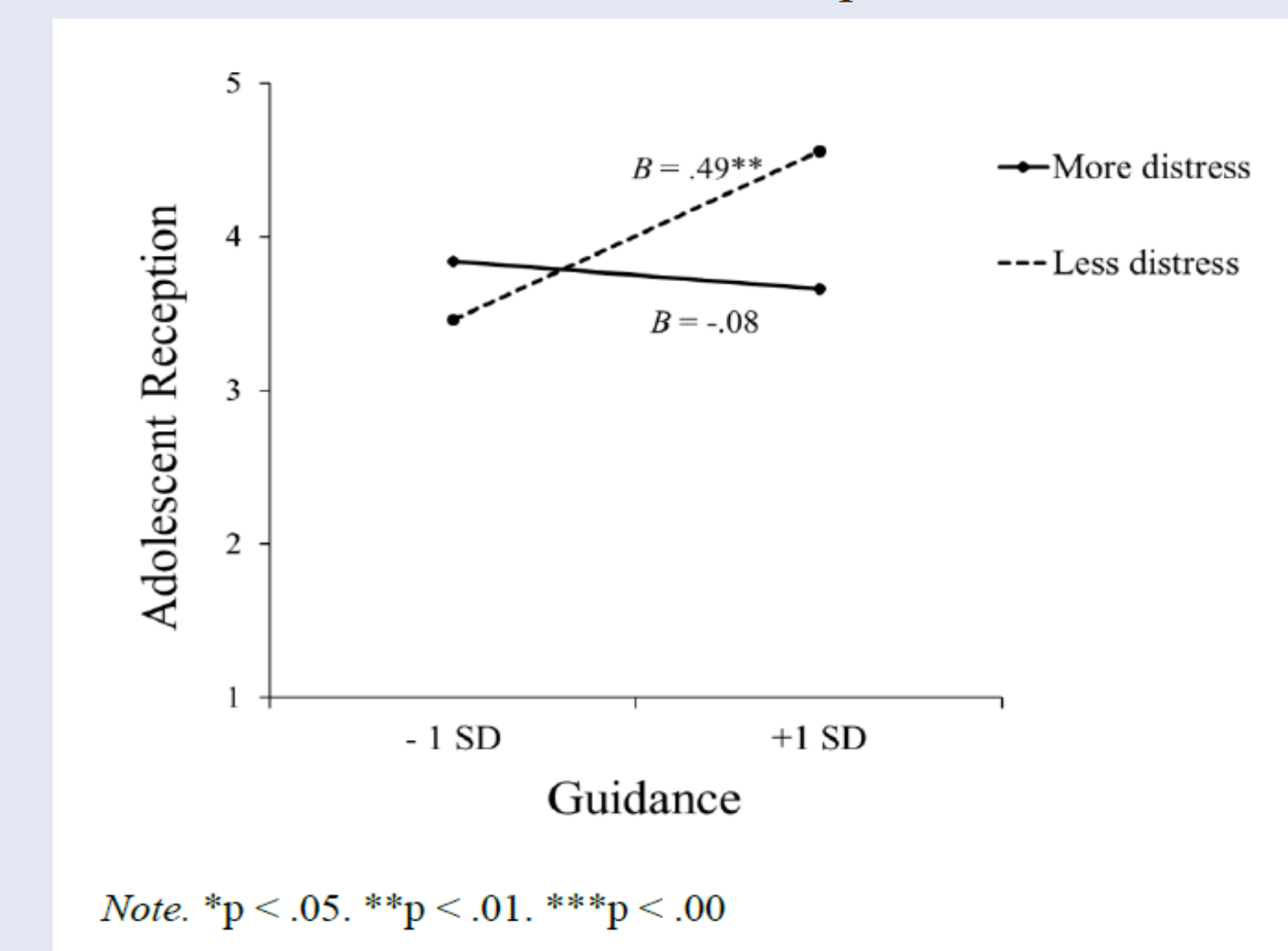
Adolescent Heartrate and Desire to Continue the Peer Challenge as Moderators of the Association Between Parental Sensitivity and Adolescent Receptivity

Predictors	Adolescent Receptivity		
	B (SE)	β	R^2
Parental sensitivity	.28 (.10)*	.27*	.33
Heartrate	.02 (.01)	.17	
Desire to continue challenge	.37 (.09)**	.40**	
Sensitivity x Heartrate	.01 (.01)	.06	
Sensitivity x Desire to continue	-.20 (.08)*	-.25*	

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$

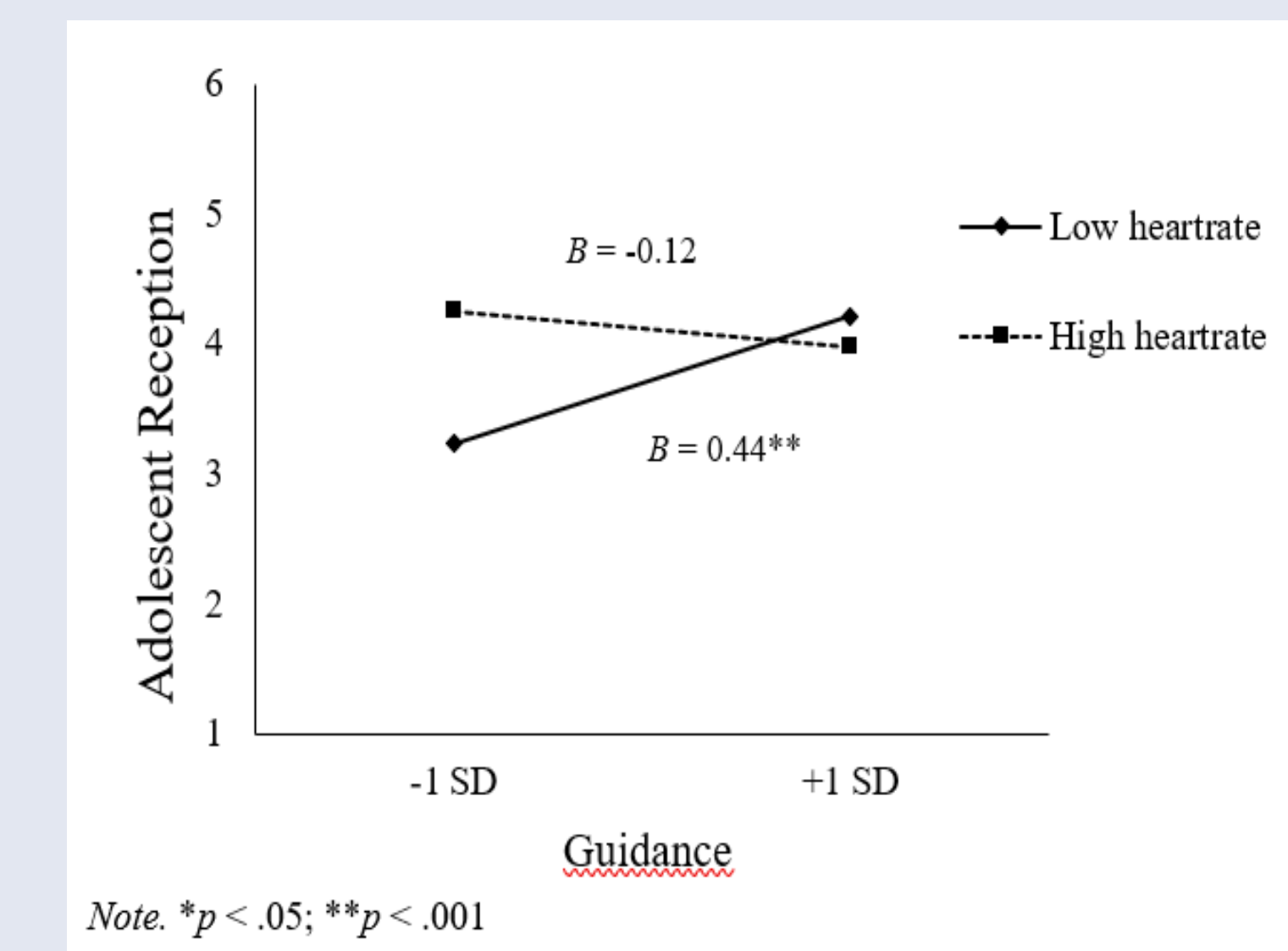
3. Parental prosocial advice, adolescent subjective discomfort, adolescent desire to continue the peer challenge, and their interactions were entered as predictors of adolescent reception.

- The interaction between parental prosocial advice and adolescent subjective discomfort was associated with adolescent reception.



4. Parental prosocial advice, adolescent heart rate, adolescent desire to continue the peer challenge, and their interactions were entered as predictors of adolescent reception.

- The interaction between parental prosocial advice and adolescent heart rate was associated with adolescent reception.



Discussion

- Parental protection and adolescent reception were positively associated when adolescents were not in the guidance domain (i.e., less inclined to continue the peer challenge). Similarly, parental guidance and adolescent reception were positively associated when adolescents were not in the protection domain (i.e., lower subjective distress or heart rate).
 - When parent and adolescent domains were not mismatched, adolescents were more receptive to higher-quality parental protection (i.e., sensitivity) and parental guidance (i.e., behavioral advice).
- Consistent with mismatching hypotheses, parental protection was not related to adolescent reception when adolescents were in the guidance domain (i.e., more inclined to continue the peer challenge). Similarly, parental guidance was not related to adolescent reception when adolescents were in the protection domain (i.e., higher subjective distress or heart rate).
 - Adolescents may be particularly unreceptive to mismatched support given their heightened need for autonomy and resistance to parental involvement in the peer domain.
- Matching hypotheses were not supported.
 - Lack of support for matching hypotheses may be related to the measurement of adolescent protection and guidance domains. Future research should include measures of adolescent desire for parental protection and adolescent desire for parental guidance.