

Indirect Association of Parent Depression With Child Emotion Lability Through Child Cognitive Flexibility



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BACKGROUND

- Parent depression → children’s emotional dysregulation^{1,2}
- Parental depression → development of children’s pre-frontal cortex³
- Cognitive flexibility —improve emotion regulation through reappraisal^{4,5}

AIM

To test the indirect association of parent depression with child emotion lability through child cognitive flexibility.

METHODS

Recruitment

- Cross-sectional; online (2020-2021)
- 315 families (178 USA, 105 UK, 8 Asia)
- 219 participants were recruited through Prolific. Rest were recruited through community outreach.

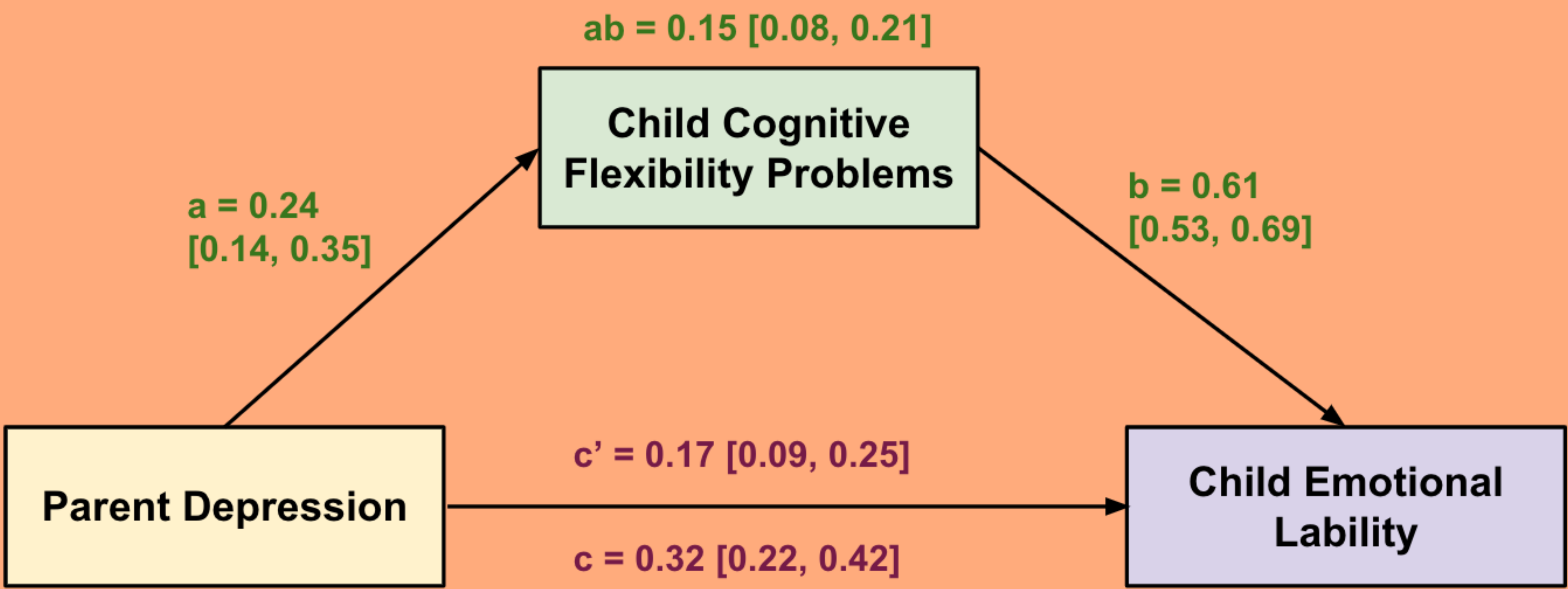
Data Collection

- **Parent Depression: Patient Health Questionnaire - 9 (PHQ-9).**⁶ 9 items, 0 (never) – 3 (most times). Higher scores—higher depressive symptoms.
- **Child Cognitive Flexibility: Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function—Preschool Version (BRIEF-P).**⁷ 63 items, 1 (never) – 3 (often). Higher scores—lower EF.
- **Child Emotion Lability: Emotion Regulation Checklist (ERC).**⁸ 24 items, 0 (never) – 3 (always). Lability subscale – 15 items. Higher scores—more emotion lability/negativity.

Analysis

- Simple mediation — PROCESS⁹ (R)
- 10000 bootstraps
- Covariates: parent age, child age

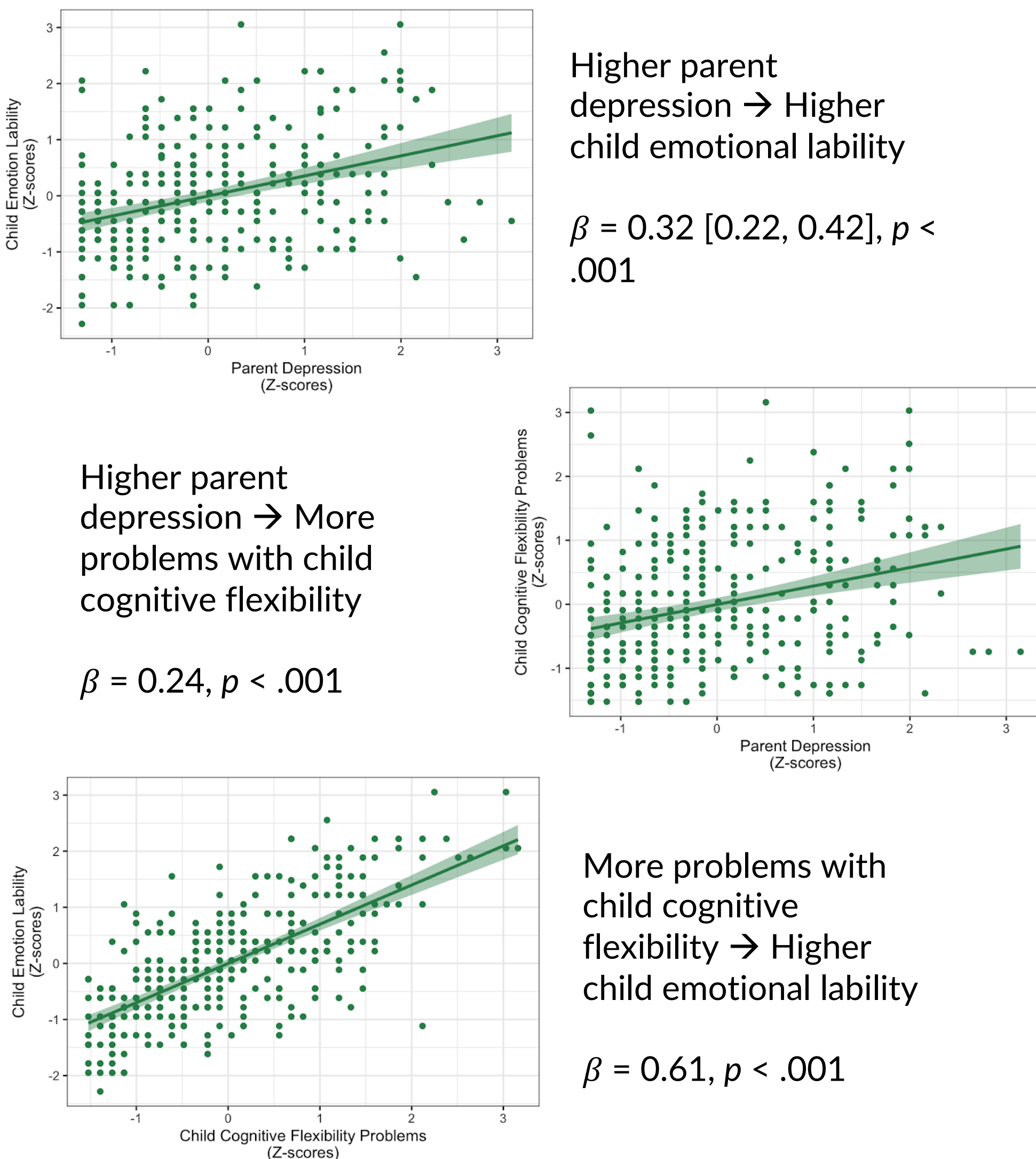
Parent depression is indirectly associated with child emotion lability through child cognitive flexibility.



	Parent	Child
Income (%)	<10k = 4% 10k-30k = 33% 30k-50k = 21% 50k-70k = 17% 70k-100k = 13% 100k-120k = 5% 120k-150k = 3% 140k-160k = 2% >160k = 2%	
Marital Status (%)	Married = 55% Unmarried = 43%	
Gender (%)	She/her =70% He/him = 30% They/them = 0.3%	She/her = 42% He/him = 57% They/them = 1%
Age (M; SD [range])	32.4; 5.8 [20, 51]	3.5; 1.0 [2, 5.5]
Race (%)	Asian = 3% American Indian/Alaskan Native = 2% Black = 17% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander = 1% Other = 1% White = 77%	Asian = 3% American Indian/Alaskan Native = 2% Black = 18% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander = 0.3% Other = 2% White = 74%

RESULTS

- Child cognitive flexibility problems partially mediate the association between parental depression and child emotional lability.
- Standardizes estimates are presented for all models.



DISCUSSION

- Emotional lability and cognitive flexibility – both part of self-regulation⁹
- Parent depression may affect broader self-regulation in children

LIMITATIONS & FUTURE DIRECTION

- Cross-sectional design
- All variables parent reported
 - Future research – task-based measures of child EF and emotional lability
- Data collection spanned COVID-19 pandemic - low generalizability

