

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)
- 96 participants: online, non-paid
- 219 participants: Prolific, paid

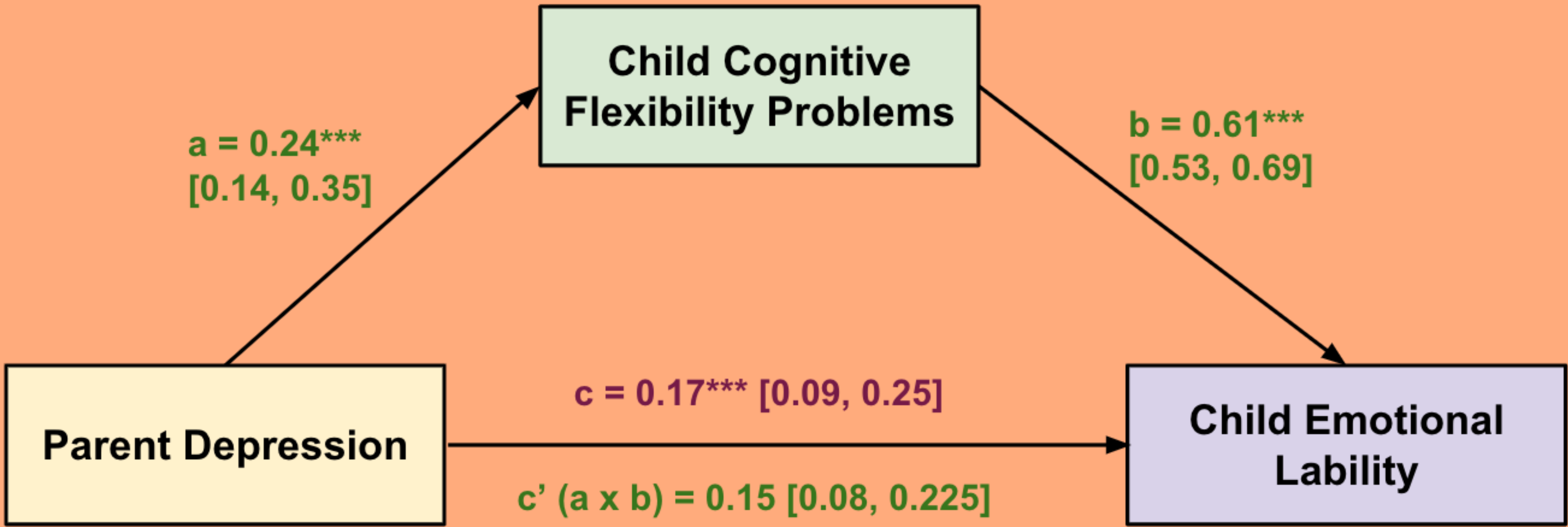
Data Collection

- **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. Last 11 items not administered due to software issues. Flexibility subscale ranges 20-60, 20 items. All items administered.
- **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)
- 5000 bootstraps
- Covariates: parent age, child age

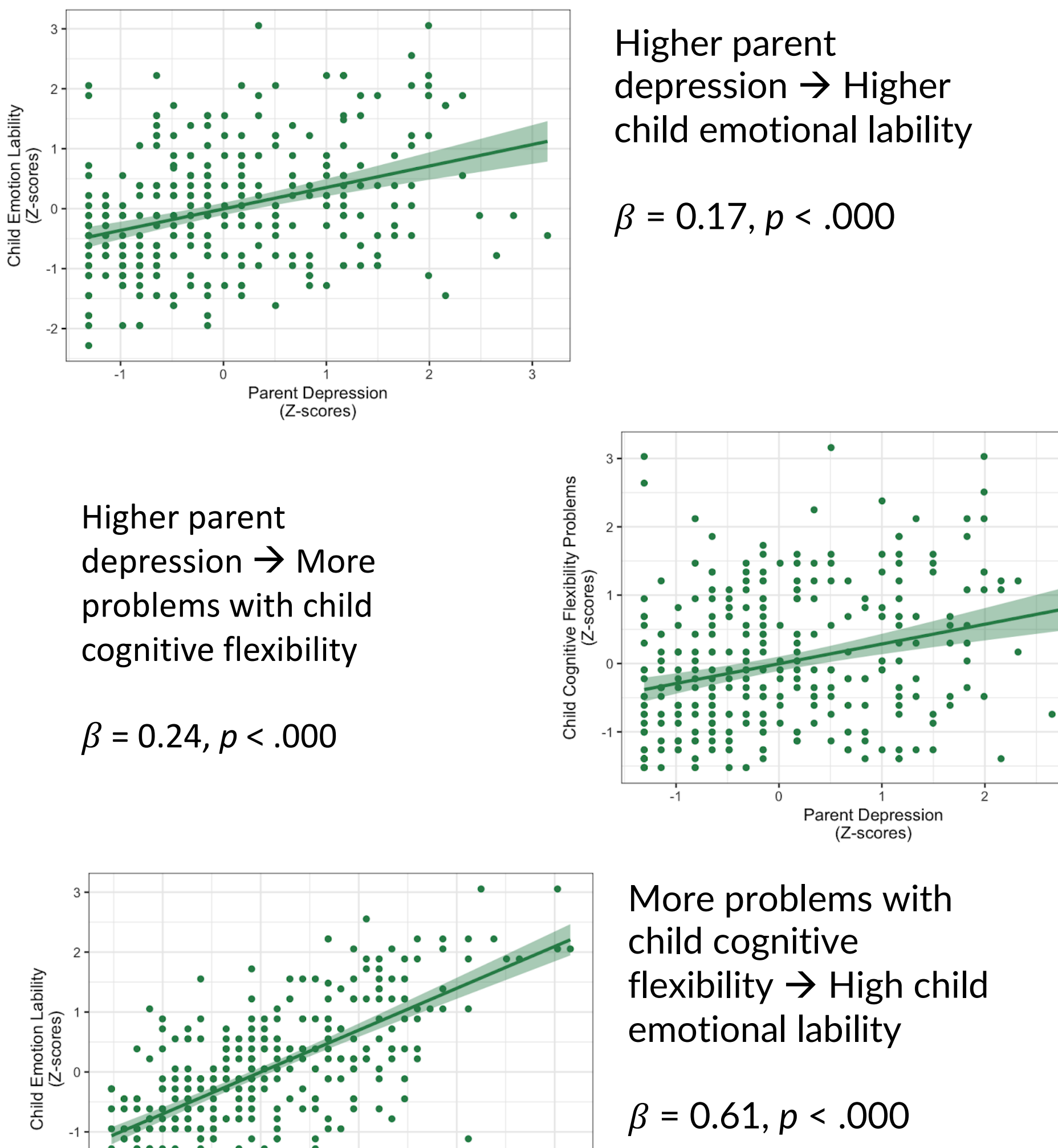
Parent depression indirectly associated with child emotion lability through child cognitive flexibility.



	Parent	Child
Income (n)	<10k = 12 10k-30k = 104 30k-50k = 67 50k-70k = 52 70k-100k = 41 100k-120k = 17 120k-150k = 10 140k-160k = 7 >160k = 5	
Marital Status (n)	Married = 173 Unmarried = 142	
Gender (n)	She/her/hers = 220 He/him/his = 94 They/them/their = 1	She/her/hers = 132 He/him/his = 179 They/them/their = 4
Age (M; SD [range])	32.41; 5.8 [20, 51]	3.49; 0.97 [2, 5.5]
Race (n)	Asian = 8 American Indian/Alaskan Native = 5 Black = 54 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander = 2 Other = 4 White = 242	Asian = 10 American Indian/Alaskan Native = 7 Black = 57 Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander = 1 Other = 7 White = 233

RESULTS

- Child cognitive flexibility problems partially mediate the association between parental depression and child emotional lability.



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

