

Ethnic-Racial Affirmation Buffers the Association Between Harsh Parenting and Externalizing Problems Among Black Adolescents

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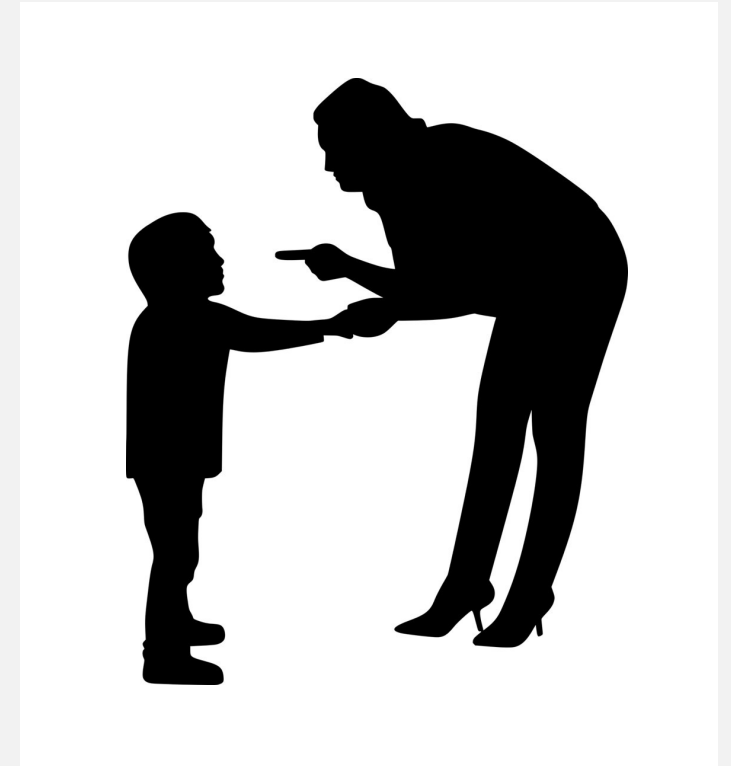
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Harsh Parenting is Associated with Adolescent Externalizing Problems

- Strongly supported by meta-analytic and review evidence¹
- **Harsh parenting:** coercive acts and negative emotional expressions directed toward the child
 - E.g., yelling, threatening, spanking, insulting
- Models poor emotion regulation/conflict resolution, disrupts physiological self-regulatory processes, impairs P-C relationship quality^{1,2,3}



Is Harsh Parenting Always Harmful?



- AAP maintains its stance on harsh/corporal punishment⁴
- Studies frequently identify a main effect
- However, conclusions drawn largely from White, U.S or Western European samples⁵
- Sizable body of literature emphasizes importance of context – both *emotional* and *cultural*
- ***Cultural normativeness perspective***⁶

Does Association between Harsh Parenting on Child Externalizing Problems Differ by Race/Ethnicity?

- Findings mixed
 - Cultural normativeness supported by early studies,^{7,8,9} less supported more recently¹⁰
- Problem: using race/ethnicity as proxy for culture
- More useful: sense of *affirmation* of and *belonging* to one's racial/ethnic identity



Ethnic/Racial Identity

“

A multidimensional construct that reflects beliefs/attitudes individuals have about their ethnic-racial group memberships, as well as processes by which these beliefs and attitudes develop over time¹¹

”

- Umaña-Taylor et al., 2014

ERI in Adolescence

- Adolescence already a period of identity formation
- ERI formation represents crucial developmental milestone during adolescence, with implications for mental and behavioral health outcomes
 - *Promotive*: boosting self-esteem, encouraging healthy cognitive appraisal strategies, coping skills, meaning-making^{12,13,14}
 - *Protective*: associated with less aggression, rule-breaking, school drop-out¹⁵



ERI in Adolescence (cont.)

- Emerging evidence indicates that ERI may be particularly important for adolescents who have experienced maltreatment
 - ERA may moderate association between maltreatment and poor behavioral outcomes^{16,17}
- Studying the role of ERI among adolescents with/at risk for maltreatment and family violence crucial



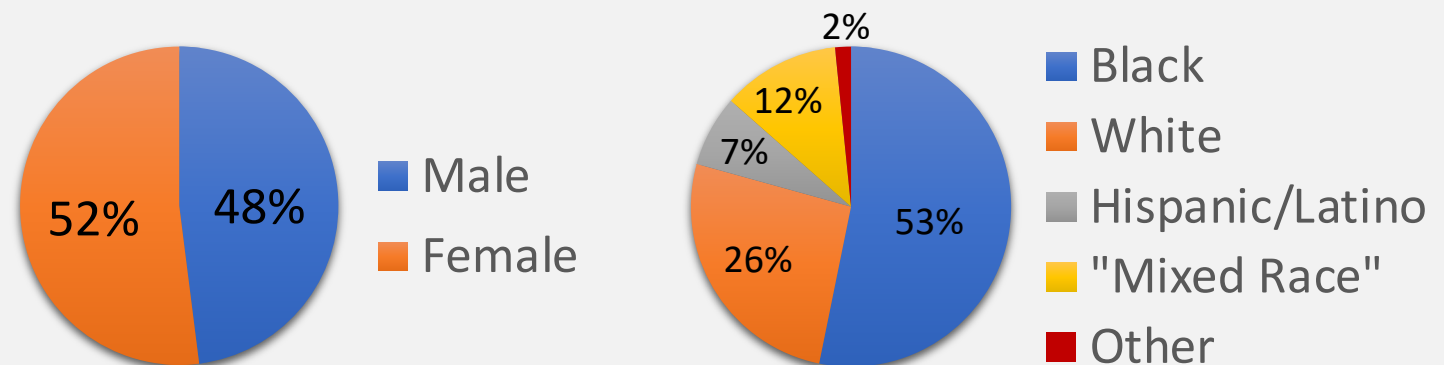
The Present Study

Examined ethnic/racial identity as a moderator in the cross-lagged associations between harsh parenting and adolescent externalizing problems in a sample at high risk for maltreatment and family violence

- Aim 1: Examine cross-lagged associations between harsh parenting and child externalizing problems across ages 12 and 14 years
- Aim 2: Examine ethnic/racial affirmation and belonging as a moderator of these associations in (a) full sample and (b) specific ethnic/racial groups

LONGSCAN Sample and Procedures

- Multi-site consortium of studies on causes/consequences of maltreatment
- Original sample: 1,354 children and their caregivers
 - Baseline to age 14 attrition = 25%;
- Recruited at age 4 due to (1) prior CPS involvement, (2) high-risk for maltreatment, (3) and involvement w/ pediatric clinic serving low-income families
- Interviewed biannually between child age 4 and 18 years
- Present sample **N = 851** P-C dyads who completed age 12 and 14 interviews



Methods

Measures

Family demographics

- Age, sex, race/ethnicity, poverty, caregiver years of education

Adolescents' ethnic/racial affirmation and belonging

- **Multi-Group Ethnic Identity Measure**
- Affirmation and Belonging subscale – sum of 5 items
- Adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.77$)

Caregivers' harsh parenting strategies

- **Conflict Tactics Scale: Parent to Child (CTSPC)**
- "Harsh Parenting" LV created from phys. + psych aggression items
- Factor loadings strong ($\lambda_s = 0.60 - 0.86$) and significant

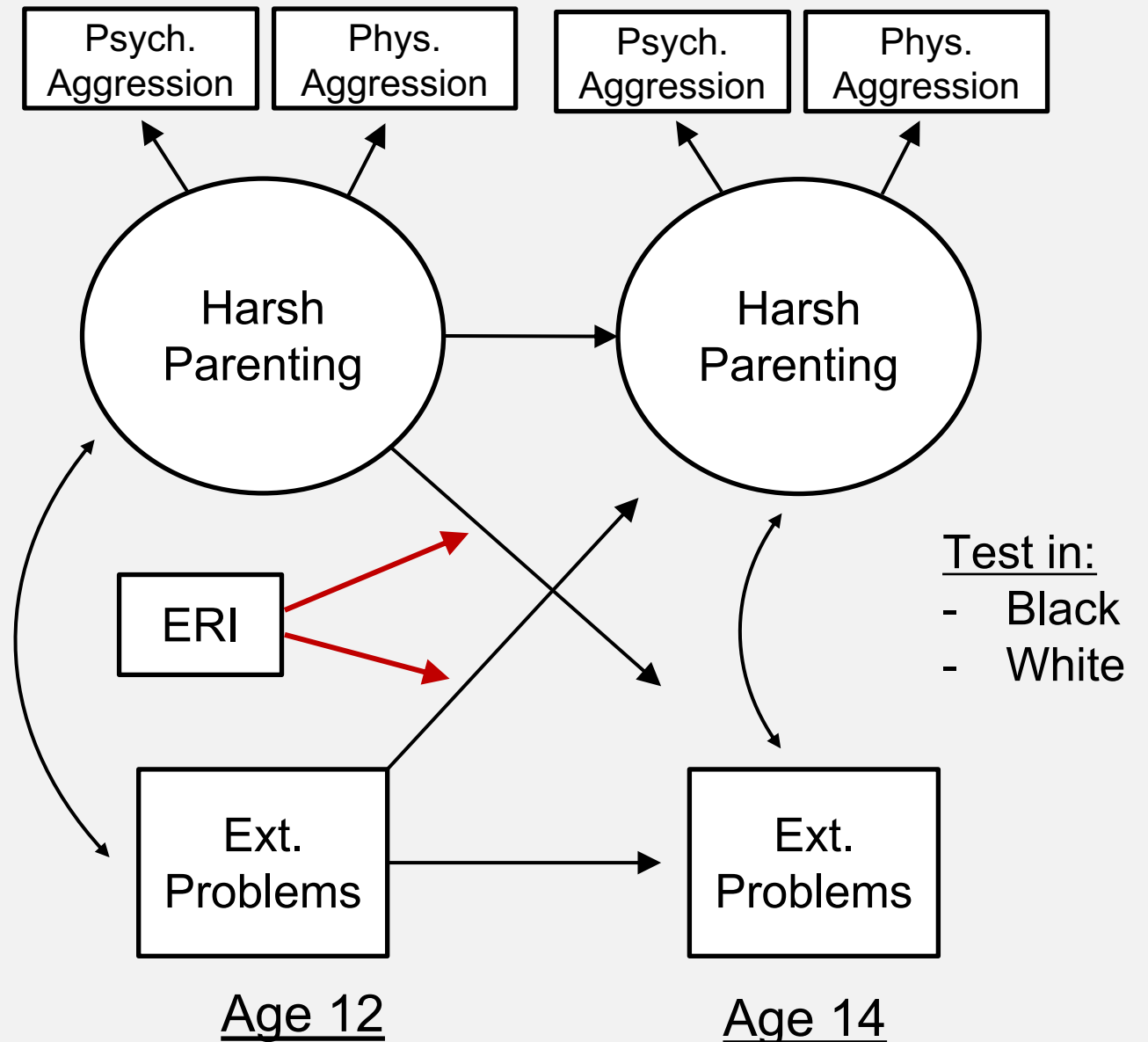
Adolescents' externalizing problems

- **Child Behavior Checklist (CBCL)**
- Externalizing Problems: sum of 35 Aggression and Delinquency items
- Strong internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.92 - 0.93$)

Methods

Analytic Plan

- Tested via SEM framework in Mplus using MLR
- Covariates: sex, CG education, poverty, early maltreatment
- Harsh Parenting LV comprised of two count scores:
 - Psych. Aggression – yell, curse, threaten, insult
 - Physical aggression – shake, hit on bottom (w or w/o object), slap (arm/leg or head/ears)



Methods

RESULTS

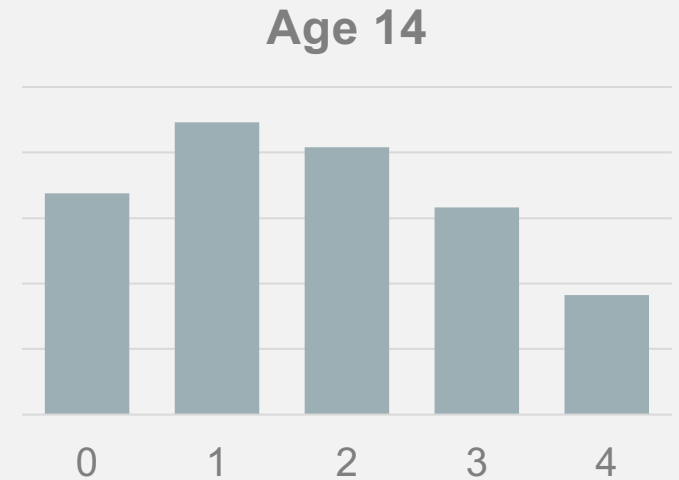
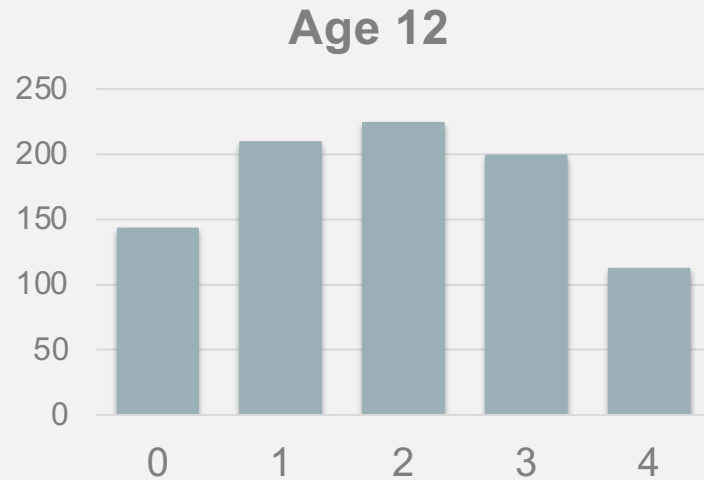
Descriptive Statistics

Psychological Aggression:

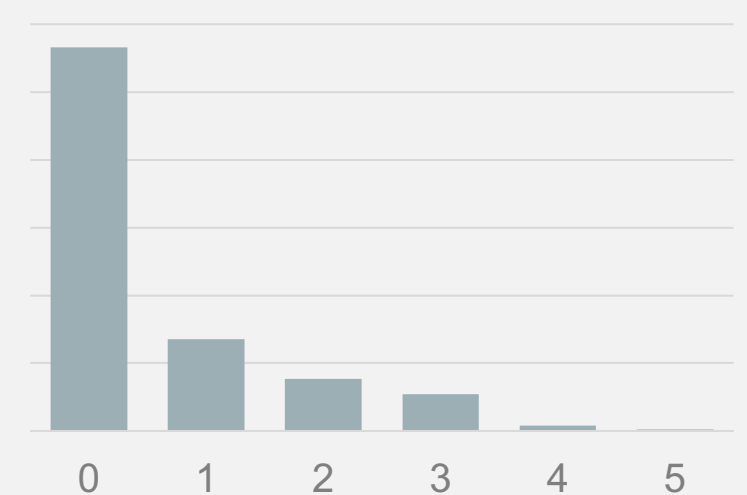
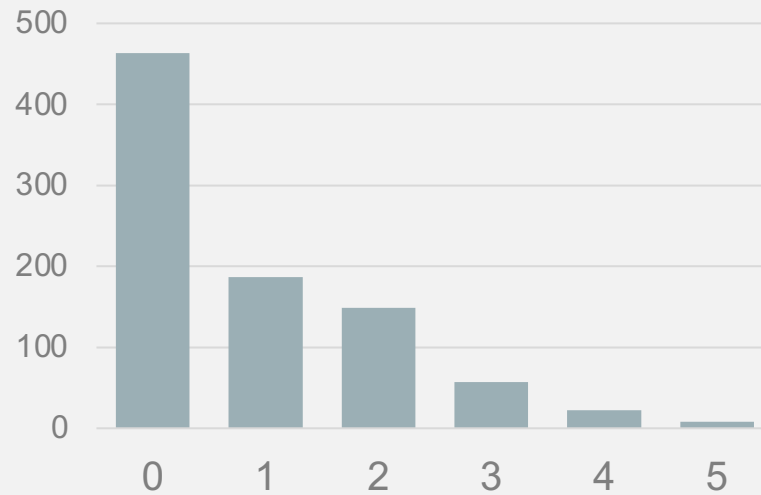
- Yell
- Curse
- Threaten
- Insult

Physical Aggression:

- Shake
- Hit on bottom w/ object
- Hit on bottom w/o object
- Slap on arm or leg
- Slap on head or ears



Number of Past-Year Psychological Aggression Items Endorsed by Caregiver



Number of Past-Year Physical Aggression Items Endorsed by Caregiver

Results

Descriptive Statistics

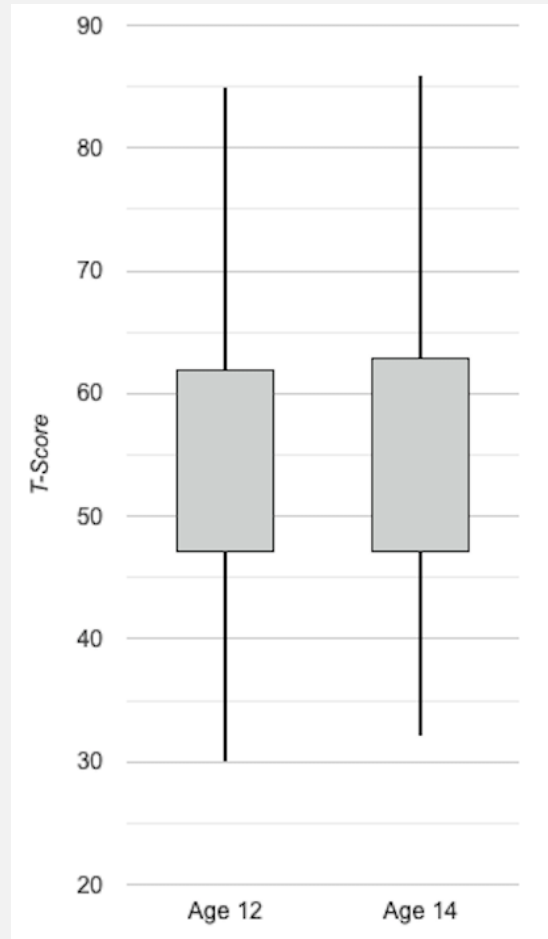
Externalizing Problems:

- Slightly elevated on avg
- No sig. difference by age

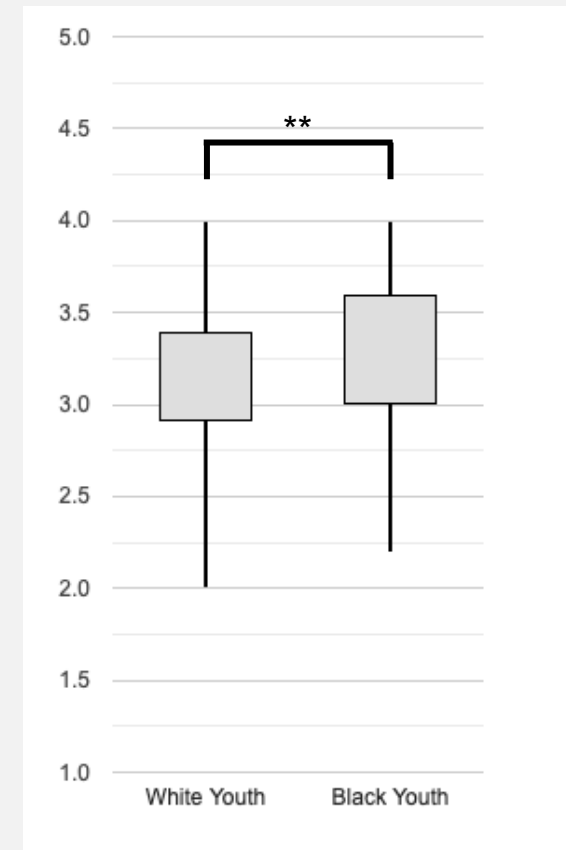
ERI Aff./Belonging:

- Sig. higher among Black compared to White youth

Boxplot of Externalizing Problems T-Scores



Boxplot of ERI Affirmation and Belonging at Age 12

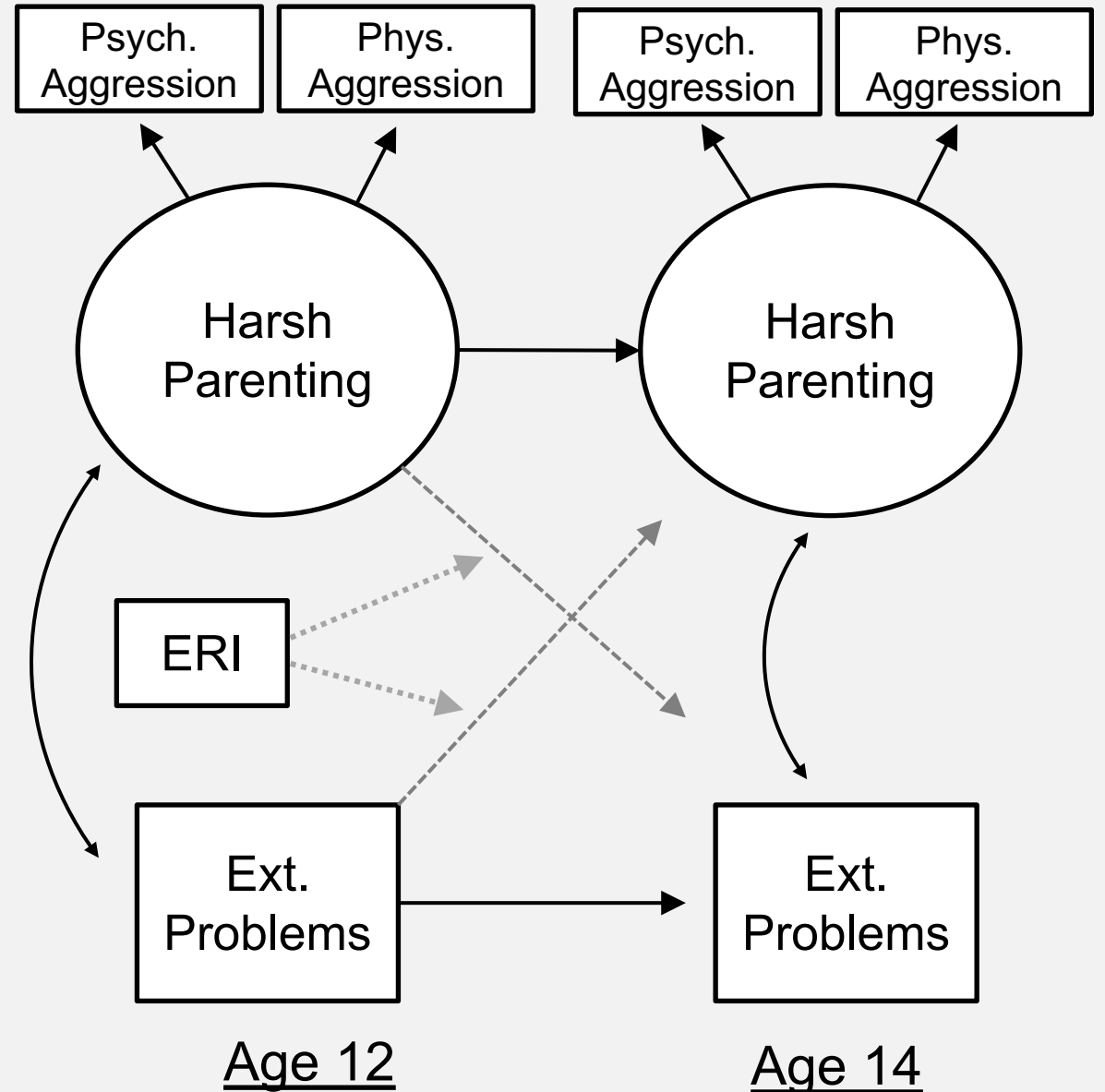


Path Models

In full sample:

- Cross-lagged paths not significant
- No moderation by ERI

Full Sample



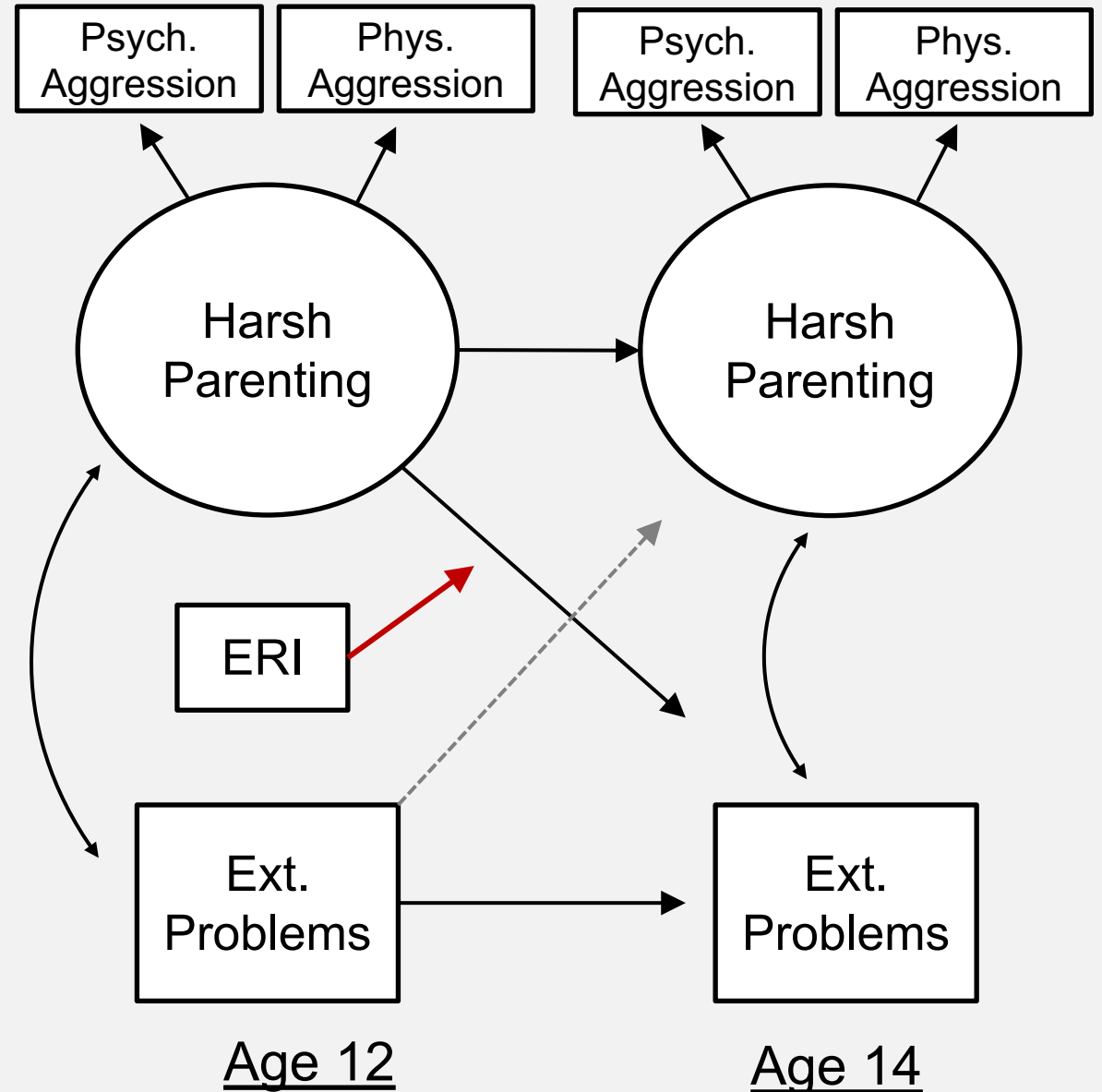
Results

Path Models

Among Black Youth

- Significant association harsh parenting → externalizing
- Moderated by ERI
- Pattern not identified for White youth

Black Youth



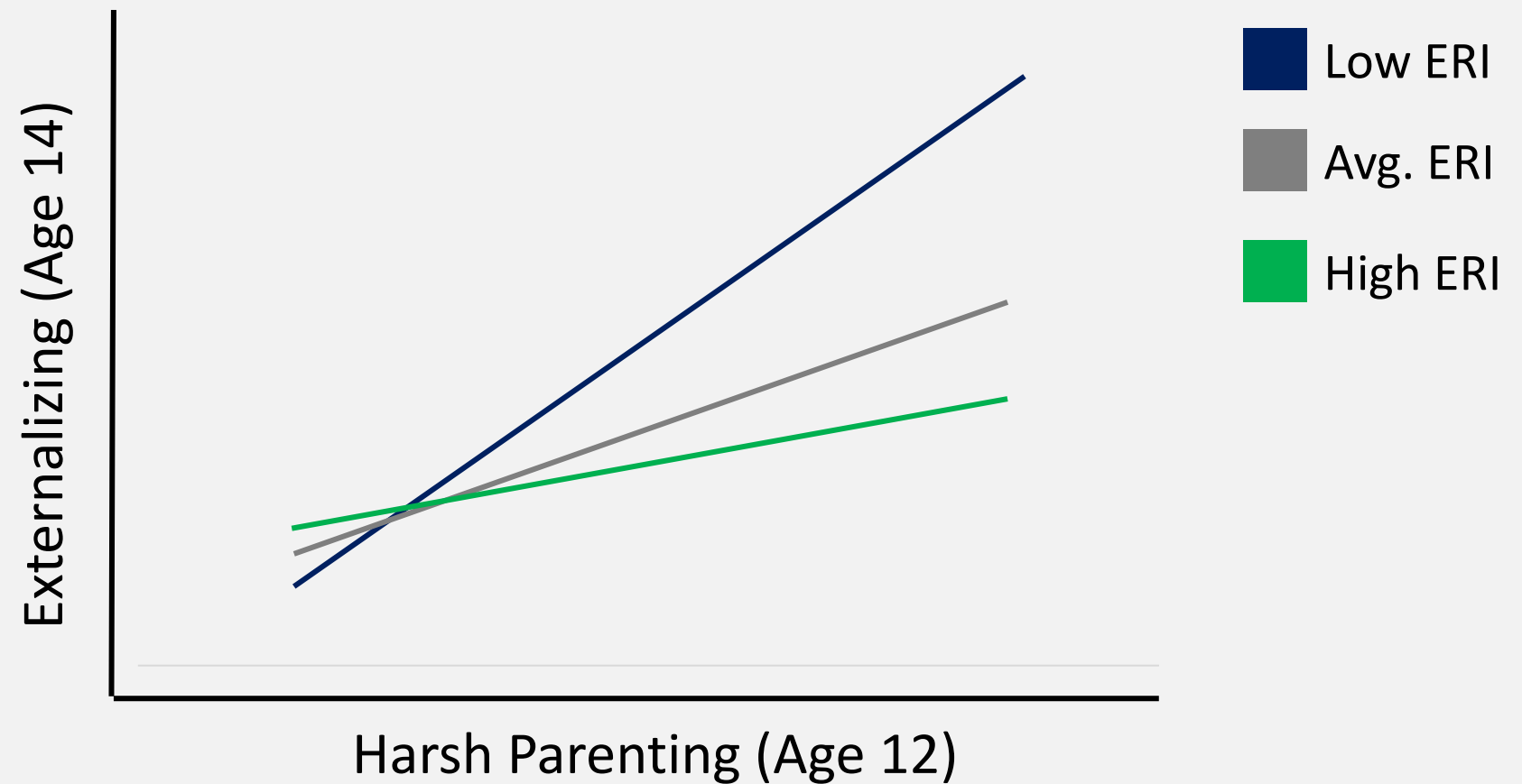
Results

Moderation by ERI

Association between age 12 harsh parenting → age 14 externalizing problems

- Strongest for Black youth with low ERA
- Weakest for Black youth with high ERA

Association Between Age 12 Harsh Parenting and Age 14 Adolescent Externalizing Problems Among Black Youth



Results

DISCUSSION

Support for Cultural Normativeness

- Findings did not support cultural normativeness theory
 - Harsh parenting did not differ by caregiver race/ethnicity
 - Association between harsh parenting → externalizing problems significant in **Black** not White families
- Possible explanations
 - Flaws in theory
 - Nature of sample

Support for ERI as a Buffer

- ERI may be protective against impact of harsh parenting
 - May be specific to Black (or other BIPOC) groups
- HOWEVER, harsh parenting still associated with externalizing problems at all levels of ERI

LIMITATIONS

- ERI assessed only at one time point
 - Unable to analyze ERI as a developmental process
 - Unable to leverage other LONGSCAN time points
- Latinx and other racial/ethnic groups underrepresented in LONGSCAN
- Generalizability of sample

IMPLICATIONS

- *Even at high levels of affirmation/belonging*, harsh parenting associated with increased externalizing symptoms among Black youth
 - Clinicians should address harsh parenting AND leverage adolescents' racial-ethnic identity as source of resilience
 - Degree of cultural competence and humility crucial
- Research implications and future directions
 - How can we foster ERI development?
 - More focus on *cultural aspects* of race/ethnicity

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QUESTIONS?