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Economic Pressure and Family-of-Origin Relationships as Predictors of African American Educational Attainment during Late Adolescence

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Economic Pressure and Family-of-Origin Relationships as Predictors of African American Educational Attainment during Late Adolescence

Abstract

According to a recent Current Population Survey, at the end of the 2008-2009 period, African American and Hispanic families experienced respective poverty rates of 25.8% and 25.3%, a stark contrast to the 9.4% rate experienced by non-Hispanic White families. Minority youth have disproportionately low rates of educational & occupational attainment compared to other ethnic groups.

Keywords

African American, poverty, economic stress, higher education

Disciplines

Family, Life Course, and Society | Finance | Higher Education | Race and Ethnicity

Comments

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Educational Attainment



“Education shapes the personal growth and life chances of our children, as well as the economic and social progress of our Nation.”

(Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America’s Children in Brief: Key National Indicators of Well-Being*, 2010. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.)

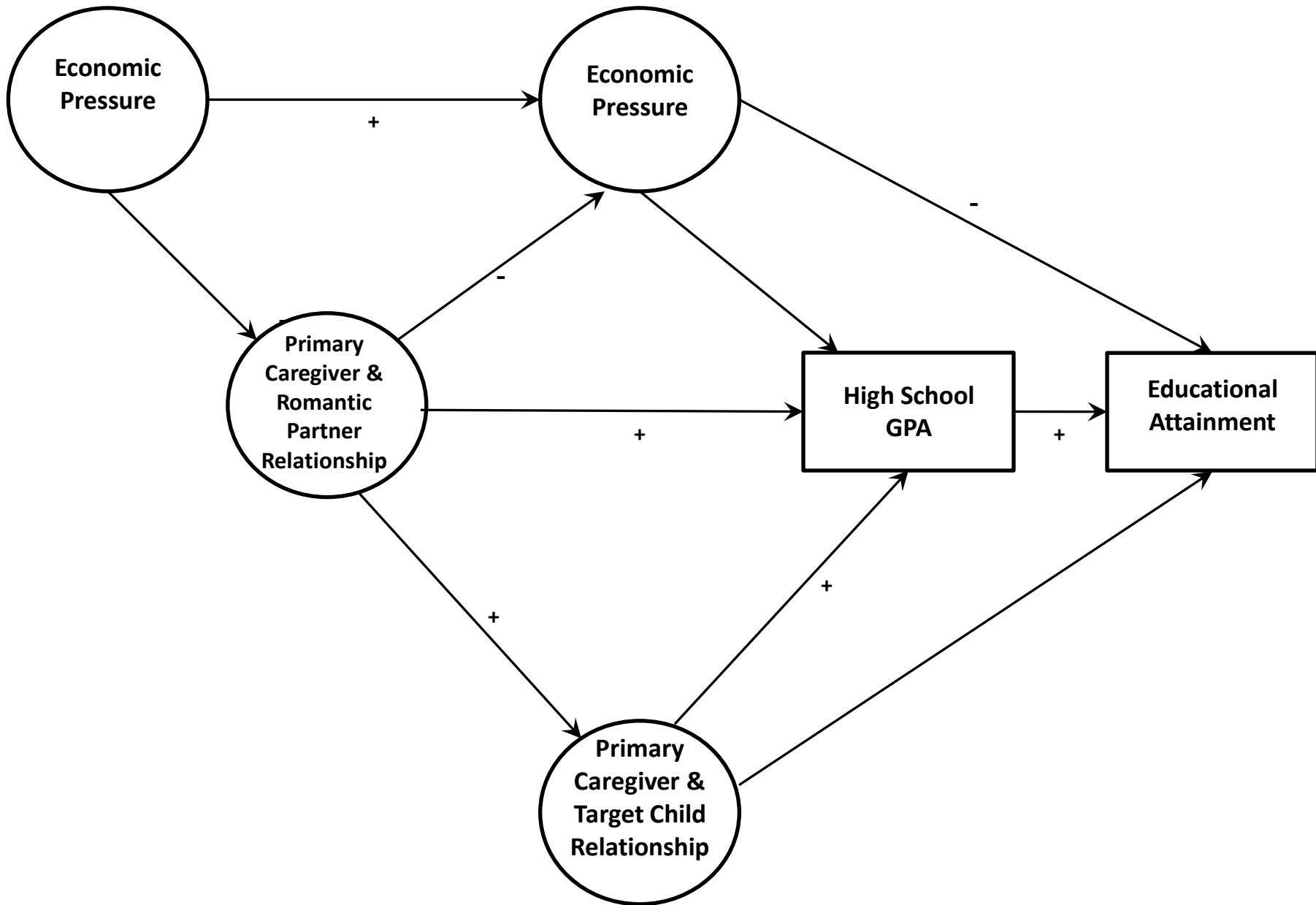
Individual Outcomes in Transition to Adulthood
(e.g. socioeconomic status)

Social impacts of education
(e.g. family relationships, parenting, communication)

African American Adolescents



- ⌘ According to a recent Current Population Survey, at the end of the 2008-2009 period, African American and Hispanic families experienced respective poverty rates of 25.8% and 25.3%, a stark contrast to the 9.4% rate experienced by non-Hispanic White families (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2010).
- ⌘ Minority youth have disproportionately low rates of educational & occupational attainment compared to other ethnic groups.
(Current Population Reports, 2003; National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 2002)



Gaps in the Literature



- ❧ Limited research on economic pressure and African American families
- ❧ Family Stress Model mostly applied to two-parent married households
 - ❧ Our study will examine romantic relationships in a unique way
- ❧ Lack of longitudinal studies
 - ❧ Our study consists of 5 waves of longitudinal data

Research Question



- How does the quality of family-of-origin relationships in childhood, coupled with parental economic pressure, influence educational attainment in second generation African American families?

∞ *Family and Community Health Study* (FACHS)

∞ Over 800 African American families living in Iowa and Georgia.

∞ $N = 322$

∞ 1997-2009

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Waves		Measures
W1	1997-1998	Economic Pressure
W2	1999-2000	Primary Caregiver & Romantic Partner Relationship
W3	2002-2003	Economic Pressure
W3	2002-2003	Primary Caregiver & Target Child Relationship
W4	2005-2006	HS GPA
W5	2007-2009	Educational Attainment

1. *Economic Pressure*

- a) Unmet Material Needs
(Conger, R. D., & Elder, G. H., Jr. , 1994)
- a) Can't Make Ends Meet
(Conger, R. D., & Elder, G. H., Jr. , 1994)
- a) Financial Adjustments
(Conger, R. D., & Elder, G. H., Jr. , 1994)

2. *Family-of-Origin Relationships*

- a) Relationship Satisfaction
(Modified from Huston, T., McHale, S., & Crouter, A. , 1986)
- b) Warmth
(Conger, R. D., & Elder, G. H., Jr. , 1994)
- c) Hostility
(Conger, R. D., & Elder, G. H., Jr. , 1994)

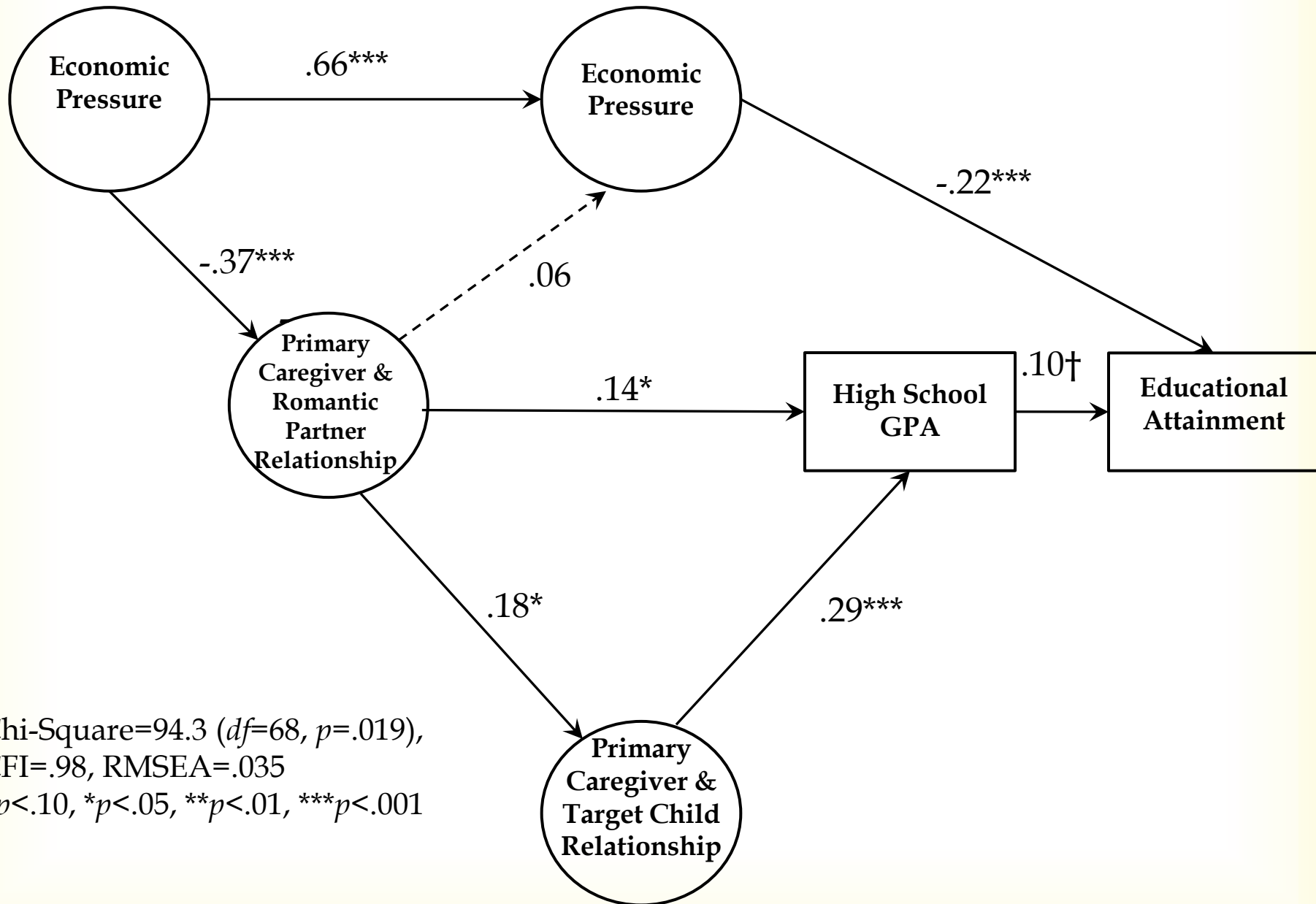
3. *High School GPA*

“Which of the following is closest to your grade point average now or when you were last in school?”

4. *Educational Attainment*

“What is the highest level of education you have completed?”

Figure 1. African American Economic Pressure, Family Relationships, and Second Generation Educational Attainment (Standardized Findings)



Limitations



1. We did not look at adolescent economic resources such as earnings from a part-time job.
2. Education attainment was measured at a relatively young age in the final wave – many who were pursuing further education may still have been in school – thus, testing this model again when more waves become available may be important to show the full effects which may take more time to achieve.

Implications



- Family Relationships → GPA
- Economic Resources → Educ. Attainment

These findings suggest that children exposed to parental economic pressure are vulnerable to disruptions in both family relationships and material demands for educational attainment in the second generation.