

Indulgent Parenting and Adolescent Adjustments: The Roles of Cultural Context and Parents' Gender

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Summary

- **Background:** Adolescence is a pivotal stage for emotional, behavioral, and social development. Indulgent parenting, characterized by high responsiveness and low demandingness, has shown mixed effects on adolescent maladjustments, potentially varying across different cultural contexts and according to parental gender.
- **Research Question:** We aim to explore how maternal and paternal indulgent parenting is correlated with adolescent emotional (i.e., depression, anxiety, and stress), behavioral (i.e., aggression), and social (Fear of Missing Out; FoMO) maladjustments in the U.S. and China. We seek to understand the differential effects of indulgence based on culture and parent's gender.
- **Method:** The study employed two samples of adolescents from high schools in the U.S. ($N = 268$; $Mage = 15.36$; 55.2% girls) and China ($N = 189$; $Mage = 16.27$; 51.1% girls). Participants reported their perceptions of indulgent parenting (mother & father separately) and their well-being through online surveys. Identical measurements across two countries, either in English or Chinese.
- **Key Results:**
 - For the U.S. sample:
 - maternal material indulgence was negatively related to stress and FoMO
 - maternal relational indulgence was positively related to FoMO
 - maternal behavioral indulgence was positively related to anxiety and stress
 - paternal indulgence was not related to adolescent maladjustments
 - For the Chinese sample:
 - maternal material indulgence was negatively related to depressive symptoms, anxiety, and stress
 - maternal relational indulgence was positively related to depressive symptoms
 - maternal behavioral indulgence was positively related to aggression
 - paternal material indulgence was positively related to anxiety, stress, and aggression

What is Indulgent Parenting?

Material Indulgence:

e.g., “My mother/father gives me gadgets, electronics, and recreational sports equipment that I seldom use.”

Relational Indulgence:

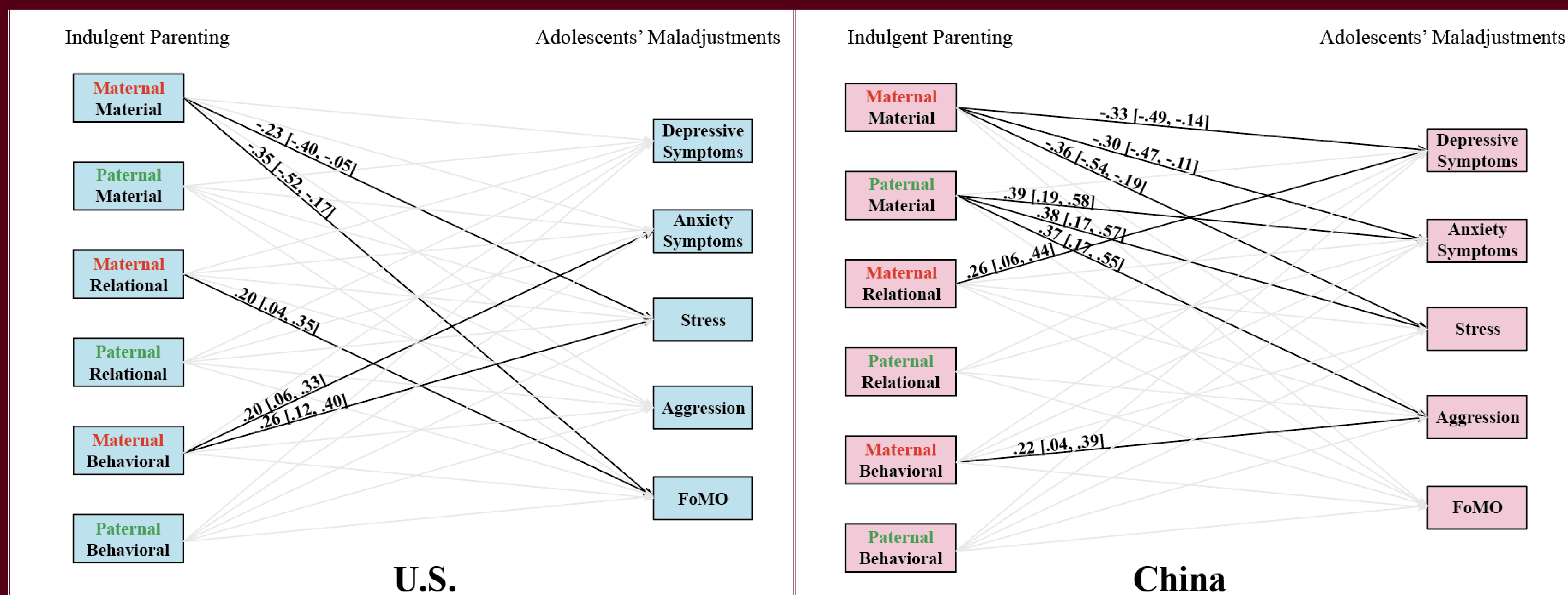
e.g., “My mother/father is involved in everything I do.”

Behavioral Indulgence:

e.g., “When I break a rule outside of home, my mother/father would help me to avoid the consequences.”

Bayesian Structural Equation Models (BSEM)

The use of Bayesian structural equation modeling (BSEM) in this study introduces a new approach to parenting research. BSEM is ideal for handling complex models and small sample sizes common in this field, overcoming limitations of traditional methods like maximum likelihood estimation. The analysis was conducted in *Mplus 8*.



Note. Significant paths are shown with dark lines. Standardized estimates were reported, followed by 95% C.I. in [].

Findings & Conclusions

- Relational and Behavioral Indulgence: Both were positively related to adolescents' maladjustments, aligning with existing theoretical and empirical expectations.
- Material Indulgence: Showed varied outcomes depending on the parent's gender. Specifically, maternal material indulgence was associated with maladjustments negatively, contrary to expectation.
- Cultural Differences: Patterns seem to differ between the two studied samples. Following-up analyses include model constraints and path comparison.
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