

Do parent-child relationships moderate the effect of self esteem on antisocial behavior? An analysis of a sample of college students in India.

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INTRODUCTION

Prior studies have found that (1) the lower self esteem one has, the more likely the individual is to engage in antisocial behavior, (2) there is a strong positive correlation between active and attentive parenting and child self esteem, and (3) stronger familial ties are associated with reductions in antisocial behavior among children.

Using a sample of college students from India, this study offers a unique cross-cultural examination of the association between the constructs of childhood self esteem and antisocial behavior and parent-child relationship quality. *This study seeks to test the moderating effect of parent-child relationships on the association between self esteem and 3 different indices of antisocial behavior.*

METHOD

Participants

N=695

English speaking undergraduate and graduate students from a large public university in Central India

Measures

Offending: sum of 12 dichotomous items

Parental relationships: average of 6 items

Self-esteem: average of 5 items

Procedures

Pencil and paper survey

Approximately 30-40 minutes to complete

RESULTS

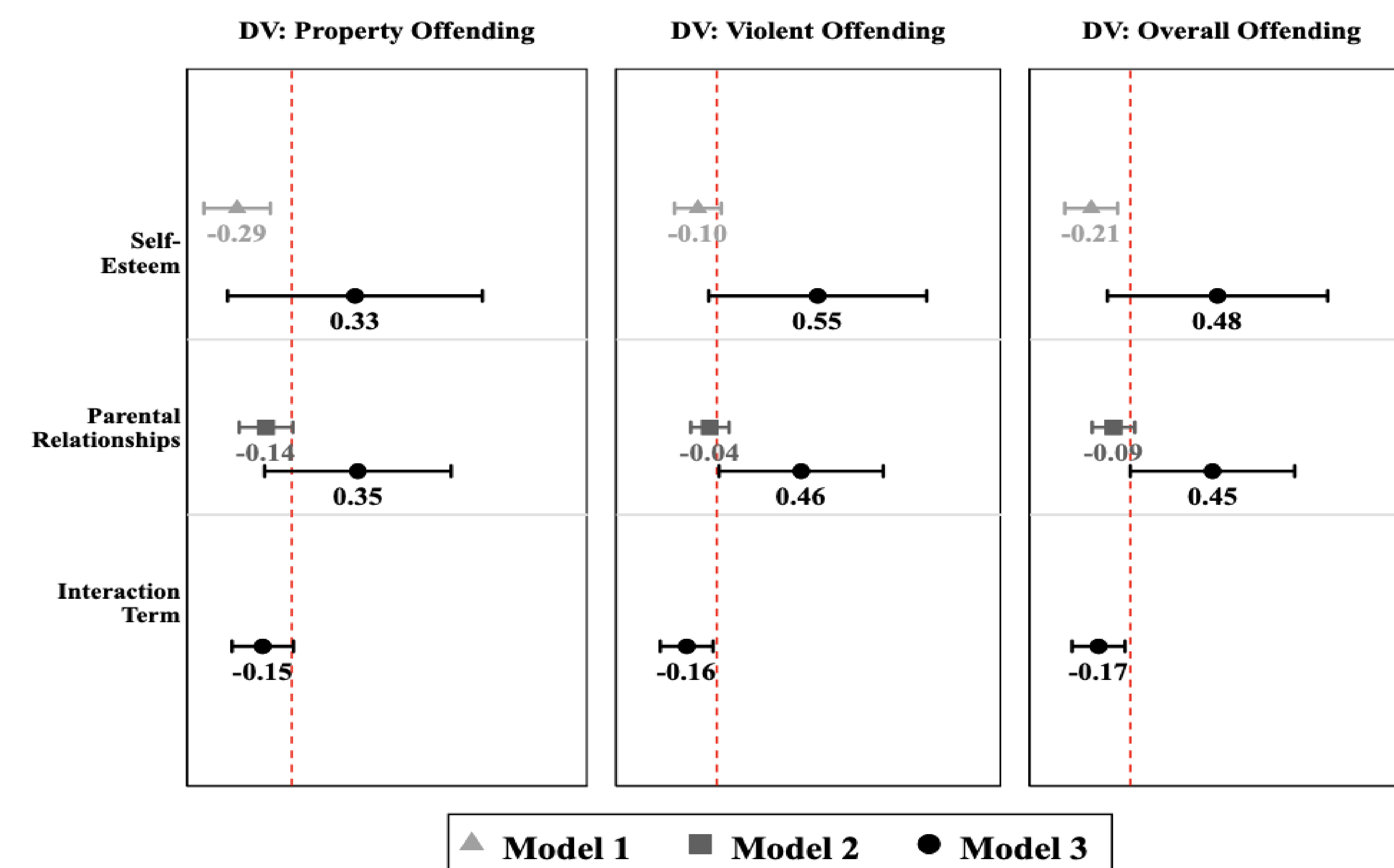


Figure 1. Results of negative binomial regression analyses predicting criminal behavior using self-esteem and parental relationships.

Notes: Model 1 includes the self-esteem index and the control variables; Model 2 includes the parental relationships index and the control variables; Model 3 (moderation model) includes the interaction between self-esteem and parental relationships as well as the control variables.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of study variables

	Mean (%)	SD	Min., Max.	N
Outcome measures				
Property offending	0.90	1.23	0, 7	670
Violent offending	1.07	1.15	0, 4	679
Overall offending	1.95	2.07	0, 11	659
Independent variables				
Self-Esteem	3.07	0.62	1, 4	695
Parental Relationships	4.08	0.82	1, 5	679
Control variables				
Current neighborhood				
City	(60.50)	--	0, 1	421
Village	(39.51)	--	0, 1	275
Married	(8.65)	--	0, 1	694
SES	-0.01	0.69	-1.54, 1.79	685
Age	20.31	2.02	17, 25	695
Sex (0=male; 1=female)	0.28	0.45	0, 1	695

DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings

1. There was no moderating effect of parental relationships on the association between self-esteem and property offending.
2. Parental relationships moderated the association between self-esteem and violent offending.
3. Parental relationships also moderated the association between self-esteem and overall offending.
4. Overall, higher quality parental relationships and higher self-esteem predicted lower violent and general offending.

Limitations

1. Sample is of college students so most of this sample has not committed any crime before.
2. Scale for self esteem does not capture the entirety of self esteem because the questions were originally used on the callous and unemotional traits scale.
3. The sample used for our data was a convenience sample.

Future Directions

1. Use of a random sample.
2. Collect data from other groups and contexts (i.e., not college students).
3. Use a scale explicitly designed to measure self esteem.

