**Dyadic Trait Fit (DTF) in Adoptive & Non-Adoptive Families**

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### Introduction

**The Present Study**

Building on previous research that provided preliminary support for the theoretical construct of dyadic trait fit (DTF; Koh, Davis, Walkner-Spaan, & Rueter, 2014), the present study tested the effect of dyadic trait fit (DTF) on a communicative family process with adoptive and non-adoptive families. Little is known about how both parent and child traits contribute to child outcomes in the general population. Moreover, examining the contribution of both parent and child traits within the context of a communicative family process that accounts for adoptive status (i.e., adoptive and non-adoptive families) is a novel approach; this study takes such an approach.

The present study answers two research questions: (1) Will parent alienation and adolescent aggression independently elicit a response in the other’s communicative behavior as a partner effect? and, (2) What is the effect of dyadic trait fit on the overall family process?

**Theoretical Frameworks**

- **Goodness of fit theory** (Lerner, 1993; Thomas & Chess, 1977)
- **Person-environment transactional theory** (Caspı, 1987, 1988; Scarr & McCartney, 1983)
- **Family Communications Patterns Theory** (FCPT; Koerner & Fitzpatrick, 2002a, 2002b, 2004, 2006)
- **Actor-partner interdependence model** (APIM; Kenny & Cook, 1999; Kenny et al., 2006; Kenny & Ledermann, 2010)

### Measures

**Personality Traits**

- **Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (MPQ; Tellegen & Waller, 2008)** – Mother and father self-reported Aggression and Alienation scales
- **Personality Booklet – Youth Abbreviated (PBYA; Tellegen & Waller, 2008)** – Adolescent reported Aggression and Alienation scales

**Family Interactions**

- Assessed using trained observers’ global ratings of dyadic (e.g. adolescent to mother, father to adolescent, etc.) family interaction tasks from the Sibling Interaction and Behavior Rating Scales (SIBRS; adapted from the Iowa Family Interaction Rating Scales, Melby & Conger, 2001). All SIBRS are based on the following scale: 1 = not at all characteristic to 9 = mainly characteristic.

- Communication (conceptualized as conversation-oriented behavior): factor scores of the Warmth (ICCs: .37 to .72), Listening Responsiveness (ICCs: .34 to .63), and Communication (ICCs: .60 to .75) scales
- Conflict: observed scores of Hostility (ICCs: .71 to .73) and Angry/Coercion (ICCs: .65 to .67) scales

- Adoption status: 1 = adopted, 2 = not adopted
- Sex: 1 = male, 2 = female

### Results

**Mother-Adolescent Final Step Model**

**Father-Adolescent Final Step Model**

### Discussion

- **Overall, findings supported the personality-initiated communicative family process and the study’s central hypothesis.**

- **Indeed, the dyadic trait fit (DTF) between adolescent aggression and parent alienation had an effect on a family interactive process that explained variance in adolescent conflict.**

- **Statistically significant mother alienation moderating effects lend further support to the notion that DTF played a role in the transactional family process and in influencing adolescent functioning.**

- **DTF interaction:** Mother alienation moderated the magnitude of the relationship between adolescent aggression and adolescent Conversation (see Figure 2).

### Future Directions

- **Present study was cross sectional; future investigations should establish direction of effects.**

- Although Koh, Davis, Walkner-Spaan, & Rueter (2014) suggested preliminary support for DTF, this is the first study to demonstrate support vis-à-vis an adolescent aggression X mother alienation interaction effect.

- Future work should test DTF interaction effects between other contributing personality traits.