

Adoptee-Adoptive Mother Relationships in Emerging Adulthood

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What do we know about adoptive family relationships?

- Conflict
 - Adoptees have higher conflict with mothers than nonadoptees
- Closeness
 - Research is contradictory
- Relationship Quality
 - Adoptees have lower relationship quality

Study purpose

To investigate the association between adoption-related variables & adoptees' relationships with their adoptive mothers during emerging adulthood



Guiding framework

- Emerging adulthood
 - 18 – 25 years old
- Major transition between adolescence & young adulthood
- What is unique about adoptive families & emerging adulthood?

Adoption-related variables

- Adoption Type (inracial vs. transracial)
 - Transracial paradox
 - Ethnic & racial socialization
- Adoption Feelings
 - Relationship between positive adoption feelings & various outcomes
- Adoption Interest
 - Adoption preoccupation
 - Birth parent search & reunion

Hypotheses

Adoption-related variables would account for a significant proportion of the variance in emerging adult adoptees’:

H1: Self-reported & observed Conflict with mothers

H2: Self-reported & observed Closeness with mothers

H3: Observed Relationship Quality with mothers



Sample: Sibling Interaction & Behavior Study

- 18.50 – 22.49 years ($M_{age} = 19.81$)
- 272 adoptee reports on mom; 273 adoptee-mom observations
- 69% Asian/Pacific Islander, 22% White, 4% Other/Mixed, 3% Hispanic, 2% Black

Measures: Self-report

Parental Environment Questionnaire (PEQ)

- Conflict ($\alpha = 0.91$)
 - 12-item Conflict with Parent subscale
- Closeness ($\alpha = 0.88$)
 - 12-item Involvement with Parent subscale

Measures: Observation

Sibling Interaction & Behavior Study Rating Scores

- Conflict
- Closeness
- Relationship Quality

Adoption-related variables

Adoption Type

(0 = inracial, 1 = transracial)

T t f F

1. It bothers me that I may have brothers and sisters I don't know.

T t f F

2. I think my parent(s) are happy that they adopted me.

T t f F

3. I feel good that I'm adopted.

T t f F

5. I wish I knew more about my medical history.

Opinions About Adoption Questionnaire

- Adoption Feelings ($\alpha = .88$)
- Adoption Interest ($\alpha = .90$)



Covariates

Biological Sex

1 = male, 2 = female

Negative Affect

Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (MPQ)

Analyses

Five hierarchical regression analyses:

Step 1: Biological Sex & Negative Affect (covariates)

Step 2: Adoption Type

Step 3: Adoption Interest & Adoption Feelings



H1: Adoption-related variables will account for a significant proportion of the variance in emerging adult adoptees' self-reported Conflict with mothers

Step & predictor variable	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²	ΔR^2
Step 1:				.20***	
Bio sex	0.06	0.06	.05		
Negative affect	0.01	0.002	.27***		
Step 2:				.21***	.01
Adoption type	-0.10	0.08	-.07		
Step 3:				.34***	.13***
Adoption feelings	-0.48	0.08	-.35***		
Adoption interest	0.13	0.05	.15**		

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.



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Bio sex	0.20	0.23	.05		
Negative affect	0.001	0.01	.01		
Step 2:				.04**	.04***
Adoption type	-0.92	0.27	-.21***		
Step 3:				.07**	.02*
Adoption feelings	-0.66	0.28	-.15*		
Adoption interest	-0.16	0.16	-.06		

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Step 1:				.20***	
Bio sex	0.12	0.06	.10*		
Negative affect	-0.01	0.002	-.24***		
Step 2:				.20***	.00
Adoption type	0.01	0.07	.01		
Step 3:				.36***	.16***
Adoption feelings	0.54	0.07	.43***		
Adoption interest	-0.03	0.04	-.04		

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Step 1:				.04**	
Bio sex	0.20	0.20	.06		
Negative affect	-0.01	0.01	-.07		
Step 2:				.05**	.02*
Adoption type	0.52	0.23	.14*		
Step 3:				.09***	.04**
Adoption feelings	0.78	0.24	.21***		
Adoption interest	0.13	0.14	.06		

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Summary

- All models accounted for a significant amount of the variance in relationship indicators with adoptive mothers
- Adoption Feelings was significant in every model



Implications

- How can we support adoptive families?
 - Practitioners
 - Researchers



Future directions

1. How are adoption-related variables associated with the relationships adoptees have with their fathers?
2. International & transracial domestic adoption?
3. How do normative life transitions impact adoptive family relationships in adulthood?



Questions?



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