



University of
Massachusetts
Amherst

Associations Between Peer Attachment and Positive Adoption Affect Throughout Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood

Item Type	event;event
Authors	Altamari, Dominique K.;Cashen, Krystal K.;Grotevant, Harold D.
DOI	https://doi.org/10.7275/R5DN439M
Download date	2026-04-12 23:06:04
Link to Item	https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.14394/43037



Associations Between Peer Attachment and Positive Adoption Affect Throughout Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood.

Dominique K. Altamari, Krystal K. Cashen, & Harold D. Grotevant

University of Massachusetts Amherst, Department of Psychological and Brain Sciences

Rudd
ADOPTION
RESEARCH
PROGRAM

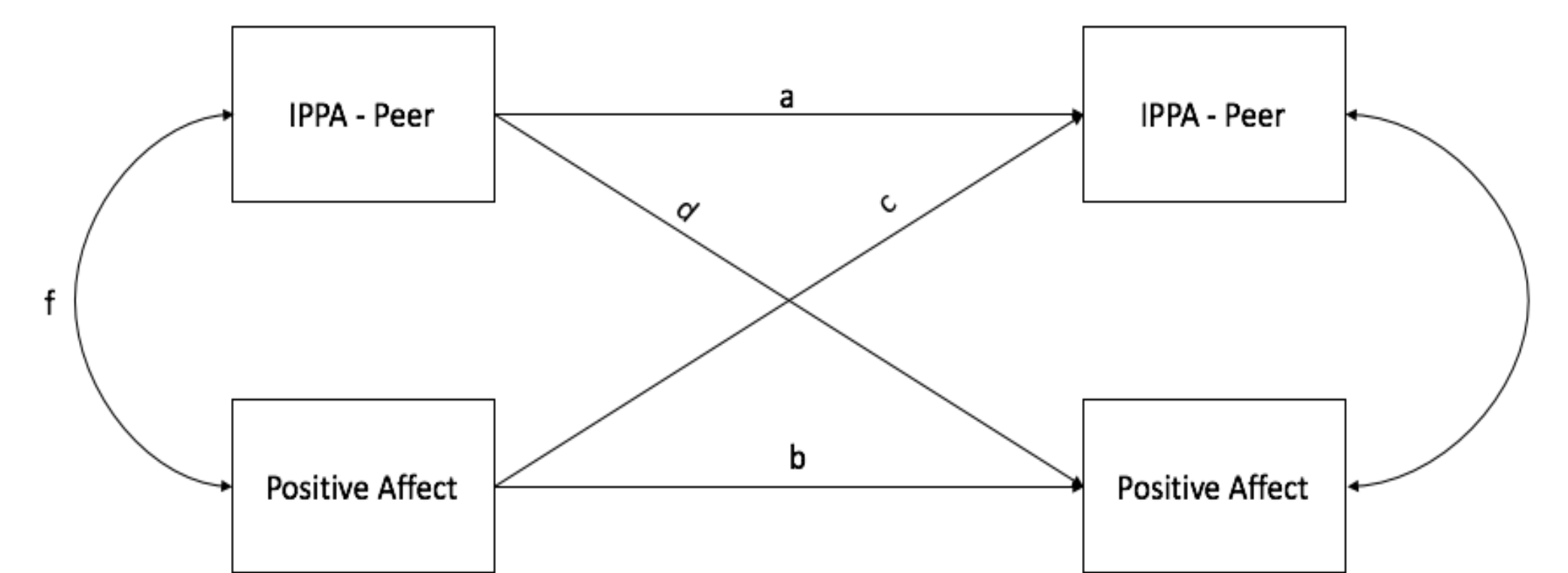
Introduction

Peer Relationships

- Friendships an important aspect of human behavior, especially important during adolescence (Waldrip, Malcolm, & Jensen-Campbell, 2008).
- Friendships also important in emerging adulthood, but are joined with new focuses of romance, work, and value exploration (Arnett, 2000).
- Internal working models of attachment are somewhat stable overtime, with attachment patterns often concordant across relationship type (Fearon, & Roisman, 2017; Furman, Simon, Schaffer, & Bouchey, 2002).

Affect about Adoption

- Adolescence is sensitive for identity development, with increased concern about reasons for placement (Wrobel, & Dillon, 2009).
- In emerging adulthood, concerns shift to practical questions about biological and medical history (Wrobel, Grotevant, Samek, & Von Korff, 2013).
- Satisfaction with adoptive experience more predictive than objective facts about experience (Grotevant, McRoy, Wrobel, & Ayers-Lopez, 2013).
- Similar study has found linkages between positive adoption affect and strong sibling relationships (Farr, Flood, & Grotevant, 2016).



Conceptual Model: Potential relationship paths for variables of interest

Participants

- Participants selected from large longitudinal study of adoptees and their families (MTARP; Grotevant, McRoy, Wrobel, & Ayers-Lopez, 2013).
- All adoptees adopted through private domestic adoption prior to their first birthday.
- 139 target adoptees were given questionnaires at Wave 2 (1996-2001) and Wave 3 (2005-2008).
 - W2 Mage= 15.8, Range: 11.1-20.8).
 - W3 Mage = 25.0, Range: 20.8-30.3).
- 139 with some data on measures relevant to study, 111 with complete data.

Measures

Positive Affect – Adoption Dynamics Questionnaire (ADQ; Benson, Sharma & Roehlkepartain, 1994)

- ADQ assesses the participant’s feelings and perceptions about their own adoption.
- Positive affect subscale consists of 20 Likert scale questions.
- Higher scores indicate the adoptee has positive feelings toward their adoption.

Peer Attachment – Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment (IPPA; Armsden, & Greenberg, 1987)

- IPPA measures attachment to peers, with a focus on trust, communication and feelings of anger/alienation, factors typically associated with relationship quality.
- The peer subscale consists of 25 Likert scale questions from 3 subscales (trust, communication, and anger/alienation).
- Higher scores indicate higher relationship quality/strong peer attachment.

Results

RQ 1: Positive affect and peer attachment were positively correlated in emerging adulthood, ($r = .33, p < .001$), but not in adolescence, ($r = .17, p = .064$).

RQ 2: Positive affect in adolescence predicted positive affect in emerging adulthood ($\beta = .52, p < .001$). Peer attachment in adolescence did not predict peer attachment in emerging adulthood.

RQ 3: Positive affect in adolescence predicted peer attachment in emerging adulthood ($\beta = .21, p = .024$). Peer attachment in adolescence did not predict positive affect in emerging adulthood.



RQ 4:

- There was a significant interaction between positive affect and gender ($\beta = .33, p = .019$) in predicting peer attachment at W3, indicating a stronger relationship between W2 positive affect and W3 peer attachment for females.
- There was also a significant interaction between peer attachment and gender ($\beta = -.33, p = .008$) in predicting peer attachment at W3, indicating a stronger relationship between W2 peer attachment and W3 peer attachment for males.

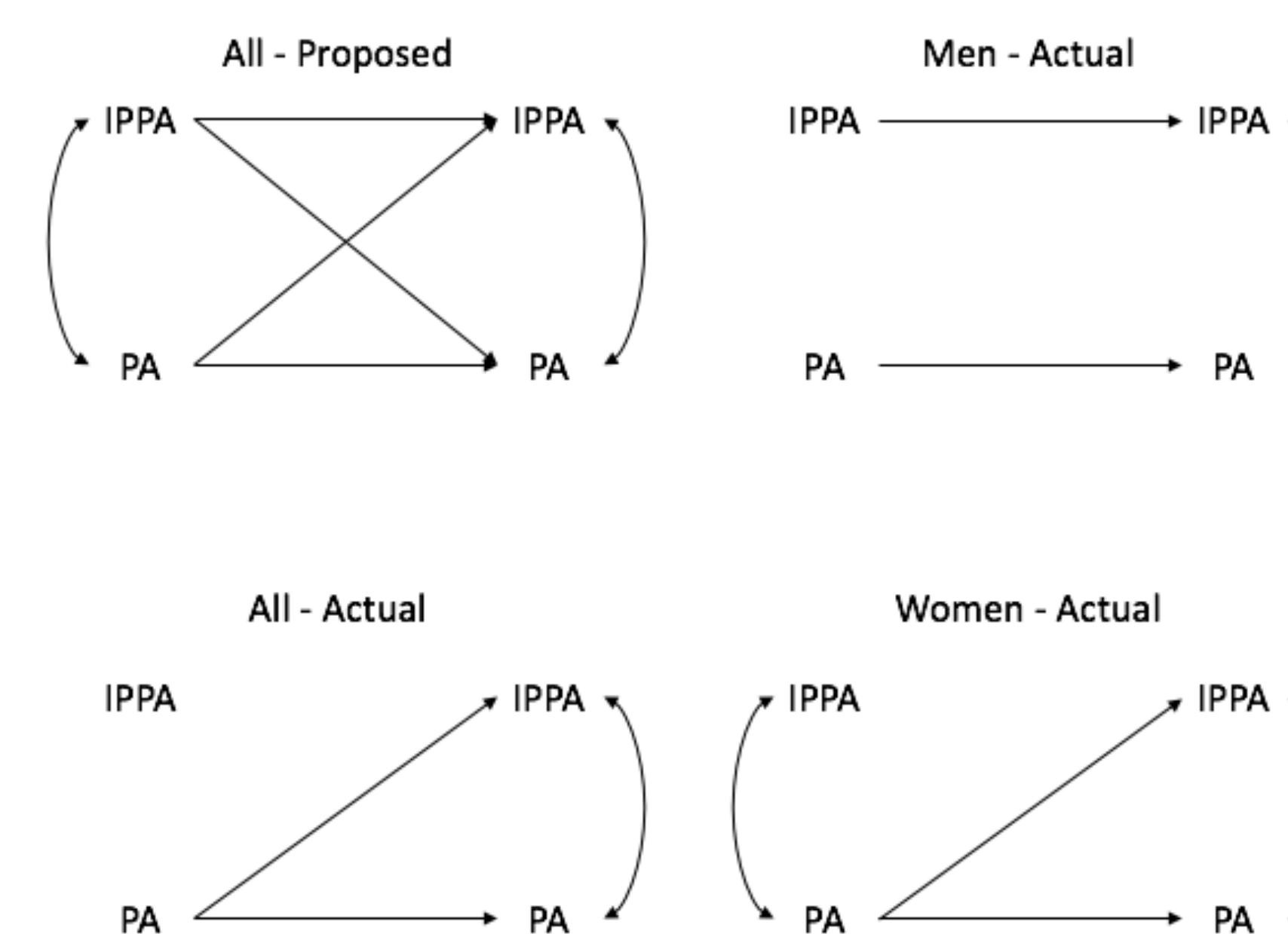


Figure: Significant paths for whole group and by gender

Table: Descriptives and Correlations of Study Variables

	n	M	SD	PA-A	IPPA-A	PA-EA
PA-A	125	73.428	10.335	-		
IPPA-A	121	106.450	14.491	.169	-	
PA-EA	128	74.120	10.437	.517**	.073	-
IPPA-EA	129	106.721	13.140	.227*	.233*	.327**

N = 139, *p<.05, **p<.01

Discussion

- Adolescent adoptees with positive feelings about their adoption more likely to have stronger friendships in emerging adulthood.
- Distinct differences by gender; could be indicative of differences in emotional closeness in friendships for men and women.
- Another limitation is the low-risk data sample as difficulties with adoption are more common in transracial, international, or welfare adoptions. Further research should include adoptees who were adopted transracially, internationally, and/or through the welfare system.
- Implications for encouragement of exploration of adoption affect in therapeutic settings.



Selected References

Armsden, G. C., & Greenberg, M. T. (1987). The Inventory of Parent and Peer Attachment: Individual differences and their relationship to psychological well-being in adolescence. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence*, 16(5), 427-454.

Arnett, J. J. (2000). Emerging adulthood: A theory of development from the late teens through the twenties. *American Psychologist*, 55(5), 469-480.

Benson, P. L., Sharma, A. R., & Roehlkepartain, E. C. (1994). *Growing up adopted: A portrait of adolescents and their families*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.

Farr, R.H., Flood, M.E., & Grotevant, H.D. (2016). The role of siblings in adoption outcomes and experiences from adolescence to emerging adulthood. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 30(3), 386 – 396.

Fearon, R. M. P., & Roisman, G. I. (2017). Attachment theory: Progress and future directions. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, 15, 131-136.

Furman, W., Simon, V. A., Schaffer, L., & Bouchey, H. A. (2002). Adolescents’ working models and styles for relationships with parents, Friends, and romantic partners. *Child Development*, 73(1), 241–255.

Grotevant, H. D., McRoy, R. G., Wrobel, G. M., & Ayers-Lopez, S. (2013). Contact between adoptive and birth families: Perspectives from the Minnesota/Texas Adoption Research Project. *Child Development Perspectives*, 7(3), 193-198.

Waldrip, A. M., Malcolm, K. T., & Jensen-Campbell, L. A. (2008). With a little help from your friends: The importance of high-quality friendships on early adolescent adjustment. *Social Development*, 17(4), 832-852.

Wrobel, G. M., & Dillon, K. (2009). Adopted adolescents: Who and what are they curious about? In G. Wrobel & E. Neil (Eds.), *International Advances in Adoption Research for Practice* (pp. 217–244).

Wrobel, G. M., Grotevant, H. D., Samek, D. R., & Von Korff, L. (2013) Adoptees’ curiosity and information seeking about birth parents in emerging adulthood: Context, motivation, and behavior. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 37(5).

Research Questions

- RQ 1: What is the relationship between positive affect about adoption and peer attachment at one time (e & f)?
- RQ 2: Are positive adoption affect and peer attachment stable over time (a & b)?
- RQ 3: What is the relationship between positive affect about adoption and peer attachment over time (c & d)?
- RQ 4: Do the relationships between these variables differ for men and women? If so, what are those differences?

