Does Race Moderate the Association Between Parent Strategies for Managing Children’s Violent Media Exposure and Child Anxiety?

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**Introduction**

Violent media exposure has been strongly associated with child anxiety (Comer & Kendall, 2007; Madan, Mrug, & Wright, 2014).

- Children spend as much as 7 hours watching TV and other media (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2010).
- In a year, a child may be exposed to as many as 12,000 acts of violence in the media (Kalin, 1997). Parents’ behavior can mitigate or amplify child’s anxiety associated with media violence exposure (Padilla-Walker & Coine, 2011; Valkenburg et al., 1999).

- One strategy that parents report using to handle their children’s responses to violent media is Scaring for Safety (SS) - scaring children on purpose in order to keep them safe (McQuarrie & Caporino, 2017).
- This strategy may impact child anxiety differently, depending on whether children come from groups at high or low risk for real life exposure to violence.
- Family race may moderate the association between use of the SS strategy and child anxiety.
- SS use may be related to increased anxiety, but only in children from groups at a relatively low risk for real-life violence exposure.

**Methods**

**Study 1**

- **Caregivers and Children**
  - 516 White
  - 56 Black/African American

- **Measures**
  - The Caregiver Responses to Youth Media Exposure (CRYME; McQuarrie & Caporino, 2017)
  - The Screen for Child Anxiety Related Disorders (SCARED; Birmaher et al., 1997; Birmaher et al., 1999)

**Study 2**

- **Caregivers and Children**
  - 66 Black/African American

- **Measures**
  - The Caregiver Responses to Youth Media Exposure (CRYME; McQuarrie & Caporino, 2017)
  - Behavior Assessment System for Children (BASC; Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992)

**Results**

**Study 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Predicting Child Anxiety</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Semi-Partial Correlations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 Constant</td>
<td>63.88</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>38.62</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SES</td>
<td>-1.84</td>
<td>-1.7***</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>-4.14</td>
<td>-.172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2 SES</td>
<td>-1.89</td>
<td>-1.8***</td>
<td>.45</td>
<td>-4.22</td>
<td>-.175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>.99</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>.042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3 SES</td>
<td>-1.65</td>
<td>-1.5***</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>-3.76</td>
<td>-.150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quadratic Scaring for Safety</td>
<td>.42</td>
<td>.23***</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>.232</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Study 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regression Predicting Child Anxiety</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>β</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>Semi-Partial Correlations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 1 Constant</td>
<td>51.20</td>
<td>4.72</td>
<td>10.85</td>
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<tr>
<td>SES</td>
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<td>-.02</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scaring for Safety</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.039</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: N = 66; R² = .19; ***p < .001

- Study 1: T-test: Black caregivers reported greater use of Scaring for Safety than White caregivers (t(568) = 2.69, p < .05).
- Correlations: Greater use of Scaring for Safety related to greater child anxiety in White caregivers (r = .248, p < .05), but not for Black caregivers.
- Regression: With SES covaried, Scaring for Safety was significantly and positively associated with child anxiety in Study 1 but not study 2. Race was not a significant predictor in Study 1.
- Closer examination of the association between Scaring for Safety and child anxiety among White children in Study 1 yielded evidence of a quadratic relationship; both low and high levels of Scaring for Safety were associated with higher levels of anxiety.
- Effects sizes compared: SR₁ = 0.232 (N = 572) and SR₂ = 0.039 (N = 66), z = 1.49, p > 0.05

**Discussion**

- Consistent with our hypothesis, Black caregivers reported significantly more use of Scaring for Safety.
  - This supports previous research reporting Black families use of harsh parenting significantly more than White families (e.g., Flink et al., 2012; Deater-Deckard et al., 1996).
  - For White caregivers, Scaring for Safety showed a quadratic association with child anxiety, which may suggest that there is a moderate amount of use of Scaring for Safety that is healthy.
  - Contrary to our hypothesis, use of the Scaring for Safety strategy was linearly associated with low levels of child anxiety for Black caregivers.
  - Findings suggest that Scaring for Safety works well in Black families in warning children of dangers to keep themselves safe.
  - Effect sizes did not show significant difference between studies.

**Limitations**

- There was not a fair representation of Black/African Americans in study 1.
- We don’t know how much the children in the study viewed violent media.
- Both studies used different measures of child anxiety.
- Parents may (either intentionally or not) inaccurately report the strategies they use to manage child media violence responses.

**Future Directions & Implications**

- Future studies should investigate a variety of races and examine how culture can influence parenting strategies.
- A longitudinal study could help give a better understanding of parental practices on children after a violent event.

**Current Study**

- To examine whether race moderates the association between use of the Scaring for Safety strategy to manage child violent media exposure and child anxiety.

**Hypotheses**

- Black caregivers will report greater use of Scaring for Safety than White caregivers.
- Anxiety will be positively related to parent use of Scaring for Safety among White children and unrelated in Black children.

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