



A Comparison of Three Parental Control Decisions' Association With Self-Worth.

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Introduction

- Studies have shown that different parenting styles have a significant effect on a child's development (Axpe, Rodríguez-Fernández, Goñi, & Antonio-Agirre, 2019).
- Evidence shows links between self-worth and psychological well-being which is why it is important to study the factors which may influence the development of self-worth (Orth, Robins, & Widaman, 2012). One study found that indulgent parenting (permissive, fewer restrictions, high responsiveness) was associated with equal or better self-concept and well-being than authoritative parenting (high responsiveness and demands) (Garcia, Fuentes, Gracia, Serra, & Garcia, 2020).
- Prior research has focused on the combined relationship of parental control and warmth on self-worth so it is unclear whether these specific examples of parental control (without the factor of warmth) will have a significant effect on self-worth as adults.

Research Questions

- How does self-worth differ among three types of parental control, such as a weekend curfew imposition, control over friend groups, and control over clothing choices?
- Does sex affect the relationship between the control of weekend curfew, control over friend groups, control over clothing choices and self-worth?

Methods

Sample

- Respondents (n=4995) were drawn from Wave 1 and Wave 4 of The U.S. National Longitudinal Survey of Adolescent Health (ADDHEALTH). Wave 1 took place from 1994-1995 and is nationally representative of the U.S. adolescent population at that time. Wave 4 of the ADDHEALTH study took place about 14 years later in 2008.

Measures

- Three types of parental control were compared using three questions from Wave 1 of the ADDHEALTH study: "Do your parents let you make your own decisions about... "the time you must be home on weekend nights?", "the people you hang around with?", "what you wear?". Each response was coded with 0 (no) or 1 (yes). Biological sex was reported as male/female.
- Self-worth was measured in Wave 4 with the variable "(During the past seven days) You felt you were just as good as other people." Self-worth was dichotomously coded as 0 (representing low self-worth) and 1 (representing high self-worth).

Results

Bivariate

- My first logistic regression for parental control in the form of "child decides weekend curfew" was not significantly related to self-worth with p-value .216 (OR: 1.097, CI: 0.948-1.271)
- The second logistic regression for parental control in the form of "child decides who they hang around" was significantly associated with the likelihood of having higher self-worth in young adulthood with p-value < 0.001 (OR: 1.898, CI: 1.590-2.260).
- The third logistic regression for parental control in the form of "child decides what they wear" was significantly related to the likelihood of having higher self-worth in young adulthood with p-value < 0.05 (OR: 1.429, CI: 1.143-1.776)

Figure 1. Proportion who have self-worth based on child deciding weekend curfew and biological sex

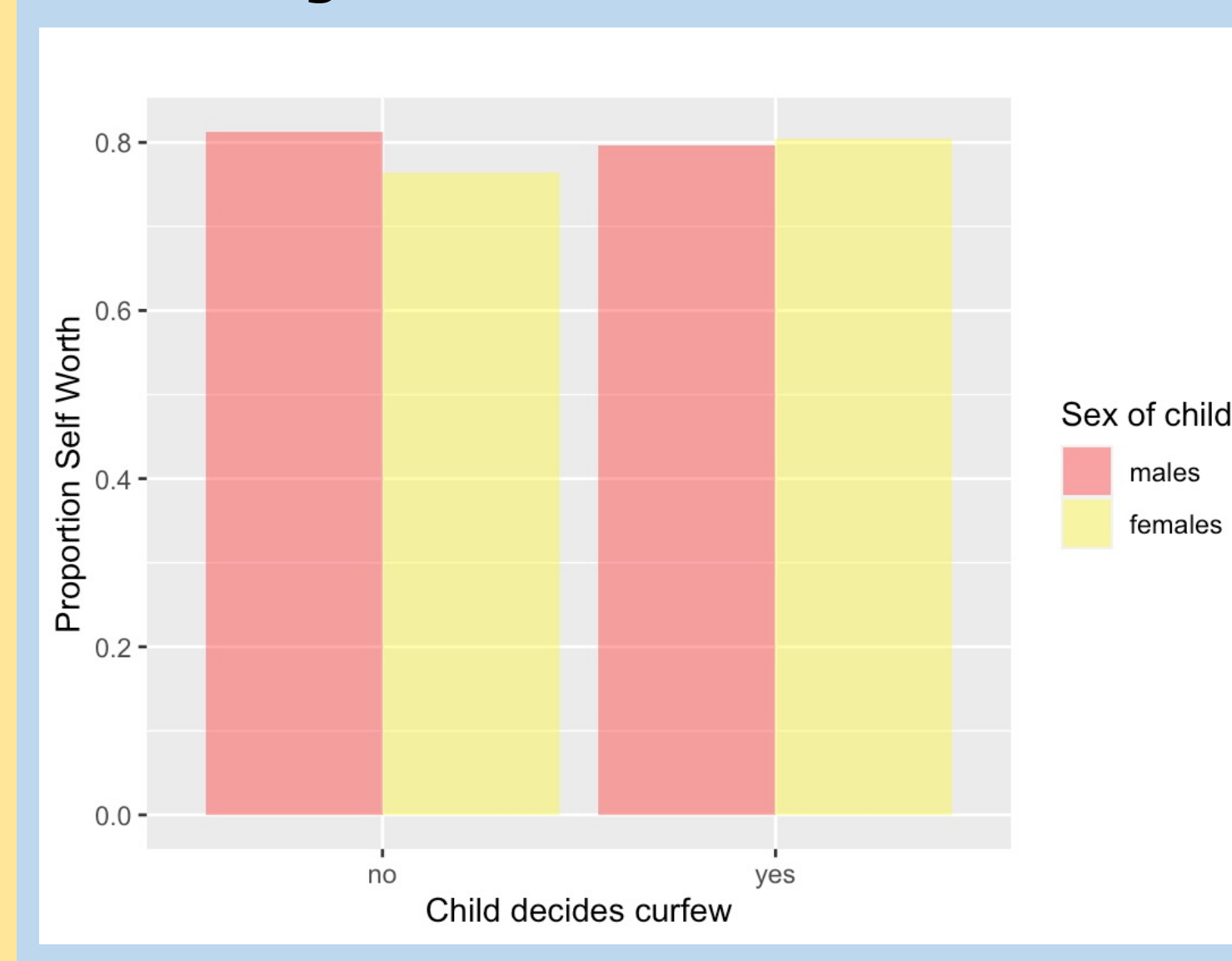
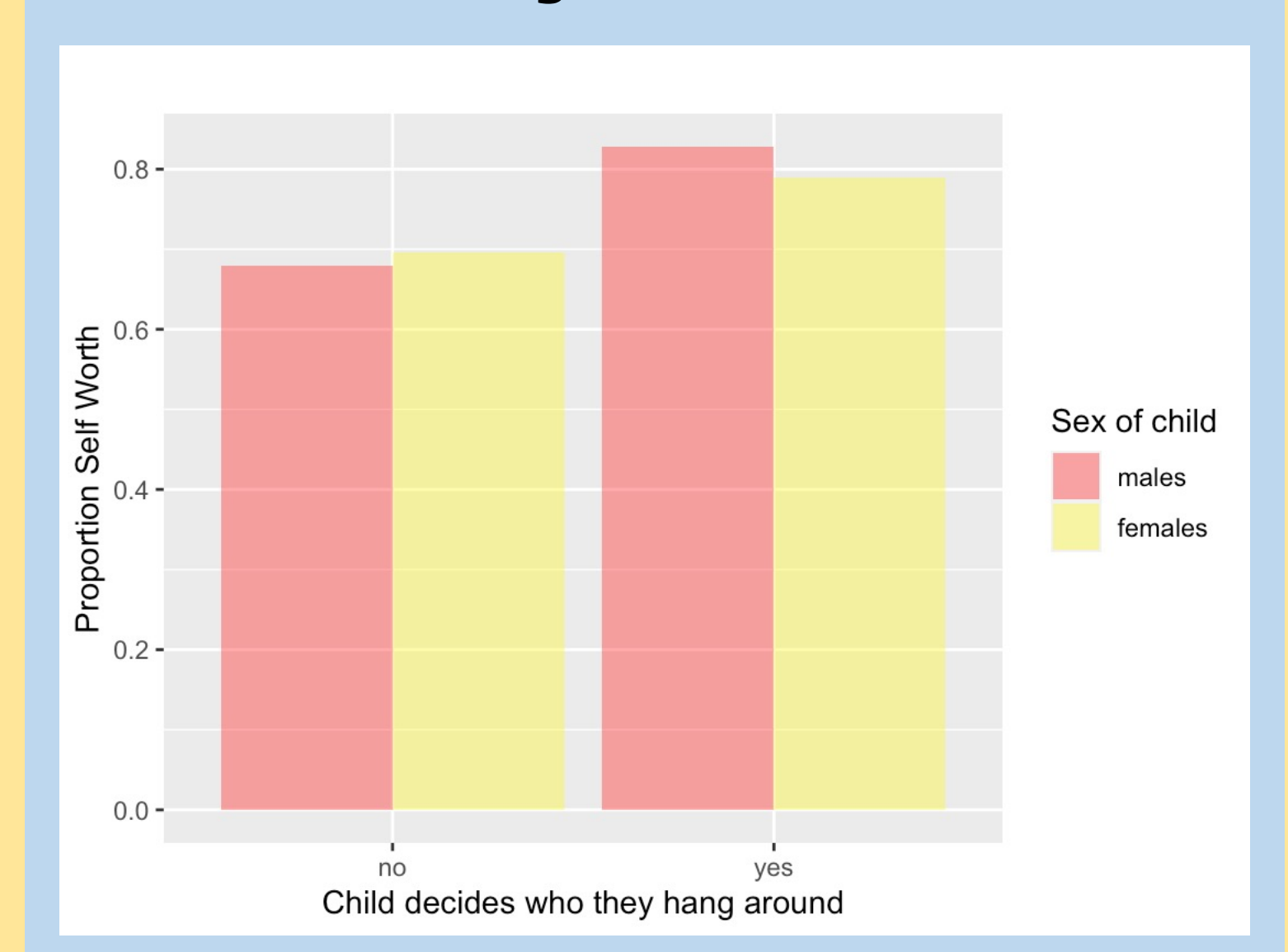


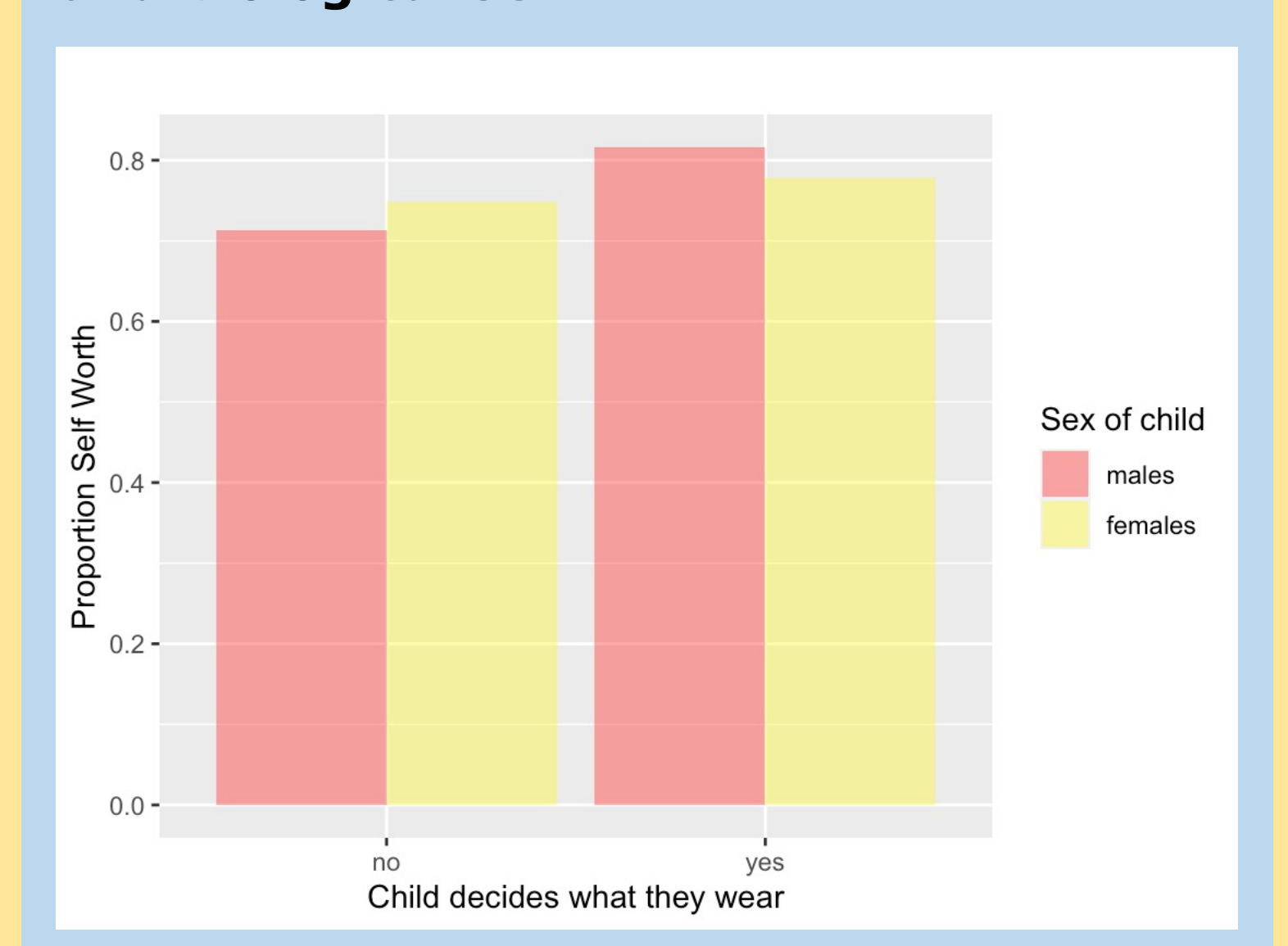
Figure 2. Proportion who have self-worth based on child deciding who they hang around and biological sex



Multivariate

- After creating a logistic regression to control for all parental control variables in the model plus biological sex, the only parental control variable that remains statistically significant is "Child decides who they hang around" with a p-value < 0.001 (OR: 2.207, CI: 1.688- 2.873). The odds of having self-worth are 2.2 times higher if a child is allowed to decide who they hang around compared to those who aren't.
- In Figure 2, it visually seems that sex interacts with the relationship between "Child decides who they hang around" and self-worth. It looks as though being able to pick who you hang around has a stronger affect on males than females. However, this relationship is not statistically significant with a p-value of 0.06.

Figure 3. Proportion who have self-worth based on child deciding what they wear and biological sex



Discussion

- The results of this study show that there is a significant association between adolescents deciding who they hang around and having higher self-worth in adulthood.
- These findings also coincide with research that shows some behavioral parental control decisions will not affect a child's wellbeing later in life but other rules which attempt to control the child's opinions, emotions, and beliefs which is defined as psychological control is believed to be detrimental to development and wellbeing later in life (Stafford et al., 2015).
- It is important to note that one limitation of this study is that the self-worth variable is only reflective of an individuals' feelings of self-worth in that given week. This means it may not reflect their overall feelings of self-worth in the past year or even month.
- Family counselors, child psychiatrists, and parents might use the information in this study to consider which types of parental control may be damaging to a child's development. It also shows that it may be important for parents to let adolescents to decide for themselves who they hang around.
- Further research is needed to determine if other forms of parental control are associated with self-worth in adulthood.