Examining Child-Teacher Relationships and Classroom Quality Across Racial Groups

Iheoma U. Iruka
HighScope Educational Research Foundation

Susan Sheridan, Lisa Knoche, and Amanda Witte
University of Nebraska – Lincoln

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The Early Learning Network aims to advance the understanding of *policies and practices* that narrow the achievement gap and *maintain early learning success* as children transition *from preschool to elementary school* and beyond.
Outline of Presentation

Take Home Points
Rationale
Research Question
Design
Findings and Conclusion
Take Home Points

- Conflict with teacher more negatively associated with Latinx children’s problem behaviors than peers
- Black children less likely have close relationships with teachers and be in emotionally supportive classrooms compared to peers
- Universal and cultural relevance of specific teacher-child relationships and classroom quality on children’s learning and behavior needs more attention.
- Deeper examination about bias and equity in early childhood experiences and opportunities to learn, especially for minoritized children
Rationale for Study

• Teacher-student relationships and interactions are critical factors in children’s learning experiences and achievement (Crosnoe et al., 2010)

• Persistent social challenge of the racial achievement gap that start early

• Some indication that children of color likely to experience less enriched learning opportunities (Early, Iruka, et al. 2010; Gilliam et al., 2016)

• The extent of these racial differences in opportunities to learn on children’s achievement have been underexplored in pre-K
Theoretical Framework

- Critical Culturally Relevant Pedagogy (CCRP) framework

CCRP

- Relationships
- Whole Child Teaching
- Equity & Excellence
- Achievement
- Developmentally Appropriate

Learning Frontiers
PreK to Grade 3
Research Questions

• What is the quality of teacher-child relationships and classroom quality experienced by children during the pre-K year?
  – Do they differ across racial groups?

• What is the link between teacher-child relationships, classroom quality, and children’s achievement and social skills during pre-K?
  – Do they differ across racial groups?

• To what extent does race moderate the association between teacher-child relationships and classroom quality and children’s achievement and social skills during pre-K?
Sample

- N = 252 pre-K attenders in Midwest state from 12 rural/urban school districts
- Age = 4.95 years old (SD = .27)
- 43% White, 15% Black/African American, 28% Latinx, and 13% Other
- 47% Male
- 37% Dual Language Learner (spoke or heard any other language other than English)
- Parent Education: 43% High School Diploma/GED or Less and 22% BA or Higher (majority of BA and higher group was White, majority of Black and Latinx parents had some college or less)
## Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Construct</th>
<th>Measure</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher-Child Relationships</td>
<td>Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (Pianta, 2001): Closeness and Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom Quality</td>
<td>Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS; Pianta, La Paro, &amp; Hamre, 2008): Emotional Support, Classroom Organization, and Instructional Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Achievement</td>
<td>Woodcock-Johnson Broad Reading and Broad Math</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Social Skills</td>
<td>Social Skills Inventory System: Social Skills and Problem Behaviors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Question #1

What is the quality of teacher-child relationships and classroom quality experienced by children during the pre-K year?

![Bar chart showing STRS Conflict and Closeness scores for different racial groups.](chart.png)
Research Question #1 (cont’d)

CLASS Emotional Support
CLASS Classroom Organization
CLASS Instructional Support

Overall Black Latinx White Other

*
Research Question #2

What is the link between teacher-child relationships, classroom quality, and children’s achievement and social skills during pre-K?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STRS Conflict</th>
<th>STRS Closeness</th>
<th>CLASS Emotional Support</th>
<th>CLASS Classroom Organization</th>
<th>CLASS Instructional Support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Broad Reading</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.12</td>
<td>0.07</td>
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<td>SSIS Social Skills</td>
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<td>-0.43</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Bolded = significant at $p<.05$
### Research Question #2

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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SSIS Social Skills</strong></td>
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<td><strong>-0.73/-0.28/-0.39</strong></td>
<td><strong>-0.26</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Bolded = significant at p<.05*.  
*Red = Black children, Green = Latinx children, Blue = White children*
Research Question #3

To what extent does race moderate the association between teacher-child relationships and classroom quality and children’s achievement and social skills during pre-K?

HLM analyses, fall scores, site, age, gender, and parental education controlled.
Research Question #3 (cont’d)

- **WJ Broad Reading**: No main effects or moderation by race
- **WJ Broad Math**: predicted by STRS Closeness ($d=0.01$), no moderation effects
- **SSIS Social Skills**: predicted by STRS Closeness & Conflict ($d=0.01$), no moderation effects
- **SSIS Problem Behaviors**: predicted by STRS Conflict ($d=0.01$) and CLASS Classroom Organization ($d=0.25$), moderation found
Increase in teacher-reported conflict associated with higher increase in Latinx children’s problem behaviors compared to their peers (effect size is <.01).
Increase in classroom emotional support associated with significant decrease in Black children’s problem behaviors, and a reverse pattern with a decrease in emotional support (effect size = .96).
Increase in classroom organization is associated with an increase in Black children’s problem behaviors; decrease in classroom organization is associated with lower problem behavior for Black children. The effect size is about .75.
Conclusions and Next Steps

- Conflict with teacher more negatively associated with Latinx children’s problem behaviors than peers
- Black children less likely have close relationships with teachers and be in emotionally supportive classrooms compared to peers
- Universal and cultural relevance of specific teacher-child relationships and classroom quality on children’s learning and behavior needs more attention.
Conclusions and Next Steps

- Self-regulation/externalizing problem found to be critical factor linking early childhood experiences and lifelong outcomes (Heckman et al., 2011)
- Examine the additive effects of environment and individual experiences
- Deeper examination about bias and equity in early childhood experiences and opportunities to learn, especially for minoritized children
Thank you!!
Questions??

Iheoma U. Iruka, PhD
iiruka@highscope.org
https://highscope.org
@earlylearnnet
http://earlylearningnetwork.unl.edu/