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THE ROLE OF CONDITIONAL PARENTAL REGARD AND

EXCESSIVELY CONTINGENT SELF-ESTEEM IN CHILDREN'S

PEER RELATIONSHIPS

A Thesis in

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Sarah H. Kollat

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The thesis of Sarah H. Kollat was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Keith E. Nelson
Professor of Psychology
Thesis Advisor, Chair of Committee

Sandra T. Azar
Professor of Psychology

Robert L. Burgess
Professor of Human Development

Sherry E. Corneal
Associate Professor of Human Development

Melvin M. Mark
Professor of Psychology
Head of the Department of Psychology

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School.

Abstract

The current study sought to further clarify the construct of self-esteem in adolescence, the antecedents of adolescent self-esteem, and peer outcomes associated with different configurations of self-esteem. Previous work has suggested that self-esteem is a multifaceted construct, with one promising new facet being excessively contingent self-esteem. It was hypothesized that adolescents with excessively contingent self-esteem would be strongly invested in their social status and relationships, leading them to employ aggressive, jealous, and prosocial behaviors as a means of defending and/or promoting their social goals. Likewise, overly conditional parenting styles were predicted to contribute to children's introjection of values and behaviors, likewise leading to the development of excessively contingent self-esteem. Participants included 264 seventh and eighth grade students attending an ethnically diverse, urban middle school. Results confirm the current study's predictions, although the strength of the proposed relationships differs according to ethnicity and sex. Results support the conclusion that excessively contingent self-esteem motivates children to engage in both aggressive and prosocial behaviors within the peer group. The need to clarify the extent to which these behaviors are instrumental, as opposed to reactive, in nature is discussed.

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I would like to thank my husband, Joshua, for his constant support throughout the process of completing my dissertation. His presence in my life was often the only saving grace of many stressful situations. I'd also like to thank my wonderful family, who have always supported my academic pursuits and encouraged me to achieve my goals.

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Dedication

To Joshua, my husband, personal cheering section, and best friend. You make everything possible. Each day with you is a blessing.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The study of human behavior and, more specifically, child development is of great interest to many scholars. This interest does not stem from the belief that all humans are similar and consistently develop along the same pathways, but from the realization that human beings are unique individuals and that many differences between and within individuals await discovery or description by scholars. The current study continues the examination of individual differences by focusing on the spectrum of genuine vs. excessively contingent self-esteem. It is the specific goal of the current study to examine how an adolescent's placement on this spectrum affects their functioning within the peer group. How are adolescents placed on the excessively contingent end of the spectrum viewed by peers? How do they behave in social settings? Also of interest in the current study are factors that affect how genuine or excessively contingent an adolescent's self-esteem is. More specifically, what role do parents play in the development of excessively contingent self-views?

1.1   The Self in Childhood and Adolescence

A broad range of literature, extending from examinations of child psychopathology to work focused purely on development, confirms that children's self-views and self-esteem are integrally related to social, emotional, and cognitive development and outcomes. Although, historically, work related to the development of the self has held a strong focus on describing the components of the self (e.g., James, 1890;

1892) [1, 2], more contemporary thought has realigned to examine the *function* of the self in children's development. Sroufe (1990) [3] argues for the organizational function of children's selves, as it influences the experiences children choose to participate in and their interpretation of these experiences. Similarly, self-views are often, implicitly or explicitly, treated as motivators for children's behavior. Work within the peer literature consistently examines the impact of self-esteem on social behaviors within the peer group (see Parker et al., 2006, for a review) [4,5,6]. Crick and Dodge's (1994) [7] social information processing model emphasizes the influence of children's cognitive heuristics, which likely include schemata of the self, on children's social behavior. As will be discussed later, Leary and Downs (1995) [8] propose that self-esteem functions as a metric for determining social exclusion and is likewise an adaptation to ensure survival. Consequently, the impact of the self and self-esteem on adolescent behavior has become an important area of investigation.

Much work has examined the developmental changes associated with adolescent self-views. Adolescence is marked as a time for differentiation, and ultimate integration, of multiple selves. A primary task of adolescence is to create higher order abstractions that allow for integrating separate selves and to accept as normative that selves may vary across contexts (see Harter, Bresnick, Bouchey, & Whitesell, 1997, for a review) [9]. The importance of self-complexity is likewise echoed in the adult self literature, where multiple selves are thought to buffer the effects of negative life events [10]. Although there is a proliferation of developmental work describing the self in adolescence and how it changes during this developmental period, the determination of *how* self-esteem functions within the world of adolescents remains controversial. Possibly because much of the research examining adolescent self-esteem has focused only on the differential impacts of high and low self-esteem levels, clarification is still needed in determining the true functioning of self-esteem in adolescents' lives.

The current study will seek to further clarify the conceptualization of self-esteem in adolescence. The present study tests the proposed models in Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2. At the core of each model is the construct defined as excessively contingent self-esteem. Excessively contingent self-esteem lies at one end of a spectrum opposite genuine self-esteem. Although both constructs will be

discussed in greater detail later, briefly put adolescents with genuine self-esteem possess a stable core self that allows them to maintain relative consistency in their self-views throughout the positive and negative experiences of life. On the other side, adolescents with excessively contingent self-esteem are so strongly invested in external feedback that their self-views fluctuate drastically from extreme highs to extreme lows as they encounter life's achievements and failures. It should be noted that the current study is not arguing that it is inherently maladaptive for a child's self-views to be partially based on external feedback from their environment. Rather, maladaptation occurs when a child's self-views are almost solely dependent on the achievement of goals and standards. Elements of family interaction will be examined as possible predictors of children's excessively contingent self-esteem. Specifically, parental behaviors and communications that convey to the child a message that they are only worthwhile if they meet standards set by the parent, defined in the current study as conditional parental regard, are hypothesized to predict adolescent formation of excessively contingent self-esteem. That is, the predominant linking of parental approval with the meeting of external standards is anticipated to lay the foundations for excessively contingent self-esteem in adolescents. Lastly, these excessively contingent self-views are predicted to predispose adolescents to hyper-investment in social relationships, which result in both negative social behaviors such as aggression and friendship jealousy and positive social outcomes such as peer acceptance and prosocial behavior.

In the following review, I will first discuss the impact of the family context on children's self-views. A description of the movement within the self literature towards a multifaceted self-view will then be provided, followed by theoretical and empirical work linking excessively contingent self-esteem to peer outcomes. Lastly, an overview will be provided of empirical and theoretical support for our models of excessively contingent self-esteem and its influence on adolescent adjustment.
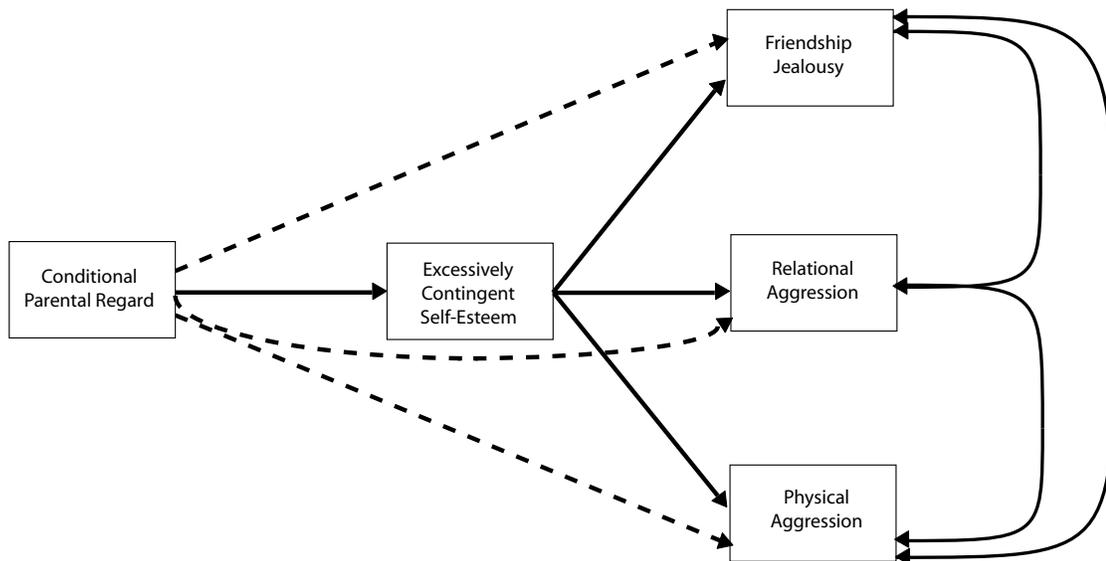
Figure 1.1. Proposed mediational model of conditional parental regard, excessively contingent self-esteem, and children's aggression and friendship jealousy.
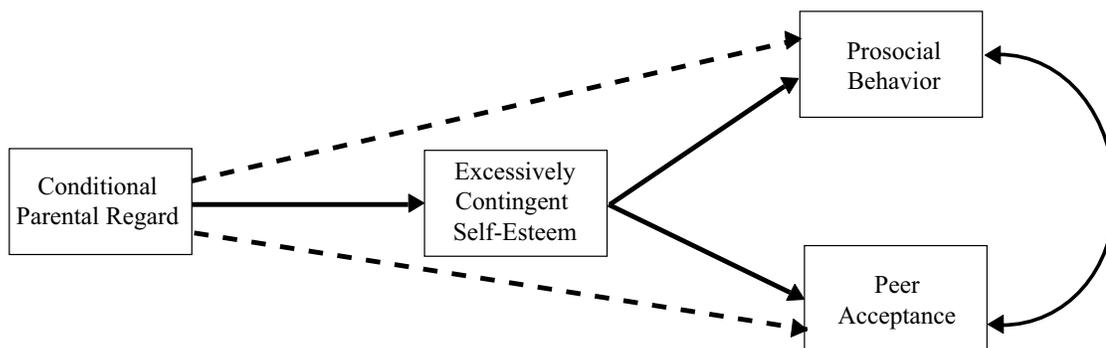
Figure 1.2. Proposed mediational model of conditional parental regard, excessively contingent self-esteem, and children's prosocial behavior and peer acceptance.

1.2 Contributions of the Family to Children's Self Development

Before adolescence, children spend the majority of their time in the family context. Such high levels of interaction make the family an integral player in children's self-development. According to Bowlby (1988), the attachments formed between children and their caregivers are profoundly linked to children's self-development [11]. Insecure attachments in children have been consistently related to more negative self-views, views of the self as socially incompetent, and lower self-esteem

Internalization

| Introjection | | Integration |

Maladjustment   Adjustment
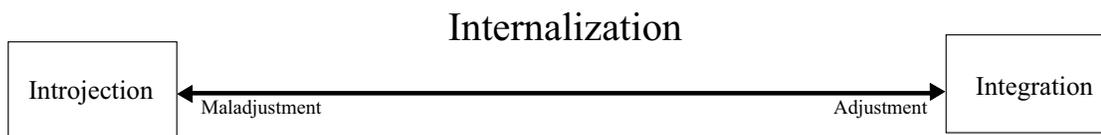
Figure 1.3. Spectrum of Internalization. Introjected regulation leads to maladjustment, whereas integrated regulation leads to adjustment.

levels. Secure attachments, on the other hand, are associated with higher levels of social competence, more positive self-views, and higher levels of self-esteem [12, 13, 14, 15, 16]. According to attachment theory, parents who are responsive to their children's needs, both concrete (food, clothing) and abstract (love, affection), provide the groundwork for children's positive self-views. Children adopt the view that they are worthy individuals, that they deserve love and acceptance, and overall that they are "good." These self-views result in the formation of high self-esteem. For insecure children, their parents failed to provide consistent love and support, leading these children to conclude that they are unworthy of love. Such working models likely lead children to adopt negative self-appraisals (for a review, see Harter, 1998, and Parker et al., 2006) [17, 4, 18, 19, 20].

Moving from the broader concept of attachment, perhaps the most compelling mechanism through which the family impacts a child's self is through communication. The Symbolic Interaction view, also referred to as the Looking Glass Self perspective, proposes that children develop their own self-views based on the perspectives that other individuals have of them. The perspectives of others eventually become internalized by the child to represent his or her own conception of the self. This theoretical perspective ultimately emphasizes the role of social interaction in children's development of self-views [21, 22]. One implication of the Symbolic Interaction view is that the perspectives of family members strongly impact children, due to the fact that children are frequently exposed to these views and value their opinions (see Segrin & Flora, 2005) [23]. Children become aware of how others perceive them through communication and interaction [21, 22]. Depending on the quality and content of parental communications, including whether it is supportive, psychologically controlling, or dominant, children will develop different self-views. Supportive communications promote positive and stable self-views, whereas controlling or dominant communications promote negative and unstable

views of the self [24, 25, 26, 27].

Symbolic interactionists argue that children construct reflected self-appraisals based on how others, including family members, perceive them [21, 22]. These reflected self-appraisals are typically internalized by children so that in time they come to reflect the child's own opinion of him or herself. Once these views are internalized, it follows that children will engage in behaviors that are consistent with their self-views. According to self-determination theory [28, 29, 30], however, individuals vary in the method in which behaviors and values linked to self-appraisals are internalized (see Figure 1.3). Some children perceive the inherent importance of particular behaviors or goals and integrate these behaviors into their sense of self. These behaviors become self-determined by the individual, ultimately making up a core component of their selves and resulting in what the current study will label genuine self-esteem, defined as a solid sense of self characterized by an accurate understanding of one's skills and abilities. Possessing genuine self-esteem enables an individual to maintain a consistent self-view even in the face of external failures or triumphs. Other children fail to integrate these behaviors and goals into their selves, instead creating an introjected state where these behaviors remain external to a child's self. These children engage in particular behaviors and goal-setting because their sense of self-worth depends on it; only by meeting these standards will family members and other individuals perceive them as good and worthwhile. The perceptions of others are eventually translated into the children's own perceptions, wherein they perceive themselves as worthwhile and competent only when these standards are met. These introjected values result in what the current study will label excessively contingent self-esteem (previously referred to as contingent self-esteem) [29], defined as feelings of self-worth that are strongly influenced by external experiences. These individuals are incapable of maintaining their self-views if they do not receive external support for their self-esteem, such as success at a valued task or acceptance from a valued individual. Excessively contingent self-esteem is considered to be a component of a broader facet of self-esteem: fragile self-esteem, which describes self-views that are vulnerable to threat and are associated with self-enhancement strategies (e.g., self-handicapping) and self-protective strategies (e.g., hostility against the source of the threat) (see Kernis & Paradise, 2002; Greenier, Kernis, & Waschull, 1995) [31, 32]. Although the

current study's interest is in the spectrum of genuine vs. excessively contingent self-esteem, other work focuses on the broader spectrum of genuine (sometimes referred to as "secure") vs. fragile self-esteem [26, 31, 33, 34].

Deci and Ryan (1995) argue that autonomy is the key link between self-appraisals and genuine vs. excessively contingent self-esteem [29]. If children are allowed opportunities for autonomous behavior and agency in developing their self-esteem, then they will successfully integrate self-appraisals and create a genuine self-esteem. If a child's autonomy is suppressed, which within the family occurs as a result of overly controlling and contingent parental communication and behavior [35, 36], it will result in an overreliance on the opinions and beliefs of others and overall excessively contingent self-esteem. Ultimately, both the symbolic interactionist and self-determination theories argue that family can be seen as providing the environment through which children develop an either adaptive or maladaptive sense of self.

Of particular interest to the current study is the link between parental communication and children's development of genuine vs. excessively contingent self-esteem. Although there is empirical support linking autonomy-supportive parenting to the integrated internalization of values and behaviors [35, 37], no studies to date have explicitly examined the impact of parental communication on children's genuine vs. excessively contingent self-esteem. Two studies have examined the impact of parental communication on children's development of the broader construct of fragile self-esteem, though. Kernis, Brown, and Brody (2000) demonstrated that parental communications of psychological control, such as controlling and contingent communication patterns, promoted fragile self-esteem in children [26]. Expanding on this link, Assor, Roth, and Deci (2004) proposed that parental conditional regard, wherein a parent's affection and approval is predominantly given when the child displays particular behaviors or achieves particular outcomes and withdrawn when the child fails to meet these standards, is a dominant communication pattern strongly linked to children's introjection of self-appraisals [36]. Through such conditional approval from their parents, children fail to integrate values and beliefs into their own self-regulation repertoires. Rather, they form an introjected regulatory style where they perform actions merely as a means of obtaining parental acceptance, which in turn translates into a fragile form of self-

esteem. Although these children may engage in socially appropriate behaviors, they perform these tasks to maintain parental, and later personal, approval and not due to their own independent choice of actions. Their behavior is coerced by their own standards, as opposed to being an integrated form of their selves. Ultimately demonstrating significant correlations between parental conditional regard and both introjected self-appraisals and fragile self-esteem (i.e., self-esteem instability), Assor et al. (2004) provide insight into the particular components of parental communication which influence children's development of fragile self-esteem and its subcomponents, including excessively contingent self-esteem.

Along the same lines, Kamins and Dweck (1999) examined the differential effect of person vs. process feedback on children's self-views and behaviors [38]. Like parental conditional regard, person feedback evaluates a child based on their specific behaviors or performance on a task. Process feedback focuses instead on the evaluation of a child's strategies or effort used during a task [38]. When faced with person feedback, children demonstrated more negative self-views after making an error, including seeing themselves as less good, nice, and smart, in comparison to their peers who received process feedback. Kamins and Dweck (1999) argue that person feedback teaches children that they are good only when they meet particular goals and are bad when they fail to achieve those goals. Such outcome-focused feelings of self-worth embody excessively contingent self-esteem [29].

Both theoretical and empirical work support the important role family communication plays in children's developing self-esteem. Recent support narrows this relationship, with findings suggesting specifically that conditional regard and approval from parents prevents children from integrating the values and goals set by their parents and leads to the development of fragile self-esteem. As Kernis and Paradise (2002) discuss, one manifestation of these fragile self-views is characterized by excessively contingent self-esteem [31]. Positive self-evaluations are maintained only when these children receive positive feedback from others and their surrounding environment. Failure to achieve goals or receive approval likewise leads to deflated and negative self-evaluations.

1.3 Children's Self-Esteem as a Multifaceted Construct

As the work of self-determination theory [28, 29, 30, 36] suggests, tracking familial predictors of children's self-esteem requires a more intricate conceptualization of self-esteem beyond the unidimensional construction of high or low level. For several decades, the focus of the self-esteem literature was on self-esteem level: Is an individual's self-esteem high or low, positive or negative? Researchers largely assumed that high self-esteem was related to positive outcomes for children and low self-esteem to negative outcomes. Although possessing a certain logic, the support for this stance has not been persuasive. Whereas some work points to the detrimental effects of low self-esteem on children's social functioning [6, 39, 40], several studies have failed to find any associations between low self-esteem and aggression (e.g., Jang & Thornberry, 1998; Rigby & Slee, 1993; Salmivalli et al., 1999) [41, 42, 43].

Kernis and colleagues [31, 32, 34, 44]took these contradictory findings within the self literature to suggest that other factors are operating within self-esteem to create these variable findings. In an attempt to unify the opposing findings of the self literature, these researchers constructed a view of self-esteem as a multi-faceted construct. Rather than viewing self-esteem as unidimensional (high vs. low), self-esteem was conceptualized as varying along four different dimensions: level, implicit vs. explicit, contingency, and stability. Self-esteem level was no longer viewed as a lone construct, but was instead viewed as independent of the other three dimensions of self-esteem [31, 32, 34, 44].

The theoretical basis for the construction of multi-faceted self-esteem partially stems from self-determination theory [28,29], wherein a distinction is made between genuine and excessively contingent self-esteem. Kernis and his colleagues expanded on this conceptualization, describing how the consideration of fragile self-esteem and its multiple components provides a framework for understanding self-esteem as a multi-faceted construct [26, 31, 33, 34]. A fragile self-view could involve various combinations of the different facets, including: high unstable self-esteem, high contingent self-esteem, or low implicit/high explicit self-esteem. Despite the variability in how fragile self-views may be expressed, application of self-determination

theory argues for a single antecedent of fragile self-views: introjection of goals and behaviors, wherein a child has internalized the standard that they are worthwhile and good only when these goals are met or behaviors are performed [28, 29].

Fragile self-views are linked with defensiveness to self-esteem threats, excessive self-enhancing and self-protective strategies, and aggressive and hostile behavior [45, 46, 47]. Therefore, even if an individual possesses high self-esteem, if it is fragile in nature that individual is much more likely to lash out against threats to their self-esteem in comparison to an individual with genuine high self-esteem. By examining these different facets of self-esteem, researchers are able to interpret the previously contradictory findings of the self-esteem level literature. One of the more promising avenues clarifying the link between children's self-esteem and peer outcomes involves the consideration of individual differences in one facet of fragile self-esteem: contingency.

As previously mentioned, excessively contingent self-esteem is a form of fragile self-esteem. Unlike self-esteem level, which describes individuals' general, characteristic, and consistent feelings of self-worth [32, 48], Deci and Ryan (1995) argue that excessively "contingent self-esteem refers to feelings about oneself that result from - indeed, are dependent on - matching some standard of excellence or living up to some interpersonal or intrapsychic expectations (p.32)" [29]. Individuals with excessively contingent self-esteem are focused on their performance on different tasks and with how others might be evaluating them [33].

1.4 Excessively Contingent Self-Esteem and Peer Outcomes

Individuals with excessively contingent self-esteem place great importance on performing competently and meeting standards. When behaviors result in positive outcomes and evaluations, these individuals feel validated and their overall sense of personal value is strengthened. On the other hand, when an individual receives negative feedback, extreme feelings of incompetence and shame are likely [31]. Failure is particularly painful for individuals with excessively contingent self-esteem and strong efforts, including various defensive strategies, might be taken to ensure

that they are able to maintain valued standards [29].

Consistent with these ideas, excessively contingent self-esteem has been linked to hostile responses to self-esteem threats [45] and aggressive responding to various threatening situations, including jealous provocations (i.e., a third party is monopolizing your best friend) [49]. Due to the nature of excessively contingent self-esteem, reactively and instrumentally aggressive behaviors are likely elicited from these children as a means of obtaining or maintaining the contingencies upon which their self-views are based. Therefore, it is important to consider the basis of these contingencies.

Leary and Downs (1995) propose that self-esteem is an adaptive tool that functions as a sociometer, measuring social acceptance and rejection [8]. Self-esteem, they argue, is largely tied to an individual's social life. Citing the "need to belong" theory [50], Leary and Downs (1995) note that inclusion within the social group is evolutionarily adaptive and a necessary motivation for an individual's survival. In order to monitor social status within the group, self-esteem emerged as an indicator of social acceptance or rejection. When it is perceived that social rejection is occurring, self-esteem drops and negative affective reactions are triggered which elicit interventions from the individual to improve their social status. Empirical evidence supports this proposal, with studies demonstrating that perceived exclusion from the social group lowers self-esteem [51, 52] and that situations which threatened self-esteem led individuals to seek social approval [53].

The sociometer perspective of self-esteem supports the important role social approval and peer interactions play in children's lives. Similarly, Harter (1990) has demonstrated that children's self-esteem becomes more strongly linked with peer approval during the developmental shift into adolescence. In particular, approval from peers in the public domain, such as classmates, is significantly predictive of adolescent self-esteem [54]. Both work suggests that children who develop excessively contingent self-esteem will base a large portion of their self-esteem on contingencies related to social (i.e., peer) approval.

Outcomes that are likely to result from excessively contingent self-esteem are aggression within the peer group, friendship jealousy, prosocial behavior, and peer acceptance. All of these behaviors or statuses are social in nature. Aggression and friendship jealousy are typically evoked by some form of social threat. For exam-

ple, multiple studies have demonstrated that provocations from peers which are socially threatening evoke aggressive responding in children [49, 55]. Others have demonstrated that aggression can also serve as a means of obtaining and maintaining peer acceptance when paired with other social skills [56]. Similarly, friendship jealousy emerges when a child perceives the socially threatening context where their best friendship is threatened by overtures from an interloper [5]. Children with excessively contingent self-esteem find threats to their self-esteem particularly provocative [45, 49]. In adolescence, the current study argues that self-esteem threats will often take the form of social exclusion or lack of social approval. Considering that both aggression and friendship jealousy are inherently tied to social approval and are in essence reactions to perceived social threats or are direct efforts to avoid social exclusion, aggression and friendship jealousy are logical reactions when adolescents with excessively contingent self-esteem are provoked.

Given the prediction that excessively contingent self-esteem will lead to higher levels of aggression and jealousy, it may seem contradictory to also predict that these children will exhibit more prosocial behaviors and be accepted by their peers. When the motivations of children with excessively contingent self-esteem are considered, though, the basis of this prediction becomes clearer. Excessively contingent self-esteem in adolescence is likely to be strongly based on social approval and success. When children fail at this, feelings of worthlessness or hostility may promote children to be aggressive. These children might also be hyper-vigilant of threats to their friendships, expressing higher levels of friendship jealousy due to their motivation for protecting their friendships. It is also likely that these children will take more instrumental strategies towards maintaining social approval, and likewise their positive self-views. Such strategies may involve prosocial behaviors and, as a result, these children will be more accepted within the peer group.

Hawley (2003) [56] has recently proposed that children should not be considered to lie on a continuum of adjustment where aggressive children are present at one end and prosocial children at the other. Rather, Hawley argues that some children may effectively use both aggression/coercion and prosocial skills to obtain social approval. Empirical data confirm that these children, dubbed by Hawley as "bistrategic controllers", are effective users of both aggression and prosocial behaviors as a means of asserting control over their social relationships and main-

taining or obtaining resources from the peer group [56, 57]. The present study contends that children with excessively contingent self-esteem embody these bistrategic strategies. Due to their extreme investment in social approval, they are likely to use a variety of measures in order to maintain their social standing and acceptance within the peer group. Although this investment might lead them to become aggressive or jealous when threatened, these children might also use prosocial strategies and instrumental aggressive strategies to achieve acceptance within the peer group. Given findings demonstrating that prosocial behavior can be a *result* of self-esteem threats (e.g., Apsler, 1975) [53], it should be noted that the prosocial behavior of children with excessively contingent self-esteem might also be reactive in nature.

Regardless of whether it is reactive or instrumental in nature, the behavior of children with excessively contingent self-esteem serves a function. This point is echoed in Hawley's work examining bistrategic children [56, 57], which emphasizes how behaviors that, on the surface, might appear maladjusted are actually functional in nature. Aggression, either physical or relational, serves a purpose in the social context within which it occurs. In the case of children with excessively contingent self-esteem, these children might use aggression to ward off threat or to proactively attain goals. For example, a child with excessively contingent self-esteem who is humiliated by a classmate in front of his peers would perceive the situation as a threat to his social status, and likewise to his self-esteem. Based on the current study's predictions, this child will likely lash out with physical aggression against the classmate as a means of diffusing the threat. Similarly, a child with excessively contingent self-esteem might spread rumors that a rival peer has engaged in behavior deemed inappropriate by the peer group (e.g., engages in risky sexual behavior, does drugs, cheated on a test) as a means of denigrating her rival's status and likewise boosting her own. In each of these situations, the child's aggression was a functional response to the situation and aided the child in obtaining a desired outcome. Similar arguments could be made for children's friendship jealousy and prosocial behavior. When an interloper is dominating the attention of a best friend, jealous responses from the child, such as spreading rumors about the interloper or paying extra care or attention to the best friend, would be a functional attempt at saving the best-friendship. Likewise, cooperating with peers and

helping peers in need is a functional means for children with excessively contingent self-esteem to obtain and maintain peer approval.

Before moving forward, it is important to note that the literature examining fragile self-views has predominantly focused on one particular configuration: individuals with fragile self-views and high self-esteem level. That is, empirical and theoretical work has focused on how positive self-views interact with fragility of self-views. On the whole, both theoretical and empirical work have neglected the implications for fragile self-views when feelings of self-worth are negative. In their review, Kernis and Waschull (1995) summarized empirical evidence for both high fragile and low fragile self-esteem, only to conclude that the findings regarding low fragile self-esteem are at best inconclusive [58].

The current study will not examine the interaction between excessively contingent self-esteem and self-esteem level. Excessively contingent self-esteem is viewed in the current study as a construct that will similarly influence adolescents regardless of their self-esteem level. Whether an individual possesses general feelings of worthlessness or happiness with him or herself, the basis for any positive self-views they may possess is still of great importance. Both individuals with high self-esteem and individuals with low self-esteem may excessively invest whatever positive self-views they have in external feedback. Likewise, when these excessively contingent self-views are not supported by achievements or the meeting of goals, individuals with both high self-esteem and low self-esteem will experience shame, feelings of worthlessness, and a general deflation in their positive self-views. That is, individuals with either high self-esteem or low self-esteem that is excessively contingent will experience failure the same way. As a result, excessively contingent self-esteem will predispose both high self-esteem and low self-esteem individuals to aggression, friendship jealousy, as well as prosocial behaviors and higher levels of peer acceptance. Therefore, the current study will control for self-esteem level, thus demonstrating that excessively contingent self-esteem is a unique facet of the self beyond self-esteem level, but will not examine interactions between contingency and level of self-esteem.

1.5 Aggression, Prosocial Behavior, and Friendship Jealousy

Aggression is broadly defined as "behavior that is aimed at harming or injuring another person or persons" (Parke & Slaby, 1983, p. 50) [59], although such behavior may take many forms that warrant separate classifications. Initially harm and injury were conceived in terms of physical attacks. Physical/overt aggression describes harm inflicted through actual or threatened damage to an individual's physical well-being and includes such physical acts as hitting, punching, kicking, or threatening to physically attack another person [60, 61]. Viewing aggression as a purely physical assault has since been recognized as a limited definition and the source of inaccurate impressions of females as largely unaggressive in nature [62]. In recent years, the study of aggression has benefitted from significant improvements in the classification, categorization, and general understanding of aggression, resulting in the identification and investigation of relational aggression (also referred to as social or indirect aggression [63]).

Although definitions of relational aggression vary from researcher to researcher, the present study will apply the definition used by Crick and colleagues, which describes behaviors that seek to harm others by damaging or manipulating an individual's relationships within the peer group [64, 65, 66]. Such relationally aggressive behaviors include threatening to withdraw friendship unless one gets one's own way, excluding a peer from the group as an act of retaliation, or spreading rumors about the child [65, 66].

The negative impact of aggression has been documented across development, from preschool, through middle childhood, and progressing into young adulthood (see Crick et al., 1999, and Underwood, 2002, for a review) [67, 63]. Aggressive children perform more poorly in school [68, 69] and are less likely than their non-aggressive peers to graduate from high school [70]. Aggressive children also are more vulnerable to loneliness and depression [66] and are likely to develop social-information processing biases that limit their social skills [7, 71, 72]. Of particular interest is work showing that aggressive children are more likely to be rejected and victimized by their peers [60, 66, 73, 74]. Bierman (2004) describes the negative spiral that aggression inflicts on children's peer worlds. Bierman (2004) argues

that the peer rejection and victimization evoked by an aggressive child's behavior act as catalysts for numerous aspects of maladjustment. Aggressive children elicit reputational biases from their peers, where peers become selectively attentive to the socially inappropriate acts of these aggressive children and ignore any prosocial behaviors. Aggressive children become increasingly socially ostracized by the peer group and are prevented opportunities for quality social interactions and friendships. As a result of their rejection from the normative peer group, aggressive children often seek out acceptance in deviant peer groups [75]. In their work, Cairns and Cairns (1994) support this trend, arguing that aggressive children are still central in certain social groups. Although aggressive children are often ostracized by their non-aggressive peers, they are able to develop strong social networks with other aggressive and deviant peers. In other words, the problem with aggressive children is not necessarily their rejection by all peers, but rather their affiliation with other deviant and aggressive children [76].

As previously mentioned, newer work indicates that not all aggressive children are rejected by their non-deviant peers or, for that matter, maladjusted. Children who aggress in an instrumental way, such that they are offensively attempting to achieve self-serving outcomes via aggressive tactics, do not demonstrate academic deficits or problems with regulating frustration [56, 77, 78]. When children pair prosocial strategies with instrumental aggression, peers perceive these children as more popular and teachers perceive them as equal in social acceptance to prosocial children [56]. Based on this work, Hawley (2003) argues that some children are effective at balancing the affiliative competencies of "getting along" and "getting ahead". This is accomplished by using both aggression/coercion and prosocial behaviors within the peer group in a proactive form to achieve what they want. Hawley argues this balancing act has roots in evolutionary theory, viewing the combination of methods for obtaining dominance in the social group (i.e., aggression/coercion) and methods for promoting personal affiliation within the social group (i.e., prosocial strategies of control) as adaptive by providing an individual with the best chance for obtaining resources within the social group. Hawley's work supports the current study's assertion that children with excessively contingent self-esteem can exhibit both high levels of aggression and prosocial behavior, and that this particular combination of behaviors may aid children in achieving

higher status and acceptance within the peer group.

A relatively recent addition to the peer relations literature, friendship jealousy is another compelling factor in the process of children's social adjustment. Jealousy in general has been defined as a negative or aversive reaction to an individual's perceived threats to the quality or existence of their relationship [79, 80, 81]. Descriptions of jealousy point to a triangular relationship between the individual, the partner, and the third party interloper. Although a close relationship exists between the individual and their partner, the individual still feels threatened by the perceived or actual threat to their relationship by the interloper (see White, 1999, and White, 1981, for a review) [82, 83]. Particularly in romantic contexts, where exclusivity in the relationship is socially expected, jealous individuals may show a specific concern that their relationship will end due to the interloper's involvement [80]. These fears are not restricted to romantic involvements, however. Recent work by Parker and his colleagues has demonstrated the important role jealousy plays in children's friendships (e.g., Parker et al., 2005; Roth & Parker, 2001) [5, 84]).

In conceptualizing romantic jealousy, Pfeiffer and Wong (1989) and White (1981) [85, 83] have both argued that it is composed of three interrelated components: emotional, cognitive, and behavioral jealousy. Emotional jealousy is an individual's vulnerability to experiencing negative emotional reactions to relational infidelity. Cognitive jealousy, on the other hand, is typified by currently active worry or suspicions regarding the fidelity of the partner. Lastly, behavioral jealousy is the manifestation of coping and/or protective strategies when infidelity is perceived. Expanding on models of romantic jealousy, Parker et al. (2005) [5] conceptualized a form of jealousy pertinent during childhood and adolescence: friendship jealousy, defined as jealousy resulting from a close friend's actual or anticipated interest in another peer. Parker et al. (2005) highlight that the individual must perceive that the partner's relationship with the interloper threatens the existing relationship and that it is this threat that leads to negative jealous reactions.

Much like adult romantic jealousy (e.g., Bringle, Renner, Terry, & Davis, 1983) [86], individual differences in children's vulnerability to friendship jealousy have been found [5]. Similar to aggression, children who display high levels of friendship

jealousy are at risk for a variety of negative outcomes. For example, children prone to jealousy display problematic cognitions, such as engaging in ruminative thought [87], lower feelings of self-worth [5], and higher levels of loneliness [5, 87]. Behaviorally, jealous children are more aggressive, particularly with regard to relational forms, and also more likely to be victimized by their peers [5]. The low popularity of jealous children reflects these cognitive and behavioral deficits, with these children possessing more enemies in their peer group [88]. Given the impact of friendship jealousy on children's overall adjustment, improving our understanding of the predictors of jealousy presents another prudent avenue of investigation for the current study.

Aggression, friendship jealousy, prosocial behavior, and peer acceptance are all inherently linked with social approval, especially during adolescence. Friendship jealousy and some forms of aggression can be viewed as reactive responses to social threat, whereas prosocial behaviors and other forms of aggression may be instrumental attempts to prevent social exclusion. As previously discussed, children with excessively contingent self-esteem are likely to hold self-views that are contingent on social approval. When threats to their social livelihood occur, it is anticipated that these children will become defensive and respond in a form that addresses the social threat. Likewise, these children will be strongly invested in obtaining social resources and status. Therefore, the current study predicts that children with excessively contingent self-esteem are likely to be characterized by aggressive behavior and friendship jealousy, as well as prosocial behavior. Due to the balance they achieve between social dominance and social affiliation, these children will also be central members of the peer group who are accepted by their peers.

1.6   Family and Peers

Considering the current study's proposal that excessively contingent self-esteem mediates the relationship between the family context and peer outcomes, the direct link between family and peers will be briefly discussed before elaborating on support for the current study's specific model. Theories ranging from attachment theory to behaviorism acknowledge the important role parents play in children's development. Because the bulk of children's early development is spent with their

primary caregivers, it is almost inevitable that caregivers leave markers of their parenting style and behaviors on their children's actions and beliefs. Although theories differ in their suggestions of the hallmarks of a good parent, an overarching theme of developmental theories is that good parenting produces more socially competent children.

Baumrind's (1966;1971;1972) classic distinction of parenting styles is perhaps the most well-known and well-cited [89, 90, 91]. Categorized on continua of nurturance and control, parents were labeled as either authoritative (high nurturance and high control), authoritarian (low nurturance and high control), or permissive (high nurturance and low control). Later expansions of Baumrind's parenting model revealed another parenting style: uninvolved (low nurturance and low control) [92]. Baumrind viewed authoritative parents as the most skillful, and this was reflected in the outcomes of children raised by authoritative parents. These children were more morally advanced [93], less likely to abuse substances [94], and overall demonstrated better social, cognitive, and emotional adjustment than their peers [91, 94, 95].

In contrast to these broad categories of parenting style, more specific parent-child behavioral patterns have emerged as important predictors of children's adjustment. For example, in his social interaction learning model, Patterson (1982;1994; Snyder & Patterson, 1995) [96, 97, 98] outlines the aversive role that coercive processes play within the parent-child context. Parents who fail to consistently enforce rules and exact discipline contribute to a pattern of coercion between themselves and their child. When parents inconsistently give in to child protests and tantrums against instructions or disciplinary measures, they orchestrate a reinforcement contingency for their child in which bad behavior is negatively reinforced by the removal of the aversive stimulus (i.e., the instruction or disciplinary action). If parents attempt to end the coercive cycle by holding fast to their rules despite the child's tantrums, the child will often escalate the level of their outburst until the parent gives into their requests, with this escalation pattern again reinforced by the parent. Not surprisingly, these coercive cycles of parent-child interaction do not remain in the home. Rather, children transfer these same tactics to their peer interactions [99]. Coercive parent-child interaction patterns contribute to children's affiliations with delinquent groups [99, 100] and aggression towards peers [101].

Parental communication in general has also been noted as an important predictor of children's adjustment. The inclusion of warmth messages, in which the parent communicates to the child that they are cared for, supported, and loved, promotes communication skills and social competency in children [23,102]. It also promotes autonomy in children, which has been shown to benefit children's academic achievement [103]. By contrast, parental communications that are excessively controlling, including use of psychological and behavioral control, undermine children's adjustment. Using communication to withdraw love from children as punishment for misbehaving or coercing children into compliant behavior stymies children's autonomous behavior and leads to both depression and delinquency [104,105]. Communications of parental support, which include responsiveness to the child's needs and provision of comfort, encouragement, and reassurance of caring [106], contribute to higher quality peer relationships [107]. Parental support provides a model of appropriate support that children are able to effectively translate into their own friendships, yielding better interpersonal skills and higher quality friendships [106]. Parental support also buffers children from various negative outcomes, including substance abuse [108] and aggression [109]. Open emotional expression, in the form of communication among family members, also supports a child's social competence and overall social adjustment (see Fitness & Duffield, 2004) [110].

In summary, parents play a major role in the overall socialization of children. As reviewed here, multiple avenues of research have demonstrated the impact of parenting behavior and communication on children's social behavior. The current study will seek to further clarify the impact of the family context on children's peer relationships by examining the mediating role of excessively contingent self-esteem.

1.7 Proposed Model

In the current study, models examining the antecedents and outcomes of excessively contingent self-esteem will be tested. It is proposed that parental communication serves as the initial predictor of children's aggression, friendship jealousy, prosocial behavior, and peer acceptance. Specifically, as supported by the work of Assor, Roth, and Deci (2004) and Kamins and Dweck (1999), parental

communications that link parental approval to the outcome of a child's behavior, as opposed to the child's effort, strongly impact a child's self-views [36, 38]. This conditional parental regard, as the current study will label it, represents a controlling communication pattern that leads children to develop an introjected, rather than integrated, set of values. Children who only receive approval from parents when they achieve particular ends or outcomes are proposed to associate their own self-esteem with the meeting of goals rather than more stable self-views that are not dependent on contingent outcomes. To demonstrate that conditional parental regard affects children's self-esteem above and beyond the influence of overall parent-child relationship quality, measures of general parenting quality will also be used in the current study to control for these factors.

Deci and Ryan (1995) argue that introjection of the self leads to the development of excessively contingent self-esteem [29]. These children may possess positive views of themselves, but are only able to maintain these views when positive outcomes occur or goals are met. In the face of failure, the façade of positive self-views crumbles and these children are left to cope with a variety of negative cognitions and emotions related to themselves. Threats to self-views are typically met with hostile and aggressive responses to the producer of the threat [45, 49]. These children will also be strongly motivated to avoid failure that disconfirms their self-views.

Regarding what, specifically, children will find threatening to their self-esteem, both empirical findings with adolescents [54] and more general theories of social psychology (i.e., the sociometer perspective) [8] emphasize the importance of peer acceptance in children's self-views. Threats to peer acceptance, including provocations of social ostracism or intrusion of interlopers into the friendship dyad, should elicit hostile responding from children with excessively contingent self-esteem. Aggression remains a likely response to these threats, although friendship jealousy has also emerged as a potential reaction. With their self-esteem highly invested in social success, including the maintenance of exclusive friendships, children with excessively contingent self-esteem are at-risk for experiencing jealous emotions when their best friendships are intruded upon by others. These children are also likely to employ prosocial behaviors or aggression as a means of obtaining social power and regard, thereby reinforcing their self-views.

As demonstrated in Figures 1.1 and 1.2, the current study proposes a mediational model wherein conditional parental regard impacts children's aggression, friendship jealousy, prosocial behavior, and peer acceptance through the mediation of children's excessively contingent self-esteem. The current study argues that conditional parental regard leads children to invest in external outcomes, including social approval, and that this investment will promote the expression of aggression, jealousy, and prosocial behavior in these children and likewise result in higher levels of peer acceptance. These direct associations will be minimized, though, when children's excessively contingent self-esteem is allowed to mediate these relationships and likewise provide further insight into the conceptualization of children's self-esteem and its ultimate impact on adjustment.

CHAPTER 2

Method

2.1 Participants

Participants of the current study included 264 students attending an ethnically diverse, urban middle school. Participants were approximately equally distributed according to sex (Males = 123, 47%, Females = 141, 53%) and ethnicity (White = 109, 41%, Black = 155, 59%). Participants included students in both seventh (N = 150, 57%) and eighth (N = 114, 43%) grade and participant ages ranged from 12 to 15 years old (age 12 = 38, 14%, age 13 = 128, 48%, age 14 = 86, 33%, age 15 = 12, 5%). The majority of students at this school were of low socioeconomic status, reflected by the fact that the majority of students at the school qualify for the free or reduced lunch program.

2.2 Procedure

Data for the current study were collected in conjunction with a larger research project in the Spring of 2006. Parental consent forms and letters detailing the study were sent home to the families of all potential participants and parents were given two weeks to return the consent forms to allow their child to participate. As an incentive for returning permission slips, students in grades that attained greater than a 90% return rate, regardless of consent, were permitted a "dress-down" day

from their school uniforms. All participants were treated according to the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct [111].

Measures were administered to groups of approximately 30 participants in a classroom setting on two separate occasions. Assessment sessions lasted approximately 40 minutes each and the two testing sessions were consecutive. During administration, a trained research assistant read the instructions for each measure aloud to participants. Participants then read the questions silently to themselves and completed the questionnaires. Additional measures unrelated to the current study were also collected during the assessment sessions.

2.3 Measures: Primary Variables

2.3.1 Excessively Contingent Self-Esteem

Participants' excessively contingent self-esteem was measured using a modified version of Paradise and Kernis' (1999) [45] Contingent Self-Esteem Scale (CSES). The CSES was designed to assess individuals' insecurity surrounding their ability to live up to standards, meet expectations, and perform in a competent manner [33]. Participants were originally asked to rate 15 questions on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = Not at all true of me, 5 = Very true of me) based on how true each statement was of them. Upon scoring the CSES, participants demonstrated inconsistent ratings on the reverse-scored items, indicating that these items were confusing and poorly worded. Due to the confusing nature of these reverse-scored items (e.g., "The way I feel about myself doesn't change if I meet the standards that other people have set for me."), they were excluded from further analyses. The remaining eight items included statements such as "The way I think about myself depends on how well I do things" and "The overall way I feel about myself depends on how well I live up to the standards I set for myself". Contingent self-esteem scores were determined by averaging each participant's ratings for the eight items (alpha = .79).

2.3.2 Conditional Parental Regard

Conditional parental regard was assessed using a total of 18 items. Items were included to assess the degree to which parental approval was made contingent on achievement and controlling parenting practices, both of which encompass the conceptualization of conditional parental regard [36]. Fourteen items were pooled from multiple pre-existing questionnaires and four items were specifically developed for the current study. Six items were modified from Assor, Roth, and Deci's (2004) Domain-Specific Perceptions of Parental Conditional Regard Scale (DPPCRS) [36]. These items assessed participants' perceptions that approval from their parents was dependent on their success in the four domains (i.e., pro-social, sports, emotion control, and academic) measured (e.g., "I feel like I would lose my parents' affection if I did poorly at school" and "I feel like I would lose my parents' affection if I showed fear or cried"). One additional item was added to assess the social domain of parental approval (i.e., "I feel like I would lose my parents' affection if I didn't have a lot of friends"). Eight items modified from the initial formulation of the Psychological Control Scale-Youth Self-Report (PCS-YSR) [104] were also included. These items assessed parental communications of invalidating feelings (e.g., "My parents are always trying to change how I feel or think about things"), guilt induction (e.g., "My parents tell me about all the things they have done for me"), and love withdrawal (e.g., "If I hurt my parents' feelings, they stop talking to me until I please them again"), and were included in the current study to assess participants' perceptions of parental emotional dominance (i.e., invalidating feelings and guilt induction) and contingent manipulation of the parent-child bond (i.e., love withdrawal). Lastly, the current study also created items to specifically address the outcome-focused parenting style characterized by conditional parental regard. Four items were developed to measure participants' perceptions that their parents value positive outcomes over the effort put into a task (e.g., "My parents think winning is the most important thing" and "My parents only care about my grades, not how hard I tried at school"). Participants completed all 18 items using a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = Not at all true, 5 = Very true). Conditional parental regard scores were determined by averaging each participant's ratings for the 18 items (alpha = .85).

2.3.3 Friendship Jealousy

Participants' friendship jealousy was assessed using the self-report Friendship Jealousy Questionnaire (FJQ) [5]. The FJQ presented 27 short vignettes describing hypothetical social situations involving the child's best friend and potential emotional reactions to those situations. Fifteen vignettes represent primary items, in which a peer interloper presents an ambiguous threat to the child's best friendship. For these primary vignettes, participants indicated the level of jealousy they felt according to a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 0 = Not at all true of me, 4 = Really true of me). The remaining 12 items were filler items. The FJQ demonstrated excellent internal consistency (alpha = .94). Friendship jealousy scores were determined by averaging each participant's ratings for the 15 vignettes.

2.3.4 Aggression and Prosocial Behavior

Children's self-reported aggressive and prosocial behavior was assessed using 17 items drawn from two scales: Crick's (1991) Children's Peer Relationship Scale [66, 112] and Paquette and Underwood's (1999) Revised Social Experience Questionnaire (RSEQ) [113]. Items from the RSEQ were modified to assess children who were perpetrators of aggression, rather than victims. Participants were asked to rate the 17 items on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = Never, 5 = All the time) according to how often they performed the particular actions described in the item. Items assessed physical/overt aggression (e.g., "How often do you hit other students at school?"), relational aggression (e.g., "How often do you leave other students out on purpose when it is time to hang out or do an activity?"), and prosocial behavior (e.g., "How often do you try to cheer up other students when they are sad or upset?"). Physical/overt aggression items assessed a child's frequency of physically harming a peer, attempting to physically harm a peer, and directly verbally assaulting a peer. Relational aggression items assessed how often the child manipulated peers' social relationships. Prosocial items assessed a child's frequency of positive peer-directed behaviors. Internal consistencies for the physical/overt aggression (alpha = .83), relational aggression (alpha = .82), and prosocial behavior (alpha = .85) subscales proved adequate. Physical/overt,

relational, and prosocial scores were determined by averaging each participant's ratings for the respective subscale items.

2.3.5 Peer Acceptance

Participants' social acceptance among their peers was assessed by presenting each participant with a roster of a random sample of 25 same-sex and same-grade peers. Participants then rated each peer on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = Not at All, 5 = Really A Lot) according to how much they liked him/her. Participants were able to indicate on the form if they did not know a peer, and likewise did not rate that peer. Each participant's name appeared on the roster of a random sample of 25 other peers. The acceptance level of each participant was determined by averaging the total ratings received from his or her peers.

2.4 Measures: Control Variables

2.4.1 Self-Esteem Level

Children's self-esteem level was employed as a control variable in the current study in order to determine the impact of excessively contingent self-esteem above and beyond the effects of self-esteem level. Participants' self-esteem level was measured using the global self-worth subscale of The Self-Perception Profile for Adolescents (SPPA) [114]. Modifications to the original subscale were made in order to reduce the confusing nature of the SPPA's original format and to make the SPPA more concordant in format with the other measures used in the current study. Specifically, the original subscale presented bipolar items depicting two contrasting descriptions of a typical adolescent (e.g., left side: "some teenagers are often disappointed with themselves"; right side: "other teenagers are pretty pleased with themselves"). Parker et al. (2005) [5] successfully implemented the global self-worth subscale of the SPPA in a modified 5-point Likert scale format with a single descriptive statement (alpha = .79). Following Parker et al. (2005), participants were asked to rate five descriptive statements on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = "Not at all true of me" to 5 = "Very true of me." Descriptive statements consisted of one contrasting statement from each item on the original

SPPA global self-worth subscale. Sample items included, "I am very happy being the way I am" and "I am happy with myself most of the time." Self-esteem level was determined by averaging each participant's ratings for the five statements (alpha = .78).

2.4.2   Overall Parenting Quality

In order to ensure that the effects of conditional parental regard operated beyond those accounted for by overall parenting style and parent-child relationship quality, a control measure was included in the assessment battery. Measures of parental acceptance/involvement and parental strictness/supervision were modified from Lamborn et al.'s (1991) [115] original scales. The acceptance/involvement scale measured the degree to which participants perceived their parents as loving, responsive, and involved (e.g., "I can count on my parents to help me out if I have some kind of problem"). The strictness/supervision scale measured the participants' perceptions of parental monitoring and supervision behaviors (e.g., "My parents know exactly where I am most afternoons after school"). Participants completed a total of 17 items by selecting on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = Not at all true, 5 = Very true) how true each item was for their parents. Parenting quality scores were determined by averaging each participant's ratings for the 17 items (alpha = .86).

CHAPTER 3

Results

3.1 Descriptive Analyses

Initial descriptive analyses were conducted to examine bivariate correlations between all core variables and control variables for both Model 1 (Aggression and Friendship Jealousy) and Model 2 (Prosocial). These are presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. Separate tables are displayed according to sex. Correlations appearing above the diagonal apply to White participants, whereas those appearing below the diagonal apply to Black participants. As shown, correlations reflect patterns of association anticipated for Models 1 and 2. Specifically, significant correlations were found between conditional parental regard and excessively contingent self-esteem, relational aggression and physical aggression, self-esteem and excessively contingent self-esteem, and excessively contingent self-esteem and both relational aggression and friendship jealousy, although the strength and significance of the correlations varied by ethnicity and sex.

Table 3.1. Core variable and control variable correlations for males. White males (N = 57) are above the diagonal; Black males (N = 66) are below. *p≤0.05

Source	CPR	CSE	RA	PA	JEA	PRO	ACC	PQ	SE
Conditional Par. (CPR)		.34*	0.31*	0.13	0.30*	-0.20	-0.08	-0.50*	-0.35*
Exc. Cont. SE (CSE)	0.12		0.30*	0.18	0.37*	-0.01	0.21	-0.11	-0.12
Relational Agg. (RA)	0.20	0.15		0.69*	0.17	-0.09	0.13	-0.52*	-0.28*
Physical Agg. (PA)	0.10	0.09	0.75*		0.07	-0.06	0.14	-0.48*	-0.23
F. Jealousy (JEA)	0.13	0.14	0.05	-0.09		0.24	0.03	-0.12	-0.08
Prosocial (PRO)	0.20	0.15	-0.08	-0.06	0.29*		0.15	0.32*	0.37*
Peer Accept. (ACC)	0.05	-0.14	-0.07	0.03	-0.16	-0.06		-0.10	0.13
Parenting Qual. (PQ)	-0.12	0.15	-0.27*	-0.20	-0.06	0.14	-0.09		0.46*
SE Level (SE)	-0.20	-0.16	-0.14	-0.00	-0.26*	0.29*	0.21	0.05	

Table 3.2. Core variable and control variable correlations for females. White females (N = 52) are above the diagonal; Black females (N = 89) are below. *p ≤ 0.05

Source	CPR	CSE	RA	PA	JEA	PRO	ACC	PQ	SE
Conditional Par. (CPR)		0.24	-0.04	-0.04	0.16	0.07	-0.20	-0.24	-0.29*
Exc. Cont. SE (CSE)	0.46*		0.36*	0.19	0.41*	0.16	0.03	0.42*	-0.15
Relational Agg. (RA)	0.27*	0.27*		0.72*	0.30*	-0.32*	0.16	0.09	-0.01
Physical Agg. (PA)	0.22*	0.25*	0.82*		0.15	-0.26	0.06	0.03	-0.08
F. Jealousy (JEA)	0.43*	0.41*	0.21*	0.14		-.04	-0.09	0.12	-0.20
Prosocial (PRO)	0.16	.32*	-0.24*	-0.12	0.10		-0.02	0.17	-0.02
Peer Accept. (ACC)	-0.08	-0.03	-0.12	0.09	-0.15	0.03		-0.06	-0.02
Parenting Qual. (PQ)	-0.08	0.25*	-0.21*	-0.29*	0.02	0.30*	-0.01		0.37*
SE Level (SE)	-0.46*	-0.31*	-0.22*	-0.18	-0.37*	0.08	0.05	0.26*	

The means and standard deviations of all core variables are provided in Tables 3.3 and 3.4. Potential sex and ethnic differences were examined for all variables of interest in the two proposed models using a 2 (Sex) X 2 (Ethnicity: White, Black) ANOVA. These analyses were originally conducted using age as a covariate. Due to the limited effects of age, and to the lack of theoretical predictions for age effects, age was dropped as a variable from further analyses. Variables of interest included conditional parental regard (CPR), overall parenting quality (PQ), excessively contingent self-esteem (CSE), self-esteem level (SE), friendship jealousy (JEA), relational aggression (RA), physical aggression (PA), peer acceptance (ACC), and prosocial behavior (PRO). Results are presented in Tables 3.5 and 3.6. Significant sex differences were found for parenting quality, F(1,260) = 4.06, p = .045, excessively contingent self-esteem, F(1,260) = 3.99, p = .047, friendship jealousy, F(1,260) = 8.62, p = .004, and prosocial behavior, $F(1, 260) = 45.35, p \leq .001$. Examination of the means showed that females reported significantly higher levels of quality parenting (Females M = 3.83, sd = 0.06; Males M = 3.66, sd = 0.06), friendship jealousy (Females M = 1.07, sd = 0.07; Males M = 0.76, sd = 0.08), and prosocial behavior (Females M = 3.71, sd = 0.07; Males M = 3.08, sd = 0.07)and lower levels of excessively contingent self-esteem than males (Females M = 2.83, sd = 0.07; Males M = 3.03, sd = 0.07). Significant ethnic differences were found for physical aggression, $F(1, 260) = 5.20, p = .023$, and peer acceptance, $F(1, 260) = 33.51, p \leq .001$. Examination of the means showed that Black participants demonstrated significantly more physical aggression (Black M = 2.03, sd = 0.06; White M = 1.81, sd = 0.07)and were better liked by peers (Black M = 3.43, sd = 0.05; White M = 3.02, sd = 0.05).

3.2 Structural Equation Modeling

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to assess the fit and group differences present in both Model 1 and Model 2. Analyses were conducted using the AMOS 7.0 program [116]. Modeling was conducted using the maximum likelihood estimation algorithm. Listwise deletion resulted in a final sample size of 264 participants with complete data. Prior to conducting any SEM analyses, data were examined for violations of skewness, kurtosis, multivariate normality and indica-

Table 3.3. Means and standard deviations for the current study's independent and control variables: Conditional Parental Regard (CPR), Parenting Quality (PQ), Excessively Contingent Self-Esteem (CSE), and Self-Esteem Level (SE).

	CPR		PQ		CSE		SE	
Source	M	sd	M	sd	M	sd	M	sd
White Males	1.85	0.52	3.77	0.68	3.07	0.74	3.79	0.92
Black Males	2.01	0.63	3.55	0.72	2.98	0.76	3.95	0.92
White Females	1.84	0.54	3.80	0.70	2.85	0.77	3.65	0.87
Black Females	1.91	0.69	3.87	0.70	2.81	0.84	3.89	0.86
Totals	1.92	0.60	3.75	0.69	2.93	0.80	3.83	0.88

Table 3.4. Means and standard deviations for the current study's dependent variables: Friendship Jealousy (JEA), Relational Aggression (RA), Physical Aggression (PA), Peer Acceptance (ACC), and Prosocial Behavior (PRO).

	JEA		RA		PA		ACC		PRO	
Source	M	sd	M	sd	M	sd	M	sd	M	sd
White Males	0.87	0.83	1.73	0.56	1.84	0.63	3.01	0.60	3.15	0.66
Black Males	0.65	0.73	1.72	0.62	2.00	0.70	3.37	0.59	3.00	0.78
White Females	1.14	0.91	1.82	0.62	1.78	0.72	3.04	0.52	3.76	0.75
Black Females	1.01	0.90	1.87	0.75	2.06	0.90	3.49	0.54	3.67	0.78
Totals	0.93	0.87	1.82	0.70	1.95	0.78	3.27	0.59	3.41	0.81

Table 3.5. Sex and ethnicity differences for the current study's independent and control variables: Conditional Parental Regard (CPR), Parenting Quality (PQ), Excessively Contingent Self-Esteem (CSE), and Self-Esteem Level (SE).

		CPR		PQ		CSE		SE	
Source	df	F	p	F	p	F	p	F	p
Sex	1	0.44	0.51	**4.06**	**0.05**	**3.99**	**0.05**	0.84	0.40
Race	1	2.18	0.14	0.81	0.37	0.47	0.49	3.31	0.07
Sex × Race	1	0.41	0.52	2.68	0.10	0.04	0.84	0.13	0.72

Table 3.6. Sex and ethnicity differences for the current study's dependent variables: Friendship Jealousy (JEA), Relational Aggression (RA), Physical Aggression (PA), Peer Acceptance (ACC), and Prosocial Behavior (PRO).

		JEA		RA		PA		ACC		PRO	
Source	df	F	p	F	p	F	p	F	p	F	p
Sex	1	**8.62**	**0.01**	2.07	0.15	0.00	0.99	1.12	0.29	**45.35**	**0.00**
Race	1	2.80	0.10	0.06	0.80	**5.20**	**0.02**	**33.51**	**0.00**	1.63	0.20
Sex × Race	1	0.19	0.67	0.13	0.72	0.40	0.53	0.42	0.52	0.09	0.77

tions of multicollinearity. No signs of multicollinearity were observed. Variables of conditional parental regard, excessively contingent self-esteem, physical aggression, relational aggression, and friendship jealousy were square-root transformed to improve multivariate normality.

3.3 Model 1: Aggression and Friendship Jealousy

Following Byrne (2001, 2004) [117, 118], model fitting for Model 1 (see Figure 3.1) began with the estimation of an unconstrained baseline model with all pathways, covariances, and variances unconstrained across groups (i.e., White males, Black males, White females, Black females). The fully unconstrained model was a saturated model, χ^2 (0) = 0.00, and provided an excellent fit to the data, Normed Fit Index (NFI) = 1.00, Conditional Fit Index (CFI) = 1.00. In the interest of parsimony, pairwise parameter comparisons from this unconstrained model were examined for pathways and covariances of interest in order to determine which model components significantly differed across the four groups. A critical ratio greater than 1.96 indicated a significant group difference for that pathway or covariance.

Significant group differences were found for the pathways of conditional parental regard to excessively contingent self-esteem, parenting quality to excessively contingent self-esteem, parenting quality to self-esteem level, and for the covariance of relational aggression to physical aggression. A subsequent partially constrained model was next examined for fit. In this new model, pathways and covariances demonstrating group differences were unconstrained across groups while all remaining pathways and covariances were constrained across groups. All variances were allowed to vary across groups. The new model provided an excellent fit to the data, χ^2 (51) = 41.81, p = .817, NFI = .918, CFI = 1.00, Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .000. The comparison of the new model to the baseline model indicated no worsening in model fit with the additional imposed constraints, χ^2 difference (51) = 41.81, p = .817. Thus, this partially constrained model was adopted as the final model for Model 1.
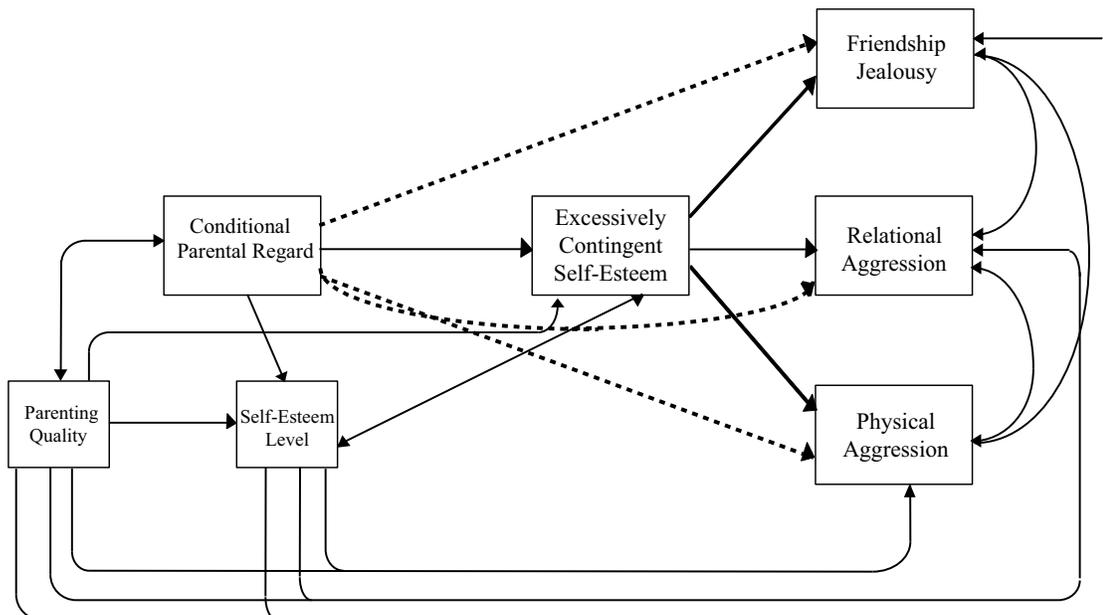
Figure 3.1. Mediational model of conditional parental regard, excessively contingent self-esteem, and children's aggression and friendship jealousy using an observed variable structure and including measures of overall parenting quality and self-esteem level as control variables. Anticipated non-significant pathways are indicated with dashed lines.
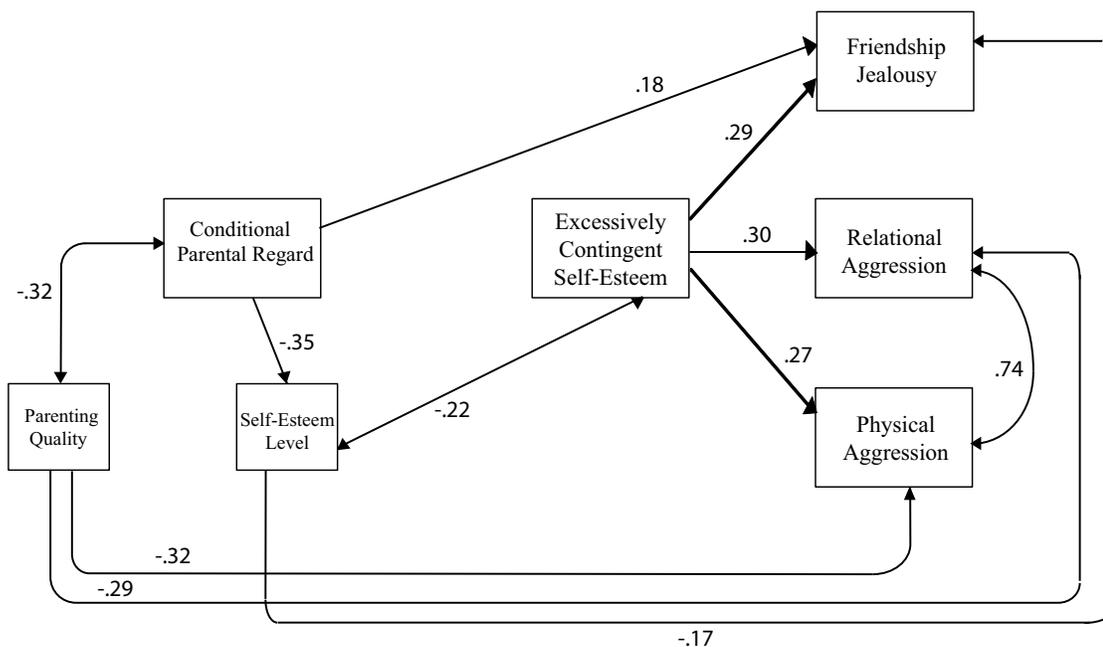
Figure 3.2. Model 1 standardized path coefficients for Black males. Non-significant pathways are not presented.
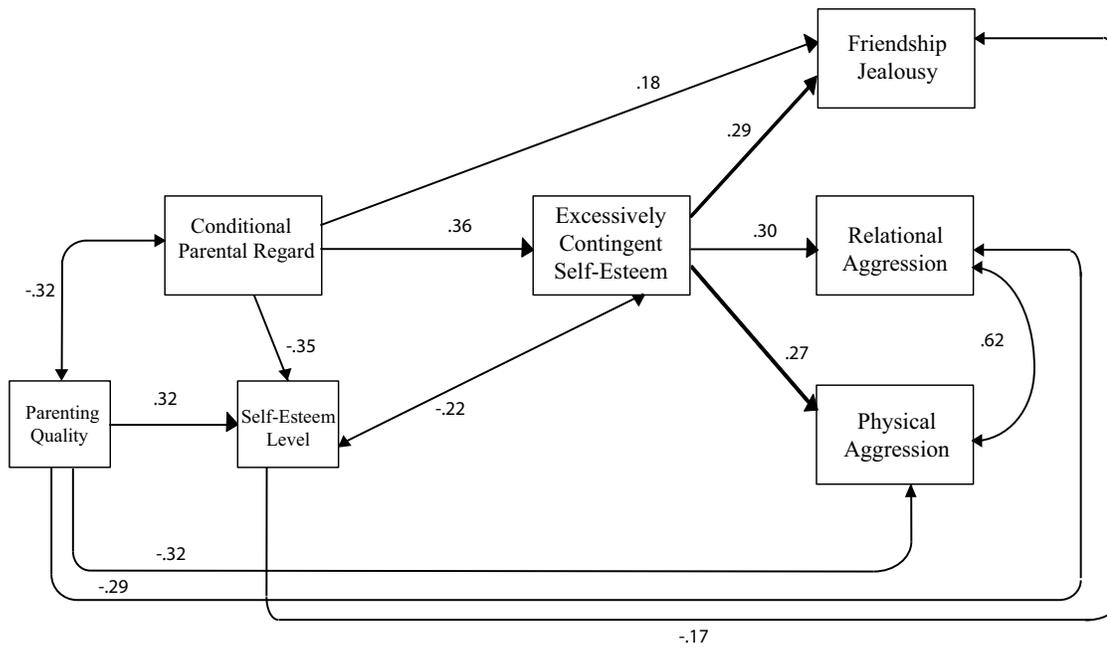
Figure 3.3. Model 1 standardized path coefficients for White males. Non-significant pathways are not presented.
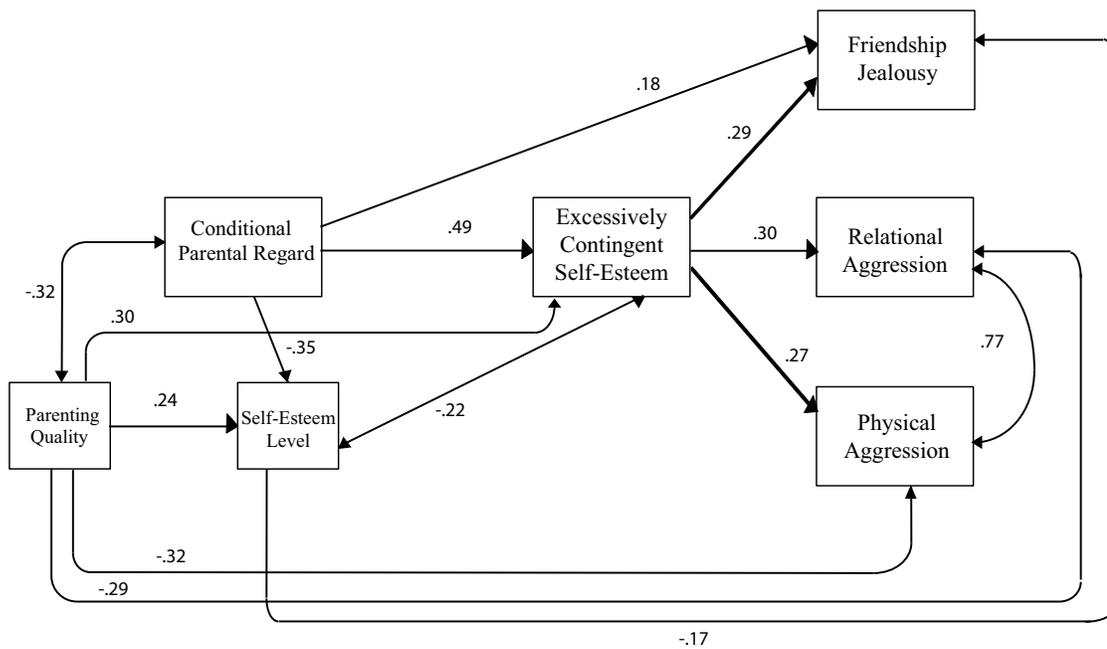
Figure 3.4. Model 1 standardized path coefficients for Black Females. Non-significant pathways are not presented.
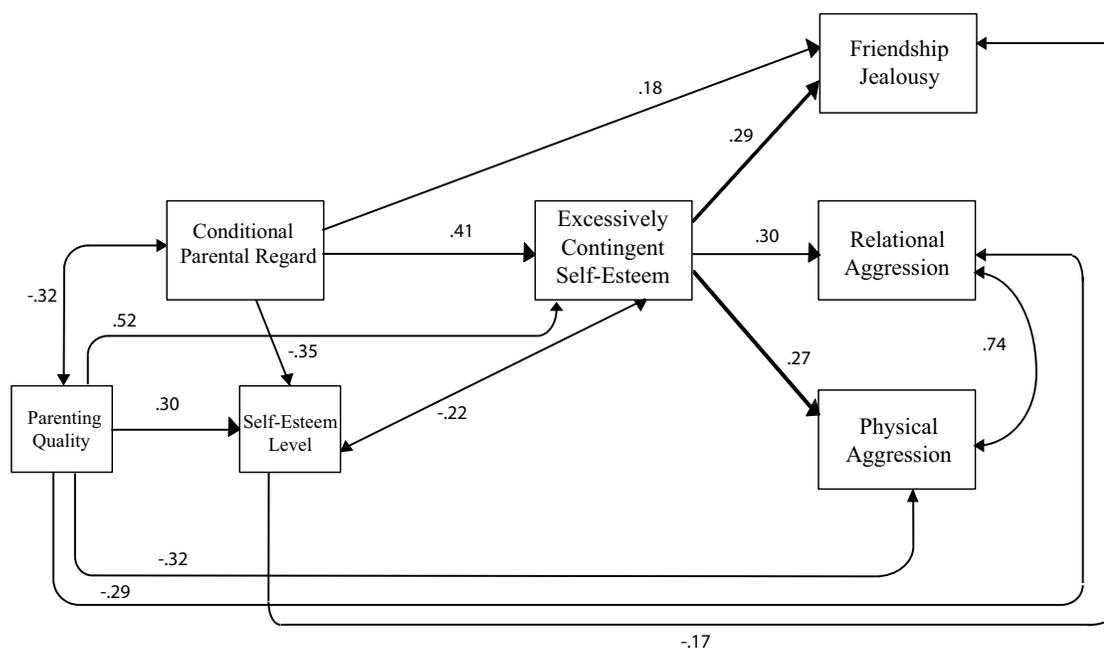
Figure 3.5. Model 1 standardized path coefficients for White Females. Non-significant pathways are not presented.

Figures 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 present the standardized path coefficients and covariances for the final model for Black males, White males, Black females, and White females, respectively. For pathways that were unconstrained, separate pathway coefficients are presented for each ethnicity. Non-significant pathways (i.e., $p < .05$) are not displayed. Table 3.7 displays the path coefficients and their p values, whereas Table 3.8 displays the standardized direct, indirect, and total effects for the pathways. Findings indicate that conditional parental regard directly predicted excessively contingent self-esteem for all groups except Black males. Excessively contingent self-esteem directly predicted friendship jealousy, physical aggression, and relational aggression for all groups, despite controlling for self-esteem level. Excepting Black males, conditional parental regard predicted physical aggression and relational aggression indirectly via excessively contingent self-esteem despite controlling for overall parenting quality, although the direct pathways between conditional parental regard and both aggression outcomes were not significant. Conditional parental regard predicted friendship jealousy directly for all groups and indirectly via excessively contingent self-esteem (excepting Black males). Significant covariances demonstrated a strong positive relationship between physical

Table 3.7. Standardized path coefficients and their p values for pathways tested in Models 1 and 2. CPR = Conditional Parental Regard, PQ = Parenting Quality, CSE = Excessively Contingent Self-Esteem, SE = Self-Esteem Level, JEA = Friendship Jealousy, RA = Relational Aggression, PA = Physical Aggression, ACC = Peer Acceptance, and PRO = Prosocial Behavior.

Source	White Males β	p	Black Males β	p	White Females β	p	Black Females β	p
CPR–CSE	0.36	0.006	0.18	0.153	0.41	0.001	.49	0.001
CPR–SE	-0.35	0.001	-0.35	0.001	-0.35	0.001	-0.35	0.001
CSE–JEA	0.29	0.001	0.29	0.001	0.29	0.001	0.29	0.001
CSE–RA	0.30	0.001	0.30	0.001	0.30	0.001	0.30	0.001
CSE–PA	0.27	0.001	0.27	0.001	0.27	0.001	0.27	0.001
CPR–JEA	0.18	0.012	0.18	0.012	0.18	0.012	0.18	0.012
CPR–RA	0.04	0.590	0.04	0.590	0.04	0.590	0.04	0.590
CPR–PA	-0.01	0.930	-0.01	0.930	-0.01	0.930	-0.01	0.930
CSE–ACC	0.29	0.034	-0.12	0.331	0.16	0.275	0.06	0.618
CSE–PRO	0.13	0.052	0.13	0.052	0.13	0.052	0.13	0.052
CPR–ACC	-0.19	0.159	0.09	0.476	-0.22	0.125	-0.05	0.694
CPR–PRO	0.18	0.016	0.18	0.016	0.18	0.016	0.18	0.016
PQ–CSE	0.07	0.595	0.18	0.146	0.52	0.001	0.30	0.001
PQ–SE	0.32	0.008	0.02	0.901	0.30	0.016	0.24	0.013
SE–JEA	-0.17	0.010	-0.17	0.010	-0.17	0.010	-0.17	0.010
SE–RA	-0.03	0.647	-0.03	0.647	-0.03	0.647	-0.03	0.647
SE–PA	0.00	0.963	0.00	0.963	0.00	0.963	0.00	0.963
PQ–JEA	0.04	0.527	0.04	0.527	0.04	0.527	0.04	0.527
PQ–RA	-0.29	0.001	-0.29	0.001	-0.29	0.001	-0.29	0.001
PQ–PA	-0.32	0.001	-0.32	0.001	-0.32	0.001	-0.32	0.001
SE–PRO	0.33	0.009	0.35	0.003	-0.03	0.846	0.15	0.170
SE–ACC	0.12	0.092	0.12	0.092	0.12	0.092	0.12	0.092
PQ–PRO	0.21	0.002	0.21	0.002	0.21	0.002	0.21	0.002
PQ–ACC	-0.14	0.061	-0.14	0.061	-0.14	0.061	-0.14	0.061

aggression and relational aggression and moderate negative relationships between conditional parental regard and parenting quality and excessively contingent self-esteem and self-esteem level.

Regarding the control variables in Model 1, lower self-esteem level predicted higher levels of friendship jealousy. Parenting quality predicted higher self-esteem levels for all groups except Black males and more excessively contingent self-esteem for females only. Parenting quality also predicted lower levels of relational and physical aggression.

Table 3.8. Standardized total, direct, and indirect effects for pathways tested in Models 1 and 2. CPR = Conditional Parental Regard, PQ = Parenting Quality, CSE = Excessively Contingent Self-Esteem, SE = Self-Esteem Level, JEA = Friendship Jealousy, RA = Relational Aggression, PA = Physical Aggression, ACC = Peer Acceptance, and PRO = Prosocial Behavior.

| Source	White Males			Black Males			White Females			Black Females		
	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect	Total	Direct	Indirect
CPR–CSE	0.36	0.36	0.00	0.18	0.18	0.00	0.41	0.41	0.00	0.49	0.49	0.00
CPR–SE	-0.23	-0.23	0.00	-0.29	-0.29	0.00	-0.27	-0.27	0.00	-0.35	-0.35	0.00
CSE–JEA	0.26	0.26	0.00	0.26	0.26	0.00	0.28	0.28	0.00	0.29	0.29	0.00
CSE–RA	0.30	0.30	0.00	0.28	0.28	0.00	0.28	0.28	0.00	0.27	0.27	0.00
CSE–PA	0.27	0.27	0.00	0.24	0.24	0.00	0.23	0.23	0.00	0.23	0.23	0.00
CPR–JEA	0.26	0.13	0.13	0.25	0.16	0.09	0.31	0.15	0.16	0.37	0.18	0.19
CPR–RA	0.15	0.03	0.12	0.09	0.04	0.06	0.15	0.03	0.12	0.18	0.04	0.14
CPR–PA	0.09	-0.01	0.10	0.04	-0.01	0.04	0.09	-0.01	0.09	0.11	-0.01	0.11
CSE–ACC	0.29	0.29	0.00	-0.12	-0.12	0.00	0.16	0.16	0.00	0.06	0.06	0.00
CSE–PRO	0.13	0.13	0.00	0.12	0.12	0.00	0.12	0.12	0.00	0.13	0.13	0.00
CPR–ACC	-0.12	-0.19	0.08	0.03	0.09	-0.05	-0.19	-0.22	0.03	-0.06	-0.05	-0.01
CPR–PRO	0.11	0.14	-0.03	0.08	0.16	-0.08	0.19	0.14	0.05	0.19	0.18	0.01
PQ–CSE	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.18	0.18	0.00	0.52	0.52	0.00	0.30	0.30	0.00
PQ–SE	0.32	0.32	0.00	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.30	0.30	0.00	0.24	0.24	0.00
SE–JEA	-0.17	-0.17	0.00	-0.16	-0.16	0.00	-0.16	-0.16	0.00	-0.15	-0.15	0.00
SE–RA	-0.03	-0.03	0.00	-0.03	-0.03	0.00	-0.03	-0.03	0.00	-0.02	-0.02	0.00
SE–PA	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PQ–JEA	0.00	0.04	-0.04	0.08	0.04	0.04	0.14	0.04	0.10	0.09	0.04	0.05
PQ–RA	-0.28	-0.29	0.01	-0.23	-0.31	0.05	-0.14	-0.27	0.14	-0.18	-0.26	0.08
PQ–PA	-0.30	-0.32	0.02	-0.27	-0.28	0.04	-0.17	-0.29	0.12	-0.21	-0.27	0.07
SE–PRO	0.33	0.33	0.00	0.35	0.35	0.00	-0.03	-0.03	0.00	0.15	0.15	0.00
SE–ACC	0.11	0.11	0.00	0.11	0.11	0.00	0.12	0.12	0.00	0.11	0.11	0.00
PQ–PRO	0.32	0.20	0.12	0.23	0.21	0.03	0.25	0.19	0.05	0.28	0.21	0.07
PQ–ACC	-0.06	-0.11	0.06	-0.15	-0.13	-0.02	-0.02	-0.14	0.12	-0.09	-0.13	0.04
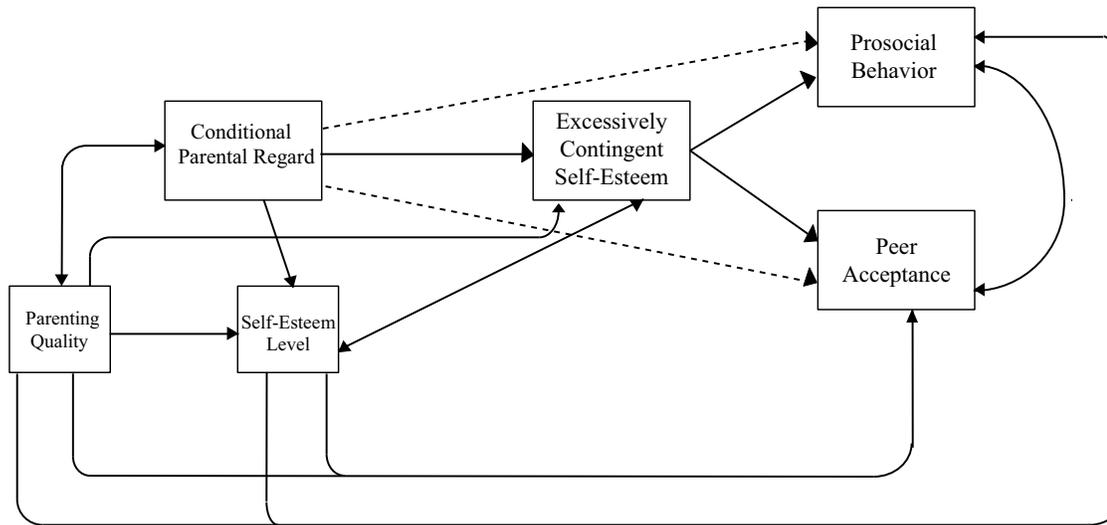
Figure 3.6. Mediational model of conditional parental regard, excessively contingent self-esteem, and children's prosocial behavior and peer acceptance using an observed variable structure and including measures of overall parenting quality and self-esteem level as control variables. Anticipated non-significant pathways are indicated with dashed lines.

3.4 Model 2: Prosocial Behavior

Following the same method of analysis used for Model 1, an unconstrained baseline model with all pathways, covariances, and variances unconstrained across groups was first examined for overall goodness of fit for Model 2. The fully unconstrained model was a saturated model, $\chi^2 (0) = 0.00$, and provided an excellent fit to the data, NFI = 1.00, CFI = 1.00. In the interest of parsimony, pairwise parameter comparisons from this unconstrained model were examined for pathways and covariances of interest in order to determine which model components significantly differed across the four groups. A critical ratio greater than 1.96 indicated a significant group difference for that pathway or covariance.

Significant group differences were found for the pathways of conditional parental regard to excessively contingent self-esteem and peer acceptance, excessively contingent self-esteem to peer acceptance, self-esteem level to prosocial behavior, and parenting quality to excessively contingent self-esteem and self-esteem level. A subsequent partially constrained model was next examined for fit. In this new model, pathways demonstrating group differences were unconstrained across groups while all remaining pathways and covariances were constrained across groups. All vari-
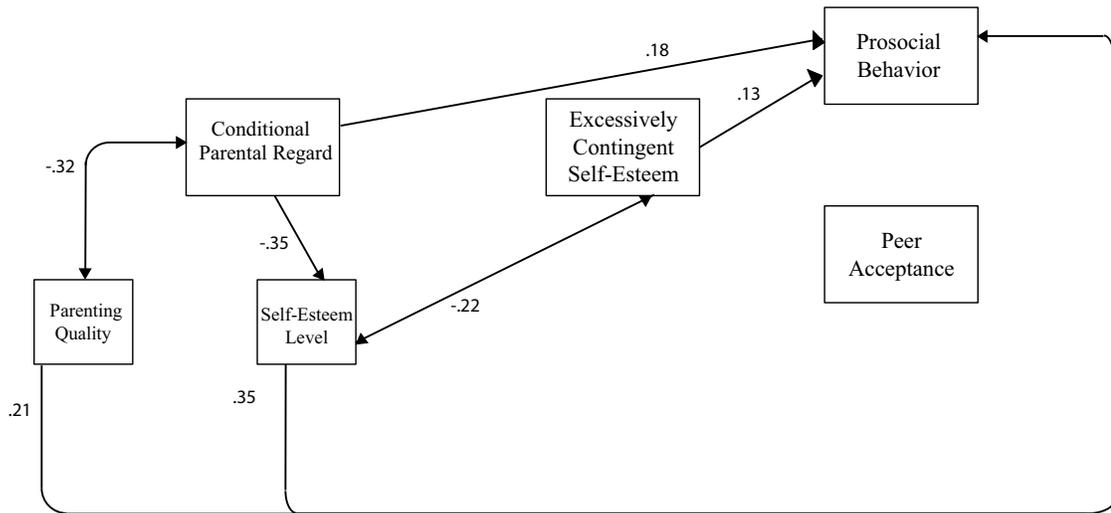
Figure 3.7. Model 1 standardized path coefficients for Black males. Non-significant pathways are not presented.
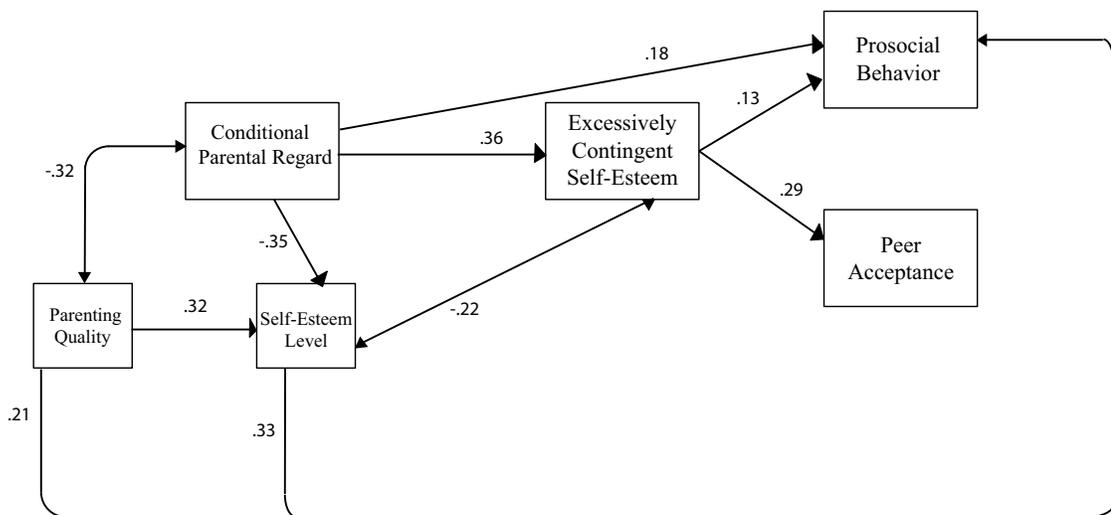
Figure 3.8. Model 1 standardized path coefficients for White males. Non-significant pathways are not presented.

ances were allowed to vary across groups. The new model provided an excellent fit to the data, $\chi^2 (27) = 21.57$, $p = .759$, NFI $= .896$, CFI $= 1.00$, RMSEA $= .000$. The comparison of the new model to the baseline model indicated no worsening in model fit with the additional imposed constraints, χ^2 difference $(27) = 21.57$, $p = .759$. Thus, this partially constrained model was adopted as the final model for Model 2.

Figures 3.7, 3.8, 3.9, and 3.10 present the standardized path coefficients and
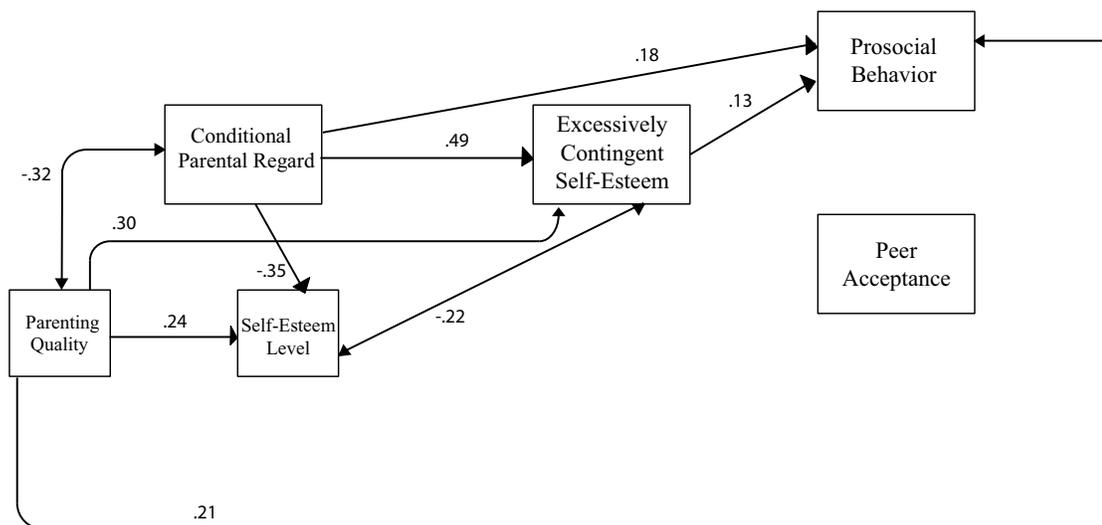
Figure 3.9. Model 1 standardized path coefficients for Black Females. Non-significant pathways are not presented.
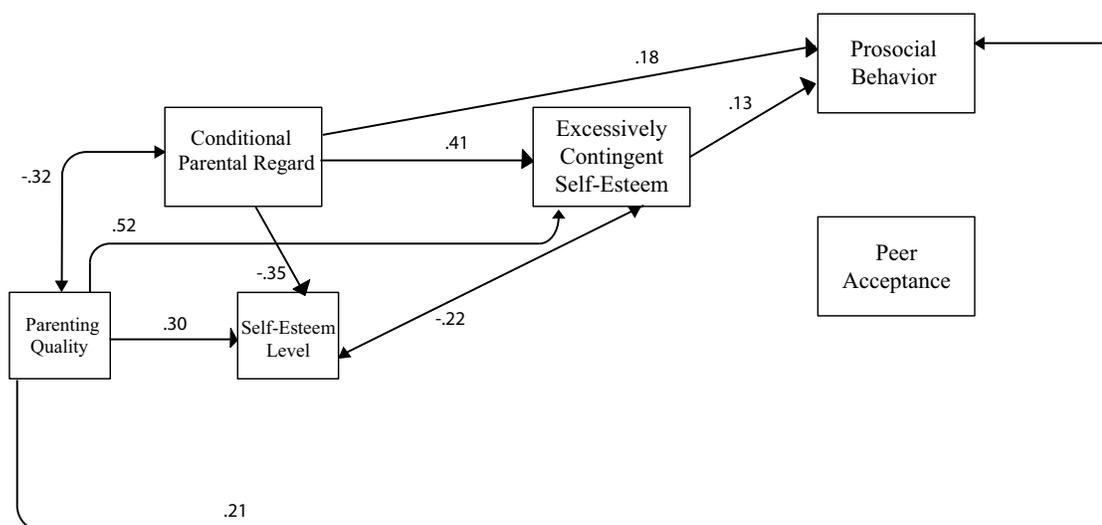
Figure 3.10. Model 1 standardized path coefficients for White Females. Non-significant pathways are not presented.

covariances for the final model for Black and White males and Black and White females, respectively. For pathways that were unconstrained, separate pathway coefficients are presented for each ethnicity. Hypothesized pathways that were neither statistically significant nor marginally statistically significant (i.e., $p <$ .053) are not displayed. Table 3.7 displays the path coefficients and their p values, whereas Table 3.8 displays the standardized direct, indirect, and total effects for the

pathways. Similar to Model 1, findings indicate that conditional parental regard directly predicted excessively contingent self-esteem for all groups except Black males. Excessively contingent self-esteem marginally and positively predicted (p = .052) prosocial behavior for all groups and peer acceptance for white males, despite controlling for self-esteem level. Conditional parental regard positively predicted prosocial behavior directly for all groups and marginally via excessively contingent self-esteem (excepting Black males). Conditional parental regard did not significantly predict peer acceptance. Significant covariances demonstrated moderate negative relationships between conditional parental regard and parenting quality ($p < .001$) and excessively contingent self-esteem and self-esteem level (p = .003).

Regarding the control variables in Model 2, parenting quality predicted prosocial behavior. Parenting quality predicted higher self-esteem levels for all groups except Black males and more excessively contingent self-esteem for females. Self-esteem level predicted prosocial behavior for males.

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

4.1 Overview of Findings

The current study examined empirical support for the models depicted in Figures 3.1 and 3.6. Although the specific relationships vary across sex and ethnic groups, overall findings confirm the two models fit the data reasonably well. Conditional parental regard does contribute to the development of excessively contingent self-esteem, which likewise is associated with aggression, friendship jealousy, prosocial behaviors, and peer acceptance. Results support both Symbolic Interaction theory [21, 22] and self-determination theory [28, 29, 30]. That is, children do appear to invest strongly in parental communications that inform their self-worth, likely creating a looking-glass self that is eventually internalized by the child as their own self-views. Whereas certain parenting behaviors appear to contribute to the development of genuine self-esteem, other parenting practices appear to lead children to form an introjected self-state in which self-esteem is strongly linked to the meeting of goals and expectations. As anticipated, social goals and achievements proved to be quite salient to adolescents, demonstrated by the fact that excessively contingent self-esteem, in varying degrees, was predictive of children's physical and relational aggression, friendship jealousy, prosocial behavior, and peer acceptance. These outcomes are seen as instrumental (i.e., prosocial behaviors and aggression) and reactive (i.e., aggression and friendship jealousy) and are indicative of a child's contingent investment in social relationships. Peer acceptance is one result

of this excessive focus on obtaining social goals. As will be discussed in relation to ethnic and sex differences, links between excessively contingent self-esteem and the outcome variables were more robust for Model 1 (Aggression and Friendship Jealousy) than Model 2 (Prosocial). The impact of conditional parental regard and excessively contingent self-esteem on these outcomes was maintained despite controlling for general parenting quality and self-esteem level, indicating that the effects of conditional parental regard and excessively contingent self-esteem are unique beyond those accounted for by more global measures of parenting style and self-views.

It should be noted that the direct link between conditional parental regard and friendship jealousy was only partially mediated by excessively contingent self-esteem. Thus, this form of parental communication uniquely predicted children's jealous dispositions beyond the variance accounted for by their excessively contingent self-esteem. These results suggest that parental communications linking parental approval with children's achievement of imposed goals and the performance of specific behaviors directly contributes to children's development of friendship jealousy within the peer group. This finding is noteworthy, as currently no previous work has examined the relationship between parenting style and children's friendship jealousy. Future work would benefit from examining more locally the connection between conditional parental regard and friendship jealousy. Perhaps this link will be strongest in families where social success, popularity, and friendships with popular peers are emphasized and valued, leading children to become excessively protective of their dyadic peer relationships for fear of parental reproaches.

As predicted for both Model 1 and Model 2, lower self-esteem level predicted higher levels of friendship jealousy, confirming previous work [5]. Parenting quality predicted higher levels of prosocial behavior and lower levels of relational and physical aggression, which was anticipated considering the body of work linking quality parenting to children's social competence [102, 107, 109]. Although the strength of effects varied across groups, parenting quality predicted higher self-esteem levels and more excessively contingent self-esteem and higher self-esteem level predicted higher levels of prosocial behavior. The implications of these findings will be discussed later in relation to group differences.

4.2   Conditional Parental Regard and the Self

Conditional parental regard predicted higher levels of excessively contingent self-esteem in adolescents. This confirms the assertion of self-determination theory that autonomy-suppressive communication from parents, which includes making parental approval contingent on performing certain behaviors or meeting certain standards, results in an introjected self-regulatory state [28, 29, 30, 36]. This introjection, in turn, leads children to intimately entangle their self-worth with their successes and failures. These children associate their self-worth with the meeting of standards and goals, perhaps once set by parents but now dictated by the child. They have failed to integrate these standards into their sense of self, and likewise their behavior remains controlled by compulsions to meet standards or expectations that they set for themselves. This type of self-esteem is thus excessively contingent in nature.

With the child's self-worth dependent for the most part on achieving standards, excessively contingent self-esteem drives these children to invest their entire selves in the external feedback they receive from the world. With success comes feelings of worth, with failure comes feelings of shame and doubt. What the current study confirms, though, is that this pattern of associating self-worth with external achievement at least partly begins in the parent-child relationship. These children have acquired this self-configuration as a result of their parents' overemphasis on standards, achievement, and their general withholding or removal of love and affection if the child's performance was unsatisfactory (despite the child's best efforts). This finding provides a cautionary note for parents who overly associate their approval with the outcomes of a child's behavior and points toward the classic Rogerian ideal of unconditional positive regard as a remaining benchmark of quality parenting [119, 120]. Such unconditional approval, self-determination theory would likely argue, sets the stage for autonomous behavior in the child and ultimately leads to the development of integrated values and genuine self-esteem.

Findings of the current study also emphasize the importance of autonomy-supportive parenting. As described by self-determination theory [29, 30, 36, 121], autonomy-supportive parenting allows children to actively identify with the values emphasized by parents. Children are then able to integrate these values into their

core selves, where their behaviors are autonomous and children perceive they have a choice in how they interact with the world. Within this framework, autonomy-supportive parenting is described as "noncontingent love for their child and a willingness to care for and nurture their dependent while giving support for the ever growing range of autonomous decision making the child exhibits" (Ryan, 1993, p. 38) [30]. Specific behavioral manifestations of autonomy-supportive parenting include reasoning, empathic limit setting, and including the child in decisions and problem-solving. [35] This parental style is reminiscent of assertions from the developmental constructivist perspective [122, 123]. According to this viewpoint, interactions with adults are viewed as vertical in nature, wherein children simply conform to adult beliefs and instructions without question. On the other hand, conflicts among peers, where the relationship is horizontal, leads to an active co-ordination of the child's beliefs rather than blind conformity. Through this active balancing between the child's own beliefs and those of their peers, cognitive growth is achieved [124]. Perhaps the vertical nature of the parent-child relationship can be avoided through autonomy-supportive parenting and unconditional positive regard from the parent. Whereas autonomy-suppressive parenting leads to a vertical parent-child relationship where children merely introject parental values, autonomy-supportive parenting allows for horizontal relatedness between parent and child and promotes children's integration of values into their core self.

It is important to note, though, that the current study is not arguing against parental discipline. It is essential that parents monitor their children's behavior and provide feedback regarding appropriate and inappropriate actions. The important distinction is in how this monitoring occurs. In reference to the work of Kamins and Dweck (1999) [38], the current study argues that parental discipline can remain autonomy-supportive if it is given in the form of process, as opposed to person, feedback. That is, the parent emphasizes the child's strategies and effort rather than focusing on the child's performance. A very basic conceptualization of this principle is to simply "punish the behavior, not the child". This difference can be clearly seen in two examples. Example 1 (Person feedback): "Johnny, I cannot believe you failed your science test. You are an awful student and a terrible son." Example 2 (Process feedback): "Johnny, you are my son and I love you. But, you should have spent more time studying for your science exam. The lack of effort

you are putting into your studies is not acceptable." It is clear how the parent's response in Example 1 undermines the child's autonomy via personal attacks and criticism, whereas Example 2 emphasizes unconditional love for the child while also indicating the inappropriateness of the child's behavior. Similarly, praise should be process-oriented as well, such that the child is rewarded for their efforts, not the outcome itself. For example, instead of praising the child for making the basketball team ("Great job making the team, Susan!"), praise the child for her effort in trying to make the team ("Susan, I am so proud of the hard work you put into making the basketball team."). This form of reward emphasizes the parents' love for the child and the child's efforts, as opposed to her attainment of an outcome.

Despite the strength of the association between parenting and children's excessively contingent self-esteem, future work would benefit by examining antecedents beyond those present in the familial context. Specifically, it would be interesting to examine the potential role of temperament in predisposing some children to the development of excessively contingent self-esteem. Perhaps children who are more fearful in nature may be strongly inclined to introject, rather than integrate, parental values in order to avoid feelings of anxiety resulting from parental disapproval. Such fearfulness might then promote the development of excessively contingent self-esteem in these children.

Rather than perceiving peer relationships as affected by children's excessively contingent self-esteem, social factors within the peer context might also serve to predispose some children to developing this self-configuration. Conditional regard from friends might lead some children to place excessive value on social approval, due to their limited experience with supportive peer relationships. Without the unconditional support of a quality friend to help build a child's genuine self-esteem, these children might come to excessively invest their self-worth in the fickle social approval of the peer group. It is likely that conditional regard from significant people in one's life, whether they are parents, friends, or even teachers would be detrimental to a child's genuine self-esteem. Likewise, previous research has demonstrated links between children's perceptions of the social climate of their school and both internalizing and externalizing problems [125, 126]. Expanding on this work, school social climate might also serve as an important antecedent to children's excessively contingent self-esteem. School environments where social

hierarchies are rigidly defined, with transitioning between popular, average, and other social levels strictly forbidden, could create a climate where children are excruciatingly aware of their social status. The same phenomenon might also occur in schools where certain groups, such as athletic teams, are highly valued. Within these social climates, children might perceive their self-worth as determined by their social or group status and likewise fail to develop self-esteem that is not strongly contingent on what is valued within the school climate.

4.3 Excessively Contingent Self-Esteem and Social Approval

Due to both evolutionary principles and developmental changes [8, 54], it was hypothesized that adolescents with excessively contingent self-esteem would be strongly invested in social outcomes and success. The association between excessively contingent self-esteem and aggression, friendship jealousy, prosocial behavior, and, to a lesser extent, peer acceptance confirms that adolescents with this self-configuration associate a large portion of their self-worth with obtaining and maintaining social approval. Aggression and friendship jealousy are common reactions when children perceive that their social relationships or status is under attack [5, 49, 55]. Aggression, either relational or physical, can be used to attack those posing the social threat. Children might choose to shove the peer who insulted them or to spread rumors about the peer who did not invite them to the big party. Either attempt denigrates the peer posing the social threat and, at least in the short term, defends the child's social status.

Considering the social investment of children with excessively contingent self-esteem, it was interesting that this self-configuration predicted both physical and relational aggression. Bjorkqvist and colleagues [127, 128] describe the effect/danger ratio of aggression, stating that individuals likely choose their aggressive strategy based on the effect of the strategy and the danger involved in applying that strategy. These authors propose that, at least in certain situations or under certain motivations, indirect (i.e., relational) aggression may present a more attractive effect/danger ratio than physical aggression. Since this form of aggression

is used precisely because it makes the aggressive intentions of the perpetrator less apparent, relational aggression allows the aggressor to stay physically removed from the opponent and makes it easier to avoid a counter attack. For example, a child would be able to retaliate against a peer by spreading nasty rumors about her throughout the peer group. The rumors would likely harm the peer's social status, but the child would not be directly accountable for the attack. It would seem logical to assume that children with excessively contingent self-esteem would prefer relational aggression, given their strong investment in social approval. Such an indirect form of retaliation would allow these children to avoid any of the negative social ramifications associated with physical aggression. In effect, they would be able to retaliate without their peers' direct awareness of the retaliation.

This preference for relational aggression over physical aggression was not found in the current study. Rather, children with excessively contingent self-esteem exhibited higher levels of both relational and physical aggression. This suggests, based on the work of Bjorkqvist and colleagues [127, 128], that these children perceive physical and relational aggression as possessing similar effect/danger ratios. One form of physical aggression that has recently been suggested to demonstrate social competence in children is instrumental physical aggression [56, 77, 78, 129]. As opposed to reactive physical aggression, which is defensive in nature, instrumental physical aggression is offensive and is used by the aggressor to obtain self-serving outcomes [77, 78]. It is possible that the form of physical aggression used by children with excessively contingent self-esteem is instrumental in nature. These children might potentially use physical aggression to obtain social dominance in the peer group and acceptance among peers. Recent research suggests that instrumental aggression, when paired with prosocial behaviors, is associated with peer acceptance and perceived popularity [56, 57]. Alternately, other empirical work has demonstrated that excessively contingent self-esteem is associated with hyper-reactivity to self-esteem threats [45, 49]. Such work implies that reactive aggression would be a more likely form of aggressive behavior employed by these children, as they attempt to defend themselves from threat. Unfortunately, the differential use of reactive vs. instrumental aggression used by children with excessively contingent self-esteem was not measured in the current study. Future research should examine whether excessively contingent self-esteem contributes more strongly to

instrumental, as opposed to reactive, aggressive strategies.

4.4 Excessively Contingent Self-Esteem and Prosocial Behavior

As anticipated, conditional parental regard and excessively contingent self-esteem predicted higher levels of prosocial behavior, though the significance level was marginal (p = .052). At first glance, this prediction and finding may be surprising. A wealth of previous work indicates that warm and supportive parenting, where children are reassured of their parents' unconditional care, leads to better social competence and adjustment in children [102,107,109]. However, recent work demonstrates that some children use both aggression and prosocial behavior to effectively navigate the social group and obtain power and status [56, 57]. It was anticipated that children with excessively contingent self-esteem would embody this "bistrategic" strategy, due to the fact that the majority of their self-esteem is contingent on social approval. Findings of the current study imply that excessively contingent self-esteem motivates children to achieve social acceptance through the use of prosocial behaviors. By employing prosocial techniques, these children can effectively obtain social resources.

It is interesting that excessively contingent self-esteem did not mediate the relationship between conditional parental regard and prosocial behavior. These results suggest that conditional parental regard impacts children's positive peer behavior via either another indirect route or simply through direct influence. Regardless, conditional parental regard and contingent self-esteem appear to independently influence children's prosocial behavior. Perhaps the social goals imbued by conditional parental regard to develop excessively contingent self-esteem are different from those that motivate prosocial behavior. With excessively contingent self-esteem mediating the relationship between conditional parental regard and potentially retaliatory peer behaviors such as aggression, these parental goals may be that children avoid social humiliation within the peer group via aggressive tactics as opposed to maintaining peer acceptance via prosocial behaviors. Along the same lines, it is possible that other predictors, such as social information processing

mechanisms, predispose children to excessively contingent self-esteem and likewise imbue social goals more complementary to prosocial behaviors. Previous work has found associations between excessively contingent self-esteem and hostile attributions [49]. Further work is necessary to decipher how these factors independently influence the social goals, and eventual social behaviors, of children.

4.5   Ethnic and Sex Differences

The most striking finding regarding group differences was the limited influence that conditional parental regard and general parenting quality had on the self-esteem of Black males. Conditional parental regard did not predict excessively contingent self-esteem and parenting quality did not predict self-esteem level for Black males, although these pathways were significant for all other groups. Previous work has demonstrated the differential effects of parenting styles on Caucasian-American and African-American children. Whereas physical discipline predicts higher levels of externalizing behavior in Caucasian-American youth, this form of discipline actually reduces aggression and acting out in African-American youth [130, 131]. Researchers argue that the differential effects of corporal punishment are based in cultural and contextual differences for these two ethnic groups. That is, physical punishment is a more normative discipline strategy for African-American parents and more accepted within the African-American community [132, 133, 134], likely leading children to interpret this discipline as an appropriate expression of parental care and authority as opposed to rejection of the child [130, 135]. More generally, behavioral control, including parental involvement in the child's decision-making, and even psychological control, including intrusive behaviors, have demonstrated beneficial effects for the adjustment of African-American children [136]. Within the construct of behavioral control, strong parental involvement in children's day-to-day decision-making led to less deviant involvement and improved academic competence in African-American youth, but poorer psychosocial adjustment in Caucasian-American youth [137]. The benefits of more controlling parenting styles for minority youth are often attributed to the fact that these children's families are more likely to live in poor and violent communities, with strict parenting serving as protection against detrimental contextual factors [138, 139, 140].

African-American parents are more likely to practice an authoritarian style of parenting (e.g., Baumrind, 1972) [141]. Authoritarian parents emphasize in their children an unquestioning respect for authority and the overall importance of obedience [90, 142]. It is likely that part of this obedience might involve expectations for the child's achievement in academic, extracurricular, and social contexts. Parental approval would be provided when these goals are achieved, and parental disappointment would be expressed when children fail or become otherwise diverted from these goals (e.g., participate in delinquent peer groups). According to self-determination theory [28, 29, 30], these parenting behaviors would be viewed as overly domineering and would be thought to result in the child's development of excessively contingent self-esteem. The findings of the current study suggest, though, that this relationship does not hold for Black males. It appears that the goal setting and contingent approval exercised by these boys' parents has fewer detrimental outcomes. Black males may be more resilient to conditional parental regard due to the potential role clear and structured parental goals play in motivating appropriate, as opposed to deviant, behaviors in the context of inner-city minority youth. Future work should seek to clarify the differential impact of conditional parental regard according to the child's ethnicity.

It was also found that parenting quality did not predict Black males' self-esteem levels. This finding implies that peer relationships and approval might be more important to Black males than parental approval. It has previously been hypothesized that inner-city minority youth are strongly invested in their peer relationships [143, 144]. The value placed on peer relationships is thought to result from the familial deficits presumed to be present in inner-city minority families [143]. As a result, the quality of parenting may not bear as strongly on these young men's self-views. More recent work, though, suggests that Black adolescents, in comparison to White youth, may be less strongly influenced by their peers and more strongly influenced by their parents [145]. Further examination of this relationship is necessary to clarify the influence of parents and peers on Black males' self-esteem.

Excessively contingent self-esteem was found to predict peer acceptance only for White males, such that higher levels of excessively contingent self-esteem predicted higher levels of peer acceptance. Considering the current study's finding that Blacks were both more physically aggressive and better liked by peers, excessively

contingent self-esteem may have motivated White males to engage in aggressive behavior that likewise led to peer acceptance. As excessively contingent self-esteem was associated with aggression in the current study, White males with excessively contingent self-esteem may have achieved levels of popularity comparable to their Black aggressive peers due to their predisposition for aggressive behavior. Work has demonstrated that, within inner-city schools, aggressive behavior contributes to higher levels of popularity among peers [146]. It is also possible, following Hawley's (2003) recent formulation of bistrategic controllers [56], that White males with excessively contingent self-esteem are particularly effective at using a combination of aggressive and prosocial tactics to obtain and maintain peer acceptance. Previous research examining bistrategic children has not demonstrated any profound gender or ethnic differences in this construct [56, 57, 147], requiring this assertion to remain only speculative until further research is conducted.

Given its relationship with prosocial behavior, it is not clear why excessively contingent self-esteem was not more strongly associated with peer acceptance. The finding that prosocial behavior and peer acceptance were not significantly correlated suggests this finding may partly be attributed to problems in measurement. According to Hawley's work [56, 57, 147], bistrategic children employ prosocial control strategies within the peer group. That is, they do not simply express prosocial behaviors of cooperation, friendliness, and reciprocity. Rather, they express these behaviors as a means of asserting control over their peers and obtaining what they want. Whereas prosocial items for the current study simply asked children about the frequency of a child's prosocial behaviors (e.g., "How often do you give another student help when they need it?"), measurement of prosocial control strategies assesses the frequency and intent of children's prosocial behaviors (e.g., "I influence others by doing something in return" [56]). It is possible that excessively contingent self-esteem may motivate children to be prosocial in their behavior, but not strategic in their use of prosocial behaviors. Since these children are also aggressive, the simple expression of prosocial behaviors may not be enough to obtain peer acceptance. Rather, strategic use of both aggressive and prosocial strategies may be required of these children in order to achieve peer approval. As with the current study's findings relating to aggression, future research should assess the prosocial and prosocial-strategic behaviors of children with excessively

contingent self-esteem and the resulting effects on peer acceptance.

It is also possible that children with excessively contingent self-esteem do not represent a homogeneous group. Although some might be bistrategic in nature, using both aggression and prosocial behaviors, others might be solely aggressive, jealous, or prosocial in their behavioral styles. Whereas the bistrategic and prosocial children may be liked by peers and focal figures in the peer group, children who are solely aggressive or express friendship jealousy may be rejected by the peer group. The limited association between excessively contingent self-esteem and peer acceptance may have been due to the fact that the peer approval of some children (bistrategic and prosocial) was canceled out by the peer rejection of other children (solely aggressive or friendship jealous). The possibility for distinct groups of children with excessively contingent self-esteem is echoed in the correlations found between the core variables of the current study (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). For example, physical aggression was not significantly correlated with children's prosocial behavior and relational aggression was either not correlated or negatively correlated with children's prosocial behavior. If all children with excessively contingent self-esteem were bistrategic, then both aggression and prosocial behaviors should both be exhibited by these children. Peer acceptance was not significantly correlated with any of the outcome variables, despite the current study's proposal that children with excessively contingent self-esteem should be aggressive, prosocial, and also accepted among their peers.

Ultimately, findings from the current study imply that children with excessively contingent self-esteem do not all follow the same behavioral trajectories, but in fact may represent a heterogeneous behavioral repertoire. Future research would benefit by examining subgroups within these children. It is possible that excessively contingent self-esteem contributes to bistrategic behaviors in some children, prosocial behaviors in others, aggressive behaviors in other children, and perhaps even anxiety and depression in a select few. It is important to determine not only these subgroups, but also the determinants that lead children to becoming members of their specific group. What role do parents, peers, and a child's own temperament play in determining which behavioral style a child with excessively contingent self-esteem will express? The current study only begins to inform understanding of whether children with excessively contingent self-esteem are heterogeneous, and if

so how they might differ from each other, leaving various possibilities for future investigation.

Lastly, it was also found that higher quality parenting contributed to higher levels of contingent self-esteem for girls and that higher self-esteem levels contributed to more prosocial behavior only in boys. These sex differences should be used to inform future work regarding excessively contingent self-esteem, although the basis for these findings is not easily found in theory or previous empirical work. It is possible that quality relationships with parents inherently pressure girls to meet personal expectations in order to "make their parents proud". Although girls may understand that their parents unconditionally support them, the strong social orientation of girls (see Block, 1983, for a review) [148], may lead them to view goal achievement as a way to further strengthen their connection to their parents. The relationship between boys' self-esteem level and prosocial behavior potentially indicates that male prosocial behavior is linked with individual factors such as self-esteem and other dispositional characteristics, whereas these dispositional factors may play a more limited role in motivating girls' prosocial behavior. Future work should seek to replicate and clarify these relationships.

4.6   Implications for Intervention and Prevention

The findings of the current study imply that excessively contingent self-esteem is a unusual construct, in that it is linked with both classically positive behaviors (i.e., prosocial acts) and negative behaviors (i.e., aggression and friendship jealousy). Although this behavioral repertoire may be functional in obtaining social goals and acceptance, strictly prosocial strategies might be equally, if not more, effective in obtaining these goals [56, 129]. Therefore, excessively contingent self-esteem is not the single or best pathway towards ideal social behavior and warrants intervention. Likewise, the likelihood that these children are heterogeneous in their behavioral responding, with some adopting bistrategic strategies while others adopt solely aggressive or jealous strategies, also gives credence to identifying ways to intervene and prevent this self-configuration.

Given the focus of the current study on conditional parental regard, one potential avenue for both intervention and prevention is to focus on family com-

munication patterns. Training parents to emphasize a child's effort rather than the *outcome* of the child's efforts should support the child's autonomy, and therefore his or her eventual development of genuine self-esteem [29,30]. Although only speculative at this point in time, it would also seem fruitful to work within the contexts of children's friendships. Identifying friendships where children consistently encounter conditional regard and training these dyads to create a more unconditional and supportive environment might serve to alleviate children's perceptions that their self-worth is tied to the attainment of outcomes or goals. Since nothing is known about the longevity of excessively contingent self-esteem once a child has adopted this style of self-evaluation, these techniques would be best applied as a means of prevention prior to the formation of problematic self-views. Although there may be potential for changes in the communications received from significant others, such as parents or friends, to shift a child towards a more genuine self-esteem, the difficulty of exacting this outcome is not yet known and further work is necessary.

Prevention and intervention strategies focusing on the individual child might also prove efficacious. The aggression displayed by children with excessively contingent self-esteem points towards inappropriate social information processing within these children. Particularly when their aggression is reactive in nature, such that it occurs as a means of self-defense [77,78], these children are demonstrating their proclivity to perceive and retaliate against threats towards themselves. Given that children with excessively contingent self-esteem are strongly invested in social approval and status, perceived threats are likely to be social in nature. Previous work has shown that hostile attributional biases are associated with excessively contingent self-esteem [49], indicating that these children are strongly inclined to perceive peer behaviors as hostile in nature (see Crick & Dodge, 1994, for a review) [7]. Excessively contingent self-esteem appears to create a cognitive environment where children are so focused on their social needs that they become hypervigilant to social threats and likewise hyperresponsive to those threats via aggression. Programs focused on reducing children's hostile attributional biases and improving their social information processing skills could potentially improve the behavior of children with excessively contingent self-esteem, if not reduce the contingency of their self-esteem as well.

The proposed mechanisms for reducing or preventing excessively contingent self-esteem are only the first stepping stones of this work. As this program of research continues, it is hoped that further avenues for prevention and intervention beyond those presently discussed will be discovered and pursued. Ultimately, a program of action to support genuine self-esteem, and reduce excessively contingent self-esteem, will hopefully be developed and validated.

4.7   Limitations

The current study was limited in that all but one variable (i.e., peer acceptance) was self-reported by the child. The validity of both Models 1 and 2 would have been strengthened by including parent-report measures to assess both parenting practices and child behavior and more peer-reported measures of child behavior. The inclusion of multiple reporters would have provided opportunities to evaluate the consistency of both parent and child characteristics across contexts and individuals. In clarifying the conceptualization and impact of conditional parental regard, future work would benefit from including parent-reported measures of conditional parenting practices.

The current study was also limited by sampling a predominantly low-income, inner-city middle school. As the limited influence of conditional parental regard on Black males alludes to, parenting behaviors must be considered within their broader ecological context. The effects of conditional parental regard, in particular, may vary according to the presence or absence of community violence, socioeconomic factors, and overall availability of delinquent peer groups or illegal substances. It is important to examine both inner-city, suburban, and rural samples in order to ascertain the differential influence of conditional parental regard in these contexts.

Similarly, the current study's sample consisted only of middle school children and data was taken at a single point in time. Currently, little is known of the developmental trajectory of excessively contingent self-esteem. The few prior studies that have examined this construct have focused solely on middle school students or college students [45, 49, 149, 150, 151], and none have been long-term longitudinal studies. As a result, little is known about the role, if any, played by ex-

cessively contingent self-esteem in the lives of elementary school and high school students. Similarly, nothing is known about the developmental trajectory of excessively contingent self-esteem, including whether, once developed, it is a permanent dispositional characteristic that remains into adulthood or if children can grow into and out of it in a more fluid manner. As work examining this construct continues, it is vital that studies examine developmental periods beyond those that have previously been studied, preferably within a longitudinal design. Only through long-term longitudinal work will the developmental course and impact of excessively contingent self-esteem be fully understood.

Lastly, another limitation to this study, and the current field examining multifaceted self-esteem, is in the measurement of excessively contingent self-esteem. The current study used a modified version of Paradise and Kernis' (1999) [45] Contingent Self-Esteem Scale (CSES) to measure children's excessively contingent self-esteem. As noted by Kernis (2002), this measure was designed to assess an individual's investment in contingencies related to "meeting expectations, matching standards, and performing competently" (p. 66). [33] The nature of the contingencies measured provided an appropriate match to the construct of excessively contingent self-esteem as it was defined in the current study and by Deci and Ryan (1995) [29]. In particular, when examining the items on the CSES individually, many deal with social expectations, standards, and competence (e.g., being well liked, feeling physically attractive), making the questionnaire even more ideal for the current study's examination of excessively contingent self-esteem in adolescents. Unfortunately, due to participants' inconsistent ratings on reverse-scored items within the CSES, only eight of the original fifteen items could be used for analysis. Although the reduction of the CSES by almost 50-percent of its items likely reduced the measurement strength of the scale, the fact that the current study found many of the predicted pathways between excessively contingent self-esteem and other variables and that some of these pathways replicate previous findings (i.e., Kollat, 2004) [49] points to the robust nature of the CSES as a measure.

Regarding the current field's measurement of excessively contingent self-esteem, disagreement exists regarding whether measurement should focus on assessing the extent to which contingent self-esteem is present or absent in an individual [34] as

opposed to assuming that all individuals have self-esteem contingencies but that the domains the contingencies are based upon (e.g., God's love, academics, social approval) differ across individuals [152]. Both avenues of research are promising, although the current study has chosen to examine the degree to which an individual's self-esteem is contingent, regardless of the domain of contingency. Although most individuals base some of their self-worth on contingent outcomes, individuals who are almost solely invested in meeting contingencies as a means for their self-worth (hence the *excessive* descriptor in our construct of contingent self-esteem) are maladjusted regardless of the domains of their contingencies. Excessive dependence on the meeting of standards and goals, despite what these goals or standards are, will lead an individual to engage in non-autonomous behavior and to forfeit their right to genuine self-esteem. Although the current study argued that adolescents with excessively contingent self-esteem would be strongly invested in social contingencies, the main interest was still the degree to which each adolescent's self-esteem was contingent in nature. Future work within this field must come to terms with these differing perspectives on the measurement of contingent self-esteem. Although both are informative, it is important that a standard be determined within the field, thus assuring consistency across studies.

4.8   Conclusions

In conclusion, the current study demonstrated that excessively contingent self-esteem and conditional parental regard are unique constructs and not simply mirrors of self-esteem level and parenting quality, respectively. Excessively contingent self-esteem is an important contributor to both positive and negative peer outcomes. Conditional parental regard significantly contributes to excessively contingent self-esteem, which serves to mediate the relationship between conditional parental regard and negative peer outcomes, including both physical and relational aggression. Sex and ethnic differences were evident in both Models 1 and 2. Future work should continue to clarify ethnic differences in children's conditional parental regard, with focus on ascertaining why Black males' self-views appear to be less strongly influenced by this style of parenting. Also, future work should distinguish between the instrumental vs. reactive aggression and the prosocial vs. prosocial-

strategic behavior of children with excessively contingent self-esteem. Clarification is needed to determine the behavioral motivation and general social competence of these children. Lastly, results of the current study point towards the behavioral heterogeneity of children with excessively contingent self-esteem, indicating the need for future work to examine behavioral subgroups within these children.

APPENDIX A:
Student Questionnaires

Answers:

1. Not at all true

2. A little true

3. Somewhat true

4. Pretty true

5. Very true

Excessively Contingent Self-Esteem

Items:

1. The way I think about myself depends on how well I do things.

2. The overall way I feel about myself depends on how well I live up to the standards I set for myself.

3. The overall way I feel about myself is really influenced by how much other people like and accept me.

4. If I get along well with somebody, I feel better about myself overall.

5. An important thing that affects how I feel about myself is how physically attractive I am.

6. If I am told that I look good, I feel better about myself in general.

7. When what I do doesn't live up to my expectations, it makes me feel upset with myself.

8. My overall feelings about myself are really influenced by how good I look.

Self-Esteem Level

Items:

1. I am often disappointed with myself. (Reverse Score)

2. I do like the way I am leading my life.

3. I am happy with myself most of the time.

4. I often wish I were someone else. (Reverse Score)

5. I am very happy being the way I am.

Conditional Parental Regard

Items:

1. I feel like I would lose my parents' affection if I did poorly at school.

2. I feel like I would lose my parents' affection if I didn't have a lot of friends.

3. I feel like I would lose my parents' affection if I showed fear or cried.

4. I feel like I would lose my parents' affection if I stopped being helpful and considerate of others.

5. I feel like my parents' affection for me depends on how good I am at sports.

6. I feel like my parents' affection for me depends on me never being angry.

7. My parents only care about my grades, NOT how hard I tried in school.

8. My parents think winning is the most important thing.

9. My parents get upset when I make mistakes, even if I tried really hard.

10. If I tried out for a team, my parents would only care about whether I made the team, NOT how hard I worked during try outs.

11. My parents are always trying to change how I feel or think about things.

12. My parents tell me about all the things they have done for me.

13. My parents say that, if I really cared for them, I wouldn't do things that cause them to worry.

14. My parents get angry with me if I do not agree with them.

15. My parents would like to be able to tell me how to feel or think about things all the time.

16. My parents avoid looking at me when I have disappointed them.

17. If I hurt my parent's feelings, they stop talking to me until I please them again.

18. My parents act like they know that I'm thinking or feeling.

Overall Parenting Quality

Items:

1. I can count on my parents to help me out if I have some kind of problem.

2. My parents keep pushing me to do my best in whatever I do.

3. My parents keep pushing me to think independently.

4. My parents help me with my school work if there is something I don't understand.

5. When my parents want me to do something, they explain why.

6. When I get a poor grade in school, my parents encourage me to try harder.

7. When I get a good grade in school, my parents praise me.

8. My parents really know who my friends are.

9. My parents spend time just talking with me.

10. My family does fun things together.

11. My parents know exactly where I am most afternoons after school.

12. My parents TRY to know where I go at night.

13. My parents REALLY know where I go at night.

14. My parents TRY to know what I do with my free time.

15. My parents REALLY know what I do with my free time.

16. My parents TRY to know where I am most afternoons after school.

17. My parents REALLY know where I am most afternoons after school.

Friendship Jealousy

Items:

1. I would feel jealous if I invited my best friend to go see a new movie, but he or she was already going with another kid from our group.

2. I would feel jealous if the teacher let us pick study partners for this year, and another kid in our group picked my best friend first.

3. I would feel jealous if my best friend and I used to walk to school together by ourselves and talk, and a new kid moved into the neighborhood and began walking with us every day.

4. I would feel jealous if I walked into the library and saw my best friend and another kid from our group talking, joking, and making plans to walk home together after school.

5. I would feel jealous if I found out that my best friend went to a new music store with another kid from our group, when we had said we would go together the first time.

6. I would feel jealous if I found out that my best friend got into a fight with her parents, and called another kid from our group for advice and didn't talk to me.

7. I would feel jealous if my best friend is assigned to work on a project with another kid in our group, and they started spending a lot of time together.

8. I would feel jealous if I found out that another kid in our group was planning a cool surprise birthday party for my best friend.

9. I would feel jealous if my best friend joined a team or club without me, and started spending a lot of time with the other kids in that group.

10. I would feel jealous if my best friend had a secret and didn't tell me first.

11. I would feel jealous if I gave my best friend a birthday present, and he or she got one even better from another kid in our group.

12. I would feel jealous if my best friend and I used to always check each other's homework together, and another kid in our group started checking it with him or her.

13. I would feel jealous if I overheard two kids from our group talking and one of them told the other one that they were best friends with my best friend.

14. I would feel jealous if I called my best friend to talk and he or she couldn't talk because another kid from our group was waiting and they were going on a bike ride.

15. I would feel jealous if another kid from our group picked my best friend to go with his or her family on a camping trip overnight.

Aggression and Prosocial Behavior

PRO = Prosocial Behavior, PA = Physical Aggression,
RA = Relational Aggression

Answers:

1. Never

2. Almost never

3. Sometimes

4. Almost all the time

5. All the time

Items:

1. How often do you give another student help when they need it? (PRO)

2. How often do you hit other students at school? (PA)

3. How often do you make faces at other students to hurt their feelings? (RA)

4. How often do you leave other students out on purpose when it is time to hang out or do an activity? (RA)

5. How often do you yell at other students and call them mean names? (PA)

6. How often do you try to cheer up other students when they are sad or upset? (PRO)

7. How often do you roll your eyes or snub your nose at other students? (RA)

8. How often do you try to get back at students you are mad at by not letting them in your group anymore? (RA)

9. How often do you push or shove other students at school? (PA)

10. How often do you do something to make other students feel happy? (PRO)

11. How often do you tell lies about a classmate to make other students not like them anymore? (RA)

12. How often do you kick or pull another student's hair? (PA)

13. How often do you tell another student that you won't like them unless they do what you want them to do? (RA)

14. How often do you say something nice to another student? (PRO)

15. How often do you try to keep others from liking a student by saying mean things about them? (RA)

16. How often do you tell a student you will beat them up if they don't do what you want them to do? (PA)

17. How often do you let other students know you care about them? (PRO)

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Vita

Sarah H. Kollat

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Psychology, The Pennsylvania State University, August 2007
Major: Developmental Psychology
Minor: Child Clinical

M.S., Psychology, The Pennsylvania State University, December 2004
Major: Developmental

B.A., Psychology, Youngstown State University, May 2003

EXPERIENCE

Intervention and Treatment

2005-06   *Behavior Specialist*, Northwestern Human Services. *Duties:* Developing and monitoring treatment programs for children with autism. *Supervisor:* John Calhoun.

Teaching Experience

2006-07   *Instructor*, HDFS 229: Infancy and Child Development, HDFS 433: Transition to Adulthood, The Pennsylvania State University, Department of Human Development and Family Studies. *Duties:* Course preparation, main lecturer, supervising graduate teaching assistants. *Supervisor:* Douglas Coatsworth, Ph.D.

HONORS & AWARDS

2004, 2005   Honorable Mention, National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship

PUBLICATIONS

Walls, T.A., and Kollat, S.H. (2006). Agency to agentic personalities: The early to middle childhood gap. In D. Mroczek and T. D. Little (Eds.), *The handbook of personality development.* Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.