

Maternal Sensitivity and Child Attachment Security at 3 – 5 years old: Differences between Low and Middle Socioeconomic Status at Lima, Peru

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Introduction

Relationship between maternal sensitivity and child attachment security has been evidenced in middle socioeconomic status in different cultural contexts (Nievar & Becker, 2008 among others).

However, it is postulated that stressful events associated with poverty could decrease the strength of this association (De Wolff & van IJzendoorn, 1997). Studies about this association in low SES are scarce.

Objectives

- Compare child attachment security and maternal sensitivity between children 3 -5 years old from low and middle Socioeconomic Status samples at Lima, Peru
- Compare correlation between child attachment security and maternal sensitivity across two groups of 3 -5 years old children: low and middle Socio Economic Status at Lima, Peru

Method

Participants

	Low SES	Middle SES
N	40	30
Mother age	18 – 42 years (<i>M</i> =27.5 <i>DE</i> =5.51)	25 – 45 years (<i>M</i> =34.97 <i>DE</i> =5.72)
Child age	36 - 59 months (<i>M</i> =44.63 <i>DE</i> = 7.11)	49 - 72 months (<i>M</i> =61 <i>DE</i> = 7.52)

Instruments

Attachment Q Set 3.0 - AQS
(Waters, 1995)

Maternal Behavior for Preschoolers Q Set MBPQS) (Posada, Jacobs y Richmond, 1998)

Two observers coded each

INTEROBSERVER RELIABILITY COEFFICIENT

	AQS	MBQS
Middle SES	.76	.74
Low SES	.80	.81

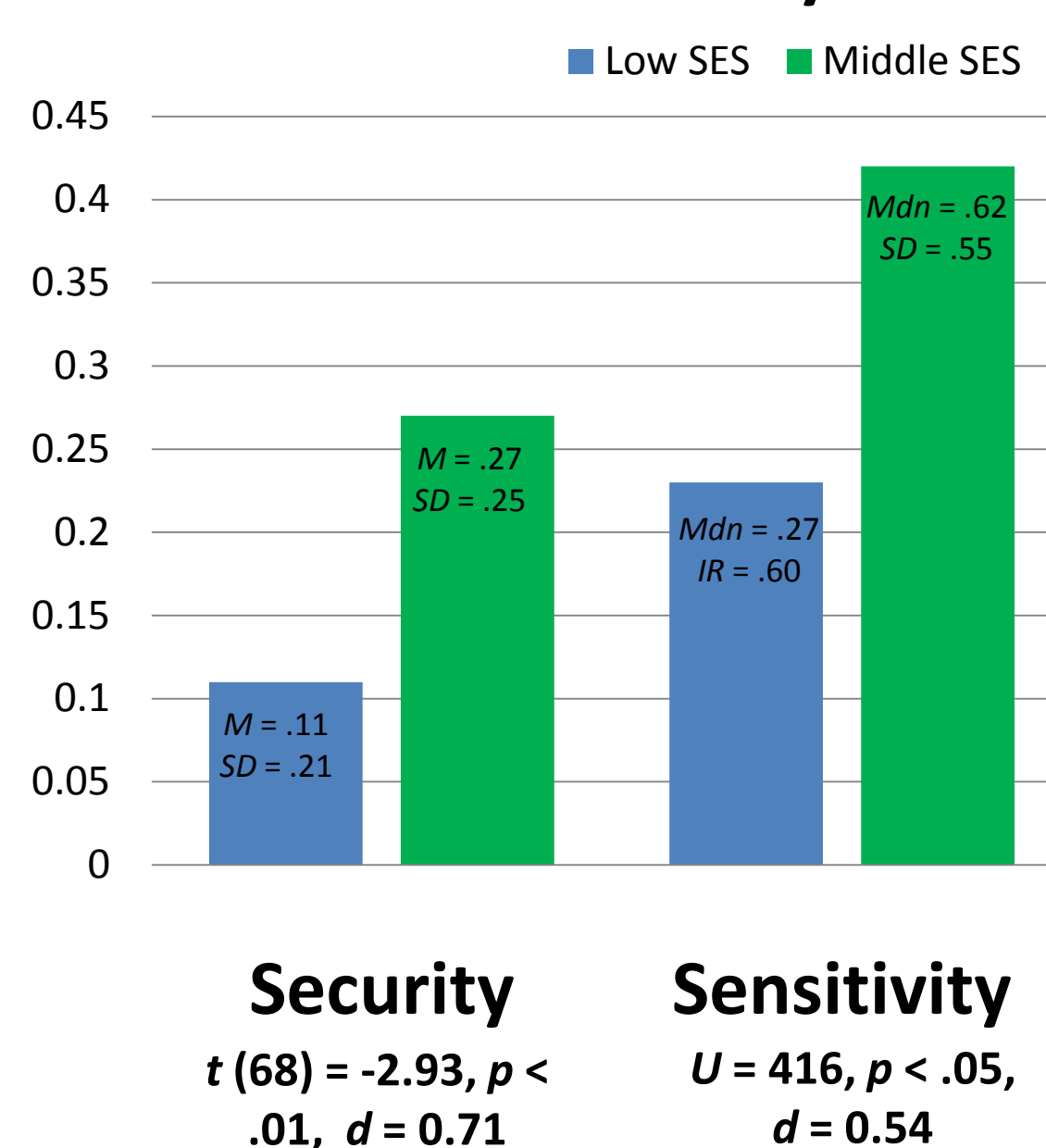
Procedure

Observation of Mother – children free interaction (60 minutes for each observation)

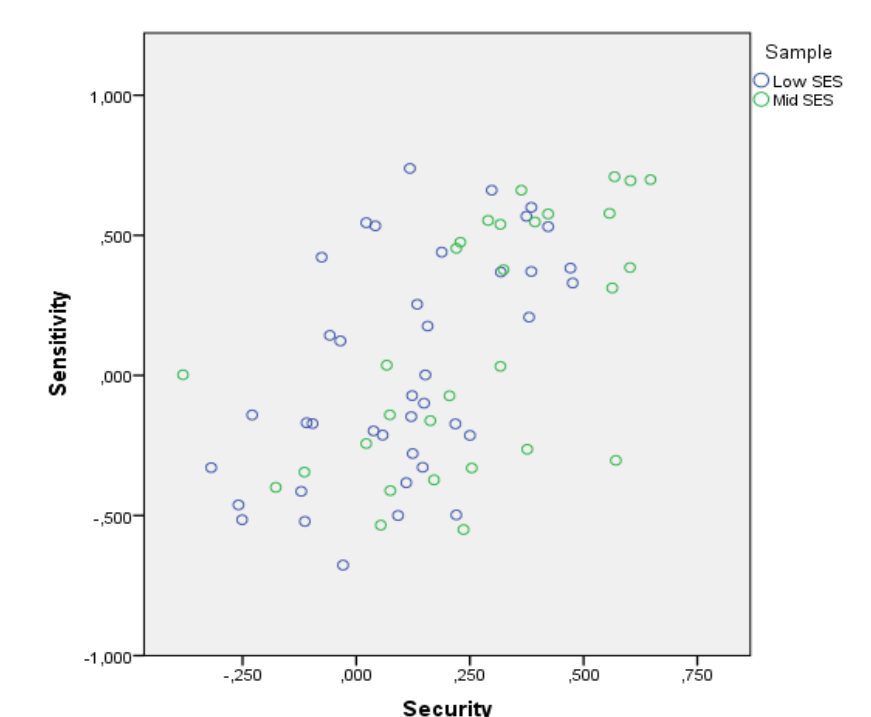
Interaction in two contexts for each SES (Home – Park) were observed

Results

Child attachment security and maternal sensitivity



Correlation between child attachment security and maternal sensitivity



LOW SES
 $r_{LOW} = .56, IC\ 95\%_{LOW} = [.30, .74], p_{LOW} < 0.001$

MIDDLE SES
 $r_{MID} = .60, IC\ 95\%_{MID} = [.31, .79], p_{MID} < 0.001$

CORRELATION DIFFERENCES
 $z = -0.16, p = .41$

Discussion

- Lower levels of attachment security and maternal sensitivity in both SES compared with other countries (Posada, Carbonell, Alzate, & Plata, 2004; van IJzendoorn, Vereken, Bakermans-Kranenburg & Riksen-Walraven, 2004).
- Attachment security and maternal sensitivity are lower in low SES compared with middle SES. Adversity in low SES context does not entirely explain low levels of security and sensitivity (Tomlinson, Cooper & Murray, 2005)
- Future research: Additional variables that could explain attachment and sensitivity scores (e.g. maternal attachment history, psychosocial problems, social support) (Huth-Bocks, Levendosky, Bogat & von Eye, 2004), security with alternative attachment figures (e.g. grandmothers, fathers, brothers)
- Relationship between attachment security and maternal sensitivity is maintained across low and middle SES contrary with what was proposed by other studies (De Wolff & van IJzendoorn, 1997).