

Infancy predictors of triadic family interactions: Maternal and paternal mind-mindedness and mutually responsive orientation.



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Introduction

- Quality of triadic (mother-father-child) interactions provides a unique contribution to child outcomes, beyond dyadic relationships¹.
- However, little is known about the predictors of these triadic interactions.**
- Research suggests:
 - Parental mentalization capacity → ↑ cooperation & coparenting in triadic interactions²
 - Quality of dyadic and triadic interactions interrelated ($r = .28$)³
- Accordingly:
 - Mind-mindedness (caregivers' ability to consider child ongoing mental activity⁴) and the quality of dyadic parent-infant interactions might be expected to predict later quality of family interactions.

Aim

- Investigate the contributions of mothers' and fathers' **mind-mindedness**, as well as their respective **quality of dyadic interaction** with their infant, to the prediction of mother-father-child **triadic family interactions** at preschool age.

Method

- Low-risk community sample
- 46 families (23 boys)

12 months ($M = 12,61$ $ET = 0,98$)	18 months ($M = 18,28$ $ET = 0,98$)	Age 6 ($M = 6,04$, $ET = 2,55$)
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Mind-mindedness (mother)

- Meins et al. (2001) coding system
- 10-minute free play

Mind-mindedness (father) AND dyadic interactions

- Meins et al. (2001) coding system
- 10-minute free play
- Mutually Responsive Orientation scale (MRO)
- 10-minute unstructured interaction

Triadic interactions

- Family Alliance Assessment scale (FAAS)
- 10-minute joint mother-father-child play

Method

Measures

- Meins et al. (2001) coding system⁵:
 - 5 categories of comments assessed: (a) infant's mental states, (b) mental processes, (c) emotional engagement, (d) attempts to manipulate other people's thoughts, and (e) comments involving the mother speaking for the infant
- MRO scale⁶:
 - Sub-scales assessed: Harmonious communication, mutual cooperation, emotional ambiance
- FAAS scale⁷:
 - Sub-scales assessed: Participation, organization, focalisation, affect sharing and timing

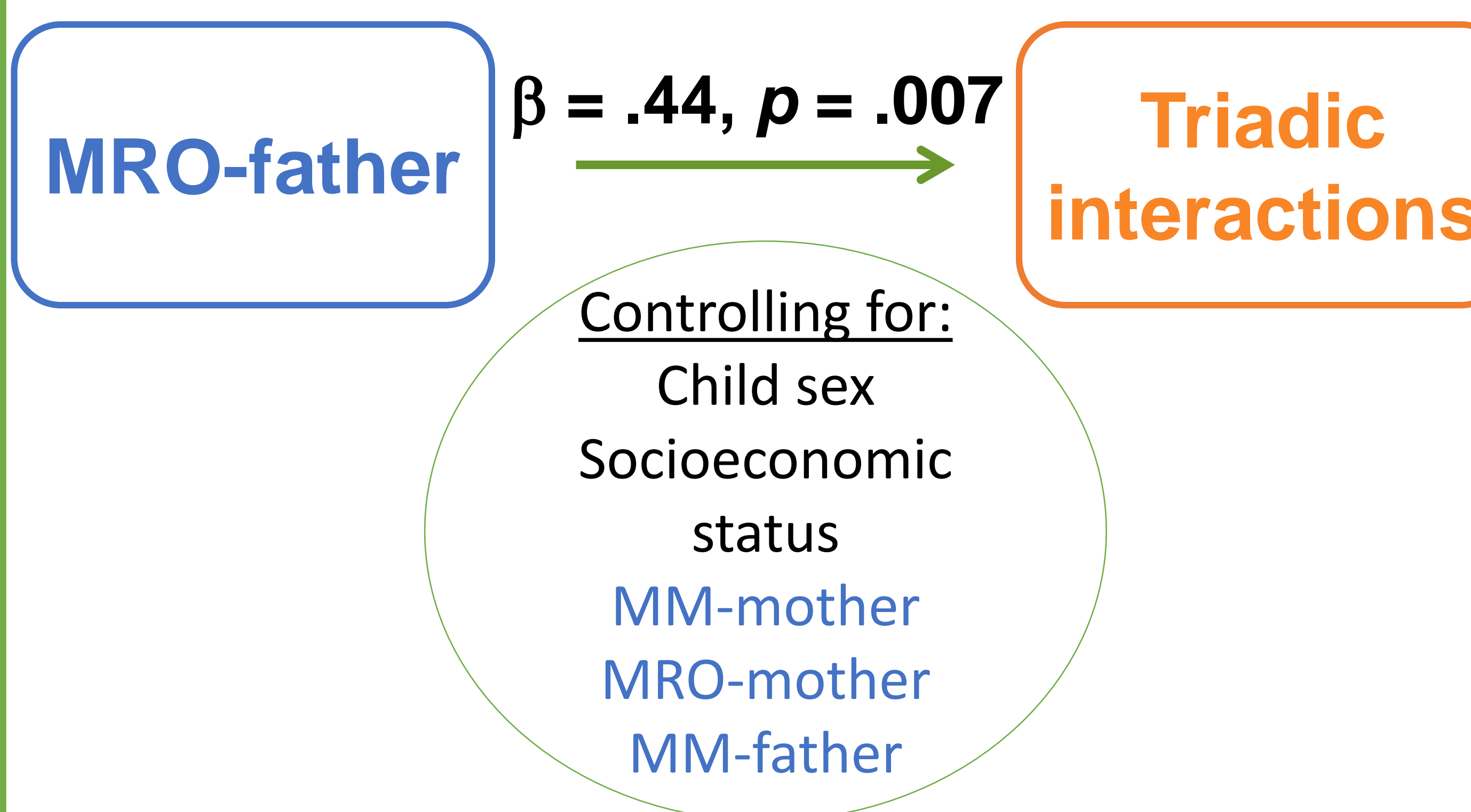
Results

Correlations among study variables

	1	2	3	4	5
1. MM - mother13	.12	.05	.09
2. MRO - mother	11	.43**	.12
3. MM - father		14	.20
4. MRO - father			35**
5. Triadic interactions					...

Note. MM = mind-mindedness; MRO = mutually responsive orientation
 ** $p < .01$.

- MRO-father** had a **unique and substantial contribution** to the quality of **triadic interactions five years later**



References

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Conclusion

- These results highlights the **interdependance of dyadic and triadic interactions** and the importance of examining different family sub-systems when studying family influences on infant development.
- These results also **emphasize the important and unique role that fathers play**, especially in play contexts.
- Overall, this study reiterates the importance of the emotional quality of father-infant interactions for family life.**

